

DFN Project SEARCH

Changing Lives Together



Annual Report and Accounts 2023





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Legal and administrative information

Trustees	D Forbes-Nixon OBE (Chair) M B B Hudson (Vice Chair) L A-M Kogbara J L Riehle S Rutkowski E M Sun T L Scott S Mills A Hyde	(Appointed 20 October 2022) (Appointed 24 November 2022) (Appointed 15 November 2023)
Charity number (England and Wales)	1183834	
Charity number (Scotland)	SC049891	
Company number	11488209	
Registered office and principal address	8-10 Grosvenor Gardens London SW1W 0DH	
Auditor	Dixon Wilson Audit Services LLP 22 Chancery Lane London WC2A 1LS	
Bankers	Barclays 1 Churchill Place Canary Wharf London E14 5HP	
Accountants	Humphrey & Co 7-9 The Avenue Eastbourne East Sussex BN21 3YA	
Solicitors	Macfarlanes LLP 20 Cursitor Street London EC4A 1LT	

Foreword — a message from our Chair and CEO



David Forbes-Nixon OBE
Chair



Claire Cookson
Chief Executive Officer

We entered this academic year with an even greater determination to ensure all young adults with a learning disability or autism spectrum condition could access the best possible opportunities to transition from education into full-time employment.

People with a learning disability are statistically far more likely to be socially isolated, experience greater physical and mental health challenges and feel economic and social challenges more acutely than their peers.

However, that doesn't have to be the case.

Our work, data and the stories attached to them are proof that as a society we can be aiming much higher for young adults with a learning disability.



Despite the disruption of COVID-19 and the cost-of-living crisis, we are hugely proud to have maintained an average of helping 60% of graduates into full-time permanent employment, defying the national average where just 4.8% of people with a learning disability known to local authorities in England are in secure full-time paid jobs. That is an appallingly low figure and must change.

In early 2023, the ONS announced record figures for job vacancies in the UK (over 1 million). For us, these figures presented an opportunity in a bleak economic landscape. There is a huge untapped talent pool of young ambitious adults with learning disabilities that can offer so much to employers if we can just encourage organisations to look past the stigma or prejudice.

Our mantra to businesses over the last 12 months has been to stop wasting this talent. And they agreed!

We are proud to partner with more organisations from the public and private sector than ever before.

With the largest data set in the UK and a successful evidence-based model, our mission is to ensure that everyone with an Education Health and Care Plan can access

high-quality transition-to-work support and training in their local area.

We have consciously aimed to have greater influence and strategic engagement with the sector to achieve this, working closely with our peers, local authorities and education providers wherever possible. We were thrilled to be part of a consortium that was awarded a government contract from the Department for Education in 2022 and continue working in partnership with the National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi) and the British Association of Supported Employment (BASE) to double the number of supported internships to 4,500 per year by March 2025. We see this as a testament to our collaborative, results-driven work.

Our role within this partnership, called Internships Work, is to lead on employer engagement, providing support and training to Local Authorities, Businesses, and education partners and creating over 800 Employer Champions in that timeframe. It is an honour to work alongside our partners who have such high levels of excellence and expertise.

The targets are demanding, but we are confident in our collective ability to reach them while maintaining the high standards we

Foreword — a message from our Chair and CEO



demand of ourselves. As part of the Internships Work commission, we partnered with BASE to test the Supported Internships Quality Assurance Framework. We will use this framework to ensure that all young people going onto supported internship programmes have the highest quality experiences and outcomes.

This year, we have also strengthened our commitment to listen and work directly with young people by evolving and growing our Youth Advisory Group. It has been a great privilege to work closely with 11 excellent Youth Advisors – all DFN Project SEARCH alumni – whose wide-ranging advocacy has helped us ensure we truly reflect the voice of our beneficiaries and educate employers across the UK to develop more inclusive employment practices.

All these workstreams represent our desire to lead a movement that will take us to a tipping point where the employment of young people with a learning disability or autism spectrum condition becomes normalised and mainstream. To help spread this message, we created our campaign, calling on organisations up and down the country to join the **#InclusionRevolution** and recognise the social and economic value of employing young adults with SEND. A

particular highlight of the campaign to date has been creating the inaugural National Supported Internships Day (NSID), galvanising support from our peers and raising awareness of the benefits of Supported Internships.

We were delighted that throughout March 2023, when we celebrated the first #NSID, engagement with Supported Internships online and on social media increased by over 4,000% compared to the previous three months.

We look back on the last academic year as a landmark moment for DFN Project SEARCH where we raised our ambitions and output in equal measure. We are indebted to our growing team who have reacted to the previous two years of disruption with ingenuity and optimism.

Despite facing multiple challenges, we now have over 100 partner sites across the UK and have helped more than 2,000 young adults into full-time jobs.

We are immensely proud of our achievements this year and remain resolutely determined to show that we can achieve much more

for our beneficiaries. This work is both important and urgent. The national statistics suggest we still have a long way to go. Still, we won't stop until young adults with a learning disability or autism spectrum condition are no longer shaped by their disabilities, but by their skills and experiences.



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About the model

“ Prior to partnering with DFN Project SEARCH, aspirations for employment were low. We had never seen any of our young people move into employment. DFN Project SEARCH changed this. ”

Steph Beale, Executive Principal,
Ellesmere College in Leicester

ABOUT US

We are DFN Project SEARCH, a national charity changing the lives of young people with a learning disability and/ or autism spectrum condition by supporting them into full-time employment.

Together, with our community of partners we deliver Supported Internships - transition-to-work programmes - for young people in their final year of school or college, helping them make the positive transition to adulthood.

- **Nationwide but locally focused**
Over a hundred sites across the UK, with each site informed by the needs of the local community.

- **Driven by data and impact**
To date, we have supported over two thousand young people into internships, with on average 70% of graduates going on to permanent jobs.

- **Partnership builders**
Through our impact-driven Project SEARCH model, we build programmes that benefit host employers, local authorities and educators around the needs of the young people we support.

- **Aiming high**
We aim to support 14,000 young people into employment by 2030.

WHY WE DO IT?

We believe deeply that all young adults should have the opportunity to secure quality jobs and forge careers based on their individual talents.

Working with our partners, we will not rest until every adult who has a learning disability in the UK who wants to work, has the opportunity to go through a high-quality Supported Internship.

OUR AMBITION

We want to see a UK job market with much-improved career opportunities for young adults with a learning disability or autism; where their talent is recognised and they are empowered to lead positive, independent and fulfilling lives.

We want to challenge misconceptions, bust myths and create better systems.

We want to inspire an inclusion revolution in the workforce, because we all know that the whole of society benefits when we get it right.

OUR HISTORY

DFN Project SEARCH was established by David Forbes-Nixon who has a son with a learning disability. He became aware of the lack of effective provision to meet his son's needs and those of other young people like him and was determined to try and make a positive difference.

David brought together a team of experts to research the best practice programmes for supported education and supported employment around the world.

In 2019, David was successful in bringing the acclaimed US Project SEARCH model for supported employment to the UK, launching the DFN Project SEARCH franchise, which has now grown to over a hundred sites around the UK, supporting thousands of graduates and working with some of the country's largest employers.

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Year in review

SEPT 22

DFN Project SEARCH, alongside partners NDTi and BASE launch government-driven Internships Work partnership.

OCT 22

We launch the #InclusionRevolution campaign to get 10,000 young people into supported internships by 2030.



NOV 22

DFN Project SEARCH hosts its Annual Conference at Gulliver's in Rotherham, celebrating inclusion in the workplace.



FEB 23

DFN Project SEARCH Intern Satisfaction survey is published, with 99% of interns finding the programme useful.



JAN 23

The team meet with Speaker Lindsey Hoyle and has an Early Day Motion passed in the House of Commons for the first-ever National Supported Internship Day.

DEC 22

DFN Project SEARCH Scotland celebrates 10 years of changing lives.

MAR 23

The first National Supported Internship Day is launched to celebrate the life-changing roles of Supported Internships. We host a reception for partners across the sector at Number 11 Downing Street with the Chancellor of the Exchequer.



APR 23

The Robertson Trust funding and partnership is announced, allowing DFN Project SEARCH to expand its pioneering programme across Scotland.

MAY 23

DFN Project SEARCH forms a strategic partnership with Movement to Work a collaboration tackling youth unemployment.

AUG 23

713 interns graduated during the year and **5,433** interns graduated so far.

JUL 23

DFN Project SEARCH sites across the country host graduation ceremonies in celebration of their 2022/23 interns.

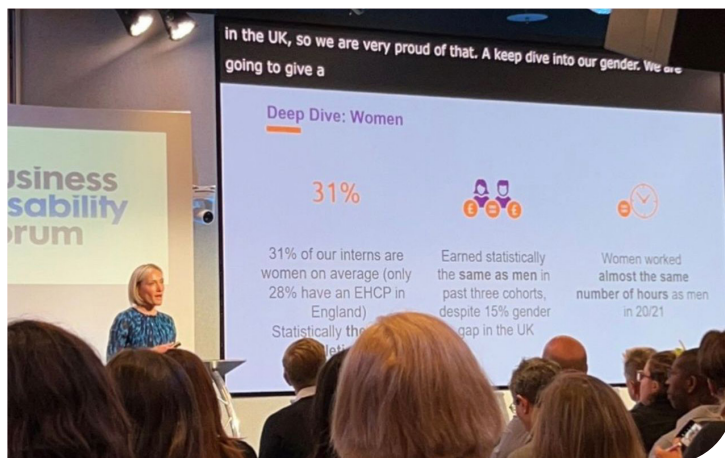


JUN 23

The DFN Project SEARCH Youth Advisory Group holds its first in-person meeting in Birmingham, reinforcing the mission statement of 'nothing about us, without us.'



