



# ANNUAL REPORT

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Year end: 31st March 2024  
Charity Registration 1186714



# ANNUAL REPORT

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# A NOTE FROM OUR CHAIR



**Access Social Care began in 2020, and it's hard to believe that we are now approaching our 5th birthday. Yet with over 400,000 people on a waiting list to have a social care assessment and at least 2.6 million with an unmet social care need, our work has never been more vital.**

As we transition from a start-up to a maturing organisation, it is an exciting time for our team of more than 40 employees who are all working tirelessly to fight for the rights of individuals with unmet social care needs. Our extraordinary colleagues often go above and beyond what is reasonable to ensure people with social care needs obtain the right support, and I would like to thank them for the profound difference they make to people's lives, as is illustrated by the case studies described later in this report.

As we enter the next phase of our development, a number of existing Trustees are standing down and we are welcoming new members to the Board. We will continue to add to the Board in the coming months to ensure it meets Access's needs in this next phase. I would like to express a huge thank you to the outgoing Trustees who have played a major part in successfully guiding Access in its formative years, and especially to our former, and founding chair, Jan Tregelles. Her leadership has been inspirational.

Although we are a much bigger team now, we know that the scale of the problem with access to justice is so large that we could never grow fast enough to meet demand without a technological solution to allow us to scale our expertise. In the past year we have continued to develop our online tool, called AccessAva, and seen the contribution it has made to our impact by empowering individuals through our community hubs to access early legal support. Assessments have been secured, as well as access to fair social care charging for adequate social care provision. A further impact has been on local authorities who have been influenced to change their policies and practices. This work was recognised in May 2023 – when ASC won "Best Digital Innovation" at the Third Sector Business Charity Awards (Winners of "Best Digital Innovation" at the Third Sector Business Charity Awards ([accesscharity.org.uk](https://accesscharity.org.uk))).

This year has also seen the team challenge the government on the funding of social care. The social care sector, including public bodies, charitable and commercial organisations, are all aligned that social care is critically underfunded. The previous Government's position was that social care was adequately funded but refused to reveal their maths. Through a number of FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) requests we are asking the government to reveal crucial data so that we can support the improvement of long-term decision making in social care funding. We have recently appealed to the new administration, the Prime Minister and dept ministers asking for a change in approach, to support the Information Commissioner's view, and disclose this information as soon as possible. We desperately need government transparency and accountability in social care, and so do the many families across the country who rely on it.

We are delighted that our work has been validated by the Oak Foundation's decision to fund us for a further 5 years. We are extraordinarily grateful for this support and that of all our funders and partners without whom our work would not be possible. We look forward to continuing to work with them in the next, exciting, phase of Access Social Care's evolution.

**Chris Hale, Chair of the Board of Trustees**

# ABOUT SOCIAL CARE

**Social Care is the support people receive in their own home, a care home or in the community to live in dignity and as independently as possible. When done right, social care should align with the Social Care Future vision, allowing us to live in the place we call home, with the people and things we love, in communities where we look out for each other, doing the things that matter to us.**

The social care funding crisis continues to have a devastating impact on the social care sector and ultimately on the lives of people who draw on social care:

Cash-strapped local authorities don't always live up to their legal obligations when it comes to social care. We see people being denied or delayed the social care they need to live their life of choice. We see carers taking on unsustainable or unsafe caring roles. It is deeply shocking that some of our clients need our support to ensure their most basic needs are met – including access to food, shelter and support to be washed and dressed.

Social care providers are struggling to balance their books. Below inflation uplifts from councils, increased energy bills, and the introduction of an unfunded rise in the minimum wage are compounding difficulties for many providers. Most of our member organisations are facing extremely difficult financial decisions: they are handing back contracts, closing services, selling off properties, restructuring, and in some cases using reserves to pay salaries. In a crowded news cycle, this provider market collapse is going largely unreported.

Care workers are affected too, leaving work they love to take positions in the NHS or in retail simply because they cannot support their families on care sector salaries.

We supported our client, Pam\* to get the correct package of care in place. Pam was assessed by her local authority as needing care and support but delays at the Local Authority left her without support for two and a half years. This was causing significant distress for Pam and led her to thoughts of taking her own life.

Pam's caseworker worked with her to review her assessment. They agreed that not only was the delay unacceptable, but the assessment of her needs was inaccurate, and she would in fact need more care than the local authority was suggesting. Pam was also going to be charged for her care, and the amount she was being asked to pay was unaffordable.

Over the course of 15 months, we worked hard to get a suitable package of care in place and challenged the amount Pam was being charged. Pam is now receiving 28 and a half hours a week of care, and she is paying £50 per week less towards her care than was originally requested. Not only this, but the local authority agreed to pay £25,000 in compensation for the delay and distress they had caused.

\*name has been changed





# THE IMPORTANCE OF ACCESS TO JUSTICE

**When local authorities fail to live up to their legal obligations to meet people's social care needs the legal system should be there to challenge injustice and hold public bodies to account. If people can't afford to pay for a lawyer themselves, the publicly funded legal aid system should be there to ensure everyone can access justice to right wrongs. But all too often, community care legal aid cases are loss-making for legal aid lawyers and since 2010 the number of community care legal cases started by legal aid lawyers has fallen by nearly 80%.**

Without access to justice, the right to social care might as well not exist because public bodies can act unlawfully with impunity because people can't access legal support when they need it. Access Social Care believes that access to justice is essential to maintain the rule of law and uphold the rights of disabled people, older people and carers. But not only that, when done right, we know that legal advice can play a vital role helping public bodies improve the quality and delivery of social care.

## WHAT WE DO AND WHY WE EXIST

The social care funding crisis leading to people being unlawfully denied their right to social care, combined with the existential risk to access to specialist community care lawyers, means Access Social Care has never been more needed. Our work is focussed on the fault lines of social care, and access to justice for social care issues:

- Our community work is reaching under-served communities with experience of health and social care inequalities, raising awareness of rights and increasing confidence and the capability to use legal language to make sure needs are met.
- Our online advice product, AccessAva, is helping us expand our reach to new communities.
- Our membership model sees us partner with social care providers to drive a rights- led approach in social care provision.
- Our caseworkers are often the last resort for families and individuals denied the social care they have a right to. Our lawyers step in and intervene early on when things go wrong and give hope to clients at the darkest of times.
- With social care seemingly low on the political agenda, the importance of ASC's system change work cannot be overstated. AccessAva is helping us to gather data, which we are combining with data from other sources to improve evidence and data insights. We are sharing this data with public bodies to improve knowledge of where and how improvements can be made. We are running legal cases locally and nationally aimed at driving system- level change.

# OUR STRATEGY

**Our vision is for people to get the health and social care support they need to live fulfilled lives.**

Our mission is for ASC to be the leading specialist health and social care legal advice provider. We collaborate, educate, and challenge to drive system change and ensure rights are met.

## Our Impact Priorities

**We empower**

Communities use the law early on to get better outcomes

**We enforce**

People get early legal advice and support when they need it

**We drive system change**

We use data to challenge, persuade and influence to improve quality, policy and practice locally and nationally

## Our Enabling Priorities

**We use technology**

We innovate and use technology to increase efficiency and impact

**We value our people**

Our people strategy protects the social care law career pathway and ensures ASC is the best place to work

**We generate income**

Our diverse income streams grow to support increased impact

# OUR VALUES & APPROACH

Trustworthy	Recognised for excellence, we will be the best we can be in everything we do. We will be truthful, independent and outcomes focussed.
Fair	We believe in treating people with kindness and compassion in a way that is right, reasonable, and just.
Fearless	We will do what is right, not what is easy. We will bravely challenge injustice.
Inclusive	Our beneficiaries' voices will influence our thinking and decision making at all levels of our organisation. Collaborative in our thinking, we will work with others to achieve our goals.
Positive	We will be constructive and progressive in our challenge. We will optimistically and dynamically drive for change

**Our purpose is to improve the lives of people with social care needs. Our approach is to do this by collaborating with all parts of the system. We know that whilst we positively and constructively challenge public bodies through our casework, we can still work with leaders from public bodies to drive improvements to quality, policy and practice.**

Occasionally, in the course of our work with our members - some of whom are social care providers - we come across pockets of poor practice, unlawful behaviours, safeguarding or human rights concerns. When this occurs, we live to our values; we fearlessly do what is right and not what is easy, challenging injustice and driving for change. We are firm throughout the life of our relationship with our members that we only work with providers who are willing to engage with us, as human rights and specialist community care lawyers at an Executive and Leadership level, to secure continuous improvements to their services. We feel so strongly about this approach, it is built into our contract.

