



Impact Report

2024 - 2025



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About Us

Suffolk User Forum (SUF) is an independent mental health user led involvement, peer support and advocacy organisation for adults.

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, trying to ensure that lived experience is at the heart of service planning, delivery, improvements, and commissioning.

We actively support and facilitate service user and 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 work in 2024/25 included:

- **SUF Peer Led Advocacy**
- **Healthy Together**
- **Coproduction and *Making Our Voice Count* publication**
- **Mental Health Support and Signposting**
- **Suicide Prevention**
- **Our SUF Community Members**



Welcome to our 2024/25 Impact Report

As we reflect on the past year, we are pleased to share the Suffolk User Forum (SUF) Impact Report for 2024/2025. This report outlines the highlights of the reporting year and the team's continued commitment to improving mental health services and support within our community.

We have continued our work as part of the Suffolk Advocacy Partnership this year, alongside our partners POHWER, ACE Anglia, and Suffolk Family Carers. Through this collaboration, SUF Advocates provided advocacy support to 743 mental health inpatients, helping people at a point of crisis.

Now in its third year, the Suffolk Advocacy Partnership has been extended for a further year until 31st March 2026. By working together, we help ensure that people's voices are heard and their rights respected, making a meaningful difference to their lives.

Healthy Together Peer Support continues to make a real difference, having supported over 650 individuals since its launch in 2021. By providing personalised care planning and emotional support, Healthy Together helps people living with severe mental illness (SMI) to access their physical health entitlements and work towards their wellbeing goals.

This year, we held two Stepping Forward events in Stowmarket and Ipswich, where we listened to the experiences of 56 people who had faced mental health crises and used local support services, including 111 (option 2 for mental health) and psychiatric liaison teams in A&E.

The feedback from these events is contained in our *Making Our Voice Count* Report (December 2024). This report shares individual stories and key themes in people's experiences. We are currently working with Healthwatch Suffolk to further explore people's experiences of emergency care for mental health crises, supported by key staff teams in our local acute and mental health trusts.

As we look to the year ahead, we remain firmly committed to our core values of service user leadership and personalisation. We will continue to ensure that the voices of service users and family/parent carers are at the heart of everything we do. We extend our sincere gratitude to our dedicated staff team, trustees, partners, and the wider SUF community for their unwavering support. Together, we will continue to strive for excellence in mental health services and support. Thank you for your continued support.

Guenever Pachent, Chair
and Jayne Stevens CEO



Empowering Individuals

SUF Advocacy



We have continued our role within the Suffolk Advocacy Service this year, providing peer-led mental health advocacy on inpatient wards, delivering crucial support to individuals during times of crisis.

We offer weekly drop-ins at Wedgwood House in Bury St Edmunds and Woodlands at Ipswich Hospital, along with monthly visits to Foxhall House, a secure unit in Ipswich.

Our peer-led advocacy service ensures that all inpatients, including the 57% admitted voluntarily¹ and those detained under the Mental Health Act, have access to advocacy.

By addressing common concerns and empowering patients to engage in their care, SUF not only improves individual outcomes but also contributes to systemic improvements in mental health services.

The positive impact on patients' ability to self-advocate highlights the importance of such services in fostering a more inclusive and responsive healthcare environment.

ADVOCACY OUTCOMES

194 people had their goals met better than expected.

508 people had their goals slightly met better than expected.

57 people had their goals met.

709 people said advocacy helped them have their voice heard.

163 people said advocacy increased their ability to self-advocate.

638

The number of advocacy hours delivered by SUF in 2024/25

743

The number of people SUF provided advocacy support to in 2024/25

814

The number of advocacy needs supported in 2024/25

¹ Mental Health Act Statistics, Annual Figures, 2023-24 - NHS England Digital

Empowering Individuals

Healthy Together Peer Support

This is the second year of our three-year Healthy Together contract, funded by the Suffolk and North East Essex (SNEE) Integrated Care Board. Healthy Together offers peer support to people who live with Severe Mental Illness (SMI) including Schizophrenia, Bi-Polar Disorder, and Psychosis following their Annual Health Checks by primary care practitioners and/or the Suffolk Physical Health Team in Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust for those people receiving care under secondary mental health services.

This year, the project has been extended to provide support for a small number of people living with eating disorders (professional referral only).

Drawing on our lived experience, our Healthy Together Peer Support Workers (PSWs) 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. The team work positively with people, championing the protective factors for good physical and mental health and supporting people with previously unidentified and unmet needs.

We have supported over 650 people since the initial pilot project in 2021. This is approximately 20% of people living with an SMI in East and West Suffolk.²

Outcomes for people receiving Healthy Together Peer Support in 2024/25:

We provided Healthy Together Peer Support to **252** people and received **183** new referrals across **265** pathways

We supported 72 people with personal health budgets, funding services like decluttering, dental care, weight loss, addiction support, and wellbeing tools.

92% of referred people use the support and reach their health goals.

"I've had support workers before but honestly no one has come close to you. You've been there for my meetings. I cannot fault you and it blows me away that you understand."

Service User Quote

Feedback received from 50% of beneficiaries with 98% being positive

2. Total numbers of people with an SMI in East and West Suffolk is c. 3500

Partnership for Positive Change

Partnership for Positive Change

Working with Suffolk County Council, supporting their people at the heart of care transformation

This year, we have made significant strides in supporting Suffolk County Council Adult Social Care with the implementation of their "People at the Heart of Care" strategy. Led by our Deputy CEO, we have worked closely with over 50 individuals in our adult mental health My Voice and My Home groups, SUF has successfully co-produced and provided involvement opportunities for various aspects of the transformation programme.

Coproduction is a collaborative process where people work as equals to make shared decisions and create inclusive services. Guided by our principles, active involvement of service users and carers, regular reporting, shared understanding, equality, and inclusion, we ensure everyone is an equal partner in driving positive change. We also provide adequate time for meaningful collaboration.

People at the Heart of Care Strategy

The "People at the Heart of Care" strategy is an initiative aimed at transforming the way Adult Social Care services are provided. The strategy emphasises working closely with individuals to support them in living well and outlines a framework for all the transformation work being done. A key priority is to support independence, helping people to live well, and to receive early help and support.

My Voice and My Home Groups

The My Voice and My Home groups have played a crucial role in supporting key areas of transformation. The My Voice Focus Groups have explored the Cassius digital care technology in collaboration with Suffolk County Council. This exploration included examining how digital support can enhance people's lives and support their independence. Various types of care technology, such as video calling, Alexa, reminder clocks, ring doorbells, and smartwatches, were evaluated. Service users highlighted the benefits and challenges of using banking apps, AI chat functions, and meditation and relaxation apps. They also expressed concerns about the reliability of chatbots and the need for an escalation process.

Partnership for Positive Change

The My Home Focus Groups have been involved in planning meetings and facilitating coproduction for the tender for Supported Housing recommissioning. Service users and family/parent carers have had an opportunity to contribute to the tender process, with their feedback being included within the tender specification, contributing to the selection criteria for future support providers, and exploring how lived experience can be included within the selection process. Together, people have emphasised the importance of supported housing providers delivering flexible support at the right time, ensuring people feel safe and supported, and maximising their independence and connections with family and local networks.

Working with Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust (NSFT)

We have been involved in various initiatives with NSFT, including the Mortality review, learning from deaths, development of the Carers Charter, and the Inpatient 3-year strategy "Lived Experience and Coproduction for Inpatient Settings."

As this reporting year ends, we are beginning to start work with the Integrated Care System (ICS), NSFT, and Suffolk County Council, focusing on Section 117 of the Mental Health Act, looking at statutory aftercare support for people being discharged from hospital back home to their local communities. Additionally, our Deputy CEO has supported the NSFT 111 mental health option and the NSFT pathway redesign for inpatient and community settings.

SUF Supporting the Lived Experience Group

Suffolk User Forum (SUF) has been actively supporting the Lived Experience Group (LEG), a sub-group to the Mental Health Collaborative Committee (MHCC). The LEG aligns with the MHCC and meets one week ahead of the MHCC meetings. The group is still in its infancy and as it is developed, the aim is to ensure that lived experience is integrated into the collaborative's decision-making process and that it is the golden thread running through all stages.

This year, we have revised the LEG's Terms of Reference. They emphasise the importance of coproduction and the involvement of service users and family/parent carers through membership in the LEG. The group focuses on ensuring equality and inclusion, and regular reporting to the MHCC.

SUF's support for the Lived Experience Group has been instrumental in ensuring collaboration between service providers and service users, whilst supporting the ICB to progress recruitment to the group, broadening its membership and lived experience.

Partnership for Positive Change

Making Our Voice Count

Making Our Voice Count (MOVC) is our series of feedback reports 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 and family/parent carer feedback, accompanied by statistical information, alongside anonymised personal stories that describe people's experiences and views.

Our MOVC initiative is a cornerstone of our commitment to listening to and acting upon the voices of those who use our services. Each report is meticulously compiled to ensure that it reflects the diverse experiences and perspectives of our service users and their families.

Our reports this year focused on reporting the experiences of service users and family/parent carers regarding emergency mental health services and support in East and West Suffolk. We gathered feedback from 56 people at two *Stepping Forward* events held in Stowmarket and Kesgrave in 2024 and contributed to a report presented directly to the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

In terms of crisis care, key areas of feedback included:

- Mixed experiences within primary care and challenges in accessing support from mental health practitioners.
- Positive experiences and quick ambulance response times, but difficulties getting through to 111 (option 2 for mental health) and a lack of empathy from call handlers.
- Mixed experiences at Ipswich Accident and Emergency (A&E), including support from Psychiatric liaison, with lengthy wait times; however, more positive feedback was received from West Suffolk Hospital A&E.
- People shared positive experiences of the support provided by the voluntary sector. However, there was also disappointment about the loss of some important voluntary services this year, following the closure of several local charities.



Partnership for Positive Change

At the end of this year we reported to CQC feedback from 121 people who were inpatients on Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trusts (NSFT) acute wards in 2024/25, including feedback from the wider involvement of SUF and family/parent carers who have been bereaved by suicide in the Learning from Deaths Action Plan Management Group. We included our involvement in the scrutinising of Prevention of Future Death notices related to Coroner findings; the lived experience and coproduction for inpatient settings; our contribution to the carers charter and NSFT Learning from deaths review.

In terms of outcomes for inpatients on acute wards feedback showed an improvement on 2023/24 data, with 63% of inpatients in 2024/25 reporting positive outcomes, praising staff for being helpful, compassionate, empathetic, and kind. However, there remained inconsistency on inpatient service provision, with 33% of inpatients reporting negative feedback, including concerns about the rude attitude of some consultants, unhelpful night staff, and lack of activities.

Negative experiences with discharge planning have continued since our detailed Discharge MOVC report in 2022, highlighting issues such as chaotic and poorly communicated discharge plans. This remains a critical area for coproduction and service improvement. We will continue to report on this and advocate for improvement in discharge planning, ensuring that the voices of service users are heard and acted upon.

Image Below - Caroline Donovan, Chief Executive of NSFT was the guest speaker at our 2024 AGM.



Promoting Mental Wellbeing

The Difference Made by Our Signposting for Support

Our mission is to ensure that individuals have access to the support they need, especially during challenging times. One of the key ways we achieve this is through our signposting for support services. This report highlights the significant impact these services have had over the past year.

Our 2024/25 Statistics

- On average every month we have 154 individual visits to our signposting and support pages.
- From April 2024 to March 2025, we had nearly 2,000 people visit our support directory and 27,000 visits to our website overall
- This year, our social media presence has grown significantly:
 - Facebook: 1.7k likes and 1999 followers.
 - X: 2,299 followers
 - LinkedIn: 643 followers
 - YouTube: 17 subscribers. 263 views on HT videos 12 and 454 views on LISTEN for suicide prevention.



Signposting A - Z

Enhancing Access to Support

Our signposting for support services have been instrumental in guiding individuals to the appropriate resources and services. By providing clear and accessible information, we have empowered people to seek help and support when they need it most. This has been particularly important for those experiencing mental health challenges, as timely access to support can make a significant difference in their recovery journey.

Key Achievements

Increased Awareness and Engagement

Over the past year, we have seen a substantial increase in the number of individuals accessing our signposting services. This is reflected in the rise in active website users, with 27K users engaging with our content. The top pages visited include the SUF homepage, Suffolk County Council – Customer First, Healthy Together Peer Support and getting emergency help for your mental health.

Positive Feedback from Service Users

Feedback from people who have used our signposting services has been overwhelmingly positive. Many have expressed gratitude for the clear and concise information provided, which has helped them navigate the often-complex landscape of mental health services.

Promoting Mental Wellbeing

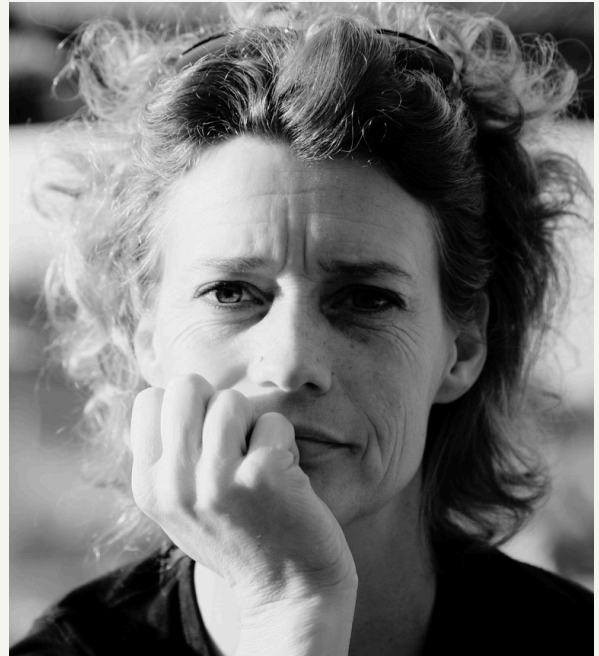
Lived Experience Journey 1: Accessing Mental Health Support

Adeel was struggling with severe anxiety. They told us that he found our signposting page for emergency mental health support.

