Sense Ability Matters LTD.

England & Wales · Charity number 1107499

Details

Other names	GATESHEAD AND SOUTH TYNESIDE SIGHT SERVICE, Vision & Hearing Support Gateshead and South Tyneside
Status	Registered
Legal form	Charitable company
Company number	05206358
Registered	2005-01-07
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

Address	Sense Ability Matters Civic Centre Regent Street Gateshead Tyne And Wear NE8 1HH
Phone	01914785959
Email	contactus@wearesam.org.uk
Website	https://wearesam.org.uk/

Activities

Objects: The Objects of the Charity shall be to relieve Blind and Partially Sighted people, Deaf and Hard of Hearing people and those with any disability or long-term condition in Gateshead and South Tyneside in particular, but not exclusively, by:1. The provision and maintenance of a comprehensive and co-ordinated service for such persons; and2. The advancement of the education of the public by the provision of such a service.

Activities: Sense Ability Matters is here to help all adults in our South Tyneside and Gateshead community who have a sensory impairment, are disabled, or live with a long-term health condition.

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Classification

- **How:** Provides Human Resources, Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information
- **What:** Education/training, The Advancement Of Health Or Saving Of Lives, Disability
- **Who:** People With Disabilities

Geography

- **Area of benefit:** GATESHEAD AND SOUTH TYNESIDE.
- Gateshead
- South Tyneside

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£743,773	£695,539	£488,263	18
2024-03-31	£752,142	£677,230	£440,029	19
2023-03-31	£780,096	£669,948	£365,117	19
2022-03-31	£545,267	£464,372	£254,969	18
2021-03-31	£506,633	£402,016	£174,074	15

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Lin Elder-Atterton MVO	Chair	2016-11-24
Deborah Tindle		2025-11-27
Ian Hickson		2020-11-26
Lynda Rhodes		2016-11-24
Peter Kirk		2025-11-27

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Sense Ability Matters LTD.

England & Wales - Charity number 1107499

Accounts

Docusign Envelope ID: 8670AE87-60B6-4DE0-9034-1D049F84DA3F

Charity registration number 1107499

Company registration number 05206358 (England and Wales)

SENSE ABILITY MATTERS LTD

ANNUAL REPORT AND UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Docusign Envelope ID: 8670AE87-60B6-4DE0-9034-1D049F84DA3F

SENSE ABILITY MATTERS LTD

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Trustees	L Elder-Atterton I Hickson L Rhodes
Charity number	1107499
Company number	05206358
Registered office	Floor 2 Gateshead Civic Centre Regent Street Gateshead Tyne and Wear NE8 1HH
Independent examiner	Simon Brown BA ACA DChA Azets Audit Services Bulman House Regent Centre Gosforth Newcastle Upon Tyne NE3 3LS
Bankers	CAF Bank Ltd PO Box 289 Kings Hill West Malling Kent United Kingdom ME18 4TA
Key management personnel	S French - Chief Executive L Watkins - Business Manager C McAllister - Operations Manager

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SENSE ABILITY MATTERS LTD

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SENSE ABILITY MATTERS LTD

CHAIR OF TRUSTEES AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS STATEMENT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

The 2024/25 period has been a year of consolidation for the Charity; in the previous period, our Membership voted to extend our Charitable Objectives to include disabled people and those with long term health conditions. We secured National Resilience funding from Fight For Sight to support this work and launched our new name and brand in May 2024.

Our relocation to the Civic Centre in Gateshead is now well established and the low vision service continues to thrive in this location. The lease for 34 – 36 New Green Street completed in the summer of 2024 and we held a successful open day for beneficiaries, partners, and funders to celebrate. We were delighted to welcome the Mayor of South Tyneside and Deputy Lieutenant to the opening event in September 2024.

Throughout the year, we have continued to deliver the best possible services for our beneficiaries and have achieved excellent outcomes through our various projects. We were extremely grateful to receive grant funding from The Ballinger Charitable Trust, Screwfix Foundation, The National Lottery Community Fund, Sport England, Sunderland Stadium of Light Foundation, Community Foundation Tyne and Wear, and via New Philanthropy Capital. This included a significant amount of unrestricted grants which provided stability and an opportunity to develop new services.

Referrals for assessments under our local authority Care Act 2014 contracts have increased from the previous year with 548 support plans being completed (343 in 2023). The Team have consistently met Care Act 2014 targets with 99% of beneficiaries being contacted within 2 working days and 79% of referrals being assessed within two weeks. The number of referring organisations has continued to rise as we increase publicity and networks.

We have continued to work with our sight loss sector colleagues across the region and nationally. Through Visionary UK, we have contributed to national working groups for rehabilitation, low vision and cross-sector partnership developments. We attended the Visionary UK conference 2024 to meet colleagues and share best practice among the sector.

To support our future succession planning and governance, we have welcomed some interest in our Trustee roles. The Board and team have been inducting two interested individuals who will hopefully stand for election by our members in 2025.

In November 2024, in accordance with good governance and due diligence, Members of Sense Ability Matters passed a resolution for the Trustees to obtain quotes for the Independent Examination for the financial year ending 2025.To this end, Sense Ability Matters appointed Azets to undertake the independent examination 2025.

As we move into the next financial year, the Trustees will remain agile and responsive to meet the Charity's objectives. This will be underpinned by our ambition to innovate and work collaboratively to achieve the best possible outcomes for our beneficiaries.

The Board has worked hard in 2024/25 to build upon the progress made in the previous five years to stabilise the Charity's finances and build appropriate reserves for the future.

Signed by:
Lin Elder-Atterton
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Lin Elder-Atterton MVO
Chair

Date: 01 December 2025

Signed by:
Sarah French
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Sarah French
Chief Executive

Date: 02 December 2025

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SENSE ABILITY MATTERS LTD

REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

The Trustees who are also Directors of the Charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the Charity for the year ended for the year ended 31 March 2025.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the charity's [governing document], the Companies Act 2006 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 1 January 2019).

Objectives and activities

Our Vision
Sense Ability Matters' vision is for the region to have a disabled and sensory loss community that is **informed**, **empowered** and **resilient**.

Our Mission

1. **Empower** our community by giving them the tools they need to live independently and make positive decisions.
2. Help our community overcome adversity by increasing **resilience** and wellbeing.
3. Ensure our community are **informed** by providing first class information, advice and guidance.
4. **Influence** positive change locally, regionally and nationally for our community through strong stakeholder and relationship management.

Our Values

Supportive
We respond and adapt to the needs of our community. We respect and value all our community equally. We are committed to working together to achieve shared goals.

Trustworthy
We are accountable. We are open and honest in our approach. We are reliable, act with integrity and do what it takes to support those in need.

Caring
We are friendly and warm. We take time to listen and promote inclusivity. We treat everyone with dignity and respect.

Professional
We are passionate and strive to be the best. We actively seek new ideas and innovation to bring about positive change. We rely on evidence to make our decisions. We challenge ourselves to be bold and resourceful. We are determined in the face of adversity.

Our Strategic Objectives

Be the **leading** service provider for sensory impaired and disabled people
Influence change locally, regionally & nationally
Diversify our income generation portfolio
Champion the interests of members, beneficiaries and the sector

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Activities for public benefit

Sense Ability Matters strives to be the best for our community. We take time to listen and promote inclusivity, treating everyone with dignity and respect. We actively seek new ideas and innovation to bring about positive change, acting with integrity to do what it takes to support those in need.

Sense Ability Matters is an organisation run for charitable purposes. We want to be around today and into the future to support disabled people and those who are sight impaired, Deaf or hard of hearing. To achieve this, we recognise that there is a need to supplement our strategic aims with business aims that will deliver long term sustainability:

- Diversify our income sources to increase financial sustainability.
- Develop the profile of Sense Ability Matters, so that more people know about the services we provide, to increase the numbers of people accessing services and the number of people willing to donate and volunteer.
- Engage people with lived experience and with people from a variety of ethnic backgrounds so that we learn from the strengths they bring in their diversity.

We review our aims, objectives and activities each year. This report looks at what we achieved and the outcomes of our work during April 2024 to March 2025.

Achievements and performance

Financial review

Financial performance in 2024/25 continues to provide stability for the Chairty moving forwards. This is largely due to support through cost of living funds grants to support running costs.

Income in 2024/25 was £743,773 - representing a decrease of £8,369 to the previous year (£752,142 – 2023/24). This is chiefly because of one-off restricted funds ending in March 2024.

Our expenditure has increased by £18,309 on the previous year, reflecting our relocation costs from Stonehills to Gateshead Civic Centre and New Green Street. Expenditure in 2024/25 was £695,539.

Principal funding sources

Our main core contracted income has remained stable and we have performed well against this income achieving all the required performance indicators.

Key income streams:

- Gateshead Council
- South Tyneside Council
- NHS North East North Cumbria Integrated Care Board
- The National Lottery Community Fund
- Fight For Sight/ Vision Foundation – National Resilience Fund

The receipt of this funding enables the charitable company to meet its charitable objectives to provide support advice and activities to people who are Sight Impaired, Severely Sight Impaired, Deaf, hard of hearing or Deaf/blind.

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Reserves policy
The calculation of free reserves is based on the definition included in the charity statement of recommended practice (SORP), which provides recommendations for accounting and reporting for charities. The trustees have examined the requirements of the charity to hold free reserves - those reserves not invested in tangible fixed assets, excluding long term liabilities, or designated for a particular purpose. The Trustees have concluded that to allow the Charity to be managed efficiently and to provide a buffer for uninterrupted services, attempts should be made to increase free reserves.

It is the policy of the Charity that free reserves should be maintained at a level equivalent to between six and nine month's expenditure. The directors consider that reserves at this level will ensure that, in the event of a significant drop in funding, they will be able to continue the Charity's current activities while consideration is given to ways in which additional funds may be raised.

The Charity has several restricted funds for identified projects, which have specific budgets and timescales. In order to reach the agreed level of reserves the charitable company intends to continue to look for increased income from our own fundraising efforts, as well as obtaining additional grant funding to increase unrestricted income.

At 31 March 2025 the charitable company held total reserves of £488,263 (2024: £440,029) of which free reserves were £367,034 (2024: £267,231)

We will continue to review levels of expenditure.

Investment policy and objectives
Under the memorandum and articles of association, the Charity has the power to make any investment which the Trustees see fit.

Risk management
The Board of Trustees reviewed the major risks to which the Charity is exposed. A risk register is in place and is updated regularly and at least annually.

Where appropriate, systems and procedures have been established to mitigate the risks the Charity faces.

The Risk Management process itself is periodically reviewed to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the Charity.

Risks are minimised by the implementation of internal controls with procedures for authorisation of all transactions and projects.

Services continued to be externally evaluated and inspected by funders.

The excellent outcomes from these evaluations point to the excellent quality of delivery for all operational aspects of the Charity.

Significant external risks to funding have led to the development of the new Strategic Direction which allows for the diversification of funding.

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Plans for future periods

The expansion of our Charitable Objectives will help us to realise our ambition to serve all adults in our South Tyneside and Gateshead community who have a sensory impairment, are disabled, or live with a long-term health condition.

Working with people with lived experience, our charity is determined to:

- leverage further investment to support disability services across South Tyneside and Gateshead, ensuring greater provision for more people,
- enable more people with lived experience to co-create services, improve health pathways and increase access to local services,
- reduce health inequalities and improve outcomes for people facing or living with a disability, are vision impaired, Deaf, hard of hearing, or who has one or more long-term health condition.

The coming year will focus on maintaining our current services: rehabilitation; holistic assessment; low vision service; digital empowerment; mental health & wellbeing; community and volunteer engagement. To support this we will focus our development on:

Employability and Transition Pathway

Following a review of our data at the end of 2020, we found that only 2% of the people we work with are aged between 15 and 44, increasing to only 5.5% at the end of 2023. We recognise that this is not a proportionate reflection of the age profile of people with sight loss in South Tyneside and Gateshead.

During 2021 and 2022 we secured a short grant to support employability for people with sight loss which was successful in engaging younger people in our support. We have also worked closely with Children's Services to improve the transition into adult services, this too has seen a small increase in 15 to 24-year-olds access our services.

We want to take this work further by engaging younger people, up to age 45, in our projects and support services. Working with young people, we will co-design a tailored programme to provide relevant support at a time when it is needed most.

Advocacy

Working with partners and social care providers, the demand for specialist advocacy support for people with sight loss is increasing. As costs of living increase, we have experienced a significant rise in requests for non-statutory advocacy support. This includes help with employment issues; blue badge and concessionary pass applications; mandatory reconsiderations for benefit applications; housing issues including amendments to properties, alongside support with banding applications and providing relevant evidence of the impact of sight loss on individuals.

Structure, governance and management

The Charity is controlled by its governing document, a deed of trust, and constitutes a limited company, limited by guarantee, as defined by the Companies Act 2006.

The trustees, who are also the directors for the purpose of company law, and who served during the year and up to the date of signature of the financial statements were:

L Elder-Atterton
I Hickson
L Rhodes

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Recruitment and appointment of new Trustees
The Charity may by ordinary resolution appoint a person who is willing to act as trustee and determine the rotation in which any additional Trustees are to retire. No person other than a trustee retiring by rotation may be appointed a trustee at any general meeting unless:

- He or she is recommended for re-election by the Trustees or
- Not less than fourteen nor more than thirty-five clear days before the date of the meeting, the Charity is given notice that:
    - Is signed by two members entitled to vote at the meeting.
    - States the members' intention to propose the appointment of a person as a trustee.
    - Contains the details that, if the person were to be appointed, the Charity would have to file at Companies House, including the names and details of two referees who have not proposed their election; and
    - Is signed by the person who is to be proposed to show his or her consent - full election to the Board will be at the end of a six month probationary period and will be at the discretion of the Board of Directors.

Organisational structure
The Board of directors meet quarterly and administer the Charity. The Board of directors may delegate any of their powers to sub-committees consisting of such members of their body and/or Charity as they think fit.

Any sub-committee so formed shall in the exercise of the powers so delegated conform to any regulations imposed on it by the directors.

Induction and training of new Trustees
New Trustees undergo an induction to brief them on:

- their legal obligations under charity and company law;
- the Charity Commission on public benefit;
- inform them of the content of the memorandum and articles of association;
- the committee and decision making processes;
- the business plan; and - recent financial performance of the charitable company.

During the induction they meet key employees and other Trustees.

Trustees are encouraged to attend appropriate external training events where these will facilitate the undertaking of their role.

Key management remuneration
The Trustees consider the Board of Trustees as comprising of the key management personnel of the charitable company in charge of directing, controlling and operating the charitable company. All Trustees give their time freely and no trustee remuneration was paid in the year.

Partnerships and Collaborations
We continue to work in close co-operation with both Gateshead and South Tyneside Councils, and are actively involved in the Integrated Care System (ICS) and Primary Care Networks (PCN) under the North East North Cumbria (NENC) Integrated Care Board.

We have effective partnerships with Royal National Institute for the Blind, Newcastle Vision Support, RNID, Visionary and several voluntary sector organisations with whom we are working with in both Gateshead and South Tyneside, and our wider network both regionally and nationally.

During the year we have formed effective partnerships with local Charities ACTS, Age UK Gateshead, Your Voice Counts and Visionary members. This has led to emerging projects to support people with disabilities and learn from each other’s experiences and approaches.

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SENSE ABILITY MATTERS LTD

REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Statement of responsibilities

The trustees, who are also the directors of Sense Ability Matters Ltd for the purpose of company law, are responsible for preparing the 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 charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that year.

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

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;

- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;

- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent; and

- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity 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 charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The report was approved by the Board of Trustees.

Signed by:
Lin Elder-Atterton
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L Elder-Atterton

Trustee

Date: 01 December 2025

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SENSE ABILITY MATTERS LTD

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

TO THE TRUSTEES OF SENSE ABILITY MATTERS LTD

I report to the trustees on my examination of the financial statements of Sense Ability Matters Ltd (the charity) for the year ended 31 March 2025.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the charity (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 (the 2006 Act).

Having satisfied myself that the financial statements of the charity are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of the charity's financial statements carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act). In carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

Since the charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of ICAEW, which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1 accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or

2 the financial statements do not accord with those records; or

3 the financial statements do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or

4 the financial statements have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the financial statements to be reached.

Signed by:
Simon Brown
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Simon Brown BA ACA DChA

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

Dated: 02 December 2025

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SENSE ABILITY MATTERS LTD

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Current financial year

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Designated funds 2025 £	Restricted funds 2025 £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Income from:						
Donations and legacies	**3**	88,568	-	156,496	245,064	222,195
Charitable activities	**4**	463,413	3,633	20,199	487,245	519,636
Investments	**5**	11,464	-	-	11,464	10,311
Total income		563,445	3,633	176,695	743,773	752,142
Expenditure on:						
Charitable activities	**6**	450,324	37,364	207,851	695,539	677,230
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources before transfers		113,121	(33,731)	(31,156)	48,234	74,912
Gross transfers between funds		9,054	(8,352)	(702)	-	-
Net income/(expenditure) for the year/ Net movement in funds		122,175	(42,083)	(31,858)	48,234	74,912
Fund balances at 1 April 2024		280,897	73,023	86,109	440,029	365,117
Fund balances at 31 March 2025		403,072	30,940	54,251	488,263	440,029

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

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

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

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SENSE ABILITY MATTERS LTD

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

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Prior financial year

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Designated funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £
Income from:					
Donations and legacies	**3**	40,772	-	181,423	222,195
Charitable activities	**4**	499,250	-	20,386	519,636
Investments	**5**	10,311	-	-	10,311
Total income		550,333	-	201,809	752,142
Expenditure on:					
Charitable activities	**6**	483,384	17,650	176,196	677,230
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources before transfers		66,949	(17,650)	25,613	74,912
Gross transfers between funds		(20,673)	20,673	-	-
Net income/(expenditure) for the year/ Net movement in funds		46,276	3,023	25,613	74,912
Fund balances at 1 April 2023		234,621	70,000	60,496	365,117
Fund balances at 31 March 2024		280,897	73,023	86,109	440,029

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SENSE ABILITY MATTERS LTD

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

AS AT 31 MARCH 2025

	Notes	2025 £	2025 £	2024 £	2024 £
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	**11**		36,038		13,666
Current assets					
Debtors	**12**	53,417		18,891	
Cash at bank and in hand		444,473		474,625	
		497,890		493,516	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	**13**	(45,665)		(67,153)	
Net current assets			452,225		426,363
Total assets less current liabilities			488,263		440,029
Income funds					
Restricted funds	**14**		54,251		86,109
Designated funds			30,940		73,023
Unrestricted funds			403,072		280,897
			488,263		440,029

The company is entitled to the exemption from the audit requirement contained in section 477 of the Companies Act 2006, for the year ended 31 March 2025.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 with respect to accounting records and the preparation of financial statements.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year in question in accordance with section 476.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees on 01 December 2025

Signed by:
Lin Elder-Atterton
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L Elder-Atterton
Trustee

Company registration number 05206358

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SENSE ABILITY MATTERS LTD

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

	Notes	2025 £	2025 £	2024 £	2024 £
Cash flows from operating activities					
Cash (absorbed by)/generated from operations	**19**		(10,553)		91,658
Investing activities					
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(31,063)		(6,188)	
Investment income received		11,464		10,311	
Net cash (used in)/generated from investing activities			(19,599)		4,123
Net cash used in financing activities			-		-
Net (decrease)/increase in cash and cash equivalents			(30,152)		95,781
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year			474,625		378,844
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year			444,473		474,625

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SENSE ABILITY MATTERS LTD

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

1 Accounting policies

Charity information

Sense Ability Matters Ltd is a private company limited by guarantee incorporated in England and Wales. The registered office is Floor 2, Gateshead Civic Centre, Regent Street, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, NE8 1HH.

1.1 Accounting convention

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

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

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

1.2 Going concern

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

1.3 Charitable funds

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

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

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

1.4 Income

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

Cash donations are recognised on receipt. Other donations are recognised once the charity has been notified of the donation, unless performance conditions require deferral of the amount. Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant is recognised at the time of the donation.

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

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1 Accounting policies **(Continued)**

1.5 Expenditure

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

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

1.6 Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are initially measured at cost and subsequently measured at cost, net of depreciation and any impairment losses.

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

Equipment and fixtures	15% reducing balance and 20% straight line

The gain or loss arising on the disposal of an asset is determined as the difference between the sale proceeds and the carrying value of the asset, and is recognised in the statement of financial activities.

Assets costing less than £500 are not capitalised.

1.7 Impairment of fixed assets

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

1.8 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities.

1.9 Financial instruments

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

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

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

Basic financial assets

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

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1 Accounting policies **(Continued)**

Basic financial liabilities

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

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

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

Derecognition of financial liabilities

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

1.10 Employee benefits

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

1.11 Retirement benefits

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

2 Critical accounting estimates and judgements

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, the trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised where the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods where the revision affects both current and future periods.

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3 Donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total
	2025	2025	2025	2024	2024	2024
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Donations and gifts	10,621	-	10,621	18,898	-	18,898
Grants	77,947	156,496	234,443	21,874	181,423	203,297
	88,568	156,496	245,064	40,772	181,423	222,195
Grants receivable for core activities						
Vision Foundation	-	1,000	1,000	-	9,000	9,000
The National Lottery Community Fund – Reaching Communities (Community Voice)	-	76,820	76,820	-	150,169	150,169
The National Lottery Community Fund – Reaching Communities (Well Connected)	-	20,908	20,908	-	19,838	19,838
Movement Matters	-	9,050	9,050	21,874	2,416	24,290
Foundation of light	-	4,743	4,743	-	-	-
Gateshead Council - Multiply	-	15,000	15,000	-	-	-
The National Lottery Community Fund – Awards For All	-	19,925	19,925	-	-	-
NPC trust fund	30,000	-	30,000	-	-	-
Ballinger	15,000	-	15,000	-	-	-
Other	32,947	9,050	41,997	-	-	-
	77,947	156,496	234,443	21,874	181,423	203,297

Docusign Envelope ID: 8670AE87-60B6-4DE0-9034-1D049F84DA3F

4 Charitable activities

	Activities undertaken directly 2025 £	Activities undertaken directly 2024 £
Services provided under contract	378,779	372,635
Other income	108,466	147,001
	487,245	519,636
Analysis by fund		
Unrestricted funds	463,413	499,250
Endowment funds - designated	3,633	-
Restricted funds	20,199	20,386
	487,245	519,636

5 Investments

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £
Bank interest received	11,464	10,311

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6 Charitable activities

	Activities undertaken directly 2025 £	Activities undertaken directly 2024 £
Staff costs	394,337	396,421
Charitable activities	262,040	251,204
	656,377	647,625
Share of support costs (see note 7)	31,962	22,405
Share of governance costs (see note 7)	7,200	7,200
	695,539	677,230
Analysis by fund		
Unrestricted funds	450,324	483,384
Designated funds	37,364	17,650
Restricted funds	207,851	176,196
	695,539	677,230

7 Support costs

	Support costs £	Governance costs £	2025 £	Support costs £	Governance costs £	2024 £
Staff costs	23,272	-	23,272	16,483	-	16,483
Depreciation	8,690	-	8,690	5,922	-	5,922
Independent examiners fee	-	7,200	7,200	-	7,200	7,200
	31,962	7,200	39,162	22,405	7,200	29,605
Analysed between						
Charitable activities	31,962	7,200	39,162	22,405	7,200	29,605

Governance costs includes payments to the independent examiner of £7,200 for examination fees.

8 Trustees

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

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9 Employees

The average monthly number of employees during the year was:

	2025 Number	2024 Number
Chief executive officer	1	1
Support advice and activities	16	17
Administration	1	1
Total	18	19

Employment costs	2025 £	2024 £
Wages and salaries	378,817	372,200
Social security costs	24,736	27,103
Other pension costs	14,056	13,601
	417,609	412,904

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

10 Taxation

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

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11 Tangible fixed assets

	Equipment and fixtures
	£
Cost	
At 1 April 2024	89,498
Additions	31,063
At 31 March 2025	120,561
Depreciation and impairment	
At 1 April 2024	75,833
Depreciation charged in the year	8,690
At 31 March 2025	84,523
Carrying amount	
At 31 March 2025	36,038
At 31 March 2024	13,666

12 Debtors

	2025	2024
Amounts falling due within one year:	£	£
Trade debtors	42,634	2,385
Prepayments and accrued income	10,783	16,506
	53,417	18,891

13 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2025	2024
	£	£
Other taxation and social security	7,150	5,531
Trade creditors	17,189	11,247
Accruals and deferred income	21,326	50,375
	45,665	67,153

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14 Restricted funds

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

	Movement in funds			Movement in funds				
	Balance at 1 April 2023	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Balance at 1 April 2024	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Transfers	Balance at 31 March 2025
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Client orders	2,176	18,151	(17,837)	2,490	20,199	(21,987)	(702)	-
Ways to Wellness	12,765	-	(12,765)	-	-	-	-	-
The National Lottery Community Fund – Reaching Communities (Community Voice)	44,708	152,404	(127,067)	70,045	76,820	(131,371)	-	15,494
The National Lottery Community Fund – Reaching Communities (Well Connected)	847	19,838	(18,527)	2,158	20,908	(16,869)	-	6,197
Vison Foundation	-	9,000	-	9,000	1,000	(10,000)	-	-
Visionary UK	-	2,416	-	2,416	-	(2,416)	-	-
Movement Matters	-	-	-	-	9,050	(2,488)	-	6,562
Foundation of Light	-	-	-	-	4,743	(4,743)	-	-
The National Lottery Community Fund – Awards For All	-	-	-	-	19,925	(2,977)	-	16,948
Pargiter	-	-	-	-	9,050	-	-	9,050
Gateshead Council - Multiply	-	-	-	-	15,000	(15,000)	-	-
	60,496	201,809	(176,196)	86,109	176,695	(207,851)	(702)	54,251

14 Restricted funds **(Continued)**

Client orders - To support information governance, IT security and online acessibility within the Charity.

