

Charity Trustees' Annual Report: **2 April 2023 to 1 April 2024**

1. Introduction

The trustees have pleasure in presenting their report and financial statements for the period 2 April 2023 to 1st April 2024. 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

Progress Following COVID-19 Restrictions

After the years of charity objectives needing to be put on hold due to restrictions around the COVID-19 pandemic, this reporting period saw us significantly build on our previous momentum of putting planning to the best possible use and using our funds to drive the objectives of Unreal forwards. Many ideas that had been developed during that time and were then set underway in the previous period (as outlined in Section 5 of the 2022-23 Annual Report), have now been fully brought through to fruition.

Increased Capacity with Freelance Support

To help us with this, the board made the decision to take on another paid freelancer for one day a week to assist with administration, the running and management of the Peer Support programme, safeguarding and content creation. This was done in July 2023 and has been revolutionary in allowing us to really power through the backlog of projects.

Peer Support Programme

In the past six months, we offered 12 peer support sessions, with a total of 215 places for attendees to participate. We paused the programme at the end of the previous reporting period to recruit and train a new group of volunteer facilitators, and then successfully relaunched it in October 2023. The vital importance of this programme is highlighted by feedback from attendees, with comments such as, *"I'd never even spoken to anyone with it before, so it was so validating,"* and *"...it makes you feel less alone and less alienated."* These responses underscore the value and impact of this provision for individuals living with DPDR. This programme remains the most important service we provide to benefit the DPDR community.

Raising awareness

A significant milestone in this period was the progression of our feature-length documentary on DPDR, now being realised as a joint venture with production company Down To Earth and in an agreement that the charity will ultimately financially benefit from. Through this documentary, our objective is to increase understanding and visibility of DPDR, ultimately raising awareness and fostering better support for those impacted. Following extensive filming across the UK and internationally, trustees Joe Perkins and Michael Down have captured compelling interviews with academic experts and individuals living with the condition. Production continues with completion targeted for 2025; plans for film festival submissions as well as generating wider media interest and publicity; as well as an agreement between the two parties that leftover footage can later be repurposed for charity projects (for example, creating a fundraising video). We have also maintained a steady output of online resources – for example, releasing 15 blog posts written by members of the community; a Q&A video with the Maudsley Hospital Depersonalisation Disorder Service (the only NHS tertiary care service available for DPDR); a live Q&A session on X which 150 people tuned into; and a video with Dr Anna Ciaunica to explain her *Walking With My Heart* study.

International Collaboration

Off the back of a successful visit to Portugal in 2023 to represent Unreal at Dr Anna Ciaunica's international conference, Joe Perkins and board member Gwendalyn Webb were invited back to Lisbon in March 2024 to take part in another event put on by CFCUL – an interdisciplinary workshop called *Embodied Consciousness and its Disorders*. Joe gave a 1-hour talk about life with DPDR and took questions from the academic audience, both in the room and online, whilst Gwendalyn represented the charity and networked with those in attendance, leading to some potential interesting research collaborations for the future.

Partnerships

Unreal has also maintained its position as being the leading organisation to support academic studies into DPDR through the embedding of expert-by-experience involvement. We have advertised recruitment for 9 studies through our website and social media channels, including KCL (London), CFCUL (Lisbon), NTU (Nottingham), Anglia Ruskin (Cambridge) and UoE (Essex) – and we have maintained contact with many of those leading academics as they've then navigated their projects. Most notably, we have regularly met with Emanuele Fino as he's been researching social identity theory; Professor Sarah Garfinkel to discuss her new research into DPDR and interoception; and have continued to be heavily involved with Dr Elaine Hunter and Professor Anthony David as their NIHR-funded feasibility study into CBT-f-DDD – for which Unreal is a co-applicant – nears its conclusion.

It is also relevant to note that the DPDR training module for the Royal College of Psychiatrists created by Dr Hunter and Professor David during this previous reporting period won the RCPsych prize for Project Of

The Year, and as of October 2023, 438 people had completed that module. The associated e-learning podcast also became freely available on Soundcloud.

4. Financial Review

Building on our strong financial position, we strategically increased investment in our objectives, notably through engaging a second freelancer. While our net deficit increased from £1,595 to £18,534 (accounting for refunds) in this period, this planned expansion of activities was supported by our substantial reserves - accumulated through a substantial donation in 2020 and preserved during COVID-19 restrictions. This investment directly enabled the key achievements detailed in Section 3.

However, we have still received significant donations from our community. In addition to income through platforms including JustGiving and the PayPal Giving Fund, more notable fundraising efforts have included a team at Coleg Cambria collectively walking 870 miles and raising over 2.5x their original target in April-May 2023; Unreal being the nominated charity for Common Meeple board game café in Swansea in August 2023; and a fundraising gig put on by a musician with DPDR in Liverpool in January 2024.

In total, we received an income of £2,518 (accounting for refunds). This helped us to cover many of our essential core support costs and allowed for more careful allocation of charitable spending. Our substantial reserves position enables us to maintain current spending levels through the next reporting period (and then for another approximately 2 years), while we develop and implement more robust fundraising strategies to ensure long-term financial sustainability.

