

Charity Trustees' Annual Report: 2 April 2022 to 1 April 2023

1. Introduction

The trustees have pleasure in presenting their report and financial statements for the period 2 April 2022 to 1st April 2023. Unreal is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) adopting its constitution under the CIO (General) Regulations 2012 and registering with the Charity Commission (*No. 1186498*) on 13 November 2019. Such constitution provides the trustees with limited legal liability and responsibility for the management of Unreal's affairs and the exercise of all of its powers. Unreal commenced operations on 21 November 2019.

2. Objectives and Activities

Unreal's mission is to raise awareness of Depersonalisation and Derealisation (DPDR). Our approach is to enable the wellbeing of people with lived experience of DPDR through support, resources, and education. We aim to help people restore their lives and empower them to share their experiences to help others in building a strong and resilient community.

We specialise in running peer support groups, signposting people to relevant resources, pushing for policy change, supporting academic studies, and providing general medical information that has been validated by leading clinicians in the field.

3. Achievements and Performance

This reporting period was the first in Unreal's history that was largely free of restrictions from the Covid pandemic, which meant that we have been more able to push forward with objectives that had previously not been able to be moved online.

Our Peer Support programme remained our flagship offering to the community, with the online sessions remaining overwhelmingly popular – we ran **19 sessions** during the period, with **299 free tickets** used by attendees. We have received regular contact from members of the community expressing how important the sessions are for them (for many, all over the world, they are the only form of DPDR support they can access). The programme did suffer a few minor setbacks, with a couple of volunteer facilitators and our Peer Support lead board member stepping back due to their increasing commitments following the easing of pandemic restrictions. But to counter this, we have been advertising via the Charity Jobs website for new volunteer facilitators – with approximately 12 strong candidates having already submitted applications – and the board has elected a new Peer Support lead to head up the programme. They are currently interviewing the applicants and establishing who will be suitable to join the

programme. We have also continued running our internal peer support groups reserved for members of Unreal to look after the wellbeing of our trustees, board members and volunteers, as well as introducing a rolling programme of 'Check-In Chats' for everybody involved with the charity to allow new ideas or concerns to be communicated effectively, whilst also monitoring wellbeing and improving pastoral care.

Aligned with our key objective of raising awareness of the condition, another project that the charity has been working on is the production of a DPDR documentary following discussions with the Head of Development of a BBC-linked production house. In November 2022, trustees Michael Down and Joe Perkins spent 15 days travelling around the UK filming interviews with clinicians working in the field and a selection of people of lived experience. This has now been edited into a 6-minute 'Teaser' which is currently being used to attract potential interest from broadcasters and/or funders to help us turn it into a feature-length programme or film.

One of the most major events for Unreal during this period was being invited by Dr Anna Ciaunica (CFCUL) to give a presentation about DPDR and our work at a major academic conference in Lisbon in March 2023. Joe Perkins was already booked to speak in a personal capacity, giving his lived-experience perspective on the condition, but after discussions with Dr Ciaunica, Michael Down and (new board member, as of July 2022) Gwendalyn Webb also travelled to Lisbon to formally represent Unreal, and speak about our work as well as showing the documentary teaser. The response from the largely academic audience was strong and invested, and many new connections were made that we hope will lead to similar public speaking opportunities and future charity involvement in studies going forwards.

On this front, Unreal has continued to support academic research being done into the condition. The charity remains a co-applicant on the NIHR-funded feasibility study (being run through UCL and headed by trustee Dr Elaine Hunter), and we regularly meet with other academics and promote their studies through our website. Two such new connections made during this period have been with Dr Emanuele Fino (Nottingham Trent), with us helping to advise & promote his research into DPDR and Social Identity Theory; and Matt Gwyther (Anglia Ruskin) who ran a collaborative art installation on DPDR at the Cambridge Festival, including an eBook of essays on dissociation that Gwendalyn Webb & Joe Perkins contributed to, and is now being sold in conjunction with Unreal.