The National Lottery Community Fund – Reaching Communities (Community Voice) - To deliver a community led engagement project in partnership with Bliss=Ability and Your Voice Counts.

The National Lottery Community Fund – Reaching Communities (Well Connected) - To provide digital support to increase independance, confidence and online security.

Vision Foundation - The National Resilience grant awarded by Fight For Sight/ Vision Foundation will support the rebrand work following the expansion of the Charity's charitable objectives in May 2024 to include all disabled people as well as those with sensory impairment.

Movement Matters - In partnership with The English Sports Council and The national lottery to deliver adapted exercise and dance activites for adults in South Tyneside and Gateshead who have sensory impairment, are disabled, or live with a long-term health condition.

Foundation of light - To provide an in person safe exercise program in partnership with the Foundation of Light to include all disability groups as well as those with sensory impairment.

The National Lottery Community Fund – Awards For All - Has funded an Apprentice to develop our Membership Engagement and Publicity activities. The Apprentice is working with our Team, Volunteers and existing Members to promote SAM, raise awareness of our work, and attract new Members.

Pargiter - Funds a sociable, digital support programme for disabled and sensory impaired people, aged over 65, in Gateshead and South Tyneside.

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15 Designated funds

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

					Movement in funds			
	Balance at 1 April 2023	Resources expended	Transfers	Balance at 1 April 2024	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Transfers	Balance at 31 March 2025
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Low vision clinic	15,000	(2,684)	(1,075)	11,241	220	(100)	(11,361)	-
Relocation costs	10,000	(2,560)	-	7,440	413	(20,226)	12,373	-
Costs of the merger	20,000	(12,346)	(6,400)	1,254	-	-	(1,254)	-
Service development	25,000	(60)	-	24,940	-	-	-	24,940
Rebranding costs	-	-	6,400	6,400	-	(6,400)	-	-
Digital investment	-	-	11,488	11,488	3,000	-	(8,488)	6,000
Research investment	-	-	6,260	6,260	-	(6,260)	-	-
Pathway development	-	-	1,000	1,000	-	(1,000)	-	-
Counselling costs	-	-	3,000	3,000	-	(3,378)	378	-
	70,000	(17,650)	20,673	73,023	3,633	(37,364)	(8,352)	30,940

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15 Designated funds **(Continued)**

Low Vision Clinic - Equivalent for the Low Vision Clinic

Relocation Costs - The lease for our current premises ends in the coming year. To support a potential relocation, the Trustees have designated funds towards relocation and the associated communications.

Costs of the merger - The Trustees had entered into discussions with another Charity about a merge opportunity and designated the associated professional fees. Although some fees were incurred, the other Charity closed prior to the merge completing. The remaining designated funds will be reallocated to support the Charity rebrand and relocation.

Service development - From the emerging Business Plan 2023/24, the Trustees recognise that new areas of work will need some initial investment. To support this activity and ensure the Charity meets its aims and objectives, funds have been designated.

Digital investment - funding has been designated to make improvements to the digital library and community workspace (equipment demonstration area).

Research investment - funding has been designated for the UKRI project to support staff time and partcipant expenses, including vouchers.

Pathway Development - funding has been designated to cover staff time to support Visionary and national partners in the development of an Eye Care Pathway project.

Mental health - funding has been designated to cover the cost of counselling sessions.

16 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Designated funds 2025 £	Restricted funds 2025 £	Total 2025 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Designated funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £
Fund balances at 31 March 2025 are represented by:								
Tangible assets	36,038	-	-	36,038	13,666	-	-	13,666
Current assets/(liabilities)	367,034	30,940	54,251	452,225	267,231	73,023	86,109	426,363
	403,072	30,940	54,251	488,263	280,897	73,023	86,109	440,029

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17 Financial commitments, guarantees and contingent liabilities

Included within the statement of financial position are unpaid pension contributions of £3,229 (2024: £2,502)

18 Related party transactions

Remuneration of key management personnel
The remuneration of key management personnel is as follows.

	2025 £	2024 £
Aggregate compensation	121,487	45,752

There were no other disclosable related party transactions during the year (2024 - none).

19 Cash generated from operations	**2025** **£**	**2024** **£**
Surplus for the year	48,234	74,912
Adjustments for:		
Investment income recognised in statement of financial activities	(11,464)	(10,311)
Depreciation and impairment of tangible fixed assets	8,690	5,922
Movements in working capital:		
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	(34,525)	9,245
(Decrease)/increase in creditors	(21,488)	11,890
Cash (absorbed by)/generated from operations	(10,553)	91,658

20 Analysis of changes in net funds
The charity had no debt during the year.

Sense Ability Matters LTD.

England & Wales - Charity number 1107499

Accounts

Charity Number: 1107499
Company Number: 05206358

Sense Ability Matters Ltd

(formerly Vision & Hearing Support Gateshead and South Tyneside Ltd)

(a company limited by guarantee)

Unaudited Trustees' Report and Financial Statements
for the year ended 31 March 2024

Sense Ability Matters Ltd
(a company limited by guarantee)

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Sense Ability Matters Ltd
(a company limited by guarantee)

Trustee Report
For the year ended 31 March 2024

2023/24- Chair of Trustees and Chief Executive Officers Statement

The 2023/24 period has been a year of development for the Charity. Significantly, in April 2023, our Membership voted to extend our Charitable Objectives to include disabled people and those with long term health conditions. We secured National Resilience funding from Vision Foundation/ Fight For Sight to support this work and launched our new name and brand in May 2024.

In February 2023, we moved out of Stonehills Business Centre and relocated to community bases in each of our operating areas. The Low Vision Clinic moved into Gateshead Civic Centre which has been well received by patients. Attendance at clinics has already increased with positive feedback.

We occupied 34 – 36 New Green Street in South Shields for a significant part of the year and have taken up temporary office space at Inspire South Tyneside while the lease on New Green Street is finalised. Both premises offer an enhanced local offer in accessible spaces for our beneficiaries.

Throughout the year, we have continued to deliver the best possible services for our beneficiaries and have achieved excellent outcomes through our various projects. We were extremely grateful to receive a legacy donation of £11,458 from one of our beneficiaries in the year. Trustees have decided to designate this fund to increasing our digital library and support service.

Referrals for assessments under our local authority Care Act 2014 contracts have increased from the previous year with 548 support plans being completed (343 in 2023). The Team have consistently met Care Act 2014 targets with 99% of beneficiaries being contacted within 2 working days and 79% of referrals being assessed within two weeks. The number of referring organisations has continued to rise as we increase publicity and networks.

Our work to develop a Transition Pathway between Children's and Adult Services continues and we have seen an increase in younger people accessing our support as a result. This will remain a priority to ensure people are supported at a time when it is needed most.

We have continued to work with our sight loss sector colleagues across the region and nationally. Through Visionary UK, we have contributed to national working groups for rehabilitation, low vision and cross-sector partnership developments. This network has produced best practice guidance for low vision services and is developing a Rehabilitation workforce plan to ensure specialist skills are readily available. We attended the Visionary UK conference 2023 to meet colleagues and share best practice among the sector.

As we move into the next financial year, the Trustees will remain agile and responsive to meet the Charity's objectives. This will be underpinned by our ambition to innovate and work collaboratively to achieve the best possible outcomes for our beneficiaries.

The Board has worked hard in 2023/24 to build upon the progress made in the previous five years to stabilise the Charity's finances and build appropriate reserves for the future.

Chair – Lin Elder-Atterton MVO Chief Executive – Sarah French

Our Vision

A vision and hearing loss community that is **informed**, **empowered** and **resilient**.

Our Mission

1. **Empower** our community by giving them the tools they need to live independently and make positive decisions.
2. Help our community overcome adversity by increasing **resilience** and wellbeing.
3. Ensure our community are **informed** by providing first class information, advice and guidance.
4. **Influence** positive change locally, regionally and nationally for our community through strong stakeholder and relationship management.

Our Values

Supportive

We respond and adapt to the needs of the Vision and hearing loss community. We respect and value all our community equally. We are committed to working together to achieve shared goals.

Trustworthy

We are accountable. We are open and honest in our approach. We are reliable, act with integrity and do what it takes to support those in need.

Caring

We are friendly and warm. We take time to listen and promote inclusivity. We treat everyone with dignity and respect.

Professional

We are passionate and strive to be the best. We actively seek new ideas and innovation to bring about positive change. We rely on evidence to make our decisions. We challenge ourselves to be bold and resourceful. We are determined in the face of adversity.

Strategic Objectives

1. Be the **leading** vision and hearing loss service provider
1. **Influence** change locally, regionally & nationally
2. **Diversify** our income generation portfolio
3. **Champion** the interests of members, beneficiaries and sector

Activities for public benefit

Vision & Hearing Support strives to be the best for our community. We take time to listen and promote inclusivity, treating everyone with dignity and respect. We actively seek new ideas and innovation to bring about positive change, acting with integrity to do what it takes to support those in need.

Vision & Hearing Support is an organisation run for charitable purposes. We want to be around today and into the future to support people who are sight impaired, Deaf or hard of hearing. To achieve this, we recognise that there is a need to supplement our strategic aims with business aims that will deliver long term sustainability:

- Diversify our income sources to increase financial sustainability.
- Develop the profile of Vision & Hearing Support, so that more people know about the services we provide, to increase the numbers of people accessing services and the number of people willing to donate and volunteer.
- Engage people with lived experience and with people from a variety of ethnic backgrounds so that we learn from the strengths they bring in their diversity.

We review our aims, objectives and activities each year. This report looks at what we achieved and the outcomes of our work during April 2023 to March 2024.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

We will work with colleagues in a supportive environment of mutual respect and empowerment to achieve the best possible outcomes for clients. We will follow the principles set out in the Visionary Sight Loss Charter 2020 and promote collaboration, integrity, and accountability in all we do.

Vision & Hearing Support will continue to work with its Members and beneficiaries to evidence our lived experience input. This is becoming ever more important to funders and society who expect Charities to engage with, listen to and respond directly to those it is there to support. Alongside this, the Board has already recognised the need to diversify Trustee and staff representation to better reflect the communities in which we work.

To achieve our strategy we deliver early intervention, crisis prevention and integrated social activities to reduce preventable sensory loss, maintain independence and mental wellbeing and reduce social isolation. Our interventions ensure that people;

- can live more independently,
- are less socially isolated,
- are more confident and empowered,
- experience improved wellbeing.

ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE – 2023/24

During 2023/24, we supported **4,726 individuals** resulting in;

- 85% reporting they were able to live more independently
- 86% feeling less isolated
- 89% reporting that they felt more confident and empowered
- 88% reporting an improvement in their emotional health & wellbeing

Over 10,650 people in South Tyneside and Gateshead live with moderate sight loss and over 1,640 are diagnosed as severely sight impaired (RNIB, 2023).

Latest estimates indicate that in South Tyneside and Gateshead 67,386 people have hearing loss of 25 dB or more, and of those 7,243 have moderate or severe hearing loss, over 65 dB (NHS England, Hearing Loss data Tool).

Our beneficiaries have increasingly complex health needs, for example 74% of active clients during the year have 2 or more additional disabilities; 50% have more than 1 eye condition; 92% have Arthritis; 93% are hard of hearing; 83% have limited mobility and or high frailty; 89% have osteoporosis; 74% have had a Stroke and 72% have Diabetes. We work collaboratively to target the social determinants of health alongside specific eye care interventions, making sure we provide the right support at the right time for individuals.

"When I first considered going along to a social group, I thought 'I'm not going to like this'. I was so isolated, I couldn't drive, I couldn't get public transport, I didn't know what to do. But the team from VHS helped me get there, and something clicked - I really enjoyed it.

Getting together at groups like the Men Shed is fantastic. We have something in common which bonds us, and we're able to open up in a way that we can't even with close family members. Over the years I've come to realise just how important mental health is, and these groups really help - it gives you purpose, and makes you feel part of something.

I'm excited that the organisation is moving onto even bigger and better things as they expand to help more people in the area - we look forward to welcoming anyone who wants to join our group. Not only do VHS support our group, but they can also help point you in the right direction for any other help you might need, from fixing your phone to getting a bus pass." Gary, 2024

Our unique and integrated pathway makes sure we provide the right support at the right time for individuals. We deliver the following activities to support people who are sight impaired, Deaf and hard of hearing across Gateshead and South Tyneside;

- Vision impairment **counselling** – providing one-to one and group counselling sessions, including for friends and family. Delivered by a professional counsellor with lived experience, the service is supported at the start and end points to enable a smooth transition.
- **"Well Connected"** is a partnership project providing digital, one-to-one and peer support, a tech lending library and cyber security information.
- An optometrist and rehabilitation specialist led **low vision** clinic – providing early intervention and magnification advice. This is a unique model that integrates health, social care and community activities to provide a seamless and effective service.
- **"Community Voice"** is a partnership project, led by people with lived experience, that helps people access activities and services in the community through peer support and volunteering.

- **Accessibility audits** and professional Vision Impairment Awareness and Sighted Guide **Training** to raise awareness of sight loss and improve accessibility.
- Our incredible **Volunteers** made over 1000 tele-befriending calls this year, providing essential social support for people living with sensory loss. We connect people to relevant **peer led support** groups including; the weekly Men's Shed Group, the Women's Weekly and Macular and Glaucoma peer support groups.

Our statutory funded work includes:

- **Person centred assessments** and planning under the Care Act 2014 to agree goals and actions that will have a positive impact; and **Rehabilitation** and Enablement support – providing independent living skills, orientation and mobility skills and independent travel.

We have directly supported 4,726 individuals across our services during 2023/24. The figures below show the numbers of individuals accessing each intervention by type during the year:

- 548 people have been referred for and received a personal holistic assessment
- 79 people have accessed our intensive rehabilitation service
- 2,873 people benefitted from our Information, Advice and Guidance
- 1,113 people accessed our low vision service
- 213 people received digital support
- 239 people accessed the Community Voice project
- 6 young people have accessed our enhanced transition support
- 24 people received professional Counselling
- 76 people attended our Living Well with Sight Loss
- 200 people received 1,277 tele-support calls from our dedicated volunteers
- Helped 73 people access the benefits they were entitled to, a collective total of £344,149 per annum, plus backdated entitlement of £32,533.

CORE CONTRACTED PROVISION

Specialist person centred needs assessment and rehabilitation services – Gateshead Council and South Tyneside Council

We assess what needs people have due to their sensory condition and put in place the services, support, equipment, concessions etc to meet those needs. The Gateshead service is for sight impairment only, South Tyneside service includes Deaf and hard of hearing support. We carry out the registration process, although we don't directly hold the register in Gateshead.

In 2019/20 we secured the South Tyneside Sensory Support contract for a further five years which includes equipment provision and support for those with hearing loss.

Our rehabilitation and enablement workers provide training on independent living skills, mobility and orientation, viewing techniques, communications, electronic low vision aids such as video magnifiers and new technology such as audio description, e-readers, accessible mobiles etc. They also carry out lighting assessments in people's homes and they issue small aids such as white sticks, canes and symbol canes, liquid level indicators, talking clocks and signature guides. We issue daylight bulbs as many people are struggling with the light provided by traditional low energy bulbs.

5,489 enquiries, from 1,928 individuals, have been received for this service during 2023/24:

- Gateshead – 2,670
- South Tyneside – 2,789

Integrated Low Vision Clinic – Gateshead residents only (NHS ICB)

We assess people's residual vision and prescribe optical low vision aids such as magnifiers, telescopes, high add readers etc. to help maximise use of residual vision. We also consider viewing techniques (such as eccentric viewing), lighting, colour contrast and posture all of which will again help people make best use of remaining vision. We provide a two-year review, although people can re-refer themselves sooner if they feel their sight is deteriorating. Information, Advice and Guidance is available when needed along with rehabilitation support, triage reviews and equipment advice.

During 2023/24 our key outputs as part of our low vision clinic work included:

- 267 low vision clinics were held
- 474 low vision assessments were carried out
- 1,113 people were supported through the service

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT PROVISION

The following activities contribute to the overall success of Vision & Hearing Support's work by complementing and adding value to statutory provision:

Welfare Rights

We provide advice and support on disability benefits such as DLA/PIP, Attendance Allowance, Employment Support Allowance as well as Universal Credit. Help is provided from completion of the initial application, support when attending assessments all the way through to representation at Tribunal if the application isn't successful.

Equipment Library

Beneficiaries can call us or visit for specialist advice and information on a wide range specialist equipment. The library contains various pieces of digital and analogue equipment which we lend to people on a short-term basis so that they can try them out at home before deciding whether they would like to buy one (either they can buy it themselves if they can afford to do so or we can help to find funding).

Living Well with Sight Loss Programme

This course is for people who are newly visually impaired or new to our services. It runs for 2 weeks with 1 half-day session per week looking at the various aspects of visual impairment and help that is available. As well as providing lots of information and advice it also provides invaluable peer support.

Training

Our team of experienced professionals provide Visual Impairment Awareness, Sighted Guide and Deaf Awareness training to a wide audience including a number of hospitals, council departments, businesses, charities and care homes.

Well Connected - Digital & Cyber Security Support

Our Partnership with ACTS, Age Gateshead and Your Voice Counts is funded through The National Lottery Community Fund and provides a range of support and tuition on how to make the most of digital and online services whilst avoiding online fraud and cyber scams. We engaged 449 clients and provided 162 intensive interventions, leading to 97% of participants reporting feeling more confident and empowered following our cyber security information, advice and guidance.

Community Voice

Funded by The National Lottery Community Fund, the project takes a partnership approach, led by people with lived experience, to help people access activities and services in the community through peer support and volunteering.

During the year, 875 people have engaged with the project, 276 of these have sensory impairment or dual sensory loss. 98 individuals have been supported with accessing community based activities, 25 are accessing volunteering pathways, and the Partnership has established 17 new activities in the community to meet the need of beneficiaries.

80% of clients who engaged in this project have said that they have felt increased self-esteem and confidence, feel less isolated and have better well-being.

Counselling

Lived experience is a core component of our counselling experience. Participants in our external evaluation (2023) discussed how this shared experience meant that: "I don't have to explain myself. I get sick and tired of having to explain myself" (Robyn). Our structured pathway supports people into and out of counselling, increasing take up rates.

Telephone Support Service

Operated entirely by volunteers, all of whom have lived experience of sight loss, our Telephone Support Service calls service users whom we are aware are particularly isolated due to other mobility issues or whom we haven't had recent contact. The support offered includes simply being a friendly voice to talk to, we promote the activities and services offered by Sense Ability Matters and if anyone called shares any concerns then the volunteer team refer them to our sight loss support team.

Activity and Social Groups

Our Community Voice project has supported numerous social groups and activities throughout the year. We will continue to work closely with independent groups to share information, provide support as required and to introduce new members.

British Wireless for the Blind (BWFTB) and RNIB Talking Books

We are the agents for BWFTB and issue radios, CD players etc on their behalf to people who are eligible (they must be registered either Sight Impaired (SI) or Severely Sight Impaired (SSI) and be in receipt of a qualifying means tested benefit (such as housing benefit or council tax benefit amongst others). We also help people with their initial applications for the RNIB talking book service.

Volunteers

We have a dedicated team of volunteers who support our work. Volunteers cover many different roles at Vision & Hearing Support from reception, telephone befriending and administration support. A team of volunteer drivers are also a vital resource who transport service users to and from medical appointments, as well as enabling the, to access a range of support services provided by Sense Ability Matters.

Case Studies and Impact

Identifying, measuring and reporting upon the impact had by the wide range of support activities provided by Sense Ability Matters is not straight forward. We continue to work with our funders and commissioners to not only supply the contractual monitoring information they require, but to also evidence the case for continued further investment in Sense Ability Matters work.

We are also continuing to work with Visionary, the national umbrella body for local sight loss charities, as they develop shared output, outcome and impact measurement tools for the sight loss sector.

However, there is nothing more powerful than hearing real life examples of the work and impact delivered by our dedicated team of sight loss professionals, supported by our volunteer team.

We have shared below a case study from the Gateshead Walking Project and a selection of quotes received throughout the year, that demonstrate the work we do. This example, along with many cases we haven't shared, shows that our personal and thorough approach delivers tangible outcomes for people and a lasting impact on their lives and the lives of those around them;

WELL CONNECTED
Simon wanted to be able to read his own mail and be more independent with daily activities. He wanted to manage his medication safely and make sure his appearance was smart.

Our Digital Team visited Simon at his home to demonstrate spoken content on his iPad to enable him to read his documents and correspondence.

Simon relied a lot on others to read and access information. We set up Be My Eyes on Simon's devices and worked through some tasks to demonstrate it's use. After leaving Simon with some ongoing tasks and information, we followed up the visit to see if the apps were working for him.

The spoken content made a huge difference to Simon's confidence and wellbeing as he no longer relies on others to read his mail. The Be My Eye's app enables Simon to spend more time independently of others and he is more confident to do so.

Simon's wife feels more confident that he is safe and can get sighted help quickly if he needs it.

"Be My Eyes is brilliant, I can now be left alone, knowing that help is at hand".

Case Study 2 – Well Connected

Donna wanted to be able to manage family life independently, without relying on her children to support this.

Our Digital Team demonstrated an Alexa device to set up timers, calendar entries and sticky notes to help plan the busy family routine. Donna can also access talking books through the device.

Donna relied on others to read and access information, including personal letters. We demonstrated a range of equipment from our lending library that could help Donna read independently. The Clover 6 electronic magnifier was Donna's preferred solution, and we helped her secure funding towards the cost of the device.

Donna has regained privacy and independence by having the right tools. She can plan the family schedule without relying on her three young children and wider family members to help.

"I really love my new magnifier, can't wait to try it out when I go shopping".

Case Study 3 – Specialist Vision Impairment Counselling

George was struggling with the emotional impact of sight loss and felt isolated and lonely, despite having good relationships with friends and family.

George had developed a sudden fear of being outdoors and he was unsure how to change things. It was important for 'George' to feel more confident outdoors and more independent at home.

At the beginning of the counselling process George was reluctant to engage due to his fear of sight loss. He had previously been involved in the local Scout group and wanted to return to being outdoors and regain his independence.

George and I built up a rapport during our work together and discussed strategies to help him overcome his fear and tools to enable him to share his sight loss journey with others.

George is now pursuing long cane training and better understands the impact of his eye condition. He has gained enough confidence to speak to his family, friends and colleagues about his sight loss.

"I feel much more confident after my counselling. I'm coping better on a day-to-day basis and am now looking towards the future positively".

Case Study 4 – Community Voice
The B-Social group meets every Friday to socialise with a cup of tea/coffee and sometimes a game of bingo or a quiz.
A client who participates in our B-Social group approached staff to say that the group's dynamic had changed for the better and that it had become more of a support group. They stated that participants in the group had become close enough to understand one another's issues, problems, health conditions and concerns.
Participants now feel they can support each other with learning about one another's coping mechanisms such as talking about their problems, looking for solutions to issues, calling each other on the telephone and meeting up to enjoy lunches, walks and going to the theatre.
"All of this has happened because of the Community Voice Project. We would not have made friends or become as close as we have if it weren't for the project and the staff."

Case Study 5 – Information, Advice & Guidance

Claire was referred to us by Adult Social Care as she was struggling to manage daily tasks after a stroke affected her sight. Recently registered as sight impaired, Claire had lost her confidence and got upset at not being able to complete everyday tasks. Financially, Claire worried about increased spending on transport and aids for the home. Claire was not in receipt of benefits, her previous applications had been unsuccessful, so we supported her through the process. The Personal Independence Payment, Daily Living Component was awarded at the Enhanced rate of £101.75pw.
"The additional money is a help, it's one less barrier to worry about"

Case Study 6 – Integrated Low Vision Assessment
80-year-old Elizabeth was referred by Newcastle Eye Hospital for a Low Vision Assessment. Elizabeth is very active but was struggling with low vision, particularly with one eye being worse than the other, which impacts on her mobility and daily living skills, including reading.

The Low Vision Assessment gave her time to discuss her worries and concerns. She also mentioned that despite wearing varifocal glasses she continued to read almost exclusively with her magnifier and not through the stronger varifocal.
We provided information and strategies to help her manage better at home using contrast enhancement and lighting. We looked at magnifier options to help both at home and when shopping.
The equipment provided included: a low-powered, handheld illuminated magnifier, illuminated pocket magnifier for shopping, Daylight task lamp, daylight bulbs and fisher handled white walking stick.

Following the appointment, Elizabeth wrote to our Lead Optometrist, Stephanie:

> **Hello Stephanie,**
> **I received all the paperwork you posted to me detailing everything that was discussed and carried out, last week at my appointment with you.**
>
> **You were so thorough in all you did and to give me all the items that will help me, and ARE helping me already, every day with my poor sight, it felt like Christmas!**
>
> **Thank you also for writing to my Opticians re; an eye test.**
>
> **Stephanie, I was SO impressed with everything, I couldn't wait to tell my family and friends, so I do hope my passing on all this hasn't caused a flood of enquiries at your clinic from people who didn't even know you existed!!**
>
> **Thank you very much and keep up your wonderful work"**

Quotes from our Annual Survey 2023;
"Very good support and great with advice. Also helped me with my PIP application. Also gave me a contact number if I needed any support or help with anything."

"Can't think of anything - everything was great, thanks!"

"Excellent help and care. Lots of good practical tips to deal with the situation. Provided me with dark glasses which I use all the time. Fantastic organisation."

"I have received fantastic support from the service"

"Just knowing that a phone call can help with any issue as it happens"

"Very friendly and efficient service"

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Financial performance and position

Financial performance in 2023/24 continues to provide stability for the Charity moving forwards. This is largely due to support through cost of living funds grants to support running costs.

Income in 2023/24 was £752,142 - representing an decrease of £27,954 to the previous year (£780,096 – 2022/23). This is chiefly because of one-off cost of living support grants during the previous year and the discontinuation of the 'Future You' pilot project.

Our expenditure has increased by £7,282 on the previous year, in line with growth and delivery of specific grant funded projects. Expenditure in 2022/23 was £669,948.

Principal funding sources

Our main core contracted income has remained stable and we have performed well against this income achieving all the required performance indicators.

