

VIEWPOINT

England & Wales · Charity number 1159735

Details

Status Registered

Legal form CIO

Registered 2014-12-29

Register [View on the Charity Commission register](#)

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Activities

Objects: THE PROMOTION OF MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING, IN PARTICULAR BUT NOT EXCLUSIVELY, BY THE INVOLVEMENT OF USERS OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SERVICES AND SUBSTANCE MISUSE SERVICES IN THE PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT, DELIVERY AND MONITORING OF THOSE SERVICES.THE PROVISION OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING TO HELP HEALTH, SOCIAL CARE AND SUBSTANCE MISUSE SERVICE USERS GAIN THE NECESSARY CONFIDENCE AND SKILLS TO EFFECTIVELY REPRESENT THEMSELVES AND THEIR PEERS.THE PROVISION OF A CONDUIT BETWEEN SERVICE USERS, COMMISSIONERS, AND SERVICE PROVIDERS TO ENABLE COLLABORATIVE WORKING (CO-PRODUCTION).TO PROMOTE WELLBEING AND A WIDER UNDERSTANDING OF MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE MISUSE ISSUES.

Activities: Viewpoint is an independent charity which has been running for around 12 years with the aim of supporting people to use their personal experiences of mental health and/or drug & alcohol issues to improve services. We do this in many ways from local forums and user representation to focus groups and user delivered training.

Classification

- **How:** Provides Advocacy/advice/information, Sponsors Or Undertakes Research
- **What:** Education/training, Disability, Economic/community Development/employment
- **Who:** People With Disabilities, People Of A Particular Ethnic Or Racial Origin, The General Public/mankind

Geography

- Hertfordshire

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£323,380	£324,280	-	-
2024-03-31	£216,030	£229,385	-	-
2023-03-31	£301,538	£305,262	-	-
2022-03-31	£327,940	£282,468	-	-
2021-03-31	£242,481	£199,781	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Graham Munn	Chair	2024-04-01
Ashley Steve Risk		2015-04-28
Eni Bankole-Race		2020-09-16
Jacqui Lynskey		2014-12-01
Joanna Bowen		2021-02-16
Simon Robert Taylor		2020-05-27
Yetunde Rachel Kasonga		2021-07-22

VIEWPOINT

England & Wales - Charity number 1159735

Accounts

viewpoint

Together we can Influence Change



VIEWPOINT ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS 2024-2025

WELCOME

Message from the Chair - Joanna Bowen

This year has been one of reflection, resilience, and reconnection. Throughout 2024-25, Viewpoint has remained a vital space where people with lived experience of mental health and addiction challenges are not only heard but also actively shaping services and influencing decisions. Whether through our co-production forums, peer-live experience facilitation, or strategic partnerships, we have seen the powerful impact that comes from placing real voices at the centre of change.

We held an anniversary party, inviting many of the founding members of Viewpoint, who all agreed that it was a very special occasion. We brought together various voices from past and present teams to discuss our impact, and the user voice group was particularly inspiring in describing the impact Viewpoint has made on their lives.

It has also been a year of expanding our reach and strengthening our relationships. We've enhanced our partnerships with statutory and voluntary organisations, while ensuring that everything we do continues to reflect the needs and aspirations of our members.

I am proud of the work our team and trustees have carried out, but even more so of the courage, insight, and leadership demonstrated by people with lived experience. Their contributions are the heartbeat of Viewpoint and the reason we remain a respected and valued organisation across Hertfordshire and beyond.

Thank you to all our members, staff, volunteers, and partners for your dedication, passion, and commitment to creating meaningful and lasting change. I look forward to seeing what we can continue to achieve together in the year ahead.



WELCOME

Message from the Chief Executive - Leslie Billy

Dear Supporters and Stakeholders, It is with great pleasure and a sense of accomplishment that I present to you our Charity's Annual Report for the year 2024/2025. Viewpoint's commitment to amplifying the voices of individuals with lived experiences of mental health and addiction challenges remains steadfast and unwavering.

Throughout the past year, our focus has not only been on operational delivery and growth but also on introspection and strategic planning for the future. A key highlight has been the formulation of our new five-year strategy, a collaborative effort achieved through co-production sessions involving our members, dedicated staff, trustees, and valued partners. Together, we have sculpted a visionary roadmap that will shape the future of our work, emphasising co-production, equity, and lasting impact. This process has served as a poignant reminder of the fervour and dedication that propels Viewpoint forward.

in parallel with this strategic initiative, we have worked tirelessly to enhance our partnerships and cultivate spaces that are safe, inclusive, and conducive to fostering a sense of belonging for all. The fusion of our long-term strategic thinking with tangible, day-to-day results has been a source of immense pride for all of us at Viewpoint.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to each and every individual who has contributed to our mission this past year. Your dedication and support have been instrumental in shaping our successes. Together, we have made significant strides, and I am excited by the collective potential that lies ahead of us in the years to come.

Thank you for believing in our cause and for standing by us on this extraordinary journey.



INTRODUCTION

We are proud to present Viewpoint’s Annual Report for 2024–2025, a year marked by resilience and enhanced collaboration with our members, partners, and communities. Over the past 12 months, we have continued to champion the voices of people with lived experience of mental health and addiction challenges. Through co-production, peer-led initiatives, and meaningful involvement in local and national forums, we have worked to influence change, challenge stigma, and promote recovery-focused approaches that place people at the heart of decision-making.

This year has seen the expansion of our projects, the strengthening of our networks, and an unwavering commitment to accessibility, inclusion, and impact. Our members remain the driving force behind all we do, shaping our direction and ensuring that our work stays rooted in real-life experience.

As you read through this report, we invite you to reflect on the collective achievements of the past year, the stories of lived experience that have guided us, and the opportunities that lie ahead as we continue our journey toward a more compassionate, responsive, and inclusive mental health system.

About Viewpoint

Viewpoint is a user voice mental health and addiction charity based in Hertfordshire. We exist to ensure that people with lived experience are at the heart of service design, delivery, and evaluation. Our work is rooted in the belief that lived experience is not only valuable but essential in shaping services that are effective, compassionate, and inclusive.

We create spaces where individuals can share their experiences, influence decision-making, and help drive real, sustainable change across the health and social care system. We work with members, professionals, and partners to embed co-production at every level – from local forums and training to strategic policy and commissioning.

Our core values guide everything we do:

- **Inclusion** – creating space for all voices to be heard and valued
- **Co-production** – working together to design and improve services
- **Empowerment** – enabling people to speak up and take the lead
- **Recovery-focused** – promoting hope, self-determination, and connection.

We work across mental health, addiction, and wellbeing, delivering peer-led support, training, campaigns, and community projects. Our membership continues to grow, and our members' voices guide our charity's direction, ensuring we remain grounded in what truly matters.

Highlights from the Year

Our vision

We will work with people with mental health and/or addiction challenges to influence change.

Our mission

We provide advice and support to promote mental wellbeing to anyone experiencing mental health and addiction challenges. We involve people to provide information and a voice to improve services.

974

**RECORDED
INTERACTIONS ACROSS
MEETINGS, FORUMS,
SUPPORT SESSIONS,
TRAINING, AND
CO-PRODUCTION
ACTIVITIES**

Improving services:

Making sure people are involved in the planning, developing, delivering and evaluating services to gain equality of support and treatment.

Staying well:

Supporting people to stay well.

Supporting choice:

Supporting people to make informed choices about services and their own mental wellbeing.

Reducing inequality:

People's involvement from all backgrounds is essential to gain equality of support and treatment.

Organisationally:

Use our organisational excellence to enhance quality and develop the right resources.

OUR ACTIVITIES IN 2024-2025

At the core of Viewpoint’s work is our commitment to meaningful engagement with people who have lived experience of mental health and substance or alcohol challenges. Throughout the year, we organised a wide range of forums, meetings, support sessions, training, and co-production activities, offering vital spaces for individuals to share their experiences, influence services, and support one another.

ACTIVITIES COMPLETED

572

In the past year, **Viewpoint** has successfully completed a total of 572 activities, encompassing various forms of support and engagement within our community.

‘Together we can make a difference’

Our commitment to mental health advocacy and ensuring people have a voice has led us to host a wide range of supportive initiatives. Through meetings, training sessions, support sessions and local forums, we aim to empower individuals and foster collaboration among community members, ensuring that everyone has access to essential resources and support.

151

Meetings with stakeholders

77

Local forums discussing community needs

12

Coproduction meetings f

284

Support activities



Our work is driven by a passion for improving mental health outcomes. Each activity represents a step towards creating a more supportive environment for individuals experiencing mental health and/or addiction challenges. We believe that **every voice matters**, and together, we can build a brighter future for mental health.

Over the past year, Viewpoint has continued to grow as an essential platform for mental health and wellbeing through diverse and meaningful engagement.

Over the past year, Viewpoint offered **572 engagement opportunities** across a variety of activities, including meetings, co-production meetings, local forums, support sessions, and training. These sessions created vital spaces for individuals to connect, influence services, and build confidence. In total, **2,264 people took part**, reflecting the growing reach and impact of our work across Hertfordshire and beyond.

While these ongoing engagement activities remain our core focus, they are complemented by our involvement in targeted projects and our delivery of Mental Health First Aider training—both of which will be explored in more detail later in this report.

Our Impact: A year of engagement and empowerment

Over the past year, Viewpoint has continued to grow as an essential platform for mental health and wellbeing through diverse and meaningful engagement.

With **974 recorded interactions** across meetings, forums, support sessions, training, and co-production activities, we have empowered individuals to share their experiences, raise issues, and enhance their personal development. The outcomes recorded are based on commissioners' criteria and demonstrate the importance of Viewpoint's opportunities for individual growth and personal recovery.



Outcomes from Our Activities

572

Our charity offered 572 activities, positively impacting 2,264 individuals.

'Together, we empower **individual voices** to create a brighter, more connected future for all.'

- Viewpoint -

The outcomes reflect our commitment to fostering connections and enhancing wellbeing within our community.

165

User voice and engagement outcomes

Individuals had an opportunity to express their needs.

147

Enhanced connections within the community

Participants had space to form meaningful relationships through our programmes.

110

Improving overall wellbeing

Our activities provided tools and space for better mental health and support.

Overall, the outcomes attributed to each activity demonstrate the significant positive impacts, emphasising the importance of user voice and community connection in fostering wellbeing and support.

Your voice matters



Amplifying the user voice

The user voice remained central to our work; we attended 151 events across various settings, where lived experiences helped shape local service improvements and policy discussions.

More than 303 people, including individuals with lived experience and peer facilitators, represented Viewpoint at board, committee, and partnership meetings.

This level of engagement is invaluable. By attending these forums, Viewpoint ensures that the lived experience voice is consistently heard in decision-making spaces. Our involvement:

- Shapes strategy and policy by bringing real experiences to the table.
- Builds stronger partnerships with commissioners, providers, and community organisations.
- Identifies opportunities and challenges early, helping us respond proactively.
- Advocates for co-production so that services are designed with, not just for, the people who use them.

Summary: These outcomes show that attending boards and committees is much more than just a meeting. It is a powerful way for people to connect, develop, and make an impact. At the wider system level, it ensures that lived experience continues to influence mental health strategy, service design, and delivery in Hertfordshire.



Forums - A platform for change

Viewpoint held 77 forums for 324 participants; these spaces served as a hub for connection and influence. Key outcomes included:

50 issues raised, many of which were actioned through service provider discussions

43 co-production contributions

23 learning and development conversations

22 networking connections

- Connection and reduce isolation: Forums help people feel part of a supportive community.
- Co-production and user voice: Attendees influence services and decisions (56 outcomes).
- Raising issues: Forums highlight real concerns to improve services (33 outcomes).
- Sharing lived experience: Participants share experiences, empowering others (19 outcomes).
- Learning and networking: Forums support skill development and peer connections (12 networking outcomes).

Summary: Forums improve wellbeing, empower participants, and ensure services respond to real needs.





Promoting connection and belonging

Our support sessions (479) played a crucial role in enhancing wellbeing and fostering self-improvement. These sessions also helped reduce social isolation through direct support activities, involving over 1,332 participants.

- Connection and reduce isolation: Our support helps people feel more connected and less isolated (144 for connection and 57 for reducing isolation).
- Improved wellbeing: Direct support improves mental health and overall wellbeing (96 outcomes).
- Self-Improvement and learning: Participants gain skills, knowledge, and confidence (77 self-improvement and 31 Learning and development outcomes).
- Sharing experiences and user voice: Our support sessions provide a safe space to share experiences and influence services (59 sharing lived experience and 4 user voice outcomes).
- Addressing issues: Support helps identify and resolve challenges (8 issues raised outcome).

Summary: Support services are vital for promoting wellbeing, empowering individuals, reducing isolation, and enabling people to influence services that affect them.



Co-production in action

Our dedication to co-production was demonstrated through 24 dedicated sessions, ensuring that service users were not only listened to but also actively involved in shaping services. Outcomes such as co-production (6), user voice (4), and sharing lived experience (3) were central to these collaborative efforts.

Summary: Co-production brings people with lived experience and professionals together as equal partners. It helps ensure that services are shaped by real experiences, making them more relevant and effective. This approach empowers individuals, strengthens the user voice, and fosters mutual understanding. Taking part also supports wellbeing by helping people feel valued, connected, and part of positive change.



Importance of learning and development opportunities

We delivered impactful training opportunities (84 sessions), which equipped participants with tools for personal growth and skill-building

- Skill-building and Self-Improvement: Training helps participants develop new skills and improve themselves (8 “Self-improvement” outcomes, 34 “Training” outcomes).
- Knowledge and Confidence: Learning opportunities increase knowledge and confidence, supporting well-being (22 “Learning and development” outcomes, 4 “Improved well-being”).
- Connection and Networking: Training fosters connections and collaboration among participants (2 “Being connected,” 1 “Reduce isolation”).
- Sharing Experiences: Participants can share insights, enhancing collective learning (3 “Sharing lived experience”).

Summary: Learning and development opportunities empower individuals, enhance well-being, build skills, and create supportive connections.

Connection and Peer Support

At Viewpoint, connection and peer support remain central to how we work. It is widely recognised that many people experiencing mental health challenges can feel isolated. Our support and peer sessions provide safe, inclusive spaces where people can come together, share experiences, and connect with others who understand.

These sessions help build confidence, reduce loneliness, and strengthen wellbeing. By talking openly and supporting one another, participants develop practical coping strategies and regain a sense of hope and belonging.

Peer support also strengthens the user voice. Every conversation is a chance to listen, learn, and ensure that the experiences of people using mental health services directly shape and deliver those services.

Our connection and peer support activities also provide a vital link to help further. Through early signposting and gentle encouragement, people can access information, advice, or other services before they reach a crisis point.

Above all, these sessions remind people that they are not alone – that recovery is possible, and that their voice matters.

‘Fantastic sessions that are making a very positive impact on my mental health.’

During the year, **1332 participants** took part in our connection and peer support. We received **487 completed questionnaires**.

When asked, ***“Were you able to make a connection with other group members?”***,

- **177 participants (36%) agreed or strongly agreed**
- **275 (56%) were neutral,**
- **33 (7%) disagreed,** and the remainder did not complete the question.

This shows that while many participants were beginning to form links with others, there remains an opportunity to strengthen peer relationships and help individuals feel more connected within group settings.

When asked, ***“Were you supported to have your say?”***,

- **413 participants (85%) agreed or strongly agreed,**
- **9 (2%) were neutral,** and none disagreed.

This demonstrates strong evidence that participants felt empowered and supported to share their views – a key outcome of Viewpoint’s co-production approach. Overall, the findings indicate that while the connection between members continues to grow, the sense of being listened to and having a voice remains a particular strength of Viewpoint’s work.

Connection and Peer Support: Building hope and belonging

"Feeling connected increased by nearly 800% after attending sessions."

A total of 487 responses were collected before and after Connection and Peer Support sessions. The data shows an emotional shift among participants following their involvement.

Before the sessions, many people reported feeling:

- Overwhelmed 91
- Anxious or scared 55
- Lonely 63
- Only 16 said they felt connected, 15 felt happy, and 19 felt in control, while 51 described themselves as hopeful or optimistic.

These figures reflect the emotional strain and isolation participants often experience before engaging in Viewpoint's sessions.

After attending, the change was striking. Reports of feeling;

- **Connected rose from 16 to 141**
- **Happy from 15 to 86**
- **Hopeful from 51 to 92**
- **In control from 19 to 36.**

While negative emotions dropped significantly:

- **Overwhelmed fell from 91 to 5**
- **Lonely from 63 to 2**
- **Angry or irritated from 15 to 1.**

Although 162 participants before and 124 after left the question blank – possibly reflecting that not everyone felt ready to describe their emotions – the overall pattern is unmistakable: **Viewpoint's Connection and Peer Support sessions help people move from isolation and anxiety toward hope, happiness, and belonging.**

I think you're doing an excellent job and helping people get better and recover from issues that we should not be ashamed of.

'Just that what Viewpoint does keeps people out of crisis services, and they are worth their weight in gold.'

Mental Health First Aider



MHFA England

At Viewpoint, we recognise the importance of equipping people with practical knowledge and confidence to support mental health – both their own and others! Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training provides individuals with the skills to spot signs of mental ill health, offer initial support, and guide someone towards further help if needed. This training not only increases awareness but also contributes to reducing stigma, promoting early intervention, and building compassionate, resilient communities.

Our MHFA courses are facilitated by two fully qualified tutors with lived experience of mental health challenges. This is central to Viewpoint's approach. It ensures that learning is grounded in real-world understanding, empathy, and authenticity. Participants repeatedly tell us that hearing from trainers with lived experience makes the sessions more relatable, impactful, and inspiring.

Courses delivered

During 2024/25, we delivered:

- 4 Full MHFA Courses (each made up of 4 sessions)
- 1 Refresher Course (1 session)
- All courses were delivered online, increasing accessibility and reaching individuals across Hertfordshire and beyond.

A total of 68 people registered across all courses, with 57 (84%) completing. Among those who did not complete, the most common reasons were changes in personal circumstances, health needs, or increased caring responsibilities.



Mental Health
First Aider
MHFA England



Learning that builds confidence and compassion

Evaluation feedback was collected from 42 participants across the four complete MHFA courses delivered this year. The results show substantial and meaningful improvements in both knowledge and confidence, as well as very positive feedback for the tutors and the overall course experience.

Participants reported an **average increase in confidence of 2.88 points and in knowledge 3.12 points**. This demonstrates that the training not only strengthened participants' understanding of mental health but also equipped them to apply this learning in real situations.

Tutor feedback was also very strong. **Tutor 1 received an average rating of 9.84/10. In contrast, Tutor 2 received an average rating of 9.7/10**, reflecting the value of learning from two qualified trainers with lived experience. Participants consistently highlighted that the authenticity and empathy brought by the tutors enhanced the sessions, making the learning relatable and engaging.

Overall satisfaction with the course was high, with participants rating their **likelihood of recommending the training at 9.28/10 on average**. This indicates that attendees not only benefited personally but would also encourage others to take part.

Together, these outcomes demonstrate that Viewpoint's lived experience-led MHFA training is having a significant positive impact, building confidence, practical skills, awareness, and supportive attitudes across the communities we work with.

Participants consistently highlighted the value of learning in a supportive environment led by tutors with lived experience. This approach helped to build confidence, reduce stigma, and ensure the training felt grounded, relatable and real.

"I found the course very helpful and informative. It was an eye-opener to explore the complexity of mental health and really understand how to support people, as well as my role as a Mental Health First Aider. The instructors made sure everyone's voice was heard and our opinions were valued, which helped me feel at ease sharing my thoughts. The topic is so important, and I feel I have learnt a lot."

– Course Participant

"The course was very interesting and engaging. There were lots of opportunities to get involved and to practise the role of a Mental Health First Aider. Every question was welcomed, and both instructors were clearly non-judgemental, well-experienced and informative."

– Course Participant

"The Mental Health First Aid training was a valuable and meaningful experience. The course was well-structured and provided practical tools and knowledge that I can apply in my work to support individuals' mental health. The instructors created a safe, supportive and engaging learning environment. Thank you."

– Course Participant

PARTNERSHIPS

Stronger Together

Partnerships are central to Viewpoint's work, helping us **amplify our impact and broaden our reach**. Collaborating with other organisations and community groups enables effective sharing of resources—including funding, expertise, and infrastructure—while allowing us to reach diverse audiences, raise awareness, and reduce stigma around mental health and addiction. These collaborations foster innovation, strengthen advocacy, and ensure comprehensive support for those who need it most, maximising our ability to **create meaningful, long-lasting change for individuals and communities**.

Supporting the next generation of mental health professionals

University of Hertfordshire **UH**

Viewpoint plays an active role in shaping the future of mental health care by supporting undergraduate and postgraduate nursing and social work students at the **University of Hertfordshire**.

