



the
lowdown
since 1989 supporting young people

Trustees' Annual Report

2023

2022

Reference and Administration



Registered Charity number:

1197273

Registered Company number:

CE027753 (England and Wales)

Address:

3 Kingswell Street (off Gold Street),
Northampton, NN1 1PP

Honorary Presidents:

Jan Jourard
Dr John Toby

Current Trustees:

Chair – Stephen Edmonds
Vice Chair – Andrea Martin
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Chair's Report

The number of young people supported has increased by 15%.

“Thank you to the outstanding lowdown team - every one of them is special.”

The last year has seen relentless levels of demand for our services to which we have done our very best to respond and, as Sharon mentions in her CEO report, the number of support contacts over that period has increased by an astounding **36%**.

As I flagged in my introduction last year, the concerning trend is not just of sheer numbers but also the increasing complexity of issues that young people are presenting with and, regrettably, it continues unabated.

Whilst our counselling service remains the backbone of what we do, we have continued to develop additional flexible and wrap around services that can help young people who could not otherwise find this support elsewhere or where “one size doesn’t fit all”. A shining example of this is the RE:Start service, which is carrying out hugely valuable work.

Keeping pace with this relentless growth over recent years, together with the need to maintain the highest clinical standards has required considerable effort in the areas of resource management, organisational change and governance with the Leadership Team, our systems, data, finances, and board now being unrecognisable from only a few years ago.

The greatest continuing practical challenge continues to be that of available space and this has inevitably occupied a great deal of time and effort but, I am delighted to say that through the immense generosity of our donors, some astute planning, tenacity and good fortune we have been able to take additional space in nearby St Giles Street, develop and open the amazing Lowdown Lounge in our courtyard and, most excitingly, now plan for a major fully funded two-storey extension to our beloved historic building as well as making some very useful internal improvements.

As I touched on last year, the lowdown has transitioned from an organisation which, because of the nature of its funding, essentially could only plan a year at a time to a position where we can at last develop strategy and plan for the medium term.

As I move on to thanks, I feel that I am repeating my message from previous years but that makes it no less heartfelt. The Lowdown Lounge was many years in its gestation and at times we thought it would never happen, but it is now a wonderful addition. The Youth Investment Fund grant has turned our plan for a two-storey extension from a pipe dream into reality.

So, I need to express huge thanks and appreciation as ever to our long-term landlords Beckett’s and Sargeant’s, all of our most generous funders, fundraisers and supporters and our outstanding lowdown team – every one of them is special.

Steve Edmonds
Chair of Trustees





CEO Report

What an amazing year for the lowdown!

97% of young people had a positive outcome from using our services.

The lowdown is going from strength to strength. In this financial year we supported **2,365** young people through **16,452** support contacts which represents a **36%** increase through all the services we deliver. Most importantly, **97%** of young people found they had a positive outcome from using our services. Our impact will continue to grow as demand for our services continues to increase.

To deliver this growth we have had to make changes to our infrastructure to manage this as the lowdown building is at full capacity; with our counselling and wellbeing services alone.

At the start of this financial year, we launched the new RE:Start service, along with our Reach partner Youth Works. This service provides practical support for young people transitioning from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services to Adult Mental Health Services.

This also has been a huge success and we have supported **79** young people with a wide range of support needs, from securing housing; to helping build their confidence and self-esteem. This service is already expanding to support more young people and more space was needed.

So, we leased a new property in St Giles Street; in Northampton so that the Support Services team, which includes RE:Start, Youth Services, our Support after Suicide Service, and staff team could have space both for themselves and their clients. This was a massive task as at the same time we were finalising the building of our **Lowdown Lounge**, the outbuilding in the lowdown garden which has been transformed from a "shed" to a brilliant modern space for young people. It was named the Lowdown Lounge by one of our services users.

We have also started the refurbishment of the main building with the main highlight being the conversion of a stationary cupboard into a seating area for our staff to have lunch in our newly refurbished kitchen. We are maximising every bit of space we have.

From there we move onto another extremely exciting new activity which is the development of our Youth Advisory Board (YAB). They will help us develop the lowdown to ensure it meets the needs of the young people we are supporting. We have so far recruited **20** young people to make up the board and we look forward to working with them and listening to their input over the coming year as once again there are going to be considerable changes.

In August 2022 we applied to the Youth Investment Fund for funding towards a two-storey side extension, finalising the refurbishment of the main building and developing new services.

On the 27th March 2023 it was finally publicly announced that our application had been successful! With nearly £1.3 million of funding over 3 years, **we feel like we have won the lottery!** The changes to the building will help us manage the increased demand for all our services and improve accessibility.

As we finished the financial year, we were waiting for planning permission – as we are in a listed building this process has taken longer than expected – but it was finally granted on the 3rd May 2023. Building of the extension will hopefully start in Autumn 2023 and be completed by Summer 2024.

This funding also enables us to develop new services, such as weekly youth and wellbeing groups. The Youth Advisory Board (YAB) will be instrumental in supporting the development of these new services.

These new services mean we can continue to develop wrap around support for the young people we serve. There are details of all our current services and their impact later in this report.

None of this would happen without the amazing lowdown team (including our staff, volunteers, trustees, and counselling student placements) who continue to deliver quality services for the young people of Northamptonshire. I cannot thank them enough; they are **THE BEST**.

Our supporters, donors, funders, and Reach partners have also helped to make all this possible and we really appreciate their support.

Young people remain at the heart of everything we do, and we will continue to strive to expand and improve our services to give young people the vital support they so need.

Sharon Womersley
CEO





Mission and Aims



Who we are

A Mental Health Charity, providing free and confidential support services for 11-25 year olds in Northamptonshire.

Our Mission

To offer a caring environment where young people are always supported on their journey towards positive emotional health and wellbeing.

Our Vision

No young person should experience mental health issues alone.

Our Purpose and Values

Accessible to all, welcoming, non-judgemental, safe, responsive, and adaptable.

Theory of Change

Young people have free and timely access to evidence-based early intervention services that improve their mental health, emotional wellbeing and resilience.

The lowdown changes lives and sometimes saves them!

Objectives

The lowdown is a Mental Health Charity, providing free and confidential support services for 11-25 year olds in Northamptonshire.

Our services include counselling, wellbeing, LGBTQ+ support, practical support, and sexual health services. We believe there is no need for young people to experience difficult situations alone – we are here to support them.

The lowdown offers a caring environment where young people are always supported on their journey towards positive emotional health and wellbeing. The service is easy to access, as young people can either self-refer or be referred by professionals such as CAMHS, schools or their GP.

The lowdown services include:

- Our free and confidential counselling support service for 11-25 year olds. Counselling support is person-centred, with aspects of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and solution focused therapy. We offer on average between six and eight sessions, either face-to-face or remotely via telephone or videocall, on a wide range of issues.
- We have robust safeguarding procedures which are regularly reviewed to ensure that any disclosures are dealt with correctly.
- Our Espresso Yourself Café for 11-18 year olds offers face-to-face and remote support every Monday and Friday from 4.00pm-8.00pm. These drop-in sessions with professional mental health workers can offer a young person and their parents and carers a safe space to talk and be listened to and receive support.



- We also have a Parent and Carers Facebook group facilitated by our Wellbeing Co-ordinator to share experience and coping strategies with other parents and carers in need of support and provide the opportunity to learn new skills to boost their wellbeing and improve relationships.
- Our helpful website provides information on all our services and online referral forms for easy access to our services.
- Our Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning (LGBTQ) services offer a safe and confidential space for young people to socialise, meet like-minded people, discuss issues and take part in activities.

The Out There Junior Group is for school years 7, 8 and 9, our Youth Group is for school years 10, 11, 12 and 13, and the Out There Plus Group is for 18-25 year olds. We also have a new group on Thursdays from 6.30pm-8.00pm for those based in Daventry. For parents and carers of young people in the LGBTQ+ community we offer a space to meet other parents/carers and receive support. They can also join the Facebook group by searching for 'Out There Group Parent and Carers Support Network Northamptonshire'.

- In collaboration with Youth Works we have our RE:Start Service to support young people making the transition from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAHMS) to Adult Mental Health Services. RE:Start is for 16-25 year olds living in Northamptonshire who need additional support with navigating mental health services or require other support services.

- Our sexual health service provides information and support on all aspects of sexual health and relationships including free condoms, pregnancy testing and chlamydia and gonorrhoea screening every Monday and Friday from 5.00pm-8.00pm.
- We have established a Youth Advisory Board for 11-25 year olds to volunteer their time to share views on our services, building, accessibility, website, social media etc. This helps to ensure we are providing what young people need and want while offering those involved the opportunity to learn new skills, meet new people and make a difference.
- Northamptonshire Support After Suicide Service is available to anyone of any age who lives in the county and who has been affected by bereavement by suicide. We are here to listen and support both emotionally and with practical issues that may follow a death by suicide or suspected suicide. This is by referral from the Coroner's Office only.
- We provide an Outreach Service to schools, colleges, youth and community groups offering bespoke support services.
- We offer unique and rewarding volunteering and personal development opportunities for members of the public. We also partner with Higher Education providers, including The University of Northampton, Tresham College, Chrysalis etc; to offer placements and internships for students.
- We actively promote our services in Northampton and surrounding areas so that young people and their families are aware of what services we offer and how to access them.