To help us with design, delivery and decision making, we work with experts by experience, ensuring our work is informed by the voices of the people our charity exists to serve. Our advisory panels and community partners support this work.

# OUR PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

## OUR MEMBERSHIP MODEL

ASC links its specialist community care law expertise to social care providers, helplines, community-based organisations, and the people they serve through a membership model. Members pay subscriptions linked to the level of service they wish to acquire. Our membership model has 3 main types of activity aligned with our 3 impact priorities

### Empower

- Legal capability training
- Legal education training
- Online training and resources

**EMPOWER**

We build relationships to increase knowledge of rights and improve legal capability and confidence. Our legal education ensures care and support staff, managers, families, and people with support needs, feel confident using legal language to improve decision making and know how and when to seek advice when things go wrong.

### Enforce

- Legal advice and casework
- Pro-bono clinics
- Barristers panel

**ENFORCE**

We ensure more people access legal help to solve problems early on. We know that with just a few letters from us we can transform outcomes and make sure people with social care needs get the care and support they have a right to.

### Systems Change

- Data analysis and insight
- Strategic casework
- Strategic consultancy
- Influencing

**CHALLENGE**

We achieve system change, working with public body decision makers to improve quality, policy and practice. We collect and analyse data to spot trends and use strategic casework and influencing to persuade and challenge, securing improved decision making and changes to the design and implementation of policy, guidance and regulations.

This year we worked with the following member organisations:		
Achieve Together	Ealing Consortium	National Autistic Society
Avenues	Father Hudson’s Care	Norwood
Camphill Village Trust	HFT	Sense
Choice Support	Lifeways	United Response
Croydon Mencap	MacIntyre	Wirral Mencap
Dimensions	Mencap	



## OUR COMMUNITY WORK

**Our membership model works well for people who are connected to a large social care provider. However, smaller community-based and user-led organisations working with people experiencing intersectionality and multiple barriers to accessing advice and quality social care can struggle to afford our fees.**

We know that disabled people, Black, Asian, minority ethnic, and some religious communities, experience worse health and social care outcomes than the general population. Free legal advice has been proven to improve health outcomes, so at Access Social Care we feel it is critical that we work alongside communities that have experienced disadvantage.

We work at the intersections of health and social care to ensure improved flow between social care and health and have adapted to work in a place-based and community-led way. We work with place-based communities and virtual communities of interest to empower their members to exercise their legal rights and access social care.

Our place-based hubs are in Gloucestershire, Croydon, Lambeth, Lewisham and Harlesden, where we are connecting our service to Black and Asian communities, a disabled person led organisation, and a family carer led organisation. We partner with Social Care Futures to deliver our community of interest hub for disabled people. We work with secondees in these organisations to share learning about how we use the law to improve outcomes for people with social care needs, and to learn how our partners work in a culturally appropriate way with their networks.

We co-produce legal education programmes and our secondees ripple knowledge out into their communities to improve knowledge of rights and confidence around using the law and legal language. By encouraging communities and community leaders to use our online tool, AccessAva, we are ensuring the quality of advice whilst harvesting data which can then be given back to communities. This helps them see trends in advice-seeking behaviours which may indicate problems with policy and practice in their area. Communities can then use this data to work alongside public body decisions. We have built strong relationships with the public bodies we work with in these communities. This year, Gloucestershire County Council thanked us for our input into their Fairer Contribution consultation, and even made amendments to their CQC self-assessment based on our feedback.

## OUR ONLINE PRODUCTS AND PROJECTS

We are a small organisation, but the demand for specialist advice is huge and growing. To complement our human advice and to help us reach further and wider than is currently possible through casework, we invented a revolutionary online solution that is changing the landscape in accessing health and social care.

This year we have rebranded our original 'chatbot' product as AccessAva in response to feedback from our partners to ensure the product meets the needs of our diverse communities.

In 2023/24 we ran a pilot to test licensing AccessAva to partner organisations to expand our impact. Our pilot organisations were:

- Asian People's Disability Alliance
- Ealing Mencap
- Croydon BME Forum
- National Autistic Society

Building on the success of the pilot, we have expanded our AccessAva hosting partnerships in 2023/24 with 2 new organisations who have contracted with us to use AccessAva with their online audiences. They are:

- Choice Support
- Crossroads Care Gloucestershire

We are working with a range of organisations across England, interested in becoming an AccessAva hosting partner. We have further developed the topics covered in the online tool, AccessAva in the following areas:

<b>MAY 2023</b>	<b>JUNE 2023</b>	<b>SEPTEMBER 2023</b>
NHS Continuing Healthcare - letter autocomplete function Carers' rights decision tree and letter downloads	Cost of living content Moving house content	End of life care content Discrimination content Safeguarding content Residential care charges
<b>NOVEMBER 2023</b>	<b>DECEMBER 2023</b>	<b>JAN 2024</b>
Carers' rights - letter autocomplete function	Cuts to care packages content Discrimination - letter autocomplete function	Direct payments module Updated versions of our factsheets and template letters

## DATA INSIGHT

The data team at Access Social Care has grown and developed this year. We continue to lead a group of organisations in a collaborative project combining helpline data to shine a spotlight on the emerging themes in social care advice provision. Data insights from this project are published annually in our State of the Nation report. This year we found that overall advice seeking, across all universal social care themes, has increased by 153% post pandemic compared with pre pandemic figures. In addition some areas of social care advice provision have increased significantly in the post pandemic period compared with pre-pandemic levels:

- 96% more advocacy
- 204% more unpaid carers queries
- 206% more provision identifying the need for specialist legal advice
- 7 times as many mental capacity queries

We have ambitious plans for 2024/25 to develop live data platforms to enable civil society and public bodies to monitor social care data in real time.

**We are developing, with the support of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, a dedicated Advisor product in 2024. The aim of this is to empower generalist information advisors to give more specialist advice and to give law students a taste of community care law, to raise awareness that this important legal specialism is a career option.**



# OUR IMPACT PRIORITIES

## WE EMPOWER

We have built knowledge and confidence in using the law by:

- Delivering bespoke training sessions to around 50 employees of our member organisations on subjects including dealing with under-funded services, care act assessments and charging for social care.
- Training 411 people through our Hubs. Participants were asked to score how much knowledge they had and how confident they felt in challenging decisions on a scale of 1 to 5. On average, participants reported that their level of knowledge increased from 1.9 to 3.9 and their confidence to challenge decisions increased from 1.5 to 3.7.
- We have trained 31 managers from member organisations and 34 staff from other organisations in using AccessAva.
- 1924 people used AccessAva for legal support in 23/24, the satisfaction rating was 2.3 out of 3 (77% from 246 reviewers).

**In Gloucestershire, we co-produced an adapted version of our Care Act training, using examples from within the community and delivered it with translation support in 4 languages.**

One woman, Sanvi, who attended the training, cares for her husband who is in an advanced stage of a neurological condition and supports her 3 teenage boys - one of whom is almost 20, autistic and has a severe learning disability. Care staff come in twice a day to support her husband. Her son has not had any support since he finished a special needs college over a year ago. The woman was unsure if he had received a social care assessment. She did know that someone had come out 8 months previously but as she has extremely limited English and her husband, who speaks good English, is too unwell to be involved in any meetings, she was not sure who or why they were there. The person who came out from Adult Social Care spoke no Gujarati and did not use a translation service.

We were able to support Sanvi to write a letter requesting a new assessment for her son using AccessAva - which can translate all its content into an appropriate language. This letter detailed the difficulties he has in achieving the outcomes listed in the Care Act and the need for language support. She also requested a Carer's Assessment as the heavy caring role had taken a burdensome toll on her and she was exhausted. The need for language support and accessible information for her son were also flagged up in the request. Now that Sanvi has been able to fully express the difficulties she and her family are experiencing, the local authority have begun a new assessment process for the whole family, in a language Sanvi can understand so she can fully participate in the assessment process.