Key income streams:

- Gateshead Council
- South Tyneside Council
- NHS North East North Cumbria Integrated Care Board
- The National Lottery Community Fund
- North East North Cumbria Suicide Prevention Network and Ways to Wellness
- Fight For Sight/ Vision Foundation – National Resilience Fund

The receipt of this funding enables the charitable company to meet its charitable objectives to provide support advice and activities to people who are Sight Impaired, Severely Sight Impaired, Deaf, hard of hearing or Deaf/blind.

Investment policy and objectives

Under the memorandum and articles of association, the Charity has the power to make any investment which the Trustees see fit.

Reserves policy

The Board has reviewed the reserves of the Charity and concluded that to allow the Charity to be managed efficiently and to provide a buffer for uninterrupted services, attempts should be made to increase general reserves.

It is the policy of the Charity that unrestricted funds which have not been designated for a specific use should be maintained at a level equivalent to between six and nine month's expenditure. The directors consider that reserves at this level will ensure that, in the event of a significant drop in funding, they will be able to continue the Charity's current activities while consideration is given to ways in which additional funds may be raised.

The Charity has several restricted funds for identified projects, which have specific budgets and timescales. In order to reach the agreed level of reserves the charitable company intends to continue to look for increased income from our own fundraising efforts, as well as obtaining additional grant funding to increase unrestricted income.

At 31 March 2024 the charitable company held total reserves of £440,029 (2023: £365,117).

We will continue to review levels of expenditure.

FUTURE PLANS

The expansion of our Charitable Objectives will help us to realise our ambition to serve all adults in our South Tyneside and Gateshead community who have a sensory impairment, are disabled, or live with a long-term health condition.
Working with people with lived experience, our charity is determined to:

- leverage further investment to support disability services across South Tyneside and Gateshead, ensuring greater provision for more people,
- enable more people with lived experience to co-create services, improve health pathways and increase access to local services,
- reduce health inequalities and improve outcomes for people facing or living with a disability, are vision impaired, Deaf, hard of hearing, or who has one or more long-term health condition.

The coming year will focus on maintaining our current services: rehabilitation; holistic assessment; low vision service; digital empowerment; mental health & wellbeing; community and volunteer engagement. To support this we will focus our development on:

Employability and Transition Pathway

Following a review of our data at the end of 2020, we found that only 2% of the people we work with are aged between 15 and 44, increasing to only 5.5% at the end of 2023. We recognise that this is not a proportionate reflection of the age profile of people with sight loss in South Tyneside and Gateshead.
During 2021 and 2022 we secured a short grant to support employability for people with sight loss which was successful in engaging younger people in our support. We have also worked closely with Children's Services to improve the transition into adult services, this too has seen a small increase in 15 to 24-year-olds access our services.
We want to take this work further by engaging younger people, up to age 45, in our projects and support services. Working with young people, we will co-design a tailored programme to provide relevant support at a time when it is needed most.

Advocacy

Working with partners and social care providers, the demand for specialist advocacy support for people with sight loss is increasing. As costs of living increase, we have experienced a significant rise in requests for non-statutory advocacy support. This includes help with employment issues; blue badge and concessionary pass applications; mandatory reconsiderations for benefit applications; housing issues including amendments to properties, alongside support with banding applications and providing relevant evidence of the impact of sight loss on individuals.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

The Charity is controlled by its governing document, a deed of trust, and constitutes a limited company, limited by guarantee, as defined by the Companies Act 2006.

Recruitment and appointment of new Trustees

The Charity may by ordinary resolution appoint a person who is willing to act as trustee and determine the rotation in which any additional Trustees are to retire. No person other than a trustee retiring by rotation may be appointed a trustee at any general meeting unless:

- He or she is recommended for re-election by the Trustees or
- Not less than fourteen nor more than thirty-five clear days before the date of the meeting, the Charity is given notice that:
    - i) Is signed by two members entitled to vote at the meeting.
    - ii) States the members' intention to propose the appointment of a person as a trustee.
    - iii) Contains the details that, if the person were to be appointed, the Charity would have to file at Companies House, including the names and details of two referees who have not proposed their election; and
    - iv) Is signed by the person who is to be proposed to show his or her consent - full election to the Board will be at the end of a six month probationary period and will be at the discretion of the Board of Directors.

Organisational structure

The Board of directors meet quarterly and administer the Charity. The Board of directors may delegate any of their powers to sub-committees consisting of such members of their body and/or Charity as they think fit.

Any sub-committee so formed shall in the exercise of the powers so delegated conform to any regulations imposed on it by the directors.

Induction and training of new Trustees

New Trustees undergo an induction to brief them on:

- their legal obligations under charity and company law;
- the Charity Commission on public benefit;
- inform them of the content of the memorandum and articles of association;
- the committee and decision making processes;
- the business plan; and - recent financial performance of the charitable company.

During the induction they meet key employees and other Trustees.

Trustees are encouraged to attend appropriate external training events where these will facilitate the undertaking of their role.

Key management remuneration

The Trustees consider the Board of Trustees as comprising of the key management personnel of the charitable company in charge of directing, controlling and operating the charitable company. All Trustees give their time freely and no trustee remuneration was paid in the year.

Partnerships and Collaborations

We continue to work in close co-operation with both Gateshead and South Tyneside Councils, and are actively involved in the Integrated Care System (ICS) and Primary Care Networks (PCN) under the North East North Cumbria (NENC) Integrated Care Board.

We have effective partnerships with Royal National Institute for the Blind, Newcastle Vision Support, RNID, Visionary and several voluntary sector organisations with whom we are working with in both Gateshead and South Tyneside, and our wider network both regionally and nationally.

During the year we have formed effective partnerships with local Charities ACTS, Age UK Gateshead, Your Voice Counts and Visionary members. This has led to emerging projects to support people with disabilities and learn from each other's experiences and approaches.

Risk management

The Board of Trustees reviewed the major risks to which the Charity is exposed. A risk register is in place and is updated regularly and at least annually.

Where appropriate, systems and procedures have been established to mitigate the risks the Charity faces.

The Risk Management process itself is periodically reviewed to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the Charity.

Risks are minimised by the implementation of internal controls with procedures for authorisation of all transactions and projects.

Services continued to be externally evaluated and inspected by funders.

The excellent outcomes from these evaluations point to the excellent quality of delivery for all operational aspects of the Charity.

Significant external risks to funding have led to the development of the new Strategic Direction which allows for the diversification of funding.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Registered Charity Number	1107499
Company Number	05206358
Registered Office	Floor 2, Gateshead Civic Centre, Regent Street, Gateshead, NE8 1HH

Trustees

The trustees who served the charity during the period were as follows;

Ms K Harrison	(resigned 23/11/23)
Mrs L Elder-Atterton	
Mrs L Rhodes	
Mr Ian Hickson	
Mr Liam Clark-Brown	(resigned 18/03/24)
Mr Alex Geddes, Co-Opted member	
Mrs Joyce Welsh, Co-Opted member	

Key Management Personnel

S French	Chief Executive

Our advisors

Independent Examiners	Evelyn Partners (Newcastle) Limited	17 Queens Lane, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 1RN
Bankers	CafBank	PO Box 289, West Mailing, Kent, ME19 4TA

Legal Status

The charitable company is limited by guarantee and therefore has no share capital. In the event of a winding up, every member (who is a trustee) undertakes to contribute to the payment of liabilities such amount as may be required not exceeding the total of £1.

STATEMENT OF MANAGEMENT TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The Management Trustees (who are also directors of Vision & Hearing Support Gateshead and South Tyneside Ltdd for the purpose of company law) are responsible for preparing the Management Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company 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 2015 (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 will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company 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 hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

This report was approved by the Management Trustees on 28/11/2024

Signed on behalf of the Board

Lin Elder-Atterton
Lin Elder-Atterton (Dec 5, 2024 22:49 GMT)

L Elder-Atterton
Trustee

Sense Ability Matters Ltd
(a company limited by guarantee)

Independent Examiner's report to the members of Sense Ability Matters Ltd
For the year ended 31 March 2024

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charitable company for the year ended 31 March 2024 which are set out on pages 19 to 34.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the charitable company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the charitable company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your charitable company's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

Since the company's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charitable company as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
4. the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

C Henderson

Craig Henderson FCCA
Evelyn Partners (Newcastle) Limited

9th December 2024

Date

17 Queens Lane
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 1RN

Sense Ability Matters Ltd
(a company limited by guarantee)

Statement of Financial Activities ***(Incorporating the Income and Expenditure Account)***
For the year ended 31 March 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Income from:						
Donations	**4**	40,772	-	181,423	222,195	347,426
Charitable activities	**5**	499,250	-	20,386	519,636	429,899
Investment income	**6**	10,311	-	-	10,311	-
Other trading income		-	-	-	-	2,771
Total income		550,333	-	201,809	752,142	780,096
Expenditure on:						
Charitable activities	**7**	483,384	17,650	176,196	677,230	669,948
Total expenditure		483,384	17,650	176,196	677,230	669,948
Net Income/(expenditure)		66,949	(17,650)	25,613	74,912	110,148
Transfers	**16**	(20,673)	20,673	-	-	-
Net movements in funds		46,276	3,023	25,613	74,912	110,148
Reconciliation of funds						
Total funds brought forward		234,621	70,000	60,496	365,117	254,969
Total funds carried forward		280,897	73,023	86,109	440,029	365,117

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses in the year and therefore a statement of total recognised gains and losses has not been prepared.

All of the above amounts relate to continuing activities.

Sense Ability Matters Ltd
(a company limited by guarantee)

Balance Sheet
As at 31 March 2024

	Notes	2024	2023
		£	£
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	11	13,666	13,400
		13,666	13,400
Current assets			
Debtors	12	18,891	28,136
Cash at bank and in hand		474,625	378,844
		493,516	406,980
Liabilities			
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	13	(67,153)	(55,263)
Net current assets		426,363	351,717
Total assets less total liabilities		440,029	365,117
Funds			
Restricted funds		86,109	60,496
Designated funds		73,023	70,000
Unrestricted funds		280,897	234,621
	16	440,029	365,117

For the year ending 31 March 2024 the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Directors' responsibilities:

- The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476;
- The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts

The financial statements were approved by the trustees on 28/11/2024 and signed on their behalf by:

Lin Elder-Atterton
Lin Elder-Atterton (Dec 5, 2024 22:49 GMT)

L Elder-Atterton
Trustee

Company Number 05206358

Sense Ability Matters Ltd
(a company limited by guarantee)

Cash Flow Statement
For the year ended 31 March 2024

	Notes	2024	2023
		£	£
Net cash flow from operating activities:			
Net cash provided by operating activities	**19**	91,658	90,224
Cash flows from investment activities			
Interest receivable and investment income		10,311	2,771
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(6,188)	(2,550)
Net cash flow from investing activities		4,123	269
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents		95,781	90,493
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		378,844	288,351
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year		474,625	378,844

1. Accounting Policies

1.1 Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with 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) issued in October 2019, Charities SORP (FRS 102), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), the Charities Act 2011, the Companies Act 2006 and UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.

Vision & Hearing Support Gateshead and South Tyneside Ltd meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. The financial statements are prepared under the historical cost convention or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note(s). The financial statements are prepared in Sterling which is the functional currency of the charity and rounded to the nearest £.

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

1.2 Going concern

The financial statements are prepared on a going concern basis. The Trustees have reviewed the annual budgets and considered relevant information in response to the external environment. Actual results are monitored against budget. Based on these assessments, given the measures that could be undertaken to mitigate any adverse conditions, and the current resources available, the Trustees have concluded that they can continue to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the annual report and accounts.

1.3 Funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charitable company and which have not been designated for other purposes.

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.

Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors which have been raised by the company for particular purposes. The cost of raising and administering such funds are charged against the specific fund. The aim and use of each restricted fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

1.4 Incoming resources

All incoming resources are included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SoFA) when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions have been met, the amount can be measured reliably and it is probable that the income will be received.

Income from charitable activities includes income received under contract or where entitlement to grant funding is subject to specific performance conditions and is recognised as earned. Grant income included in this category provides funding to support performance activities and is recognised where there is entitlement, certainty of receipt and the amount can be measured with reasonable certainty. Income received to deliver services over a specific period covering more than one financial year is accounted for over the specific period; related expenditure is accounted when incurred.

Investment income relates to interest earned through holding assets on deposit.

In accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102), the general volunteer time is not recognised and refer to the trustees' report for more information about their contribution.

1.5 Expenditure and irrecoverable VAT

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.

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

1.6 Support cost allocation

Support costs are those that assist the work of the charity but do not directly represent charitable activities and include office costs, governance costs and administrative payroll costs. They are incurred directly in support of expenditure on the objects of the charity.

1.7 Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost (or deemed cost) or valuation less accumulated depreciation and accumulated impairment losses. Cost includes costs directly attributable to making the asset capable of operating as intended.

Depreciation is provided on all tangible fixed assets, at rates calculated to write off the cost, less estimated residual value, of each asset on a systematic basis over its expected useful life as follows:

Fixtures & fittings	-	15% reducing balance

All assets costing more than £1,000 are capitalised, unless paid directly by a grant where capitalisation is not approved.

1.8 Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

1.9 Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

1.10 Creditors and provisions

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the 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 after allowing for any trade discounts due.

1.11 Financial instruments

The charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value with the exception of bank loans which are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

1.12 Pensions

The charitable company contributes to a defined contribution pension scheme for the benefit of its employees. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the charitable company. The annual contributions payable are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities.

1.13 Tax

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 of the Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes.

2. Legal status

The charitable company is limited by guarantee and therefore has no share capital. In the event of a winding up, every member (who is a trustee) undertakes to contribute to the payment of liabilities such amount as may be required not exceeding the total of £1.

3. Comparative statement of financial activities

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Income from:					
Donations	**4**	156,773	190,653	347,426	120,095
Charitable activities	**5**	415,198	14,701	429,899	424,006
Investment income	**6**	2,771	-	2,771	55
Other trading income		-	-	-	1,111
Total income		574,742	205,354	780,096	545,267
Expenditure on:					
Charitable activities	**7**	503,534	166,414	669,948	464,372
Total expenditure		503,534	166,414	669,948	464,372
Net Income		71,208	38,940	110,148	80,895
Transfers	**16**	(623)	623	-	-
Net movements in funds		70,585	39,563	110,148	80,895
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward		234,036	20,933	254,969	174,074
Total funds carried forward		304,621	60,496	365,117	254,969

4. Donations

	2024	2023
	£	£
Donations	18,898	7,091
Grants	203,297	340,335
	222,195	347,426

Grant income

	2024	2023
	£	£
Vision Foundation	9,000	-
Counselling	-	5,083
Suicide Prevention	-	6,567
VCSE Transformation	-	-
Ways to Wellness	-	12,765
GMBC	-	8,252
National Lottery - Community Voice	150,169	147,711
National Lottery – Well Connected	19,838	15,000
ICP Mental Health	-	17,000
Other	24,290	127,957
	203,297	340,335

5. Income from charitable activities

	2024	2023
	£	£
Services provided under contract	372,635	360,348
Other income	147,001	69,551
	519,636	429,899

6. Investment income

	2024	2023
	£	£
Income from investments	10,311	2,771

7. Analysis of expenditure charitable activities

	Activities undertaken directly £	Support costs £	2024 £	2023 £
Charitable activities	647,625	29,605	677,230	669,948
	647,625	29,605	677,230	669,948

8. Support & Governance costs

	2024 £	2023 £
Staff Costs	16,163	17,789
Payroll costs	320	2,480
Depreciation	5,922	8,514
Governance costs	7,200	6,600
	29,605	35,383

9. Net income/(expenditure) for the year

This is stated after charging:

	2024 £	2023 £
Depreciation	5,922	8,514
Independent examiners fee	7,200	6,600

10. Analysis of staff costs, trustee remuneration and expenses, and the cost of key management personnel

Staff costs were as follows:

	2024	2023
	£	£
Wages and salaries	372,520	340,821
Social security costs	26,783	25,077
Other pension costs	13,601	11,839
	412,904	377,737

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

	2024	2023
	Number	Number
Chief executive officer	1	1
Support, advice and activities	17	17
Administration	1	1
	19	19

During the year no (2023 – none) employees received total employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) of more than £60,000.

The charity trustees were not paid or received any other benefits from employment in the year (2023 - £nil). No trustees were reimbursed expenses during the year (2023 - £nil). No charity trustee received payment for professional or other services supplied to the charity (2023- £nil).

The key management personnel of the charity comprise the trustees and the Chief Executive Officer. The total employee benefits of the key management personnel of the charity were £45,752 (2023 - £43,500).

11. Tangible Fixed assets

	Equipment	Total
	£	£
Cost		
At 1 April 2023	83,310	83,310
Additions	6,188	6,188
At 31 March 2024	89,498	89,498
Depreciation		
At 1 April 2023	69,910	69,910
Charge for the year	5,922	5,922
At 31 March 2023	75,832	75,832
Net Book Value		
At 31 March 2024	13,666	13,666
At 31 March 2023	13,400	13,400

12. Debtors

	2024	2023
	£	£
Trade debtors	2,385	4,191
Prepayments and accrued income	16,506	23,945
	18,891	28,136

13. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

	2024	2023
	£	£
Trade creditors	11,247	5,962
Accruals and deferred income	47,873	41,261
Social security & pension creditor	8,033	8,040
	67,153	55,263

14. Deferred income

Deferred income relates to grants received relating to future periods.

	2024	2023
	£	£
Opening balance	34,661	75,902
Resources deferred during the year	32,721	34,661
Amounts released from previous years	(34,661)	(75,902)
Closing balance	32,721	34,661

15. Pension costs

The charitable company operates a defined contribution pension scheme, during the period contributions of £13,601 (2023 - £11 839) were paid into the scheme. At the year end, £2,502 was payable to the pension provider.

16. Fund reconciliation

Year ended 31 March 2024

	At 01 April	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	31 March
Unrestricted funds					
General funds	234,621	550,333	(483,384)	(20,673)	280,897
Designated funds					
Low Vision Clinic	15,000	-	(2,684)	(1,075)	11,241
Relocation Costs	10,000	-	(2,560)	-	7,440
Costs of the Merger	20,000	-	(12,346)	(6,400)	1,254
Service Development	25,000	-	(60)	-	24,940
Rebranding costs	-	-	-	6,400	6,400
Digital investment	-	-	-	11,488	11,488
Research investment	-	-	-	6,260	6,260
Pathway development	-	-	-	1,000	1,000
Counselling costs	-	-	-	3,000	3,000
Total unrestricted funds	304,621	550,333	(501,034)	-	353,920
Restricted funds					
Client orders	2,176	18,151	(17,837)	-	2,490
Ways to wellness	12,765	-	(12,765)	-	-
National Lottery - Community Voice	44,708	152,404	(127,067)	-	70,045
National Lottery – Well Connected	847	19,838	(18,527)	-	2,158
Vision Foundation	-	9,000	-	-	9,000
Visionary UK	-	2,416	-	-	2,416
	60,496	201,809	(176,196)	-	86,109
Total of funds	365,117	752,142	(677,230)	-	440,029

16. Fund reconciliation *(Continued)*

Year ended 31 March 2023

	At 01 April	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	31 March
Unrestricted funds					
General funds	219,036	574,742	(503,534)	(55,623)	234,621
Designated funds					
Low Vision Clinic	15,000	-	-	-	15,000
Relocation Costs	-	-	-	10,000	10,000
Costs of the Merger	-	-	-	20,000	20,000
Service Development	-	-	-	25,000	25,000
Total unrestricted funds	234,036	574,742	(503,534)	(623)	304,621
Restricted funds					
Vision Support Lottery	6,545	358	(6,903)	-	-
Counselling	5,000	-	(5,000)	-	-
Client orders	421	14,701	(12,946)	-	2,176
Suicide Prevention	4,467	6,567	(11,657)	623	-
VCSE Digital Transformation	4,500	-	(4,500)	-	-
GMBC CCF	-	8,252	(8,252)	-	-
Ways to wellness	-	12,765	-	-	12,765
National Lottery - Community Voice	-	147,711	(103,003)	-	44,708
National Lottery – Well Connected	-	15,000	(14,153)	-	847
	20,933	205,354	(166,414)	623	60,496
Total of funds	254,969	780,096	(669,948)	-	365,117

Designated funds

Low Vision Clinic – Equipment for the Low Vision Clinic

Relocation costs - The lease for our current premises ends in the coming year. To support a potential relocation, the Trustees have designated funds towards relocation and the associated communications.

Costs of the merger - The Trustees had entered into discussions with another Charity about a merge opportunity and designated the associated professional fees. Although some fees were incurred, the other Charity closed prior to the merge completing. The remaining designated funds will be reallocated to support the Charity rebrand and relocation.

Service development - From the emerging Business Plan 2023/24, the Trustees recognise that new areas of work will need some initial investment. To support this activity and ensure the Charity meets its aims and objectives, funds have been designated.

16. Fund reconciliation ***(continued)***

Digital investment - funding has been designated to make improvements to the digital library and community workspace (equipment demonstration area).

Research investment - funding has been designated for the UKRI project to support staff time and participant expenses, including vouchers.

Pathway Development - funding has been designated to cover staff time to support Visionary and national partners int he development of an Eye Care Pathway project.

Mental health - funding has been designated to cover the cost of counselling sessions.

Restricted funds

Community Foundation – Bernicia Foundation – To increase employment, skills and training opportunities for sight impaired people and to improve the transition pathway between children's and adult services. The project will work with employers to improve their understanding and awareness of support available to sight impaired employees and candidates.

National Lottery – To work in partnership with Newcastle Vision Support to develop and expand services creating a more joined up holistic and inclusive service across a wider region, reducing social inclusion and health and economic inequalities through increased access to services and support.

Vision Support – To work in partnership with Newcastle Society for Blind People to develop and expand services creating a more joined up, holistic and inclusive service across a wider region. The project aims to reduce social isolation and health and economic inequalities through increased access to services and support.

Counselling – To support Counselling provision across Tyne & Wear and Northumberland in partnership with Sunderland & Durham Royal Society for the Blind, Northumberland County Blind Association and Newcastle Vision Support.

Client orders – To support information governance, IT security and online accessibility within the Charity.

Suicide Prevention Fund – To support counselling provision across Tyne and Wear and Northumberland in partnership with Sunderland & Durham Royal Society for the Blind, Northumberland County Blind Association and Newcastle Vision Support.

VCSE Digital Transformation – To support information governance, IT security and online accessibility within the Charity.

Ways to Wellness – To support Counselling provision across Tyne & Wear and Northumberland in partnership with Sunderland & Durham Royal Society for the Blind, Northumberland County Blind Association and Newcastle Vision Support.

National Lottery Community Voice – To deliver a community led engagement project in partnership with Bliss=Ability and Your Voice Counts.

National Lottery – Well Connected - To provide digital support to increase independence, confidence and online security.

Vision Foundation - The National Resilience grant awarded by Fight For Sight/ Vision Foundation will support the rebrand work following the expansion of the Charity's charitable objectives in May 2024 to include all disabled people as well as those with sensory impairment.

17. Analysis of net assets between funds

Year ended 31 March 2024	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2023 £
Fixed assets	13,666	-	-	13,666
Current assets/(liabilities)	267,231	86,109	73,023	426,363
	280,897	86,109	73,023	440,029

Year ended 31 March 2023	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2023 £
Fixed assets	13,400	-	-	13,400
Current assets/(liabilities)	266,593	15,000	60,496	351,717
	279,993	15,000	60,496	365,117

18. Related party transactions

There have been no related party transactions in the year.

19. Reconciliation of net movement in funds to net cash flow from operating activities

	2024	2023
Net income for the period	74,912	110,148
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation	5,922	8,514
Income from investments	(10,311)	(2,771)
Decrease / (Increase) in debtors	9,245	25,568
(Decrease)/ increase in creditors	11,890	(51,235)
Net cash used in operating activities	91,658	90,224

Sense Ability Matters LTD.

England & Wales - Charity number 1107499

Accounts

Charity Number: 1107499
Company Number: 05206358

Vision & Hearing Support Gateshead and South Tyneside Ltd
(a company limited by guarantee)

Unaudited Trustees' Report and Financial Statements
for the year ended 31 March 2023

Vision & Hearing Support Gateshead and South Tyneside Ltd
(a company limited by guarantee)

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Vision & Hearing Support Gateshead and South Tyneside Ltd
(a company limited by guarantee)

Trustee Report
For the year ended 31 March 2023

2022/23- Chair of Trustees and Chief Executive Officers Statement

The 2022/23 period has been a positive year of growth for the Charity, we have welcomed three new members of staff and secured new funding for our work. We have continued to deliver the best possible services for our beneficiaries and have achieved excellent outcomes through our various projects.

Building on the partnership's formed in the previous year, Vision & Hearing Support has secured funding to support several key areas of work. Firstly, the Community Voice project in partnership with Bliss=Ability and Your Voice Counts secured three-year funding from the National Lottery Community Fund. Led by people with lived experience, the project helps people access activities and services in the community through peer support and volunteering. The project is underpinned by learning and information sharing across the partner organisations. In the first eight months of the project, we worked with 150 individuals providing information, advice and guidance; volunteering opportunities; and support to access groups and social activities.

Secondly, in Partnership with ACTS (project lead), Age UK Gateshead and Your Voice Counts we secured five-year funding from the National Lottery Community Fund to deliver digital support. In the first eight months We engaged 162 people in the Digital project with 97% of clients reporting increased digital confidence after receiving our support (versus their response before receiving help).

Finally, our Counselling project, funded by the NENC Suicide Prevention Network, managed by Ways to Wellness, was delivered across Tyne & Wear and Northumberland in Partnership with Newcastle Vision Support, Northumberland Vision Support and Sunderland and Durham Royal Society for the Blind. Vision & Hearing support delivered 121 counselling sessions to 44 individuals during the year. Clients reported an average score change of 4.63 on the PHQ-9 and 4.96 on the GAD-7, which is higher than the minimal clinically important difference (MCID) score for both measures.