Data



Once again, our interns exceeded all expectations this year. Despite the economic uncertainties, they found employment in over 20 sectors, from aviation and IT, to education and healthcare. That equates to 68% of interns finding employment in the first cohort after the pandemic. Impressively, 61% of all interns had full-time jobs paid at or above the prevailing wage and in an integrated setting.

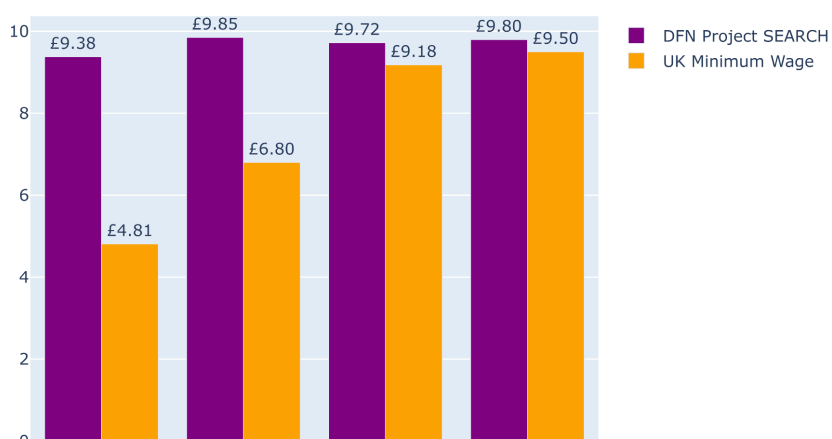
As in previous years, our interns earned above the minimum wage for all age groups. Over one year, our 16-17 interns earn nearly £6,000 more than a young person on a minimum wage, on average.

Host business survey

We asked business liaisons (host businesses' employees who support the programme) about the impact of interns during the placements. In total, 82% of respondents said the impact of interns on the team and on clients was either very positive or positive. No respondent said the impact was negative.

While interns completed their rotations in a range of settings, including challenging roles in hospitals and catering facilities, 65% of business liaisons said the productivity increased, even though interns were learning to perform the work. 24% of business liaisons said there was no change in productivity. The numbers are even more impressive when we consider the context that this represented the first experience of a work environment for many interns.

DFN Project SEARCH average wage and UK minimum wage



Weekly working hours by gender

Age Group	DFN average hourly wage	UK minimum wage	Hourly wage difference	Estimated wage difference in the year
16 – 17	£9.16	£4.81	£4.35	£5,917.60
18 – 20	£9.83	£6.83	£3.00	£4,314.80
21 – 22	£9.72	£9.18	£0.54	£730.81
23+	£9.80	£9.50	£0.30	£380.10

Wage difference by age group

Employment outcome data from interns graduating during 2022

Interns enrolled with DFN Project SEARCH	Interns completing the Supported Internship Programme	% interns completing the Programme	Interns achieving employment	% Interns achieving employment	Interns employed meeting DFN Project SEARCH Criteria	Average Hourly Wage	Average Weekly Hours
593	540	91%	365	68%	324	£9.76	26.8

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Doubling supported internship provision in England.

Funded by



Delivered by



INTERSHIPS WORK

We are incredibly proud to be working with our partners National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi) and British Association of Supported Employment (BASE) in a collaborative consortium entitled Internships Work. Launched in September 2022, Internships Work is funded by the Department for Education and will double the current supported internship provision in England by 2025. Within the consortium, we are working to support more young people with additional needs to have greater choice and control over their future, opening up opportunities that prepare them for adult life and independent living.

Broken down into four key areas, this commission seeks to:

- Support Local Authorities
- Engage and support employers
- Invest in training for job coaches

WHAT IS OUR ROLE?

As a consortium partner, DFN Project SEARCH is leading on engaging employers and supporting them to offer high-quality work placements by providing information, advice and training that enable growth

in supported internships and job opportunities. We are also delivering accredited training for each SEND Employment Forum as well as supporting the design and implementation of a sustainable process to improve the quality of Supported Internship provision, using the Supported Internship Quality Assurance Framework (SIQAF). The SIQAF aims to provide organisations with support on completing self-assessments and auditing so that they can work towards achieving a quality kitemark that shows that they are providing high quality Supported Internships that lead to real jobs.

TRAINING FOR SEND EMPLOYMENT FORUMS

DFN Project SEARCH delivers comprehensive, CPD-accredited training over five days, enhancing forum members' capabilities in areas like partner roles, intern recruitment, employer engagement, and long-term strategy development.

We are proud to have delivered training to 108 SEND employment forums with 92% of respondents feeling more confident in offering placements to supported interns. We will now work to deliver to the remaining 45 SEND Employment Forums over the next academic year.

“ The training was brilliant: information was relevant and practically useful, the flow of the training was expertly designed so everything moved smoothly and built on previous discussions and the facilitator prioritised meaningful networking, information sharing and strategy development pertinent to our daily work and projects. One of the best training sessions I’ve attended. ”

Feedback from one of our trainees

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“ Really engaging session with some eye-opening statistics which helps put in to perspective the importance of these supported internships and how we can best support these young adults. ”

EMPLOYER CHAMPION TRAINING

As part of the commission, we aim to provide employers with essential information, advice, and training, fostering growth in internships and job opportunities within their organisations. We are delighted to have already trained 289 Employer Champions with a 93% satisfaction rate.

ONE STOP SHOP

Working in collaboration with our partners NDTi and BASE, we have also created a ‘one stop shop’ for the sector, providing a suite of resources, how-to guides and case studies relating to developing and evolving high quality supported internships. The ‘one stop shop’ (main portal) <http://internshipswork.org.uk/> hosts a portal for each stakeholder audience:

[The Young people & Families portal](#)

[The Employers portal](#)

[The Local Authorities portal](#)

[The Providers & Colleges portal](#)

[The Job Coaches Portal](#)

We see this as a real lever to the long-term sustainability of supported internships across England.

Jacob Barnett, DFN Project SEARCH Graduate 2023

Jacob studied at Wakefield College and although he completed a few different courses, he wasn’t sure where to go next. He did know that he had a keen interest in first aid. Through a college open event, he and his mum were able to find out about **DFN Project SEARCH**, choosing Pinderfields Hospital because he liked the first aid element of the internship and was excited to be working within a hospital setting.

Jacob completed 3 different rotations and learnt a lot about his skills and the requirements of the different areas of the NHS. He completed his rotations and after a short period volunteering, secured a Portering job at Kendray Hospital. Jacob faced challenges but he now feels that he is more equipped to deal with them in the

patient Portering and facilities workplace. Jacob likes Portering and is so proud to have secured his job!

Tracy Barnett, mum of Jacob, says: “It was clear to me that Jacob had had enough of the day-to-day college routine. He wanted to do something more. He was ready to work but he needed that experience to get started. That’s why when we found out about **DFN Project SEARCH**, it was just perfectly timed. I was initially worried that the year internship wasn’t going to be enough to prepare him for the world of work, but it turns out it was more than enough, with bells on.

DFN Project SEARCH turns around the mindset of young people that there is no chance or hope for them after college. Through the internship, Jacob got the education and the support to be an adult and to experience working life. I can’t shout loud enough about what difference it has made for him, it’s been brilliant.”

“The programme has been lifechanging for me, my Mum and my Dad. It can be a bumpy road to start with, but meeting new people and completing tasks to a high standard makes it all worthwhile. I wouldn’t have a job if it wasn’t for DFN Project SEARCH”. Jacob Barnett

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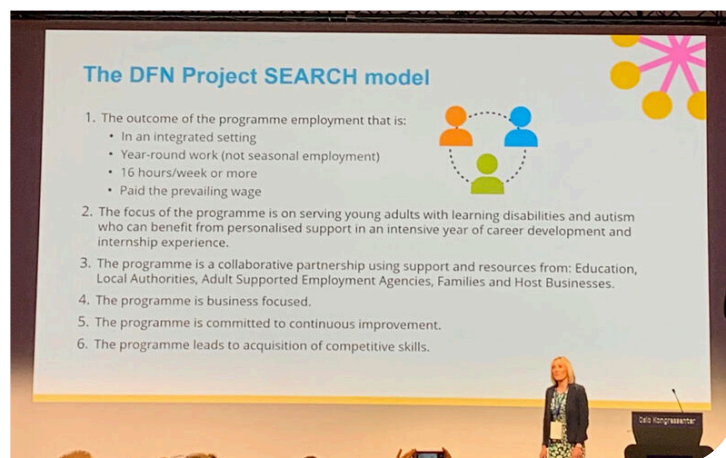
Case study #2

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Business plan



REACHING THE TIPPING POINT – OUR 2030 AMBITIONS

Having successfully delivered our 2020-2023 organisational business plan, in June 2023 we developed a new seven-year strategic business plan which reflects both our significant growth as well as our future ambitions.

Our ambition is to achieve the crucial tipping point, where we, alongside our partners, deliver systemic change across the sector for all young adults with a learning disability who are making their way in the world of work and preparing to thrive as adults.

OUR UPDATED BUSINESS PLAN:

Sustainable organic growth to reach by 2030 **500 sites**

Delivering jobs by 2030

14,000

Increase the number of interns from 1,000 to 4,000 every year

Our five strategic levers:

1. **Consolidate** – increasing employment outcomes for current programme sites
2. **Evolve** – our management, organisation, and governance to support growth
3. **Grow strategically** – focusing on high potential sites and regions with greatest need
4. **Harness learning and data using technology**
5. **Influence national funding and policy**

1. CONSOLIDATE – INCREASING EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES FOR CURRENT PROGRAMME SITES

This lever will address several challenges including ensuring more robust sector wide data to better understand the number of young adults who could benefit from a supported internship, and raising awareness of this as a pathway to positively transition from education to employment. Activity will include a new programme to support our programme graduates over the longer-term and foster career progression and promotion opportunities. This lever will also ensure we maintain quality as we continue to grow.

