

**COMPANY REGISTRATION NUMBER: 06946785**

**CHARITY REGISTRATION NUMBER: 1133457**

**Suffolk User Forum  
Company Limited by Guarantee  
Unaudited financial statements  
31 March 2023**



# **Suffolk User Forum**

## **Company Limited by Guarantee**

### **Financial statements**

**Year ended 31 March 2023**

---

	<b>Pages</b>
Trustees' annual report (incorporating the directors' report)	<b>1 to 12</b>
Independent examiner's report to the trustees	<b>13</b>
Statement of financial activities (including income and expenditure account)	<b>14</b>
Balance sheet	<b>15</b>
Notes to the financial statements	<b>16 to 24</b>

# **Suffolk User Forum**

## **Company Limited by Guarantee**

### **Trustees' annual report (incorporating the directors' report)**

#### **Year ended 31 March 2023**

---

The trustees, who are also the directors for the purposes of company law, present their report and the unaudited financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2023.

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

# Suffolk User Forum

## Company Limited by Guarantee

### Trustees' annual report (incorporating the directors' report) *(continued)*

**Year ended 31 March 2023**

---

#### Chair's report

Over the years, much of Suffolk User Forum's (SUF's) work listening to service users and their families has been about their experiences of NHS services. In 2022/23, SUF was pleased to be asked by Suffolk County Council (SCC) to engage with mental health (MH) service users about their interactions with SCC social workers and provide written feedback to SCC on the quality of their services as experienced by service users. It has been pleasing to see SCC genuinely interested in learning about service users' experiences, willing to listen and take action even when service user feedback has been negative. Working in partnership with SCC and with service users, we look forward to collecting more feedback about MH social work services in 2023/24, highlighting the good practice and areas in need of improvement.

The new statutory NHS Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care System (SNEE ICS) is also very keen for coproduced service user feedback to be a golden thread woven into all its decisions. SUF has been contributing to the development of SNEE's systems, including its MH Collaborative, and expects, together with service users, to participate more extensively in the Collaborative in 2023/24.

We are really pleased that advocacy for voluntary MH patients (distinct from patients detained under the Mental Health Act who have the legal right to advocacy) has been included in the three-year advocacy contract for Suffolk Advocacy Services, led by the charity POhWER, since it is so important that all inpatients, whether detained or not, have someone who will help them voice their wants and needs.

We are particularly pleased that SUF is contracted to provide peer-led advocacy to patients in Woodlands, Wedgwood House and Foxhall House. Helping people voice their concerns and take control of their lives is core SUF business.

Healthy Together is another project which helps people with severe mental illness, psychosis, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia in this case, voice their concerns and take control of their own lives. SUF developed this project with the NHS and received further pilot funding in 2022/23. The stories of how private and public sector organisations have given service users the run around for straightforward requests, e.g. getting the sink fixed in rented accommodation, booking appointments for utility services, or booking GP appointments, are shocking. Healthy Together has made a real difference to people's lives in enabling people to get these sorts of problems fixed. And then, relieved of burdensome everyday life stresses, service users have been free to attend their health appointments and improve their lives in this way as well.

2022/23, with its high rate of inflation and cost of living crises, has been a burden on MH service users and their families, and on SUF staff. SUF staff are conscious of the stress on service users and the need to be supportive. The Trustee Board is conscious of our obligation regarding the wellbeing of staff, and we have been able in 2022/23 to increase basic pay levels and to remunerate some additional work. It is pleasing to see in 2023 some signs of longer-term funding and indeed some small allowances for inflation.

We also wish to recognise in this report the hard work of our staff team: their contributions to SUF members and service users and their commitment to our charity. Our person centred Advocacy and Healthy Together work relies entirely on the staff team, led from the front by our indomitable chief executive. We also say a very big thank you to our funders and donors without whom SUF would not be here. And finally, thank you to our excellent volunteer trustees who hold the legal responsibility for SUF, ensuring that SUF carries out its functions in the interests of our beneficiaries, complies with our governing document and the law, ensuring good governance and accountability.

With best wishes,



Guenever Pachent, SUF Chair

  
Jayne Stevens, CEO

# **Suffolk User Forum**

## **Company Limited by Guarantee**

### **Trustees' annual report (incorporating the directors' report) *(continued)***

**Year ended 31 March 2023**

---

#### **Reference and administrative details**

<b>Registered charity name</b>	Suffolk User Forum
<b>Charity registration number</b>	1133457
<b>Company registration number</b>	06946785
<b>Principal office and registered office</b>	3 Grange Business Centre Kesgrave Ipswich IP5 2BY

#### **The trustees**

The trustees who served during the year and at the date of approval were as follows:

G Pachent (Chair)  
M Blowers  
A Good  
R Nesbitt  
B Parrott  
M Stafford-White  
J Stern  
B Turner  
J Everett (Resigned 07/08/2023)

# **Suffolk User Forum**

## **Company Limited by Guarantee**

### **Trustees' annual report (incorporating the directors' report) *(continued)***

#### **Year ended 31 March 2023**

---

<b>Chief executive officer</b>	J Stevens
<b>Solicitors</b>	Clements Solicitors 2nd Floor 20 Queen Street Ipswich IP1 1SS
<b>Bankers</b>	The Co-operative Bank 9-11 Queen Street Ipswich IP1 1SW  Ipswich Building Society Unit 22 Sailmakers Shopping Centre Ipswich IP1 3BB  Nationwide Building Society 48 Tavern Street Ipswich IP1 3DL
<b>Company secretary</b>	R Nesbitt
<b>Independent examiner</b>	L Thurston FCCA Lovewell Blake LLP Chartered accountants First Floor Suite 2 Hillside Business Park Bury St Edmunds IP32 7EA

# **Suffolk User Forum**

## **Company Limited by Guarantee**

### **Trustees' annual report (incorporating the directors' report) *(continued)***

**Year ended 31 March 2023**

---

#### **Objectives and activities**

Suffolk User Forum, also referred to as SUF, with either term used throughout these accounts, voices the views of mental health service users and their family/parent carers in the East and West of Suffolk. SUF is an independent, user led mental health charity, also known as a Disabled Persons Organisation (DPO). Everyone involved in the charity has lived experience of mental health as a service user, family carer or worker.

SUF delivers engagement, involvement, coproduction, peer support and inpatient mental health advocacy services. SUF gives mental health service users a powerful and unified voice for their experiences of care and support, promoting individuals' rights, options and choices for care and support for both physical and mental health.

The charity works with service providers and commissioners to try to ensure that the voices of lived experience are central to improving emotional wellbeing and mental health services in East and West Suffolk. This is achieved through the charity's engagement, peer support and advocacy roles, which alongside supporting people, prioritises the gathering and recording of people's experiences of services. By connecting areas of individual feedback together, the charity draws together key themes and emerging trends in mental health experience. These are regularly reported in the SUF publication titled 'Making Our Voice Count' which is presented to providers, commissioners and to strategic partners, to assist with decision making and to promote coproduction, so that providers and commissioners can understand and actively respond to the current lived experience of people with emotional wellbeing and mental health needs.

**SUF's mission** is to be an inclusive and trusted mental health user-led network that values, promotes, and strengthens the user voice for positive change, independence, rights, choice, and control.

**SUF's vision** is to continue to be the leading organisation in Suffolk, championing equal and valued partnerships between mental health service users, commissioners, and providers; combining mutual strengths and experience to improve services, achieving positive emotional and mental health for all.

#### **Charitable Objectives**

SUF can help and work with people in Suffolk, Norfolk and Essex. We have five main charitable objectives.

- a) To promote partnership working between service providers, including the NHS and Social Care, service users and family/parent carers.
- b) To promote suicide prevention initiatives.
- c) To provide advocacy services, peer support and information to empower people to make their own decisions.
- d) To promote better understanding of mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- e) To promote volunteering and peer support.

