

Charity Trustees' Annual Report:
2 April 2024 to 1 April 2025

Chair's Summary

On behalf of the trustees, I am pleased to present Unreal's Trustees' Annual Report for the period 2 April 2024 to 1 April 2025.

The past year has been a positive one for Unreal, with steady growth across our services and increasing engagement with the DPDR community. We have continued to build on what works well, respond to feedback, and develop our work in ways that remain grounded in lived experience and informed by clinical and academic expertise.

Our Peer Support Network remained the charity's flagship activity and a core means of delivering direct benefit to individuals affected by DPDR. During the year, the charity delivered 20 free Peer Support sessions, with 415 tickets taken up by community members. Quantitative feedback demonstrated strong outcomes, with over 72% of respondents rating peer learning at 7/10 or above and nearly three-quarters rating sessions 8/10 or higher overall. Qualitative feedback consistently highlighted reduced isolation, increased validation, and greater resilience among participants. The programme was further strengthened through the recruitment and training of new volunteer facilitators, the appointment of two Lead Facilitators, and ongoing safeguarding and support structures for volunteers.

We also made significant progress in establishing Unreal as a leading DPDR organisation nationally and internationally. Key developments included continued work on a major DPDR documentary film project; the successful launch of a redesigned website with improved accessibility and global reach; growth and professionalisation of social media activity; and the appointment of BRIT Award-winning artist Will Young as an ambassador for the charity. Together, these activities have materially increased awareness of DPDR and strengthened Unreal's public profile.

Unreal continued to act as an advocate for research, policy change, and the dissemination of DPDR knowledge. The charity supported multiple academic studies across leading institutions, contributed to published research, advised on study design and participant engagement, and amplified findings to the community in accessible formats. Trustees and representatives also delivered talks at international academic events and contributed lived-experience perspectives to forthcoming professional publications, further reinforcing Unreal's role as a trusted bridge between the DPDR community and the academic and clinical fields.

Financial position

The charity remains in a stable financial position, supported by historic reserves and a notable increase in community-led fundraising during the period. Total income for the year was £10,669.28, representing a significant increase compared to the previous year. Although Unreal continued to operate at a planned deficit, this was substantially reduced from the prior period. The trustees consider the current reserves position to be adequate and in line with the charity's Reserves Policy, while recognising the importance of developing a more sustainable fundraising strategy in the medium term.

Governance and future direction

During the year, the trustees undertook governance restructuring to strengthen oversight, resilience and continuity, including clearer separation of responsibilities and staggered trustee appointment terms. The trustees remain actively engaged in oversight of safeguarding, financial management, and strategic direction.

Looking ahead, the charity will focus on expanding and strengthening our Peer Support Network, progressing the documentary project, deepening strategic partnerships, refining its academic engagement strategy, and increasing the range and accessibility of educational resources. Fundraising and long-term financial sustainability will also be a key focus of strategic discussions in the coming year.

I would like to thank my fellow trustees, board members, volunteers, ambassadors, clinicians, researchers and—most importantly—the community members who place their trust in Unreal. Your continued commitment and openness make this work possible.



Jane Charlton

Chair of Trustees

1. Introduction

The trustees have pleasure in presenting their report and financial statements for the period 2 April 2024 to 1 April 2025. 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. The 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

For the public benefit, to relieve the needs of people affected by Depersonalisation and Derealisation (DPDR) in particular, but not exclusively, by providing support and information to patients and their families and carers, and by raising awareness of the disorder amongst health professionals, policymakers and the general public, including by providing information about the disorder, its diagnoses and treatment, and the useful results of the latest research.

We specialise in running Peer Support groups, the creation of informational resources, signposting, pushing for policy change, supporting academic studies, and providing general medical information that has been validated by leading clinicians in the field affiliated with the charity.

3. Achievements and Performance

Peer Support Network

Our Peer Support programme remains our flagship offering as an organisation, delivering meaningful impact for the DPDR community by providing a space for people to feel heard and validated, and learn more about how others navigate life whilst living with DPDR. Following the recruitment of new volunteer facilitators in 2023-24, in this reporting period the programme was more robust than ever. We ran **20 free Peer Support sessions** with a total of **415 tickets** used by members of the community. We offered feedback questionnaires after every session. Over **72%** of responses rated the amount they learned from their peers as **7/10** or above; and nearly **74%** gave an overall session rating of **8/10** or above.

Quantitative feedback demonstrated similarly strong outcomes, with statements such as, *"It has given me more positivity to keep going and knowing I'm not alone in what I'm experiencing, hearing from others who understand gives me more strength,"* and, *"I like getting to meet others who know exactly how I feel,"* being common. We listened and responded to feedback, making several changes to format, rules and ticketing. Two new Lead Facilitators were also nominated and trained, adding further resilience and increasing overall safeguarding and managerial skills to the programme. To best support our team of facilitators and help them to better integrate within the community, we continued to run monthly Internal Peer Support sessions as well as casual in-person events for volunteers. We shared immediate feedback from attendees post-sessions to highlight the positive impact that their volunteering has on others.

