THE NATIONAL CHILDBIRTH TRUST

England & Wales · Charity number 801395

Details

Other names	N C T, NCT
Status	Registered
Legal form	Charitable company
Company number	02370573
Registered	1989-04-24
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

Address	Nct 27 Old Gloucester Street London WC1N 3AX
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Website	nct.org.uk

Activities

Objects: THE OBJECTS FOR WHICH THE COMPANY IS ESTABLISHED ARE:1. TO PRESERVE AND PROTECT THE MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH OF PREGNANT WOMEN BY, BUT NOT EXCLUSIVELY, THE PROVISION OF PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL AND PRACTICAL SUPPORT DURING PREGNANCY AND CHILDBIRTH;2. TO PRESERVE AND PROTECT THE MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH OF PARENTS AND THEIR CHILDREN DURING THE POST-NATAL PERIOD; AND3. TO ADVANCE THE EDUCATION OF THE PUBLIC INCLUDING HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS IN CHILDBIRTH AND PARENTHOOD.

Activities: We offer information and support in pregnancy, childbirth and early parenthoodWe aim to give every parent the chance to make informed choicesWe want to make sure that everyone in the UK, regardless of background or location, has access to our services and activitiesWe advocate on behalf of parents to make the UK more parent friendly by improving services and support for parents

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Classification

- **How:** Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information, Sponsors Or Undertakes Research
- **What:** Education/training, The Advancement Of Health Or Saving Of Lives
- **Who:** Children/young People, Other Defined Groups

Geography

- **Area of benefit:** SEE OBJECTS
- Guernsey
- Jersey
- Northern Ireland
- Scotland
- Throughout England And Wales

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£11,133,898	£11,882,985	£3,883,399	185
2024-03-31	£11,848,572	£12,064,573	£4,601,188	187
2023-03-31	£11,251,000	£11,656,000	£4,588,000	172
2022-03-31	£10,861,000	£10,613,000	£5,141,000	110
2021-03-31	£10,413,000	£10,351,000	£4,590,000	117

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Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Charles Austen Richardson		2022-07-16
Colin James Cassidy		2025-11-19
Elaine Sharon Lambe		2017-11-04
Elizabeth Anne Duff		2025-11-19
Joelle Warren		2024-10-16
Julien Haye		2023-11-08
Keshia Mbeck Firth		2025-11-19
Mikayla Pencross		2023-11-08
Salima Shariff		2026-03-26
Sarah Louise Brown		2017-11-04
Sherida Bevan		2019-11-16
Vikram Sundarraj		2026-03-26

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THE NATIONAL CHILDBIRTH TRUST

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Accounts



Support for every parent

NCT 2025 Annual report and accounts

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About us

About us

Every year we support thousands of parents across the UK on their journeys through pregnancy, birth, infant feeding, and early parenthood. We connect, inform and support parents through our antenatal and postnatal information, courses and services, bringing people together to share information and experiences of life as an expectant or new parent.

Our peer support programmes reach parents facing mental health challenges, social isolation, or other unmet needs – offering care where it's needed most.

We host thousands of community-based events across the UK, from ***NCT Bumps & Babies*** groups to ***NCT Baby Cafés*** offering infant feeding support. Many of these activities are run by our volunteers, who give more than 77,000 hours of outstanding community service each year.

We support parents to make decisions that are right for them through access to evidence-based information on our website and our ***NCT Infant Feeding Support Line***, open 365 days a year.

Our charity has a proud history of creating transformative change in the lives of parents. We are a trusted voice and a strong advocate for parents, campaigning on the issues that matter most.

Today, we are a membership charity and a strong community of volunteers, practitioners, Peer Supporters, staff, students, advocates, and campaigners. We have a huge opportunity to positively influence the experience of millions of people as they become parents and work towards our vision that every parent feels confident, connected, and safe.

Working towards our vision that every parent feels confident, connected, and safe

We supported nearly

180,000

parents **in-person** last year, and **millions more** **online**.

Confident

6.7 million people accessed our pregnancy and parenting information online

We offer free, evidence-based information for parents.

94% rated their NCT Antenatal course 'good' or 'excellent'

Parents continue to build confidence with our courses.

NCT awarded the Patient Information Forum TICK Certification

Trusted by the NHS, the PIF TICK is UK's only independent quality mark for print and digital health information.



> There's so much negativity around LGBTQIA+ parenting – we need more stories like ours. We were happy. We were supported. We had a baby, and NCT helped us feel confident doing it.

Gem, new parent.



Connected

95% of parents keep in touch with other parents after finishing an NCT course

NCT brings people together and builds networks of support.

81,000 parents joined our community parent support groups

Like ***NCT Bumps & Babies*** and more.

Over 77,000 hours of volunteer community service

Thousands of NCT volunteers give back in their local communities.

1,150 NCT Walk & Talks

Connecting parents, walking together.



NCT parent support group in Bridgnorth

> The change was instant. NCT's walks gave me structure, community, and a sense of self during those early, uncertain weeks.

Rhiannon, Worcester.

Safe



2,500 families received essential NCT Baby Bundles

28,000 nappies, 900 toys, and 600 clothing bundles distributed by volunteers.

Birthing communication cards, translated into 25 languages

Supporting women to convey urgent symptoms during labour.

Over 300 refugee and asylum-seeking women supported

Thanks to our Newham Nurture Perinatal Partnership and Leeds Bankside project.

> "NCT helped me a lot in this situation to communicate with emergency services."
>
> Ava, solo mother experiencing homelessness.

Over 7,200 calls to our free NCT Infant Feeding Line

The postnatal period is a vulnerable time for women, parents, and babies. Evidence based, non-judgemental, and unbiased support really matters.

> "It's not just a helpline. It's a lifeline."
>
> Parent calling ***NCT's Infant Feeding Line***.

Nearly 300 NCT x Mini First Aid classes

Providing parents with the essential skills to help cope when their baby has an injury or emergency.



Chair's welcome



When I stepped into the role of Chair of NCT following our AGM in November 2024, I knew I was joining an organisation with a long and proud legacy of supporting new and expectant parents. What I didn't yet know was just how much inspiration, resilience, and deep human connection I would encounter in my first year.

It has been eye opening and inspiring to meet parents, volunteers, practitioners, and staff across the UK. Whether sitting on the floor during a music session in Newham, learning about mental health support in Halton, or listening to pregnant women's experiences of the asylum system in Leeds, I've been consistently struck by the compassion and trust that define NCT's work.

These visits brought to life the powerful role NCT plays in communities. In Newham, I saw how we co-produced services with local women from low income, migrant and marginalised backgrounds – and how these are shaped directly by them and respond to what they need. In Halton, the ***NCT Parents in Mind*** team showed me how positive action amplifies and grows, with former beneficiaries volunteering to help others. In Leeds, I met Rose, an NCT practitioner who has a 20-year legacy of supporting pregnant women in the asylum system, reminding me what it means to truly be there for parents.

This first hand experience has deepened my understanding of NCT's unique role and made clear the scale of the challenge we face.

I've spoken with midwives, partners, and other charities in the maternity sector. I've seen how maternity and perinatal services in the UK are under enormous strain. Women and new parents now face a postcode lottery and huge disparities that are both unfair and unacceptable. We don't simply want to grow our charity's reach, we *need* to, so that every parent, wherever they are, whoever they are, has access to the trusted support they deserve.



Joëlle and the team from *NCT Parents in Mind* Halton

> *I've spent much of this year listening. I've spoken with parents, NCT practitioners and volunteers, staff, and funders. I've seen a shared determination: to ensure NCT remains here for every parent – now and in the future.*

I've also seen the compassion and expertise at the heart of our work, from in-person ***NCT Baby Cafés*** where I saw our Breastfeeding Counsellors in action, to our award-winning ***NCT Antenatal*** classes. Sitting in an antenatal class in Nantwich reminded me how fun, inclusive, and empowering our sessions are today. (And yes, I'm still practising my 4–8 breathing and using all of my B-R-A-I-N when making decisions!)

One story that especially stayed with me came from an LGBTQIA+ couple I met at a ***NCT Baby Café***. They hadn't done an ***NCT Antenatal*** course, unsure if they'd feel welcome. But after several visits for feeding support, they told me how warmly they'd been welcomed by NCT practitioners and volunteers. That experience changed their view: they now see NCT as a place where they belong. It was a moving reminder of the inclusive, person-centred approach that runs through everything we do.

Looking ahead, my role as Chair is to steward our charity with care, courage and clarity of purpose. NCT is trusted by generations, and we must evolve to remain relevant, representative, and responsive to the realities of parenting today.

We are growing our partnerships and influence – engaging with policymakers, philanthropists, and corporate partners to ensure NCT is recognised as the *charity* it is, rooted in a deep commitment to do social good. We are also strengthening our governance and welcoming new voices to our board, to help shape the next chapter.

This year has shown me that while the challenges are many, the commitment across NCT is even greater. We are united by a powerful belief: that every parent should be confident, connected and safe.

Thank you for being part of this journey.

Joëlle Warren

NCT Chair

President's welcome



It is with pride and deep appreciation that I reflect on six years as NCT President – years that have tested, transformed, and strengthened our charity in ways we could have never imagined.

Most remarkable is that amidst momentous change in the world and our sector, the vibrancy of our NCT community, the commitment of our people to supporting parents, and NCT's strong values have never wavered – this remains the beating heart of our charity today and will do so long into the future.

This was true more than ever during the COVID-19 pandemic, which brought profound uncertainty for expectant and new parents and marked a period of significant transformation for NCT. Our teams rapidly adapted – moving services online, offering virtual infant feeding support, and ensuring our helpline and website remained a trusted lifeline. Through extraordinary circumstances, our values – **being welcoming, collaborative, inclusive, bold, and trusted** – guided everything we did.

As NCT rose to meet new challenges and began safely unlocking in-person services, we also began deepening our commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion – listening and responding to what parents need and doing more to support women, parents, and families who are marginalised or excluded.

> *In 2023, NCT launched the* ***For Every Parent*** *strategy and we renewed our vision and mission to ensure that every decision we make and every service we offer is working towards a world where parents feel confident, connected, and safe – no matter who they are, what their background is, or what pregnancy, birth or parenting decisions they make.*

Since then, we have expanded our peer support programmes to reach more women and families who are marginalised, created new community partnerships, and amplified the voices of parents facing inequality, discrimination, or isolation. As a result, I can proudly say that today more parents have access to the support and community they need during pregnancy, birth, and early parenthood.

I see the impact of this work making a world of difference to parents' lives across the UK - whether it's a Breastfeeding Counsellor on ***NCT's Infant Feeding Support Line***, a volunteer running a ***NCT Bumps & Babies*** group, a practitioner facilitating an ***NCT Antenatal*** course, or a campaigner challenging maternity inequalities, each person in the NCT community shares our values and the belief that parents deserve safety, dignity, and compassion.

As a Breastfeeding Counsellor and NCT practitioner myself, NCT's mission is close to my heart. Opening my own local ***NCT Baby Café*** in Bromley, where we offer a free weekly drop-in service providing personalised and non-judgemental infant feeding support, has allowed me to hear first hand about the joys and challenges of feeding babies in a myriad of different ways and to witness the incredible difference it can make to have a community of people around you to support your feeding journey. As an NCT volunteer, I run a local ***NCT Walk & Talk*** group and as we've strolled through the park together, so many parents have told me not just how this movement and connection has been the highlight of their week, but how it's inspired them to join NCT's incredible volunteering movement too.

As I've actively fundraised to keep these services going in my local area, I've gained first hand experience of the challenges the charity sector faces in securing long-term funding to sustain vital services in communities. It is more important than ever that we continue to campaign for sustained and long-term investment into a maternity system that works for all.

As always, this year it has been an extraordinary pleasure and honour to work with everyone across NCT. The commitment and expertise of our staff, practitioners, and volunteers is outstanding – I really love being part of this amazing team – and the generosity of NCT's commissioners, donors, and partners is a beacon of hope for all of us. Thank you to everyone who shares NCT's vision and has collaborated with us over the last year.

Just like in previous years, our charity is transforming. As parents' needs have changed, digitalisation has accelerated, and the UK's social and economic environment throws up new challenges, NCT is evolving too. Over the last year, with the guidance of the Board of Trustees, significant decisions have been made to steward NCT towards a sustainable future where we can deliver the greatest impact for parents. Change is always tough, but our community is resilient and so many of our people have made valuable contributions to building this new future. Thank you to our staff, practitioners and volunteers for the ongoing support and energy you bring to improving the experience of becoming a parent.

The past six years has certainly thrown challenges and opportunities at our charity, at parents, and at our society, and I'm so proud that they've always made NCT braver, more open, and more united in achieving our vision of a world where every new parent feels confident, connected, and safe.

Sherry Bevan

NCT President

Chief Executive's welcome



In 2024, the state of maternity care in the UK was thrust into the spotlight. The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care admitted that the crisis in services "*keeps him awake at night*", a stark but honest reflection of a system that too often fails pregnant women, new parents and babies. By June 2025, a national investigation into NHS maternity and neonatal services had been announced.

This has only come about because of parents. Their courage in speaking out – about birth trauma, the death of their babies in preventable circumstances, or the deep inequities faced by Black and Asian women and those living in poverty – has been the catalyst for change. But these stories, and the findings of multiple public inquiries and reports, point to a hard truth: the UK's maternity system does not keep every parent or baby safe.

At NCT, we believe that everyone should be able to shape their own unique journey through pregnancy, birth and early parenthood – feeling confident, connected, and above all, safe.

Over the last year, we've taken the campaign for safer, fairer maternity care to governments and NHS bodies across all four nations. From contributing to the Change NHS consultation in England to supporting the Neonatal Network in Northern Ireland, shaping new quality standards in Wales, and delivering frontline services in Scotland, we've worked to centre parents' voices wherever change is happening.

> *"As the nation's charity for pregnancy, birth and parents, we are here for and advocate alongside parents, through the joy and the stress, the beginnings and the unknowns. We educate and empower, with trusted information, practical support, and local networks that help build community and confidence."*

In 2024, we were proud to be awarded the Patient Information Forum (PIF) Tick, certifying our information resources as evidence-based, inclusive, easy to understand, and designed for real life.

Of course, our support must also evolve as parents' realities do. That's why we've adapted, investing in more flexible, accessible services, delivered online, in local communities, and through peer support.



Angela visits our 'Empowering Parents' programme celebration in Hackney

We've also had to make tough financial decisions to safeguard our future, including pausing our education model and restructuring parts of our team. These changes weren't easy, but they've been made with a single goal: to ensure NCT is here for every parent, now and for generations to come.

The strength of our work lies in collaboration. This year, we've worked side by side with local partners, commissioners, and fellow charities, co-producing services for new and expectant parents, supporting mental health in underserved communities, and ensuring that language or digital barriers never stop a parent from being heard. Every action, every partnership, every voice has helped improve someone's experience of becoming a parent.

I am proud of the dedication of our staff, practitioners, volunteers, and students, and grateful for the trust placed in us by parents, supporters, and partners. Together, we're making important progress.

This year has tested pregnant people and new parents in countless ways. But parents continue to lead the call for change. They remind us why our purpose matters: to create a society where everyone who becomes a parent feels confident, connected and safe.

Together, we are NCT, the nation's advocate for parents. And I am so proud of and grateful for this incredible charity, and everything we do together.

Angela McConville

Chief Executive

NCT staff members Anna Murray and Katy Thompson at Hartlepool Pride event





Introduction

At NCT, we envisage a future where safe personalised maternity care is the norm, not the exception. For us, this means delivering trusted and unbiased information, support, and services to parents – before, during, and after birth – and it means raising our voice to campaign for a more empathetic, equitable, and accessible maternity system for all.

This report shares highlights of our impact over the last year, and some incredible stories of the positive action created by our NCT community and the many parents, families, and local communities that we have worked with.

We share our achievements and progress in three main sections – **confident**, **connected**, **and safe** – highlighting how we are driving towards our vision that every parent is confident and informed in their decision making, connected to a supportive community, and safe in pregnancy, birth and early parenthood. These aren't just ideals, they are the conditions every parent deserves.

Confidence, connection, safety: Why it matters for every parent

- Nearly half (48%) of NHS maternity units in England were rated as 'inadequate' or 'requires improvement', with 65% failing key safety criteria.[1]
- Only 54% of women reported receiving adequate help postnatally.[2]
- Only 58% of people surveyed said they were 'always' given the information and explanations needed in hospital after birth.[3]
- 61% of parents in the UK reported anxiety about their mental health in the past year.[4]
- 82% of parents report they have experienced feelings of isolation.[5]

[1] Care Quality Commission's (CQC) national maternity inspection programme
[2] Care Quality Commission's (CQC) 2024 maternity survey.
[3] Maternity survey 2024 - Care Quality Commission
[4] New Survey: Nearly 90% of GB parents are worried for their children's future life chances – UNICEF UK calls for urgent reset from new Government - UNICEF UK
[5] New Survey Reveals Extent of Loneliness Among UK Parents

NCT's *For Every Parent* strategy

Our vision is that everyone who becomes a parent feels **confident**, **connected**, and **safe** because we believe parents help build the foundations of the future. That's why NCT is the charity with a clear and singular mission – we support people as they become parents. We're here for you through pregnancy, birth, and early parenthood.

More parents, more impact

We want to support and empower all people as they become parents by building even bigger communities of expectant and new parents, tackling health inequalities and making our services and content more inclusive and accessible.

Real lives, real change

We are reigniting our focus on campaigning and community action. We will listen to your experiences, amplify all parents' voices and collaborate for change to improve the experiences of pregnancy, birth, and early parenting.

We want everyone who becomes a parent to feel confident, connected, and safe. No exceptions.

Great people, great results

Our people hold the key to our impact.

We're building a diverse and inclusive community of staff, practitioners, students, Peer Supporters and volunteers – who are all empowered in their work to support everyone who becomes a parent to feel confident, connected, and safe.

Strong foundations, strong future

To support people as they become parents now and into the future, our charity must be progressive, sustainable, and here for the long-term. We're committed to making it easier for parents to access our services and for our team to deliver them.

Our values: welcoming, collaborative, inclusive, bold, and trusted.

Our impact:

Confident

Confidence empowers parents to trust their instincts, make decisions that are right for them, and advocate for their needs. Confidence is also a huge part of feeling positive about your parenting experience and being able to navigate uncertainty. When parents feel confident, they are more likely to seek support, ask questions, and engage with services. Confidence doesn't mean having all the answers; it means feeling equipped, respected, and supported on the journey.

At NCT, we support new and expectant parents to build confidence during pregnancy, birth, infant feeding and early parenthood by ensuring our information and services are comprehensive, accurate, and impartial. We know that every parent and every birth is unique, and we're committed to ensuring parents can access the support they need – no matter who they are, what their background is, or what parenting decisions they make.

We equip parents with the knowledge, tools, and reassurance they need throughout their unique parenting journey. We provide evidence-based antenatal and postnatal courses, breastfeeding support, and peer support programs; as well as free resources on our website and our ***NCT Infant Feeding Line***.

In this section you will find:

- *NCT Antenatal*
- Infant Feeding Support
- Trusted information for parents.

NCT practitioners - expert facilitators, educators, welcoming to all.

NCT practitioners are expert, university-trained educators who deliver inclusive, evidence-based support for parents.

Welcoming and locally informed, they create safe spaces to share, ask questions and build confidence – so every parent feels prepared, supported, and connected from pregnancy into parenthood.

Our NCT practitioners give many hours of their time to working with new and expectant parents, as well as sharing their knowledge and expertise with others at NCT and in the wider maternity community. Thank you for everything you do.

NCT Antenatal

Our *NCT Antenatal* courses cover a range of topics, including different types of birth, pain management, infant feeding, and life with a newborn, to help parents feel confident and prepared with realistic and flexible plans. Our courses continually evolve in response to feedback from parents and reflect the latest guidance and research.

NCT practitioners are skilled perinatal educators, trained at university level on pregnancy, birth and early parenthood, and highly skilled in group facilitation for adult learners. Building on our work in 2023/24, we continue to roll out trauma-informed CPD (continuous professional development) for our practitioners, so they have the necessary skills to support all parents and their unique experiences.

This year we also added new digital content on hypnobirthing, pregnancy yoga and baby first aid, exclusively available to parents who attend our courses, ensuring they have more tools to support their parenting journey.

We're proud that 94% of parents rated our ***NCT Antenatal*** course 'good' or 'excellent' this year, and that 95% of parents keep in touch with the other parents they met during the course after they have all had their babies. This highlights the valuable support networks our courses help to form in the early weeks and months of parenthood.

Loved by parents

***NCT Antenatal* classes have been recognised as the Best Antenatal Class at the 15th Annual Loved by Parents Awards, which celebrate excellence in products and services that support families – as voted for by parents.**

We were also proud to secure **Gold for Best Parenting Brand of the Year** and **Silver for Best Family Brand.** These awards reflect our unwavering commitment to providing expectant parents with comprehensive, evidence-based education and support.







Yasmin & Gemma's story: Feeling seen, supported, and prepared

Location: South England
Service: *NCT Antenatal*
Impact duration: Antenatal classes over 8 weeks – friendships ongoing!

Yasmin and Gemma's parenting journey began with a successful IUI procedure and the exciting news that Yas was pregnant. As a same-sex couple navigating early parenthood, they sought out support and information – though Yas was initially unsure about joining an antenatal class.

"*I thought, 'I'm not an antenatal class person,'*" Yas admits. "*I can be quite socially awkward, and I worried people wouldn't understand our lifestyle as a lesbian couple.*"

Despite early nerves, the couple found their ***NCT Antenatal*** course offered not just vital information, but a sense of belonging and calm. Gem recalls, "*NCT really helped us understand our choices. It wasn't scary – it was empowering. We weren't just told what would happen, we learned why, and how to make informed decisions.*"



Yas and Gem's first cuddle with their baby





Skin to skin and establishing breastfeeding

When complications arose in the final weeks of pregnancy with a diagnosis of foetal growth restriction, the couple felt equipped to handle difficult conversations with medical staff. Yas says, "*When the consultant told us the baby needed to come out, I was terrified, but I also felt empowered. Thanks to the course, I knew my rights, I knew I could say no. In the end, we decided on a planned caesarean, which felt right for me and my body.*"

The very next day, Yas developed signs of preeclampsia. It was Gem who recognised the symptoms, thanks to what she'd learned in class. "*You don't think it'll happen to you, but then Yas got a headache, her hands and face swelled up, and I knew. We called the hospital immediately, and that likely made all the difference.*"

Despite the unexpected turn of events, their birth experience was calm and positive. "*We had music playing, the midwives were amazing, and they protected the birth experience even though it was so different from what we'd planned,*" Yas shares. "*It was peaceful – they just pulled him out!*" Gem cut the cord, and Yas began skin-to-skin contact and breastfeeding in theatre. "*They treated it like any other birth. We felt respected, involved, and safe,*" Gem said.

As a non-birthing mother, Gem also highlighted the importance of inclusive education. "*So much of the literature is for straight couples. Even registering our son's birth was legally complex. But NCT helped us feel like every other parent.*"

Yas also shared how her ADHD affected her pregnancy: "*I was overstimulated, hormonal, anxious – and I'd never heard anyone talk about ADHD and pregnancy. But Jessica, our NCT teacher, took it seriously. Just knowing she understood made a difference.*" Over a year later, Yas, Gem, and their son still see their NCT group regularly. "*They say it takes a village, and it does,*" Yas says. "*I never thought I'd say this, but I love our group. We message every day. I felt seen and understood.*"

Gem reflects: "*There's so much negativity around LGBTQIA+ parenting – we need more stories like ours. We were happy. We were supported. We had a baby, and NCT helped us feel confident doing it.*"



NCT infant feeding support

At NCT, we offer inclusive, evidence-based feeding support to parents whatever their feeding journey looks like. From breastfeeding and expressing to formula feeding, mixed feeding, and introducing solids, we're here for it all.

Our support is available 365 days a year on the phone, online, and in communities. Services include ***NCT's Infant Feeding Line***, ***peer support*** on postnatal and neonatal wards, ***NCT Baby Cafés*** facilitated by NCT practitioners and volunteers, and our online ***Parent Hub*** offering trusted information and guidance.

The impact of our work has been recognised by local authorities and health boards across the UK, and thanks to new funding we've been able to expand our free-to-access services.

With trained volunteers, Peer Supporters, and qualified NCT Breastfeeding Counsellors, we deliver tailored support and help parents feel confident, informed, and supported.

In 2024/25:

- Over 7,700 parents attended ***NCT Baby Cafés***, and community breastfeeding and infant feeding drop-ins.
- Almost 20,000 parents were supported through our breastfeeding peer support programmes by over 700 Peer Supporters.
- 2,500 parents attended NHS infant feeding sessions run by NCT.
- Close to 50,000 expectant parents attended infant feeding sessions through their ***NCT Antenatal*** courses.
- Over 7,200 parents contacted our free ***NCT Infant Feeding Line***.





NCT's Infant Feeding Line: Every call matters

We're here to support every feeding journey. No judgement. No exceptions.

In 2024, over 7,200 parents contacted our free ***NCT Infant Feeding Line*** for responsive, compassionate support on breastfeeding, bottle-feeding, combination feeding, and more.

No matter the question, no matter the age of the child – from newborn to toddler – our skilled Breastfeeding Counsellors were there with evidence-based, non-judgemental support and guidance.

NCT's Infant Feeding Line ensures that no one has to face feeding challenges alone.

Thank you to the dedicated team working on the line and to every supporter who helps make this service free, accessible, and open to all.

"I would have been completely lost without this service."

2024 **Impact:**

- **94%** felt less isolated after their call
- **87%** felt more confident about feeding their baby
- **88%** reported their mental well-being improved.

A lifeline through every stage, for every journey

Day 5

Early days of breastfeeding

"I came away from the call feeling less overwhelmed and more empowered in making decisions on how to feed my baby! Thank you!"

In those first early, vulnerable days, feeding can be overwhelming. We can help identify issues and signpost parents to where to access further support.



2 Weeks

Combination feeding

"We called after a long night in hospital with a lethargic baby. We just needed to talk to someone. The person we spoke to was empathetic and kind."

We're here when it's urgent for both practical and emotional support.

6 Weeks

Formula feeding

"Emilie was so helpful and answered all of my queries and also sent further information to me afterwards."

We offer non-judgemental support for all feeding decisions.



Feeding patterns

"I suffer with postnatal anxiety and my daughter had dropped her feeds. Receiving this information when I needed it rather than having to wait really helped ease my anxiety."

Our support isn't just about feeding – it's about mental wellbeing too.

4 Months



6 Months

Starting solid food

"All I can say is how fantastic this service is and how amazing the advisor was. I felt so worried, and I feel so much better now."

Transitions can be tough. We help parents feel prepared, not panicked.

2 Years

Breastfeeding toddlers

"They gave me lots of ideas to try. Most usefully, she asked 'What is your gut feeling?' That helped so much. I'm now setting boundaries and stopping painful feeds."

Feeding support doesn't stop with babyhood.

Our Infant Feeding Line is open every day from 8am to midnight.

0300 330 0700

From supported to supporter: Francoise's feeding story

Location: Hackney, London
Service: Community infant feeding support
Impact duration: 12 months


Francoise with her son

Our peer support volunteers are there for parents at the most vulnerable moments of their feeding journeys. Francoise, a mum of two from Hackney, shares what inspired her to volunteer, and the incredible difference peer support can make.

After receiving excellent care during her own feeding experience, Francoise felt a strong pull to give back: "*Something shifted and that caring part of my brain kicked in. I wanted to do something meaningful while on maternity leave.*"

She joined NCT's peer support training while juggling life with a newborn: "*There were babies feeding on the call, children in the background, it was so inclusive and full of likeminded people.*" The training, which took place weekly over two months, opened her eyes to the diverse needs of families: "*There's no one-size-fits-all. Every journey is different – it's not an out-of-the-box experience.*"



Francoise supporting families in Basingstoke

Now, Francoise supports families at weekly drop-ins in Hackney: "*I'm not there to fix things but to listen, to signpost, to reassure. Sometimes it's just about saying, 'You're doing fine, your baby is fine.' You can see the switch; they leave with a spring in their step.*"

She reflects on the power of peer support: "*When I had my first baby during Covid, I paid for lactation support because nothing else was available. It's amazing that drop-ins are free now. I try to put myself back in that headspace – vulnerable, unsure. You just need someone to talk to.*"

Francoise sees the full arc of feeding journeys, from newborn challenges to weaning information months later. "*A mum with a five-day-old comes back at six months to ask about solids, or even to help another new parent. You see the journey unfold.*"

Volunteering has given her purpose, connection, and pride: "*It's rewarding, sometimes challenging. But to be there in those early days, and offer care with no judgement, it's special. We're just there for families.*"

We're so grateful for Francoise and all our Peer Supporters across Hackney and beyond. Their time, empathy, and knowledge are helping parents feel less alone and more confident.

NCT Hackney is commissioned by Hackney Council to provide community infant feeding peer support.

Francoise shared:

> *There is support out there. Don't be afraid to ask. Use the free help that's available, it can make all the difference.*



Breastfeeding Buddies - a lifeline for many

Location: Greater Glasgow & Lothian
Service: Breastfeeding Buddies, delivered by NCT
Impact duration: 10+ years

For over a decade, the *Breastfeeding Buddies* programme, which NCT delivered in partnership with local NHS boards, supported thousands of families across Greater Glasgow and Lothian. This peer support service offered compassionate, one-to-one guidance for new parents navigating breastfeeding, often during their most vulnerable moments.



Sadia, former *Breastfeeding Buddy* in Edinburgh is now training to be a midwife

Funded initially by the Scottish Government and later by NHS health boards, the service operated in five hospitals and seven community settings, backed by a team of nine part-time staff and 82 trained volunteers. For thousands of new parents, *Breastfeeding Buddies* was an essential part of growing their confidence and being able to work through the challenges and changes they experienced feeding their baby.

Sophie, who struggled to breastfeed after her daughter Nora's early birth and NICU stay, said: "*Staffing on the ward was tight and it wasn't until I got home that I realised how much help I needed. Having that peer support group, with shared experiences and expert help, was absolutely crucial.*"

One of those dedicated supporters was **Sadia**, a former *Breastfeeding Buddy* in Edinburgh. After volunteering following her own challenging postnatal experience, she is now training to be a midwife and remains a passionate advocate for the power of peer-led support:

"*As a student midwife, a mum, and a volunteer, it's devastating to see this support go. Midwives simply don't have the time – and this service was so needed in both hospitals and communities.*"

Although the programme has now closed due to changes to government funding for early years support for families in Scotland, NCT remains committed to championing services that centre on the needs of families. The voices of Sophie, Sadia, and many others show that peer support works. Investment in personalised, compassionate care must continue if we are to build a truly equitable start for all parents and babies.



Trusted information for parents

Today, parents are bombarded with advice and opinions, often unverified and inconsistent. At NCT, we understand how vital it is that new and expectant parents can access trusted, evidence-based information.

Last year over 6.7 million people came to us for free, inclusive information on pregnancy, birth, infant feeding and early parenthood via our website, helping them to feel informed and confident in their decisions.

Our parent content is certified by the UK's only independent quality mark for trusted health information

We're proud to have become the 150th organisation awarded the PIF TICK – the UK's only independent quality mark for print and digital health information. Run by the Patient Information Forum (PIF), it confirms that our content meets 10 rigorous criteria, including that it is evidence-based, up-to-date, and easy to read.

The impact is clear: these are some of the most viewed pages on our website and positive feedback has increased, with parents telling us:

"Very helpful as it covers everything I need to know and the things I'm worried about."

The PIF TICK is not just for the public – it's also used by GPs and NHS professionals to identify and recommend reliable health information.

As the demand for accessible, trustworthy information grows, NCT remains committed to providing parents with the clarity and confidence they deserve.





Our impact:

Connected

Every parent needs to know they are not alone. Whether through friendships, peer support, family networks, or trusted professionals, feeling connected helps parents share experiences, ease isolation, and build resilience.

At NCT, we build long and lasting connections between parents, many of whom remain friends for years after they first met at an ***NCT Antenatal*** course, ***NCT Baby Café***, or ***NCT Walk & Talk***. We build connection in communities, where our volunteers host ***NCT Nearly New Sales***, or convene ***NCT Bumps & Babies*** groups that give parents a regular, reliable, safe place to meet and play. And we build connections with the NHS maternity and neonatal and other health and social services in the UK through the services we offer.

This is important work - strong, supportive relationships create a safety net that helps parents feel seen, understood, and better able to care for themselves and their babies. It also builds resilience in local communities and contributes to a more positive, compassionate future for everyone.

In this section you will find:

- Volunteering with NCT
- *NCT Walk & Talk*
- *NCT Nearly New Sales.*

Community based support, powered by volunteers

It is through the dedication and passion of our NCT practitioners and volunteers that we continue to make a meaningful difference and host safe, non-judgmental spaces for parents to share experiences, gain insights, and build connections in their local communities.

Last year more than 3,000 volunteers gave over 77,000 hours of their time to support local parents. Their efforts enabled over 80,000 people to attend over 6,000 community events, and thousands more parents were supported through our perinatal peer support programmes, such as ***NCT Parents in Mind***.

Volunteers offer peer support, coordinate local community groups, lead walking groups, run our ***NCT Nearly New Sales***, crochet baby blankets, co-ordinate baby first aid classes, pack toiletries bags for new parents and run marathons as part of #TeamNCT.

Every one of these actions – however big or small – makes a huge difference to a parent, who needs and deserves the support, empathy, and connection that our volunteers offer. Thank you all so much for your time, skills, enthusiasm, and care.

NCT Walk & Talk

Location: Worcester & Malvern
Service: *NCT Walk & Talk*

Rhiannon Williams, 33, is an *NCT Walk & Talk* volunteer in Worcester & Malvern, and she started volunteering after attending *NCT Antenatal* classes. Rhiannon is outdoorsy and was "*excited to hear there were groups I could join while on maternity leave that involved getting out*."

Rhiannon says: "*I started volunteering with the walks to keep them running so that other parents could benefit in the same way I had and to ensure that they would still be available to myself throughout my maternity leave.*"

Volunteering at *NCT Walk & Talks* meant that the walks she herself benefited from during her maternity leave could continue helping others. Rhiannon says the *NCT Walk & Talks*, "*kept me going early on when I was an uncomfortable first-time mum, who was nervous about joining traditional baby groups.*"

"*Joining the walks felt comfortable and allowed me to get out the house, enjoy the outdoors, and build my fitness back up while being able to meet other parents.*"

"*The walks were vital to giving me some sense of self and direction in the first few months of parenthood, so I was keen to volunteer at both my local groups to ensure they would keep going. Most weeks I would be at both walks as a volunteer or a walker! I loved all of it.*"



Rhiannon – out walking with her baby

nct Walk&Talk

Discover the benefits of our *NCT Walk & Talk* groups, see upcoming walks in your area, and learn how to become a volunteer by visiting our website: www.nct.org.uk/local-activities-meet-ups/nct-walk-and-talk



Map of NCT Walk & Talk locations in 24/25

The scenic Malvern Hills

I'm now two weeks back in to work and missing it, but glad to be having a few bank holidays coming up where I can pop along to at least one of the walks.

How did you feel before you started participating in Walk and Talk groups, and what kind of change did you notice once you started going to *NCT Walk & Talk* groups?

I was quite nervous before attending the group, I hadn't been to any other groups and it had been a long time since I'd really gone to any new activity on my own. I was trying to find something to give me structure while I was off work and felt pretty confident I would enjoy the walk and talks because I'm very outdoorsy. I think I went along to the *Malvern Walk & Talk* for the first time when my son was 5 weeks old and the change was instant. Instead of dreading Monday mornings because my husband was going to work, and I'd have to struggle through it on my own, suddenly I had something to get up and do to start the week. Every Monday like clockwork I was getting up and getting out and about in all weathers with a very welcoming group of women. It was wonderful to not only get out but share experiences and realise that we were all in the same boat – there was a lot of moral support in the group. By the time my son was a few months old I was a pretty permanent fixture at both the Malvern and Worcester walks as well as the *Worcester Baby Cafe*. These groups helped me feel a lot less isolated and not only did I become part of a community, but I was also lucky enough to be able to give back to that community.

Why do you think these walks are especially important for new and expectant parents?

The walks are important because they give the opportunity for everyone to come together, they are not targeted at just mums so I've seen dads, grandparents and siblings on the walks as well (especially on bank holidays). I've not seen any other groups that encourage the same level of engagement from the entire family, and on several occasions we've had just dads walking! It's also great to be doing something that isn't just sat indoors, for both your mental and physical health – it feels a lot easier sometimes to open up about what's going on and allows you to talk to lots of different people instead of just sitting with the same people.

NCT Nearly New Sales

Our Head of Volunteering, Daniella Abraham, explains how *NCT's Nearly New Sales* are a sustainable and affordable option for parents.

Since the first volunteers ran ***NCT Nearly New Sales*** over two decades ago, NCT has been a pioneer in sustainable and affordable baby essentials. ***NCT Nearly New Sales*** provide a reliable opportunity to buy and sell pre-loved, quality baby clothes, toys and other essentials.

By offering parents a way to save money and reduce their environmental impact, these sales have become a vital resource for families across the UK. In the past year alone, over 20,000 families attended sales, purchasing more than 345,000 items.

For many parents struggling to make ends meet, ***NCT Nearly New Sales*** are a lifeline. The events provide a platform for both buyers and sellers, allowing families to save money while also earning extra income by selling their pre-loved items.

NCT Nearly New Sales also serve a powerful reminder of the impact our choices have on the world around us. By choosing to shop second hand, we are committing to a sustainable way of living that benefits our wallets and the planet our babies will inherit.



Angela McConville, NCT Chief Executive with volunteers at an *NCT Nearly New Sale*





Our impact:

Safe

Safety is the foundation of creating positive maternity experiences for all parents. In the UK the majority of births are safe, but that's not the experience for everyone.

At NCT, we believe becoming a parent should be a safe and supported experience for everyone. As the UK's largest charity for parents, we are in a unique position to deliver trusted and unbiased information, support, and services to parents. We also campaign for change, and together with parents and our partners in other organisations, we've been actively calling for a more empathetic, equitable, and accessible maternity system for all.

We are expanding our free-to-access services – with the goal of ensuring every parent is supported, regardless of their circumstances. We've grown and developed our services for new parents needing support with their mental health, as we know this is a frequent challenge often experienced. We continue working to make everything we do accessible, inclusive and culturally safe.



In this section you will find:

- Connecting parents in crisis
- *NCT Parents in Mind*
- *NCT Baby Bundles*
- Collaborating and campaigning for change.

Connecting parents in crisis

In 2024, we continued our work to support women from marginalised and migrant backgrounds, with a strong focus on communication and connection. In Newham and Leeds, many of the women we support experience language barriers, digital poverty, and social isolation, all of which limit their access to safe and responsive maternity care. Two key pieces of work, captured below, provided practical, compassionate responses to these challenges.

Tackling digital poverty with the National Databank

Location: Newham and Leeds
Service: Newham Nurture Perinatal Partnership and NCT Leeds Bankside
Impact duration: 12 months

Digital poverty can be a life-threatening barrier to healthcare, housing, and emergency assistance. In 2024, NCT was delighted to be chosen by the Good Things Foundation to help support pregnant women and new families experiencing digital poverty by providing free data and devices.

In Newham and Leeds, we support pregnant women and new mothers who are refugees, asylum seekers, or have no recourse to public funds. Many of them live without access to phones, the internet, or critical support networks.

Thanks to the National Databank (one of the Good Things Foundation's innovations – delivered with strategic partners Virgin Media O2, Vodafone and Three), we were able to distribute SIM cards to our most at-risk parents. We also provided one-to-one support so that women and their families could access vital maternity and community services.

For women like Narva, an asylum-seeking mother caring for her premature baby in hospital, the impact was immediate:

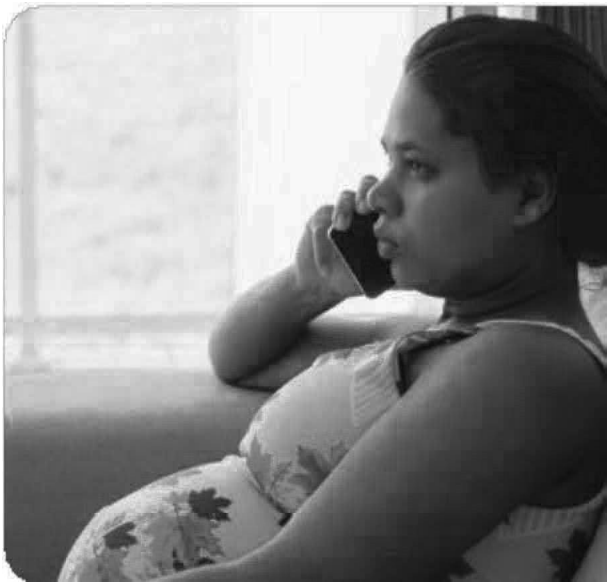
"I was so isolated. I couldn't speak to my family or check on my asylum case. Now, it keeps me in touch with people like yourself. I feel less alone."

For women like Narva, digital connectivity is a lifeline. We are proud to be part of this initiative, and we're committed to continuing our learning on how best to support digitally excluded parents in times of crisis.



Supporting parents in all languages: Improving communication in maternity care

Over 300 languages are spoken in London, and 58% of women who give birth are born outside the UK[6]. As the demographic of parents continues to become more diverse, inclusive and accessible maternity care is vital to reducing inequalities.



This year, NCT helped develop the *Resource Pack for Commissioners and Maternity Service Providers Using Interpreting Services* – a tool offering practical guidance to improve the quality, consistency, and cultural sensitivity of interpreting services being offered in maternity care. The resource was shaped by evidence, parent input, and recommendations from MBRRACE-UK, which continues to highlight the risks that language barriers pose to maternal safety, NCT was pleased to support the project by facilitating access to the voices of parents with lived experience.

Alongside this, our Newham team co-created communication cards for use in maternity triage, enabling women who don't speak English as a first language to quickly convey urgent symptoms – such as pain, bleeding, or reduced foetal movements – while waiting for an interpreter. These cards, now translated into 25 languages and distributed in our antenatal classes in Newham, help ensure faster clinical responses and safer outcomes.

Through these initiatives, NCT is working to remove systemic barriers in maternity care – ensuring that every woman, regardless of her background or language, can be heard, understood, and cared for with dignity.

The initiatives ran at Newham Nurture, a community partnership with NCT, Alternatives Trust and The Magpie Project, and generously funded by Newham Council, City Bridge Trust and Royal Docks Trust.

Funded by

Newham London

CITY BRIDGE FOUNDATION

Royal Docks Trust

Partners

nct

The Magpie Project

alternatives

[6] ONS, 2023

NCT Parents in Mind

Mental health support for fathers and partners

Location: St Helens
Service: *NCT Parents in Mind*
Impact duration: 4 years

"*If it wasn't for NCT, I wouldn't have the family I have now.*"

At 27, Aaron had lived in St Helens his whole life, just 20 minutes from his mum and nan. He'd never had much of a relationship with his dad – "*I never wanted his money, just his time*," he says. After moving out of the family home to be closer to his partner's side of the family, Aaron found support in his partner's mum, his neighbour, and most of all, his partner herself. But asking for help? That didn't come naturally.

When his second child was born, Aaron began to struggle, especially with bonding, sleepless nights, and the stress of it all. It was through his social worker that he was introduced to ***NCT Parents in Mind***, a group in St Helens, specifically for dads.

"*There was a moment where it felt like, if something didn't change, we were done,*" he recalls speaking about his relationship. *"But the lads in that group – they were there every step of the way."*

Before joining the group, Aaron says he avoided parenting spaces altogether. "*I didn't even want to be around my own kids. I was stuck in a bubble, pub, snooker, darts. I even avoided taking them to the park.*" Now, if someone suggests going to the park, he's the first to put his shoes on and head out the door with his kids.

Through the support of other dads, NCT's trained volunteers and staff, Aaron found something different: no pressure, no judgement, just a space to talk, or not talk, surrounded by people who understood.

"*I'd tried group therapy before, but this was different. I was nervous when I got the first phone call but the person on the other end just knew how to put me at ease.*"

The transformation wasn't overnight, Aaron built coping strategies like meditation, exercise, and emotional check-ins and began putting them into practice. He saw the change in himself, and so did his partner. "*Four years on, I can honestly say: if it wasn't for NCT, I wouldn't have the family I have now.*"

Now, Aaron gives back and volunteers for NCT as a Peer Supporter. If someone messages, he's there. "*You never know what someone's going through. That one message could be the thing that stops them from self-harming.*" Aaron's goal? "*To break the stigma around men's mental health. The training we've had helps us do it safely and well.*"

To date, the St Helens group has supported over 30 dads and non-birthing parents. Aaron says the impact is clear: ***"This isn't one-to-one support, it's a community. Like a family."***

Designing services for parents, with parents

In 2024, NCT's focus on co-production continued – this time in Halton where we helped develop local understanding of what good access to perinatal mental health support looks like. Working in partnership with Halton Family Hubs, Parent-Infant Foundation, and Ideas Alliance the team engaged 147 parents through over 16 hours of interviews and focus groups and online surveys. Parents shared honest experiences of isolation, anxiety, and feeling unseen by services, especially fathers and non-birthing parents.

In response, ***NCT's Parents in Mind***: Dads and Partners launched in late 2024 as part of their father inclusive strategy. Trained volunteers with lived experience provide safe, non-judgemental support on topics like anger, sleep deprivation, and emotional overwhelm.

Early success led to an extension of funding to March 2026. The project demonstrates the power of co-production and lived experience to create inclusive, parent-centred services that make a real difference.





NCT Baby Bundles

Supporting local families with little bundles of new baby essentials: 2,500 families supported by NCT Baby Bundles UK-wide



Volunteers at NCT's Little Bundles Baby Bank

NCT's Little Bundles Baby Bank is one of our longest-running and largest baby banks, supporting over 650 local families each year across Littlehampton, Chichester and Bognor Regis.

Launched in 2019 and powered by around 20 dedicated volunteers, Little Bundles provides baby essentials – from clothes and nappies to highchairs and toiletries – to families who are struggling. The team receives around 25 referrals each week, a figure that has risen by 20-25% due to the ongoing cost-of-living crisis.

In 2024 alone, volunteers distributed over 28,000 nappies, 900 toys, and 600 clothing bundles. The team also works with local hospitals to provide emergency supplies, premature baby items, and baby loss packs to A&E departments.

Alice, who founded the NCT Baby Bank, was recently recognised with a Coronation Champion Award for her service.

She shared, "*We do this because it matters. We recently supported around 50 refugee families who had been relocated. Knowing we're helping families who otherwise wouldn't have access to essentials keeps us going.*"

Across the country NCT Baby Banks supported over 2,500 families last year. This work reflects the heart of NCT's mission: supporting parents and babies from the very beginning, thanks to the compassion and commitment of our volunteers.

Many thanks to all our supporters, including local and national businesses, who generously donated to help this work. Find out more about supporting programmes like NCT Baby Banks at our website: **www.nct.org.uk/support-us/donate**



Little Bundles Baby Bank volunteer preparing baby essentials

NCT Baby Bundles partners with Baby Bank Alliance

NCT was proud to partner with the Baby Bank Alliance in July 2024 and can now provide more families with urgent baby essentials.

The Baby Bank Alliance ensures that all baby banks can access funding, goods, volunteers and practical support. As a charity partner, ***NCT's Baby Bundles*** project works with the Baby Bank Alliance to ensure every baby has the basics they need including clothes, nappies, moses baskets and mattresses.

Daniella Abraham, Head of Volunteering at NCT, said: "*We know more and more parents are relying on baby banks for baby essentials, particularly with the rising cost-of-living. This new partnership and funding will help us reach and support more parents who are struggling with necessities when it comes to caring for a new baby.*"

Collaborating and campaigning for change

In 2024, the UK maternity system remained in crisis and under intense scrutiny. As the UK's largest charity for pregnancy and parents, we are in a unique position to hear, understand, and share the experiences and challenges women and parents are facing, and use these insights to advocate alongside parents to call for safer, more compassionate and inclusive maternity care.

A core focus of our work is addressing inequalities and campaigning to ensure every parent has access to safe, personalised, and culturally competent care. We advocate for a UK maternity policy that is shaped by real-world experiences alongside robust evidence.



Influencing the NHS 10-Year Plan: NCT's impact

As NHS England undergoes major reform – bringing many of its functions under the Department of Health and Social Care – we have been focussed on ensuring that the voices of parents are heard.

In response to the government's 10-Year Health Plan for the NHS, NCT contributed through:



- **Policy influence:** We submitted evidence to the national consultation and engaged directly with decision-makers, including the Department of Health and Social Care, MPs, and the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Maternity.
- **Parliamentary engagement:** At our Westminster drop-in event with the One Voice Maternity Alliance, we brought together key voices in maternity care, including MPs from the Health and Social Care Committee, Chairs and members of key sector APPGs, NHS stakeholders, and charity partners. We highlighted that urgent reforms are needed in postnatal and maternity care. We also met separately with Baroness Merron, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Patient Safety, Women's Health, and Mental Health, to discuss the NHS 10-Year Plan and its role in supporting the health and wellbeing of parents.
- **Community insight:** We led targeted community engagement to ensure maternity care reforms reflect the real-world experiences of parents. We ran three Seldom Heard Voices engagement workshops in Newham for the Department for Health and Social Care, attended by 28 participants, including:
  - New and expectant parents who are asylum seekers or refugees
  - People experiencing homelessness
  - Ethnic minority parents
  - Parents facing digital exclusion.
- **Championing Change:** As members of the NHS England Stakeholder Council for Maternity and Neonatal Services and of the NHS Change Partners Council, we've emphasised the need for maternity reform that champions compassionate care, protects and invests in frontline workers, embeds equity and safety, and co-produces solutions with parents. Together with our partners, we continue to push for the NHS to deliver safe, equitable and compassionate care for every parent and baby.

Highlighting the impact of NHS charging

Location: Leeds
Service: NCT Leeds Bankside
Impact duration: 20 years


Kim, pictured in her asylum accommodation

Photograph by Gary Calton

In our local community services, we continue to witness the devastating impact of NHS maternity charging on vulnerable pregnant women who are seeking asylum.

Kim's journey

Kim* sought asylum in the UK in 2017 after fleeing political persecution in Zimbabwe. Her initial claim was refused, and she spent years living in limbo, without the right to work or access mainstream support. In 2021, during the COVID-19 pandemic, she became pregnant and submitted a fresh asylum application – a right that comes with exemption from NHS charging for maternity care.

Despite having an active asylum claim at the time of her daughter's birth in March 2022, Kim received a bill from Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust for over £10,000.

"*I really felt depressed*," Kim said. "*Where am I going to get this money? I was still a new mum, breastfeeding as well … you're trying to heal from a caesarean and then there's a bill, and there's a small child as well*."

Living in asylum accommodation in poor conditions, including mould and cockroach infestations, she faced immense stress at a time when new mothers should be supported and protected.

Barriers beyond the hospital walls

Kim joined an NCT group in West Yorkshire that supports parents who are refugees or seeking asylum. The group, NCT Leeds Bankside, is a safe place to share experiences, access information and support, and connect with other parents who may have experienced similar struggles.

NCT's support, through antenatal sessions and our practitioner Rose, helped Kim feel less alone and helped her draft a response to the NHS Trust to challenge the charges.

"*The project is a lifeline for many asylum seeking and refugee women who often come to us with no family or support network*," said NCT practitioner Rose McCarthy. The group was launched with funding from Sure Start after surveying local parents about attending antenatal classes, but since 2011 has been funded by and delivered in collaboration with Leeds City Council.

A call for change

Kim's experience is not an isolated case. The threat of NHS charging, combined with insecure housing and language barriers, creates a hostile environment for pregnant women with uncertain immigration status.

NCT Head of Programmes, Helen Lloyd, states: "*Systemic change is urgently needed to ensure that no parent, regardless of their immigration status, is left to choose between safe medical care and a mountain of unpayable debt*."

*Kim's name has been changed to protect her privacy.


DAISY

Representing parents in policy - looking back over the year

Over the past year, NCT has advocated for parents and babies through campaigning, engaging with policymakers, and representing parents' voices at national forums. Highlights include:

April 2024

Submitted evidence to the APPG on Birth Trauma inquiry.

May 2024

Co-presented at the Royal College of Midwives Conference Liverpool.

September 2024

UK COVID-19 Inquiry: NCT gives evidence on the impact of the pandemic on women, parents, and babies as part of a charity coalition.

October 2024

Submitted evidence to the Department for Health and Social Care consultation on eligibility for Healthy Start for groups who have no recourse to public funds or are subject to immigration controls.

Attended the Birmingham Race and Healthcare Summit.

Attended the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) Maternity Disparities Consortium kick-off events.

December 2024

Submitted evidence to the NHS 10-Year Plan consultation.

Ran Seldom Heard Voices Engagement workshop with 32 marginalised and migrant women.

Contributed to the lay research group ahead of the publication of MBRRACE-UK's report into the care of migrant women with language barriers who have experienced a stillbirth or neonatal death.

January 2025

Met with Baroness Merron, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Patient Safety, Women's Health, and Mental Health to discuss the NHS 10-Year Plan.

February 2025

Responded to the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) report, calling on the government to ensure the formula milk market is regulated in the best interests of babies and parents - not corporate profits.

Co-sponsored The Motherhood Group's annual Black Maternal Health Conference.

Nominated for 'Charity of the Year' for our work in Leeds and Newham working with pregnant women and new parents who are migrants and/or asylum seekers.

March 2025

Co-hosted a Parliamentary Drop in with the One Voice Alliance on maternity and the NHS 10-Year Plan.

Supported the campaign led by The Miscarriage Association, which saw the inclusion of bereavement leave for miscarriage in the Employment Rights Bill.

Attended the Northern Ireland Inaugural Maternity & Neonatal Conference in Belfast as a guest of the Chief Midwifery Officer.

Sector collaboration and representation

NCT is actively shaping national policy and research as part of key groups, including:

- NHS England's Maternity and Neonatal Stakeholder Council
- One Voice Alliance
- Pregnancy and Baby Charity Network
- Postnatal Care Working Group
- MBRRACE Lay Research Group
- RELAX Group (King's College London)
- iHolds Study (University of Birmingham)
- REACH Project on pregnancy circles (City University of London).



Jo Corfield, NCT Head of Communications and Campaigns, Elizabeth Duff, NCT Senior Policy Advisor and Angela McConville, NCT Chief Executive alongside members of the Pregnancy and Baby Core Participants in the UK Government COVID-19 Inquiry



Angela McConville, NCT Chief Executive and Caroline Keown, Chief Midwifery Officer at the Northern Ireland Inaugural Maternity & Neonatal Conference in Belfast



Angela McConville, NCT Chief Executive and Michelle Welsh MP, Chair of the Maternity APPG

Our impact:

Strong foundations, strong futures

We believe that strong futures start with strong foundations and that means building a charity rooted in inclusion and community, where every parent can feel seen, supported, and truly welcome. We know that being inclusive isn't a box to tick – it's how we come up with better ideas, build more accessible services, and create support that works for everyone. We've made it a priority to challenge bias, break down stigma, and welcome in voices that haven't always been heard, to cocreate solutions.

This year, we've continued to lay the groundwork to be a more sustainable, progressive charity that reflects the diversity of the new and expectant parents we serve.

We've strengthened our financial foundations, launching new partnerships designed to bring direct benefits to parents, expanding our NCT membership, and growing our community of fundraisers. These are more than just income streams, they're part of how we give back, grow communities, and increase our impact where it matters most.

This year, in response to a challenging financial environment, we had to make some difficult decisions, including restructuring teams and saying goodbye to valued colleagues. We've also continued to strengthen the foundations that keep NCT safe, secure, and running smoothly. We've made ongoing improvements to safeguarding and data protection while also upgrading key IT systems to better support our staff, practitioners, volunteers and the parents we serve.



In this section you'll find:

- Equity, diversity, and inclusion
- Partnerships to benefit parents
- NCT membership.

Equity, diversity, and inclusion

Over the last year, we've continued vital work to ensure NCT is a charity where *every* parent feels welcome, represented, and supported.



We're committed to being equitable, inclusive and accessible – so that all parents, and everyone involved in NCT, feel they belong here.

We know that real change starts from the inside out. That's why we're working hard to build inclusion into everything we do, from the way we design new projects, how our teams work, and how decisions are made.

NCT's Allyship Programme

Creating a truly inclusive space for all parents means learning, listening, and standing up for one another. That's where our Allyship Programme comes in.

It's a welcoming space for everyone in our NCT community – whether they're a staff member, practitioner, student or volunteer to ask questions, share experiences, and learn how to take positive, meaningful action to help build a more inclusive culture across NCT and beyond.

In 2024, our Allyship Support Spaces focused on real, practical conversations around issues like anti-racism, making services more accessible, understanding our own privileges, and how we use personal data respectfully and ethically.

We took this work further during Black History Month, running weekly sessions focused on the experiences of Black families during pregnancy, birth and early parenthood. These helped build greater awareness, understanding, and allyship within our community.

Building inclusive communities within NCT

We are proud to be developing and growing our NCT Diversity Network – a space for NCT's community to explore issues, identify opportunities, co-produce work and policies, and champion equity, diversity and inclusion. In 2024, the Diversity Network contributed to a variety of activities, including the NCT Language Guide update, PRIDE and Black History Month events, and reviewing our approach to demographic data collection.

2024 also saw the creation of a Neurodivergent Staff Network (NDSN), offering a supportive space for neurodivergent staff. The NDSN has increased the confidence of some members, leading them to develop guidance for our community around simple communications adjustments that are supportive of those with neurodivergence.





Partnerships to benefit parents

This year, we are grateful to all our generous donors, members and funding partners who helped NCT extend its reach and impact, delivering emotional support, practical help, and trusted guidance to thousands of new and expectant parents across the UK.

We're grateful to work with so many organisations that share our vision. We strongly believe that it is through collaboration that we can achieve the greatest impact for parents and we see this every time we work with others who are committed to ensuring every parent feels confident, connected, and safe.