#### **Public Benefit**

In shaping our objectives for the year and planning our activities, the trustees have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on Public Benefit including, The Public Benefit Requirement (PB1), Running a Charity (PB2) and Reporting (PB3).

# **Suffolk User Forum**

## **Company Limited by Guarantee**

### **Trustees' annual report (incorporating the directors' report) *(continued)***

#### **Year ended 31 March 2023**

---

##### **Achievements and performance**

The achievements and performance are described further in the Impact Report accompanying these financial statements.

##### **Financial review**

The charity's income in 2022/23 was £300,746 (2021/22: £173,768) of which £176,962 (2021/22: £66,068) related to project restricted activities. The charity's expenditure in 2022/23 was £177,646 (2021/22: £168,420) of which £135,246 (2021/22: £64,354) related to project restricted activities. The net surplus of £123,100 (2021/22: £5,348) has continued to contribute to the charity's general reserves.

##### **Principal funding sources**

The charity's core income is received under a funding agreement with Suffolk County Council and the Ipswich & East Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and West Suffolk CCG via a tri-part fund called the Mental Health Pooled Fund. This funding agreement is overseen by Suffolk County Council. The Mental Health Pooled Fund is due to end by 31st March 2024. SUF's core funding for 2022/23 was confirmed for one year. At the end of this reporting period a further year's core funding via has been agreed for 2023/24.

As the reporting year 2022/23 commences, SUF is pleased to report that we are part of a new advocacy partnership made up of POhWER, Ace Anglia, Suffolk Family Carers and Suffolk User Forum. This new partnership is commissioned to deliver advocacy services to people in Suffolk for the next three years, with the opportunity for a further two years funding. As a partnership, we will be working together as a unified and stronger voice, with greater influence to make an even bigger difference to people's lives. Trustees are pleased the charity will be able to continue to deliver peer led inpatient mental health advocacy for a further three years (commencing 1st April 2022).

We are proud to report that following the success of our Healthy Together pilot project further funding has been awarded for 2022/23. The project this year is expanded to offer support to people who receive their Severe Mental Illness (SMI) Annual Health Checks by primary care practitioners. The project delivers peer support and personalised care planning, providing emotional and practical help for people living with SMI, to help access their physical health entitlements and achieve wellbeing goals.

##### **Investment policy and performance**

The charity's policy is to invest any surplus funds in savings accounts, up to a maximum of the guaranteed £85,000 in any one account. The charity has a Business Deposit Account with the Ipswich Building Society and with the Nationwide Building Society.



# **Suffolk User Forum**

## **Company Limited by Guarantee**

### **Trustees' annual report (incorporating the directors' report) *(continued)***

#### **Year ended 31 March 2023**

---

##### **Reserves policy**

The Trustees remain committed to providing the maximum possible service levels. The Trustees have continued to retain SUF reserves during this financial year to provide the charity with reserves equal to at least six months' operating costs.

It is our revised policy to maintain current general reserves equivalent to six months projected operating expenditure, plus redundancy and statutory notice costs of £39,000 and £12,000 to replace IT equipment. This equates to £199,882 (2021/22: £191,881). Reserves on unrestricted funds at 31 March 2023 are £239,241 (2021/22: £157,954). The Trustee board will review the reserves policy during the forthcoming year, aiming to expend the slight excess in the coming year as and where appropriate.

Financial reserves are SUF's savings, helping to strengthen the charity and its sustainability. They help SUF to pay for activities that donors will not fund or handle unplanned events. They also provide additional operating funds over and above the core funding provided by the Mental Health Pooled Fund.

General reserves must be built up from unrestricted income; any surplus on a restricted project is tied to the same restrictions as the original project and may not be transferred to unrestricted funds without the donor's consent.

# **Suffolk User Forum**

## **Company Limited by Guarantee**

### **Trustees' annual report (incorporating the directors' report) *(continued)***

#### **Year ended 31 March 2023**

---

##### **Plans for future periods**

Trustees are committed to further developing service user leadership, involvement, personalisation, and coproduction working together with our local statutory partners, Suffolk County Council and NHS, supporting the developing Integrated Care System (ICS), and promoting the mental health service user voice.

We aim to continue to grow our mental health user led network to try to ensure the voice of lived experience informs and shapes new and existing mental health services, placing the voice of lived experience at the heart of suicide prevention, service improvement and development.

Our key priorities for the next period include:

##### **1. Funding -**

Trustees' top priority is to secure sustainable, long-term funding (for three years+) to ensure ongoing service delivery and support to beneficiaries, through specific project work, alongside promoting the voices of individual people living with mental ill health, and the shared interests of mental health service users collaboratively.

As the reporting year closes, the board of trustees are pleased to report that our core funding has been confirmed for a further year (2023/24).

If SUF could secure appropriate levels of core funding for a minimum of three years, the charity would be sustainable. This remains a key priority, and it would enable SUF to recruit to its community engagement and involvement posts which have been vacant since February 2022.

The charity is strengthened through having secured long term funding for peer led advocacy services, funded for a minimum of three years (up to 31st March 2025), with the opportunity for an additional two years until 31st March 2027.

In February 2023 SUF submitted a tender bid for the delivery of outreach peer support to people living with severe mental illness (SMI), which has been piloted over the last 18 months through the Healthy Together Project. A successful bid will secure funds for Healthy Together Peer Support for a further three years up to 31st March 2026.

##### **2. Partnership and user voice -**

- To continue to strengthen our local partnerships, supporting the County Council and the newly formed Integrated Care System (ICS) to discharge their statutory responsibilities for mental health service user involvement; coproduction, information, assistance, and advocacy in relation to adult mental health service users. This includes supporting the new ICS Mental Health Collaborative Board to ensure that the voice of lived experience is a golden thread through the collaborative and its subgroups.

- Making Our Voice Count: continuing to raise people's voices and lived experience to try to ensure that mental health services, organisations and policies are led and shaped by the people best placed to know what works.

- To use the Metal Recycling grant carried forward into 2023/24 (from 2022/23) to invest in the appointment of a SUF Community and Involvement worker to reach people in our communities to listen to and hear the user voice.

# **Suffolk User Forum**

## **Company Limited by Guarantee**

### **Trustees' annual report (incorporating the directors' report) *(continued)***

#### **Year ended 31 March 2023**

---

- To continue actively promoting service user priority areas for mental health improvement. These include:

- Raising and promoting LISTEN as a universal model for personalised care, suicide prevention and coproduction.

- Championing improved discharge planning for people transitioning from secondary mental health services to primary care support.

#### **3. Project delivery -**

- To continue to help deliver good outcomes for people at a time of mental health crisis through our peer led advocacy service, working as a partner within the Suffolk Advocacy Service.

- Assuming our bid for the delivery of outreach peer support is successful, we will continue to develop the SUF Healthy Together Project, growing new partnerships within primary care, promoting the healthcare rights and goals of people living with severe mental illness (SMI), which includes the following diagnoses: Schizophrenia, Bipolar Disorder, and Psychosis.

#### **4. People in our communities**

- To work across all communities and protected characteristics regarding groups where there is evidence of under-representation and/or greater discrimination.

- To develop our skills and capacity to support service user leadership and volunteer roles within our charity. Supporting people to gain skills and self-confidence as active citizens, building capacity to increase our support to people living with mental distress and mental health needs.

# **Suffolk User Forum**

## **Company Limited by Guarantee**

### **Trustees' annual report (incorporating the directors' report) *(continued)***

#### **Year ended 31 March 2023**

---

##### **Structure, governance, and management**

Suffolk User Forum is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated on the 29th June 2009 and registered as a charity (registered number 1133457) on the 5th January 2010.