Our lived-experience facilitators share their personal recovery journeys, helping students bridge the gap between academic learning and real-world practice. Through open, honest discussion, they bring mental health challenges and recovery to life – highlighting resilience, hope, and the value of compassionate, person-centred support.

Students frequently tell us that hearing lived experiences first-hand encourages empathy, deepens reflective practice, and inspires them to deliver care that is respectful, humane, and grounded in understanding.



Interviews:

- 31 Mental Health Nursing
- 12 Social Work
- 1 Approved Mental Health Professional

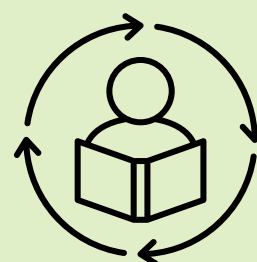


Teaching

- 6 Student teaching sessions



- Service user and public involvement and course development



Stronger Together

Teaching Sessions – What Students Said

(37 completed evaluation forms)

- 100% agreed the expert was clear and confident in their presentation
- 97.3% said the expert reflected on value-based practice
- 94.6% felt the session met learning outcomes
- 94.6% said the session would influence their future work practice

'I found the Confidence, Reflection, Collaboration, and determination displayed by the facilitator very useful. This has given me an insight into service users' experiences, and it would improve my communication skills in dealing with people and how to perceive and treat people who are vulnerable and in need.'

Interview Sessions – Partner Feedback

(12 completed evaluation forms)

- 100% were very satisfied or satisfied with the expert's contribution
- 91.7% would welcome the expert in future interviews
- 91.7% would recommend Viewpoint involvement opportunities

'I've got to understand that I have to look beyond the diagnosis of mental illness, and get to know properly the individuals we support.'

Through lived experience, Viewpoint bridges the gap between education and empathy – inspiring future professionals to deliver compassionate, person-centred care.

Peer support



Hertfordshire Partnership University
NHS Foundation Trust

Viewpoint continues to work closely with **Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust** to provide lived experience and peer support within the Enhanced Rehabilitation Outreach Service (EROS). EROS is a multidisciplinary community service supporting people experiencing complex mental health challenges. The service offers up to 16 weeks of focused rehabilitation support, promoting independence and helping individuals progress towards living well within their communities.

Our lived experience/peer support workers are a key part of this approach. Drawing on their own personal experiences of mental health recovery, they provide hope, empathy, and practical assistance. Through shared understanding, they help individuals regain confidence, rebuild daily living skills, and move forward in their recovery on their own terms.

This support is grounded in mutuality and respect. Lived experience workers encourage self-determination, promote informed choice, and help people explore opportunities that foster connection, purpose, and meaningful roles within their local communities. Their presence reinforces the message that recovery is not only possible but also achievable and that each person's journey is valued and uniquely their own.

Partnerships

Viewpoint continues to work in partnership with Healthwatch Hertfordshire, Hertfordshire County Council, Public Health Hertfordshire, Carers in Herts, and other local mental health and addiction charities to ensure that the voices of people with lived experience – including carers – are heard, valued, and used to inform the development of local services.

Through this collaboration, we help collect and share real experiences from communities across the county, enabling partners to build an accurate picture of what is working well and where improvements are needed. Our role is to create safe and supportive spaces where individuals feel confident in sharing their stories, concerns, and ideas. These insights are then incorporated directly into broader health and social care discussions, influencing decision-making and service development.

This partnership strengthens our shared commitment to co-production and meaningful involvement. By amplifying people's voices rather than speaking for them, we ensure change is grounded in lived reality. During the year, Viewpoint contributed to four county-wide projects, providing lived experience insight to support system learning and service improvement. Together, we are helping to create services that are **responsive, compassionate, and person-centred**.

Drug and Alcohol Service User Engagement: Prison leavers' experiences

Between June and August 2024, 15 participants participated in three focus groups facilitated by Viewpoint. The focus was on meaningful qualitative insights; no demographic data was collected to maintain anonymity.

Key Findings

- Awareness of Services

Most participants first learned about support through the criminal justice system, raising concerns that others may be unaware of available help.

- Barriers to Access

While services were generally easy to reach, motivation and readiness to engage were significant barriers. Some also mentioned travel costs and distance..

- Timeliness of Support

Access was usually prompt, often arranged before or soon after release – a key factor in preventing relapse

- Experience of Support

Participants praised the caring staff and responsive services, but noted high staff turnover, limited peer support, and delays in prescription processing.

- Reintegration & Wider Needs

Many faced challenges with housing, GP registration, employment, relationships, and finances. Better signposting to wider support was recommended.

These findings emphasise the need for timely, empathetic, and person-centred support that reflects the real experiences of prison leavers in Hertfordshire.

Co-occurring Mental Health and Substance Use: Voices of service users and carers

Viewpoint worked with Public Health Hertfordshire County Council, Healthwatch Hertfordshire, and Carers in Hertfordshire, during January – April 2025 to gather the experiences of people living with both mental ill health and substance use, ensuring their voices informed Hertfordshire’s Co-occurring Mental Health and Substance Use programme.

We facilitated four focus groups and one individual interview, providing safe and supportive spaces for open conversations. Participants described the challenges of being passed between services and the difference made when care was joined up and compassionate. Healthwatch Hertfordshire analysed the findings, with lived experience feedback at the core.

What people told us:

- Mental health and substance use often go hand in hand.
- Access to support can be blocked when services work in isolation.
- Carers feel excluded and left to navigate the system alone.
- Positive change happens when professionals listen and work together.

Impact:

The findings shaped Hertfordshire’s multi-agency action plan and strengthened partnership work between Hertfordshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (HPFT) and Change Grow Live (CGL). Viewpoint’s involvement ensured lived experience remains central to service improvement and system design.

Why this matters:

People with co-occurring needs often face the highest barriers. By amplifying their voices, Viewpoint helps build a more compassionate and coordinated system that recognises the whole person.



Gambling Harms Strategy: Feedback from people with lived experience

During 2024–25, Viewpoint collaborated with Healthwatch Hertfordshire and Public Health Hertfordshire to capture the experiences of individuals affected by gambling harms, including service users and their carers. We facilitated focus groups and interviews, creating safe spaces for participants to share their experiences.

Participants highlighted the impact of gambling on mental health, finances, relationships, and wellbeing, as well as stigma and lack of awareness among professionals. They called for better training, improved access to support services, and stronger regulation and licensing.

Impact:

Viewpoint’s input ensured that lived experience shaped Hertfordshire’s Gambling Harms Strategy (2025–30), influencing priorities around licensing, workforce awareness, access to support, and carer involvement. By embedding the voices of those directly affected, Viewpoint helped ensure the strategy reflects real needs, improving the potential effectiveness of local services and interventions.

Hertfordshire Drug and Alcohol Strategy 2025–2030

Viewpoint contributed to the development of Hertfordshire's Drug and Alcohol Strategy - 2025 -2030, by facilitating focus groups with people accessing drug and alcohol treatment services and their carers. These sessions provided a safe space for participants to share experiences of treatment, recovery, and support, highlighting gaps in service access, the need for joined-up mental health and substance use support, and priorities for young people.

Impact:

By directly incorporating lived experience, Viewpoint ensured that the voices of service users and carers informed the development of the strategy. This helped Public Health Hertfordshire design services and interventions that are more responsive, accessible, and person-centred, and strengthened the focus on prevention, early support, and integrated care pathways across the county.

Peer Support Training in Hertfordshire Drug and Alcohol Services

Following the 'Recovery and Reintegration: Voices of Service Users and Carers ' report, Hertfordshire County Council invested in peer roles to integrate lived experience into drug and alcohol services. Viewpoint hosted a Peer Development Worker two days a week to lead this work, who will continue on the programme into the following year.

The peer support training ran over four months, from September to December 2024, in a modular format, comprising 24 sessions. The programme covered a wide range of topics, including introduction to peer support, confidence and assertiveness, presentation skills, autism and neurodivergence, IT skills, and core modules via iLearn, such as safeguarding, health and safety, and substance misuse awareness. Optional drop-in sessions provided additional individual support. We also held an in-person graduation ceremony. Eight people signed up, seven completed the programme, and three participants opted for the full ImROC Peer Support Worker training, with two completing it.

The modular approach allowed participants to build knowledge and confidence progressively, culminating in a graduation event. This training strengthened peer capacity and embedded lived experience across services.



Stronger Together

Community Mental Health Advocacy Viewpoint in partnership with POhWER



In June 2024, Viewpoint was awarded the contract to partner with POhWER to deliver community mental health advocacy across Hertfordshire. This service ensures that people experiencing mental health challenges have their voices heard and their rights protected.

Mental health advocacy is about standing up for the rights, needs, and voices of people experiencing mental health challenges.

It involves:

- Ensuring people are heard – helping individuals express their views and make informed choices about their care and treatment.
- Promoting equality and inclusion – challenging stigma and discrimination in mental health services and wider society.
- Protecting rights – supporting people to understand and exercise their legal and human rights, especially when they're detained or under treatment.
- Influencing systems – working with services, policymakers, and communities to improve mental health support and create fairer systems.

Our advocates empower individuals to express their views, make informed choices, and take an active role in decisions about their care and treatment. This partnership strengthens the principle of **“nothing about us without us,”** keeping lived experience at the heart of mental health services in Hertfordshire.

Together, we are strengthening community voices, building inclusion, and ensuring that every person feels heard, valued, and supported in their recovery journey.

Issues supported by our advocacy services

Over the year, 108 new clients accessed Viewpoint’s advocacy service, many with multiple concerns.

29% Children and family matters

20% Mental health services

18% Housing

13% Complaints and safeguarding

9% Care and support

6% Other issues

5% Health and wellbeing

Every voice matters – advocacy helps turn lived experience into lasting change

How Clients Heard About Advocacy

Since June 2024, Viewpoint has supported 108 new advocacy cases across Hertfordshire, with clients learning about the service through a wide range of channels. Self-referral was a significant route, with 25 clients coming directly to the service, showing that individuals are aware of and confident in seeking support themselves.

Professional referrals also played a key role. Social workers were the most common source, accounting for 23 referrals, highlighting the vital role professionals play in connecting people to advocacy support. Children’s Services and District Councils each referred 15 clients, while smaller numbers came via CMHT, GP surgeries, housing services, and community health teams.

Word of mouth from former clients (19) and referrals from friends, family, voluntary organisations, MPs/councillors, carers, and other community sources (31) further demonstrate the breadth of the service’s reach and the value of both personal and professional networks.

This wide variety of referral pathways illustrates that Viewpoint’s advocacy service is well recognised across statutory, voluntary, and community networks. By being accessible through multiple trusted channels, the service ensures that more voices across Hertfordshire are heard and supported.

Who Uses Our Advocacy Service

Viewpoint supports a diverse range of people—there’s no “typical” client. Over the year, 108 new clients accessed our advocacy service, many with more than one need.

- 49% have a mental health condition
- 23% have a long-term illness or physical condition
- 15% have a physical disability, including vision or hearing impairment
- 15% have learning difficulties or disabilities
- 7% are neurodivergent (autism/Asperger’s/ASD)
- 8% experience social vulnerabilities, such as homelessness or domestic abuse
- Smaller numbers include acquired brain injury (1%), pregnancy/maternity (1%), speech impairment (1%), and substance misuse (9%)

This data shows that our advocacy service reaches people with multiple and complex needs, ensuring every voice is heard and supported.

Advocacy | a u
support of an i
the act of plea
mending

Advocacy in Action: Supporting a mother to be heard



How advocacy helped a neurodivergent parent overcome barriers and engage confidently in her child’s protection plan.

The challenge



Communication barriers and sensory overload



Difficulty understanding professional language



Anxiety and emotional regulation struggles



Delays in her child’s developmental assessments



History of domestic abuse adds vulnerability

*“With the advocate’s help,
I can finally talk about what my
child needs.”*

*I don’t feel lost in the system
anymore.”*

How advocacy helped

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|---|
| 1. Changed communication method | → | from phone calls to home visits |
| 2. Requested adjustment | → | short, clear sentences, breaks, and visual aids |
| 3. Challenged advice | → | ensured realistic and safe behavioural strategies |
| 4. Secured better access | → | pushed for ASD and speech therapy referrals |
| 5. Raised safeguarding issues | → | made sure domestic abuse was considered |

The Difference



- Mother feels confident and understood
- Professionals communicate clearly
- Child’s developmental needs supported
- Reduced anxiety and emotional distress

Next Steps



- Continued advocacy to sustain progress
- Ongoing professional awareness of neurodivergent communication needs
- Monitoring of the child’s development and family wellbeing

The importance of lived experience/peer support to Viewpoint

At Viewpoint, lived experience and peer support are at the heart of everything we do. Our approach recognises that people who have navigated mental health challenges themselves are uniquely placed to offer empathy, understanding, and hope to others. By drawing on personal recovery journeys, peer support workers provide not only practical guidance but also inspiration, showing that recovery is possible.

Lived experience ensures that services remain grounded in reality. Peer support bridges the gap between professional knowledge and the everyday experiences of those using services, promoting genuine understanding, trust, and connection. It encourages choice, self-determination, and empowerment, helping individuals build confidence and resilience.

We offer a modular peer support programme, co-produced with ImROC, which provides insight into how lived experience can inform support and demonstrates the value of the lived experience voice. Our facilitators are a vital part of this programme, and we provide regular team meetings and support to help them debrief, reflect, and develop new skills.



From Crisis to Champion Karen Hannan

I am a proud Autistic, ADHD woman, and I am grateful for the opportunity to share my journey. For much of my life, I felt compelled to hide my true self to fit into a world that preferred a version of me that moulded itself to society's comfort with social norms, even when these demands were exhausting, stigmatising, and damaging to me and people like me. The result was a crisis and an unhealthily contrived identity that imprisoned my authentic self, and threw away the key.

Balancing the responsibilities of daily life alongside my own needs was challenging. Over time, the weight of trying to cope without understanding or support became overwhelming, and my mental health collapsed. At the age of 45, I felt hopeless, believing I had nowhere to turn. This crisis was not just personal—it reflected years of unmet needs and a system that struggled to support people like me.



From Crisis to Champion

Karen Hannan

Seeking help was difficult. My attempts to get a correct diagnosis were met with misunderstanding and dismissal. As a new mother, I was discouraged from seeking support. Years later, after finally being diagnosed as autistic at 53, I was also misdiagnosed with a personality disorder—a common experience for neurodivergent women. It took years, multiple assessments, and the support of an advocate before I was finally heard.

Everything changed when I found Viewpoint. Instead of expecting people to cope better, Viewpoint understands that mental health difficulties often bring deeper and more overwhelming distress than others might see. Instead of demanding more endurance, Viewpoint offers a sanctuary where people are met with empathy and acceptance. Recovery is nurtured through self-compassion, reducing internalised stigma, and encouraging pride in one's identity. Even when hope feels out of reach, Viewpoint holds hope for those who need it, offering steady support until individuals are ready to believe in themselves again. The culture of mutual respect and non-hierarchical support helped me reclaim my identity and find purpose.

Becoming **Viewpoint's Neurodivergence Champion** was a turning point. This role enabled me to use my lived experience to shape support, raise awareness, and advocate for positive change within the organisation and beyond. It gave me the chance to work collaboratively, develop training, and help foster a more inclusive environment. The opportunities and trust offered by Viewpoint not only benefited the organisation but also gave me the confidence and skills to develop NeuMinKind, a social enterprise that focuses on change, promoting healthy outcomes for neurodivergent people, influenced by priorities important to neurodivergent individuals. I hold NeuMinKind accountable in the same way I do for Viewpoint.

Viewpoint offers peer-led groups for neurodivergent adults, providing a welcoming space to connect with other neurodivergent individuals, explore what neurodivergence means to them, and discover ways to achieve positive outcomes in their own lives. The social environment of these groups is supportive and empowering, helping people build connections and confidence.

If you are struggling—whether you are neurodivergent, an unpaid caregiver for neurodivergent adults or children, a neurodivergent unpaid caregiver for others, or a professional—Viewpoint welcomes anyone seeking support, understanding, or simply a place to belong. For professionals and organisations, commissioning Experts by Experience is not just best practice—it is essential for influencing positive systemic change and saving the lives of autistic and other neurodivergent individuals. Involving those with lived experience upholds professional standards, enriches understanding, and leads to healthier outcomes for everyone.

My journey is a call for a new paradigm—one rooted in equity for neurodivergent individuals, the recognition of the immense value that neurodivergent contributions bring to society, and genuine collaboration.



Viewpoint User Voice Council Chair Andrew Smith

During 2024–2025, the Viewpoint User Voice Council (VUVC) played a central role in strengthening user voice, shaping service development, and influencing mental health policy and practice across Hertfordshire.

Key achievements included:

Strengthening VUVC presence and governance

- Updated the VUVC section of the Viewpoint website, including adding biographies of members.
- Designed a recruitment flyer to attract new members.
- Updated the Terms of Reference and the role description for the VUVC Chair.
- Held discussions regarding Viewpoint’s role in delivering community advocacy in partnership with POhWER.
- Supported the design of job descriptions and took part in interviews for the Operations Manager and Peer Coordinator roles.

Co-production and partnership working.

- Worked in co-production with Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) on the development of a generic mental health website.
- Engaged in a review of the HCC Co-production Boards.
- Collaborated with Stevenage World Forum and ethnic minority communities to strengthen engagement.
- Continued ongoing engagement with the Patient Experience Forum (PEF) within the ICB, and with the Community Assembly mental health stakeholder group.

Community engagement and peer support

- Supported Viewpoint “Get Togethers” in Hemel Hempstead, Letchworth, East Herts, and Watford.
- Co-produced and supported the delivery of the Peer Development Pathway course for clients of CGL, TLR, Druglink, Resolve, and Turning Point.
- Planned and facilitated Co-Occurring (formerly dual diagnosis) focus groups.
- Contributed to the co-production of Viewpoint’s 20th Anniversary celebrations at Christchurch.



Service improvement and consultation

- Consulted with HPFT on Street Triage (Section 136) arrangements.
- Provided input into the “Better Together” strategy, particularly the introduction of new technologies such as the NHS App.
- Engaged with NHS planning processes, including the NHS 10-Year Plan.
- Campaigned to halt the rollout of Oxevision in Hertfordshire and raised awareness of its use. Proposed establishing a Technologies & Innovations in Healthcare group within existing co-production structures.
- Discussed DWP eligibility criteria for PIP and contributed perspectives on broader welfare issues.

Policy, strategy and innovation

- Designed a Viewpoint cancellation policy to compensate peers for involvement opportunities cancelled with less than 24 hours’ notice.
- Held discussions on regenerative agriculture (Groundswell) and its links to wellbeing.
- Explored Viewpoint’s financial challenges and supported the development of a new Viewpoint Policy Group.
- Raised the profile of neurodiversity internally and externally, including the appointment of a Neurodiversity Champion.

Your Voice Matters 2025 - 2030 Strategy

Our new five-year strategy, Your Voice Matters 2025–2030, was co-produced with people who have lived experience of mental health and/or addiction challenges. It sets out how Viewpoint will continue to champion lived experience, challenge inequality, and influence better mental health and wellbeing across Hertfordshire.



Together, we're creating a future where people are not just listened to, but where their experiences drive real change.

Our Strategy – Your Voice Matters 2025–2030

Improve and Innovate

We will strengthen our ability to influence services, including our own, to ensure effectiveness, productivity, and quality.

Personal Recovery

We will help individuals take greater control of their wellbeing by providing effective, evidence-based support that empowers personal agency.

Breaking Barriers

We will inspire positive change in perceptions of stigma and discrimination, ensuring equal opportunities for everyone. We will challenge ideas and behaviours that contradict our values.

Promoting Lived Experience

We value and promote lived experience as it provides unique insights and perspectives, placing people at the centre of everything we do.

Your voice can shape services, inspire new ideas, and build a stronger, more inclusive mental health system for all.

How we reached people

Clear, accessible communication is essential to ensuring people with lived experience remain informed, involved, and heard. In 2024/25, we strengthened how we connect and share information with people across Hertfordshire and beyond.

Through the Google Ad Grants programme, Viewpoint secured a free annual digital advertising budget worth \$63,000, generating over **29,000 ad impressions** and attracting more than **3,400 new visitors** to our website. As a result, overall web traffic **increased by over 200%** during the year.

A new website design was also introduced, making navigation more straightforward and content more engaging. This improvement has helped people find information more easily and stay connected with our activities, with average UK visitor dwell time increasing by 20%.

We maintained regular contact with our community through 45 e-newsletters, representing more than 52,000 sends across our opt-in database, achieving a strong click-through rate of 4.5%.

Our social media presence continues to grow:

- Facebook: 489 followers (average post reach 250 people)
- Instagram: 215 followers
- X (Twitter): 920 followers

We also promoted 20 ticketed events through our website, helping to raise awareness of mental health, celebrate lived experience, and encourage participation across our networks.