The clear instructions and contact information provided enabled them to quickly access the help they needed, leading to a significant improvement in their mental health.

"The information was so clear and easy to follow. I was able to get the help I needed quickly, and it made a huge difference in my recovery."

Adeel, Service User



Lived Experience Journey 2: Navigating Health Services

Jennifer was unsure about the process for accessing health services. She used our signposting page to find information about her SMI Annual Physical Health Check. This guidance together with our Healthy Together video helped her understand the steps involved and encouraged Jennifer to attend her appointment, ultimately leading to better health outcomes.

"I didn't know where to start, but the signposting page guided me through the process. It was a relief to have clear information, and it helped me take the necessary steps for my health."

Jennifer, Service User

Suicide Prevention

Every year, on the 10th of September, World Suicide Prevention Day brings people and organisations together to raise awareness about suicide, bereavement by suicide, and its prevention.

As a mental health user-led charity, we understand that when personal problems become overwhelming, it can be incredibly difficult for individuals to seek help. Many people remain silent about their struggles, finding it nearly impossible to talk about suicidal feelings. Feelings of shame, fear of letting loved ones down, and a sense of isolation can make these emotions even more challenging to manage.

We understand the importance of creating a safe and non-judgmental space where people can talk openly about their feelings. It is important for friends, family, and professionals to feel confident in listening and offering support. Often, people worry about saying the wrong thing and are afraid to ask if someone is considering suicide.



We work to empower people to ask questions like, "What's happening for you right now?" and "Are you having thoughts of ending your life?" Listening and understanding are essential for building connections and offering hope and reassurance.

We have developed several resources to help individuals manage difficult feelings and support others in distress. Our *Thrive with Five* booklets promote self-care, while our *LISTEN for Suicide Prevention* booklet and coproduced LISTEN for suicide prevention video offers step-by-step guidance for friends, family, community members, and professionals to feel more confident in preventing suicide.

To watch our co-produced video "LISTEN for Suicide Prevention," please visit <https://youtu.be/8E6hNCiiyWA>.



L	Listen and validate concerns. Look at crisis/care plan and general options
I	Involve and Inform the service user and carer of the immediate options available
S	Shared understanding achieved and Safety issues established
T	Time. Be clear about your availability and be aware of your Tone of voice
E	Empathise and Encourage responsibility then Evaluate what has been agreed
N	Next steps made clear. Never end the contact without a plan

Suicide Prevention

Thinking about suicide?

Worried about someone?

Download the award-winning Stay Alive app

It's free and can help you and others stay safe from suicide

stayalive.app

Visit the Suicide Prevention Hub
prevent-suicide.org.uk/prevention-hub

In the app:

- Advice
- Helplines and chat
- Safety plans
- Wellness Plan
- Staying safe guide

Google Play | Download on the App Store

GRASSROOTS SUICIDE PREVENTION

In 2014 we supported Grassroots with their innovative Stay Alive App for suicide prevention, making a strong business case to the East and West Clinical Commissioning Groups to bring the Stay Alive app to Suffolk. Without additional funding we have continued to provide regular updates to Grassroots to keep the app current for our Suffolk community.

In 2014, our first year with Stay Alive, we supported just over 500 people.

As this reporting year ends in March 2025, the Stay Alive app has supported 4,467 individuals in Suffolk with suicide prevention, including significant use in Ipswich, Stowmarket, Sutton, and Bury St Edmunds.

Through open communication, providing our LISTEN and Stay Alive resources, we deliver significant suicide prevention support, helping those in need. Remember, you are not alone, and there is always hope. Reach out for support.

Through open communication, providing our LISTEN and Stay Alive resources, we deliver significant suicide prevention support, helping those in need. Remember, you are not alone, and there is always hope. Reach out for support.

880,000+
downloads since the app
was launched in 2014

208
countries and territories with
Stay Alive users

22
languages are available

Building Community

Our SUF Community Members

The ethos of Suffolk User Forum (SUF) is deeply rooted in our commitment to mental health service users and their families. As a user-led organisation driven by lived experiences, SUF members are the cornerstone of our mission and vision. Our members' insights and perspectives are invaluable in shaping our initiatives and ensuring that our efforts are truly reflective of the needs and aspirations of our community. SUF members bring a wealth of knowledge and firsthand experience that enriches our understanding of mental health challenges and solutions. Our members' active participation in coproduction opportunities, events, and discussions fosters a collaborative environment where every voice is heard and valued.

By sharing stories and advocating for change, SUF members help us create a more inclusive and supportive space for everyone. Your contributions are not just important; they are essential to our growth and success as an organisation committed to making a positive impact.

Being a SUF member is important to me. SUF's support has been invaluable in my recovery journey. SUF's commitment to valuing my lived experiences and advocating for change has created a positive and inclusive environment for SUF members.

Member Quote



Our Membership in 2024/25

500 Individual members

49 group members with a reach of over 43,662 people

The SUF Team and Trustees

Team Development

This year has also seen significant development within the staff team. We appointed Emily Geen as Administrative Officer in February 2024, who, by the end of the year, achieved excellent results in professional development, qualifying in Sage 2 and Sage 3, and was promoted to Finance and Administrative Officer.

Additionally, we strengthened our leadership team with the appointment of James Woolnough to the post of Deputy CEO.

We want to extend our heartfelt thanks to Louise Biddiscombe for her hard work and excellent management of the Healthy Together team and wish her the best of luck in her new role with Community Action Suffolk.

In July 2024, we celebrated the appointment and promotion of Chloe Newman to Healthy Together Manager, and in October 2024, we appointed Felicity French as Communications Lead.

These developments have significantly strengthened SUF, supporting our continued project work with mental health service users.



Emily

James

Chloe

Felicity



Anna

Alison

Davide

Trustees

The Trustees commitment to good governance and transparency remains strong.

Annually, SUF trustees dedicate over 3000+ hours volunteering for SUF, contributing significantly to our mission and strategic objectives. Trustees' efforts have been invaluable in raising awareness about mental health and building valuable relationships within our networks and community.

As the year ends, we bid farewell to Robert Nesbitt, company Secretary for the last five years, recognising his steady presence and significant contributions to SUF.



Robert

Looking Ahead

Looking ahead to 2025/26, we remain committed to service user leadership, personalisation, peer support, and coproduction. Working with Suffolk County Council and the NHS, we aim to strengthen the voice of mental health service users in Suffolk.

Our goal is to expand our mental health user-led network, ensuring that the voice of lived experience informs and shapes both new and existing mental health services. By placing the voice of lived experience at the heart of service improvement and development, we strive to create impactful changes.

Our key priorities are:

Funding

Our top priority is to secure sustainable, long-term funding (three years or more) to ensure ongoing service delivery and support to SUF beneficiaries. This includes specific project work and promoting the voices of individuals living with mental ill health, as well as the shared interests of mental health service users collaboratively.



Partnership and User Voice

Strengthening local partnerships to support the County Council and the Integrated Care System (ICS) in their statutory responsibilities for mental health service user involvement, coproduction, information, assistance, and advocacy. This includes ensuring that the voice of lived experience is a central theme throughout the collaborative and its subgroups. Additionally, delivering key coproduction events, publishing service user feedback, and promoting service user priority areas for mental health improvement.



Looking Ahead

As we look to the future, we remain committed to improving outcomes for people in mental health crises by strengthening our peer-led advocacy services and growing the reach of the SUF Healthy Together Peer Support programme. This involves growing new partnerships within primary care and promoting the healthcare rights and wellbeing goals of people living with severe mental illness and severe eating disorders.

In 2025/26, we plan to deliver three Stepping Forward events focused on coproduction with SUF members. These events will be instrumental in developing a SUF strategy for the next three years, ensuring that the needs and ambitions of our members are at the forefront of our planning.

By engaging directly with SUF members, we aim to gather valuable insights and feedback that will shape our future direction and enhance the services we provide.

These events will serve as a platform for open dialogue, collaboration, and the sharing of ideas, ultimately leading to a strategy that truly reflects the voices and aspirations of our community.

We remain committed to working with people across all of our communities and underrepresented groups.

Group discussions were vivid and interesting, and I felt that I could really contribute and make a difference.

Service User Quote

SUF Stepping Forward events have been life changing. The focus on coproduction ensures our voices shape the services we rely on. These events provide a platform for open dialogue and collaboration, making me feel valued and empowered."

Service User Quote

SUF's in-person events have been invaluable. The interaction, sharing, communicating, and mutual education have been illuminating.

Service User Quote

Final Thoughts

To our Community 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 2025/26.



To our Trustees

We would like to thank all our trustees for their volunteering time, continued commitment, and outstanding support. You have actively supported us to achieve our strategic objectives, bringing a more diverse range of skills, lived experience and knowledge, helping us raise 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 to Suffolk County Council, Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care Board and to those of you in our SUF community, who are friends of SUF, choosing to give generously through your personal donations. Thank you for being our partner, for your generosity, confidence, and appreciation of our support to vulnerable people and mental health service users.





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Suffolk User Forum



@SUFMentalWealth



www.suffolkuserforum.co.uk



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**Suffolk User Forum (SUF)
is a Registered Company
Number 06946785 and a
Charity Number 1133457**

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COMPANY REGISTRATION NUMBER: 06946785

CHARITY REGISTRATION NUMBER: 1133457

Suffolk User Forum
Company Limited by Guarantee
Unaudited independently examined accounts
31 March 2025

Suffolk User Forum

Company Limited by Guarantee

Financial statements

Year ended 31 March 2025

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Suffolk User Forum

Company Limited by Guarantee

Trustees' annual report (incorporating the directors' report)

Year ended 31 March 2025

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 2025.

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

Chair's report

The chair's report is disclosed in the Impact Report accompanying these financial statements.

Reference and administrative details

Registered charity name	Suffolk User Forum
Charity registration number	1133457
Company registration number	06946785
Principal office and registered office	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)
- D Aldrovandi (Appointed 16/04/2025)
- A Good
- M Little
- A Mudd (Appointed 16/04/2025)
- B Parrott
- M Stafford-White
- A Tanner (Appointed 16/04/2025)
- B Turner
- M Blowers (Passed 08/05/2024)
- R Nesbitt (Resigned 31/03/2025)
- J Stern (Resigned 31/07/2025)

Suffolk User Forum

Company Limited by Guarantee

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

Year ended 31 March 2025

Chief Executive Officer	J Stevens
Bankers	<p>The Co-operative Bank 9-11 Queen Street Ipswich IP1 1SW</p> <p>Suffolk Building Society Mutual House 2 Princes Street Ipswich IP1 1QT</p> <p>Nationwide Building Society Nationwide House Pipers Way Swindon Wiltshire SN38 1NW</p> <p>Charity Bank Fosse House 182 High Street Tonbridge TN9 1BE</p> <p>Unity Trust Bank 1 Ropemaker St London EC2Y 9AW</p>
Company secretary	R Nesbitt (Resigned 27/03/2025)
Independent examiner	<p>A Robinson FCA Lovewell Blake LLP Chartered accountants First Floor Suite 2 Hillside Business Park Bury St Edmunds IP32 7EA</p>

Suffolk User Forum

Company Limited by Guarantee

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

Year ended 31 March 2025

Objectives and activities

Suffolk User Forum, also referred to as SUF, a 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 people's mental health experiences. 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.

Suffolk User Forum

Company Limited by Guarantee

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

Year ended 31 March 2025

Objectives and activities *(continued)*

Mission, vision, and values

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, legal rights, choice, and control.

SUF's vision is to continue to be the leading organisation for adults 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 wellbeing and mental health for all.

SUF's values were coproduced at the SUF AGM in 2018:

1. We are open, honest, and trustworthy.
2. We are inclusive and have people at our heart.
3. We are caring and compassionate.
4. We speak out and together we make a difference.

Charitable Objectives

SUF can help people in Suffolk, Norfolk and Essex. We have five main 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 Commissions guidance on public benefit when setting the objectives for the year.

The trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty in section 4 of the Charities Act 2011.

Achievements and performance

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

Suffolk User Forum

Company Limited by Guarantee

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

Year ended 31 March 2025

Financial review

The charity's income in 2024/25 was £267,168 (2023/24: £326,320) of which £143,120 (2023/24: £198,790) related to project restricted activities. The charity's expenditure in 2024/25 was £271,431 (2023/24: £236,140) of which £198,734 (2023/24: £176,315) related to project restricted activities. The result is a net deficit of £4,263 (2023/24: surplus of £90,180) for the year.

Principal funding sources

The charity's core income is received under a funding agreement with Suffolk County Council and the Suffolk & North East Essex NHS Integrated Care Board (ICB) via a shared fund called the Mental Health Pooled Fund. This fund has now ended and been replaced by the Aligned Fund.

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 Suffolk Building Society and with the Nationwide Building Society. SUF also has accounts with the Charity Bank and from 2024/25 United Trust Bank.

Reserves policy

The Trustees are committed to providing the highest possible service levels. To ensure the charity's financial stability, the Trustees have decided to maintain reserves equivalent to at least six months' operating costs. Our revised policy includes the following allocations:

- General reserves equivalent to six months' projected operating expenditure: £154,768.
- Redundancy and statutory notice costs: £45,902.
- IT and office equipment replacement costs: £16,567
- Designated funds for expenditure in 2025-2027: £108,950
- Restricted funds for service user expenses: £3,451.

This equates to £329,638 for 2024/25 (2023/24: £188,923). As of 31 March 2025, unrestricted funds stand at £329,761 (2023/24: £291,918).

Suffolk User Forum

Company Limited by Guarantee

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

Year ended 31 March 2025

Plans for future periods

Trustees continue to be committed to further developing service user leadership, involvement, personalisation, peer support 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 will continue to grow our mental health user led network 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.

More detail on how this will be achieved is contained in the impact report accompanying these accounts.

There have been no significant post balance sheet events (events after the year-end) that have had significant impact on the charity.

Suffolk User Forum

Company Limited by Guarantee

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

Year ended 31 March 2025

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.