Our Impact 2022/23



2,365 young people were supported.

An increase of **15%** on the previous year.



Through all the lowdown services we provided

16,452 support contacts for young people and their families.

An increase of **36%** on the previous year.

Main issues >

- anxiety
- low mood
- family/relationship problems
- education and training
- sleep problems
- loneliness
- suicidal feelings
- self harm
- self-esteem
- stress

What do our service users say?

98%
would recommend our
service to others.

97%
felt they had a positive
outcome using our
services.

95%
found the service
accessible.

**“Every day they positively impact
a young person’s life”**
– service user aged 17



Counselling Service

11,070 counselling sessions provided for 11-25 year olds.

88% of young people reported an improved or maintained CORE score.

The lowdown's counselling service supports 11-25 year olds living in Northampton and the surrounding areas, 6 days per week. The counselling service is easy to access, as young people can either self-refer or be referred by professionals such as CAMHS, schools or their GP.

Counselling referrals increased by **13%** compared to the previous year. The combination of extra funding to meet this demand and counsellor recruitment has given us the resources to manage the high numbers of young people needing our support.

To meet the demand for our counselling service we have recruited additional Counsellors, Shift Managers and Admin staff to ensure we have a smooth-running service, look after our staff's wellbeing and, most importantly, provide a good quality service for our young people. Our Shift Managers work closely with our counsellors to support them with safeguarding and managing the complexity of issues presented by the young people. They also support our student placements, as well as booking the clients' counselling appointments, rooms etc. This ensures our counsellors can focus on the valuable work of supporting our service users. Our admin team has also expanded to support all our services and are now available 6 days a week to answer email or telephone enquiries.

Additional funding (Tier 2.5) has been allocated to Reach, by the Integrated Care Board (ICB) to support higher need clients and bridge the gap between youth counselling and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). This enables us to offer longer interventions to support the increased complexity of the issues our young people are facing.

We also have a Rapid Response counselling service providing immediate access to counselling for young people who have significantly self-harmed and/or have strong suicidal thoughts or have recently attempted suicide. Referrals are made by professionals including the lowdown, who can also escalate high risk clients to this service so they do not have to wait for support.

We also provide outreach counselling services for 11-18 year olds in four local schools, again increasing the support available for young people.

Our Therapy dog, Harper, has now been with us for 2 years, and continues to support young people within the counselling and wellbeing services. We are hugely proud to have her as part of the lowdown team. Seeing Harper provide much-needed support to young people, who would normally struggle to access talking therapy, has helped the counselling service become more accessible.

Demand for our counselling service for 19-25 year olds also continues to increase. This is a valuable service that has been provided for over 20 years and complements our RE:Start service perfectly as it enables us to provide both practical and emotional support for our service users.



Overall, we provided **11,070** counselling sessions from April 2022 to March 2023, a **31%** increase compared to the previous year. In March 2023, the referral to treatment time was **7 weeks** and **88%** of young people reported an improved or maintained CORE score, a measure of their emotional wellbeing.

The lowdown also provided **18** counselling student placements in the financial year. This is a significant investment by the lowdown team to support the students but this helps us to grow our services to meet the demand.

Thank you to our amazing counselling team for providing this vital support for young people.

Case Study:



A young female, aged 17 and of Pakistani origin, referred into the counselling service for support after a recent suicide attempt. She was feeling worthless, had suffered trauma in her life and was experiencing strong emotions. Her starting CORE score was 31 – which is severe.

A person-centred approach was used throughout counselling. She said she benefitted from having her traumatic experiences validated, as they never had been before. This was pivotal for her as she could explore her experiences without fear of being minimised or judged. Due to the suicide attempt, a safety plan was discussed and agreed with her identifying her support network, distraction techniques and an appropriate App to use as she would often isolate herself if feeling low and sometimes found talking too overwhelming.

Through the counselling sessions she began to show compassion for herself and pursue things that made her happy rather than pleasing others. Her counsellor was authentic, non-judgemental and provided unconditional positive regard, which enabled her to fully accept herself and contribute significantly to her increase in self-worth and resilience. Her counselling sessions ended positively with an ending CORE score of 8 – mild. She felt able to implement boundaries and strive for a life that made her happy. Her suicidal thoughts had completely disappeared, and her depression and anxiety had significantly reduced.

All this was achieved through 10 counselling sessions!

A selection of our clients' comments:

"I always felt safe to disclose what was bothering me."

"I've adopted a much more positive way of thinking due to this great support."

"I am more able to face feared situations, manage my anxiety, and see myself in a positive light."

"My counsellor was empathic and thoughtful."

RE:Start

A total of 93 referrals in 2022/23.

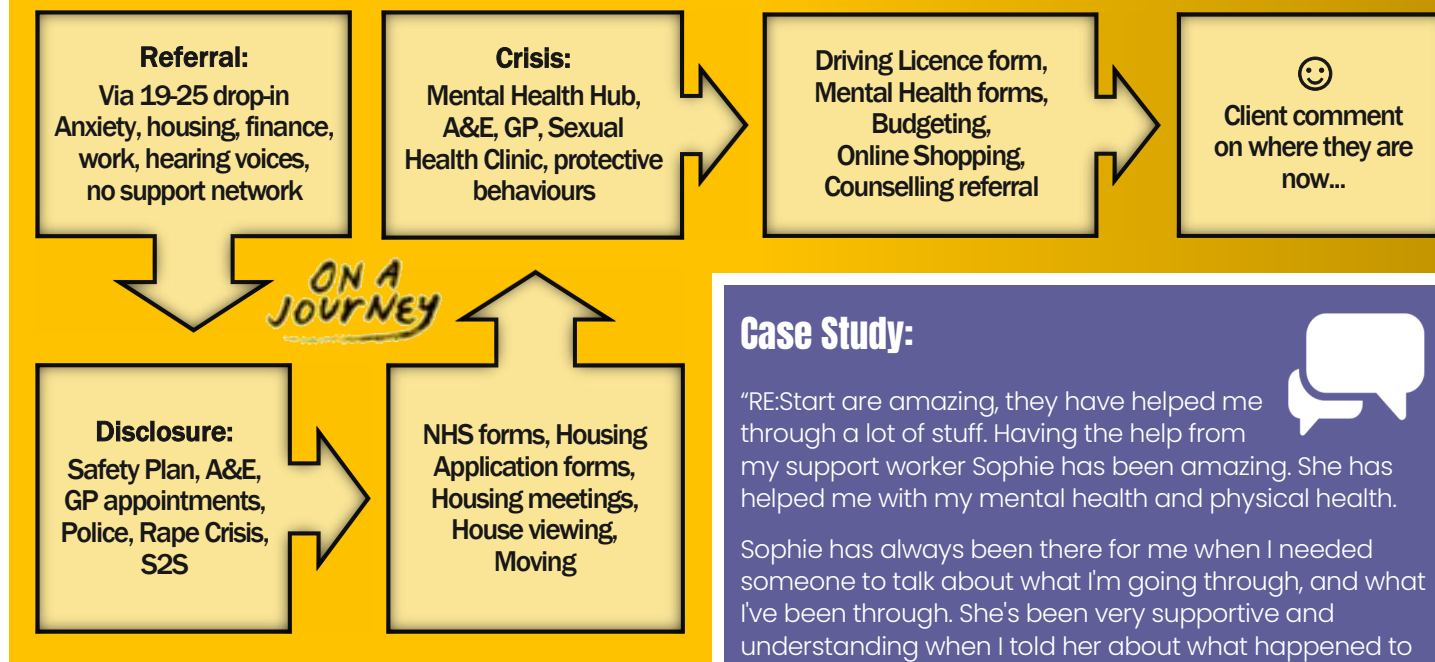
“I’m getting the help that I need to be a better person and accept myself more.”

This is an innovative new service to support young people making the transition from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAHMS) to Adult Mental Health Services. **RE:Start** is exclusively for 16–25 year olds, who live in Northamptonshire, and need additional support with navigating mental health services

What a year it has been for RE:Start in the West Northamptonshire area. Our referrals opened on the 20th April 2022 and the service has grown in demand and structure ever since.

The RE:Start team in the West received a total of 93 referrals with 32 of those from 16 and 17 year olds and 54 from young people aged 18–25 years old. Between them **779 support sessions** were provided. The majority of young people are presenting to the service with anxiety and depression often alongside conditions such as ADHD, ASD, EUPD, Psychosis, OCD and PTSD amongst others. Coexisting with the young people’s diagnoses are experiences of historical sexual assault or abuse, historical trauma, domestic violence, issues involving immigration, housing, social isolation along with involvement from agencies such as the police and social services etc.

RE:Start clients often self-refer, but are also referred in by CAMHS, GP surgeries, the police and many other agencies across the county. We have an amazing resourceful team of support workers who work one to one with our clients and have completed a broad number of tasks including advocating, facilitating access to appointments and services, making referrals and signposting, supporting with benefits and budgeting, reducing isolation and reintegration into communities, education, employment, healthy relationships to name but a few.



We now have a team of 6 RE:Start workers – a team leader and 4 part-time workers and we were thrilled to receive additional funding from the commissioner in January 2023 to increase our team with a full-time worker.