Referrals for assessments under our local authority Care Act 2014 contracts have remained steady with 343 support plans being completed. The Team have consistently met Care Act 2014 targets with 97.5% of beneficiaries being contacted within 2 working days and 83.5% of referrals being assessed within two weeks. The number of referring organisations has grown as opportunities for networking and collaboration have increased in the post-pandemic period.

Our work to develop a Transition Pathway between Childrens and Adult Services continues and we have seen an increase in younger people accessing our support as a result. This will remain a priority to ensure people are supported at a time when it is needed most.

We have continued to work with our sight loss sector colleagues across the region and nationally. Through Visionary UK, we have contributed to national working groups for rehabilitation, low vision and cross-sector partnership developments. This network has produced best practice guidance for low vision services and is developing a Rehabilitation workforce plan to ensure specialist skills are readily available. We attended the Visionary UK conference 2022 to meet colleagues and share best practice among the sector.

Through our Partnership work we identified many joint ambitions with Bliss=Ability and, in April 2022, Trustees and Members from both organisations voted in favour of us joining forces. By using resources and knowledge more effectively and efficiently we can increase the number of people we reach and ensure long term sustainability of provision as a charity.

BLISS=Ability is a fully inclusive, user–led specialist provider of accessible information, Care Act advocacy and other services for people with disabilities in South Tyneside.

This unique opportunity will help us to realise a shared ambition to serve residents of South Tyneside and Gateshead who have a disability, including vision impairment, Deaf, hard of hearing and those with a long-term health condition.
As we move into the next financial year, the Trustees will remain agile and responsive to meet the Charity's objectives. This will be underpinned by our ambition to innovate and work collaboratively to achieve the best possible outcomes for people who are sight impaired, severely sight impaired, Deaf of hard of hearing.

The Board has worked hard in 2022/23 to build upon the progress made in the previous four years to stabilise the Charity's finances and build appropriate reserves for the future.





Chair – Lin Elder-Atterton MVO Chief Executive – Sarah French

Our Vision
A vision and hearing loss community that is **informed**, **empowered** and **resilient**.

Our Mission
1. **Empower** our community by giving them the tools they need to live independently and make positive decisions.
2. Help our community overcome adversity by increasing **resilience** and wellbeing.
3. Ensure our community are **informed** by providing first class information, advice and guidance.
4. **Influence** positive change locally, regionally and nationally for our community through strong stakeholder and relationship management.

Our Values
Supportive
We respond and adapt to the needs of the Vision and hearing loss community. We respect and value all our community equally. We are committed to working together to achieve shared goals.

Trustworthy
We are accountable. We are open and honest in our approach. We are reliable, act with integrity and do what it takes to support those in need.

Caring
We are friendly and warm. We take time to listen and promote inclusivity. We treat everyone with dignity and respect.

Professional
We are passionate and strive to be the best. We actively seek new ideas and innovation to bring about positive change. We rely on evidence to make our decisions. We challenge ourselves to be bold and resourceful. We are determined in the face of adversity.

Strategic Objectives

1. Be the **leading** vision and hearing loss service provider
1. **Influence** change locally, regionally & nationally
2. **Diversify** our income generation portfolio
3. **Champion** the interests of members, beneficiaries and sector

Activities for public benefit

Vision & Hearing Support strives to be the best for our community. We take time to listen and promote inclusivity, treating everyone with dignity and respect. We actively seek new ideas and innovation to bring about positive change, acting with integrity to do what it takes to support those in need.

Vision & Hearing Support is an organisation run for charitable purposes. We want to be around today and into the future to support people who are sight impaired, Deaf or hard of hearing. To achieve this, we recognise that there is a need to supplement our strategic aims with business aims that will deliver long term sustainability:

- Diversify our income sources to increase financial sustainability.
- Develop the profile of Vision & Hearing Support, so that more people know about the services we provide, to increase the numbers of people accessing services and the number of people willing to donate and volunteer.
- Engage people with lived experience and with people from a variety of ethnic backgrounds so that we learn from the strengths they bring in their diversity.

We review our aims, objectives and activities each year. This report looks at what we achieved and the outcomes of our work during April 2022 to March 2023.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

We will work with colleagues in a supportive environment of mutual respect and empowerment to achieve the best possible outcomes for clients. We will follow the principles set out in the Visionary Sight Loss Charter 2020 and promote collaboration, integrity, and accountability in all we do.
Vision & Hearing Support will continue to work with its Members and beneficiaries to evidence our lived experience input. This is becoming ever more important to funders and society who expect Charities to engage with, listen to and respond directly to those it is there to support. Alongside this, the Board has already recognised the need to diversify Trustee and staff representation to better reflect the communities in which we work.
To achieve our strategy we deliver early intervention, crisis prevention and integrated social activities to reduce preventable sensory loss, maintain independence and mental wellbeing and reduce social isolation. Our interventions ensure that people;

- can live more independently,
- are less socially isolated,
- are more confident and empowered,
- experience improved wellbeing.

ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE – 2022/23

During 2022/23, we supported **4,731 individuals** resulting in;

- 84% reporting they were able to live more independently
- 82.5% feeling less isolated
- 88% reporting that they felt more confident and empowered
- 88% reporting an improvement in their emotional health & wellbeing

"I had hit a brick wall and didn't think I could find a way back, but you have lifted me out of my depression and talked me back to having a reason to go on. You have helped me back to living my life again" (Beneficiary, 2022)

Over 10,650 people in South Tyneside and Gateshead live with moderate sight loss and over 1,640 are diagnosed as severely sight impaired (RNIB, 2023).

Latest estimates indicate that in South Tyneside and Gateshead 67,386 people have hearing loss of 25 dB or more, and of those 7,243 have moderate or severe hearing loss, over 65 dB (NHS England, Hearing Loss data Tool).

Our beneficiaries have increasingly complex health needs, for example 74% of active clients during the year have 2 or more additional disabilities; 50% have more than 1 eye condition; 92% have Arthritis; 93% are hard of hearing; 83% have limited mobility and or high frailty; 89% have osteoporosis; 74% have had a Stroke and 72% have Diabetes. We work collaboratively to target the social determinants of health alongside specific eye care interventions, making sure we provide the right support at the right time for individuals.

"Having a stroke and being blinded was a massive shock in my lifetime, I felt very lonely and depressed. Your charity is such a massive and worthwhile charity that made my life worth living again. I don't think I could have survived without it." (Beneficiary, 2022)

Our unique and integrated pathway makes sure we provide the right support at the right time for individuals. We deliver the following activities to support people who are sight impaired, Deaf and hard of hearing across Gateshead and South Tyneside;

- Vision impairment **counselling** – providing one-to one and group counselling sessions, including for friends and family. Delivered by a professional counsellor with lived experience, the service is supported at the start and end points to enable a smooth transition.
- **"Well Connected"** is a partnership project providing digital, one-to-one and peer support, a tech lending library and cyber security information.
- An optometrist and rehabilitation specialist led **low vision** clinic – providing early intervention and magnification advice. This is a unique model that integrates health, social care and community activities to provide a seamless and effective service.
- **"Community Voice"** is a partnership project, led by people with lived experience, that helps people access activities and services in the community through peer support and volunteering.
- **Accessibility audits** and professional Vision Impairment Awareness and Sighted Guide **Training** to raise awareness of sight loss and improve accessibility.
- Our incredible **Volunteers** made over 1000 tele-befriending calls this year, providing essential social support for people living with sensory loss. We connect people to relevant **peer led support** groups including; the weekly Men's Shed Group, the Women's Weekly and Macular and Glaucoma peer support groups.

These values sit alongside the three core values that underpin our youth offer and reflect the values for our staff:

- Involve young people are involved in communities and in quality, positive and inclusive activities
- Enjoy young people enjoy their lives and the communities where they live.
- Achieve young people feel empowered and valued, are prepared for the future and are recognised for their achievements.

Our statutory funded work includes:

- **Person centred assessments** and planning under the Care Act 2014 to agree goals and actions that will have a positive impact; and **Rehabilitation** and Enablement support – providing independent living skills, orientation and mobility skills and independent travel.

We have directly supported 4,731 individuals across our services during 2022/23. The figures below show the numbers of individuals accessing each intervention by type during the year:

- 434 people have been referred for and received a personal holistic assessment
- 120 people have accessed our intensive rehabilitation service
- 3,129 people benefitted from our Information, Advice and Guidance
- 837 people accessed our low vision service
- 162 people received digital support
- 302 people accessed the Community Voice project
- 6 young people have accessed our enhanced transition support
- 44 people received professional Counselling
- 80 people attended our Living Well with Sight Loss
- 173 people received 1105 tele-support calls from our dedicated volunteers
- Helped 78 people access the benefits they were entitled to, a collective total of £394,149 per annum, plus backdated entitlement of £23,531

CORE CONTRACTED PROVISION

Specialist person centred needs assessment and rehabilitation services – Gateshead Council and South Tyneside Council

We assess what needs people have due to their sensory condition and put in place the services, support, equipment, concessions etc to meet those needs. The Gateshead service is for sight impairment only, South Tyneside service includes Deaf and hard of hearing support. We carry out the registration process, although we don't directly hold the register in Gateshead.

In 2019/20 we secured the South Tyneside Sensory Support contract for a further five years which includes equipment provision and support for those with hearing loss.

Our rehabilitation and enablement workers provide training on independent living skills, mobility and orientation, viewing techniques, communications, electronic low vision aids such as video magnifiers and new technology such as audio description, e-readers, accessible mobiles etc. They also carry out lighting assessments in people's homes and they issue small aids such as white sticks, canes and symbol canes, liquid level indicators, talking clocks and signature guides. We issue daylight bulbs as many people are struggling with the light provided by traditional low energy bulbs.

2,722 contacts have been received for this service during 2022/23:

- Gateshead - 1304
- South Tyneside – 1418

Integrated Low Vision Clinic – Gateshead residents only (NHS ICB)

We assess people's residual vision and prescribe optical low vision aids such as magnifiers, telescopes, high add readers etc. to help maximise use of residual vision. We also consider viewing techniques (such as eccentric viewing), lighting, colour contrast and posture all of which will again help people make best use of remaining vision. We provide a two-year review, although people can re-refer themselves sooner if they feel their sight is deteriorating. Information, Advice and Guidance is available when needed along with rehabilitation support, triage reviews and equipment advice.

During 2022/23 our key outputs as part of our low vision clinic work included:

- 254 low vision clinics were held
- 465 low vision assessments were carried out
- 1469 people were supported through the service

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT PROVISION

The following activities contribute to the overall success of Vision & Hearing Support's work by complementing and adding value to statutory provision:

Gateshead Walking Groups

We secured annual funding from Gateshead Council to improve the physical, mental and emotional health of people with sight loss and their families across Gateshead by delivering outdoor and online support including: themed walks for people who are blind and partially sighted and their families/ carers with sighted guide volunteers; support from our qualified, vision impaired Counsellor; sighted guide training for volunteers and sighted walks participants and; self-care and healthy lifestyles information, advice and guidance via Peer Support Groups and online networks.

A Future You

Funded as a 6 month pilot through the Integrated Care Board Ageing Well programme, A Future You was a new project to reduce the risk of loneliness, social isolation, and frailty. The project was a partnership between Age Concern Tyneside South (ACTS), Vision and Hearing Support (VHS), South Tyneside Council, South Tyneside Public Health, and the Integrated Care Board via the Central Integrated Care Pathway. The project offered a novel approach to healthcare, adopting a preventative care approach to reduce the risk and prevalence of loneliness, social isolation, and resultant frailty among the residents of South Tyneside. An evaluation of the project was produced and the learning will be shared across the Borough to support future interventions.

Welfare Rights and Advocacy

We provide advice and support on disability benefits such as DLA/PIP, Attendance Allowance, Employment Support Allowance as well as Universal Credit. Help is provided from completion of the initial application, support when attending assessments all the way through to representation at Tribunal if the application isn't successful.

Equipment Library

At The Bradbury Centre for Sight in Gateshead people can call us or visit for specialist advice and information on a wide range specialist equipment. The library contains various pieces of digital and analogue equipment which we lend to people on a short-term basis so that they can try them out at home before deciding whether they would like to buy one (either they can buy it themselves if they can afford to do so or we can help to find funding).

Living Well with Sight Loss Programme

This course is for people who are newly visually impaired or new to our services. It runs for 3 weeks with 1 half-day session per week looking at the various aspects of visual impairment and help that is available. As well as providing lots of information and advice it also provides invaluable peer support.

Training

Our team of experienced professionals provide **Visual Impairment Awareness, Sighted Guide and Deaf Awareness training** to a wide audience including a number of hospitals, council departments, businesses, charities and care homes.

Well Connected - Digital & Cyber Security Support

Our Partnership with ACTS, Age Gateshead and Your Voice Counts is funded through The National Lottery Community Fund and provides a range of support and tuition on how to make the most of digital and online services whilst avoiding online fraud and cyber scams. We engaged 449 clients and provided 162 intensive interventions, leading to 97% of participants reporting feeling more confident and empowered following our cyber security information, advice and guidance.

Community Voice
Funded by The National Lottery Community Fund, the project takes a partnership approach, led by people with lived experience, to help people access activities and services in the community through peer support and volunteering.
During the year, 875 people have engaged with the project, 276 of these have sensory impairment or dual sensory loss. 98 individuals have been supported with accessing community based activities, 25 are accessing volunteering pathways, and the Partnership has established 17 new activities in the community to meet the need of beneficiaries.

80% of clients who engaged in this project have said that they have felt increased self-esteem and confidence, feel less isolated and have better well-being.

Counselling

Funded by the NENC Suicide Prevention Network, managed by Ways to Wellness, we delivered 121 counselling sessions to 44 individuals during the year. Clients reported an average score change of 4.63 on the PHQ-9 and 4.96 on the GAD-7, which is higher than the minimal clinically important difference (MCID) score for both measures.

Telephone Support Service

Operated entirely by volunteers, all of whom have lived experience of sight loss, our Telephone Support Service calls service users whom we are aware are particularly isolated due to other mobility issues or whom we haven't had recent contact. The support offered includes simply being a friendly voice to talk to, we promote the activities and services offered by Vision & Hearing Support and if anyone called shares any concerns then the volunteer team refer them to our sight loss support team. During the year 2022/23 volunteers made 1105 calls to 173 people.

Activity and Social Groups

We are delighted that we can once again welcome groups to meet at our premises following the pandemic. We will continue to work closely with independent groups to share information, provide support as required and to introduce new members.

British Wireless for the Blind (BWFTB) and RNIB Talking Books

We are the agents for BWFTB and issue radios, CD players etc on their behalf to people who are eligible (they must be registered either Sight Impaired (SI) or Severely Sight Impaired (SSI) and be in receipt of a qualifying means tested benefit (such as housing benefit or council tax benefit amongst others). We also help people with their initial applications for the RNIB talking book service.

Volunteers

We have a dedicated team of volunteers who support our work. Volunteers cover many different roles at Vision & Hearing Support from reception, telephone befriending and administration support. A team of volunteer drivers are also a vital resource who transport service users to and from medical appointments, as well as enabling the, to access a range of support services provided by Vision & Hearing Support.

Newsletter

We have produced a regular newsletter promoting both Vision & Hearing Support services and other issues of interest and relevance to people who are sight impaired, Deaf or hard of hearing. This is available in various formats to meet individual preferences.

Case Studies and Impact

Identifying, measuring and reporting upon the impact had by the wide range of support activities provided by Vision & Hearing Support is not straight forward. We continue to work with our funders and commissioners to not only supply the contractual monitoring information they require, but to also evidence the case for continued further investment in Vision & Hearing Supports work.

We are also continuing to work with Visionary, the national umbrella body for local sight loss charities, as they develop shared output, outcome and impact measurement tools for the sight loss sector.

However, there is nothing more powerful than hearing real life examples of the work and impact delivered by our dedicated team of sight loss professionals, supported by our volunteer team.

We have shared below a case study from the Gateshead Walking Project and a selection of quotes received throughout the year, that demonstrate the work we do. This example, along with many cases we haven't shared, shows that our personal and thorough approach delivers tangible outcomes for people and a lasting impact on their lives and the lives of those around them;

GATESHEAD WALKING PROJECT

We engaged 422 people, with 73 clients continuing to have on-going engagement/activity throughout the project. Initial contact was made to determine client's interest in joining walking groups to increase their confidence and independence post Covid.

73% of clients were female. 75% were aged between 45 & 84 and 52% of clients lived alone. 70% had 2 or more additional health conditions alongside their sight loss, with 44% of those reporting mobility issues.

A Monday walking group was established, and supported 36 people throughout the project, who met for peer support and to increase their confidence, reduce their isolation and increase their physical mobility.

Where people didn't continue with activity in the project, this was influenced by a number of factors including a lack of accessible transport to reach a central meeting point, lack of confidence in travelling independently, reduced mobility due to lack of social opportunities during the Covid-19 pandemic and an increase in co-morbidities alongside their sight loss.

As a result of the barriers above, there was restricted uptake of our planned themed walks. Clients who continued to engage, expressed interest in office-based activities to increase their confidence in the first instance. As a result, we reviewed our existing group provision and identified our well-established peer support group, the 'Men's Shed', as an opportunity to meet some of that need.

Through our post-counselling transition pathway, our counsellor identified there was a need for a women's group and general peer support. As a result, we established a Women's Weekly group that offers weekly peer support and also developed a new monthly peer support group that offers an opportunity for anyone with sensory loss to meet and share experiences and increase social contact. Our counsellor facilitated those referrals in the first instance to ensure that client's expectations and needs were fully met.

These groups continue to meet and are supported by Community Voice volunteers, to ensure their continuation, development and future growth.

Feedback from the groups has been positive, with 84% of clients reporting reduced isolation, improved emotional health & wellbeing and improved confidence. 100% of clients reported improved access to accessible information, with 81.5% reporting improved social inclusion.

Case study 1

SA was isolated at home due to their sight loss and loss of confidence post-pandemic. They wanted to improve confidence travelling independently to increase mental health and wellbeing and to explore peer support options available. A collaborative approach between our rehabilitation specialist and our Community Voice project officer agreed a support plan to meet the client's needs. Our rehab officer undertook as assessment and designed a 4-week orientation and mobility plan to map out the best travel options. At the end of this period, the client was able to travel independently from home to the peer support group she wished to join. The impact of this work has increased her confidence and she commented "my quality of life has improved massively, and I never thought I would be travelling on my own in such a short space of time. I love the ladies group and my mental health is so much better now".

Case study 2
DM had recently resigned from their employment due to the deterioration in their sight loss alongside other long-term health conditions. They had become isolated at home and had lost confidence in socialising and participating in wider activities. The client had 12 weeks' counselling sessions. As part of the transition post-counselling planning, it was identified that the client would benefit from engaging in peer support to reduce their isolation and increase confidence. Our counsellor facilitated a referral to the newly established ladies group. DM is a regular attendee at this group and during review feedback commented "I don't know what I would have done without the Counselling project. The ladies group has been a lifeline for me after giving up my job due to my sight loss. My mental health and wellbeing have improved so much I no longer rely on medication to improve my low mood".

Quotes from our Annual Survey 2022;
"As it is only recently, I have started to use your service I am constantly surprised how helpful people are and have been. The group of people who make up the support team should be very proud at what they have created."

"I am very grateful for all the help and support I have received over the years. Thank you."

"Everyone seems to be doing excellent work and I am so grateful for the help I have received from you all."

"Couldn't thank Helen and Claire enough. Their support was second to none. Very pleased with how it all went, couldn't be happier. Once again Thank you Helen and Claire!!!"

"I recommend this service to others with sight problems."

"They were very helpful and put me at ease."

"I have only met Pauline who spoke to me on the phone and arranged to visit me. She was lovely, caring and supported and told me of people who could help me in the future at Vision & Hearing. She told me that it would be good for me to speak to Karen who might be able to support me further. I have spoken to Karen, and I am looking forward to meeting with her as she sounds so full of life and a great person to work for Vision and Hearing. I do feel I need some counselling as I'm feeling a little anxious of my future and feel I need a little support in this area."

"One of your staff helped me to apply for an allowance which I was awarded and will always be grateful. Thank you."

"For the moment I can't really think of anything that could improve what is an extraordinary service. Just keep up with the great job that all staff are doing."

"I admired the knowledge, enthusiasm and support offered, even down to home visit by keen staff member to check requirements and progress. You do an incredible job for people to help and encourage them at a time when such help is needed and I had lost mobility after 2.5 months in hospital and had lost my right eye due to autoimmune condition, pemphigoid. Two bright bulbs and walking aid are of great benefit, thank you. I can now read print more easily and much mobility has been restored though I still find your walking aid invaluable."

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Financial performance and position

Financial performance in 2022/23 continues to provide stability for the Charity moving forwards. This is largely due to support through cost of living funds grants to support running costs.

Income in 2022/23 was £780,096 - representing an increase of £234,829 to the previous year (£545,267 – 2021/22). This is chiefly because of one-off cost of living support grants and successful Partnership projects securing funding from The National Lottery Community Fund.

Our expenditure has increased by £205,576 on the previous year, in line with growth and delivery of specific grant funded projects. Expenditure in 2022/23 was £464,372.

Principal funding sources

Our main core contracted income has remained stable and we have performed well against this income achieving all the required performance indicators.

Key income streams:

- Gateshead Council
- South Tyneside Council
- NHS North East North Cumbria Integrated Care Board
- The National Lottery Community Fund
- Community Foundation Tyne & Wear and Northumberland
- North East North Cumbria Suicide Prevention Network and Ways to Wellness
- VCSE Cost of Living Crisis Fund

The receipt of this funding enables the charitable company to meet its charitable objectives to provide support advice and activities to people who are Sight Impaired, Severely Sight Impaired, Deaf, hard of hearing or Deaf/blind.

Investment policy and objectives

Under the memorandum and articles of association, the Charity has the power to make any investment which the Trustees see fit.

Reserves policy

The Board has reviewed the reserves of the Charity and concluded that to allow the Charity to be managed efficiently and to provide a buffer for uninterrupted services, attempts should be made to increase general reserves.

It is the policy of the Charity that unrestricted funds which have not been designated for a specific use should be maintained at a level equivalent to between six and nine month's expenditure. The directors consider that reserves at this level will ensure that, in the event of a significant drop in funding, they will be able to continue the Charity's current activities while consideration is given to ways in which additional funds may be raised.

The Charity has several restricted funds for identified projects, which have specific budgets and timescales. In order to reach the agreed level of reserves the charitable company intends to continue to look for increased income from our own fundraising efforts, as well as obtaining additional grant funding to increase unrestricted income.

At 31 March 2023 the charitable company held total reserves of £365,117 (2022: £254,969).

We will continue to review levels of expenditure.

FUTURE PLANS

The unique opportunity to merge with disability charity Bliss=Ability will help us to realise a shared ambition to serve residents of South Tyneside and Gateshead who have a disability, including vision impairment, Deaf, hard of hearing and those with a long-term health condition.
Working with people with lived experience, our combined charity is determined to:

- leverage further investment to support disability services across South Tyneside and Gateshead, ensuring greater provision for more people,
- enable more people with lived experience to co-create services, improve health pathways and increase access to local services,
- reduce health inequalities and improve outcomes for people facing or living with a disability, are vision impaired, Deaf, hard of hearing, or who has one or more long-term health condition.

The coming year will focus on maintaining our current services: rehabilitation; holistic assessment; low vision service; digital empowerment; mental health & wellbeing; community and volunteer engagement. To support this we will focus our development on:

Employability and Transition Pathway

Following a review of our data at the end of 2020, we found that only 2% of the people we work with are aged between 15 and 44, increasing to only 5.5% at the end of 2023. We recognise that this is not a proportionate reflection of the age profile of people with sight loss in South Tyneside and Gateshead.
During 2021 and 2022 we secured a short grant to support employability for people with sight loss which was successful in engaging younger people in our support. We have also worked closely with Children's Services to improve the transition into adult services, this too has seen a small increase in 15 to 24-year-olds access our services.
We want to take this work further by engaging younger people, up to age 45, in our projects and support services. Working with young people, we will co-design a tailored programme to provide relevant support at a time when it is needed most.

Advocacy
Working with partners and social care providers, the demand for specialist advocacy support for people with sight loss is increasing. As costs of living increase, we have experienced a significant rise in requests for non-statutory advocacy support. This includes help with employment issues; blue badge and concessionary pass applications; mandatory reconsiderations for benefit applications; housing issues including amendments to properties, alongside support with banding applications and providing relevant evidence of the impact of sight loss on individuals.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

The Charity is controlled by its governing document, a deed of trust, and constitutes a limited company, limited by guarantee, as defined by the Companies Act 2006.

Recruitment and appointment of new Trustees

The Charity may by ordinary resolution appoint a person who is willing to act as trustee and determine the rotation in which any additional Trustees are to retire. No person other than a trustee retiring by rotation may be appointed a trustee at any general meeting unless:

- He or she is recommended for re-election by the Trustees or
- Not less than fourteen nor more than thirty-five clear days before the date of the meeting, the Charity is given notice that:
    - i) Is signed by two members entitled to vote at the meeting.
    - ii) States the members' intention to propose the appointment of a person as a trustee.
    - iii) Contains the details that, if the person were to be appointed, the Charity would have to file at Companies House, including the names and details of two referees who have not proposed their election; and
    - iv) Is signed by the person who is to be proposed to show his or her consent - full election to the Board will be at the end of a six month probationary period and will be at the discretion of the Board of Directors.

Organisational structure

The Board of directors meet quarterly and administer the Charity. The Board of directors may delegate any of their powers to sub-committees consisting of such members of their body and/or Charity as they think fit.

Any sub-committee so formed shall in the exercise of the powers so delegated conform to any regulations imposed on it by the directors.

Induction and training of new Trustees

New Trustees undergo an induction to brief them on:

- their legal obligations under charity and company law;
- the Charity Commission on public benefit;
- inform them of the content of the memorandum and articles of association;
- the committee and decision making processes;
- the business plan; and - recent financial performance of the charitable company.