All trustees are either UK nationals or have a lawful right to live and work in England. No trustees are politically exposed in the UK or elsewhere (they are not MPs, Members of a local Council or similar).

Currently, 80% of the SUF Trustee Board has used or currently uses mental health services as a service user or family/parent 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/parent 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 as they continue to be under-represented on the 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 2025

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 Suffolk and North East Essex NHS ICB 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 2025

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.

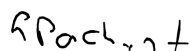
Independent examiner reappointment

A resolution to appoint A Robinson FCA 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 20/11/2025 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 2025

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the financial statements of the company for the year ended 31 March 2025 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 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 Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW), which is one of the listed bodies.

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

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the 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.

Abigail Robinson

A Robinson FCA
Independent Examiner

Lovewell Blake LLP
Chartered accountants
First Floor Suite
2 Hillside Business Park
Bury St Edmunds
IP32 7EA
24/11/2025

Suffolk User Forum

Company Limited by Guarantee

Statement of financial activities (including income and expenditure account)

Year ended 31 March 2025

			2025		2024
	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £	Total funds £
Income and endowments					
Donations and legacies	5	116,518	143,120	259,638	321,328
Investment income	6	7,530	–	7,530	4,992
Total income		<u>124,048</u>	<u>143,120</u>	<u>267,168</u>	<u>326,320</u>
Expenditure					
Charitable activities	7	72,697	198,734	271,431	236,140
Total expenditure		<u>72,697</u>	<u>198,734</u>	<u>271,431</u>	<u>236,140</u>
Net (expenditure)/income before transfer of funds		51,351	(55,614)	(4,263)	90,180
Transfers between funds		(13,508)	13,508	–	–
Net movement in funds		<u>37,843</u>	<u>(42,106)</u>	<u>(4,263)</u>	<u>90,180</u>
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward		291,918	86,466	378,384	288,204
Total funds carried forward		<u>329,761</u>	<u>44,360</u>	<u>374,121</u>	<u>378,384</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 13 to 22 form part of these financial statements.

Suffolk User Forum

Company Limited by Guarantee

Balance sheet

31 March 2025

	Note	2025 £	£	2024 £	£
Fixed assets					
Tangible fixed assets	11		7,089		9,414
Current assets					
Debtors	12	11,600		11,800	
Cash at bank and in hand		360,575		360,993	
		372,175		372,793	
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	13	(5,143)		(3,823)	
Net current assets			367,032		368,970
Total assets less current liabilities			374,121		378,384
Net assets			374,121		378,384
Funds of the charity					
Restricted funds			44,360		86,466
Unrestricted funds			329,761		291,918
Total charity funds	16		374,121		378,384

For the year ending 31 March 2025 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 20/11/2025, and are signed on behalf of the board by:

G Pachent

G Pachent
(Chair)

Company registration number: 06946785

The notes on pages 13 to 22 form part of these financial statements.

Suffolk User Forum

Company Limited by Guarantee

Notes to the financial statements

Year ended 31 March 2025

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.

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.

The Trustees confirm that the charity is a going concern when taking into account all financial and non-financial risks.

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 2025

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.
- investment income is recognised on a receivable basis.

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 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.

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.

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.

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

Suffolk User Forum

Company Limited by Guarantee

Notes to the financial statements *(continued)*

Year ended 31 March 2025

3. Accounting policies *(continued)*

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.

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.

Suffolk User Forum

Company Limited by Guarantee

Notes to the financial statements *(continued)*

Year ended 31 March 2025

5. Donations and legacies

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2025 £
Donations			
Donations	1,064	–	1,064
Grants			
Mental Health Pooled Fund	115,454	–	115,454
NHS CCG and ICB Income	–	114,927	114,927
POhWER	–	28,193	28,193
	<u>116,518</u>	<u>143,120</u>	<u>259,638</u>
	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £
Donations			
Donations	301	–	301
Grants			
Mental Health Pooled Fund	111,712	–	111,712
NHS CCG and ICB Income	10,525	165,062	175,587
POhWER	–	33,728	33,728
	<u>122,538</u>	<u>198,790</u>	<u>321,328</u>

6. Investment income

	Unrestricted Funds £	Total Funds 2025 £	Unrestricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £
Interest received	<u>7,530</u>	<u>7,530</u>	<u>4,992</u>	<u>4,992</u>

Suffolk User Forum

Company Limited by Guarantee

Notes to the financial statements *(continued)*

Year ended 31 March 2025

7. Expenditure on charitable activities

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2025 £
Staff costs	31,517	166,658	198,175
Staff and volunteer expenses	9,359	—	9,359
Support costs	31,821	32,076	63,897
	<u>72,697</u>	<u>198,734</u>	<u>271,431</u>

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £
Staff costs	5,659	156,535	162,194
Staff and volunteer expenses	9,149	1,700	10,849
Support costs	45,017	18,080	63,097
	<u>59,825</u>	<u>176,315</u>	<u>236,140</u>

Analysis of support costs

	2025 £	2024 £
Office rent	13,487	13,084
Rates	1,964	1,803
Light and heat	2,088	3,377
Telephone	2,676	2,499
Payroll bureau	766	649
Computer and website costs	7,370	8,944
Equipment hire	1,069	1,612
Postage and stationery	1,948	1,919
Repairs and renewals	1,784	1,143
Marketing	13,380	14,821
Insurance	3,573	3,007
Depreciation	3,782	3,298
Trustees' expenses	211	647
Sundry expenses	4,065	1,946
Legal and professional fees	2,482	1,894
Independent examination fee	3,252	2,454
	<u>63,897</u>	<u>63,097</u>

8. Net (expenditure)/income

Net (expenditure)/income is stated after charging/(crediting):

	2025 £	2024 £
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	<u>3,782</u>	<u>3,298</u>

Suffolk User Forum

Company Limited by Guarantee

Notes to the financial statements *(continued)*

Year ended 31 March 2025

9. Staff costs

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

	2025	2024
	£	£
Wages and salaries	183,254	151,087
Social security costs	12,238	9,380
Pension costs	2,683	1,727
	<u>198,175</u>	<u>162,194</u>

The average head count of employees during the year was 7 (2023/24: 5).

Travel expenses were paid during in the period amounting to £216 (2023/24: £706), 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, the Chief Executive Officer. The Trustees neither received nor waived any remuneration during the year (2023/24: £Nil). The total amount of employee benefits (including employer pension contributions) received by senior management for their services to the charity was £56,029 (2023/24: £56,001).

11. Tangible fixed assets

	Computer equipment £	Office furniture £	Total £
Cost			
At 1 April 2024	30,727	2,582	33,309
Additions	<u>1,241</u>	<u>216</u>	<u>1,457</u>
At 31 March 2025	<u>31,968</u>	<u>2,798</u>	<u>34,766</u>
Depreciation			
At 1 April 2024	21,709	2,186	23,895
Charge for the year	<u>3,635</u>	<u>147</u>	<u>3,782</u>
At 31 March 2025	<u>25,344</u>	<u>2,333</u>	<u>27,677</u>
Carrying amount			
At 31 March 2025	<u>6,624</u>	<u>465</u>	<u>7,089</u>
At 31 March 2024	<u>9,018</u>	<u>396</u>	<u>9,414</u>

12. Debtors

	2025	2024
	£	£
Trade debtors	—	8,447
Prepayments and accrued income	<u>11,600</u>	<u>3,353</u>
	<u>11,600</u>	<u>11,800</u>

Suffolk User Forum

Company Limited by Guarantee

Notes to the financial statements *(continued)*

Year ended 31 March 2025

13. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

	2025	2024
	£	£
Trade creditors	1,515	979
Accruals and deferred income	3,358	2,844
Social security and other taxes	270	–
	<u>5,143</u>	<u>3,823</u>

14. Deferred income

	2025	2024
	£	£
At 1 April 2024	–	6,970
Amount released to income	–	(6,970)
	<u>–</u>	<u>–</u>
At 31 March 2025	<u>–</u>	<u>–</u>

Deferred income relates to conditional grant income received in the year on behalf of projects being completed in following years.

15. Pensions and other post-retirement benefits

The amount recognised in income or expenditure as an expense in relation to defined contribution plans was £2,683 (2023/24: £1,727).

Suffolk User Forum

Company Limited by Guarantee

Notes to the financial statements *(continued)*

Year ended 31 March 2025

16. Analysis of charitable funds

	At 1 April 2024 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	At 31 March 2025 £
Restricted funds					
Mental Health Service					
User expenses	3,597	—	(146)	—	3,451
SCC Waveney Peer					
Support	746	—	—	—	746
Healthy Together	3,925	—	—	—	3,925
Healthy Together Peer					
Support	—	114,927	(114,098)	—	829
Personal Health Budgets	32,453	—	(12,442)	—	20,011
Advocacy	—	28,193	(41,701)	13,508	—
Suffolk Cemeteries Metal					
Fund	15,000	—	(5,980)	—	9,020
Healthy Hearts Together	30,745	—	(24,367)	—	6,378
	<u>86,466</u>	<u>143,120</u>	<u>(198,734)</u>	<u>13,508</u>	<u>44,360</u>

Unrestricted funds

General Fund	<u>291,918</u>	<u>124,048</u>	<u>(72,697)</u>	<u>(13,508)</u>	<u>329,761</u>
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	At 1 April 2023 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	At 31 March 2024 £
Restricted funds					
Mental Health Service					
User expenses	4,690	—	(1,093)	—	3,597
SCC Waveney Peer					
Support	746	—	—	—	746
Healthy Together	12,908	114,927	(123,910)	—	3,925
Personal Health Budgets	28,905	—	3,548	—	32,453
Suicide Prevention	1,714	—	(1,714)	—	—
Advocacy	—	33,728	(33,756)	28	—
Suffolk Cemeteries Metal					
Fund	—	—	—	15,000	15,000
Healthy Hearts Together	—	50,135	(19,390)	—	30,745
	<u>48,963</u>	<u>198,790</u>	<u>(176,315)</u>	<u>15,028</u>	<u>86,466</u>

Unrestricted funds

General Fund	<u>239,241</u>	<u>127,530</u>	<u>(59,825)</u>	<u>(15,028)</u>	<u>291,918</u>
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Suffolk User Forum

Company Limited by Guarantee

Notes to the financial statements *(continued)*

Year ended 31 March 2025

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. Subsequent to the year end it has been agreed that the balance will be repaid to Suffolk County Council.

Healthy Together - Peer Support (Formerly Personal Health Budgets) is funded by NHS Ipswich and East Suffolk CCG and NHS West Suffolk CCG following the transfer from the Healthy Together project to support people with severe mental illness.

Healthy Hearts Together was funded by NHS Suffolk & North East Essex ICB to work on Cardiovascular Disease and severe mental illness. As at the year end date there is an underspend of £6,378 and the charity is awaiting confirmation from the funders on how to repurpose this money in 2025/2026.

The following projects are complete:

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 ending 31 March 2025 with POhWER as the lead partner. During the year the £13,508 overspend was made up from general funds.

Healthy Together was funded by NHS Ipswich and East Suffolk CCG and NHS West Suffolk CCG to support a restricted to support people with severe mental illness and is now fully complete, having merged into the Healthy Together - Peer Support following consultation and agreement with the fund provider.

Suffolk Cemeteries Metal Fund was funded to support a restricted project in line with the objectives of SUF and is now fully complete.

17. Analysis of net assets between funds

As at 31 March 2025

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2025 £
Tangible fixed assets	7,089	–	7,089
Net current assets	322,672	44,360	367,032
Net Assets	<u>329,761</u>	<u>44,360</u>	<u>374,121</u>

As at 31 March 2024

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £
Tangible fixed assets	9,414	–	9,414
Net current assets	282,504	86,466	368,970
Net Assets	<u>291,918</u>	<u>86,466</u>	<u>378,384</u>

Suffolk User Forum

Company Limited by Guarantee

Notes to the financial statements *(continued)*

Year ended 31 March 2025

18. Operating lease commitments

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

	2025	2024
	£	£
Not later than 1 year	13,628	11,250
Later than 1 year and not later than 5 years	5,377	21,383
	<u>19,005</u>	<u>32,633</u>

19. Related parties

The Trustees confirm that there were no related party transactions in this or the prior period.



Impact Report

2024 - 2025



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About Us

Suffolk User Forum (SUF) is an independent mental health user led involvement, peer support and advocacy organisation for adults.

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, trying to ensure that lived experience is at the heart of service planning, delivery, improvements, and commissioning.

We actively support and facilitate service user and 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 work in 2024/25 included:

- **SUF Peer Led Advocacy**
- **Healthy Together**
- **Coproduction and *Making Our Voice Count* publication**
- **Mental Health Support and Signposting**
- **Suicide Prevention**
- **Our SUF Community Members**



Welcome to our 2024/25 Impact Report

As we reflect on the past year, we are pleased to share the Suffolk User Forum (SUF) Impact Report for 2024/2025. This report outlines the highlights of the reporting year and the team's continued commitment to improving mental health services and support within our community.

We have continued our work as part of the Suffolk Advocacy Partnership this year, alongside our partners POHWER, ACE Anglia, and Suffolk Family Carers. Through this collaboration, SUF Advocates provided advocacy support to 743 mental health inpatients, helping people at a point of crisis.

Now in its third year, the Suffolk Advocacy Partnership has been extended for a further year until 31st March 2026. By working together, we help ensure that people's voices are heard and their rights respected, making a meaningful difference to their lives.

Healthy Together Peer Support continues to make a real difference, having supported over 650 individuals since its launch in 2021. By providing personalised care planning and emotional support, Healthy Together helps people living with severe mental illness (SMI) to access their physical health entitlements and work towards their wellbeing goals.

This year, we held two Stepping Forward events in Stowmarket and Ipswich, where we listened to the experiences of 56 people who had faced mental health crises and used local support services, including 111 (option 2 for mental health) and psychiatric liaison teams in A&E.