The company was established under a memorandum of association which sets out the objects and powers of the charitable company and is governed under its articles of association. The liability of the members is limited.

##### **Trustee Board**

The directors of Suffolk User Forum are known as trustees for the purposes of charity law and under the company's Articles of Association are known as members of the Trustee Board. Recruitment to Suffolk User Forum's Trustee Board seeks to ensure that the organisation's desire to remain service user-led is appropriately reflected through the diversity of the Trustee body.

Currently 88% of the SUF Trustee Board have used or currently use mental health services as a service user or family carer. The charity is described as a Disabled Persons Organisation (DPO) as over 75% of its trustees and 100% of its staff have lived experience of mental ill health. The charity works within the ethos of the social model of disability.

##### **Recruitment and appointment of Trustee Board**

Business and public sector, mental health and social care, and family carer and service user skills remain well represented on the Trustee Board. Trustees also have skills in law and in community and voluntary services development. Recruitment has been supported by robust policy and procedures. SUF advertises vacancies for new trustees through the SUF website and social media, Reach Volunteering, Suffolk Volunteering and through its wider networks and partnerships.

The Trustee Board actively encourages and welcomes applications from people of all backgrounds, particularly welcoming applications from ethnic minority communities and women, as they are currently underrepresented on the Trustee Board.

Potential trustees are invited to meet SUF trustees and the chief executive to familiarise themselves with the charity and the context within which it operates. All applicants are asked to apply (using the SUF application form) to the Trustee Board.

Applications are shortlisted by the Chair of Trustees in partnership with at least one other Trustee, establishing a recruitment team supported by the Company Secretary. An interview is conducted by this recruitment team which writes an Interview Report. This report is submitted at the earliest board meeting for a board discussion and a decision made regarding suitability for appointment. Trustees are appointed by the Trustee Board initially until the next annual members' meeting when the appointment is put to a vote. Trustees normally serve a term of three years before reappointment at the next annual members' meeting.

##### **Trustee Induction and Training**

All new Trustees receive governance and business documentation relevant to their role, induction, and training.

# **Suffolk User Forum**

## **Company Limited by Guarantee**

### **Trustees' annual report (incorporating the directors' report) *(continued)***

#### **Year ended 31 March 2023**

---

New trustees are provided with essential documents to support them in their role. These include:

1. The obligations of the Trustee Board members including the Declaration of Interests, Code of Conduct and Agreement, trustees' roles, and a self-reported skills audit, to inform the board's overall skills report, which is regularly reviewed by the board to ensure a balance of knowledge and skills across the Trustee Board, and to inform the board's annual training plan for trustees.
2. The main documents which set out the operational framework for the charity include the Memorandum and Articles of Association of Suffolk User Forum.
3. A copy of all partnership and funding agreements, including those with Suffolk County Council, the NHS CCGs for Healthy Together and the Suffolk Advocacy Service lead partner POhWER.
4. Copies of contract review meetings.
5. Resourcing and the current financial position as set out in the latest published accounts.
6. The charity's aims and objectives.
7. The current business/operational plan.
8. The current structure of the organisation including staff.
9. The current project plans and reports.
10. The latest SUF publication including the regular service user feedback reports titled 'Making Our Voice Count'.
11. This documentation is supported by a Trustee Induction programme which provides forums for wider discussion regarding the governing documents, explanation of aims and objectives and of the charity's business and action plan, including strategic plans. All new trustees are encouraged to complete on-line training provided in Suffolk by Community Action Suffolk as part of their induction, to ensure they understand their trustee role and responsibilities.

The SUF new trustee induction programme includes receiving information about key SUF policies and procedures which include:

1. The SUF Information Governance framework which underpins our registration with NHS digital, including confidentiality, data, and cyber security, data protection, and the SUF Privacy Statement.
2. Equality and Diversity.
3. Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults.
4. Health and Safety including, lone working, near miss policy and risk management.
5. Comments, Compliments, and Complaints.
6. Social Value Strategy.
7. Environmental Strategy.
8. The SUF Staff and Volunteer Handbook.

## **Suffolk User Forum**

### **Company Limited by Guarantee**

### **Trustees' annual report (incorporating the directors' report) *(continued)***

**Year ended 31 March 2023**

---

#### **Structure, governance, and management *(continued)***

##### **Risk assessment**

The Trustees have assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed and holds a Risk Register that is reviewed at least four times a year at board meetings to ensure that the board is satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate exposure to the major risks. Risk assessment and mitigations inform the Charity's Business Continuity Plan, the robustness of which is tested through regular business continuity exercises.

##### **Independent examiner reappointment**

A resolution to appoint L Thurston FCCA of Lovewell Blake LLP as independent examiner will be proposed at the next AGM.

##### **Small company provisions**

This report has been prepared taking advantage of the small companies' exemption of section 415A of the Companies Act 2006.

The trustees' annual report was approved on 11/9/23 and signed on behalf of the board of trustees by:



G Pachent  
(Chair)

# **Suffolk User Forum**

## **Company Limited by Guarantee**

### **Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Suffolk User Forum**

**Year ended 31 March 2023**

---

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the financial statements of the company for the year ended 31 March 2023 which comprise the statement of financial activities (including income and expenditure account), balance sheet and the related notes.

#### **Responsibilities and basis of report**

As the charity's trustees of the company (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 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 company's financial statements 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 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 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 company 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 accounts to be reached.

 13/10/23

L Thurston FCCA  
Independent Examiner

Lovewell Blake LLP  
Chartered accountants  
First Floor Suite  
2 Hillside Business Park  
Bury St Edmunds  
IP32 7EA

# Suffolk User Forum

## Company Limited by Guarantee

### Statement of financial activities (including income and expenditure account)

Year ended 31 March 2023

		Unrestricted funds £	2023 Restricted funds £	Total funds £	2022 Total funds £
	Note				
<b>Income and endowments</b>					
Donations and legacies	5	122,749	176,962	299,711	162,662
Investment income	6	1,035	–	1,035	228
Other income		–	–	–	10,878
<b>Total income</b>		<u>123,784</u>	<u>176,962</u>	<u>300,746</u>	<u>173,768</u>
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Charitable activities	7	42,400	135,246	177,646	168,420
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<u>42,400</u>	<u>135,246</u>	<u>177,646</u>	<u>168,420</u>
<b>Net income before transfer of funds</b>		81,384	41,716	123,100	5,348
Transfers between funds		(97)	97	–	–
<b>Net movement in funds</b>		<u>81,287</u>	<u>41,813</u>	<u>123,100</u>	<u>5,348</u>
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>					
Total funds brought forward		157,954	7,150	165,104	159,756
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		<u>239,241</u>	<u>48,963</u>	<u>288,204</u>	<u>165,104</u>

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

The notes on pages 16 to 24 form part of these financial statements.



# Suffolk User Forum

## Company Limited by Guarantee

### Balance sheet

31 March 2023

	Note	2023 £	2022 £
<b>Fixed assets</b>			
Tangible fixed assets	11	5,292	2,148
<b>Current assets</b>			
Debtors	12	15,347	8,450
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>277,922</u>	<u>320,120</u>
		293,269	328,570
<b>Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year</b>	13	<u>(10,357)</u>	<u>(165,614)</u>
<b>Net current assets</b>		282,912	162,956
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>		<u>288,204</u>	<u>165,104</u>
<b>Net assets</b>		<u>288,204</u>	<u>165,104</u>
<b>Funds of the charity</b>			
Restricted funds		48,963	7,150
Unrestricted funds		<u>239,241</u>	<u>157,954</u>
<b>Total charity funds</b>	16	<u>288,204</u>	<u>165,104</u>

For the year ending 31 March 2023 the charity 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 financial statements 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 financial statements.