At the beginning of the year, we struggled with a base and location for the RE:Start service with Kingswell Street at full capacity with the counselling service. After managing through the first half of the year, we moved into our beautiful office in St Giles Street with a desk for everyone and 2 consulting rooms designated for RE:Start clients. The majority of clients live within the Northampton area, but support workers have regularly met with clients across the whole of the West of Northamptonshire.

The service has increased the lowdown’s ability to offer a variety of support according to the needs and presentation of clients. Many counselling clients have benefitted from more practical longer-term support through RE:Start, and many RE:Start clients have benefitted from a therapeutic intervention from the lowdown’s counselling team alongside the practical support they were receiving.

Case Study:

“RE:Start are amazing, they have helped me through a lot of stuff. Having the help from my support worker Sophie has been amazing. She has helped me with my mental health and physical health.

Sophie has always been there for me when I needed someone to talk about what I’m going through, and what I’ve been through. She’s been very supportive and understanding when I told her about what happened to me when I was 15 years old. Sophie helped me to get the help that I needed and not to be afraid to talk about it and that’s helped me out a lot.

She’s also helped me with moving out from my parents, food shopping and appointments which I’m happy with because I don’t think I would be where I am today in a shared house and taking on responsibility. If it wasn’t for RE:Start and what they do, I still believe I would be drinking the way I was and doing nothing for myself.

I have a weekly session with Sophie, whether it’s face to face or a phone call, it helps me out a lot and I can tell her anything without being judged or anything and I can trust her. It’s a relief to tell her on a weekly basis what’s been going on or if I’m going through a really bad stage of depression, suicidal thoughts or self-harm. I’m getting the help that I need to be a better person and to accept myself more.

I’m in a better place than I was over a year ago. I still have a long way to go but I’m getting there thanks to RE:Start and Sophie, who are doing an amazing job and looking after the young people so thank you and good luck”.

Wellbeing Services

Espresso Yourself Café

1,227 support contacts provided by our wellbeing café.

96% of young people showed an improvement in their mood after attending our café.

The Espresso Yourself Café is a wellbeing drop-in service for young people aged 11–18 years old and their parents/carers. Young people can access the cafés face to face or remotely via telephone or video call.

The café is delivered in collaboration with St Andrew's Healthcare and Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (NHFT) and the Reach Partnership. There are now a total of 9 cafés across the county, operating 6 days of the week.

Our professional support workers offer a safe space, supporting service users who are struggling with their emotional wellbeing, mental health or are in crisis. They provide a listening ear, offer advice and guidance, signpost to relevant services, support with onward referrals, distractions, coping skills and so much more to meet the individual needs of young people.

We have seen our contacts grow throughout the year and, as the lowdown is the busiest café in the county, the opening of our brand-new building was a long time coming for a busy drop-in being held in a limited space.

The Lowdown Lounge (name chosen by a regular attendee of the café) opened its doors to young people in January 2023, and the impact of being in this beautiful new space has been incredible. Feedback from young people and staff has reflected a positive change in atmosphere which now is even more relaxing, calming, and enjoyable.

In February 2023, two young people started volunteering at the wellbeing café, one being a service user who has experienced counselling at the lowdown and has regularly accessed the café for further support when needed. This young person felt the positive impact of her experience at the lowdown has inspired her to give back to the charity, and even explore career options within the mental health sector.

Comments from our service users:

"We were able to chat to a member of staff who offered information about next steps as well as immediate reassurance."

"Can talk with them about everything and always listening carefully."

"Café is a good place to talk and meet people. Feeling safe and comfortable."



Walk and Talk at Espresso Yourself Café

An addition to the café in June 2022 was our walk and talk service provided by Krissy, one of the lowdown's counsellors, and her therapy dog Harper. Harper had been working at the lowdown for some time prior to this, with one-to-one counselling sessions. This has been a huge success, particularly with young people presenting with high levels of anxiety, learning difficulties and selective mutism.

Following the pandemic, the walk and talk therapy became more popular as it allowed people to access therapy face to face safely with social distancing. Walk and talk therapies fall under the eco-psychotherapy umbrella. Rather than being enclosed in a room, sitting in designated chairs, which can feel quite intense for some people having a counsellor sitting opposite them. Walking alongside each other can feel, for some, more equal and less formal.


We are always looking at different ways we can offer support for young people and felt this would fit well within our wellbeing café. Weather dependent, Krissy can take a young person out with Harper for a walk.

“The young person finds a lot of comfort spending time with Harper, the therapy dog.”

If the weather is not suitable, young people can work with Harper in a one-to-one session at the lowdown, giving them the opportunity to gain support in a less formal environment.



Case Study:



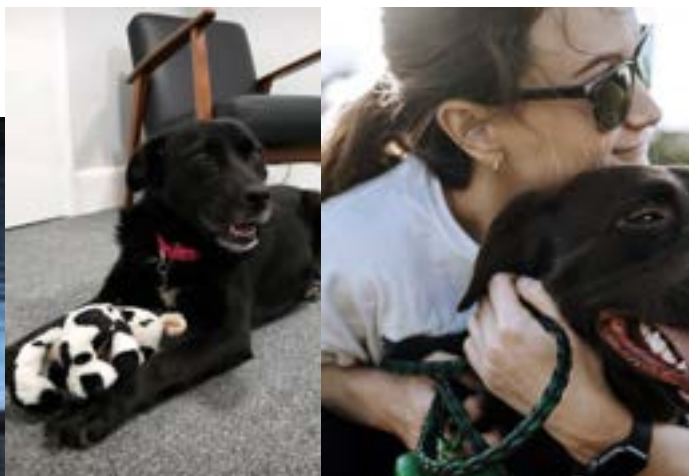
An 11-year-old male with a diagnosis of autism and suspected ADHD was struggling with attending school, relationships with peers, and had challenges at home. His mum brought him to the café, as he loves dogs and loved meeting Harper.

To begin with, we would sit in the room with the lights off and the LED sky lights on while classical modern music played softly in the background. The young person would play with Harper while Mum and I (Krissy) spoke about how they had been doing at home and at school.

This support progressed to the young person taking her out for a walk and talk. He was always excited to take Harper out, and demonstrated real awareness and consideration of risks, and looking after himself and Harper whilst walking.

This young person finds a lot of comfort in spending time with Harper and taking her for a walk; it is calming for him, and on returning to the lowdown conversations are opened, with mum present as well, about what is worrying him, and together we found solutions which helped him.

Using this service, he found a comfortable space to explore his worries, and improve communication and build on his relationship with his mum.



Sexual Health Service

Since relaunching our sexual health service, we have had 255 individual contacts.

In June 2022, we reopened our sexual health services, after closing them in 2020 during the coronavirus pandemic. Prior to the pandemic, our sexual health services were one of our most popular as young people found it helpful to access them in a non-clinical setting. They preferred a service which is young person friendly, safe, and non-judgemental so it was important to bring this back.

Our sexual health service now runs on Mondays and Fridays between 5.00pm-8.00pm during the Espresso Yourself Café, offering free condoms, pregnancy testing and chlamydia and gonorrhea testing for young people aged 14-25. We can also support young people with onward referrals and someone to talk to, give advice and support.



Wellbeing Outreach

Through our outreach work during this year, we have supported a total of 54 young people.

The wellbeing team has been busy with outreach work this year. We have delivered bespoke assemblies and workshop sessions to several local schools and community organisations including:

- Scouts Group
- Northampton Saints Foundation
- The Clipper Group
- Blackpool inspirations
- The Duston School

Through activities, interactive discussions and psycho-education, our assemblies and workshop sessions can be tailored to the needs of the group, and aim to improve wellbeing in an engaging way, whilst also informing young people of the support on offer at the lowdown.

Happier Families

The Happier Families Programme is a countywide service and delivered as part of the Reach Collaborative. It aims to help families by supporting them to learn about and try out tips, skills, and tools to boost wellbeing both individually and as families, and to improve the quality of the time they spend together.

It provides a toolkit to help participants:

- Explore ways to build their own and others' happiness.
- Learn tips to try when struggling.
- Build happier relationships.
- Enjoy family time together more.

The programme entails 6 facilitator-led workshops, each focusing on one of the 10 Keys to Happier Living as developed by Action for Happiness.

Our team delivered two programmes with two primary schools between April and August 2022 which were the final few months of the pilot stage of this project, supporting a total of 14 families across both programmes.

In addition, 79 drop-in sessions were held in these final stages of the pilot phase.

August 2022 saw the end of the pilot stage of this Happier Families Project, with Phase Two launching in September 2022. Phase Two has provided the opportunity to work one-to-one with families, and further flexibility with activities.

Since the launch of Phase Two, we have delivered 6 programmes, one to a group of families at a primary school, and others involving one-to-one work with families.

The drop-in element of this project has been removed since the start of Phase Two. The lowdown has numerous drop-ins internally where young people can be supported, however we felt it was important to continue the support for parents and provide a drop-in for them. This is provided in the Espresso Yourself Café.

Happier Families attendees' comments:

"It has helped my family to talk more and brought us closer."

"It has helped with using different techniques on how to manage emotions."

"Gave us tools to be more mindful and present with each other."