This year we want to draw attention to three partnerships in particular that have helped us extend our reach and impact.

Supporting wellbeing with Calm

Thanks to generous support from the UK's leading mindfulness app, Calm, NCT delivered vital support to new parents facing the emotional and physical demands of early parenthood:

- 1,000 wholesome meals from COOK were distributed via ***NCT's Baby Bundles***, helping parents access nutritious food.
- Free access to Calm content, including postpartum-focused soundscapes and guided meditations, gave new parents tools to nurture their mental wellbeing. In particular, ***NCT's Parents in Mind*** programme was grateful to receive the Calm content as an additional tool to support parents' mental health.
- On Giving Tuesday, December 2nd, Calm made a generous donation to help support ***NCT's Infant Feeding Line*** over the month of December, during which over 400 calls were answered.

One parent shared: "*As a 34-year-old mum, I thought I was prepared for life after having a baby – but nothing prepared me for postnatal depression or the level of it. The exhaustion, the overwhelm, the constant self-doubt – it felt like I was drowning and not good enough. I still do but that's where Calm helped. It reminded me to breathe, to be kind to myself, and to find moments of peace in the chaos.*"

And another said: "*As a dad, I always put my family first, but Calm reminded me that taking care of my own mental health makes me a better father. Even five minutes of meditation changes my whole day.*"

This partnership brought critical emotional and practical care to new families at a time they needed it most, as **Blake Beers, VP of Brand Marketing at Calm** explains:

> *"This partnership with NCT emphasises the importance of prioritising mothers' health so we're better equipped to care for our children. Calm's donation supports both mother and baby, giving mothers a little something for themselves. We're proud to contribute to the conversation around postpartum mental health and grateful to support those who turn to NCT for care and guidance."*

Helping growing families with Hasbro



Congratulations to Peppa Pig's family! In 2025, Mummy and Daddy Pig announced they were expecting baby number 3! As Peppa Pig and her family embark on big changes, NCT is thrilled to have been chosen to be their Pregnancy and Parenting Charity Partner.

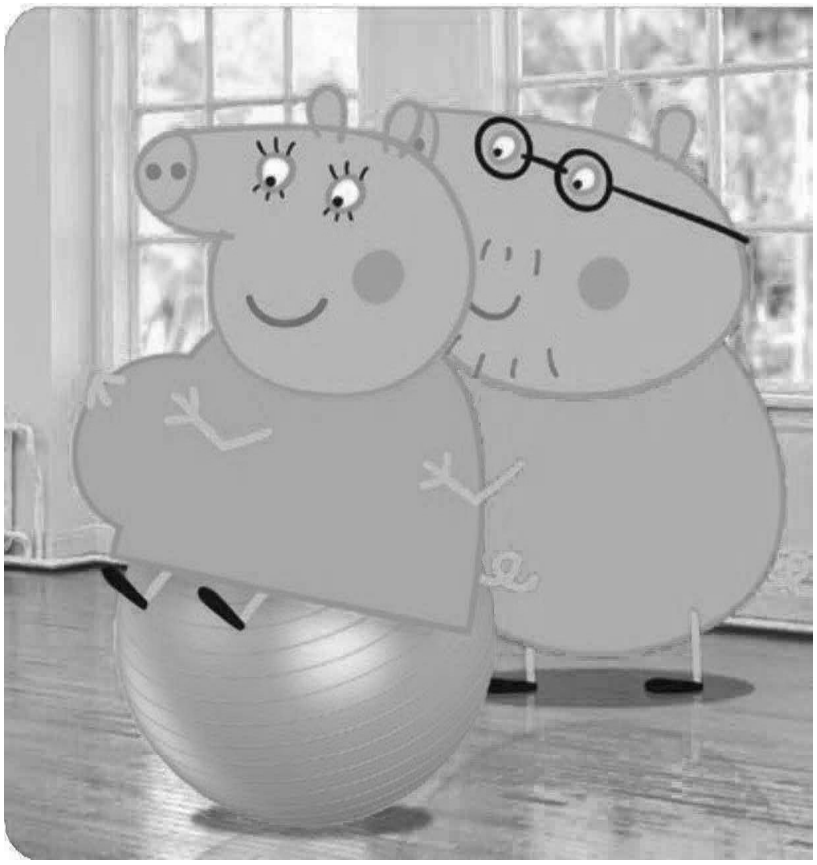
As millions of parents across the UK watch this iconic family journey through pregnancy, birth and early life with a baby, we'll be on hand to offer real-life support.

The collaboration was inspired by a shared commitment to providing families with evidence-based parenting information and support.

So far, news of the partnership has generated 238 pieces of news coverage and 607 million impressions, as well as reaching 680,525 people on NCT's own social media platforms.

Thanks to Peppa Pig and this partnership we're reaching parents in a fun and accessible way – and helping millions more parents to know we're here for them.

We look forward to sharing more news of activities in 2025.



NCT and Lidl GB renew partnership for a fourth consecutive year

NCT is delighted to have renewed its partnership with UK supermarket Lidl GB for a fourth consecutive year.

The partnership gives Lidl GB employees access to discounts on gold standard ***NCT Antenatal*** courses, enabling their staff to feel better supported, connected, and confident throughout their pregnancy and early life with a baby.

A spokesperson from Lidl GB said: "*We know that thousands of our colleagues have young children or are planning to start a family. We also employ grandparents and other carers. Working with the UK's leading charity for pregnancy, birth and early parenthood means we can provide a fantastic benefit that will be invaluable to our teams and their families.*"

Angela McConville, Chief Executive at NCT said: "*There are many new and expectant parents, grandparents and carers in Lidl GB's workforce and I'm delighted that through our enduring partnership we're able to continue to offer Lidl GB colleagues access to our NCT membership as well as discounts on our brilliant* ***NCT Antenatal*** *classes. We look forward to continuing this partnership to support many more people as they become parents.*"



Joining our community and giving back to others

Individual fundraising and giving, alongside NCT membership, play a vital role in growing our community of supporters, helping us reach more parents across the UK. It's been wonderful to see so many people choosing to give back, whether that's through local NCT branches, taking on challenge events, or joining as a member. Every contribution, big or small, helps us build a stronger, more supportive network for all kinds of families. Thank you to everyone who supported us this year, we're so grateful for all that you do.

Sarah, Carol, and Emily: Running together for NCT at London Landmarks

We had an incredible day cheering on our amazing runners – Emily, Carol, and Sarah – at the London Landmarks challenge event! We're so grateful for their commitment to fundraising for NCT and raising awareness about the vital support we offer to parents.

Emily shared why this challenge meant so much to her: "*I took on this challenge to raise awareness of NCT's fantastic work, especially the* ***NCT Parents in Mind*** *service. The impact of this support is huge, and I wanted to help shine a light on it.*"

In April 2024 six runners also took part in the iconic TCS London Marathon raising an incredible £13,900 for NCT. We'd like to thank: Jason Nourse, Thomas Shore, Adam Sennitt, Charlotte Gower, Jessica Dunn, Dylan Clarke and Agnes Hann for their amazing commitment to fundraising and training for this event.



Sarah, Carol, and Emily at the finish line

If you'd like to be part of #TeamNCT by running a full or half Marathon please do get in touch via fundraising@nct.org.uk

Emma's story: Celebrating new beginnings in creative ways

Emma Atkinson was awarded Platinum by BBC Gardeners' World for her inspirational show garden at BBC Gardeners' World Autumn Fair in Essex. Emma, a garden designer, who attended an *NCT Antenatal* course during her pregnancy, created a special garden space to celebrate the transition to life with a new baby.



Emma with her award winning garden

Emma said: "*The garden is called Finding your 'Pink' and takes its inspiration from flamingos. The garden has been designed for women postpartum as a calm and peaceful sanctuary, reassuring new mums.*"

The garden was popular with visitors across the weekend, including Emma's NCT classmates and their babies, and NCT President, Sherry Bevan.

Our congratulations to Emma and thanks for her amazing support!



Emma's show garden at the BBC Gardeners' World Autumn Fair in Essex

NCT membership

We're proud to be a membership charity — and even prouder of our members.

Thank you to everyone who's been part of our journey over the years. Membership has taken many forms, and throughout 2024, we've worked closely with our Board to shape the next chapter – one that continues to meet the needs of our charity, our mission, and, most importantly, our members.

If you're already part of our NCT community, you may have noticed changes to our newsletter, with more stories about our campaigning work and the difference your support is making for parents across the UK.

This is just the beginning. In 2025, we're building more ways to bring your membership to life – to connect, to influence, and to celebrate what we can achieve together.

We'd love to hear what would make your membership feel even more meaningful. Your voice matters, and we're listening. Get in touch via **members@nct.org.uk**

Not yet a member? There's never been a better time to join. Be part of something powerful.



Our thanks

Organisations, alliances, and networks that we have worked with during the year

Alternatives Trust, Association of Volunteer Managers (AVM), Birthrights, Black Mothers Matter, Breastfeeding Alliance, Breastfeeding Network, British Pregnancy Advisory Service, City of Sanctuary, Charity Reform Group, Five X More, Good Innovation, Health and Wellbeing Alliance, Hello Brave, HumanKind, Institute of Health Visiting, London Maternity Clinical Network, London Marathon, London Landmarks, Magpie Project, Maternal Mental Health Alliance, Maternity Action, Mini First Aid, NSPCC, One Voice, Pregnancy and Baby Charity Network, RELAX Study, Royal College of Midwives, Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, Together, The Motherhood Group, University of Worcester STFWV, UNICEF, University of Dundee, Vision for Volunteering.

Funders and commissioners

Arnold Clark
Arthur Meredith Memorial Charity
Baby Bank Alliance
Babycare TENS
Brympton Parish Council
Calm
City Bridge Trust
Community Chest Cornwall
Co-op
Countess of Chester NHS FT
Coventry and Warwickshire NHS PT
East Sussex County Council
Evelyn Trust
Flitwick Council
Flos - Place in the park
Four Lanes Trust
Frodsham Town Council
Good Things Foundation
Hackney Council
Halton Borough Council
Hartlepool Council
Homestart Trafford, Salford and wigan
Lancashire County Council
Leeds City Council
Lenardo
Lidl
Medway Community Healthcare
Newham Council
NHS Cheshire and Merseyside ICB
NHS Fife
NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde
NHS Lothian
NISA
North East London ICB
North West London ICB
Paddington Development Trust
Peppa Pig
Peterborough City Council
Royal Berkshire NHS FT
Royal Docks Trust
Savoo
Scottish Government
Skipton Gala Committee
Sport England
St Helens Borough Council
Tesco Stronger Starts
The London Borough of Hounslow
The National Lottery Community Fund
Twins Trust
Venture Community Association

Our community

We are inspired by the efforts and generosity of the NCT community who continue to amaze us every day, and you have all made a difference. With thanks to:

- All our members
- All our volunteers and Peer Supporters
- All our practitioners
- All our staff
- All our students
- The NCT Diversity and Affinity Networks
- The Neurodivergent Staff Network
- The Practitioner Representative Body
- Our Board of Trustees.

Join us

At NCT, we're building a community that's **welcoming**, **inclusive**, **bold**, and **collaborative** and there's a place here for you. Whether you're looking to support parents, grow your skills, or connect with others, you can make a difference:

- **Become a member** – Stay informed, connected, and part of a movement that makes change happen.
- **Donate** – Help us continue our vital work by funding local services and expert support.
- **Fundraise** – Run a cake sale, or run a marathon for our cause!
- **Volunteer** – Join our amazing volunteer community and be a force for good in your area.
- **Find events near you** – Connect with others and be part of something local and meaningful.

Together, we can make sure that every parent is connected, confident and safe.

Registered 2024/25
FUNDRAISING REGULATOR



Financial review

Financial review

Overall summary

Total group income fell 6% from £11.8m to £11.1m during the year. This was driven by challenging economic conditions, notably the continued cost-of-living pressures on new and expectant parents, and increased competition in the market for antenatal courses which meant that antenatal course income fell 20% year on year. Programme Delivery income continued to see significant growth, enabling a wider reach during the period.

Other income for the year included a substantial gain from the sale of the leasehold office premises in Bristol.

Operating costs grew due to two factors – growth in Programme Delivery activity, as well as general inflationary pressures.

The net result for the year was a deficit operating position of -£0.5m (2024: breakeven) before investment income of £0.1m (2024: £0.1m), a gain on the sale of the office premises of £0.5m (2024: nil), investment gains of £0.03m (2024: gains of £0.2m) and non-operational spend of £0.8m (2024: £0.3m), which included investment in several strategic projects, including the sale of the office premises, as well as staff restructuring costs. The operating position is a key financial target and was managed very closely in line with the approved Reserves Policy.

After non-operating expenditure, investment income and gains on investment and fixed assets, the total net expenditure for the year was -£0.7m (2024: Net Income of £0.01m). Again, this was in line with the requirements of the Reserves Policy.

NCT Courses

Delivery of antenatal and other courses to parents is one of NCT's key educational activities. Income in this area exceeds expenditure, with surpluses supporting the education and development of current and future NCT practitioners; the delivery of commissioned services in the health sector; and work in the policy, research, campaigns, content and information areas, including the much-needed delivery of the NCT Infant Feeding Line.

Income from courses of £7.0m represents a £1.8m decrease on the prior year (2024: £8.8m). This decline reflects the continued cost-of-living crisis and intense competition for antenatal courses. The number of Antenatal course bookings by start date was 24,515 (2024: 29,234) while post course parent satisfaction was 94% (2024: 95%). Total costs fell from £6.4m in 2024 to £5.9m, as fewer bookings led to lower course volumes.

Education and Practice

In September 2024, the Education programme was paused, with no new students taken from this date. This pause enabled initial development work into a new approach to create a modern, inclusive and agile training framework for the recruitment and development of our practitioners of the future. As a result, NCT education and practice income decreased from £0.3m to £0.2m and costs decreased from £1.0m to £0.7m.

Programme Delivery

Programme Delivery provides local and national services to parents that are free at the point of access. They are largely commissioned contracts with the National Health Service, including hospital trusts and health boards, and local authorities as well as central government departments. This work is also supported through funding from Trusts and Foundations. This area also delivers the vital NCT Infant Feeding Line.

Income for Programme Delivery in the year grew by 64% to £2.3m (2024: £1.4m) building on the growth seen in 2024. During the year, 2,500 parents were supported through our perinatal peer support programmes (2024: 3,700) and our breastfeeding peer support programmes supported nearly 20,000 people (2024: 10,000).

Membership, grants and donations

Total donation income has remained at £0.8m (2024: £0.8m) with a £0.1m fall in membership income offset by a £0.1m increase in grant income. Work has commenced to make membership a more accessible experience.

Other trading activities

Total income from other trading activities declined to £0.2m (2024: £0.4m). This was largely due to a decrease in the number of branch activities. A decline in income from corporate partners also contributed to the decrease.

Responsible Fundraising

NCT is supported in its charitable fundraising by so many amazing supporters spanning companies, charities, individual donors and volunteer fundraisers. We would like to thank everyone for their efforts to make a difference to parents across the UK. Our fundraising activities, led by the central charity and volunteer branches, are monitored by appropriate members of the Senior Leadership Team. We do not use mass audience commercial fundraising operations such as telephone call services or face-to-face street fundraisers. During the year, no complaints (2024: none) were received about our fundraising activities.

Our Trading subsidiary NCT Trading Limited will shortly become dormant.

Our overarching safeguarding commitment to all members of the NCT community encompasses protection of people in vulnerable circumstances including a dedicated point of contact for any concerns in this regard that is open to the entire charity. As a registered member of the Fundraising Regulator Directory, we are proud of our commitment to continuously reflect upon, learn and evolve our fundraising practices.

Investment income and asset movements

Income received from cash balances and the investment portfolio was £0.1m (2024: £0.1m). A gain of £0.03m was recorded on the investment portfolio (2024: a gain of £0.2m) reflecting market movements.

Going concern

The Board has assessed the Charity's ability to continue as a going concern. Total unrestricted funds at the end of the 2024/25 financial year were in line with the revised Reserves Policy. The plan and budget for the coming year was set to operate within acceptable risk levels and within the risk reserve level. Management accounts regularly re-forecast the yearly outcome, which allows for quick and appropriate responses to changes in our operating model and demand for our services.

After a review of the current and future risks and the plans to mitigate those risks, an assessment of a 12-month forecasted cashflow and with consideration of the value of the investment portfolio (£4m), the Board is comfortable with the appropriateness of the going concern basis for accounting.

Investment Policy

The Investment Policy is reviewed by the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee regularly and the latest version was approved by the Board in October 2024. NCT seeks to achieve the best financial return within an acceptable level of risk, which has been defined as medium on a scale of low, medium and high. The desired risk level is achieved through a mixed portfolio of low-risk cash deposits and medium risk managed investment funds held for the long term. All investments are made within the terms of the NCT Commercial and Charitable Activities Policy (CCAP) that takes social, environmental and ethical considerations into account.

The investment objective for long-term investments is to generate a return in excess of inflation in order to preserve the real terms value of NCT's reserves and support growth of the reserves, and thereafter within, the range determined by the reserves policy. The charity monitors performance closely and continues to take regular advice from its investment managers. The performance of the funds over the time held meets the investment objectives. During the 12 months to March 2025, the value of the Investment Portfolio grew by 0.3% (2024: growth of 7.8%) which was less than the UK CPI of 2.6% in the same period (2024: 3.2%).

The investment objective for the short-term investments is to seek the highest rate of interest available for cash deposits with a UK FSCA regulated financial institution, with deposits made with different institutions where practicable.

Under the Investment Policy, NCT considers that it holds a mixed motive investment in NCT Trading Limited. This is because the investment had two aims: firstly, to provide funding which will generate a financial return for NCT; and secondly to contribute to NCT's charitable purpose by promoting goods and services that are beneficial to prospective and new parents. This has assisted the charity in achieving its strategic objective of providing new parent support. The scale of the activities delivered through NCT Trading Limited have fallen in recent years and consideration is being given to making the company dormant.

The investment in NCT Trading Limited has been made through holding 100% of its issued share capital at a cost of £100.

Total Funds

The group balance sheet at 31 March 2025 showed total funds of £3.9m (2024: £4.6m) of which £0.2m (2024: £0.3m) were restricted. Restricted funds, analysed in Note 15, comprise donations and grants subject to donor-imposed conditions. Unrestricted funds were £3.7m (2024: £4.3m), of which £0.002m were represented as fixed assets (2024: £1.2m) following the sale of the leasehold building held in Bristol. The balance of the Group general funds, representing the 'free reserves', was £3.6m at 31 March 2025 (2024: £3.1m).

Reserves Policy

The Reserves Policy, which was last updated in March 2025, provides a dynamic framework for determining available reserves by identifying two components of NCT's risk management reserve:

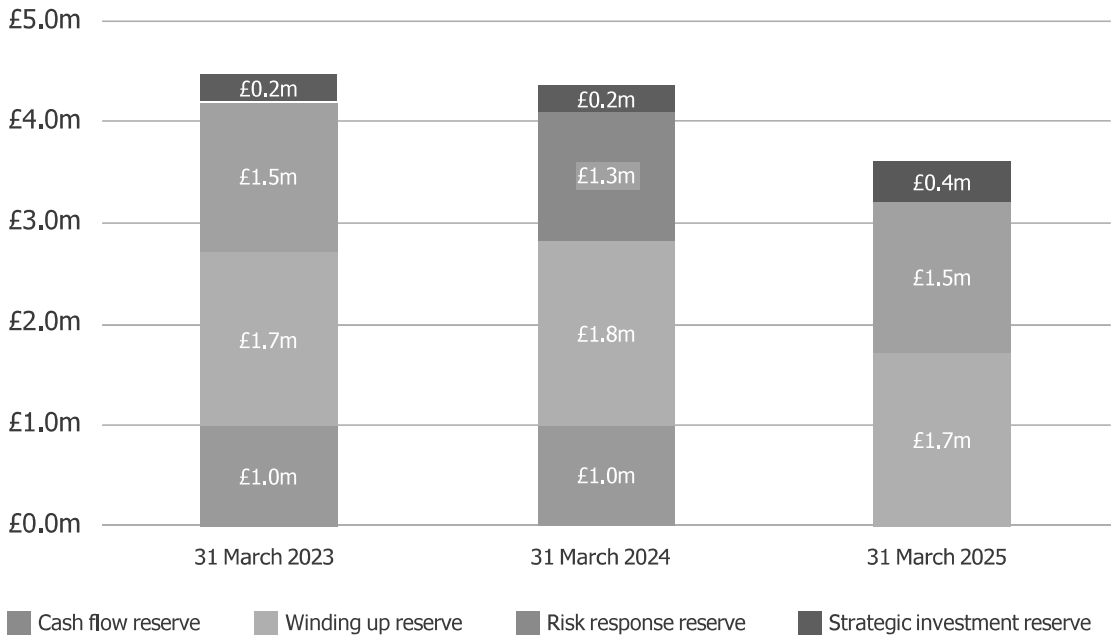
- Winding up reserve to cover the costs of winding up the charity; and
- Risk response reserve to respond to uncertainty identified in the risk management process.

Any surplus funds beyond these considerations represent the strategic development reserve.

The Board determined a target risk management reserve level of £3.2m in March 2025. This comprises £1.7m for the costs of winding up and £1.5m to respond to uncertainty identified in the risk management process. Compared with the previously agreed levels, the £1.0m cash flow reserve has been removed and the winding up reserve has decreased to reflect the current size of the group. The level of the risk response reserve has increased to reflect the latest operating performance and risk assessments.

The Board plans to reduce the target level of the risk response reserve further by continuing to address key risks. By planning for a breakeven operating position over multiple periods, any investment income and gains can be used to increase the strategic development reserve.

The amounts held in these reserves at the end of the last three financial years are shown below.



At 31 March 2025, total unrestricted funds were £3.6m, exceeding the required risk management reserve level of £4.1m meeting the requirements of the policy. This means that the charity holds sufficient funds to perform an orderly wind up if needed and manage risks as they arise. The remaining group funds as at 31 March 2025 were held in the strategic development reserve of £0.2m (2023: £0.2m). Any funds held in the strategic development reserve at the end of each year are used to invest in future growth opportunities to meet one-off items of expenditure during the following year.

Risk management

Effective risk management is critical for achieving the *For Every Parent* strategy and the risk management process identifies the uncertainties and events that could affect the achievement of the strategic objectives. Trustees acknowledge their responsibility for ensuring effective risk management systems and procedures. The Board works closely with the Directors Group to identify the most significant risks, mitigate any potential impact of downside risks and exploit the opportunities of upside risks and opportunities. The Board reviews the full Risk Register every year and receives regular updates on significant changes to the profile of individual risks throughout the year.

The Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee has delegated authority from the Board to:

- review risk management systems and procedures;
- drive continued improvement in the sophistication and impact of our risk management processes;
- advise the Board on the principal risks faced and any changes to the Risk Register;
- scrutinise the analysis and management of risks by the Directors Group through a review of the Risk Register every quarter; and
- receive periodic deep dive reviews of significant risks, usually twice a year.

Managing each risk is the responsibility of the senior managers within each Directorate. Controls and actions are put in place to mitigate the identified risks as far as is possible and practical, consisting of processes built around the Risk Register, external professional advice and insurance where appropriate.

The Risk Management Policy is reviewed every two years. Through this Policy, the level of gross risk to the achievement of strategic objectives is assessed and the likelihood of this occurring given existing activities to manage the risk appraised. The net risk is compared to the agreed risk appetite for each broad category to identify areas where increased focus is required to manage individual risks.

Principle risks and uncertainties

There are 30 risks on the Risk Register. In the Reporting Period, the Charity's five principal risks and uncertainties, taken from the Risk Register, which the Board monitored during the year, are summarised below:

Risk
Antenatal Course Performance
Health & Safety and Safeguarding
Information Governance including Cyber Risks
Information Provision
Investment Returns

Public Benefit Statement

The Board has referred to the relevant guidance (as published by the Charity Commission in its guidance documents PB1 "*Public benefit, the public benefit requirement*", PB2 "*Public benefit: running a charity and PB3 "Public benefit: reporting*") and concluded that NCT complies with the duty in Section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to public benefit because the charitable services delivered provide value to the public in general and new parents in particular.

Structure and governance

NCT (The National Childbirth Trust) is a registered charity. It is a company limited by guarantee governed by its Articles of Association as adopted on 26th September 2015 and amended on 18 October 2018.

The Board of Trustees

NCT is governed by a Board of Trustees who are the directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act. The Board of Trustees is ultimately responsible for the governance of the Charity to ensure that it acts in the best interests of all parents, who are the Charity's beneficiaries. The Board of Trustees sets the strategy, policy and financial framework for the Charity and has the responsibility for its overall direction and control. Additionally, the Board has responsibility for ensuring that the Charity complies with the law and the safeguarding of the Charity's assets, including its money, property and reputation.

The names of trustees at the date at which the accounts were approved, or who served during the period, are given below. There were two resignations following the end of the reporting period. The Board is very grateful for the work and commitment of David Shanks who served two full terms as trustee. Chi Evi-Parker stepped down to take a period of maternity leave and the Board thanks her for her commitment and contribution over her term as a trustee.

Name	Start date of most recent term	Date of resignation
Joëlle Warren (Chair)	Appointed 16 October 2024	—
Sarah Brown (Vice Chair)	Elected 4 November 2021 [2]	—
Sherry Bevan (President)	Elected 16 November 2019	—
Charles Richardson (Honorary Treasurer re-appointed 15 July 2024)	Appointed 15 July 2022	—
Ema Ojiako (Honorary Secretary)	Re-appointed 1 August 2025	—
Chi Evi-Parker	Elected 11 December 2020	Resigned 23 April 2025
David Shanks	Appointed 7 August 2021 [1]	Resigned 6 August 2025
Elaine Lambe	Elected 4 November 2021 [2]	—
Franciane Husbands-Chevot	Elected 11 December 2020	—
Julien Haye	Elected 8 November 2023	—
Mikayla Pencross	Elected 8 November 2023	—
Vikram Sundarraj	Appointed to act as Elected 21 March 2024	—

[1] Second term, initial term commenced on 7 August 2017

[2] Second term, initial term commenced on 4 November 2017

The charity is a membership charity. Members are organised locally into branches. Many members and volunteers carry out the work of the charity at a local level.

Each year, the Board reviews past performance and sets plans within a forward-looking planning horizon. As part of that review and planning process, the trustees consider how future plans and performance relate to the aims and vision of the Charity and thus to the charitable purpose.

The trustees are committed to ensuring NCT's governance and constitutional framework reflect current thinking on best practice. The Board of Trustees is committed to the principles of the Charity Governance Code.

Authority for the day-to-day management of the charity within that framework is delegated to the Chief Executive, supported by colleagues on the Directors Group. Together, they formulate strategy, policy and financial plans for the Board's approval, ensure delivery of required performance and oversee the Charity's day-to-day operations.

Recruitment and appointment of trustees

The Board of Trustees must have a minimum of nine trustees and a maximum of twelve. Of the maximum, there may be up to eight member elected trustees and four appointed trustees. Any member may stand for election as a trustee subject to the restrictions laid down in the Governance handbook.

Member-elected trustees are elected to coincide with the Annual General Meeting, whilst appointed trustees may be appointed during the course of the year. Any trustee vacancies arising during the year may also be filled by the Board until the date of the next Annual General Meeting.

The process of appointing new trustees is led by the Nominations and Remuneration Committee based on an assessment of the key skills required by the Board. An executive search firm may be used to attract a diverse range of candidates from different backgrounds. Extensive screening will take place followed by rigorous interviews. All appointments are subject to satisfactory references.

Elected and Appointed Trustees have a term of four years and the President has a term of five years. An individual may serve a maximum of two terms as an Elected Trustee, two terms as an Appointed Trustee and two terms as President.

Further details on the recruitment and appointment of trustees can be found in the Governance Handbook at
http://bit.ly/46KFkDv.

We are keen to talk to anyone interested in serving as an Independent Committee member, especially people who will bring unique skills and experiences. To discuss becoming involved, please contact us at board.secretary@nct.org.uk.

Induction and training of trustees

A comprehensive and structured induction programme is put in place for new trustees. This includes:

- a written briefing about trustees' responsibilities and copies of relevant Policies;
- detailed presentations covering Strategy; Governance; Courses & Income; Practitioners and Education; Impact and Engagement; People & Inclusion; Volunteering; Finance; and Data and Technology; and
- meetings with the Chair, Chief Executive and other members of the Directors Group.

In addition, access is provided to specific training that is tailored to the incoming trustee.

Training is also provided during the year for trustees, for example at the Board Away Day session, on topics relevant to the Board's current work and strategy or through access to external courses as required.

Board committees

The Board of Trustees is supported in its work by committees. There are two Board committees

- Audit, Risk and Scrutiny [ARSC] – covering the adequacy of financial control, external reporting, budgeting, performance and risk management.
- Nominations and Remuneration [NRC] – covering people issues, equity, diversity and inclusion, trustee recruitment and the remuneration policy for senior management and other key groups.

In addition, Advisory and Task and Finish groups enable internal and external experts to be involved in decision-making and governance. There is also a 'Lead Trustee' for safeguarding to provide additional support, scrutiny and oversight in this area and a 'Lead Trustee' for Health and Safety (H&S). The full Board maintains collective responsibility for all these areas and receives update reports at Board meetings.

Independent committee members are individuals who bring additional skills, experience and perspectives to the work of our sub-committees. They are not trustees.

Committee membership and lead trustee roles as at 31 March 2025 are detailed in the table below.

Name	Role	Committee membership
Joëlle Warren	Trustee / Chair	NRC (and attendee at ARSC)
Sarah Brown	Trustee / Vice Chair / Safeguarding Lead Trustee	ARSC
Sherry Bevan	Trustee / President	—
Charles Richardson	Trustee / Honorary Treasurer	ARSC (Chair)
Ema Ojiako	Trustee / Honorary Secretary	NRC (Chair)
Chi Evi-Parker	Trustee	—
David Shanks	Trustee	—
Elaine Lambe	Trustee	NRC
Franciane Husbands-Chevot	Trustee	—
Julien Haye	Trustee	ARSC
Mikayla Pencross	Trustee	NRC
Vikram Sundarraj	Trustee / Health & Safety Lead	ARSC
Faran Johnson	Independent Committee Member	ARSC
Naomi Horsfall	Independent Committee Member	ARSC

Key relationships

NCT wholly owns one active commercial company, NCT Trading Ltd, which gift aids its profits to the charity. The Board of NCT Trading Ltd is responsible for its activities and it is the intention that the company will become dormant in 2025/26.

Charity Commission guidance makes it clear that the Board of Trustees is responsible for establishing the overarching principles within which its subsidiary's trading activities must take place. Trustees have established a comprehensive Commercial and Charitable Activities Policy within which the Trading Board is required to operate.

Trustee benefits

Under the terms of its Articles, the Charity is able to pay trustees for the provision of services to achieve its objectives, subject to certain safeguards. This includes the requirement that a majority of the trustees must have received no payments from NCT either as employees or for goods and services supplied to NCT. This year, no member of the Board of Trustees received any remuneration in respect of their services as trustees (2024: None). Expenses and other payments to trustees are detailed in Note 9.

Statement of the Board's responsibilities as trustees

The trustees (who are also directors of NCT for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice). Members of the Directors Group are not Directors as defined by Company Law.

Company law requires trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of the affairs of the charitable company and the group and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable group for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards, including FRS102, have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006, as amended by the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Amendment (No. 2) Regulations 2014. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and the group, and hence for taking reasonable steps to prevent and detect of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

In so far as the trustees are aware:

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

Remuneration Policy

NCT recognises that pay is part of a wider employment offer for employees, which also includes the satisfaction of working for a charity, personal development opportunities, family-friendly policies and practices, annual leave and absence policies and a range of other benefits including access to the pension scheme.

NCT operates a benchmarked market rate system, using reputable and appropriate data. NCT aims to pay employees between plus/minus 10% margin of the market median salary for most roles. Employees will not normally be paid less than the lower decile or higher than the higher decile for any role. When benchmarking pay and benefits, NCT will compare against charities of similar size, employee numbers and income, workplace location and competitors. Additionally, a specialist consultancy will be commissioned to independently review the market rate for the salaries of the Directors Group every three years.

Each year, NCT will consider whether to uplift all employee salaries by the cost-of-living. This will take into account the Consumer Price Index, Retail Price Index and the national average increase in earnings. Any decisions will be based on affordability and are at the Board's discretion.

Appointment of Auditors

HaysMac LLP have been appointed in accordance with section 487(2) of the Companies Act 2006.

The strategic report, which forms part of the Trustees' Annual Report, is approved by the trustees in their capacity as directors of the company. The Trustees' Report is approved by the Board of Trustees and signed on its behalf by:



Joëlle Warren
Chair
30 September 2025

Independent auditor's report to the members and trustees of National Childbirth Trust

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of National Childbirth Trust for the year ended 31 March 2025 which comprise the Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities, Charity Statement of Financial Activities, Consolidated and Charity Balance Sheets, Consolidated Cash Flow Statement 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, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 *The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland* (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the group's and of the parent charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2025 and of the group's and parent charitable company's net movement in funds, including the 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 and the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and regulation 8 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 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 Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the group 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 group'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 Trustees' Annual Report. 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 there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Trustees' Annual Report (which includes the strategic report and the directors' report prepared for the purposes of company law) for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the strategic report and the directors' report included within the Trustees' Annual Report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the group and the parent charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Trustees' Annual Report (which incorporates the strategic report and the directors' report).

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Companies Act 2006 and the Charity Accounts (Scotland) Regulations (as amended) require us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept by the parent charitable company, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the parent charitable company financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of trustees for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement as set out on page 73, 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 group's and the parent 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 group or the parent charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

Based on our understanding of the group and the environment in which it operates, we identified that the principal risks of non-compliance with laws and regulations related to company law and charity law, and we considered the extent to which non-compliance might have a material effect on the financial statements. We also considered those laws and regulations that have a direct impact on the preparation of the financial statements such as the Companies Act 2006, the Charities Act 2011 and Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006, income tax, payroll tax and sales tax.

We evaluated management's incentives and opportunities for fraudulent manipulation of the financial statements (including the risk of override of controls), and determined that the principal risks were related to income recognition. Audit procedures performed by the engagement team included:

- Inspecting correspondence with regulators and tax authorities;
- Discussions with management including consideration of known or suspected instances of non-compliance with laws and regulation and fraud;
- Evaluating management's controls designed to prevent and detect irregularities;
- Identifying and testing journals, in particular journal entries posted with unusual account combinations, postings by unusual users or with unusual descriptions; and
- Challenging assumptions and judgements made by management in their accounting estimates.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

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 auditor's report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006, section 44(1)(c) of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and regulation 10 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an Auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



Kathryn Burton
(Senior Statutory Auditor)

For and on behalf of HaysMac LLP, Statutory Auditors
Date: 12th November 2025

10 Queen Street Place
London EC4R 1AG

NCT consolidated group statement of financial activities

Including Income & Expenditure Account for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2025 £'000	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2024 £'000
Income from donations							
Membership		156	-	156	228	-	228
Donations		7	1	8	19	1	20
Grants receivable	3	-	672	672	17	574	591
		163	**673**	**836**	**264**	**575**	**839**
Charitable activities							
NCT Courses		7,013	-	7,013	8,770	-	8,770
Education and Practice		151	-	151	293	-	293
Programme Delivery	4	2,292	-	2,292	1,414	-	1,414
		9,456	**-**	**9,456**	**10,477**	**-**	**10,477**
Other trading activities							
Community fundraising		167	5	172	334	-	334
Commercial fundraising		23	-	23	71	-	71
Trading		-	-	-	3	-	3
		190	**5**	**195**	**408**	**-**	**408**
Investments							
Investment portfolio income		120	-	120	97	-	97
		120	**-**	**120**	**97**	**-**	**97**
Other income							
Other income receivable		**527**	**-**	**527**	**27**	**-**	**27**
Total income		**10,456**	**678**	**11,134**	**11,273**	**575**	**11,848**
Expenditure on raising funds							
Membership		**146**	**-**	**146**	**135**	**-**	**135**
Charitable activities							
NCT Courses	5	5,581	253	5,834	6,279	166	6,445
Education and Practice		732	-	732	973	-	973
Programme Delivery		3,086	305	3,391	2,235	317	2,552
Policy, research and information		1,210	-	1,210	1,180	-	1,180
		10,609	**558**	**11,167**	**10,667**	**483**	**11,150**
Other trading activities							
Community fundraising	6	263	114	377	580	20	600
Commercial fundraising		9	-	9	36	-	36
Trading		184	-	184	144	-	144
		456	**114**	**570**	**760**	**20**	**780**
Total Expenditure	7	**11,211**	**672**	**11,883**	**11,562**	**503**	**12,065**
Net operating (expenditure)/income		**(755)**	**6**	**(749)**	**(289)**	**72**	**(217)**
Gain/(loss) on investment assets	12	31	-	31	230	-	230
Other gains and losses							
Charitable distribution		-	-	-	-	-	-
Net (expenditure)/income and net movement in funds	8	**(724)**	**6**	**(718)**	**(59)**	**72**	**13**
Reconciliation of funds							
Total funds brought forward		4,333	268	4,601	4,392	196	4,588
Total funds carried forward	15,16	**3,609**	**274**	**3,883**	**4,333**	**268**	**4,601**

All of the group's activities are derived from continuing operations during the above two financial periods. The group has no recognised gains or losses other than those shown above. The movement in reserves is shown above.

The notes on pages 84 to 100 form part of these financial statements.

NCT charity statement of financial activities

Including Income & Expenditure Account for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2025 £'000	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2024 £'000
Income from							
Donations and legacies							
Membership		156	-	156	228	-	228
Donations		11	1	12	26	1	27
Grants receivable	3	-	672	672	17	574	591
		167	**673**	**840**	**271**	**575**	**846**
Charitable Activities							
NCT Courses		7,013	-	7,013	8,770	-	8,770
Education and Practice		151	-	151	293	-	293
Programme Delivery	4	2,292	-	2,292	1,414	-	1,414
		9,456	**-**	**9,456**	**10,477**	**-**	**10,477**
Other trading activities							
Community fundraising		167	5	172	334	-	334
Trading		-	-	-	3	-	3
		167	**5**	**172**	**337**	**-**	**337**
Investments							
Investment portfolio income		120	-	120	97	-	97
		120	**-**	**120**	**97**	**-**	**97**
Other income		**537**	**-**	**537**	**55**	**-**	**55**
Total income		**10,447**	**678**	**11,125**	**11,237**	**575**	**11,812**
Expenditure on							
Raising funds							
Membership		**146**	**-**	**146**	**135**	**-**	**135**
Charitable activities							
NCT Courses	5	5,581	253	5,834	6,279	166	6,445
Education and Practice		732	-	732	973	-	973
Programme Delivery		3,086	305	3,391	2,235	317	2,552
Policy, research and information		1,210	-	1,210	1,180	-	1,180
		10,609	**558**	**11,167**	**10,667**	**483**	**11,150**
Other trading activities							
Community fundraising	6	263	114	377	580	20	600
Trading		184	-	184	144	-	144
		447	**114**	**561**	**724**	**20**	**744**
Total resources expended	7	**11,202**	**672**	**11,874**	**11,526**	**503**	**12,029**
Net operating (expenditure)/income		**(755)**	**6**	**(749)**	**(289)**	**72**	**(217)**
Gain/(loss) on investment assets	12	31	-	31	230	-	230
Net (expenditure)/income and net movement in funds	8	**(724)**	**6**	**(718)**	**(59)**	**72**	**13**
Reconciliation of funds							
Total funds brought forward		4,333	268	4,601	4,392	196	4,588
Total funds carried forward	15,16	**3,609**	**274**	**3,883**	**4,333**	**268**	**4,601**

All of the NCT's activities are derived from continuing operations during the above two financial periods. The charity has norecognised gains or losses other than those shown above. The movement in reserves is shown above.

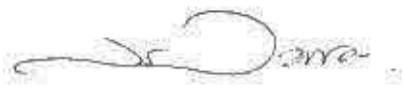
The notes on pages 84 to 100 form part of these financial statements.

NCT consolidated and charity balance sheets

as at 31 March 2025

	Notes	2025 Group £'000	2025 Charity £'000	2024 Group £'000	2024 Charity £'000
Fixed Assets					
Intangible Assets	10	-	-	-	-
Tangible Assets	11	2	2	1,241	1,241
Investments	12	4,008	4,008	3,997	3,997
Total Fixed Assets		**4,010**	**4,010**	**5,238**	**5,238**
Current Assets					
Debtors	13	487	526	772	790
Short term deposits		1,807	1,807	501	501
Cash at bank and in hand		282	243	1,149	1,122
		2,576	**2,576**	**2,422**	**2,413**
Liabilities					
Creditors:					
Amounts falling due within one year	14	**(2,703)**	**(2,703)**	**(3,059)**	**(3,050)**
Net current assets / (liabilities)		**(127)**	**(127)**	**(637)**	**(637)**
Total net assets		**3,883**	**3,883**	**4,601**	**4,601**
Fund balances					
Charitable funds					
Restricted funds	15	**274**	**274**	**268**	**268**
Unrestricted funds	16				
General funds		3,606	3,606	3,092	3,092
Fixed asset fund		3	3	1,241	1,241
		3,609	**3,609**	**4,333**	**4,333**
Total funds	17	**3,883**	**3,883**	**4,601**	**4,601**

Approved and authorised for issue by the Board of Trustees and signed on its behalf by:



Joëlle Warren
Chair
30 September 2025

The National Childbirth Trust
Company Number: 2370573 (England & Wales)

The notes on pages 84 to 100 form part of these financial statements.

NCT consolidated cash flow statement

for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Cash flows from Operating Activities		
Net income / (expenditure) for the reporting period	(718)	13
(Gains) / Losses on investments	(31)	(230)
Depreciation and amortisation charges	32	32
Gains on the sale of Fixed Asset	(525)	0
Investment income	(65)	(86)
(Increase) / decrease in debtors	285	176
Increase / (decrease) in creditors	(355)	(653)
Net cash provided by operating activities	**(1,377)**	**(748)**
Cash flows from Investing Activites		
Purchase of Investments	(756)	(2,086)
Proceeds from the sale of Investments	681	2,016
Proceeds from the sale of Fixed Asset	1,752	0
Dividends received	65	85
Net cash from investing activities	**1,742**	**15**
Cash flows from Financing Activities		
Net cash from financing activities	**-**	**-**
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period	**365**	**(733)**
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period	**1,789**	**2,522**
Cash and cash equivalents at end of the reporting period	**2,154**	**1,789**

Analysis of cash and cash equivalents	2025 £'000	2024 £'000
Cash at bank and in hand	282	1,149
Short term deposits	1,808	501
Cash held by investment managers	64	139
Total cash and cash equivalents	**2,154**	**1,789**

A reconciliation of net debt has not been presented as the group does not have any borrowings.

The notes on pages 84 to 100 form part of these financial statements.

Notes to the financial statements

1 Principal Accounting Policies

a) General information

National Childbirth Trust is a charitable company, limited by guarantee. The registered office is 27 Old Gloucester Street, London, WC1N 3AX. Its company registration number is 2370573 (England and Wales), its charity registration numbers are 801395 (England and Wales) and SC041592 (Scotland).

b) Basis of accounting

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies below and comply with the charity's governing document, the Companies Act 2006 and 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, the Charities Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 as amended in 2014. The charity is a public benefit entity for the purposes of FRS 102 and a registered charity. The charity has therefore also prepared its individual and consolidated financial statements in accordance with FRS 102 (The Charities SORP (FRS 102)).

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis and on the historical cost basis, except for the measurement of investments and certain financial assets and liabilities at fair value with movements in value reported within the Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA). The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below and have been applied consistently throughout the year.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charity. Amounts included in the financial statements are rounded to the nearest thousand pounds.

c) Preparation of the accounts on a going concern basis

The trustees have adopted the going concern basis in preparing these accounts after assessing the principal risks and having considered the impact of returning to online courses due to COVID-19 and inflationary factors. The trustees consider that the charity is resilient to the impact of these scenarios.

The trustees considered the impact of the expected future environment on the business for the 12 months following signature of the financial statements, the viability period and the longer term considering the impacts on income, expenditure and cash flow and consider the charity can absorb and adapt to the environment.

On this basis the trustees have concluded that there are no material uncertainties that impact the use of the going concern basis and that the charity will be able to settle its debts as they fall due for a period of at least 12 months from the date of approval of these financial statements. Accordingly, the going concern basis has continued to be adopted in the preparation of the financial statements.

d) Basis of consolidation

The statement of financial activities and balance sheet consolidate on a line-by-line basis the financial statements of the charity and all its subsidiary undertakings made up to the balance sheet date. Immaterial subsidiaries are not consolidated. The decision on consolidation is based on the power NCT has to control each undertaking.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

e) Income

Incoming resources are recognised in the period in which the charity is entitled to receipt, the receipt is probable and the amount can be measured reliably. Income is deferred only when the charity has to fulfil conditions outside of its control before becoming entitled to it or when the donor or funder has specified that the income is to be expended in a future accounting period. Legacies are included in the statement of financial activities when the charity is advised by the personal representative of an estate that payment will be made or property transferred and the amount involved can be measured reliably. Grants, including government grants, have been included as income from charitable activities where these amount to a contract for services or a grant for specific costs. Fees from NCT affiliates are included in full within incoming resources.

f) Expenditure

Expenditure is included in the statement of financial activities when incurred and includes any attributable VAT, which cannot be recovered. Resources expended comprise the following:

- *Charitable activities*, which comprises expenditure on the charity's primary purposes and are categorised as NCT Courses, Education and Practice, Programme Delivery and Policy, Research and Information.
  - *NCT Courses* comprises the costs of providing courses, for parents and expectant parents where a participant generally books the course.
  - *Education and Practice* comprises the costs of providing training and support for students and NCT practitioners who deliver NCT courses.
  - *Programme Delivery* comprises the costs of delivering services procured under a contract for services or a grant and providing specialist helplines.
  - *Policy, research and information* comprises the cost of the research and service development teams, as well as communications and marketing.
- *Expenditure on raising funds* is categorised into membership only. *Membership* expenditure comprises the costs of the department that services members and prospective members and the team that provides support to members and Branches.
- *Other trading activities* is categorised into community fundraising, commercial fundraising and trading.
  - *Community fundraising*, which comprises the community fundraising support team, the costs of Branch fundraising activities and costs associated with the administration of Branches. Many of the fundraising events held by the branches have two objectives, to raise funds for the charity as well as meeting the aims of the charity in terms of providing postnatal support for families. There is no meaningful way of apportioning the costs of Branch fundraising events between fundraising costs and charitable activities.
  - *Commercial fundraising* is the cost of obtaining and managing the sponsorship of activities and events and undertakes other business activity on behalf of NCT by NCT Trading Limited.
  - *Trading* comprises the costs of supporting other trading activities.

g) Basis of apportioning support costs

Support costs, which includes governance costs, represent indirect charitable expenditure. In order to carry out the primary purposes of NCT, it is necessary to provide support in the form of the people and inclusion team, financial operations and management, information technology, general management and administration and office services. These costs are apportioned to the other activities within the charity based on the average number of full-time equivalent employees utilised by the activity.

h) Gifts in kind

Facilities and services donated to the charity for its own use are included in incoming resources and expenditure at their value to the charity as at the time of the gift.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

i) Tangible and intangible fixed assets

All assets costing more than £1,000 and with an expected useful life exceeding one year are capitalised. Leasehold properties used for the work of the charity are included in these accounts at the cost of acquisition. Software development is capitalised when there is future economic benefit to the charity and ongoing lease costs are not required to use the developed software. Fixed assets are capitalised and depreciated at the following rates per annum, based on cost, in order to write them off over their estimated useful lives at the rates shown below.

Category	Asset Group	Rate per annum
Property	Leasehold	2%
	Leasehold improvements	Lease length or on a component basis, minimum 2%
Equipment	End user computer equipment and software	33%
	Computer and telecoms network infrastructure and software	20%
	Furniture	20%
	Other equipment	33%

At the end of each reporting period, residual values and useful lives are reviewed and adjusted as necessary. Assets are also reviewed annually for impairment.

j) Fixed asset investments

Listed equities are included in the financial statements at fair value as at the balance sheet date. Investments in subsidiary undertakings are held at cost less impairment. Realised and unrealised gains (or losses) are credited (or debited) to the statement of financial activities in the year in which they arise.

k) Fund accounting

Restricted funds are monies raised for, or their use restricted to, a specific purpose, or contributions subject to donor imposed conditions.

The fixed assets fund represents the net book value of the tangible and intangible fixed assets used in the day-to-day operations of NCT. The value of this fund is not available for working capital.

General funds represent those monies, which are freely available for application towards achieving any charitable purpose that falls within the charity's charitable objects.

l) Leased assets

Rentals applicable to operating leases where substantially all of the benefits and risks of ownership remain with the lessor are charged on a straight-line basis over the lease term.

Rental applicable to finance leases where the terms of the lease transfer substantially all the risks and rewards of ownership to the lessee are recognized as assets at the lower of the assets fair value at the date of inception and the present value of minimum lease payments. The related liability is included in the balance sheet as a finance lease obligation. Lease payments are treated as consisting of capital and interest elements. The interest is charged to the Statement of Financial Activity so as to produce a constant periodic rate of interest in the remaining balance of the liability.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

m) Branches

Branch transactions are considered transactions of the charity.

n) Employee benefits

The costs of short-term employee benefits are recognised as a liability and an expense, unless those costs are required to be recognised as part of the cost of fixed assets. The cost of any unused holiday entitlement is recognised in the period in which the employee's services are received. Termination benefits are recognised immediately as an expense when the company is demonstrably committed to terminate the employment of an employee or to provide termination benefits.

o) Debtors

Debtors are stated at their net realisable value after allowing for bad and doubtful debts.

p) Creditors

Creditors are amounts owed by the charity. They are measured at the amount that the charity expects to have to pay to settle the debt

q) Pension costs

The charity as an employer contributes to personal pension plans of its employees. The contributions are set at up to 5% of gross salary and are available to all employees whose contracts are permanent and who have completed three months' service with the charity.

r) Redundancy costs

Redundancy costs are recognised when there is a legal or constructive obligation.

s) Financial Instruments

The National Childbirth Trust has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method. Financial assets held at amortised cost comprise cash at bank and in hand, together with trade and other debtors. Financial liabilities held at amortised cost comprise trade and other creditors.

t) Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Any bank overdrafts would be shown within borrowings in current liabilities.

u) Irrecoverable VAT

All expenditure is charged to the SOFA on an accruals basis including the charge for VAT which is not recoverable.

v) Accounting judgements and estimation uncertainty

In preparing financial statements it is necessary to make certain judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts recognised in the financial statements. The following judgements and estimates are considered by the Board to have the most significant effect on amounts recognised in the financial statements.

Tangible fixed assets are depreciated to their estimated residual value over their estimated useful economic life as detailed above.

Accrued course expenditure is estimated at the year end date using algorithmic modelling based on contracted hours and pre-agreed rates and anticipated venue costs.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

2 Commercial trading operations

The National Childbirth Trust owns the entire called up ordinary share capital of four companies incorporated in the United Kingdom:

- NCT Trading Limited, which has two principal activities; the promotion of the work of NCT and profit generation;
- NCT (Maternity Sales) Limited which did not trade during the period of these accounts;
- NCT Publishing Limited which did not trade during the period of these accounts; and
- First 1,000 Days Foundation which did not trade during the period of these accounts.

NCT Trading Limited has a deed of covenant to distribute its taxable profit to NCT. A summary of the results of the trading subsidiary for the period are given below.

Profit and loss account – NCT Trading Ltd	**2025 £'000**	2024 £'000
Turnover	23	71
Cost of sales	-	-
Gross profit	**23**	**71**
Administrative expenses	(19)	(64)
Operating profit before interest	**4**	**7**
Interest payable	-	-
Comprehensive income for the period	**4**	**7**

Balance Sheet – NCT Trading Ltd	**31 March 2025 £'000**	31 March 2024 £'000
Current Assets	39	29
Amounts falling due within one year	(39)	(29)
Net Assets	**-**	**-**

The above figures exclude any consolidation adjustments for inter-group profits/losses, which have been reflected in the consolidated statement of financial activities. The accounts figures have been consolidated on a line-by-line basis.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

3 Income: grants receivable

Group and Charity	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2025 £'000	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2024 £'000
Parents in Mind	-	-	-	-	3	3
Grants to branches	-	332	332	17	253	270
BBCS	-	14	14	-	31	31
Scottish Health	-	184	184	-	185	185
Newham Nurture	-	102	102	-	96	96
Antenatal	-	40	40	-	6	6
	-	**672**	**672**	**17**	**574**	**591**

Grants receivable includes government grants for Scottish Health and Newham Nurture and totalled £287k (2024: £281k).

4 Income: programme delivery

Group and Charity	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2025 £'000	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2024 £'000
National Health Service	623	-	623	607	-	607
Local Authorities	1,636	-	1,636	775	-	775
Other	33	-	33	32	-	32
	2,292	**-**	**2,292**	**1,414**	**-**	**1,414**

5 Expenditure: NCT courses

Group and Charity	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2025 £'000	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2024 £'000
Antenatal	4,338	-	4,338	4,318	-	4,318
Postnatal	-	-	-	37	-	37
General Parental Support	224	253	477	901	166	1,067
Apportioned support costs	1,019	-	1,019	1,023	-	1,023
	5,581	**253**	**5,834**	**6,279**	**166**	**6,445**

6 Expenditure: community fundraising

Group and Charity	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2025 £'000	Total 2024 £'000
Branch fundraising	82	114	196	398
Central fundraising	181	-	181	202
	263	**114**	**377**	**600**

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

7 Support cost allocations

Support costs are allocated to the expenditure headings in the Statement of Financial Activities, on the basis stated in the Accounting Policies (note 1), as stated in the tables below.

Group 2025	**Membership £'000**	**NCT Courses £'000**	**Education and Practice £'000**	**Programme Delivery £'000**	**Policy, Research & Information £'000**	**Community Fundraising £'000**	**Trading £'000**	**Total 2025 £'000**
Staff costs	33	538	97	700	139	49	14	1,570
Depreciation	-	5	1	5	1	-	-	12
Premises and equipment	1	18	3	24	4	1	1	52
Office supplies	5	74	13	97	19	7	2	217
Insurance	2	30	6	38	8	3	-	87
Irrecoverable VAT	5	80	14	104	21	8	2	234
Governance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other	16	274	49	357	71	25	8	800
Support Costs	**62**	**1,019**	**183**	**1,325**	**263**	**93**	**27**	**2,972**
Direct Costs	**84**	**4,815**	**550**	**2,065**	**946**	**285**	**157**	**8,902**
Total Costs	**146**	**5,834**	**733**	**3,390**	**1,209**	**378**	**184**	**11,874**

Group 2024	Membership £'000	NCT Courses £'000	Education and Practice £'000	Programme Delivery £'000	Policy, Research & Information £'000	Community Fundraising £'000	Trading £'000	Total 2024 £'000
Staff costs	22	506	136	472	128	48	19	1,331
Depreciation	1	12	3	11	3	1	1	32
Premises and equipment	3	59	16	55	15	6	2	156
Office supplies	4	88	24	82	22	8	3	231
Insurance	1	34	9	32	9	3	1	89
Irrecoverable VAT	3	68	18	64	17	6	3	179
Governance	-	10	3	9	3	1	-	26
Other	11	246	66	229	61	24	9	646
Support Costs	**45**	**1,023**	**275**	**954**	**258**	**97**	**38**	**2,690**
Direct Costs	**90**	**5,422**	**698**	**1,598**	**922**	**503**	**106**	**9,375**
Total Costs	**135**	**6,445**	**973**	**2,552**	**1,180**	**600**	**144**	**12,065**

Charity 2025	**Membership £'000**	**NCT Courses £'000**	**Education and Practice £'000**	**Programme Delivery £'000**	**Policy, Research & Information £'000**	**Community Fundraising £'000**	**Trading £'000**	**Total 2025 £'000**
Staff costs	33	538	96	700	139	49	14	1,569
Depreciation	-	4	1	5	1	-	-	11
Premises and equipment	1	18	3	24	5	1	1	53
Office supplies	5	74	13	97	19	7	2	217
Insurance	2	30	6	39	8	3	-	88
Irrecoverable VAT	5	80	14	104	21	8	2	234
Governance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other	16	274	49	357	71	25	8	800
Support Costs	**62**	**1,018**	**182**	**1,326**	**264**	**93**	**27**	**2,972**
Direct Costs	**84**	**4,815**	**550**	**2,065**	**946**	**285**	**157**	**8,902**
Total Costs	**146**	**5,833**	**732**	**3,391**	**1,210**	**378**	**184**	**11,874**

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

Charity 2024	Membership £'000	NCT Courses £'000	Education and Practice £'000	Programme Delivery £'000	Policy, Research & Information £'000	Community Fundraising £'000	Trading £'000	Total 2024 £'000
Staff costs	22	506	136	472	128	48	19	1,331
Depreciation	1	12	3	11	3	1	1	32
Premises and equipment	3	59	16	55	15	6	2	156
Office supplies	4	88	24	82	22	8	3	231
Insurance	1	34	9	32	9	3	1	89
Irrecoverable VAT	3	68	18	64	17	6	3	179
Governance	-	10	3	9	3	1	-	26
Other	11	246	66	229	61	24	9	646
Support Costs	**45**	**1,023**	**275**	**954**	**258**	**97**	**38**	**2,690**
Direct Costs	**90**	**5,422**	**698**	**1,598**	**922**	**503**	**106**	**9,339**
Total Costs	**135**	**6,445**	**973**	**2,552**	**1,180**	**600**	**144**	**12,029**

8 Net movement in funds

	Group		Charity	
	2025 £'000	2024 £'000	**2025 £'000**	2024 £'000
Net movement in funds is stated after charging:				
Depreciation/amortisation of fixed assets	32	32	32	31
Staff costs (excluding agency staff)	5,292	4,766	5,292	4,741
Operating lease rentals	11	11	11	11
Auditors' remuneration: audit services	55	52	55	47
Auditors' remuneration: non-audit services	-	2	-	-
Investment management fees	15	27	15	27
Gifts in kind from corporate partners	29	15	29	15

9 Staff costs and remuneration

Staff costs during the period were as follows:

	Group		Charity	
	Total 2025 £'000	Total 2024 £'000	**Total 2025 £'000**	Total 2024 £'000
Wages and salaries	4,426	4,176	4,426	4,153
Redundancy costs	294	66	294	66
Social security costs	365	326	365	324
Other pension costs	207	200	207	198
	5,292	4,768	5,292	4,741
Payments to agency staff	-	-	-	-
	5,292	**4,768**	**5,292**	**4,741**

There were no outstanding redundancy costs at the balance sheet date.