## WE ENFORCE

Our in-house legal team have worked on 452 legal cases this year, including 360 level 1 / initial advice pieces, 10 level 2 cases, 63 level 3 cases and 19 level 4 / pro bono cases. In a level 1 case, we provide initial advice to our membership organisation who then take their own action based on the advice we have provided. In level 2 cases, we speak directly to the person with care and support needs to provide them with advice. In level 3 cases we carry out casework for the person with care and support needs by taking action on their behalf. Level 4 cases are referred to our legal clinics for advice from our pro bono volunteers.

At Access Social Care, our commitment to providing access to justice drives every aspect of our work.

### **Recently we were delighted to resolve a pressing case brought to us by our member organisation Dimensions, who support people with learning disabilities and autism.**

The case centred around the vital need to secure transportation for a Dimensions client. They were about to lose access to their lease car, which they relied on to visit their family, go to the supermarket, and undertake other activities that are important for their welfare. Despite months of effort by Dimensions' Locality Manager, the Local Authority's inaction left the client facing the imminent loss of the car. The potential consequences were serious. Without access to reliable transportation, their ability to engage in community activities, make trips, and maintain connections with their family would be severely compromised. This not only threatened their wellbeing, but also posed risks to their safety and autonomy.

When Dimensions got in touch with us, we began the process of advocating on behalf of the client. We drafted a letter to the Local Authority outlining their duties under the Care Act and emphasising that their inaction was unlawful. The message was clear: they urgently needed to secure transportation to meet the client's essential needs.

We're pleased to report that the Local Authority conceded and made the application for a car, which was sorted in time for the client. Not only this, but it catalysed a broader change in the Local Authority's approach to these applications and had a wider impact on other Dimensions clients in the area. This shows the power of challenging a Local Authority's inaction or unlawful decisions – it not only secures justice for individual clients but can also drive wider positive change.

Dimensions' Locality Manager said:

*"I would like to thank you very much for your help and support. This has been a battle that I have been fighting for a good couple of years and to finally get the outcome we hoped for is great for the person we support."*



## WE DRIVE SYSTEM CHANGE

### Strategic litigation and our social care funding campaign

There is a broad consensus across the social care sector that social care is woefully underfunded by at least £8.3 Billion per year. (The Health Foundation estimate Sept 2023) The last Government asserted social care was adequately funded but refused to publish their maths. As a result of this lack of government transparency, civil society cannot identify biases, gaps or errors in the evidence on which public policy decision making is based. Since 2021, ASC has been making FOI requests against three government departments. Three Government departments have refused to publish the information requested despite the information commissioner finding it was in the public interest to do so.

Social care affects all of us – we will all need social care at some point. When so many are struggling to get the social care they need and have a right to, and when there is such a gap between Government's position and the wider social care sector's position, it is not good enough for the government to say how much they are investing in social care without explaining how much is needed.

Access Social Care are now pursuing a strategic legal case against 3 government departments seeking government transparency in this important area of public policy.

Access Social Care is asking DHSC, the Department of Levelling up and the Treasury to share the evidence that was used to decide how to fund adult social care. We hope this landmark legal case will for the first time enable the social care sector to interrogate the quality of the evidence relied upon and identify gaps in evidence to drive up decision-making. This case will continue into 2024/25.



# OUR ENABLING PRIORITIES

## WE USE TECHNOLOGY

We have grown from 4 to 6 AccessAva partners and hope to increase this number substantially in the coming year.

We plan to develop new products focused on the feedback from users and partners.

Crossroads Care Gloucestershire has partnered with Access Social Care adding AccessAva – a user-friendly facility on their website. Here, individuals seeking answers about social care can quickly ask questions, download factsheets, or generate auto-populated template letters without charge.

The impact of this initiative has been tremendous, empowering carers with increased confidence and professional advice. For instance, one carer shared their experience:

*"Crossroads Care Gloucestershire has helped me understand the Care Act, giving me the confidence to request a social care assessment. Although the local authority only acknowledged one of my husband's basic needs, Access Social Care Charity advised on the assessment and is now supporting me to appeal against it. Something that would have been too stressful for us as a family to do alone."*

**Jessica Hudson, Working Carer Project Manager, Crossroads Care Gloucestershire**



## WE VALUE OUR PEOPLE

**In the past year, we have taken action to improve our organisation's commitment to wellbeing, recognising its importance for our collective progress. This includes hosting reflective practice sessions tailored for our legal team and organising an all staff away day with a focus on wellbeing in the fourth quarter, which also served to strengthen our team's bond.**

In 2024/25, we will establish a wellbeing working group. This group will evaluate the success of our current wellbeing initiatives, address challenges, and identify key areas for continued development.

We are simultaneously developing a people strategy that reflects our values and ambitions. Central to this strategy is our commitment to making sure that Access Social Care is a brilliant place to work. This will ensure we can retain talented people to help us deliver our mission and vision across all of our workstreams.

## SUPPORTING THE FUTURE OF COMMUNITY CARE LAW

**In response to the critical national shortfall of community care lawyers, our team is actively developing a comprehensive career pathway initiative. This project is dedicated to enhancing the recruitment process and bolstering the retention rates of specialist lawyers in this vital field. Our aim is to cultivate a robust, and growing, legal community that is well-equipped to meet the growing needs of our society. In order to do this we are:**

- Partnering with universities to run community care legal advice clinics. In these clinics, students volunteer their time with us to carry out casework for our clients, under the supervision of our expert staff. This gives the students first-hand experience with community care cases, supporting them to develop skills and increasing their interest in the field. We continue to grow the number of universities we partner with and the number of students volunteering their time.



- Developing online training to support a range of organisations who form part of the community care advice ecosystem including universities, advice agencies, law firms and social care providers. This training will both make sure that a range of organisations are able to provide high-quality advice and information to their beneficiaries, alongside increasing interest and understanding in community care law as a career option.
- Setting up a community of practice for existing community care specialists to access peer support and supervision, training and seminars, and wellbeing initiatives. This will support reduce risk of burnout and reduce the number of lawyers leaving the professions.

**Access Social Care, worked in partnership with University of York, to pilot a Letter Writing Clinic where law students support Access Social Care clients to write a letter to their local authority about their social care issues.**

The Letter Writing Clinic's first successful outcome has led to a client being repaid a significant sum of money as a result of a missed direct payment from last year. The missed payment has meant the person with social care needs has had to miss out on taking part in activities such as swimming lessons, that are crucial to their wellbeing. The care plan of the person with social care needs is also going to be reviewed to make sure that their needs are being fully met. The outcome was achieved within 2 weeks of the letter being sent! The payment now means the client can re-start the activities that were so beneficial to their wellbeing.

The students involved in this case worked hard to obtain relevant information and write a robust letter citing the law to achieve the positive outcome for the client. Esme Edwards, the student who wrote the letter, explains what motivated her to take part in the clinic and what her experience was like:

*"I was really excited when I saw that this opportunity was available as community care law is not an area currently covered by my degree and so allowed me the opportunity to explore an area of law I wouldn't have been able to otherwise. I found it really rewarding to be able to talk to and support the client with their issue, and then see the positive impact our letter had had on their case. I thoroughly enjoyed my time volunteering for this clinic."*

Esme Edwards, Student Participant at the Letter Writing Clinic

## WE GENERATE INCOME

### OUR PRO BONO SUPPORT

ASC's volunteers support the charity in many ways, and the charity benefits greatly from their experience and commitment to the cause.

In 2023/24 we partnered with four law firms to provide legal advice and casework on:

- Care Act assessments
- Welfare benefits appeals
- Social care charging
- One-off letter writing

Around 150 solicitors volunteered their time to provide this advice. Additionally, we received 9 pieces of advice from our Pro Bono panel of barristers and solicitors. These one-off pieces of advice enable our work in other ways such as supporting us with the wording of our contracts or completing research. We would like to extend our thanks for this to Baker MacKenzie, Field Fisher, Orrick and Slaughter and May, Landmark Chambers, 39 Essex Chambers and Doughty Street Chambers.