By expanding our digital reach and improving how we communicate, we are ensuring that more people know about Viewpoint, understand the power of user voice, and can take part in shaping better mental health services.



3,400

**NEW VISITORS TO OUR
WEBSITE - INCREASING
TRAFFIC BY 200%**

VIEWPOINT – 2024/25 – Financial Report

Resources and financial management. - Simon Taylor Treasurer

For the 12-month accounting period ending 31st March 2025, Viewpoint reported a deficit of just £-900. This is a very pleasing result, primarily when judged against the previous year's deficit of £-26,427. Viewpoint's accumulated reserves on 31st March 2025 were £107,542.

Total income for the year was £323,380, an increase of over £107,000 (+50%) on last year. This increase was primarily driven by the newly acquired POhWER Public Advocacy contract that started in June 2024 and generated c. £70,000 of income in the year.

The principal funding for Viewpoint continues to be provided by the Hertfordshire County Council. Total funding in the year amounted to £196,330, which constituted 60% of Viewpoint's total income. The total grant received in respect of our core contract for both User Involvement Commissioning & User Involvement for Mental Health was c. £159,180 (an increase of 6.2% from last year), and the funding for the Drug & Alcohol Support project increased to almost £36,000 (Last year £11,480)

The ongoing support of Hertfordshire County Council remains absolutely fundamental to Viewpoint's viability and provides the critical foundation for the Charity's work.

The income from the HPFT Peer Support (EROS) Project continues to decline, amounting to less than £17,000 for the year. From a peak of three peer support workers, just one individual was supporting this work at the end of the financial year.

The direct costs and overheads of Viewpoint continue to be very tightly controlled. Whilst total expenditure increased by almost £82,000 (+34%) year on year, it must be noted that the increase was driven by the recruitment of new staff to service the PohWER Advocacy project, the increased work completed for the Drug & Alcohol Support programme and the vital recruitment of an Operations Manager towards the end of the year.

Viewpoint is therefore in a strong and stable position going into the 2025/26 financial year, with reserves in excess of £107,000 and secure in the knowledge that the contracts with Hertfordshire County Council and PohWER have been secured for another year. However, the long-term viability of charities is always precarious, and the trustee board of Viewpoint continues to search for short-term opportunities to boost revenues and reduce costs, as well as for longer-term strategic initiatives to ensure our continued operation.

I sincerely thank all organisations and individuals who consistently support our charity.

I would also like to recognise all of our staff and volunteers for their unstinting hard work throughout the year; their commitment and dedication are genuinely appreciated.

THANK YOU AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank our members for your insight, experience, and willingness to share, which continue to shape and strengthen our work. To our staff team, peer lived experience facilitators, and volunteers – thank you for your professionalism, dedication, and consistent effort. Your contribution is essential to everything we achieve. To our trustees, your guidance continues to shape a strong and inclusive charity. To our funders and partners, we are grateful for your continued support and belief in our work.

You can get involved by:

Becoming a Trustee;

Becoming a Member;

Becoming a Peer/Lived Experience Facilitator;

Becoming a Volunteer.

Contact us on 01707 386136 or email: info@hertsviewpoint.co.uk

WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT IN OUR PROGRAMS

If you would like to donate to Viewpoint, please follow the link to:

<http://www.hertsviewpoint.co.uk/>

<http://booking.com/>

<https://www.hertsviewpoint.co.uk/donate/donate/10/SinglePayment>

Viewpoint

Weltech Business Centre, Ridgeway,

Welwyn Garden City AL7 2AA

+44(0)1707 386136

www.hertsviewpoint.co.uk

info@hertsviewpoint.co.uk Charity

number 1159735

viewpoint

Together we can Influence Change



VIEWPOINT

Report of the Trustees & Financial Statements

Year Ended 31st March 2025

VIEWPOINT
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VIEWPOINT
INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT FOR THE
YEAR ENDED 31st March 2025

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity for the year ended 31 March 2025, which are set out on pages 5 to 9.

Responsibilities and basis of the report

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent Examiner's Statement

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

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts as set out in the Charities (Accounts & Reports) Regulation 2008, other than the requirement that the accounts give a 'true & fair' view, which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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 to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

.....

George Davidson FMAAT
Resolve Corporate Ltd
Unit 11, Garden Court
Tewin Road Business Centre
Welwyn Garden City
Hertfordshire
AL7 1BH

VIEWPOINT
REFERENCE & ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS
AS AT 31st MARCH 2025

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Registered Charity number:	1159735 Unit 6, Weltech Centre	
Registered office:	Ridgeway Welwyn Garden City Hertfordshire AL7 2AA	
Trustees	Joanna Bowen Ashley Risk Bryony Kirby (Resigned 01/04/24) Eni Bankole-Race Graham Munn (Appointed 01/04/24) Jacqui Lynskey Ray Gibbins (Resigned 08/08/24) Simon Taylor Yetunde Rachel Kasonga	Chairman Treasurer Secretary
Independent Examiner	George Davidson Resolve Corporate Ltd 11 Garden Court Tewin Road Business Centre Welwyn Garden City Hertfordshire AL7 1BH	
Bankers	CAF Bank 25 Kings Hill Avenue Kings Hill West Malling Kent ME19 4TA	
Chief Executive Officer	Leslie Billy	

**VIEWPOINT
TRUSTEES REPORT FOR THE YEAR
ENDED 31st March 2025**

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES

The Trustees of Viewpoint present their report and financial statements for the year ended 31st March 2025.

STATUS

Viewpoint was established under a constitution and registered as a charity with the Charity Commission on 29th December 2014.

PURPOSE

The promotion of mental health in the county of Hertfordshire, in particular but not exclusively, by the involvement of users and former users of mental health services in the planning, development & delivery and monitoring of those services and the advancement of the education of the public in all aspects of mental health and addiction.

RESERVES POLICY

The Trustees have examined the Charity's requirements for reserves in the light of the main risks to the organisation and have established a policy whereby they wish to work towards the balance of unrestricted funds being equivalent to at least three months core funding.

PRINCIPAL FUNDING SOURCES

The principal funding source for the organisation is Hertfordshire County Council who contributed a total of £196,330 in 2024/25 (2023/24 £162,426).

The Charity also partners with other local government organisations and charities on projects commensurate to its purpose as stated above.

Future Plans

The Charity plans to continue the activities outlined in the forthcoming year subject to satisfactory funding arrangements.

ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD:

.....
Joanna Bowen
Chair

VIEWPOINT
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
Year Ended 31 March 2025

		Year Ended 31st March 2025		Year Ended 31st March 2024	
Incoming Resources	Notes	£	£	£	£
Grants	2	310,093		205,510	
Training Group		10,180		7,212	
Sundry Income incl. donations	3	3,107		3,308	
Total Incoming Resources		323,380		216,030	
 Less: Charitable Expenditure					
Direct personnel costs		218,260		161,255	
Office Expenses		23,341		25,800	
Premises Costs		19,278		18,508	
User Group Support		28,611		17,498	
Training and related costs		6,563		2,712	
Training Group Costs		5,678		2,898	
Staff & Volunteer Travel		1,569		714	
		303,300		229,385	
 Less: Management & Administration					
Management		10,835		7,155	
Legal & Professional		4,901		3,404	
Accountancy		500		650	
Marketing & Advertising		4,624		1,723	
Bank Charges		120		120	
Provision for bad debts		0		20	
		20,980		13,072	
Total Resources Expended		324,280		242,457	
 Net Surplus /-Deficit for the year		-900		-26,427	
 Fund balances brought forward		108,442		134,869	
Total Funds carried forward		107,542		108,442	

VIEWPOINT
BALANCE SHEET
As at 31st March 2025

	Notes	2025 Total Funds £	2024 Total Funds £
Fixed Assets			
Tangible Assets at Net Book Value		0	0
Current Assets			
Debtors' amounts falling due within one year	4	36,015	37,997
Cash at bank and in hand		83,673	87,078
Total Current Assets		<u>119,688</u>	<u>125,075</u>
Current Liabilities			
Creditors due within one year	5	-12,146	-16,633
Total Current Liabilities		<u>-12,146</u>	<u>-16,633</u>
Net Current Assets		107,542	108,442
Total Assets less Current Liabilities		107,542	108,442
Creditors due after more than one year		0	0
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>107,542</u>	<u>108,442</u>
Analysis of Total Funds			
Unrestricted Funds		107,542	108,442
Restricted Funds		0	0
TOTAL FUNDS		<u>107,542</u>	<u>108,442</u>

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on 3rd September 2025 and were signed on its behalf by:

.....
Joanna Bowen, Chairman

VIEWPOINT
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE
YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2025

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

1.1 General. These accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with applicable accounting standards and the statement of recommended practice on accounting and reporting by charities.

1.2 Grant Income. Revenue grants are matched with the related expenditure.

1.3 Expenditure. Expenditure is recognised on an accruals basis when a liability is incurred, as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the Charity to the expenditure.

1.4 Tangible Fixed Assets. Capital expenditure in the year is shown net of any grants received. Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates to write off each asset over its estimated useful life. Individual assets purchased with a cost (net of grants) lower than £2,000 are expensed in the year of purchase.

1.5 Taxation The Charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities & is not registered for VAT.

1.6 Fund Accounting. Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the Trustees. Restricted funds can only be used for restricted purposes within the objects of the Charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

1.7 Pension Costs and Other Post-retirement Benefits. Viewpoint operates a defined contribution pension scheme; employer contributions payable to the scheme are charged to the Income Statement in the period to which they relate.

2. GRANTS & CHARITABLE INCOME

	2025	2024
	£	£
Hertfordshire County Council:	196,330	162,426
POhWER	70,016	0
Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (HPFT)	16,797	23,389
Health Education England	14,433	14,220
Hertsmere Borough Council	11,740	0
Healthwatch	775	0
Comic Relief (Groundwork)	2	4,975
Hertfordshire Community Foundation (HCF)	0	500
Total	<u>310,093</u>	<u>205,510</u>

VIEWPOINT
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE
YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2025

ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

3. Sundry Income

	2025	2024
	£	£
Bank interest received	1,935	2,893
Donations	1,172	415
Total	<u>3,107</u>	<u>3,308</u>

4. Debtors

	2025	2024
	£	£
Accounts receivable	14,062	22,953
Accrued income	12,504	7,938
Prepayments	9,449	7,106
	<u>36,015</u>	<u>37,997</u>

5. Creditors (due within one year)

	2025	2024
	£	£
Amounts payable	2,175	2,421
Accruals	9,971	7,599
Deferred income	0	3,555
PAYE & National Insurance payable	0	1,722
Pension costs payable	0	1,336
	<u>12,146</u>	<u>16,633</u>

VIEWPOINT

England & Wales - Charity number 1159735

Accounts



viewpoint

Together we can Influence Change




2023-24



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-  Partnerships

What next for Viewpoint

Report of the Trustees and Financial Statements

Message from our Chair



Welcome to Viewpoint's annual report for 2023/24. We emphasise the importance of people with a lived experience of mental health and/or addiction challenges voices and how they can influence change.

Mental health and/or addiction challenges are not just a personal recovery journey—it's a collective responsibility. At Viewpoint, we champion the voices of those with lived experiences, ensuring they are heard and valued in shaping the future of mental health and addiction support.

Every story shared through our platforms highlights resilience, courage, and the urgent

need for systemic change. Together, we've created spaces where individuals can speak out without fear, influence policies, and foster understanding in communities that once silenced them.

However, the work is far from over. Stigma, isolation, and insufficient resources still need to be improved. Your continued support fuels our mission to amplify user voices, advocate for accessible services, and inspire hope.

Together, we can make change.

I want to thank everyone involved in Viewpoint. I would appreciate your continued support.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joanna Bowen".

Joanna Bowen
Board Of Trustees Chair

Who we are and what we do

Viewpoint provides an independent, recovery-focused, united voice for individuals with mental health and/or addiction challenges to share their experiences of accessing and using support services to help shape future provision. We believe everyone has the right to be listened to, heard, and have a voice; Viewpoint strives to make that happen.

We also develop innovative services that support people with a lived experience of mental health and/or addiction challenges. We put them at the centre of everything. Our support is flexible and needs-led, delivered by outreach group-based activity or one-to-one. Lived experience facilitators facilitate our groups, providing a safe place to discuss issues, share experiences, and help solve problems. Alongside this, we offer a variety of educational and connection sessions that enhance wellbeing. We aim to equip each individual with the skills, attitude, and self-belief to live a meaningful, independent life in their community.

OUR VISION



We will work with people with mental health and/or addiction challenges to influence change.

OUR MISSION



We provide advice and support to promote mental wellbeing to anyone experiencing mental health and addiction challenges. We involve people to provide information and a voice to improve services.

OUR MISSION



Improving services:

Making sure people are involved in the planning, developing, delivering and evaluating services to gain equality of support and treatment.

Staying well:

Supporting people to stay well.

Supporting choice:

Supporting people to make informed choices about services and their own mental wellbeing.

Reducing inequality:

People's involvement from all backgrounds is essential to gain equality of support and treatment.

Organisationally:

Use our organisational excellence to enhance quality and develop the right resources.



What we Offer



Giving people a voice to improve services through questionnaires, interviews, forums, co-production sessions and partner meetings.



Lived, experienced facilitators lead all our projects and are at the centre of our organisation. They co-produce courses, attend meetings, innovate projects and teach University students.



Working with local partners and encouraging better collaboration for better outcomes.



Run projects that support people with



Mental health and/or addiction challenges support skill development and encourage involvement in relevant communities, giving them a voice and tackling prejudice.

Our Governance

Board of Trustees

Our Board of Trustees, a team of dedicated volunteers, is committed to the charity's mission. They bring a wealth of skills, knowledge, and experience, providing vital governance, overseeing strategic direction, and ensuring financial stewardship. They set policies, monitor organisational performance, and safeguard the charity's mission. They also appoint executive leadership, manage risks, and uphold legal and ethical standards to fulfil our objectives to benefit the people we support. The Board meets publicly six times yearly.

User Voice Council

Our 'User Voice' Council, a vital part of our organisation, works alongside our Board of Trustees to review and ensure we work within our Fidelity Criteria in a collaborative and co-productive way and remain recovery-focused. This inclusive approach fosters transparency, accountability, and responsiveness, resulting in programs and services that better address the needs and preferences of the people we support. Importantly, the Council's efforts significantly enhance our overall impact and effectiveness, instilling confidence in our stakeholders.

User Voice Council

What the User Voice Council achieved

- Developing a record of the lived experience journey
- Induction handbook
- Viewpoints 20th-anniversary event
- Net zero - how Viewpoint can reduce its 'carbon footprint'
- Representations on trustee board subgroups, such as quality and performance, communications and marketing, training, funding, and remunerations.
- Suggested ways to engage with members to encourage greater attendance at sessions, e.g. working in partnership with other organisations
- To get more voice, suggest that Viewpoint members attend local GP Patient Participation Groups.
- Attending relevant courses for group development, including 'Building a consciously inclusive culture', Domestic violence conference, Mental Health First Aid Course
- Partnership working with St. Albans and Hertsmere Women's Refuge
- Reviewed Viewpoints website and developed ways to raise the charity profile, including a conference promoting the involvement of people with lived experience
- Discussed recording levels of Viewpoint involvement
- Coproducing a Coproduction Evaluation tool with the Hertfordshire County Council Coproduction Board
- Review of Survey Monkey use and purpose
- Discussed Membership a
- Proposed and appointed Viewpoint 'Neurodiversity champion'
- Attended PEF (Patient Engagement Forum), which links to ICB (Integrated Care Board)
- Involved in developing a 'Peer involvement strategy'
- Involved in developing 'Service user and Coproduction strategy'
- Discussed and commented on the Community Advocacy Strategy and Commissioning planning.

Andrew Henry Smith
Chair



The power of the lived experience voice

Lived experience or peer support is a beacon of hope for those experiencing mental health challenges. The shared experiences create a unique bond, fostering empathy and understanding. Peers offer non-judgmental, relatable perspectives, promoting a sense of connection and reducing isolation. This support, when combined with professional services, enhances recovery outcomes. It empowers individuals, instilling hope and encouraging self-advocacy. But it's more than that. It contributes to a collaborative and inclusive mental health landscape, breaking down stigma. Through shared narratives, coping strategies, and encouragement, peer support builds resilient communities, promoting holistic healing. Its value lies in its transformative impact on individuals, facilitating recovery and creating a supportive, empathetic environment.

We offer all our lived experience facilitators a bespoke learning package co-produced with IMROC (Implementing Recovery through Organisational Change) and provide a series of co-produced learning opportunities throughout the year. After attending the workshops, experts represent the organisation and become peer/lived experience facilitators. We then match them to our opportunities.

Our peer/lived experience facilitators are at the heart of sessions and are crucial in supporting individuals with mental health challenges. They share the wisdom of their own lived recovery experiences, inspiring hope and belief that recovery is possible and within reach for others.

What are the personal benefits of becoming a peer/lived experience facilitator?

The role offers significant support for personal recovery by providing a sense of purpose and empowerment. Sharing lived experiences fosters a meaningful connection with others facing similar challenges, reducing feelings of isolation. It reinforces the individual's journey of self-discovery, promoting resilience and self-esteem. The role also encourages ongoing learning, enhancing coping skills and self-awareness. It helps to build a supportive community, reinforcing the importance of mutual assistance. By positively impacting the lives of others, facilitators often find a renewed sense of identity, fostering a transformative and affirming experience that contributes to their ongoing recovery journey.



match

our

Lémarr's Story

It all began when I was a young teenager in 2017. I was feeling unstable and not very well with myself, and everything caught up with my current lifestyle. I even had to leave my dream job as an operator of freight trains.

I shortly called out for help and decided to go to the hospital. I was then seen by a special doctor who said I was going through a crisis, which made perfect sense when he described the relevant symptoms that I may have had.

I was then discharged that following day as my parents said they would look after me as I had the option at the time. The crisis team visited me every week for 2 months until they discharged me to another team within HPFT. This team was with me for another 3 years. Throughout the duration, my support worker recommended a mental health and wellbeing charity called Viewpoint to help me steer myself back into the working world alongside my recovery, so I did!



In 2020, I called Viewpoint and had a chat and introduction about my current journey and what I wanted to do and change. After the chat, I became a telephone volunteer, ringing our individuals who experienced mental health challenges and supporting them through the COVID-19 pandemic. Following this work over the years, more opportunities within Viewpoint came my way year by year, such as AHMP interviewing at the University, peer support facilitating, mental health first aid, Healthy habits assistant facilitator, and attending NHS and Council prevention meetings. I also became the Chair of the Viewpoints User Voice Council and participated in many more activities.

In 2022, I returned to work and went to Costco Wholesale. I was so excited to return to work and have a job after such a long period. I was put on trolleys outside and worked there for 8 months through the winter. The following year, I transferred to the fuel station. I learned other department roles alongside the main store, as I only covered college breaks and fuel deliveries. Then, in 2024, I was promoted to a front-end supervisor, managing a collection of cashier assistants and dealing with customer service, items, orders and problems near a management level.

But it does not stop there as I am still learning, reading, and growing to become even better within my working career. I have recently decided to go back and work with Viewpoint on my days off and personal holidays because I really miss and enjoy the work and activities that they do.

Lémarr Jean-Jacques

Elisha's Story

My name is Elisha. I joined Viewpoint as a member in 2021. At this time, I was battling with my mental health conditions without any support from the NHS or other services. I was in despair and felt utterly let down and abandoned. I didn't know what to do or where to go next. One day, I was so fed up and wished a miracle would happen. I was sitting on my laptop, researching for hours for services in my area. Of course, nothing showed up. Then, out of nowhere, Viewpoint popped up. I must admit, I was confused about the concept of "member" and questioned whether I was in a fit state to be a "member". It sounded very professional to me.

I attended groups and classes. I very much enjoyed the mindfulness group and meditation group. My turning point was attending Introduction to Peer Support training and Moving into Awareness group. This group allowed me to open up to the concept of spirituality, and since I have connected to this. Introduction to Peer Support training allowed me to explore the concept of Peer Support and increase my confidence. As a result of the training, I did the full course. Then, I became a Lived Experience Support Worker/Peer Support Worker after 3 years of not working. I would not have had the motivation or confidence to take the position without attending the training.

Overall, Viewpoint has been a lifeline for me. Without the help, passion, dedication, commitment and support of all the staff I have met, I wouldn't be in recovery. The staff and Leslie really go above and beyond. They help in every way possible and strive to achieve their best. It truly feels like a family, without any judgement. We share hope, whilst having our own lived experience to learn from. I thoroughly enjoy the training courses that Viewpoint offer. Over the past few years at Viewpoint, professional development has allowed me to co-facilitate the Introduction to Peer Support training, which I will be doing for the second time this year. I also started volunteering last year doing the minutes for meetings.