"Helped us to better our communication and understanding... To think about ourselves and our lives more positively."

Youth Advisory Board

The lowdown is an ever-growing service, and with constant changes and developments to the organisation, it was time for us to get young people more involved in this.

At the latter end of 2022 work began with research, plans and preparations for the lowdown's first Youth Advisory Board (YAB). The YAB will be a group of young people selected to represent the voice of young people, to share their feedback, ideas and views on our services and to support the development of the lowdown and the services it provides.

By setting up a Youth Advisory Board, the lowdown will develop a greater awareness of the issues affecting the community and youth, as seen from the perspective of the young people within the community. The members will provide a fresh energy and perspective which will make for innovative ideas and solutions.

In February 2023 we launched recruitment for young people aged 11-25 to become a part of the board, and in March we began our selection process. We received a remarkable 27 applications from young people wanting to join our new Youth Advisory Board.

Watch this space...

LGBTQ+ Services

Out There

1,332 contacts across all the groups, supporting 115 young people.

The last year has been a huge success again for Out There in Northampton, embedding and growing our Junior group and expanding into Daventry. We continued the fun with our second residential, another prom and more Pride events.

Over the year the Northampton group ran 144 sessions across the three age groups – Out There Juniors, Out There Youth and Out There Plus with 1,332 contacts made with 115 different young people.

We expanded into Daventry starting with holding a Big Gay Picnic in partnership with Daventry Mind in June to build awareness of the LGBTQ+ community in that area and gauge the demand for an Out There group along with engaging with the local secondary schools. Out There Daventry was launched on 3rd November 2022. It takes place on Thursday nights during term time at the Mind building and so far has held 18 sessions, making 85 contacts with 19 individual young people.

Another Out There swim was held in April and we attended the HeadFest Event and I'm Still Me virtual conference in May. June brought us the Big Gay Picnic in Daventry and Northampton Pride where 21 of our Out There Northampton young people paraded along with 12 young people from the Out There Wellingborough group. Our stall was as popular as ever, selling the usual flags and laces along with our talented young people's jewellery and art, turning over £900 meaning a profit of around £300 going back into the Out There groups.



In July we threw our annual Prom in the lowdown garden, which was swiftly followed by our second residential, this time held at the University of Nottingham with 21 young people and 5 leaders attending. Fun was had row boating, t-shirt designing and competing in our sports day. In August we attended the very warm Deanshanger Pride and September had us heading off on a train with 14 young people and 4 leaders to join the Birmingham Pride Parade. Our legendary Halloween party was the highlight of October and in November, as well as the Daventry group launching, **Out There, the Northampton service, turned 10 years old** and was celebrated with the most amazing birthday cake. Our Christmas dinner and party games for 30 young people finished off the year and made way for a more relaxed start to 2023.

We gave a warm welcome to Callum, our volunteer Youth Leader, and Ash, Sophie and Cami as paid Youth Leaders. In March we also welcomed Kelly to the team as our Youth Services Co-ordinator who will manage the day-to-day running of our LGBTQ+ services and be involved in some exciting projects happening later in 2023. Kelly is an ex-volunteer Youth Leader, and we are very excited to have her back on the team. Sadly, Parker left us in August to be closer to family and take on a new exciting LGBTQ+ role in Nottingham. Will has also left us and moved up to Manchester. He has been an integral part of the growth of the Out There service; the residential, parent and carers group and GSRD training would not have been possible without his input and dedication to the group. Will's absence will be felt greatly by leaders and young people alike; however, I am sure his impact will be felt for a long time to come. We wish both Parker and Will all the best on their new adventures.



Quotes from our Group members:

"I am so glad for the friends I have gained while being here, everyone is so nice and so lovely."

"From having attended The Out There Youth Group for almost 4 years now, I can say that it has been the most supportive group I have been able to be a part of, and they have provided both support, and community in the times I have needed it most. Group has been a big part of figuring out my identity and my true self, and they have been there to support me through it."

"The activities and trips they have provided has also helped me to develop stronger bonds with the friends I have made there, most of which I have had since joining, and continue to talk to outside of group."

"I would recommend this group, and I have done to a few people over the years. Group is a welcoming, friendly and supportive community, and I have thoroughly enjoyed attending, and even with the recent move to Uni, I still look forward to attending every time I come back home."

Northamptonshire Support after Suicide Service

One of our clients sent Anna, our Support Worker, the following letter. Her partner died by suicide, and this is her story.

Warning. This is a very emotional read...

"The Northamptonshire Coroner's Office referred me to your service. Quickly I received communication from Anna and an appointment was arranged for me to see her.

On the day of the appointment I was completely broken, I did not know how I was going to even begin to accept and understand what had just happened.

I walked into the lowdown and was greeted and asked to sit in the reception area. Everyone who walked through said hello to me providing a reassuring smile that put me at ease. Anna then came and introduced herself and took me into a private room. Within a very short period of time, I was able to share with her how I was feeling, I felt completely listened to, she took in absolutely everything I said to her, providing reassurance, support and guidance during the session. I spent a very long time with Anna during that appointment, not once did I feel rushed. She sensed that I needed the time, and she gave it to me. I felt so comfortable, I literally shared everything with her that day.

Following the meeting I felt overwhelmed, but validated, completely listened to. Finally, someone understood where I was coming from.

Anna ensured I was safe and in a good frame of mind to leave, and checked on me to ensure I was home safe.

Anna explained so much about suicide, things I did not know, how would I, I never had to deal with something so tragic before. She advised me to trust me and my own instincts and not take in other people's judgements but for me to come to my own conclusions so that I could then begin to accept what had happened.

Following the initial meeting Anna and I spoke frequently either by telephone calls, text messages and emails. She kept in contact with me, particularly on key dates, she never missed one.

Although this may sound strange, but it was almost like **I had my own Guardian Angel by my side reassuring me that there was going to be a better day**, and somehow, I was going to get through this.

I have worked in the care sector for 26 years mainly within managerial positions. I can say without any question that **Anna is the most caring, compassionate, considerate, kind, committed professional I have ever met**. Without doubt I can say that **she saved my life**. I am here because of her. She helped me to accept what had happened and find a way to carry it.

I am still on a very long road; Anna gave me the tools to somehow drag myself to a year since his passing. Although I now have a diagnosis of PTSD, I am getting out of bed every day, I am working full time, I am socialising, I am attending regular group and individual sessions and I am living. Without doubt, I am now his eyes and ears.

I recently took a trip to Scotland and wanted to share the below photograph with you. I was there and so was he. Without Anna all of this would not have been possible, and I cannot thank her enough for all the support she has given me.

Anna kept telling me "You can do this", she was right."

A picture that says a thousand words!



Fundraising

We have had a fun-filled year of fundraising and events to raise funds and awareness for our services.

Yet again we are blown away by the support we have had from people in our community who go above and beyond to help young people on their journey towards positive emotional health and wellbeing.

- We were delighted to be chosen as Starting Off's "Charity of the Year" which raised both awareness and funds with them taking part in the Santa Run both this year and the previous one.
- We were thankful to be chosen again by Northampton Partnership Homes who raised **£2,843.49** from various fundraisers including a Bake Off.

We are always delighted to be supported by local businesses and this year did not disappoint.

- We had donations from Hewitsons, The Department for Work and Pensions, and Michael Jones Jeweller agreed to support the lowdown with **£5,000 per annum** for the next 3 years to support new youth activities in the Lowdown Lounge.
- We also received a donation of **£1,900** from Kevin Matthews Funeral Services who said such kind words (below) about our services;

"All too often, as a community, we see the devastating consequences of the growing mental health crisis. That's why we are supporting the lowdown in their work with children and young adults. If, together, we can change the path that one individual is taking, we have the responsibility to try. Thank you to the lowdown for all you do."

- Zapato Lounge raised **£122** during their LoungeAid month in June and GXO in Wellingborough held events during Pride Month raising **£600**.



- We were also supported by a local artist, Sophie Slade, who raffled off one of her original paintings and held an exhibition to raise funds.

We have seen the return of fundraisers and donations from:

- Sign In App who donated profits during Pride Month, Cards Direct with their collection tins, Waitrose (both Kingthorpe and Wootton Stores), Northampton School for Boys Charity Week, Northampton Rotary Groups for the Santa Run in December, Northampton College with bake sales and Jogo Behaviour Support's annual conference.

We are so thankful for the continued support; it means so much to be repeatedly chosen.

- We were touched and honoured to be the charity supported by the family and friends in loving memory of Eamonn 'Fitzy' Fitzpatrick, who sadly passed away in November 2022. Eamonn supported the lowdown for many years by donating, helping with fundraising, and campaigning to help young people's mental health and wellbeing.
- Due to a family member using our services, three courageous sisters from 'Team Sister Act' abseiled the Express Lift Tower raising over **£1,600**.

We also give thanks to those who donate monthly, buy tickets for the Northampton Lottery, took part in Amazon Smile and easyfundraising purchases and support us at various events, fundraisers; and promotions.

Thank you to each and every one of our donors, fundraisers, funders and supporters who have contributed, you are amazing!



How to Support the lowdown



Your support and donations are vital so we can continue to provide our services for young people. Our work helps us to increase young people's resilience and equip them with the tools to help them cope with future challenges in their life.