Establishing Unreal As The Leading DPDR Charity

- a) **DocuFilm:** Joe Perkins & Michael Down continued to gather the raw footage needed to bring this ambitious project to fruition. They have continued to interview leading academics (such as Prof. Anil Seth, Prof. Sarah Garfinkel and Dr. Nick Medford) as well as more people with lived experience to make the project as representative of the collective community as possible. They have now finished the majority of filming and are beginning to work through the extensive footage to assemble a rough edit. Joe and Michael are speaking with two professional producers regarding applying for BFI funding and exploring additional external funding opportunities. If significant funding is obtained, it would widen the scope of the project, leading to increased media coverage and global appeal, and make the whole awareness-raising project even more impactful.
- b) **New Website Design:** The total redesign of our website was completed and launched in October 2024, with improved navigation, accessibility and new sections. It was migrated over to a new URL (www.unrealcharity.com) to make our presence less UK-centric to reflect our global Peer Support reach and now having an international ambassador (Foster). In the five months the new site was live, it received **12,000** page views and **3,600** unique visitors, with over **1,800** of those coming directly from Google searches – meaning that people are increasingly discovering the charity from searching symptoms online, which we know from our community is one of the first things people tend to do when encountering DPDR.
- c) **Social Media:** During this period, the board reviewed the charity's social media strategy and made a strategic decision to consolidate activity on platforms that best align with Unreal's values and audience. Following the appointment of a new social media lead, our content has been revitalised and a house style guide implemented, ensuring that our branding and content is now consistent across the new website and all social media platforms, as well as improving accessibility. On Instagram, new highlight reels and video content on key themes and FAQs have made vital information more visible. This has resulted in more than double the average views compared to the previous period. All content is now produced in-house, allowing us to maintain consistent tone, embed lived experience, and increase efficiency. Our TikTok account, while still in its early stages, has also begun to grow, with each post averaging around 1,000 views.
- d) **New Celebrity Ambassador:** In May 2024, musician Will Young, who has lived experience of DPDR, was formally appointed as an ambassador for Unreal. His openness and advocacy help raise awareness of DPDR, reduce stigma, and strengthen the charity's public profile.

Advocate for Support, Research, Policy Change & The Spread of DPDR Knowledge

- a) **IYPAD Project:** Unreal has frequently supported the research of Dr Emma Černis – who has established herself as one of the field’s leading academics. She applied for, and obtained, funding to create a new resource giving verified information about dissociation (and specifically DPDR) to 16–25-year-olds. Going forwards, she has asked Unreal to be hands-on involved in all managerial meetings; to help run the Young People’s Advisory Group (YPAG); and ultimately host the resource on the charity’s website. This project will expand the reach of our existing leaflets, delivering clinically-verified information to a significantly larger number of young people, in partnership with a top researcher and academic institution.
- b) **Research:** During this period, we advertised for recruitment on DPDR-linked studies with many top institutions, such as the University of Greenwich, University of Essex and University of Lisbon. One notable study was through London Metropolitan University and run by psychologist Giovanni Foglia, investigating attitudes towards seeking professional psychological help in adults who identify as affected by DPDR; the first stage of a body of work pivotal for the community and the work of the charity. Findings suggested an urgent need for increased awareness and education about DPDR amongst mental health professionals to improve diagnosis and treatment as well as the complex relationship between help-seeking attitudes and self-stigma. Separately, Prof. Sarah Garfinkel announced some exciting findings regarding Interoception and Self-Other Differentiation in DPDR and expressed that she would like Unreal to be a formal partner on her next DPDR research proposal; and Unreal also had hands-on involvement advising Dr Emanuele Fino’s study (Queen’s University Belfast) resulting in a published academic paper that kindly listed Joe Perkins & Gwendalyn Webb as co-authors; and ended with the heartening comment, *“The authors would like to warmly thank everyone at Unreal for their contribution and support throughout the realization of this research and all participants for sharing their lived experiences, despite the difficulty in doing so: Your stories and struggles have not remained unheard.”*
- c) **New Resource Creation:** Following the October 2024 Trustees Meeting, it was agreed that the new website was too text-heavy and new video resources should be created to supplement the information in a more accessible and digestible way. These videos were shot with leading DPDR experts Dr Elaine Hunter (an Unreal ambassador) and Dr Emma Černis in October 2024 and are now scheduled to be edited – with an anticipated launch date of May 2025. As part of the website redesign, it was also agreed that following the completion of academic studies we would create both Plain English Summaries for social media channels and informational videos with research teams to better disseminate results to the community in an accessible way. This was trialled with Dr Emanuele Fino at Queen’s University Belfast in June 2024, with a successful social media campaign coming from it, and was repeated with Giovanni Foglia at London Metropolitan in July 2024.
- d) **Giving Of DPDR Talks:** After a successful visit to Lisbon in April 2023 to speak at the international conference of philosopher Dr Anna Ciaunica, Joe Perkins was invited back to take part in a subsequent event in April 2024 – he travelled down to speak, with trustee Gwendalyn Webb also attending privately to represent Unreal and network with the academics. They spoke with many in attendance who expressed an interest in collaborating with Unreal in the future, as DPDR could be interesting to their fields of expertise. With the charity aiming to give more talks to university classes, other charities, interested businesses and conferences in the future, a *Request A Talk*