Furthermore, I have assisted with running a "Get Together" group at Create Community. Writing this has made me reflect on how far I've come. For once, I can say I'm proud!

The Difference We Made

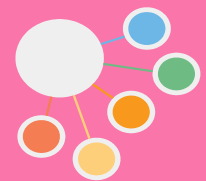
Viewpoint membership is a valuable opportunity for individuals experiencing mental health and/or addiction challenges to get involved and receive up-to-date information about services and local and national influences. With a current membership 400, we offer access to the latest information on our engagement and involvement opportunities. Our weekly news bulletin informs members about our offerings and how they can influence change in the health and social environment. The active participation of our current members has been instrumental in driving these changes, and we encourage new members to join and contribute to our cause.

At Viewpoint, we believe individuals are true experts in their recovery and well-being. This belief underpins our encouragement for people to share their experiences, as it not only provides valuable support to others but also acknowledges and respects the expertise of the sharer in their own journey of recovery.

WHAT WE OFFERED

Connection sessions

We ran 177 connections sessions with over 450 participants.



We ran 11 lived experience/peer support sessions for 67 people.

Lived experience/peer support sessions

workshops

We ran 35 workshops and 69 attended.



Meetings & committees

we attended 47 + meetings and committees to get people's voices heard.



University

We helped the University by interviewing students and telling the recovery narrative



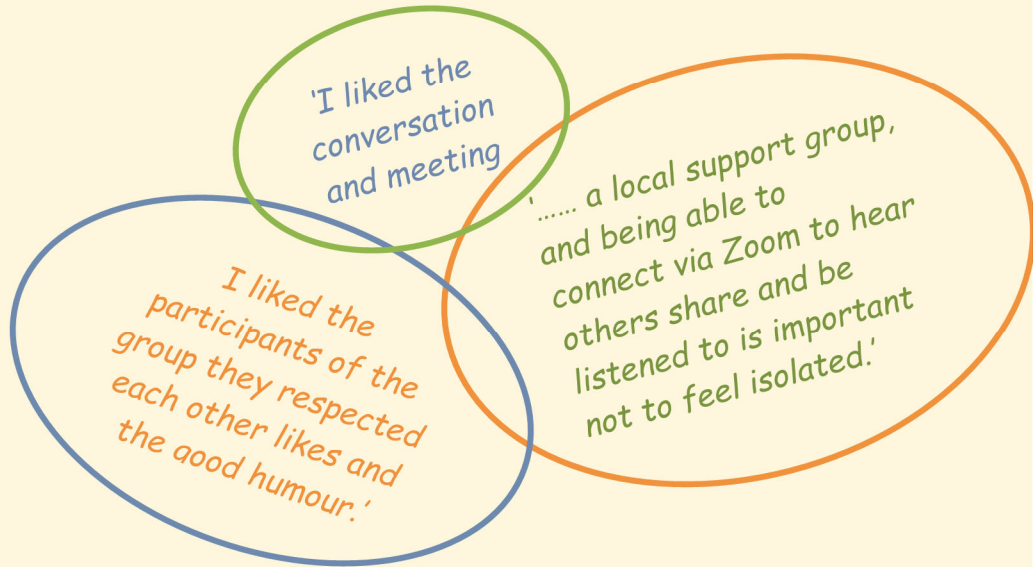
Connection sessions

WHAT PARTICIPANTS SAID ABOUT THE CONNECTION SESSIONS

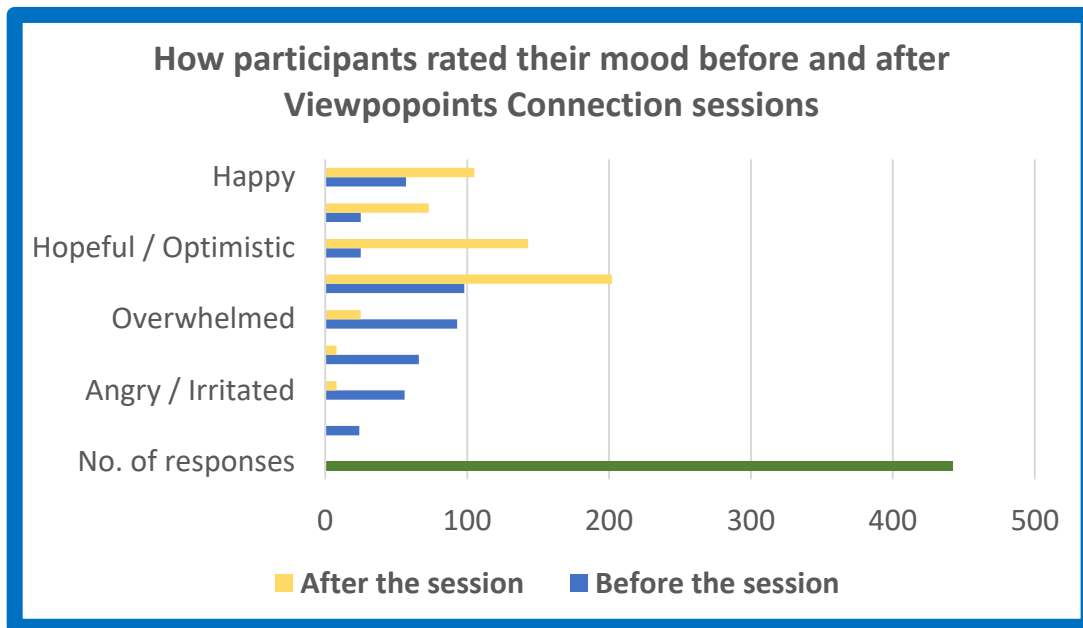
1 WERE YOU ABLE TO MAKE CONNECTIONS?
97.7% strongly agreed/agreed they had made connections connections

2 WERE YOU SUPPORTED TO HAVE YOUR SAY?
85% of participants felt they had been supported to have their say

3 WOULD YOU RECOMMEND VIEWPOINT?
92% of participants would recommend Viewpoint



Forging meaningful connections is vital for mental health. Social bonds offer emotional support, reducing feelings of isolation and stress. Shared experiences and understanding create a sense of belonging, fostering resilience. Positive connections have repeatedly promoted a supportive environment, enhanced overall well-being and contributed to a more robust mental health foundation. Our connections sessions, run by an expert and an experienced facilitator, continue to make a difference - as can be seen from the participants' responses – and there was a massive difference in how they felt at the beginning and end of the session. All categories had a positive shift—the table below reflects 442 completed evaluation forms.



Workshops and courses

Our workshops and courses provide education, support, and practical tools to foster wellbeing and resilience. They aim to increase awareness of personal recovery and teach coping strategies such as mindfulness and stress management.














Our sessions have included practical and creative activities encouraging self-expression and shared experiences. They also focus on developing life skills such as communication, time management, and self-management, helping individuals regain independence and self-confidence.

A significant focus is on lived experience/peer support, which fosters a sense of community while alleviating feelings of isolation. Additionally, workshops help participants connect with resources, educate them on self-advocacy, and guide them in accessing healthcare and support services. Ultimately, these initiatives empower individuals to tackle challenges and enhance their quality of life.

Workshops/courses

Viewpoint offered 35 workshops or courses over the year. Some ran for several sessions, others one-off.

We ran sessions on:

-  Active in Mind
-  Anxiety
-  Basic IT
-  Co-producing HPFT strategy
-  Co-production evaluation tool kit
-  Health Habits
-  Meditation made easy
-  Meditation for emotional wellbeing
-  Poets in Wellbeing
-  Poets in Creative Writing
-  Research for all
-  Self-care
-  Self-esteem/confidence building

We received 91 completed questionnaires.

What participants said:

- ◇ 90.1% strongly agreed/agreed the tutors were supportive of their needs
- ◇ 83.3% strongly agreed/agreed the tutors were knowledgeable about the course subject
- ◇ 70.3% strongly agreed/agreed the tutors were confident in delivering the content
- ◇ 96.7% strongly agreed/agreed the tutors explained what the session was about
- ◇ 96.7% would recommend Viewpoint to others.

What participants said....

'The workshop was great; I was able to share my opinion on the factors that hinder participation and possible solutions.'

'As this is part of a six-session course I can say that each week we learn more about the subject and new tools to help us, so it continues to help and support each week.'

'The course was a starting point for a very long journey.....'

'Brilliant course, and I wish to attend another one.'

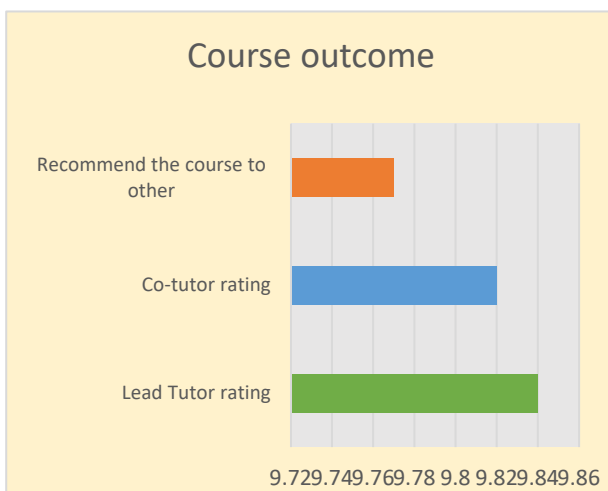
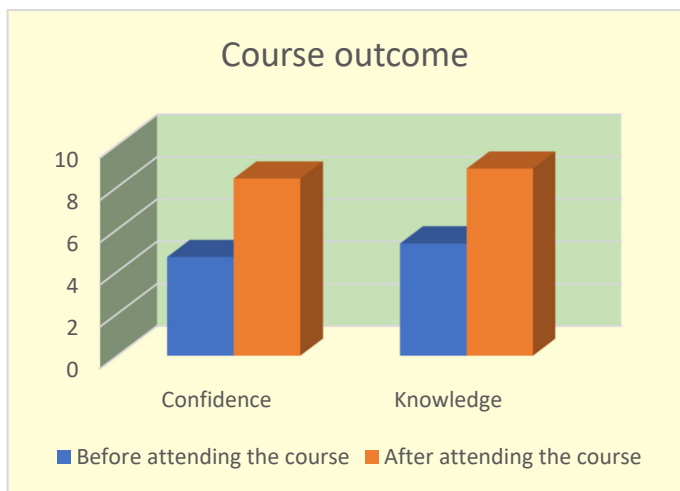


Mental Health First Aid

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training is essential because it equips individuals with the skills to recognise, respond to, and support someone experiencing a mental health challenge. It helps reduce stigma by fostering

understanding and empathy for mental health challenges. Participants learn to identify warning signs, provide immediate assistance, and guide individuals toward professional help or resources. This training is vital in workplaces, schools, and communities, promoting early intervention and preventing crises from escalating. MHFA training fosters safer, more supportive environments by empowering people to act confidently and compassionately. It contributes to better mental health outcomes for everyone.

This year, we have run two courses with 14 students from across the community, including people who experience mental health challenges, which continues to be well received.



'Loved this course, the workbook and the online meetings. I am grateful for the videos as well; this is a great way for me to learn. Sad it has come to an end. I love the opportunity for us to share our feelings and thoughts.'

'This course was brilliant, and I really want to thank Kat, Jason and Ann (class support) for doing an amazing job. The tutors are so knowledgeable and they make you feel comfortable to share your thoughts and feelings. I learnt so much about how to help others experiencing mental health issues and understanding how to look after myself with self-care tips, too. I will definitely be applying ALGEE when listening to individuals in both my professional and personal life, as well as implementing boundaries. Thanks very much for a great course!'



Partnerships

Our partnerships are vital as they amplify impact and broaden our reach. Collaborating with other organisations and community groups enhances resource sharing, including funding, expertise, and infrastructure.

Partnerships allow us to access diverse audiences, raise awareness, and reduce mental health and/or addiction stigma. Working together has helped to develop innovative programs, strengthen advocacy efforts, and ensure comprehensive support for those in need. Ultimately, we aim to maximise our ability to create meaningful, long-lasting change in the lives of individuals and communities.

Viewpoint has supported the development of undergraduate and post-graduate mental health nurses and social workers for some years and continues getting very positive feedback. The students are always grateful and positive about the insight Viewpoint lived experience facilitators.

Sharing a personal recovery narrative with student mental health nurses offers invaluable insight into the lived experience of mental health and recovery. It bridges the gap between theory and practice, fostering empathy and understanding. These narratives provide real-world perspectives on resilience, coping strategies, and the importance of compassionate care. By hearing first-hand accounts, students gain a deeper appreciation of their future role in supporting recovery, inspiring them to deliver person-centred, empathetic, and effective mental health care.



Hertfordshire Partnership University
NHS Foundation Trust

Lived experience/peer support with Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (HPFT)

Viewpoint continues to support HPFT with lived experience/peer support for the Enhanced Rehabilitation Outreach Service (EROS). EROS is a community service unit with a multidisciplinary team comprised of nursing, occupational therapy, social work, psychology, psychiatry, peer support and support staff.

The team supports people experiencing mental health challenges for up to 16 weeks and provides targeted interventions on the rehabilitation pathway to promote independence and support independent living.

Our lived experience/peer support workers provide peer support and practical assistance to service users as they regain control over their lives and their unique recovery journeys.

By sharing the wisdom of their own lived recovery experience, the lived experience/lived experience worker inspires hope and belief that recovery is possible in others. Within a relationship of mutuality, they facilitate and support information sharing to promote choice, self-determination, and opportunities to fulfil socially valued roles and connections to local communities.



My role involves interacting with people experiencing mental health challenges within the community and using my own lived experience of mental health challenges and empathy to assist with any issues they may be having; apart from visiting people in their homes, I also visit Mental Health Rehabilitation Units, e.g. The Beacon (St. Albans). I will go for a long walk with some people and chat. We sometimes go to a local café and chat, or I may help with practical things like signing up for Library services.

I work alongside the individual's care team to support and inspire recovery. If I cannot provide advice, I will attempt to signpost to the relevant information and services.

*Rajeeva Wijetunge
EROS Peer Support Worker
Enhanced Rehabilitation Outreach Service*

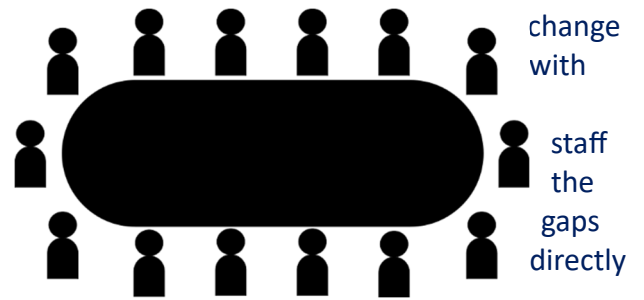


Drug and Alcohol Service User Engagement

Healthwatch asked Viewpoint to lead focus groups and interviews with service users within CGL, Druglink, and The Living Room as part of a joint project with Carers in Herts, Healthwatch, and Herts County Council. Close to 75 individuals attended the groups across the county's hubs, and their responses were recorded and shared with Healthwatch to compile a report. This work will also continue into the next financial year.

Committees and meetings

Viewpoint sits on committees and meetings to influence because it ensures that the lived experiences of individuals mental health and/or addiction challenges are central to decision-making. Many people with lived experience and represent Viewpoint and provide valuable insights into real-world impact of policies and services, helping identify and improvement areas. By amplifying the voices of those affected, we advocate for inclusive, person-centred, personal recovery approaches that genuinely address community needs.



Participating in committees enables us to collaborate with policymakers, service providers, and stakeholders, fostering partnerships that drive meaningful reform. Our involvement promotes transparency, accountability, and the inclusion of diverse perspectives in shaping mental health and/or addiction initiatives. Additionally, it helps to challenge stigma and misconceptions within decision-making processes. Ultimately, this proactive engagement empowers individuals with lived experience, ensuring that systems evolve to be more equitable, effective, and responsive to the people they serve.



Our Get Together forums allow Viewpoint members to meet and share their views and ideas regarding mental health and drug and alcohol services within Hertfordshire. They provide an opportunity to learn more about mental health services in the community and share views.

They feature special guest speakers from various organisations across Hertfordshire, providing up-to-date information on projects and services. It also offers the opportunity to raise any concerns or questions about experiences.



What people say

'I really don't know how I would be able to do the work I do with Viewpoint without this physical loan & the technical support & encouragement they provide for a 68-year-old technophobe like myself.'

I attend a lot of meetings, plus I also facilitate and start several Zoom meetings myself - something I wouldn't have even imagined doing just a few years ago. Also, as deputy chair and often acting chair of the VUVC, I have to create reports, training slides & documents.

Without the software packages on the laptop and the functionality and visibility of the larger screen I would struggle with my much smaller phone & tablet. It is difficult to run a group with these personal devices and they often lack a lot of the functions of their bigger brother.

Thank you, Viewpoint, for your continuing support and the developmental opportunities you offer.'



'I have been a member of Viewpoint since 2021. It has been a lifeline for me. Since being diagnosed with severe depression and anxiety, they have helped me massively. I have gained a lot of knowledge, help, advice, hope and support, which I will use moving forward.... Without Viewpoint, I would not have been able to move forward into recovery. They provided me with many opportunities that I would not have been able to do if I wasn't a member. For example, I took part in expert-by-experience involvement opportunities with the University of Hertfordshire, whereby I interviewed candidates for different courses and degrees. This opportunity allowed me to increase my confidence and develop a higher sense of self-worth as well as using my own skills of interviewing. The overall outcome of this opportunity and doing Peer Support training with Implementing Recovery Through Organisational Change (ImROC) via Viewpoint allowed me to attend face-to-face job interviews.

I very much enjoyed attending different groups such as Healthy Habits, Depression group and Mindfulness. These opportunities being online made it easier to access, and my mental health wasn't a barrier due to this. The staff are incredible.

They are kind, caring, friendly, always go out of their way to help, professional, understanding and hard working. Without Viewpoint, I wouldn't be in this positive position today.

What Next

We will review our five-year **strategic objectives**. To enable Viewpoint to be innovative and transformative, we will co-produce our strategy with all stakeholders, ensuring people are at the centre.

We will continue to:







- 🚧 Holding co-production sessions to develop new and innovative ways of working;
- 🚧 Work with lived experience/peer facilitators to support people experiencing mental health challenges and support the organisation in capturing the voice of people using services;
- 🚧 Develop co-produced projects that enable people to manage their wellbeing and set their goals for success;
- 🚧 Approach organisation to make sure we gather the information to influence change and meet people's needs;
- 🚧 Learn from all the information and data;
- 🚧 Ensure people have a broader voice in the transforming agenda across statutory and voluntary sectors.



Membership

We encourage people to become members of Viewpoint, as this gives them a far more significant influence on what we do.

After joining, Viewpoint members will receive opportunities to:

-  Give us a greater voice to influence change
-  Attend courses
-  Attend forums, focus groups, seminars, etc
-  Attend the Peer development pathway
-  to become a Peer Facilitator
-  Get involved in projects







To learn more about our membership, the benefits of doing so, how to access our weekly news bulletin and more, please visit our website:

**[www.hertsviewpoint.co.uk/
become-a-member](http://www.hertsviewpoint.co.uk/become-a-member)**

We need your help

You can get involved by:

-  Becoming a Trustee;
-  Becoming a member;
-  Becoming a Peer Facilitator;
-  Becoming a Volunteer.

Contact us on 01707 386136 or email: info@hertsviewpoint.co.uk

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR FUNDERS AND DONORS

If you would like to donate to Viewpoint, please follow the link to:

<https://www.hertsviewpoint.co.uk/donate/donate/5/credit-card>

Virgin Money Giving

<http://localgiving.com/charity/viewpoint;>

<https://www.hertsviewpoint.co.uk/donate/donate> GPay



viewpoint

Together we can Influence Change

Website: hertsviewpoint.co.uk

Social Media: [@hertsviewpoint](https://twitter.com/hertsviewpoint)

Weltech Business Centre

Ridgeway

Welwyn Garden City

AL7 2AA

+44

(0)1707 386136

info@hertsviewpoint.co.uk

Charity number 1159735

viewpoint

Together we can Influence Change



VIEWPOINT

**Report of the Trustees
&
Financial Statements**

Year Ended 31st March 2024

VIEWPOINT

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FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st March 2024

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Notes to the Financial Statements	8-9

VIEWPOINT

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st March 2024

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity for the year ended 31 March 2024 which are set out on pages 5 to 9.

Responsibilities and basis of the report

As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent Examiner's Statement

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

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts as set out in the Charities (Accounts & Reports) Regulation 2008 other than the requirement that the accounts give a 'true & fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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 to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

DocuSigned by:
George R. Davidson
26F73F3A26754D5...