The feedback from these events is contained in our *Making Our Voice Count* Report (December 2024). This report shares individual stories and key themes in people's experiences. We are currently working with Healthwatch Suffolk to further explore people's experiences of emergency care for mental health crises, supported by key staff teams in our local acute and mental health trusts.

As we look to the year ahead, we remain firmly committed to our core values of service user leadership and personalisation. We will continue to ensure that the voices of service users and family/parent carers are at the heart of everything we do. We extend our sincere gratitude to our dedicated staff team, trustees, partners, and the wider SUF community for their unwavering support. Together, we will continue to strive for excellence in mental health services and support. Thank you for your continued support.

Guenever Pachent, Chair
and Jayne Stevens CEO



Empowering Individuals

SUF Advocacy



We have continued our role within the Suffolk Advocacy Service this year, providing peer-led mental health advocacy on inpatient wards, delivering crucial support to individuals during times of crisis.

We offer weekly drop-ins at Wedgwood House in Bury St Edmunds and Woodlands at Ipswich Hospital, along with monthly visits to Foxhall House, a secure unit in Ipswich.

Our peer-led advocacy service ensures that all inpatients, including the 57% admitted voluntarily¹ and those detained under the Mental Health Act, have access to advocacy.

By addressing common concerns and empowering patients to engage in their care, SUF not only improves individual outcomes but also contributes to systemic improvements in mental health services.

The positive impact on patients' ability to self-advocate highlights the importance of such services in fostering a more inclusive and responsive healthcare environment.

ADVOCACY OUTCOMES

194 people had their goals met better than expected.

508 people had their goals slightly met better than expected.

57 people had their goals met.

709 people said advocacy helped them have their voice heard.

163 people said advocacy increased their ability to self-advocate.

638

The number of advocacy hours delivered by SUF in 2024/25

743

The number of people SUF provided advocacy support to in 2024/25

814

The number of advocacy needs supported in 2024/25

¹ Mental Health Act Statistics, Annual Figures, 2023-24 - NHS England Digital

Empowering Individuals

Healthy Together Peer Support

This is the second year of our three-year Healthy Together contract, funded by the Suffolk and North East Essex (SNEE) Integrated Care Board. Healthy Together offers peer support to people who live with Severe Mental Illness (SMI) including Schizophrenia, Bi-Polar Disorder, and Psychosis following their Annual Health Checks by primary care practitioners and/or the Suffolk Physical Health Team in Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust for those people receiving care under secondary mental health services.

This year, the project has been extended to provide support for a small number of people living with eating disorders (professional referral only).

Drawing on our lived experience, our Healthy Together Peer Support Workers (PSWs) 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. The team work positively with people, championing the protective factors for good physical and mental health and supporting people with previously unidentified and unmet needs.

We have supported over 650 people since the initial pilot project in 2021. This is approximately 20% of people living with an SMI in East and West Suffolk.²

Outcomes for people receiving Healthy Together Peer Support in 2024/25:

We provided Healthy Together Peer Support to **252** people and received **183** new referrals across **265** pathways

We supported 72 people with personal health budgets, funding services like decluttering, dental care, weight loss, addiction support, and wellbeing tools.

92% of referred people use the support and reach their health goals.

"I've had support workers before but honestly no one has come close to you. You've been there for my meetings. I cannot fault you and it blows me away that you understand."

Service User Quote

Feedback received from 50% of beneficiaries with 98% being positive

2. Total numbers of people with an SMI in East and West Suffolk is c. 3500

Partnership for Positive Change

Partnership for Positive Change

Working with Suffolk County Council, supporting their people at the heart of care transformation

This year, we have made significant strides in supporting Suffolk County Council Adult Social Care with the implementation of their "People at the Heart of Care" strategy. Led by our Deputy CEO, we have worked closely with over 50 individuals in our adult mental health My Voice and My Home groups, SUF has successfully co-produced and provided involvement opportunities for various aspects of the transformation programme.

Coproduction is a collaborative process where people work as equals to make shared decisions and create inclusive services. Guided by our principles, active involvement of service users and carers, regular reporting, shared understanding, equality, and inclusion, we ensure everyone is an equal partner in driving positive change. We also provide adequate time for meaningful collaboration.

People at the Heart of Care Strategy

The "People at the Heart of Care" strategy is an initiative aimed at transforming the way Adult Social Care services are provided. The strategy emphasises working closely with individuals to support them in living well and outlines a framework for all the transformation work being done. A key priority is to support independence, helping people to live well, and to receive early help and support.

My Voice and My Home Groups

The My Voice and My Home groups have played a crucial role in supporting key areas of transformation. The My Voice Focus Groups have explored the Cassius digital care technology in collaboration with Suffolk County Council. This exploration included examining how digital support can enhance people's lives and support their independence. Various types of care technology, such as video calling, Alexa, reminder clocks, ring doorbells, and smartwatches, were evaluated. Service users highlighted the benefits and challenges of using banking apps, AI chat functions, and meditation and relaxation apps. They also expressed concerns about the reliability of chatbots and the need for an escalation process.

Partnership for Positive Change

The My Home Focus Groups have been involved in planning meetings and facilitating coproduction for the tender for Supported Housing recommissioning. Service users and family/parent carers have had an opportunity to contribute to the tender process, with their feedback being included within the tender specification, contributing to the selection criteria for future support providers, and exploring how lived experience can be included within the selection process. Together, people have emphasised the importance of supported housing providers delivering flexible support at the right time, ensuring people feel safe and supported, and maximising their independence and connections with family and local networks.

Working with Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust (NSFT)

We have been involved in various initiatives with NSFT, including the Mortality review, learning from deaths, development of the Carers Charter, and the Inpatient 3-year strategy "Lived Experience and Coproduction for Inpatient Settings."

As this reporting year ends, we are beginning to start work with the Integrated Care System (ICS), NSFT, and Suffolk County Council, focusing on Section 117 of the Mental Health Act, looking at statutory aftercare support for people being discharged from hospital back home to their local communities. Additionally, our Deputy CEO has supported the NSFT 111 mental health option and the NSFT pathway redesign for inpatient and community settings.

SUF Supporting the Lived Experience Group

Suffolk User Forum (SUF) has been actively supporting the Lived Experience Group (LEG), a sub-group to the Mental Health Collaborative Committee (MHCC). The LEG aligns with the MHCC and meets one week ahead of the MHCC meetings. The group is still in its infancy and as it is developed, the aim is to ensure that lived experience is integrated into the collaborative's decision-making process and that it is the golden thread running through all stages.

This year, we have revised the LEG's Terms of Reference. They emphasise the importance of coproduction and the involvement of service users and family/parent carers through membership in the LEG. The group focuses on ensuring equality and inclusion, and regular reporting to the MHCC.

SUF's support for the Lived Experience Group has been instrumental in ensuring collaboration between service providers and service users, whilst supporting the ICB to progress recruitment to the group, broadening its membership and lived experience.

Partnership for Positive Change

Making Our Voice Count

Making Our Voice Count (MOVC) is our series of feedback reports 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 and family/parent carer feedback, accompanied by statistical information, alongside anonymised personal stories that describe people's experiences and views.

Our MOVC initiative is a cornerstone of our commitment to listening to and acting upon the voices of those who use our services. Each report is meticulously compiled to ensure that it reflects the diverse experiences and perspectives of our service users and their families.

Our reports this year focused on reporting the experiences of service users and family/parent carers regarding emergency mental health services and support in East and West Suffolk. We gathered feedback from 56 people at two *Stepping Forward* events held in Stowmarket and Kesgrave in 2024 and contributed to a report presented directly to the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

In terms of crisis care, key areas of feedback included:

- Mixed experiences within primary care and challenges in accessing support from mental health practitioners.
- Positive experiences and quick ambulance response times, but difficulties getting through to 111 (option 2 for mental health) and a lack of empathy from call handlers.
- Mixed experiences at Ipswich Accident and Emergency (A&E), including support from Psychiatric liaison, with lengthy wait times; however, more positive feedback was received from West Suffolk Hospital A&E.
- People shared positive experiences of the support provided by the voluntary sector. However, there was also disappointment about the loss of some important voluntary services this year, following the closure of several local charities.



Partnership for Positive Change

At the end of this year we reported to CQC feedback from 121 people who were inpatients on Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trusts (NSFT) acute wards in 2024/25, including feedback from the wider involvement of SUF and family/parent carers who have been bereaved by suicide in the Learning from Deaths Action Plan Management Group. We included our involvement in the scrutinising of Prevention of Future Death notices related to Coroner findings; the lived experience and coproduction for inpatient settings; our contribution to the carers charter and NSFT Learning from deaths review.

In terms of outcomes for inpatients on acute wards feedback showed an improvement on 2023/24 data, with 63% of inpatients in 2024/25 reporting positive outcomes, praising staff for being helpful, compassionate, empathetic, and kind. However, there remained inconsistency on inpatient service provision, with 33% of inpatients reporting negative feedback, including concerns about the rude attitude of some consultants, unhelpful night staff, and lack of activities.

Negative experiences with discharge planning have continued since our detailed Discharge MOVC report in 2022, highlighting issues such as chaotic and poorly communicated discharge plans. This remains a critical area for coproduction and service improvement. We will continue to report on this and advocate for improvement in discharge planning, ensuring that the voices of service users are heard and acted upon.

Image Below - Caroline Donovan, Chief Executive of NSFT was the guest speaker at our 2024 AGM.



Promoting Mental Wellbeing

The Difference Made by Our Signposting for Support

Our mission is to ensure that individuals have access to the support they need, especially during challenging times. One of the key ways we achieve this is through our signposting for support services. This report highlights the significant impact these services have had over the past year.

Our 2024/25 Statistics

- On average every month we have 154 individual visits to our signposting and support pages.
- From April 2024 to March 2025, we had nearly 2,000 people visit our support directory and 27,000 visits to our website overall
- This year, our social media presence has grown significantly:
 - Facebook: 1.7k likes and 1999 followers.
 - X: 2,299 followers
 - LinkedIn: 643 followers
 - YouTube: 17 subscribers. 263 views on HT videos 12 and 454 views on LISTEN for suicide prevention.



Signposting A - Z

Enhancing Access to Support

Our signposting for support services have been instrumental in guiding individuals to the appropriate resources and services. By providing clear and accessible information, we have empowered people to seek help and support when they need it most. This has been particularly important for those experiencing mental health challenges, as timely access to support can make a significant difference in their recovery journey.

Key Achievements

Increased Awareness and Engagement

Over the past year, we have seen a substantial increase in the number of individuals accessing our signposting services. This is reflected in the rise in active website users, with 27K users engaging with our content. The top pages visited include the SUF homepage, Suffolk County Council – Customer First, Healthy Together Peer Support and getting emergency help for your mental health.

Positive Feedback from Service Users

Feedback from people who have used our signposting services has been overwhelmingly positive. Many have expressed gratitude for the clear and concise information provided, which has helped them navigate the often-complex landscape of mental health services.

Promoting Mental Wellbeing

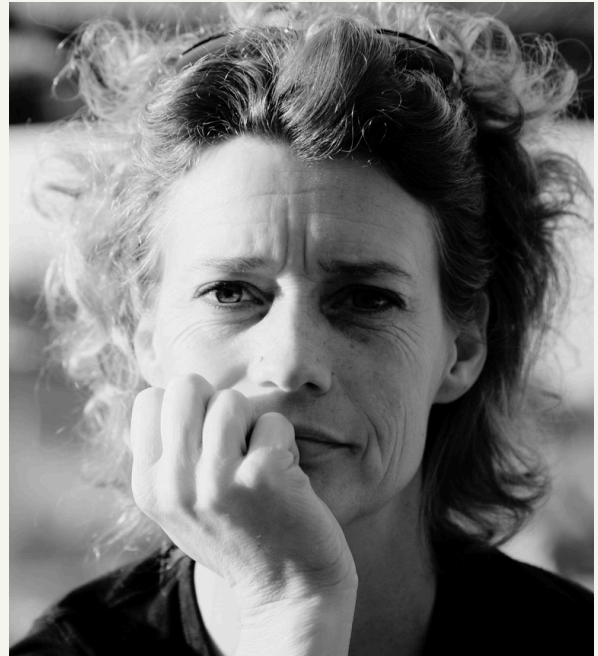
Lived Experience Journey 1: Accessing Mental Health Support

Adeel was struggling with severe anxiety. They told us that he found our signposting page for emergency mental health support.

The clear instructions and contact information provided enabled them to quickly access the help they needed, leading to a significant improvement in their mental health.

"The information was so clear and easy to follow. I was able to get the help I needed quickly, and it made a huge difference in my recovery."

Adeel, Service User



Lived Experience Journey 2: Navigating Health Services

Jennifer was unsure about the process for accessing health services. She used our signposting page to find information about her SMI Annual Physical Health Check. This guidance together with our Healthy Together video helped her understand the steps involved and encouraged Jennifer to attend her appointment, ultimately leading to better health outcomes.

"I didn't know where to start, but the signposting page guided me through the process. It was a relief to have clear information, and it helped me take the necessary steps for my health."

Jennifer, Service User

Suicide Prevention

Every year, on the 10th of September, World Suicide Prevention Day brings people and organisations together to raise awareness about suicide, bereavement by suicide, and its prevention.

As a mental health user-led charity, we understand that when personal problems become overwhelming, it can be incredibly difficult for individuals to seek help. Many people remain silent about their struggles, finding it nearly impossible to talk about suicidal feelings. Feelings of shame, fear of letting loved ones down, and a sense of isolation can make these emotions even more challenging to manage.

We understand the importance of creating a safe and non-judgmental space where people can talk openly about their feelings. It is important for friends, family, and professionals to feel confident in listening and offering support. Often, people worry about saying the wrong thing and are afraid to ask if someone is considering suicide.



We work to empower people to ask questions like, "What's happening for you right now?" and "Are you having thoughts of ending your life?" Listening and understanding are essential for building connections and offering hope and reassurance.

We have developed several resources to help individuals manage difficult feelings and support others in distress. Our *Thrive with Five* booklets promote self-care, while our *LISTEN for Suicide Prevention* booklet and coproduced LISTEN for suicide prevention video offers step-by-step guidance for friends, family, community members, and professionals to feel more confident in preventing suicide.