There are lots of ways you can support us:

- Set up a monthly donation
- Make a one-off donation
- Organise a fundraising event or activity
- Donate via JustGiving, PayPal or play The Northampton Lottery



Or scan this QR code
to instantly donate





Who's Who?

A list of all those who have worked or volunteered for the lowdown between 1st April 2022 and 31st March 2023.

The lowdown would not be what it is without our amazing team who are flexible and constantly help us to adapt to fulfil every opportunity we get to support young people.

Staff

CEO – Sharon Womersley

Office Manager – Lisa Braithwaite

Fundraising & Marketing Manager – Ellie White

Clinical Manager – Rachel Welsh

Business Manager – Laura Simms

Support Services Manager – Helen Heng

Shift Managers – Chelsea Buswell, Becky Truman, Ryan Parkinson and Steph Gardner

Administrators – Maxine Eborall and Alison Inglese

Wellbeing Co-ordinator – Chelsea Buswell

Youth Services Co-ordinator – Kelly Emmanuel

LGBTQ+ Co-ordinators – Kathryn Parker, Helen Heng and Kelly Emmanuel

Out There Youth Leaders – Julie Holt, William Beckett, Ash Harrison, Ioana-Camelia Martin and Sophie Turner

Suicide Bereavement Support Worker – Anna Tutt

RE:Start Support Workers – Carol Jeyes, Sophie Goode, Kirsty Bees, Gemma Cort, Rebecca Kings and Laura Farmer

Trustees

Stephen Edmonds (Chair), Andrea Martin (Vice Chair), Jonathan Smith (Treasurer), Brendan Dunphy, Dr Martin Clarke, Georgina Bayliss, Dr Mike Scanlan, Matt Toresen MBE and Dr Deborah Patton

Counsellors

Catherine Burrows, Caroline Parnell, Adrian Shaw, Carol Jeyes, Ciara Cummings, Da-Sheena Fulford, Daniel Kwakye, Helen Heng, Hitomi Palmer, James Young, Jennifer Gee, Kanan Robinson, Kelly Lane, Kenny Pang, Kirsty Roberts, Kirsty Bees, Kristyana Jimdar, Laura Cooper, Matthew Price, Meghan Wright, Rebecca Wheeler, Rose-Marie Golaub, Toniiae Smith, Natalie Morrison, Rachael Moss, Stephanie Clayson, Chelsea Buswell, Laura Kaye, Leanne Allsop, Rachel Welsh, Ryan Parkinson, Stephanie Gardner, Anna Tutt, Gemma Ainge, Laura Farmer and Sophie Goode

Placement Counsellors

Abbie Anderson, Charlotte White, Gemma Ainge, Geraldine Ward, Katie Redding, Laura Farmer, Laura Kaye, Leanne Allsop, Rebecca Ibbs, Natalie Morrison, Rachael Moss, Stephanie Clayson, Helen Shouler, Anna Tutt, Becky Truman, Sophie Goode, Ryan Parkinson and Callum Crawford-McKellar

School Outreach Counsellors and Workers

Carol Jeyes, Chelsea Buswell, Gemma Ainge, Kelly Lane, Kirsty Roberts, Kirsty Bees, Matthew Price, Meghan Wright and Rebecca Ibbs

Wellbeing Workers (including Espresso Yourself Café)

Elizabeth Johnson, Emma Roddis, Emma Miller, Hazel Scott, Helen Shouler, Karoline Bardin-Bryant, Niamh Roe, Chelsea Buswell, Ciara Cummings, Da-Sheena Fulford, Kelly Lane, Kirsty Roberts, Kristyana Jimdar, Laura Farmer, Meghan Wright and Donna Shrubbs

LGBTQ+ Groups Volunteers

Maxine Bannard, Callum Crawford-McKellar, Adelaide Essex and Alex Webber

Clinical Supervisors

Alison Souster, Clare Marshall, Daniel Kwakye, Kate Williams and Matthew Price

Other Volunteers

Marie Wallace

Acknowledgements and Thanks

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has supported the lowdown during 2022 and 2023. There are so many individuals, organisations, businesses, and schools who have helped us to ensure we can provide our vital services to young people. We feel very honoured to be recognised by so many in our community.

- Beckett's and Sargeant's Educational Foundation
- NHS - ICB and NHFT
- St Andrew's Healthcare
- West Northamptonshire Council
- Northampton Town Council
- Youth Investment Fund
- Jane Dollar
- Our Reach Partners - Youth Works, Time2Talk, Chat and Service Six
- Rotary Club of Northampton Becket
- Dunphy Associates
- Cards Direct
- Guilsborough Academy
- Abbeyfield School
- Malcolm Arnold Academy
- Northampton School for Girls
- Northampton School for Boys
- Earl Spencer Primary School
- Campion School
- The Duston School
- The University of Northampton
- Tresham College
- Chrysalis
- Free2Talk
- The Bridge
- Northamptonshire Community Foundation
- Voluntary Impact Northamptonshire
- Northampton Chronicle and Echo
- The Thomas Brington Foundation
- Surefire Creative and Santander
- Ashby Computers
- Gateway HR
- BBC Radio Northampton
- Nlive Radio
- NPH (Northampton Partnership Homes)
- Northampton Lottery
- Rotary Clubs of Northamptonshire
- Rotary Club of Northampton
- Rotary Club of Northampton West
- Blackpool Inspirations
- Sir Thomas White Northampton Charity
- Goodwill Solutions
- Faraway Children's Charity



- Arnold Clark Community Fund
- Garfield Weston Foundation
- The Wilson Foundation
- The Laing Family Trusts
- Postcode Places Trust
- Coral Samuel Charitable Trust
- Northamptonshire Sport
- Metro Bank
- The Department for Work and Pensions
- Sign In App
- Hewitsons
- Jogo Behaviour Support
- Kevin Matthews Funeral Services
- Michael Jones Jeweller
- Bosworth Independent College
- Northampton Partnership Homes
- Scott Bader
- St James's Place
- Waitrose - Kingsthorpe and Wootton Branches
- Northampton Quakers
- Skipton Building Society
- Zapato Lounge

Report of the Trustees

Public Benefit

The Trustees have taken due regard of the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.

The lowdown is a Mental Health charity, providing free and confidential support services for 11-25 year olds and their families in Northamptonshire. Our services include counselling, wellbeing, LGBTQ+ support, practical support and sexual health services. These services are provided free of charge and provide a caring environment where young people are fully supported in their journey towards positive emotional health and wellbeing regardless of their socio-economic circumstances, ethnicity, gender, religion, ability, sexuality, or perceived disadvantage.

We aim to help children and young people feel valued and supported so that they can live safe, happy, and healthy lives, be part of and enjoy family and community life and achieve their full potential. The services we provide at the lowdown, along with our varied outreach services, not only benefit young people directly, but also the wider community.

The lowdown provides student placements for counselling trainees in order to develop the workforce of the future to support the escalation in demand for mental health services for children and young people.

Our anonymous service user questionnaires, regular internal reviews, and feedback from the organisations that use the lowdown enable us to keep abreast of any gaps in youth service provision and we continually develop our services in order to fill any such gaps. Surveys are also carried out when introducing new services to ensure that these services fulfil young people's needs.

Appointment of Trustees

New trustees are recruited by advertisements placed with the local volunteering centre, and organisations targeted for particular expertise and knowledge. The lowdown adheres to a policy of equal opportunities in the advertisement, selection, recruitment, and training of its trustees, and within all aspects of its service delivery.

Applicants are interviewed by the trustees and CEO, who then reach a decision as to the suitability of the candidate.

Successful candidates are appointed subject to a satisfactory DBS check and fulfilment of a three-month probationary period. At the next annual general meeting, they are officially elected, and all trustees are subject to re-election at our AGM in line with our constitution.

All trustees receive a copy of the lowdown Trustees' Handbook. In accordance with good practice, governance is regularly reviewed.

continued...



The trustees who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2023. The trustees have adopted the provisions of Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).

STRATEGIC REPORT

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

The charity is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (the CIO) governed according to the new and more flexible Constitution dated 22 December 2021. It was established to take forward the work of the unincorporated charity with registered charity number 801886.

The Charity became a CIO on 1 April 2022. The financial statements for the CIO represent the combined assets, liabilities and funds of the two legal entities as though they have always been part of the same organisation. The balance sheet for the unincorporated charity will show zero funds at the end of the accounting period, having effectively transferred those to the CIO.

The trustees consider this approach to be consistent with the requirements of the Charities SORP (FRS 102) and it provides a clear comparative of the financial activities and financial position with previous reporting periods. This treatment is appropriate because the CIO was formed expressly to take over the work of the charity, the two entities have the same name and address and are party to the same organisation, and there is no significant change to the beneficiaries, purposes or control of the organisation.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Registered Company number

CE027753 (England and Wales)

Registered Charity number

1197273

Registered office

3 Kingswell Street
Northampton
Northamptonshire
NN1 1PP

Trustees

S Edmonds
G Bayliss
M Toresen (resigned 12/6/23)
J Smith
A Martin
M Clarke
D Patton
M Scanlan
B Dunphy
A Gore (appointed 12/6/23)

Auditors

DNG Dove Naish LLP, Statutory Auditor
Eagle House
28 Billing Road
Northampton
Northamptonshire
NN1 5AJ

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The trustees (who are also the directors of The Lowdown for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Report of the Trustees and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law 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 charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that 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 Charity SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In so far as the trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditors are unaware; and
- the trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditors are aware of that information.