2. EVOLVE – OUR MANAGEMENT, ORGANISATION, & GOVERNANCE TO SUPPORT GROWTH

This activity will ensure that we have the right structures, processes, and policies in place as we continue to grow.

3. GROW STRATEGICALLY – FOCUSING ON HIGH POTENTIAL SITES & REGIONS WITH THE GREATEST NEED

This will ensure that the young adults we serve remain at the heart of our decision-making process. For example, building strategic partnerships with

national employers so that we can more efficiently and effectively replicate programme across the UK and reach more young people more quickly.

4. HARNESS LEARNING & DATA USING TECHNOLOGY

As an evidence-based organisation, this approach underpins and informs all our activities. We want to better understand why some programme sites are more successful than others, how many young adults could benefit from the programme and establish a return-on-investment model that informs what we should be measuring in terms of outcomes. We aim to share this evidence base across our partnerships and the sector.

5. INFLUENCE FUNDING & POLICY

As we grow and obtain greater evidence and insight, our role and responsibility as an influencer for the whole supported internship sector also grows. This lever recognises the opportunity to influence debate around early years provision, lobby for a kite mark for supported internship programmes, and support the Department for Education to develop better strategies and systems for the collection of robust data on special educational needs nationally.

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NHS contract



THE NHS & DFN PROJECT SEARCH

Our contract with NHS England to deliver 42 new **DFN Project SEARCH** sites was the first major contract for new site development with Europe's biggest employer! It was not just a contractual agreement between parties but was built on mutual trust developed over many years of working with individual NHS Trusts and senior managers at NHS England.

The contract, signed in March 2021, was ambitious. **DFN Project SEARCH** promised to deliver 42 new programmes within three years. The contract was detailed with milestones and metrics and committed to the shared goal of supporting young people with a learning disability or autism spectrum condition into employment inside and outside of the NHS.

MATCHING OUR AMBITIONS

DFN Project SEARCH approached the project with rigour and created a task and finish project management team working with our NHS England commissioners to ensure that the new programmes integrated seamlessly with NHS Trusts across England and that there was a good geographic spread and availability for the young people we serve. The first programmes were up and running in September 2021.

This contract continues to support 420 young people every year and gives them a fantastic opportunity to move into paid employment. Our NHS programmes have great outcomes with over 70% of those on the programme moving into paid work and on salaries that are well above the minimum wage.

A WIN-WIN SCENARIO

The NHS is also keen to see more young people with a learning disability or autism spectrum condition working for the NHS. At **DFN Project SEARCH**, we support the NHS in their ambition to see at least 50% of those moving into employment in the health and social care sectors.

The contract between NHS England and **DFN Project SEARCH** is an example of a real win-win scenario. Many of our NHS programmes have been operational for 10 years or more. This investment in 42 programmes will change thousands of lives for the young people we support and their families in the decades to come and bring many more into the NHS as valued employees.

King's College Hospital partnered with DFN Project SEARCH in September 2021

Sam, 20, was one of seven interns to take part in **DFN Project SEARCH** at King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill, London last year, which was the Trust's first supported internship programme. Six months after his graduation in July 2022, Sam used the skills he gained on his year-long internship to secure a full-time role at the Trust, working in the cardiac department at KCH.

Sam, who has a speaking difficulty, works as an administrator in the team and says that working at King's has made him more confident speaking to people, and his colleagues have been supportive of him.

"I have a speaking difficulty and sometimes I can't pronounce words and I stutter."



"After work, I practice my speaking. I feel like I'm part of Team King's and I don't feel nervous talking to my colleagues. This is my first proper job and I want to impress the team with my work and, so far, I think I am getting the hang of it."

"I want to show people that even though I have a learning difficulty, I can do anything if I put my mind to it. I want to show people that people with learning disabilities can do anything. I am really proud of everything I have achieved and I know I can do a lot more as well."

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Youth Advisory Group, The Alumni Network, Parent & Carer Champions



LATEST UPDATE YOUTH ADVISORY GROUP MEETS IN PERSON

We are thrilled to bring you an update from our Youth Advisory Group, also known as the YAG. Youth Advisory Group is composed of DFN Project SEARCH interns who are currently on a programme within the UK and want to actively participate in our campaigning and advocacy work, as well as help develop the programme around the needs of young people taking part. YAG is committed to ensuring that EVERYONE has equal rights and opportunities to employment by reducing the employment gap for people with learning disabilities and or autism. This year, we were thrilled to host the very first in-person meeting of YAG, taking place in Birmingham, where 12 interns met to discuss how we can educate employers to become more inclusive.

Jason Cherry, a former The Calico Group and DFN Project SEARCH intern, who is now working at Advocacy Focus, participated in the YAG meeting:

"I'm proud to represent young people with disabilities and I want employers to see how great we are. The Youth Advisory Group meeting was brilliant, it was a wonderful day and it was great to meet fellow interns from across the UK."

For his involvement with the YAG, Jason has gone on to win the DFN Project SEARCH Young Advocate of the Year Award.

WHAT'S NEW THE ALUMNI NETWORK

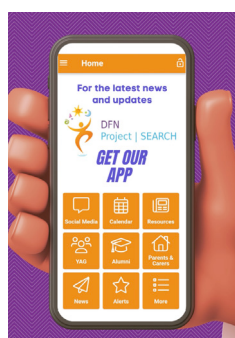
This year, we also launched an Alumni Membership for all graduates of DFN Project SEARCH. This network enables us to engage Alumni through the introduction of new activities, designed to complement the follow-on support that are already experiencing as part of their pathway from the supported

internship site. We value experts with lived experience of the programme. The Alumni network brings us a big step closer to creating a community of support for DFN Project SEARCH and for all young people.

WHAT'S NEXT PARENT & CARER CHAMPIONS

At DFN Project SEARCH, we value the parents and carers of the young people we work with as partners and champions. We try to empower parents from our communities to become champions for the programme, ensuring they have the information and support that they need to look positively towards the future for themselves and their whole families. We want to see parent champions who lead from the front, telling other families that supported internships are a viable option for all young people.

By working in partnership with parents, we can ensure they understand what a supportive internship is and the objectives of supported internships. Through our latest initiatives, parents will have all the information regarding training, long-term support and finances. This will help them make informed choices and support their young person into adulthood.



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Youth Advisory Group, The Alumni Network, Parent & Carer Champions



WE ARE LAUNCHING OUR NEW PARENT CHAMPION TRAINING

We are building Parent Champion Training for people wanting a good understanding of what Supported Internship is and how young people can evaluate if it is a suitable option for them. Parent Champions that we train will be encouraged to connect with Parent Carer Forums local to them, with their Local Authorities and to find out about opportunities and provisions in their region, so they can advise other families in their networks.

Introducing Jason

Jason Cherry has secured his first paid employment with Advocacy Focus as an Administrator. Jason believes his career has taken off because of his participation in a **DFN Project SEARCH** programme which he started in 2022.

Before DFN Project SEARCH

Jason attended Burnley College; he finds communication really difficult. Not everyone understands what it is like being deaf, and there is a lack of Deaf Awareness. English is Jason's second language, and the challenges around British Sign Language compared to the English structure have been complicated. Jason felt that employment was going to be difficult to achieve but was determined.

Jason was aware of **DFN Project SEARCH** as his college delivered it. He was keen to work for Calico and work in the different rotations they had to offer. He didn't want to be unemployed and had achieved everything he wanted in college. He was ready to develop his work skills and most importantly, to find paid employment.

During DFN Project SEARCH

Jason's **DFN Project SEARCH** journey was with Calico. As part of the programme, Jason was involved in two different rotations. The first rotation was with the neighbourhood team. This team is really important and it is resident facing and focused on community. Jason had to overcome a challenge and work within a large team. Although communication was difficult, especially when lots of people talk at the same time, he found the whole experience positive.

During his second rotation, Jason joined Advocacy Focus. Advocacy Focus exists proudly and purely to make a positive difference to the lives of the community who would benefit from having a "voice" that they may otherwise struggle to get heard. Jason is grateful for the opportunity with **DFN Project SEARCH** and would recommend it to others. He says,

"It is important for people with disabilities to overcome discrimination in the workplace."



“ I never thought or imagined the day would come where Jason was travelling independently & employed. He is much more positive about his future, I never thought this would all be possible. ”

Jason's Mum

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10+ year old programmes



When we are aiming to improve the lives of young people, our work must be successful year on year. In 2023, 15 DFN Project SEARCH programmes celebrated their first decade in operation and each year we are proud to add more programmes to that 10+ programme list.

Why is project sustainability and longevity so important?

1. Sustainable programmes ensure that the benefits extend over a long period, which means that the positive changes made in people's lives are maintained.

2. Sustainable programmes attract more involvement from the community – when people feel invested in a programme, they are more likely to support it and build it into future plans for their young people.

3. Sustainability includes the capacity to adapt to changing conditions and needs. A programme designed with sustainability in mind will be able to evolve over time, remaining relevant and effective in improving people's lives.

4. By focusing on sustainability, programmes are more likely to attract continuous investment and offer good value for money for local authorities, educators, and the government.

Incorporating sustainability into DFN Project SEARCH programme design is critical to our success in improving lives. We want to ensure that enduring resources are used effectively and, with many of our programmes celebrating 10 years or more, we can evidence that DFN Project SEARCH is an organisation that people can rely on.

Mary Sweeney at Universal Hospital Wishaw, which celebrated 12 years in 2022

Mary is the first ever DFN Project SEARCH graduate to secure a permanent position as a Clinical Support Worker with NHS Lanarkshire, in November 2019.