George Davidson FMAAT
Resolve Corporate Ltd Unit
11, Garden Court
Tewin Road Business Centre
Welwyn Garden City
Hertfordshire
AL71BH

VIEWPOINT

REFERENCE & ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

AS AT 31st MARCH 2024

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Registered Charity number: 1159735

Registered office: Unit 28, Weltech Centre Ridgeway
Welwyn Garden City Hertfordshire
AL9 2AA

Trustees	Joanna Bowen Ashley Risk Bryony Kirby Eni Bankole-Race Jacqui Lynskey Ray Gibbins Simon Taylor Yetunde Rachel Kasonga	Chairman Treasurer Secretary
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Independent Examiner
George Davidson Resolve
Corporate Ltd 11 Garden
Court
Tewin Road Business Centre
Welwyn Garden City
Hertfordshire
AL71BH

Bankers
CAF Bank
25 Kings Hill Avenue Kings
Hill
West Malling
Kent ME194TA

Chief Executive Officer
Leslie Billy

VIEWPOINT

TRUSTEES REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st March 2024

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES

The Trustees of Viewpoint present their report and financial statements for the year ended 31st March 2024.

STATUS

Viewpoint was established under a constitution and registered as a charity with the Charity Commission on 29th December 2014.

PURPOSE

The promotion of mental health in the county of Hertfordshire, in particular but not exclusively, by the involvement of users and former users of mental health services in the planning, development & delivery and monitoring of those services and the advancement of the education of the public in all aspects of mental health and addiction.

RESERVES POLICY

The Trustees have examined the Charity's requirements for reserves in the light of the main risks to the organisation and have established a policy whereby they wish to work towards the balance of unrestricted funds being equivalent to at least three months core funding.

PRINCIPAL FUNDING SOURCES

The principal funding source for the organisation is Hertfordshire County Council who contributed a total of £162,426 in 2023/24 (2022/23 £144,675).

The Charity also partners with other local government organisations and charities on projects commensurate to its purpose as stated above.

Future Plans

The Charity plans to continue the activities outlined in the forthcoming year subject to satisfactory funding arrangements.

ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD:



Joanna Bowen
Chairman

VIEWPOINT**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES****Year Ended 31 March 2024**

		Year Ended 31 st March 2024		Year Ended 31 st March 2023	
<u>Incoming Resources</u>	Notes	£	£	£	£
Grants	2	205,510		287,810	
Training Group		7,212		7,286	
Sundry Income incl. donations	3	3,308		6,442	
Total Incoming Resources			216,030		301,538
Less: Charitable Expenditure					
Staff Costs		161,255		227,829	
Office Expenses		25,800		20,706	
Premises Costs		18,508		18,926	
User Group Support		17,498		20,101	
Equipment & Training Costs		2,712		4,895	
Training Group Costs		2,898		1,745	
Staff & Volunteer Travel		714		223	
			229,385		294,425
Less: Management & Administration					
Management		7,155		5,714	
Legal & Professional		3,404		3,913	
Accountancy		650		650	
Marketing & Advertising		1,723		416	
Bank Charges		120		144	
Provision for bad debts		20		0	
			13,072		10,837
Total Resources Expended			242,457		305,262
Net Surplus / -Deficit for the year			-26,427		-3,724
Fund balances brought forward			134,869		138,593
Total Funds carried forward			108,442		134,869

VIEWPOINT**BALANCE SHEET****As at 31st March 2024**

	Notes	2024 Total Funds £	2023 Total Funds £
Fixed Assets			
Tangible Assets at Net Book Value		0	0
Current Assets			
Debtors amounts falling due within one year	4	37,997	21,502
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>87,078</u>	<u>150,765</u>
Total Current Assets		<u>125,075</u>	<u>172,267</u>
Current Liabilities			
Creditors due within one year	5	-16,633	-32,398
Total Current Liabilities		<u>-16,633</u>	<u>-32,398</u>
Net Current Assets		<u>108,442</u>	<u>139,869</u>
Total Assets less Current Liabilities		108,442	139,869
Creditors due after more than one year	6	0	-5,000
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>108,442</u>	<u>134,869</u>
Analysis of Total Funds			
Unrestricted Funds		108,442	134,869
Restricted Funds		<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
TOTAL FUNDS		<u>108,442</u>	<u>134,869</u>

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on 7th August 2024 and were signed on its behalf by:

.....
 Joanna Bowen, Chairman

VIEWPOINT

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2024

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

1.1 General. These accounts have been prepared under the historical; cost convention and in accordance with applicable accounting standards and the statement of recommended practice on accounting and reporting by charities

1.2 Grant Income. Revenue grants are matched with the related expenditure.

1.3 Expenditure. Expenditure is recognised on an accruals basis when a liability is incurred, as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the Charity to the expenditure.

1.4 Tangible Fixed Assets. Capital expenditure in the year is shown net of any grants received. Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates to write off each asset over its estimated useful life. Individual assets purchased with a cost (net of grants) lower than £2,000 are expensed in the year of purchase.

1.5 Taxation The Charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities & is not registered for VAT.

1.6 Fund Accounting. Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the Trustees. Restricted funds can only be used for restricted purposes within the objects of the Charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

1.7 Pension Costs and Other Post-retirement Benefits. Viewpoint operates a defined contribution pension scheme; employer contributions payable to the scheme are charged to the Income Statement in the period to which they relate.

2. GRANTS & CHARITABLE INCOME

	2024	2023
	£	£
Hertfordshire County Council:	162,426	144,675
Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (HPFT)	23,389	113,282
Health Education England	14,220	3,484
Comic Relief (Groundwork)	4,975	5,477
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National Lottery	0	10,892
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Total	<u>205,510</u>	<u>287,810</u>

VIEWPOINTNOTES TO THE ACCOUNTSFOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2024**ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)****3. Sundry Income**

	2024	2023
	£	£
Bank interest received	2,893	1,764
Donations	<u>415</u>	<u>4,678</u>
Total	<u>3,308</u>	<u>6,442</u>

4. Debtors

	2024	2023
	£	£
Accounts receivable	£ 22,973	12,308
	<u>-20</u>	<u>12,308</u>
Less: Provision for bad debts	22,953	<u>12,308</u>
	7,938	3,282
Accrued income	<u>7,106</u>	<u>5,912</u>
Prepayments	<u>37,997</u>	<u>21,502</u>

5. Creditors (due within one year)

	2024	2023
	£	£
Accounts payable	2,421	5,986
Pension costs payable	1,336	1,587
Accruals	7,599	13,451
Deferred income	3,555	5,000
PAYE & National Insurance payable	1,722	3,374
Future Builders Loan	<u>0</u>	<u>3,000</u>
	<u>16,633</u>	<u>32,398</u>

6. Creditors (due in more than one year)

	2024	2023
	£	£
Future Builders Loan	<u>0</u>	<u>5,0</u>

viewpoint

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VIEWPOINT

Report of the Trustees & Financial Statements

Year Ended 31st March 2024

VIEWPOINT

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George Davidson FMAAT
Resolve Corporate Ltd
Unit 11, Garden Court
Tewin Road Business Centre
Welwyn Garden City
Hertfordshire
AL7 1BH

VIEWPOINT

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AS AT 31st MARCH 2024

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Registered Charity number: 1159735

Registered office: Unit 28, Weltech Centre
Ridgeway
Welwyn Garden City
Hertfordshire
AL7 2AA

Trustees	Joanna Bowen Ashley Risk Bryony Kirby Eni Bankole-Race Jacqui Lynskey Ray Gibbins Simon Taylor Yetunde Rachel Kasonga	Chairman Treasurer Secretary
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VIEWPOINT

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PRINCIPAL FUNDING SOURCES

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The Charity also partners with other local government organisations and charities on projects commensurate to its purpose as stated above.

Future Plans

The Charity plans to continue the activities outlined in the forthcoming year subject to satisfactory funding arrangements.

ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD:



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Joanna Bowen
Chairman

VIEWPOINT**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES****Year Ended 31 March 2024**

		Year Ended 31 st March 2024		Year Ended 31 st March 2023	
<u>Incoming Resources</u>	Notes	£	£	£	£
Grants	2	205,510		287,810	
Training Group		7,212		7,286	
Sundry Income incl. donations	3	3,308		6,442	
Total Incoming Resources			<u>216,030</u>		<u>301,538</u>
<u>Less: Charitable Expenditure</u>					
Staff Costs		161,255		227,829	
Office Expenses		25,800		20,706	
Premises Costs		18,508		18,926	
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			<u>229,385</u>		<u>294,425</u>
<u>Less: Management & Administration</u>					
Management		7,155		5,714	
Legal & Professional		3,404		3,913	
Accountancy		650		650	
Marketing & Advertising		1,723		416	
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Total Resources Expended			<u>242,457</u>		<u>305,262</u>
Net Surplus / -Deficit for the year			<u>-26,427</u>		<u>-3,724</u>
Fund balances brought forward			134,869		138,593
Total Funds carried forward			<u>108,442</u>		<u>134,869</u>

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	Notes	2024 Total Funds £	2023 Total Funds £
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Current Assets			
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Cash at bank and in hand		87,078	150,765
Total Current Assets		<u>125,075</u>	<u>172,267</u>
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Unrestricted Funds		108,442	134,869
Restricted Funds		0	0
TOTAL FUNDS		<u>108,442</u>	<u>134,869</u>

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VIEWPOINT

Report of the Trustees & Financial Statements

Year Ended 31st March 2024

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VIEWPOINT

England & Wales - Charity number 1159735

Accounts



viewpoint

Together we can Influence Change



Annual **Report**

2022-3

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- Our Mission
- Our Goals
- What We Offer

Our Governance

- Board of Trustees
- Viewpoint User Voice Council

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- Involvement and Lived Experience Support
- How does becoming a peer/lived experience facilitator support personal recovery
- Peer support in partnership with Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trus
- User Voice Council – what we achieved
- The difference we made

Resources and Financial Management

What is Next for Viewpoint?

A Message from our Chair, Joanna Bowen



Welcome to Viewpoint's annual report for 2022/23. Viewpoint emphasises the importance of people with a lived experience of mental health and addiction challenges, and they are central to all we do. With this in mind, we have continued to co-produce, seek information and offer a lifeline through our supportive sessions.

We have welcomed and involved more people in the organisation and encouraged them to tell their stories, influencing change and promoting recovery-oriented working.

I look forward to working co-productively with all our stakeholders to develop our next five-year strategy to ensure we continue to hear what people experiencing mental health and/or addiction challenges say, influence change, and ensure Viewpoint remains patient-centred and recovery-focused. It will be an exciting year, and I hope you will get involved.

I want to thank everyone involved in Viewpoint. I would appreciate your continued support.

A handwritten signature of Joanna Bowen in black ink on a white background.

Joanna Bowen
Board of Trustees
Chair

Who We Are & What We Do

Viewpoint develops innovative services that support people with a lived experience of mental health issues and/or addiction challenges. We put them at the centre of everything. For example, promoting good physical and psychological wellbeing while supporting people to be independent, have their say, and influence change to services that help them in their personal recovery.

Our support is flexible and needs-led, delivered by outreach group-based activity or one-to-one. Living experience facilitators facilitate our groups, providing a safe place to discuss issues, share experiences, and help solve problems. Alongside this, we offer a variety of educational and connection sessions that enhance wellbeing. We equip each individual with the skills, attitude, and self-belief to live a successful, independent life in their community.

We provide an independent, recovery-focused, united voice for individuals with mental health and/or addiction challenges to share their experiences of accessing support services to help shape future provision. Everyone has the right to be listened to and heard and have a voice; every individual is at the centre of our decision-making.



OUR VISION

We will work with people with mental health and/or addiction challenges to influence change.

OUR MISSION

We provide advice and support to promote mental wellbeing to anyone experiencing mental health and addiction challenges. We involve people to provide information and a voice to improve services.



OUR GOALS



Improving Services

Making sure that people are involved in the planning, developing, delivering, and evaluating of services to gain equality of support and treatment

Staying Well

Supporting people to stay well

Supporting Choice

Supporting people to make informed choices about services and their own mental wellbeing

Reducing Inequality

People's involvement from all backgrounds is essential to gain equality of support and treatment

Organisationally

Use all of our organisational excellence to enhance quality and develop the right resources

WHAT WE OFFER



- Giving people a voice to improve services through questionnaires, interviews, forums, co-production sessions and partner meetings.
- Lived experience facilitators lead all our projects and are at the centre of our organisation. They co-produce courses, attend meetings, innovate projects and teach students (under- and post-graduate)
- Working with local partners and encouraging better collaboration for better outcomes.
- Run projects that support people with mental health and/or addiction challenges by giving them new skills, encouraging involvement in relevant communities, giving them a voice and tackling prejudice

“

OUR IMPACT

100
%

Feel they have been supported in a way that has reduced feelings of social and self-isolation [January 2023]

Mood was improved after taking part in one of our Connection Sessions [January 2023]

94
%

Would attend another Get Together session [January 2023]

100

”

Governance

Board of Trustees

Our Board of Trustees comprises volunteers, bringing in a wealth of skills, knowledge, and experience. They are vital in providing governance, overseeing strategic direction, and ensuring financial stewardship. They set policies, monitor organisational performance, and safeguard the charity's mission. They also appoint executive leadership, manage risks, and uphold legal and ethical standards to fulfil our objectives to benefit the people we support. The Board meets publicly six times yearly.

viewpoint

USER VOICE COUNCIL

Our 'User Voice' Council works alongside our Board of Trustees to review and ensure we work within our Fidelity Criteria in a collaborative and co-productive way and remain recovery-focused. This inclusive approach fosters transparency, accountability, and responsiveness, resulting in programs and services that better address the needs and preferences of the people we support, enhancing our overall impact and effectiveness.

Please get in touch with Viewpoint if you are interested in either becoming a member on the Board of Trustees or the User Voice Council -
Contact us on 01707 386136 or email: info@hertsviewpoint.co.uk



Viewpoint User Voice Council

12 Month Overview

Throughout the past year, the VUVC have discussed and worked on:

- Spreadsheet to record people's journeys with lived experiences with Viewpoint, giving important information about learning needs, qualifications, and skills to help their development
- Information about individuals - used to attract potential new work and involvement opportunities, such as working with the Police, etc.
- Global warming and developing a Net Zero policy
- Review of the involvement reward payments, including travel and expenses
- Reviewed and suggested changes to the website, including developing a resources section with links to other services, etc.
- Arranged a formal process to speak to trustees and staff directly
- Started developing an Induction programme
- Developing an IT programme available to all members
- Reviewed and discussed the welfare checks instigated in the COVID crisis
- Reviewed returning to face-to-face opportunities for the continuation of Get Together sessions. Discussed attendance and outcomes
- Drafted a template to use with the social work faculty at the University of Hertfordshire. This is an important development; peers must receive relevant information to guide a successful involvement opportunity
- Discussed the challenges of men-only groups - We also discussed forming a group to see what could be done for domestic abuse survivors
- Peers were asked to contribute to the Ballyhoo newsletter and involvement in developing the 13th HPFT recovery conference, which has set a theme of 'challenges and opportunities in uncertain times'
- Discussed the challenges to recruiting new members of the Council
- Attracted new members as a result of World Mental Health Day
- Co-produced the Viewpoint Induction pack, which would be for all members, staff, trustees, facilitators, etc.
- Agreed protected time for the Council - this means no sessions for members of the group
- Took part in the debate about the user voice contract – and discussed the risks to the charity.
- Discussed Viewpoint's 20-year anniversary and how we could celebrate the special occasion
- Took part in HPFT 5-Year Strategy Stakeholder Event
- Highlight the need for a policy for booking and cancelling peers.
- Suggested the need for a coproduction course for Viewpoint facilitators and members.

What We

D*o* *art of the wider health and social care network, we collate views of people experiencing mental health and/or addiction challenges to ensure how they can positively impact the redesign and improvement of local services.*

People are encouraged to have their say through:

- **Questionnaires/interviews**
- **Forums/focus groups**
- **Seminars**
- **Attending a meetings held by partner organisations**

Involvement Peer Facilitators and Involvement Peers

Our involvement peers lead all of our projects and are at the centre of our organisation. We encourage people to co-produce and collaborate in service delivery and the organisation's governance.

We host fora forums where people give us feedback on development, potential gaps in services, and exploring new opportunities to broaden our service delivery. We also hold co-productive sessions for all elements of our work and the development of any new projects.

We are a user lead organisation and encourage people with lived experience to get involved by:

- Co-designing and co-deliver courses and sessions
- Taking part in interview panels
- Attending meetings on behalf of Viewpoint
- Taking part in audits, surveys or evaluations involving designing surveys, questionnaires, running groups etc
- Joining innovative working groups to design aspects of the organisation
- Innovative projects

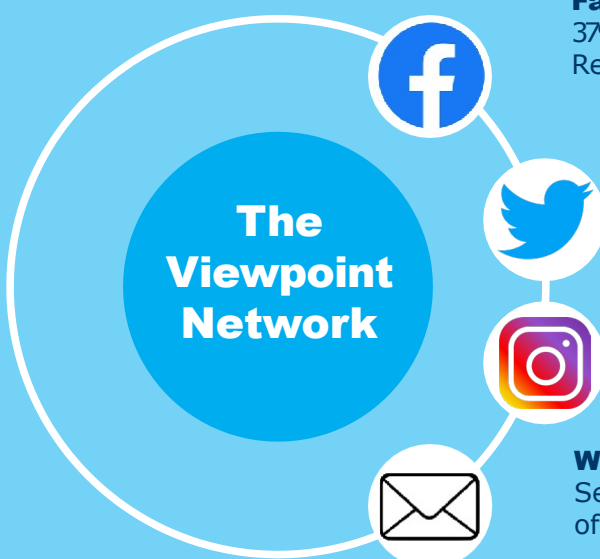
Our Year In

Focus

Viewpoint remains committed to creating a safe and non-judgmental place where people can receive a warm welcome and help to access the proper support at the right time. Everyone has the right to be listened to and heard and have a voice, and every individual is at the centre of decision-making.



Viewpoint continues offering a unique service across Hertfordshire. Our main objective is to support people to have a voice and move forward in their recovery. We have offered support people through telephone and digital online support, providing Immediate and assessable lived experience support groups; An opportunity for experts by experience a chance to co-produce and co-deliver all aspects of our service; Partnerships with statutory and local community agencies to ensure people with mental health and/or addiction challenges have a voice. We continued participating in meetings and committees to ensure partners heard the user's voice.



Facebook

379 Likes, 451 Followers
Reach increase of 2112% (Jan 22 - Feb 23)

Twitter

976 Followers

Instagram

160 Followers

Weekly Bulletin

Sent every Friday to 800 subscribers (as of 14.3.24) 34% email open rate

Our Strategic Objectives

2018 - 2023

Viewpoints' **Together we can influence change' Strategy** (2018-2023) describes how we will work with people with mental health and/or addiction challenges to influence change and achieve positive outcomes. We aim to ensure that people who use both Viewpoint services and those provided by other organisations are at the centre.

Viewpoint's current strategies are:

1. We will improve, innovate and transform Viewpoint productive and high-quality service through co-delivery
2. We will deliver opportunities for people who use service skills to self-manage and (ii) influence other organisations people say
3. We will improve the wellbeing of people through the delivery service
4. We will attract, retain and develop staff people with

Note; For people, read people with mental health and/or a



We have held several sessions to think about our Strategy, which has enabled us to think more about what is unique about Viewpoint and begin to review the Strategy to take the charity forward.

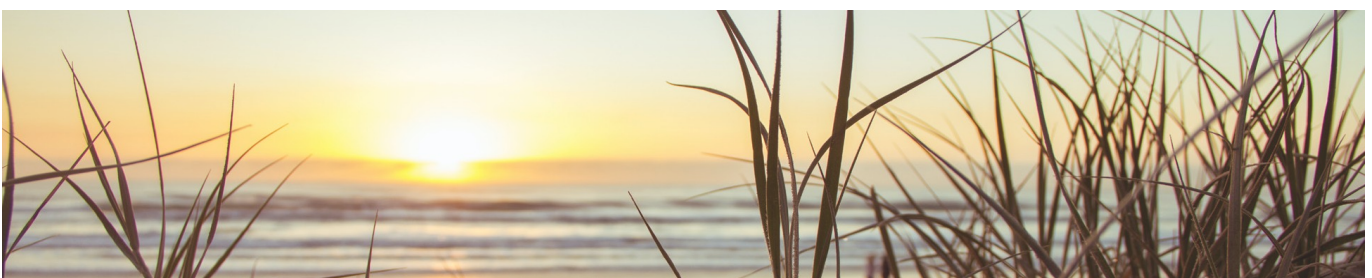
Involvement and Lived Experience Support

Lived experience support holds immense value for people experiencing mental health challenges. Shared lived experiences create a unique bond, fostering empathy and understanding. Peers offer non-judgmental, relatable perspectives, promoting a sense of connection and reducing isolation. This support complements professional services, enhancing recovery outcomes. Peer support empowers individuals, instils hope, and encourages self-advocacy. It contributes to a collaborative and inclusive mental health landscape, breaking down stigma. Through shared narratives, coping strategies, and encouragement, peer support builds resilient communities, promoting holistic healing. Its value lies in its transformative impact on individuals, promoting recovery, and creating a supportive, empathetic environment.