Staff costs by function were as follows:

	Group		Charity	
	Total 2025 £'000	Total 2024 £'000	**Total 2025 £'000**	Total 2024 £'000
Raising funds	111	95	111	95
Other trading activities	297	325	297	300
Charitable activities	4,884	4,346	4,884	4,346
	5,292	**4,766**	**5,292**	**4,741**

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

Higher paid employees:

	Group		Charity	
	Total 2025	Total 2024	**Total 2025**	Total 2024
£60,000 – 69,999	1	1	1	1
£70,000 – 79,999	1	3	1	3
£80,000 – 89,999	2	1	2	1
£90,000 – 99,999	-	-	-	-
£100,000 – 109,999	-	-	-	-
£110,000 - 119,999	1	1	1	1
	5	**6**	**5**	**6**

The pension cost for these employees, was £18,820 (2024: £19,873), which included the Chief Executive who received a total salary of £127,515 (2024: 118,965) and pension contributions of £6,376 (2024: £4,759).

The average headcount including part-time staff, analysed by function was:

	Group		Charity	
	Number 2025	Number 2024	**Number 2025**	Number 2024
Raising funds	2	2	2	2
Other trading activities	5	7	5	6
Charitable activities	155	154	155	154
Support	23	24	23	24
	185	**187**	**185**	**186**

The average number of full time equivalents, analysed by function was:

	Group		Charity	
	FTEs 2025	FTEs 2024	**FTEs 2025**	FTEs 2024
Raising funds	1.0	1.9	1.0	1.9
Other trading activities	3.4	5.6	3.4	4.6
Charitable activities	104.8	106.0	104.8	106.0
Support	21.6	21.3	21.6	21.3
	130.8	**134.8**	**130.8**	**133.8**

The key management personnel of the charity comprise the trustees and the executive team (referred to as the Directors Group). The total employee benefits of the key management personnel of the charity were £435,858 (2024 - £499,825).

Expenses were reimbursed to 5 (2024: 5) members of the Board of Trustees during the year. Their expenses amounted to £795 (2024: £131) in respect of expenses incurred as a trustee in attending board and related meetings, and £6,579 (2024: £19,157) in respect of expenses incurred for branch support and fees as practitioners or breastfeeding counsellors. No trustees were remunerated in the current or prior year.

We are very grateful to our excellent volunteers. Given the absence of a reliable measurement basis, donated services from our volunteers are not included within the financial statements.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

10 Intangible fixed assets

Group and charity	Software £'000	Total 31 March £'000
Cost or valuation		
At 1 April 2024	128	128
Additions	-	-
Disposals	-	-
At 31 March 2025	128	**128**
Amortisation		
At 1 April 2024	128	128
Charge for period	-	-
On disposals	-	-
At 31 March 2025	128	**128**
Net book values		
At 31 March 2025	-	**-**
At 31 March 2024	-	-

11 Tangible fixed assets

Group and charity	Property £'000	Equipment £'000	Total 31 March £'000
Cost or valuation			
At 1 April 2024	1,504	262	1,766
Additions	-	-	-
Disposals	(1,504)	(165)	(1669)
At 31 March 2025	-	97	**97**
Depreciation			
At 1 April 2024	267	258	**525**
Charge for period	30	2	32
On disposals	(297)	(165)	(462)
At 31 March 2025	-	95	**95**
Net book values			
At 31 March 2025	-	2	**2**
At 31 March 2024	1,237	4	**1,241**

Property relates to a leasehold building. This property was sold after the Balance Sheet date.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

12 Fixed asset investments

	Group		Charity	
	2025 31 March £	2024 31 March £	**2025 31 March £**	2024 31 March £
Investment in group undertakings:				
NCT (Maternity Sales) Limited	-	-	6	6
NCT Trading Limited	-	-	100	100
NCT Publishing Limited	-	-	2	2
First 1,000 Days Foundation	-	-	-	-
Other investments:				
Managed investment funds	4,007,427	3,996,678	4,007,427	3,996,678
	4,007,427	**3,996,678**	**4,007,535**	**3,996,786**

On 7 August 2013, the 'First 1,000 Days Foundation' was formed as a company limited by guarantee (registered in England and Wales 864816) with the sole member as The National Childbirth Trust. The Company has been dormant since incorporation. Investments in NCT (Maternity Sales) Limited, NCT Trading Limited and NCT Publishing Limited represent the entire called up share capital of the companies, all of which are incorporated in England.

	Registered Company Number	**Reserves at 31 March 2025 £**	Reserves at 31 March 2024 £
Investment in Group undertakings:			
NCT (Maternity Sales) Limited	01291517	6	6
NCT Trading Limited	02488491	-	-
NCT Publishing Limited	03017833	2	2
First 1,000 Days Foundation	08641816	-	-

The registered office for all of the above companies is: 27 Old Gloucester Street, London, WC1N 3AX.

Managed investment funds

Group and Charity	**2025 31 March £'000**	2024 31 March £'000
Market value at 1 April 2024	3,858	3,558
Acquisitions	747	2,086
Disposals	(692)	(2,016)
Net investment gains/ (losses)	31	230
Market value at 31 March 2025	**3,944**	**3,858**
The Market value is represented by:		
Equities	3,337	3,199
Bonds	607	659
	3,944	3,858
Cash held by investment managers	64	139
Total Investment fund	**4,008**	**3,997**

The charity's actively managed investment fund is revalued annually at the balance sheet date. The increase or decrease in value as a result of this valuation is recognised as an unrealised investment gain or loss.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

13 Debtors

	Group		Charity	
	2025 31 March £'000	2024 31 March £'000	**2025 31 March £'000**	2024 31 March £'000
Amounts due from subsidiary undertakings	-	-	39	21
Prepayments and accrued income	339	400	339	400
Trade and branch debtors	143	367	143	364
Tax recoverable	1	2	1	2
Other debtors	4	3	4	3
	487	**772**	**526**	**790**

'Trade and branch debtors' includes £nil (2024: £nil) due in more that one year.

14 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	Group		Charity	
	2025 31 March £'000	2024 31 March £'000	**2025 31 March £'000**	2024 31 March £'000
Expense creditors	227	341	227	341
Social security and other taxes	157	104	157	104
Deferred income	1,468	1,971	1,468	1,969
Accruals	851	643	851	636
	2,703	**3,059**	**2,703**	**3,050**

	Movement in Deferred Income			
Group and Charity	**At 1 April 2024 £'000**	**Deferred £'000**	**Released £'000**	**At 31 March 2025 £'000**
NCT Courses	1,724	1,256	(1,724)	1,256
Programme Delivery	245	212	(245)	212
Total for the Charity	**1,969**	**1,468**	**(1,969)**	**1,468**
Commercial Fundraising	2	-	(2)	-
Total for the Group	**1,971**	**1,468**	**(1,971)**	**1,468**

Deferred income relates to courses and contracts for services which have not been delivered at the balance sheet date.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

15 Restricted funds

The income funds of the charity and the group include restricted funds comprising the following unexpended balances of donations and grants held on trusts to be applied for specific purposes:

Group and Charity	At 1 April 2024 £'000	Movements in Funds: Incoming Resources £'000	Outgoing Resources £'000	Fund Transfer £'000	At 31 March 2025 £'000
Grants and donations received by branches	253	330	(348)	-	235
Newham Nurture	-	102	(102)	-	-
Glasgow Service Delivery	6	185	(179)	-	12
Birth and Beyond Community Service (BBCS)	1	14	(13)	-	2
Parents In Mind	3	-	(2)	-	1
Big Give – Infant Feeding Line	-	6	-	-	6
LIDL	-	-	-	-	-
Sports England	-	34	(18)	-	16
Other	5	8	(11)	-	2
	268	**679**	**(673)**	**-**	**274**

Group and Charity	At 1 April 2023 £'000	Movements in Funds: Incoming Resources £'000	Outgoing Resources £'000	Fund Transfer £'000	At 31 March 2024 £'000
Grants and donations received by branches	166	253	(166)	-	253
Glasgow Service Delivery	-	185	(178)	-	7
Birth and Beyond Community Support	-	31	(31)	-	-
Newham Nurture	-	96	(96)	-	-
Big Give	2	1	(3)	-	-
LIDL	28	-	(28)	-	-
Parents in Mind	-	3	-	-	3
Antenatal	-	6	(1)		5
	196	**575**	**(503)**	**-**	**268**

Glasgow Service Delivery – Funding to enable us to provide a range of community and hospital breastfeeding peer support services across East Lothian and Glasgow

BBCS – Funding to enable us to continue to provide Birth and Beyond Community Support to mothers who are at risk of isolation and not accessing services across Peterborough and Lincolnshire and extended into Wisbech and Fenland.

Newham Nurture – Funding to enable us to coproduce a programme of support to pregnant women and new parents from low income, migrant and marginalised backgrounds experiencing financial hardship and disadvantage.

Big Give – Funding to enable us to give extra resource to our Infant Feeding Line so that more parents can be supported during peak times.

LIDL – Funding to enable us to support parents through the cost-of-living crisis by providing free-to-access services.

NCT Parents in Mind – Funding to enable us to continue to provide ***NCT Parents in Mind*** our perinatal mental health peer support programme to families in need

Antenatal – Funding to enable us to work with NHS hospitals to get their antenatal education up and running with in their trusts, ensuring families have free access to antenatal education.

Sport England – Funding to enable us to develop our Walk & Talk activity across the United Kingdom.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

16 Unrestricted funds

Group	At 1 April 2024 £'000	Incoming Resources £'000	Outgoing Resources £'000	Unrealised Investment Gains/ (Losses) £'000	Transfer Between Funds £'000	At 31 March 2025 £'000
General Funds	3,092	10,447	11,445	31	1,481	**3,606**
Fixed Assets Fund	1,241	-	-	-	(1,238)	**3**
	4,333	**10,447**	**11,445**	**31**	**243**	**3,609**

Charity	At 1 April 2024 £'000	Incoming Resources £'000	Outgoing Resources £'000	Unrealised Investment Gains/ (Losses) £'000	Transfer Between Funds £'000	At 31 March 2025 £'000
General Funds	3,092	10,447	11,445	31	1,481	**3,606**
Fixed Assets Fund	1,241	-	-	-	(1,238)	**3**
	4,333	**10,447**	**11,445**	**31**	**243**	**3,609**

Group	At 1 April 2023 £'000	Incoming Resources £'000	Outgoing Resources £'000	Unrealised Investment Gains/ (Losses) £'000	Transfer Between Funds £'000	At 31 March 2024 £'000
General Funds	3,122	11,237	11,526	230	29	**3,092**
Fixed Assets Fund	1,270	-	-	-	(29)	**1,241**
	4,392	**11,237**	**11,526**	**230**	**-**	**4,333**

Charity	At 1 April 2023 £'000	Incoming Resources £'000	Outgoing Resources £'000	Unrealised Investment Gains/ (Losses) £'000	Transfer Between Funds £'000	At 31 March 2024 £'000
General Funds	3,122	11,237	11,526	230	29	**3,092**
Fixed Assets Fund	1,270	-	-	-	(29)	**1,241**
	4,392	**11,237**	**11,526**	**230**	**-**	**4,333**

The transfer between funds represents the movement in the fixed asset balance during the year.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

17 Analysis of net assets between funds

Fund balances at 31 March 2025 are represented by:

Group	Unrestricted Funds			
	General Funds £'000	Fixed Asset Fund £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	2025 Total £'000
Fixed assets	-	3	-	3
Investment assets	4,008	-	-	4,008
Net current assets / (liabilities)	(402)	-	274	(128)
Total net assets	**3,606**	**3**	**274**	**3,883**

Charity	Unrestricted Funds			
	General Funds £'000	Fixed Asset Fund £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	2025 Total £'000
Fixed assets	-	3	-	3
Investment assets	4,008	-	-	4,008
Net current assets / (liabilities)	(402)	-	274	(128)
Total net assets	**3,606**	**3**	**274**	**3,883**

Group	Unrestricted Funds			
	General Funds £'000	Fixed Asset Fund £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	2024 Total £'000
Fixed assets	-	1,241	-	1,241
Investment assets	3,997	-	-	3,997
Net current assets / (liabilities)	(905)	-	268	(637)
Total net assets	**3,092**	**1,241**	**268**	**4,601**

Charity	Unrestricted Funds			
	General Funds £'000	Fixed Asset Fund £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	2024 Total £'000
Fixed assets	-	1,241	-	1,241
Investment assets	3,997	-	-	3,997
Net current assets / (liabilities)	(905)	-	268	(637)
Total net assets	**3,092**	**1,241**	**268**	**4,601**

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

18 Taxation

The National Childbirth Trust is a registered charity and therefore is not liable to income tax or corporation tax on income derived from its charitable activities, as it falls within the various exemptions available to registered charities. Each year subsidiary companies, which do not have charitable status, may Gift Aid any taxable profits to The National Childbirth Trust. The charity and group is not able to reclaim all VAT suffered on expenditure due to the partial exemption regulations.

19 Operating lease commitments

At 31 March 2025 the group's future minimum operating lease payments were as follows:

	Group		Charity	
	2025 31 March £'000	2024 31 March £'000	**2025 31 March £'000**	2024 31 March £'000
Expire				
Within one year	11	6	11	6
Between one and five years	18	-	18	-
	29	**6**	**29**	**6**

20 Financial Instruments

The financial statements include the following in respect of items held at fair value at the balance sheet date:

	Group		Charity	
	2025 31 March £'000	2024 31 March £'000	**2025 31 March £'000**	2024 31 March £'000
Financial assets measured at fair value through profit and loss	3,944	3,858	3,944	3,858

21 Related party transactions

NCT Trading Limited is a subsidiary of The National Childbirth Trust and its shares are 100% controlled within the group.

During the year the National Childbirth Trust purchased services from NCT Trading of £nil (2024: £nil) on normal commercial terms. The National Childbirth Trust supplied services to NCT Trading of £10k (2024: £29k).

At the 31 March 2025 NCT Trading Limited owed The National Childbirth Trust £39k (2024: £23k).

No members of the Board of Trustees (2024: Nil) had a beneficial interest in contracts with the Charity. No member of the Board (2024: Nil) had a beneficial interest in a contract with a wholly owned subsidiary of The National Childbirth Trust during the period. At the date of signing the accounts, one (2024: one) trustee was also Director of NCT Trading Limited.

There was one related party transaction in the year from the consultancy services provided by supplier Hello Brave with contract value of £43k. The founder of Hello Brave is the sister of Tope Medupin who is Director of Operations and a member of the Directors Group. The decision to appoint the supplier was made through a competitive process following the procurement procedures by the Directors Group with the Director of Operations removed from the group when the decision was made owing to the conflict of interest.

There are no other related party transactions to disclose other than set out elsewhere in these accounts.

Reference and administrative information

Charity Registrations:

The National Childbirth Trust ('NCT')
Company Registration: 2370573 (England & Wales)
Registered Charity: 801395
Charity Registered in Scotland: SC041592
VAT: GB 115 0789 24

Registered Office:

27 Old Gloucester Street,
London,
WC1N 3AX

Board of Trustees who are also directors under Company Law at the date of this report are:

Charles Richardson (Honorary Treasurer)

Joëlle Warren (Chair)

Elaine Lambe

Ema Ojiako (Honorary Secretary)

Franciane Husbands-Chevot

Julien Haye

Mikayla Pencross

Sarah Brown (Vice Chair)

Sherry Bevan (President)

Vikram Sundarraj

Directors Group who are not directors for the purposes of Company Law at the date of this report are:

Angela McConville, Chief Executive

Chris Conway, Director of Finance

Natasha Simpson, Director of People, Education and Inclusion

Tope Medupin, Director of Operations

Jessica Abelscroft, Interim Director of Marketing and Engagement

Company Secretary

Chris Conway

Auditor:

HaysMac LLP
10 Queen Street Place
London
EC4R 1AG

Bankers:

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39 Threadneedle Street
London
EC2R 8AU

Cazenove Capital.
1 London Wall Place
London
EC2Y 5AU

Investment Advisors:

Rathbone Brothers PLC
8 Finsbury Circus
London
EC2M 7AZ

Solicitors:

Bates Wells & Braithwaite London LLP
10 Queen Street Place
London
EC4R 1BE

Subsidiaries:

NCT Trading Limited



© NCT is a trading name of The National Childbirth Trust. Limited company registered in England and Wales: 2370573.
Registered address: 27 Old Gloucester Street, London WC1N 3AX.
Registered charity in England and Wales: 801395 and Scotland: SC041592.

des5408

THE NATIONAL CHILDBIRTH TRUST

England & Wales - Charity number 801395

Accounts



Annual report & accounts

Year to 31 March 2024

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About us

Our vision

That everyone who becomes a parent feels confident, connected, and safe, because we believe that parents help build the foundations of the future.

Our mission

We're the charity that supports people as they become parents.

Through pregnancy, birth and early parenthood:

- We create opportunities for parents to connect with others.
- We share evidence-based information that parents can trust.
- We empower parents to make decisions that are right for them.
- We listen to parents' experiences and campaign to make things better.
- We build local capacity in communities so we can be there for parents, now and in the future.

Our values

Our values guide everything we do at NCT. They help us to navigate the way we work and behave and are interwoven throughout our strategy. The next five years will see our commitment to these values deepen and grow, as we continue to embed them across our work.

At NCT, we are:

- **Welcoming** – We are always welcoming, creating connections, and building communities.
- **Collaborative** – We achieve better outcomes by working together.
- **Inclusive** – We ensure equity and inclusion are core to who we are and what we do.
- **Bold** – We are bold, brave, and progressive.
- **Trusted** – We provide trusted, high-quality, evidence-based information, support, and services.

Our impact in numbers

Support in the community...

70,000

hours given by 3,000 volunteers to support local parents.



Over

95,000

people attended nearly 7,000 community events, including over 1,450 NCT Walk & Talk events and more than 3,155 NCT Bumps & Babies events.



3,700

parents were supported through our perinatal peer support programmes.



Responding to the cost of living crisis



Over

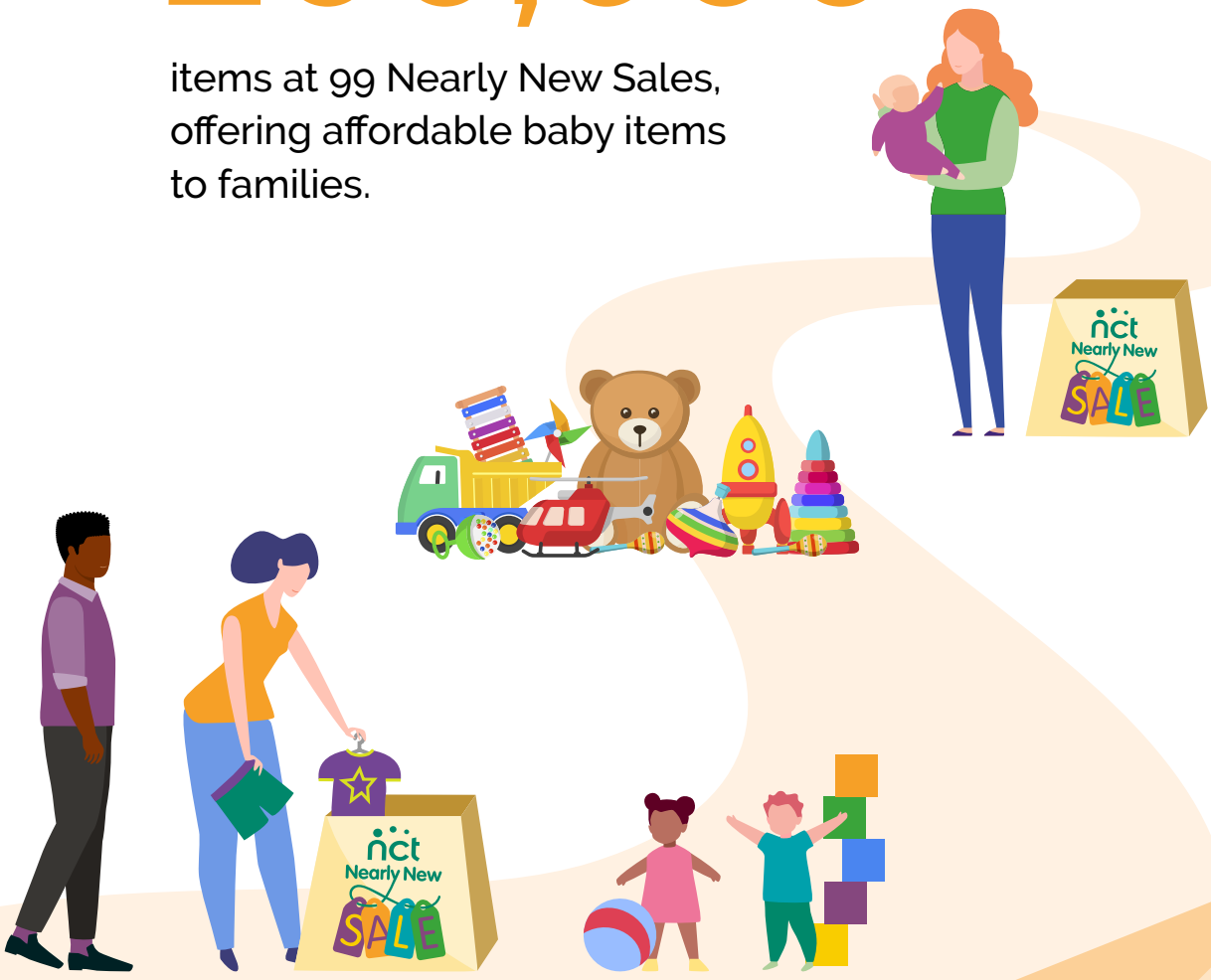
3,000

Baby Bundle items sent to new families in need.

Sold

200,000

items at 99 Nearly New Sales, offering affordable baby items to families.



Trusted antenatal and postnatal education

Nearly

66,500

parents were supported through NCT courses, run by over **530 practitioners**.



95%

of parents rated their NCT Antenatal course as 'good' or 'excellent'.

90%

of course attendees felt part of a supportive group of parents and 96% are still in touch after they have had their baby.

Infant feeding...

Grew

our **breastfeeding peer support** to support nearly **10,000 people** – 3,000 more than the year before – in postnatal and neonatal wards, as well as in community drop-in groups, NCT Baby Cafes, clinics, and home visits.



Over 6,300

parents attended NHS infant feeding sessions, facilitated by NCT across four NHS Trusts.

Ran 60

weekly NCT Baby Cafes providing feeding support to 7,580 parents in their local community.



Spoke to 7,740

people who called the NCT Infant Feeding Line and made the service available over bank holidays and religious festivals.

Information parents can trust...

Over

41 million

people reached via the media.



Over

7 million



people visited our website, including over 5 million views for our pregnancy, birth and life as a parent content.

Nearly

30,000

parents accessed Parenthub, our online learning platform.







Chair's welcome and farewell



This year marked my last as Chair of Trustees of this incredible charity. It has been my pleasure and privilege to be part of NCT's Board for the last seven years, and to have had the opportunity to Chair has been an honour.

I've witnessed first-hand the enormous difference NCT makes to so many pregnant women and expectant and new parents across the UK in those vital early stages of parenting. As we embark on the next phase of our For Every Parent strategy, the time is right for me to hand the baton over to someone new.

But what a high to leave on. Following the launch of *For Every Parent*, NCT grew in impact and reach, continued to innovate and be there for parents. To think that the number of parents who we supported in-person last year exceeded the capacity of Wembley Stadium is amazing.

There are no days off at NCT, because there's always someone who needs our support. Today might be your antenatal class, the day of your baby's birth, the moment you need help with feeding your baby, or to talk to someone about your mental health. I would like to thank the staff, volunteers and practitioners who work tirelessly to make life better for parents. They give and they go the extra mile every day.

Last year we continued to strengthen and diversify our Board of Trustees. At our 2023 AGM, members elected two new Trustees, Mikayla Pencross and Julien Haye, to the NCT Board to help us continue our vital work to support people as they become parents. Julien has actively advised NCT on EDI matters, shaping our strategy, mission, and values. He brings a perspective as an LGBTQIA+ parent to the Board. Mikayla has been an NCT Antenatal Practitioner and Breastfeeding Counsellor since 2020 and brings a wealth of experience of NCT's grassroots communities and delivering services to parents on the ground. We are delighted to have them both on the Board.

My sincere thanks to all the Trustees who give their time to steward our charity. I would particularly like to thank Susy Broekhuizen, who has been actively involved with NCT for over 25 years and who served on the Board until the end of the 2023 Annual General Meeting. I am also grateful to the six independent committee and other group members who support the Trustees and bring a wide range of perspectives to critical issues, helping us to stay on top of rapid changes in the external environment.

> *I am proud of who we are and what we have achieved together.*

We remain focused on supporting and empowering parents to make decisions that are right for them. This commitment runs through everything we do.

I know we can reach more parents, do more to support them, and work hard to create a system that works better for them at this critical, life-changing stage of their lives. I look forward to seeing our impact continue to grow once the new NCT Chair is in place.

Stephanie Maurel

Chair of Trustees

President's welcome



This past year has been an extraordinary journey for our charity, one that has seen us grow stronger and more impactful in our mission to support parents. Our charity's values—being welcoming, collaborative, inclusive, bold, and trusted—are the pillars upon which we build our vision of a thriving, supportive community. The stories in this report paint a vivid picture of the positive changes we've made and how we bring these values to life.

Welcoming to all

At the heart of our charity lies the commitment to be welcoming. This year, our local community groups have flourished, creating safe spaces where parents can connect, share experiences, and build lasting friendships. Take Emma, for instance, a new mother who felt isolated after moving to a new town. Volunteering as an NCT Community Builder, Emma built a network of welcoming, supportive parents and hosted local events, which filled a gap in her local community. Now she welcomes other new parents to the community – it's amazing to see this impact grow.

The power of collaboration

The success of our charity is deeply rooted in collaboration. By working together within our own NCT community and with our local delivery partners, we have achieved remarkable outcomes. Lauren's story is a great example of this - she received support from NCT's Glasgow Breastfeeding Buddies after a traumatic birth. Lauren was supported by our specially trained Neonatal Peer Supporters who provided essential information, as well as emotional and practical assistance, to help Lauren establish breastfeeding and feel confident and informed to introduce combination feeding for her newborn. Collaborating closely with our NHS colleagues – and thanks to funding from the Scottish Government and NHS – we helped thousands of parents like Lauren to feel supported and empowered to make the decision that are right for them and their babies.

Championing inclusivity

Inclusion is core to who we are and what we do. Be that launching our inclusive NCT Language Guide to our community, rolling out our Allyship Programme, or co-producing a new service to support a specific local group, we ensure that we cater to the diverse needs of the communities we partner with. Listen to Christie's* experience, for example. She reached out to me, as a Breast Feeding Councellor, for support on inducing lactation so that both she and her pregnant partner could breastfeed their baby. Months later, when the birth mother faced challenges with latching, I made a home visit and helped resolve the issue. Realising later that these two instances were connected, affirmed for me that our inclusive support for LGBTQIA+ parents is making a meaningful impact.

Embracing boldness and progress

We are bold and progressive in our approach, continuously evolving to meet the changing needs of families. This year we have co-produced new services with local parents. NCT *Parents in Mind for Dads and Partners* in Newham launched last year – with thanks to generous support of Newham Council – to offer a community-based support system for fathers and non-birthing partners experiencing mild to moderate mental health challenges. At a time when community services in the UK could become more impactful through co-production, NCT is really leading the way in just how meaningful and extensive community-based solutions can be.

Earning parents' trust

Trust is the cornerstone of our relationship with communities and parents. We provide high-quality, evidence-based information, support, and services that families can rely on. Last year my own local NCT Baby Café welcomed hundreds of parents through our doors.

> *This space has become more than just a café; it's a sanctuary of support which parents trust.*

Looking ahead with hope and focus

None of our work would be possible without the dedication of our volunteers, the generosity of our donors and partners, and the resilience of the parents we serve. Despite the challenges today's parents face, entering an underfunded and understaffed NHS maternity system, our resolve is firm – we're here to support everyone who becomes a parent to navigate their unique experiences of pregnancy, birth, and early parenthood.

Here's to another year of living our values and making a difference, one parent at a time.

Sherry Bevan

NCT President

Chief Executive's welcome



Becoming a parent changes you. It shifts your priorities. It can change your body, the way your brain is wired, and how you sleep. Parenthood changes how we think about ourselves and our place in the world. And it can change how we spend our time, energy, and money.

Being cared for during this monumental life change is a human right. That's why our charity has a clear and unwavering mission: to support people as they become parents and ensure that they feel confident, connected, and safe.

Over the last four years, NCT has been changing too. We have been transforming and modernising our charity, so we are equipped to make our mission a reality by supporting and educating all new and expectant parents as they navigate pregnancy, birth, and the early weeks and months with a new baby.

As NCT evolves, we are building on our proud 70-year history of advocating for pregnant women and new parents, listening to them, campaigning for their maternity rights, and striving to provide the most accurate, comprehensive, and impartial information and services.

Becoming a parent has always had its challenges, but today we are preparing people to enter a broken NHS maternity system in which they have an unacceptably high likelihood of negative[1] or traumatic experiences[2], where they may receive little or no postnatal support[3], and after which they will raise their child an incredibly tough social and economic environment.

It's shocking that in 2023 almost half of NHS maternity services were regarded as inadequate or requiring improvement when judged on safety[4]. All are dangerously underfunded and understaffed[5]. The stark reality is, this means in the UK today, a pregnant woman or person is just as likely as not to enter a maternity ward that doesn't meet basic safety standards.

Black and Asian women, as well as women living in deprivation, are disproportionately affected by these failings[6]. They are more likely to die in childbirth. So are their babies. These are devastating inequities in healthcare access, quality, and treatment, which have lasting, and often traumatic, impacts of the lives of women, parents, and their babies.

Rising cost of living pressures are felt more acutely by new parents too. Many struggle to adapt to the new expenses and changes to financial circumstances involved in raising a child[7]. Some face severe financial stress and social isolation.

Parents need urgent help to tackle these complex and unprecedented challenges, along with the day-to-day realities of life being an expectant or new parent. We know that education and personalised care this time improves the health and wellbeing of babies, which goes on to secure lifelong positive social outcomes. There's just so much for the UK to gain in getting this right.

> *It's time to make change happen.*

With a new Government in Westminster, there is a huge opportunity ahead of us to address the crisis in maternity and postnatal care. Some changes won't be possible overnight. Rebalancing the shortage in midwives, for example, will take time, leadership, and dedicated investment. But other changes are possible now, such as setting an explicit target to close the Black and Asian maternal and neonatal mortality gap.

In NCT's *For Every Parent* strategy, which launched last year, we committed to reigniting our focus on campaigning and community action. We're here to listen to parents' experiences, amplify their voices, and collaborate to achieve this urgently needed change.

As we respond to the changing needs of parents, we have also committed to reaching more parents with more impact, tackling health inequalities, and making our services and content more inclusive and accessible. We have expanded our free-to-access services ensuring every parent can access education and support, regardless of their circumstances. We've grown and developed our services for women and new parents needing support with their mental health or with infant feeding challenges, as we know these issues are among the top challenges facing new parents.

We have been chosen by increasing numbers of funders – from NHS Trusts and local authorities to The National Lottery – to work together to deliver programmes of support in local communities. And we have been delighted to receive new forms of support from trusts and foundations, like the City Bridge Foundation and Royal Docks Trust.

We now have more services online, and in the community, and we continue working to make everything we do accessible, inclusive and culturally safe. Last year, for example, we started rolling out new trauma-informed and anti-discriminatory practice CPD (continuous professional development) for our course tutors, so they have the necessary skills to support all parents and their unique experiences.

I am extremely grateful to all those who have supported our work this year in so many ways – individual members, practitioners, students, staff, volunteers and peer supporters, health professionals, partner organisations, supporters and funders – and without whom our work and impact simply wouldn't be possible.

My message to our partners and communities is to keep up your energy, momentum, and dedication – parents need us now more than ever and we've got big plans ahead.

As parents steward the next generation, they bring about great change. Together, we can ensure that every parent has the education and support they need to help build strong and positive foundations for the future.

Angela McConville

Chief Executive

[1] Maternity survey 2023 - Care Quality Commission (cqc.org.uk)
[2] Birth Trauma Inquiry Report for Publication_May13_2024.pdf (theo-clarke.org.uk)
[3] CDP-2022-0174.pdf (parliament.uk)
[4] Maternity survey 2023 - Care Quality Commission (cqc.org.uk)
[5] NHS maternity staffing crisis putting babies' lives at risk (rcm.org.uk)
[6] MBRRACE-UK Perinatal Mortality Surveillance: Report for births in 2022, Reports | MBRRACE-UK | NPEU (ox.ac.uk)
[7] Barnardo's report 'At what cost? The impact of the cost-of-living crisis on children and young people' , 2022, Cost-of-living report: impacts on children and young people | Barnardo's (barnardos.org.uk)



Strategic review

Our *For Every Parent* strategy, which launched last year, provides us with a bold and clear plan for the next five years, with a focus on four strategic pillars:



More parents, more impact

Real lives, real change

Great people, great results

Strong foundations, strong future

We're proud of the progress we've made in the last 12 months to reach more people, do more to support new and expectant parents, and work to create an equitable system that supports all parents at this critical, life-changing stage of their lives.

More parents, more impact

We support and empower all people as they become parents – through pregnancy, birth, breastfeeding, infant feeding, and early parenthood. Over the past year we've been building even bigger communities of new parents, tackling health inequalities, and making our services and content more inclusive and accessible.

Community based support, powered by volunteers

From Cardiff to Aberdeen and everywhere in-between, we create opportunities for parents to connect with other parents. It is through the dedication and passion of our volunteers and practitioners that we continue to make a meaningful difference and host safe, non-judgmental spaces for parents to share experiences, gain insights and build connections in their local communities.

Last year more than **3,000 volunteers** gave **70,000 hours** of their time to support local parents. Their efforts enabled over **95,000 people** to attend nearly **7,000 community events**, including over **1,450 NCT Walk & Talk** events and more than **3,155 NCT Bumps & Babies** events. And around 3,700 parents were supported through our perinatal peer support programmes, such as NCT Parents in Mind.

We created a new volunteer role – NCT Community Builders – to talk to parents to understand what they need in their local area, and then encourage people to get involved, volunteer, and build inclusive communities from the ground up. We've recruited 13 new NCT Community Builders in the first year alone, and we're excited to see these communities flourish in the years to come.



Local parent grows support group – one parent at a time

Last year we created a new volunteer role called the NCT Community Builder to encourage new, parent-led communities to grow. Emma saw the role advertised and started volunteering in September. "I moved to the area while on maternity leave and loved the idea of having a project that would help me to build connections with – and between – other parents, so I started an NCT Walk & Talk in September 2023," Emma told us. Soon after that, as Emma's volunteer community began to grow, together they responded to requests from parents and set up a regular NCT Bumps & Babies group. "Our sessions are led by an NCT Breastfeeding Counsellor, who gives support and guidance for all stages of the infant feeding journey."



As an NCT Community Builder, Emma is focused on linking up with other community and charitable groups. "Warwickshire Family Service recently came in to tell parents what they offer, and we also have a good relationship with Stratford Baby Bank. It is an honour to see the branch activity grow and reach more parents. We hope to open a Sling Library and Nearly New Sales soon." Emma Waight, NCT Community Builder, Stratford Upon Avon.



Parents gather for an NCT Walk & Talk in Stratford Upon Avon



Emma Waight, NCT Community Builder, Stratford Upon Avon

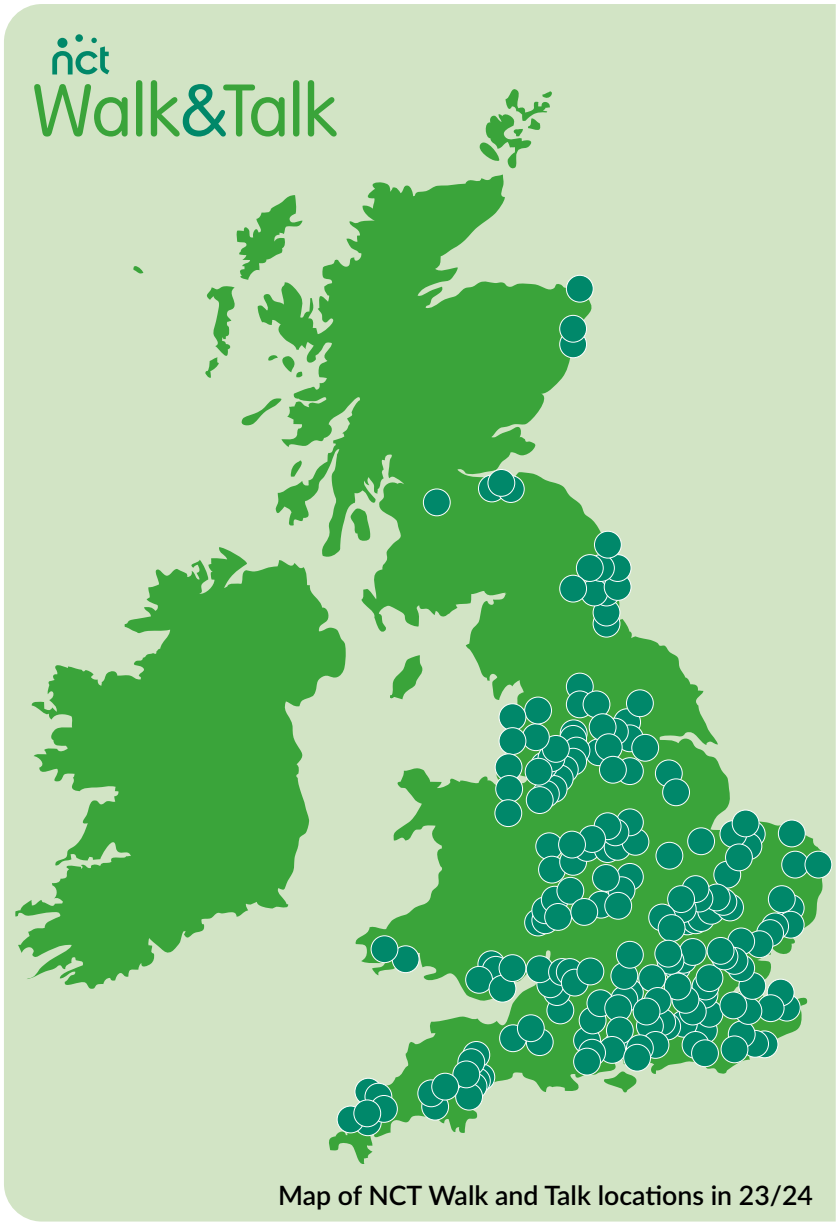
Walking and talking under rainbows

This year NCT volunteers hosted thousands of NCT Walk and Talks across the country, creating moments to meet new parents in the great outdoors. One NCT student and volunteer, Laurène Bizarro, decided to host her Walk & Talks in Brighton to mark Pride. “Seven years ago, while expecting my son, I vividly recall feeling isolated and struggling to connect with other families. As an NCT volunteer and student, my priority is to create an environment where no LGBTQIA+ family feels alone, anxious about others’ opinions, and where they can be confident that they are seen, heard, and safe. What better moment than to go for a walk together to mark Pride.”



Laurène with parents in Brighton





Map of NCT Walk and Talk locations in 23/24

Parents supporting parents to navigate mental health challenges

NCT's local peer-to-peer support groups play a crucial role in assisting parents with mild to moderate mental health challenges. Delivered by local parent volunteers, NCT Parents in Mind provides safe, non-judgmental spaces where people can share their experiences, talk about how they are feeling, and gain insights from others facing similar struggles.

Groups are led by Volunteer Peer Supporters, who each have lived experience of the challenges early parenthood can present and are passionate about making sure new parents don't feel alone. With the support of NCT's accredited training, and through their own experiences, they can help to bridge the gap between professional mental health services and the individual's personal journey.

We're proud of how this support network has grown – last year our Volunteer Peer Supporters were there for 3,700 parents who were struggling with their own mental health. Our thanks to all the parents, trainers, and funders who have helped make this work so far possible.

We are looking to expand this work to be there for more parents. To discuss support options and the possibility of commissioning Parents in Mind in your local area, please contact **programme.delivery@nct.org.uk.**



Coventry & Warwickshire Parents in Mind

nct Parents in mind

NCT Parents in Mind timeline

2016

NCT secured Department for Education funding for two-year pilot programme to explore what good quality volunteer-led community care for women and people who are pregnant or have given birth, experiencing mild-moderate mental health difficulties should look like. Our inaugural NCT Parents in Mind peer support programme began supporting parents in Coventry & Warwickshire.



NCT wins national award from Maternal Mental Health Alliance for Parents in Mind.

2017

NCT's Parents in Mind peer support programme launched in Widnes and Runcorn and London Borough of Newham.



All Parents in Mind sites that launched during the pilot were awarded continuation funding through Local Authorities, NHS Trusts, and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs).

2019

NCT launches its 'Hidden Half' campaign, highlighting research that showed that around half of new mothers' mental health problems don't get picked up by a health professional and calling for funding for dedicated, 6-week GP check-ups.



Parents in Mind support extended in the North-West of England, to Halton, Warrington, and St Helens. A service for dads and non-birthing partners was also set up in St Helens.

2020

The English government listened to #HiddenHalf supporters and announced that GP postnatal checks will be funded in England from April 2020, so every new mother will be entitled to a dedicated appointment with her GP practice to discuss her own health and mental health at around 6-8 weeks after she has a baby.

2022

Parents across Newham start working together to co-produce a service for fathers and non-birthing partners with mental health challenges.



2023

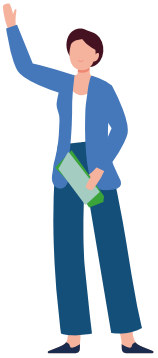
NCT pilots a peer support programme in Newham for fathers and non-birthing partners and goes on to establish a well-attended group, awarded funding from Newham Council.

NCT is awarded funding from East Sussex Family Hubs to offer mental health support for new dads and non-birth partners.

2023/24

Our impact continues to grow! 3,673 parents were supported through NCT's perinatal peer support programmes in the last year.

We now have over 250 peer supporters volunteering across NCT's services.



NCT is awarded funding from Hartlepool Borough Council to run support groups across the community and in Family Hubs.

Bonds between fathers reduces isolation in Newham

NCT's Parents in Mind Group in Newham launched last year – with thanks to the support of Newham Council – to offer a community-based support system for fathers and non-birthing partners. Co-produce with local parents, this service is specifically designed to address barriers in receiving accessible support for mild-moderate mental health challenges.



Malik* came to NCT during a turbulent period in his life, struggling to adapt to his new role as a father and single parent amidst personal upheavals and unresolved trauma. Feeling overwhelmed and isolated, he reached out to the NCT group, seeking support and guidance.

The group provided a safe space for Malik to connect with other fathers who had faced similar challenges. Through regular meetings via What'sApp, phone and groups, Malik engaged in open discussions that addressed not only practical aspects of parenting but also emotional and mental health support.

Malik developed bonds with the other parents through peer-to-peer mentorship. One of the peer-to-peer supporters who had spent time with Malik, shared, "When I first joined the group, I felt like I was drowning. But here, I found my anchor. I knew I had to pass that lifeline on." Malik said: "Joining the Dad's Group gave me a new perspective on fatherhood and helped me see that my struggles don't define my ability to be a good dad."

*Names have been changed to protect the parent's identity.



Newham parent attends NCT's group for fathers and non-birthing partners



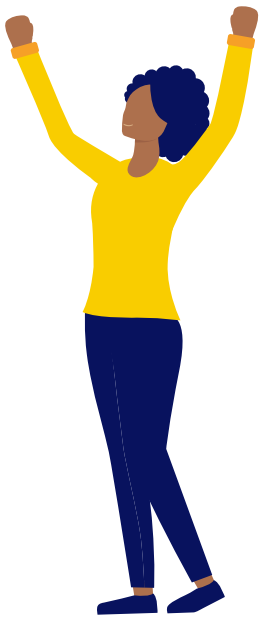
One-to-one support helps mother overcome fears

Jamilla* was referred to Parents in Mind by her Health Visitor after experiencing heightened anxiety since the birth of her 7-week-old baby. Despite having a supportive partner and family, Jamilla felt that this support was often focused on the baby, leaving her without a space to express her own feelings.

Jamilla's speech impediment, which worsened when she was feeling anxious, meant that she lacked the confidence to attend baby groups and meet new people, so NCT's Parents in Mind team offered one-on-one support over the phone. "I'm really grateful to have had the one-to-one phone calls," Jamilla recalled, "[it] gave me time to build up my confidence to going to group as I stutter when nervous, the thought of walking into a group full of people I didn't know made me feel anxious." At its worst, this anxiety often led to her avoiding new spaces or leaving abruptly due to her stutter, feeling embarrassed and judged.

Thanks to the strong connection she built with her peer supporter over the phone, Jamilla grew in confidence to eventually meet in person. "Without this encouragement, I wouldn't have attended the group," reflected Jamilla.

She went on to attend NCT's Parents in Mind Warrington and Halton weekly sessions. "Parents in Mind has helped me find more mums and feel less alone. It's just so nice to speak to others going through the same. I loved the art therapy and felt great afterwards." Jamilla met other mums, and found that having a safe, non-judgmental space focused on her feelings, made her feel less anxious and more connected to other parents. "I enjoy talking to the other mums every week," Jamilla said, "and I started a baby group [at the children's centre] that I wouldn't have ever thought I could do."



As Jamilla prepared to return to work full-time, she experienced a resurgence of anxiety, and worried about losing the group support. To help her transition back into work, Parents in Mind offered further one-on-one conversations to explore other support options available while working. This support meant that Jamilla could continue to access the NCT Parents in Mind service remotely providing her with a continuing safe space to focus on her feelings.

*Names have been changed to protect the parent's identity

Team spotlight: Cristina's journey to supporting parents

It's been quite the year for Newham NCT *Parents in Mind* Perinatal Coordinator, Cristina Galis!

Cristina began volunteering with NCT in 2023 as a Volunteer Peer Supporter with *NCT Parents in Mind* in Newham, to make a difference and help parents to feel less isolated and alone. "I started volunteering with NCT because the Parents in Mind mission was very close to my heart. I was the mum that needed the help when I had my son, and I didn't receive it."

Cristina wanted help to lift the stigma around postnatal mental health. While volunteering for NCT she attended the Volunteer Peer Support training which she found "amazing."

> *"After my training, I began supporting mums in groups and on a one-to-one basis. I loved doing something that made such a difference in someone's life."*



Cristina (right), Parents in Mind Perinatal Co-ordinator, and her manager Carol, Project Manager Parents in Mind

And then earlier this year, when an opening came up to become NCT Newham's Parents in Mind Perinatal Coordinator role, Cristina was encouraged to apply.

NCT National Perinatal Peer Support Manager, Emily Henson, said: "When the role came up, I encouraged Cristina to apply. Her passion and commitment to helping parents is truly inspiring."

Responding to the cost-of-living crisis

The birth of a new baby can result in financial hardship, when the costs of raising a child combine with a possible reduction in income as parents or caregivers take time off work to care for their new baby. Many parents already struggle to afford the basics, but as the cost living continues to soar, parents and families on a low income or living in poverty can face even greater financial stress or deprivation[8]. We know this in turn impacts parents' mental health and wellbeing overall[9].

Parents tell us that the cost of living is impacting their safety, their confidence, and how connected they feel to other parents in their communities.

We have worked hard to address these challenges and disparities through our services, support, and information. We have:

- Distributed over **3,000 essential Baby Bundle** items to new families in need.
- Sold **200,000 items at 99 NCT Nearly New Sales**, offering affordable baby items to families.
- Continued to expand our free-to-access services, including our antenatal education, infant feeding support, postnatal community groups and mental health services.
- Established partnerships that help parents save money on essentials.
- Asked for support for Baby Bundles as one part of our 2023 Big Give appeal. Our thanks to the amazing generous individual donors who answered this call and offered support.
- **Expanded our course discounts** so we can help more families to access quality education and support.
- Worked closely with other local services such as **food banks, baby banks, clothing banks, and emergency accommodation** to help parents and families who need support, particularly during the winter months, when the cost-of-living crisis was felt particularly acutely.



[8] Cost-of-living report: impacts on children and young people | Barnardo's (barnardos.org.uk)
[9] ihv.org.uk/news-and-views/news/health-visitors-raise-the-alarm-as-more-families-struggle-with-poverty-and-poor-health/

NCT Bumps & Babies

£1 stay and play session sees Skipton group grow

NCT volunteers in Skipton have created an affordable, flexible, and welcoming space for parents and families with young children at their weekly NCT Bumps & Babies group.

Thanks to a grant from the National Lottery Community Fund, parents pay just £1 to stay and play, enjoy a brew and a slice of cake. Keeping the group truly affordable has enabled new families from the area to attend.

NCT Volunteer, Sammi Orrah said "Countless parents have formed lasting friendships, and this sense of community is my greatest reward. Keeping the costs down has meant that the community can continue to grow."



Parents gather in Skipton for the weekly meet up





NCT Baby Bundles

New families given emergency essentials

Last year we provided over 3,000 items like nappies, newborn vests, sanitary pads, and baby wipes to families through emergency NCT Baby Bundles. Our volunteers worked closely with local healthcare professionals to run 18 different services across the country, ensuring that the bundles reach those who need them. Thanks to the Big Give 2023, NCT raised £7,000 in donations to support this vital work and other NCT services and support.

If you missed this appeal and would like to find out more about donating, please get in touch via **fundraising@nct.org.uk**



NCT's team sorting out emergency items

> *"The NCT team have been amazing; they have ensured that we have a constant stock of "kit" for women and new parents who are vulnerable and may not be able to afford the basic essentials for coming into hospital and having a baby."*

NHS Midwife, Sussex.

NCT Nearly New Sales

100 sales across the country help parents keep costs down

From clothes to cots, playmats to pushchairs, last year NCT Nearly New Sales helped parents sell and recycle over 200,000 items. With prices starting as low as 50p, our sales helped parents stock up on much needed baby essentials at a fraction of the price of the high street. Every item is quality checked by NCT volunteers, so that parents can trust the quality.



Volunteer sorting items at an NCT Nearly New Sale







Expanding infant feeding support for all

We believe that parents need unbiased, evidence-based information and support to enable them to feed their babies in the way they decide. Statistics show that a high proportion of parents, especially women and birthing parents, do not get the support and information they need during their feeding journey – be that breastfeeding, expressing, using bottles, using formula milk, mixed feeding, introducing solids, stopping breastfeeding or bottle feeding, and variations of all of these.



Breastfeeding Peer Supporter listens to parent

We understand that this can sometimes have a negative impact on feeding outcomes, and on the health of their child, as well as on a parent's own emotional wellbeing,

We offer women and parents support with all types of infant feeding, provide evidence-based information that is impartial and unbiased and empower people to make and sustain the decisions that feel right for them and their families.

Over the last year we have extended our free community-based breastfeeding and infant feeding provision, so even more parents can be supported and can gain confidence in their feeding decisions.

Last year we:

- Grew our **breastfeeding peer support** to support nearly **10,000 women** – 3,000 more than the year before – in postnatal and neonatal wards, as well as in community drop-in groups, clinics, and home visits.
- Launched new support in Hartlepool, Hackney, and increased our support in Scotland, Peterborough and Cambridgeshire.
- Over **6,300 parents attended NHS infant feeding sessions**, facilitated by NCT across four NHS Trusts.
- Ran **60 weekly NCT Baby Cafes** providing feeding support to 7,580 new parents.
- Supported **7,740 people who called the NCT Infant Feeding Line** and made the service available over bank holidays and religious festivals.

Feeding support on neonatal ward provides vital reassurance

Parents in Glasgow and Clyde have access to invaluable, free infant feeding support, generously commissioned by both the Scottish Government and the NHS. Last year NCT Glasgow and Lothian Breastfeeding Buddies gave over 3,800 instances of emotional and practical support to parents both in hospital wards and at local community drop-in support groups.

Our support extends into the postnatal and neonatal wards of five hospitals across Glasgow and Lothian. Our specially trained Neonatal Peer Supporters offer essential information, emotional, and practical assistance to help new parents, like Lauren, find a feeding solution that works for them and their babies, immediately after birth and throughout their baby's stay in the hospital ward.



Lauren holding hands with her daughter under blue lights

Lauren and her daughter were in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) when they met Rosie, an NCT Neonatal Peer Supporter.

When Lauren's baby was born by unplanned caesarian, her body "went into shock" she recalls. "When my baby was taken to neonatal unit, I hand expressed colostrum to try and support her while she was tube fed." Later, once mother and baby had both got the hang of latching, Lauren would breastfeed her around tube feeds and would also pump to stimulate her supply.

"But when she developed jaundice," said Lauren, "I decided to start bottle feeding her with formula, combining this with breastfeeding. She had a big appetite and we found she needed formula feeds to remain calm under the blue lights.

Lauren's story

"I was exhausted, conflicted, emotional and desperately needing reassurance that I wasn't sabotaging our chances of breastfeeding by combination formula feeding too", and this is when Lauren met NCT Neonatal Peer Supporter Rosie.

"Rosie was kind, non-judgmental and listened gently to my concerns, which was exactly the support I needed. She'd seen combination feeding work and helped me learn feeding techniques with the bottle that would mimic the breast.

"Rosie visited us around five times in the two weeks we were in hospital. I felt reassured in my moment of panic to stand by my decision on combination feeding for my daughter's best interest."



Lauren holding her daughter after feeding

> *She made a difference to my journey as a first-time mum. The way my baby looks at me while breastfeeding, strokes me and makes little noises of contented bliss while feeding makes our victory so much sweeter with our rough start.*

Collaborating closely with our NHS colleagues, we helped hundreds of parents like Lauren to find infant feeding solutions that are right for them and their baby, ensuring they felt supported and informed during this crucial time.

Appeal helps keep NCT Infant Feeding Line open over festive period

Last year, thousands of parents called NCT's Infant Feeding Line (0300 330 0700). For many, this service was nothing short of a lifeline. Tracey, a new mother, shared, "I was so grateful, particularly in the early days when we were on our own, close to tears."

All calls are answered by experienced NCT Breastfeeding Counsellors who offer relevant information and support - whether on breastfeeding, formula feeding or mixed feeding. "There's so much information online", said Tracey, "But nothing compares to the reassurance of speaking with a caring, knowledgeable person."

Thanks to this service, four out of five parents reported feeling more confident about feeding their babies, and that their mental wellbeing improved.

With health visitor and postnatal services stretched, sometimes parents find themselves days waiting for help. "There is so little instant support, and you need instant support when it comes to feeding your baby," Gia* told us.

> *I have used the feeding line multiple times, and I don't know what I would have done without it.*

Since 2010, support for families' health and wellbeing and children's social and emotional development, especially in areas of socioeconomic deprivation – have been in rapid decline. The rate of 0–4-year-olds attending A&E has increased by 42% over the same period[10]. With half of our callers seeking guidance for babies under two weeks old, it is clear that there is an urgent need for NCT's service and support.

Through generous donations from the public, we were able to keep this free service open every day from 8am to midnight, including on Christmas Day and New Year's Day. Thank you for helping us to continue to provide this essential service to families when they need it most.

After calling the NCT Infant Feeding Line

87% of callers felt more confident about feeding their baby

94% of callers felt less isolated

88% of callers reported that their mental well-being improved



[10] Understanding-the-rise-in-0-4-year-old-Emergency-Department-ED-attendances-and-changing-health-visiting-practice-FINAL-VERSION-18.12.23.pdf (ihv.org.uk)

Providing trusted and safe support, content and services

Over the year we've continued work to transform and modernise our charity to respond to the crisis in the UK's maternity system, and to equip parents with comprehensive, accurate, and impartial education, content, and services.

We launched a revised NCT Antenatal course framework, and a new course for the postnatal period, NCT New Baby. Both courses are underpinned by a refreshed approach to facilitation, to ensure that the information and support we provide to parents remains evidence-based, unbiased, and inclusive. We also rolled out a refreshed Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for NCT Practitioners, including training modules on trauma-informed practice and anti-discriminatory practice.

NCT Antenatal

The original and leading antenatal class, NCT Antenatal is based on the knowledge that every parent and every birth is unique. Our courses cover different types of birth, pain management, infant feeding and life with a newborn, to help parents feel confident and prepared with realistic and flexible plans.

Our courses continually evolve in response to the feedback from parent's and also reflect the latest guidance and research. In November 2023 we launched the refreshed NCT Antenatal course framework, underpinned by five new facilitation principles to ensure the courses are engaging, parent-centred, evidence informed and place emphasis on safety and active learning.

Last year nearly **66,500 parents** were supported through NCT courses, run by over **530 practitioners**. Our courses continued to help parents build supportive communities, identify trusted information and create realistic expectations for labour and birth.



Parents take part in interactive exercise

Our post-birth evaluation showed:



95% of parents rated their NCT Antenatal course as 'good' or 'excellent'.

90% of course attendees felt part of a supportive group of parents and **96%** are still in touch after they have had their baby.

85% of parents told us that we helped them identify trusted information, and **84%** said their course helped create realistic expectations for labour and birth.

89% of parents reported that they felt less isolated after birth as a result of taking part in an NCT Antenatal course.



As a first time mum, I found the information received at the NCT course invaluable. It provided a great jumping off point on a wide range of topics, from labour to safer sleep and feeding. The facilitators were non-judgemental and made everyone in my group feel confident to ask questions and contribute to discussion. My husband and I are really glad that we did this course and I have now booked an NCT baby first aid course as well.