During her internship, Mary wanted to be involved in caring for people and did her rotation at the Discharge Lounge of University Hospital Wishaw. Mary excelled in this role and decided that with support she could apply for the Clinical Support Worker Staff Bank course and have a chance to care for patients on the hospital words as her permanent job. Upon completing the course, Mary

was thrilled to be accepted to the NHS Lanarkshire Staff Bank, where she is now working, picking up shifts averaging 35 hours a week.



Mary finds the support she needs to land her dream job at University Hospital Wishaw

Fiona Dawson, Senior Charge Nurse who works with Mary, said: "Mary is excellent with all the patients and relatives, always showing care and compassion. She is a hard-working, valued member of our team and goes above and beyond in her job, even staying late to make patients feel good."

Mary said:

"Without the DFN Project SEARCH course, and the help from all the tutors and staff that I worked alongside, landing this job would never have been possible. I am thankful to every one of them."

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Quality assurance



QUALITY ASSURANCE TEAM

The Quality Assurance Team is a new branch of the Operations Team of **DFN Project SEARCH**. It enables us to adapt to evolving challenges and maximise our impact in achieving meaningful employment for our graduates.

Quality assurance is key to maintaining fidelity to the model, ensuring our programmes achieve high outcomes and are sustainable. Through systematic monitoring and improvement, the Quality Assurance Team seeks to showcase best practice and support innovation and adaptability across our networks.

Our overarching objective is to increase our outcomes. We aim to achieve 80% of all our interns gaining employment. We are also aiming for 70% of all our interns to gain employment matching the **DFN Project SEARCH** criteria of non-seasonal, integrated employment of over 16 hours a week paid at a competitive wage.

So far, we have implemented the following:

- **Individualised Support** Each site is allocated a Programme Impact Coordinator (PIC) who monitors the site, provides targeted training where needed and is available to the site for specific support with any challenges.
- **A RAG Rating System** Allows the PICs (Programme Impact Coordinator) to identify sites that require the most support. Identifies sites engaging in best practice that we can utilise to support other sites.
- **Inset Days** These run 10am – 3pm online once a term to deliver relevant updates, share best practice and provide refresher training on key elements of our model to all onsite teams across the UK and Ireland.
- **Development of Targeted Trainings** Based on common themes drawn down from a SWOT analysis of sites, a range of specific trainings have been designed to be delivered to groups of or individual sites that have challenges in specific areas e.g., recruitment of interns.

- **Resource Updates** The team supported by the wider operations team review and update the portal resources for the UK sites to support model fidelity.

FEEDBACK FROM OUR INSET DAYS:

“ Thanks to everyone it was a fantastic session I learnt a lot from everyone.

Oct 2023

“ Most useful training I have been on in years... Loved the speakers passion.

Jan 2023

Case Study #1

JONATHAN MUNRO

DFN Project SEARCH
Graduate
2023



Jonathan is a inspirational graduate in meaningful employment, transformed from a selective mute to a confident public speaker due to the support and guidance of the DFN Project SEARCH programme and his lecturers.

Before DFN Project SEARCH

Jonathan Munro is neurodiverse, and at an early age was diagnosed with Autism and other learning disabilities. During school he was overwhelmed with anxiety and began to reduce his verbal communications to the extent he was deemed a selective mute, only feeling comfortable enough to speak in his homsetting to his mum, Maxine.

Although he was very clever and enjoyed learning, his inability to socialise and lack of confidence led to loneliness and isolation. The pandemic and online learning also severely triggered his anxiety.

“ Since being in DFN Project SEARCH, Jonathan has found his voice and is using it a lot! ”

In 2022 Jonathan, supported by his mum, applied for the DFN Project SEARCH programme. The programme was a collaboration between D&A College, NHS Tayside, and Dundee Health & Social Care Partnership.

During DFN Project SEARCH

For the first time in 22 years, in an education context, Jonathan spoke at the interview day. From this point on, he continued to speak and develop his verbal communication with the continued support and encouragement from his lecturer and job coach. His mental health has hugely benefited from the engagement and structure, and he has gained a sense of purpose and meaning in the community.

Jonathan’s mum comments:

“Since being in DFN Project SEARCH, Jonathan has found his voice and is using it a lot. The transformation in Jonathan is unrecognisable. There is no doubt in my mind this supportive environment, the continued positive reinforcement, the clear guidance, and the structure that is provided within DFN Project SEARCH, by both Leanne and Nessy, has been paramount in Jon’s development and allowed him to thrive.”

Jonathan’s confidence has grown so much, and he has continued to develop his verbal communication. At the DFN Project SEARCH Graduation in May, he volunteered to speak in front of over 100 people and did it confidently.

After DFN Project SEARCH

Since graduating, Jonathan has progressed into meaningful employment Jonathan is an inspirational role model to all, particularly those who are neurodiverse, and he attributes his development and growth to the support he has had through the DFN Project SEARCH programme, his lecturer and job coach.

Leanne Macdonald, Lecturer in Supported Education at D&A College comments: **“We are all so incredibly proud of Jonathan, his development is life changing. The Nurse Bank staff are very supportive of him, believing in him and always seeing his potential.”**

Jonathan has since gone on to win multiple awards, including the NHS Gold Star Award for his growth and achievements.



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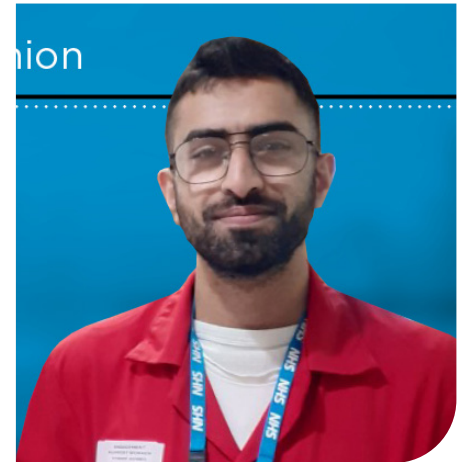
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Case Study #2

TOSEEF AHMED

DFN Project SEARCH
Graduate
2021



Toseef is an Engagement Support Worker at Calderdale & Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust and a former DFN Project SEARCH supported intern.

He has written an article for FE Week magazine describing his experiences as a supported intern at the Trust and his journey to permanent employment.

“ A supported internship changed my prospects and could help your learners too. ”

His Story, His Words

Before his internship, Toseef studied in Carlderdale College. You can read Toseef's story in his own words in this FE Week article by clicking [here](#).

“ It turns out that not only could I work on the ward, but because I am compassionate and pay attention to needs, I could really help patients – sometimes better than any of the permanent staff on the ward. For listening to and helping patients and developing tools like translation sheets to improve our work, I was given a Calderdale and Huddersfield Foundation Trust star award. It's a moment I am really proud of. ”

FEWEEK

A supported internship changed my prospects and could help your learners too



Toseef Ahmed explains how his supported internship has been a win-win for him, his team and his employer



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Case Study #3

SOHAIL AMJED

DFN Project SEARCH
Graduate
2022

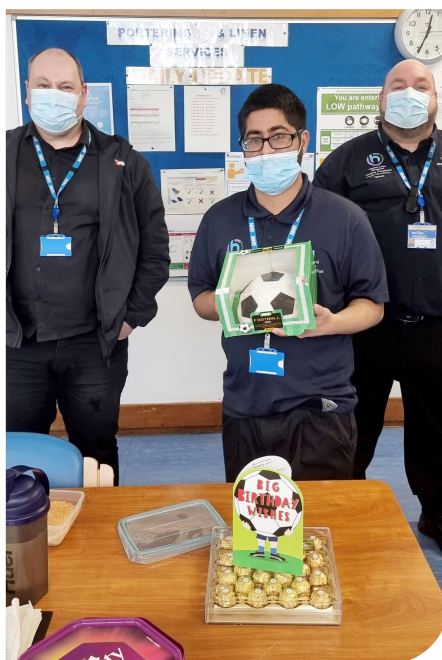


Sohail joined us in September 2021 and made a massive impact from the start, he was loved by the staff everywhere he went.

He was not sure what he wanted to do when he started, but he went off to join Calderdale & Huddersfield Solution to try Portering for his first placement. Sohail loved it and the team loved having him around. His confidence grew and grew, and his personality shone through. In fact, while job coaching him over there it didn't take him long to say "Please leave me alone now, you are cramping my style!"

Sohail then went on to work in Ingleton Falls for ISS, where again his personality shone through, and he was described as hard work but a great laugh. It was during this placement that he realised he would like to find paid employment as a kitchen assistant and so started applying for these roles.

In July 2022, the interns went on a trip with Halifax Opportunities Trust, looking behind the scenes at many local businesses to find out what they did and what kind of jobs they had. This trip included a trip to the Piece Hall in Halifax, where they bumped into a man who was just about to open a brand-new restaurant, The Astronomer. Sohail wasted



no time at all and went off to talk to the owner, telling him he had applied for a job there as a kitchen assistant but had not heard, and went on to tell the man all about his work placements on **DFN Project SEARCH**, how hard-working he was and what an asset he would be to the company. The man agreed and invited Sohail for a work trial, after half a day Sohail was offered a full-time paid role. He is now working about 40 hours per week as a kitchen assistant and absolutely loves it!

The Portering team at HRI got him a card, present and cake for his birthday!



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Thank you to our supporters



We are pleased to report another successful year of fundraising with total fundraised income at over £1.3 million during the reporting year. We are extremely grateful to all our supporters for funding our work - helping us to expand the number and impact of our programmes and giving more young people with a learning disability and/or autism spectrum condition the opportunity to live more independent, happier and healthier lives.