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

These financial statements were approved by the board of trustees and authorised for issue on 11/9/23, and are signed on behalf of the board by:



G Pachent  
(Chair)

Company registration number: 06946785

The notes on pages 16 to 24 form part of these financial statements.

# **Suffolk User Forum**

## **Company Limited by Guarantee**

### **Notes to the financial statements**

**Year ended 31 March 2023**

---

#### **1. General information**

The charity is a public benefit entity and a private company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales and a registered charity in England and Wales. The operational address and registered office is 3 Grange Business Centre, Kesgrave, Ipswich, IP5 2BY.

#### **2. Statement of compliance**

The charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102. 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 issued in October 2019, 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.

#### **3. Accounting policies**

##### **Basis of preparation**

The financial statements have been prepared on the historical cost basis, as modified by the revaluation of certain financial assets and liabilities and investment properties measured at fair value through income or expenditure.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the entity.

##### **Going concern**

The accounts have been prepared on the ongoing concern basis and the Trustees believe that no material uncertainties exist. The Trustees have considered the level of funds held and the expected income and expenditure for the next 12 months from authorising these financial statement. The budgeted income and expenditure is sufficient with the level of reserves for the Charity to be able to continue as a going concern.

##### **Income tax**

As a registered charity, the activities are exempt from United Kingdom Income and Corporation taxation, provided that the income is applied to charitable purposes.

##### **Fund accounting**

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees to further any of the charity's purposes.

Designated funds where necessary, are unrestricted funds earmarked by the trustees for particular future project or commitment.

Restricted funds are subjected to restrictions on their expenditure declared by the donor or through the terms of an appeal and fall into one of two sub-classes: restricted income funds or endowment funds.

# Suffolk User Forum

## Company Limited by Guarantee

### Notes to the financial statements *(continued)*

#### Year ended 31 March 2023

---

#### 3. Accounting policies *(continued)*

##### Income

All income is included in the statement of financial activities when entitlement has passed to the charity, it is probable that the economic benefits associated with the transaction will flow to the charity and the amount can be reliably measured. The following specific policies are applied to particular categories of income:

- income from donations or grants is recognised when there is evidence of entitlement to the gift, receipt is probable and its amount can be measured reliably.
- legacy income is recognised when receipt is probable and entitlement is established.
- income from donated goods is measured at the fair value of the goods unless this is impractical to measure reliably, in which case the value is derived from the cost to the donor or the estimated resale value. Donated facilities and services are recognised in the accounts when received if the value can be reliably measured. No amounts are included for the contribution of general volunteers.
- income from contracts for the supply of services is recognised with the delivery of the contracted service. This is classified as unrestricted funds unless there is a contractual requirement for it to be spent on a particular purpose and returned if unspent, in which case it may be regarded as restricted.

##### Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised on an accruals basis as a liability is incurred. Expenditure includes any VAT which cannot be fully recovered, and is classified under headings of the statement of financial activities to which it relates:

- expenditure on raising funds includes the costs of all fundraising activities, events, non-charitable trading activities, and the sale of donated goods.
- expenditure on charitable activities includes all costs incurred by a charity in undertaking activities that further its charitable aims for the benefit of its beneficiaries, including those support costs and costs relating to the governance of the charity apportioned to charitable activities.
- other expenditure includes all expenditure that is neither related to raising funds for the charity nor part of its expenditure on charitable activities.

All costs are allocated to expenditure categories reflecting the use of the resource. Direct costs attributable to a single activity are allocated directly to that activity. Shared costs are apportioned between the activities they contribute to on a reasonable, justifiable, and consistent basis.

##### Operating leases

Lease payments are recognised as an expense over the lease term on a straight-line basis. The aggregate benefit of lease incentives is recognised as a reduction to expense over the lease term, on a straight-line basis.

# **Suffolk User Forum**

## **Company Limited by Guarantee**

### **Notes to the financial statements *(continued)***

**Year ended 31 March 2023**

---

#### **3. Accounting policies *(continued)***

##### **Tangible assets**

Tangible assets are initially recorded at cost, and subsequently stated at cost less any accumulated depreciation and impairment losses. Any tangible assets carried at revalued amounts are recorded at the fair value at the date of revaluation less any subsequent accumulated depreciation and subsequent accumulated impairment losses.

An increase in the carrying amount of an asset as a result of a revaluation, is recognised in other recognised gains and losses, unless it reverses a charge for impairment that has previously been recognised as expenditure within the statement of financial activities. A decrease in the carrying amount of an asset as a result of revaluation, is recognised in other recognised gains and losses, except to which it offsets any previous revaluation gain, in which case the loss is shown within other recognised gains and losses on the statement of financial activities.

##### **Depreciation**

Depreciation is calculated so as to write off the cost or valuation of an asset, less its residual value, over the useful economic life of that asset as follows:

Computer equipment	- 25% straight line
Office furniture	- 25% straight line

##### **Financial instruments**

A financial asset or a financial liability is recognised only when the entity becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at the amount receivable or payable including any related transaction costs, unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where it is recognised at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest for a similar debt instrument.

Current assets and current liabilities are subsequently measured at the cash or other consideration expected to be paid or received and not discounted.

Debt instruments are subsequently measured at amortised cost.

##### **Defined contribution plans**

Contributions to defined contribution plans are recognised as an expense in the period in which the related service is provided. Prepaid contributions are recognised as an asset to the extent that the prepayment will lead to a reduction in future payments or a cash refund.

When contributions are not expected to be settled wholly within 12 months of the end of the reporting date in which the employees render the related service, the liability is measured on a discounted present value basis. The unwinding of the discount is recognised as an expense in the period in which it arises.

# Suffolk User Forum

## Company Limited by Guarantee

### Notes to the financial statements *(continued)*

Year ended 31 March 2023

#### 4. Limited by guarantee

The company is limited by guarantee and does not have a share capital. Every member of the company undertakes to contribute to the assets of the company if it is wound up during the time that he or she is a member, or within one period afterwards, for payment of the debts and liabilities of the company contracted before the time at which he or she ceases to be a member and of the costs, charges and expenses of winding up and for the adjustment of the rights of the contributors among themselves such amount as may be required not exceeding £10.

#### 5. Donations and legacies

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2023 £
<b>Donations</b>			
Donations	15,335	–	15,335
<b>Grants</b>			
Mental Health Pooled Fund	107,414	–	107,414
NHS West Suffolk CCG	–	34,657	34,657
NHS Ipswich and East Suffolk CCG	–	60,486	60,486
NHS England	–	48,500	48,500
POhWER	–	33,319	33,319
	<u>122,749</u>	<u>176,962</u>	<u>299,711</u>

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2022 £
<b>Donations</b>			
Donations	57	–	57
<b>Grants</b>			
Mental Health Pooled Fund	107,415	–	107,415
NHS West Suffolk CCG	–	6,343	6,343
NHS Ipswich and East Suffolk CCG	–	48,847	48,847
NHS England	–	–	–
POhWER	–	–	–
	<u>107,472</u>	<u>55,190</u>	<u>162,662</u>

#### 6. Investment income

	Unrestricted Funds £	Total Funds 2023 £	Unrestricted Funds £	Total Funds 2022 £
Building society interest	<u>1,035</u>	<u>1,035</u>	<u>228</u>	<u>228</u>

# Suffolk User Forum

## Company Limited by Guarantee

### Notes to the financial statements *(continued)*

Year ended 31 March 2023

#### 7. Expenditure on charitable activities

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2023 £
Staff costs	1,032	126,345	127,377
Staff and volunteer expenses	3,992	1,360	5,352
Support costs	37,376	7,541	44,917
	<u>42,400</u>	<u>135,246</u>	<u>177,646</u>
	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2022 £
Staff costs	64,078	56,068	120,146
Staff and volunteer expenses	2,420	–	2,420
Support costs	37,568	8,286	45,854
	<u>104,066</u>	<u>64,354</u>	<u>168,420</u>