Although operating at a deficit, our robust balance sheet ensures the charity faces no significant financial risks during this period. Our current position remains well above our Reserves Policy threshold of £5,000, which represents approximately one year of basic operational costs. This reserve provides a financial buffer that would enable us to redirect resources toward enhanced fundraising and grant applications if required. The board has committed to review this policy every 6 months in board meetings.

5. Plans For The Future

Continued development of projects

Unreal anticipates the next reporting period to focus on the continued development of our existing projects. Our flagship documentary project remains in production, with filming ongoing. The team continues to coordinate interviews efficiently while developing the project's creative vision.

Website and social media development

We also anticipate that our website redesign will be finalised and made live, and we are planning a revitalisation of our social media accounts – for example, streamlining our Instagram highlight reels to allow easier access to relevant key content, and the provision of Plain English Summaries and video results of academic studies on Twitter and our website to improve accessibility of study results and key findings to the community. We would also like to create new resources to include on all platforms and intend on approaching leading academics to help us to create these with clinical validity to include information, advice and resources for clinicians, as well as members of our community (for example, Peer Support facilitators) to offer more real-world coping strategies. Social media remains a key source of

messaging and engagement with the community – for example, average impressions on X increased even further over the last reporting period with a growth of +60%, and our Instagram following has steadily and organically been growing by approximately 10% each year. The board feel it's imperative these platforms are as functional and accessible as possible.

Fundraising strategy development

Developing a more substantial fundraising strategy is becoming necessary given our expenditure levels, and we would far rather seek additional funding for our charity than have to substantially cut the resources we provide and create for the community. To do this, the charity will primarily look to apply for grants. Our Peer Support program presents a compelling case for external funding that could increase its impact. Initial research into suitable funding bodies is underway. We are also aiming to continue to grow our community fundraising – improving website resources for doing so and fostering relationships with fundraisers.

Outreach and collaboration

Finally, members of our team have been giving progressively more talks to academic conferences and universities (for example, NTU's PACE week in November 2023), and with the lack of awareness in medical circles being such a central problem for our condition, we will endeavour to seek out more opportunities to do this. We continue to foster professional relationships with many of the leading academics and are looking to embed lived experience and our knowledge base into even more projects going forwards.

6. Structure, Governance and Management

Unreal is governed by its constitution dated 13 November 2019. Our governing team is 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.

The board meets nine times annually to oversee Unreal's operations and governance. While major decisions involve all trustees, specific operational areas are delegated to individual board members - including dedicated financial oversight. Subcommittees manage focused areas such as website maintenance and documentary production.

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. All trustees and board members, and all Peer Support facilitators, have been DBS checked.

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), 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 30 January 2025.

(On behalf of Unreal's Trustees):

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JP' with a flourish.

Joe Perkins – Trustee & Treasurer

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

Jane Charlton – Trustee & Chair



Unreal	1186498
--------	---------


Receipts and payments accounts

For the period from	02-Apr-23	To	01-Apr-24
---------------------	-----------	----	-----------

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £
A1 Receipts				
Corporate Donations	60	-	-	60
Donations from supporters	2 428	-	-	2 428
Amazon	18	-	-	18
Charities Trust	11	-	-	11
Refunds	282	-	-	282
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	2 800	-	-	2 800
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).				
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	2 800	-	-	2 800
A3 Payments				
Administration & Peer Support Coordinator	5 481	-	-	5 481
Safeguarding & Socials Coordinator	4 118	-	-	4 118
Documentary Filming	5 229	-	-	5 229
DBS Checks	1 706	-	-	1 706
Web Hosting & Design Costs	1 128	-	-	1 128
JustGiving Subscription	216	-	-	216
Zoom Subscription	187	-	-	187
PO Box	396	-	-	396
Public Liability Insurance	381	-	-	381
Training Costs	425	-	-	425
Events (Travel, Accommodation & Expenses)	857	-	-	857
Meetings	199	-	-	199
Postage	45	-	-	45
Merch	470	-	-	470
Misc.	496	-	-	496
Sub total	21 334	-	-	21 334
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)				
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-
Total payments	21 334	-	-	21 334
Net of receipts/(payments)	- 18 534	-	-	- 18 534
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	74 773	-	-	74 773
Cash funds this year end	56 239	-	-	56 239

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	56 240	-
			-
		-	-
	Total cash funds	56 240	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	Agreement Error	OK
B2 Other monetary assets	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
B3 Investment assets	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)
			-
			-
			-
			-
			-
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)
			-
			-
			-
			-
			-
			-
			-
			-
			-
B5 Liabilities	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)
			-
			-
			-
			-
			-
Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees		Signature	Print Name
			JOE A PERKINS

CC16a

Last year
to the nearest £

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

-
-
-

-

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

-
-
-

-

-

-
-
-
-



**Endowment
funds
to nearest £**

-
-
-
-

OK

**Endowment
funds
to nearest £**

-
-
-
-
-
-

**Current value
(optional)**

-
-
-
-
-

**Current value
(optional)**

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

**When due
(optional)**

**Date of
approval**

28-Jan-25