During the induction they meet key employees and other Trustees.

Trustees are encouraged to attend appropriate external training events where these will facilitate the undertaking of their role.

Key management remuneration

The Trustees consider the Board of Trustees as comprising of the key management personnel of the charitable company in charge of directing, controlling and operating the charitable company. All Trustees give their time freely and no trustee remuneration was paid in the year.

Partnerships and Collaborations

We continue to work in close co-operation with both Gateshead and South Tyneside Councils, and are actively involved in the Integrated Care System (ICS) and Primary Care Networks (PCN) under the North East North Cumbria (NENC) Integrated Care Board.

We have effective partnerships with Royal National Institute for the Blind, Newcastle Vision Support, RNID, Visionary and several voluntary sector organisations with whom we are working with in both Gateshead and South Tyneside, and our wider network both regionally and nationally.

During the year we have formed effective partnerships with local Charities ACTS, Age UK Gateshead, Your Voice Counts and Bliss=Ability. This has led to emerging projects to support people with disabilities and learn from each other's experiences and approaches as well as the opportunity to merge to form one holistic disability charity with Bliss=Ability.

Risk management

The Board of Trustees reviewed the major risks to which the Charity is exposed. A risk register is in place and is updated regularly and at least annually.

Where appropriate, systems and procedures have been established to mitigate the risks the Charity faces.

The Risk Management process itself is periodically reviewed to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the Charity.

Risks are minimised by the implementation of internal controls with procedures for authorisation of all transactions and projects.

Services continued to be externally evaluated and inspected by funders.

The excellent outcomes from these evaluations point to the excellent quality of delivery for all operational aspects of the Charity.

Significant external risks to funding have led to the development of the new Strategic Direction which allows for the diversification of funding.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Registered Charity Number	1107499
Company Number	05206358
Registered Office	The Bradbury Centre for Sight, Unit 2B, Stonehills Business Centre, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, NE10 0HW

Trustees

The trustees who served the charity during the period were as follows;
Ms K Harrison
Mrs L Elder-Atterton
Mrs L Rhodes
Mr Ian Hickson
Mr Liam Clark-Brown
Mr Alex Geddes, Co-Opted member
Mrs Joyce Welsh, Co-Opted member

Key Management Personnel

S French	Chief Executive

Our advisors

Independent Examiners	Haines Watts	17 Queens Lane, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 1RN
Bankers	CafBank	PO Box 289, West Mailing, Kent, ME19 4TA

Legal Status

The charitable company is limited by guarantee and therefore has no share capital. In the event of a winding up, every member (who is a trustee) undertakes to contribute to the payment of liabilities such amount as may be required not exceeding the total of £1.

STATEMENT OF MANAGEMENT TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The Management Trustees (who are also directors of Vision & Hearing Support Gateshead and South Tyneside Ltdd for the purpose of company law) are responsible for preparing the Management Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company 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 2015 (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 will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company 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 hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

This report was approved by the Management Trustees on 23 November 2023.

Signed on behalf of the Board



……

L Elder-Atterton
Trustee

Vision & Hearing Support Gateshead and South Tyneside Ltd
(a company limited by guarantee)

Independent Examiner's report to the members of Vision & Hearing Support Gateshead and South Tyneside Ltd

For the year ended 31 March 2023

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charitable company for the year ended 31 March 2023 which are set out on pages 21 to 33.

Responsibilities and basis of report
As the charity trustees of the charitable company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the charitable company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your charitable company's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement
Since the company's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charitable company as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
4. the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

C. Henderson

……

Craig Henderson ACCA
Haines Watts Newcastle

8 December 2023
Date

17 Queens Lane
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 1RN

Vision & Hearing Support Gateshead and South Tyneside Ltd
(a company limited by guarantee)

Statement of Financial Activities ***(Incorporating the Income and Expenditure Account)***
For the year ended 31 March 2023

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Income from:					
Donations	**4**	156,773	190,653	347,426	120,095
Charitable activities	**5**	415,198	14,701	429,899	424,006
Investment income	**6**	2,771	-	2,771	55
Other trading income		-	-	-	1,111
Total income		574,742	205,354	780,096	545,267
Expenditure on:					
Charitable activities	**7**	503,534	166,414	669,948	464,372
Total expenditure		503,534	166,414	669,948	464,372
Net Income/(expenditure)		71,208	38,940	110,148	80,895
Transfers	**16**	(623)	623	-	-
Net movements in funds		70,585	39,563	110,148	80,895
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward		234,036	20,933	254,969	174,074
Total funds carried forward		304,621	60,496	365,117	254,969

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses in the year and therefore a statement of total recognised gains and losses has not been prepared.

All of the above amounts relate to continuing activities.

Vision & Hearing Support Gateshead and South Tyneside Ltd
(a company limited by guarantee)

Balance Sheet
As at 31 March 2023

	Notes	2023	2022
		£	£
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	**11**	13,400	19,412
		13,400	19,412
Current assets			
Debtors	**12**	28,136	53,704
Cash at bank and in hand		378,844	288,351
		406,980	342,055
Liabilities			
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	**13**	(55,263)	(106,498)
Net current assets		351,717	235,557
Total assets less total liabilities		365,117	254,969
Funds			
Restricted funds		60,496	20,933
Designated funds		70,000	15,000
Unrestricted funds		234,621	219,036
	16	365,117	254,969

For the year ending 31 March 2023 the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Directors' responsibilities:

- The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476;
- The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts

The financial statements were approved by the trustees on 23 November 2023 and signed on their behalf by:



……

L Elder-Atterton
Trustee

Company Number 05206358

Vision & Hearing Support Gateshead and South Tyneside Ltd
(a company limited by guarantee)

Cash Flow Statement
For the year ended 31 March 2023

	Notes	2023	2022
		£	£
Net cash flow from operating activities:			
Net cash provided by operating activities	**19**	90,224	79,402
Cash flows from investment activities			
Interest receivable and investment income		2,771	52
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(2,502)	(4,862)
Net cash flow from investing activities		269	(4,810)
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents		90,493	74,592
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		288,351	213,759
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year		378,844	288,351

1. Accounting Policies

1.1 Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with 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) issued in October 2019, Charities SORP (FRS 102), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), the Charities Act 2011, the Companies Act 2006 and UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.

Vision & Hearing Support Gateshead and South Tyneside Ltd meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. The financial statements are prepared under the historical cost convention or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note(s). The financial statements are prepared in Sterling which is the functional currency of the charity and rounded to the nearest £.

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

1.2 Going concern

The financial statements are prepared on a going concern basis. The Trustees have reviewed the annual budgets and considered relevant information in response to the external environment. Actual results are monitored against budget. Based on these assessments, given the measures that could be undertaken to mitigate any adverse conditions, and the current resources available, the Trustees have concluded that they can continue to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the annual report and accounts.

1.3 Funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charitable company and which have not been designated for other purposes.

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.

Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors which have been raised by the company for particular purposes. The cost of raising and administering such funds are charged against the specific fund. The aim and use of each restricted fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

1.4 Incoming resources

All incoming resources are included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SoFA) when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions have been met, the amount can be measured reliably and it is probable that the income will be received.

Income from charitable activities includes income received under contract or where entitlement to grant funding is subject to specific performance conditions and is recognised as earned. Grant income included in this category provides funding to support performance activities and is recognised where there is entitlement, certainty of receipt and the amount can be measured with reasonable certainty. Income received to deliver services over a specific period covering more than one financial year is accounted for over the specific period; related expenditure is accounted when incurred.

Investment income relates to interest earned through holding assets on deposit.

In accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102), the general volunteer time is not recognised and refer to the trustees' report for more information about their contribution.

1.5 Expenditure and irrecoverable VAT

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.

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

1.6 Support cost allocation

Support costs are those that assist the work of the charity but do not directly represent charitable activities and include office costs, governance costs and administrative payroll costs. They are incurred directly in support of expenditure on the objects of the charity.

1.7 Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost (or deemed cost) or valuation less accumulated depreciation and accumulated impairment losses. Cost includes costs directly attributable to making the asset capable of operating as intended.

Depreciation is provided on all tangible fixed assets, at rates calculated to write off the cost, less estimated residual value, of each asset on a systematic basis over its expected useful life as follows:

Fixtures & fittings	-	15% reducing balance

All assets costing more than £1,000 are capitalised, unless paid directly by a grant where capitalisation is not approved.

1.8 Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

1.9 Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

1.10 Creditors and provisions

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the 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 after allowing for any trade discounts due.

1.11 Financial instruments

The charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value with the exception of bank loans which are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

1.12 Pensions

The charitable company contributes to a defined contribution pension scheme for the benefit of its employees. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the charitable company. The annual contributions payable are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities.

1.13 Tax

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 of the Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes.

2. Legal status

The charitable company is limited by guarantee and therefore has no share capital. In the event of a winding up, every member (who is a trustee) undertakes to contribute to the payment of liabilities such amount as may be required not exceeding the total of £1.

3. Comparative statement of financial activities

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
Income from:					
Donations	**4**	46,508	73,587	120,095	128,253
Charitable activities	**5**	419,276	4,730	424,006	378,289
Investment income	**6**	55	-	55	91
Other trading income		1,111	-	1,111	-
Total income		466,950	78,317	545,267	506,633
Expenditure on:					
Charitable activities	**7**	382,588	81,784	464,372	402,016
Total expenditure		382,588	81,784	464,372	402,016
Net income before transfers		84,362	(3,467)	80,895	104,617
Transfers	**16**	119	(119)	-	-
Net movements in funds		84,481	(3,586)	80,895	104,617
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward		149,555	24,519	174,074	69,457
Total funds carried forward		234,036	20,933	254,969	174,074

4. Donations

	2023	2022
	£	£
Donations	7,091	10,761
Grants	340,335	109,334
	347,426	120,095

Grant income

	2023	2022
	£	£
National Lottery	-	47,603
Counselling	5,083	14,917
Suicide Prevention	6,567	6,567
VCSE Transformation	-	4,500
Ways to Wellness	12,765	-
GMBC	8,252	-
National Lottery - Community Voice	147,711	-
National Lottery – Well Connected	15,000	-
ICP Mental Health	17,000	-
Other	127,957	35,747
	340,335	109,334

5. Income from charitable activities

	2023	2022
	£	£
Services provided under contract	360,348	375,495
Other income	69,551	48,511
	429,899	424,006

6. Investment income

	2023	2022
	£	£
Income from investments	2,771	91

7. Analysis of expenditure charitable activities

	Activities undertaken directly	Support costs	2023	2022
	£	£	£	£
Charitable activities	634,565	35,383	669,948	464,372
	634,565	35,383	669,948	464,372

8. Support & Governance costs

	2023	2022
	£	£
Staff Costs	17,789	13,526
Payroll costs	2,480	40
Depreciation	8,514	3,363
Governance costs	6,600	3,650
	35,383	20,579

9. Net income/(expenditure) for the year

This is stated after charging:

	2023	2022
	£	£
Depreciation	8,514	3,363
Independent examiners fee	6,600	3,650

10. Analysis of staff costs, trustee remuneration and expenses, and the cost of key management personnel

Staff costs were as follows:

	2023	2022
	£	£
Wages and salaries	340,821	286,120
Social security costs	25,077	20,689
Other pension costs	11,839	9,038
	377,737	315,847

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

	2023	2022
	Number	Number
Chief executive officer	1	1
Support, advice and activities	17	16
Administration	1	1
	19	18

During the year no (2022 – none) employees received total employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) of more than £60,000.

The charity trustees were not paid or received any other benefits from employment in the year (2022 - £nil). No trustees were reimbursed expenses during the year (2022 - £nil). No charity trustee received payment for professional or other services supplied to the charity (2022- £nil).

		Equipment	Total
11.	**Tangible Fixed assets**		
		£	**£**
	Cost		
	At 1 April 2022	80,808	80,808
	Additions	2,502	2,502
	At 31 March 2023	83,310	83,310
	Depreciation		
	At 1 April 2022	61,396	61,396
	Charge for the year	8,514	8,514
	At 31 March 2023	69,910	69,910
	Net Book Value		
	At 31 March 2023	13,400	13,400
	At 31 March 2022	19,412	19,412

12. Debtors

	2023	2022
	£	£
Trade debtors	4,191	-
Prepayments and accrued income	23,945	9,173
Other debtors	-	44,531
	28,136	53,704

13. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

	2023	2022
	£	£
Trade creditors	5,962	364
Accruals and deferred income	41,261	79,552
Social security & pension creditor	8,040	6,395
Other creditors	-	20,187
	55,263	106,498

14. Deferred income

Deferred income relates to grants received relating to future periods.

	2023	2022
	£	£
Opening balance	75,902	-
Resources deferred during the year	34,661	75,902
Amounts released from previous years	(75,902)	-
Closing balance	34,661	75,902

15. Pension costs

The charitable company operates a defined contribution pension scheme, during the period contributions of £11,839 (2022 - £9,038) were paid into the scheme. At the year end, £2,545 was payable to the pension provider.

16. Fund reconciliation

Year ended 31 March 2023

	At 01 April	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	31 March
Unrestricted funds					
General funds	219,036	574,742	(503,534)	(55,623)	234,621
Designated funds					
Low Vision Clinic	15,000	-	-	-	15,000
Relocation Costs	-	-	-	10,000	10,000
Costs of the Merger	-	-	-	20,000	20,000
Service Development	-	-	-	25,000	25,000
Total unrestricted funds	234,036	574,742	(503,534)	(623)	304,621
Restricted funds					
Vision Support Lottery	6,545	358	(6,903)	-	-
Counselling	5,000	-	(5,000)	-	-
Client orders	421	14,701	(12,946)	-	2,176
Suicide Prevention	4,467	6,567	(11,657)	623	-
VCSE Digital Transformation	4,500	-	(4,500)	-	-
GMBC CCF	-	8,252	(8,252)	-	-
Ways to wellness	-	12,765	-	-	12,765
National Lottery - Community Voice	-	147,711	(103,003)	-	44,708
National Lottery – Well Connected	-	15,000	(14,153)	-	847
	20,933	205,354	(166,414)	623	60,496
Total of funds	254,969	780,096	(669,948)	-	365,117

16. Fund reconciliation *(Continued)*

Year ended 31 March 2022

	At 01 April	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	31 March
Unrestricted funds					
General funds	149,555	466,950	(382,588)	(14,881)	279,993
Designated funds					
Low Vision Clinic	-	-	-	15,000	15,000
Total unrestricted funds	149,555	466,950	(382,588)	119	243,036
Restricted funds					
Community Foundation	9,000	-	(9,000)	-	-
Northumbria Police & Crime Commissioner	15,400	-	(15,400)	-	-
National Lottery – Awards for all	119	-	-	(119)	-
Vision Support Lottery	-	48,603	(42,058)	-	6,545
Counselling	-	14,917	(9,917)	-	5,000
Client orders	-	3,730	(3,308)	-	422
Suicide Prevention	-	6,567	(2,100)	-	4,467
VCSE Digital Transformation	-	4,500	-	-	4,500
	24,519	78,317	(81,784)	(119)	20,933
Total of funds	174,074	545,267	(464,372)	-	254,969

Designated funds

Low Vision Clinic – Equipment for the Low Vision Clinic

Relocation costs - The lease for our current premises ends in the coming year. To support a potential relocation, the Trustees have designated funds towards relocation and the associated communications.

Costs of the merger - The Trustees have entered into discussions with another Charity about a merge opportunity. Costs to undertake due diligence and the associated professional fees of merging have been designated to support this activity in the coming year.

Service development - From the emerging Business Plan 2023/24, the Trustees recognise that new areas of work will need some initial investment. To support this activity and ensure the Charity meets its aims and objectives, funds have been designated.

16. Fund reconciliation *(continued)*

Restricted funds

Community Foundation – Bernicia Foundation – To increase employment, skills and training opportunities for sight impaired people and to improve the transition pathway between children's and adult services. The project will work with employers to improve their understanding and awareness of support available to sight impaired employees and candidates.

National Lottery – To work in partnership with Newcastle Vision Support to develop and expand services creating a more joined up holistic and inclusive service across a wider region, reducing social inclusion and health and economic inequalities through increased access to services and support.

Northumbria Police & Crime Commissioner – The project will develop resources to increase cyber security for vulnerable adults and collaborate with partners to share the learning. Digital support will be provided with a focus on staying safe online.

Vision Support – To work in partnership with Newcastle Society for Blind People to develop and expand services creating a more joined up, holistic and inclusive service across a wider region. The project aims to reduce social isolation and health and economic inequalities through increased access to services and support.

Counselling – To support Counselling provision across Tyne & Wear and Northumberland in partnership with Sunderland & Durham Royal Society for the Blind, Northumberland County Blind Association and Newcastle Vision Support.

Client orders – To support information governance, IT security and online accessibility within the Charity.

Suicide Prevention Fund – To support counselling provision across Tyne and Wear and Northumberland in partnership with Sunderland & Durham Royal Society for the Blind, Northumberland County Blind Association and Newcastle Vision Support.

VCSE Digital Transformation – To support information governance, IT security and online accessibility within the Charity.

Ways to Wellness – To support Counselling provision across Tyne & Wear and Northumberland in partnership with Sunderland & Durham Royal Society for the Blind, Northumberland County Blind Association and Newcastle Vision Support.

National Lottery Community Voice – To deliver a community led engagement project in partnership with Bliss=Ability and Your Voice Counts.

National Lottery – Well Connected - To provide digital support to increase independence, confidence and online security.

17. Analysis of net assets between funds

Year ended 31 March 2023	Unrestricted funds	Designated funds	Restricted funds	Total 2023
	£	£	£	£
Fixed assets	13,400	-	-	13,400
Current assets/(liabilities)	266,593	15,000	60,496	351,717
	279,993	15,000	60,496	365,117

Year ended 31 March 2022	Unrestricted funds	Designated funds	Restricted funds	Total 2022
	£	£	£	£
Fixed assets	19,412	-	-	19,412
Current assets/(liabilities)	199,624	15,000	20,933	235,557
	219,036	15,000	20,933	254,696

18. Related party transactions

There have been no related party transactions in the year.

19. Reconciliation of net movement in funds to net cash flow from operating activities

	2023	2022
Net income for the period	110,148	80,895
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation	8,514	3,363
Income from investments	(2,771)	(55)
Decrease / (Increase) in debtors	25,568	(26,695)
(Decrease)/ increase in creditors	(51,235)	24,894
Net cash used in operating activities	90,224	79,402

Sense Ability Matters LTD.

England & Wales - Charity number 1107499

Accounts

Charity Registration No. 1107499

Company Registration No. 05206358 (England and Wales)

VISION & HEARING SUPPORT GATESHEAD AND SOUTH TYNESIDE

ANNUAL REPORT AND UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

VISION & HEARING SUPPORT GATESHEAD AND SOUTH TYNESIDE

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Trustees	L Elder-Atterton K Harrison I Hickson L Rhodes
Co-opted member	A Geddes
Chief executive officer	S French
Charity number	1107499
Company number	05206358
Registered office	Unit 2b The Bradbury Centre For Sight Stonehills Business Pelaw Gateshead Tyne and Wear NE10 0HW
Independent examiner	Haines Watts 17 Queens Lane Newcastle Upon Tyne NE1 1RN

VISION & HEARING SUPPORT GATESHEAD AND SOUTH TYNESIDE

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VISION & HEARING SUPPORT GATESHEAD AND SOUTH TYNESIDE

CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

The 2021/22 period has been another exceptional year for businesses, charities, and individuals. The Coronavirus pandemic (Covid-19) and associated restrictions has continued to impact upon all social care and welfare services, including our own. Nevertheless, we have strived to deliver the best possible services for our beneficiaries and have achieved excellent outcomes through our various projects.

Vision & Hearing Support carefully reopened face to face services during the year in accordance with Government guidelines. The staff Team welcomed beneficiaries back to the premises for individual appointments and group activities. The Living Well with Sight Loss programme has been particularly well attended and is now running monthly.

Building on information gathered from client surveys and national data, Vision and Hearing Support secured funding to directly respond to the emerging needs of people with sensory loss. This included grants for our professional counselling service in response to an increased demand for mental health support; a grant to enable greater access to digital and online services with a focus on online security; and funding to support people with sensory loss to find or remain in employment, volunteering or education.

This work has exceeded expectations with 116 people engaged in our Employability project and 87% of those said that they have felt increased self-esteem and confidence, feel less isolated and have better well-being. We engaged 146 people in the Digital project with a 96% increase in clients reporting that they have good digital skills after receiving our support (versus their response before receiving help).

Referrals for assessments under our local authority Care Act 2014 contracts have increased by 46% from 2019/20. The Board has worked hard in 2021/22 to build upon the progress made in the previous three years to stabilise the Charity's finances and build appropriate reserves for the future. This will be increasingly important as we predict the number of referrals and demand for our service in the coming year will continue to rise.

We welcomed two apprentice level trainees to the organisation under the Government's Kickstart programme. These positions supported our marketing and communications activity and digital support project.

We have spent time building effective partnerships where this will deliver better results for clients. We have sought to develop collaborative solutions where we have identified that people with a range of disabilities share concerns and priorities: isolation and loneliness; getting out and about, digital support and cyber security, access to information and having a voice, and mental health. It is apparent that these issues were exacerbated for people with disabilities during the pandemic and that we can learn from each other's responses. Three Partnership's have been formed during the year: Firstly, with Bliss=Ability, a user-led disability Charity working in South Tyneside; secondly with Your Voice Counts, a Charity supporting people with learning disabilities and autism; and thirdly with Age Gateshead and ACTS working to support older people with digital skills.

VISION & HEARING SUPPORT GATESHEAD AND SOUTH TYNESIDE

CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

We have continued to work with our sight loss sector colleagues across the region and nationally. This has led to a collaborative project supporting mental health across Tyne & wear and Northumberland for which funding was secured at the end of the year. Through Visionary UK, we hosted a sector networking event for employees to meet and catch up after a year of online and remote working.

To strengthen our Governance the Trustees have sought to recruit new Board Members to drive forward the next phase of Vision & Hearing Support. To this end Liam Clark-Brown has been Co-Opted to the Board. Liam has spent the last 10 years leading fundraising, marketing and engagement programmes and teams across a range of third sector organisations and will support our goals to diversify our income and raise our profile. Recruitment is ongoing, supported by a skills audit to ensure Trustees contribute to the development and stability of the business.

As we move into the next financial year, the Trustees will remain agile and responsive to meet the Charity's objectives. This will be underpinned by our ambition to innovate and work collaboratively to achieve the best possible outcomes for people who are sight impaired, severely sight impaired, Deaf of hard of hearing.

Chair - Lin Elder-Atterton MVO

Chief Executive - Sarah French

Dated: 17 Nov 2022

VISION & HEARING SUPPORT GATESHEAD AND SOUTH TYNESIDE

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

The trustees present their report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2022.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the charity's [governing document], the Companies Act 2006 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 1 January 2019)".

Objectives and activities

We are a local Charity working with people who are sight impaired, deaf or hard of hearing on their journey to independence. We ensure people have choice and control over their lives and help others better understand the needs of people with sensory loss.

In South Tyneside and Gateshead over 11,700 people are sight impaired and over 1,800 are registered blind (severely sight impaired). Over 65,500 adults in this area are deaf or hard of hearing.
We deliver early intervention, crisis prevention and integrated social activities to reduce preventable sensory loss, maintain independence and mental wellbeing and reduce social isolation. Our interventions ensure that people;

- can live more independently,
- are less socially isolated,
- are more confident and empowered,
- experience improved wellbeing.

Vision & Hearing Support is an organisation run for charitable purposes. We want to be around today and into the future to support people who are sight impaired, Deaf or hard of hearing. To achieve this, we recognise that there is a need to supplement our strategic aims with business aims that will deliver long term sustainability:

- Diversify our income sources to increase financial sustainability.
- Develop the profile of Vision & Hearing Support, so that more people know about the services we provide, to increase the numbers of people accessing services and the number of people willing to donate and volunteer.
- Engage people with lived experience and with people from a variety of ethnic backgrounds so that we learn from the strengths they bring in their diversity.

The aims of the organisation are embedded within our pathway to independence which incorporates the following stages of intervention;

- Early help
- Lets make a plan
- Independence matters
- Friendship matters

Early Help includes preventative work with communities, health professional and businesses. This activity is supported by regional and national collaborations to harmonise key messages and awareness raising campaigns.

At the point of referral, we work with individuals to create a Personal Plan based on an assessment under the care Act 2014. The plan is person centred to ensure the agreed actions will achieve the persons desired outcomes.

Independence does matter and our services are all designed with independence at the fore. We promote independent living through our integrated approach combining low vision, rehabilitation, enablement, and digital support. These services combine traditional orientation and mobility services with enhanced optometry consultations, enablement advice and guidance, and digital empowerment.

We promote friendship and social activities through Peer support and our connections with local interest groups. Our quality assured Living Well with Sight Loss programme provides information and specialist support through a network of professionals and individuals with lived experience. We facilitate introductions to local community groups and support group leaders to make sessions inclusive and accessible.

Vision & Hearing Support achieves its charitable purpose by delivering a range of services in Gateshead and South Tyneside which are available to people who are sight impaired, severely sight impaired, deaf or hard of hearing and those who are deaf/blind.

We review our aims, objectives and activities each year. This report looks at what we achieved and the outcomes of our work during April 2021 to March 2022.

The trustees have paid due regard to guidance issued by the Charity Commission in deciding what activities the charity should undertake.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Our Vision

- A vision and hearing loss community that is **informed, empowered** and **resilient**

We will:

- **Empower** our community by giving them the tools they need to live independently and make positive decisions.
- Help our community overcome adversity by increasing **resilience** and wellbeing.
- Ensure our community are **informed** by providing first class information, advice and guidance.
- **Influence** positive change locally, regionally and nationally for our community through strong stakeholder and relationship management.

Our Values:

- **Supportive**
- We respond and adapt to the needs of the Vision and hearing loss community. We respect and value all our community equally. We are committed to working together to achieve shared goals.