### OUR FUNDERS

We are extraordinarily grateful for financial support without whom our work would not be possible. We have received financial support from generous individual donations, pro bono funders as well as funding organisations to enable us to do the work we do. With thanks to:

- |                                  |                                    |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| • The Baring Foundation          | • Oak Foundation                   |
| • CareTech Foundation            | • Disrupt Foundation               |
| • Esmée Fairbairn Foundation     | • Barnwood Trust                   |
| • Fidelity UK Foundation         | • Rayne Foundation                 |
| • The Legal Education Foundation | • 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust   |
| • Rangoonwala Foundation         | • The Access To Justice Foundation |
| • Pears Foundation               | • The Dulverton Trust              |

In addition to grant funding, ASC also received income from its membership model, individual donors and through licencing Access Ava.



# LOOKING FORWARDS TO 2024/25 AND BEYOND

## OUR IMPACT PRIORITIES

### EMPOWER

**Membership Model:** We will develop our membership model in 2024/25 so that more social care providers are able to access advice from us in a way that is affordable for them in a difficult time for the social care sector.

**Hubs:** We will create a new community of interest hub for carers, utilising a network of peer navigators to support new carers through the social care system.

Hubs: We will create a new community of interest hub for carers, utilising a network of peer navigators to support new carers through the social care system.

### ENFORCE

**Community Care Legal Specialists:** We will launch a community of practice for community care legal specialists, enabling them to access peer support, wellbeing activities and expert supervision, to promote retention of lawyers in this field and increasing the availability of legal advice.

We will introduce pro-bono clinics at 2 Universities, allowing students to volunteer on some of our cases. This will increase the level of interest in community care law as a career option and create a pipeline of new community care lawyers.



### CHALLENGE

Access Social Care is asking DHSC, the Department of Levelling up and the Treasury to share the evidence that was used to decide how to fund adult social care in a landmark legal case which will for the first time enable the social care sector to interrogate the quality of the evidence relied upon and identify gaps in evidence to drive up decision-making.

We will continue to influence the Legal Aid Agency to make positive changes to the way community care lawyers are paid for the work they do and remove barriers to people accessing legal aid.

Influence the Legal Aid Agency to make positive changes for community care lawyers and remove barriers to people accessing legal aid.

# ENABLING PRIORITIES

## WE USE TECHNOLOGY

**AccessAva:** We are aiming to establish 25 AccessAva partnerships by March 2025.

**Case Management system:** We will implement a new system to enhance the effectiveness and security of the legal team's operations.

**Data Protection:** We will carry out high-priority improvements based on an external Data Protection audit and form a dedicated working group to maintain top rankings in key protection measures and integrate data protection into the organisational culture at all levels.

We are aiming to establish 25 AccessAva partnerships by March 2025

## WE VALUE OUR PEOPLE

**New People Strategy:** We will support our team with a new People Strategy, and our workforce will be invited to contribute to its development. This strategy will outline our plans to strengthen the recruitment, development and retention of community care experts and the broader organisation.

## OUR INCOME

**Strategic Fundraising:** Our fundraising team will remain dedicated to strategic fundraising, focusing on grant funding trends and strategies to align with and respond to funders' priorities. We will also continue our work to develop and strengthen our impact methodology and framework, continuing the significant progress made on this in the past year.

**Communication and Marketing Strategy.** We are fully committed to supporting ASC's mission and vision by developing a new communication and marketing strategy. This strategy will be developed in collaboration with our colleagues to better understand our target audience and determine the most effective communication channels. It will also help us identify the internal resources needed to support our work and facilitate external communication. We plan to begin the recruitment process for a new communication and marketing team in the spring of 2025.

Communication and Marketing Strategy. We are fully committed to supporting ASC's mission and vision by developing a new communication and marketing strategy.

# OUR GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

**As noted in the introduction, as we approach our fifth anniversary later this year, several of our Trustees have reached the end of their term or decided that it was time for them to move on from ASC. As an organisation, we are enormously grateful to our outgoing Trustees for all of their support, guidance and practical assistance throughout their tenures, and for supporting with the transition arrangements.**

ASC is now entering a new phase of development, and these changes present an exciting opportunity to renew the ASC Board to guide and support on the next stage of our journey. Two new Trustees joined in July 2024 and a recruitment process will be launched in the Autumn to add to our Trustee numbers

ASC follows the Charity Commission's best practice guidance on recruitment and induction of new trustees. Skills gaps relevant to the strategic objectives of the charity are identified by the Board by way of informal audit (which was conducted in summer 2024). Potential trustees will submit a CV and covering letter and meet the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and one other member of the Executive team. Then the chair and at least one other trustee will conduct an interview to assess the suitability of the candidate. New trustees are offered an induction programme including a set of key documents, meetings with other trustees, training courses relevant to their roles and in-depth discussions with the Executive Team. Opportunities for training are offered to support trustees in their roles. In line with our diversity aims, we will work hard to encourage applications from a diverse range of candidates and under-represented groups. The Articles of Association include terms of office and, with the exception of two of the founding trustees, an initial appointment is made for a 3-year term. Trustees will be eligible for reappointment for one further term of 3 years. One of our founding trustees and our current Chair, Chris Hale, had an initial term of 5 years and was reappointed for a further 3 years in 2024.

The Board of Trustees is responsible for determining the overall strategic direction of the charity and for developing policies and plans to support the delivery of our charitable objectives. The Board monitors progress across all areas of activity including legal requirements and financial performance. The Board began a governance review in April 2024 and the first stage of this is informing the renewal of the Board and will continue to work with the new Board in early 2025 on the next phase of this review.

A CEO is appointed by the trustees to manage the day-to-day operations of the charity. To facilitate effective operations, the authority for operational matters including financial management, employment and performance relating to agreed key objectives is delegated to the CEO and other members of the Executive team. Any decisions outside of the strategic direction agreed by the Board, or more than £100,000 outside of the agreed budget, are referred to trustees for approval. Pay and remuneration of the charity's key management personnel is reviewed by the Board each year and any changes made are based on performance, an assessment of the market, the financial position of the organisation and relativity across the team.

If the Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) is wound up, the Trustees as members of the CIO have no liability to contribute to its assets and no personal responsibility for settling its debts and liabilities.

# FINANCIAL REVIEW

**ASC ended the financial year on 31.3.24 in a strong financial position having grown its income and secured long-term grant funding. We have recorded a surplus of £514,608 but this surplus relates to funds that were received in the year but committed to expenditure in the following year.**

## INCOME

Our total income for the year was £2,516,586, a significant increase from the prior year (£1,669,136). This increase is predominantly due to the renewal of our partnership with Oak Foundation at a significantly increased funding level (£1.15m per annum vs £386k) but we have also broadened our sources of income with further licensing of Access Ava and the support of new grant funders such as Rayne Foundation and Access to Justice Foundation.

## EXPENDITURE

Total expenditure in the reporting period was £2,001,978, again a significant increase from the prior year (£1,523,409). This increase was driven by increasing staff costs (£360k), particularly supporting our legal casework and AccessAva, reflecting both an expansion of our team and inflationary-related increases. Amortisation of Access Ava was also higher this year as funds invested are increasingly released to our income and expenditure statement.

## GOING CONCERN

Access Social Care is still a relatively new charity and our experience of the last few years from our incorporation leaves us well-placed to manage the risk that we face. This position is supported by strong liquidity, sufficient reserves for business continuity and development plans, a good relationship with our key funders and proven ability to retain and secure new services.

We have set out in this report a review of

Access Social Care's financial performance, the reserves position and principal risks and uncertainties. Notwithstanding the ongoing pressures on fundraising, our performance to date has been robust in terms of income generation and Access Social Care has remained firmly in control of its service quality and financial performance throughout the operating period.

The 2024/25 budget has been approved by the Access Social Care Board. Our planning processes, including financial projections, take into consideration the current economic climate and its potential impact on the various sources of income and planned expenditure. The trustees therefore have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future, being at least twelve months from the date of approval of these financial statements. Accordingly, the financial statements continue to be prepared on the going concern basis.