To watch our co-produced video "LISTEN for Suicide Prevention," please visit <https://youtu.be/8E6hNCiiyWA>.



L	Listen and validate concerns. Look at crisis/care plan and general options
I	Involve and Inform the service user and carer of the immediate options available
S	Shared understanding achieved and Safety issues established
T	Time. Be clear about your availability and be aware of your Tone of voice
E	Empathise and Encourage responsibility then Evaluate what has been agreed
N	Next steps made clear. Never end the contact without a plan

Suicide Prevention

Thinking about suicide?

Worried about someone?

Download the award-winning Stay Alive app

It's free and can help you and others stay safe from suicide

stayalive.app

Visit the Suicide Prevention Hub
prevent-suicide.org.uk/prevention-hub

In the app:
Advice
Helplines and chat
Safety plans
Wellness Plan
Staying safe guide

Google Play
Download on the App Store

Suffolk water forum
GRASSROOTS SUICIDE PREVENTION

In 2014 we supported Grassroots with their innovative Stay Alive App for suicide prevention, making a strong business case to the East and West Clinical Commissioning Groups to bring the Stay Alive app to Suffolk. Without additional funding we have continued to provide regular updates to Grassroots to keep the app current for our Suffolk community.

In 2014, our first year with Stay Alive, we supported just over 500 people.

As this reporting year ends in March 2025, the Stay Alive app has supported 4,467 individuals in Suffolk with suicide prevention, including significant use in Ipswich, Stowmarket, Sutton, and Bury St Edmunds.

Through open communication, providing our LISTEN and Stay Alive resources, we deliver significant suicide prevention support, helping those in need. Remember, you are not alone, and there is always hope. Reach out for support.

Through open communication, providing our LISTEN and Stay Alive resources, we deliver significant suicide prevention support, helping those in need. Remember, you are not alone, and there is always hope. Reach out for support.

880,000+
downloads since the app
was launched in 2014

208
countries and territories with
Stay Alive users

22
languages are available

Building Community

Our SUF Community Members

The ethos of Suffolk User Forum (SUF) is deeply rooted in our commitment to mental health service users and their families. As a user-led organisation driven by lived experiences, SUF members are the cornerstone of our mission and vision. Our members' insights and perspectives are invaluable in shaping our initiatives and ensuring that our efforts are truly reflective of the needs and aspirations of our community. SUF members bring a wealth of knowledge and firsthand experience that enriches our understanding of mental health challenges and solutions. Our members' active participation in coproduction opportunities, events, and discussions fosters a collaborative environment where every voice is heard and valued.

By sharing stories and advocating for change, SUF members help us create a more inclusive and supportive space for everyone. Your contributions are not just important; they are essential to our growth and success as an organisation committed to making a positive impact.

Being a SUF member is important to me. SUF's support has been invaluable in my recovery journey. SUF's commitment to valuing my lived experiences and advocating for change has created a positive and inclusive environment for SUF members.

Member Quote



Our Membership in 2024/25

500 Individual members

49 group members with a reach of over 43,662 people

The SUF Team and Trustees

Team Development

This year has also seen significant development within the staff team. We appointed Emily Geen as Administrative Officer in February 2024, who, by the end of the year, achieved excellent results in professional development, qualifying in Sage 2 and Sage 3, and was promoted to Finance and Administrative Officer.

Additionally, we strengthened our leadership team with the appointment of James Woolnough to the post of Deputy CEO.

We want to extend our heartfelt thanks to Louise Biddiscombe for her hard work and excellent management of the Healthy Together team and wish her the best of luck in her new role with Community Action Suffolk.

In July 2024, we celebrated the appointment and promotion of Chloe Newman to Healthy Together Manager, and in October 2024, we appointed Felicity French as Communications Lead.

These developments have significantly strengthened SUF, supporting our continued project work with mental health service users.



Emily

James

Chloe

Felicity



Anna

Alison

Davide

Trustees

The Trustees commitment to good governance and transparency remains strong.

Annually, SUF trustees dedicate over 3000+ hours volunteering for SUF, contributing significantly to our mission and strategic objectives. Trustees' efforts have been invaluable in raising awareness about mental health and building valuable relationships within our networks and community.

As the year ends, we bid farewell to Robert Nesbitt, company Secretary for the last five years, recognising his steady presence and significant contributions to SUF.



Robert

Looking Ahead

Looking ahead to 2025/26, we remain committed to service user leadership, personalisation, peer support, and coproduction. Working with Suffolk County Council and the NHS, we aim to strengthen the voice of mental health service users in Suffolk.

Our goal is to expand our mental health user-led network, ensuring that the voice of lived experience informs and shapes both new and existing mental health services. By placing the voice of lived experience at the heart of service improvement and development, we strive to create impactful changes.

Our key priorities are:

Funding

Our top priority is to secure sustainable, long-term funding (three years or more) to ensure ongoing service delivery and support to SUF beneficiaries. This includes specific project work and promoting the voices of individuals living with mental ill health, as well as the shared interests of mental health service users collaboratively.



Partnership and User Voice

Strengthening local partnerships to support the County Council and the Integrated Care System (ICS) in their statutory responsibilities for mental health service user involvement, coproduction, information, assistance, and advocacy. This includes ensuring that the voice of lived experience is a central theme throughout the collaborative and its subgroups. Additionally, delivering key coproduction events, publishing service user feedback, and promoting service user priority areas for mental health improvement.



Looking Ahead

As we look to the future, we remain committed to improving outcomes for people in mental health crises by strengthening our peer-led advocacy services and growing the reach of the SUF Healthy Together Peer Support programme. This involves growing new partnerships within primary care and promoting the healthcare rights and wellbeing goals of people living with severe mental illness and severe eating disorders.

In 2025/26, we plan to deliver three Stepping Forward events focused on coproduction with SUF members. These events will be instrumental in developing a SUF strategy for the next three years, ensuring that the needs and ambitions of our members are at the forefront of our planning.

By engaging directly with SUF members, we aim to gather valuable insights and feedback that will shape our future direction and enhance the services we provide.

These events will serve as a platform for open dialogue, collaboration, and the sharing of ideas, ultimately leading to a strategy that truly reflects the voices and aspirations of our community.

We remain committed to working with people across all of our communities and underrepresented groups.

Group discussions were vivid and interesting, and I felt that I could really contribute and make a difference.

Service User Quote

SUF Stepping Forward events have been life changing. The focus on coproduction ensures our voices shape the services we rely on. These events provide a platform for open dialogue and collaboration, making me feel valued and empowered."

Service User Quote

SUF's in-person events have been invaluable. The interaction, sharing, communicating, and mutual education have been illuminating.

Service User Quote

Final Thoughts

To our Community 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 2025/26.



To our Trustees

We would like to thank all our trustees for their volunteering time, continued commitment, and outstanding support. You have actively supported us to achieve our strategic objectives, bringing a more diverse range of skills, lived experience and knowledge, helping us raise 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 to Suffolk County Council, Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care Board and to those of you in our SUF community, who are friends of SUF, choosing to give generously through your personal donations. Thank you for being our partner, for your generosity, confidence, and appreciation of our support to vulnerable people and mental health service users.





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Suffolk User Forum



@SUFMentalWealth



www.suffolkuserforum.co.uk



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Charity Number 1133457**

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

Dear Sirs

Financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025

The following representations are made on the basis of enquires with those individuals, including management and staff, with relevant knowledge and experience such as we consider necessary in connection with your independent examination of the charitable company's financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025. These enquiries have included inspection of supporting documentation where appropriate and are sufficient to satisfy ourselves that we can make each of the following representations. All representations are made to the best of our knowledge and belief.

General

We acknowledge that the work performed by you is substantially less in scope than an audit performed in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) and that you do not express an audit opinion.

We confirm that the charitable company qualifies as small in accordance with the conditions set out in chapter 1 of part 15 of the Companies Act 2006.

We confirm that the charitable company was entitled to exemption under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011, being that gross income for the year does not exceed £1m or £250,000 if gross assets exceed £3.26m, from the requirement to have its financial statements for the financial year ended 31 March 2024 audited. We also confirm that the members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the financial year in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

We confirm we have declared all income, including legacies, of which we are aware at the year end, whether received during the year or following the year end.

We have fulfilled our responsibilities as trustees, as set out in the terms of our engagement letter dated 5 October 2022 under the Companies Act 2006 and Charities Act 2011, for preparing financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view and for making accurate representations to you.

All the transactions undertaken by the charitable company have been properly reflected and recorded in the accounting records.

All the accounting records have been made available to you for the purpose of your independent examination. We have provided you with unrestricted access to all appropriate persons within the charitable company, and with all other records and related information requested, including minutes of all management and trustees' meetings and correspondence with The Charity Commission.

The financial statements are free of material misstatements, including omissions.

Internal control and fraud

We acknowledge our responsibility for the design, implementation and maintenance of internal control systems to prevent and detect fraud and error, and we believe that we have appropriately fulfilled these responsibilities. We have disclosed to you the results of our risk assessment that the financial statements may be misstated as a result of fraud.

We have disclosed to you all instances of known or suspected fraud affecting the entity involving those individuals, including management and employees, who have a significant role in internal control or others that have a material effect on the financial statements.

We have also disclosed to you all information in relation to allegations of fraud or suspected fraud affecting the entity's financial statements communicated by current or former employees, analysts, regulators or others.

Assets and liabilities

The charitable company has satisfactory title to all assets and there are no liens or encumbrances on the charitable company's assets, except for those that are disclosed in the notes to the financial statements.

All actual liabilities, contingent liabilities and guarantees given to third parties have been recorded or disclosed as appropriate.

We have no plans or intentions that may materially alter the carrying value and, where relevant, the fair value measurements or classification of assets and liabilities reflected in the financial statements.

Accounting estimates

The methods, data and significant assumptions used by us in making accounting estimates, and their related disclosures, are appropriate to achieve recognition, measurement and disclosure that is reasonable in the context of the applicable financial reporting framework.

Bank accounts

We have disclosed to you all bank accounts operated by the charitable company.

Legal claims

We have disclosed to you all claims in connection with litigation that have been, or are expected to be, received and such matters, as appropriate, have been properly accounted for and disclosed in the financial statements.

Laws and regulations

We have disclosed to you all known instances of non-compliance or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations whose effects should be considered when preparing the financial statements.

Related parties

Related party relationships and transactions have been appropriately accounted for and disclosed in the financial statements. We have disclosed to you all relevant information concerning such relationships and transactions and are not aware of any other matters which require disclosure in order to comply with legislative and accounting standards requirements.

Serious incidents

We confirm that no serious incident reports have been submitted to the Charity Commission, nor any events considered for submission, during the year or in the period to the date of signing of the balance sheet.

Subsequent events

All events subsequent to the date of the financial statements which require adjustment or disclosure have been properly accounted for and disclosed.

Going concern

We believe that the charitable company's financial statements should be prepared on a going concern basis, on the grounds that current and future sources of funding or support will be more than adequate for the charitable company's needs. We also confirm our plans for future action(s) required to enable the charitable company to continue as a going concern are feasible. We have considered a period of twelve months from the date of approval of the financial statements. We believe that no further disclosures relating to the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern need to be made in the financial statements.

Grants and donations

All grants, donations and other income, the receipt of which is subject to specific terms or conditions, have been notified to you. There have been no breaches of terms or conditions in the application of such income.

Each trustee has taken all steps that they ought to have taken as a trustee in order to make themselves aware of any relevant information and to establish that you are aware of that information.

Yours faithfully

R Poole, nt

.....
Signed on behalf of the board of trustees of Suffolk User Forum

Date: 20/11/2025
.....

COMPANY REGISTRATION NUMBER: 06946785

CHARITY REGISTRATION NUMBER: 1133457

Suffolk User Forum
Company Limited by Guarantee
Unaudited independently examined accounts
31 March 2025

Suffolk User Forum
Company Limited by Guarantee
Financial statements
Year ended 31 March 2025

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Suffolk User Forum

Company Limited by Guarantee

Trustees' annual report (incorporating the directors' report)

Year ended 31 March 2025

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 2025.

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

Chair's report

The chair's report is disclosed in the Impact Report accompanying these financial statements.

Reference and administrative details

Registered charity name	Suffolk User Forum
Charity registration number	1133457
Company registration number	06946785
Principal office and registered office	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)
- D Aldrovandi (Appointed 16/04/2025)
- A Good
- M Little
- A Mudd (Appointed 16/04/2025)
- B Parrott
- M Stafford-White
- A Tanner (Appointed 16/04/2025)
- B Turner
- M Blowers (Passed 08/05/2024)
- R Nesbitt (Resigned 31/03/2025)
- J Stern (Resigned 31/07/2025)

Suffolk User Forum

Company Limited by Guarantee

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

Year ended 31 March 2025

Chief Executive Officer	J Stevens
Bankers	<p>The Co-operative Bank 9-11 Queen Street Ipswich IP1 1SW</p> <p>Suffolk Building Society Mutual House 2 Princes Street Ipswich IP1 1QT</p> <p>Nationwide Building Society Nationwide House Pipers Way Swindon Wiltshire SN38 1NW</p> <p>Charity Bank Fosse House 182 High Street Tonbridge TN9 1BE</p> <p>Unity Trust Bank 1 Ropemaker St London EC2Y 9AW</p>
Company secretary	R Nesbitt (Resigned 27/03/2025)
Independent examiner	<p>A Robinson FCA Lovewell Blake LLP Chartered accountants First Floor Suite 2 Hillside Business Park Bury St Edmunds IP32 7EA</p>

Suffolk User Forum

Company Limited by Guarantee

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

Year ended 31 March 2025

Objectives and activities

Suffolk User Forum, also referred to as SUF, a 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 people's mental health experiences. 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.

Suffolk User Forum

Company Limited by Guarantee

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

Year ended 31 March 2025

Objectives and activities *(continued)*

Mission, vision, and values

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, legal rights, choice, and control.