Lauren, Ystradowen, Wales.

NCT was a great introduction to parenthood, learning what to expect with a newborn and how to make sure you are giving them the best start to life you can. It made us feel ready to welcome the new baby and understand how to make sure all their needs are met. The course instructor was extremely knowledgeable – an ex midwife, with plenty of tips. Meeting other parents in the same position is fantastic and watching our new friends grow their famillies is amazing!

Rebecca, Warwickshire.

“We felt prepared for the arrival of our baby – and to be the best birthing partners”

After getting over the initial shock of “Wow, we’re going to be parents” we then realised “What on earth do we do now?”, so NCT seemed the best place to start.



Tom and his partner with their baby girl

We didn’t quite know what to expect. Being responsible for a baby and keeping them alive is a daunting task and we also didn’t know any other same-sex couples who had done an NCT course. We felt apprehensive - how would it feel being in a very female-dominant space? Would other parents understand us being there?

Within a minute of walking through the door, those fears fell away. Our NCT Practitioner was immediately so welcoming and warm. She acknowledged that our setup was different and reassured us that she would support us on our journey regardless of the differences.

It was the little things that mattered. Each week she would point out differences that were more important to us, bring useful resources and signpost extra helpful things for us to look at. She offered to meet us outside of the session to talk more about how things might be different for us and was always mindful we didn’t necessarily fit other advice. Being a same-sex male couple, we clearly knew we wouldn’t breastfeed, and our teacher was helpful here too, making sure anyone bottle feeding was totally informed and comfortable.

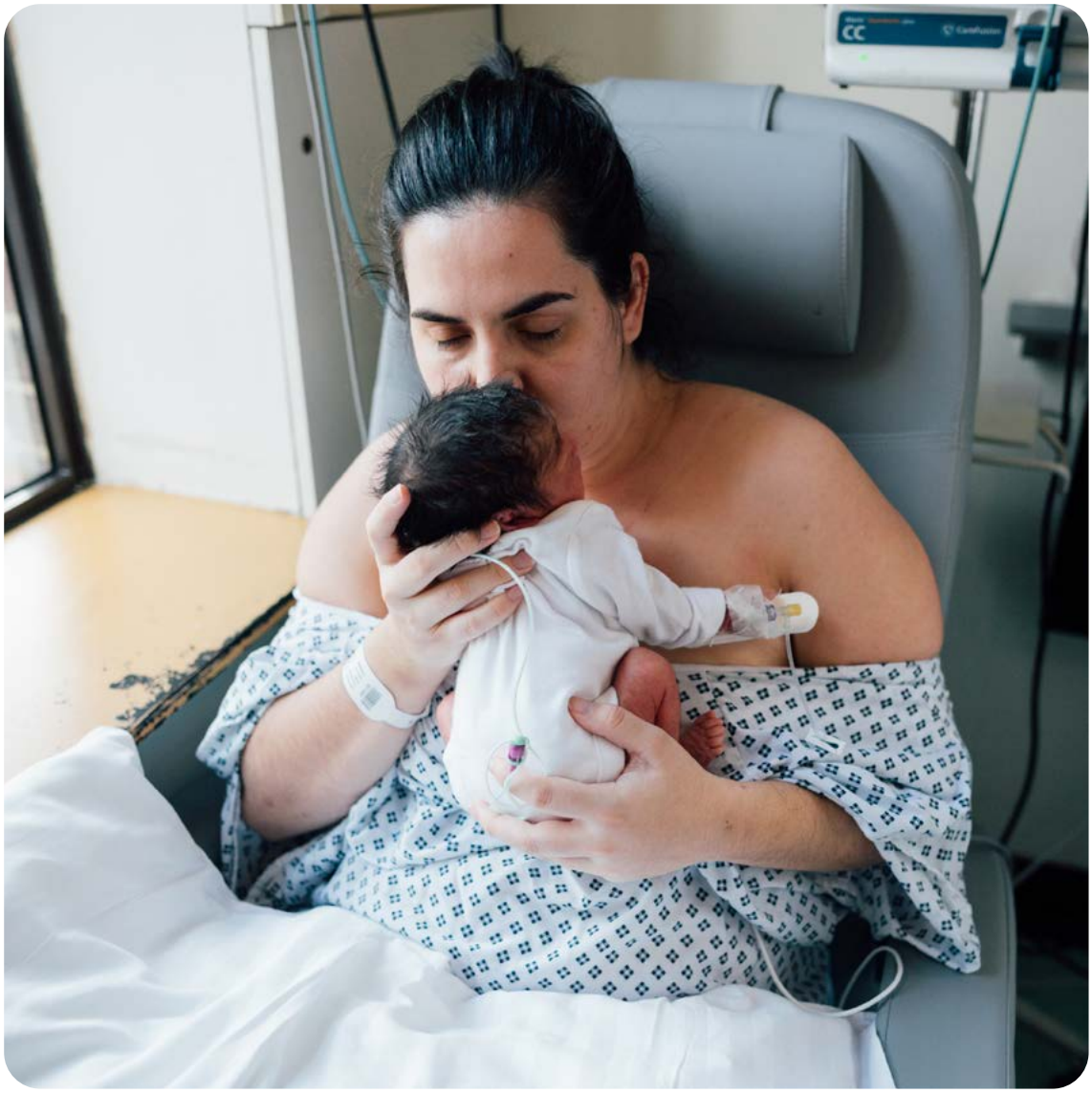
When you become a parent, it can feel that there is a lot of judging of choices – but not in this space. Any fears about being judged fell away – and we finished the course feeling confident and comfortable. We never felt like the odd ones out.

Doing NCT Antenatal helped us to be the best birthing partners to our surrogate we could be. Before the birth, it meant we felt informed when talking with her about the type of birth she wanted. During the birth, it meant that we knew what was happening and what choices needed to be made. Of course, ultimately it was her body and her choice, but we felt like a team, in it together.

We got home with our amazing daughter from the hospital at 1am. As our parenting instincts kicked in, we found ourselves putting everything we’d learned about baby care at NCT to immediate use. It helped us to get through the first few weeks, especially knowing what’s normal for a newborn.

Trauma-informed practice

Trauma can leave lasting emotional and physical scars. With an increasing number of women experiencing traumatic births, we are now rolling out Trauma Informed Practice training and professional development for all our practitioners. We're focused on ensuring that parents with trauma feel safe and that our practitioners can offer them practical and emotional support.



NCT's New Baby Course helps parents in the early weeks



NCT Practitioner offers parent support



The early days and weeks of having a new baby can be full of wonder, but they can also be challenging and isolating. Parents often tell us that they feel overwhelmed by information, advice and decisions.

Responding to this call for help, we co-produced NCT New Baby with parents and experienced NCT Postnatal Practitioners, to meet the needs of parents or caregivers in the early weeks of their baby's life.

The classes help parents to build a network of support by introducing them to other new parents at a similar stage to them and linking them into local services. "Being a new parent can be quite challenging. It was lovely to meet other parents in the same situation," one parent, Magdalena explained, "we received so much support from our course leader."

With information about how babies grow, develop and learn, the course gives parents skills and strategies to parent and care in ways that are right for them. "It helped me realise how to navigate certain things and emotions – they didn't give me all the answers but helped me to understand where I could find what suits me and baby and my husband", another parent, Sana reflected.

Since its launch hundreds of parents, like Magdalena and Sana, have taken the course.

NCT Practitioners in the community

NCT Practitioners are committed educators who care deeply about safe and equitable outcomes for all women, parents, and their babies. We are proud of our community of over 530 practitioners across the country. In 2023-24, 53 new practitioners completed a qualification to support the parents of the future.

Simone's story

"I left midwifery to offer holistic care to expectant and new parents and their babies"

Simone trained as a midwife but left the profession after becoming fed up and exhausted.

"I felt like women and new parents deserved more than what I was able to give in the stretched NHS, so decided to leave and find another way I could give back in a more supportive role," she reflected. Simone decided to train to become an NCT Antenatal Practitioner. "The PHECert was in some ways a refresher on my midwifery training," she explained, "but it went deeper into how to balance the evidence, take a women-centred approach and be an advocate for parents."

The learning environment was flexible and personalised. "Being dyslexic," she said, "I was supported to access funding to support my learning style. I appreciated resources and presentations being sent in advance and benefited from one-to-one meetings with the tutors." Simone went on to complete NCT's Doula Pathway, Postnatal, and Baby Yoga and Massage. And since graduating with NCT, Simone has collaborated with Black Mothers Matter to run a range of services for Black or Mixed Black women and new parents based in Bristol.

"I now describe myself as a birth and beyond consultant - offering holistic care to expectant and new parents and their babies," Simone explained. "We have created spaces so people from Black communities can feel safe, relaxed, free and affirm each other. Most recently we've launched a free antenatal course which women can join at any point in their pregnancy." Simone remains committed to providing personalised, non-judgmental, evidence-based information to parents. "I believe that birth is not just a single event but a pivotal experience that can shape the parent-child relationship and parenthood journey," she told us. "It is my mission to bridge the gap in services."



Simone running a pregnancy yoga class



Simone Sciberras was awarded the NCT Sheila Kitzinger Award in 2023. This award is given to the student who has demonstrated the best understanding of woman-centred care and birth practices, taking into account the wide range of cultures across the UK.

Real lives, real change

There is more work to be done to ensure everyone who becomes a parent feels, and is, safe during their pregnancy, birth, and as they adjust to life with a new baby. The UK maternity system is dangerously underfunded and understaffed; in late 2023 the Care Quality Commission found that people's experiences of maternity care have deteriorated in the last 5 years[11].

We believe that the quality of care a pregnant woman or pregnant person receives during or after birth should not be determined by their ethnicity or postcode. Yet Black women are still almost four times as likely, and Asian women almost twice as likely, to die during pregnancy or up to six weeks after birth compared with white women. And women living in the most deprived areas continue to have the highest maternal mortality rate compared to those living in the least deprived areas. We continue to call for urgent action to ensure equitable care is available and accessible for all, regardless of their background, circumstances, or where they live in the UK.

Postnatal care is in crisis. The health visiting profession has witnessed a loss of almost 40% of its workforce since 2015,[13] and timely access to GP provision is also an issue: public satisfaction with the NHS has slumped to its lowest level ever recorded in the 40-year history[14]. Against this backdrop, it is unsurprising that babies under one have the highest rate of A&E attendance compared to any other age group[15].

From campaigning for change at a national policy, to working in local communities and providing support and services tailored to meet parent's needs, we are working to ensure that everyone receives safe, respectful, and equitable maternity care.



[11] Maternity survey 2023 - Care Quality Commission (cqc.org.uk)
[12] Reports | MBRRACE-UK | NPEU (ox.ac.uk)
[13] ihv.org.uk/news-and-views/news/health-visitor-workforce-numbers-in-england-reach-an-all-time-low/
[14] Public Satisfaction With The NHS And Social Care In 2022 | The King's Fund (kingsfund.org.uk)
[15] Understanding-the-rise-in-0-4-year-old-Emergency-Department-ED-attendances-and-changing-health-visiting-practice-FINAL-VERSION-18.12.23.pdf (ihv.org.uk)

A safe place for new and expectant parents seeking asylum and refuge

For 20 years, NCT has run an antenatal education group in West Yorkshire that supports parents who are refuges or seeking asylum. The group, NCT Leeds Bankside, is a safe place for parents to access essential antenatal education as well as information and support about feeding, sleep, and caring for their baby.

"The project is a lifeline for many asylum seeking and refugee women who often come to us with no family or support network," said NCT Practitioner Rose McCarthy, who has run the group every week since 2003.

Each year NCT Leeds Bankside supports around 50 parents, many who have poor mental health, speak English as an additional language, or are isolated from family or friends. At NCT Leeds Bankside parents can share their hopes, fears, and experiences, access information and support, and connect with other parents who may have experienced similar struggles.



NCT Practitioner Rose McCarthy with NCT Volunteer, Wan

Wan, an asylum-seeking parent, attended the classes before the birth of her eighth child and now volunteers with the group. "As a domestic abuse survivor, I feel this group helped me to build confidence in myself" Wan told us. "I had very low self-esteem, but the group is a space to share experiences and feel accepted. After the birth of my son, I started volunteering and helping other mothers struggling with their mental health in pregnancy. I love to see the smiles on their faces after each session."

The group was launched by Sure Start after surveying local parents about attending antenatal classes, but since 2011 has been funded by and delivered in collaboration with Leeds City Council.





Newham's most vulnerable families supported during pregnancy and early parenthood

NCT's Newham Nurture Perinatal Partnership is led and co-designed by migrant and marginalised women, providing holistic support to Newham's most vulnerable families during pregnancy and early parenthood. Last year we supported over 600 women and babies; many are refugees and asylum seekers or women with no recourse to public funds, living in temporary accommodation. We offer them educational classes and workshops on perinatal/infant health, peer support, drop-in sessions and link work.



Co-design session with parents in Newham



Following a successful pilot commissioned by the Department of Health (2020 - 2023), we are grateful to the City Bridge Foundation for choosing to support this work via a three-year-grant. Our thanks as always to Newham Council for their ongoing support, and to the Royal Docks Trust for their new commitment to help deliver additional mental health support to this community. This work would not be possible without the essential support of these agencies.

Collaborating and campaigning for change

We believe that collaboration within the maternity sector is vital for influencing policy making and effecting positive change. This collective voice brings together diverse expertise and perspectives to advocate for and inform policymakers about the challenges faced by parents, particularly those who are under-served by our society. Our work aims to ensure that policy decisions are informed by real-world experiences and evidence and respond to the needs of parents today.

Here are a few highlights of our campaigns and collaborations from last year:

NHS England's Maternity and Neonatal Stakeholder Council

NCT was reappointed to the NHS England's Maternity and Neonatal Stakeholder Council in March 2024. The Stakeholder Council acts to support NHS England's Maternity and Neonatal Programme in its implementation of the three year delivery plan for maternity and neonatal services.

Black Maternal Health Conference UK

NCT was proud to support the 2nd Black Maternal Health Conference UK, looking at solutions around the racial disparities facing Black women accessing maternity services. Organised by The Motherhood Group, the event helped to bridge the gap between community, service providers and industries to understand and learn how we can all play our part to deliver personalised, respectful, and culturally competent care.



Angela McConville (left), NCT Chief Executive and Sandra Igwe, The Motherhood Group CEO



One Voice Alliance

A collaboration between the Royal College of Midwives (RCM), Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, Institute of Health Visiting, NCT, Association of Anaesthetists and Sands, GPs Championing Perinatal Care, Maternity Mental Health Alliance, Tommy's. The purpose of One Voice is to bring together organisations that collectively represent the voice, experience, and expertise of parents and maternity professionals.


Members of the One Voice Alliance

Earlier this year the One Voice Alliance, chaired by the RCM and bringing together professional and voluntary sector organisations, met with the then Shadow Minister for Women's Health, Abena Oppong-Asare MP, to discuss priorities for the next Government. A joint letter was sent to the Shadow Minister to reinforce the Alliance's list of priorities.

UK Covid-19 Inquiry

NCT's participation in the National Covid Inquiry continued through the year, as a member of a Core Participant grouping of 13 charities from the pregnancy, baby and parenting sector. We are consistently pressing for a greater focus around the pandemic's impact on expectant and new parents, as well as their babies. Through this we aim to shine a light on shortcomings or failures in maternity care during the pandemic and draw lessons to improve future preparedness and response to public health crises.

APPG Birth Trauma Inquiry

Every year we listen to thousands of parents via our post-course surveys to ask them about their experiences of birth. We consistently hear about a maternity system under strain and that is unable to provide the safe, personalised care women and parents need. We shared these insights from parents with the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Birth Trauma Inquiry as part of their report, which called for urgent changes to the UK maternity system and met with Theo Clarke MP. We supported the inquiry's recommendations for an integrated maternity strategy led by a new Maternity Commissioner, and the provision of equitable access to antenatal education through NHS Trusts.



NCT Polwarth Bumps & Babies group

Scottish maternity policy

NCT continues to scrutinise the implementation of Scottish maternity policy, The Best Start, by sitting on the Implementation Programme Board. Reflecting joint work across services for parents and babies, we also attend the Scottish Perinatal Network, which encourages collaboration across maternity and neonatal services and supports the best possible outcomes for women and new parents, babies, and families. There has been an increased focus on service user engagement, with NCT input, resulting in recommendations to government in September 2023 with an emphasis on tackling inequalities.

State of Maternity Services in Northern Ireland

NCT's Chief Executive, Angela McConville, represented NCT in Belfast to advocate for a new maternity and neonatal strategy and argued that the recruitment and retention of midwives to deliver high-quality, personalised care must be at its core.

Great people, great results

Our people hold the key to our impact. We're building a diverse and inclusive community of staff, practitioners, students, peer supporters, and volunteers who are empowered in their work to support everyone who becomes a parent to feel confident, connected, and safe.

We have made progress on our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) ambitions over the last 12 months to ensure that all our people and all parents feel that they belong and are included at NCT, irrespective of their background.

This year, we continued this important work by:

- Ensuring that equity and inclusion remains central to our recruitment process. We co-facilitated an inclusive recruitment activity for the Senior Leadership Team, which included the planning of interview panel members, addressing bias, and diversity of thoughts and experiences.
- Launching the NCT Language Guide internally, to support our community to ensure our information and services are as inclusive and accessible as possible.
- Strengthening our governance, culture and leadership by refreshing our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group.
- Embedding anti-discriminatory approach within our education. The Anti-Discriminatory Practice (ADP) Module within our CertHE NCT Perinatal Education and Practice, for academic year 2022/23 was completed and evaluated.
- Continuing to champion inclusion in all our work with parents by:
  - Reviewing content on our website to ensure it is culturally appropriate, safe and evidence based.
  - Co-designing services with parents to ensure inclusion is a key consideration and to expand and reach more parents.
  - Supporting the course booking journey to ensure the accessibility needs of parents are met.

We're committed to using our platform as an anti-racist charity to raise the voices and experiences of marginalised and under-served groups, and ally with others who are also working to create equitable maternity and postnatal care.




Oliver

> *Allyship involves active support for the rights of under-served groups – by people who are not members of these groups. Allyship is crucial for equity and inclusion. Being an ally comes from personal reflection and learning, and requires individual commitment to real, long-term action – it is a role we can all play in building a fairer, more equitable society.*
>
> Louise Oliver, NCT's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Lead

As well as our public campaigns and partnerships, we boosted our EDI events internally, including NCT's Allyship Programme. Over the last 12 months we've run Allyship Support Spaces, and more than a hundred staff, volunteers, students and practitioners have attended so far.

We also launched a series of bitesize Volunteer Allyship videos tailored for our volunteer community.

We held events for our community to mark PRIDE, Black History Month and International Women's Day. These have supported our community to gain a better understanding of the experiences of parents from marginalised communities through the sharing of stories and enhanced by the addition of practical information about how to best support.

> *It was lovely to be invited to speak at the @nctcharity Black History Month All Community Event. Sharing my motivations for founding @blackbabylossawareness, my role @tommys_pregnancyhub and the work I do to raise awareness of Black #infant #mortality and the services that exist to support #bereaved #parents is always an honour.*
>
> Alicia Burnett, midwife and founder, Black Baby Loss Awareness

"This was such a fantastic, informative session to learn more about allyship and what that means for us as volunteers. I came away understanding allyship better and how I can support, advocate for and be proactive as a volunteer." Attendee at Volunteer Allyship 'Learn and Chat'.



Wellbeing pledges

As part of NCT's ongoing commitment to embedding a culture of putting people first, we set eight Wellbeing Pledges to improve staff wellbeing while working remotely, create more breathing space within time at work, and to help staff to balance their work commitments with all other aspects of life. These include Meeting-free Fridays; one 'stock-take' day every 6 months – where no meetings, calls or events are to be held, across the whole organisation; and one hour per month of personal development time.

Strengthening safeguarding at NCT

NCT is committed to providing safe, trusted spaces for parents, staff, volunteers and practitioners. As such, over the last 12 months, we have strengthened our safeguarding work. An external audit was commissioned, focusing on the safeguarding function within our Programme Delivery teams. The audit team also looked at policies and procedures across the charity, staff training and leadership. The auditors cited the 'passion and commitment' NCT's team have towards supporting adults and children, and praised the safeguarding work happening on the ground. Recommendations made in the auditors report have been incorporated into the NC Safeguarding improvement action plan.


For
Every
Parent
Pride
DOES NOT

Strong foundations, strong future

To support people as they become parents now and into the future, our charity must be progressive, sustainable, and here for the long term. We're committed to making it easier for parents to access our services and for our teams to deliver them.

We continue to strive to put data and technology at the heart of how we operate, completing the migration of our membership platform onto a modern system integrated with courses.

Improvements have been made in our policies and practices around data protection, with records of processing activities revised for every area and training needs analysed. Progress was also made to ensure compliance with the NHS Data Security and Protection Toolkit.

Health and Safety remained a key priority for the year. Particular attention was paid to ensuring everyone's safety in times of extreme weather events, confirming that the venues we use meet core safety standards and improving our guidance on the use of display screen equipment and homeworking.

Our Ethical Funding Framework

Collaborating with our supporters, applying resources, and investing funds for our future are critical activities that help us fulfil our charitable mission of supporting people as they become parents through each unique journey of pregnancy, birth, and early parenthood.

Our policies and practices in this space have evolved over many years as we build upon our respected heritage of working with a wide variety of supporters to support new and expectant parents.

In 2023, following its approval in 2022, we rolled out our latest framework to ensure that our values and legal responsibilities are represented across all our partnership activities, including all types of supporters (e.g. corporate, charity or individual donor) and all types of funding (e.g. from donations to our own investments).

Additions have been made to the new policy that enshrine our commitments to parent and baby safety; equity, diversity, and inclusion; human rights; and the environment. It also renews our commitments to the WHO International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and the UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative.

Our Commercial and Charitable Activities Policy framework is designed to empower our communities in taking decisions at local level while still adhering to our values and principles. It will help us ensure that our funding and partnering arrangements are in the best interests of our charity's mission, while providing more freedom and flexibility for our volunteers to take decisions on fundraising, commercial and charitable gifts and giving.



NCT Membership

Current and past NCT members provided valuable opinions and feedback on their NCT Membership experience through online surveys sent in November 2023 and January 2024. Alongside positive comments including “Lovely to be a member” and “Keep up the good work”, members shared a range of views about their involvement with NCT as a member.

Some immediate changes have been made to membership in response to this feedback, including adjusting the frequency of the flagship email update, NCT Matters, and reviewing member discounts, with a new member, family & friends discount for selected NCT courses introduced in the spring of 2024.

These important member insights are also helping to shape the future of membership at NCT, as work continues on will help support future membership programme development through 2024-25.



London Marathon 2023

Six runners completed the iconic London Marathon in April 2023 raising £14,510 for NCT. They achieved fantastic times and their dedication to fundraising was amazing.

Runners were:

- Alan Milstein
- Emmanuelle Bentley-Sanders
- Karen Miles
- Becky Peirani
- Emilie VanBrabant
- Kelly Dippenaar

Thank you so much to all of our 2023 London Marathon team #TeamNCT! If you're interested in running the Marathon or fundraising for NCT, please do get in touch via fundraising@nct.org.uk



> *What an amazing day.*
>
> Alan Milstein, runner





Thank you to all our partners and supporters this year, including those who wish to remain anonymous. Your support helped to make a difference to parents and babies during the life changes of pregnancy, birth and early parenthood.

Organisations, alliances, and networks that we have worked with during the year

Alternatives Trust East London; Association of Volunteer Managers (AVM); Birthrights; Bourne This Way Black Mothers Matter; brap; Breastfeeding Alliance; Breastfeeding Network; British Pregnancy Advisory Service; Baby Feeding Law Group (BFLG); City of Sanctuary; Compost London; First 1001 Days; Movement; Five X More; Good Innovation; Hello Brave; Institute of Health Visiting; LGBT+ Mummies; The Magpie Project; Maternity Action; Mini First Aid; One Voice Alliance; Pregnancy and Baby Charity Network; Proud 2 B Parents; RELAX Study; Royal College of Midwives; Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists; Together; The Big Help Out; The Motherhood Group; STFWV; Shaping the Future with Volunteering; University of Worcester.

Research partnerships and contributions

Early Lives Equal Start Shared Learning (Oxford); Health and Social Care Scrutiny Report (Inequalities in Maternity); Family Hub Integrated Management groups;London Maternity Consortium; London Maternity Clinical Network; NHS Race & Health Observatory (RHO); NHS England; MAP Alliance; Local Maternity and Neonatal service user forum, Perinatal Mental Health Reference and working Groups, MNVPs; The University of Aberdeen; University of Dundee.

Stakeholder and programme boards that we contributed to

MBRRACE-UK Third Sector Stakeholder Council; Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency; National Maternity and Perinatal Audit Clinical Reference Group; NHS England Maternity and Neonatal Stakeholder Council; Scottish Government 'The Best Start' Implementation Programme Board.

Funders, partners and commissioners

Babycare TENS; Big Give; Bradford District Care Trust; Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West LMNS; Cambridgeshire County Council; Coop Community Fund; Countess of Chester Hospital NHS Foundation Trust; Coventry & Warwickshire Partnership NHS Trust; City Bridge Foundation; Cross Keys Homes; Department of Health and Social Care Starting Well Fund; Durham County Council Area Action Partnership; East Sussex Public Health; Ely Primary Care Network; Evelyn Trust; NHS Cheshire and Merseyside ICB; Hampshire County Council; NHS North West London ICB; NHS Cheshire and Merseyside ICB; Leeds City Council; Lidl Great Britain Limited; Medway Community Healthcare; Middlesbrough Council; National Lottery; NHS North East London ICB; NHS Lothian; Norfolk Community Foundation; Northern Ireland Public Health Agency; North West Anglia NHS Foundation Trust; Paddington Development Trust; Peabody Housing Association; Peterborough City Council; Royal Docks Trust; Redcar and Cleveland Council; Richard Lawes Foundation; Richmond Council; Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust; Scottish Government; Southwark Council; NHS Cheshire and Merseyside ICB; Stockton-on-Tees Council; Swindon Borough Council; Twins Trust; Venture Community Association; Wandsworth Council; NHS Cheshire and Merseyside ICB; Wiltshire Council.

Our community

We are inspired by the efforts and generosity of the NCT community who continue to amaze us every day. To all our members, supporters, volunteers, practitioners, students, staff, and Trustees, you have all made a difference.

- All our members
- All our donors and everyone who generously fundraised in aid of our charity
- All our volunteers and peer supporters
- All our practitioners
- All our staff
- All our students
- NCT Diversity and Affinity Networks
- Practitioner Representative Body
- Our Board of Trustees
- Our Patron, Baroness Julia Cumberlege

In memory

Our thoughts are with the families and friends of Barbara Kott, Lucy Pedder and Hilary English, who sadly passed away over the last year.

Barbara Kott

Barbara made a significant contribution to our work and charitable mission and stood up for parental rights across the world. We are forever grateful for her valuable contribution and commitment to NCT.

Barbara set up her own local NCT branch in Kingston-Upon-Thames back in 1976 following the birth of her first child. Two years later Barbara qualified as an NCT Antenatal Teacher. From teaching she became a Tutor, and by the mid 1980s was chairing the NCT's National Teachers Panel.

She became NCT President in 1995 and was the charity's figurehead until 2000. She retired as an NCT Tutor in September 2011 and as an NCT Antenatal practitioner in 2015.

Hilary English

Hilary qualified as a breastfeeding counsellor with the NCT in 1983, and was a tutor, training both breastfeeding counsellors and health professionals for 20 years. She was Deputy Chair of Lactation Consultants of Great Britain.

Lucy Pedder

Lucy qualified with NCT in 2017 and taught as an Antenatal and Postnatal Practitioner from June 2019 to March 2022 in and around Derby, Nottingham and Staffordshire. She was also part of the co-production team who worked on the NCT One Antenatal project, which led to our new NCT Antenatal course.
She brought her amazing warmth, passion, a great willingness to share and explore and was brilliantly collaborative on the project team – an absolute force for good, challenging us to do more and better, a real ambassador and change maker. Lucy was also an NCT volunteer, for many years running a highly valued postnatal drop-in for NCT's Amber Valley branch, where so many parents benefited from her support.

Financial review

Financial review

Overall summary

Good growth in total organisational income, up 6% from £11.3m to £11.8m, was delivered during the year. This was despite the challenging economic conditions, notably the effect of the cost-of-living crisis on new and expectant parents, which meant that antenatal course bookings remain below pre-pandemic levels. We were particularly pleased with the increase in income from Programme Delivery and with the wider reach that this enabled us to have during the period.

Operating costs grew due to growth in Programme Delivery and Branch activity, as well as inflationary pressures.

The net result for the year was a breakeven operating position (2023: deficit of £0.1m) before investment income of £0.1m (2023: £0.1m), non-operational spend of £0.3m (2023: £0.1m) invested this year in the next stage of the Salesforce system implementation and investment gains of £0.2m (2023: losses of £0.1m). The operating position is a key financial target and was managed very closely in line with the approved Reserves Policy.

The total net income / expenditure for the year was £0.01m (2023: £ -0.55m) after non-operating expenditure, investment income and losses on investment assets. Again, this was in line with the requirements of the Reserves Policy.

NCT Courses

Delivery of antenatal and other courses to parents is one of NCT's key educational activities. Income in this area exceeds expenditure, with surpluses supporting the education and development of current and future NCT Practitioners; the delivery of commissioned services in the health sector; and work in the policy, research, campaigns, content and information areas, including the much-needed delivery of the NCT Infant Feeding Line.

Income from courses of £8.8m represents a £0.4m increase on the prior year (2023: £8.4m). This growth reflects the full-year impact of an increase in the average course price following a pricing review in 2022. The number of Antenatal course bookings by start date was 29,234 (2023: 31,849) while post course parent satisfaction was 95% (2023: 95%). Total costs increased to £6.4m from £6.2m in 2023 due to inflationary pressures.

Education and Practice

Fewer students, partly due to the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on the affordability of fees, has led to a corresponding decrease in NCT education and practice income from £0.5m to £0.3m. Costs decreased slightly from £1.1m to £1.0m linked to lower student numbers.

Programme Delivery

Programme Delivery provides local and national services to parents that are free at the point of access. They are largely commissioned contracts with the National Health Service, including hospital trusts and health boards, and local authorities as well as central government departments. This work is also supported through funding from Trusts and Foundations. This area also delivers the vital NCT Infant Feeding Line.

Income for Programme Delivery in the year grew by 66% to £1.4m (2023: £0.8m). During the year, 3,700 parents were supported through our perinatal peer support programmes (2023: 3,000) and our breastfeeding peer support programmes supported nearly 10,000 people (2023: 7,000).

Membership, grants and donations

Total donation income has decreased 13% to £0.8m (2023: £1.0m) due to a £0.1m fall in membership income continuing the longer-term trend. Work is underway to consider the future of our NCT membership proposition to ensure it remains attractive, trusted and meaningful for parents and supporters.

Donations and Grants receivable were broadly in line with the prior year.

Other trading activities

Total income from other trading activities declined by 20% to £0.4m (2023: £0.5m). An increase in the number of branch activities was more than offset by a decline in income from corporate partners.

Responsible Fundraising

NCT is supported in its charitable fundraising by so many amazing supporters spanning companies, charities, individual donors and volunteer fundraisers. We would like to thank everyone for their efforts to make a difference to parents across the UK. Our fundraising activities, led by the central charity and volunteer branches, are monitored by appropriate members of the Senior Leadership Team. We do not use mass audience commercial fundraising operations such as telephone call services or face-to-face street fundraisers. During the year, no complaints (2022: none) were received about our fundraising activities.

Our overarching safeguarding commitment to all members of the NCT community encompasses protection of people in vulnerable circumstances including a dedicated point of contact for any concerns in this regard that is open to the entire charity. As a registered member of the Fundraising Regulator Directory, we are proud of our commitment to continuously reflect upon, learn and evolve our fundraising practices.

Investment income and asset movements

Income received from cash balances and the investment portfolio was £0.1m (2023: £0.1m). A gain of £0.2m was recorded on the investment portfolio (2023: a loss of £0.1m) reflecting market movements.

Going concern

Due consideration has been given by the Board to the appropriateness of the going concern basis for accounting. Total funds at the end of the year were in line with the targeted Reserves Policy. The plan and budget for the coming year was set to operate within acceptable risk levels and within the risk reserve level. Management accounts regularly re-forecast the yearly outcome, which allows quick and appropriate responses to changes in our operating model and demand for our services. On this basis, the amounts held as investments and in light of the strong reserves position, the Board is satisfied that the charity is well positioned to respond to a reasonable worst-case scenario.

Investment Policy

The Investment Policy is reviewed by the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee regularly and the latest version was approved by the Board in October 2024. NCT seeks to achieve the best financial return within an acceptable level of risk, which has been defined as medium on a scale of low, medium and high. The desired risk level is achieved through a mixed portfolio of low-risk cash deposits and medium risk managed investment funds held for the long term. All investments are made within the terms of the NCT Commercial and Charitable Activities Policy that takes social, environmental and ethical considerations into account.

The investment objective for long-term investments is to generate a return in excess of inflation in order to preserve the real terms value of NCT's reserves and support growth of the reserves to, and thereafter within, the range determined by the reserves policy. The charity monitors performance closely and continues to take regular advice from its investment managers. The performance of the funds over the time held meets the investment objectives. During the 12 months to March 2024, the value of the Investment Portfolio grew by 7.8% (2023: a fall of 2.2%) which exceeded UK CPI of 3.2% in the same period (2023: 10.1%).

The investment objective for the short-term investments is to seek the highest rate of interest available for cash deposits with a UK FSCA regulated financial institution, with deposits made with different institutions where practicable.

Under the Investment Policy, NCT considers that it holds a mixed motive investment in NCT Trading Limited. This is because the investment had two aims: firstly, to provide funding which will generate a financial return for NCT; and secondly to contribute to NCT's charitable purpose by promoting goods and services that are beneficial to prospective and new parents. This has assisted the charity in achieving its strategic objective of providing new parent support. The scale of the activities delivered through NCT Trading Limited have fallen in recent years and consideration is being given to making the company dormant.

The investment in NCT Trading Limited has been made through holding 100% of its issued share capital at a cost of £100.

Total Funds

The group balance sheet at 31 March 2024 showed total funds of £4.6m (2023: £4.6m) of which £0.3m (2023: £0.2m) were restricted. Restricted funds, analysed in Note 15, comprise donations and grants subject to donor-imposed conditions. Unrestricted funds were £4.3m (2023: £4.4m), of which £1.2m were represented as fixed assets (2023: £1.3m). The balance of the Group general funds, representing the 'free reserves', were £3.1m at 31 March 2024 (2023: £3.1m).

Since the Balance Sheet date, the Group's principal tangible asset, the leasehold building held in Bristol, has been sold. The value from the sale has been placed on deposit and the gain will be recorded in the Group Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 March 2025.

Reserves Policy

The Reserves Policy provides a dynamic framework for determining available reserves by identifying three components of NCT's risk management reserve:

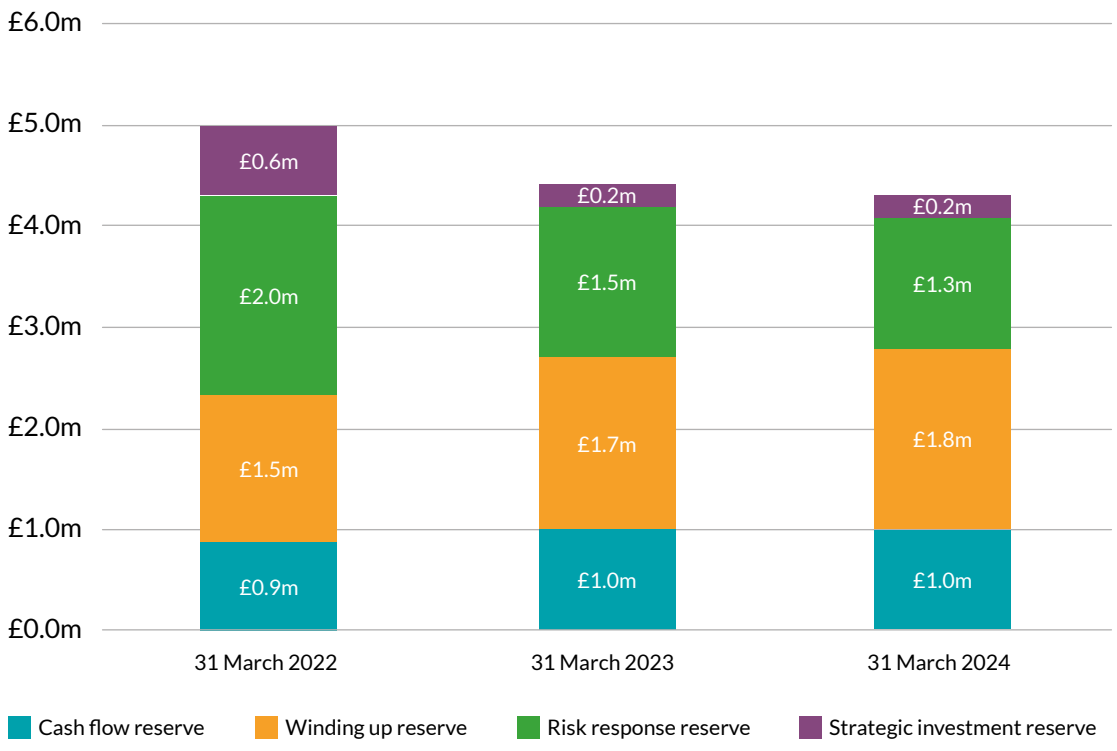
- cash flow reserve to cover cash flow requirements;
- winding up reserve to cover the costs of winding up the charity; and
- risk response reserve to respond to uncertainty identified in the risk management process.

Any surplus funds beyond these considerations represent the strategic development reserve.

The Board determined a target risk management reserve level of £4.1m in March 2024. This comprises £1.0m for cash flow requirements, £1.8m for the costs of winding up and £1.3m to respond to uncertainty identified in the risk management process. Compared with the previously agreed levels, the amounts in the cash flow reserve and winding up reserve have grown to reflect the current size of the group. The level of the risk response reserve has been reduced from the level of £2.0m as originally set in 2017 when the group had a much larger trading operation and higher risks relating to legacy IT solutions.

The Board plans to reduce the target level of the risk response reserve further by continuing to address key risks. By planning for a breakeven operating position over multiple periods, any investment income and gains can be used to increase the strategic development reserve.

The amounts held in these reserves at the last three year ends are shown below.



At 31 March 2024, total unrestricted funds were £4.3m, exceeding the required risk management reserve level of £4.1m meeting the requirements of the policy. This means that the charity holds sufficient funds to perform an orderly wind up if needed and manage risks as they arise. The remaining group funds as at 31 March 2024 were held in the strategic development reserve of £0.2m (2023: £0.2m). Any funds held in the strategic development reserve at the end of each year are used to invest in future growth opportunities to meet one-off items of expenditure during the following year.

Risk management

Effective risk management is critical for achieving the For Every Parent strategy and the risk management process identifies the uncertainties and events that could affect the achievement of the strategic objectives. Trustees acknowledge their responsibility for ensuring effective risk management systems and procedures. The Board works closely with the Directors Group to identify the most significant risks, mitigate any potential impact of downside risks and exploit the opportunities of upside risks. The Board reviews the full Risk Register every year and receives regular updates on significant changes to the profile of individual risks throughout the year.

The Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee has delegated authority from the Board to:

- review risk management systems and procedures;
- drive continued improvement in the sophistication and impact of our risk management processes;
- advise the Board on the principal risks faced and any changes to the Risk Register;
- scrutinise the analysis and management of risks by the Directors Group through a review of the Risk Register every quarter; and
- receive periodic deep dive reviews of significant risks, usually twice a year.

Managing each risk is the responsibility of the senior managers within each Directorate.

The Risk Management Policy is reviewed every two years. Through this Policy, the level of gross risk to the achievement of strategic objectives is assessed and the likelihood of this occurring given existing activities to manage the risk appraised. The net risk is compared to the agreed risk appetite for each broad category to identify areas where increased focus is required to manage individual risks.

Principle risks and uncertainties

There are 30 risks on the Group Risk Register. After assessing existing activities to manage the risk, the risks that the Board has a particular focus on are summarised below.

Risk	Response and *Example Activity*
Antenatal Course Surpluses and Fulfilment We may not be able to meet the expectations of parents as their needs change and how we engage with them through practitioners is likely to be different in the coming years.	We are aware of the need to remain the most relevant provider of antenatal courses and review trends to adapt our offer to stay ahead of competitors. *Baby safety and health video guides were developed and have been made available to parents.*
Health & Safety and Safeguarding Inadequate or ineffective policies and practices could result in, or contribute to, serious harm to those we come into contact with.	We have dedicated H&S and Safeguarding Lead roles with a Safeguarding Lead Trustee, with annual Policy Reviews, quarterly reporting of Incidents and a dedicated Safety, Operations and Compliance Group. *An external audit of Safeguarding activities across Programme Delivery was completed.*
Information Governance including Cyber Risks Cyber security risks could disrupt our delivery and all personal data must be handled and stored safely.	We continuously monitor cyber security with the Board's Cyber Task & Finish Group and invest in our systems, processes and people to reduce the level of risks faced. *A Cyber and Data Business Continuity Plan has been developed.*
Information Provision Information provided to parents must meet their needs, be up to date, accurate and easily accessible.	We review our frameworks and content on a periodic basis, factoring in parent feedback and the latest externally available evidence. *A Parent Content project has been initiated.*
Investment Returns Gains and losses from the Investment Portfolio have a direct impact on funds available for investing in strategic activities for the future.	We discuss investment returns every quarter at the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee and review performance with our Investment Manager every year. *A full tender process for Investment Management services was concluded in May 2024.*

Public Benefit Statement

The Board has referred to the relevant guidance (as published by the Charity Commission in its guidance documents PB1 "Public benefit, the public benefit requirement", PB2 "Public benefit: running a charity and PB3 "Public benefit: reporting") and concluded that NCT complies with the duty in Section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to public benefit because the charitable services delivered provide value to the public in general and new parents in particular.

Structure and governance

NCT (The National Childbirth Trust) is a registered charity. It is a company limited by guarantee governed by its Articles of Association as adopted on 26th September 2015 and amended on 18 October 2018.

The Board of Trustees

NCT is governed by a Board of Trustees who are the directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act. The Board of Trustees is ultimately responsible for the governance of the Charity to ensure that it acts in the best interests of all parents, who are the Charity's beneficiaries. The Board of Trustees sets the strategy, policy and financial framework for the Charity and has the responsibility for its overall direction and control. Additionally, the Board has responsibility for ensuring that the Charity complies with the law and the safeguarding of the Charity's assets, including its money, property and reputation.

The names of trustees at the date at which the accounts were approved, or who served during the period, are given below. The Board is very grateful for the work and commitment of Peter Brown and Susy Broekhuizen who agreed to act as Elected Trustees until the 2023 AGM. The Board were sorry that, after an extended period of being unable to attend Board meetings, Zoe Stewart-Fields left the Board during the year with thanks and best wishes.

Name	Start date of most recent term	Date of resignation
Charles Richardson (Honorary Treasurer)	Appointed 15 July 2022	–
Chi Evi-Parker	Elected 11 December 2020	–
David Shanks	Appointed 7 August 2021 [1]	–
Elaine Lambe	Elected 4 November 2021 [2]	–
Ema Ojiako (Honorary Secretary)	Appointed 8 March 2021	–
Franciane Husbands-Chevot	Elected 11 December 2020	–
Julien Haye	Elected 8 November 2023	–
Mikayla Pencross	Elected 8 November 2023	–
Peter Brown	Appointed to act as Elected 8 December 2022	Resigned 8 November 2023
Sarah Brown (Vice Chair)	Elected 4 November 2021 [2]	–
Sherry Bevan (President)	Elected 16 November 2019	–
Stephanie Maurel (Chair)	Appointed 7 August 2021 [1]	–
Susy Broekhuizen	Appointed to act as Elected 8 December 2022	Resigned 8 November 2023
Vikram Sundarraj	Appointed to act as Elected 21 March 2024	–
Zoe Stewart-Fields	Elected 26 November 2021	Vacated 21 March 2024

[1] Second term, initial term commenced on 7 August 2017

[2] Second term, initial term commenced on 4 November 2017

The charity is a membership charity. Members are organised locally into branches. Many members and volunteers carry out the work of the charity at a local level.

Each year, the Board reviews past performance and sets plans within a forward-looking planning horizon. As part of that review and planning process, the trustees consider how future plans and performance relate to the aims and vision of the Charity and thus to the charitable purpose.

The trustees are committed to ensuring NCT's governance and constitutional framework reflect current thinking on best practice. The Board of Trustees is committed to the principles of the Charity Governance Code.

Authority for the day-to-day management of the charity within that framework is delegated to the Chief Executive, supported by colleagues on the Directors Group. Together, they formulate strategy, policy and financial plans for the Board's approval, ensure delivery of required performance and oversee the Charity's day-to-day operations.

Recruitment and appointment of trustees

The Board of Trustees must have a minimum of nine trustees and a maximum of twelve. Of the maximum, there may be up to eight member elected trustees and four appointed trustees. Any member may stand for election as a trustee subject to the restrictions laid down in the Governance handbook.

Member-elected trustees are elected to coincide with the Annual General Meeting, whilst appointed trustees may be appointed during the course of the year. Any trustee vacancies arising during the year may also be filled by the Board until the date of the next Annual General Meeting.

The process of appointing new trustees is led by the Nominations and Remuneration Committee based on an assessment of the key skills required by the Board. An executive search firm may be used to attract a diverse range of candidates from different backgrounds. Extensive screening will take place followed by rigorous interviews. All appointments are subject to satisfactory references.

Elected and Appointed Trustees have a term of four years and the President has a term of five years. An individual may serve a maximum of two terms as an Elected Trustee, two terms as an Appointed Trustee and two terms as President.

Further details on the recruitment and appointment of trustees can be found in the Governance Handbook at **https://www.nct.org.uk/sites/default/files/related_documents/NCT%20Governance%20Handbook%20-%20May%202024.pdf**

We are keen to talk to anyone interested in standing as a trustee or serving as an Independent Committee member, especially people who will bring unique skills and experiences. To discuss becoming involved, please contact us at **board.secretary@nct.org.uk.**

Induction and training of trustees

A comprehensive and structured induction programme is put in place for new trustees. This includes:

- a written briefing about trustees' responsibilities and copies of relevant Policies;
- detailed presentations covering Strategy; Governance; Courses & Income; Practitioners and Education; Impact and Engagement; People & Inclusion; Volunteering; Finance; and Data and Technology; and
- meetings with the Chair, Chief Executive and other members of the Directors Group.

In addition, access is provided to specific training that is tailored to the incoming trustee.

Training is also provided during the year for trustees, for example at the Board Away Day session, on topics relevant to the Board's current work and strategy or through access to external courses as required.

Board committees

The Board of Trustees is supported in its work by committees. There are two Board committees..

- Audit, Risk and Scrutiny [ARSC] - covering the adequacy of financial control, external reporting, budgeting, performance and risk management.
- Nominations and Remuneration [NRC] – covering people issues, equity, diversity and inclusion, trustee recruitment and the remuneration policy for senior management and other key groups.

In addition, advisory and task & finish groups enable internal and external experts to be involved in decision-making and governance. During the year, there were groups for Cybersecurity; Equity, Diversity and Inclusion; and an IT project. There is also a 'Lead Trustee' for safeguarding to provide additional support, scrutiny and oversight in this area. The full Board maintains collective responsibility for all these areas and receives update reports at Board meetings.

Independent committee members are individuals who bring additional skills, experience and perspectives to the work of our sub-committees. They are not trustees.

Committee membership and lead trustee roles as at 31 March 2024 are detailed in the table below.

Name	Role	Committee membership
Charles Richardson	Trustee / Honorary Treasurer	ARSC (Chair)
Chi Evi-Parker	Trustee	—
David Shanks	Trustee	—
Elaine Lambe	Trustee	NRC
Ema Ojiako	Trustee / Honorary Secretary	NRC (Chair)
Faran Johnson	Independent Committee Member	ARSC
Franciane Husbands-Chevot	Trustee	—
Julien Haye	Trustee	ARSC
Mikayla Pencross	Trustee	NRC
Naomi Horsfall	Independent Committee Member	ARSC
Salima Shariff	Independent Committee Member	NRC
Sarah Brown	Trustee / Vice Chair / Safeguarding Lead Trustee	ARSC
Sherry Bevan	Trustee / President	—
Stephanie Maurel	Trustee / Chair	NRC
Vikram Sundarraj	Trustee	ARSC

Key relationships

NCT wholly owns one active commercial company, NCT Trading Ltd, which gift aids its profits to the charity. The Board of NCT Trading Ltd is responsible for its activities, which during 2023-24 mainly consisted of commercial partnerships.

Charity Commission guidance makes it clear that the Board of Trustees is responsible for establishing the overarching principles within which its subsidiary's trading activities must take place. Trustees have established a comprehensive Commercial and Charitable Activities Policy within which the Trading Board is required to operate.

Trustee benefits

Under the terms of its Articles, the Charity is able to pay trustees for the provision of services to achieve its objectives, subject to certain safeguards. This includes the requirement that a majority of the trustees must have received no payments from NCT either as employees or for goods and services supplied to NCT. This year, no member of the Board of Trustees received any remuneration in respect of their services as trustees (2023: None). Expenses and other payments to trustees are detailed in Note 9.

Statement of the Board's responsibilities as trustees

The trustees (who are also directors of NCT for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice). Members of the Directors Group are not Directors as defined on Company Law.

Company law requires trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of the affairs of the charitable company and the group and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable group for that period.
In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards, including FRS102, have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006, as amended by the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Amendment (No. 2) Regulations 2014. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and the group, and hence for taking reasonable steps to prevent and detect of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

In so far as the trustees are aware:

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

Remuneration Policy

NCT recognises that pay is part of a wider employment offer for employees, which also includes the satisfaction of working for a charity, personal development opportunities, family-friendly policies and practices, annual leave and absence policies and a range of other benefits including access to the pension scheme.

NCT operates a benchmarked market rate system, using reputable and appropriate data. NCT aims to pay employees between plus/minus 10% margin of the market median salary for most roles. Employees will not normally be paid less than the lower decile or higher than the higher decile for any role. When benchmarking pay and benefits, NCT will compare against charities of similar size, employee numbers and income, workplace location and competitors. Additionally, a specialist consultancy will be commissioned to independently review the market rate for the salaries of the Directors Group every three years.

Each year, NCT will consider whether to uplift all employee salaries by the cost of living. This will take into account the Consumer Price Index, Retail Price Index and the national average increase in earnings. Any decisions will be based on affordability and are at the Board's discretion.

Appointment of Auditors

Haysmacintyre LLP have been appointed in accordance with section 487(2) of the Companies Act 2006.

The strategic report, which forms part of the Trustees' Annual Report, is approved by the trustees in their capacity as directors of the company. The Trustees' Report is approved by the Board of Trustees and signed on its behalf by:

Stephanie Maurel
Chair
12 September 2024

Independent auditor's report to the members and trustees of NCT

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of National Childbirth Trust for the year ended 31 March 2024 which comprise the Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities, Charity Statement of Financial Activities, Consolidated and Charity Balance Sheets, Consolidated Cash Flow Statement 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, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 *The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland* (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the group's and of the parent charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2024 and of the group's and parent charitable company's net movement in funds, including the 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 and the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and regulation 8 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 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 Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the group 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 group'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 Trustees' Annual Report. 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 there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Trustees' Annual Report (which includes the strategic report and the directors' report prepared for the purposes of company law) for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the strategic report and the directors' report included within the Trustees' Annual Report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the group and the parent charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Trustees' Annual Report (which incorporates the strategic report and the directors' report).

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Companies Act 2006 and the Charity Accounts (Scotland) Regulations (as amended) require us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept by the parent charitable company, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the parent charitable company financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of trustees for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement set out on page 74, 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 group's and the parent 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 group or the parent charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

Based on our understanding of the group and the environment in which it operates, we identified that the principal risks of non-compliance with laws and regulations related to company law and charity law, and we considered the extent to which non-compliance might have a material effect on the financial statements. We also considered those laws and regulations that have a direct impact on the preparation of the financial statements such as the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Act 2011, income tax, payroll tax and sales tax.

We evaluated management's incentives and opportunities for fraudulent manipulation of the financial statements (including the risk of override of controls), and determined that the principal risks were related to income recognition. Audit procedures performed by the engagement team included:

- Inspecting correspondence with regulators and tax authorities;
- Discussions with management including consideration of known or suspected instances of non-compliance with laws and regulation and fraud;
- Evaluating management's controls designed to prevent and detect irregularities;
- Identifying and testing journals, in particular journal entries posted with unusual account combinations, postings by unusual users or with unusual descriptions; and
- Challenging assumptions and judgements made by management in their accounting estimates.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

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 auditor's report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006, section 44(1)(c) of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and regulation 10 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an Auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Kathryn Burton
(Senior Statutory Auditor)

For and on behalf of Haysmacintyre LLP, Statutory Auditors
18 September 2024

10 Queen Street Place
London EC4R 1AG

NCT consolidated group statement of financial activities

Including Income & Expenditure Account for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2024 £'000	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2023 £'000
Income from							
Donations							
Membership		228	-	228	345	2	347
Donations		19	1	20	13	-	13
Grants receivable	3	17	574	591	19	579	598
		264	**575**	**839**	**377**	**581**	**958**
Charitable activities							
NCT Courses		8,770	-	8,770	8,376	-	8,376
Education and Practice		293	-	293	452	-	452
Programme Delivery	4	1,414	-	1,414	820	-	820
		10,477	**-**	**10,477**	**9,648**	**-**	**9,648**
Other trading activities							
Community fundraising		334	-	334	334	42	376
Commercial fundraising		71	-	71	135	-	135
Trading		3	-	3	4	-	4
		408	**-**	**408**	**473**	**42**	**515**
Investments							
Investment portfolio income		97	-	97	93	-	93
		97	-	**97**	**93**	-	**93**
Other income							
Other income receivable		**27**	**-**	**27**	**37**	**-**	**37**
Total income		**11,273**	**575**	**11,848**	**10,628**	**623**	**11,251**
Expenditure on Raising funds							
Membership		**135**	**-**	**135**	**239**	**-**	**239**
Charitable activities							
NCT Courses	5	6,279	166	6,445	6,098	117	6,215
Education and Practice		973	-	973	1,114	-	1,114
Programme Delivery		2,235	317	2,552	1,713	461	2,174
Policy, research and information		1,180	-	1,180	1,196	-	1,196
		10,667	**483**	**11,10**	**10,121**	**578**	**10,699**
Other trading activities							
Community fundraising	6	580	20	600	553	8	561
Commercial fundraising		36	-	36	56	-	56
Trading		144	-	144	101	-	101
		760	**20**	**780**	**710**	**8**	**718**
Total Expenditure	7	**11,562**	**503**	**12,065**	**11,070**	**586**	**11,656**
Net operating (expenditure)/income		**(289)**	**72**	**(217)**	**(442)**	**37**	**(405)**
Gain/(loss) on investment assets	12	230	-	230	(148)	-	(148)
Net (expenditure)/income and net movement in funds	8	**(59)**	**72**	**13**	**(590)**	**37**	**(553)**
Reconciliation of funds							
Total funds brought forward		4,392	196	4,588	4,982	159	5,141
Total funds carried forward	15,16	**4,333**	**268**	**4,601**	**4,392**	**196**	**4,588**

All of the group's activities are derived from continuing operations during the above two financial periods. The group has no recognised gains or losses other than those shown above. The movement in reserves is shown above.

The notes on pages 84 to 99 form part of these financial statements.

NCT charity statement of financial activities

Including Income & Expenditure Account for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2024 £'000	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2023 £'000
Income from							
Donations and legacies							
Membership		228	-	228	345	2	347
Donations		26	1	27	64	-	64
Grants receivable	3	17	574	591	19	579	598
		271	**575**	**846**	**428**	**581**	**1,009**
Charitable Activities							
NCT Courses		8,770	-	8,770	8,376	-	8,376
Education and Practice		293	-	293	452	-	452
Programme Delivery	4	1,414	-	1,414	820	-	820
		10,477	**-**	**10,477**	**9,648**	**-**	**9,648**
Other trading activities							
Community fundraising		334	-	334	334	42	376
Trading		3	-	3	4	-	4
		337	**-**	**337**	**338**	**42**	**380**
Investments							
Investment portfolio income		97	-	97	93	-	93
		97	**-**	**97**	**93**	**-**	**93**
Other income		**55**	**-**	**55**	**65**	**-**	**65**
Total income		**11,237**	**575**	**11,812**	**10,572**	**623**	**11,195**
Expenditure on							
Raising funds							
Membership		**135**	**-**	**135**	**239**	**-**	**239**
Charitable activities							
NCT Courses	5	6,279	166	6,445	6,098	117	6,215
Education and Practice		973	-	973	1,114	-	1,114
Programme Delivery		2,235	317	2,552	1,713	461	2,174
Policy, research and information		1,180	-	1,180	1,196	-	1,196
		10,667	**483**	**11,150**	**10,121**	**578**	**10,699**
Other trading activities							
Community fundraising	6	580	20	600	553	8	561
Trading		144	-	144	101	-	101
		724	**20**	**744**	**654**	**8**	**662**
Total resources expended	7	**11,526**	**503**	**12,029**	**11,014**	**586**	**11,600**
Net operating (expenditure)/income		**(289)**	**72**	**(217)**	**(442)**	**37**	**(405)**
Gain/(loss) on investment assets	12	230	-	230	(148)	-	(148)
Net (expenditure)/income and net movement in funds	8	**(59)**	**72**	**13**	**(590)**	**37**	**(553)**
Reconciliation of funds							
Total funds brought forward		4,392	196	4,588	4,982	159	5,141
Total funds carried forward	15,16	**4,333**	**268**	**4,601**	**4,392**	**196**	**4,588**

All of the NCT's activities are derived from continuing operations during the above two financial periods. The charity has no recognised gains or losses other than those shown above. The movement in reserves is shown above.