## STATEMENT OF PUBLIC BENEFIT

The trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty in section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have regard to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit, "Charities and Public Benefit". Access Social Care's charitable objects are enshrined within its memorandum and articles and as such the trustees ensure that the charity's activities are carried out for the public benefit through its strategic priorities. This is done primarily through the delivery of services aimed at people with a social care needs as well as those who support them. This report

allows us to show how our charitable funds are spent and the impact and benefits that has on those using our services, as well as the wider impact on society

## CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

Spend on further development of AccessAva in this year was £80,483. This amount has been capitalized and does not appear in our expenditure in the Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA). This expenditure supported the pilot programme and included further development of AccessAva to respond to the emerging needs of our pilot partners.

## FUNDS ANALYSIS

Reserves are maintained at a level that enables the charity to manage operational financial risks and short-term income volatility. They allow the charity to sustain service delivery, in particular legal casework support to our clients, over the long term, as well as ensuring that financial commitments can be met as they fall due.

Of the charity's £1,818,123 total funds at the end of March 2024, £377,988 are restricted funds that are committed to future expenditure and not available for general purposes.

We hold £1,178,164 in two designated funds; the first (£334,188) covers the amortisation of our intangible asset, Access Ava. These funds result from cash expenditure on development which were not expensed at the point of purchase in the SOFA. Instead, these funds will be used to cover future amortisation costs and therefore will be released to the SOFA in future years.

The second designated fund (£843,976) holds the balance of our Oak Foundation funding.

This funding is flexible, but it is not part of our general funds as it must be spent over a calendar year period.

Our free reserves, or General Funds, are £261,971 (FY23: £313,841). Free reserves are those unrestricted funds which are freely available to the trustees to spend on any of the charity's purposes.

## RESERVES POLICY

The Trustees have reviewed the Reserves policy this year due to the confirmation of long-term funding. In this new light, the existing policy had become out of date. A new policy has been devised with the following considerations:

- Secured funding sources
- Cash flow
- Fixed costs
- Ensuring our ability to effectively complete or transfer vital services in the event of loss of income

The Trustees have therefore decided to set a target for reserves this year of retaining six months of essential costs (£362,000) as well as non-negotiable costs required in restructuring. This will ensure provision for supporting services and dealing appropriately with liabilities in the event of a drop in income. This target should be held in cash to ensure that funds are liquid.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Our current free reserves provide four months of cover (£261,971) and the trustees alongside the Executive team will review strategies to bridge this gap in the coming year.



# MANAGING RISK

Access Social Care continually reviews its risk framework, ensuring that it aligns with the organisation's strategic aims and objectives. The Board of Trustees reviews the full register annually and is provided with regular exception reporting flagging where risk scoring has changed, and additional mitigation actions being taken. Independent assurance is provided by an outsourced independent audit function from Godfrey Wilson accountants. Risk management at the operational level is managed by the Executive team, who review risks regularly both within their directorates and as a group. The table below outlines some of the risks we review and the mitigation strategy for each.

PRINCIPAL RISKS	BACKGROUND	OUR MITIGATION STRATEGY
Diversifying income streams away from grant funding.	We have had incredibly generous support from a wide range of grant funders, but we need to grow other income streams, including commercial ones, to reduce our reliance on grants in future.	We have worked hard to grow our partners using our AccessAva and we continue to research all available sources of funding from trusts and foundation.  In addition, we will explore new funding models such as social investment if they can support our impact aims and they are right for our charity.
Membership Income drops below expected levels detailed in the budget e.g. loss of a major partner	Our membership is made up of care sector organisations. We recognise that this is an extremely challenging time for the sector with many of our members having to make difficult decisions to remain financially viable.	We have strengthened our relationship management work with our partners, improved communication around the return on investment our members gain, and we are rolling out a number of alternative models to retain existing partners and attract new ones.
Staff experience burnout or well-being issues due to volume & pace of organisational delivery and change	As a small and growing charity with huge ambitions, there is always a tension between what we want to achieve and what we have capacity for.	We recognise that more work is needed to refine our business plan and agree on a set of priorities which fits our strategy and the capacity of the team.  We have recently recruited a People Director who has prioritised a People Strategy to ensure we get the best of our people; this is due for review by the Board in October.

# FUNDRAISING

Access Social Care's small fundraising team is line managed by the Director of Partners & Engagement and includes a part-time Senior Fundraiser and part-time Fundraiser, with some support from Admin staff on prospect research. The team relies on input from the CEO, Finance Director, wider Exec and operational teams to provide accurate and relevant content for proposals and reporting. The CEO and/or Executive members sign off applications over the value of £100k.

The Fundraising team had another successful year through grant-giving, which remained the main source of fundraised income. With traditional pipeline fundraising continuing to pose challenges, the team's approach focuses on building long-term strategic partnerships with funders. Via careful stewardship throughout the year, the team, along with support from the CEO, Executive team and other colleagues have maintained excellent relationships with many funders who are now on their second and third grants. We have taken grateful advantage of extended partnership offers from Funder Plus Schemes that have included; small capacity grants, Team Development, meeting room spaces and networking opportunities.

Other areas of Fundraising include

- **Individual Giving** – This area of fundraising is increasing steadily, as the charity's stakeholders continue to grow. We now segment communication to 'opted-in' individuals, with a view to maintaining existing and growing new individual givers. We have received tranches of opted in supporters who have donated to 2 previous Crowd Justice campaigns through their legal crowd funding platform.
- **Major Donors** – ASC has one individual major donor and is supported by one of our Trustees and some external well networked supporters who help us reach new influential audiences.
- **CSR** – ASC benefits from donations by 6 law firms which is in addition to the pro-bono support given through legal clinics to the charity. One of the firms has committed a three-year pledge to supporting the charity.

ASC Fundraising Team regularly monitor fundraising trends through publications, webinars, and peer connections. Whilst the main source of income in Fundraising remains grants, the team have an open and flexible approach to opportunities which suit Access Social care.

# REPORT AND AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

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### Statement of responsibilities of the trustees

#### For the year ended 31 March 2024

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The trustees are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with 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).

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and the incoming resources and application of resources, including the net income or expenditure, of the charity for the period. In preparing those financial statements the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and which enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the constitution. The trustees 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 corporate 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.

If the CIO is wound up, the members of the CIO have no liability to contribute to its assets and no personal responsibility for settling its debts and liabilities. The trustees are members of the charity but this entitles them only to voting rights. The trustees have no beneficial interest in the charity.

#### Auditors

Godfrey Wilson Limited were re-appointed as auditors to the charity during the period and have expressed their willingness to continue in that capacity.