Reflecting our growing audience worldwide – largely due to our social media presence and online Peer Support being globally accessible – in October 2022 we took on a new USA-based ambassador: musician Foster. We are hopeful that by having people in different territories formally linked to Unreal and actively using their platforms to promote our work, we can increase our messaging reach significantly. We are also continuing with the previously-planned redevelopment of our website so that we can offer more information in a more accessible format – we now have a web developer involved with us, and a subgroup is liaising with him to structure the new site and consult on its design. Our online presence remains the primary way in which we communicate with our community. We previously noticed a significant surge in web traffic during Covid, but this period has seen those raised statistics largely maintained despite the easing of restrictions: **15k overall visits, 12k unique visitors, and c.34k page views** match the previous period, suggesting that we have been both retaining engagements and remaining at the forefront of DPDR awareness as the condition gains further global interest and awareness. However, our social media scores have continued to increase significantly – using Twitter as an example, **Average Impressions** of our posts **have increased tenfold** compared to 2021-22; suggesting further the vital importance of using our social media efficiently and effectively.

4. Financial Review

Largely due to the lifting of Covid restrictions, in this period our expenditure has been able to increase dramatically from **£3832** to **£9237**, as we have been able to travel and take part in in-person events again rather than operations almost exclusively taking place online. As with the previous period, the largest cost to the charity was the monthly invoices from our *Administration & Marketing Coordinator* freelancer, but this role being funded ultimately enables the charity to take many more opportunities and function as a working board of volunteers by handling most of the behind-the-scenes operations and logistics on its behalf. The creation of the Documentary Teaser was also a significant cost, but if done properly, the Trustees believe the resulting film could potentially become the largest awareness-raising project on DPDR worldwide to date. Many of our other costs remained operational, including website hosting, and subscriptions to JustGiving and Zoom accounts.

This increase in expenditure was largely offset by some herculean fundraising efforts from our community – as whilst we had no Corporate donations during the current period for the first time in our history, income from supporters rose by almost 250% from **£3084** to **£7642**. With our healthy existing funds, it was always part of our strategy to begin to use that money to advance our charity goals once Covid restrictions were lifted. But despite expecting our bank balance to drop significantly during this period, the efforts of our fundraisers ensured that we only made a net loss of **-£1595**, which is massively better than we had anticipated and planned for. Given this, and our still-healthy final balance, the charity has not felt there to be any substantial financial operating risks posed to us during this period, and our finances keep us well above our Reserves Policy of keeping **£5000** (approximately one year of basic operational costs, at our current annual expenditure levels) at our disposal. This reserve would allow us to refocus our efforts on increasing fundraising and bidding for grants should it become necessary. The charity has committed to review this policy every 6 months in board meetings.

5. Plans For The Future

The period 2022-23 has seen us being able to increase our operations on all fronts, but much of the work that we have done within this has been laying the groundwork for future projects.

Recruitment of new Peer Support volunteers is already underway. Once candidates have been selected, we will need to develop a comprehensive training programme to make sure that everybody has the necessary skills to run the groups, operate Zoom in a manner that maintains safeguarding for the attendees, and deal with any issues or crises that might arise from discussing sensitive topics with vulnerable people. Being our flagship programme though, the new Peer Support lead has the full support of the board to develop their own training programme, and funds can be allocated if any costs need to be covered to do this in the most effective manner. It has also been decided that all new volunteers – and existing board members, as a matter of good practice – should be DBS checked, so a plan will be drawn up to make this happen in a compliant way.

Discussions have been happening around the ultimate direction of the DPDR documentary – especially within the creative subgroup of Michael Down, Joe Perkins & Jane Charlton. The primary decision needing to be made is whether it would be better to pursue funding from a broadcaster/platform, or to complete the project in-house using charity funds. Both approaches have positives and negatives associated – especially the scale of the overall budget – but the team are agreed that the story being told

accurately, and without any sensationalising, is of paramount importance to the project's integrity. No external offers would be considered if it was felt too much creative control would need to be relinquished and the footage would be at risk of being twisted in a misrepresentative manner.

With our online presence being as vital to our operations as it is, we will be continuing to work closely with our web designer to bring the new site to fruition. However, with our current website being adequate, and our designer being very busy, both sides have been keen not to set a fixed timescale for this project. Given our rising social media statistics, we are also looking to increase and streamline our social media output – with new ideas to involve members of the community in creating new content (especially video) and running live events. Creating video content involving clinicians working in the field of DPDR is also something we are keen to do more of.

