

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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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

Trustee Report
For the year ended 31 March 2024

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.

Trustee Report
For the year ended 31 March 2024

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.

Trustee Report

For the year ended 31 March 2024

- **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.

Trustees' Report (*Continued*)
For the year ended 31 March 2024

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 its 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.

Trustees' Report (Continued)
For the year ended 31 March 2024

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.

Trustees' Report (Continued)
For the year ended 31 March 2024

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.

Trustees' Report (*Continued*)
For the year ended 31 March 2024

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.

Trustees' Report (*Continued*)
For the year ended 31 March 2024

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.

Trustees' Report (Continued)
For the year ended 31 March 2024

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.

Trustees' Report (*Continued*)
For the year ended 31 March 2024

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.

Sense Ability Matters Ltd
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Trustees' Report (*Continued*)
For the year ended 31 March 2024

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
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Our advisors

Independent

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

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.


.....
Craig Henderson FCCA
Evelyn Partners (Newcastle) Limited


.....
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		<u>550,333</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>201,809</u>	<u>752,142</u>	<u>780,096</u>
Expenditure on:						
Charitable activities	7	483,384	17,650	176,196	677,230	669,948
Total expenditure		<u>483,384</u>	<u>17,650</u>	<u>176,196</u>	<u>677,230</u>	<u>669,948</u>
Net Income/(expenditure)		66,949	(17,650)	25,613	74,912	110,148
Transfers	16	(20,673)	20,673	-	-	-
Net movements in funds		<u>46,276</u>	<u>3,023</u>	<u>25,613</u>	<u>74,912</u>	<u>110,148</u>
Reconciliation of funds						
Total funds brought forward		234,621	70,000	60,496	365,117	254,969
Total funds carried forward		<u>280,897</u>	<u>73,023</u>	<u>86,109</u>	<u>440,029</u>	<u>365,117</u>

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

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

28/11/2024

The financial statements were approved by the trustees on 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:			
<i>Net cash provided by operating activities</i>	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)
<i>Net cash flow from investing activities</i>		<u>4,123</u>	<u>269</u>
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents		<u>95,781</u>	<u>90,493</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		378,844	288,351
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year		<u><u>474,625</u></u>	<u><u>378,844</u></u>

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.

Notes to the Financial Statements (Continued)
For the year ended 31 March 2024

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.

Notes to the Financial Statements (*Continued*)
For the year ended 31 March 2024

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
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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.

Sense Ability Matters Ltd
(a company limited by guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements (Continued)
For the year ended 31 March 2024

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

		Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
	Notes				
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

Sense Ability Matters Ltd
(a company limited by guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements (Continued)
For the year ended 31 March 2024

4. Donations

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

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
	<u>203,297</u>	<u>340,335</u>

5. Income from charitable activities

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

6. Investment income

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

Sense Ability Matters Ltd
(a company limited by guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements (Continued)
For the year ended 31 March 2024

7. Analysis of expenditure charitable activities

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

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
	<u>29,605</u>	<u>35,383</u>

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
	<u></u>	<u></u>

Notes to the Financial Statements (Continued)
For the year ended 31 March 2024

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
	<u>412,904</u>	<u>377,737</u>
	<u><u>412,904</u></u>	<u><u>377,737</u></u>

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
	<u>19</u>	<u>19</u>
	<u><u>19</u></u>	<u><u>19</u></u>

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).

Sense Ability Matters Ltd
(a company limited by guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements (*Continued*)
For the year ended 31 March 2024

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

Sense Ability Matters Ltd
(a company limited by guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements (Continued)
For the year ended 31 March 2024

12. Debtors

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

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
	<u>67,153</u>	<u>55,263</u>

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	<u>32,721</u>	<u>34,661</u>

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.

Sense Ability Matters Ltd
(a company limited by guarantee)

Notes to the Financial Statements (Continued)
For the year ended 31 March 2024

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

Notes to the Financial Statements (Continued)
For the year ended 31 March 2023

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.

Notes to the Financial Statements (Continued)
For the year ended 31 March 2024

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 in the 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.

Notes to the Financial Statements (Continued)
For the year ended 31 March 2024

17. Analysis of net assets between funds

<u>Year ended 31 March 2024</u>	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
	<u>280,897</u>	<u>86,109</u>	<u>73,023</u>	<u>440,029</u>

<u>Year ended 31 March 2023</u>	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
	<u>279,993</u>	<u>15,000</u>	<u>60,496</u>	<u>365,117</u>

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	<u>91,658</u>	<u>90,224</u>