- **Trustworthy**
- We are accountable. We are open and honest in our approach. We are reliable, act with integrity and do what it takes to support those in need.
- **Caring**
- We are friendly and warm. We take time to listen and promote inclusivity. We treat everyone with dignity and respect.
- **Professional**
- We are passionate and strive to be the best. We actively seek new ideas and innovation to bring about positive change. We rely on evidence to make our decisions. We challenge ourselves to be bold and resourceful. We are determined in the face of adversity.

We will work with colleagues in a supportive environment of mutual respect and empowerment to achieve the best possible outcomes for clients. We will follow the principles set out in the Visionary Sight Loss Charter 2020 and promote collaboration, integrity, and accountability in all we do.
Vision & Hearing Support must continue to work with its Members and beneficiaries to evidence our lived experience input. This is becoming ever more important to funders and society who expect Charities to engage with, listen to and respond directly to those it is there to support. Alongside this, the Board has already recognised the need to diversify Trustee and staff representation to better reflect the communities in which we work.

To achieve our strategy we deliver early intervention, crisis prevention and integrated social activities to reduce preventable sensory loss, maintain independence and mental wellbeing and reduce social isolation. Our interventions ensure that people;

- can live more independently,
- are less socially isolated,
- are more confident and empowered,
- experience improved wellbeing.

ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

In South Tyneside and Gateshead over 11,700 people live with sight loss and over 1,800 are registered blind. Over 65,500 adults in this area are deaf or hard of hearing.
Our unique integrated Pathway to Independence makes sure we provide the right support at the right time for individuals. Our interventions include specialist Counselling, Enablement Assessments, Rehabilitation, Social and Peer Support, Employment, Welfare and Advocacy and Digital support.

We have directly supported 3714 individuals across our services during 2021/22. The figures below show the numbers of individuals accessing each intervention by type during the year:

- 524 people have been referred for and received a personal and holistic assessment
- 94 people have accessed our intensive rehabilitation service
- 3578 people benefitted from our Information, Advice and Guidance
- 228 people accessed our low vision service
- 146 people were given digital support
- 116 people received employment support
- 12 young people have accessed our enhanced transition support
- 34 people received professional Counselling
- 70 people attended our Living Well with Sight Loss
- 1709 people received Tele-support calls from our dedicated volunteers
- Helped 83 people access the benefits they were entitled to, a collective total of £345,396 per annum

These activities have led to;

- 88% of our clients experiencing improved wellbeing
- 79% can live more independently
- 84% are more confident and empowered
- 69% feel less socially isolated

CORE CONTRACTED PROVISION

Specialist person centred needs assessment and Rehabilitation Services – Gateshead Council and South Tyneside Council

We assess what needs people have due to their sensory condition and put in place the services, support, equipment, concessions etc to meet those needs. We carry out the registration process, although we don't hold the register in Gateshead.

In 2019/20 we secured the South Tyneside Sensory Support contract for a further five years which includes equipment provision and support for those with hearing loss.

Our rehabilitation workers provide training on independent living skills, mobility and orientation, viewing techniques, communications, electronic low vision aids such as video magnifiers and new technology such as audio description, e-readers, accessible mobiles etc. They also carry out lighting assessments in people's homes and they issue small aids such as white sticks, canes and symbol canes, liquid level indicators, talking clocks and signature guides. We issue daylight bulbs as many people are struggling with the light provided by traditional low energy bulbs.

3090 new referrals made to this service during 2021/22:

- Gateshead - 1442
- South Tyneside – 1648

Integrated Low Vision Clinic – Gateshead residents only (Newcastle and Gateshead CGG)

We assess people's residual vision and prescribe optical low vision aids such as magnifiers, telescopes, high add readers etc. to help maximise use of residual vision. We also consider viewing techniques (such as eccentric viewing), lighting, colour contrast and posture all of which will again help people make best use of remaining vision. We provide a two-year review, although people can re-refer themselves sooner if they feel their sight is deteriorating. Information, Advice and Guidance is available when needed along with rehabilitation support, triage reviews and equipment advice.

During 2021/22 our key outputs as part of our low vision clinic work included:

- 75 low vision clinics were held
- 228 low vision assessments were carried out
- 1832 people were supported through the service

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT PROVISION

The following activities contribute to the overall success of Vision & Hearing Support's work by complementing and adding value to statutory provision:

Welfare Rights and Advocacy

We provide advice and support on disability benefits such as DLA/PIP, Attendance Allowance, Employment Support Allowance as well as Universal Credit. Help is provided from completion of the initial application, support when attending assessments all the way through to representation at Tribunal if the application isn't successful.

Equipment Library

At The Bradbury Centre for Sight in Gateshead people can call us or visit for specialist advice and information on a wide range specialist equipment. The library contains various pieces of digital and analogue equipment which we lend to people on a short-term basis so that they can try them out at home before deciding whether they would like to buy one (either they can buy it themselves if they can afford to do so or we can help to find funding).

Living Well with Sight Loss Programme

This course is for people who are newly visually impaired or new to our services. It runs for 3 weeks with 1 half-day session per week looking at the various aspects of visual impairment and help that is available. As well as providing lots of information and advice it also provides invaluable peer support.

Visual Impairment Awareness Training (VIAT)

Our team of experienced sight loss professionals provide VIAT to a wide audience including a number of hospitals, council departments, businesses, charities and care homes.

Digital & Cyber Security Support

Through a one-year grant from the Northumbria Police & Crime Commissioner Operation Payback Fund, we provided a range of support and tuition on how to make the most of digital and online services whilst avoiding online fraud and cyber scams. We engaged 1022 clients and provided 146 intensive interventions, leading to 88% of participants reporting feeling more confident and empowered when online following our cyber security information, advice and guidance, compared to 33% pre-intervention.

Employment & Skills Support

Funded by the People's Postcode Lottery and Bernicia Foundation, the project aimed to enhance employability and long-term future prospects of those engaged within this project.
Of the 116 people engaging in the project, 53 have been supported with accessing specialist employment support, 43 are engaged in local employment pathways, 11 have been supported directly by Vision & Hearing Support activity, and 9 have joined local groups.
87% of clients who engaged in this project have said that they have felt increased self-esteem and confidence, feel less isolated and have better well-being.

Counselling

Through funding from Independent Age, we delivered a professional Counselling service for people who are vision impaired. The Counsellor delivering the service is registered blind and offers tailored support to individuals and their families/ carers to help reduce isolation and increase emotional and mental wellbeing. We use British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) recognised scales GAD-7 and PHQ-9 monitor clients progress.
After receiving counselling, 80% of clients reported their anxiety had reduced and their feelings of depression were less. Following completion of the Counselling sessions, clients are supported through group sessions that we had developed as a next step. The group meets bi-monthly and is led by the clients themselves, promoting their independence and encouraging them to share their experiences with their peers.

Telephone Support Service

Operated entirely by volunteers, all of whom have direct experience of sight loss, our Telephone Support Service calls service users whom we are aware are particularly isolated due to other mobility issues or whom we haven't had recent contact. The support offered includes simply being a friendly voice to talk to, we promote the activities and services offered by Vision & Hearing Support and if anyone called shares any concerns then the volunteer team refer them to our sight loss support team. During the year 2021/22 volunteers supported 1709 individuals through the project.

Activity and Social Groups

We are delighted that we can once again welcome groups to meet at our premises following the pandemic. We will continue to work closely with independent groups to share information, provide support as required and to introduce new members.

British Wireless for the Blind (BWFTB) and RNIB Talking Books

We are the agents for BWFTB and issue radios, CD players etc on their behalf to people who are eligible (they must be registered either Sight Impaired (SI) or Severely Sight Impaired (SSI) and be in receipt of a qualifying means tested benefit (such as housing benefit or council tax benefit amongst others). We also help people with their initial applications for the RNIB talking book service.

Volunteers

We have a dedicated team of volunteers who support our work. Unfortunately, many of these activities ceased due to Covid-19 restrictions but we will reinstate this essential support through our emerging and future projects. Volunteers cover many different roles at Vision & Hearing Support from reception, telephone befriending and administration support. A team of volunteer drivers are also a vital resource who transport service users to and from medical appointments, as well as enabling the, to access a range of support services provided by Vision & Hearing Support.

Newsletter

We have produced a regular newsletter promoting both Vision & Hearing Support services and other issues of interest and relevance to people who are sight impaired, Deaf or hard of hearing. This is available in various formats i.e. large print, CD, and electronically.

Case Studies and Impact

Identifying, measuring and reporting upon the impact had by the wide range of support activities provided by Vision & Hearing Support is not straight forward. We continue to work with our funders and commissioners to not only supply the contractual monitoring information they require, but to also evidence the case for continued further investment in Vision & Hearing Supports work.

We are also continuing to work with Visionary, the national umbrella body for local sight loss charities, as they develop shared output, outcome and impact measurement tools for the sight loss sector.

However, there is nothing more powerful than hearing real life examples of the work and impact delivered by our dedicated team of sight loss professionals, supported by our volunteer team.

We have shared below a case study and a selection of quotes received throughout the year, that demonstrate the work we do. This example, along with many cases we haven't shared, shows that our personal and thorough approach delivers tangible outcomes for people and a lasting impact on their lives and the lives of those around them.

Case Study;

> A 49-year-old male lost his job due to sight loss, he then lost is home due to financial difficulties. Consequently, he had exceptionally low self-esteem and deteriorating mental health.
>
> He accessed the employment project from an internal referral and was supported with an action plan. As a result of the information, advice and guidance given, the client secured several interviews and was offered full time employment. However, the job requirements included a 6am start which was not compatible with public transport.
>
> After being advised about the Access to Work Scheme and how it works, the client applied for transport support and now gets subsidised travel to and from work – the client pays a contribution of £2.30 per journey (the price of public transport) rather than the full taxi fare (estimated at £20).

Quotes;

"Having a stroke and being blinded was a massive shock in my lifetime, I had many visits to the eye hospital for many tests and felt very lonely and depressed. After being contacted by V&HS, I began to feel so much better, your charity is such a massive and worthwhile charity that made my life worth living again. Don't think I could have survived without it."

"All my challenges were discerned and understood by those who helped. It was dealt with in a swift, timely manner. I felt comfortable with the way things were done, and soon felt more confident in my communication with others. Especially the amplifier on my telephone, landline and the loop equipment"

"Yes, the team helped me through a very stressful period when my hearing aids had failed, I was stressed and agitated. Equipment was provided that helped alleviate these problems, help was giving with making appointments at audiology and doctors"

"After having my stroke I felt my world had ended, the hospital were great but your staff were very understanding and helped me tremendously, providing me with aids to help me and just friendly listening to my worries and lifting my depression to get my life back."

"Excellent service. Helen was fantastic in doing everything she could and made life a little easier and was really lovely to deal with. Much appreciated"

"I had recently had one eye removed and had dry macular and damage from radiotherapy in the remaining. It was a very traumatic experience and Vision & Hearing Support helped me cope and taught me how to deal with the loss. I will be forever grateful to Mike for support then and the ongoing help and advice"

"I feel the service responded by looking at the bigger picture In terms of how they supported me, and helped create not just a one off response, but emphasised they provide ongoing help, when needed, which in my present circumstances is very reassuring"

"I liked the telephone calls from Pat, Pauline and Craig to check I was ok. Claire's counselling every week has kept me motivated to carry out household tasks and carry on. She is a huge asset to your team."

"Helped me get through and gave me confidence after sight loss, and actually gave me back my life"

"Very efficient service, staff are hard working and caring people who understand the problems they are dealing with. Most, if not all of them suffer from the things we suffer from. Down to earth advice and practical equipment. This service is a life saver. Thank you all."

"I cannot praise enough the support I have received from the team who have dealt with me. Their kindness and understanding has helped me cope not only with the loss of my sight but the loss of my husband."

"It was good to find a place where I could get information, advice and suggestions to help me make adjustments to make life easier for my reduced sight. I think you provide a valuable service at a time when people experiencing sight loss feel vulnerable"

"Someone has always been available to help or advise me as I've needed. At the time of my diagnosis I was given access to a councillor and the sessions commenced straight away. This helped enormously during my most vulnerable time."

"I was given suitable advice and kept up to date with my assessment and provided with equipment to help maintain my independence and self confidence"

Financial review

Financial performance and position

Financial performance in 2021/22 has improved and delivered some stability for the Charity moving forwards. This is largely due to support through emergency Coronavirus funds which will secure our services to meet future demand by increasing our reserves.

Income in 2021/22 was £545,267 - representing an increase of £38,634 to the previous year (£506,633 – 2020/21). This is chiefly because of one-off emergency coronavirus support grants that will stabilise our activities into the future years enabling us to respond to demand.

Our expenditure has increased by £62,356 on the previous year, as we reopen services, respond to an increased demand and deliver specific grant funded projects. Expenditure in 2021/22 was £464,372 compared to £402,016 the previous year (2020/21).

Reserves policy

The Board has reviewed the reserves of the Charity and concluded that to allow the Charity to be managed efficiently and to provide a buffer for uninterrupted services, attempts should be made to increase general reserves.

It is the policy of the Charity that unrestricted funds which have not been designated for a specific use should be maintained at a level equivalent to between six and nine month's expenditure. The directors consider that reserves at this level will ensure that, in the event of a significant drop in funding, they will be able to continue the Charity's current activities while consideration is given to ways in which additional funds may be raised.

The Charity has several restricted funds for identified projects, which have specific budgets and timescales. In order to reach the agreed level of reserves the charitable company intends to continue to look for increased income from our own fundraising efforts, as well as obtaining additional grant funding to increase unrestricted income.
At 31 March 2022 the charitable company held total reserves of £254,969 (2021: £174,074).
We will continue to review levels of expenditure.

Our main core contracted income has remained stable and we have performed well against this income achieving all the required performance indicators.

Key income streams:

- Gateshead Council
- South Tyneside Council
- Newcastle and Gateshead CCG
- Community Foundation – Bernicia Foundation
- Northumbria Police & Crime Commissioner
- People's Postcode Lottery

The receipt of this funding enables the charitable company to meet its charitable objectives to provide support advice and activities to people who are Sight Impaired, Severely Sight Impaired, Deaf, hard of hearing or Deaf/blind.

Investment policy and objectives

Under the memorandum and articles of association, the Charity has the power to make any investment which the Trustees see fit.

Risk management

The Board of Trustees reviewed the major risks to which the Charity is exposed. A risk register is in place and is updated regularly and at least annually.

Where appropriate, systems and procedures have been established to mitigate the risks the Charity faces.

The Risk Management process itself is periodically reviewed to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the Charity.

Risks are minimised by the implementation of internal controls with procedures for authorisation of all transactions and projects.

Services continued to be externally evaluated and inspected by funders.

The excellent outcomes from these evaluations point to the excellent quality of delivery for all operational aspects of the Charity.

Significant external risks to funding have led to the development of the new Strategic Direction which allows for the diversification of funding.

FUTURE PLANS

The strategic aims of Vision & Hearing Support remain the same, but our work has adapted to meet the needs identified by clients during and resulting from Covid-19 and the associated restrictions. The coming year will focus on;

Digital Empowerment and Cyber Security

VHS has been working with people with sensory loss over the previous year to enable them to use online resources for essential services.

The Digital Support Project will deliver a programme to support people with sensory loss access information, technology, and cyber security advice. The Digital activity will be centred on a digital library and volunteer peer support. Personalised digital assessments will be undertaken by our professional lived experience team to ensure people receive relevant and appropriate advice for their needs. The assessment will form part of our Pathway to Independence and a personal plan will be developed to record the aims and outcomes. Cyber security will be embedded into all activities to keep those most vulnerable safe.

Employability and Transition Pathway

We want to support sight impaired, Deaf and hard of hearing people into sustainable employment and engage with them at a younger age, ideally as they leave children's services. This Transition pathway will help build relationships and inform personalised support plans. Alongside this we will work closely with employers to help them make their organisation accessible for people who are sight impaired, Deaf or hard of hearing.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

We experienced a substantial rise in the number of calls relating to mental health since the pandemic began in March 2020. Social isolation, loneliness and low mood were exacerbated by COVID-19 and measures to reduce infection rates – disproportionately so for people who are sight impaired, Deaf or hard of hearing.

We will continue to deliver professional counselling support and embed the service into our Pathway to independence. We will grow the service to include friends and family sessions, staff and volunteer training and group peer support.

Community and Volunteer engagement

We will recruit volunteers to provide one-to-one peer mentoring and facilitate people accessing the right support at the right time. Activities will come from our existing interventions/ activities but also from wider partnerships within the voluntary and public sector.
This work will enhance the support provided through statutory contracts and ensure the needs of our clients are met.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

The Charity is controlled by its governing document, a deed of trust, and constitutes a limited company, limited by guarantee, as defined by the Companies Act 2006.

Recruitment and appointment of new Trustees

The Charity may by ordinary resolution appoint a person who is willing to act as trustee and determine the rotation in which any additional Trustees are to retire. No person other than a trustee retiring by rotation may be appointed a trustee at any general meeting unless:

- He or she is recommended for re-election by the Trustees or
- Not less than fourteen nor more than thirty-five clear days before the date of the meeting, the Charity is given notice that:
    - i) Is signed by two members entitled to vote at the meeting.
    - ii) States the members' intention to propose the appointment of a person as a trustee.
    - iii) Contains the details that, if the person were to be appointed, the Charity would have to file at Companies House, including the names and details of two referees who have not proposed their election; and
    - iv) Is signed by the person who is to be proposed to show his or her consent - full election to the Board will be at the end of a six month probationary period and will be at the discretion of the Board of Directors.

Organisational structure

The Board of directors meet quarterly and administer the Charity. The Board of directors may delegate any of their powers to sub-committees consisting of such members of their body and/or Charity as they think fit.

Any sub-committee so formed shall in the exercise of the powers so delegated conform to any regulations imposed on it by the directors.

Induction and training of new Trustees

New Trustees undergo an induction to brief them on:

- their legal obligations under charity and company law;
- the Charity Commission on public benefit;
- inform them of the content of the memorandum and articles of association;
- the committee and decision making processes;
- the business plan; and - recent financial performance of the charitable company.

During the induction they meet key employees and other Trustees.

Trustees are encouraged to attend appropriate external training events where these will facilitate the undertaking of their role.

Key management remuneration

The Trustees consider the Board of Trustees as comprising of the key management personnel of the charitable company in charge of directing, controlling and operating the charitable company. All Trustees give their time freely and no trustee remuneration was paid in the year.

Partnerships and Collaborations

We continue to work in close co-operation with both Gateshead and South Tyneside Councils, and Newcastle Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). We have engaged in the NHS restructure of CCGs and are actively involved in the emerging Integrated Care System (ICS) and Primary Care Networks (PCN) under the North East North Cumbria (NENC) Integrated Care Board.

We have effective partnerships with Royal National Institute for the Blind, Newcastle Vision Support, RNID, Visionary and several voluntary sector organisations with whom we are working with in both Gateshead and South Tyneside, and our wider network both regionally and nationally.

During the year we have formed a collaboration with local Charities Your Voice Counts and Bliss=Ability. This has led to emerging projects to support people with disabilities and learn from each other's experiences and approaches.

Risk management

The Board of Trustees reviewed the major risks to which the Charity is exposed. A risk register is in place and is updated regularly and at least annually.

Where appropriate, systems and procedures have been established to mitigate the risks the Charity faces.

The Risk Management process itself is periodically reviewed to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the Charity.

Risks are minimised by the implementation of internal controls with procedures for authorisation of all transactions and projects.

Services continued to be externally evaluated and inspected by funders.

The excellent outcomes from these evaluations point to the excellent quality of delivery for all operational aspects of the Charity.

Lin Elder-Atterton

L Elder-Atterton
Trustee
Dated: 17.NOV.'22

VISION & HEARING SUPPORT GATESHEAD AND SOUTH TYNESIDE

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

TO THE TRUSTEES OF VISION & HEARING SUPPORT GATESHEAD AND SOUTH TYNESIDE

I report to the trustees on my examination of the financial statements of Vision & Hearing Support Gateshead and South Tyneside ("the charity") for the year ended 31 March 2022.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the charity (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 (the 2006 Act).

Having satisfied myself that the financial statements of the charity are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of the charity's financial statements carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act). In carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

Since the charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1 accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2 the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
3 the financial statements do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
4 the financial statements have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the financial statements to be reached.

Donna Bulmer BA (Hons) ACA
For and on behalf of Haines Watts

17 Queens Lane
Newcastle Upon Tyne
NE1 1RN

Dated: 20 December 2022

VISION & HEARING SUPPORT GATESHEAD AND SOUTH TYNESIDE

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2022 £	Restricted funds 2022 £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
Income from:					
Donations and legacies	2	46,508	73,587	120,095	128,253
Charitable activities	3	419,276	4,730	424,006	378,289
Investments	4	55	-	55	91
Other trading income		1,111	-	1,111	-
Total income		466,950	78,317	545,267	506,633
Expenditure on:					
Charitable activities	5	382,588	81,784	464,372	402,016
Net income for the year before transfers		84,362	(3,467)	80,895	104,617
Transfers between funds		119	(119)	-	-
Net movement in funds		84,481	(3,586)	80,895	104,617
Fund balances at 1 April 2021		149,555	24,519	174,074	69,457
Fund balances at 31 March 2022		234,036	20,933	254,969	174,074

VISION & HEARING SUPPORT GATESHEAD AND SOUTH TYNESIDE

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

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

Prior financial year

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2021 £	Restricted funds 2021 £	Total 2021 £
Income from:				
Donations and legacies	**2**	17,391	110,862	128,253
Charitable activities	**3**	378,829	-	378,289
Investments	**4**	91	-	91
Total income		395,771	110,862	506,633
Expenditure on:				
Charitable activities	**5**	285,241	116,775	402,016
Gross transfers between funds				
Net income/(expenditure) for the year/ Net movement in funds		110,530	(5,913)	104,617
Fund balances at 1 April 2020		39,025	30,432	69,457
Fund balances at 31 March 2021		149,555	24,519	174,074

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

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

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

VISION & HEARING SUPPORT GATESHEAD AND SOUTH TYNESIDE

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 MARCH 2022

	Notes	2022 £	£	2021 £	£
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	9		19,412		17,913
Current assets					
Debtors	10	53,704		24,009	
Cash at bank and in hand		288,351		213,756	
		342,055		237,765	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	11	(106,498)		(22,172)	
Net current assets			235,557		215,593
Total assets less current liabilities			254,969		233,506
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	12		-		(59,432)
Net assets			254,969		174,074
Income funds					
Restricted funds	13		20,933		24,519
Unrestricted funds			219,036		149,555
Designated funds			15,000		-
			254,969		174,074

VISION & HEARING SUPPORT GATESHEAD AND SOUTH TYNESIDE

BALANCE SHEET (CONTINUED)

AS AT 31 MARCH 2022

The company is entitled to the exemption from the audit requirement contained in section 477 of the Companies Act 2006, for the year ended 31 March 2022.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for ensuring that the charity keeps accounting records which comply with section 386 of the Act and for preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company as at the end of the financial year and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the financial year in accordance with the requirements of sections 394 and 395 and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the company.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year in question in accordance with section 476.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies' subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees on 17th November 2022

L Elder-Atterton
Trustee

Company Registration No. 05206358

VISION & HEARING SUPPORT GATESHEAD AND SOUTH TYNESIDE

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

	Notes	2022 £	2022 £	2021 £	2021 £
Cash flows from operating activities					
Cash generated from operations	**17**		79,402		117,998
Investing activities					
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(4,862)		(7,932)	
Investment income received		52		91	
Net cash (used in)/generated from investing activities			(4,810)		(7,841)
Net cash used in financing activities			-		-
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents			74,592		110,157
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year			213,759		103,599
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year			288,351		213,756

1 Accounting policies

Charity information

Vision & Hearing Support Gateshead and South Tyneside is a private company limited by guarantee incorporated in England and Wales. The registered office is Unit 2b, The Bradbury Centre For Sight Stonehills Business, Pelaw, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, NE10 0HW.

1.1 Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the charity's Memorandum and Articles of Association, the Companies Act 2006 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 1 January 2019)". The charity is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

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

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, modified to include the revaluation of freehold properties and to include investment properties and certain financial instruments at fair value. The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below.

1.2 Going concern

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis. The trustees have reviewed and considered the level of funds and forecast income and expenditure for 12 months from the date of approving the accounts. The budgeted income and expenditure is sufficient considering the level of reserves for the charity to be able to continue as a going concern.

1.3 Charitable funds

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

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

1.4 Income

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

Cash donations are recognised on receipt. Other donations are recognised once the charity has been notified of the donation, unless performance conditions require deferral of the amount. Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant is recognised at the time of the donation.

Donated services or facilities are recognised as income when the charity has control over the item, any conditions associated with the donated item have been met, the receipt of the economic benefit from the use by the charity of the item is probable and that economic benefit can be measured reliably. On receipt, donated services and facilities are recognised on the basis of the value of the gift to the charity which is the amount the charity would have been willing to pay to obtain services or facilities of equivalent economic benefit on the open market; a corresponding amount is then recognised in expenditure in the period of the receipt.

1 Accounting policies

Income from grants, including capital grants, is included within income when communication has been received in writing of both the amount and the period to which they relate. In the event that the grant was received in advance of the period to which it relates, the grant is therefore deferred and included within creditors. When the grants are for a particular restricted purpose, this income is included in incoming resources of restricted funds when receivable.

Income from other trading activities is recognised when the amount of income can be measured reliably and when it is probable that future economic benefits will flow to the entity. The charitable company recognises this income once goods or services have been sold, and are stated net of trade discounts and value added tax.

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the bank.

1.5 Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is classified under the following activity headings:

- Expenditure on charitable activities includes the costs of providing services to the visually impaired to further the purposes of the charity and their associated support costs.
- Other expenditure represents those items not falling into any other heading.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

Support costs have been differentiated between governance and other support costs. Governance costs comprise all costs involving the public accountability of the charitable company and its compliance with regulation and good practice. These costs include costs related to independent examination and legal fees.