The notes on pages 84 to 99 form part of these financial statements.

NCT consolidated and charity balance sheets

as at 31 March 2024

	Notes	2024 Group £'000	2024 Charity £'000	2023 Group £'000	2023 Charity £'000
Fixed Assets					
Intangible Assets	10	-	-	-	-
Tangible Assets	11	1,241	1,241	1,270	1,270
Investments	12	3,997	3,997	3,707	3,707
Total Fixed Assets		**5,238**	**5,238**	**4,977**	**4,977**
Current Assets					
Debtors	13	772	790	948	979
Short term deposits		501	501	76	76
Cash at bank and in hand		1,149	1,122	2,297	2,236
		2,422	**2,413**	**3,321**	**3,291**
Liabilities					
Creditors:					
Amounts falling due within one year	14	**(3,059)**	**(3,050)**	**(3,710)**	**(3,680)**
Net current assets / (liabilities)		**(637)**	**(637)**	**(389)**	**(389)**
Total net assets		**4,601**	**4,601**	**4,588**	**4,588**
Fund balances					
Charitable funds					
Restricted funds	15	**268**	**268**	**196**	**196**
Unrestricted funds	16				
General funds		3,092	3,092	3,122	3,122
Fixed asset fund		1,241	1,241	1,270	1,270
		4,333	**4,333**	**4,392**	**4,392**
Total funds	17	**4,601**	**4,601**	**4,588**	**4,588**

Approved and authorised for issue by the Board of Trustees and signed on its behalf by:

Stephanie Maurel
Chair
12 September 2024

The National Childbirth Trust
Company Number: 2370573 (England & Wales)

The notes on pages 84 to 99 form part of these financial statements.

NCT consolidated cash flow statement

for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Cash flows from Operating Activities		
Net income / (expenditure) for the reporting period	13	(553)
(Gains) / Losses on investments	(230)	148
Depreciation and amortisation charges	32	32
Investment income	(86)	(93)
(Increase) / decrease in debtors	176	106
Increase / (decrease) in creditors	(653)	46
Net cash provided by operating activities	**(748)**	**(314)**
Cash flows from Investing Activites		
Purchase of Investments	(2,086)	(940)
Proceeds from the sale of Investments	2,016	936
Dividends received	85	93
Net cash from investing activities	**15**	**89**
Cash flows from Financing Activities		
Net cash from financing activities	-	-
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period	**(733)**	**(225)**
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period	**2,522**	**2,747**
Cash and cash equivalents at end of the reporting period	**1,789**	**2,522**

Analysis of cash and cash equivalents	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Cash at bank and in hand	1,149	2,297
Short term deposits	501	76
Cash held by investment managers	139	149
Total cash and cash equivalents	**1,789**	**2,522**

A reconciliation of net debt has not been presented as the group does not have any borrowings.

The notes on pages 84 to 99 form part of these financial statements.

Notes to the financial statements

1 Principal Accounting Policies

a) General information

National Childbirth Trust is a charitable company, limited by guarantee. The registered office is 27 Old Gloucester Street, London, WC1N 3AX. Its company registration number is 2370573 (England and Wales), its charity registration numbers are 801395 (England and Wales) and SC041592 (Scotland).

b) Basis of accounting

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies below and comply with the charity's governing document, the Companies Act 2006 and 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, the Charities Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 as amended in 2014. The charity is a public benefit entity for the purposes of FRS 102 and a registered charity. The charity has therefore also prepared its individual and consolidated financial statements in accordance with FRS 102 (The Charities SORP (FRS 102).

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis and on the historical cost basis, except for the measurement of investments and certain financial assets and liabilities at fair value with movements in value reported within the Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA). The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below and have been applied consistently throughout the year.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charity. Amounts included in the financial statements are rounded to the nearest thousand pounds.

c) Preparation of the accounts on a going concern basis

The trustees have adopted the going concern basis in preparing these accounts after assessing the principal risks and having considered the impact of the cost-of-living crisis and inflationary factors. The trustees consider that the charity is resilient to the impact of these scenarios.

The trustees considered the impact of the expected future environment on the business for the 12 months following signature of the financial statements, the viability period and the longer term considering the impacts on income, expenditure and cash flow and consider the charity can absorb and adapt to the environment.

On this basis the trustees have concluded that there are no material uncertainties that impact the use of the going concern basis and that the charity will be able to settle its debts as they fall due for a period of at least 12 months from the date of approval of these financial statements. Accordingly, the going concern basis has continued to be adopted in the preparation of the financial statements.

d) Basis of consolidation

The statement of financial activities and balance sheet consolidate on a line-by-line basis the financial statements of the charity and all its subsidiary undertakings made up to the balance sheet date. Immaterial subsidiaries are not consolidated. The decision on consolidation is based on the power NCT has to control each undertaking.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

e) Income

Incoming resources are recognised in the period in which the charity is entitled to receipt, the receipt is probable and the amount can be measured reliably. Income is deferred only when the charity has to fulfil conditions outside of its control before becoming entitled to it or when the donor or funder has specified that the income is to be expended in a future accounting period. Legacies are included in the statement of financial activities when the charity is advised by the personal representative of an estate that payment will be made or property transferred and the amount involved can be measured reliably. Grants, including government grants, have been included as income from charitable activities where these amount to a contract for services or a grant for specific costs. Fees from NCT affiliates are included in full within incoming resources.

f) Expenditure

Expenditure is included in the statement of financial activities when incurred and includes any attributable VAT, which cannot be recovered. Resources expended comprise the following:

- *Charitable activities*, which comprises expenditure on the charity's primary purposes and are categorised as NCT Courses, Education and Practice, Programme Delivery and Policy, Research and Information.
  - *NCT Courses* comprises the costs of providing courses, for parents and expectant parents where a participant generally books the course.
  - *Education and Practice* comprises the costs of providing training and support for students and NCT Practitioners who deliver NCT courses.
  - *Programme Delivery* comprises the costs of delivering services procured under a contract for services or a grant and providing specialist helplines.
  - *Policy, research and information* comprises the cost of the research and service development teams, as well as communications and marketing.
- *Expenditure on raising funds* is categorised into membership only. *Membership* expenditure comprises the costs of the department that services members and prospective members and the team that provides support to members and Branches.
- *Other trading activities* is categorised into community fundraising, commercial fundraising and trading.
  - *Community fundraising*, which comprises the community fundraising support team, the costs of Branch fundraising activities and costs associated with the administration of Branches. Many of the fundraising events held by the branches have two objectives, to raise funds for the charity as well as meeting the aims of the charity in terms of providing postnatal support for families. There is no meaningful way of apportioning the costs of Branch fundraising events between fundraising costs and charitable activities.
  - *Commercial fundraising* is the cost of obtaining and managing the sponsorship of activities and events and undertakes other business activity on behalf of NCT by NCT Trading Limited.
  - *Trading* comprises the costs of supporting other trading activities.

g) Basis of apportioning support costs

Support costs, which includes governance costs, represent indirect charitable expenditure. In order to carry out the primary purposes of NCT, it is necessary to provide support in the form of the people and inclusion team, financial operations and management, information technology, general management and administration and office services. These costs are apportioned to the other activities within the charity based on the average number of full-time equivalent employees utilised by the activity.

h) Gifts in kind

Facilities and services donated to the charity for its own use are included in incoming resources and expenditure at their value to the charity as at the time of the gift.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

i) Tangible and intangible fixed assets

All assets costing more than £1,000 and with an expected useful life exceeding one year are capitalised. Leasehold properties used for the work of the charity are included in these accounts at the cost of acquisition. Software development is capitalised when there is future economic benefit to the charity and ongoing lease costs are not required to use the developed software. Fixed assets are capitalised and depreciated at the following rates per annum, based on cost, in order to write them off over their estimated useful lives at the rates shown below.

Category	Asset Group	Rate per annum
Property	Leasehold	2%
	Leasehold improvements	Lease length or on a component basis, minimum 2%
Equipment	End user computer equipment and software	33%
	Computer and telecoms network infrastructure and software	20%
	Furniture	20%
	Other equipment	33%

At the end of each reporting period, residual values and useful lives are reviewed and adjusted as necessary. Assets are also reviewed annually for impairment.

j) Fixed asset investments

Listed equities are included in the financial statements at fair value as at the balance sheet date. Investments in subsidiary undertakings are held at cost less impairment. Realised and unrealised gains (or losses) are credited (or debited) to the statement of financial activities in the year in which they arise.

k) Fund accounting

Restricted funds are monies raised for, or their use restricted to, a specific purpose, or contributions subject to donor imposed conditions.

The fixed assets fund represents the net book value of the tangible and intangible fixed assets used in the day-to-day operations of NCT. The value of this fund is not available for working capital.

General funds represent those monies, which are freely available for application towards achieving any charitable purpose that falls within the charity's charitable objects.

l) Leased assets

Rentals applicable to operating leases where substantially all of the benefits and risks of ownership remain with the lessor are charged on a straight-line basis over the lease term.

Rental applicable to finance leases where the terms of the lease transfer substantially all the risks and rewards of ownership to the lessee are recognized as assets at the lower of the assets fair value at the date of inception and the present value of minimum lease payments. The related liability is included in the balance sheet as a finance lease obligation. Lease payments are treated as consisting of capital and interest elements. The interest is charged to the Statement of Financial Activity so as to produce a constant periodic rate of interest in the remaining balance of the liability.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

m) Branches

Branch transactions are considered transactions of the charity.

n) Employee benefits

The costs of short-term employee benefits are recognised as a liability and an expense, unless those costs are required to be recognised as part of the cost of fixed assets. The cost of any unused holiday entitlement is recognised in the period in which the employee's services are received. Termination benefits are recognised immediately as an expense when the company is demonstrably committed to terminate the employment of an employee or to provide termination benefits.

o) Debtors

Debtors are stated at their net realisable value after allowing for bad and doubtful debts.

p) Creditors

Creditors are amounts owed by the charity. They are measured at the amount that the charity expects to have to pay to settle the debt.

q) Pension costs

The charity as an employer contributes to personal pension plans of its employees. The contributions are set at up to 5% of gross salary and are available to all employees whose contracts are permanent and who have completed three months' service with the charity.

r) Redundancy costs

Redundancy costs are recognised when there is a legal or constructive obligation.

s) Financial Instruments

The National Childbirth Trust has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method. Financial assets held at amortised cost comprise cash at bank and in hand, together with trade and other debtors. Financial liabilities held at amortised cost comprise trade and other creditors.

t) Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Any bank overdrafts would be shown within borrowings in current liabilities.

u) Irrecoverable VAT

All expenditure is charged to the SOFA on an accruals basis including the charge for VAT which is not recoverable.

v) Accounting judgements and estimation uncertainty

In preparing financial statements it is necessary to make certain judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts recognised in the financial statements. The following judgements and estimates are considered by the Board to have the most significant effect on amounts recognised in the financial statements.

Tangible fixed assets are depreciated to their estimated residual value over their estimated useful economic life as detailed above.

Accrued course expenditure is estimated at the year end date using algorithmic modelling based on contracted hours and pre-agreed rates and anticipated venue costs.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

2 Commercial trading operations

The National Childbirth Trust owns the entire called up ordinary share capital of four companies incorporated in the United Kingdom:

- NCT Trading Limited, which has two principal activities; the promotion of the work of NCT and profit generation;
- NCT (Maternity Sales) Limited which did not trade during the period of these accounts;
- NCT Publishing Limited which did not trade during the period of these accounts; and
- First 1,000 Days Foundation which did not trade during the period of these accounts.

NCT Trading Limited has a deed of covenant to distribute its taxable profit to NCT. A summary of the results of the trading subsidiary for the period are given below.

Profit and loss account – NCT Trading Ltd	**2024 £'000**	2023 £'000
Turnover	71	135
Cost of sales	-	-
Gross profit	**71**	**135**
Administrative expenses	(64)	(84)
Operating profit before interest	**7**	**51**
Interest payable	–	–
Comprehensive income for the period	**7**	**51**

Balance Sheet – NCT Trading Ltd	**31 March 2024 £'000**	31 March 2023 £'000
Current Assets	29	83
Amounts falling due within one year	(29)	(83)
Net Assets	**-**	**-**

The above figures exclude any consolidation adjustments for inter-group profits/losses, which have been reflected in the consolidated statement of financial activities. The accounts figures have been consolidated on a line-by-line basis.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

3 Income: grants receivable

Group and Charity	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2024 £'000	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2023 £'000
Parents in Mind	–	3	3	–	–	–
Grants to branches	17	253	270	19	166	185
BBCS	–	31	31	–	17	17
Scottish Health	–	185	185	–	184	184
Newham Nurture	–	96	96	–	212	212
Antenatal	–	6	6	–	–	–
	17	**574**	**591**	**19**	**579**	**598**

Grants receivable includes government grants for Scottish Health and Newham Nurture and totalled £281k (2023: £396k).

4 Income: programme delivery

Group and Charity	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2024 £'000	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2023 £'000
National Health Service	607	-	607	475	-	475
Local Authorities	775	-	775	250	-	250
Other	32	-	32	95	-	95
	1,414	**-**	**1,414**	**820**	**-**	**820**

5 Expenditure: NCT courses

Group and Charity	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2024 £'000	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2023 £'000
Antenatal	4,318	-	4,318	3,966	-	3,966
Postnatal	37	-	37	38	-	38
General Parental Support	901	166	1,067	865	117	982
Apportioned support costs	1,023	-	1,023	1,229	-	1,229
	6,279	**166**	**6,445**	**6,098**	**117**	**6,215**

6 Expenditure: community fundraising

Group and Charity	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2024 £'000	Total 2023 £'000
Branch fundraising	378	20	398	372
Central fundraising	202	–	202	189
	580	**20**	**600**	**561**

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

7 Support cost allocations

Support costs are allocated to the expenditure headings in the Statement of Financial Activities, on the basis stated in the Accounting Policies (note 1), as stated in the tables below.

Group 2024	**Membership £'000**	**NCT Courses £'000**	**Education and Practice £'000**	**Programme Delivery £'000**	**Policy, Research & Information £'000**	**Community Fundraising £'000**	**Commercial Fundraising £'000**	**Trading £'000**	**Total 2024 £'000**
Staff costs	22	506	136	472	128	48	-	19	1,331
Depreciation	1	12	3	11	3	1	-	1	32
Premises and equipment	3	59	16	55	15	6	-	2	156
Office supplies	4	88	24	82	22	8	-	3	231
Insurance	1	34	9	32	9	3	-	1	89
Irrecoverable VAT	3	68	18	64	17	6	-	3	179
Governance	-	10	3	9	3	1	-	-	26
Other	11	246	66	229	61	24	-	9	646
Support Costs	**45**	**1,023**	**275**	**954**	**258**	**97**	**-**	**38**	**2,690**
Direct Costs	**90**	**5,422**	**698**	**1,598**	**922**	**503**	**36**	**106**	**9,375**
Total Costs	**135**	**6,445**	**973**	**2,552**	**1,180**	**600**	**36**	**144**	**12,065**

Group 2023	Membership £'000	NCT Courses £'000	Education and Practice £'000	Programme Delivery £'000	Policy, Research & Information £'000	Community Fundraising £'000	Commercial Fundraising £'000	Trading £'000	Total 2023 £'000
Staff costs	36	481	153	302	142	45	-	16	1,175
Depreciation	1	14	4	8	4	1	-	-	32
Premises and equipment	5	61	19	39	18	6	-	2	150
Office supplies	10	133	42	84	39	13	-	4	325
Insurance	2	31	10	19	9	3	-	1	75
Irrecoverable VAT	8	104	33	65	31	10	-	3	254
Governance	-	4	1	3	2	-	-	-	10
Other	31	401	128	252	118	38	-	13	981
Support Costs	**93**	**1,229**	**390**	**772**	**363**	**116**	**-**	**39**	**3,002**
Direct Costs	**146**	**4,986**	**724**	**1,402**	**833**	**445**	**56**	**62**	**8,654**
Total Costs	**239**	**6,215**	**1,114**	**2,174**	**1,196**	**561**	**56**	**101**	**11,656**

Charity 2024	**Membership £'000**	**NCT Courses £'000**	**Education and Practice £'000**	**Programme Delivery £'000**	**Policy, Research & Information £'000**	**Community Fundraising £'000**	**Trading £'000**	**Total 2024 £'000**
Staff costs	22	506	136	472	128	48	19	1,331
Depreciation	1	12	3	11	3	1	1	32
Premises and equipment	3	59	16	55	15	6	2	156
Office supplies	4	88	24	82	22	8	3	231
Insurance	1	34	9	32	9	3	1	89
Irrecoverable VAT	3	68	18	64	17	6	3	179
Governance	-	10	3	9	3	1	-	26
Other	11	246	66	229	61	24	9	646
Support Costs	**45**	**1,023**	**275**	**954**	**258**	**97**	**38**	**2,690**
Direct Costs	**90**	**5,422**	**698**	**1,598**	**922**	**503**	**106**	**9,339**
Total Costs	**135**	**6,445**	**973**	**2,552**	**1,180**	**600**	**144**	**12,029**

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

Charity 2023	Membership £'000	NCT Courses £'000	Education and Practice £'000	Programme Delivery £'000	Policy, Research & Information £'000	Community Fundraising £'000	Trading £'000	Total 2023 £'000
Staff costs	36	481	153	302	142	45	16	1,175
Depreciation	1	14	4	8	4	1	-	32
Premises and equipment	5	61	19	39	18	6	2	150
Office supplies	10	133	42	84	39	13	4	325
Insurance	2	31	10	19	9	3	1	75
Irrecoverable VAT	8	104	33	65	31	10	3	254
Governance	-	4	1	3	2	-	-	10
Other	31	401	128	252	118	38	13	981
Support Costs	**93**	**1,229**	**390**	**772**	**363**	**116**	**39**	**3,002**
Direct Costs	**146**	**4,986**	**724**	**1,402**	**833**	**445**	**62**	**8,598**
Total Costs	**239**	**6,215**	**1,114**	**2,174**	**1,196**	**561**	**101**	**11,600**

8 Net movement in funds

	Group		Charity	
	2024 £'000	2023 £'000	**2024 £'000**	2023 £'000
Net movement in funds is stated after charging:				
Depreciation/amortisation of fixed assets	32	32	31	32
Staff costs (excluding agency staff)	4,766	4,341	4,741	4,310
Operating lease rentals	11	11	11	11
Auditors' remuneration: audit services	52	46	47	38
Auditors' remuneration: non-audit services	2	1	-	-
Investment management fees	27	26	27	26
Gifts in kind from corporate partners	15	5	15	5

9 Staff costs and remuneration

Staff costs during the period were as follows:

	Group		Charity	
	Total 2024 £'000	Total 2023 £'000	**Total 2024 £'000**	Total 2023 £'000
Wages and salaries	4,176	3,859	4,153	3,833
Redundancy costs	66	1	66	1
Social security costs	326	310	324	307
Other pension costs	200	171	198	169
	4,766	4,341	4,741	4,310
Payments to agency staff	-	44	-	44
	4,766	**4,385**	**4,741**	**4,354**

There were no outstanding redundancy costs at the balance sheet date.

Staff costs by function were as follows:

	Group		Charity	
	Total 2024 £'000	Total 2023 £'000	**Total 2024 £'000**	Total 2023 £'000
Raising funds	95	162	95	162
Other trading activities	325	273	300	242
Charitable activities	4,346	3,950	4,346	3,950
	4,766	**4,385**	**4,741**	**4,354**

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

Higher paid employees:

	Group		Charity	
	Total 2024	Total 2023	**Total 2024**	Total 2023
£60,000 – 69,999	1	3	1	3
£70,000 – 79,999	3	1	3	1
£80,000 – 89,999	1	-	1	-
£90,000 – 99,999	-	-	-	-
£100,000 – 109,999	-	-	-	-
£110,000 - 119,999	1	1	1	1
	6	**5**	**6**	**5**

The pension cost for these employees, was £20,737 (2023: £13,102), which included the Chief Executive who received a total salary of £118,965 (2023: £115,600) and pension contributions of £5,948 (2023: £4,626).

The average headcount including part-time staff, analysed by function was:

	Group		Charity	
	Number 2024	Number 2023	**Number 2024**	Number 2023
Raising funds	2	4	2	4
Other trading activities	7	7	6	6
Charitable activities	154	140	154	140
Support	24	21	24	21
	187	**172**	**186**	**171**

The average number of full time equivalents, analysed by function was:

	Group		Charity	
	FTEs 2024	FTEs 2023	**FTEs 2024**	FTEs 2023
Raising funds	1.9	3.2	1.9	3.2
Other trading activities	5.6	5.4	4.6	4.4
Charitable activities	106.0	95.0	106.0	95.0
Support	21.3	18.2	21.3	18.2
	134.8	**121.8**	**133.8**	**120.8**

The key management personnel of the charity comprise the trustees and the Directors Group. The total employee benefits of the key management personnel of the charity were £499,825 (2023: £425,765).

Expenses were reimbursed to 5 (2023: 5) members of the Board of Trustees during the year. Their expenses amounted to £131 (2023: £1,112) in respect of expenses incurred as a trustee in attending board and related meetings, and £19,157 (2023: £16,104) in respect of expenses incurred for branch support and fees as practitioners or breastfeeding counsellors. No trustees were remunerated in the current or prior year.

We are very grateful to our excellent volunteers. Given the absence of a reliable measurement basis, donated services from our volunteers are not included within the financial statements. Our network of volunteers offered welcoming and inclusive activities, supported over 96,000 parents at over 7,000 community events and provided over 75,000 hours of outstanding community service. More details of the crucial role volunteers contribute is provided in the Trustees' Report.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

10 Intangible fixed assets

Group and charity	Software £'000	Total 31 March £'000
Cost or valuation		
At 1 April 2023	128	128
Additions	-	-
Disposals	-	-
At 31 March 2024	128	**128**
Amortisation		
At 1 April 2023	128	128
Charge for period	-	-
On disposals	-	-
At 31 March 2024	128	**128**
Net book values		
At 31 March 2024	-	**-**
At 31 March 2023	-	-

11 Tangible fixed assets

Group and charity	Property £'000	Equipment £'000	Total 31 March £'000
Cost or valuation			
At 1 April 2023	1,504	259	1,763
Additions	-	3	3
Disposals	-	-	-
At 31 March 2024	1,504	262	**1,766**
Depreciation			
At 1 April 2023	236	257	**493**
Charge for period	31	1	32
On disposals	-	-	-
At 31 March 2024	267	258	**525**
Net book values			
At 31 March 2024	1,237	4	**1,241**
At 31 March 2023	1,268	2	**1,270**

Property relates to a leasehold building. This property was sold after the Balance Sheet date.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

12 Fixed asset investments

	Group		Charity	
	2024 31 March £	2023 31 March £	**2024 31 March £**	2023 31 March £
Investment in group undertakings:				
NCT (Maternity Sales) Limited	–	–	6	6
NCT Trading Limited	–	–	100	100
NCT Publishing Limited	–	–	2	2
First 1,000 Days Foundation	–	–	-	-
Other investments:				
Managed investment funds	3,996,678	3,707,453	3,996,678	3,707,453
	3,996,678	**3,707,453**	**3,996,786**	**3,707,561**

On 7 August 2013, the 'First 1,000 Days Foundation' was formed as a company limited by guarantee (registered in England and Wales 864816) with the sole member as The National Childbirth Trust. The Company has been dormant since incorporation. Investments in NCT (Maternity Sales) Limited, NCT Trading Limited and NCT Publishing Limited represent the entire called up share capital of the companies, all of which are incorporated in England.

	Registered Company Number	**Reserves at 31 March 2024 £**	Reserves at 31 March 2023 £
Investment in Group undertakings:			
NCT (Maternity Sales) Limited	01291517	6	6
NCT Trading Limited	02488491	-	-
NCT Publishing Limited	03017833	2	2
First 1,000 Days Foundation	08641816	-	-

The registered office for all of the above companies is: 27 Old Gloucester Street, London, WC1N 3AX.

Managed investment funds

Group and Charity	**2024 31 March £'000**	2023 31 March £'000
Market value at 1 April 2023	3,558	3,702
Acquisitions	2,086	940
Disposals	(2,016)	(936)
Net investment gains/ (losses)	230	(148)
Market value at 31 March 2024	**3,858**	**3,558**
The Market value is represented by:		
Equities	3,199	2,883
Bonds	659	675
	3,858	3,558
Cash held by investment managers	139	149
Total Investment fund	**3,997**	**3,707**

The charity's actively managed investment fund is revalued annually at the balance sheet date. The increase or decrease in value as a result of this valuation is recognised as an unrealised investment gain or loss.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

13 Debtors

	Group		Charity	
	2024 31 March £'000	2023 31 March £'000	**2024 31 March £'000**	2023 31 March £'000
Amounts due from subsidiary undertakings	-	-	21	54
Prepayments and accrued income	400	401	400	400
Trade and branch debtors	367	541	364	519
Tax recoverable	2	4	2	4
Other debtors	3	2	3	2
	772	**948**	**790**	**979**

'Trade and branch debtors' includes £nil (2023: £25,000) due in more than one year.

14 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	Group		Charity	
	2024 31 March £'000	2023 31 March £'000	**2024 31 March £'000**	2023 31 March £'000
Expense creditors	341	431	341	431
Social security and other taxes	104	95	104	95
Deferred income	1,971	2,663	1,969	2,643
Accruals	643	521	636	511
	3,059	**3,710**	**3,050**	**3,680**

	Movement in Deferred Income			
Group and Charity	**At 1 April 2023 £'000**	**Deferred £'000**	**Released £'000**	**At 31 March 2024 £'000**
NCT Courses	2,165	1,724	(2,165)	1,724
Programme Delivery	478	245	(478)	245
Total for the Charity	**2,643**	**1,969**	**(2,643)**	**1,969**
Commercial Fundraising	20	2	(20)	2
Total for the Group	**2,663**	**1,971**	**(2,663)**	**1,971**

Deferred income relates to courses and contracts for services which have not been delivered at the balance sheet date.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

15 Restricted funds

The income funds of the charity and the group include restricted funds comprising the following unexpended balances of donations and grants held on trusts to be applied for specific purposes:

Group and Charity	At 1 April 2023 £'000	Movements in Funds: Incoming Resources £'000	Outgoing Resources £'000	Fund Transfer £'000	At 31 March 2024 £'000
Grants and donations received by branches	166	253	(166)	-	253
Glasgow Service Delivery	-	185	(178)	-	7
Birth and Beyond Community Support	-	31	(31)	-	-
Newham Nurture	-	96	(96)	-	-
Big Give	2	1	(3)	-	-
LIDL	28	-	(28)	-	-
Parents in Mind	-	3	-	-	3
Antenatal	-	6	(1)	-	5
	196	**575**	**(503)**	**-**	**268**

Group and Charity	At 1 April 2022 £'000	Movements in Funds: Incoming Resources £'000	Outgoing Resources £'000	Fund Transfer £'000	At 31 March 2023 £'000
Grants and donations received by branches	117	166	(117)	-	166
Glasgow Service Delivery	-	184	(184)	-	-
Birth and Beyond Community Support	-	17	(17)	-	-
Newham Nurture	19	212	(231)	-	-
Big Give	23	6	(27)	-	2
LIDL	-	38	(10)	-	28
	159	**623**	**(586)**	**-**	**196**

Glasgow Service Delivery – Funding to enable us to provide a range of community and hospital breastfeeding peer support services across East Lothian and Glasgow

BBCS – Funding to enable us to continue to provide Birth and Beyond Community Support to mothers who are at risk of isolation and not accessing services across Peterborough and Lincolnshire and extended into Wisbech and Fenland.

Newham Nurture – Funding to enable us to coproduce a programme of support to pregnant women and new parents from low income, migrant and marginalised backgrounds experiencing financial hardship and disadvantage.

Big Give – Funding to enable us to give extra resource to our Infant Feeding Line so that more parents can be supported during peak times.

LIDL – Funding to enable us to support parents through the cost-of-living crisis by providing free-to-access services.

Parents in Mind – Funding to enable us to continue to provide Parents in Mind our perinatal mental health peer support programme to families in need

Antenatal – Funding to enable us to work with NHS hospitals to get their antenatal education up and running with in their trusts, ensuring families have free access to antenatal education.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

16 Unrestricted funds

Group	At 1 April 2023 £'000	Incoming Resources £'000	Outgoing Resources £'000	Unrealised Investment Gains/ (Losses) £'000	Transfer Between Funds £'000	At 31 March 2024 £'000
General Funds	3,122	11,273	11,562	230	29	**3,092**
Fixed Assets Fund	1,270	-	-	-	(29)	**1,241**
	4,392	**11,273**	**11,562**	**230**	**-**	**4,333**

Charity	At 1 April 2023 £'000	Incoming Resources £'000	Outgoing Resources £'000	Unrealised Investment Gains/ (Losses) £'000	Transfer Between Funds £'000	At 31 March 2024 £'000
General Funds	3,122	11,237	11,526	230	29	**3,092**
Fixed Assets Fund	1,270	-	-	-	(29)	**1,241**
	4,392	**11,237**	**11,526**	**230**	**-**	**4,333**

Group	At 1 April 2022 £'000	Incoming Resources £'000	Outgoing Resources £'000	Unrealised Investment Gains/ (Losses) £'000	Transfer Between Funds £'000	At 31 March 2023 £'000
General Funds	3,680	10,628	(11,070)	(148)	32	**3,122**
Fixed Assets Fund	1,302	-	-	-	(32)	**1,270**
	4,982	**10,628**	**(11,070)**	**(148)**	**-**	**4,392**

Charity	At 1 April 2022 £'000	Incoming Resources £'000	Outgoing Resources £'000	Unrealised Investment Gains/ (Losses) £'000	Transfer Between Funds £'000	At 31 March 2023 £'000
General Funds	3,680	10,572	(11,014)	(148)	32	**3,122**
Fixed Assets Fund	1,302	-	-	-	(32)	**1,270**
	4,982	**10,572**	**(11,014)**	**(148)**	**-**	**4,392**

The transfer between funds represents the movement in the fixed asset balance during the year.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

17 Analysis of net assets between funds

Fund balances at 31 March 2024 are represented by:

Group	Unrestricted Funds			
	General Funds £'000	Fixed Asset Fund £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	2024 Total £'000
Fixed assets	-	1,241	-	1,241
Investment assets	3,997	-	-	3,997
Net current assets / (liabilities)	(905)	-	268	(637)
Total net assets	**3,092**	**1,241**	**268**	**4,601**

Charity	Unrestricted Funds			
	General Funds £'000	Fixed Asset Fund £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	2024 Total £'000
Fixed assets	-	1,241	-	1,241
Investment assets	3,997	-	-	3,997
Net current assets / (liabilities)	(905)	-	268	(637)
Total net assets	**3,092**	**1,241**	**268**	**4,601**

Group	Unrestricted Funds			
	General Funds £'000	Fixed Asset Fund £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	2023 Total £'000
Fixed assets	-	1,270	-	1,270
Investment assets	3,707	-	-	3,707
Net current assets / (liabilities)	(585)	-	196	(389)
Total net assets	**3,122**	**1,270**	**196**	**4,588**

Charity	Unrestricted Funds			
	General Funds £'000	Fixed Asset Fund £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	2023 Total £'000
Fixed assets	-	1,270	-	1,270
Investment assets	3,707	-	-	3,707
Net current assets / (liabilities)	(585)	-	196	(389)
Total net assets	**3,122**	**1,270**	**196**	**4,588**

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

18 Taxation

The National Childbirth Trust is a registered charity and therefore is not liable to income tax or corporation tax on income derived from its charitable activities, as it falls within the various exemptions available to registered charities. Each year subsidiary companies, which do not have charitable status, may Gift Aid any taxable profits to The National Childbirth Trust. The charity and group is not able to reclaim all VAT suffered on expenditure due to the partial exemption regulations.

19 Operating lease commitments

At 31 March 2024 the group's future minimum operating lease payments were as follows:

	Group		Charity	
	2024 31 March £'000	2023 31 March £'000	**2024 31 March £'000**	2023 31 March £'000
Expire				
Within one year	11	6	11	6
Between one and five years	18	-	18	-
	29	**6**	**29**	**6**

20 Financial Instruments

The financial statements include the following in respect of items held at fair value at the balance sheet date

	Group		Charity	
	2024 31 March £'000	2023 31 March £'000	**2024 31 March £'000**	2023 31 March £'000
Financial assets measured at fair value through profit and loss	3,858	3,558	3,858	3,558

21 Related party transactions

NCT Trading Limited is a subsidiary of The National Childbirth Trust and its shares are 100% controlled within the group.

During the year the National Childbirth Trust purchased services from NCT Trading of £nil (2023: £7k) on normal commercial terms. The National Childbirth Trust supplied services to NCT Trading of £29k (2023: £34k).

At the 31 March 2023 NCT Trading Limited owed The National Childbirth Trust £23k (2023: £54k).

No members of the Board of Trustees (2023: Nil) had a beneficial interest in contracts with the charity. No member of the board (2023: Nil) had a beneficial interest in a contract with a wholly owned subsidiary of The National Childbirth Trust during the period. At the date of signing the accounts, one (2023: three) trustees was also a Director of NCT Trading Limited.

There are no other related party transactions to disclose other than set out elsewhere in these accounts, including in Note 9 (2023: none).

Reference and administrative information

Charity Registrations:

The National Childbirth Trust ('NCT')
Company Registration: 2370573 (England & Wales)
Registered Charity: 801395
Charity Registered in Scotland: SC041592
VAT: GB 115 0789 24

Registered Office:

27 Old Gloucester Street,
London,
WC1N 3AX

Board of Trustees who are also directors under Company Law at the date of this report are:

Charles Richardson (Honorary Treasurer)

Chi Evi-Parker

David Shanks

Elaine Lambe

Ema Ojiako (Honorary Secretary)

Franciane Husbands-Chevot

Julien Haye

Mikayla Pencross

Sarah Brown (Vice Chair)

Sherry Bevan (President)

Stephanie Maurel (Chair)

Vikram Sundarraj

Directors Group who are not directors for the purposes of Company Law at the date of this report are:

Angela McConville, Chief Executive

Michael Barnett, Director of Finance and Planning

Natasha Simpson, Director of People, Education and Inclusion

Tope Medupin, Director of Operations

Company Secretary

Michael Barnett

Auditor:

Haysmacintyre LLP
10 Queen Street Place
London
EC4R 1AG

Bankers:

Lloyds Bank plc.
39 Threadneedle Street
London
EC2R 8AU

Investment Advisors:

Rathbone Brothers PLC
8 Finsbury Circus
London
EC2M 7AZ

Solicitors:

Bates Wells & Braithwaite London LLP
10 Queen Street Place
London
EC4R 1BE

Kemp Little
Cheapside House
138 Cheapside
London
EC2V 6BJ

Subsidiaries:

First 1,000 Days Foundation (limited by guarantee, dormant)

NCT (Maternity Sales) Limited (dormant)

NCT Publishing Limited (dormant)

NCT Trading Limited

© NCT is a trading name of The National Childbirth Trust. Limited company registered in England and Wales: 2370573.
Registered address: 27 Old Gloucester Street, London WC1N 3AX.
Registered charity in England and Wales: 801395 and Scotland: SC041592.

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THE NATIONAL CHILDBIRTH TRUST

England & Wales - Charity number 801395

Accounts



Annual report & accounts

Year to 31 March 2023

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Trustees' report



We are NCT – the national charity that supports people as they become parents. We are here to support each unique journey of pregnancy, birth and early parenthood.

Our vision

That everyone who becomes a parent feels **confident**, **connected**, and **safe**, because we believe that parents help build the foundations of the future.

Our mision

We're the charity that supports people as they become parents.

Through pregnancy, birth and early parenthood:

- We create opportunities for parents to connect with others
- We share evidence-based information that parents can trust
- We empower parents to make decisions that are right for them
- We listen to parents' experiences and campaign to make things better
- We build local capacity in communities so we can be there for parents, now and in the future.

We are the charity that supports people as they become parents.



Every year we support over 250,000 parents across the UK on their unique journeys through pregnancy, birth, infant feeding, and early parenthood.

We connect, inform and support parents through our antenatal and postnatal courses and services, bringing people together to share information and experiences of pregnancy, birth, and life with a new baby. Our peer support programmes are there for parents who may be under-served by society or who are experiencing challenges with mental health, social isolation, or other unmet needs.

We host thousands of community-based events across the UK. If you're a new or expectant parent, you may have joined one of our Bumps & Babies Groups or visited a Baby Café to access infant feeding support. Many of these activities are run by our volunteers, who give more than 70,000 hours of outstanding community service each year.

We support parents to make informed decisions that feel right for them. We provide access to evidence-based information through our website and free Infant Feeding Line 365 days a year.

Our charity has a proud 67-year history of creating transformative change in the lives of parents. We are a trusted voice, a reassuring presence and a strong advocate, campaigning on the issues that matter most.

Today, we are a membership charity and a strong community of volunteers, practitioners, peer supporters, staff, students, advocates, and campaigners. We have a huge opportunity to positively influence the experience of millions of people as they become parents and to shape a bright future together.



By becoming an NCT member, you can help to fund vital, free services, including the Infant Feeding Line and our community support services. You can help shape the future of the charity, and with your support, we'll campaign on the issues that matter to parents. Plus, you'll benefit from access to extra parenting support, rewards, discounts, and exclusive events, including early access to our Nearly New Sales. Join us today!



Welcome from the Chair



This year marked my first full year as Chair of Trustees at NCT, and I am very proud of what we have achieved together over this relatively short period of time.

Every day our people – our staff, practitioners, students, and volunteers – show up for parents, touching lives across the country and making an incredible impact. The power that our NCT practitioners and volunteers have to change the world is undeniable, and I am particularly humbled by the time, passion, and energy that our people give every day.

Parents need our support to face the new challenges brought on by the long-term impact of the pandemic, the rising cost of living, and inequities in the system that cares for them. We know that we can and must do more. That's why this year the Board guided the development of NCT's new five-year strategy, ***For Every Parent***, from its inception through to its approval in March 2023. We highly commend its inclusive and collaborative production and extensive engagement with NCT's community and stakeholders.

Our commitment to inclusion and equity remains steadfast. We have strengthened our governance and leadership in this area, creating a new internal directorate with a focus on inclusion, and have made two key appointments – a new Director of People, Education, and Inclusion and a full-time, permanent Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Lead, who work closely with our teams to ensure our services, information, and support are increasingly fair, equitable, and accessible.

> *"The Board remains focused on good governance and ensuring our policies reflect real-world challenges."*

My sincere thanks to all the Trustees who give their time to steward our charity. I would particularly like to thank Susy Broekhuizen, who has been actively involved with NCT for over 25 years and will serve on the Board until the end of the 2023 Annual General Meeting. Thank you also to David Shanks and Charles Richardson who are helping, in conjunction with our former Chair, Jess Figueras, to ensure that the strength of our approach to cyber security matches the challenges that we face as an organisation and as a society to keep data private and secure. Finally, I am immensely grateful to the six independent committees and other group members who support the Trustees and bring a wide range of perspectives to critical issues, helping us to stay on top of rapid changes in the external environment. We continue to steward key risks and challenges including the safety of our services, our people and our suppliers, cyber-security, the continuing costs and challenge of our technology and digital environments and safeguarding our future funding at a time of much political and economic unpredictability.

In a difficult economic environment, we were pleased that total income grew during the year. Total expenditure also grew, partly due to a number of strategic investments to ensure that we can deliver better services for parents, and careful management of resources meant that reserves finished the year in line with the agreed policy.

Thank you to everyone who gives time, energy, and commitment to support parents. Together, we make a big difference. And together, we will do more to support all parents now, and in the future.

Stephanie Maurel

Chair of Trustees

Welcome from the Chief Executive



Our charity has a clear and singular mission – **to support people as they become parents**.

Across our NCT community we are working tirelessly towards our vision of a world where everyone who becomes a parent feels confident, connected, and safe.

In the face of complex social and economic challenges, we know our work through pregnancy, birth, and early parenthood has never been more important. Last year hundreds of thousands of people in the UK became parents – be that for the first or fifth time – in uncertain and challenging times.

A dramatic increase in the cost of living saw more babies born into poverty and more parents struggling to heat their homes, feed themselves, and pay for childcare. New parents also found themselves navigating maternity and postnatal services which are critically underfunded and under-resourced. Inequalities remain stark. Birth experiences and outcomes still vary wildly, too often influenced by where someone lives or by their demographic characteristics and socioeconomic status. Too many families struggle to access the critical support and information they need.

In the face of these new challenges for parents, we know that our charity must adapt and evolve to remain impactful and relevant. We can be bold and do even more. Over the past 12 months we have developed our new five-year strategy, ***For Every Parent*** – a plan to reach more parents than ever before and help ensure that every parent feels safe and supported during pregnancy, birth, and early parenthood.

We believe that high quality antenatal and postnatal education and support shouldn't be an opportunity only for the few, but that every parent should have the opportunity to develop the skills, access the information, and build the confidence and support networks that are invaluable during this monumental life transition. We shape our work around this ethos.

Last year, we expanded our offer of free antenatal classes and drop-ins, as well as free infant feeding support, often commissioned by NHS trusts across the country, supporting nearly 5,000 parents. Postnatally, we continued to expand our support for new parents through NCT's Infant Feeding Line, Baby Cafés and community drop-ins, and breastfeeding peer support services offered free, community-based breastfeeding and infant feeding support to over 22,000 women and people. We also continued to enhance our wider postnatal offer to parents, including live postnatal talks.

We continue to campaign, influence, and advocate for better experiences and outcomes for parents, with a focus on addressing health inequalities and the long-term underinvestment in maternity services.

During 2022 we saw the publication of two major independent reports commissioned to investigate deaths of mothers and babies at NHS trusts in England. The devastating failures identified in both the Shrewsbury and Telford, and East Kent reviews led us to undertake a deep listening exercise with our community, where we heard from volunteers, practitioners, students, staff, and trustees – and above all, new and expectant parents. We then developed a series of important commitments to parents as we continued to accelerate development of our support and services.

2022-23 was also a year of key inquiry, with research and lived experiences being harnessed and shared to better understand the state of maternity discrimination and disparity in the UK today. Through our involvement with the COVID-19 Inquiry, in partnership with other pregnancy and baby charities, we are highlighting how pregnant women, their partners, and new parents, particularly those who experience socioeconomic deprivation and other forms of exclusion and discrimination, were also disproportionally impacted by the pandemic. By scrutinising government decisions and ensuring that the appropriate lessons are learnt, we can support people as they become parents now and into the future.

We know that inclusion and equity are vital for living our values, fulfilling our social responsibilities, and expanding our reach. We are focused on continually improving our organisational culture, policies, and practices. In 2022-23, this included initiating a review of our online content, advancing the NCT Antenatal framework, refreshing our postnatal course offer, and examining our language choices – all to ensure we give parents confidence that our information and services are evidence-based, unbiased, inclusive, and trustworthy.

We could not achieve all we do without the commitment of our people – our staff, practitioners, students, and volunteers. I am so very proud of our shared community spirit. I can only extend my deepest gratitude to all our people. You truly are bold and brave, and your welcoming and collaborative spirit knows no limits. Above all, you continue to learn, stay open, and show compassion, which are the cornerstones of our NCT community. A special mention to our thousands of volunteers, whose commitment and ability to positively reach so many new parents is fantastic. Without you, much of our charitable work would not be possible. Last year this incredible group gave more than 70,000 hours of voluntary community service in support of parents. I too am humbled by the time, passion, and energy that NCT volunteers give. A wholehearted thank you.

Thank you for everything you do in helping to ensure that everyone who becomes a parent feels confident, connected, and safe.

Angela McConville

Chief Executive

Welcome from the NCT President



As the President of this incredible parent-centred movement, I have witnessed first-hand how our values drive so much of what we do. The highlight of my year was working with NCT colleagues to define and communicate NCT's values – the first time that we've so explicitly articulated who we are, and how we want to show up in the world.

People often say, 'it takes a village to raise a family,' but not everyone has the relationships or help they need. Having access to support can make all the difference. That's why NCT is **welcoming** to everyone. We're here to help make every parent feel more confident, connected, and safe, and to enable them to build their own villages of support. Much of this work takes place through our fantastic volunteer-led branches, and over the course of the year I've loved seeing our branches returning to their full range of activities after the pandemic.

Our role in helping people to explore their options and navigate their own pregnancy, birth, feeding, or caring decisions relies on us being **trusted** by parents. As an NCT practitioner myself, I know trust is crucial to delivering high-quality, evidence-based information, support, and services that have impact. This year I opened my own Baby Café to offer specialist infant feeding and breastfeeding support for parents in my local area. My group – like many others around the country – has grown from strength to strength and demonstrates the need for local, **inclusive**, and accessible services that parents can rely on and trust.

> *I've witnessed a **collaborative** spirit in the way we approach our work.*

In the last year, we've worked across teams to improve our own information, services, and support to parents and collaborated with partner organisations on campaigns to create change within the maternity sector. Together we can achieve so much.

This year I've been proud to be involved in the development of our new five-year strategy, ***For Every Parent***. As well as being **bold**, the strategy builds on our roots – decades of achievements by our committed, passionate NCT community, as well as the partner organisations and collaborators who have supported our vision.

NCT's new values set a clear and positive framework for how we work together and with parents. I am proud of our staff, volunteers, practitioners, and students who are already living these values every day.

Finally, I would like to take a moment to remember Gail Werkmeister, former NCT President, Trustee, Practitioner and Tutor who passed away in November 2022. For over three decades, Gail worked at both national and local level with parents and alongside antenatal practitioners, breastfeeding counsellors, postnatal leaders, and volunteers. I didn't know Gail well, but I always admired her from afar. She will always be remembered for her contribution to the NCT movement.

Sherry Bevan

NCT President


Chi Evi- Parker

Looking ahead – *For Every Parent:*

NCT's 2023-28 strategy



NCT has a proud 67-year history of creating transformative change in the lives of women, new parents, babies and families in the UK. For millions of parents, we have been a trusted voice, a supportive presence, and a strong advocate. We are proud of who we are and what we have achieved together. But we know we can reach more people, do more to support expectant and new parents, and help create a better, more equitable system to support them at this critical, transformative stage of their lives.

Drawing on the experiences and views of parents, our people, the wider NCT community, and our partners and key stakeholders, in 2022-23, we co-developed a new strategy to lead our charity into the future.

Throughout the development process we were focused on ensuring that our vision and mission:

- Are inclusive of all parents, and of our wider community
- Keep the emphasis on parents' experiences
- Explain why supporting and empowering parents is so important
- Capture the idea that becoming a parent is a unique and individual transition, and that our work is focused on this critical period of change in people's lives
- Showcase the breadth and scale of our charity's work and the services we provide.



We're the charity that supports people as they become parents, and this means tackling head on the top challenges facing parents today. The strategy is a response to five key issues – overstretched maternity services, disparities in quality of care, postnatal support in crisis, the rising cost of living, and the diverse and evolving profile of parents in the UK.

Our ***For Every Parent*** strategy sets a clear direction for our charity to reach more people, do more to support new and expectant parents, and campaign with impact. Achieving our vision will have long-lasting and far-reaching benefits, not just for parents themselves, but also for babies, children, families, and our whole society. We believe that parents help build the foundations of the future, and we will work to ensure that becoming a parent is an equitable and fair experience for everyone.

Our vision

That everyone who becomes a parent feels **confident**, **connected**, and **safe**, because we believe that parents help build the foundations of the future.

Our mission

We're the charity that supports people as they become parents.

Through pregnancy, birth and early parenthood:

- We create opportunities for parents to connect with others
- We share evidence-based information that parents can trust
- We empower parents to make decisions that are right for them
- We listen to parents' experiences and campaign to make things better
- We build local capacity in communities so we can be there for parents, now and in the future.

Our values

Our values guide everything we do at NCT. They help us to navigate the way we work and behave and are interwoven throughout our new strategy. The next five years will see our commitment to these values deepen and grow, as we continue to embed them across our work so that we truly live and breathe these ideals in who we are and what we do.

Welcoming

We are always welcoming, creating connections, and building communities.

Collaborative

We achieve better outcomes by working together.

Inclusive

We ensure equity and inclusion are core to who we are and what we do.

Bold

We are bold, brave, and progressive.

Trusted

We provide trusted, high-quality, evidence-based information, support, and services.

Our strategic priorities for 2023-28

In building our strategy, we engaged with over 200 staff, students, practitioners, volunteers, trustees, parents, members and partner organisations through surveys, interviews, focus groups, events, and workshops.

We formed a clear picture of the turbulent and changing world we find ourselves in, what pregnant women and new parents need, what we must keep at the core of our work and mission, and where we need to adapt and do things differently. Drawing on this diverse range of experiences and community of experts, we coproduced our strategy.

It sets a clear direction for our charity to reach more people, do more to support new and expectant parents, and campaign with impact, with a focus on **four strategic pillars**:

- More parents, more impact
- Real lives, real change
- Great people, great results
- Strong foundations, strong future



More parents, more impact

We want to support and empower all people as they become parents – through pregnancy, birth, breastfeeding, infant feeding, and early parenthood. For us, this means building even bigger communities of new parents, tackling health inequalities, and making our services and content more inclusive and accessible.

Real lives, real change

We are reigniting our focus on campaigning and community action. We will listen to parents' experiences, amplify their voices, and collaborate for change to improve the experiences of pregnancy, birth, and early parenthood. We want everyone who becomes a parent to feel confident, connected, and safe. No exceptions.

Great people, great results

Our people hold the key to our impact. We're building a diverse and inclusive community of staff, practitioners, students, peer supporters, and volunteers who are empowered in their work to support everyone who becomes a parent to feel confident, connected, and safe.

Strong foundations, strong future

To support people as they become parents now and into the future, our charity must be progressive, sustainable, and here for the long-term. We're committed to making it easier for parents to access our services and for our teams to deliver them.



Tackling health inequalities in maternity services and support

Racial injustice and disparities in quality of care

The pressure on UK maternity services was a high-profile issue over the past year. A recurring theme was inequity in the outcomes of childbirth and the perinatal period. NCT regularly attended Parliament and other key public forums to campaign on the issues that matter most to parents. 2022-23 was a year of key inquiry, with research and lived experiences being harnessed and shared to better understand the state of maternity discrimination and disparity in the UK and Channel Islands today.

In May 2022, we welcomed the publication of the **Black Maternity Experiences** report by **Five X More**, a campaigning organisation committed to highlighting and changing Black maternal outcomes in the UK.[i] Their report found that Black women experienced distinct and particular challenges in their interactions with healthcare professionals, facing assumptions, bias, and discrimination that directly contributed to negative outcomes for mothers and babies.

This was followed by **Systemic Racism not Broken Bodies** by the charity **Birthrights**[ii] – which NCT supported through the participatory, lived experience work with women – which presented the stark findings of an inquiry into racial injustice and human rights in UK NHS maternity care.

In July 2022 came **Invisible – Maternity Experiences of Muslim Women** from the **Muslim Women's Network UK (MWNUK)**[iii], which again we welcomed. All three reports cited women's experiences of discrimination on a personal basis, as well as within the system. Important recommendations included improved cultural training, better quality data collection, and heightened awareness of conditions where diagnosis is based on, for example, the colour of a baby's skin.

NCT has responded publicly to each of these important reports, including a call to action from NCT Chief Executive Angela McConville following the publication of the Black Maternity Experiences report: ***"The experiences of Black women and people must be listened to, understood, and worked with to take action to address racial bias in our maternity services. This report makes meaningful recommendations for positive change. Increasing knowledge on identifying and diagnosing conditions that are specific to, and which disproportionately affect Black women, and an improved system to submit feedback and complaints, is crucial."*** NCT also responded to the MWNUK report: 'Services need to be tailored to meet the needs of ethnically diverse local populations, and a cultural shift in attitudes and behaviours towards ethnically diverse communities is needed.'

In November 2022, **MBRRACE-UK** published the '**Saving Lives, Improving Mothers' Care**' report[iv], which found that Black women were almost four times more likely than white women to die during pregnancy, labour, or postpartum, twice as likely to lose their baby during pregnancy or soon after birth, and more likely to be readmitted to hospital after birth. NCT's Angela McConville responded:

> *Safety in birth isn't a 'nice-to-have' – it is a fundamental right. And yet we live in a society where women's and people's safety in pregnancy, birth and postnatally can depend on where they live, their ethnicity and if they experience multiple disadvantages in life. The disparity between women who are Black, Asian and from other ethnic minority backgrounds compared to white women, while decreasing, persist. Sustained focus is needed to deliver equitable maternity care. With the right leadership, behaviours, team working cultures and staffing levels, lives can be saved, and avoidable deaths prevented.*

During 2022-23, NCT collaborated with and supported organisations leading these campaigns for change and continued to raise awareness of key Black maternal health campaigns and services. These included those led by **Five X More**, **The Motherhood Group** and **Black Mothers Matter**, which all brought vital attention to the inequalities in outcomes experienced by Black mothers and those giving birth. We are very grateful to the team at **Black Mothers Matter** who were key collaborators in our work scoping the future of our Infant Feeding Line service. We'd also like to thank **The Motherhood Group's** Chief Executive, Sandra Igwe, who was a guest speaker at our AGM in November 2022, and who helped us unpack the findings from our maternity experiences survey. In addition, we were members of the **RCOG Race Equality Taskforce** across the year, and have also supported the calls of the **Black Maternal Health APPG** since its establishment in 2021.

Failings in quality of care in NHS maternity services

Maternity reviews

2022 saw the publication of two major independent reports commissioned to investigate the deaths of mothers and babies at NHS Trusts in England.

The Independent Review of Maternity Services at The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust[v], led by Donna Ockenden, was published on 30 March 2022 with responsive commitments from the NHS being pledged in the days following. NCT's Chief Executive responded:

> *Safety for women and babies is paramount, and that means receiving personalised, skilled, and compassionate care that responds to their individual needs at every stage of the maternity journey. They must be listened to and respected … We wholeheartedly support the call for major investment to ensure a safe, skilled maternity workforce who feel valued and supported in their roles.*

October 2022 saw publication of the **Maternity and neonatal services in East Kent: 'Reading the signals' report**[vi], led by Dr Bill Kirkup. Again, NCT responded, stressing heartfelt sympathy for the families affected, the crucial need for parents' voices to be heard, and a call for NHS maternity staff to have positive working environments with strong leadership and a supportive culture.

A third, high-profile maternity review – also led by Donna Ockenden – was launched in September 2022, to investigate failings in maternity care in Nottingham University Hospitals. This review is ongoing.

The weight of evidence and public opinion is clearly moving in one direction. We face the stark reality that only a handful of maternity services are rated as 'outstanding' by the **Care Quality Commission**, with many requiring improvements and some rated as 'inadequate'. And, as discussed above, there are shocking and persistent variations in the quality of maternity care received, with racial bias a particular problem.

NCT's response: new commitments to parents across our services

There are many organisations doing important and trailblazing work to ensure that parents' experiences of pregnancy, birth, and early parenthood are fair and equitable. NCT is committed to joining and amplifying these voices to campaign for change.

In the aftermath of the Ockenden review, we worked closely with our maternity alliances and charity partners. We undertook a deep listening exercise with our community, where we heard from our volunteers, practitioners, students, staff, and trustees. We made sure we were putting parents' voices at the heart of our calls for change, undertaking a survey with over 1,200 new parents to find out about their experiences of maternity care in summer 2022. These workstreams resulted in a series of important commitments to parents as we continued to accelerate the development of our support and services. Our commitments included:

- Strengthening our NCT Antenatal framework, guidance resources, and Continuing Professional Development that will support its safe, effective, and unbiased delivery
- Focusing on our support and services to parents in the postnatal period
- Reigniting NCT's work as a powerful campaigning charity
- Creating new and refreshed website content that supports everyone, whoever they are, in the decisions they may make as parents.

In July 2022 we began an in-depth review of NCT Antenatal, ensuring that the information and support we provide to parents continues to be evidence-based, unbiased, and inclusive. We gathered and analysed feedback from parents and practitioners and examined new evidence and best practice approaches from a range of internal stakeholders and external experts. Using a coproduction approach, we built on the findings from the review to update and refresh the content framework for NCT Antenatal, as well as the supporting guidance on the balance of content and recommended approaches.

We also initiated our content review project, which is ongoing throughout 2023. First steps included conducting an initial audit of content immediately after the Ockenden review and updating all the web pages that were identified as high priority. We appointed a Senior Digital Content Manager to lead the content review and strategy development. We initiated the content discovery phase, working with teams to understanding the current impact of our parent content, the content needs of all teams across NCT, and understanding the range of ways and preferences parents have in finding and accessing trusted information.

In addition, we commissioned a place of birth rapid literature review, to ensure our information and services were supported through rigorous evidence, especially in this post-pandemic, stretched maternity environment. This has extended to the development of a refreshed Continuing Professional Development programme on place of birth safety for our practitioner community, including a live webinar on the topic by Dr Kirstie Coxon, then Associate Professor in Midwifery at Kingston University and St George's, University of London. We also delivered an online learning module to understand the key findings of the place of birth review and implications for practice. Our online resources for parents about place of birth have also been updated given that the review identified that the additional details we included would be useful to parents in their decision-making.

We have also extended our postnatal feedback collection from parents to include questions in our post-birth course evaluation survey about their maternity care experience. This is sent to all parents who attend NCT Antenatal courses. The data we collect enables us to continue to examine trends in maternity services, in turn influencing the focus of our advocacy and campaigning work.

Campaigning for change



Highlighting parents' experiences of maternity care

In July 2022, NCT responded to a call from the Royal College of Midwives (RCM) for evidence on the impact of shortages in maternity staffing. We surveyed over 1,200 people who had given birth during 2021-2022 about their experiences, seeking to learn if NHS staff working across the maternity disciplines had been able to provide safe and compassionate care.

The findings were presented and discussed at NCT's AGM in November 2022. We were grateful to Abbie Aplin from the **RCM**, Sandra Igwe from **The Motherhood Group**, and Francesca Treadaway from **Birthrights**, who joined NCT's leadership representatives for a discussion panel on the day of the AGM.