SUF's vision is to continue to be the leading organisation for adults 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 wellbeing and mental health for all.

SUF's values were coproduced at the SUF AGM in 2018:

1. We are open, honest, and trustworthy.
2. We are inclusive and have people at our heart.
3. We are caring and compassionate.
4. We speak out and together we make a difference.

Charitable Objectives

SUF can help people in Suffolk, Norfolk and Essex. We have five main 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 Commissions guidance on public benefit when setting the objectives for the year.

The trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty in section 4 of the Charities Act 2011.

Achievements and performance

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

Suffolk User Forum

Company Limited by Guarantee

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

Year ended 31 March 2025

Financial review

The charity's income in 2024/25 was £267,168 (2023/24: £326,320) of which £143,120 (2023/24: £198,790) related to project restricted activities. The charity's expenditure in 2024/25 was £271,431 (2023/24: £236,140) of which £198,734 (2023/24: £176,315) related to project restricted activities. The result is a net deficit of £4,263 (2023/24: surplus of £90,180) for the year.

Principal funding sources

The charity's core income is received under a funding agreement with Suffolk County Council and the Suffolk & North East Essex NHS Integrated Care Board (ICB) via a shared fund called the Mental Health Pooled Fund. This fund has now ended and been replaced by the Aligned Fund.

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 Suffolk Building Society and with the Nationwide Building Society. SUF also has accounts with the Charity Bank and from 2024/25 United Trust Bank.

Reserves policy

The Trustees are committed to providing the highest possible service levels. To ensure the charity's financial stability, the Trustees have decided to maintain reserves equivalent to at least six months' operating costs. Our revised policy includes the following allocations:

- General reserves equivalent to six months' projected operating expenditure: £154,768.
- Redundancy and statutory notice costs: £45,902.
- IT and office equipment replacement costs: £16,567
- Designated funds for expenditure in 2025-2027: £108,950
- Restricted funds for service user expenses: £3,451.

This equates to £329,638 for 2024/25 (2023/24: £188,923). As of 31 March 2025, unrestricted funds stand at £329,761 (2023/24: £291,918).

Suffolk User Forum

Company Limited by Guarantee

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

Year ended 31 March 2025

Plans for future periods

Trustees continue to be committed to further developing service user leadership, involvement, personalisation, peer support 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 will continue to grow our mental health user led network 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.

More detail on how this will be achieved is contained in the impact report accompanying these accounts.

There have been no significant post balance sheet events (events after the year-end) that have had significant impact on the charity.

Suffolk User Forum

Company Limited by Guarantee

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

Year ended 31 March 2025

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.

All trustees are either UK nationals or have a lawful right to live and work in England. No trustees are politically exposed in the UK or elsewhere (they are not MPs, Members of a local Council or similar).

Currently, 80% of the SUF Trustee Board has used or currently uses mental health services as a service user or family/parent 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/parent 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 as they continue to be under-represented on the 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 2025

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 Suffolk and North East Essex NHS ICB 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 2025

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 A Robinson FCA 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 20/11/2025 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 2025

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the financial statements of the company for the year ended 31 March 2025 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 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 Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW), which is one of the listed bodies.

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

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the 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.

Abigail Robinson

A Robinson FCA
Independent Examiner

Lovewell Blake LLP
Chartered accountants
First Floor Suite
2 Hillside Business Park
Bury St Edmunds
IP32 7EA
24/11/2025

Suffolk User Forum

Company Limited by Guarantee

Statement of financial activities (including income and expenditure account)

Year ended 31 March 2025

			2025		2024
	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £	Total funds £
Income and endowments					
Donations and legacies	5	116,518	143,120	259,638	321,328
Investment income	6	7,530	–	7,530	4,992
Total income		<u>124,048</u>	<u>143,120</u>	<u>267,168</u>	<u>326,320</u>
Expenditure					
Charitable activities	7	72,697	198,734	271,431	236,140
Total expenditure		<u>72,697</u>	<u>198,734</u>	<u>271,431</u>	<u>236,140</u>
Net (expenditure)/income before transfer of funds		51,351	(55,614)	(4,263)	90,180
Transfers between funds		(13,508)	13,508	–	–
Net movement in funds		<u>37,843</u>	<u>(42,106)</u>	<u>(4,263)</u>	<u>90,180</u>
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward		291,918	86,466	378,384	288,204
Total funds carried forward		<u>329,761</u>	<u>44,360</u>	<u>374,121</u>	<u>378,384</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 13 to 22 form part of these financial statements.

Suffolk User Forum

Company Limited by Guarantee

Balance sheet

31 March 2025

	Note	2025 £	£	2024 £	£
Fixed assets					
Tangible fixed assets	11		7,089		9,414
Current assets					
Debtors	12	11,600		11,800	
Cash at bank and in hand		360,575		360,993	
		372,175		372,793	
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	13	(5,143)		(3,823)	
Net current assets			367,032		368,970
Total assets less current liabilities			374,121		378,384
Net assets			374,121		378,384
Funds of the charity					
Restricted funds			44,360		86,466
Unrestricted funds			329,761		291,918
Total charity funds	16		374,121		378,384

For the year ending 31 March 2025 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 20/11/2025, and are signed on behalf of the board by:

G Pachent

G Pachent
(Chair)

Company registration number: 06946785

The notes on pages 13 to 22 form part of these financial statements.

Suffolk User Forum

Company Limited by Guarantee

Notes to the financial statements

Year ended 31 March 2025

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.

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.

The Trustees confirm that the charity is a going concern when taking into account all financial and non-financial risks.

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 2025

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.
- investment income is recognised on a receivable basis.

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 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.

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.

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.

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

Suffolk User Forum

Company Limited by Guarantee

Notes to the financial statements *(continued)*

Year ended 31 March 2025

3. Accounting policies *(continued)*

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.

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.

Suffolk User Forum

Company Limited by Guarantee

Notes to the financial statements *(continued)*

Year ended 31 March 2025

5. Donations and legacies

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2025 £
Donations			
Donations	1,064	–	1,064
Grants			
Mental Health Pooled Fund	115,454	–	115,454
NHS CCG and ICB Income	–	114,927	114,927
POhWER	–	28,193	28,193
	<u>116,518</u>	<u>143,120</u>	<u>259,638</u>
	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £
Donations			
Donations	301	–	301
Grants			
Mental Health Pooled Fund	111,712	–	111,712
NHS CCG and ICB Income	10,525	165,062	175,587
POhWER	–	33,728	33,728
	<u>122,538</u>	<u>198,790</u>	<u>321,328</u>

6. Investment income

	Unrestricted Funds £	Total Funds 2025 £	Unrestricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £
Interest received	<u>7,530</u>	<u>7,530</u>	<u>4,992</u>	<u>4,992</u>

Suffolk User Forum

Company Limited by Guarantee

Notes to the financial statements *(continued)*

Year ended 31 March 2025

7. Expenditure on charitable activities

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2025 £
Staff costs	31,517	166,658	198,175
Staff and volunteer expenses	9,359	—	9,359
Support costs	31,821	32,076	63,897
	<u>72,697</u>	<u>198,734</u>	<u>271,431</u>

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £
Staff costs	5,659	156,535	162,194
Staff and volunteer expenses	9,149	1,700	10,849
Support costs	45,017	18,080	63,097
	<u>59,825</u>	<u>176,315</u>	<u>236,140</u>

Analysis of support costs

	2025 £	2024 £
Office rent	13,487	13,084
Rates	1,964	1,803
Light and heat	2,088	3,377
Telephone	2,676	2,499
Payroll bureau	766	649
Computer and website costs	7,370	8,944
Equipment hire	1,069	1,612
Postage and stationery	1,948	1,919
Repairs and renewals	1,784	1,143
Marketing	13,380	14,821
Insurance	3,573	3,007
Depreciation	3,782	3,298
Trustees' expenses	211	647
Sundry expenses	4,065	1,946
Legal and professional fees	2,482	1,894
Independent examination fee	3,252	2,454
	<u>63,897</u>	<u>63,097</u>

8. Net (expenditure)/income

Net (expenditure)/income is stated after charging/(crediting):

	2025 £	2024 £
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	<u>3,782</u>	<u>3,298</u>

Suffolk User Forum

Company Limited by Guarantee

Notes to the financial statements *(continued)*

Year ended 31 March 2025

9. Staff costs

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

	2025	2024
	£	£
Wages and salaries	183,254	151,087
Social security costs	12,238	9,380
Pension costs	2,683	1,727
	<u>198,175</u>	<u>162,194</u>

The average head count of employees during the year was 7 (2023/24: 5).

Travel expenses were paid during in the period amounting to £216 (2023/24: £706), 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, the Chief Executive Officer. The Trustees neither received nor waived any remuneration during the year (2023/24: £Nil). The total amount of employee benefits (including employer pension contributions) received by senior management for their services to the charity was £56,029 (2023/24: £56,001).

11. Tangible fixed assets

	Computer equipment £	Office furniture £	Total £
Cost			
At 1 April 2024	30,727	2,582	33,309
Additions	<u>1,241</u>	<u>216</u>	<u>1,457</u>
At 31 March 2025	<u>31,968</u>	<u>2,798</u>	<u>34,766</u>
Depreciation			
At 1 April 2024	21,709	2,186	23,895
Charge for the year	<u>3,635</u>	<u>147</u>	<u>3,782</u>
At 31 March 2025	<u>25,344</u>	<u>2,333</u>	<u>27,677</u>
Carrying amount			
At 31 March 2025	<u>6,624</u>	<u>465</u>	<u>7,089</u>
At 31 March 2024	<u>9,018</u>	<u>396</u>	<u>9,414</u>

12. Debtors

	2025	2024
	£	£
Trade debtors	—	8,447
Prepayments and accrued income	<u>11,600</u>	<u>3,353</u>
	<u>11,600</u>	<u>11,800</u>

Suffolk User Forum

Company Limited by Guarantee

Notes to the financial statements *(continued)*

Year ended 31 March 2025

13. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

	2025	2024
	£	£
Trade creditors	1,515	979
Accruals and deferred income	3,358	2,844
Social security and other taxes	270	—
	<u>5,143</u>	<u>3,823</u>

14. Deferred income

	2025	2024
	£	£
At 1 April 2024	—	6,970
Amount released to income	—	(6,970)
At 31 March 2025	<u>—</u>	<u>—</u>

Deferred income relates to conditional grant income received in the year on behalf of projects being completed in following years.

15. Pensions and other post-retirement benefits

The amount recognised in income or expenditure as an expense in relation to defined contribution plans was £2,683 (2023/24: £1,727).

Suffolk User Forum

Company Limited by Guarantee

Notes to the financial statements *(continued)*

Year ended 31 March 2025

16. Analysis of charitable funds

	At 1 April 2024 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	At 31 March 2025 £
Restricted funds					
Mental Health Service					
User expenses	3,597	—	(146)	—	3,451
SCC Waveney Peer					
Support	746	—	—	—	746
Healthy Together	3,925	—	—	—	3,925
Healthy Together Peer					
Support	—	114,927	(114,098)	—	829
Personal Health Budgets	32,453	—	(12,442)	—	20,011
Advocacy	—	28,193	(41,701)	13,508	—
Suffolk Cemeteries Metal					
Fund	15,000	—	(5,980)	—	9,020
Healthy Hearts Together	30,745	—	(24,367)	—	6,378
	<u>86,466</u>	<u>143,120</u>	<u>(198,734)</u>	<u>13,508</u>	<u>44,360</u>

Unrestricted funds

General Fund	<u>291,918</u>	<u>124,048</u>	<u>(72,697)</u>	<u>(13,508)</u>	<u>329,761</u>
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	At 1 April 2023 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	At 31 March 2024 £
Restricted funds					
Mental Health Service					
User expenses	4,690	—	(1,093)	—	3,597
SCC Waveney Peer					
Support	746	—	—	—	746
Healthy Together	12,908	114,927	(123,910)	—	3,925
Personal Health Budgets	28,905	—	3,548	—	32,453
Suicide Prevention	1,714	—	(1,714)	—	—
Advocacy	—	33,728	(33,756)	28	—
Suffolk Cemeteries Metal					
Fund	—	—	—	15,000	15,000
Healthy Hearts Together	—	50,135	(19,390)	—	30,745
	<u>48,963</u>	<u>198,790</u>	<u>(176,315)</u>	<u>15,028</u>	<u>86,466</u>

Unrestricted funds

General Fund	<u>239,241</u>	<u>127,530</u>	<u>(59,825)</u>	<u>(15,028)</u>	<u>291,918</u>
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Suffolk User Forum

Company Limited by Guarantee

Notes to the financial statements *(continued)*

Year ended 31 March 2025

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. Subsequent to the year end it has been agreed that the balance will be repaid to Suffolk County Council.

Healthy Together - Peer Support (Formerly Personal Health Budgets) is funded by NHS Ipswich and East Suffolk CCG and NHS West Suffolk CCG following the transfer from the Healthy Together project to support people with severe mental illness.

Healthy Hearts Together was funded by NHS Suffolk & North East Essex ICB to work on Cardiovascular Disease and severe mental illness. As at the year end date there is an underspend of £6,378 and the charity is awaiting confirmation from the funders on how to repurpose this money in 2025/2026.

The following projects are complete:

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 ending 31 March 2025 with POhWER as the lead partner. During the year the £13,508 overspend was made up from general funds.

Healthy Together was funded by NHS Ipswich and East Suffolk CCG and NHS West Suffolk CCG to support a restricted to support people with severe mental illness and is now fully complete, having merged into the Healthy Together - Peer Support following consultation and agreement with the fund provider.

Suffolk Cemeteries Metal Fund was funded to support a restricted project in line with the objectives of SUF and is now fully complete.