feature has been implemented into the new website for people to approach us specifically to do this.

- e) **Major Publications:** We were approached by Insight Magazine (the official publication for the Royal College of Psychiatrists) who were looking for lived experience input on an article about DPDR. Gwendalyn Webb, Prof. Anthony David and Dr Elaine Hunter spoke with them, and we are expecting the piece to be published at the start of the next reporting period. Chair Jane Charlton also spoke with Bo Forbes, a clinical psychologist based in the USA, to input on a book she is writing about embodiment.

Governance Updates

Following internal review and restructuring, it was decided when most trusteeships were needing to be renewed that a greater division between board members and trustees would be beneficial for Unreal. To this end:

- Liam Macpherson stood down as a board member but remains a trustee.
- Michael Down and Mary Charlton stood down as trustees but remain board members.
- Jane Charlton, Heather Perkins and Joe Perkins remain both board members and trustees. Gwendalyn Webb was elected as a trustee and remains a board member also.

Appointment durations were staggered to avoid all trusteeships expiring within the same year (Chair – 5 years; all others – 3 years). Further, expiry months were staggered to avoid multiple trusteeships expiring on the same date.

4. Financial Review

Unreal continues to hold healthy financial reserves from a few significant historic donations, which has allowed us to fund two freelancers to manage day to day operations. The trustees have strategically prioritised focusing our resources on advancing Unreal's charitable aims, rather than directing significant effort toward fundraising. While this approach has allowed us to strengthen our core activities, we recognise the importance of developing a more robust fundraising strategy soon to support long-term sustainability.

While Unreal has continued to operate at a planned deficit, the overall operating loss has been substantially reduced, from **-£18,533.21** in 2023-24 to **-£5512.79** in this period. This improvement has been driven largely by a strong increase in community-led fundraising. Total income for the year was **£10,669.28**, almost entirely from community donations, with one generous contribution from a family trust. By comparison, income in the previous period was **£2517.37**. This is a promising sign Unreal is moving onto a self-sustaining footing.

These results demonstrate that our light-touch fundraising approach over the past year has been effective and suggest that future increases in community fundraising could be achieved without significant additional internal capacity. This financial stability allows us to continue focusing on our core mission and deliver meaningful impact to the DPDR community.

The charity's largest expenses have been our two freelance staff members (**£8538.18**) and the ongoing production of the DPDR DocuFilm (**£2421.60** in this period). Basic operational costs – such as the Zoom subscription, Squarespace subscription and Public Liability Insurance – have all increased in line with inflation but not beyond that. (It is important to note however that our insurance policy was accidentally double charged by the insurer during this period but not refunded until after it had ended, leading to an artificial doubling of those costs on our balance sheet: **£582.40** rather than the correct **£291.20**.)

Unreal's substantial reserves provide a strong financial buffer, enabling the charity to maintain current spending levels and manage risks while continuing to deliver its charitable aims. Based on recent community donations, these reserves could now support operations for up to four years if current income and expenditure patterns continue. The trustees remain committed to reviewing our fundraising strategy and long-term financial sustainability as part of our five-year strategic planning in 2025-26, and monitoring the Reserves Policy every six months to ensure continued financial resilience.

5. Looking Ahead

Peer Support Network

- a) Both due to demand for the programme proving sustainably healthy and outstripping supply, as well as a few facilitators stepping back in recent months, we intend to advertise, recruit and train approximately 10 new volunteer facilitators. We will develop a comprehensive in-house training programme to both increase facilitator preparedness and keep costs down, whilst also ensuring transferability of training materials for future recruitment drives.
- b) We are committing to fully auditing and re-risk assessing the programme and training developed to ensure safety and compliance throughout.
- c) Continue to monitor both SurveyMonkey feedback from attendees and the *Incident Log* kept by Unreal's Safeguarding Lead to constantly assess session structure, house rules, the ticketing system, etc – and make changes to procedures and programme trajectory based on feedback.