What we heard from parents in our survey reflects concerning levels of low staffing in maternity units also reported externally. Though most parents reported kindness and respect from health professionals, an alarming proportion – over half – reported experiencing at least one 'red flag' event, as defined by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), during their intrapartum care. Red flag events are signs that there may not be enough midwives available to give women and babies the care they need; examples include having to wait more than 30 minutes to get pain relief or waiting over an hour to be given stitches. Even more concerningly, however, of the people who indicated they had experienced a red flag event, almost half had been affected by two or more events, and one third experienced four or more events. Continuity of care was also found to be a problem, with just one quarter of respondents indicating they could always see a specific midwife or obstetrician antenatally. Continuity of care was least likely to be reported postnatally, with almost two fifths of those surveyed reporting that they could rarely or never see a specific midwife. We shared our insights with the campaign being conducted by the All-Party Parliamentary Groups (APPGs) on Maternity and on Baby Loss.

Recommendations coming from this work include calls for investment in the NHS workforce, and for parents' voices to be heard, resonating with conclusions from the independent reports by Donna **Ockenden**[vii] and Bill **Kirkup**[viii] discussed above.

Many survey respondents reported particularly poor experiences of postnatal care, which have been exacerbated through the pandemic. In response, we successfully supported campaigns to restore a woman or pregnant person's right to have their birth partner with them on the hospital ward during labour, following Covid-19 restrictions, and for a review of this phase of care, which has become dangerously inadequate. In March 2023, NHS England published a **Three-Year Delivery Plan for Maternity and Neonatal Services**[ix]: we are very pleased that since January 2023, NCT is represented on a Postnatal Care Improvement Working Group commissioned to ensure this part of the service is made safer.

National Covid-19 Inquiry

Another key focus of our advocacy work in the year relates to our participation in the Covid-19 Inquiry. **The UK's Covid-19 Inquiry** accepted NCT, along with 12 other charities in the pregnancy and baby charities sector, as a 'core participant' group in February 2023. At the first preliminary hearing, barrister Adam Wagner represented the group, telling the Inquiry how policies implemented at the start of the pandemic had devastating effects on thousands of families during pregnancy and after the birth of their babies. Antenatal and postnatal care are included as specific areas to be covered in the Inquiry's Terms of Reference. More detailed submissions of evidence to the Inquiry are planned for 2023-2024.

Collaborating with NHS trusts to provide antenatal and infant feeding support

NCT has been providing Preparation for Birth and Beyond antenatal courses for the NHS since 2009, and last year we supported over 4,000 parents through the programme.

We are currently working with five NHS Trusts:

- Countess of Chester Hospital Foundation Trust
- Royal Berkshire Hospital Foundation Trust
- North West Anglia Foundation Trust
- Mersey and West Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust
- Oxford University Hospitals Foundation Trust.

These antenatal programmes are tailored to their local area, trust, and place of birth. This year we partnered with three new Trusts: North West Anglia, Mersey and West Lancashire Teaching Hospitals, and Oxford University Hospitals. This has enabled us to support more than 1,000 additional parents with antenatal education, bringing the total number supported across all Trusts in 2022-23 to 4,383.

Many of the families who attend these Preparation for Birth and Beyond courses would not have accessed any antenatal education had it not been for this provision. For many of the parents, English is not their first language and postcode analysis found that over a third of attendees lived in areas of deprivation.[1]

Our collaboration in action

We have been working with Royal Berkshire Hospital since 2016 providing antenatal education. During 2022-23, they expanded their commission to include antenatal infant feeding support services. We have worked in collaboration with the Trust's Infant Feeding Team to develop a parent-centred course framework, learning outcomes, and course content. Our aim is to deliver accurate, trusted information and ensure high-quality content for the parents who attend.

One of our new NHS Trusts, Oxford University Hospitals (OUH), has also commissioned infant feeding education as part of their antenatal offer to parents.

[1] Areas in the lower half of the multiple deprivation deciles. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/835115/IoD2019_Statistical_Release.pdf Accessed 22 Aug. 23

We were very fortunate at OUH to secure funding for 12 months of antenatal education for first-time mothers. After a competitive process for the contract, we decided to go with NCT. This has proven to be a fantastic decision. Janie, Cerys and team have gone above and beyond to roll this out extremely quickly. They worked with multiple members of the midwifery team to produce bespoke content and the feedback from women and midwives alike has been exceptional. We feel very grateful to be able to offer this to women and families in Oxfordshire and have very much enjoyed working with them!

Wendy, Matron for Community and Public Health, Maternity Directorate, Oxford University Hospitals Foundation Trust

I love the challenge of working with diverse groups of parents and adapting my delivery style to meet their needs.

Heidi, NCT Antenatal Practitioner and Breastfeeding Counsellor

I emigrated to the UK 3 months ago and had no idea how the system worked. This course will definitely help those who have the same background as me.

Anon, attendee of a PBB course at Royal Berkshire Hospital

We are delighted that this year over 700 parents attended our NHS-supported infant feeding sessions across the five Trusts.



Newham Nurture – supporting parents under-served by society



NCT's Newham Nurture Perinatal Partnership is a co-designed service which supports migrant families in Newham who have refugee status, are seeking asylum, or have no recourse to public funds, from pregnancy to early parenthood.

Many of the families that we work with are experiencing homelessness and financial hardship, and are under-served by society in multiple ways. Our programme aims to provide a critical intervention to help these families to have the best possible start in life during this significant transition. In the past year nearly 300 families were supported through this programme, with 49 different languages spoken among them.

In October 2022 Newham Nurture received a Maternity Service, City of Sanctuary award, recognising our work as a welcoming place of safety for people fleeing violence and persecution.

Newham Nurture acts as a bridge by providing culturally safe and appropriate antenatal and postnatal support which is genuinely accessible, with 29 languages spoken within the team. Our partnership works to boost statutory services by supporting families not only to engage with their rights via advocacy and practicalities (translation, creche, travel allowance), but also help to shape local systems for pregnancy, birth, and early childhood service provision for future communities.

Siân Summers-Rees, Chief Officer at City of Sanctuary UK, said:

> *"Newham Nurture truly exemplifies sanctuary in maternity care. Pregnancy and parenthood can be daunting – even more so when also going through the UK asylum system – but Newham Nurture's innovative and inclusive programming ensures more families get the care, support, friendship, and community that we all deserve."*

In November 2022, steering group members, volunteers, and staff from the Newham Nurture project came together with partner organisations, funders, and policymakers at a roundtable event to discuss how we can better support migrant and under-served women and pregnant people through pregnancy, birth, and early parenthood. A compelling message from the event was the importance of listening, involving, and genuinely cocreating with those with lived experience in making services accessible and relevant to who they support.

In 2023 it was confirmed that NCT have secured further funding for the Newham Nurture Perinatal Partnership. We are grateful to City Bridge Trust, Royal Docks Trust and Newham Council for their support.



Increased financial pressures and uncertainty for new parents

The UK is in the grip of a cost-of-living crisis, as price inflation has seen the cost of food, energy, and other goods and services, like transport and childcare, rise faster than wages. Increasing financial pressures have forced many parents to make difficult decisions about how to feed their baby, or keep them warm, with research showing that two-thirds of UK parents are concerned about paying for food, energy, and fuel.[x]

While everybody has experienced an increase in the cost of living, these pressures are felt more acutely by new parents, who are adapting to the new expenses involved in raising a child or growing their family. The soaring cost of formula milk, for example, has led to some parents and caregivers resorting to unsafe feeding practices.[xi]

The uncertain economic environment also amplifies the disparities in our society. Cost-of-living pressures particularly affect parents and caregivers on low incomes, or those already under-served or excluded by our society in other ways. Many of the parents who use our community-based services reported that their lives have become more challenging and complex as they face insecurity on multiple fronts.

These economic stressors impact parents' ability to feel confident, connected, and safe. If you can't afford to heat – or even keep – your home, your health and wellbeing, and that of your baby, will suffer. If you can no longer afford a bus fare, you will be at greater risk of isolation with a new baby.

We have worked hard to address these challenges and disparities in our provision of services, support, and information. We have:

- Continued to expand our free-to-access provision – including our antenatal, infant feeding and peer support services.
- Distributed over 3,000 Baby Bundle packages to new families in need.
- Run 76 Nearly New Sales that offered affordable baby items to over 22,000 parents, with over 200,000 items sold.
- Established partnerships that help parents save money on essentials.
- Reviewed our course discount policy so we can help more families to access quality education support.
- Secured the future of our Newham Nurture Perinatal Partnership, which provides critical perinatal support for refugees and asylum seekers, thanks to support from City Bridge Trust.
- Worked closely with other local services such as food banks, baby banks, clothing banks, and emergency accommodation to help parents and families who need support, particularly during the winter months, when the cost-of-living crisis was felt particularly acutely.

NCT Nearly New Sales – affordable, sustainable shopping for parents



Spotlight on: NCT Loughborough

NCT Nearly New Sales have continued to grow over the last year, with over 200,000 items sold across 76 Nearly New Sales. These were accessed by over 22,000 parents who were able to ease the cost of parenting and shop more sustainably.

NCT Loughborough's team of volunteers and helpers run NCT Nearly New Sales twice a year. The sales provide hundreds of families in the local community and wider area with a trusted place to find a variety of high-quality items at reasonable cost, carefully displayed for a great shopping experience.

Many parents attend each sale to buy essentials for the next season at a fraction of the cost on the high street and resell their outgrown items.

> *"We came for coats and shoes. I can do a whole seasonal wardrobe swap here for basically nothing."*
>
> Vicki and Andy, parents





As well as being an affordable way parents can shop for their families, the sale supports the wider community. Teachers use the sale to buy items for their classrooms, and support workers shop for clothes and toys for service users.

> *NCT Sales are brilliant for good quality things to buy at a good price.*
>
> Liz, Nearly New Sale buyer

And while saving or making some extra money is a top priority for most buyers and sellers at the sales, sustainability is also a big factor. NCT Nearly New Sales help parents play a part in protecting the planet for their children.

> *Nearly New Sales are important for the community at the moment as the cost of living is going up. It's a great way to get really good deals but it is also a great way to make a little bit of money back once the children have grown out of things. It's a good cyclic system and saves a lot of things going to rubbish tips.*
>
> Jenny, NCT volunteer

> *More and more people are taking up the opportunity to sell and recycle.*
>
> Eileen, NCT volunteer

The sales can only happen thanks to our incredible volunteers and helpers who also enjoy the social side of being part of an NCT family. This is what makes NCT Nearly New Sales so much more than just a place to shop – for parents, volunteers and the local community.

> *I am a foster carer and first came to the sales to pick up bits and bobs for my foster children. Now four of my children volunteer here with me, and my mum. It has become a family affair and we enjoy the social aspect.*
>
> Laura, foster parent and NCT volunteer

NCT Baby Bundles – providing essentials for new families

Spotlight on: NCT Vale of Evesham

NCT Baby Bundles support families in a wide range of circumstances. Run by NCT branch volunteers in 18 different areas across the UK, we provide packs of essential items for parents-to-be and families of newborns in need. This includes, for example, parents who have lost jobs or are unable to work, refugee families, people who have escaped domestic abuse, and young parents. We also know that many families have a surplus of baby clothing and equipment and are keen to see their pre-loved items go to someone who needs it. NCT Baby Bundles is a way to make this happen. Last year, we distributed over 3,000 Baby Bundle packages to new families in need.



Hannah, a volunteer from the NCT Vale of Evesham Baby Bundles team explains:

"We know from feedback that some of the families that we support simply could not afford to buy the items that we are able to source for them. Our Bundles are sometimes the difference between a child having an essential item and not.

There's enormous environmental benefit to re-using items for as long as possible and this is a huge driver for me personally. We all have a responsibility to ensure that we use resources carefully and considerately. We've developed our scheme to include offering 'Newborn Packs' for all expectant and new parents - these include pre-loved clothing and part packs of nappies. We have also linked with keen crafters in our local community who can use stained or damaged clothing to create items which are then sold in aid of our scheme."



The NCT Vale of Evesham Baby Bundles team works closely with healthcare professionals to generate referrals into the scheme, which started in March 2021. By its second year of operation referrals had doubled, with demand growing due to the rising cost of living as well as increased awareness of the project by professionals.

> *I think it's a wonderful service, to know that families will be given such beautiful, high-quality items at a time when they're most vulnerable and in need. The fact that it's a 'no questions asked' service is so special – we save many families from feeling shame. It's lovely to see what people can do for other people.*

Midwife from Vale of Evesham area

> *We got our clothing Bundles, they were amazing. We're all over the moon and so grateful to everyone who helped us.*

Anon, parent

Partnering to help parents save money on baby essentials

Lidl GB and NCT have worked in partnership to support new parents across the UK since 2019.

New for 2022, NCT and Lidl GB trialled an innovative digital discount across their Lupilu range via monthly QR codes. These offered over 43,000 new and expectant families the opportunity to save money on baby essentials. In a rapidly shifting uncertain economic environment, we are grateful to Lidl GB for their generous support to families.

Aside from digital discounts, Lidl GB has been supporting NCT's Newham Nurture Perinatal Partnership with a donation of 2,200 reusable canvas bags. When our Head of Programmes asked a member of the team about the bags, they said *"we can take hundreds if needed as we have many uses for them."* One of the most popular uses of bags is to provide expectant parents and people with no recourse to public funds with a sustainable hospital bag that they can have as part of their birth preparations. Our huge thanks again to Lidl GB and the Newham Nurture team for helping to make a difference at this critical time.

In 2022- 23 Lidl GB remained the official supplier of disposable nappies at NCT Antenatal courses, providing free nappies to practitioners for use as teaching aids at over 3,200 courses across the UK to help parents practice key baby care.

As part of Lidl GB's continued commitment to supporting parents in their own workforce, NCT provided eligible employees with corporate membership to NCT as well as offering a discount on NCT Antenatal courses.

Together we raised awareness of our partnership with key promotions in Lidl GB new store leaflets and at collaborative events. A special mention to the volunteering branch in Basingstoke who took part in a photoshoot that provided new, modern images for the collaboration.

Thank you, Lidl GB, for your support and friendship.

If you have any questions about partnering with NCT, please do contact **partnerships@nct.org.uk**



Overstretched maternity services



Every year over 605,000 babies are born in the UK[xii] to parents who form part of an increasingly diverse group of people within our society. The demographic of parents is changing. Latest figures show that almost a third of births are to parents born outside the UK.[xiii] More babies today are conceived as a result of fertility treatment.[xiv] The number born by surrogacy[xv] is also increasing, as are births to people with diverse gender identities or sexual orientations.[xvi] In 2022, just over half of all live births were registered to women outside of a marriage or civil partnership.[xvii]

As society changes and the profile of parents and families diversifies, the way we design and deliver support and information must also evolve. Over the past year we have continued to listen, learn, adapt, and innovate, so that we can provide high-quality, personalised support, and inclusive and accessible services.

Becoming a parent – whether for the first or a subsequent time – is often a joyful, positive, and exhilarating experience. It can, however, also be overwhelming, frightening and, at times, full of uncertainty and challenges.

Expectant and new parents need support in the form of high-quality, safe, and personalised maternity care. And yet, in 2022, only 1% of maternity services were rated as outstanding by the Care Quality Commission[xviii], meaning that 99% of services have room to improve the quality of care they deliver.

Today, people who are pregnant or have given birth are less likely to report getting the support they need, less likely to get information to make informed decisions about their care, and less likely to feel that their concerns are taken seriously.[xix] The publication of two highly critical reviews of maternity services in NHS Trusts in England in 2022, referenced earlier in this report, offered extensive insight into the numerous challenges in delivering safe maternity care in the current climate. Not surprisingly, these often-devastating outcomes are directly associated with long-term underinvestment in maternity services.

Chronic underinvestment and staffing shortages are central to the current crisis facing maternity services in the UK. They have led to oversights, errors, and at times, catastrophic outcomes for parents, babies and families. Governing health bodies say the workforce is short of 2,000 midwives[xx], 500 obstetricians[xxi] and 5,000 health visitors[xxii] to fulfil the needs of new families. Among the consequences of the unprecedented pressures on the maternity workforces are increasingly restricted care options for pregnant people and new parents, when providing choice had previously been enshrined in policy and practice.

Against this backdrop, our charity's mission – to support every parent during pregnancy, birth, and early parenthood – is more important than ever. Feeling confident and safe when becoming a parent is inextricably linked to adequate support and service provision throughout the antenatal, birth, infant feeding, and postnatal journey.

The inherent challenges of all of these stages are compounded by the realities of life post-pandemic, a cost-of-living and energy crisis, maternity and postnatal services that are underfunded and under-resourced, widespread public sector strikes, and climate change.

While the context in which our charity must operate is undoubtedly increasingly challenging, we are committed to ongoing progress and action to address these issues.

Over the past year, we have:

- Undertaken a deep listening exercise with our community and with parents in light of the Independent review of maternity services at the Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust, which led to a series of commitments to improve our support and services to parents.
- Joined together with other leading pregnancy and maternity organisations to call strongly on government for investment in workforce, leadership, training, and culture in the wake of the damning maternity investigations in Shrewsbury and Telford, and East Kent.
- Reviewed and strengthened our NCT Antenatal framework, ensuring that the information and support we provide to parents continues to be evidence-based, unbiased, inclusive, and trustworthy.
- Undertaken a maternity experiences survey with over 1,200 new parents that highlighted the impact of staffing shortages, the alarming prevalence of 'red flag' events, the lack of continuity of care, and the importance of being listened to and treated with compassion.
- Commissioned a rapid literature review on place of birth, to ensure our information and services are supported through rigorous evidence, and subsequently developed a refreshed Continuing Professional Development programme on place of birth for our practitioner community.
- Expanded the free-to-access support we offer antenatally to parents via NHS Trusts, including antenatal education services and infant feeding support.
- Worked hard throughout the pandemic to regularly review and update safe operating procedures in relation to Covid-19 – supporting practitioners to deliver in-person sessions as safely as possible. We continued to deliver online catch-up workshops for parents who miss sessions that are live and interactive throughout 2022.
- Responded to unprecedented hot weather during summer 2022 by moving sessions online to reduce the risks to parents and practitioners.



NCT Antenatal courses – beginning a confident and supported parenting journey

NCT Antenatal courses provide practical skills and knowledge and help create support networks so that expectant parents feel confident and ready for life with a new baby. The courses are facilitated by our skilled practitioners, and cover a wide range of topics, including what to expect during the labour and birth, how to feed and care for your new baby, parental wellbeing, and where to find support.

Our post-course evaluation showed:

95% of parents rated our NCT Antenatal course 'good' or 'excellent' this year,
2% higher than 21-22.

Our post-birth evaluation showed:

89% of course attendees felt part of a supportive group of parents and
95% are still in touch after they have had their baby.

84% of parents told us that we helped them identify trusted information, and
86% said their course helped them to consider information and what it means to them.

80% of parents said they had been given tools and strategies to cope with labour, birth, and early parenting.



Hannah's story

I knew I wanted to be a mum, but didn't want to do it in a relationship, so my daughter, Robin, was conceived by IVF using donor sperm. I had heard of NCT from friends who said it was worth it for the group of people I'd meet. It turned out to be way more than that!

As a gay woman, I was nervous about it maybe being me and a bunch of couples. Rosie (my antenatal practitioner) got in touch before the first session and talked about what the sessions would be like. This helped me decide if I wanted my mum – my birth partner – to be there. In the end, she came to all the sessions, and it felt really inclusive. For example, the language was always 'birthing parent' and 'birth partner'.

Rosie went through things like the stages of labour in detail so I was much more aware of what would happen – it made me feel excited and I was actually looking forward to it!

But at my 37-week scan, Robin was breech, and they said because she was small, they wouldn't try and rotate her, so I would need a c-section. At first, I panicked, because this was not what I had planned. But over the next week I completely came to terms with it. Rosie had gone through everything to do with c-sections during the course, so I knew what to expect. At the time, I didn't think I was even listening that carefully – because this wasn't how I was going to give birth. But once I had got over the shock, I realised how much I knew about the process. I knew there would be a lot of people in the room, I knew about the spinal, we had talked about how it might feel – like someone washing-up in your stomach! I said to Rosie at our reunion session 'I am so glad you went through that.' If I hadn't done NCT, I would not have been as calm and relaxed during birth.

The feeding session was also really informative. It helped me understand the biology of how breastfeeding works – things like cluster-feeding and supply. I learned what was 'normal', otherwise I would have probably worried. I contacted Louise (NCT breastfeeding counsellor) a couple of times after the session as well. I have had an amazing breastfeeding journey and again, NCT helped prepare me so much.

The NCT group is really supportive too. We have a WhatsApp group and try and meet up on Mondays. Everyone has had different struggles and I think it's helped us all to share those experiences.

Hannah W., 32, Glasgow



Emilton's story

My mum is a midwife, and I'd heard family and friends talk about antenatal classes, so I knew it was something we would do to equip us with the knowledge and skills we needed before becoming parents to our son, Asher. My wife, Ornella, looked into different classes and ended up choosing NCT.

For me, the physical aspects of the course were most helpful: being able to see and touch things, and also the demonstrations. For example, we went through the delivery process on the floor. We were shown what a Tens machine is, and learning about nappies and the different types of baby poo was useful preparation – seeing the mustard sauce, seeing the marmite that looked like tar. I don't think it would have been the same if we'd just been shown a picture.

The course definitely helped prepare me for the reality of the birth. It was a confidence builder for the most amazing journey ahead. During the birth, I remember getting my phone out to time the contractions, for example. But the course also taught me that we can ask questions. We can ask 'What's the alternative?' It helped me advocate for what we wanted. For example, we asked for air and gas – and they brought out a Tens machine. This was not what we had asked for, and I felt confident saying that.

The feeding session was also helpful. We looked at things like latch, and we also learned a lot about breastfeeding behaviour. One of the things that stuck with me was the analogy with how many times we eat and drink in a day – say when you drink a cup of tea, you don't drink it all in one go, you take sips. If you think about baby's feeding in the same way, it doesn't seem strange that baby might want to feed all day long or have lots of little snacks. We did struggle at first, and we were able to contact the NCT course leader by Facetime, so she was able to actually see how Asher was latching and help.

One really important message I took from the course was that I need to look after myself in all this too. It's all 'go, go, go' in those early days, but I remembered to stop and ask myself 'How are you actually feeling?' I needed that reminder that I need to look after myself physically and mentally too, as well as my wife and my baby."

Emilton B., 41, Cambridge



NCT Doulas

– supporting parents through labour and birth

NCT's Doula scheme offers personalised physical and emotional support for expectant and new parents during pregnancy, labour, and birth.

Our doulas complete a nine-month course recognised by Doula UK. The course is developed by NCT in partnership with the University of Worcester, and many of those on the course are already experienced practitioners in other specialisms. Once qualified, NCT Doulas can provide families with skilled physical and emotional support, as well as up-to-date knowledge, information, advocacy, and encouragement during pregnancy, labour, and birth.

Great people: Debbie's story

In the 2022-2023 financial year NCT Doulas supported 27 clients. One of our busiest doulas, Debbie, explains what it means for her to be able to support parents:

"To work as a doula supporting women through labour and birth, and their partners, is a privilege and honour. It's a beautiful, intimate, momentous time and to help mothers and partners to feel safe, empowered, positive, and supported is incredibly rewarding. I feel passionate about the impact of birth experiences on parenthood and wellbeing. Although in this current climate, there are often challenges in the healthcare and maternity system, I can see first-hand that having a doula to listen and advocate makes a huge difference, and the relationships I build with my clients are very special."

Debbie, NCT Doula

"Debbie you were amazing, and no words can express how grateful I am that we met each other. I can't have imagined anyone else being there. It wasn't the birth I imagined but when I felt helpless and lost you got me through it. Holding your hand and listening to you made me feel safe. Thank you so much."

Linda and Pete, parents



There is more information about the NCT Doula scheme on our **website**.

You can enquire about training with NCT **here**.

John Lewis & Partners x NCT – training Partners to support parents

2022 marked the start of a new sector-leading venture between NCT and John Lewis to help expectant and new parents enjoy a welcoming, positive, and inclusive retail experience. Nearly 200 John Lewis Nursery Partners across the UK have been trained to date with plans underway for more Partner training courses in 2023/24.

Our NCT Practitioners and Service Development Team created a bespoke digital training programme to enable John Lewis Nursery Partners to better understand and respond to the needs of all families when preparing for their baby's arrival. Educational modules considered different aspects and perspectives to the parent journey, delivered through live, interactive workshops. The programme was greatly welcomed by John Lewis Partners as a specialist professional development opportunity for their careers, and a way of providing key tools for their day-to-day activities on the shop floor. This included John Lewis's specialist All Things Baby appointments, a free, impartial service held in-store or virtually, depending upon the family's needs. John Lewis Nursery Partners fed back how much the training had improved their confidence in responding to parent questions and concerns.

NCT continues to be proud to work in partnership with John Lewis to ensure that parents are provided with high-quality, up-to-date, relevant and accurate information that responds to their needs and personal preferences during this new life stage.



In addition to supporting the parent experience in store, John Lewis kindly continued its discount programme for expectant parents via NCT Antenatal Courses and donated pamper boxes as competition prizes for five lucky families.

Many thanks to John Lewis and Partners for their support throughout the last year, we look forward to continuing to work together.

Please do contact **partnerships@nct.org.uk** if you would like to learn more about this partnership or opportunities to develop parent-centred training for your organisation.

Our reach in numbers – 2022-23

6.5 million visits to our website to access trusted information and support

75,000 parents supported through NCT courses by **556** practitioners

65,000 expectant parents attended antenatal infant feeding sessions

30,000 parents accessed Parenthub resources

50,000 parents attended our community parent support groups

7,000 community events held

Over 70,000 hours of outstanding community service given by our volunteers

8,000 parents attended NCT Baby Cafés and community breastfeeding and infant feeding drop-ins

8,000 parents called the NCT Infant Feeding Line

7,000 parents supported through our breastfeeding peer support programmes

3,000 parents supported through our perinatal peer support programmes



Supporting each individual experience of the postnatal period

Postnatal support in crisis

We know from parents just how desperately support is needed in the early days and weeks following the birth of a baby. For years, parents have been telling us about numerous support gaps, including wanting advice and support with their own recovery, as well as caring for and feeding their new baby. Research with new parents, alongside insight via the experiences of our NCT practitioners, has identified the early postnatal period as the biggest gap in parent support, particularly for breastfeeding, but also for adjusting to life as a new parent.

Breastfeeding continues to be a particularly challenging and emotive subject, with many new parents facing challenges or feeling unsupported. The UK is widely known for having some of the lowest breastfeeding rates in the world,[xxiii] with research showing that up to 90% of parents stop breastfeeding before they want to.[xxiv]

Many new parents do not get the help they need with their infant feeding decisions – be that establishing breastfeeding, continuing breastfeeding, expressing, pumping, bottle feeding, formula feeding, introducing solids, stopping breastfeeding – or a combination of these.

Unfortunately, the postnatal support and care system that should be stepping in to support parents and new families at this crucial time has been in crisis for many years. Parents across the UK are being offered patchy and inadequate support, impacting both their own health and wellbeing, and that of their baby, during the critical early days and months. This situation has only worsened during and in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, which impacted everything from staffing levels, availability of community provision, health anxiety, and the availability of family support. A national survey[xxv] documented the extensive impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on maternity services in the UK, with 70% of units reporting a reduction in antenatal appointments, 56% reporting a reduction in postnatal appointments and 89% reporting using remote consultation methods. 59% of units temporarily removed the offer of births at home or in a midwife-led unit. However, more research is needed to understand the longer-term impact on maternity services, outcomes, and experiences.

The 2022 MBRRACE-UK report demonstrated how most maternal deaths occur between six weeks and a year after birth[xxvi] and postnatal depression affects one in ten new mothers and people who have given birth.[xxvii] Support and services during this period – when parents and babies are most vulnerable to physical and mental ill health – are failing parents. In communities, the number of health visitors providing postnatal care

has fallen to an all-time low[xxviii], while other postnatal support services – including infant feeding support services – have been cut over the last decade.[xxix] There are signs of further pressures ahead, with an aging workforce and insufficient numbers of health visitors being trained.[xxx]

We know that postnatal care is critical to securing positive outcomes for parents and babies and, crucially, ensuring that parents feel confident, connected, and safe during this time. Every new parent deserves access to key services, trusted information, reassurance, and continuity of care to guide and protect them during this vulnerable time.

NCT has a crucial role to play in enabling and supporting a system that provides these. This is why we have continued to invest heavily in our postnatal service provision over the past year. We have:

- Supported almost 8,000 parents via our NCT Baby Cafés and community breastfeeding and infant feeding drop-ins, almost 7,000 through our breastfeeding peer support programmes, and almost 8,000 via our NCT Infant Feeding Line.
- Opened 12 new free-to-access Baby Cafés to support new parents with all aspects of breastfeeding and infant feeding.
- Expanded our community-based postnatal infant feeding and mental health support, including training 255 new peer supporters.
- Invested in a programme of parent research and insight to inform the blueprint for the future redesign of our free Infant Feeding Line, so we can help more parents with a wider range of postnatal issues.
- Expanded our perinatal peer support offer across the country, including designing new, specialist services for the partners of those giving birth.
- Secured the future of our Newham Nurture Perinatal Partnership, which provides critical perinatal support for refugees and asylum seekers, thanks to support from City Bridge Trust.
- Supported over 50,000 parents at over 7,000 community events, with NCT volunteers providing over 70,000 hours of outstanding community service.
- Distributed over 3,000 Baby Bundle packages to new families in need.
- Run 76 Nearly New Sales that offered affordable baby items to over 22,000 parents, with over 200,000 items sold.
- Reviewed our course offer, developed a new content framework, and prepared a new course offer ready for launch in Autumn 2023.
- Presented on the dangers and issues during the postnatal period at both international and UK maternity conferences.
- Been invited to join a Postnatal Care Improvement Working Group by NHS England, which has been commissioned to ensure this part of the service is made safer.



NCT Postnatal courses – adjusting to life with a new baby

NCT postnatal courses and talks help new parents to adjust to life with a new baby, providing a safe space to build a support network, explore different aspects of parenting, ask questions, develop practical skills, and gain insight and knowledge. The course shares evidence-based information, and links parents into local services and support to help them make informed decisions and feel more confident and connected. From Autumn 2023, the name of the course will change from 'Early Days' to 'NCT New Baby'.

This year 83% of parents rated our Early Days postnatal course 'good' or 'excellent'

Inn's story

"I attended an NCT Antenatal course before giving birth and found it very useful and I made a great group of friends. However, I had a traumatic pregnancy and birth with many complications. I was told there was an increased risk of my baby having Downs, Edwards and Patau's syndromes, I was at risk of blood clots, had low PAPP-A levels, and one of my growth scans showed my placenta failing. I was induced, but baby's heart rate dropped, and my son was born by c-section. My placenta ruptured and I haemorrhaged Unfortunately, I struggled accessing continuity of care, and post-birth, I struggled with my recovery – physically and mentally. I felt like everyone I knew locally was thriving and doing baby classes, whereas I was struggling. I don't have any family support besides my partner. I couldn't establish breastfeeding at first and felt I had failed as a mother. Luckily, my breastfeeding counsellor from the antenatal session was able to come and help, and I've ended up combi feeding my son.

I felt I needed to debrief about my birth and pregnancy experience more than anything. I did counselling, and had a debrief at the hospital, but it was quite clinical and factual. They missed some things out and it didn't give me the emotional support I needed.

When I got the email about the Early Days course, I decided to try it. It was a 30-minute drive away, but in my mind, I was going to this course to debrief and hopefully hear experiences from other mums.



It was a short and sweet course that lasted about five weeks. The other mums were lovely, and my teacher Lauren was amazing; she was so informative and approachable. She set me up for recovery by giving me that space to debrief. There was something about it being with a group of strangers that helped. I met other mums also combi feeding for their own personal reasons, and I learnt that I wasn't alone. Lauren was so reassuring. I had really wanted to exclusively breastfeed and felt like I'd failed when I couldn't. But the course helped me realise just how much everything I had been through during the birth had impacted on breastfeeding. More importantly, motherhood is a rollercoaster.

There was other useful information too, for example about weaning, and it was so helpful that there were mums with older babies on the course as I picked up tips. But it wasn't all about baby, it was about mum, dad, relationships, and baby development. It's such a great value course. I'm on the WhatsApp group and although I'm not too active, I know I can post there if I have a question. I also know I can reach out to Lauren directly – we've stayed in touch. I hope Lauren realises what a positive impact she has had on my postpartum recovery. I credit Lauren and that course with helping me evade postnatal depression and providing me that support to assist with my recovery.

Inn K., 38, Warrington

NCT breastfeeding and infant feeding services – supportive, inclusive, accessible

NCT supports expectant and new parents with infant feeding and breastfeeding in a myriad of ways, helping them navigate a wide range of changes and challenges during the early days, and throughout their feeding journey. This includes establishing breastfeeding, continuing breastfeeding, expressing, pumping, bottle feeding, formula feeding, introducing solids, stopping breastfeeding – or a combination of these. We have a dedicated Infant Feeding Line, open every day from 8am to midnight, staffed by qualified breastfeeding counsellors. Our volunteer-led branches also support new parents with their feeding decisions, providing invaluable, free-to-access services such as peer support for breastfeeding. This is available in many local areas, often in the form of a closed Facebook group. NCT is also commissioned by Local Authorities and NHS Trusts to provide breastfeeding peer support services in some parts of the UK. We have dedicated teams of staff, peer support trainers, and volunteer peer supporters delivering services across Scotland and the East of England.

Many of our breastfeeding and infant feeding services, such as the Infant Feeding Line and Baby Café, are delivered by NCT breastfeeding counsellors. Our breastfeeding counsellors also deliver the breastfeeding and infant feeding session as part of NCT Antenatal, and many support new parents 1:1 on a voluntary basis.



Our NCT breastfeeding and infant feeding support in numbers

230 breastfeeding counsellors licensed to provide skilled infant feeding support

Almost **8,000** parents attended NCT Baby Cafés, and community breastfeeding and infant feeding drop-ins

Almost **8,000** parents called the NCT Infant Feeding Line

Almost **7,000** parents supported through our breastfeeding peer support programmes by **245** peer supporters

Over **63,000** expectant parents attended NCT Antenatal infant feeding sessions

Over **700** parents attended NHS infant feeding sessions

Great people: George's story

I have been a qualified breastfeeding counsellor with NCT for over five years and was previously massage and yoga trained as well. I currently facilitate the breastfeeding and infant feeding session for NCT Antenatal, predominantly working across the whole of South Wales, but also parts of Reading, Maidenhead, Marlow, Windsor, as well as Shoreditch in London. I've taught in lots of other parts of the UK previously too. I really enjoy teaching across so many different areas – I notice how the sociocultural factors of parents vary from area to area, and they all have different needs and questions. Different systemic challenges are raised in different areas too, and it's great to empower parents to start challenging or questioning these. Adapting my teaching to different areas and parents' individual needs is a challenge I enjoy taking on!

I also work on the Infant Feeding Line – being able to offer support postnatally is one of my favourite parts of the job. I think sometimes when we think about rates and policies, we can forget that the individual really matters, and this 1-1 work enables us to really centre the support around the individual. I used to be commissioned to do the drop-in for the Bridgnorth branch, which I loved doing, and occasionally do voluntary visits and calls outside my work on the Infant Feeding Line, though this can be harder to fit in.

I've also done a fair amount of focussed work with LGBTQIA+ parents over the years, and have supported parents to induce lactation, and use other aids where needed. I received some feedback recently via the antenatal practitioner where we had had a non-binary parent on the course – not known until after – and they had been really grateful for my use of inclusive language throughout the breastfeeding session.

It's always lovely to receive feedback on the positive difference our work can make. Earlier this year, a parent took the time to email NCT Head Office to provide feedback on my teaching. While I don't think I did anything special, I love that I was able to help, and it was a good reminder that the small things we do can have such a big impact.

George Howson, NCT Breastfeeding Counsellor



> The breastfeeding session was particularly informative, and it was very helpful to have the details of George, the breastfeeding counsellor to contact afterwards. Contact with her definitely contributed to being able to continue breastfeeding, so I am very grateful for this.
>
> **Anon, parent**

NCT Baby Café – community-based support with feeding for new parents

NCT Baby Café is a free drop-in service in the community, led by NCT breastfeeding counsellors, that any parent or expectant parent can attend for support with feeding their baby. The drop-ins support parents with a range of issues, including getting ready to breastfeed, establishing breastfeeding, continuing breastfeeding, expressing, mixed feeding, formula feeding, introducing solids, or stopping breastfeeding.

The model was first established in 2000. We most recently refreshed the approach in 2021 to deliver a service focused on inclusive feeding support. It continues to provide accessible, high-quality, professional support, which is free at the point of use.

Between April 2022 and March 2023, a total of 7,761 parents were supported at NCT Baby Cafés. In 2023, we completed our first annual snapshot survey, gaining parents' feedback on NCT's branch-led infant feeding services. The survey was completed by 276 parents with:

- 98% reporting they felt supported to feed their baby at the drop-ins
- 91% saying they felt more confident to feed their baby as a result of attending
- 78% agreeing they breastfed or gave their baby breastmilk for longer because they attended the sessions
- 92% saying their mental wellbeing improved due to attending the group, as talking to other parents helped normalise their problems.



We are very pleased that the Baby Café model supported so many parents in 2022-23. Over the coming year, our aim is to extend our community-based breastfeeding and infant feeding provision, so even more parents can be supported and can gain confidence in their feeding decisions. Above all, we are committed to being ever-more inclusive in our provision of quality infant feeding and breastfeeding support, so we can reach more diverse parent audiences across the country.

2022-23 also saw the successful launch of 12 new Baby Cafés in areas including Reading, Bromley, and Sutton Coldfield. Some stand-out successes from our NCT branch-led Baby Cafés during the year included:

- Clapham, who have successfully run an online drop-in for many years, opening a face-to-face Baby Café to complement their virtual service.
- Alton, who embraced the new Baby Café model, updating their branding and inclusive language around feeding.
- Birmingham West, who secured funds to sustain their Northfield Baby Café, after 20 years of running it with volunteers.

> *The counsellors are so friendly and kind. I call it my safe place as I can go there and talk through issues without feeling judged.*
>
> Anon, parent

> *It was lovely just to chat with other mums and babies and share experiences. Just chatting to other mums gave me so much more confidence and ideas for tackling each stage.*
>
> Anon, parent

NCT's Infant Feeding Line – a blueprint for the future



The NCT Infant Feeding Line has been providing vital infant feeding and postnatal support to new parents for over two decades. Staffed by qualified practitioners, it provides free-to-access support for parents struggling with a range of feeding issues and currently receives almost 8,000 calls a year. Increasingly, women and new parents are calling the line with challenges or questions that go beyond infant feeding – notably around mental health and wellbeing, baby development, family, and relationship issues, and how to navigate health services.

In April 2022 we partnered with Good Innovation to look at how we might redesign our Infant Feeding Service to produce a sustainable, flagship, fit-for-purpose resource to meet the needs of all parents into the future. We collaborated with key partner organisations including Black Mothers Matter, and asked the question to a diverse range of parents: 'What do you want from this service?'. We also engaged with breastfeeding counsellors and the wider NCT community to gather their insights and ideas.

We found demand from parents for a digital omni-channel service, one with voice, video and chat formats that delivers more appropriate and seamless support, as well as communication for new parents facing a range of challenges. For example: where someone doesn't have English as their primary spoken language, they might find a text or chat service more accessible for receiving information, while video support may be useful to a parent seeking support with feeding positions.

A blueprint was created in late 2022 that captured the start of our ambitions to be able to support parents from all cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds with an accessible, high-quality, and free-to-access service.

Our current priority is to secure funding to progress this much needed project, with work already underway by NCT's Fundraising and Development Team.

Co-designing perinatal peer support for fathers and partners in Newham

NCT has launched a new community-based support system for local fathers and non-birthing partners in Newham, East London. The initiative builds on our trusted and respected profile in the area, following the success of programmes, including Parents in Mind (for women and pregnant people) and the bespoke Newham Nurture Perinatal Partnership for refugees and asylum seekers, as well as other local community activity.

This latest initiative is specifically designed for expectant and new fathers and partners, supporting them to overcome barriers to receiving support for mild to moderate mental health challenges.

It has been coproduced by fathers and partners from diverse backgrounds, who were consulted to understand their needs and preferences regarding perinatal mental health peer support. Working in collaboration with other community organisations, this involved:

- Gathering information about the challenges non-birthing parents face
- Capturing expectations fathers and partners have regarding support services
- Using this research to design and develop a tailored peer support service that meets the specific needs of the target group.

We held coproduction sessions with parents across Newham lasting 118 hours in total. These involved 166 local parents, including those who identified as fathers, co-parents, and partners with experience of supporting a pregnant partner or caring for a baby under two years old. We gained valuable insights that enabled us to build up a picture of what a welcoming, accessible, inclusive, and safe service for this group should look like.

Our focus has now turned to developing the service model for an accredited peer support programme and training local parent volunteers to be able to support new non-birthing partners with their mental health. From June – October 2023, NCT volunteers and staff will pilot different support engagement methods, with varying locations, delivery times (including evenings and weekends), intensity, and focus, with the aim of meeting the diverse needs set out during the engagement process.

> *I may be a dad, but when it comes to coproduction, I'm not just a spectator, I'm a valuable member of the team. Being consulted and involved in every stage of the process was amazing, and I'm proud of the end result.*
>
> Anon, coproduction participant

Great people: Imran's story

Being a father is a remarkable journey, one that has inspired me to dive headfirst into the world of advocating for dads and their partners. Today, I have the privilege to project manage a cause that I know can make a difference. With all this man/dad talk, it was actually a woman (my wife) I credit for my being in this role, for not only sharing the job advert with me but also for her unwavering belief and support in my abilities to excel in this pivotal role.



Through my work with dads, I have come to understand the vital importance of fathers in the lives of their children and the significant impact they have on the overall wellbeing of their families along with the importance of self-care. Something that comes to mind is that in the event of a plane crash, flight attendants always remind passengers to put the oxygen mask on themselves first before assisting others. This powerful reminder resonates on multiple levels, particularly when it comes to the role of being a dad. Taking care of oneself is paramount in order to effectively care for, and support others.

It is this belief that propels me forward in my mission to ensure that dads' and partners' voices and needs are not only heard, but actively addressed.

The Dads and Partners Project holds a special place in my heart. It symbolizes a collective effort to challenge the existing societal norms and stereotypes surrounding fatherhood. It is a platform that allows dads and their partners to share their experiences, struggles, and triumphs, fostering a sense of community and support.

I am motivated by a profound desire to bring about tangible results and ensure that the needs of dads are met. Through the Fathers and Partners Project, I hope to contribute to the creation of policies, programs, and resources that recognize and support the unique experiences of dads. Together, we can build a world where fathers are not only present but actively supported, engaged, nurtured, and empowered.

The Dads and Partners Project is a small step towards a larger revolution, and I am humbled and honoured to play a part in it. Together, let us champion the cause of fatherhood and build a future where dads thrive, families flourish, and children are raised with love and care.

Imran, Project Manager,
Newham Fathers and Partners Project

Safe, inclusive and sustainable services

For Every Parent – our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion

At NCT, we know we have a clear and fundamental responsibility to ensure fairness, equity, and respect for everyone. Inclusion and equity are vital for fulfilling our social responsibilities and expanding our reach, as well as fostering innovation and enhancing performance. Embracing these principles creates a nurturing and supportive environment that benefits everyone.

The disparities that exist within our society impact on outcomes for both parents and their children. While this is in large part due to systemic challenges that can't easily be resolved, we can mitigate their impact by striving to put inclusivity and accessibility at the heart of all our services, information, and support. Not everyone starts their parenting journey in the same place, and an inclusive, equitable approach ensures that every expectant and new parent has access to essential resources and support during this important life transition, with support personalised to meet individuals at the point of their need. The principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion are cornerstones of our new five-year strategy, *For Every Parent*.

Over the past year, we have undertaken an extensive review of the language we use across all our information, content, and services, as part of our plan to ensure that our communications are inclusive of all parents and all parenting experiences. We also initiated our content review project, updating priority pages, appointing a Senior Digital Content Manager and beginning a content discovery phase. Another priority has been to review and strengthen our NCT Antenatal framework, ensuring that the information and support we provide to parents continues to be evidence-based, unbiased, inclusive, and trustworthy. We also commissioned an extensive scoping and feasibility project to redesign our Infant Feeding Line so it can better meet the needs of parents from different backgrounds and support them with a wider range of postnatal challenges.

On the campaigning and influencing front, we submitted evidence to an inquiry into racial injustice in UK maternity services led by **Birthrights** and supported the inquiry through the participatory work with women. We have continued to raise awareness of key Black maternal health campaigns and services including those led by **Five X More**, **The Motherhood Group** and **Black Mothers Matter**, which are bringing vital attention to the inequalities in outcomes experienced by Black mothers and birthing parents. In addition, we were members of the **RCOG Race Equality Taskforce** in the year, and have also supported the work and calls of the **Black Maternal Health APPG** since its establishment in 2021.

Building an equitable, inclusive organisation



NCT is committed to building a diverse, inclusive, and welcoming community that brings together people with different identities, backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives. Welcoming a diverse range of voices helps us to generate fresh ideas, identify gaps in our thinking and approach, and ensures we find inclusive solutions to the challenges faced by parents. We value and incorporate different perspectives when developing our charity's strategies and services to ensure our work resonates with the most diverse communities of parents possible.

We're creating inclusive spaces and services because we want all parents to feel welcome, respected, and understood. We actively encourage the exchange of diverse perspectives, knowledge sharing, and development of strong, supportive networks. Our aim is to break down social stigmas and stereotypes both within and beyond parenting experiences, challenging biases, and prejudice, and promoting fairness, acceptance and understanding. Over the past year, we have invested significantly in equity, diversity, and inclusion at NCT.

In 2022, we appointed a new Director of People, Education, and Inclusion, a vital leadership role in the ongoing transformation of our charity, placing our people, inclusion, education, and wellbeing at the centre of everything we do. We also appointed a full-time, permanent Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Lead. This role has helped ensure that diversity and inclusion are embedded in every workstream within our plans for the years ahead, including our content and communications, volunteer and practice support, service delivery, quality assurance, campaigning and influencing, and complaint handling.

We continued to develop and grow our NCT Diversity Network, a space for NCT's community to explore issues, identify opportunities, learn together, coproduce work and policies, and to build a community of consultees and champions for equity, diversity, and inclusion at NCT. We also continued to support the Affinity network, an independently run support network for NCT's Black and Brown practitioners, students, and staff, led by experienced senior practitioners.

We developed a programme of Continuing Professional Development, learning and development for our staff, practitioners, students, and volunteers, including anti-racism and anti-discriminatory practice, as well as initiatives that support wellbeing in the workplace. We also embedded our anti-racism and anti-discriminatory approach within the new training pathways for NCT practitioners. In parallel, we reviewed our quality support policy and practices for practitioners to ensure that we are supporting our workforce to make changes where required in a way that is unbiased and fair. In 2023, we invested in an internal Allyship programme in collaboration with external provider Diversity Dreaming, to encourage and support the NCT community to embrace and practice allyship, the act of supporting and advocating for marginalised individuals and communities.

Great people: Louise Oliver, NCT's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Lead



"I am in this role to contribute towards creating a fair and just organisation and to continue our journey as a charity that celebrates differences and takes equitable action to ensure everyone has the same opportunity to succeed, whether that's as a member of staff, volunteer, practitioner, student, or as an expectant or new parent. I am excited about being able to play an integral part in leading, shaping, and supporting NCT's equity, diversity, and inclusion work as we expand our reach and aim to support even more parents with high-quality, accessible information and services."

Louise Oliver,
NCT Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Lead

NCT Allyship



In the Autumn of 2022, NCT developed an internal Allyship programme in collaboration with external provider Diversity Dreaming. The programme aims to encourage and support the NCT community to embrace and practice allyship.

Allyship is the act of supporting and advocating for marginalised individuals and communities. Allies amplify marginalised voices, educate themselves about different communities and various forms of oppression, and use their privilege to create positive change.

Through allyship, we can challenge systemic oppression, bias, and discrimination, break down barriers, cultivate empathy, and pave the way for a more equitable, inclusive society.

The programme launched in March 2023 with an event attended by staff, practitioners, and volunteers from across the NCT community. 92% of attendees said that the session had supported them to live NCT's value of inclusion at a practical level.

This is an ongoing and rapidly developing area of our work, which we will continue to develop over the coming years.



[It was] a reminder that allyship is an ongoing process and a good reminder that it covers a wide range of areas. [It was an] acknowledgment that it's a journey we are all on.

Allyship Programme launch attendee

Training our workforce of the future

The UK's only higher education qualification in parent education

In 2021 we worked in partnership with the University of Worcester to launch a new model of education and training. This year our first cohort of students qualified and began working with parents as NCT practitioners, playing their part in supporting people as they become parents.

The **NCT Perinatal Education and Practice CertHE** trains practitioners to facilitate our NCT courses – both antenatally and postnatally. The revised training programme aims to build confidence and skills by developing deeper understanding through 'learning by doing'. There is a strong 'in-practice' element, where students shadow an experienced NCT practitioner, and, under their guidance, practise both facilitation and active listening in a real-world environment.

Every year detailed evaluation is carried out by the NCT Education Team, gathering feedback from students and tutors, as well as from those newly qualified and from colleagues in the Practice Team. This evaluation is then used to make improvements and adjustments so that the course is always evolving. Initial evaluation has been broadly positive so far, showing the new structure and content is enabling students to move into practice with the skills and knowledge they need to facilitate confidently and safely, using an anti-discriminatory approach.



The placement was fundamental to my confidence in 'going alone'. I've just started my fifth antenatal group and am now tweaking my plan as I see what's working well and what can be developed further. I'm still in touch with my NCT placement practitioner, speak with my peers often, and have just signed up for a few of NCT's CPD sessions – I felt I needed to find my feet before being ready to learn even more, but now feels like the right time to develop my practice little by little.

Helen, CertHE graduate and
newly qualified Antenatal Practitioner

The NCT community is just amazing, you never feel alone, you always feel you've got someone to turn to if you've got questions or are doubting yourself... there's always someone you can count on.

Anon, NCT student

The **NCT Breastfeeding and Perinatal Support** training pathway is for students and practitioners to train to provide one-to-one support postnatally and with infant feeding. This pathway has also evaluated positively:

The quality of the course is really high, with fantastic tutors. I found the role plays daunting at the beginning, but my confidence has been built as we've gone through them.

Anon, NCT student

Gemma is an NCT volunteer and is currently on the pathway. Although initially apprehensive about returning to formal study, she said:

It's turned out to be one of the best decisions I've made. The support from tutors and fellow students has been excellent. There's a wonderful culture of everyone wanting each other to succeed. The course has challenged me academically and personally, juggling studying with family life, but the sense of pride and achievement has made the effort more than worthwhile. I've even decided to continue studying in September and am excited to see where my journey will go next!

Gemma, NCT student

Alongside the skills for working one-to-one with parents, Gemma also reflected on wider changes as a result of the training:

> *The course has improved my skills as a volunteer massively. After just a couple of months I noticed a change in my interactions with the families at the groups I volunteered at.*

Gemma, NCT student

Anti-discriminatory Practice for NCT students

Building on the partnership and education work NCT did with brap, a charity that supports organisations to make equality a reality, we've been further developing the anti-discriminatory practice module which all NCT students undertake.

This year the module has been brought in-house and further developed by Karen Hall, Lucy Joyce (Tutors) and Louise Oliver (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Lead), pulling together their experience as educators and their wider learning and experience with equity, diversity, and inclusion issues. Ongoing learning continues across the NCT Education Team, so that tutors can bring anti-discrimination principles into their work and include an anti-discrimination focus when planning taught sessions and tutorials.

> *Our experience of delivering the module, as well as evaluations from students, has indicated that it's much-needed work, and that our students are coming to it from very different places. We have seen some wonderful lightbulb moments, but also been challenged in often unexpected ways. We have learned a lot from developing and delivering the training this year and will bring this learning into our planning for next year's students.*

Karen Hall, NCT Tutor



85 practitioners completed a qualification to support the parents of the future in 2022-23:

- **50** antenatal practitioners
- **31** breastfeeding counsellors
- **16** postnatal practitioners
- **18** doulas
- **10** yoga for pregnancy teachers
- **4** mother and baby yoga teachers
- **10** baby massage teachers

We were also delighted to welcome a number of practitioners back into practice during 2022-23. This follows a review of our Return to Practice pathway, which has resulted in a new, more straightforward personalised way to return to practice.

Student awards

- The NCT President's Award – student who has shown the greatest progress and development. This has been awarded to **Lisa Smith**.
- The Fiona Cowell Award – student who has overcome great difficulties with good humour, in order to qualify and graduate. This has been awarded to **Rebecca Dufton**.
- The NCT Sheila Kitzinger Award – student who has demonstrated the best understanding of birthing parent-centred care and birth practices, taking into account the wide range of cultures across the UK. This has been awarded to **Catherine Muldoon**.

Strong foundations for a sustainable future

To support people as they become parents now and into the future, NCT must be progressive, sustainable, and here for the long-term. We're committed to making it easier for parents to access our services and for our teams to deliver them.

In 2022-23 we continued to invest in making sure that our foundations are strong for the future. Considerable effort went into a project to update our membership platform, to move it from a legacy system onto a modern platform integrated with courses to make signing up easier for parents and eliminating potential cyber risks. This addressed various data protection issues such as being able to hold personal data more securely and making it easier to keep data up-to-date and accurate. Other efforts to address cyber risks included investments in new devices for staff, decommissioning servers, and updating systems.

In this post-Covid world, improvements and investments have also been made in our policies and practices around health and safety, including the appointment of a Health and Safety Lead in April 2022. Changes have been made to our Health and Safety Management Systems to ensure that relevant documents and advice are easily accessible and fit for purpose. Specific training has been developed and an audit and inspection schedule presented to the Board.

We invested significantly in our safeguarding function, including a five-month secondment for a staff member to focus full-time on progressing our NCT Safeguarding Improvement Action Plan. One outcome from the secondment was the creation of a new Designated Safeguarding Lead role, providing dedicated time for safeguarding, leading the NCT Safeguarding Team, developing and delivering training, managing complex cases, and supporting the Programme Delivery Team in practice. We have also invested in an external trainer for safeguarding training for our practitioner community, Directors Group, and Board of Trustees.



Climate change has been high on the agenda, and NCT is committed to playing our part in protecting the environment for future generations. Over the past year, we have held facilitated workshops for our Directors Group and Board of Trustees to discuss our approach to climate change and sustainability. In the year ahead we will continue to look at our policies, practices, service design, and partnering arrangements through the lens of climate and environmental responsibility.

We continue to challenge ourselves to ensure that all our services are safe, inclusive, and sustainable.

Our thanks

Organisations, alliances, and networks that we have worked with during the year

Alliance for Maternity Rights, Alternatives Trust; Birthrights; Black Mothers Matter; brap; Breastfeeding Alliance; Breastfeeding Network; British Pregnancy Advisory Service; City of Sanctuary; Compost London; First 1001 Days Movement; Five X More; Good Innovation; Hello Brave; Institute of Health Visiting; Magpie Project; Maternal Mental Health Alliance; Maternity Action; Mini First Aid; One Voice Partnership; Partnerships for Good; Pregnancy and Baby Charity Network; Royal College of Midwives; Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists; The Motherhood Group; University of Worcester.

Stakeholder and programme boards that we contributed to

Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW) National Review of Maternity Services; MBRRACE-UK Third Sector Stakeholder Council; Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency; National Maternity and Perinatal Audit Clinical Reference Group; NHS England and Improvement Maternity Transformation Stakeholder Council; Scottish Government 'The Best Start' Implementation Programme Board.

Funders and commissioners

Babycare TENS; John Lewis Plc; Lidl Great Britain Limited; Market Research Society.

Bradford District Care Trust; Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West LMNS; Cambridgeshire County Council; Coop Community Fund; Countess of Chester Hospital NHS Foundation Trust; Coventry & Warwickshire Partnership NHS Trust; Cross Keys Homes; Department of Health and Social Care Starting Well Fund; Durham County Council Area Action Partnership; East Sussex Public Health; Ely Primary Care Network; Evelyn Trust; Halton CCG; Hampshire County Council; Hounslow CCG; Knowsley CCG; Leeds City Council; Medway Community Healthcare; Middlesbrough Council; National Lottery; Newham & Tower Hamlets CCG; NHS Lothian; Norfolk Community Foundation; Northern Ireland Public Health Agency; North West Anglia NHS Foundation Trust; Paddington Development Trust; Peabody Housing Association; Peterborough City Council; Redcar and Cleveland Council; Richard Lawes Foundation; Richmond Council; Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust; Scottish Government; Southwark Council; St Helens CCG; Stockton-on-Tees Council; Swindon Borough Council; Twins Trust; Venture Community Association; Wandsworth Council; Warrington CCG; Wiltshire Council.

Individual donors

Our sincere thanks to everyone who kindly donated in 2022-23 to help us reach, connect, and support more parents through pregnancy, birth and early parenthood.

We remember Joyce Crosfield, Gail Werkmeister, Caroline Pearce and their loved ones who generously included NCT as part of their legacies.

We thank the amazing work of the family of Roscoe Barnaby Carter, who raised funds in his memory to support families in Malvern.

We are grateful to everyone who donated to help NCT's Infant Feeding Line as a service for women and families.

Our community

We are inspired by the efforts and generosity of the NCT community who continue to amaze us every day. To all our members, supporters, volunteers, practitioners, students, staff, and Trustees, you have all made a difference.

- All our members
- All our volunteers and peer supporters
- All our practitioners
- All our staff
- All our students
- NCT Diversity and Affinity Networks
- Practitioner Representative Body
- Our Board of Trustees
- Our Patron, Baroness Julia Cumberlege



A huge thank you and congratulations to our six amazing #TeamNCT runners who ran and finished the London Marathon on 2 October 2022. They achieved some fantastic times, and their dedication to running and fundraising for NCT has been so inspiring, raising £7940 to support parents across the UK. Thank you to: Amy Bird; Tina Cobb; Andrew Graham, with support from Karen; Mohammed Haroon; Samantha Makinen; Helen Whiting.