#### Analysis of support costs

	2023 £	2022 £
Office rent	12,906	14,254
Rates	1,018	960
Light and heat	2,079	3,210
Telephone	2,252	2,924
Payroll bureau	592	648
Computer and website costs	11,262	5,824
Equipment hire	1,904	1,724
Postage and stationery	1,783	718
Repairs and renewals	661	156
Marketing	–	8,286
Insurance	1,726	1,546
Depreciation	2,376	1,433
Trustees' expenses	646	465
Sundry expenses	591	945
Legal and professional fees	2,301	997
Independent examination fee	2,820	1,764
	<u>44,917</u>	<u>45,854</u>

#### 8. Net income

Net income is stated after charging/(crediting):

	2023 £	2022 £
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	<u>2,376</u>	<u>1,433</u>

# Suffolk User Forum

## Company Limited by Guarantee

### Notes to the financial statements *(continued)*

#### Year ended 31 March 2023

#### 9. Staff costs

The total staff costs and employee benefits for the reporting period are analysed as follows:

	2023 £	2022 £
Wages and salaries	119,493	112,997
Social security costs	6,553	5,197
Pension costs	1,331	1,952
	<u>127,377</u>	<u>120,146</u>

The average head count of employees during the year was 5 (2021/22: 5).

Travel expenses were paid during in the period amounting to £856 (2021/22: £297), with none of the Trustees being paid expenses as users.

#### 10. Trustee remuneration and expenses

The key management personnel of the charity comprise the trustees and the Chief Executive. The trustees neither received nor waived any remuneration during the year (2021/22: £Nil). The total amount of employee benefits (including employer pension contributions) received by senior management for their services to the charity was £54,215 (2021/22: £47,819).

#### 11. Tangible fixed assets

	Computer equipment £	Office furniture £	Total £
<b>Cost</b>			
At 1 April 2022	18,213	2,431	20,644
Additions	5,520	–	5,520
<b>At 31 March 2023</b>	<u>23,733</u>	<u>2,431</u>	<u>26,164</u>
<b>Depreciation</b>			
At 1 April 2022	16,414	2,082	18,496
Charge for the year	2,119	257	2,376
<b>At 31 March 2023</b>	<u>18,533</u>	<u>2,339</u>	<u>20,872</u>
<b>Carrying amount</b>			
<b>At 31 March 2023</b>	<u>5,200</u>	<u>92</u>	<u>5,292</u>
At 31 March 2022	<u>1,799</u>	<u>349</u>	<u>2,148</u>

#### 12. Debtors

	2023 £	2022 £
Prepayments and accrued income	15,347	7,980
Other debtors	–	470
	<u>15,347</u>	<u>8,450</u>

# Suffolk User Forum

## Company Limited by Guarantee

### Notes to the financial statements *(continued)*

#### Year ended 31 March 2023

---

#### 13. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

	2023	2022
	£	£
Trade creditors	983	5,369
Accruals and deferred income	9,374	160,245
	<u>10,357</u>	<u>165,614</u>

#### 14. Deferred income

	2023	2022
	£	£
At 1 April 2022	158,643	29,333
Amount released to income	(158,643)	(29,333)
Amount deferred in year	6,970	158,643
<b>At 31 March 2023</b>	<u>6,970</u>	<u>158,643</u>

#### 15. Pensions and other post-retirement benefits

The amount recognised in income or expenditure as an expense in relation to defined contribution plans was £1,331 (2021/22: £1,952).



# Suffolk User Forum

## Company Limited by Guarantee

### Notes to the financial statements (continued)

#### Year ended 31 March 2023

#### 16. Analysis of charitable funds

##### Restricted funds

	At 1 April 2022 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	At 31 March 2023 £
Mental Health Service					
User expenses	4,690	—	—	—	4,690
SCC Waveney Peer Support	746	—	—	—	746
Healthy Together	—	143,643	(101,830)	(28,905)	12,908
Personal Health Budgets	—	—	—	28,905	28,905
Suicide Prevention	1,714	—	—	—	1,714
Advocacy	—	33,319	(33,416)	97	—
	<u>7,150</u>	<u>176,962</u>	<u>(135,246)</u>	<u>97</u>	<u>48,963</u>

	At 1 April 2021 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	At 31 March 2022 £
Mental Health Service					
User expenses	4,690	—	—	—	4,690
SCC Waveney Peer Support	746	—	—	—	746
Healthy Together	—	45,190	(45,190)	—	—
Suicide Prevention	—	10,000	(8,286)	—	1,714
Advocacy	—	10,878	(10,878)	—	—
	<u>5,436</u>	<u>66,068</u>	<u>(64,354)</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>7,150</u>

**The Mental Health Services User expenses** - is funded by the Ipswich & East Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group; West Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group and Suffolk County Council, through the Suffolk Mental Health Pooled Fund, SUF have agreed to hold and administer an amount of now less than £5,000 on behalf of Suffolk County Council and the Integrated Care System.

**SCC Waveney Peer Support** was funded by Suffolk County Council to support a restricted project in line with the objectives of SUF.

**Healthy Together** was funded by NHS Ipswich and East Suffolk CCG and NHS West Suffolk CCG to support a restricted project in line with the objectives of SUF. During the year it was agreed to transfer the remaining balance to a new project called Personal Health Budgets.

**Personal Health Budgets** was funded by NHS Ipswich and East Suffolk CCG and NHS West Suffolk CCG following the transfer from the Healthy Together project to support a restricted project in line with the objectives of SUF.

**Suicide Prevention** was funded by Suffolk County Council to support a restricted project in line with the objectives of SUF.

**Advocacy** was funded by Suffolk County Council to support a restricted project in line with the objectives of SUF. This is a three year contract with POHWER as the lead partner.

# Suffolk User Forum

## Company Limited by Guarantee

### Notes to the financial statements *(continued)*

#### Year ended 31 March 2023

---

#### 17. Analysis of net assets between funds

As at 31 March 2023

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2023 £
Tangible fixed assets	5,292	–	5,292
Net current assets	233,949	48,963	282,128
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>239,241</b>	<b>48,963</b>	<b>287,420</b>

As at 31 March 2022

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2022 £
Tangible fixed assets	2,148	–	2,148
Net current assets	155,806	7,150	162,956
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>157,954</b>	<b>7,150</b>	<b>165,104</b>


#### 18. Operating lease commitments

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

	2023 £	2022 £
Not later than 1 year	13,080	14,425

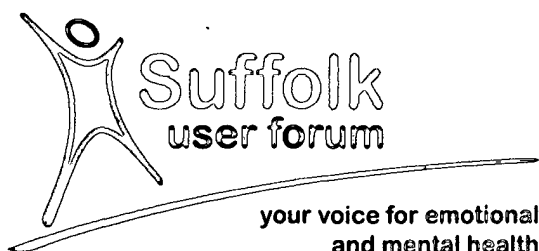
#### 19. Related parties

Other than elsewhere disclosed in the accounts, there were no related party transactions in this or the prior period.



# Impact Report 2022/23

**SUFFOLK USER FORUM**



---

# Welcome to our Impact Report for 2022/23

## Chair's Report



By Guenever Pachent, Chair of Trustees (left)  
and Jayne Stevens, Chief Executive (right)

Over the years, much of Suffolk User Forum's (SUF's) work listening to service users and their families has been about their experiences of NHS services. In 2022/23, SUF was pleased to be asked by Suffolk County Council (SCC) to engage with mental health (MH) service users about their interactions with SCC social workers and provide written feedback to SCC on the quality of their services as experienced by service users. It has been pleasing to see SCC genuinely interested in learning about service users' experiences, willing to listen and take action even when service user feedback has been negative. Working in partnership with SCC and with service users, we look forward to collecting more feedback about MH social work services in 2023/24, highlighting the good practice and areas in need of improvement.