AUDITORS

The auditors, DNG Dove Naish LLP, Statutory Auditor, will be proposed for re-appointment at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting.

Report of the trustees, incorporating a strategic report, approved by order of the board of trustees, as the company directors, on 5 September 2023 and signed on the board's behalf by:


J Smith - Trustee

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT AUDITORS TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE LOWDOWN

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of The Lowdown (the 'charitable company') for the year ended 31 March 2023 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Statement of Financial Position, the Statement of Cash Flows and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2023 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, 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 Companies Act 2006.

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 Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

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

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

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

Other information

The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report, other than the financial statements and our Report of the Independent Auditors thereon.

Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. 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 where the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the information given in the Report of the Trustees is inconsistent in any material respect with the financial statements; or
- the charitable company has not kept adequate accounting records; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT AUDITORS TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE LOWDOWN

Responsibilities of trustees

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

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company 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 auditors 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 a Report of the Independent Auditors 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.

The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

We identified the greatest risk of material impact on the financial statements from irregularities, including fraud, to be the override of controls by management and the understatement of revenue. Our audit procedures to respond to these risks included enquiries of management about their own identification and assessment of the risks of irregularities, sample testing on the posting of journals, reviewing meeting minutes, regulatory correspondence and professional fees, detailed substantive testing on the completeness of income, and reviewing accounting estimates for biases. We will also review the regulatory correspondence with the Charity Commission.

Owing to the inherent limitations of an audit, there is an unavoidable risk that we may not have detected some material misstatements in the financial statements, even though we have properly planned and performed our audit in accordance with auditing standards. We are not responsible for preventing non-compliance and cannot be expected to detect non-compliance with all laws and regulations.

These inherent limitations are particularly significant in the case of misstatement resulting from fraud as this may involve sophisticated schemes designed to avoid detection, including deliberate failure to record transactions, collusion or the provision of intentional misrepresentations.

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. This description forms part of our Report of the Independent Auditors.

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT AUDITORS TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE LOWDOWN

Use of our report

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

DNG Dove Naish LLP

DNG Dove Naish LLP, Statutory Auditor

Eligible to act as an auditor in terms of Section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006

Eagle House

28 Billing Road

Northampton

Northamptonshire

NN1 5AJ

Date: 6 September 2023



	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2023 Total funds £	2022 Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM					
Donations and legacies	2	81,944	173,842	255,786	127,308
Charitable activities	3				
Charitable Activities		<u>807,036</u>	<u>24,000</u>	<u>831,036</u>	<u>581,898</u>
Total		<u>888,980</u>	<u>197,842</u>	<u>1,086,822</u>	<u>709,206</u>
EXPENDITURE ON					
Charitable activities	4				
Charitable Activities		<u>824,695</u>	<u>53,291</u>	<u>877,986</u>	<u>485,271</u>
NET INCOME					
Transfers between funds	14	<u>64,285</u> <u>(419)</u>	<u>144,551</u> <u>419</u>	<u>208,836</u> <u>-</u>	<u>223,935</u> <u>-</u>
Net movement in funds		<u>63,866</u>	<u>144,970</u>	<u>208,836</u>	<u>223,935</u>
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		<u>348,265</u>	<u>85,225</u>	<u>433,490</u>	<u>209,555</u>
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		<u><u>412,131</u></u>	<u><u>230,195</u></u>	<u><u>642,326</u></u>	<u><u>433,490</u></u>

CONTINUING OPERATIONS

All income and expenditure has arisen from continuing activities.

The notes form part of these financial statements

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
31 MARCH 2023

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2023 Total funds £	2022 Total funds £
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible assets	10	48,041	230,195	278,236	32,467
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	11	69,151	-	69,151	173,173
Cash at bank		<u>600,853</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>600,853</u>	<u>980,156</u>
		670,004	-	670,004	1,153,329
CREDITORS					
Amounts falling due within one year	12	(305,914)	-	(305,914)	(752,306)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		<u>364,090</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>364,090</u>	<u>401,023</u>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>412,131</u>	<u>230,195</u>	<u>642,326</u>	<u>433,490</u>
NET ASSETS		<u>412,131</u>	<u>230,195</u>	<u>642,326</u>	<u>433,490</u>
FUNDS	14				
Unrestricted funds				412,131	348,265
Restricted funds				<u>230,195</u>	<u>85,225</u>
TOTAL FUNDS				<u>642,326</u>	<u>433,490</u>

The charitable company is entitled to exemption from audit under Section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 for the year ended 31 March 2023.

The members have not deposited notice, pursuant to Section 476 of the Companies Act 2006 requiring an audit of these financial statements.

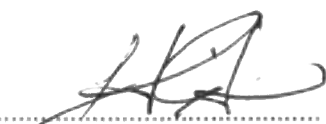
The trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for

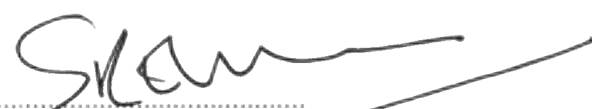
- (a) ensuring that the charitable company keeps accounting records that comply with Sections 386 and 387 of the Companies Act 2006 and
- (b) preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company as at the end of each financial year and of its surplus or deficit for each financial year in accordance with the requirements of Sections 394 and 395 and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the charitable company.

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on 5 September 2023 and were signed on its behalf by:

The notes form part of these financial statements

continued...


.....
J Smith - Trustee


.....
S Edmonds - Trustee

The notes form part of these financial statements

**STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023**

	Notes	2023 £	2022 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Cash generated from operations	1	<u>(123,885)</u>	<u>811,204</u>
Net cash (used in)/provided by operating activities		<u>(123,885)</u>	<u>811,204</u>
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		<u>(255,418)</u>	<u>(36,501)</u>
Net cash used in investing activities		<u>(255,418)</u>	<u>(36,501)</u>
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period		(379,303)	774,703
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		<u>980,156</u>	<u>205,453</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period		<u>600,853</u>	<u>980,156</u>

The notes form part of these financial statements

1. RECONCILIATION OF NET INCOME TO NET CASH FLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES

	2023 £	2022 £
Net income for the reporting period (as per the Statement of Financial Activities)	208,836	223,935
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation charges	9,649	4,993
Decrease/(increase) in debtors	104,022	(70,998)
(Decrease)/increase in creditors	(446,392)	653,274
Net cash (used in)/provided by operations	<u>(123,885)</u>	<u>811,204</u>

2. ANALYSIS OF CHANGES IN NET FUNDS

	At 1/4/22 £	Cash flow £	At 31/3/23 £
Net cash			
Cash at bank	<u>980,156</u>	<u>(379,303)</u>	<u>600,853</u>
	<u>980,156</u>	<u>(379,303)</u>	<u>600,853</u>
Total	<u>980,156</u>	<u>(379,303)</u>	<u>600,853</u>


 The notes form part of these financial statements

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of preparing the financial statements

The financial statements of the charity, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019)', Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Charities Act 2011. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

No material uncertainties exist in relation to going concern.

The presentation currency of the financial statements is the Pound Sterling (£).

Charity Status

The Lowdown is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales. The Charity became a CIO on 1 April 2022. The financial statements for the CIO represent the combined assets, liabilities and funds of the two legal entities as though they have always been part of the same organisation. The balance sheet for the unincorporated charity will show zero funds at the end of the accounting period, having effectively transferred those to the CIO.

Registered address listed in the annual report, managed and controlled by the Management Committee/Trustees named in the annual report.

Critical accounting judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty

The preparation of financial statements requires the use of certain critical accounting estimates. It also requires management to exercise its judgement in the process of applying the company accounting policies. The areas involving a higher degree of judgement or complexity, or areas where assumptions and estimates are significant to the financial statements are disclosed within the individual accounting policies below

Income

Voluntary income, including donations, legacies and grants that provide core funding or are of a general nature are recognised where there is entitlement, certainty of receipt and the amount can be measured with sufficient reliability. Investment income is brought into account on a receivable basis and dividend income on a received basis. Income from charitable activities includes income received under contract or where entitlement to grant funding is subject to specific performance conditions is recognised as earned. Grant income in this category provides funding to support performance activities and is recognised where there is entitlement, certainty of receipt and the amount can be measured with sufficient reliability.

Intangible income

Intangible income, in the form of donated facilities and voluntary help etc., is not included in the financial statements since it is not considered practicable to quantify such income.

Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised when a liability is incurred.

Cost of generating funds are those costs incurred in attracting voluntary income.

Charitable activities include expenditure associated with direct services and membership support.

Governance costs include those incurred in the governance of the charity and its assets and are primarily associated with constitutional and statutory requirements.

continued...

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES - continued**Tangible fixed assets**

Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life.

Improvements to property	- 10% on cost
Fixtures and fittings	- 33% on cost
Computer and Office Equipment	- 50% on cost and 33% on cost

Fixed assets are stated at cost less accumulated depreciation and accumulated impairment losses. Where parts of an item of property, plant and equipment have different useful lives, they are accounted for as separate items of property, plant and equipment.