17. Analysis of net assets between funds

As at 31 March 2025

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2025 £
Tangible fixed assets	7,089	–	7,089
Net current assets	322,672	44,360	367,032
Net Assets	<u>329,761</u>	<u>44,360</u>	<u>374,121</u>

As at 31 March 2024

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £
Tangible fixed assets	9,414	–	9,414
Net current assets	282,504	86,466	368,970
Net Assets	<u>291,918</u>	<u>86,466</u>	<u>378,384</u>

Suffolk User Forum

Company Limited by Guarantee

Notes to the financial statements *(continued)*

Year ended 31 March 2025

18. Operating lease commitments

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

	2025	2024
	£	£
Not later than 1 year	13,628	11,250
Later than 1 year and not later than 5 years	5,377	21,383
	<u>19,005</u>	<u>32,633</u>

19. Related parties

The Trustees confirm that there were no related party transactions in this or the prior period.



Impact Report

2024 - 2025



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About Us

Suffolk User Forum (SUF) is an independent mental health user led involvement, peer support and advocacy organisation for adults.

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, trying to ensure that lived experience is at the heart of service planning, delivery, improvements, and commissioning.

We actively support and facilitate service user and 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 work in 2024/25 included:

- **SUF Peer Led Advocacy**
- **Healthy Together**
- **Coproduction and *Making Our Voice Count* publication**
- **Mental Health Support and Signposting**
- **Suicide Prevention**
- **Our SUF Community Members**



Welcome to our 2024/25 Impact Report

As we reflect on the past year, we are pleased to share the Suffolk User Forum (SUF) Impact Report for 2024/2025. This report outlines the highlights of the reporting year and the team's continued commitment to improving mental health services and support within our community.

We have continued our work as part of the Suffolk Advocacy Partnership this year, alongside our partners POHWER, ACE Anglia, and Suffolk Family Carers. Through this collaboration, SUF Advocates provided advocacy support to 743 mental health inpatients, helping people at a point of crisis.

Now in its third year, the Suffolk Advocacy Partnership has been extended for a further year until 31st March 2026. By working together, we help ensure that people's voices are heard and their rights respected, making a meaningful difference to their lives.

Healthy Together Peer Support continues to make a real difference, having supported over 650 individuals since its launch in 2021. By providing personalised care planning and emotional support, Healthy Together helps people living with severe mental illness (SMI) to access their physical health entitlements and work towards their wellbeing goals.

This year, we held two Stepping Forward events in Stowmarket and Ipswich, where we listened to the experiences of 56 people who had faced mental health crises and used local support services, including 111 (option 2 for mental health) and psychiatric liaison teams in A&E.

The feedback from these events is contained in our *Making Our Voice Count* Report (December 2024). This report shares individual stories and key themes in people's experiences. We are currently working with Healthwatch Suffolk to further explore people's experiences of emergency care for mental health crises, supported by key staff teams in our local acute and mental health trusts.

As we look to the year ahead, we remain firmly committed to our core values of service user leadership and personalisation. We will continue to ensure that the voices of service users and family/parent carers are at the heart of everything we do. We extend our sincere gratitude to our dedicated staff team, trustees, partners, and the wider SUF community for their unwavering support. Together, we will continue to strive for excellence in mental health services and support. Thank you for your continued support.

Guenever Pachent, Chair
and Jayne Stevens CEO



Empowering Individuals

SUF Advocacy



We have continued our role within the Suffolk Advocacy Service this year, providing peer-led mental health advocacy on inpatient wards, delivering crucial support to individuals during times of crisis.

We offer weekly drop-ins at Wedgwood House in Bury St Edmunds and Woodlands at Ipswich Hospital, along with monthly visits to Foxhall House, a secure unit in Ipswich.

Our peer-led advocacy service ensures that all inpatients, including the 57% admitted voluntarily¹ and those detained under the Mental Health Act, have access to advocacy.

By addressing common concerns and empowering patients to engage in their care, SUF not only improves individual outcomes but also contributes to systemic improvements in mental health services.

The positive impact on patients' ability to self-advocate highlights the importance of such services in fostering a more inclusive and responsive healthcare environment.

ADVOCACY OUTCOMES

194 people had their goals met better than expected.

508 people had their goals slightly met better than expected.

57 people had their goals met.

709 people said advocacy helped them have their voice heard.

163 people said advocacy increased their ability to self-advocate.

638

The number of advocacy hours delivered by SUF in 2024/25

743

The number of people SUF provided advocacy support to in 2024/25

814

The number of advocacy needs supported in 2024/25

¹ Mental Health Act Statistics, Annual Figures, 2023-24 - NHS England Digital

Empowering Individuals

Healthy Together Peer Support

This is the second year of our three-year Healthy Together contract, funded by the Suffolk and North East Essex (SNEE) Integrated Care Board. Healthy Together offers peer support to people who live with Severe Mental Illness (SMI) including Schizophrenia, Bi-Polar Disorder, and Psychosis following their Annual Health Checks by primary care practitioners and/or the Suffolk Physical Health Team in Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust for those people receiving care under secondary mental health services.

This year, the project has been extended to provide support for a small number of people living with eating disorders (professional referral only).

Drawing on our lived experience, our Healthy Together Peer Support Workers (PSWs) 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. The team work positively with people, championing the protective factors for good physical and mental health and supporting people with previously unidentified and unmet needs.

We have supported over 650 people since the initial pilot project in 2021. This is approximately 20% of people living with an SMI in East and West Suffolk.²

Outcomes for people receiving Healthy Together Peer Support in 2024/25:

We provided Healthy Together Peer Support to **252** people and received **183** new referrals across **265** pathways

We supported 72 people with personal health budgets, funding services like decluttering, dental care, weight loss, addiction support, and wellbeing tools.

92% of referred people use the support and reach their health goals.

"I've had support workers before but honestly no one has come close to you. You've been there for my meetings. I cannot fault you and it blows me away that you understand."

Service User Quote

Feedback received from 50% of beneficiaries with 98% being positive

2. Total numbers of people with an SMI in East and West Suffolk is c. 3500

Partnership for Positive Change

Partnership for Positive Change

Working with Suffolk County Council, supporting their people at the heart of care transformation

This year, we have made significant strides in supporting Suffolk County Council Adult Social Care with the implementation of their "People at the Heart of Care" strategy. Led by our Deputy CEO, we have worked closely with over 50 individuals in our adult mental health My Voice and My Home groups, SUF has successfully co-produced and provided involvement opportunities for various aspects of the transformation programme.

Coproduction is a collaborative process where people work as equals to make shared decisions and create inclusive services. Guided by our principles, active involvement of service users and carers, regular reporting, shared understanding, equality, and inclusion, we ensure everyone is an equal partner in driving positive change. We also provide adequate time for meaningful collaboration.

People at the Heart of Care Strategy

The "People at the Heart of Care" strategy is an initiative aimed at transforming the way Adult Social Care services are provided. The strategy emphasises working closely with individuals to support them in living well and outlines a framework for all the transformation work being done. A key priority is to support independence, helping people to live well, and to receive early help and support.

My Voice and My Home Groups

The My Voice and My Home groups have played a crucial role in supporting key areas of transformation. The My Voice Focus Groups have explored the Cassius digital care technology in collaboration with Suffolk County Council. This exploration included examining how digital support can enhance people's lives and support their independence. Various types of care technology, such as video calling, Alexa, reminder clocks, ring doorbells, and smartwatches, were evaluated. Service users highlighted the benefits and challenges of using banking apps, AI chat functions, and meditation and relaxation apps. They also expressed concerns about the reliability of chatbots and the need for an escalation process.

Partnership for Positive Change

The My Home Focus Groups have been involved in planning meetings and facilitating coproduction for the tender for Supported Housing recommissioning. Service users and family/parent carers have had an opportunity to contribute to the tender process, with their feedback being included within the tender specification, contributing to the selection criteria for future support providers, and exploring how lived experience can be included within the selection process. Together, people have emphasised the importance of supported housing providers delivering flexible support at the right time, ensuring people feel safe and supported, and maximising their independence and connections with family and local networks.

Working with Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust (NSFT)

We have been involved in various initiatives with NSFT, including the Mortality review, learning from deaths, development of the Carers Charter, and the Inpatient 3-year strategy "Lived Experience and Coproduction for Inpatient Settings."

As this reporting year ends, we are beginning to start work with the Integrated Care System (ICS), NSFT, and Suffolk County Council, focusing on Section 117 of the Mental Health Act, looking at statutory aftercare support for people being discharged from hospital back home to their local communities. Additionally, our Deputy CEO has supported the NSFT 111 mental health option and the NSFT pathway redesign for inpatient and community settings.

SUF Supporting the Lived Experience Group

Suffolk User Forum (SUF) has been actively supporting the Lived Experience Group (LEG), a sub-group to the Mental Health Collaborative Committee (MHCC). The LEG aligns with the MHCC and meets one week ahead of the MHCC meetings. The group is still in its infancy and as it is developed, the aim is to ensure that lived experience is integrated into the collaborative's decision-making process and that it is the golden thread running through all stages.

This year, we have revised the LEG's Terms of Reference. They emphasise the importance of coproduction and the involvement of service users and family/parent carers through membership in the LEG. The group focuses on ensuring equality and inclusion, and regular reporting to the MHCC.

SUF's support for the Lived Experience Group has been instrumental in ensuring collaboration between service providers and service users, whilst supporting the ICB to progress recruitment to the group, broadening its membership and lived experience.

Partnership for Positive Change

Making Our Voice Count

Making Our Voice Count (MOVC) is our series of feedback reports 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 and family/parent carer feedback, accompanied by statistical information, alongside anonymised personal stories that describe people's experiences and views.

Our MOVC initiative is a cornerstone of our commitment to listening to and acting upon the voices of those who use our services. Each report is meticulously compiled to ensure that it reflects the diverse experiences and perspectives of our service users and their families.

Our reports this year focused on reporting the experiences of service users and family/parent carers regarding emergency mental health services and support in East and West Suffolk. We gathered feedback from 56 people at two *Stepping Forward* events held in Stowmarket and Kesgrave in 2024 and contributed to a report presented directly to the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

In terms of crisis care, key areas of feedback included:

- Mixed experiences within primary care and challenges in accessing support from mental health practitioners.
- Positive experiences and quick ambulance response times, but difficulties getting through to 111 (option 2 for mental health) and a lack of empathy from call handlers.
- Mixed experiences at Ipswich Accident and Emergency (A&E), including support from Psychiatric liaison, with lengthy wait times; however, more positive feedback was received from West Suffolk Hospital A&E.
- People shared positive experiences of the support provided by the voluntary sector. However, there was also disappointment about the loss of some important voluntary services this year, following the closure of several local charities.



Partnership for Positive Change

At the end of this year we reported to CQC feedback from 121 people who were inpatients on Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trusts (NSFT) acute wards in 2024/25, including feedback from the wider involvement of SUF and family/parent carers who have been bereaved by suicide in the Learning from Deaths Action Plan Management Group. We included our involvement in the scrutinising of Prevention of Future Death notices related to Coroner findings; the lived experience and coproduction for inpatient settings; our contribution to the carers charter and NSFT Learning from deaths review.

In terms of outcomes for inpatients on acute wards feedback showed an improvement on 2023/24 data, with 63% of inpatients in 2024/25 reporting positive outcomes, praising staff for being helpful, compassionate, empathetic, and kind. However, there remained inconsistency on inpatient service provision, with 33% of inpatients reporting negative feedback, including concerns about the rude attitude of some consultants, unhelpful night staff, and lack of activities.

Negative experiences with discharge planning have continued since our detailed Discharge MOVC report in 2022, highlighting issues such as chaotic and poorly communicated discharge plans. This remains a critical area for coproduction and service improvement. We will continue to report on this and advocate for improvement in discharge planning, ensuring that the voices of service users are heard and acted upon.

Image Below - Caroline Donovan, Chief Executive of NSFT was the guest speaker at our 2024 AGM.



Promoting Mental Wellbeing

The Difference Made by Our Signposting for Support

Our mission is to ensure that individuals have access to the support they need, especially during challenging times. One of the key ways we achieve this is through our signposting for support services. This report highlights the significant impact these services have had over the past year.

Our 2024/25 Statistics

- On average every month we have 154 individual visits to our signposting and support pages.
- From April 2024 to March 2025, we had nearly 2,000 people visit our support directory and 27,000 visits to our website overall
- This year, our social media presence has grown significantly:
 - Facebook: 1.7k likes and 1999 followers.
 - X: 2,299 followers
 - LinkedIn: 643 followers
 - YouTube: 17 subscribers. 263 views on HT videos 12 and 454 views on LISTEN for suicide prevention.



Signposting A - Z

Enhancing Access to Support

Our signposting for support services have been instrumental in guiding individuals to the appropriate resources and services. By providing clear and accessible information, we have empowered people to seek help and support when they need it most. This has been particularly important for those experiencing mental health challenges, as timely access to support can make a significant difference in their recovery journey.

Key Achievements

Increased Awareness and Engagement

Over the past year, we have seen a substantial increase in the number of individuals accessing our signposting services. This is reflected in the rise in active website users, with 27K users engaging with our content. The top pages visited include the SUF homepage, Suffolk County Council – Customer First, Healthy Together Peer Support and getting emergency help for your mental health.

Positive Feedback from Service Users

Feedback from people who have used our signposting services has been overwhelmingly positive. Many have expressed gratitude for the clear and concise information provided, which has helped them navigate the often-complex landscape of mental health services.

Promoting Mental Wellbeing

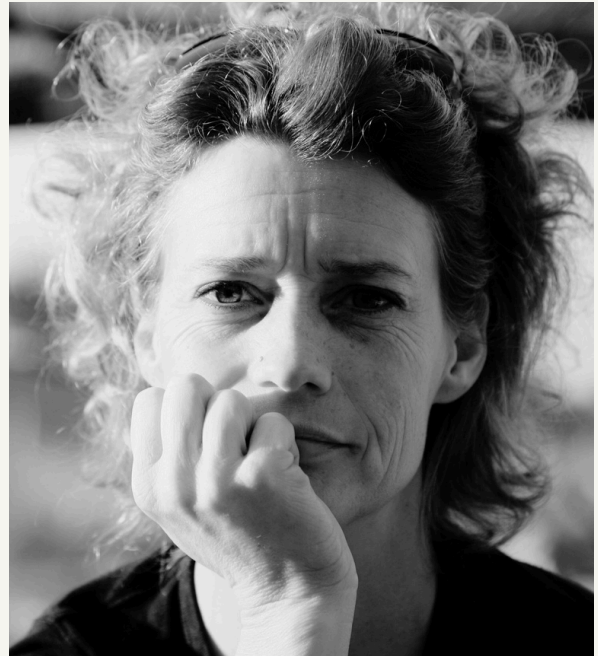
Lived Experience Journey 1: Accessing Mental Health Support

Adeel was struggling with severe anxiety. They told us that he found our signposting page for emergency mental health support.