The new statutory NHS Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care System (SNEE ICS) is also very keen for coproduced service user feedback to be a golden thread woven into all its decisions. SUF has been contributing to the development of SNEE's systems, including its MH Collaborative, and expects, together with service users, to participate more extensively in the Collaborative in 2023/24.

We are really pleased that advocacy for voluntary MH patients (distinct from patients detained under the Mental Health Act who have the legal right to advocacy) has been included in the three-year advocacy contract for Suffolk Advocacy Services, led by the charity POhWER, since it is so important that all inpatients, whether detained or not, have someone who will help them voice their wants and needs.

---

We are particularly pleased that SUF is contracted to provide peer-led advocacy to patients in Woodlands, Wedgwood House and Foxhall House. Helping people voice their concerns and take control of their lives is core SUF business.

Healthy Together is another project which helps people with severe mental illness, psychosis, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia in this case, voice their concerns and take control of their own lives. SUF developed this project with the NHS and received further pilot funding in 2022/23. The stories of how private and public sector organisations have given service users the run around for straightforward requests, e.g. getting the sink fixed in rented accommodation, booking appointments for utility services, or booking GP appointments, are shocking. Healthy Together has made a real difference to people's lives in enabling people to get these sorts of problems fixed. And then, relieved of burdensome everyday life stresses, service users have been free to attend their health appointments and improve their lives in this way as well.

2022/23, with its high rate of inflation and cost of living crises, has been a burden on MH service users and their families, and on SUF staff. SUF staff are conscious of the stress on service users and the need to be supportive. The Trustee Board is conscious of our obligation regarding the wellbeing of staff, and we have been able in 2022/23 to increase basic pay levels and to remunerate some additional work. It is pleasing to see in 2023 some signs of longer-term funding and indeed some small allowances for inflation.

We also wish to recognise in this report the hard work of our staff team: their contributions to SUF members and service users and their commitment to our charity. Our person centred Advocacy and Healthy Together work relies entirely on the staff team, led from the front by our indomitable chief executive. We also say a very big thank you to our funders and donors without whom SUF would not be here. And finally, thank you to our excellent volunteer trustees who hold the legal responsibility for SUF, ensuring that SUF carries out its functions in the interests of our beneficiaries, complies with our governing document and the law, ensuring good governance and accountability.

With best wishes,

*Guenever and Jayne*

---

# Contents

	Page Numbers
About Us	5
Our vision, mission, and values	6
Advocacy Together	7
Suicide Prevention	8
Healthy Together	9-10
Mental health self-care and support	11
Making Our Voice Count	12-13
Our members	14
Looking ahead to 2023-24	15-17
Final Words – Thank you.	17

---

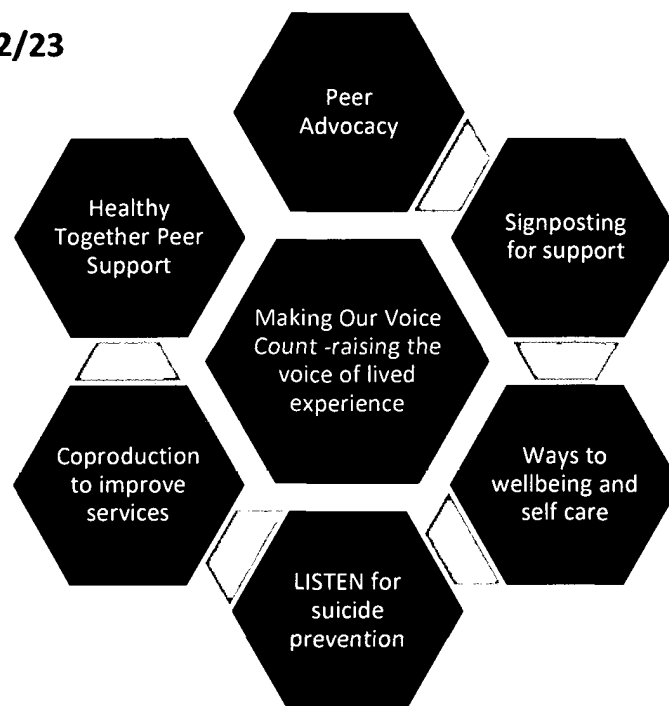
## About us

Suffolk User Forum (SUF) is an independent mental health user led involvement, peer support and advocacy organisation. All our staff and trustees have lived experience of mental health as a service user, family/parent carer or mental health worker. We make a difference because people know we understand their experiences and genuinely care.

Listening and giving people a voice is central to our work. We make positive changes happen for individuals and we help drive service improvement. As a critical friend we are respected and valued as a strategic partner that shares people's stories, ensuring lived experience is at the heart of service planning, delivery, improvements, and commissioning. Our regular publication 'Making Our Voice Count' reports key themes and emerging trends.

We actively support and facilitate user/family/parent carer involvement in coproduction, thus influencing decision-making about individuals' care. Valuing individuals as active citizens ensures that their lived experience becomes an essential resource for service improvement.

### Our project work in 2022/23



---

# Our Mission, Vision, Values and Objectives

## Our Mission

Is to be an inclusive and trusted mental health user led network that values, promotes, and strengthens the user voice for positive change, independence, rights, choice, and control.

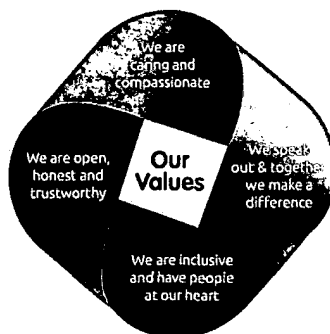
## Our Vision

Is to continue to be the leading organisation in Suffolk, championing equal and valued partnerships between mental health service users, commissioners, and providers; combining mutual strengths and experience to improve services, achieving positive emotional and mental health for all.

## Our Charitable Objectives

SUF can help and work with people in Suffolk, Norfolk, and Essex. We have five main charitable objectives.

1. To promote partnership working between service providers, including the NHS and Social Care, service users and family/parent carers.
2. To promote suicide prevention initiatives.
3. To provide advocacy services, peer support and information to empower people to make their own decisions.
4. To promote better understanding of mental health and emotional wellbeing.
5. To promote volunteering and peer support.





---

## SUF Peer Led Advocacy



As a partner within the Suffolk Advocacy Service, our inpatient peer advocacy service, led by James Woolnough (pictured left), has delivered peer led mental health ward advocacy through weekly drop ins at Wedgwood House (Bury St Edmunds) and Woodlands (Ipswich Hospital); and monthly at Foxhall House low to medium secure unit, Ipswich. On average (2018-2021) 40% of mental health inpatients are detained under the Mental Health Act and 60% are admitted voluntarily.

Voluntary/informal patients have no statutory access to advocacy. SUF's peer advocacy has no eligibility criteria. It is accessible to all inpatients, importantly ensuring voluntary/informal patients receive support to have their voice heard. We ensure that patients know and understand their rights, choices, and options. Peer advocacy is a strengths-based approach, which enables connection, addresses inequalities, increases self-autonomy and involvement in decisions about treatment, care, and discharge planning, in a way that is meaningful for a recovery.

Alongside this role we deliver wider advocacy awareness, promoting the benefits of advocacy to staff, inpatients, and family carers. We refer on to our lead partner POhWER those people who require statutory advocacy or Independent Mental Health Capacity Advocacy.