We offer all our lived experience facilitators a bespoke learning package co-produced with IMROC (Implementing Recovery through Organisational Change). We also provided a series of co-produced learning opportunities throughout the year. After attending the workshops, experts will represent the organisation and become Peer/lived experience facilitators. We then match them to the opportunities we have. Currently, we have 15 peer/lived facilitators and 15 volunteers.

Peer/lived experience facilitators run most of our sessions to support people with mental health challenges by sharing the wisdom of their own lived recovery experiences, inspiring hope and belief that recovery is possible in others.

Being a peer/lived experience facilitator can significantly aid personal recovery by providing a sense of purpose and empowerment. Sharing lived experiences fosters a meaningful connection with others facing similar challenges, reducing feelings of isolation. It reinforces the individual's journey of self-discovery, promoting resilience and self-esteem. The role also encourages ongoing learning, enhancing coping skills and self-awareness. It helps to build a supportive community, reinforcing the importance of mutual assistance. By positively impacting the lives of others, facilitators often find a renewed sense of identity, fostering a transformative and affirming experience that contributes to their ongoing recovery journey.



What Jason says about being a peer/lived experience facilitator

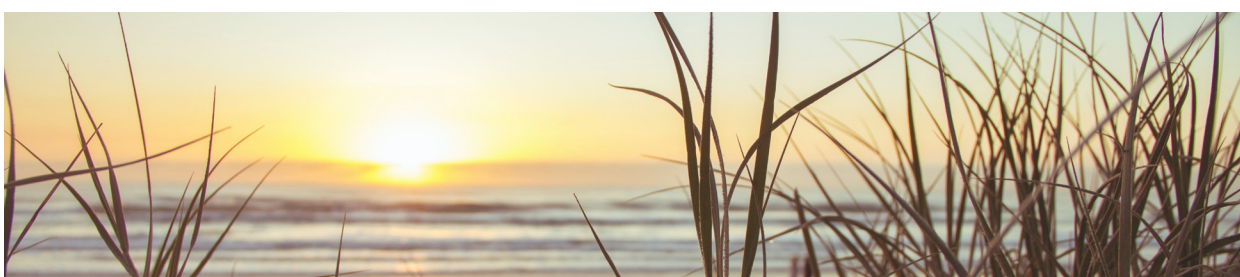
Being a peer/lived experience facilitator with Viewpoint has been great for my continuing recovery journey. I've been able to connect with others who have shared experiences and learn from people from very different stories, and in doing so, I'm part of a wider community.

While I am there to facilitate groups and offer support, I've often found that Viewpoint group members also try to lend support, share resources and provide information, and sometimes I have found myself benefiting from that help.

My skills and confidence as a facilitator have also grown through my work with Viewpoint, which has helped my overall self-esteem and confidence. There are frequently new opportunities to get involved as well, and there is always more to learn.'

Jason Langley

Peer Support Coordinator Viewpoint



Peer Support in Partnership with Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (HPFT)

Over the year, our peer support team working as part of the Enhance Primary Mental Health Service (EPMHS) based in Watford and Lower Lee Valley continued to offer support to people experiencing mental health challenges.

We helped them to make a positive difference in their wellbeing and progress in their unique recovery journey.

This support was provided through:

1:1 support weekly sessions either remotely or via face-to-face calls.

Online weekly peer support groups average 10+ participants at each session, and people attending the groups would sometimes co-facilitate sessions.

Supported colleagues to co-facilitate psychological-based therapy sessions. Examples include: Beginnings Group.

THRIVE group for 18 to 26-year-olds.

STEP exercise group offering peer support alongside.

Conducting evaluation and feedback sessions.

4. We have also promoted and encouraged people with lived experience of both mental health challenges and using the Trust services to become involved through the Trust Involvement Team, which laid the ground for setting up a Primary Care Advisory Council, which opened in September

What people we supported say:

'The only reason my suicidal thoughts were not acted upon was the thought of my wife or daughters being the ones to find me and how that would affect their lives, so in essence, I owe my life to them! I was contacted by the peer support team, who invited me to an online peer support group.....and I am still attending these every week.

I have found and still find these discussions extremely insightful but also extremely helpful. I have gained knowledge regarding coping mechanisms, advice, and life experiences from other attendees.....

I have identified methods used by others that can assist me in moving forward in a much better frame of mind now, and I would not have been able to identify these without the guidance of the peer workers. I cannot thank them enough Keep up the excellent work'. - Jo

'Thank you so much for your support. I'm going to take that time to really work on recovery.So I've also managed to get out with A to the Beaumont centre and do an art class and a knitting class. It's been good to be around people like myself, like a Lil community; I doubt I'd have got this far on my own steam, so I'm grateful for you holding my hand the last couple of years; I couldn't have done it without you. Thank you for your support, guidance, time and encouragement. I really appreciate you and all you've done to get me out of the desperate places I go to 🙏. You've worked so hard with and for me,

If there's anything I can do to repay your kindness please let me know... Thanks'.

'R, S and M regularly attended Peer Support Group Workshops; they have since participated in Viewpoints Introduction to Peer Support training and then the Imroc training to fully qualify as peer support champions. They were instrumental in coproducing their own self-run peer support group with Viewpoint, which is being developed to receive referrals from other organisations. S also made a moving video presentation at the HPFT Recovery Conference 2022'. - Olgar

The difference we made



We encourage people experiencing mental health and addiction challenges to become Viewpoint members. Currently, we have 508 members. Membership offers an opportunity to receive up-to-date information about our engagement and involvement opportunities. In addition, we send out a weekly news bulletin highlighting what we have to offer and how they might get involved in influencing change across the health and social environment.

Overview

We offered a variety of sessions, attended committees and meetings, and provided educational sessions and connection opportunities throughout the year:

Attended 25 committees or meetings to make sure the user's voice is heard;

Held 162 connection sessions with 1000 attendees;

Held 15 'Get Together' sessions – 97 people registered;

Offered 34 workshops/awareness sessions – 230 attendees;

Offered 5 co-production sessions – 57 people registered;

Ran 3 introductions to peer support for Viewpoints peer/lived experience experts with 14 participants

Ran 5 Mental Health First Aider training courses, 49 participants;

University of Hertfordshire:

47 Interview sessions for either Nurse or social work students;

9 recovery narrative sessions for pre and post Approved Mental Health Professionals.

We attracted 46 new members.



What we offered and what participants told us

Connection sessions

Forging meaningful connections is vital for mental health. Social bonds offer emotional support, reducing feelings of isolation and stress. Shared experiences and understanding create a sense of belonging, fostering resilience. Positive connections promote a supportive environment, enhancing overall well-being and contributing to a more robust mental health foundation. Our connections sessions continue to make a difference - as can be seen from the participants' responses – and there was a huge difference in how they felt at the beginning and end of the session. All categories had a positive shift—the table below reflects 413 completed evaluation forms.

How participants felt	At the beginning of the session	At the end of the session
Angry/Irritated	56.77% (228)	0.90% (3)
Anxious/Scared	21.30% (88)	1.45% (6)
Lonely	27.36% (113)	0.30% (1)
Overwhelmed	19.12% (79)	1.21% (5)
Connected	5.56% (23)	51.08% (211)
Hopeful/optimistic	17.91% (74)	29.05% (120)
In control	3.14% (13)	6.29% (26)
Happy	5.08% (21)	30.99% (128)

Active in Mind project



Viewpoint received funding for our innovative 'Active in Mind' project from Comic Relief via Groundworks. Our original project proposed running six sports health and wellbeing / social activity pop-up groups—3 for men and 3 for women. Each session would have a peer support group after the activity session. However, after consideration, discussion with experts by experience and negotiating with Groundworks, we amended our offer. We had concerns about the safety of participants and felt they would benefit the physical/sports element led by a qualified sports trainer and first-aider.

We ran gender-specific sessions and mixed sessions. Two peer/lived experiences facilitated the support group after the activity session supported all groups. Forty-eight participants participated in the weekly sessions, and eight peer/lived experience facilitators supported 27 sessions across Hertfordshire.

We received 48 completed evaluation forms. What participants said:

No of participants who identified personal goals - 47 (98%)

Were you able to make connections with other group members -

Strongly agree/agree - 44 (91%)

Did you feel supported to have your say?

Strongly agree/agree - 41 (86%)

Did you feel supported to problem solve?

Strongly agree - 41 (86%)

Did you meet your recovery goal for attending?

Strongly agree - 39 (82%)

Would you recommend Viewpoint to someone else? - 47 (98%)



Men's Closed Peer/lived Support Groups

Our Closed Peer/Lived Experience Support Group Project aimed to support men experiencing mental health challenges. The group offered both practical cookery sessions alongside peer support. It aimed to help men, enabling an attitude of self-belief and self-empowerment to help them live successful, independent lives, reduce isolation, and equip them with skills to increase the potential for further education and employment.

We ran six weekly sessions and had 33 participants.

What participants said

100% felt supported to have their say

100% made connections

85% felt supported to problem-solve

85% Felt they had met their recovery goal

71% would recommend Viewpoint





Our Get Together forums allow Viewpoint members to meet and share their views and ideas regarding mental health and drug and alcohol services within Hertfordshire. They provide an opportunity to learn more about mental health services in the community and share views. They feature special guest speakers from various organisations across Hertfordshire, providing up-to-date information on projects and services. It also offers the opportunity to raise any concerns or questions about experiences.

We ran 15 sessions; subjects included burn-out prevention, the cost of living crisis, and learning about services, including Hertfordshire Complex Needs, New Leaf Recovery and Wellbeing College and Headway services. We also had a session to offer support over Christmas.



Working with the University of Hertfordshire

Viewpoint has supported the development of undergraduate and post-graduate mental health nurses and social workers for some years and continues getting very positive feedback. The students are always grateful and positive about the insight Viewpoint lived experience facilitators.

Connection Sessions

Viewpoint lived experience facilitators participated in the following:

Interviews

30 Nurse Interview sessions

17 Social Work Interview sessions

Approved Mental Health Professional (AHMP) sessions

Peer/lived experience facilitators shared their recovery stories at 6 AHMP and 3 with pre-AHMP students.

Teaching sessions

5 MH Nurse Teaching Sessions

6 Social Work Course Planning and Programme Presentations

2 Paramedic Teaching sessions

Took part in Equality and Diversity, Personality Disorder and the Impact of Gender and Being Transgender Days



Working with the University of Hertfordshire

We encourage our members to comment yearly on our service and possible new developments. They told us: 97% (37) said they felt supported in accessing appropriate information. 95% (36) felt they had been supported to improve their feelings of self-worth and mental wellbeing.

Comments & Testimonials

Comments made:

Having the opportunity to deliver training and facilitate peer support sessions is really valuable to my wellbeing. It allows me to be honest and real about my experiences and challenges and support others.

Viewpoint providing regular support in the form of different groups has definitely improved my self-worth. There's never any judgment if you've missed a session, making me want to keep returning. Also, having space with people who understand how to enjoy a laugh about living with mental health issues is invaluable.

Being in Viewpoint gives me purpose and meaning. It makes me more creative. I get support & understanding from interacting with my peers. Through expression, I get a better perspective on my situation. I learned practical tips on things like self-care.

Testimonials

'..... I'm a very social person and enjoy the company of others, and without Viewpoint's activities, I would have felt lonely, isolated and cut off. The activities have been really great because they are connecting people together and keeping us busy... They give me something to do during the day, and I get to know new people, which I think is very good. I'm not sure what I would have done without them; they make me feel better, and I really enjoy them.

A big thank you to everyone who has hosted an activity with Viewpoint.'

'It is lovely that Viewpoint cares about their members/service users in such a lonely time. Choosing to come out of an abusive relationship because of COVID-19 was a challenge and still is, but I found the skills Viewpoint gave me helped me through what I had to do, and the people I met through Viewpoint are supporting me still. So thank you, Viewpoint. I'm still learning who I am, and it's hard, but I will get there.'

Mental Health First Aid

Mental health first aid training is essential because it equips individuals with the skills to recognise and respond to people experiencing mental health challenges. It reduces stigma, fosters empathy, and provides tools for early intervention, potentially preventing crises. By promoting a supportive environment, mental health first aid contributes to a more compassionate and understanding community.

This year, we have run five courses with 49 students from across the community, including people who experience mental health challenges, which continues to be well received.

What participants say:

- ✦ 100% (49) felt the course helped them think differently about mental health.
- ✦ 95.91% (47) felt more confident to challenge mental health stigma.
- ✦ 95.91% (47) felt more confident to challenge discrimination.

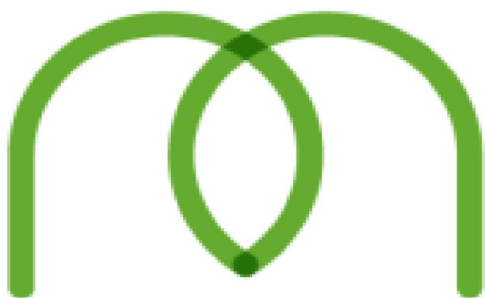
Participants comments:

'It has taught me how to respond better to situations and different types of mental health.'

'That everyone has mental health, whether good or bad.'

'Mental health is a lot more than just an umbrella term for a wide range of illnesses and issues. Also, it's made me become a lot more aware that everyone will deal with mental health in very different ways, even if they are experiencing the same symptoms.'

'It has made me think about how mental health can be applied to the workplace if there are any measures we can put into place that will help colleagues. As a team leader, I feel it will be very beneficial in helping me spot the signs of mental health concerns but also how to best support that individual and how to approach that individual.'



MHFA England

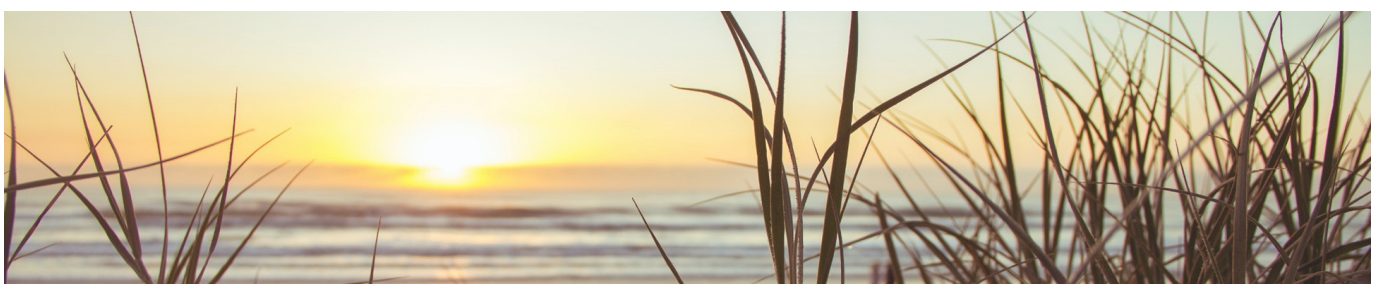


What Is Next For Viewpoint?

We need to review our strategic objectives. We will work with all stakeholders to co-produce our strategy for the next five years to enable Viewpoint to be innovative and transformative, ensuring we place people at the centre.

We will continue to:

- ❖ Holding co-production sessions to develop new and innovative ways of working;*
- ❖ Work with peer/lived experience facilitators to support people experiencing mental health challenges and support the organisation in capturing the voice of people using services;*
- ❖ Develop co-produced projects that enable people to manage their wellbeing and set their goals for success;*
- ❖ Approach organisation to make sure we gather the information to influence change and meet people's needs;*
- ❖ Learn from all the information and data;*
- ❖ Ensure people have a wider voice in the transforming agenda across both the statutory and voluntary sectors.*



Membership

We encourage people to become members of Viewpoint, as this gives them a far more significant influence on what we do.

After joining, Viewpoint members will receive opportunities to:

- 01 Give us a greater voice to influence change
- 02 Attend courses
- 03 Attend forums, focus groups, seminars etc
- 04 Attend the Peer development pathway to become a Peer Facilitator
- 05 Get involved in projects

To learn more about our membership, the benefits of doing so, how to access our weekly news bulletin and more, please visit our website:

**[www.hertsviewpoint.co.uk/
become-a-member](http://www.hertsviewpoint.co.uk/become-a-member)**



Resources and Financial Management

The principal funding for Viewpoint continues to come from the Health Care Commission (HCC); the total grant received in respect of the HCC User Involvement Commission for Mental Health was c. £137,000. This grant is fundamental to Viewpoint's viability, and without this ongoing funding, the charity's future would be very much at risk.

Viewpoint reported a surplus of £45,472, which is an improvement on the previous year. Total income for the year was almost £328,000, an increase of 10% on the previous year. However, this significant increase in revenue did not result in similar growth in Viewpoint's reported surplus because of the costs of the HPFT Peer Support Project and is primarily offset by its directly related salary and related costs.



The grant from HCC and the HPFT Peer Support Project income accounts for c.75% of the charity's total income. The third largest tranche of revenue came from Health Education England (£52,275) to deliver a Peer Support training programme.

We control the charity's direct costs tightly. The overheads and the year-on-year increase are primarily driven by the recruitment and salary costs of the Peer Support Team, who are employed to fulfil the HPFT Peer Support project requirements.

Viewpoint's accumulated reserves on 31st March 2022 are £138,593. Therefore, with the retention of the HCC User Involvement contract confirmed for 2022/23, it goes into the new year in a solid and stable financial position.

We continue to appreciate significantly all those organisations and individuals supporting our charity. We would also like to recognise our staff and volunteers for their unstinting hard work and commitment throughout the year.

Total income for the year

£328,000

Accumulated reserves

£138,593

How We Have Engaged With

People



Workshops and Courses

Viewpoint offered 12 workshops or courses over the year. Some ran for several sessions, others one-off.

We ran sessions on:

- Active Listening
- Charity involvement rewards
- Domestic Abuse
- Healthy Habits
- HIV Awareness
- Meditation
- Mindfulness
- Moving into Awareness
- Reforming the Mental Health Act
- Confidence Building
- Section 136 of the Mental Health Act
- The Role of an Approved Mental Health Professional (AHMP)

What Participants Said

- 81% felt the tutor was supportive to their needs
- 100% felt the tutor was both confident and knowledgeable about the course subject
- 99% would recommend Viewpoint to others.

About the participants:

- 74% women
- 5% men
- 1% non-binary
- 81% were aged 45 – 65
- 13% had long term mental health challenges
- 18% had another health challenge
- 33% were primary carers



Peer Support

Peer support is an essential element of the work of Viewpoint. Sessions allow people to find solutions to challenges, support each other, and put in structures that build resilience and support their mental wellbeing.



What Participants Said

- 100% felt they had made connections
- 89% felt the facilitator was supportive
- 89% felt supported to have their say
- 100% had met their goal for attending
- 100% would recommend Viewpoint to others

About the participants:

- 70% women
- 32% men
- 1% non-binary
- 81% were aged 45 – 65
- 77% had long term mental health challenges

What people said:

'I like that we feel at ease with one another and can speak about whatever's on our minds without judgement'

'Connecting with others, sharing experiences, being respected and validated, being listened to and heard, being supported through challenging times'

We Need Your Help

You can get involved by

- Becoming a Trustee
- Becoming a Member
- Becoming a Peer Facilitator
- Becoming a Volunteer

Contact us on **01707 386136**
or email: info@hertsviewpoint.co.uk

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR FUNDERS AND DONORS

If you would like to donate to Viewpoint, please follow the link to:

<https://www.hertsviewpoint.co.uk/donate/donate/5/credit-card>

Virgin Money Giving

<http://localgiving.com/charity/viewpoint;>

<https://www.hertsviewpoint.co.uk/donate/donate> G
Pay

viewpoint

Together we can Influence Change



**Website: hertsviewpoint.co.uk
Social Media: @hertsviewpoint**

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Ridgeway
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AL7 2AA

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info@hertsviewpoint.co.uk

viewpoint

Together we can Influence Change



VIEWPOINT

Report of the Trustees & Financial Statements

Year Ended 31st March 2023

VIEWPOINT

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VIEWPOINT

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st March 2023

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity for the year ended for the year ended 31 March 2023 which are set out on pages 5 to 9.

Responsibilities and basis of the report

As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent Examiner's Statement

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

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts as set out in the Charities (Accounts & Reports) Regulation 2008 other than the requirement that the accounts give a 'true & fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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 to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

DocuSigned by:

George R. Davidson

.....26F73F3A26754D5:.....