Depreciation methods, useful lives and residual values are reviewed at each balance sheet date. The selection of these residual values and estimated lives requires the exercise of judgement. The directors are required to assess whether there is an indication of impairment to the carrying value of assets. In making that assessment, judgements are made in estimating value in use. The directors consider that the individual carrying values of assets are supportable by their value in use.

Taxation

The charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.

Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

Pension costs and other post-retirement benefits

The charitable company operates a defined contribution pension scheme. Contributions payable to the charitable company's pension scheme are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities in the period to which they relate.

Reserves

The current reserve policy is to maintain sufficient cash flow for known commitments, and the replacement of certain assets. Grants are received at various times during the year.

Risk

The trustees do not believe it is subject to any substantial risk beyond the liabilities disclosed in its Annual Report and Accounts.

The organisation has public, employer insurance to protect the Charity in the case of a claim.

Financial Instruments Policy

Cash and cash equivalents in the balance sheet comprise cash at banks and in hand and short term deposits with an original maturity date of three months or less.

Debtors and creditors with no stated interest rate and receivable or payable within one year are recorded at transaction price. Any losses arising from impairment are recognised in the statement of comprehensive income under administrative expenses.

continued...

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES - continued**Reserves**

Financial liabilities and equity instruments are classified according to the substance of the contractual arrangements entered into. An equity instrument is any contract that evidences a residual interest in the assets of the entity after deducting all of its financial liabilities.

Where the contractual obligations of financial instruments (including share capital) are equivalent to a similar debt instrument, those financial instruments are classed as financial liabilities. Financial liabilities are presented as such in the balance sheet. Finance costs and gains or losses relating to financial liabilities are included in the profit and loss account. Finance costs are calculated so as to produce a constant rate of return on the outstanding liability.

2. DONATIONS AND LEGACIES

	2023	2022
	£	£
Donations	90,786	127,308
Grants	<u>165,000</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>255,786</u>	<u>127,308</u>

Grants received, included in the above, are as follows:

	2023	2022
	£	£
NHFT - Espresso Yourself Cafe	5,000	-
Beckett's & Sargeants	40,000	-
The Beatrice Laing Trust	<u>120,000</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>165,000</u>	<u>-</u>

3. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	2023	2022
	Charitable Activities	Total activities
	£	£
Grants & Contract Services	782,960	536,241
Outreach Services	46,191	45,657
Other income	<u>1,885</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>831,036</u>	<u>581,898</u>

Grants received, included in the above, are as follows:

	2023	2022
	£	£
LGBTQ	22,000	20,000
VCSE - Happier Families	25,975	19,013
NHFT - Espresso Yourself Cafe	68,840	46,755
NHS Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board	595,466	371,514
Children in Need Youth Investment Fund Grant	-	19,094
Aspire Higher	<u>270</u>	<u>8,445</u>
Carried forward	712,551	484,821

continued...

3. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES - continued

	2023 £	2022 £
Brought forward	712,551	484,821
Garfield Weston	-	15,000
Thomas Brington	1,800	4,950
Constance Travis	1,500	1,500
National Lottery	9,990	9,990
Queen's Institute	4,995	19,980
Youth Investment Fund	249	-
Northampton Town Council	15,000	-
St James's Place Foundation	9,990	-
Goodwill Solutions	9,900	-
Faraway Children's Charity	2,000	-
West Northamptonshire Council	14,985	-
	<u>782,960</u>	<u>536,241</u>

4. CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES COSTS

	Direct Costs £	Support costs (see note 5) £	Totals £
Charitable Activities	<u>853,077</u>	<u>24,909</u>	<u>877,986</u>

5. SUPPORT COSTS

	Finance £	Governance costs £	Totals £
Charitable Activities	<u>715</u>	<u>24,194</u>	<u>24,909</u>

6. NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)

Net income/(expenditure) is stated after charging/(crediting):

	2023 £	2022 £
Auditors' remuneration	5,700	2,200
Accountancy Fees - non Audit work	1,500	1,100
Depreciation - owned assets	<u>9,649</u>	<u>4,993</u>

continued...

7. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 31 March 2023 nor for the year ended 31 March 2022.

Trustees' expenses

There were no trustees' expenses paid for the year ended 31 March 2023 nor for the year ended 31 March 2022.

8. STAFF COSTS

	2023	2022
	£	£
Wages and salaries	579,275	299,175
Social security costs	41,190	17,286
Other pension costs	10,846	5,199
	<u>631,311</u>	<u>321,660</u>

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

	2023	2022
	35	23

No employees received emoluments in excess of £60,000.

Key Management Remuneration in the year was £59,606 (2022: £45,314). The increase was due to an increase in working hours.

9. COMPARATIVES FOR THE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM			
Donations and legacies	66,923	60,385	127,308
Charitable activities			
Charitable Activities	<u>537,804</u>	<u>44,094</u>	<u>581,898</u>
Total	<u>604,727</u>	<u>104,479</u>	<u>709,206</u>
EXPENDITURE ON Charitable activities			
Charitable Activities	<u>439,352</u>	<u>45,919</u>	<u>485,271</u>
NET INCOME	165,375	58,560	223,935
Transfers between funds	<u>(166)</u>	<u>166</u>	<u>-</u>
Net movement in funds	165,209	58,726	223,935
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS			
Total funds brought forward	183,056	26,499	209,555

continued...

9. COMPARATIVES FOR THE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES - continued

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	<u>348,265</u>	<u>85,225</u>	<u>433,490</u>

10. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Improvements to property £	Fixtures and fittings £	Computer and Office Equipment £	Totals £
COST				
At 1 April 2022	34,857	4,296	8,795	47,948
Additions	<u>250,902</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>4,516</u>	<u>255,418</u>
At 31 March 2023	<u>285,759</u>	<u>4,296</u>	<u>13,311</u>	<u>303,366</u>
DEPRECIATION				
At 1 April 2022	3,486	4,296	7,699	15,481
Charge for year	<u>7,122</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,527</u>	<u>9,649</u>
At 31 March 2023	<u>10,608</u>	<u>4,296</u>	<u>10,226</u>	<u>25,130</u>
NET BOOK VALUE				
At 31 March 2023	<u>275,151</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>3,085</u>	<u>278,236</u>
At 31 March 2022	<u>31,371</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,096</u>	<u>32,467</u>

11. DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2023 £	2022 £
Trade debtors	-	162,864
Other debtors	216	-
Prepayments and accrued income	<u>68,935</u>	<u>10,309</u>
	<u>69,151</u>	<u>173,173</u>

continued...

12. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2023 £	2022 £
Trade creditors	46,832	18,782
Social security and other taxes	13,158	8,496
Other creditors	133,784	297,844
Deferred Income	91,876	409,441
Accrued expenses	<u>20,264</u>	<u>17,743</u>
	<u>305,914</u>	<u>752,306</u>

Deferred Income Reconciliation:

	2023 £	2022 £
Balance brought forward	(409,441)	(90,758)
Amount released to the Statement of Financial Activities	409,441	90,758
Amount Deferred in the year	<u>(91,876)</u>	<u>(409,441)</u>
Balance carried forward	<u>(91,876)</u>	<u>(409,441)</u>

Deferred income relates to amounts receivable for the provision of services that have been invoiced in financial year ending 31 March 2023, where performance conditions will not be met until future accounting periods.

13. LEASING AGREEMENTS

Minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases fall due as follows:

	2023 £	2022 £
Within one year	10,450	-
Between one and five years	<u>6,300</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>16,750</u>	<u>-</u>

continued...

14. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

	At 1/4/22 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 31/3/23 £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	347,455	65,095	(419)	412,131
NVCT Right Resolution	810	(810)	-	-
	348,265	64,285	(419)	412,131
Restricted funds				
LGBTQ	13,544	(13,544)	-	-
Scott Bader Commonwealth	4,000	(4,000)	-	-
Children in Need Youth Investment Fund Grant	8,681	(1,025)	-	7,656
Outbuilding	50,000	164,120	419	214,539
Leasehold Improvements - Kitchen	9,000	(1,000)	-	8,000
	85,225	144,551	419	230,195
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>433,490</u>	<u>208,836</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>642,326</u>

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	888,980	(823,885)	65,095
NVCT Right Resolution	-	(810)	(810)
	888,980	(824,695)	64,285
Restricted funds			
LGBTQ	26,682	(40,226)	(13,544)
Scott Bader Commonwealth	-	(4,000)	(4,000)
Children in Need Youth Investment Fund Grant	-	(1,025)	(1,025)
Outbuilding	169,160	(5,040)	164,120
Leasehold Improvements - Kitchen	-	(1,000)	(1,000)
Faraway Children's Charity	2,000	(2,000)	-
	197,842	(53,291)	144,551
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>1,086,822</u>	<u>(877,986)</u>	<u>208,836</u>

continued...

14. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

Comparatives for movement in funds

	At 1/4/21 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 31/3/22 £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	176,326	171,295	(166)	347,455
NVCT Right Resolution	810	-	-	810
NHS Northants - Resources and Training	2,800	(2,800)	-	-
Sir Thomas White	3,120	(3,120)	-	-
	<u>183,056</u>	<u>165,375</u>	<u>(166)</u>	<u>348,265</u>
Restricted funds				
LGBTQ	22,499	(8,955)	-	13,544
Scott Bader Commonwealth	4,000	-	-	4,000
Children in Need Youth Investment Fund Grant	-	8,515	166	8,681
Outbuilding	-	50,000	-	50,000
Leasehold Improvements - Kitchen	-	9,000	-	9,000
	<u>26,499</u>	<u>58,560</u>	<u>166</u>	<u>85,225</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>209,555</u>	<u>223,935</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>433,490</u>

Comparative net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	604,727	(433,432)	171,295
NHS Northants - Resources and Training	-	(2,800)	(2,800)
Sir Thomas White	-	(3,120)	(3,120)
	<u>604,727</u>	<u>(439,352)</u>	<u>165,375</u>
Restricted funds			
LGBTQ	25,385	(34,340)	(8,955)
Children in Need Youth Investment Fund Grant	19,094	(10,579)	8,515
Outbuilding	50,000	-	50,000
Leasehold Improvements - Kitchen	10,000	(1,000)	9,000
	<u>104,479</u>	<u>(45,919)</u>	<u>58,560</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>709,206</u>	<u>(485,271)</u>	<u>223,935</u>

General reserve - to maintain sufficient cash flow due to time differences of grants received and expenditure paid

Fundraising LGBTQ - is fundraising for the LGBTQ project

continued...

14. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

NVCT Right Resolution - is for a Counselling Contract.

NHS Northants - Resources & Training funds are for LGBTQ awareness, training, Self-Harm and Emotional Wellbeing Resources and development for Reach.

Sir Thomas White - is for a Counselling Contract.

Outbuilding Extension - to provide additional space to expand our services

Leasehold Improvements - Funding to renovate and improve the kitchen facilities and create a staff area within the property, in which the charity operates. The balance on this fund represents the Net Book Value of the assets, are being depreciated over 10 years.

LGBTQ - Funding for youth services to support young people who are lesbian, gay or bisexual, transgender or questioning.

Scott Bader Commonwealth - Donation towards Sexual Health Service that we have not been able to deliver due to COVID

VCSE Happier Families - funds are for Family Work, drop-ins and group work.

NHS Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board - to provide immediate one to one counselling.

Children In Need Youth Futures Funding - Building, IT and Service improvements. The balance on this fund represents the Net Book Value of the assets, are being depreciated over 10 years.

Outbuilding - Funding for the building of the Outbuilding at the Kingswell Street Property.

Transfers between funds

Transfer between the General Fund and the Outbuilding Fund, represents a small overspend of £419. (2022: Children In Need Youth Fund £166)

15. RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

Donations received from trustees in the year totalled £360 (2022: £350).

There were no other related party transactions for either the current or prior year.

Treasurers Report and Financial Review

for the year ended 31st March 2023

Facing the future from a position of considerable strength and flexibility.

With the vagaries of Covid-19 restrictions behind us, but perhaps partly due to those restrictions, the team have found themselves faced with a hugely expanded workload during the year.

Needless to say, they have all risen to the challenge and have made amazing efforts to maintain service levels while at the same time continuing to source and secure funding. The lowdown is now facing the future from a position of considerable strength and flexibility to offer whatever services are needed over the coming year.

As shown in The Statement of Financial Position, the Total Funds have again improved over the course of the year with Total Funds held at 31st March 2023 standing at **£642,326**. This compares to the balance at 31st March 2022 of **£433,490**, giving an increase in funds retained during the year of **£208,836**. Within the Total Funds figure are restricted funds of **£230,195** which is the current value of the Lowdown Lounge.

The bank balance has fallen from **£980,156** at 31st March 2022 to **£600,853** at 31st March 2023, a drop of **£379,303** which is mainly due to two major factors. During the year, capital expenditure was undertaken at a cost of **£250,902**. At 31st March 2022 there was a large sum of monies held which represented advance payments for contracts, shown in creditors, which had not yet been fulfilled at that point. This advance payment has not repeated at the current year end and the difference is therefore shown as a cash outflow of **£317,565**. These sums have been somewhat offset by the surplus for the year and other movements, further details are enumerated in the Statement of Cash Flows.

The major capital work carried out at the Kingswell Street premises during the year was the build and commission of the Lowdown Lounge.

The cost of this, together with a new intercom system and fitted desks for the main building, totalling **£250,902** has been capitalised as Improvements to Property. Other items of equipment purchased were an interactive display board and free-standing tables for the Lowdown Lounge which make up the **£4,516** capitalised as Office Equipment. Each of these are shown in the Tangible Fixed Assets Note 10 to the Financial Statements.

Income from charitable activities has again grown significantly during the year due to the sustained focus on funding applications and has increased by **£249,138** compared to the previous year. Donations have also increased by **£128,478**. A more detailed summary of income streams can be found in Notes 2 & 3 to the Financial Statements. The net effect of this is that Total Income has increased during the year by **£377,616 (53%)**.

Having reached a point where there is enough resource and stability to make longer term plans, one of the first strategic decisions has been to formalise the structure of the lowdown and the rates at which staff are paid.

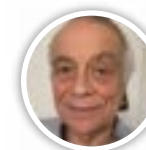
Where practicable, counsellors have been offered employment contracts and all wage rates have been adjusted to better reflect the industry rate for the work performed. Hopefully this will provide more security for staff and serve as an indication of the high regard in which we hold all of them. The cost of staff salaries and counsellors continues to be the largest item of expenditure and during the year this amounted to **75%** of total expenditure. The cost of salaries and counsellors amounted to **£654,639** for the year which represents an increase of **76%** over the previous year, due to increased staffing levels and pay increases.

Overheads have been carefully monitored during the year and significant expense increases are related to the opening and running of the premises in St Giles Street, property repairs at Kingswell Street and audit fees.

The Trustees of the lowdown would like to thank the Beckett's and Sargeant's Educational Foundation for the generous provision of the premises in Kingswell Street, and also all the organisations and individuals who have made donations, given their time or supported the lowdown in any other way.

A special thank you this year must go to the funders who have made the Lowdown Lounge possible. They are the Beatrice Laing Trust, Beckett's and Sargeant's, The Wilson Foundation and Michael Jones Jeweller – they have provided a fantastic resource for us with this facility. It is already making a huge difference to the young people we support who are greatly benefiting from it.

Jonathan Smith
Treasurer



How to Contact Us



Call us: 01604 634385

Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm



Email us:

General Enquiries:

info@thelowdownnorthampton.co.uk

Fundraising, Events and Business Partnership:

elliwhite@thelowdownnorthampton.co.uk

Wellbeing Services:

wellbeing@thelowdownnorthampton.co.uk

LGBTQ+ Support Enquiries:

lgbtqsupport@thelowdownnorthampton.co.uk

RE:Start Enquiries:

helenheng@thelowdownnorthampton.co.uk

Youth Groups Enquiries:

youthgroups@thelowdownnorthampton.co.uk



How to find us:

the lowdown, 3 Kingswell Street (off Gold Street),
Northampton NN1 1PP



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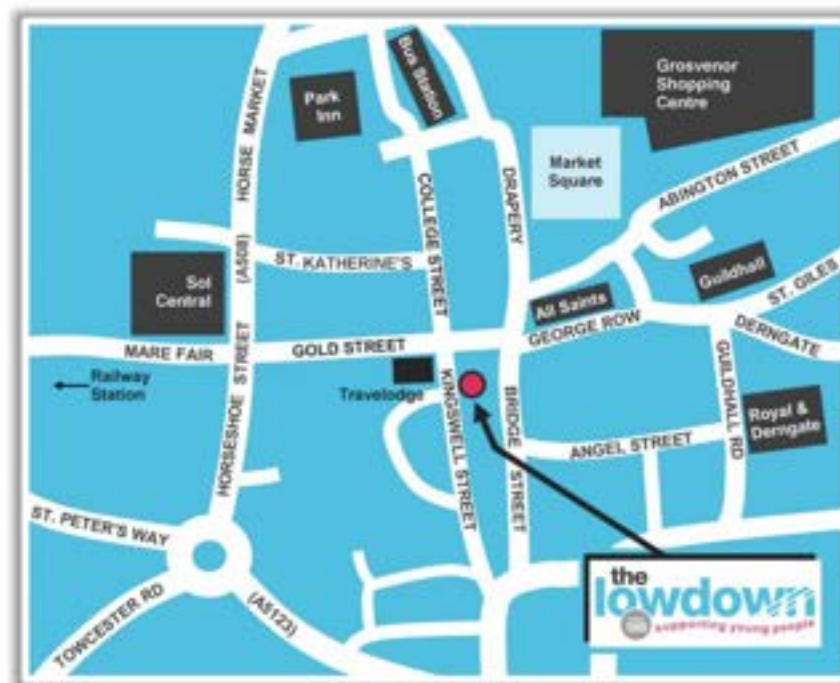
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- We are 2 mins from the North Gate Bus Station.
- If coming from Gold Street, turn at the Travelodge.
- Find the Red Door and ring the buzzer when you arrive.

**For information on all our services or to
make a referral, visit our website...**

www.thelowdown.info