The clear instructions and contact information provided enabled them to quickly access the help they needed, leading to a significant improvement in their mental health.

"The information was so clear and easy to follow. I was able to get the help I needed quickly, and it made a huge difference in my recovery."

Adeel, Service User



Lived Experience Journey 2: Navigating Health Services

Jennifer was unsure about the process for accessing health services. She used our signposting page to find information about her SMI Annual Physical Health Check. This guidance together with our Healthy Together video helped her understand the steps involved and encouraged Jennifer to attend her appointment, ultimately leading to better health outcomes.

"I didn't know where to start, but the signposting page guided me through the process. It was a relief to have clear information, and it helped me take the necessary steps for my health."

Jennifer, Service User

Suicide Prevention

Every year, on the 10th of September, World Suicide Prevention Day brings people and organisations together to raise awareness about suicide, bereavement by suicide, and its prevention.

As a mental health user-led charity, we understand that when personal problems become overwhelming, it can be incredibly difficult for individuals to seek help. Many people remain silent about their struggles, finding it nearly impossible to talk about suicidal feelings. Feelings of shame, fear of letting loved ones down, and a sense of isolation can make these emotions even more challenging to manage.

We understand the importance of creating a safe and non-judgmental space where people can talk openly about their feelings. It is important for friends, family, and professionals to feel confident in listening and offering support. Often, people worry about saying the wrong thing and are afraid to ask if someone is considering suicide.



We work to empower people to ask questions like, "What's happening for you right now?" and "Are you having thoughts of ending your life?" Listening and understanding are essential for building connections and offering hope and reassurance.

We have developed several resources to help individuals manage difficult feelings and support others in distress. Our *Thrive with Five* booklets promote self-care, while our *LISTEN for Suicide Prevention* booklet and coproduced LISTEN for suicide prevention video offers step-by-step guidance for friends, family, community members, and professionals to feel more confident in preventing suicide.

To watch our co-produced video "LISTEN for Suicide Prevention," please visit <https://youtu.be/8E6hNCiiyWA>.



L	Listen and validate concerns. Look at crisis/care plan and general options
I	Involve and Inform the service user and carer of the immediate options available
S	Shared understanding achieved and Safety issues established
T	Time. Be clear about your availability and be aware of your Tone of voice
E	Empathise and Encourage responsibility then Evaluate what has been agreed
N	Next steps made clear. Never end the contact without a plan

Suicide Prevention

Thinking about suicide?

Worried about someone?

Download the award-winning Stay Alive app

It's free and can help you and others stay safe from suicide

stayalive.app

Visit the Suicide Prevention Hub
prevent-suicide.org.uk/prevention-hub

In the app:
Advice
Helplines and chat
Safety plans
Wellness Plan
Staying safe guide

Google Play
Download on the App Store

Suffolk water forum
GRASSROOTS SUICIDE PREVENTION

In 2014 we supported Grassroots with their innovative Stay Alive App for suicide prevention, making a strong business case to the East and West Clinical Commissioning Groups to bring the Stay Alive app to Suffolk. Without additional funding we have continued to provide regular updates to Grassroots to keep the app current for our Suffolk community.

In 2014, our first year with Stay Alive, we supported just over 500 people.

As this reporting year ends in March 2025, the Stay Alive app has supported 4,467 individuals in Suffolk with suicide prevention, including significant use in Ipswich, Stowmarket, Sutton, and Bury St Edmunds.

Through open communication, providing our LISTEN and Stay Alive resources, we deliver significant suicide prevention support, helping those in need. Remember, you are not alone, and there is always hope. Reach out for support.

Through open communication, providing our LISTEN and Stay Alive resources, we deliver significant suicide prevention support, helping those in need. Remember, you are not alone, and there is always hope. Reach out for support.

880,000+
downloads since the app
was launched in 2014

208
countries and territories with
Stay Alive users

22
languages are available

Building Community

Our SUF Community Members

The ethos of Suffolk User Forum (SUF) is deeply rooted in our commitment to mental health service users and their families. As a user-led organisation driven by lived experiences, SUF members are the cornerstone of our mission and vision. Our members' insights and perspectives are invaluable in shaping our initiatives and ensuring that our efforts are truly reflective of the needs and aspirations of our community. SUF members bring a wealth of knowledge and firsthand experience that enriches our understanding of mental health challenges and solutions. Our members' active participation in coproduction opportunities, events, and discussions fosters a collaborative environment where every voice is heard and valued.

By sharing stories and advocating for change, SUF members help us create a more inclusive and supportive space for everyone. Your contributions are not just important; they are essential to our growth and success as an organisation committed to making a positive impact.

Being a SUF member is important to me. SUF's support has been invaluable in my recovery journey. SUF's commitment to valuing my lived experiences and advocating for change has created a positive and inclusive environment for SUF members.

Member Quote

”



Our Membership in 2024/25

500 Individual members

49 group members with a reach of over 43,662 people

The SUF Team and Trustees

Team Development

This year has also seen significant development within the staff team. We appointed Emily Geen as Administrative Officer in February 2024, who, by the end of the year, achieved excellent results in professional development, qualifying in Sage 2 and Sage 3, and was promoted to Finance and Administrative Officer.

Additionally, we strengthened our leadership team with the appointment of James Woolnough to the post of Deputy CEO.

We want to extend our heartfelt thanks to Louise Biddiscombe for her hard work and excellent management of the Healthy Together team and wish her the best of luck in her new role with Community Action Suffolk.

In July 2024, we celebrated the appointment and promotion of Chloe Newman to Healthy Together Manager, and in October 2024, we appointed Felicity French as Communications Lead.

These developments have significantly strengthened SUF, supporting our continued project work with mental health service users.



Emily

James

Chloe

Felicity



Anna

Alison

Davide

Trustees

The Trustees commitment to good governance and transparency remains strong.

Annually, SUF trustees dedicate over 3000+ hours volunteering for SUF, contributing significantly to our mission and strategic objectives. Trustees' efforts have been invaluable in raising awareness about mental health and building valuable relationships within our networks and community.

As the year ends, we bid farewell to Robert Nesbitt, company Secretary for the last five years, recognising his steady presence and significant contributions to SUF.



Robert

Looking Ahead

Looking ahead to 2025/26, we remain committed to service user leadership, personalisation, peer support, and coproduction. Working with Suffolk County Council and the NHS, we aim to strengthen the voice of mental health service users in Suffolk.

Our goal is to expand our mental health user-led network, ensuring that the voice of lived experience informs and shapes both new and existing mental health services. By placing the voice of lived experience at the heart of service improvement and development, we strive to create impactful changes.

Our key priorities are:

Funding

Our top priority is to secure sustainable, long-term funding (three years or more) to ensure ongoing service delivery and support to SUF beneficiaries. This includes specific project work and promoting the voices of individuals living with mental ill health, as well as the shared interests of mental health service users collaboratively.



Partnership and User Voice

Strengthening local partnerships to support the County Council and the Integrated Care System (ICS) in their statutory responsibilities for mental health service user involvement, coproduction, information, assistance, and advocacy. This includes ensuring that the voice of lived experience is a central theme throughout the collaborative and its subgroups. Additionally, delivering key coproduction events, publishing service user feedback, and promoting service user priority areas for mental health improvement.



Looking Ahead

As we look to the future, we remain committed to improving outcomes for people in mental health crises by strengthening our peer-led advocacy services and growing the reach of the SUF Healthy Together Peer Support programme. This involves growing new partnerships within primary care and promoting the healthcare rights and wellbeing goals of people living with severe mental illness and severe eating disorders.

In 2025/26, we plan to deliver three Stepping Forward events focused on coproduction with SUF members. These events will be instrumental in developing a SUF strategy for the next three years, ensuring that the needs and ambitions of our members are at the forefront of our planning.

By engaging directly with SUF members, we aim to gather valuable insights and feedback that will shape our future direction and enhance the services we provide.

These events will serve as a platform for open dialogue, collaboration, and the sharing of ideas, ultimately leading to a strategy that truly reflects the voices and aspirations of our community.

We remain committed to working with people across all of our communities and underrepresented groups.

Group discussions were vivid and interesting, and I felt that I could really contribute and make a difference.

Service User Quote

SUF Stepping Forward events have been life changing. The focus on coproduction ensures our voices shape the services we rely on. These events provide a platform for open dialogue and collaboration, making me feel valued and empowered."

Service User Quote

SUF's in-person events have been invaluable. The interaction, sharing, communicating, and mutual education have been illuminating.

Service User Quote

Final Thoughts

To our Community 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 2025/26.



To our Trustees

We would like to thank all our trustees for their volunteering time, continued commitment, and outstanding support. You have actively supported us to achieve our strategic objectives, bringing a more diverse range of skills, lived experience and knowledge, helping us raise 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 to Suffolk County Council, Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care Board and to those of you in our SUF community, who are friends of SUF, choosing to give generously through your personal donations. Thank you for being our partner, for your generosity, confidence, and appreciation of our support to vulnerable people and mental health service users.





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Suffolk User Forum



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

Dear Sirs

Financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025

The following representations are made on the basis of enquires with those individuals, including management and staff, with relevant knowledge and experience such as we consider necessary in connection with your independent examination of the charitable company's financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025. These enquiries have included inspection of supporting documentation where appropriate and are sufficient to satisfy ourselves that we can make each of the following representations. All representations are made to the best of our knowledge and belief.

General

We acknowledge that the work performed by you is substantially less in scope than an audit performed in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) and that you do not express an audit opinion.

We confirm that the charitable company qualifies as small in accordance with the conditions set out in chapter 1 of part 15 of the Companies Act 2006.

We confirm that the charitable company was entitled to exemption under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011, being that gross income for the year does not exceed £1m or £250,000 if gross assets exceed £3.26m, from the requirement to have its financial statements for the financial year ended 31 March 2024 audited. We also confirm that the members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the financial year in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

We confirm we have declared all income, including legacies, of which we are aware at the year end, whether received during the year or following the year end.

We have fulfilled our responsibilities as trustees, as set out in the terms of our engagement letter dated 5 October 2022 under the Companies Act 2006 and Charities Act 2011, for preparing financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view and for making accurate representations to you.

All the transactions undertaken by the charitable company have been properly reflected and recorded in the accounting records.

All the accounting records have been made available to you for the purpose of your independent examination. We have provided you with unrestricted access to all appropriate persons within the charitable company, and with all other records and related information requested, including minutes of all management and trustees' meetings and correspondence with The Charity Commission.

The financial statements are free of material misstatements, including omissions.

Internal control and fraud

We acknowledge our responsibility for the design, implementation and maintenance of internal control systems to prevent and detect fraud and error, and we believe that we have appropriately fulfilled these responsibilities. We have disclosed to you the results of our risk assessment that the financial statements may be misstated as a result of fraud.

We have disclosed to you all instances of known or suspected fraud affecting the entity involving those individuals, including management and employees, who have a significant role in internal control or others that have a material effect on the financial statements.

We have also disclosed to you all information in relation to allegations of fraud or suspected fraud affecting the entity's financial statements communicated by current or former employees, analysts, regulators or others.

Assets and liabilities

The charitable company has satisfactory title to all assets and there are no liens or encumbrances on the charitable company's assets, except for those that are disclosed in the notes to the financial statements.

All actual liabilities, contingent liabilities and guarantees given to third parties have been recorded or disclosed as appropriate.

We have no plans or intentions that may materially alter the carrying value and, where relevant, the fair value measurements or classification of assets and liabilities reflected in the financial statements.

Accounting estimates

The methods, data and significant assumptions used by us in making accounting estimates, and their related disclosures, are appropriate to achieve recognition, measurement and disclosure that is reasonable in the context of the applicable financial reporting framework.

Bank accounts

We have disclosed to you all bank accounts operated by the charitable company.

Legal claims

We have disclosed to you all claims in connection with litigation that have been, or are expected to be, received and such matters, as appropriate, have been properly accounted for and disclosed in the financial statements.

Laws and regulations

We have disclosed to you all known instances of non-compliance or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations whose effects should be considered when preparing the financial statements.

Related parties

Related party relationships and transactions have been appropriately accounted for and disclosed in the financial statements. We have disclosed to you all relevant information concerning such relationships and transactions and are not aware of any other matters which require disclosure in order to comply with legislative and accounting standards requirements.

Serious incidents

We confirm that no serious incident reports have been submitted to the Charity Commission, nor any events considered for submission, during the year or in the period to the date of signing of the balance sheet.

Subsequent events

All events subsequent to the date of the financial statements which require adjustment or disclosure have been properly accounted for and disclosed.

Going concern

We believe that the charitable company's financial statements should be prepared on a going concern basis, on the grounds that current and future sources of funding or support will be more than adequate for the charitable company's needs. We also confirm our plans for future action(s) required to enable the charitable company to continue as a going concern are feasible. We have considered a period of twelve months from the date of approval of the financial statements. We believe that no further disclosures relating to the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern need to be made in the financial statements.

Grants and donations

All grants, donations and other income, the receipt of which is subject to specific terms or conditions, have been notified to you. There have been no breaches of terms or conditions in the application of such income.

Each trustee has taken all steps that they ought to have taken as a trustee in order to make themselves aware of any relevant information and to establish that you are aware of that information.

Yours faithfully

R Poole

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Signed on behalf of the board of trustees of Suffolk User Forum

Date: 20/11/2025
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