Approved by the trustees on 15 October 2024 and signed on their behalf by

Chris Hale - Trustee

## Access Your Right To Care

### Reference and administrative details

For the year ended 31 March 2024

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<b>Charity number</b>	1186714																		
<b>Registered office</b>	86-90 Paul Street London EC21 4NE																		
<b>Trustees</b>	<p>The trustees who served during the period and up to the date of this report were as follows:</p> <table><tr><td>Tracey Gyateng</td><td>(appointed 11 July 2024)</td></tr><tr><td>Christopher Hale</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Rhoda Iranloye</td><td>(resigned 19 July 2024)</td></tr><tr><td>Sarah Maguire</td><td>(appointed 11 July 2024)</td></tr><tr><td>Kevin McGuirk</td><td>(resigned 19 July 2024)</td></tr><tr><td>Linda Redford</td><td>(resigned 5 July 2024)</td></tr><tr><td>Joyce Sarpong</td><td>(resigned 15 May 2024)</td></tr><tr><td>Janine Tregelles</td><td>(resigned 5 July 2024)</td></tr><tr><td>Robbie Turner</td><td>(resigned 19 July 2024)</td></tr></table>	Tracey Gyateng	(appointed 11 July 2024)	Christopher Hale		Rhoda Iranloye	(resigned 19 July 2024)	Sarah Maguire	(appointed 11 July 2024)	Kevin McGuirk	(resigned 19 July 2024)	Linda Redford	(resigned 5 July 2024)	Joyce Sarpong	(resigned 15 May 2024)	Janine Tregelles	(resigned 5 July 2024)	Robbie Turner	(resigned 19 July 2024)
Tracey Gyateng	(appointed 11 July 2024)																		
Christopher Hale																			
Rhoda Iranloye	(resigned 19 July 2024)																		
Sarah Maguire	(appointed 11 July 2024)																		
Kevin McGuirk	(resigned 19 July 2024)																		
Linda Redford	(resigned 5 July 2024)																		
Joyce Sarpong	(resigned 15 May 2024)																		
Janine Tregelles	(resigned 5 July 2024)																		
Robbie Turner	(resigned 19 July 2024)																		
<b>Chief executive officer</b>	Kari Gerstheimer																		
<b>Senior management team</b>	<table><tr><td>Joanne Williams</td><td>Director of Fundraising &amp; Communications</td></tr><tr><td>Lainey Gough</td><td>Director of Operations and Impact (resigned May 2023)</td></tr><tr><td>Laura Peters</td><td>Director of Legal Services (appointed January 2024)</td></tr><tr><td>Alan Bird</td><td>Chief Technology Officer</td></tr><tr><td>Pauline Gayle</td><td>People Director (resigned October 2023)</td></tr><tr><td>Serena Kashim</td><td>People Director (appointed February 2024)</td></tr><tr><td>Peter Stimpson</td><td>Finance Director</td></tr></table>	Joanne Williams	Director of Fundraising & Communications	Lainey Gough	Director of Operations and Impact (resigned May 2023)	Laura Peters	Director of Legal Services (appointed January 2024)	Alan Bird	Chief Technology Officer	Pauline Gayle	People Director (resigned October 2023)	Serena Kashim	People Director (appointed February 2024)	Peter Stimpson	Finance Director				
Joanne Williams	Director of Fundraising & Communications																		
Lainey Gough	Director of Operations and Impact (resigned May 2023)																		
Laura Peters	Director of Legal Services (appointed January 2024)																		
Alan Bird	Chief Technology Officer																		
Pauline Gayle	People Director (resigned October 2023)																		
Serena Kashim	People Director (appointed February 2024)																		
Peter Stimpson	Finance Director																		
<b>Bankers</b>	The Co-Operative Bank Business Direct Skelmerdale WN8 6GH																		
<b>Auditors</b>	Godfrey Wilson Limited Chartered accountants and statutory auditors 5th Floor Mariner House 62 Prince Street Bristol BS1 4QD																		



## Independent auditors' report

### To the members of

#### Access Your Right To Care

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##### Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Access Your Right To Care (the 'charity') for the year ended 31 March 2024 which comprise the statement of financial activities, balance sheet, statement of cash flows and the related 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 charity's affairs as at 31 March 2024 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
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011.

##### 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 charity 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 the provisions available for small entities, in the circumstances set out in note 6 to the financial statements, 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 charity'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 we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

## **Independent auditors' report**

### **To the members of**

#### **Access Your Right To Care**

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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 require us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the information given in the trustees' report is inconsistent in any material respect with the financial statements; or
- sufficient accounting records have not been kept; or
- 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 the trustees**

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement set out in the trustees' report, the trustees 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 they 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 charity'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 trustees either intend to liquidate the charity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

#### **Our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements**

We have been appointed as auditor under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and report in accordance with the Act 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.

## Independent auditors' report

### To the members of

#### Access Your Right To Care

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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 procedures we carried out and the extent to which they are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, are detailed below:

(1) We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory framework that the charity operates in, and assessed the risk of non-compliance with applicable laws and regulations. Throughout the audit, we remained alert to possible indications of non-compliance.

(2) We reviewed the charity's policies and procedures in relation to:

- Identifying, evaluating and complying with laws and regulations, and whether they were aware of any instances of non-compliance;
- Detecting and responding to the risk of fraud, and whether they were aware of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud; and
- Designing and implementing internal controls to mitigate the risk of non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud.

(3) We inspected the minutes of trustee meetings.

(4) We enquired about any non-routine communication with regulators and reviewed any reports made to them.

(5) We reviewed the financial statement disclosures and assessed their compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

(6) We performed analytical procedures to identify any unusual or unexpected transactions or balances that may indicate a risk of material fraud or error.

(7) We assessed the risk of fraud through management override of controls and carried out procedures to address this risk. Our procedures included:

- Testing the appropriateness of journal entries;
- Assessing judgements and accounting estimates for potential bias;
- Reviewing related party transactions; and
- Testing transactions that are unusual or outside the normal course of business.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. Irregularities that arise due to fraud can be even harder to detect than those that arise from error as they may involve deliberate concealment or collusion.

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/auditorsresponsibilities](http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities). This description forms part of our auditor's report.

## **Independent auditors' report**

### **To the members of**

#### **Access Your Right To Care**

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##### **Use of our report**

This report is made solely to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Part 4 of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charity'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 charity and the charity's trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Date: 16 October 2024

##### **GODFREY WILSON LIMITED**

Chartered accountants and statutory auditors  
5th Floor Mariner House  
62 Prince Street  
Bristol  
BS1 4QD

Godfrey Wilson Limited is eligible for appointment as auditor of the charity by virtue of its eligibility for appointment as auditor of a company under section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

## Access Your Right To Care

### Statement of financial activities

For the year ended 31 March 2024

		Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2024 Total £	2023 Total £
	Note				
<b>Income from:</b>					
Donations	3	693,622	1,326,297	<b>2,019,919</b>	1,267,251
Charitable activities	4	-	488,784	<b>488,784</b>	400,722
Investments		-	7,883	<b>7,883</b>	1,163
<b>Total income</b>		<u>693,622</u>	<u>1,822,964</u>	<u><b>2,516,586</b></u>	<u>1,669,136</u>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>					
Raising funds		146,127	85,437	<b>231,564</b>	184,686
Charitable activities		<u>724,215</u>	<u>1,046,199</u>	<u><b>1,770,414</b></u>	<u>1,338,723</u>
<b>Total expenditure</b>	5	<u>870,342</u>	<u>1,131,636</u>	<u><b>2,001,978</b></u>	<u>1,523,409</u>
<b>Net income / (expenditure)</b>		(176,720)	691,328	<b>514,608</b>	145,727
Transfers between funds		<u>(37,457)</u>	<u>37,457</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	6	(214,177)	728,785	<b>514,608</b>	145,727
<b>Reconciliation of funds:</b>					
Total funds brought forward		<u>592,165</u>	<u>711,350</u>	<u><b>1,303,515</b></u>	<u>1,157,788</u>
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		<u><u>377,988</u></u>	<u><u>1,440,135</u></u>	<u><u><b>1,818,123</b></u></u>	<u><u>1,303,515</u></u>

All of the above results are derived from continuing activities. There were no other recognised gains or losses other than those stated above. Movements in funds are disclosed in note 14 to the accounts.



## Access Your Right To Care

### Balance sheet

As at 31 March 2024

	Note	£	2024 £	2023 £
<b>Fixed assets</b>				
Intangible fixed assets	9		<u>334,188</u>	<u>397,509</u>
<b>Current assets</b>				
Debtors	10	182,803		183,348
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>1,583,457</u>		<u>985,426</u>
		1,766,260		1,168,774
<b>Liabilities</b>				
Creditors: amounts falling due within 1 year	11	<u>282,325</u>		<u>262,768</u>
<b>Net current assets</b>			<u>1,483,935</u>	<u>906,006</u>
<b>Net assets</b>	13		<u><u>1,818,123</u></u>	<u><u>1,303,515</u></u>
<b>Funds</b>	14			
Restricted funds			377,988	592,165
Unrestricted funds:				
Designated funds			1,178,164	397,509
General funds			<u>261,971</u>	<u>313,841</u>
<b>Total charity funds</b>			<u><u>1,818,123</u></u>	<u><u>1,303,515</u></u>

Approved by the trustees on 15 October 2024 and signed on their behalf by

Chris Hale - Trustee

## Access Your Right To Care

### Statement of cash flows

For the year ended 31 March 2024

	2024 £	2023 £
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	<b>514,608</b>	145,727
Adjustments for:		
Amortisation charges	143,804	86,825
Dividends, interest and rents from investments	(7,883)	(1,163)
Decrease / (increase) in debtors	545	(64,137)
Increase / (decrease) in creditors	19,557	35,109
<b>Net cash provided by operating activities</b>	<b>670,631</b>	202,361
<b>Cash flows from investing activities:</b>		
Dividends, interest and rents from investments	7,883	1,163
Purchase of intangible fixed assets	(80,483)	(195,649)
<b>Net cash used in investing activities</b>	<b>(72,600)</b>	(194,486)
<b>Increase in cash and cash equivalents in the period</b>	<b>598,031</b>	7,875
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the period	985,426	977,551
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period</b>	<b>1,583,457</b>	985,426

The charity has not provided an analysis of changes in net debt as it does not have any long term financing arrangements.