Trusts and foundations continue to make up the majority of our fundraising income, including a new multi-year pledge from the Pears Foundation who are providing much needed funding to help support the expansion of our programmes and the number of young adults that we can reach, and also The Robertson Trust, which has enabled us to recruit a dedicated Programme Specialist to support our work in Scotland.

“ For young people with a learning disability or autism, the transition from school to adulthood is often particularly difficult. We are delighted to support DFN Project Search and their model of supported internship opportunities alongside personalised coaching which has a proven track record of improved and sustained employment outcomes. ”

Sir Trevor Pears CMG, Executive Chair, Pears Foundation

“ Through our Work Pathways theme, we aim to support work which improves employability services and rates for groups that are underrepresented in the labour market.

Research has overwhelmingly highlighted the transformational impact of high quality, secure employment on wellbeing. By opening up more opportunities to those with Additional Special Needs in Scotland, this programme has the potential to contribute to a more inclusive employment landscape and help more young people achieve financial, social and emotional independence.

We are delighted to support this work and look forward to learning from DFN Project Search to build our own knowledge around positive transitions from education to work.

Gillian Morton, Funding Officer, The Robertson Trust

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Thank you to our supporters



Jon Robards and Carmel McKeogh at Amazon Head Office

ENSURING FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

We are working towards diversifying our fundraising income streams to meet the increased growth of our programmes and ensure financial sustainability. This will include greater focus on major individual donors and corporate partnerships.

This year, we worked towards expanding our Supporters' Circle membership, which enables supporters to help transform the life chances of the young adults we support by providing valuable unrestricted funding. The **DFN Project SEARCH** supported internship model relies on successful relationships with businesses and so we are also looking to develop several transformational partnerships with some of these businesses over the course of the next year.

We would like to thank all of those who have generously supported our work this year, including:

David Forbes-Nixon
Charitable Foundation

The Henry Smith Charity

Youth Futures Foundation

Garfield Weston Foundation

Paul Hamlyn Foundation

The Robertson Trust

Pears Foundation

Leo Lion Foundation

The Hummingbird Foundation

Charlotte Warner
and Bruno Paulson

And our funders who wish to remain anonymous.

DFN Charitable Foundation

The
Henry Smith
Charity
founded in 1628

youth
futures
FOUNDATION

W
Garfield Weston
FOUNDATION

phf Paul Hamlyn
Foundation

R The
ROBERTSON
Trust

Pears
Foundation

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“ We recently entered into a strategic partnership, which is growing the internship opportunities across the Sodexo network. DFN Project SEARCH are a fantastic organisation to partner with, and we look forward to what we can achieve together throughout 2024. ”

Richard Sharpe, Regional Facilities Lead, Sodexo.

We want to say a heartfelt thank you to all our delivery partners and networks. Without you, our work and our impact would not be possible. Here is a small sample of all the fantastic organisations we are grateful to for their support:



Trustees' report on financial and other statutory matters

For the year ended 31 August 2023

Trustees' report on financial and other statutory matters

The Trustees of DFN Project SEARCH are pleased to present their Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 August 2023, which have been prepared to meet the requirements for a Directors' Report and Accounts for Companies Act purposes.

The Financial Statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the accounts and comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006, the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005, the Charity Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended), the Charities Act 2011, the Charity's Memorandum and Articles of Association and the "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to Charities preparing accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (effective 1 January 2019).

DFN Project SEARCH was registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales (No. 1183834) on 11 June 2019 and is a company limited by guarantee (No. 11488209); the company was incorporated on 28 July 2018. DFN Project SEARCH was registered with the Scottish Charity Regulator (No. SC049891) on 23 January 2020.

Charitable objectives

DFN Project SEARCH's charitable objectives are specifically restricted to the advancement of the education of young people with additional needs in vocational and employability skills so as to develop their capabilities that they may grow to full maturity as individuals and members of society. Activities in support of this include:

- 01** Granting licenses to partner organisations to deliver the DFN Project SEARCH programme in their local area
- 02** Providing training and support to partner organisations to deliver the DFN Project SEARCH programme: and
- 03** Conducting quality assurance and improvement of every programme to ensure that the DFN Project SEARCH programme is being carried out effectively.

Demonstrating public benefit

The Trustees are aware of the Charity Commission guidance on Charity and Public Benefit and confirm that they have complied with the duty in Section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to it. The Trustees consider that the information contained within the Trustees' Report about the Charity's aims, activities and achievements demonstrates the benefit to the public.

Financial review

Following the change of accounting reference date to align with the academic year, these Financial Statements reflect the first full year of financials to 31 August.

During 2022/23 DFN Project SEARCH experienced a transformative year following the start of the Internships Work partnership in September 2022, focusing on the growth of supported internships throughout England. DFN Project SEARCH also experienced continuing success throughout Scotland, Wales and Ireland. As a result, the operations team was expanded in late 2022 to keep up with demand for the DFN Project SEARCH programme and furthering the roll out of supported internships throughout the U.K.

The Trustees are also delighted to report on the success of the charity's fundraising strategy, which has enabled DFN Project SEARCH to expand its offering and supplement the cost of running the supported internships programme.

Income generated from fundraising activities amounted to £1,684,093 compared to £961,716 raised in the eight month financial period to 31 August 2022. Of this amount £493,124 (2022 £359,823) is in the form of restricted funds and £156,296 (2022 £76,643) in the form of donated goods and services from the Social Business Trust as set out in note 3.

Income generated from the DFN Project SEARCH programme (after adjusting for deferred income per note 17) was £1,542,564 (2022 £91,600) as set out in note 4.

This reflects a combination of licence fees, the Internships Work commission plus training courses.

Other sales, including the provision of services to external organisations, totalled £46,020 (2022 £23,100) as set out in note 5.

Expenditure relating to fundraising activities amounted to £170,938 (2022 £115,956) as set out in note 6.

Direct costs consist primarily of the employment costs and expenses of the Programme Specialists and Associates, together with payment of the master franchise fee and other support from the Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Centre (CCHMC); these costs totalled £1,123,125 (2022 £399,074) as set out in note 7.

Costs directly related to Project SEARCH for management and support costs totalled £678,926 (2022 £392,647) as set out in note 8.

The Trustees are pleased to report a net movement of funds of £1,339,482 for the year (2022 £200,906). The Trustees are mindful that a significant proportion of the 37 month Internships Work contract was received in the first 12 months, and that the expansion of the DFN Project SEARCH team in 2022/23 will lead to increased expenditure after 31 August 2023. With this in mind the Trustees have set up a designated fund to cover future costs as set out in note 21.

Use of resources

The Trustees consider it prudent to maintain resources at a level to enable the Charity to continue to fund its core services over a period of time in the event of a significant drop in funding. During the year the Trustees reviewed the reserves policy and considered that a period of three to six months remains a sufficient time frame (2022 three to six months) for this purpose. At the current level of operations this indicates a level of reserves in the range of £583,500 to £1,167,000; at the year-end unrestricted reserves total £1,847,032, of which a designated fund makes up £850,000. Remaining general unrestricted funds amounts to £997,032.

In light of the Internships Work commission running until March 2025, the trustees have recognised a new designated fund of £850,000 to ensure the obligations of running the Internships Work contract will be met. Due to the structure of the contract, with £1.1m of the total £1.7m funding provided within the first 12 months to August 2023, adequate reserves are required to cover the remaining 25 months of the contract.

The Trustees recognise that the level of unrestricted reserves is greater than target, but given the rapid growth achieved in the current financial year and the expected growth in future years, these will serve as a firm base as the DFN Project SEARCH programme continues to be rolled out in a difficult economic environment.

In order to guarantee the future of DFN Project SEARCH the Trustees are focused on securing multi year grant funding to ensure the programme can continue to support young adults far into the future.

Risk management

The management team have developed a register of significant risks that the charity is, or potentially could be, exposed to. There is an established risk assessment process which includes practical operational mitigation procedures. Responsibility for each class of risk is reflected within the register.

The Trustees and CEO regularly review the register to address any changes in the likelihood and impact of each risk and risk mitigation measures are considered. The register is updated regularly to reflect new and changing risks.

Diversity

Respecting diversity is one of DFN Project SEARCH's key values and we are committed to being an inclusive organisation where diversity is welcomed and valued. Through our programmes, DFN Project SEARCH strives to promote a culture where people treat each other with mutual respect regardless of age, disability, gender, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment, race, religion and belief or sexual orientation.

Fundraising standards information

DFN Project SEARCH's main fundraising approach is to establish a small number of larger partnerships with trusts and foundations, statutory funders, companies and high net worth individuals. We don't currently make appeals to the public. We don't contract fundraising to external third parties but do put in place commercial participator agreements and other contracts and gift agreements as and when required.

We are registered with the Fundraising Regulator and comply with its Fundraising Code of Practice. Fundraising is also carried out in line with our Ethical Fundraising Policy, which also references how we protect vulnerable people when fundraising. We have not received any fundraising complaints during this accounting period. Our fundraising complaints process is set out on our website.

Structure, governance and management

The charity is a company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 28 July 2018 and was registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales (charity number 1183834) on 11 June 2019.

The charity was established under a Memorandum of Association which established the objects and powers of the charitable company (as amended) and is governed under its Articles of Association. The charity was registered with the Scottish Charity Regulator on 23 January 2020 (charity number SC049891).

The Board of Trustees is responsible for the overall governance of the charity and meets as a board at least three times a year. In addition, various sub-committees meet regularly to address financial and operational issues reporting to the Board.