All costs are allocated between the expenditure categories of the Statement of Financial Activities on a basis designed to reflect the use of the resource. Costs relating to a particular activity are allocated directly, others are apportioned on a staff time basis.

1.6 Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are initially measured at cost and subsequently measured at cost or valuation, net of depreciation and any impairment losses.

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

Fixtures and fittings	15% on reducing balance

The gain or loss arising on the disposal of an asset is determined as the difference between the sale proceeds and the carrying value of the asset, and is recognised in net income/(expenditure) for the year.

1 Accounting policies

1.7 Impairment of fixed assets

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

If an impairment loss subsequently reverses, the carrying amount of the asset is increased to the revised estimate of its recoverable amount, but not in excess of the amount that would have been determined had no impairment loss been recognised for the asset in prior years. A reversal of an impairment loss is recognised immediately in the statement of financial activities.

1.8 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities.

1.9 Financial instruments

The charity only has financial assets and liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value.

1.10 Taxation

The charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.

1.11 Employee benefits

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

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

1.12 Retirement benefits

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

2 Donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds	**Restricted funds**	**Total**	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total
	£		**£**	£	£	£
Donations and gifts	10,761	-	10,761	2,927	-	2,927
Grants receivable	35,747	73,587	109,334	14,464	110,862	125,326
	46,508	73,587	120,095	17,391	110,862	128,253

2 Donations and legacies

Grants receivable for core activities						
National Lottery	-	47,603	47,603	-	71,142	71,142
Gateshead Council	-	-	-	10,000	-	10,000
Northumbria Police & Crime Commissioner	-	-	-	-	15,400	15,400
Thomas Pocklington	-	-	-	-	10,000	10,000
Community Foundation - Bernicia Foundation	-	-	-	-	9,000	9,000
The William Leech Charity	-	-	-	-	3,500	3,500
Counselling	-	14,917	14,917	-	-	-
Suicide Prevention	-	6,567	6,567	-	-	-
VCSE Transformation	-	4,500	4,500	-	-	-
Other	35,747	-	35,747	4,464	1,820	6,284
	35,747	73,587	109,334	14,464	110,862	125,326

3 Charitable activities

	Total 2022 £	Total 202 £
Services provided under contract	375,495	354,321
Other income	48,511	23,968
	424,006	378,289

4 Investments

	Unrestricted funds 2022 £	Unrestricted funds 2021 £
Interest receivable	55	91

5 Charitable activities,

	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
Staff costs	291,373	234,234
Depreciation and impairment	3,363	2,097
Other expenditure	152,420	143,536
	447,156	379,867
Share of support costs (see note 6)	13,566	18,609
Share of governance costs (see note 6)	3,650	3,540
	464,372	402,016
Analysis by fund		
Unrestricted funds	382,588	285,241
Restricted funds	81,784	116,775
	464,372	402,016

6 Support costs

	Support costs £	Governance costs £	2022 £	Support costs £	Governance costs £	2021 £
Staff costs	13,526	-	13,526	14,344	-	14,344
Depreciation	3,363	-	3,363	2,097	-	2,097
Professional and consultancy fees	40	-	40	2,168	-	2,168
Legal and professional	-	3,650	-	-	3,540	3,540
	16,929	3,650	20,579	18,609	3,540	22,419
Analysed between						
Charitable activities	16,929	3,	20,579	18,609	3,540	22,149

Governance costs includes payments to the independent examiner of £3,650 (2021 - £3,540) for the independent examination.

7 Trustees

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

8 Employees

The average monthly number of employees during the year was:

	2022 Number	2021 Number
Chief executive officer	1	1
Support, advice and activities	16	13
Administration	1	1
Total	18	15

Employment costs	2022 £	2021 £
Wages and salaries	286,120	226,805
Social security costs	20,689	14,212
Other pension costs	9,038	7,561
	315,847	248,578

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

9 Tangible fixed assets

	Fixtures and fittings £
Cost	
At 1 April 2021	75,946
Additions	4,862
At 31 March 2022	80,808
Depreciation and impairment	
At 1 April 2021	58,033
Depreciation charged in the year	3,363
At 31 March 2022	61,396
Carrying amount	
At 31 March 2022	19,412
At 31 March 2021	17,913

10 Debtors

Amounts falling due within one year:	2022 £	2021 £
Other debtors	44,531	15,400
Prepayments and accrued income	9,173	8,609
	53,704	24,009

11 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2022 £	2021 £
Other taxation and social security	10,045	4,677
Trade creditors	364	2,419
Other creditors	12,000	6,413
Accruals and deferred income	84,089	8,663
	106,498	22,172

12 Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year

	2022 £	2021 £
Other creditors	-	59,432
	-	59,432

13 Restricted funds

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

Current year

		Movement in funds			
	Balance at 1 April 2021	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Transfers	Balance at 31 March
	£	£	£	£	£
Community Foundation – Bernicia Foundation	9,000	-	(9,000)	-	-
Northumbria Police & Crime Commissioner	15,400	-	(15,400)	-	-
National Lottery – Awards for all	119	-	-	(119)	-
Vision Support Project	-	48,603	(42,058)	-	6,545
Counselling	-	14,917	(9,917)	-	5,000
Client Orders	-	3,730	(3,309)	-	421
Suicide Prevention	-	6,567	(2,100)	-	4,467
VCSE Digital Transformation	-	4,500	-	-	4,500
	24,519	78,317	(81,784)	(119)	20,933

Prior year

		Movement in funds			
	Balance at 1 April 2020	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Transfers	Balance at 31 March
	£	£	£	£	£
The William Leech Charity	-	3,500	(3,500)	-	--
National Lottery – Joint Project	30,432	30,728	(61,160)	-	--
Community Foundation – Bernicia Foundation	-	9,000	-	-	9,000
Northumbria Police & Crime Commissioner	-	15,400	-	-	15,400
Thomas Pocklington Trust	-	10,000	(10,000)	-	-
National Lottery – Awards for all	-	9,867	(9,568)	-	119
National Lottery – Community Coronavirus Support	-	30,727	(30,727)	-	-
Other	-	1,820	(1,820)	-	-
	30,432	110,862	(116,775)	-	24,519-

13 Restricted funds

The unrestricted fund represents the free funds of the charity, which are not designated for particular purposes.

The major restricted funds as detailed above relate to the following activities carried out by the charity:-

Community Foundation – Bernicia Foundation
To increase employment, skills and training opportunities for sight impaired people and to improve the transition pathway between children's and adult services. The project will work with employers to improve their understanding and awareness of support available to sight impaired employees and candidates.

National Lottery - Joint Project (formerly Joint Lottery)
To work in partnership with Newcastle Vision Support to develop and expand services creating a more joined up holistic and inclusive service across a wider region, reducing social isolation and health and economic inequalities through increased access to services and support.

Community Foundation - Bernicia Foundation
To increase employment, skills and training opportunities for sight impaired people and to improve the transition pathway between children's and adult services. The project will work with employers to improve their understanding and awareness of support available to sight impaired employees and candidates.

Northumbria Police & Crime Commissioner, Operation Payback Fund
The project will develop resources to increase cyber security for vulnerable adults and collaborate with partners to share the learning. Digital support will be provided with a focus on staying safe online.

Peoples Postcode Lottery
To increase employment, skills and training opportunities for sight impaired people and to improve the transition pathway between children's and adult services. The project will work with employers to improve their understanding and awareness of support available to sight impaired employees and candidates.

National Lottery - Joint Project (formerly Joint Lottery)
To work in partnership with Newcastle Vision Support to develop and expand services creating a more joined up holistic and inclusive service across a wider region, reducing social isolation and health and economic inequalities through increased access to services and support.

Suicide Prevention Fund
To support Counselling provision across Tyne & Wear and Northumberland in partnership with Sunderland & Durham Royal Society for the Blind, Northumberland County Blind Association and Newcastle Vision Support.

Independent Age
To provide bespoke counselling services for people with sensory loss to reduce isolation, increase confidence and improve mental health and wellbeing.

13 Restricted funds

14 Analysis of net assets between funds

Current year

	Unrestricted funds 2022	Restricted funds 2022	Designated funds 2022	Total 2022
	£	£	£	£
Fund balances at 31 March 2022 are represented by:				
Tangible assets	19,412	-	-	19,412
Current assets/(liabilities)	199,624	20,933	15,000	235,557
Long term liabilities	-	-	-	-
	219,036	20,933	15,000	254,696

Prior year

	Unrestricted funds 2021	Restricted funds 2021	Designated funds 2021	Total 2021
	£	£	£	£
Fund balances at 31 March 2021 are represented by:				
Tangible assets	17,913	-	-	17,913
Current assets/(liabilities)	191,074	24,519	-	215,593
Long term liabilities	(59,432)	-	-	(59,432)
	149,555	24,519	-	174,074

15 Related party transactions

There were no disclosable related party transactions during the year (2021 - none).

16 Operating lease commitments

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

	2022	2021
	£	£
Within one year	15,765	15,765
Between two and five years	3,747	19,513
	19,512	35,277

17 Cash generated from operations

	2022	2021
	£	£
Surplus for the year	80,895	104,617
Adjustments for:		
Investment income recognised in statement of financial activities	(55)	(91)
Depreciation and impairment of tangible fixed assets	3,363	2,097
Movements in working capital:		
Decrease/(increase) in debtors	(29,695)	4,378
Increase in creditors	24,894	6,997
Cash generated from operations	79,402	117,998

18 Analysis of changes in net funds

The charity had no debt during the year.

Sense Ability Matters LTD.

England & Wales - Charity number 1107499

Accounts

Charity Registration No. 1107499

Company Registration No. 05206358 (England and Wales)

VISION & HEARING SUPPORT GATESHEAD AND SOUTH TYNESIDE

ANNUAL REPORT AND UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

VISION & HEARING SUPPORT GATESHEAD AND SOUTH TYNESIDE

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Trustees	L Elder-Atterton K Harrison I Hickson (Appointed 26 November 2020) L Rhodes
Co-opted member	A Geddes
Chief executive officer	S French
Charity number	1107499
Company number	05206358
Registered office	Unit 2b The Bradbury Centre For Sight Stonehills Business Pelaw Gateshead Tyne and Wear NE10 0HW
Independent examiner	Haines Watts 17 Queens Lane Newcastle Upon Tyne NE1 1RN

VISION & HEARING SUPPORT GATESHEAD AND SOUTH TYNESIDE

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VISION & HEARING SUPPORT GATESHEAD AND SOUTH TYNESIDE

CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

The 2020/21 period has been an exceptional year for all businesses, charities, and individuals. The Coronavirus pandemic (Covid-19) has led to unprecedented challenges across all social care and welfare services, including our own.

At the very start of the calendar year, the country was struck by Covid-19 and on 23rd March 2020 lockdown measures were enforced. The virus control measures had a significant impact on Vision & Hearing Support's activities which were face to face, often involving close physical contact, and most appointments with people identified by the Government as 'high risk'.

Ahead of the enforced lockdown, the Team were enabled to work from home and appointments were carried out remotely to avoid contact with vulnerable, or 'high risk', people. Throughout the year, Vision & Hearing Support has worked positively with stakeholders, funders, and partners to agree innovative ways to deliver outcomes. This work has been supported by our volunteers who have quickly adapted to new, remote systems and continue to support vision impaired people with telephone befriending. Despite the personal and professional challenges faced by the staff team and volunteers, they have worked tirelessly to ensure our services reached the people who need and rely on them.

We have retained all but one member of staff in productive work to deliver our charitable objectives. Where this was not possible, with one part time cleaning post, we have accessed the Job Retention Scheme to provide stability and security.

During the first lockdown, we carried out two client surveys and two staff surveys.
The first client surveys identified that 75% of those responding reported concerns about their mental health, feeling isolated, loneliness, feeling down and or depressed. 88% were concerned about getting out and about and the impact of not doing so on their safety, confidence, independence, and mental health.
A second survey focussed on the welfare calls and the impact they had on clients since 23rd March 2020. This survey found that 92% reported that our welfare support calls made them feel less isolated. 92% felt that their emotional health & wellbeing had increased because of the calls. 94% wished the calls to continue after lockdown and 94% rated our calls as very important to them during lockdown.
In response to these results, we secured emergency Coronavirus Community Support Funding to deliver increased digital support and befriending volunteers, professional counselling and additional rehabilitation support. This work ran from November 2020 to March 2021 and we received over 90 referrals into the project and contacted over 200 people. Over 50 people have signed up for telephone befriending and 5 for counselling. To help us and our existing volunteers deliver this we have recruited 5 health and social care students from Newcastle College and 4 vision impaired people as volunteers.
Alongside the additional work in response to coronavirus, we are now seeing the impact of limited hospital, GP and optometrist access over the last year as our assessment referrals escalate as services open up. We anticipate this trend will continue as we better promote the service and raise our profile across the area.
Our staff surveys were undertaken to learn lessons from our COVID-19 response and to understand what parts of our new delivery model could and should continue beyond the pandemic. The feedback to the COVID-19 response was positive and will be incorporated into our Business Continuity Plan.

VISION & HEARING SUPPORT GATESHEAD AND SOUTH TYNESIDE

CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

The financial impact of Covid-19 and the virus control measures has been mostly felt in our ability to fundraise and financially forward plan. The Trustees and Staff Team continue to work closely with our funders, commissioners, and donors to ensure our services are relevant and we have been supported both strategically and financially.

Alongside the operational challenges brought by Covid-19, the Board has worked hard in 2020/21 to build upon the progress made in the previous two years to stabilise the Charity's finances and build appropriate reserves for the future. This will be increasingly important as we predict a steep rise in referrals and demand for our service in the coming year as restrictions are lifted and the full impact of the pandemic is revealed.

To augment our recent success and organisational review, the Trustees and Members reviewed the name and brand of the Charity to ensure it fully reflects the future purpose and strength of our ambition. As a result, from 1st March 2021 Sight Service was renamed as Vision & Hearing Support. This name change reflects our purpose and recent incorporation of services for people who are deaf and hard of hearing and tinnitus support. The name Vision and Hearing Support allows us to present ourselves as a holistic sensory service with a clear and concise brand.

To strengthen our Governance the Trustees have sought to recruit new Board Members to drive forward the next phase of Vision & Hearing Support. To this end Ian Hickson, Optometrist, joined the Board in November 2020. Ian brings a range of skills to the Board including his professional Optometrist knowledge alongside business acumen gained through running his own local practice for several years. Recruitment is ongoing, supported by a skills audit to ensure Trustees contribute to the development and stability of the business.

As we move into the next financial year, the Trustees will remain agile and responsive to meet the Charity's objectives within the constraints of ongoing virus control measures. This will be underpinned by our ambition to innovate and work collaboratively to achieve the best possible outcomes for people who are sight impaired, severely sight impaired, deaf of hard of hearing.

Lin Elder-Atterton

Chair - Lin Elder-Atterton MVO

Chief Executive - Sarah French

Dated: 25 NOV 2021

VISION & HEARING SUPPORT GATESHEAD AND SOUTH TYNESIDE

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

The trustees present their report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2021.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the charity's [governing document], the Companies Act 2006 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 1 January 2019)".

Objectives and activities

We are a local Charity working with people who are sight impaired, deaf or hard of hearing on their journey to independence. We ensure people have choice and control over their lives and help others better understand the needs of people with sensory loss.

In South Tyneside and Gateshead over 11,700 people are sight impaired and over 1,800 are registered blind (severely sight impaired). Over 65,500 adults in this area are deaf or hard of hearing.
We deliver early intervention, crisis prevention and integrated social activities to reduce preventable sensory loss, maintain independence and mental wellbeing and reduce social isolation. Our interventions ensure that people;

- can live more independently,
- are less socially isolated,
- are more confident and empowered,
- experience improved wellbeing.

Vision & Hearing Support is an organisation run for charitable purposes. We want to be around today and into the future to support people who are sight impaired, Deaf or hard of hearing. To achieve this, we recognise that there is a need to supplement our strategic aims with business aims that will deliver long term sustainability:

- Diversify our income sources to increase financial sustainability.
- Develop the profile of Vision & Hearing Support, so that more people know about the services we provide, to increase the numbers of people accessing services and the number of people willing to donate and volunteer.
- Engage people with lived experience and with people from a variety of ethnic backgrounds so that we learn from the strengths they bring in their diversity.

The aims of the organisation are embedded within our pathway to independence which incorporates the following stages of intervention;

- Early help
- Lets make a plan
- Independence matters
- Friendship matters

Early Help includes preventative work with communities, health professional and businesses. This activity is supported by regional and national collaborations to harmonise key messages and awareness raising campaigns.

At the point of referral, we work with individuals to create a Personal Plan based on an assessment under the care Act 2014. The plan is person centred to ensure the agreed actions will achieve the persons desired outcomes.

Independence does matter and our services are all designed with independence at the fore. We promote independent living through our integrated approach combining low vision, rehabilitation, enablement, and digital support. These services combine traditional orientation and mobility services with enhanced optometry consultations, enablement advice and guidance, and digital empowerment.

We promote friendship and social activities through Peer support and our connections with local interest groups. Our quality assured Living Well with Sight Loss programme provides information and specialist support through a network of professionals and individuals with lived experience. We facilitate introductions to local community groups and support group leaders to make sessions inclusive and accessible.

Vision & Hearing Support achieves its charitable purpose by delivering a range of services in Gateshead and South Tyneside which are available to people who are sight impaired, severely sight impaired, deaf or hard of hearing and those who are deaf/blind.

We review our aims, objectives and activities each year. This report looks at what we achieved and the outcomes of our work during April 2020 to March 2021.

The trustees have paid due regard to guidance issued by the Charity Commission in deciding what activities the charity should undertake.

Vision & Hearing Support aspires to a world in which sight impaired, Deaf or hard of hearing people have choice and control over their lives and no-one experiences avoidable sight or hearing loss.
We are a progressive, enabling charity committed to ensuring that people have:

- Dignity and Respect as a unique individual
- Privacy in their own home
- Protection from harm
- Independence
- Choice and empowerment
- Rights, as for all people in society

We will work with colleagues in a supportive environment of mutual respect and empowerment to achieve the best possible outcomes for clients. We will follow the principles set out in the Visionary Sight Loss Charter 2020 and promote collaboration, integrity, and accountability in all we do.
Vision & Hearing Support must continue to work with its Members and beneficiaries to evidence our lived experience input. This is becoming ever more important to funders and society who expect Charities to engage with, listen to and respond directly to those it is there to support. Alongside this, the Board has already recognised the need to diversify Trustee and staff representation to better reflect the communities in which we work.

Achievements and performance

In South Tyneside and Gateshead over 11,700 people live with sight loss and over 1,800 are registered blind. Over 65,500 adults in this area are deaf or hard of hearing.
Our unique integrated Pathway to Independence makes sure we provide the right support at the right time for individuals. Our interventions include specialist Counselling, Enablement Assessments, Rehabilitation, Social and Peer Support, Employment, Welfare and Advocacy and Digital support.

Despite the challenges of Coronavirus, our services were adapted to enable us to provide the support, information, advice & guidance our clients needed. The pandemic brought major changes to our lives, yet the Team and Volunteers adapted and worked effectively and efficiently from home. They seized the opportunities and challenges presented, and continued to work together as enthusiastically, providing a personal, caring, and professional service.

As a result, we have;

- Made over 8,500 calls providing professional Information, Advice and Guidance
- Carried out 299 Assessments for personalised support plans
- Delivered over 2,700 pieces of equipment to help people live independently
- Ensured that benefits of £9,525 per week, or £495,300 per annum, are being claimed by those entitled to them

Our dedicated Volunteers made over 4100 befriending calls to those isolated during the pandemic. These activities have led to;

- 97% of our clients experiencing improved wellbeing
- 96% can live more independently
- 95% are more confident and empowered
- 91% feel less socially isolated

CORE CONTRACTED PROVISION

Specialist person centred needs assessment and Rehabilitation Services – Gateshead Council and South Tyneside Council

We assess what needs people have due to their sensory condition and put in place the services, support, equipment, concessions etc to meet those needs. We carry out the registration process, although we don't hold the register in Gateshead.

We secured the South Tyneside Sensory Support contract for a further five years which includes equipment provision and support for those with hearing loss.

Our rehabilitation workers provide training on independent living skills, mobility and orientation, viewing techniques, communications, electronic low vision aids such as video magnifiers and new technology such as audio description, e-readers, accessible mobiles etc. They also carry out lighting assessments in people's homes and they issue small aids such as white sticks, canes and symbol canes, liquid level indicators, talking clocks and signature guides. We issue daylight bulbs as many people are struggling with the light provided by traditional low energy bulbs.

3,635 new referrals made to this service during 2020/21:

- Gateshead - 2,203
- South Tyneside – 1,432

Integrated Low Vision Clinic – Gateshead residents only (Newcastle and Gateshead CGG)

We assess people's residual vision and prescribe optical low vision aids such as magnifiers, telescopes, high add readers etc. to help maximise use of residual vision. We also consider viewing techniques (such as eccentric viewing), lighting, colour contrast and posture all of which will again help people make best use of remaining vision. We provide a two-year review, although people can re-refer themselves sooner if they feel their sight is deteriorating.

During 2020/21 our key outputs as part of our low vision clinic work included:

- 69 appointments were delivered
- 16 remote low vision assessments were conducted

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT PROVISION

The following activities contribute to the overall success of Vision & Hearing Support's work by complementing statutory provision:

Joint Newcastle/Gateshead Sight Loss Community Empowerment Project – funded by the National Lottery Community Fund

The five-year project came to an end in July 2020 and, due to the unprecedented circumstances, a six month extension to December 2020 was granted.

The project evaluation confirmed that the project had significantly exceeded the expected outcomes and had delivered excellent outcomes for people. During the lifetime of the project 1529 people engaged with the activities against a target of 500, with 100% of those reporting a tangible improvement on the target outcomes:

- Visually impaired people experience improved health and well-being that helps them to maintain their independence.
- Visually impaired people report feeling less isolated as a result of accessing a range of social activities.

Project indicators are available upon request.

Welfare Rights and Advocacy
We provide advice and support on disability benefits such as DLA/PIP, Attendance Allowance, Employment Support Allowance as well as Universal Credit. Help is provided from completion of the initial application, support when attending assessments all the way through to representation at Tribunal if the application isn't successful.

Equipment Library
At The Bradbury Centre for Sight in Gateshead people can call us or visit for specialist advice and information on a wide range specialist equipment. Funded by the Coronavirus Community Support Fund the library contains various pieces of digital and analogue equipment which we lend to people on a short-term basis so that they can try them out at home before deciding whether they would like to buy one (either they can buy it themselves if they can afford to do so or we can help to find funding).

Living Well with Sight Loss Programme
This course is for people who are newly visually impaired or new to our services. It runs for 3 weeks with 1 half-day session per week looking at the various aspects of visual impairment and help that is available. As well as providing lots of information and advice it also provides invaluable peer support.

Visual Impairment Awareness Training (VIAT)
Our team of experienced sight loss professionals provide VIAT to a wide audience including a number of hospitals, council departments, businesses, charities and care homes.

Information Communication Technology (ICT) Support
Through a short term grant we provided a range of support and tuition on how to make the most of ICT and how this can assist those living with a visual impairment. This focussed on helping people learn to make the most of voice activated and controlled devices such as the Amazon Alexa and Google home devices. This project is being developed to include cyber security and online safety.

Telephone Support Service
Operated entirely by volunteers, all of whom have direct experience of sight loss, our Telephone Support Service calls service users whom we are aware are particularly isolated due to other mobility issues or whom we haven't had recent contact. The support offered includes simply being a friendly voice to talk to, we promote the activities and services offered by Vision & Hearing Support and if anyone called shares any concerns then the volunteer team refer them to our sight loss support team.

Activity and Social Groups
We will continue to provide a space for service user groups to meet as the pandemic restrictions ease. We will continue to work closely with independent groups to share information, provide support as required and to introduce new members.

British Wireless for the Blind (BWFTB) and RNIB Talking Books
We are the agents for BWFTB and issue radios, CD players etc on their behalf to people who are eligible (they must be registered either Sight Impaired (SI) or Severely Sight Impaired (SSI) and be in receipt of a qualifying means tested benefit (such as housing benefit or council tax benefit amongst others). We also help people with their initial applications for the RNIB talking book service.

Volunteers
We have a dedicated team of volunteers who support our work. Unfortunately many of these activities ceased due to Covid-19 restrictions but we will reinstate this essential support as soon as possible. Volunteers cover many different roles at Vision & Hearing Support from reception, telephone befriending and administration support. A team of volunteer drivers are also a vital resource who transport service users to and from medical appointments, as well as enabling them, to access a range of support services provided by Vision & Hearing Support.

Newsletter
We have produced a regular newsletter promoting both Vision & Hearing Support services and other issues of interest and relevance to people who are sight impaired, Deaf or hard of hearing. This is available in various formats i.e. large print, CD, and electronically.

Responding to Covid-19
141 surveys were asked between 18th May and 19th June 2020 to determine how people with sight loss were being affected by coronavirus and what their main concerns for the future were.
The results were used to inform our activities, services and strategy to ensure people who are sight impaired, severely sight impaired, Deaf or hard of hearing have the support they need coming out of lockdown and into the future. The full report is available upon request.
We have seen a substantial rise in the number of calls relating to mental health since the pandemic began in March 2020. Social isolation, loneliness and low mood have been exacerbated by COVID-19 and measures to reduce infection rates – disproportionately so for people with sight loss who have lost confidence and the ability to get out and about.
Our telephone survey (May/June 2020) identified;

- 79% re worried about 'getting out and about' and reduced 'confidence'. Many are struggling with social distancing and are fearful of public places.
- 80% are feeling "down", "depressed", "lonely" or "anxious" because of coronavirus and isolation.
- Access to medical appointments (52%) and worsening eye conditions (43%) were significant concerns for many people.
- 65% did not receive emergency information in an accessible format.
- 57% of respondents were worried about their physical health and lack of mobility.