In memory

Our thoughts are with the families and friends of Joyce Crosfield, Caroline Pearce, and Gail Werkmeister, who sadly passed away last year.

Joyce Crosfield was a founder member of NCT. We would like to record our sincere thanks to Joyce for her contributions to NCT as a founder member and for her longstanding support of the vital work of the charity helping expectant and new parents.

Caroline Pearce was a much-loved member of the NCT Community for nearly two decades. The impact of her personal contributions as a Tutor, Antenatal Practitioner, Doula, Baby Massage Practitioner, and friend to many staff will stay with the charity and across many individual lives as well as those of new parents and NCT staff for the years to come.

Gail Werkmeister was a former NCT President, Trustee, Practitioner, and Tutor. Her work with NCT spanned three decades, and we are enormously grateful to Gail for her many contributions to the NCT Community and towards helping expectant and new parents, at both national and local levels.

Financial review

Financial review

Overall summary

Good growth in total organisational income, up 5% from £10.7m to £11.3m, was delivered during the year. This was despite the challenging economic conditions, notably the effect of the cost-of-living crisis on new and expectant parents, which meant that antenatal course bookings remain below pre-pandemic levels. We were particularly pleased with the increase in income from Programme Delivery and Grants Receivable with the wider reach that this enabled us to have during the period.

Operating costs grew partly due to inflationary pressures and partly due to prudent increases in key areas. These included expenditure to enhance our long-term prospects through the development of the *For Every Parent* strategy; to reduce our overall risk profile in areas such as safeguarding and health & safety; to support our ongoing efforts around EDI; and to improve the information that we provide to new and expectant parents.

The net result for the year was a small operating deficit of £0.1m (2022: surplus of £0.3m) before investment income of £0.1m (2022: £0.1m), non-operational spend of £0.4m (2022: £0.1m) invested this year in the next stage of the Salesforce system implementation and investment losses of £0.1m (2022: gain of £0.3m). The operating position is a key financial target and was managed very closely in line with the approved Reserves Policy.

The total net income / expenditure for the year was £ - 0.6m (2022: £ + 0.6m) after non-operating expenditure, investment income and losses on investment assets. Again, this was in line with the requirements of the Reserves Policy.

NCT Courses

Delivery of antenatal and other courses to parents is one of NCT's key educational activities. Income in this area exceeds expenditure, with surpluses supporting the education and development of current and future NCT Practitioners; the delivery of commissioned services in the health sector; and work in the policy, research, campaigns, content and information areas, including the much needed delivery of the NCT Infant Feeding Line.

Income from courses of £8.4m represents a £0.3m increase on the prior year (2022: £8.1m). This growth reflects an increase in the average course price following a pricing review in 2022. Total costs increased slightly to £6.2m from £6.1m in 2022.

Education and Practice

Fewer students, partly due to the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on the affordability of fees, has led to a corresponding decrease in NCT education and practice income from £0.6m to £0.5m. Costs grew slightly from £1.0m to £1.1m as the need to train the practitioners of the future remains a key objective.

Programme Delivery

Programme Delivery provides local and national services to parents that are free at the point of access. They are largely commissioned contracts with the National Health Service, including hospital trusts and health boards, and local authorities as well as central government departments. This work is also supported through funding from Trusts and Foundations. This area also delivers the vital NCT Infant Feeding Line.

Income for Programme Delivery in the year grew by 55% to £0.8m (2022: £0.5m).

Membership, grants and donations

Total donation income has decreased 7% to £1.0m (2022: £1.1m) largely due a £0.2m fall in membership income continuing the longer-term trend. The latest phase of Salesforce development is focused on the area of membership. Work is underway to consider the future of our NCT membership proposition to ensure it remains attractive, trusted and meaningful for parents and supporters.

Grants receivable saw excellent growth of 17% to £0.6m (2022: £0.5m) largely due to an increase in branch grants and funding for projects in Scotland.

Other trading activities

Total income from other trading activities rose by 24% to £0.5m (2022: £0.4m). This was due to the return of branch activities after the impact of the pandemic in the previous year more than offsetting a decline in income from corporate partners due to a decision to phase out the distribution of gift bags.

Responsible Fundraising

NCT is supported in its charitable fundraising by so many amazing supporters spanning companies, charities, individual donors and volunteer fundraisers. We would like to thank everyone for their efforts to make a difference to parents across the UK. Our fundraising activities, led by the central charity and volunteer branches, are monitored by appropriate members of the Senior Leadership Team. We do not use mass audience commercial fundraising operations such as telephone call services or face-to-face street fundraisers.

Our overarching safeguarding commitment to all members of the NCT community encompasses protection of people in vulnerable circumstances including a dedicated point of contact for any concerns in this regard that is open to the entire charity. As a registered member of the Fundraising Regulator Directory, we are proud of our commitment to continuously reflect upon, learn and evolve our fundraising practices.

Investment income and asset movements

Income received from cash balances and the investment portfolio was £93k (2022: £84k). A loss of £0.1m was recorded on the investment portfolio (2022: a gain of £0.3m) reflecting market movements.

Going concern

Due consideration has been given by the Board to the appropriateness of the going concern basis for accounting. While the movement in total funds showed a fall of £0.6m in the year, the level at the end of the year was in line with the targeted Reserves Policy. The plan and budget for the coming year was set to operate within acceptable risk levels and within the risk reserve level. Management accounts regularly re-forecast the yearly outcome, which allows quick and appropriate responses to changes in our operating model and demand for our services. On this basis, the amounts held as investments and in light of the strong reserves position, the Board is satisfied that the charity is well positioned to respond to a reasonable worst-case scenario.

Investment Policy

The Investment Policy is reviewed by the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee regularly and the latest version was approved by the Board in May 2023. NCT seeks to achieve the best financial return within an acceptable level of risk, which has been defined as medium on a scale of low, medium and high. The desired risk level is achieved through a mixed portfolio of low-risk cash deposits and medium risk managed investment funds held for the long term. All investments are made within the terms of the NCT Commercial and Charitable Activities Policy that takes social, environmental and ethical considerations into account.

The investment objective for long-term investments is to generate a return in excess of inflation in order to preserve the real terms value of NCT's reserves and support growth of the reserves to, and thereafter within, the range determined by the reserves policy. The charity monitors performance closely and continues to take regular advice from its investment managers. The performance of the funds over the time held meets the investment objectives.

The investment objective for the short-term investments is to seek the highest rate of interest available for cash deposits with a UK FSCA regulated financial institution, with deposits made with different institutions where practicable.

Under the Investment Policy, NCT considers that it holds a mixed motive investment in NCT Trading Limited. This is because the investment has two aims: firstly, to provide funding which will generate a financial return for NCT; and secondly to contribute to NCT's charitable purpose by promoting goods and services that are beneficial to prospective and new parents. This will assist the charity in achieving its strategic objective of providing new parent support.

The investment in NCT Trading Limited has been made through holding 100% of its issued share capital at a cost of £100.

Total Funds

The group balance sheet at 31 March 2023 showed total funds of £4.6m (2022: £5.1m) of which £0.2m (2022: £0.2m) were restricted. Restricted funds, analysed in Note 15, comprise donations and grants subject to donor-imposed conditions. Unrestricted funds were £4.4m (2022: £5.0m), of which £1.3m were represented as fixed assets (2022: £1.3m). The balance of the Group general funds, representing the 'free reserves', were £3.1m at 31 March 2023 (2022: £3.7m).

Reserves Policy

The Reserves Policy provides a dynamic framework for determining available reserves by identifying three components of NCT's risk management reserve:

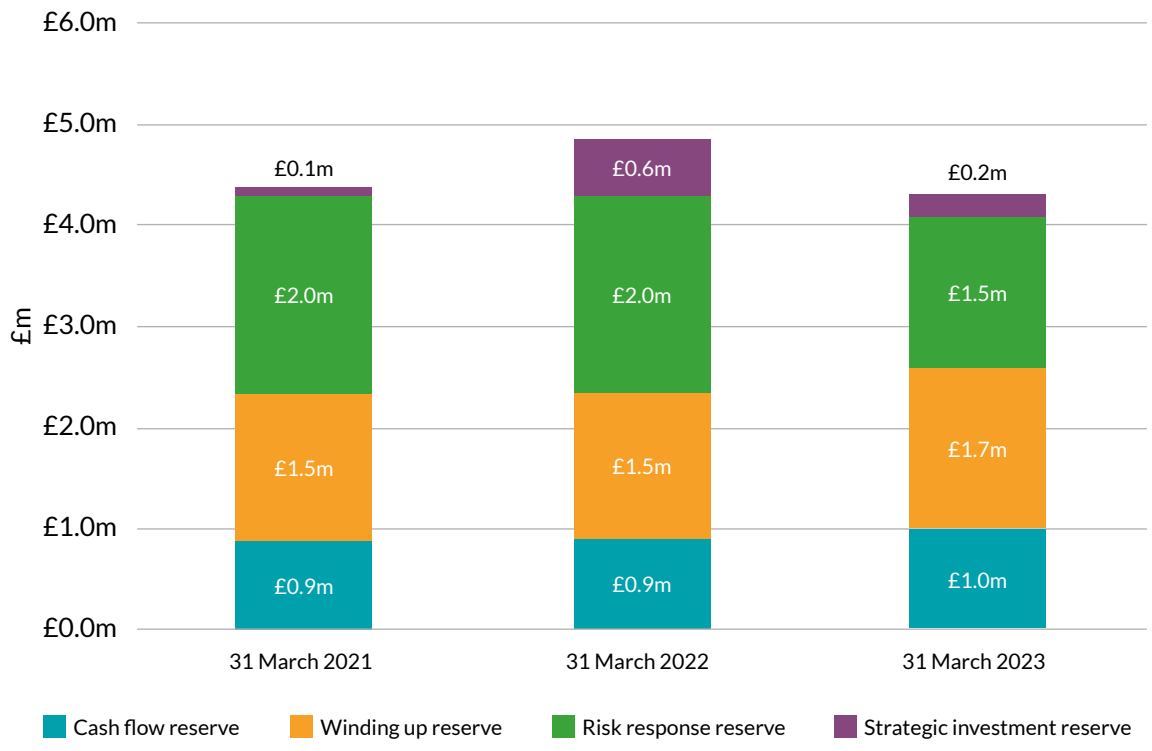
- Cash flow reserve to cover cash flow requirements;
- Winding up reserve to cover the costs of winding up the charity; and
- Risk response reserve to respond to uncertainty identified in the risk management process.

Any surplus funds beyond these considerations represent the strategic development reserve.

The Board determined a target risk management reserve level of £4.2m in March 2023. This comprises £1.0m for cash flow requirements, £1.7m for the costs of winding up and £1.5m to respond to uncertainty identified in the risk management process. Compared with the previously agreed levels, the amounts in the cash flow reserve and winding up reserve have grown to reflect the current size of the group. The level of the risk response reserve has been reduced from the level of £2.0m as originally set in 2017 when the group had a much larger trading operation and higher risks relating to legacy IT solutions.

The Board plans to reduce the target level of the risk response reserve further by continuing to address key risks. By planning for a breakeven operating position over multiple periods, any investment income and gains can be used to increase the strategic development reserve.

The amounts held in these reserves at the last three year ends are shown below.



At 31 March 2023, total unrestricted funds were £4.4m, exceeding the required risk management reserve level of £4.2m meeting the requirements of the policy. This means that the charity holds sufficient funds to perform an orderly wind up if needed and manage risks as they arise. The remaining group funds as at 31 March 2023 were held in the strategic development reserve of £0.2m (2022: £0.6m). Any funds held in the strategic development reserve at the end of each year are used to invest in future growth opportunities to meet one-off items of expenditure during the following year.

Risk management

The risk management process identifies the uncertainties and events that could affect the achievement of the strategic objectives. Trustees acknowledge their responsibility for ensuring effective risk management systems and procedures. The Board works closely with the Directors Group to identify the most significant risks, mitigate any potential impact of downside risks and exploit the opportunities of upside risks. The Board reviews the full Risk Register every year and receives regular updates on significant changes to the profile of individual risks throughout the year.

The Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee has delegated authority from the Board to:

- review risk management systems and procedures;
- drive continued improvement in the sophistication and impact of our risk management processes;
- advise the Board on the principal risks faced and any changes to the Risk Register;
- scrutinise the analysis and management of risks by the Directors Group through a review of the Risk Register at every meeting; and
- receive periodic deep dive reviews of significant risks.

Managing each risk is the responsibility of the senior managers within each Directorate.

The Risk Management Policy is reviewed every year. Through this Policy, the level of gross risk to the achievement of strategic objectives is assessed and the likelihood of this occurring given existing activities to manage the risk appraised. The net risk is compared to the agreed risk appetite for each broad category to identify areas where increased focus is required to manage individual risks.

Key Risks

There are 27 risks on the Group Risk Register. After assessing existing activities to manage the risk, the four risks that the Board has a particular focus on are listed below, alongside a summary of how likely it is that the risk will crystallise in what timeframe, the potential impact, our plans for managing these risks and recent changes in the risk profile.

- Information Provision - Parents rely on accurate, up-to-date, evidence-based and accessible information. NCT provides this through a variety of channels, including our courses, Parent Hub, infant feeding line, postnatal support, community provision and our website. The potential impact of getting this wrong is that parents do not have the information they need to make the right decisions. This could also impact NCT's reputation. A review of our parent content, information, course content and frameworks and organisational language has continued during the year and is ongoing.
- Information Governance including Cyber - Personal and corporate data must be handled and stored safely to protect sensitive information and ensure full compliance with GDPR legislation. The volume of sensitive information necessary for us to deliver services through practitioners, volunteers and staff requires careful management. Cyber-attacks on charities continue to be a concern and a Cyber Risk Register with Board oversight is used to prioritise activities to prevent such attacks. A dedicated Data Protection Officer was appointed during the year to increase resources in this area.
- Investment Returns - NCT holds an investment portfolio in accordance with our Investment Policy which seeks to preserve the real terms value of reserves. The risk that this target will not be met has increased due to recent increases in inflation and interest rate volatility. Returns are regularly monitored and reported with the Investment Policy updated annually.

- Fulfilment of Courses – Resources and workforce, especially our NCT practitioners, must be available to meet the demand from parents for services and support. Insufficient resources will restrict the ability to engage parents, have a positive impact and, in turn, generate surpluses to fund other core NCT parent services. The cost-of-living crisis is having an impact on the number of people wishing to train as a practitioner, so the scoring of this risk has risen during the last 12 months. Extensive activities were undertaken during the year within the courses team to engage, support and retain our practitioner community alongside the Education Team's work to continue to recruit and support students.

Public Benefit Statement

The Board has referred to the relevant guidance (as published by the Charity Commission in its guidance documents PB1 "Public benefit, the public benefit requirement", PB2 "Public benefit: running a charity and PB3 "Public benefit: reporting") and concluded that NCT complies with the duty in Section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to public benefit because the charitable services delivered provide value to the public in general and new parents in particular.

Structure and governance

NCT (The National Childbirth Trust) is a registered charity. It is a company limited by guarantee governed by its Articles of Association as adopted on 26th September 2015 and amended on 18 October 2018.

NCT is governed by a Board of Trustees who are the directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act. The names of trustees at the date at which the accounts were approved, or who served during the period, are given below. The Board is very grateful for the work and commitment of Jess Figueras, Richard Smothers and Jo Powell who have served NCT and stood down in this period as well as David Shanks' support as Vice Chair, ensuring a NCT member ramained in a Chair role. We also welcomed two trustees to the board in this period.

Name	Start date of most recent term	Date of resignation
Charles Richardson (Honorary Treasurer from 15 July 2022)	Appointed 15 July 2022	—
Chi Evi-Parker	Elected 11 December 2020	—
David Shanks	Appointed 7 August 2021 [1]	—
Elaine Lambe	Elected 26 November 2021 [2]	—
Ema Ojiako (Honorary Secretary)	Appointed 8 March 2021	—
Franciane Husbands-Chevot	Elected 11 December 2020	—
Joanne Powell	Elected 16 November 2019	Resigned 1 August 2022
Peter Brown	Appointed to act as Elected 8 December 2022	—
Richard Smothers (Honorary Treasurer to 15 July 2022)	Appointed 5 February 2020	Resigned 15 July 2022
Sarah Brown (Vice Chair)	Elected 26 November 2021 [2]	—
Sherry Bevan (President)	Elected 16 November 2019	—
Stephanie Maurel (Chair)	Appointed 7 August 2021 [1]	—
Susy Broekhuizen	Appointed to act as Elected 8 December 2022	—
Zoe Stewart-Fields	Elected 26 November 2021	—

[1] Second term, initial term commenced on 7 August 2017
[2] Second term, initial term commenced on 4 November 2017

The charity is a membership charity. Members are organised locally into 333 branches. Many members and volunteers carry out the work of the charity at a local level.

Recruitment and appointment of trustees

The Board of Trustees must have a minimum of nine trustees and a maximum of twelve. Of the maximum, there may be up to eight member elected trustees and four appointed trustees. Any member may stand for election as a trustee subject to the restrictions laid down in the Governance handbook.

Member-elected trustees are elected to coincide with the Annual General Meeting, whilst appointed trustees may be appointed during the course of the year. Any trustee vacancies arising during the year may also be filled by the Board until the date of the next Annual General Meeting.

The process of appointing new trustees is led by the Nominations and Remuneration Committee based on an assessment of the key skills required by the Board. An executive search firm may be used to attract a diverse range of candidates from different backgrounds. Extensive screening will take place followed by rigorous interviews. All appointments are subject to satisfactory references.

Elected and Appointed Trustees have a term of four years and the President has a term of five years. An individual may serve a maximum of two terms as an Elected Trustee, two terms as an Appointed Trustee and two terms as President.

Further details on the recruitment and appointment of trustees can be found in the Governance Handbook at **https://www.nct.org.uk/sites/default/files/related_documents/2021%2007%2027%20-%20Governance%20Handbook%20final%20v1.pdf.**

We are keen to talk to anyone interested in standing as a trustee or serving as an Independent Committee member, especially people who will bring unique skills and experiences. To discuss becoming involved, please contact us at **board.secretary@nct.org.uk**.

Induction and training of trustees

A comprehensive and structured induction programme is put in place for new trustees. This includes:

- a written briefing about trustees' responsibilities;
- detailed presentations covering Strategy; Governance and Critical Incidents; Courses & Income; Practitioners and Education; Impact and Engagement; Volunteering; Finance Overview, Budget, Forecasting and Systems; and Data and Technology; and
- meetings with the Chair, Chief Executive and other members of the Directors Group.

In addition, access is provided to specific training that is tailored to the incoming trustee.

Training is also provided during the year for trustees, for example at the Board Away Day session on topics relevant to the Board's current work and strategy or through access to external courses as required.

The Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is ultimately responsible for the governance of the Charity to ensure that it acts in the best interests of all parents, who are the Charity's beneficiaries. The Board of Trustees sets the strategy, policy and financial framework for the Charity and has the responsibility for its overall direction and control. Additionally, the Board has responsibility for ensuring that the Charity complies with the law and the safeguarding of the Charity's assets, including its money, property and reputation.

Authority for the day-to-day management of the charity within that framework is delegated to the Chief Executive, supported by colleagues on the Directors Group. Together, they formulate strategy, policy and financial plans for the Board's approval, ensure delivery of required performance and oversee the Charity's day-to-day operations.

Each year, the Board reviews past performance and sets plans within a forward-looking planning horizon. As part of that review and planning process, the trustees consider how future plans and performance relate to the aims and vision of the Charity and thus to the charitable purpose.

The trustees are committed to ensuring NCT's governance and constitutional framework reflect current thinking on best practice. The Board of Trustees is committed to the principles of the Charity Governance Code.

Board committees

The Board of Trustees is supported in its work by committees. There are two Board committees.

- Audit, Risk and Scrutiny [ARSC] - covering the adequacy of financial control, external reporting, budgeting, performance and risk management.
- Nominations and Remuneration [NRC] - covering people issues, equity, diversity and inclusion, trustee recruitment and the remuneration policy for senior management and other key groups.

In addition, advisory and task & finish groups enable internal and external experts to be involved in decision-making and governance. During the year, there were groups for Cybersecurity; Equity, Diversity and Inclusion; and an IT project. There is also a 'Lead Trustee' for safeguarding to provide additional support, scrutiny and oversight in this area. The full Board maintains collective responsibility for all these areas and receives update reports at Board meetings.

Independent committee members are individuals who bring additional skills, experience and perspectives to the work of our sub-committees. They are not trustees.

Committee membership and lead trustee roles as at 31 March 2023 are detailed in the table below.

Name	Role	Committee membership
Charles Richardson	Trustee / Honorary Treasurer	ARSC (Chair)
Chi Evi-Parker	Trustee	—
David Shanks	Trustee	—
Elaine Lambe	Trustee	NRC
Ema Ojiako	Trustee / Honorary Secretary	NRC (Chair)
Franciane Husbands-Chevot	Trustee	ARSC
Faran Johnson	Independent Committee Member	ARSC
Naomi Horsfall	Independent Committee Member	ARSC
Peter Brown	Trustee	NRC
Salima Shariff	Independent Committee Member	NRC
Sarah Brown	Trustee / Vice Chair / Safeguarding Lead Trustee	ARSC
Sherry Bevan	Trustee / President	—
Stephanie Maurel	Trustee / Chair	NRC
Susy Broekhuizen	Trustee	—
Zoe Stewart-Field	Trustee	NRC

Key relationships

NCT wholly owns one active commercial company, NCT Trading Ltd, which gift aids its profits to the charity. The Board of NCT Trading Ltd is responsible for its activities, which during 2022-23 mainly consisted of commercial partnerships and sponsorship.

Charity Commission guidance makes it clear that the Board of Trustees is responsible for establishing the overarching principles within which its subsidiary's trading activities must take place. Trustees have established a comprehensive Commercial and Charitable Activities Policy within which the Trading Board is required to operate.

Trustee benefits

Under the terms of its Articles, the Charity is able to pay trustees for the provision of services to achieve its objectives, subject to certain safeguards. This includes the requirement that a majority of the trustees must have received no payments from NCT either as employees or for goods and services supplied to NCT. This year, no member of the Board of Trustees received any remuneration in respect of their services as trustees (2022: None). Expenses and other payments to trustees are detailed in Note 9.

Statement of the Board's responsibilities as trustees

The trustees (who are also directors of NCT for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice). Members of the Directors Group are not Directors as defined on Company Law.

Company law requires trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of the affairs of the charitable company and the group and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable group for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards, including FRS102, have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006, as amended by the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Amendment (No. 2) Regulations 2014. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and the group, and hence for taking reasonable steps to prevent and detect of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

In so far as the trustees are aware:

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

Remuneration Policy

NCT recognises that pay is part of a wider employment offer for employees, which also includes the satisfaction of working for a charity, personal development opportunities, family-friendly policies and practices, annual leave and absence policies and a range of other benefits including access to the pension scheme.

NCT operates a benchmarked market rate system, using reputable and appropriate data. NCT aims to pay employees between plus/minus 10% margin of the market median salary for most roles. Employees will not normally be paid less than the lower decile or higher than the higher decile for any role. When benchmarking pay and benefits, NCT will compare against charities of similar size, employee numbers and income, workplace location and competitors. Additionally, a specialist consultancy will be commissioned to independently review the market rate for the salaries of the Directors Group every three years.

Each year, NCT will consider whether to uplift all employee salaries by the cost of living. This will take into account the Consumer Price Index, Retail Price Index and the national average increase in earnings. Any decisions will be based on affordability and are at the Board's discretion.

Appointment of Auditors

Moore Kingston Smith LLP have indicated their willingness to continue in office and are deemed reappointed in accordance with section 487(2) of the Companies Act 2006.

The strategic report, which forms part of the Trustees' Annual Report, is approved by the trustees in their capacity as directors of the company. The Trustees' Report is approved by the Board of Trustees and signed on its behalf by:



Stephanie Maurel
Chair
21 September 2023

Independent Auditor's Report to the Trustees and Members of NCT

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of The National Childbirth Trust for the year ended 31 March 2023 which comprise Group and Parent Charitable Company Statements of Financial Activities (incorporating the Summary Income and Expenditure Account), the Group and Parent Charitable Company Balance Sheets, the Group Cash Flow Statement and the related notes, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the group's and the parent charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2023 and of the group's and the parent charitable company's 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 Companies Act 2006, the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 (as amended) and regulations 6 and 8 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended).

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the 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 other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, 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 there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the strategic report and the trustees' annual report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the strategic report and the trustees' annual report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the group and parent charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the strategic report or the trustees' annual report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 or the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended) require us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the parent charitable company has not kept adequate and sufficient accounting records, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the parent charitable company's financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement set out on page 23, 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 group and parent 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 group or parent charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditor under Section 44(1)(c) of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and under the Companies Act 2006 and report to you in accordance with regulations made under those Acts.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs (UK) we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purposes of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the group and parent charitable company's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the trustees.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the group and parent charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the group or parent charitable company to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.
- Obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding the financial information of the entities or business activities within the group to express an opinion on the consolidated financial statements. We are responsible for the direction, supervision and performance of the group audit. We remain solely responsible for our audit report.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Explanation as to what extent the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below.

The objectives of our audit in respect of fraud, are; to identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements due to fraud; to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding the assessed risks of material misstatement due to fraud, through designing and implementing appropriate responses to those assessed risks; and to respond appropriately to instances of fraud or suspected fraud identified during the audit. However, the primary responsibility for the prevention and detection of fraud rests with both management and those charged with governance of the charitable company.

Our approach was as follows:

- We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory requirements applicable to the charitable company and considered that the most significant are the Companies Act 2006, the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 (as amended), regulations 6 and 8 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended), the Charity SORP, and UK financial reporting standards as issued by the Financial Reporting Council.
- We obtained an understanding of how the charitable company complies with these requirements by discussions with management and those charged with governance.
- We assessed the risk of material misstatement of the financial statements, including the risk of material misstatement due to fraud and how it might occur, by holding discussions with management and those charged with governance.
- We inquired of management and those charged with governance as to any known instances of non-compliance or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations.
- Based on this understanding, we designed specific appropriate audit procedures to identify instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. This included making enquiries of management and those charged with governance and obtaining additional corroborative evidence as required.

There are inherent limitations in the audit procedures described above. We are less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations that are not closely related to events and transactions reflected in the financial statements. Also, the risk of not detecting a material misstatement due to fraud is higher than the risk of not detecting one resulting from error, as fraud may involve deliberate concealment by, for example, forgery or intentional misrepresentations, or through collusion.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006 and to the charitable company's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Section 44(1)(c) of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members and trustees those matters which we are required to state to them in an auditor's report addressed to them and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to any party other than the charitable company and charitable company's members as a body, and the charity's trustees, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



Andrew Stickland
(Senior Statutory Auditor)

for and on behalf of Moore Kingston Smith LLP, Statutory Auditor
16 October 2023

9 Appold Street
London EC2A 2AP

Moore Kingston Smith LLP is eligible to act as auditor in terms of Section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

NCT consolidated group statement of financial activities

Including Income & Expenditure Account for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2023 £'000	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2022 £'000
Income from							
Donations							
Membership		345	2	347	539	-	539
Donations		13	-	13	17	-	17
Grants receivable	4	19	579	598	13	500	513
		377	**581**	**958**	**569**	**500**	**1,069**
Charitable activities							
NCT Courses		8,376	-	8,376	8,104	-	8,104
Education and Practice		452	-	452	612	-	612
Programme Delivery	3	820	-	820	530	-	530
		9,648	**-**	**9,648**	**9,246**	**-**	**9,246**
Other trading activities							
Community fundraising		334	42	376	184	22	206
Commercial fundraising		135	-	135	207	-	207
Trading		4	-	4	1	-	1
		473	**42**	**515**	**392**	**22**	**414**
Investments							
Investment portfolio income		93	-	93	84	-	84
		93	-	**93**	**84**	-	**84**
Other income							
Other income receivable		**37**	**-**	**37**	**48**	**-**	**48**
Total incoming resources		**10,628**	**623**	**11,251**	**10,339**	**522**	**10,861**
Expenditure on Raising funds							
Membership		**239**	**-**	**239**	**210**	**-**	**210**
Charitable activities							
NCT Courses	5	6,098	117	6,215	5,993	66	6,059
Education and Practice		1,114	-	1,114	1,034	-	1,034
Programme Delivery		1,713	461	2,174	1,019	435	1,454
Policy, research and information		1,196	-	1,196	1,180	-	1,180
		10,121	**578**	**10,699**	**9,226**	**501**	**9,727**
Other trading activities							
Community fundraising	6	553	8	561	451	-	451
Commercial fundraising		56	-	56	178	-	178
Trading		101	-	101	47	-	47
		710	**8**	**718**	**746**	**-**	**746**
Total Expenditure	7	**11,070**	**586**	**11,656**	**10,112**	**501**	**10,613**
Net operating income/(expenditure)		**(442)**	**37**	**(405)**	**227**	**21**	**248**
Gain/(loss) on investment assets	12	(148)	-	(148)	303	-	303
Net income/(expenditure) and net movement in funds	8	**(590)**	**37**	**(553)**	**530**	**21**	**551**
Reconciliation of funds							
Total funds brought forward		4,982	159	5,141	4,452	138	4,590
Total funds carried forward	15,16	**4,392**	**196**	**4,588**	**4,982**	**159**	**5,141**

All of the group's activities are derived from continuing operations during the above two financial periods. The group has no recognised gains or losses other than those shown above. The movement in reserves is shown above.

NCT charity statement of financial activities

Including Income & Expenditure Account for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2023 £'000	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2022 £'000
Income from							
Donations and legacies							
Membership		345	2	347	539	-	539
Donations		64	-	64	38	-	38
Grants receivable	4	19	579	598	13	500	513
		428	**581**	**1,009**	**590**	**500**	**1,090**
Charitable Activities							
NCT Courses		8,376	-	8,376	8,104	-	8,104
Education and Practice		452	-	452	612	-	612
Programme Delivery	3	820	-	820	530	-	530
		9,648	**-**	**9,648**	**9,246**	**-**	**9,246**
Other trading activities							
Community fundraising		334	42	376	184	22	206
Trading		4	-	4	1	-	1
		338	**42**	**380**	**185**	**22**	**207**
Investments							
Investment portfolio income		93	-	93	84	-	84
		93	**-**	**93**	**84**	**-**	**84**
Other income		**65**	**-**	**65**	**56**	**-**	**56**
Total income		**10,572**	**623**	**11,195**	**10,161**	**522**	**10,683**
Expenditure on							
Raising funds							
Membership		**239**	**-**	**239**	**210**	**-**	**210**
Charitable activities							
NCT Courses	5	6,098	117	6,215	5,993	66	6,059
Education and Practice		1,114	-	1,114	1,034	-	1,034
Programme Delivery		1,713	461	2,174	1,019	435	1,454
Policy, research and information		1,196	-	1,196	1,180	-	1,180
		10,121	**578**	**10,699**	**9,226**	**501**	**9,727**
Other trading activities							
Community fundraising	6	553	8	561	451	-	451
Trading		101	-	101	47	-	47
		654	**8**	**662**	**498**	**-**	**498**
Total resources expended	7	**11,014**	**586**	**11,600**	**9,934**	**501**	**10,435**
Net operating income/(expenditure)		**(442)**	**37**	**(405)**	**227**	**21**	**248**
Gain/(loss) on investment assets	12	(148)	-	(148)	303	-	303
Net income/(expenditure) and net movement in funds	8	**(590)**	**37**	**(553)**	**530**	**21**	**551**
Reconciliation of funds							
Total funds brought forward		4,982	159	5,141	4,452	138	4,590
Total funds carried forward	15,16	**4,392**	**196**	**4,588**	**4,982**	**159**	**5,141**

All of the NCT's activities are derived from continuing operations during the above two financial periods. The charity has no recognised gains or losses other than those shown above. The movement in reserves is shown above.

NCT consolidated and charity balance sheets

as at 31 March 2023

	Notes	2023 Group £'000	2023 Charity £'000	2022 Group £'000	2022 Charity £'000
Fixed Assets					
Intangible Assets	10	-	-	-	-
Tangible Assets	11	1,270	1,270	1,302	1,302
Investments	12	3,707	3,707	3,789	3,789
Total Fixed Assets		**4,977**	**4,977**	**5,091**	**5,091**
Current Assets					
Debtors	13	948	979	1,054	1,029
Short term deposits		76	76	76	76
Cash at bank and in hand		2,297	2,236	2,584	2,560
		3,321	**3,291**	**3,714**	**3,665**
Liabilities					
Creditors:					
Amounts falling due within one year	14	**(3,710)**	**(3,680)**	**(3,664)**	**(3,615)**
Net current assets / (liabilities)		**(389)**	**(389)**	**50**	**50**
Total net assets		**4,588**	**4,588**	**5,141**	**5,141**
Fund balances					
Charitable funds					
Restricted funds	15	**196**	**196**	**159**	**159**
Unrestricted funds	16				
General funds		3,122	3,122	3,680	3,680
Fixed asset fund		1,270	1,270	1,302	1,302
		4,392	**4,392**	**4,982**	**4,982**
Total funds	17	**4,588**	**4,588**	**5,141**	**5,141**

Approved by the Board of Trustees and signed on its behalf



Stephanie Maurel
Chair
21 September 2023

The National Childbirth Trust
Company Number: 2370573 (England & Wales)

NCT consolidated cash flow statement

for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Cashflows from Operating Activities		
Net income / (expenditure) for the reporting period	(553)	551
(Gains)/ Losses on investments	148	(303)
Depreciation and amortisation charges	32	41
Investment income	(93)	(84)
(Increase) / decrease in debtors	106	(502)
Increase / (decrease) in creditors	46	552
Net cash provided by operating activities	**(314)**	**255**
Cash flows from Investing Activites		
Purchase of Investments	(940)	(975)
Proceeds from the sale of Investments	936	907
Dividends received	93	84
Net cash from investing activities	**89**	**16**
Cash flows from Financing Activities		
Net cash from financing activities	-	-
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period	**(225)**	**271**
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period	**2,747**	**2,476**
Cash and cash equivalents at end of the reporting period	**2,522**	**2,747**

Analysis of cash and cash equivalents	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Cash at bank and in hand	2,297	2,584
Short term deposits	76	76
Cash held by investment managers	149	87
Total cash and cash equivalents	**2,522**	**2,747**

Notes to the financial statements

1 Principal Accounting Policies

a) Basis of accounting

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies below and comply with the charity's governing document, the Charities Act 2011 and 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, the Charities Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 as amended in 2014. The charity is a public benefit entity for the purposes of FRS 102 and a registered charity. The charity has therefore also prepared its individual and consolidated financial statements in accordance with FRS 102 (The Charities SORP (FRS 102).

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis and on the historical cost basis, except for the measurement of investments and certain financial assets and liabilities at fair value with movements in value reported within the Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA). The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below and have been applied consistently throughout the year.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charity. Amounts included in the financial statements are rounded to the nearest thousand pounds.

b) Preparation of the accounts on a going concern basis

The trustees have adopted the going concern basis in preparing these accounts after assessing the principal risks and having considered the impact of returning to online courses due to COVID-19 and inflationary factors. The trustees consider that the charity is resilient to the impact of these scenarios.

The trustees considered the impact of the expected future environment on the business for the 12 months following signature of the financial statements, the viability period and the longer term considering the impacts on income, expenditure and cash flow and consider the charity can absorb and adapt to the environment.

On this basis the trustees have concluded that there are no material uncertainties that impact the use of the going concern basis and that the charity will be able to settle its debts as they fall due for a period of at least 12 months from the date of approval of these financial statements. Accordingly, the going concern basis has continued to be adopted in the preparation of the financial statements.

c) Basis of consolidation

The statement of financial activities and balance sheet consolidate on a line-by-line basis the financial statements of the charity and all its subsidiary undertakings made up to the balance sheet date. Immaterial subsidiaries are not consolidated. The decision on consolidation is based on the power NCT has to control each undertaking.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

d) Income

Incoming resources are recognised in the period in which the charity is entitled to receipt, the receipt is probable and the amount can be measured reliably. Income is deferred only when the charity has to fulfil conditions outside of its control before becoming entitled to it or when the donor or funder has specified that the income is to be expended in a future accounting period. Legacies are included in the statement of financial activities when the charity is advised by the personal representative of an estate that payment will be made or property transferred and the amount involved can be measured reliably. Grants, including government grants, have been included as income from charitable activities where these amount to a contract for services or a grant for specific costs. Fees from NCT affiliates are included in full within incoming resources.

e) Expenditure

Expenditure is included in the statement of financial activities when incurred and includes any attributable VAT, which cannot be recovered. Resources expended comprise the following:

- *Charitable activities*, which comprises expenditure on the charity's primary purposes and are categorised as NCT Courses, Education and Practice, Programme Delivery and Policy, Research and Information.
  - *NCT Courses* comprises the costs of providing courses, for parents and expectant parents where a participant generally books the course.
  - *Education and Practice* comprises the costs of providing training and support for students and NCT Practitioners who deliver NCT courses.
  - *Programme Delivery* comprises the costs of delivering services procured under a contract for services or a grant and providing specialist helplines.
  - *Policy, research and information* comprises the cost of the research and service development teams, as well as communications and marketing.
- *Expenditure on raising funds* is categorised into membership only. Membership expenditure comprises the costs of the department that services members and prospective members and the team that provides support to members and Branches.
- *Other trading activities* is categorised into community fundraising, commercial fundraising and trading.
  - *Community fundraising*, which comprises the community fundraising support team, the costs of Branch fundraising activities and costs associated with the administration of Branches. Many of the fundraising events held by the branches have two objectives, to raise funds for the charity as well as meeting the aims of the charity in terms of providing postnatal support for families. There is no meaningful way of apportioning the costs of Branch fundraising events between fundraising costs and charitable activities.
  - *Commercial fundraising* is the cost of obtaining and managing the sponsorship of activities and events and undertakes other business activity on behalf of NCT by NCT Trading Limited.
  - *Trading* comprises the costs of supporting other trading activities.

f) Basis of apportioning support costs

Support costs, which includes governance costs, represent indirect charitable expenditure. In order to carry out the primary purposes of NCT, it is necessary to provide support in the form of human resources, financial operations and management, information technology, general management and administration and office services. These costs are apportioned to the other activities within the charity based on the average number of full-time equivalent employees utilised by the activity.

g) Gifts in kind

Facilities and services donated to the charity for its own use are included in incoming resources and expenditure at their value to the charity as at the time of the gift.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

h) Tangible and intangible fixed assets

All assets costing more than £1,000 and with an expected useful life exceeding one year are capitalised. Leasehold properties used for the work of the charity are included in these accounts at the cost of acquisition. Software development is capitalised when there is future economic benefit to the charity and ongoing lease costs are not required to use the developed software. Fixed assets are capitalised and depreciated at the following rates per annum, based on cost, in order to write them off over their estimated useful lives at the rates shown below.

Category	Asset Group	Rate per annum
Property	Leasehold	2%
	Leasehold improvements	Lease length or on a component basis, minimum 2%
Equipment	End user computer equipment and software	33%
	Computer and telecoms network infrastructure and software	20%
	Furniture	20%
	Other equipment	33%

At the end of each reporting period, residual values and useful lives are reviewed and adjusted as necessary. Assets are also reviewed annually for impairment.

i) Fixed asset investments

Listed equities are included in the financial statements at fair value as at the balance sheet date. Investments in subsidiary undertakings are held at cost less impairment. Realised and unrealised gains (or losses) are credited (or debited) to the statement of financial activities in the year in which they arise.

j) Fund accounting

Restricted funds are monies raised for, or their use restricted to, a specific purpose, or contributions subject to donor imposed conditions.

The fixed assets fund represents the net book value of the tangible and intangible fixed assets used in the day-to-day operations of NCT. The value of this fund is not available for working capital.

General funds represent those monies, which are freely available for application towards achieving any charitable purpose that falls within the charity's charitable objects.

k) Leased assets

Rentals applicable to operating leases where substantially all of the benefits and risks of ownership remain with the lessor are charged on a straight-line basis over the lease term.

Rental applicable to finance leases where the terms of the lease transfer substantially all the risks and rewards of ownership to the lessee are recognized as assets at the lower of the assets fair value at the date of inception and the present value of minimum lease payments. The related liability is included in the balance sheet as a finance lease obligation. Lease payments are treated as consisting of capital and interest elements. The interest is charged to the Statement of Financial Activity so as to produce a constant periodic rate of interest in the remaining balance of the liability.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

l) Branches

Branch transactions are considered transactions of the charity.

m) Employee benefits

The costs of short-term employee benefits are recognised as a liability and an expense, unless those costs are required to be recognised as part of the cost of fixed assets. The cost of any unused holiday entitlement is recognised in the period in which the employee's services are received. Termination benefits are recognised immediately as an expense when the company is demonstrably committed to terminate the employment of an employee or to provide termination benefits.

n) Debtors

Debtors are stated at their net realisable value after allowing for bad and doubtful debts.

o) Creditors

Creditors are amounts owed by the charity. They are measured at the amount that the charity expects to have to pay to settle the debt.

p) Pension costs

The charity as an employer contributes to personal pension plans of its employees. The contributions are set at up to 5% of gross salary and are available to all employees whose contracts are permanent and who have completed three months' service with the charity.

q) Redundancy costs

Redundancy costs are recognised when there is a legal or constructive obligation.

r) Financial Instruments

The National Childbirth Trust has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method. Financial assets held at amortised cost comprise cash at bank and in hand, together with trade and other debtors. Financial liabilities held at amortised cost comprise trade and other creditors.

s) Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Any bank overdrafts would be shown within borrowings in current liabilities.

t) Irrecoverable VAT

All expenditure is charged to the SOFA on an accruals basis including the charge for VAT which is not recoverable.

u) Accounting judgements and estimation uncertainty

In preparing financial statements it is necessary to make certain judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts recognised in the financial statements. The following judgements and estimates are considered by the Board to have the most significant effect on amounts recognised in the financial statements.

Tangible fixed assets are depreciated to their estimated residual value over their estimated useful economic life as detailed above.

Accrued course expenditure is estimated at the year end date using algorithmic modelling based on contracted hours and pre-agreed rates and anticipated venue costs.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

2 Commercial trading operations

The National Childbirth Trust owns the entire called up ordinary share capital of four companies incorporated in the United Kingdom:

- NCT Trading Limited, which has two principal activities; the promotion of the work of NCT and profit generation;
- NCT (Maternity Sales) Limited which did not trade during the period of these accounts;
- NCT Publishing Limited which did not trade during the period of these accounts; and
- First 1,000 Days Foundation which did not trade during the period of these accounts.

NCT Trading Limited has a deed of covenant to distribute its taxable profit to NCT. A summary of the results of the trading subsidiary for the period are given below.

Profit and loss account – NCT Trading Ltd	**2023 £'000**	2022 £'000
Turnover	135	207
Cost of sales	-	-
Gross profit	**135**	**207**
Administrative expenses	(84)	(186)
Operating profit before interest	**51**	**21**
Interest payable	–	–
Comprehensive income for the period	**51**	**21**

Balance Sheet – NCT Trading Ltd	**31 March 2023 £'000**	31 March 2022 £'000
Current Assets	83	21
Amounts falling due within one year	(83)	(21)
Net Assets	**-**	**-**

The above figures exclude any consolidation adjustments for inter-group profits/losses, which have been reflected in the consolidated statement of financial activities. The accounts figures have been consolidated on a line-by-line basis.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

3 Income: programme delivery

Group and Charity	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2023 £'000	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2022 £'000
National Health Service	475	-	475	279	-	279
Local Authorities	250	-	250	229	-	229
Other	95	-	95	22	-	22
	820	**-**	**820**	**530**	**-**	**530**

4 Income: grants receivable

Group and Charity	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2023 £'000	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2022 £'000
Parents in Mind	–	–	–	–	12	12
Grants to branches	19	166	185	6	117	123
BBCS	–	17	17	–	50	50
Scottish Health	–	184	184	–	109	109
Newham Nurture	–	212	212	–	212	212
Government Furlough Grant	–	–	–	7	–	7
	19	**579**	**598**	**13**	**500**	**513**

Grants receivable includes government grants for Scottish Health and Newham Nurture and totalled £396k (2022: £328k).

5 Expenditure: NCT courses

Group and Charity	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2023 £'000	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2022 £'000
Antenatal	3,966	-	3,966	3,840	-	3,840
Postnatal	38	-	38	79	-	79
General Parental Support	865	117	982	1,026	66	1,092
Apportioned support costs	1,229	-	1,229	1,048	-	1,048
	6,098	**117**	**6,215**	**5,993**	**66**	**6,059**

6 Expenditure: community fundraising

Group and Charity	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2023 £'000	Total 2022 £'000
Branch fundraising	364	8	372	117
Central fundraising	189	–	189	334
	553	**8**	**561**	**451**

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

7 Support cost allocations

Support costs are allocated to the expenditure headings in the Statement of Financial Activities, on the basis stated in the Accounting Policies (note 1), as stated in the tables below.

Group 2023	NCT Courses £'000	Education and Practice £'000	Programme Delivery £'000	Policy, Research & Information £'000	Membership £'000	Community Fundraising £'000	Commercial Fundraising £'000	Trading £'000	Total 2023 £'000
Staff costs	481	153	302	142	36	45	-	16	1,175
Depreciation	14	4	8	4	1	1	-	-	32
Premises and equipment	61	19	39	18	5	6	-	2	150
Office supplies	133	42	84	39	10	13	-	4	325
Insurance	31	10	19	9	2	3	-	1	75
Irrecoverable VAT	104	33	65	31	8	10	-	3	254
Governance	4	1	3	2	-	-	-	-	10
Other	401	128	252	118	31	38	-	13	981
Support Costs	**1,229**	**390**	**772**	**363**	**93**	**116**	**-**	**39**	**3,002**
Direct Costs	**4,986**	**724**	**1,402**	**833**	**146**	**445**	**56**	**62**	**8,654**
Total Costs	**6,215**	**1,114**	**2,174**	**1,196**	**239**	**561**	**56**	**101**	**11,656**

Group 2022	NCT Courses £'000	Education and Practice £'000	Programme Delivery £'000	Policy, Research & Information £'000	Membership £'000	Community Fundraising £'000	Commercial Fundraising £'000	Trading £'000	Total 2022 £'000
Staff costs	452	151	243	152	37	46	-	10	1,091
Depreciation	16	6	9	7	1	2	-	-	41
Premises and equipment	74	25	40	25	6	7	-	1	178
Office supplies	88	29	47	30	7	9	-	2	212
Insurance	23	8	12	7	2	2	-	-	54
Irrecoverable VAT	76	25	41	25	6	8	-	2	183
Governance	10	3	6	3	1	1	-	-	24
Other	309	103	166	104	25	31	-	7	745
Support Costs	**1,048**	**350**	**564**	**353**	**85**	**106**	**-**	**22**	**2,528**
Direct Costs	**5,011**	**684**	**890**	**827**	**125**	**345**	**178**	**25**	**7,907**
Total Costs	**6,059**	**1,034**	**1,454**	**1,180**	**210**	**451**	**178**	**47**	**10,435**

Charity 2023	NCT Courses £'000	Education and Practice £'000	Programme Delivery £'000	Policy, Research & Information £'000	Membership £'000	Community Fundraising £'000	Trading £'000	Total 2023 £'000
Staff costs	481	153	302	142	36	45	16	1,175
Depreciation	14	4	8	4	1	1	-	32
Premises and equipment	61	19	39	18	5	6	2	150
Office supplies	133	42	84	39	10	13	4	325
Insurance	31	10	19	9	2	3	1	75
Irrecoverable VAT	104	33	65	31	8	10	3	254
Governance	4	1	3	2	-	-	-	10
Other	401	128	252	118	31	38	13	981
Support Costs	**1,229**	**390**	**772**	**363**	**93**	**116**	**39**	**3,002**
Direct Costs	**4,986**	**724**	**1,402**	**833**	**146**	**445**	**62**	**8,598**
Total Costs	**6,215**	**1,114**	**2,174**	**1,196**	**239**	**561**	**101**	**11,600**

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

Charity 2022	NCT Courses £'000	Education and Practice £'000	Programme Delivery £'000	Policy, Research & Information £'000	Membership £'000	Community Fundraising £'000	Trading £'000	Total 2022 £'000
Staff costs	452	151	243	152	37	46	10	1,091
Depreciation	16	6	9	7	1	2	-	41
Premises and equipment	74	25	40	25	6	7	1	178
Office supplies	88	29	47	30	7	9	2	212
Insurance	23	8	12	7	2	2	-	54
Irrecoverable VAT	76	25	41	25	6	8	2	183
Governance	10	3	6	3	1	1	-	24
Other	310	103	166	104	25	31	7	745
Support Costs	**1,048**	**350**	**564**	**353**	**85**	**106**	**22**	**2,528**
Direct Costs	**5,011**	**684**	**890**	**827**	**125**	**345**	**25**	**7,907**
Total Costs	**6,059**	**1,034**	**1,454**	**1,180**	**210**	**451**	**47**	**10,435**

8 Net movement in funds

	Group		Charity	
	2023 £'000	2022 £'000	**2023 £'000**	2022 £'000
Net movement in funds is stated after charging:				
Depreciation/amortisation of fixed assets	32	41	32	41
Staff costs (excluding agency staff)	4,341	3,905	4,310	3,870
Operating lease rentals	11	5	11	5
Auditors' remuneration: audit services	46	51	38	44
Auditors' remuneration: non-audit services	1	1	-	-
Investment management fees	26	26	26	26
Gifts in kind from corporate partners	5	-	5	-

9 Staff costs and remuneration

Staff costs during the period were as follows:

	Group		Charity	
	Total 2023 £'000	Total 2022 £'000	**Total 2023 £'000**	Total 2022 £'000
Wages and salaries	3,859	3,443	3,833	3,412
Redundancy costs	1	40	1	40
Social security costs	310	263	307	260
Other pension costs	171	159	169	157
	4,341	3,905	4,310	3,870
Payments to agency staff	44	35	44	35
	4,385	**3,939**	**4,354**	**3,904**

There were no outstanding redundancy costs at the balance sheet date.

Staff costs by function were as follows:

	Group		Charity	
	Total 2023 £'000	Total 2022 £'000	**Total 2023 £'000**	Total 2022 £'000
Raising funds	162	148	162	148
Other trading activities	273	225	242	190
Charitable activities	3,950	3,566	3,950	3,566
	4,385	**3,939**	**4,354**	**3,904**

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

Higher paid employees:

	Group		Charity	
	Total 2023	Total 2022	**Total 2023**	Total 2022
£60,000 – 69,999	3	3	3	3
£70,000 – 79,999	1	1	1	1
£80,000 – 89,999	-	-	-	-
£90,000 – 99,999	-	-	-	-
£100,000 – 109,999	-	-	-	-
£110,000 - 119,999	1	1	1	1
	5	**5**	**5**	**5**

The pension cost for these employees, was £13,012 (2022: £21,508), which included the Chief Executive who received a total salary of £115,660 (2022: £111,375) and pension contributions of £4,626 (2022: £4,455).

The average headcount including part-time staff, analysed by function was:

	Group		Charity	
	Number 2023	Number 2022	**Number 2023**	Number 2022
Raising funds	4	4	4	4
Other trading activities	7	6	6	5
Charitable activities	140	133	140	133
Support	21	17	21	17
	172	**160**	**171**	**159**

The average number of full time equivalents, analysed by function was:

	Group		Charity	
	FTEs 2023	FTEs 2022	**FTEs 2023**	FTEs 2022
Raising funds	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2
Other trading activities	5.4	4.8	4.4	3.8
Charitable activities	95.0	86.0	95.0	86.0
Support	18.2	15.6	18.2	15.6
	121.8	**109.6**	**120.8**	**108.6**

The key management personnel of the charity comprise the trustees and the Directors Group. The total employee benefits of the key management personnel of the charity were £425,765 (2022: £386,422).

Expenses were reimbursed to 5 (2022: 5) members of the Board of Trustees during the year. Their expenses amounted to £1,112 (2022: £301) in respect of expenses incurred as a trustee in attending board and related meetings, and £16,104 (2022: £14,572) in respect of expenses incurred for branch support and fees as practitioners or breastfeeding counsellors. No trustees were remunerated in the current or prior year.

We are very grateful to our excellent volunteers. Given the absence of a reliable measurement basis, donated services from our volunteers are not included within the financial statements. Our network of volunteers offered welcoming and inclusive activities, supported over 50,000 parents at over 7,000 community events and provided over 70,000 hours of outstanding community service. More details of the crucial role volunteers contribute is provided in the Trustees' Report.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

10 Intangible fixed assets

Group and charity	Software £'000	Total 31 March £'000
Cost or valuation		
At 1 April 2022	163	163
Additions	-	-
Disposals	(35)	(35)
At 31 March 2023	128	**128**
Amortisation		
At 1 April 2022	163	163
Charge for period	-	-
On disposals	(35)	(35)
At 31 March 2023	128	**128**
Net book values		
At 31 March 2023	-	**-**
At 31 March 2022	-	-

11 Tangible fixed assets

Group and charity	Property £'000	Equipment £'000	Total 31 March £'000
Cost or valuation			
At 1 April 2022	1,504	259	1,763
Additions	-	-	-
Disposals	-		
At 31 March 2023	1,504	259	**1,763**
Depreciation			
At 1 April 2022	206	255	**461**
Charge for period	30	2	32
On disposals			
At 31 March 2023	236	257	**493**
Net book values			
At 31 March 2023	1,268	2	**1,270**
At 31 March 2022	1,298	4	**1,302**

Property relates to a leasehold building.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

12 Fixed asset investments

	Group		Charity	
	2023 31 March £	2022 31 March £	**2023 31 March £**	2022 31 March £
Investment in group undertakings:				
NCT (Maternity Sales) Limited	–	–	6	6
NCT Trading Limited	–	–	100	100
NCT Publishing Limited	–	–	2	2
First 1,000 Days Foundation	–	–	-	-
Other investments:				
Managed investment funds	3,707,453	3,789,122	3,707,453	3,789,122
	3,707,453	**3,789,122**	**3,707,561**	**3,789,230**

Material investments held in the portfolio include the following:

Treasury Stock	675,345	606,562	675,345	606,562
SPDR Series Trust S&P 500 ETF (GBP)	164,733	359,583	164,733	359,583
Aspect Capital Diversified Trends	119,362	-	119,362	-
Ishares PLC MSCO Far East Ex-Japan	70,067	137,229	70,067	137,229
BH Global Ltd NPV Sterling Shares	147,111	164,998	147,111	164,998
Mayfair Capital Invest Mgmt Property Inc Trust	90,084	110,408	90,084	110,408
Shell PLC (EUR)	101,574	107,829	101,574	107,829

On 7 August 2013, the 'First 1,000 Days Foundation' was formed as a company limited by guarantee (registered in England and Wales 864816) with the sole member as The National Childbirth Trust. The Company has been dormant since incorporation. Investments in NCT (Maternity Sales) Limited, NCT Trading Limited, and NCT Publishing Limited represent the entire called up share capital of the companies, all of which are incorporated in England.

	Registered Company Number	**Reserves at 31 March 2023 £**	Reserves at 31 March 2022 £
Investment in Group undertakings:			
NCT (Maternity Sales) Limited	01291517	6	6
NCT Trading Limited	02488491	-	-
NCT Publishing Limited	03017833	2	2
First 1,000 Days Foundation	08641816	-	-

Managed investment funds

Group and Charity	**2023 31 March £'000**	2022 31 March £'000
Market value at 1 April 2022	3,702	3,331
Acquisitions	940	975
Disposals	(936)	(907)
Net investment gains/ (losses)	(148)	303
Market value at 31 March 2023	**3,558**	**3,702**
The Market value is represented by:		
Equities	2,883	3,095
Bonds	675	607
	3,558	3,702
Cash held by investment managers	149	87
Total Investment fund	**3,707**	**3,789**

The charity's actively managed investment fund is revalued annually at the balance sheet date. The increase or decrease in value as a result of this valuation is recognised as an unrealised investment gain or loss.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

13 Debtors

	Group		Charity	
	2023 31 March £'000	2022 31 March £'000	**2023 31 March £'000**	2022 31 March £'000
Amounts due from subsidiary undertakings	-	-	54	32
Prepayments and accrued income	401	519	400	519
Trade and branch debtors	541	523	519	466
Tax recoverable	4	7	4	7
Other debtors	2	5	2	5
	948	**1,054**	**979**	**1,029**

'Trade and branch debtors' includes £25,000 (2022: £nil) due in more than one year.

14 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	Group		Charity	
	2023 31 March £'000	2022 31 March £'000	**2023 31 March £'000**	2022 31 March £'000
Expense creditors	431	647	431	647
Social security and other taxes	95	101	95	101
Deferred income	2,663	2,272	2,643	2,230
Accruals	521	644	511	637
	3,710	**3,664**	**3,680**	**3,615**

	Movement in Deferred Income			
Group and Charity	**At 1 April 2022 £'000**	**Deferred £'000**	**Released £'000**	**At 31 March 2023 £'000**
NCT Courses	1,89	2,165	1,849	2,165
Programme Delivery	381	478	381	478
Total for the Charity	**2,230**	**2,643**	**2,230**	**2,643**
Commercial Fundraising	42	20	42	20
Total for the Group	**2,272**	**2,663**	**2,272**	**2,663**

Deferred income relates to courses and contracts for services which have not been delivered at the balance sheet date.