The Trustees, who are also directors for the purposes of company law, and who have served since the end of the previous year (unless indicated otherwise) are:

- David Forbes-Nixon OBE (Chair)
- Nicola Brentnall (resigned 13 September 2022)
- Elaine Colquhoun (resigned 20 October 2022)
- Mark Hudson (Vice Chair)
- Steve Mills (appointed 24 November 2022)
- Lelabari Kogbara
- Janet Riehle
- Susan Rutowski
- Tina Scott (appointed 20 October 2022)
- Anthony Hyde (appointed 15 November 2023)
- Emily Sun

The number of Trustees shall not be less than two. None of the Trustees receive remuneration or other benefit from their work for the charity other than fees paid one Trustee for work undertaken as an Associate as set out in note 23 (2022 – one Trustee). Expenses incurred by the Trustees in the performance of their duties are reimbursed. None of the Trustees has any beneficial interest in the company. All of the Trustees are members of the company and guarantee to contribute £1 in the event of a winding up.

Trustee selection and induction

The Trustees review regularly the composition of the Board and its various sub-committees. When a vacancy arises, the Trustees look at the blend of experience and skills of Trustees to ensure that these meet the needs of the charity and instigate a recruitment process if required. This will involve advertising both locally and nationally as well as more informal approaches to individuals who have the relevant skills and experience.

All new Trustees are invited to attend induction training with the Chair and CEO. New Trustees are briefed on their legal obligations under charity and company law, on their role and responsibilities as Trustees, the Charity Commission guidance on public benefit, the content of the governing document, the decision making process, the business plans and recent financial performance of the charity.

Statement of Trustees' responsibilities and corporate governance

The Trustees, who are also the directors of **DFN Project SEARCH** for the purposes of company law, are responsible for preparing the Trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland".

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial period which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of those resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charity for that period.

In preparing these statements, the Trustees are required to:

- 01 Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- 02 Observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP
- 03 Make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- 04 State whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- 05 Prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Charity will continue in business

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the Charity’s transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006, the Charities and Trustee Investment Act (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Account (Scotland) Regulations 2008 (as amended). They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the charity and financial information included on the charity’s website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

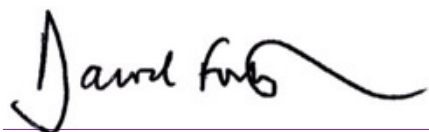
Auditor

Dixon Wilson Audit Services LLP were appointed as auditor to the charitable company and a resolution proposing that they be re-appointed will be put at a General Meeting.

Discloser of Information to Auditor

The Trustees who were in office on the date of the approval of these financial statements, having made reasonable enquiry, have collectively confirmed that, as far as they are aware, there is no relevant audit information undisclosed to the company's auditor and that they have taken the steps that they ought to have taken as Trustees in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that it has been communicated to the auditor.

This report was approved by the Board of Trustees and signed on its behalf by:



David Forbes-Nixon OBE (Chair)

Dated: 8th May 2024



Mark Hudson (Vice Chair)

Dated: 8th May 2024

Independent Auditor's report to the members of DFN Project SEARCH

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of DFN Project Search (the 'charitable company') for the year ended 31 August 2023, which comprise the statement of financial activities, balance sheet, statement of cash flows and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 August 2023 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- meet the requirements of the Charities Act 2011, the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and regulation 8 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended).

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our

other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material

inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended) require us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the information given in the financial statements is inconsistent in any material respect with the Trustees' report;
- sufficient accounting records have not been kept;
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of Trustees

As explained more fully in the Trustees' responsibilities statement set out on page 28 and 29, the Trustees (who are also directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the directors either intend to liquidate the company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditor under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and section 44(1)c of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and report in accordance with the Acts and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

We gained an understanding of the legal and regulatory framework applicable to the charitable company by considering, amongst other things, the sector in which it operates, and considered the risk of acts by the charitable company that were contrary to applicable laws and regulations, including fraud. We designed audit procedures to respond to the risk, but recognised that the risk of not detecting a material misstatement due to fraud is higher than the risk of not detecting one resulting from error, as fraud may involve deliberate concealment by, for example, forgery or intentional misrepresentations, or through collusion.

We focused on laws and regulations which could give rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements, including, but not limited to, the Charities Act 2011, the Companies Act 2006, the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006.

Our tests included agreeing the financial statement disclosures to underlying supporting documentation, enquiries with management and enquiries of third parties.

As in all our audits, we also addressed the risk management override internal controls, including testing journals and evaluating whether there was any evidence of bias by the Trustees that represented a risk of material misstatement due to fraud.

There are inherent limitations in the audit procedures described above and, the further removed non-compliance with laws and regulations is from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, the less likely we would become aware of it. We did not identify any key audit matters relating to irregularities, including fraud.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: www.frc.org.uk/ auditor's responsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's Trustees, as a body, in accordance with Part 4 of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and regulation 10 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's Trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's Trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



Dated: 15th May 2024

Dixon Wilson Audit Services LLP - Statutory Auditor

22 Chancery Lane
London
EC2A 1LS

Dixon Wilson Audit Services LLP is eligible to act as an auditor in terms of section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

Financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

For the year ended 31 August 2023

Current financial period	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Unrestricted operations funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
<u>Income and endowments from:</u>						
Donations	3	1,190,969	-	493,124	1,684,093	961,716
Charitable activities	4	1,542,564	-	-	1,542,564	91,600
Other income	5	46,020	-	-	46,020	23,100
Total income		2,779,553	-	493,124	3,272,677	1,076,416
<u>Expenditure on:</u>						
Raising funds	6	169,972	-	966	170,938	115,956
Charitable activities	7	1,314,237	-	448,928	1,763,165	757,761
Total expenditure		1,484,209	-	449,894	1,934,103	873,717
Net income		1,295,344	-	43,230	1,338,574	202,699
Transfers between funds		(850,000)	850,000	-	-	-
<u>Other recognised gains and losses:</u>						
Other gains/ (losses)	13	908	-	-	908	(1,793)
Net movement in funds		446,252	850,000	43,230	1,339,482	200,906
<u>Reconciliation of funds:</u>						
Fund balances at 1 September 2022		550,780	-	176,855	727,635	526,729
Fund balances at 31 August 2023		997,032	850,000	220,085	2,067,117	727,635

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

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

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

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

For the year ended 31 August 2023

Prior financial period	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2022 £	Restricted funds 2022 £	Total 2022 £
<u>Income and endowments from:</u>				
Donations	3	601,893	359,823	961,716
Charitable activities	4	91,600	-	91,600
Other income	5	23,100	-	23,100
Total income		716,593	359,823	1,076,416
<u>Expenditure on:</u>				
Raising funds	6	115,390	566	115,956
Charitable activities	7	561,379	196,382	757,761
Total expenditure		676,769	196,948	873,717
Net income		39,824	162,875	202,699
<u>Other recognised gains and losses:</u>				
Other losses	13	(1,793)	-	(1,793)
Net movement in funds		38,031	162,875	200,906
<u>Reconciliation of funds:</u>				
Fund balances at 1 January 2022		512,749	13,980	526,729
Fund balances at 31 August 2022		550,780	176,855	727,635

BALANCE SHEET

As at 31 August 2023

	Notes	2023		2022	
		£	£	£	£
Current assets					
Debtors	14	1,083,959		438,664	
Cash at bank and in hand		1,268,352		771,045	
		2,352,311		1,209,709	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	16	273,194		296,074	
Net current assets			2,079,117		913,635
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	17		(12,000)		(186,000)
Net assets			2,067,117		727,635
The funds of the charity					
Restricted income funds	20		220,085		176,855
Unrestricted funds - general			997,032		550,780
Unrestricted funds - operations fund			850,000		-
			2,067,117		727,635

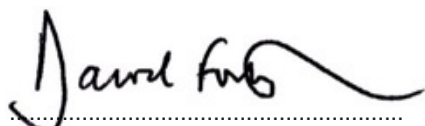
The company is entitled to the exemption from the audit requirement contained in section 477 of the Companies Act 2006, for the year ended 31 August 2023, although an audit has been carried out under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011.

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

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements under the requirements of the Companies Act 2006, for the year in question in accordance with section 476.

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

The financial statements were approved by the trustees on 8th May 2024.



D Forbes-Nixon OBE (Chair)
Trustee



M B B Hudson (Vice Chair)
Trustee

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

For the year ended 31 August 2023

	Notes	2023 £	2022 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Cash generated from operations	24	497,307	540,050
Net cash used in investing activities		-	-
Net cash used in financing activities		-	-
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents		497,307	540,050
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year		771,045	230,995
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year		1,268,352	771,045

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 31 August 2023

1 ACCOUNTING POLICIES**Charity information**

DFN Project Search is a private company limited by guarantee incorporated in England and Wales. The registered office is 8-10 Grosvenor Gardens, London, SW1W 0DH.

In the event of the charity being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per member of the charity.

1.1 Reporting period

Following the change of accounting reference date to 31 August in the prior period, comparative figures and related notes within this set of Financial Statements are not entirely comparable as they reflect a period of eight months compared to twelve months for the year to 31 August 2023.

1.2 Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the charity's governing document, the Companies Act 2006, the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005, the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended) and "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019)". The charity is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

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

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

1.3 Going concern

The Trustees consider that at the end of the period the charity has sufficient resources to undertake planned projects in the next 3-5 years. The Trustees do acknowledge the ongoing uncertainty faced by many charities and businesses as a result of recent events and the impact this will cause to funding and overheads.

The Trustees are therefore appreciative of the David Forbes-Nixon Charitable Foundation which has indicated its willingness to support the operations of DFN Project SEARCH (subject to conditions) if required in the future.

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

1.4 Charitable funds

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

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

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

1.5 Income

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

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

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

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 August 2023

1 ACCOUNTING POLICIES (CONTINUED)**1.5 Income (continued)**

Assets given for use by the charity are recognised when receivable at the fair value of the assets received. Donated services are recognised when the charity has received the service and is measured as the amount the charity would pay on the open market for an alternative service that would provide an equivalent benefit.