Our advocate also shares the inpatients' voices and experiences with the Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust's monthly Mental Health Law Monitoring Group, supporting the Trust to review and improve patients' rights.

This year our inpatient advocacy service has:



Delivered peer led advocacy to **939 people**.



Helping them with **1098 advocacy issues** on acute mental health inpatient wards in East and West Suffolk.

---

# Suicide Prevention

The 10th of September each year is World Suicide Prevention Day, where people and organisations across the globe come together to raise awareness of suicide and suicide prevention. The theme in 2022 was 'creating hope through action' and locally SUF supported the #You are not alone campaign, encouraging people to reach out for support.

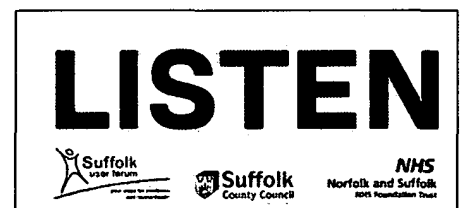
As a mental health user led charity, we know from people's experiences that when personal problems become insurmountable, it can be very hard to reach out for help. Too often people stay silent about their problems and difficulties. Talking about suicidal feelings can feel impossible. We can feel a sense of shame for not being able to cope; for being unable to find solutions to our problems. We can fear letting our families and loved ones down, or can experience a sense of loneliness and isolation, a loss of purpose and self-worth, so that these feelings become overwhelming.

In Suffolk User Forum, supporting people to talk more openly about their feelings, in a safe, and non-judgmental way is essential for suicide prevention. It is equally important that friends, family, and professionals can feel confident to be able to listen and offer support. Often people tell us they worry about saying the 'wrong' thing and are frightened to ask if someone is thinking of taking their own life. We work to support people to listen and to feel confident to ask questions, such as 'What's happening for you right now?' 'Are you having thoughts of ending your life?' Listening and understanding people's experiences is essential for building connection, offering hope and reassurance that says, 'I care, and you are not alone'.

We have coproduced helpful resources to support people to find ways to manage difficult feelings, and for supporting others to start conversations with people in distress. Our 'Thrive with Five' booklets support self-care and our LISTEN for Suicide Prevention booklet and this year, our coproduced LISTEN video provide helpful ways to manage thoughts of suicide with a step-by-step guide to help friends, family, people in our communities and professionals to feel more confident when giving support to prevent suicide.



To watch our coproduced video  
LISTEN for Suicide Prevention visit  
<https://youtu.be/8E6hNCiiyWA>



---

## Healthy Together Peer Support



Drawing on their lived experience, our Healthy Together Peer Support Workers, Chloe Newman (left) and Simon Palman-Titchener (right) provide friendly and supportive peer support which is mutual, trauma informed, and recovery focused. Our approach is person centred offering people options and choices about how they wish to be supported to achieve their healthcare goals.

This year we have been delighted to appoint Simon to the team. Both Chloe and Simon have been supported to attend a range of training to help develop our team's knowledge and skills. Our staff training programme includes mandatory training e.g. Data Security/GDPR, Safeguarding, Equalities and Diversity, Health and Safety, and more specialist training: e.g. all Peer Support Workers are ImROC qualified (Implementing Recovery through Organisational Change) meeting Health Education England's Competence Framework for MH PSWs.

Supporting people in over 70+ health and support pathways, Chloe and Simon have also undertaken additional training including: Making Every Contact Count (MECC); advocacy awareness; Oral Health Champions; Stop Smoking Practitioner Level One; Talk Cancer; Bipolar UK E-learning; Terrence Higgins Trust HIV Training; Key Understanding Framework for Personality Disorders; Zero Suicide Alliance's suicide prevention; Integrating Care: Depression, Anxiety and Physical Illness; Suffolk Wellbeing Friend; plus other recovery focused courses e.g. Suffolk Cares. We are a Mindful Employer and support peer staff with both regular and peer group supervision, and reflective practice sessions.

As the year ends, we have published a wealth of information for people living with Severe Mental Illness (SMI) and professionals on our website. We have submitted a funding bid for the delivery of peer led outreach support for people living with SMI and look forward to extending Healthy Together and growing our peer service further over the next three years, including developing personal health budgets.

---

Healthy Together peer support enables over **90%** of those referred to meet their health care goals.



If we are living with schizophrenia, psychosis or bipolar we have what is called a severe mental illness (SMI) and are more likely to develop physical health problems such as diabetes and heart problems. Because of these health risks we are entitled to a **FREE SMI Annual Physical Health Check**. Attending our annual physical health check is an important first step towards taking charge of our physical health. An annual physical health check usually takes about 30 to 45 minutes. It includes six different checks:

1. Our height and weight.
2. Our blood pressure.
3. Our temperature and pulse.
4. Blood tests to check our blood sugar and cholesterol.
5. Smoking – we will be asked if we smoke.
6. Alcohol - we will be asked whether we drink alcohol, and if so, how much.

Ask your GP surgery to arrange a SMI annual physical health check appointment.

---

## Mental health self-care and support

Mental health problems are common, with 1 in 6 adults reporting a common mental health disorder, such as anxiety. There are close to five thousand people in Suffolk with more severe mental illness (SMI) such as schizophrenia or bipolar disorder and around 5,000 adults (aged 16 and over) estimated to live with autism. Mental health problems are often hidden, and many people are still not receiving support to access services. We know that social risk factors, which include poverty, migration, extreme stress, exposure to violence (e.g. domestic, sexual and gender-based), emergency and conflict situations, natural disasters, trauma, and low social support, increase the risk of poor mental health.

Whilst our Healthy Together project supports those of us who live with an SMI, our wider work supports people with existing mental health problems to get information that can help them to access services and support to improve their health and wellbeing.



Over **2169 people** visited our website each month for signposting and support.

**26,033 people** across the year viewed over **56,800 SUF web pages**.

Our most visited web pages are:

Making Our Voice Count -  
Feedback Reports

Mental health crisis and  
emergency help now

Healthy Together  
Peer-led Advocacy

Living with Eating Disorders  
Living with Personality Disorder

Long Covid Recovery

Our Support Directory: Housing, Older People's Support, Domestic Violence Support, Bereavement Support, Customer First and Social Care Support

---

# Making Our Voice Count: Discharge and Eating Disorders

Making our Voice Count (MOVC) is our feedback report on service user and family/parent carer experiences of adult mental health and wellbeing services in East and West Suffolk. Our reports provide service user feedback with statistical information, alongside some anonymised personal stories which describe people's experiences and views. This year we have focused our reports on two key issues. Discharge from mental health services (both community mental health and inpatient care) and eating disorder services.



**Discharge from mental health services.** This report focused on people's experiences of being discharged from specialist mental health services in East and West Suffolk. Our feedback was shared at the Healthwatch Suffolk Mental Health Focus Group and with NSFT and commissioners. Whilst some people experience discharge as a positive part of their recovery, others experience it as difficult and distressing.

It can present risks to people's recovery and care if not managed with consideration and sensitivity. Both nationally and locally it is understood that often people leave inpatient mental health care with no discharge plan in place to support them after discharge. We are still working with NSFT local leadership to ask for discharge to be a key priority for coproduction, involving other mental health system partners and representatives (e.g. the new Connect Service and Steam/wellbeing/crisis cafés) to work together to support a more thorough, user led approach to safe and effective discharge planning.