Establishing Unreal as the Leading DPDR Charity

- a) **Partnerships:** We will build on existing collaborations with external organisations to amplify our impact, create a united voice on DPDR issues, and increase the charity's visibility to wider audiences.
- b) **Continue to work on the DocuFilm:** We will continue developing the DPDR documentary, exploring funding opportunities from organisations such as the BFI, Okre, and Sandbox to expand its scope. If those endeavours aren't successful, the team have the knowledge, footage, contacts and expertise to finish the film in-house. Efforts for the first half of the next period will be focussed on exploring funding options; and refining the final edit based on focus group feedback, board input and to fit entry briefs of film festivals.

Advocate for Support, Research, Policy Change & The Spread of DPDR Knowledge

- a) **Giving of more talks:** Providing lived experience-led talks to academic institutions, organisations and in collaboration with other charities, as well as giving interviews to media outlets, has proven fruitful in allowing us to raise awareness of DPDR to large groups of important people. Through the new *Request A Talk* button on the website, as well as ad hoc enquiries, we intend to expand our capabilities in this area with transferable presentation slides and a dedicated team to deliver them. Talks will be offered for free to maximise accessibility, but with encouraged donations depending on the size of institution/company, and in line with how beneficial they find the talk. We anticipate this could become a funding stream for the charity.
- b) **Refine Our Academic Strategy:** With the number of studies we are being asked to support increasing with each reporting period, we are inevitably having to become more selective over the scale of involvement we provide to certain projects, with our research team currently judging the appropriate committal of Unreal's involvement based on the study's exact proposal and how specifically beneficial it is likely to be to the DPDR community. We anticipate continuing to advertise all DPDR-linked studies through our website, but drawing up a formal strategy to ratify only becoming directly involved in managing projects where DPDR is the sole focus of the study or

will have significant impact on our community, and/or ensuring that the effect(s) on DPDR can be measured specifically when relevant (for example, using dedicated diagnostic tools such as the Cambridge Depersonalisation Scale). This strategy will be discussed and drawn up at the next trustees' meeting.

- c) **Create More Resources For Website & Social Media:** Based on feedback from the community about video content being more engaging and easier to focus on when experiencing DPDR, we will create more audiovisual resources to host on the website and disseminate on social media channels. We anticipate filming more content with clinicians to collate accurate information about DPDR, as well as creating more lived experience-led content such as *Coping Strategy* videos and features on the work/projects of Unreal. We would also like to continue to push areas of our website that have seen strong engagement such as the community Blog section.

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 advertise externally 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 charity board meets nine times annually to oversee Unreal's operations. While major decisions involve all board members and trustees, specific operational areas are delegated to individual members - including dedicated financial oversight. Subcommittees manage focussed 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, board members and volunteer 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; reappointed 03/10/2024), Liam Macpherson (appointed 01/03/2020; reappointed 03/10/2024), Heather Perkins (appointed 21/11/2019; reappointed 03/11/2024), Joe Perkins (appointed 21/11/2019; reappointed 03/12/2024), Gwendalyn Webb (appointed 21/01/2025).

Chair: Jane Charlton

Secretary & Treasurer: Joe Perkins

Bank: Natwest Bankline

The trustees of Unreal approved this report on Wednesday 14 January 2026.

(On behalf of Unreal's Trustees):

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

Joe Perkins – Trustee

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

Jane Charlton – Trustee



Unreal	1186498
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Receipts and payments accounts

For the period from	02-Apr-24	To	01-Apr-25
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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				
JustGiving	5 082	-	-	5 082
PayPal	99	-	-	99
Charities Trust	991	-	-	991
Charity Aid Foundation	4 000	-	-	4 000
Private Donations	497	-	-	497
Refunds	122	-	-	122
	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	10 791	-	-	10 791
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).				
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	10 791	-	-	10 791
A3 Payments				
Freelance Administrator 1 (Peer Support/Admin)	4 551	-	-	4 551
(Safeguarding/Socials)	3 987	-	-	3 987
DocuFilm Creation	2 422	-	-	2 422
Website (Hosting & Design)	1 181	-	-	1 181
JustGiving Subscription	216	-	-	216
Zoom Account	203	-	-	203
Social Media	705	-	-	705
PO Box Subscription	425	-	-	425
Public Liability Insurance	582	-	-	582
Peer Support	1 211	-	-	1 211
Trustees (Meetings & Permitted Travel)	775	-	-	775
Postage	27	-	-	27
Miscellaneous	20	-	-	20
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
Sub total	16 304	-	-	16 304
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)				
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-
Total payments	16 304	-	-	16 304
Net of receipts/(payments)	- 5 513	-	-	- 5 513
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	56 240	-	-	56 240
Cash funds this year end	50 727	-	-	50 727


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 (Co-Operative)	1 100	-
	Bank Balance (Natwest)	49 627	-
		-	-
	Total cash funds	50 727	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK
B2 Other monetary assets	Details		
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
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

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**Date of
approval**

25-Nov-25