This data along with information through befriending calls, regional and national networks and local partnerships informed our immediate priorities to support people through the pandemic.
We secured emergency Coronavirus funding from the Community Coronavirus Support Fund to deliver digital support and telephone befriending to reduce isolation and loneliness, and a professional counselling service and additional rehabilitation support to improve mental and physical wellbeing and increase independence.

Case Studies and Impact

Identifying, measuring and reporting upon the impact had by the wide range of support activities provided by Vision & Hearing Support is not straight forward. We continue to work with our funders and commissioners to not only supply the contractual monitoring information they require, but to also evidence the case for continued further investment in Vision & Hearing Supports work.

We are also continuing to work with Visionary, the national umbrella body for local sight loss charities, as they develop shared output, outcome and impact measurement tools for the sight loss sector.

However, there is nothing more powerful than hearing real life examples of the work and impact delivered by our dedicated team of sight loss professionals, supported by our volunteer team.

We have shared below a case study, provided directly by the client, that demonstrates the work we do. This example, along with many cases we haven't shared, shows that our personal and thorough approach delivers tangible outcomes for people and a lasting impact on their lives and the lives of those around them;

"My name is Peter Brown, now almost 65 years old. I came upon VHS by sheer accident after visiting the Patient Liaison Officer in the Eye Department at the RVI Hospital, shortly after my surgery in October 2016. I am very partially sighted after losing an eye due to sinus/brain cancer and my right eye has Age Related Dry Macular, which has been made worse by radiotherapy.
From the onset, VHS have been amazing and both my wife and I don't know how we would have managed without their help and guidance. Losing your sight suddenly at my age has been incredibly upsetting and after being able to see to drive, play sports, do my job as a Building Surveyor, I suddenly had nothing.
I made an appointment initially, hoping they could give me ideas of enhancing what little sight I have left. They did much more. My wife and I had a 6 week course in aids and adaptations, talking to other people and gaining an insight on how they coped with sight loss and trying different aids out before we spent money on them. Little things like coloured table mats so that a white cup/plate is easier to see, coloured trays to eat off so the white plate is more visible.
They also gave me a guide stick and lessons in using it, both at their unit and at home, up and down steps etc. My wife had guiding lessons, so she could help while we are out and about. Other items I received were, a buzzer that sits on the side of a cup that goes off when the tea was up to level and then again when milk was added. Also dark glasses and yellow tinted ones to fit over my spectacles to help with glare.
In 2019 they tested my eyes and wrote a letter to my GP and the RVI requesting an appointment with the view to being registered Partially Sighted. Just recently I met Stephanie Cairns, who had picked up my file and rang to see if I needed any more help. I can honestly say, that after seeing several eye specialists at the RVI, Stephanie has been more help and given me more information regarding my sight loss and Dry Macular than anyone else. She also gave me a large hand magnifier, which has been invaluable, and I use it constantly. She showed me that things like light, that you take for granted, is very important, and by using a 'Daylight Lamp' in close proximity you can distinguish words and read large print.
She has now written to the RVI to ask them to review my status to Severely sight impaired after taking a photograph of my eye. This was the most informative thing we have seen, and she explained the photo completely, no one else has ever done this and I am very grateful to understand why I have the sight loss I have.
All I can do is thank all the staff profoundly, Mike who did the cane lessons and Stephanie for all her insight and help. I recommend that anyone who experiences sight loss of any kind to get in touch with Vision and Hearing Support, they are amazing."
Dictated by Peter Brown

Financial review

Financial performance and position
Financial performance in 2020/21 has improved and delivered some stability for the Chairty moving forwards. This is largely due to support through emergency Coronavirus funds which will secure our services to meet future demand by increasing our reserves.

Income in 2020/21 was £506,633 - representing an increase of £10,616 to the previous year (£496,917 – 2019/20). This is chiefly because of one-off emergency coronavirus support grants that will stabilise our activities into the future years enabling us to respond to demand.

Our expenditure has continued to decrease, by £40,818 on the previous year, as changes made in the previous year have been realised and better value operating systems have been adopted. In addition, operational savings have been made as our activities were restricted by the impact of Covid-19 and related lockdowns. Expenditure in 2020/21 was £402,016 compared to £442,834 the previous year (2019/20).

Reserves policy
The Board has reviewed the reserves of the Charity and concluded that to allow the Charity to be managed efficiently and to provide a buffer for uninterrupted services, attempts should be made to increase general reserves.

It is the policy of the Charity that unrestricted funds which have not been designated for a specific use should be maintained at a level equivalent to between six and nine month's expenditure. The directors consider that reserves at this level will ensure that, in the event of a significant drop in funding, they will be able to continue the Charity's current activities while consideration is given to ways in which additional funds may be raised.

The Charity has several restricted funds for identified projects, which have specific budgets and timescales. In order to reach the agreed level of reserves the charitable company intends to continue to look for increased income from our own fundraising efforts, as well as obtaining additional grant funding to increase unrestricted income.

At 31 March 2021 the charitable company held total reserves of £174,074 (2020: £69,457).

We will continue to review levels of expenditure and further savings are planned for 2021/22.

Principal funding sources
Our main core contracted income has remained stable and we have performed well against this income achieving all the required performance indicators.

Key income streams:

- Gateshead Council
- South Tyneside Council
- Newcastle and Gateshead CCG
- National Lottery Community Fund

The receipt of this funding enables the charitable company to meet its charitable objectives to provide support advice and activities to people who are Sight Impaired, Severely Sight Impaired, Deaf, hard of hearing or Deaf/blind.

Investment policy and objectives
Under the memorandum and articles of association, the Charity has the power to make any investment which the Trustees see fit.

Risk management
The Board of Trustees reviewed the major risks to which the Charity is exposed. A risk register is in place and is updated regularly and at least annually.

Where appropriate, systems and procedures have been established to mitigate the risks the Charity faces.

The Risk Management process itself is periodically reviewed to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the Charity.

Risks are minimised by the implementation of internal controls with procedures for authorisation of all transactions and projects.

Services continued to be externally evaluated and inspected by funders.

The excellent outcomes from these evaluations point to the excellent quality of delivery for all operational aspects of the Charity.

Significant external risks to funding have led to the development of the new Strategic Direction which allows for the diversification of funding.

Future plans

The strategic aims of Vision & Hearing Support remain the same, but our work has adapted to meet the needs identified by clients during and resulting from Covid-19 and the associated restrictions. The coming year will focus on;

Digital Empowerment and Cyber Security
VHS has been working with blind and partially sighted people throughout the pandemic to enable them to use online resources for essential services.
The Vision Support Project will deliver a Digital Enablement programme to support B/PS people access information, technology, and cyber security advice. The Digital activity will be centred on a digital library (established through the CCSF project) and volunteer peer support. Personalised digital assessments will be undertaken by our professional lived experience team to ensure people receive relevant and appropriate advice for their needs. The assessment will form part of our Pathway to Independence and a personal plan will be developed to record the aims and outcomes. Cyber security will be embedded into all activities to keep those most vulnerable safe.

Employability and Transition Pathway
We want to support sight impaired, Deaf and hard of hearing people into sustainable employment and engage with them at a younger age, ideally as they leave children's services. This Transition pathway will help build relationships and inform personalised support plans. Alongside this we will work closely with employers to help them make their organisation accessible for people who are sight impaired, Deaf or hard of hearing.
Mental Health and Wellbeing
We have seen a substantial rise in the number of calls relating to mental health since the pandemic began in March 2020. Social isolation, loneliness and low mood have been exacerbated by COVID-19 and measures to reduce infection rates – disproportionately so for people who are sight impaired, Deaf or hard of hearing.

We will continue to deliver professional counselling support and embed the service into our Pathway to independence. We will grow the service to include friends and family sessions, staff and volunteer training and group peer support.

Community and Volunteer engagement
We will recruit volunteers to provide one-to-one peer mentoring and facilitate people accessing the right support at the right time. Activities will come from our existing interventions/ activities but also from wider partnerships within the voluntary and public sector.
This work will enhance the support provided through statutory contracts and ensure the needs of our clients are met.

Structure, governance and management

Governing document
The Charity is controlled by its governing document, a deed of trust, and constitutes a limited company, limited by guarantee, as defined by the Companies Act 2006.

Trustees
The trustees, who are also the directors for the purpose of company law, and who served during the year and up to the date of signature of the financial statements were:

L Elder-Atterton
K Harrison
I Hickson (Appointed 26 November 2020)
L Rhodes

Recruitment and appointment of new Trustees
The Charity may by ordinary resolution appoint a person who is willing to act as trustee and determine the rotation in which any additional Trustees are to retire. No person other than a trustee retiring by rotation may be appointed a trustee at any general meeting unless:

- He or she is recommended for re-election by the Trustees or
- Not less than fourteen nor more than thirty-five clear days before the date of the meeting, the Charity is given notice that:
- Is signed by two members entitled to vote at
- States the members' intention to propose the appointment of a person as a trustee.

iii) Contains the details that, if the person were to be appointed, the Charity would have to file at Companies House, including the names and details of two referees who have not proposed their election; and

- Is signed by the person who is to be proposed to show his or her consent - full election to the Board will be at the end of a six month probationary

Organisational structure
The Board of directors meet quarterly and administer the Charity. The Board of directors may delegate any of their powers to sub-committees consisting of such members of their body and/or Charity as they think fit.

Any sub-committee so formed shall in the exercise of the powers so delegated conform to any regulations imposed on it by the directors.

Induction and training of new Trustees
New Trustees undergo an induction to brief them on:

- their legal obligations under charity and company law;
- the Charity Commission on public benefit;
- inform them of the content of the memorandum and articles of association;
- the committee and decision making processes;
- the business plan; and - recent financial performance of the charitable company.

During the induction they meet key employees and other Trustees.

Trustees are encouraged to attend appropriate external training events where these will facilitate the undertaking of their role.

Key management remuneration
The Trustees consider the Board of Trustees as comprising of the key management personnel of the charitable company in charge of directing, controlling and operating the charitable company. All Trustees give their time freely and no trustee remuneration was paid in the year.

Partnerships and Collaborations
We continue to work in close co-operation with both Gateshead and South Tyneside Councils, Newcastle Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and also have effective partnerships with Royal National Institute for the Blind, Newcastle Vision Support, RNID, Visionary and several voluntary sector organisations with whom we are working with in both Gateshead and South Tyneside, and our wider network both regionally and nationally.

The trustees' report was approved by the Board of Trustees.

Lin Elder Atterton

L Elder-Atterton
Trustee
Dated: 25 NOV 2021

VISION & HEARING SUPPORT GATESHEAD AND SOUTH TYNESIDE

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

TO THE TRUSTEES OF VISION & HEARING SUPPORT GATESHEAD AND SOUTH TYNESIDE

report to the trustees on my examination of the financial statements of Vision & Hearing Support Gateshead and South Tyneside (the charity) for the year ended 31 March 2021.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the charity (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 (the 2006 Act).

Having satisfied myself that the financial statements of the charity are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of the charity's financial statements carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act). In carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

Since the charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1 accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or

2 the financial statements do not accord with those records; or

3 the financial statements do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or

4 the financial statements have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the financial statements to be reached.

Donna Bulmer BA (Hons) ACA
For and on behalf of Haines Watts

17 Queens Lane
Newcastle Upon Tyne
NE1 1RN

Dated: 9 December 2021

VISION & HEARING SUPPORT GATESHEAD AND SOUTH TYNESIDE

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Current financial year

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2021 £	Restricted funds 2021 £	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £
Income from:					
Donations and legacies	2	17,391	110,862	128,253	145,005
Charitable activities	3	378,289	-	378,289	351,858
Investments	4	91	-	91	54
Total income		395,771	110,862	506,633	496,917
Expenditure on:					
Charitable activities	5	285,241	116,775	402,016	442,834
Net income/(expenditure) for the year/ Net movement in funds		110,530	(5,913)	104,617	54,083
Fund balances at 1 April 2020		39,025	30,432	69,457	15,374
Fund balances at 31 March 2021		149,555	24,519	174,074	69,457

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

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

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

VISION & HEARING SUPPORT GATESHEAD AND SOUTH TYNESIDE

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

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Prior financial year

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2020 £	Restricted funds 2020 £	Total 2020 £
Income from:				
Donations and legacies	2	27,941	117,064	145,005
Charitable activities	3	351,858	-	351,858
Investments	4	54	-	54
Total income		379,853	117,064	496,917
Expenditure on:				
Charitable activities	5	318,016	124,818	442,834
Gross transfers between funds		(2,034)	2,034	-
Net income/(expenditure) for the year/ Net movement in funds		59,803	(5,720)	54,083
Fund balances at 1 April 2019		(20,778)	36,152	15,374
Fund balances at 31 March 2020		39,025	30,432	69,457

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

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

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

VISION & HEARING SUPPORT GATESHEAD AND SOUTH TYNESIDE

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 MARCH 2021

	Notes	2021 £	2021 £	2020 £	2020 £
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	**9**		17,913		12,078
Current assets					
Debtors	**10**	24,009		28,387	
Cash at bank and in hand		213,756		103,599	
		237,765		131,986	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	**11**	(22,172)		(19,000)	
Net current assets			215,593		112,986
Total assets less current liabilities			233,506		125,064
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	**12**		(59,432)		(55,607)
Net assets			174,074		69,457
Income funds					
Restricted funds	**13**		24,519		30,432
Unrestricted funds			149,555		39,025
			174,074		69,457

VISION & HEARING SUPPORT GATESHEAD AND SOUTH TYNESIDE

BALANCE SHEET (CONTINUED)

AS AT 31 MARCH 2021

The company is entitled to the exemption from the audit requirement contained in section 477 of the Companies Act 2006, for the year ended 31 March 2021.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for ensuring that the charity keeps accounting records which comply with section 386 of the Act and for preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company as at the end of the financial year and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the financial year in accordance with the requirements of sections 394 and 395 and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the company.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year in question in accordance with section 476.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees on 25 NOV 2021

Lin Elder-Atterton

L Elder-Atterton
Trustee

Company Registration No. 05206358

VISION & HEARING SUPPORT GATESHEAD AND SOUTH TYNESIDE

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

	Notes	2021 £	2021 £	2020 £	2020 £
Cash flows from operating activities					
Cash generated from operations	17		117,998		55,893
Investing activities					
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(7,932)		-	
Investment income received		91		54	
Net cash (used in)/generated from investing activities			(7,841)		54
Net cash used in financing activities			-		-
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents			110,157		55,947
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year			103,599		47,652
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year			213,756		103,599

1 Accounting policies

Charity information

Vision & Hearing Support Gateshead and South Tyneside is a private company limited by guarantee incorporated in England and Wales. The registered office is Unit 2b, The Bradbury Centre For Sight Stonehills Business, Pelaw, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, NE10 0HW.

1.1 Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the charity's [governing document], the Companies Act 2006 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 1 January 2019)". The charity is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

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

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, modified to include the revaluation of freehold properties and to include investment properties and certain financial instruments at fair value. The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below.

1.2 Going concern

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis. The trustees have reviewed and considered the level of funds and forecast income and expenditure for 12 months from the date of approving the accounts. The budgeted income and expenditure is sufficient considering the level of reserves for the charity to be able to continue as a going concern.

1.3 Charitable funds

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

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

1.4 Income

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

Cash donations are recognised on receipt. Other donations are recognised once the charity has been notified of the donation, unless performance conditions require deferral of the amount. Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant is recognised at the time of the donation.

Donated services or facilities are recognised as income when the charity has control over the item, any conditions associated with the donated item have been met, the receipt of the economic benefit from the use by the charity of the item is probable and that economic benefit can be measured reliably. On receipt, donated services and facilities are recognised on the basis of the value of the gift to the charity which is the amount the charity would have been willing to pay to obtain services or facilities of equivalent economic benefit on the open market; a corresponding amount is then recognised in expenditure in the period of the receipt.

1 Accounting policies

Income from grants, including capital grants, is included within income when communication has been received in writing of both the amount and the period to which they relate. In the event that the grant was received in advance of the period to which it relates, the grant is therefore deferred and included within creditors. When the grants are for a particular restricted purpose, this income is included in incoming resources of restricted funds when receivable.

Income from other trading activities is recognised when the amount of income can be measured reliably and when it is probable that future economic benefits will flow to the entity. The charitable company recognises this income once goods or services have been sold, and are stated net of trade discounts and value added tax.

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the bank.

1.5 Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is classified under the following activity headings:

- Expenditure on charitable activities includes the costs of providing services to the visually impaired to further the purposes of the charity and their associated support costs.
- Other expenditure represents those items not falling into any other heading.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

Support costs have been differentiated between governance and other support costs. Governance costs comprise all costs involving the public accountability of the charitable company and its compliance with regulation and good practice. These costs include costs related to independent examination and legal fees.

All costs are allocated between the expenditure categories of the Statement of Financial Activities on a basis designed to reflect the use of the resource. Costs relating to a particular activity are allocated directly, others are apportioned on a staff time basis.

1.6 Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are initially measured at cost and subsequently measured at cost or valuation, net of depreciation and any impairment losses.

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

Fixtures and fittings	15% on reducing balance

The gain or loss arising on the disposal of an asset is determined as the difference between the sale proceeds and the carrying value of the asset, and is recognised in net income/(expenditure) for the year.

1 Accounting policies

1.7 Impairment of fixed assets

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

If an impairment loss subsequently reverses, the carrying amount of the asset is increased to the revised estimate of its recoverable amount, but not in excess of the amount that would have been determined had no impairment loss been recognised for the asset in prior years. A reversal of an impairment loss is recognised immediately in the statement of financial activities.

1.8 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities.

1.9 Financial instruments

The charity only has financial assets and liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value.

1.10 Taxation

The charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.

1.11 Employee benefits

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

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

1.12 Retirement benefits

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

2 Donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds	**Restricted funds**	**Total**	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total
	2021	**2021**	**2021**	2020	2020	2020
	£	**£**	**£**	£	£	£
Donations and gifts	2,927	-	2,927	12,941	-	12,941
Grants receivable	14,464	110,862	125,326	-	117,064	117,064
Donated goods and services	-	-	-	15,000	-	15,000
	17,391	110,862	128,253	27,941	117,064	145,005

2 Donations and legacies

Grants receivable for core activities						
National Lottery Community Fund	-	71,142	71,142	-	105,384	105,384
Gateshead Council	10,000	-	10,000	-	11,680	11,680
Northumbria Police & Crime Commissioner	-	15,400	15,400	-	-	-
Thomas Pocklington	-	10,000	10,000	-	-	-
Community Foundation - Bernicia Foundation	-	9,000	9,000	-	-	-
The William Leech Charity	-	3,500	3,500	-	-	-
Other	4,464	1,820	6,284	-	-	-
	14,464	110,862	125,326	-	117,064	117,064

Included within grants receivable are government grants of £2,454 relating to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

3 Charitable activities

	Total 2021	**Total 2020**
	£	**£**
Services provided under contract	354,321	343,173
Other income	23,968	8,685
	378,289	351,858

4 Investments

	Unrestricted funds	Unrestricted funds
	2021	2020
	£	£
Interest receivable	91	54

5 Charitable activities

	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £
Staff costs	234,234	234,039
Depreciation and impairment	2,097	2,131
Other expenditure	143,536	184,422
	379,867	420,592
Share of support costs (see note 6)	18,609	16,420
Share of governance costs (see note 6)	3,540	5,822
	402,016	442,834
Analysis by fund		
Unrestricted funds	285,241	318,016
Restricted funds	116,775	124,818
	402,016	442,834

6 Support costs

	Support costs £	Governance costs £	2021 £	Support costs £	Governance costs £	2020 £
Staff costs	14,344	-	14,344	12,921	-	12,921
Depreciation	2,097	-	2,097	2,131	-	2,131
Professional and consultancy fees	2,168	-	2,168	3,650	-	3,650
Legal and professional	-	3,540	3,540	-	3,540	3,540
	18,609	3,540	22,149	18,702	3,540	22,242
Analysed between						
Charitable activities	18,609	3,540	22,149	16,420	5,822	22,242

Governance costs includes payments to the independent examiner of £3,540 (2020 - £3,540) for the independent examination.

7 Trustees

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

8 Employees

The average monthly number of employees during the year was:

	2021 Number	2020 Number
Chief executive officer	1	1
Support, advice and activities	13	11
Adminitration	1	1
Total	15	13

Employment costs	2021 £	2020 £
Wages and salaries	226,805	224,773
Social security costs	14,212	14,495
Other pension costs	7,561	7,692
	248,578	246,960

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

9 Tangible fixed assets

	Fixtures and fittings £
Cost	
At 1 April 2020	68,014
Additions	7,932
At 31 March 2021	75,946
Depreciation and impairment	
At 1 April 2020	55,936
Depreciation charged in the year	2,097
At 31 March 2021	58,033
Carrying amount	
At 31 March 2021	17,913
At 31 March 2020	12,078

10 Debtors

Amounts falling due within one year:	2021 £	2020 £
Other debtors	15,400	26,346
Prepayments and accrued income	8,609	2,041
	24,009	28,387

11 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2021 £	2020 £
Other taxation and social security	4,677	4,157
Trade creditors	2,419	5,898
Other creditors	6,413	1,365
Accruals and deferred income	8,663	7,580
	22,172	19,000

12 Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year

	2021 £	2020 £
Trade creditors	-	31,800
Other creditors	59,432	23,807
	59,432	55,607

13 Restricted funds

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

Current year

		Movement in funds			
	Balance at 1 April 2020	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Transfers	Balance at 31 March 2021
	£	£	£	£	£
The William Leech Charity	-	3,500	(3,500)	-	-
National Lottery - Joint Project	30,432	30,728	(61,160)	-	-
Community Foundation - Bernicia Foundation	-	9,000	-	-	9,000
Northumbria Police & Crime Commissioner	-	15,400	-	-	15,400
Thomas Pocklington Trust	-	10,000	(10,000)	-	-
National Lottery - Awards for All	-	9,687	(9,568)	-	119
National Lottery - Community Coronavirus Support	-	30,727	(30,727)	-	-
Other	-	1,820	(1,820)	-	-
	30,432	110,862	(116,775)	-	24,519

Prior year

		Movement in funds			
	Balance at 1 April 2019	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Transfers	Balance at 1 April 2020
	£	£	£	£	£
The William Leech Charity	5,000	-	(5,000)	-	-
Community Foundation - Arts for All	2,460	-	(2,460)	-	-
Gateshead Equipment	-	11,680	(13,714)	2,034	-
Sir James Knott	4,000	-	(4,000)	-	-
National Lottery - Joint Project	24,692	105,384	(99,644)	-	30,432
	36,152	117,064	(124,818)	2,034	30,432

13 Restricted funds

The unrestricted fund represents the free funds of the charity, which are not designated for particular purposes.

The major restricted funds as detailed above relate to the following activities carried out by the charity:-

The William Leech Charity
To deliver Vision Support activities providing specialist support for sight impaired people to help them navigate complex and changing systems. We will deliver and increase our telephone befriending and establish a counselling service.

National Lottery - Joint Project (formerly Joint Lottery)
To work in partnership with Newcastle Vision Support to develop and expand services creating a more joined up holistic and inclusive service across a wider region, reducing social isolation and health and economic inequalities through increased access to services and support.

Community Foundation - Bernicia Foundation
To increase employment, skills and training opportunities for sight impaired people and to improve the transition pathway between children's and adult services. The project will work with employers to improve their understanding and awareness of support available to sight impaired employees and candidates.

Northumbria Police & Crime Commissioner
The project will develop resources to increase cyber security for vulnerable adults and collaborate with partners to share the learning. Digital support will be provided with a focus on staying safe online.

Thomas Pocklington Trust
To deliver Vision Support activities providing specialist support for sight impaired people to help them navigate complex and changing systems. We will deliver and increase our telephone befriending and establish a counselling service. Additional rehabilitation was provided to increase people's confidence as restrictions eased.

National Lottery - Awards for All
To support our rebrand and name change, this grant funded the design work for the new logo and a new website.

National Lottery - Covid Support
To deliver Vision Support activities providing specialist support for sight impaired people to help them navigate complex and changing systems. We will deliver and increase our telephone befriending and establish a counselling service. Additional rehabilitation was provided to increase people's confidence as restrictions eased.

Community Foundation - Arts for All
This project delivered art workshops aimed to reduce isolation and celebrate achievement. A mixed craft event was held focussed on Christmas activities and was very well attended. The feedback was extremely positive and we hope to repeat this activity in the future.

Gateshead Equipment
Council funding for the provision of specialised equipment.

Sir James Knott
The project delivered digital support to people who are sight impaired with a focus on the Alexa home device. Activities helped with the initial set up, communication functions, alerts and reminders alongside connected apps and systems to maximise the benefits of home devices.

13 Restricted funds

14 Analysis of net assets between funds

Current year

	Unrestricted funds 2021 £	Restricted funds 2021 £	Total 2021 £
Fund balances at 31 March 2021 are represented by:			
Tangible assets	17,913	-	17,913
Current assets/(liabilities)	190,074	25,519	215,593
Long term liabilities	(59,432)	-	(59,432)
	148,555	25,519	174,074

Prior year

	Unrestricted funds 2020 £	Restricted funds 2020 £	Total 2020 £
Fund balances at 31 March 2020 are represented by:			
Tangible assets	12,078	-	12,078
Current assets/(liabilities)	112,986	-	112,986
Long term liabilities	(55,607)	-	(55,607)
	69,457	-	69,457

15 Operating lease commitments

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

	2021 £	2020 £
Within one year	15,765	13,252
Between two and five years	19,512	41,215
	35,277	54,467

16 Related party transactions

There were no disclosable related party transactions during the year (2020 - none).

17	**Cash generated from operations**	**2021**	**2020**
		£	**£**
	Surplus for the year	104,617	54,083
	Adjustments for:		
	Investment income recognised in statement of financial activities	(91)	(54)
	Depreciation and impairment of tangible fixed assets	2,097	2,131
	Movements in working capital:		
	Decrease/(increase) in debtors	4,378	(1,572)
	Increase in creditors	6,997	1,305
	Cash generated from operations	117,998	55,893

18 **Analysis of changes in net funds**

The charity had no debt during the year.