**Eating Disorders, the Cycle of 'Support' - How you can help.** In this publication we featured the voices and experiences of people living with eating disorders. Our Call to Action set out a series of targeted actions for the short and medium term that would make a difference to the lives of people living with eating disorders. Suffolk Mind's Eating Recovery Group has now been recommissioned. Service users have set up their own peer support group to help reduce

isolation and to build self-confidence for managing wellbeing. Find out more [Suffolk InfoLink | Eating Peer Support Group - Ipswich](#)

---

# Making Our Voice Count: The Mental Health Collaborative

We gather and share feedback from a wide range of health and care organisations, who provide mental health care and wellbeing services. This includes mental health services in primary care (at our GP surgeries) and secondary care (specialist mental health services provided by Norfolk & Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust (NSFT)). In 2022/23 we have also gathered feedback for SCC about their point of contact to social care: Customer First. This year our feedback and Making Our Voice Count report has been presented at strategic meetings including the NSFT Overview and Assurance Group and the Mental Health Alliance Implementation Group and sent to key strategic leaders. As the year ends, we are working with the new Integrated Care System (ICS) to strengthen the user voice within the ICS, at the new Mental Health Collaborative. The Collaborative's aim is to make the voice of lived experience a golden thread which is central to the IC Board's decision making, quality assurance and governance.

To achieve this, we will need to create more opportunities for service users to be involved, to influence activities and decisions, to identify priorities, investing in innovative approaches, building on our shared strengths, and doing things differently together. As this work develops, we will be working closely with our SUF members and service users to work in coproduction with the Collaborative, aiming for user involvement:

- To be given time and appropriately resourced.
- Has a clear remit and mandate.
- Recognises that it often takes courage to speak up, and that people need support, alongside being enabled to participate in a range of diverse ways.
- Captures a wider range of user voices, recognising the diverse range of groups and people that access mental health services.
- Understands the importance of seeing the whole of the person's life, not just the part that relates to mental health or to a service.
- Builds on existing insight and intelligence.
- Ensures that the user voice is evident in all Mental Health Collaborative Board papers, with a clear path from involvement through to board decision making/minutes of meetings. This needs to be tangible and more than the usual feedback loop (e.g. 'you said, we did').

If you would like to be involved in this work, please email us through our online Contact Us form [Contact Suffolk User Forum](#). Share your story via our [feedback page](#) or call the SUF office on 01473 907087.

---

## Our members



SUF is a membership organisation. Individual members include people with lived experience, who may have used mental health services in the past or are currently using them. They may include professionals with lived experience. However, we hold a separate mailing list for MH professionals, e.g. mental health nurses, or nursing/social work students or other people with an interest in the mental health lived experience landscape in Suffolk. Benefits of SUF membership include our bi-weekly e-news, providing information, news, events, involvement opportunities, SUF jobs, and funding updates.

Our group members may not all be mental health groups, but all are organisations that work at the grassroots level across our county. They offer emotional support, faith, cultural, practical, financial, and much more, enabling people to have opportunities to build their recovery, tackling the social and economic issues that can lead to distress or mental ill-health. During this year we have had personal contact with all our group members to catch up on their work supporting vulnerable people and those living with mental ill health.

As the financial year ends, we are planning a summer 2023 members' event, to gather people's views about their priorities for mental health coproduction.



---

## Looking ahead to 2023/24

Trustees are committed to further developing service user leadership, involvement, personalisation, and coproduction collaborating with our local statutory partners, SCC, and the NHS, supporting the developing Integrated Care System (ICS), and promoting mental health service user voices.

We aim to continue to grow our mental health user led network to try to ensure the voice of lived experience informs and shapes new and existing mental health services, placing the voice of lived experience at the heart of suicide prevention, service improvement and development.

**Our key priorities for the next period include:**

### **1. Funding**

- 1.1 Trustees' top priority is to secure sustainable, long-term funding (for three years+) to ensure ongoing service delivery and support to beneficiaries, through specific project work, alongside promoting the voices of individual people living with mental ill health, and the shared interests of mental health service users collaboratively.
- 1.2 As the reporting year closes, the board of trustees are pleased to report that our core funding has been confirmed for a further year (2023/24).
- 1.3 If SUF could secure appropriate levels of core funding for a minimum of three years, the charity would be sustainable. This remains a key priority, and it would enable SUF to recruit to its community engagement and involvement posts which have been vacant since February 2022.
- 1.4 The charity is strengthened through having secured long term funding for peer led advocacy services, funded for a minimum of three years (up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025), with the opportunity for an additional two years until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2027.
- 1.5 In February 2023 SUF submitted a tender bid for the delivery of outreach peer support to people living with severe mental illness (SMI), which has been piloted over the last 18 months through the Healthy Together Project.

A successful bid will secure funds for Healthy Together Peer Support for a further three years up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026.

---

## **2. Partnership and user voice**

- 2.1 To continue to strengthen our local partnerships, supporting the County Council and the newly formed Integrated Care System (ICS) to discharge their statutory responsibilities for mental health service user involvement; coproduction, information, assistance, and advocacy in relation to adult mental health service users. This includes supporting the new ICS Mental Health Collaborative Board to ensure that the voice of lived experience is a golden thread through the collaborative and its subgroups.
- 2.2 Making Our Voice Count: continuing to raise people's voices and lived experience to try to ensure that mental health services, organisations and policies are led and shaped by the people best placed to know what works.
- 2.3 To use the Metal Recycling grant carried forward into 2023/24 (from 2022/23) to invest in the appointment of a SUF Community and Involvement worker to reach people in our communities to listen to and hear the user voice.
- 2.4 To continue actively promoting service user priority areas for mental health improvement. These include:
  - Raising and promoting LISTEN as a universal model for personalised care, suicide prevention and coproduction.
  - Championing improved discharge planning for people transitioning from secondary mental health services to primary care support.

## **3. Project delivery**

- 3.1 To continue to help deliver good outcomes for people at a time of mental health crisis through our peer led advocacy service, working as a partner within the Suffolk Advocacy Service.
- 3.2 Assuming our bid for the delivery of outreach peer support is successful, we will continue to develop the SUF Healthy Together Project, growing new partnerships within primary care, promoting the healthcare rights and goals of people living with severe mental illness (SMI), which includes the following diagnoses: Schizophrenia, Bipolar Disorder, and Psychosis.

---

## **4. People in our communities.**

- 4.1 To work across all communities and protected characteristics regarding groups where there is evidence of under-representation and/or greater discrimination.
- 4.2 To develop our skills and capacity to support service user leadership and volunteer roles within our charity. Supporting people to gain skills and self-confidence as active citizens, building capacity to increase our support to people living with mental distress and mental health needs.

## **Final words – Thank you.**

### **To our members**

We would like to thank our SUF membership, service users and family/parent carers who have supported us during this year. Thank you for trusting us, for sharing your very individual experiences with us and for working in coproduction with us. Together we are stronger and can make a difference. We look forward to working together in 2023/24.

### **To our trustees**



We would like to thank all our trustees for their volunteering time, continued commitment, and outstanding support. They have actively supported us to achieve our mission and strategic objectives, bringing a more diverse range of skills, lived experience and knowledge; raising awareness about SUF and mental health; building valuable relationships within our networks, partnerships, community and ultimately our work supporting others.

### **To our funders**

We would like to express our sincere thanks and appreciation to our funders and donors who are fundamental to the financial stability of our charity. Thank you for being our partner, for your generosity, confidence, and appreciation of our support to vulnerable people and mental health service users.



-  01473 907087
-  hello@suffolkuserforum.co.uk
-  Suffolk User Forum
-  @SUFMentalWealth
-  www.suffolkuserforum.co.uk

-  The New Hollies  
Unit 3, Grange Business Centre  
Kesgrave, Ipswich  
Suffolk, IP5 2BY
-  Suffolk User Forum (SUF) is a  
Registered Company Number  
06946785 and a Charity  
Number 1133457.

Copyright 2023 © Suffolk User Forum

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form, other than the following. The publication can be printed for personal use only.

The publication may be shared on social media on the condition that it is shared in its entirety and acknowledge the source of the material.