**1. Accounting policies**

**a) Basis of preparation**

Access Your Right To Care is a charitable incorporated organisation registered in England and Wales. The registered office address is 86-90 Paul Street, London, EC21 4NE.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities in preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

Access Your Right To Care meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note.

**b) Going concern basis of accounting**

The accounts have been prepared on the assumption that the charity is able to continue as a going concern, which the trustees consider appropriate having regard to the current level of unrestricted reserves. There are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern.

**c) Income**

Income is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the item of income have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Income from the government and other grants, whether 'capital' grants or 'revenue' grants, is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the grants have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably and is not deferred.

Income from subscriptions received in advance is deferred until criteria for income recognition are met.

**d) Donated services and facilities**

Donated professional services and donated facilities are recognised as income when the charity has control over the item, any conditions associated with the donated item have been met, the receipt of economic benefit from the use by the charity of the item, is probable and the economic benefit can be measured reliably. In accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102), general volunteer time is not recognised.

On receipt, donated professional services and donated facilities are recognised on the basis of the value of the gift to the charity which is the amount the charity would have been willing to pay to obtain services or facilities of equivalent economic benefit on the open market; a corresponding amount is then recognised in expenditure in the period of receipt.

As discussed in the trustees' report, the charity benefitted from significant pro bono support in 2023 and 2024, however these have not been recognised in the accounts on the basis that the charity would not have been able to afford these services if not provided for free.

**1. Accounting policies (continued)**

**e) Interest receivable**

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity: this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the bank.

**f) Funds accounting**

Unrestricted funds are available to spend on activities that further any of the purposes of the charity. Designated funds are unrestricted funds of the charity which the trustees have decided at their discretion to set aside to use for a specific purpose. Restricted funds are donations which the donor has specified are to be solely used for particular areas of the charity's work or for specific projects being undertaken by the charity.

**g) Expenditure and irrecoverable VAT**

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Irrecoverable VAT is allocated as a support cost.

**h) Allocation of support and governance costs**

Support costs are those functions that assist the work of the charity but do not directly undertake charitable activities. Governance costs are the costs associated with the governance arrangements of the charity, including the costs of complying with constitutional and statutory requirements and any costs associated with the strategic management of the charity's activities. These costs have been allocated between cost of raising funds and expenditure on charitable activities based on the proportion of direct costs, as follows:

	2024	2023
Raising funds	12%	12%
Charitable activities	88%	88%

**i) Intangible fixed assets**

Internally generated intangible assets meeting the relevant recognition criteria are initially measured at cost. Intangible fixed assets relate to the costs incurred in developing the charity's ChatBot asset.

Amortisation is provided at rates calculated to write down the cost of each asset to its estimated residual value over its expected useful life. The amortisation process commences upon the completion of each sprint. The amortisation rate in use for ChatBot is 4 years straight line.

**j) Debtors**

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

**1. Accounting policies (continued)**

**k) Cash at bank and in hand**

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

**l) Creditors**

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

**m) Financial instruments**

The charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value with the exception of bank loans which are subsequently recognised at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

**n) Pension costs**

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme for its employees. There are no further liabilities other than that already recognised in the SOFA.

**o) Accounting estimates and key judgements**

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, the trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying values of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and underlying 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 if the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods if the revision affects both current and future periods.

The key sources of estimation uncertainty that have a significant effect on the amounts recognised in the financial statements are determining the value of additions to capitalised intangible assets and the associated amortisation policy.

2. Prior period comparatives: statement of financial activities

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2023 Total £
<b>Income from:</b>			
Donations and legacies	1,025,746	241,505	1,267,251
Charitable activities	-	400,722	400,722
Investments	-	1,163	1,163
<b>Total income</b>	<b>1,025,746</b>	<b>643,390</b>	<b>1,669,136</b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>			
Raising funds	37,320	147,366	184,686
Charitable activities	611,420	727,303	1,338,723
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>648,740</b>	<b>874,669</b>	<b>1,523,409</b>
<b>Net income / (expenditure)</b>	<b>377,006</b>	<b>(231,279)</b>	<b>145,727</b>
Transfers between funds	(176,755)	176,755	-
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	<b>200,251</b>	<b>(54,524)</b>	<b>145,727</b>

3. Income from donations

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2024 Total £
Oak Foundation grant		1,115,000	<b>1,115,000</b>
Trusts and foundations	693,622	168,000	<b>861,622</b>
Corporate donations	-	38,022	<b>38,022</b>
Individual donations	-	5,275	<b>5,275</b>
<b>Total income from donations</b>	<b>693,622</b>	<b>1,326,297</b>	<b>2,019,919</b>

Prior period comparative:

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2023 Total £
Oak Foundation grant	457,660	-	457,660
Trusts and foundations	565,680	209,000	774,680
Corporate donations	2,406	25,013	27,419
Individual donations	-	7,492	7,492
<b>Total income from donations</b>	<b>1,025,746</b>	<b>241,505</b>	<b>1,267,251</b>



4. Income from charitable activities

	2024 Total £	2023 Total £
Consultancy income	720	360
ChatBot licensing	39,533	-
Subscriptions	<u>448,531</u>	<u>400,362</u>
<b>Total income from charitable activities</b>	<b><u>488,784</u></b>	<b><u>400,722</u></b>

*All income from charitable activities in the current and prior year was unrestricted.*

5. Total expenditure

	Raising funds £	Charitable activities £	Support and governance costs £	2024 Total £
Staff costs (note 7)	177,341	1,118,687	277,587	1,573,615
Other staff costs	1,708	14,713	26,432	42,853
Consultancy	7,150	74,197	24,046	105,393
IT and telephone costs	-	66,963	26,900	93,863
Office costs	150	6,358	11,488	17,996
Finance and governance	-	4	15,050	15,054
Amortisation	-	143,804	-	143,804
Irrecoverable VAT	-	-	9,400	9,400
<b>Sub-total</b>	186,349	1,424,726	390,903	2,001,978
Allocation of support and governance costs	45,215	345,688	(390,903)	-
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>231,564</b>	<b>1,770,414</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,001,978</b>

Total governance costs were £7,300 (2023: £13,137).

Prior period comparative

	Raising funds £	Charitable activities £	Support and governance costs £	2023 Total £
Staff costs (note 7)	133,460	945,493	134,411	1,213,364
Other staff costs	1,371	20,012	29,320	50,703
Consultancy	15,400	24,621	54,781	94,802
IT and telephone costs	-	8,046	27,745	35,791
Office costs	158	5,122	4,042	9,322
Finance and governance	-	-	20,634	20,634
Amortisation	-	86,825	-	86,825
Irrecoverable VAT	-	-	11,968	11,968
<b>Sub-total</b>	150,389	1,090,119	282,901	1,523,409
Allocation of support and governance costs	34,297	248,604	(282,901)	-
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>184,686</b>	<b>1,338,723</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,523,409</b>

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2024

**6. Net movement in funds**

This is stated after charging:

	2024 £	2023 £
Trustees' remuneration	Nil	Nil
Trustees' reimbursed expenses	569	581
Amortisation	143,804	86,825
Auditors' remuneration:		
▪ Statutory audit (ex VAT)	7,150	6,500

During the period two trustees were reimbursed for travel expenses, totalling £569 (2023: two trustees were reimbursed £581 for travel expenses).

In common with other charities of our size and nature we use our auditors to assist with the preparation of the financial statements.