Finally – and off the back of the Lisbon conference, which is the first time the charity has been involved in speaking publicly about DPDR and our work – we are looking to create other opportunities to do this via our connections and working relationships with academics. We will endeavour to speak to as many groups of university students and clinicians as we can, as the board believes this is one of the best ways of making a real difference to the levels of awareness in medical circles; especially though giving trainee psychologists an awareness of DPDR, when we know the condition is rarely included on curriculums.

6. Structure, Governance and Management

Unreal is governed by its constitution dated 13 November 2019. Our governing team are very committed, and so far in our history as a registered charity it hasn't been necessary for us to recruit any new trustees. But we have previously expanded our charity board using the same process that we would use for trustees: advertising the position through both the Charity Jobs website and our social media channels; a shortlist of candidates being invited for interview; and then a final decision being taken by the board. One new board member (Gwendalyn Webb) was recruited during the current reporting period.

Our trustees and board members meet most months (9 in total throughout the year) to discuss Unreal's operations and make decisions on actions needed – being responsible for all areas of the charity's work. Whilst all trustees are ultimately involved in all major decisions, some members of the charity do have more specific remits – for example, one board member's primary role is to control our finances and to sign off any expenditures whilst not being directly involved in the projects themselves. We operate a subcommittee system where smaller groups meet to discuss and action certain tasks (for example, managing the website, planning the documentary, etc).

We also have a group of dedicated volunteers who support us in the daily running of the charity – from facilitating peer support sessions, to advising us on marketing strategy and creating engaging illustrations to bolster our online presence.

7. Reference and Administration

Charity Name: Unreal

Charity Number: 1186498

Registered Address: PO Box 227, Bristol, BS20 1EH

Trustees: Jane Charlton (appointed 21/11/2019), Liam Macpherson (appointed 01/03/2020), Heather Perkins (appointed 21/11/2019), Elaine Hunter (appointed 21/11/2019), Joe Perkins (appointed 21/11/2019), Mary Charlton (appointed 21/11/2019), Michael Down appointed 01/07/2019.

Chair: Jane Charlton

Secretary: Mary Charlton

Treasurer: Joe Perkins

Bank: The Co-Operative Bank, Business Directplus (Online Services)

The trustees of Unreal approved this report on 18 January 2024.

(On behalf of Unreal's Trustees):

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JP' with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Joe Perkins – Trustee & Treasurer

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. A. Charlton' in a cursive style.

Jane Charlton - Chair



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Unreal

1186498

Receipts and payments accounts

For the period from

2-Apr-22

To

1-Apr-23

Section A Receipts and payments

Unrestricted funds

Restricted
funds

Endowment
funds

Total funds

to the nearest £

to the nearest £

to the nearest £

to the nearest £

A1 Receipts

Corporate Donations	-	-	-	-
Donations from supporters	7,642	-	-	7,642
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
Sub total(Gross income for AR)	7,642	-	-	7,642

A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).

	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-

Total receipts 7,642 - - 7,642

A3 Payments

Freelance Administrator & Marketing Role	4,916	-	-	4,916
Documentary Teaser	1,450	-	-	1,450
Accountancy	500	-	-	500
Website & Socials (Hosting & Design)	493	-	-	493
Public Liability Insurance	448	-	-	448
Lisbon Conference (costs to end of period)	434	-	-	434
Royal Mail PO Box	378	-	-	378
JustGiving Subscription	216	-	-	216
Miscellaneous Costs	192	-	-	192
Zoom Account	174	-	-	174
Postage Costs	37	-	-	37
Sub total	9,237	-	-	9,237

A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)

	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-

Total payments 9,237 - - 9,237

Net of receipts/(payments) - 1,595 - - 1,595

A5 Transfers between funds

A6 Cash funds last year end - - - -

Cash funds this year end 75,859 - - 75,859

74,264

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Bank Balance	74,264	-
			-
		-	-
	Total cash funds	74,264	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK

	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-


	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)
B3 Investment assets			-
			-
			-
			-
			-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use			-
			-
			-
			-
			-
			-
			-
			-
			-

	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)
B5 Liabilities			-
			-
			-
			-
			-

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature



Print Name

JOE A PERKINS

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CC16a



Last year
to the nearest £

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**Endowment
funds**

to nearest £

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OK

**Endowment
funds**

to nearest £

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**Current value
(optional)**

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**Current value
(optional)**

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**When due
(optional)**

**Date of
approval**

16-Jan-24