Where the charity has entered into a contract for the supply of services over a period exceeding one year, income is recognised within the accounts based on the most reliable estimate of the right to receive payment for the work performed:

Project SEARCH licence fees - on a time-apportioned basis associated with the expected delivery of that service over the life of the contract.

'Internships Work' contract - based on the proportion of costs incurred for work performed to date compared with the total estimated costs to completion.

1.6 Expenditure

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the Charity in the delivery of its charitable activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them.

Governance costs are associated with meeting the constitutional and statutory arrangements of the Charity, including external audit and the cost of preparing statutory accounts, the cost of Trustees' meetings and other costs involved with the Charity's strategic management.

All costs are allocated between the expenditure categories of the Statement of Financial Activities on a basis designed to reflect the use of the resource. Wherever possible, costs relating to a particular activity are allocated directly; others are apportioned on the basis of the ratio of resources expended in respect of each charitable activity.

Irrecoverable VAT is included with the items of expenditure to which it relates.

1.7 Tangible fixed assets

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

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

IT equipment	2 year straight line method
--------------	-----------------------------

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

1.8 Cash and cash equivalents

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

1.9 Financial instruments

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

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

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

Basic financial assets

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

Basic financial liabilities

Basic financial liabilities, including creditors and bank loans are initially recognised at transaction price unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction,

where the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial liabilities classified as payable within one year are not amortised.

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

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

1.10 Employee benefits

Where material the cost of any unused holiday entitlement is recognised in the period in which the employees' services are received.

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

1.11 Retirement benefits

The Charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme for employees whereby the assets of the scheme are held separately within an independently administered fund.

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

1.12 Foreign exchange

Transactions in currencies other than pounds sterling are recorded at the rates of exchange prevailing at the dates of the transactions. At each reporting end date, monetary assets and liabilities that are denominated in foreign currencies are retranslated at the rates prevailing on the reporting end date. Gains and losses arising on translation are included in net income/(expenditure) for the period.

2 CRITICAL ACCOUNTING ESTIMATES AND JUDGEMENTS

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

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

Critical judgements

The Board do not feel that any critical judgements of a material nature have been made in the process of applying the Charity's accounting policies, other than those including estimation, that have had a significant effect on the amounts reported in the financial statements.

Key sources of estimation uncertainty

Deferred income

As set out in note 1.5 above, in respect of the Project SEARCH licence fees, where the Charity has entered into contracts for the supply of services over a period exceeding one year, income is recognised within the accounts on a time apportioned basis associated with the expected delivery of that service over the life of the contract.

In applying this policy the Board acknowledge that the recognition of income under each Project SEARCH Licence agreement is dependent on the completion of each stage under the contract.

To the extent that timing of the delivery of each stage of the contract is not known with certainty the Board have applied estimates based on the expected timing of the delivery of the service.

Details of income deferred to subsequent periods in accordance with the above are set out in note 19.

Donated services

The value of donated services is an estimate of the market value of the services based on similar projects. As set out in note 3, the value of donated services received by the Charity in the year was £156,296 (2022 £76,643).

3 INCOME FROM DONATIONS AND LEGACIES

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total 2023 £	Unrestricted funds 2022 £	Restricted funds 2022 £	Total 2022 £
Donations and gifts	1,034,673	493,124	1,527,797	525,250	359,823	885,073
Donated goods and services	156,296	-	156,296	76,643	-	76,643
	1,190,969	493,124	1,684,093	601,893	359,823	961,716

Donations and gifts includes forward pledges from funders for amounts receivable in future years of £250,000 (2022 £nil) as required by Charity SORP.

4 INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	2023 £	2022 £
Charitable activities		
'Internships Work' commission	1,136,852	-
Project SEARCH licence fees	350,833	91,600
Training courses and other programme-related work	54,879	-
	1,542,564	91,600

During the year DFN Project SEARCH provided services to the Department for Education through the 'Internships Work' commission in partnership with NDTi and BASE. The contract, worth £1.7m to DFN Project SEARCH, covers the period from September 2022 to March 2025. Income has been recognised under the recognition principles set out in note 1.5.

5 OTHER INCOME

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Unrestricted funds 2022 £
Services provided to the DFN Foundation	16,313	10,131
Other sales	2,381	5,680
Reimbursement of support worker costs from Access to Work	27,326	7,289
	46,020	23,100

6 EXPENDITURE ON RAISING FUNDS

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total 2023 £	Unrestricted funds 2022 £	Total 2022 £	Unrestricted funds 2021 £
Fundraising and publicity						
Governance costs	4,329	-	4,329	4,914	-	4,914
Staging fundraising events	3,772	-	3,772	10,523	-	10,523
Other fundraising costs	12,381	966	13,347	6,452	566	7,018
Staff costs	114,933	-	114,933	64,455	-	64,455
Support costs	34,557	-	34,557	29,046	-	29,046
	169,972	966	170,938	115,390	566	115,956

7 EXPENDITURE ON CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	Charitable activities 2023 £	Charitable activities 2022 £
Direct costs		
Staff costs	745,720	230,424
Other direct costs	170,833	80,414
Bad debts	20,064	5,000
UK conference costs	40,772	3,466
Overseas conference costs	12,592	15,342
Franchise fee and support costs	87,099	49,544
Support worker	46,045	14,884
	1,123,125	399,074
Share of support and governance costs (see note 8)		
Support	603,224	334,770
Governance	36,816	23,917
	1,763,165	757,761
Analysis by fund		
Unrestricted funds - general	1,314,237	561,379
Restricted funds	448,928	196,382
	1,763,165	757,761

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 August 2023

8 SUPPORT COSTS ALLOCATED TO ACTIVITIES

	Basis of allocation	Fundraising 2023 £	Charitable activities 2023 £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Staff costs	Direct allocation	-	115,284	115,284	66,375
Management costs	Direct allocation	-	133,282	133,282	80,699
Website costs and hosting	Resources expended	157	1,336	1,493	12,499
Staff travel and accommodation	Direct allocation	-	5,394	5,394	4,266
IT and communication costs	Direct allocation	-	49,303	49,303	9,508
Training and recruitment costs	Direct allocation	-	4,558	4,558	6,261
Strategy and consulting	Resources expended	20,233	172,082	192,315	75,043
Public relations	Resources expended	8,945	76,082	85,027	95,524
Safeguarding and GDPR	Direct allocation	-	1,483	1,483	168
Administration costs	Resources expended	5,222	44,420	49,642	13,473
Governance		4,329	36,816	41,145	28,831
		38,886	640,040	678,926	392,647

GOVERNANCE COSTS COMPRISE:

	2023 £	2022 £
Audit fees	15,886	8,400
Accountancy	16,037	19,651
Legal and professional	3,937	304
Board meeting expenditure	5,285	476
	41,145	28,831

Strategy and consulting includes £156,296 (2022 £75,043) of donated services from the Social Business Trust (note 3).

9 AUDITOR'S REMUNERATION

Fees payable to the charity's auditor and associates:

	2023 £	2022 £
For audit services		
Audit of the financial statements	16,800	8,000

10 TRUSTEES

None of the trustees received any remuneration from the charity during the year (2022 £nil).

Three Trustees were reimbursed expenditure, or had expenses paid by the charity on their behalf, in the year totalling £486 for hospitality, travel and other expenses. (2022 £nil: no trustees).

11 MANAGEMENT COSTS OF THE CEO

As in the previous reporting period DFN Project SEARCH continued to employ the services of the CEO in a dual role with the DFN Foundation. The roles were combined in 2020 to serve the education and employability objectives set out by DFN Project SEARCH, in conjunction with the DFN MoveForward programme (operated within the DFN Foundation).

All employment costs of the CEO were met by the DFN Foundation and the proportion of the employment costs relating to DFN Project SEARCH are recharged.

The total costs recharged from the DFN Foundation during the period amounted to £131,652 (2022 £78,058), plus irrecoverable VAT relating to the recharges amounting to £1,630 (2022 £2,640). The total costs incurred from the CEO recharge are therefore £133,282 (2022 £80,699).

These costs are disclosed within note 8. Costs of £65,826 (2022 £36,890) are expended by the restricted funds disclosed in note 20.

12 EMPLOYEES

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

	2023 Number	2022 Number
Productive	18	7
Management	2	4
Fundraising	2	-
Total	22	11

	2023 £	2022 £
Employment costs		
Wages and salaries	844,704	315,432
Social security costs	82,480	31,055
Other pension costs	48,753	14,767
	975,937	361,254

12 EMPLOYEES (CONTINUED)

The number of employees whose annual remuneration was more than £60,000 is as follows:

	2023 Number	2022 Number
£70,000 - £79,999	1	-

For the comparative eight month period to 31 August 2022 the Board opted to report employees remuneration of £60,000 per annum at the eight month equivalent of £40,000 for that reporting period.

In the year to 31 August 2023, one employee received remuneration between £70,000 - £79,999 (2022 £40,000 - £46,666: one employee). Remuneration for this purpose includes gross salary and employer national insurance contributions. Contributions totalling £2,642 (2022 £1,761) were made to defined contribution schemes on behalf of employees whose emoluments exceed £60,000 (£40,000 for the period to 31 August 2022).

During the year the cost of a Finance Director was shared with David Forbes-Nixon Charitable Foundation. The DFN Foundation was invoiced for a proportion of the employment costs incurred as set out in note 5.

The employment costs recharged to the DFN Foundation for the Finance Director's services during the period totalled £16,313 (2022 £10,131).