George Davidson FMAAT
Resolve Corporate Ltd
Unit 11, Garden Court
Tewin Road Business Centre
Welwyn Garden City
Hertfordshire
AL7 1BH

VIEWPOINT

REFERENCE & ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

AS AT 31st MARCH 2023

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Registered Charity number: 1159735

Registered office: Unit 28, Weltech Centre
Ridgeway
Welwyn Garden City
Hertfordshire
AL7 2AA

Trustees	Joanna Bowen Ashley Risk Bryony Kirby (appointed 02.11.2022) Eni Bankole-Race Jacqui Lynskey Meredith Griffiths (resigned 17.10.2022) Ray Gibbins Simon Taylor Yetunde Rachel Kasonga	Chairman Treasurer Secretary
----------	---	--

Independent Examiner George Davidson
Resolve Corporate Ltd
11 Garden Court
Tewin Road Business Centre
Welwyn Garden City
Hertfordshire
AL7 1BH

Bankers CAF Bank
25 Kings Hill Avenue
Kings Hill
West Malling
Kent
ME19 4TA

Chief Executive Officer Leslie Billy

VIEWPOINT

TRUSTEES REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st March 2023

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES

The Trustees of Viewpoint present their report and financial statements for the year ended 31st March 2023.

STATUS

Viewpoint was established under a constitution and registered as a charity with the Charity Commission on 29th December 2014.

PURPOSE

The promotion of mental health in the county of Hertfordshire, in particular but not exclusively, by the involvement of users and former users of mental health services in the planning, development & delivery and monitoring of those services and the advancement of the education of the public in all aspects of mental health and addiction.

RESERVES POLICY

The Trustees have examined the Charity's requirements for reserves in the light of the main risks to the organisation and have established a policy whereby they wish to work towards the balance of unrestricted funds being equivalent to at least three months core funding.

PRINCIPAL FUNDING SOURCES

The principal funding source for the organisation is Hertfordshire County Council who contributed a total of £144,675 in 2022/23 (2021/22 £151,706).

Viewpoint also provided mental health peer support throughout Hertfordshire in conjunction with the Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust. This contract started in September 2020 and finished in March 2023 generating income in the year of £110,000 (2021/22 £111,112)

The Charity also partners with other local government organisations and charities on projects commensurate to its purpose as stated above.

Future Plans

The Charity plans to continue the activities outlined in the forthcoming year subject to satisfactory funding arrangements.

ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD:

.....
Joanna Bowen
Chairman

VIEWPOINT**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES****Year Ended 31 March 2023**

		Year Ended 31 st March 2023		Year Ended 31 st March 2022	
<u>Incoming Resources</u>	Notes	£	£	£	£
Grants	2	287,810		322,113	
Training Group		7,286		3,395	
Sundry Income incl. donations	3	6,442		2,432	
Total Incoming Resources			<u>301,538</u>		<u>327,940</u>
<u>Charitable Expenditure</u>					
Staff Costs		227,829		209,731	
Office Expenses		20,706		20,102	
Premises Costs		18,926		16,194	
User Group Support		20,101		12,442	
Equipment & Training Costs		4,895		3,285	
Training Group Costs		1,745		1,356	
Staff & Volunteer Travel		223		111	
			<u>294,425</u>		<u>263,221</u>
<u>Management & Administration</u>					
Management		5,714		7,080	
Legal & Professional		3,913		11,049	
Accountancy		650		650	
Marketing & Advertising		416		0	
Bank Charges		144		205	
Provision for bad debts		0		263	
			<u>10,837</u>		<u>19,247</u>
Total Resources Expended			<u>305,262</u>		<u>282,468</u>
Net Surplus / -Deficit for the year			<u>-3,724</u>		<u>45,472</u>
Fund balances brought forward			138,593		93,121
Total Funds carried forward			<u>134,869</u>		<u>138,593</u>

VIEWPOINT**BALANCE SHEET****As at 31st March 2023**

	Notes	2023 Total Funds £	2022 Total Funds £
Fixed Assets			
Tangible Assets at Net Book Value		0	0
Current Assets			
Debtors amounts falling due within one year	4	21,502	12,086
Cash at bank and in hand		150,765	161,635
Total Current Assets		<u>172,267</u>	<u>173,721</u>
Current Liabilities			
Creditors due within one year	5	<u>-32,398</u>	<u>-27,128</u>
Total Current Liabilities		<u>-32,398</u>	<u>-27,128</u>
Net Current Assets		<u>139,869</u>	<u>146,593</u>
Total Assets less Current Liabilities		139,869	146,593
Creditors due after more than one year	6	-5,000	-8,000
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>134,869</u>	<u>138,593</u>
Analysis of Total Funds			
Unrestricted Funds		134,869	128,661
Restricted Funds		0	9,932
TOTAL FUNDS		<u>134,869</u>	<u>138,593</u>

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on 2nd August 2023 and were signed on its behalf by:

.....
Joanna Bowen, Chairman

VIEWPOINT**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS****FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2023****1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

1.1 General. These accounts have been prepared under the historical; cost convention and in accordance with applicable accounting standards and the statement of recommended practice on accounting and reporting by charities

1.2 Grant Income. Revenue grants are matched with the related expenditure.

1.3 Expenditure. Expenditure is recognised on an accruals basis when a liability is incurred, as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the Charity to the expenditure.

1.4 Tangible Fixed Assets. Capital expenditure in the year is shown net of any grants received. Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates to write off each asset over its estimated useful life. Individual assets purchased with a cost (net of grants) lower than £2,000 are expensed in the year of purchase.

1.5 Taxation The Charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities & is not registered for VAT.

1.6 Fund Accounting. Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the Trustees. Restricted funds can only be used for restricted purposes within the objects of the Charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

1.7 Pension Costs and Other Post-retirement Benefits. Viewpoint operates a defined contribution pension scheme; employer contributions payable to the scheme are charged to the Income Statement in the period to which they relate.

2. GRANTS & CHARITABLE INCOME

	2023	2022
	£	£
Hertfordshire County Council:	144,675	151,706
Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (HPFT)	113,282	111,112
National Lottery	10,892	0
Edward Gostling Foundation	10,000	0
Comic Relief (Groundwork)	5,477	4,059
Health Education England	3,484	52,275
North Hertfordshire District Council	0	2,700
Sundry	0	261
Total	<u>287,810</u>	<u>322,113</u>

VIEWPOINT**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS****FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2023****ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)****3. Sundry Income**

	2023	2022
	£	£
Donations	4,678	2,252
Bank Interest Received	1,764	180
Total	<u>6,442</u>	<u>2,432</u>

4. Debtors

	2023	2022
	£	£
Accounts receivable	12,308	1,087
Accrued income	3,282	9,920
Prepayments	5,912	1,079
	<u>21,502</u>	<u>12,086</u>

5. Creditors (due within one year)

	2023	2022
	£	£
Amounts payable	5,986	2,390
Pension costs payable	1,587	1,360
Accruals	13,451	7,216
Income received in advance	5,000	9,932
PAYE & National Insurance payable	3,374	3,230
Future Builders Loan	3,000	3,000
	<u>32,398</u>	<u>27,128</u>

6. Creditors (due in more than one year)

	2023	2022
	£	£
Future Builders Loan	<u>5,000</u>	<u>8,000</u>

VIEWPOINT

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st March 2023

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity for the year ended for the year ended 31 March 2023 which are set out on pages 5 to 9.

Responsibilities and basis of the report

As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent Examiner's Statement

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

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts as set out in the Charities (Accounts & Reports) Regulation 2008 other than the requirement that the accounts give a 'true & fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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 to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

DocuSigned by:

George R. Davidson

.....26F73F3A26764D5.....

George Davidson FMAAT
Resolve Corporate Ltd
Unit 11, Garden Court
Tewin Road Business Centre
Welwyn Garden City
Hertfordshire
AL7 1BH

VIEWPOINT

England & Wales - Charity number 1159735

Accounts



ANNUAL REPORT

2020 -2021

Working together with people with mental health, or addictions challenges, to influence change and achieve positive outcomes.

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Together we can influence change

Message from Chair of the Board of Trustees

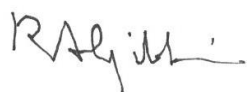
Dear Friends,

Welcome to Viewpoints annual report for 2020/21. It has been challenging for many of us, the stress of COVID-19 placing a burden on many people we support. However, we quickly took the opportunity to mobilise our online 'connection' sessions enabling contact and alleviating loneliness for many people, which proved to be very successful. It's been truly inspiring to see how staff, peer facilitators and volunteers began supporting people online, bringing together hundreds of young people to help influence and shape our work.

At the same time, we rapidly expanded and tailored our existing support in response to the pandemic's devastating impact on mental wellbeing.

We have welcomed and involved more people in the organisation and encouraged them to tell their stories, influencing change and promoting recovery-oriented working.

I want to thank everyone involved in Viewpoint. I ask for your continued support.



Ray Gibbins
Board Of Trustees Chair

What we do

Viewpoint aims to develop innovative services that support people with a lived experience of mental health issues and/or alcohol and drug challenges. We are currently working with approximately 1200+ experts by experience, putting them at the centre of everything we do. Promoting good physical and mental well-being while supporting them to be independent, having their say, and influencing change to services that help their recovery journey.

Our support is flexible and needs-led, delivered by outreach group-based activity, one to one or remotely (online or via the phone). The groups are facilitated by people with a lived experience of mental health challenges, providing a safe place to discuss issues, share experiences and help to problem solve. Alongside, we offer a variety of educational sessions that enhance well-being. We equip each individual with the skills, attitude and self-belief they need to live a successful independent life in their community.

We provide an independent, recovery-focused, united voice for individuals living with mental health and/or addictions challenges to share their experiences of accessing support services to help shape future provision. We believe everyone has the right to be listened to, heard, and have a voice and that every individual is at the centre of our decision-making.

We offer a wide variety of support to our beneficiaries, including:

- Opportunities to develop facilitation skills through our peer development pathway;
- Opportunities to have a voice and influence change through participation in fora, seminars, meetings etc.;
- Coproduction sessions that influence the development of service;
- Peer support groups - self-help groups that build on shared personal experiences and empathy, enabling de-stigmatisation and self-empowerment;
- Connection groups to stave off social isolation and loneliness;
- Information, advice and guidance;
- Specialist independent support; that enable beneficiaries to achieve their personal goals.

WHAT WE DO

Our vision

We will work together with people with mental health and/or addiction challenges to influence change.

Our mission

We provide advice and support to promote mental wellbeing to anyone experiencing a mental health and/or addiction challenge. We involve and encourage people to provide information and a voice to improve services.

Our goals

- **Improving services:**
Making sure people are involved in the planning, developing, delivering, and evaluating of services to gain equality of support and treatment.
- **Staying well:**
Supporting people to stay well
- **Supporting choice:**
Supporting people to make informed choices about services and their own mental wellbeing
- **Reducing inequality:**
People's involvement from all backgrounds is essential to gain equality of support and treatment
- **Organisationally:**
Use all of our organisational excellence to enhance quality and develop the right resources



Have your say through:

- Questionnaires/interviews
- Forums/focus groups;
- Seminars;
- Attend meeting held by partner organisations.

Involvement

Including:

- Co-designing and co-delivering courses and sessions;
- Take part in interview panels;
- Attend meetings on behalf of Viewpoint;
- Take part in audits, surveys or evaluations. This could involve designing surveys, questionnaires, running groups etc.;
- Join innovative working groups to design aspects of the organisation.

Projects

Innovative projects that involve and support people with a lived experience of mental health, and alcohol and/or substance challenges.

Membership

We encourage people to become a member of Viewpoint, as this gives you greater influence on what we do.

All Viewpoint members will receive opportunities to:

- Give us a greater voice
- Attend courses
- Attend forums, focus groups, seminars etc.,
- Attend the Peer development pathway to become a Peer Facilitator;
- Get involved in projects.

Governance

Approximately 95% of Viewpoint staff and volunteers have personal lived experience of mental health challenges at all levels within the organisation, including Board level. We work co-productively with our beneficiaries, enabling them to shape and develop the service. Our 'User Voice' Council works alongside our Board of Trustees to review and ensure we work within our Fidelity Criteria to work in a collaborative and co-productive way, being community-focused and inclusive, humanitarian, and Recovery focused.

WHAT WE DO

At the centre of our organisation, our involvement peers lead on all of our projects. We encourage people to co-produce and collaborate in service delivery and within the governance of the organisation.

The Board meets four times yearly together with a yearly strategic session with members of the User Voice and other stakeholders. In addition, the User Voice Council meets ten times each year, reporting to the Board.

We host fora where people give us feedback on development, potential gaps in services, and exploring new opportunities to broaden the delivery of our service. We also hold co-productive sessions for all elements of our work and the development of any new projects.



The Year in Focus

It has been a challenging but rewarding year for Viewpoint. We are a unique service working within Hertfordshire. Our main objective is to support people to have a voice and develop self-management strategies to move forward in their recovery.

Throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic, Viewpoint has adapted to the new landscape embracing alternative service provision. We supported people during exceptionally challenging times by providing telephone and digital platform support and gaining insight from other stakeholders. This learning has been embedded within the organisation to ensure the effective delivery of our service. We have:

- Provided immediate and accessible peer support groups;
- Provided opportunities for experts by experience a chance to co-produce and co-deliver all aspects of our service;
- Worked with partnerships with statutory and local community agencies to ensure people with mental health and/or addiction challenges have a voice.

We helped reduce some of the burdens many people with mental health challenges face, which COVID-19 has worsened. We know staying connected helps to support our mental health, which during the COVID crisis was more challenging to do.

We continued to take part in meetings and committees to ensure the user voice is heard.

Our strategic Objectives 2018- 2023:

Viewpoint's '***Together we can influence change***' Strategy (2018-2023) describes how we will work ***together*** with people with mental health and/or addictions challenges, to influence change and achieve positive outcomes. Making sure people who use both Viewpoint services and those provided by other organisations are at the ***Centre*** of all they do.

THE YEAR IN FOCUS

Our strategic objectives are:

1. We will improve, innovate and transform Viewpoint to provide the most effective, productive and high-quality service through co-development and co-delivery
2. We will deliver opportunities for people who use services, to enable them to (i) develop skills to self-manage and (ii) influence other organizations to hear and respond to what people say
3. We will improve the wellbeing of people through the delivery of effective, evidence-based service
4. We will attract, retain and develop staff people with the right skills and values

Note: For people read people with mental health and/or addiction challenges.

Priorities for 20/21:

Develop new ways of working to meet people's needs.

For example:

- Co-developed 'connection' sessions led by peers.
- Held co-production sessions.
- Held 'closed' peer group groups.
- Ran 'Confidence Building' sessions

Generate more income.

For example:

- Secured funding to support several innovative projects such as;
 - Closed peer support groups'
 - Peer support in partnership with Hertfordshire University Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (HPFT)
 - various closed creative peer group sessions etc.

Develop robust outcome measures.

For example:

- Evaluation, reviewed and developed.
- Collect wellbeing and loneliness scores to ensure we are making a difference.
- Collect individual people's stories.

Develop a programme to improve self-management and development skills.

For example:

- Held 3Peer Development sessions - 27 attendees.
- Have a bank of 37 peer facilitators.
- Have a bank of 15 volunteers.

Peer Support

Central to our work is giving people a voice and to help improve local services and support their personal growth. There is a plethora of evidence to show peer support is significant (National Voices). By providing a united voice for individuals living with mental health and/or addictions challenges to share their experiences of accessing support services to help shape future provision.

We are a person-centred organisation that promotes physical and mental wellbeing while supporting people to be independent and enabling them to have their say and influence change. We aim to reduce social isolation, enhance self-confidence, self-management skills, learn new skills, enhance health and wellbeing and help people move closer to the labour market and/or further training.

Viewpoint Peer Development Pathway

Our unique approach looks at the **ability** of each person.

Viewpoint provides development opportunities to help experts by experience to achieve their personal goals and help the organisation grow and meet its needs. We provide a series of workshops to learn about active listening skills, discuss boundaries, how to represent the organisation and how they might tell their recovery story.

After completing all the development workshops, experts will represent the organisation and become Peer Facilitators. We then include matching peers to various opportunities we have to offer. Currently, we have 37 peers and 15 volunteers.

Peer Facilitators run most of our sessions to support people with mental health challenges by sharing the wisdom of their own lived recovery experience; they inspire hope and belief that recovery is possible in others. Within a relationship of mutuality, they will facilitate and promote choice, self-determination.

Becoming Peer Facilitator not only benefits the attendees, but helps Viewpoint achieve its aims and objectives and also supports the individual wellbeing by:

- Increasing social interaction, reducing isolation, and helps them to feel more connected with others;
- Increasing their sense of purpose;

THE YEAR IN FOCUS

- Valuing their contribution;
- Enabling them to develop new self-management skills;
- Increasing their self-esteem and motivation.

What Amanda says about being a Peer Facilitator

"I began my mental health recovery and wellbeing journey with Viewpoint in 2018. I ceased my businesses here and abroad as the need to stop and focus on my self-care became necessary.

I now passionately support Viewpoint in many voluntary roles and share my story of lived experience. By actively engaging in sharing my experiences and positive outcomes through Viewpoint and peer support, I hope that I can also inspire others moving forward on their recovery journey.



Joining Viewpoint allowed me to develop new skills and build on existing experiences to support the ongoing recovery of mental health and wellbeing in others, and myself. A symbiotic relationship.

Being involved in a service that supports people experiencing mental challenges offers me a sense of belonging and a safe, supportive, and nurturing environment to share, learn and expand awareness.

In acknowledging, accepting, and allowing my mental health ups and downs to 'just be', I have gained an outlook with hope and opportunity and the freedom to choose a more positive journey moving forward. Offering groups that I facilitated at Viewpoint is life-changing for me. Literally, for the very first time, I can honestly say: I want to live and love my life."

What we achieved



We welcome people to become members to support their mental health, and addiction, through courses, events, sharing lived experiences, and offer a variety of opportunities to influence our continuing growth through co-production and co-delivery. We believe people are experts in their own wellbeing and encourage them to share their experience by supporting others through peer support.

- We attracted **100** new members;
- Attended **82** committees or meetings to make sure the user voice is heard;
- Held **30** forums and focus groups;
- Launched virtual connection sessions and offered telephone support;
- Offered **23** co-production sessions - **96** attendees;
- Offered **5** awareness courses – **83** attendees;
- **1091** attendees our connection sessions;
- Held 3 closed peer support groups - **15** attendees
- University of Hertfordshire:
 - ◇ Took part in **22** Interview sessions for Nurse trainees;
 - ◇ Ran **3** sessions for pre and post nursing students/Pre-Amp students;
 - ◇ **3** Mental Health Act questions and answer session.



We are grateful to all the funders who have enabled Viewpoint the ability to offer so many opportunities to people who experience mental health and/or addiction challenges:

- i) to support people with mental health and/or addiction challenges,
- ii) to enable experts by experience to gain skills and become peer facilitators who support others in their recovery.

THE YEAR IN FOCUS

How we have engaged with people:

- **Forums and focus groups**

We use focus or discussion groups to engage with a small group to get feedback about specific topics to influence change. Focus groups are beneficial in developing ideas because the group explores and reflects on things together.

Findings of Viewpoints forums and seminars

- 77% strongly agreed that the forums/seminars gave them a sense of purpose
- 72% strongly agreed they had been supported to have their say.

What attendees say:

"A fantastic facilitator and source of great support for Viewpoint members. The whole team at Viewpoint inspire, encourage, embrace, and are inclusive towards all the members at Viewpoint, volunteers and otherwise."

"I was inspired and supported by 2 local Viewpoint members to share my story with them after they had shared their stories with me - and I will always owe them both such gratitude for playing their part in saving my life. "

"Very interesting meeting"

"Good atmosphere and lots to say. Felt included."

"I am really pleased that the Forum is being offered via Zoom. I have been trying to get along to one for a long time and Zoom makes it so much more accessible."



Peer facilitators rated the sessions:

- ◇ 92% Agreed their sessions went well or very well
- ◇ 81% Believed the attendees supported each other
- ◇ 95% Believed the attendees found Zoom easy to access and use

THE YEAR IN FOCUS

- **Connection sessions**



The COVID-19 pandemic placed increased pressure on many aspects of society and greatly impacted many people living with mental health challenges. We quickly mobilised our support to online provision. We introduced our Connection sessions intending to reduce some of the burdens many people with mental health challenges face, which COVID-19 may have worsened. We know staying connected helps support our mental health, which has been more challenging to do during the crisis. We were very much aware of the need to reach out to vulnerable people and connect to reduce isolation and loneliness.

We ran various sessions, e.g., poetry, spirituality, mindfulness, creativity activities; mutual support etc. with the aim to:

- ◇ Improve health and wellbeing;
- ◇ Reduce social isolation;
- ◇ Develop confidence and self-esteem;
- ◇ Develop positive wellbeing activities;
- ◇ Build resilience.