**7. Staff costs and numbers**

Staff costs were as follows:

	2024 £	2023 £
Salaries and wages	1,382,938	1,008,684
Social security costs	130,859	87,579
Pension costs	59,818	45,440
Freelancers	-	71,661
	<b>1,573,615</b>	<b>1,213,364</b>

	2024 No.	2023 No.
Number of employees earning in the range of:		
£60,000 - £70,000	2	1
£70,000 - £80,000	1	-
£80,000 - £90,000	2	1

The key management personnel of the charity comprise the Trustees, Chief Executive Officer, and Senior Management Team. The total employee benefits of the key management personnel for the period were £417,154 (2023: £383,775).

	2024 No.	2023 No.
Average head count	36	32

**8. Taxation**

The charity is exempt from corporation tax as all its income is charitable and is applied for charitable purposes.

## Access Your Right To Care

### Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2024

#### 9. Intangible assets

	ChatBot app £
<b>Cost</b>	
At 1 April 2023	532,230
Additions in period	<u>80,483</u>
At 31 March 2024	<u><b>612,713</b></u>
<b>Amortisation</b>	
At 1 April 2023	134,721
Charge for the period	<u>143,804</u>
At 31 March 2024	<u><b>278,525</b></u>
<b>Net book value</b>	
<b>At 31 March 2024</b>	<u><u><b>334,188</b></u></u>
At 31 March 2023	<u><u>397,509</u></u>

Intangible fixed assets relates to the charity's ChatBot app which has now been brought into use, but continues to be developed. The app will be amortised over 4 years as each stage of development is complete.

#### 10. Debtors

	2024 £	2023 £
Trade debtors	<b>115,568</b>	102,926
Prepayments	<b>23,070</b>	8,385
Accrued income	<u><b>44,165</b></u>	<u>72,037</u>
	<u><u><b>182,803</b></u></u>	<u><u>183,348</u></u>

#### 11. Creditors: amounts falling due within 1 year

	2024 £	2023 £
Trade creditors	<b>8,332</b>	2,065
Accruals	<b>55,260</b>	32,251
Other taxation and social security	<b>69,126</b>	72,010
Deferred income (see note 12)	<u><b>149,607</b></u>	<u>156,442</u>
	<u><u><b>282,325</b></u></u>	<u><u>262,768</u></u>

12. Deferred income

	2024 £	2023 £
At 1 April 2023	156,442	138,760
Deferred during the period	149,607	156,442
Released during the period	<u>(156,442)</u>	<u>(138,760)</u>
At 31 March 2024	<u>149,607</u>	<u>156,442</u>

Deferred income relates to subscription income invoiced in advance.

13. Analysis of net assets between funds

	Restricted funds £	Designated funds £	General funds £	Total funds £
Intangible fixed assets	-	334,188	-	334,188
Current assets	382,988	843,976	539,296	1,766,260
Current liabilities	<u>(5,000)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(277,325)</u>	<u>(282,325)</u>
<b>Net assets at 31 March 2024</b>	<u><b>377,988</b></u>	<u><b>1,178,164</b></u>	<u><b>261,971</b></u>	<u><b>1,818,123</b></u>

Prior year comparative

	Restricted funds £	Designated funds £	General funds £	Total funds £
Intangible fixed assets	-	397,509	-	397,509
Current assets	602,165	-	566,609	1,168,774
Current liabilities	<u>(10,000)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(252,768)</u>	<u>(262,768)</u>
<b>Net assets at 31 March 2023</b>	<u><b>592,165</b></u>	<u><b>397,509</b></u>	<u><b>313,841</b></u>	<u><b>1,303,515</b></u>

## Access Your Right To Care

### Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2024

#### 14. Movements in funds

	At 1 April 2023 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers between funds £	At 31 March 2024 £
<b>Restricted funds</b>					
Oak Foundation	356,273	-	(356,273)	-	-
Hub / Casework	68,730	241,730	(95,385)	43	<b>215,118</b>
ChatBot	115,481	331,392	(352,701)	(37,500)	<b>56,672</b>
Public Legal Education	51,681	110,500	(58,563)	-	<b>103,618</b>
Wellbeing	-	10,000	(7,420)	-	<b>2,580</b>
<b>Total restricted funds</b>	<b>592,165</b>	<b>693,622</b>	<b>(870,342)</b>	<b>(37,457)</b>	<b>377,988</b>
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>					
Designated funds					
ChatBot	397,509	-	(143,804)	80,483	<b>334,188</b>
Oak Foundation	-	1,115,000	(271,024)	-	<b>843,976</b>
Total designated funds	<b>397,509</b>	<b>1,115,000</b>	<b>(414,828)</b>	<b>80,483</b>	<b>1,178,164</b>
General funds	<b>313,841</b>	<b>707,964</b>	<b>(716,808)</b>	<b>(43,026)</b>	<b>261,971</b>
<b>Total unrestricted funds</b>	<b>711,350</b>	<b>1,822,964</b>	<b>(1,131,636)</b>	<b>37,457</b>	<b>1,440,135</b>
<b>Total funds</b>	<b>1,303,515</b>	<b>2,516,586</b>	<b>(2,001,978)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,818,123</b>

#### Purposes of restricted funds

##### *Oak Foundation*

This a core grant which has enabled the set up of Access Social Care. The majority of the grant covers the cost of salaries.

##### *Hub / Casework*

These funds are to set up the place-based hub in Gloucestershire and Croydon, fund community care casework, strategic casework and strategic data work.

##### *ChatBot*

These funds are to develop a legal information chatbot, which will be free at the point of use and available on the Access Social Care website.

##### *Public Legal Education*

These funds are to increase legal knowledge and legal capability and to improve the career pathway for community care law.

##### *Wellbeing*

This grant is restricted for use only in the context of the Access Social Care team's wellbeing needs. An organisational retreat will be piloted to offer staff a space and time away from work.



#### 14. Movements in funds (continued)

##### Purposes of designated funds

###### *ChatBot*

The designated ChatBot fund represents the net book value of the intangible asset and is maintained as a distinct fund to separate it from the charity's general funds.

###### *Oak Foundation*

This fund is designated for the purpose of supporting Access Social Care's career pathway strategy as well as providing for core administrative costs.

##### Transfers between funds

Transfers between funds relate to restricted capital expenditure for the ChatBot project and relocating the ChatBot intangible asset to a designated fund. The restriction on the funds has been discharged by the purchase of the asset, as the ongoing use of the asset is not restricted. This restriction has also been discharged from the internal staff time capitalised.

Prior year comparative	At 1 April 2022 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers between funds £	At 31 March 2023 £
<b>Restricted funds</b>					
Oak Foundation	273,716	457,660	(375,103)	-	356,273
Hub / Casework	97,272	146,400	(174,942)	-	68,730
ChatBot	20,926	366,686	(95,376)	(176,755)	115,481
Public Legal Education	-	55,000	(3,319)	-	51,681
<b>Total restricted funds</b>	<b>391,914</b>	<b>1,025,746</b>	<b>(648,740)</b>	<b>(176,755)</b>	<b>592,165</b>
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>					
Designated funds					
<i>Programme work</i>	-	215,000	(215,000)	-	-
<i>ChatBot</i>	-	-	-	397,509	397,509
<b>Total designated funds</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>215,000</b>	<b>(215,000)</b>	<b>397,509</b>	<b>397,509</b>
General funds	765,874	428,390	(659,669)	(220,754)	313,841
<b>Total unrestricted funds</b>	<b>765,874</b>	<b>643,390</b>	<b>(874,669)</b>	<b>176,755</b>	<b>711,350</b>
<b>Total funds</b>	<b>1,157,788</b>	<b>1,669,136</b>	<b>(1,523,409)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,303,515</b>

#### 15. Related party transactions

Rhoda Iranloye, a former trustee, is also a Group Director of Regulatory for Dimensions. During the year the charity received contract income of £29,849 (2023: £7,380) from Dimensions. Sarah Maguire, a trustee from July 2024, is also CEO of Choice Support. During the year the charity received contract income of £35,849 from Choice Support. All transactions were carried out at normal business terms.

# THANK YOU

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A note of thanks to all donors, volunteers and other supporters of ASC. Without you none of our achievements and successes would have been possible. We sincerely hope that you will continue to stand by our side as we continue on our journey, working towards a future where we all get the social care we have a right to.

With best wishes

The Access Social Care Team