13 OTHER GAINS OR LOSSES

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Unrestricted funds 2022 £
Gains/(losses) upon:		
Foreign exchange	908	(1,793)

14 DEBTORS

	2023 £	2022 £
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Trade debtors	112,268	51,223
Other debtors	943,869	367,720
Prepayments and accrued income	27,822	19,721
	1,083,959	438,664

Other debtors of £943,869 (2022 £367,720) includes an outstanding donation of £500,000 which was pledged and approved before the year end.

15 CONTINGENT ASSET

During the period to 31 August 2022, DFN Project SEARCH received a pledge of £1.5m over three years from a donor who wishes to remain anonymous. The first instalment of £500,000 was received during the period to 31 August 2022. The second instalment of £500,000 was approved during the year to 31 August 2023 and paid post-year end, and is recognised within note 3 of the Financial Statements. The outstanding balance of the pledge amounts to £500,000 (2022 £1,000,000) at the year end.

Payment of the balance is subject to the terms and conditions of the gift agreement. The donor has the right to withhold any unpaid amount and, on this basis, the unapproved balance is not recognised within the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 August 2023.

16 CREDITORS - AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	Notes	2023 £	2022 £
Other taxation and social security		41,492	14,884
Deferred income	19	96,000	175,000
Payments received on account		20,814	-
Trade creditors		23,076	28,234
Accruals and deferred income		91,812	77,956
		273,194	296,074

17 CREDITORS - AMOUNTS FALLING DUE AFTER MORE THAN ONE YEAR

	Notes	2023 £	2022 £
Deferred income	19	12,000	186,000

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 August 2023

18 RETIREMENT BENEFIT SCHEMES**Defined contribution schemes**

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme for all qualifying employees. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the charity in an independently administered fund. The company contributes a specified percentage of payroll costs to the retirement pension scheme to fund the benefits. The only obligation of the company with respect to the scheme is to make the specified contributions.

The charge to the statement of financial activities in respect of defined contribution schemes is £48,753 (2022 £14,767).

19 DEFERRED INCOME

	2023 £	2022 £
Arising from services provided	108,000	361,000

Deferred income is included in the financial statements as follows:

	2023 £	2022 £
Deferred income is included within:		
Current liabilities	96,000	175,000
Non-current liabilities	12,000	186,000
	108,000	361,000
Movements in the year:		
Deferred income at 1 September 2022	361,000	368,600
Released from previous periods	(263,000)	(37,600)
Resources deferred in the year	10,000	30,000
Deferred income at 31 August 2023	108,000	361,000

Licence Fees

Working within the framework of the Franchise Agreement a one off fee is charged for the creation of a Project SEARCH Site to contribute to the costs of establishing the partnership and the support network vital to each unique project. Once established ongoing services, support and training is made available for which an annual fee is charged.

In setting up each site, and in working with the site partners, each Programme Specialist undertakes a series of tasks commencing in the preparation year prior to operation and concluding with a mandatory Continuous Improvement Review and follow up consultation in the year after the first year of operation; overall a three year cycle.

In keeping with the guidance in the SORP part of any fees received for the set up of each site is deferred to subsequent periods on the basis of the proportion of the work to deliver the programme over a three year cycle.

20 RESTRICTED FUNDS

The restricted funds of the charity comprise the unexpended balances of donations and grants held on trust subject to specific conditions by donors as to how they may be used.

	At 1 September 2022 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	At 31 August 2023 £
Charity Running Costs	89,357	250,124	(263,816)	75,665
West Midlands Development	68,945	100,000	(80,882)	88,063
Youth Advisory Group	18,553	33,000	(44,926)	6,627
Strategic Growth in Scotland	-	50,000	(34,846)	15,154
North and North West England	-	60,000	(25,424)	34,576
	176,855	493,124	(449,894)	220,085

Previous period:

	At 1 January 2022 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	At 31 August 2022 £
Charity Running Costs	13,980	239,823	(164,446)	89,358
West Midlands Development	-	90,000	(21,055)	68,945
Youth Advisory Group	-	30,000	(11,447)	18,553
	13,980	359,823	(196,948)	176,855

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (continued)

For the year ended 31 August 2023

Charity running costs

The restricted fund consists of grants from The Henry Smith Charitable Foundation and the Youth Futures Foundation towards the charity's running costs.

The Trustees express their continued appreciation to The Henry Smith Charitable Foundation for the grant of £629,000 pledged in 2021 for a period of four years, subject to performance related conditions. The instalments of the grant are recognised once the performance related conditions for each payment have been met.

The Trustees continue to be grateful to the Youth Futures Foundation for their pledge of £194,250 in 2021, since uplifted to £202,882. At the year end instalments had been received totalling £175,947. Each instalment of the grant is recognised once the performance related condition has been met.

West Midlands Development

The Trustees are thankful to the Garfield Weston Foundation for their commitment of £290,000 over three years. The grant is aimed at development within the West Midlands region of the UK and instalments of the grant are recognised when performance related conditions have been met.

At the year end £80,882 had been incurred in respect of the above fund.

Youth Advisory Group

The Paul Hamlyn Foundation generously pledged £90,000 over three years in 2022, since uplifted to £96,000, to support the Youth Advisory Group, subject to performance related conditions. Each instalment of the grant is recognised when specific performance related conditions have been met. At the year end £44,926 has been expended for the Youth Advisory Group.

Strategic Growth in Scotland

The Trustees are thankful to The Robertson Trust for their pledge of £250,000 over five years to support strategic growth in Scotland. Each instalment of the grant is recognised once specific performance related conditions have been met.

At the year end expenditure of £34,846 had been incurred in respect of the above fund. DFN Project SEARCH employed a Scotland-specific Programme Specialist in April 2023.

North and North West England

DFN Project SEARCH are grateful to receive a restricted grant of £60,000 to support the expansion of the programme in Northern England. During the year £25,424 was expended in respect of this fund.

21 DESIGNATED FUNDS

The unrestricted funds of the charity comprise the unexpended balances of donations and grants which are not subject to specific conditions by donors and grantors as to how they may be used. These include designated funds which have been set aside out of unrestricted funds by the trustees for specific purposes. The trustees have set up a designated fund named 'Operations fund' as set out below:

	Movement in funds					
	Balance at 1 September 2022	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Transfers	Gains and losses	Balance at 31 August 2023
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Operations fund	-	-	-	850,000	-	850,000
General unrestricted funds	550,780	2,779,553	(1,484,209)	(850,000)	908	997,032
	550,780	2,779,553	(1,484,209)	-	908	1,847,032

The operations fund represents the amount designated by the trustees to support the costs of the expanded operations team following the investment in additional staff members to support existing site growth and delivery of the Internships Work programme. Further details on the Internships Work programme are included on pages 10 and 11 of this report.

In the year to 31 August 2023 DFN Project SEARCH received £1.1m of the total £1.7m of funding due under the 37-month contract with the Department for Education. This amounts to 65% of the total proceeds of the contract, despite being 40% through the time period. Expenditure over the remaining period of the Internships Work programme will exceed the amounts receivable for the same period.

The Board are therefore minded to designate a proportion of unrestricted funds to cover the cost of the operations team throughout the remainder of this contract and beyond.

22 ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

Fund balances at 31 August 2023 are represented by:

	Unrestricted funds	Designated funds operations fund	Restricted funds	Restricted funds
	2023 £	2023 £	2023 £	2023 £
Current assets/ (liabilities)	1,009,032	850,000	220,085	2,079,117
Long term liabilities	(12,000)	-	-	(12,000)
	997,032	850,000	220,085	2,067,117

Fund balances at 31 August 2022 are represented by:

	Unrestricted funds	Designated funds operations fund	Restricted funds	Restricted funds
	2022 £	2022 £	2022 £	2022 £
Current assets/ (liabilities)	736,780	-	176,855	913,635
Long term liabilities	(186,000)	-	-	(186,000)
	550,780	-	176,855	727,635

23 RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS**David Forbes-Nixon Charitable Foundation**

In accordance with the Charities SORP the David Forbes-Nixon Charitable Foundation (DFN Foundation) is considered a related party following the appointment of a joint CEO.

The transactions between the two organisations are:

- Charges made at cost for the services of the CEO of £131,652 (2022 £78,058) exclusive of VAT as reported in management costs within note 11.
- The DFN Foundation paid for the services of the Finance Director employed by DFN Project SEARCH for which invoices were raised for the equivalent employment cost of £16,313 (2022 £10,131). The income for these services is reported within other income in note 5.
- At the period end DFN Project SEARCH was owed £44,874 (2022 £161,470) by the DFN Foundation.

23 RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS (CONTINUED)**David Forbes-Nixon OBE**

During the year, the Charity employed the son of trustee David Forbes-Nixon. Remuneration for the period totalled £8,599 (2022 £nil). The recruitment of the employee was conducted under the Charity's normal recruitment process, independently of David Forbes-Nixon.

Colquhoun Group Limited

During 2023 Colquhoun Group Limited (Company number: 12324299) provided services to DFN Project SEARCH totalling £2,473 (2022 £1,384), for associate fees and expenses. The transaction took place in accordance with the agreement set by DFN Project SEARCH for all associate work undertaken.

Ms E M Colquhoun OBE is a Director of Colquhoun Group Limited and was a trustee of DFN Project SEARCH during the period. Ms E M Colquhoun resigned as a trustee on 20 October 2022.

24 CASH GENERATED FROM OPERATIONS

	2023 £	2022 £
Surplus for the period	1,338,574	202,699
Adjustments for:		
Foreign exchange differences	908	(1,793)
Movements in working capital:		
Increase/ (decrease) in debtors	(645,295)	285,922
Increase in creditors	56,120	60,822
(Decrease) in deferred income	(253,000)	(7,600)
Cash generated from operations	497,307	540,050

25 ANALYSIS OF CHANGES IN NET FUNDS

The charity had no debt during the period.