The sessions have proved successful, with over 90% of attendees reporting improved mood at the end of the session. We are continuing to offer these sessions. Examples of

THE YEAR IN FOCUS

sessions include poetry, spirituality, mindfulness, creative activities; mutual support, tea and chat etc.,

Attendees rated the sessions:

1. Were you able to make a connection with other group members?
93% Strongly agree/Agree
2. Do you feel what you said was listened to?
94% Strongly agree/Agree
3. Were you supported to have your say?
91% Strongly agree/Agree

What attendees say:

"Felt tired, overwhelmed by things, anxious and sad at the start. I feel calmer and more relaxed now. It helps seeing someone and being able to talk. I live alone, so small zoom meetings are helpful."

"This virtual Tea and Chat session is a great opportunity for me to improve my social interaction skill and to improve my self-confidence for the next stage of virtual group Tea and Chat sessions too. I aim for progress in the flow of social dialogues or social interaction to feel inclusive in the local community."



"I really enjoy this activity. I love the fact we use our brains to socialise discuss, and it lifted my spirits tonight. We all seem to connect and value everyone else."

"Liked the mutual sharing of ideas, beliefs, experiences, and interests - all within a friendly and jovial atmosphere."

"I really enjoyed today's session. Found it moving. I think the above questions are a bit restrictive re feelings. I had a mixture of feelings that I couldn't adequately express."

THE YEAR IN FOCUS

Attendees rated the sessions:

- 100% felt facilitators were supportive of their needs;
- 100% felt they were listened to;
- 100% felt their input was respected;
- 100% would recommend Viewpoint's peer support groups to someone else;
- 92% felt they made connections with the other attendees;
- 96% felt the facilitators were supportive of their needs.

What Peer facilitators say:

- 100% felt support by the co-facilitator;
- 86% felt they help participants to problem solve;
- 100% felt they had met their goal for facilitating the group.

The group are very supportive and positive towards each other and they encourage each other to try things out and experiment. It's been really nice to see the group bond build.

Members' enthusiasm is great. Also seeing what others are working on and sharing our own art with each other.

Enabling people to join our online sessions

The pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities in digital access in the UK. As a result, many people experience a lack of relevant digital skills or cannot afford to get online or purchase the equipment, either computer, tablet or smartphone. With the support of Funders, we have been able to purchase laptops and associated licences to offer people with mental health challenges remote access to our online support sessions to support their positive mental wellbeing. Having the ability to do this has proved beneficial.

Beneficiaries' comments re laptop loan:

"Borrowing this laptop from Viewpoint has been an absolute life saver for me. I find going out very difficult so the laptop really helps my mental health by helping me not to feel isolated. It enabled me to take part in a Peer Support Group which I found extremely helpful and supportive over 12 weeks during lockdown. I use it for other meetings with HPFT. It allows me to stay

THE YEAR IN FOCUS

connected to my church community, including Sundays, midweek meetings and a fortnightly men's group which is incredibly supportive. My eyes get very sore if I have to use my phone only, so the laptop has made staying connected so much easier. It has contributed so much to my wellbeing and has been an absolute blessing. Many thanks.”

“Thanks to Viewpoint for loaning me a laptop. My laptop was a cheap second hand one and very slow and prone to mysteriously lock up. When I used Zoom the picture and sound often wouldn't work together, so I sometimes had to put the camera off as the system couldn't cope with too many applications open at once. I had trouble with email as well. So, it was a constant headache and I found using technology during this time to be extremely frustrating - I was genuinely surprised at how stressful & how IT difficulties depleted any feelings of wellbeing. Digital exclusion had a very negative affect on my mental health. Without the support of Viewpoint, and peer facilitators I would have completely folded as I started to feel really unwell trying to take part online.



Since I got a laptop on loan from Viewpoint, I have been able to take part in numerous online activities without any adverse problems. I bet the staff have noticed I no longer call them up as much with daily IT dilemmas to resolve. I can't believe how fast this laptop is and it has no intractable problems whilst on zoom and is able to use the camera and audio without any problems. I can also simultaneously use other features without the fear of overloading the system. Being able to rely on this equipment, which has been really vital during the pandemic has definitely improved my wellbeing & linked me into other people at a time when without this support I would have been socially isolated. It's great to be a small part of that program and that involvement, purpose and activity is what really supports my mental health on an ongoing basis.”

Peer support in Partnership with HPFT

Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (HPFT) was successful in a bid as part of Herts and West Essex Sustainability Transformation Partnership to pilot an Enhanced Primary Mental Health Service in Watford and Lower Lea Valley.

THE YEAR IN FOCUS

This innovation followed on from the successful implementation of the GP Plus service model, where a mental health practitioner is based within GP surgeries to ensure that patients access the right support at the right time.

Peer Support Workers, led by a Peer Support Co-ordinator, provides peer support and practical assistance to service users to regain control over their lives and their own unique recovery journey.

By sharing the wisdom of their own lived recovery experience, the Peer Support Workers inspire hope and belief that recovery is possible in others. Within a relationship of mutuality, they facilitate and support information sharing to promote choice, self-determination, and opportunities to fulfil socially valued roles and connections to local communities.

What has gone well

So far, the peer support team have supported around 116 people experiencing mental health challenges, including over 70 who have been discharged or moved on to other community services. Since January 2021, the team has successfully facilitated 30 workshops for younger people (18 - 25) with an average of 90 participants and 35 workshops for 26+ year-olds with an average of 280 participants. The team also provided an average of 10 remote or face to face 1 to 1 support sessions weekly.

The peer support workers have also assisted clinical colleagues in running group sessions, being instrumental in helping run the weekly Physical Exercise and networking sessions which are very popular with the service users in Watford.

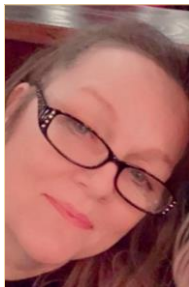
HPFT colleagues have indicated they have found the peer support team an invaluable part of the service. The peer support workers enjoy being part of this multidisciplinary team and feel well supported within the service. Service users' feedback is equally encouraging, as portrayed in the regular polls taken at the workshops and through individual verbal and written comments.

The team have launched an online survey through the HPFT and a set of evaluation forms. These will give valuable feedback from the service users about the difference the peer support service is making to the users in achieving their goals, improving their well-being, and overall experience of the service.

THE YEAR IN FOCUS

The pilot has been very successful and has secured an extension until March 2022.

Ann - Peer Support Worker



I come from a background of alcohol and drug abuse, with my fair share of mental health problems along the way. However, I truly believe that having made the recovery journey, I am uniquely placed to understand how a service user feels; I have been through the anger, the despair, the complete and utter sadness at times that can leave one feeling bereft. The lived experience that my colleagues and I have has become a gift, a gift we share.

Comments from people who I have supported

..at first; I was really sceptical about the help being offered to me and somewhat unhappy with the decision. I thought the best kind of help for me would have been on a one-to-one basis rather than groups. ...I was pretty reluctant to answer calls and quite hesitant to talk. I began to feel much more relaxed talking to you and have found you very helpful. You're easy to talk to and say it how it is, which makes it feel like I'm talking to a friend and a professional, and it helps me feel comfortable opening up about my problems. You have helped give me a more positive outlook on the future and helped me start believing in myself a lot more. I always feel so much better and uplifted after talking to you....

Great session today, thank you to all who make this meeting possible, loved the analogies and positivity, could relate to all the subjects today some I already try to practice, good to feel reassured I'm on the right track with those and some other pearls of wisdom....

Jaskawal - Peer Support Worker

Having faced physical and mental health challenges myself, I hope to inspire other people in their recovery journey. We support service users in meeting their goals, building life skills, confidence and resilience whilst developing independence and social networks.



I've been explicitly in charge of facilitating the groups for 18-25years Peer Support workshop. I also input into the groups for people 25+. Some of the topics

THE YEAR IN FOCUS

explored include self-sabotage, negative and positive thinking, goals setting, self-care, setting boundaries, relationships and coping strategies.

What service users say:

Very valuable and useful / Nice to have someone to talk to / Good to have a 1-1 chat with someone re any issues and after group sessions too / Trustworthy, understanding, kind / Help people heal better / Mood booster, enjoyable and opportunity to connect with other.

Users Voice - Chair's report - Andrew Smith



Since I took over as interim Chair, I have focused on capacity building and improving communications in the Council and the wider Viewpoint organisation.

The main concerns have been encouraging people to become involved in the Council. We have also developed a communication strategy that ensures that matters of concern are taken directly to the appropriate person(s) within the organisation and agreed on actions reported to the next council meeting.

The Council members now use SharePoint, which helps to make effective decisions. However, we are aware some Council members may need further training and support to feel confident and able to access the various documents held easily; it is invaluable for the development of the Council.

Although the Council holds no formal scrutiny role, we act as a 'critical friend' and a 'voice' within Viewpoint. For example, on several occasions, we have held the organisation and the CEO to account on many different issues such as the involvement reward payments policy and communicating clear, timely and effective decisions within the organisation.

Our biggest challenge is to make the Council truly representative of users of mental health services. To do this, we need to build a more diverse membership with more younger people, service veterans, people with various neurological conditions, people from the LGBT community, and those from BAME groups.

THE YEAR IN FOCUS

We have also discussed whether trustees or staff might be part of the Council; we feel we need to maintain a clear service user identity as a council whilst working wholeheartedly in partnership with the trustees and staff. It is also vitally important that we operate transparently, amicably, and openly.

The Council has progressed, now we need to reflect to ensure that we take the best course of action for the Council to be genuinely influential and reach its full potential within the Viewpoint and the wider community.

Membership

Viewpoints membership continues to grow – we have **1103 members**; **909** people with a lived experience, **12** carers and **182** professionals.

Becoming a member of Viewpoints enables one voice to become many to influence change. The more members we have, the louder our voice will be.

Membership also gives people an opportunity to complete Viewpoints Development Pathway and become Peer Facilitator representing and supporting the organisations and helping other.

'I have found being part of Viewpoint essential to my recovery and ongoing growth. This organisation has given me opportunities to: learn skills in a supportive environment, receive much-needed community through the local open sessions and to give talks on my personal journey from recovery to discovery.'



Resources and Financial Management

Income and Expenditure for the year ended 31st March 2021

Viewpoint reported a surplus of £42.7k for the 2020/21 financial year, an improvement of £16.9k from the previous year.

Total income for the year was £242.5k, which increased £+78.2k (+47.5%) from the previous year. Two main factors drove the year-on-year increase:

1. Viewpoint secured a contract for £48.9k with the Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (HPFT) to deliver Peer Group Support across the region
2. £23.9k grant from the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) Bank Resilience Fund.

Whilst Viewpoint was delighted to work with the HPFT in delivering the peer support project. However, it should be noted that this work did not provide any profit/contribution to overheads for the charity; the income received was entirely offset by the direct costs incurred on the project, most notably the salaries of the peer group co-ordinators.

However, the grant from the CAF Bank was explicitly given to strengthen Viewpoint's reserves to help secure its medium / long term viability. As a result, no costs were incurred in the year against this income, and hence it was the receipt of these funds drove the increase in this year's reported surplus.

The principal funding for Viewpoint continues to come from Hertfordshire County Council (HCC), who contributed £152.1k in the year. Without the ongoing support of the HCC, the future of Viewpoint is very much at risk.

In summary, the reported surplus for the year allows Viewpoint to go into 2020/21 financial solid position with reserves of £93.1k.

We are very grateful to all those organisations and individuals who support our organisation and our staff and volunteers for the hard work, skill, and enthusiasm they have brought to Viewpoint throughout the year.

What next

We will continue to work to achieve our strategic objectives:

1. We will improve, innovate and transform Viewpoint to provide the most effective, productive and high-quality service through co-development and co-delivery;
2. We will deliver opportunities for people who use services to enable them to (i) develop skills to self manage and (ii) influence other organisations to hear and respond to what people say;
3. We will improve the wellbeing of people through the delivery of effective, evidence-based services;
4. We will attract, retain and develop staff with the right skills and values.

How will we do this?

We will work with all stakeholders to innovate and transform Viewpoint making sure we place people at the centre of all we do by:

- Holding co-production sessions to develop new and innovative ways of working;
- Working with IMROC (Implementing Recovery through Organisation Change) to co-produce a bespoke development programme to offer people with a lived experience and opportunity to enable them to become Peer facilitators –
- Developing co-produced projects that enable people to manage their wellbeing and set their goals for success;
- Reviewing our strategy to ensure we are meeting the needs of our community;
- Approaching organisations to make sure we gather the information that enables us to influence change and meet people's needs;
- Ensuring people have a wider voice in the transforming agenda across both the statutory and voluntary sectors.

WE NEED YOUR HELP

We need your help

You can get involved by:

- Becoming a Trustee;
- Becoming a member;
- Becoming a Peer Facilitator;
- Becoming a Volunteer.

Contact us on 01707 386136 or email: info@hertsviewpoint.co.uk

Thank You to All of Our Funders and Donors

If you would like to donate to Viewpoint, please follow the link to:

- <https://www.hertsviewpoint.co.uk/donate/donate/5/credit-card>
- <http://localgiving.com/charity/viewpoint;>

Registered Charity Number: 1159735

CONTACT DETAILS

Contact Details

Contact Details:

Viewpoint
Unit 28 Weltech Business Centre
The Ridgway
Welwyn Garden City
AL7 2AA

Tel: 01707 386136

Email: info@hertsviewpoint.co.uk

Web site link: <http://www.hertsviewpoint.co.uk>



Twitter: @Hertsviewpoint

Facebook: Viewpoint.hertfordshire

viewpoint

Together we can Influence Change



VIEWPOINT

Report of the Trustees & Financial Statements

Year Ended 31st March 2021

VIEWPOINT

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VIEWPOINT

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st March 2021

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity for the year ended for the year ended 31 March 2021 which are set out on pages 5 to 9.

Responsibilities and basis of the report

As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent Examiner's Statement

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

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts as set out in the Charities (Accounts & Reports) Regulation 2008 other than the requirement that the accounts give a 'true & fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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 to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

George Davidson

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George Davidson FMAAT
Unit 11, Garden Court
Tewin Road Business Centre
Welwyn Garden City
Hertfordshire
AL7 1BH

VIEWPOINT

REFERENCE & ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

AS AT 31st MARCH 2021

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Registered Charity number:	1159735
Registered office:	Unit 28, Weltech Centre Ridgeway Welwyn Garden City Hertfordshire AL7 2AA
Trustees	Ray Gibbins (Chairman) Eni Bankole-Race Meredith Griffiths Jacqui Lynskey Mariel Norton-Vanheeuverswyn Ashley Risk Linda Sampson Angela Smith Simon Taylor
	appointed 16.9.2021
	appointed 27.5.2021
Independent Examiner	George Davidson Resolve Accountancy Services Ltd 11 Garden Court Tewin Road Business Centre Welwyn Garden City Hertfordshire AL7 1BH
Bankers	CAF Bank 25 Kings Hill Avenue Kings Hill West Malling Kent ME19 4TA
Chief Executive Officer	Leslie Billy

VIEWPOINT

TRUSTEES REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st March 2021

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES

The Trustees of Viewpoint present their report and financial statements for the year ended 31st March 2021.

STATUS

Viewpoint was established under a constitution and registered as a charity with the Charity Commission on 29th December 2014.

PURPOSE

The promotion of mental health in the county of Hertfordshire, in particular, but not exclusively, by the involvement of users and former users of mental health services in the planning, development & delivery and monitoring of those services and the advancement of the education of the public in all aspects of mental health and addiction.

RESERVES POLICY

The Trustees have examined the Charity's requirements for reserves in the light of the main risks to the organisation and have established a policy whereby they wish to work towards the balance of unrestricted funds being equivalent to at least three months core funding.

PRINCIPAL FUNDING SOURCES

The principal funding source for the organisation comes from the Hertfordshire County Council - £152,087 in 2020/21 (2019/20 £147,629). The Charity also partners with other local government organisations and charities on projects commensurate to its purpose as stated above

Future Plans

The Charity plans to continue the activities outlined in the forthcoming year subject to satisfactory funding arrangements.

ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD:

.....
Ray Gibbins
Chairman

VIEWPOINT

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

Year Ended 31 March 2021

		Year Ended 31 st March 2021		Year Ended 31 st March 2020	
<u>Incoming Resources</u>	Notes	£	£	£	£
Grants	2	234,805		157,629	
Training Group		4,732		5,849	
Sundry Income incl. donations	3	2,944		852	
Total Incoming Resources			<u>242,481</u>		<u>164,330</u>
<u>Charitable Expenditure</u>					
Premises Costs		16,184		17,098	
Office Expenses		21,593		17,129	
Staff Costs		129,872		80,471	
Staff Travel		266		1,756	
Training Group Costs		643		8,399	
User Group Support		11,621		9,523	
Equipment & Training Costs		3,744		0	
			183,923		134,376
<u>Management & Administration</u>					
Accountancy		1,480		1,560	
Legal & Professional		10,660		744	
Management		3,466		1,696	
Marketing & Advertising		114		0	
Bank Charges		138		120	
			<u>15,858</u>		<u>4,120</u>
Total Resources Expended			<u>199,781</u>		<u>138,496</u>
Net Surplus / (Deficit) for the year			<u>42,700</u>		<u>25,834</u>
Fund balances brought forward			50,421		24,587
Total Funds carried forward			<u>93,121</u>		<u>50,421</u>

VIEWPOINT

BALANCE SHEET

As at 31st March 2021

	Notes	2021 Total Funds £	2020 Total Funds £
Fixed Assets			
Tangible Assets at Net Book Value		0	0
Current Assets			
Debtors amounts falling due within one year	4	37,657	27,223
Cash at bank and in hand		137,885	45,041
Total Current Assets		<u>175,542</u>	<u>72,264</u>
Current Liabilities			
Creditors due within one year		68,848	8,593
Accruals	5	2,573	0
Total Current Liabilities		<u>71,421</u>	<u>8,593</u>
Net Current Assets		<u>104,121</u>	<u>63,671</u>
Total Assets less Current Liabilities		104,121	63,371
Creditors due after more than one year		11,000	13,250
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>93,121</u>	<u>50,421</u>
Analysis of Total Funds			
Unrestricted Funds		39,305	0
Restricted Funds		53,816	50,421
TOTAL FUNDS		<u>93,121</u>	<u>50,421</u>

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on 4th August 2021 and were signed on its behalf by:

.....
Ray Gibbins, Chairman

VIEWPOINT

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2021

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

1.1 General. These accounts have been prepared under the historical; cost convention and in accordance with applicable accounting standards and the statement of recommended practice on accounting and reporting by charities

1.2 Grant Income. Revenue grants are matched with the related expenditure.

1.3 Expenditure. Expenditure is recognised on an accruals basis when a liability is incurred, as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the Charity to the expenditure.

1.4 Tangible Fixed Assets. Capital expenditure in the year is shown net of any grants received. Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates to write off each asset over its estimated useful life. Individual assets purchased with a cost (net of grants) lower than £2,000 are expensed in the year of purchase.

1.5 Taxation The Charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities & is not registered for VAT.

1.6 Fund Accounting. Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the Trustees. Restricted funds can only be used for restricted purposes within the objects of the Charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

1.7 Pension Costs and Other Post-retirement Benefits. Viewpoint operates a defined contribution pension scheme; employer contributions payable to the scheme are charged to the Income Statement in the period to which they relate.

2. GRANTS & CHARITABLE INCOME

	2021	2020
	£	£
Hertfordshire County Council	152,087	147,629
Big Lottery Community Fund	0	10,000
Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (HPFT)	48,920	0
CAF Bank Ltd	22,839	0
Hertfordshire Community Foundation	6,959	0
North Hertfordshire District Council	2,000	0
NHS Charities	1,000	0
Ascend	1,000	0
Total	234,805	157,629

VIEWPOINT

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2021

ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

3. Sundry Income

	2021	2020
	£	£
Donations	2,890	852
Bank Interest Received	54	0
Total	<u>2,944</u>	<u>852</u>

4. Debtors

	2021	2020
	£	£
Debtors	35,930	27,223
Prepayments	1,728	0
	<u>37,658</u>	<u>27,223</u>

5. Creditors (due within one year)

	2021	2020
	£	£
Income received in advance	52,550	0
PAYE & National Insurance payable	10,314	1,781
Future Builders Loan	3,000	3,000
Amounts payable	2,984	3,812
	<u>68,848</u>	<u>8,593</u>

6. Creditors (due in more than one year)

	2021	2020
	£	£
Future Builders Loan	<u>11,000</u>	<u>13,250</u>

viewpoint

Together we can Influence Change



VIEWPOINT

Report of the Trustees & Financial Statements

Year Ended 31st March 2021

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VIEWPOINT

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FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2021

ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

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