15 Restricted funds

The income funds of the charity and the group include restricted funds comprising the following unexpended balances of donations and grants held on trusts to be applied for specific purposes:

		Movements in Funds:			
Group and Charity	At 1 April 2022 £'000	**Incoming Resources £'000**	**Outgoing Resources £'000**	**Fund Transfer £'000**	**At 31 March 2023 £'000**
Grants and donations received by branches	117	166	117	-	166
Glasgow Service Delivery	-	184	184	-	-
Birth and Beyond Community Support	19	17	17	-	-
Newham Nurture	23	212	231	-	-
Big Give	-	6	27	-	2
LIDL	-	38	10		28
	159	**623**	**586**	**-**	**196**

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

Glasgow Service Delivery – Funding to enable us to provide a range of community and hospital breastfeeding peer support services across East Lothian and Glasgow

BBCS – Funding to enable us to continue to provide Birth and Beyond Community Support to mothers who are at risk of isolation and not accessing services across Peterborough and Lincolnshire and extended into Wisbech and Fenland.

Newham Nurture – Funding to enable us to coproduce a programme of support to pregnant women and new parents from low income, migrant and marginalised backgrounds experiencing financial hardship and disadvantage.

Big Give – Funding to enable us to give extra resource to our Infant Feeding Line so that more parents can be supported during peak times.

LIDL – Funding to enable us to support parents through the cost-of-living crisis by providing free-to-access services.

16 Unrestricted funds

Group	At 1 April 2022 £'000	Incoming Resources £'000	Outgoing Resources £'000	Unrealised Investment Gains/ (Losses) £'000	Transfer Between Funds £'000	At 31 March 2023 £'000
General Funds	3,680	10,628	11,070	(148)	32	**3,122**
Fixed Assets Fund	1,302	-	-	-	(32)	**1,270**
	4,982	**10,628**	**11,070**	**(148)**	**-**	**4,392**

Charity	At 1 April 2022 £'000	Incoming Resources £'000	Outgoing Resources £'000	Unrealised Investment Gains/ (Losses) £'000	Transfer Between Funds £'000	At 31 March 2023 £'000
General Funds	3,680	10,572	11,014	(148)	32	**3,122**
Fixed Assets Fund	1,302	-	-	-	(32)	**1,270**
	4,982	**10,572**	**11,014**	**(148)**	**-**	**4,392**

17 Analysis of net assets between funds

Fund balances at 31 March 2023 are represented by:

Group	Unrestricted Funds: General Funds £'000	Fixed Asset Fund £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	2023 Total £'000
Fixed assets	-	1,270	-	1,270
Investment assets	3,707	-	-	3,707
Net current assets / (liabilities)	(585)	-	196	(389)
Total net assets	**3,122**	**1,270**	**196**	**4,588**

Charity	Unrestricted Funds: General Funds £'000	Fixed Asset Fund £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	2023 Total £'000
Fixed assets	-	1,270	-	1,270
Investment assets	3,707	-	-	3,707
Net current assets / (liabilities)	(585)	-	196	(389)
Total net assets	**3,122**	**1,270**	**196**	**4,588**

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

18 Taxation

The National Childbirth Trust is a registered charity and therefore is not liable to income tax or corporation tax on income derived from its charitable activities, as it falls within the various exemptions available to registered charities. Each year subsidiary companies, which do not have charitable status, may Gift Aid any taxable profits to The National Childbirth Trust. The charity and group is not able to reclaim all VAT suffered on expenditure due to the partial exemption regulations.

19 Operating lease commitments

At 31 March 2023 the group's future minimum operating lease payments were as follows:

	Group		Charity	
	2023 31 March £'000	2022 31 March £'000	**2023 31 March £'000**	2022 31 March £'000
Expire				
Within one year	6	5	6	5
Between one and five years	-	-	-	-
	6	**5**	**6**	**5**

20 Financial Instruments

The financial statements include the following in respect of items held at fair value at the balance sheet date

	Group		Charity	
	2023 31 March £'000	2022 31 March £'000	**2023 31 March £'000**	2022 31 March £'000
Financial assets measured at fair value through profit and loss	3,558	3,702	3,558	3,702

21 Related party transactions

NCT Trading Limited is a subsidiary of The National Childbirth Trust and its shares are 100% controlled within the group.

During the year the National Childbirth Trust purchased services from NCT Trading of £7k (2022: £7k) on normal commercial terms. The National Childbirth Trust supplied services to NCT Trading of £44k (2022: £15k).

At the 31 March 2023 NCT Trading Limited owed The National Childbirth Trust £54k (2022: £32k).

No members of the Board of Trustees (2022: Nil) had a beneficial interest in contracts with the charity. No member of the board (2022: Nil) had a beneficial interest in a contract with a wholly owned subsidiary of The National Childbirth Trust during the period. At the date of signing the accounts, three (2022: one) trustees were also Directors of NCT Trading Limited.

There are no other related party transactions to disclose other than set out elsewhere in these accounts, including in Note 9.

Reference and administrative information

Charity Registrations:

The National Childbirth Trust ('NCT')
Company Registration: 2370573 (England & Wales)
Registered Charity: 801395
Charity Registered in Scotland: SC041592
VAT: GB 115 0789 24

Registered Office:

Brunel House
11 The Promenade
Clifton Down
Bristol
BS8 3NG

Board of Trustees who are also directors under Company Law at the date of this report are:

Charles Richardson (Honorary Treasurer)

Chi Evi-Parker

David Shanks

Elaine Lambe

Ema Ojiako (Honorary Secretary)

Franciane Husbands-Chevot

Peter Brown

Sarah Brown (Vice Chair)

Sherry Bevan (President)

Stephanie Maurel (Chair)

Susy Broekhuizen

Zoe Stewart-Field

Directors Group who are not directors for the purposes of Company Law at the date of this report are:

Angela McConville, Chief Executive

Michael Barnett, Director of Finance and Planning

Emma Cutler, Director of Impact and Engagement

Natasha Simpson, Director of People, Education and Inclusion

Tope Medupin, Director of Operations

Company Secretary

Michael Barnett

Auditor:

Moore Kingston Smith LLP
9 Appold Street
London
EC2A 2AP

Bankers:

Lloyds Bank plc.
39 Threadneedle Street
London
EC2R 8AU

Investment Advisors:

Rathbone Brothers PLC
8 Finsbury Circus
London
EC2M 7AZ

Solicitors:

Bates Wells & Braithwaite London LLP
10 Queen Street Place
London
EC4R 1BE

Kemp Little
Cheapside House
138 Cheapside
London
EC2V 6BJ

Subsidiaries:

First 1,000 Days Foundation (limited by guarantee, dormant)

NCT (Maternity Sales) Limited (dormant)

NCT Publishing Limited (dormant)

NCT Trading Limited

© NCT is a trading name of The National Childbirth Trust. Limited company registered in England and Wales: 2370573.
Registered address: Brunel House, 11 The Promenade, Clifton Down, Bristol BS8 3NG.
Registered charity in England and Wales: 801395 and Scotland: SC041592.

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THE NATIONAL CHILDBIRTH TRUST

England & Wales - Charity number 801395

Accounts

Annual report & accounts



nct 1ST 1,000 DAYS NEW PARENT SUPPORT

Year to 31 March 2022

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Trustees' report



About us

We are NCT – the national charity for pregnancy, birth and early parenthood.

Our vision

A world in which no parent is isolated, and all parents are supported to build a stronger society.

Our mission

To support parents through the first 1,000 days to have the best possible experience of pregnancy, birth, and early parenthood.

We'll achieve this through three interconnected aims:

1. Sharing evidence-based information to support parents to make informed decisions
2. Creating networks of vital support and life-long friendship
3. Campaigning on the issues that matter most through the early experiences of becoming a parent

Every year, we support thousands of parents across the UK and Channel Islands to feel more connected and confident during this major life transition.

We support parents through antenatal and postnatal courses, and thousands of free community-based activities and events, often run by our volunteers. We offer unbiased information and support to thousands of parents via our Infant Feeding Line, in homes, and in the community.

Through our website, we provide evidence-based information and resources on the issues that matter to parents. We also provide a range of funded peer support programmes for those facing specific challenges, such as social isolation or poor mental health. We work with local and national governments, charities, and corporate partners to consider opportunities to drive change at scale in areas of need for new parents.

We are a membership charity. By becoming an NCT member, you can help to fund vital, free services, including the Infant Feeding Line and our community support services. With your support, we'll campaign to create important changes for parents. Plus, you'll benefit from rewards, discounts, and exclusive events, including early access to our Nearly New Sales.

Join us today.



Our impact in 2021-22

6,400,000	visits to our website to access information and support
106,065	parents attended our community parent support groups
73,295	parents supported through NCT courses by 425 practitioners
68,303	expectant parents attended antenatal breastfeeding sessions
43,000	volunteer hours
8,239	parents called the NCT Infant Feeding Line
7,140	community events
5,088	parents attended NCT Baby Cafes and community breastfeeding drop-ins
4,513	parents accessed peer-to-peer support for breastfeeding
3,129	parents attended free antenatal classes and drop-in sessions
2,061	NCT members signed up to attend our live, online talks for new parents
1,823	parents supported through our peer-to-peer support programmes
248	baby first aid courses held for thousands of parents



Chair's welcome



Another very tough year is behind us, with Covid-19 placing a sharp spotlight on the challenges facing maternity provision in the UK.

The world has changed unrecognisably, and NCT is changing with it, because parents need our support to face the new challenges brought on by the pandemic, the rising cost of living, and inequities in the system that cares for them.

Across the country, important work is being delivered by our people and volunteers. We've coproduced services with women from low income, migrant, and marginalised communities, delivering crucial support for people when they need it most. We refreshed our Baby Café model to offer free, professional, non-judgemental community support around feeding concerns. All of this delivered by our strong team at NCT, who continually go the extra mile to see how they can support as many people, in as many ways as needed.

Our volunteers have continued to offer Baby Bundles - packs of toiletries, clothes and equipment given to families in need. They run free walking groups and low-cost baby and toddler groups, as well as Nearly New Sales, which sell preloved essentials and raise funds to support local NCT community groups. Seeing the Nearly New Sales start again has been one of my favourite moments of the past year, queues out the door at my new local branch and smiling parents leaving with full bags.

Vital programmes like this, and many more, wouldn't be possible without our volunteers, who give their time, energy, and unwavering support. We rely on their generosity and skills to be there for parents and we're never disappointed. Many of our staff and practitioners are also volunteers, as are our Trustees. A heartfelt thank you from me, and all the Trustees, to everyone who has gone the extra mile to support and empower parents.

Getting volunteer support right is crucial in delivering our vision for strong, more inclusive parent networks. As part of our continuous improvement drive, work is ongoing to review and redesign local structures and volunteer roles so they can achieve the greatest impact.

> As we respond to the changing needs of parents, we have spent time out there listening, to understand what excellence should look like for NCT. We have kicked off a new, five-year strategy that will update our vision, mission, and values. It's designed to meet the needs of parents in the ever-changing environment – we want to listen and shape what we do according to you.

The Trustees are yours and will continue to guide us all, as we navigate the impact of the pandemic and unlock our services.

The Board has had a small refresh - congratulations to Zoe Stewart-Field, elected as a new Trustee, and Sarah Brown and Elaine Lambe, who have been re-elected for a second term. I am so pleased to have their expertise alongside the other Trustees to continue to steer the charity towards our goals.

We remain focused on good governance and ensuring our policies reflect real world challenges. Thank you to Zoe Stewart-Field and Ema Ojiako who are leading our work to be a more inclusive charity, and to Chi Evi-Parker for the important progress on the future of our membership offer and platform.

A warm welcome also to our new Honorary Treasurer, Charles Richardson, who joined us in July 2022 after most recently being the CFO at Bupa UK. We value the experience and commitment you bring to our organisation. Sincere gratitude to outgoing Honorary Treasurer, Richard Smothers, who since 2016, has ensured that NCT remains sustainable and here for parents in the future. He has steered the charity through some very difficult times, and always done so with financial acumen, loyalty, and kindness. My thanks to Joanne Powell who also stepped down from the board this year. Joanne was elected at the 2019 AGM and bought valuable experience as a volunteer and practitioner to the board. I'd also like to thank again our former Chair, Jess Figueras, for her years of leadership with our Board of Trustees.

The pressures on our charity resources and income remain significant. We are working hard to protect our services and income, while focusing on cost control and prudent investment. As we re-establish certain roles and teams that were scaled back during the pandemic, we remain cautious in our financial approach and mindful of the cost-of-living crisis and the pressure on family incomes.

The world is changing, but we won't sit still. We are energised by the opportunities to support parents on the issues that matter most to them. Together, we can ensure the future is bright for every parent, baby, and family.

Stephanie Maurel

Chair of Trustees

President's welcome



Everyone at NCT believes in the power that a positive experience during pregnancy, birth, and early parenthood can have. Over the course of the year, I've seen first-hand the energy and commitment our practitioners, staff, volunteers, and students bring to the charity.

As President, I am not just here to represent our movement, but to be part of it. I've trained alongside dedicated practitioners, counselled new parents on feeding their baby, and volunteered with the amazing people who support families up and down the country. I've witnessed an incredible generosity of spirit and fierce passion for our cause.

Today's NCT community is built on more than 60 years of dedicated service. Since the 1950s we have supported parents to feel informed, confident, and connected. We have done this through needs-based services, pioneering thought leadership, important legislative change, and always listening to parents.

> Parenting today is unrecognisable from the 1950s. Our charity has changed too – and continues to evolve at pace. But one thing remains the same. NCT has always existed to answer a deep need from parents for support at a time of change in their lives.

Within a decade of our formation, more than 8,000 parents were attending our antenatal classes. Today, more than 200,000 parents access our services each year. We have more than 6.4 million annual visits to our website, supporting parents to make informed choices. There's no greater proof of how necessary and in demand our work is.

It's been another challenging year for parents, for NCT, and for our people. We've all had to adapt, and I've been so impressed with the team's resilience and the smooth transition to working online, remotely, and under immense pressure.

It's brilliant to see us unlocking in-person events – with parent and baby groups, feeding and changing tents, and more. I volunteered at my local branch's first Nearly New Sale in two years. Local parents were so happy to see us back. I know it's been tough, but we have some incredibly faithful volunteers who support our work in local communities. I'm grateful to every one of you.

The work that we do in communities has a huge impact on reducing isolation, lessening anxiety, and increasing wellbeing. Close to my heart is our infant feeding and breastfeeding support. No matter what your feeding choices are – breastfeeding, bottle, or a bit of both – feeding a baby can feel lonely and stressful at times, especially in the early days. Having access to someone who can listen and answer questions without judgement can make the world of difference.

This year we celebrated 21 years of our Infant Feeding Line, which answers new parents and their families' calls every day of the year. Through our #BigGive campaign we raised thousands of pounds to continue this important work, and we also hosted our Virtual BIG Latch On, bringing parents together to celebrate, feed their babies, and access peer support.

I feel very proud to be part of this charity that does such life-changing work. We have a proud history and an exciting opportunity to continue shaping positive experiences for parents. Thank you to everyone who makes this happen, now and in the future.

Sherry Bevan

NCT President

Welcome, Angela McConville, Chief Executive, NCT



The first 1,000 days of pregnancy, birth and early parenthood are crucial. 1,000 questions, 1,000 ups and downs, and 1,000 precious moments. 1,000 opportunities for a positive, safe and supported experience to lay the foundations for the future.

The benefits of positive experiences during this time extend far beyond the birth of a baby. It has a long-term effect on the lives of both parents and babies.

> Today's parents are nurturing the next generation, our future leaders, teachers and carers. So, accessing a high standard of care and support is not just an issue for parents – it's everyone's business.

We want the UK to be the safest place in the world to have a baby, but that's not the reality for everyone. Our maternity services are under extreme pressure. There are persistent and systemic variations in the quality of care, especially for Black, Asian, and ethnic minority women, and anyone suffering a socio-economic disadvantage. Critical staff shortages, a lack of continuity in care, and huge gaps in postnatal support are plaguing the system.

Numerous reports have amplified the urgent need for change. The publication of the Independent Review of Maternity Services at the Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust is a shocking example of how failing to investigate, learn, and improve the quality and safety of maternity services is having a devastating impact on families.

At the centre of this complex crisis lies a reoccurring issue - a failure to listen to women, to parents, and to put them at the centre of their own care.

As the UK's leading charity for parents, we have unprecedented insight into the views and needs of people who need and want access to safe, inclusive maternity services. It's our responsibility to champion the issues that matter to parents and to do so in a way that truly represents the diversity of our country.

We support parents to navigate the maternity system and to have the best possible experiences of pregnancy, birth, and early parenthood. We are committed to ensuring that parents' voices are heard, and we are working to change policy and practice to ensure that parents are put at the centre of their care before, during, and after birth, regardless of their background or circumstances.

Fighting for and delivering equitable maternity services also means being a fair and representative organisation ourselves and this year we have undertaken important work to ensure that our charity strives for the highest standards of equity, diversity, and inclusion.

This work is so important in the current environment. As we unlocked and re-opened services - from our NCT antenatal courses, Bump and Baby groups and Baby Cafes, to home visits for 1:1 feeding support - we took the opportunity to do so with renewed freshness, quality, accessibility, safety, and inclusion. Sometimes in person, sometimes in blended formats, but always with a focus on parents' needs.

Our NCT Practitioners guide new parents through a life-changing journey, during the first 1,000 days of pregnancy into parenthood. This is vital work. It also provides vital income that enables our charity to offer free support to those who need it most. We couldn't do our work without them.

During the pandemic, parents united in a loud call for community, care, and connection. As that call was answered, I am proud to have witnessed the greatest levels of hope, inspiration, and support. Our Walk and Talk groups are a shining example, springing up where NCT had no historic presence, with hundreds of new volunteers registering. Last year more than 50,000 parents joined a walking group, showing how volunteering and community organising can change lives.

There's now evidence about vulnerability to Covid-19 during pregnancy. But as restrictions were lifted before the vaccine roll out was underway, many parents felt at risk and unsure of what to do. We worked with Public Health England and others to share safety information about the Covid-19 vaccine to help parents make informed choices. In every aspect of our work, ensuring no-one feels pressured or judged about their choices is our top priority. Parents need our support, information, advocacy, and community.

Our vision is for a world where no parent is isolated, which is why I am so proud of our community spirit. I can only extend my deepest gratitude to all our people, our staff, practitioners, volunteers, students, members, donors, sponsors and partners – you have shown great kindness and compassion, which is the cornerstone of our NCT movement. I'd also like to thank the public commissioners and government departments who provide funding and resources that allow us to support parents every day.

There are 1,000 ways we can make a difference to a parent's journey from pregnancy through to raising a child. Our focus is on ensuring parents are safe, connected, and confident during this most critical, life-changing time. Properly funded, equitable and safe services with a focus on care must be the priority of policy makers. But we can all play a part.

Maybe you'll become a member or volunteer with us, maybe you'll share our message or nudge a friend in the direction of one of our services. Maybe you'll cook a meal for a new parent, or just ask, are you ok? Whatever you choose to do, I offer my thanks, 1,000 times over.

Angela McConville

Chief Executive


nct
Supporting parents across the UK
Antenatal & postnatal courses and drop-ins
Be part of something
Be part of something


nct Preston, Fylde and District
We need volunteers


COLOURS
Yellow
Green
Purple


nct
1ST 1,000 DAYS

The year in review: recovery and renewal

The pandemic had a profound impact on our charity, our people, our services, and the parents we support. Early on we implemented a Recovery and Renewal Strategy, designed to ensure we could manage the crisis, recover effectively, and build towards the future.

In 2021-22, as the far-reaching impact of Covid-19 continued, this strategy gave our work ongoing focus and clarity. We supported parents across three strategic priorities:

1. To be the UK's most trusted antenatal education and infant feeding support charity
2. To grow our reputation as the UK's most trusted provider of digital support for pregnancy, birth, and early parenthood
3. To deliver a safe unlock plan to reintroduce in-person events and enable our inclusive parent communities to flourish safely and with big impact.

Recovery

The year was characterised by decisions of how and when to unlock our in-person events, support, and services. We built an unlock governance team to lead our rapid response as legislation and guidance changed, repeatedly and often with little notice. Its aim was to balance the sustainability of 'unlocking', while making sure we could respond quickly to any change in guidance or outbreaks of Covid-19.

Safety for parents and for our people, students, volunteers, and practitioners remained our top priority. We always followed the latest guidance and legislation and kept our Safe Operating Procedures under constant review, but with care and empathy for those who were affected.

For parents, the pandemic brought many challenges and great uncertainty. It also galvanised our community around the need support each other.



> No part of our charity's work was left untouched by the impact of the pandemic. Unlocking our services required careful focus and investment, balancing the need to reinstate in-person activities and events with the ongoing uncertainty that our people and parents were facing.

Angela McConville, Chief Executive, NCT

Unlock timeline

Winter – Spring 2021

UK faces toughest restrictions. Courses and support groups remain online. 91% of parents rated our antenatal services during the pandemic as 'good' or 'excellent'.





Late Spring 2021

Restrictions ease.

Some courses back in person, or in blended formats, providing much needed connection at a time of crisis.

Baby Cafes and home visits for 1:1 feeding support unlocked.

Peer-to-peer support for breastfeeding back in hospital wards.

Summer 2021

We support our volunteers to re-open indoor parent support groups, like Bumps and Babies.

Walk & Talks continue, with outside meetings the preferred option for many parents.

Student practitioners return to in-person classes, run by NCT Tutors.





Autumn 2021

Indoor fundraising events run by volunteers, including Nearly New Sales, return.

Case study
Sharing information on the Covid-19 vaccine

We believe every parent deserves to be able to make their own informed choices and to seek comfort and guidance to make this happen. But at the height of the pandemic, Public Health England estimates suggested that many had not had the jab, and the number of mums-to-be in hospital was rising.



"Understandably parents had questions and hesitations about vaccinations, given the changing circumstances and advice. They needed to be able to trust the information and access support to make informed decisions." Katie Toon, Parent Content and Social Media Manager, NCT.

We worked with Public Health England, the NHS and the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists to provide parents with information about vaccine safety.

With a focus on clear, evidence-based content, we brought together a panel of experts in June 2021 to discuss vaccine safety for those who were pregnant or breastfeeding. The panel included:



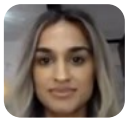
Professor Jacqueline Dunkley-Bent, Chief Midwifery Officer in England



Dr Pat O'Brien, Vice President, Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists



Dr Gayatri Amirthalingam, Consultant Medical Epidemiologist, Immunisation, and Countermeasures Division, Public Health England



Dr Pavan Minhas, a registrar in obstetrics and gynaecology and Instagram influencer.

- **80,000** people reached on social media
- **45,000** views of our evidenced-based content on our website
- **14,000** NCT Members received vaccine information.


nct
Volunteer

Renewal – 2023 and beyond

As we look to the future, we're investing in projects with a focus on impact, inclusion, and income.

Strengthening volunteer communities

We want to make volunteering easier, more inclusive and more rewarding, to help us deliver our vision of strong, inclusive parent networks that boost wellbeing through friendly, non-judgmental support. We have facilitated formation of an action team of volunteers and NCT people, who have been tasked with analysing, researching, planning, and making recommendations for change.

Becoming an open, diverse charity with inclusive services and support

We have accelerated and embedded our work on equity, diversity, and inclusion. We are committed to being an anti-racist, anti-discriminatory charity. We have used our platform and influence to amplify calls for social action and justice in maternity services for Black, Asian and ethnic minority women and for those experiencing disadvantage. We have a strong focus on wellbeing and engagement to ensure our workplace and community supports happy, healthy individuals.

Supporting all parents to have a positive experience of feeding their babies

We'll be redesigning the future of our Infant Feeding Line, co-creating with parents to understand how we can best meet their needs and collaborating with our NCT Breastfeeding Counsellors and people from across the charity to design a modern, caring, and inclusive service for parents.

Building our campaigning and influencing focus

We will strengthen our campaigning and influencing work with a focus on the issues that matter to parents, from better postnatal support to improving NHS maternity services for everyone.

Sustaining and growing our income so we can expand our support for parents

We will strengthen our NCT membership proposition. We will review how we price and package our courses and look at how we support and grow our community of practitioners.

Building our donor community

We will continue to challenge ourselves to evolve our fundraising practices so that we offer the best possible experience for families, donors, and our NCT community. In consultation with our Trustees, we will generate an ambitious development strategy that excites existing supporters and inspires new donor engagement with our charity mission.



A review of our services

Trusted support through pregnancy, birth, and early parenthood

We're here for parents as they navigate pregnancy, birth, and early parenthood. We help people build knowledge, skills, and networks of support to assist a smooth transition to parenthood, where they feel practically and emotionally prepared for what's to come.

Most people know us for our signature NCT Antenatal courses, but our work extends beyond this. We run refresher courses for second time parents and NCT Doulas support parents during birth. We're also here to help parents once their babies arrive. We have courses to help parents adjust and grow in confidence, we offer Baby First Aid and sessions on how to introduce babies to solid food. Every year thousands of people use our free-to-access services, like the Infant Feeding Line, community infant feeding services, and mental health support.

"We are not here to promote one approach over another, or to provide clinical advice or support, but to share evidence-based information, and support parents to find and access the services they need. We aim to help parents develop the skills, confidence, and support networks for navigating their own personal journey – whatever type of pregnancy, birth, feeding, or caring decisions they make."

NCT Antenatal

Our antenatal classes are an important entry point for parents to discover the support we can offer during the first 1,000 days of pregnancy, birth, and early parenthood. We want the UK to be the safest place in the world to have a baby, and a big part of that is giving parents the information and tools they need to navigate the maternity system and make informed choices about their care.

We lead the field in parenting education. Every NCT Antenatal course leader is university trained, licensed, and professionally developed to deliver a gold-standard antenatal course packed with the latest, unbiased, and trusted information, practical skills, and in-depth local knowledge and signposting.

But that's not all. Our courses grow networks, help people discover and learn with other local parents, and make vital connections that will form the basis of a parent's new community.

We ask every participant for their feedback on the experience they've had on our courses, because we believe there's always room for improvement. Here's what parents told us during 2021, a year where confidence, community and connection was more important than ever:

90% of parents felt part of a supportive group

94% will stay in touch with others from their course

94% are still in touch after they have had their baby

80% of parents felt we helped them identify trusted information after their baby was born

84% said their course helped them to consider information and what it means to them

Over 90% of parents said they had been given tools and strategies to cope with labour, birth, and early parenting

> The course gave us a fantastic insight into parenthood and some highly appreciated advice given. It was nice to explore the birth process with other parents of similar experience. Facilitators are very well trained and experienced. They developed positive relationships with the group and made everyone feel comfortable.

Vikesh, Solihull

> The course was so engaging and informative. I feel confident to go through labour, make the right decisions in the hospital, happier in my skin and the changes to my pregnant body and what to expect when baby arrives, breastfeeding etc. Everything has been covered! Our course leader has been so enthusiastic and supportive and really brought the group together with her sessions. We feel we have made a lovely connection with the group.

Rainna, Dover

> The NCT course was excellent and has been a real highlight of my third trimester! Our trainer, Emilie, was super knowledgeable, reassuring and attentive. She took the time to answer all the questions we had and went above and beyond by sending us additional resources through our WhatsApp group. The overall experience was fantastic, and we would highly recommend the sessions to expecting parents.

Harmeet, Redditch

Breastfeeding, infant feeding and postnatal support

We believe that feeding is a personal decision – it may be dependent on circumstances, the information and support received, challenges faced, and the social and cultural context.

While most women in the UK plan to breastfeed, a significant number use formula milk from the start, and most parents introduce formula milk at some point. Too often we hear that mothers have had a difficult feeding experience or haven't been able to get the support they need. This can have a significant, negative impact on their experiences of early parenthood and their emotional wellbeing, as well as on feeding outcomes.

NCT's infant feeding services are built around a parent-centred approach. This means understanding and respecting each parent's unique circumstances and supporting them to make the decisions that are right for them. Our services are inclusive and support all feeding types.

A key priority for us is to support all parents to have a positive experience of feeding their babies.

95% of parents said their infant feeding sessions helped develop strategies and practical skills to use when feeding their baby

96% of parents said they would consider contacting an NCT Breastfeeding Counsellor if they needed to





Case study
21 years of the Infant Feeding Line

The Infant Feeding Line is a free telephone line available to all parents who have a question or worry on feeding their baby. The line supports over 8,000 calls per year and is open seven days a week, 365 days a year from 8am to midnight.

It takes time to feel confident with feeding and the line is a huge support to parents who call seeking reassurance and reliable information on all forms of feeding.

Whilst parents are our typical caller into the line, NCT also support health care professionals who may be seeking further information. There may be several reasons that someone decides to call the NCT Infant Feeding Line but queries regarding positioning and attachment, expressing, introducing/using formula, and general reassurance are the most common.

NCT celebrated 21 years of the Infant Feeding Line. We launched the Big Give Women's Match Fund on International Women's Day, raising over £25,200. Thank you to everyone who generously donated to this online appeal. Your support helped fund extra NCT Breastfeeding Counsellors to quickly respond to parents calling the line during high-demand periods.



> Thank you SO much for picking up the phone this evening. I was worrying myself sick and I'm now feeling hugely reassured.

Anon, parent



> I've worked on the Infant Feeding Line since it first started in 2001. I love being there for parents, to give them a listening ear at a precious time and make a difference.

Paula Martin,
NCT Breastfeeding Counsellor



> The line offers mothers immediate access to feeding support and I'm delighted to be part of the team that delivers this vital service.

Kate MacPherson,
NCT Breastfeeding Counsellor



Case study
Baby Café – Improving access to feeding support in the community

NCT Baby Cafés are free drop-in events run by an NCT Breastfeeding Counsellor to support parents with feeding their baby. Parents get reliable information whether getting ready to breastfeed, establishing breastfeeding, continuing breastfeeding, expressing, mixed feeding, formula feeding, introducing solids, or stopping breastfeeding.

This important service is growing in popularity, so this year we decided to give our Baby Cafés a refresh, with emphasis on the provision of accessible, inclusive, high quality, professional support. With a new brand and logo, a toolkit, and a suite of inclusive social media resources, it is now easier and more affordable for our volunteers and practitioners to operate a Baby Café in their local community.

One of the first to use the new identity and support materials was NCT Doncaster, who launched their Baby Café alongside their established Bumps and Babies group in November. They have supported 104 local parents since opening.

> There was little support in the area, so I decided to fill the gap. I trained with NCT and started facilitating antenatal courses and Baby Café so that other parents had somewhere to go for a cuppa, a chat, a cry and somewhere to get the support they need with feeding their babies.

Hayley McGovern, NCT Breastfeeding Counsellor, Doncaster



NCT Doncaster Baby Café and volunteers

Case study
Breastfeeding community support in Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland has the lowest breastfeeding rates across the UK. In 2019, a passionate group of local NCT Practitioners set up a breastfeeding support group – ABC – All Breastfeeding Counts – to offer social support to normalise breastfeeding.

Recognising the value and need of breastfeeding support, the Public Health Agency in Northern Ireland funded weekly drop-ins and antenatal breastfeeding workshops. NCT Breastfeeding Counsellors also offered one-to-one support for any mother who needs it and together they have reached around 200 families.



The local NCT team also set up BoobCast – a podcast that covers topics from low milk supply to breastfeeding beyond 12 months. To listen, search "NCT NI presents: Boobcast" on your podcast platform.

> It has saved our breastfeeding journey; wonderful skilled support and reassurance; great company; a chance to connect with other mothers and hear their breastfeeding stories; a safe space to talk, to cry, to be heard and not judged, a place to find breastfeeding solutions to breastfeeding problems.

ABC parent

Supporting socially isolated parents

We're there for parents during the first 1,000 days - from pregnancy until a child turns two. This can be a tough time for parents – full of ups and downs – and it can be isolating and lonely. Our locally designed and led services are there to support parents whether they're suffering poor mental health or struggling to navigate an unfamiliar maternity system. NCT brings together local people who have lived through similar experiences and trains them up to support those in need.

Case study
Newham Nurture – The power of shared experience

Newham Nurture is a community partnership supporting pregnant women and new mums from low income, migrant, and marginalised communities in East London. The project is delivered in partnership with NCT, Alternatives Trust, The Magpie Project and Compost London.

All its services have been cocreated with a steering group of 11 local mums with experience of the hardships, challenges, and barriers migrant and marginalised groups face within maternity services.

These women have given nearly 200 hours of their time to the project, offering their thoughts, experiences, and voices to shape the services that Newham Nurture offer. Their input ensures that the service is accessible, inclusive, relevant and impactful, and crucially, that it meets the needs of those involved.

Blessing, one of our steering group members said: "*It's like conception and coming to life, giving birth. We put ideas together with other steering group members, and now we're seeing it brought to life: it's amazing to be part of something like that. Where we say something, and our ideas are taken into consideration. It makes a lot of sense to ask mums in order to help other mums. This is the first time we've been consulted and heard, and action has been taken based on what we said.*"

Blessing went on to train as a NCT Peer Supporter, volunteering at the project and is now the project's Referral Coordinator, the first point of call for women referred into the service.

> "I want to do what I can – for them to feel better, listened to. Having been in the situation myself I'm in a better position to understand and know how to help. I can't believe it, to be in this position means I'm being listened to, and for me personally it feels like I'm finally picking up all my pieces."



Blessing, NCT Referral Coordinator and Peer Supporter speaking to women in Newham


nct




nct
Certificate of Participation
Zhaneta Xholi
Record of Achievement



Case study
Nadia's story – Five months pregnant and anxious

Nadia* first joined Parents in Mind when she was approximately five months pregnant, feeling anxious and overwhelmed.

She had postnatal anxiety after her first baby and she was keen to be proactive and access timely mental health support at this point in her pregnancy, to avoid further deterioration.

Nadia didn't feel like she could talk to any family or friends about her mental health, and had also only recently moved to the area, so was unfamiliar with her GP and Health Visitor, and didn't feel able to open up to them.

Due to her anxiety, Nadia was finding social interaction with others difficult, and would therefore find face-to-face support from other parents very challenging. Her contact at Parents in Mind explained that there were several remote support options available to her, and at this point she expressed interest in the Pregnancy WhatsApp group. Since then, she has been an extremely active participant in this group, which she has been finding beneficial.

"Having people (who have experienced similar things) to speak to in a non-judgemental space is so helpful… The volunteers are very validating, even if it doesn't always take away the worries, it helps me feel less alone. Just having that link to a group of mums who are experiencing similar things to myself has been really reassuring and makes me feel less isolated."

She has recently given birth to her baby and continues to engage with the pregnancy group (we invite parents to stay in this group up until three months postnatally, should they choose to), and is hoping to soon transition to accessing our face-to-face group in her local area.

"Thank you so much, as always, these messages in this group have really uplifted me and helped me to consider ways to reframe my thinking and see things in a more positive light. You make such a difference to me."

*name changed

Growing support for parents with mental health issues

It is common for new parents to experience mild to moderate mental health issues. Parents in Mind is a peer-to-peer support service, run by NCT volunteers who have experienced mental health issues and are trained to support others through active-listening and social support. This year we expanded our Parents in Mind services in the Northwest, Peterborough, East Sussex and London, offering one-to-one conversations, group discussions, and digital support, and helping parents to find and access the services they need.

Case study

John's struggle with his mental health

John* grew up in care and has suffered mental health difficulties since childhood. Now a father of three, with his youngest just nine months old, he was feeling overwhelmed by the level of responsibility fatherhood presents, and he felt he had lost his identity. He felt a huge sense of guilt and selfishness at verbalising a desire to spend time alone and away from his responsibilities.

He was referred to Parents in Mind by his social worker from the local authority Early Help team. He joined the weekly WhatsApp support and had a buddy for 1-1 phone chats. After a successful run of WhatsApp support, John has – despite his initial anxiety – joined a face-to-face Walk & Talk.

He continues to be actively engaged and is keen to join a sponsored climb and awareness raising activity the volunteers have planned for later in the year.

"The lads (dads) always take an interest in how we have been feeling and encourage us to express how we deal with things, what could we have done differently, and they share their experiences too, making us feel that we aren't the only ones going through these types of problems. These people are amazing, and I see a difference in myself. And when you're feeling better, it reflects on the people around you too."

*name changed



Supporting new and expectant dads with their mental health

It's been estimated that around one in ten fathers are depressed in the first year after birth. Through our Parents in Mind project, we're proud to pilot a new support service for dads and partners in St Helens, working in partnership with Dad Matters, Fathers Reaching Out, and Dad Pad.

As part of this pilot the local team created a podcast called 'Being Dad' to normalise the challenges fatherhood presents and encourage men to talk openly about their experiences and wellbeing.



NCT Practitioners of the future

We guide parents through the most life-changing journey of their lives from pregnancy into parenthood, believing that everyone can, and should, feel supported in becoming a parent. Our NCT Practitioners, across all specialisms, play a crucial role in this. That's why we take their education very seriously.

Our education courses are led by experienced NCT Tutors. They provide exceptional teaching and support for students to ensure they are trained to the highest standards and draw on the latest evidence around birth, feeding, and early parenting, as well as from the field of adult education. Our approach develops knowledgeable, skilled, adaptable, self-aware, inclusive, and critically reflective NCT Practitioners, able to meet the needs of all parents – whoever they are and whatever their story or circumstances.

"The tutors have made a massive impact on my life." NCT student

For another year, both students and tutors rose to the challenge of learning and teaching in an ever-changing environment. We slowly reintroduced in-person teaching, taking into account government and university guidelines, as well as NCT's duty of care for all students and staff. We can now celebrate the hard work of our students who achieved their goal of becoming NCT Practitioners through an extraordinarily challenging time.

In 2021 to 2022, 82 students completed practitioner qualifications to support parents:

35 Antenatal Practitioners

32 Breastfeeding Counsellors

22 Postnatal Practitioners

15 Doulas

9 Yoga for pregnancy teachers

4 Mother and baby yoga teachers

10 Baby massage teachers

In addition, **124** students continued or started their training during this year

In July, NCT Education received a glowing report from our External Examiner, Amy Brown, Professor of Public Health at Swansea University:

> …an excellent example of how students can be prepared for working life. All the modules and assignments build to equip students to deliver perinatal education and support. It is a fantastic course delivering up to date subjects…students are clearly supported through their learning and helped to become the best practitioners they can be.



Launch of new NCT Antenatal Practitioner training

September 2021 saw the launch of our new NCT Perinatal Education and Practice Certificate in Higher Education – our new training to become an NCT Antenatal Practitioner.

The new course includes a strong in-practice element, enabling students to work directly with parents alongside qualified NCT Practitioners. This in-practice element is designed to link theory to practice and help learning come to life. To make this happen we recruited a team of NCT Practitioners with a wealth of professional and lived experience to work with our students and support them into practice.

The course emphasises reflective practice, informed decision making, the exploration of systemic and personal biases, the analysis of issues, and the use of research-based evidence, as well as a new unit on Anti-Discriminatory practice.

We continue to partner with the University of Worcester to deliver the only university accredited qualifications in parenting education. The University's approach to education, which is "built on the principle of inclusion", and "actively promote(s) an inclusive learning environment by fostering positive relationships...celebrating diversity and challenging discrimination" is one we share, alongside a shared focus on evidence-based practice and widening participation.



> Our students have such energy, enthusiasm, and commitment. We cannot wait to see them in practice.

Cathy Finlay,
Head of Education

> I had no idea I would meet so many inspiring tutors and peers, delve so deeply into the issues surrounding birth and becoming a parent, and how much self-awareness was necessary for me to move forward on both a personal and professional level.

Newly qualified NCT Practitioner

Refreshed training to support parents postnatally

We have also developed a new training pathway for NCT Practitioners who wanted to provide one-to-one infant feeding and postnatal support, and in September we piloted this training with a small cohort of new students.

This pathway trains practitioners to support parents with infant feeding and a range of changes and challenges they might experience in the early days. Alongside infant feeding counselling knowledge and skills, the pathway enhances knowledge of the transition to parenthood and understanding the needs of the new baby.

This training is now called NCT Breastfeeding and Perinatal Support and will launch with a full cohort of new students in September 2022. It has a flexible structure to enable both existing practitioners and those training with NCT for the first time to develop their skills and knowledge.

> …the tutorials really allow us to explore our thoughts/ feelings on some of the topics and think about what parents need most from the information that we have access to, so that we can support parents in a parent-centred way.

NCT student

> I've really enjoyed the sessions as the group is given time to explore issues that can create some deep discussions allowing us to consider things from different perspectives.

NCT student



Engaging in experiential teaching and learning

> The support available to newly qualified practitioners from NCT has been invaluable to feel equipped to work with parents and it feels incredibly rewarding to be supporting new parents and making a difference in their birth and parenting journeys. I'm now motivated to continue working towards diversity, equality, inclusion, and birth rights for all parents.

Newly qualified NCT Practitioner
(Antenatal, Postnatal and Doula)



Our qualifying NCT students celebrate their graduation at Worcester Cathedral

Apply now to become an NCT Practitioner

NCT volunteers: boosting parent wellbeing

Without volunteers who give their time to NCT, we wouldn't be able to support parents so extensively in local communities. Our network of 4,482 volunteers arranged events that were attended by over a hundred thousand parents this year. Volunteers might help run a local nappy library, welcome parents to a group, or help organise a fundraiser – whoever they are and wherever they live, they're all committed to being there for parents.

We have a vision for volunteering that supports and builds strong, inclusive parent networks across the country. To make this a reality, we've been making it easier for local volunteers to sustain and deliver safe and quality support for parents. We've been improving the support, guidance, and community we offer volunteers. And we're challenging ourselves to remove complexity and make our support more accessible and inclusive at every opportunity.

Case study
Bumps and babies

A thriving return for community volunteering

In 2020 we had to pause all our indoor community events in response to the pandemic, but June 2021 saw their much-anticipated return.

Our incredible volunteers took the extra Covid-19 safety measures in their stride to make sure Bumps & Babies groups, which bring local parents together to share their experiences, could reopen safely. Never were the groups and the support that they offer more needed. Since reopening, our volunteers have helped support nearly 40,000 parents at Bumps & Babies groups.

> ***"As a first-time mum it's given me experiences of being a part of a community. It's made my little bubble bigger. Being so poorly during pregnancy and with lockdowns it made me so isolated, but thanks to this group I feel like I am a part of things again. My little one is making friends and so am I."***
>
> Rebecca, Shropshire

> ***"I had anxiety before giving birth, and then postnatal depression. A lot of this stemmed from high standards I held myself to from social media about how having a baby was "supposed" to be. Meeting other parents helped me to realise that as long as your baby is growing and loved, that's all that matters."***
>
> Dot, Bradford

Case study
Walk & Talks

Walking has proven mental health benefits, as does companionship and talking about our experiences. So, when NCT Walk & Talks sprung up in the height of the pandemic, they offered a lifeline to parents who were isolated by strict social distancing rules. These free walks – made possible by the Government's exemption for charity support groups – offered a chance to connect with other local parents in a safe environment and they are still going strong in many areas. In our survey, 95% of parents who attended a Walk & Talk group said they felt less isolated and that their mood improved.

"I joined the NCT Walk & Talks back in 2020. Wow what a life saver they were. Having a baby during lockdown in a town you hadn't lived in for that long was isolating and a dramatic change. A whirl wind later I am now the NCT Branch Coordinator. The friends I have made have been a lifeline. Being a volunteer has saved my mental health ten-fold and without the group's people and support I'm not sure what I'd do.

"I work with an incredible team of peers with one goal in mind - support our community. For someone with social anxiety if I randomly start chatting to you in a coffee shop or event, promoting our groups – this takes so much but just shows how much these groups mean to me and how proud I am to say, ' I do this to help everyone and our community'."

Sammi, NCT Branch Coordinator, Skipton

Community fundraising

Volunteers are the driving force behind NCT community fundraising. From organising Baby First Aid classes, to running a marathon or holding a Nearly New Sale. Our community fundraisers raise vital funds that we invest back into local community support, our wider charity work, and our vital national services, like the Infant Feeding Line.

Volunteers use our fundraising guides and track fundraising through a branch accounting system that lets them produce accurate and up-to-date accounts.



"Thank you so much to all the NCT volunteers who give their time to fundraise through local events and apply for grants to support local activities. Your contribution makes a real difference."

Catherine Bartlett,
Head of Volunteering, NCT



40,664 parents have attended our Walk & Talk groups

Case study
Nearly New Sales return

Our Nearly New Sales offer parents the opportunity to access affordable, nearly new clothes and essentials, and support our charity at the same time. We reopened sales in Autumn 2021, supported by a new improved toolkit for volunteers and safety guidance for sellers and buyers to help keep everyone safe. With many charity shops closed or limiting stock, the return of this service helped many parents in need.

> I'm so grateful to the volunteers who run these sales. We've been putting off buying any winter clothes for my son as we don't have enough money, but we got a big warm jumpsuit today that he can wear home. I even found a little toy for him.

Anon Dad



> Giving parents an opportunity to buy and sell second hand is important. It helps parents save money and is much better for the environment.

Nanna Gudmundsdottir,
NCT Medway NNS Coordinator








Scout's Gold Award
SCOUTS
nct 1ST 1,000 DAYS NEW PARENT SUPPORT
Volunteer

Case study
National partnership with Baby First Aid

We are pleased to have a new partnership with Mini First Aid – UK's leading provider of paediatric first aid education – to deliver lifesaving first aid training to parents across the country.

The classes are organised by local NCT volunteers and delivered by Mini First Aid. They cover the basics of life saving first aid and initial first aid responses, including CPR, choking, bumps, burns, breaks, bleeding, febrile seizures, and Meningitis awareness. Parents can either attend a local in-person class or attend online from their own homes.

Nataline, a new parent who attended a course in Shropshire, said:

"The baby first aid class was amazing! So informative, and I feel so much more confident now should I find myself in a situation with my baby where first aid is required. I would like to add that the class was made even better as babies were welcome – hugely appreciated."



Find out more about volunteer opportunities at NCT



Equity, diversity, and inclusion

NCT: A place where everyone belongs

Two years ago, we set out to reinvigorate our approach to equity, diversity and inclusion. Our aim is to ensure the wellbeing of our people and our community is at the forefront of everything we do – across our courses, training, and services.

We developed a comprehensive plan and created an EDI Steering Group, chaired by Trustee, Zoe Stewart-Field, to lead our progress, bringing together people from across our community.

We've taken immediate action to create a fairer and more diverse organisation:

- We diversified our Board and governance committees
- We created a new leadership role, Director of People, Education and Inclusion, to play a vital role in the ongoing transformation of our charity
- We developed our diversity network groups
- We undertook our first all-community diversity survey, to inform our future workforce and education goals
- We launched a new anti-discriminatory practice unit within our university-accredited higher education for NCT Practitioners
- We worked with brap, a charity transforming the way organisations think about equality, to engage our Board, senior leaders and managers in anti-racism training and development.

We believe in continual improvement so this work will be ongoing. We are committed to challenging ourselves to be better and go further in this most important work.

New anti-discriminatory approach embedded in our education programmes

We are committed to equity, diversity, and inclusion across all our courses and education programmes. We've been working with brap, our inclusion advisor and learning partner, on our new education model and the way our practitioners are trained.

In the new NCT Perinatal Education and Practice Certificate in Higher Education, we ensure that NCT students develop strong skills in the reflective, inclusive, and anti-discriminatory approach needed to meet the needs of all parent groups across all communities.

We adjusted the language and emphasis we use throughout the programme and co-developed an Anti-Discriminatory Practice Unit for all our students. Training for NCT Tutors and placement Practitioners working with students was also introduced to ensure a cohesive, connected approach.

Next steps are to conduct research with the University of Worcester to explore the experiences of NCT students from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds, and their sense of belonging, connection, and self-efficacy within the community of NCT practice. This will help evaluate to what extent the anti-discriminatory practice unit is helping affect change; inform both future planning and delivery of training, and ongoing strategic work on diversity and inclusion.



> We need to face into the reality that inequality, discrimination and racism are systemic in our society. We have a responsibility to our people and to parents to examine our own culture, practices, and policies. We will continue to highlight inequalities and to work with others to bring about better experiences and more equitable outcomes within maternity care.

Trustee, Ema Ojiako

Strengthening our quality and feedback processes for our services

We're proud to work with passionate, committed and skilled practitioners, who care deeply about their work. As part of our regular review processes, some practitioners raised concerns about the risks of bias and discrimination in our approach to course feedback and quality, concerns we took incredibly seriously.

In April 2021 we commissioned an extensive review into the issues that had been raised, which involved:

- In-depth listening exercises, where our directors spoke with practitioners and the Practitioner Representative Body to understand their experiences and hear suggestions for change
- A review of our approach across four key areas identified as important: parent feedback, assessment, quality support, and complaints
- Working closely with our inclusion and learning partner, brap, to identify what we need to do to mitigate the risk of bias in feedback and complaints, including better monitoring of data and greater scrutiny across quality support processes
- Working with the ISOS Partnership to learn from practice across comparable and peer organisations, working with self-employed practitioners, employees, and volunteers to deliver support and education.

We heard wholehearted agreement across our NCT community that, as a charity, we need to ask parents about their experiences of our services. While the majority of parents rate the quality of our services as extremely good, we learnt from our internal review that we needed to change some of our processes to ensure that our feedback and quality work felt safe, fair, and effective for everyone.

As a result, we supported everyone involved with a programme of learning and development and made a range of specific changes to our feedback and quality processes.

We refreshed our course evaluation surveys and revised our quality support policy to ensure it is transparent about how we gather and use feedback and clearly sets out the process for quality support.

We now have more checks and balances for bias to ensure a fair, safe, and effective approach. We encourage practitioners to be proactive in gathering parent feedback directly and, where possible, resolving any issues during the course. We carefully review all parent feedback to ensure it is constructive and actionable, alongside regular peer review of our decisions.

As part of our continuous improvement drive, we have also begun work on important measures that will take longer to implement - moderating assessments, tracking practitioner and parent data to monitor for bias, and exploring how to build more regular peer-to-peer support into learning and development.

The future of volunteering – inclusive parent networks

As part of our project looking at the future of volunteering at NCT, we have been focused on how we can make volunteering easy, simple, inclusive and open to everyone. We have worked on a codesigned process to create new volunteering roles and structures that makes it much easier for volunteers to take on roles and to leave. We're now ready to start testing this new structure to assess its desirability, feasibility, and viability. We have also worked to make our resources more accessible - for example, to ensure that we are digitally inclusive, all our video guides now include captions and, as well as email, we now offer support for volunteers by phone.









Reaching more parents through digital support

Trusted content to support informed decision-making

More than 6 million people accessed our website last year, a clear demonstration of the increasing reliance on the internet and social media to inform decisions. Being able to access quick, clear and unbiased information is a crucial part of feeling supported and informed as a parent.

Our aim is to grow our reputation as the UK's most trusted provider of digital support for pregnancy, birth, and early parenthood by enhancing our digital content and using our reach and influence to advocate for parents online.

Digital platform to enhance antenatal education



This year we launched Parent Hub, a new digital information and resource platform exclusively for parents attending NCT Antenatal courses. Parent Hub features curated content from evidence-based articles, as well as videos and information sheets.

Parent Hub exists to support parents from the start of their NCT antenatal journey and help bridge the gap until their course begins, with access continuing until their baby is six months old. We also share safety guidance with parents, so they feel informed and prepared before their babies are born.

- 84% of parents accessing Parent Hub found it useful or very useful - with high value being placed on its simplicity and accessibility, well categorised information, and concise, informative content.

Live online talks to support new parents

As part of our ongoing work to improve our NCT membership offer, we have created a series of weekly live online talks for new parents, to support them during the first weeks with their new baby. The talks were developed in partnership with a team of experienced postnatal practitioners and cover topics including:

- Getting to know your baby
- Baby sleep
- Crying and communicating
- Finding your feet.



In the first six months, more than 2,000 parents signed up, with around 40 parents attending each week.

These sessions offer an excellent opportunity to showcase our NCT postnatal services, from the Infant Feeding Line to Early Days courses, and our local community support networks.

In response to parent feedback, our qualified Breastfeeding Counsellors and Postnatal Leaders are developing an inclusive and supportive Early Days session on 'Feeding your baby'.

> "I attended a live talk on newborn sleep and the information was invaluable. Parenting can feel isolating, but it was extremely reassuring to connect with other parents in the same boat. The session was realistic with expectations and empathetic."

> "This talk really helped to hear what other parents are experiencing and to help me to realise that my baby's behaviour is completely normal!"



Become a member today to join these live talks

Campaigning and influencing for change

Change is urgently needed across the maternity system. For many years, serious concerns have been raised by women, parents and families, and by those caring, supporting and advocating for them, about quality of care and safety in maternity services. The publication of the Independent Review of Maternity Services at The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust in March 2022 – and the reviews into the care provided by the NHS in Nottingham and Kent currently underway– highlight the urgent need to make change happen.

Only 1% of maternity services are rated as 'outstanding' by the Care Quality Commission, with some rated as 'inadequate'. That means 99% of the time, parents entering the maternity system have an experience that could be improved. This is especially true for Black, Asian, and ethnic minority parents, who suffer shocking and persistent variations in the quality of care they receive.

We believe that improving the quality and safety of maternity care will require urgent action from government and the public bodies that administer maternity care. That's why we actively campaign on the issues that matter to parents, aiming to give them a voice in public debate and create real and important change.

Protecting and supporting pregnant women and parents during the pandemic

Throughout the pandemic, we campaigned for changes in legislation and guidance to protect and support pregnant women and new parents at a time of significant isolation and vulnerability.

We spoke up about the unequal impact of Covid-19. Working alongside other maternity organisations and charities, we recommended significantly widening the scope of the UK Covid-19 public inquiry to include the pandemic's effect on minority ethnic groups, children's mental health, and early years provision.

These were dangerous oversights, and we were relieved that the government listened to our calls for change.

Baroness Heather Hallett, the Chair of the UK Covid-19 Public Inquiry, called on the Prime Minister to significantly widen the Inquiry's scope and the Prime Minster agreed.

> "I have listened to compelling arguments to focus on children and young people, the mental health and wellbeing of the UK population, and collaboration between regional, devolved, and national government, and the voluntary and community sector."
>
> Baroness Heather Hallett, the Chair of the UK Covid-19 Public Inquiry

Tackling maternal health inequalities

We actively campaign at all levels of government across the country. We respond to government reviews and inquiries representing parents on the issues that matter, and regularly attend national-level policy meetings to campaign on their behalf.

Changing the guidelines on induction of labour

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) published draft guidelines that prompted widespread concern after it recommended that all women should be offered induction at 41 weeks. It also recommended that groups at increased risk of complications, including Black, Asian, and ethnic minority parents, women, those aged 35 or over, women with a high BMI, or after assisted conception, should be offered induction at 39 weeks. This was a major concern because we believe each pregnancy and birth must be treated as individual, with the parents placed at the centre of their own care and empowered to make informed choices.

We highlighted the lack of an evidence base, across several parts the guidance, and called for them to be changed. In November 2021, a revised guideline was published, and the recommendations have been dropped.

Partnership working to prevent deaths of Asian and Asian British babies

We joined Sands, the Royal College of Midwives and the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists in writing to Nadine Dorries MP to ask for a confidential inquiry into the deaths of Asian and Asian British babies.

We believed that a review of these tragic deaths was essential to ensure immediate action could be taken, preventable deaths are avoided, and parents are better supported in the future.

The government subsequently launched a confidential inquiry led by MBRRACE-UK – the organisation that leads on audits and inquiries to reduce risk for mothers and babies across the UK. This is a vital chance to tackle inequalities in the system, at the same time as the inquiry into deaths of babies from Black families is underway.

Further examples of our impact this year:

Issue	Our response	Impact
Threat to Health Visiting support for parents. Hampshire County Council proposed reducing its Health Visiting workforce by 12.5 per cent.	We joined the Institute of Health Visiting and other bodies in submitting evidence to a consultation on public health staffing held by Hampshire County Council.	The recommendation was subsequently dropped – an important landmark for other local authorities and helped maintain a focus on the need for a strong health visiting workforce.
Improvement needed in the health and development outcomes for babies in England.	We responded to the Early Years Review, led by Dame Leadsom MP, into improving the health and development outcomes for babies in England. The Review focused on the 1,001 critical days through pregnancy to the age of two. As well as highlighting the need for more infant feeding support, we made the case for supporting parents with their mental health.	Our research on mental health was referenced in the final report from the review published by the Department for Health and Social Care. "The mental health and wellbeing of mums, dads, partners, and carers is also important for the development of the baby. Poor mental health can impact a parent's ability to bond with their baby." The best start for life: a vision for the 1,001 critical days.
Mothers in Wales who needed care for serious mental health conditions were not getting the support they needed. Some were being supported in the community, admitted to acute mental health wards without their babies, or having to travel to one of the specialist mother and baby units in England.	Five years previously we had protested the closure of the only unit in Wales providing acute mental health care for mothers. We joined Welsh representatives at the Senedd in Cardiff to talk to Jenny Rathbone MP and then Health Minister Vaughan Gething. We worked to highlight the evidence and need for a new Mother and Baby unit.	This year the new unit based at Tonna Hospital, near Neath, has finally opened. Designed to be a home away from home where mums will have access to specialist care for themselves and their babies.
Improvement needed in the outcomes of maternity service in England	We worked to ensure that the commitments to improve outcomes of maternity services in England, made in the National Maternity Review, are delivered five years on from its publication. We contributed to the review and are an active member of the Maternity Stakeholder Council, which scrutinises the work of the NHS Improvement's Maternity Transformation Programme. Our influencing work focused on perinatal mental health, postnatal care and amplifying the voices of service users.	The voices of service users are now included in every workstream of the NHS Maternity Transformation Programme, with wide ethnic diversity. Expanded perinatal mental health services are now included in the NHS Long-Term Plan. Postnatal care remains an area for action, where we continue to apply pressure.

Working in alliance to drive change for parents

NCT actively campaign at all levels of government across the UK and Channel Islands. We respond to government reviews and inquiries representing parents on the issues that matter, and regularly attend national-level policy meetings to campaign on their behalf. In 2021, our government advocacy work included:

- NHS England Maternity Stakeholder Council
- The Scottish government's 'The Best Start' Implementation Board
- The Safer Medicines in Pregnancy & Breastfeeding Consortium
- Breastfeeding Alliance
- The Maternal Mental Health Alliance
- Pregnancy & Baby Charity Network
- The Alliance for Maternity Rights
- One Voice Alliance.



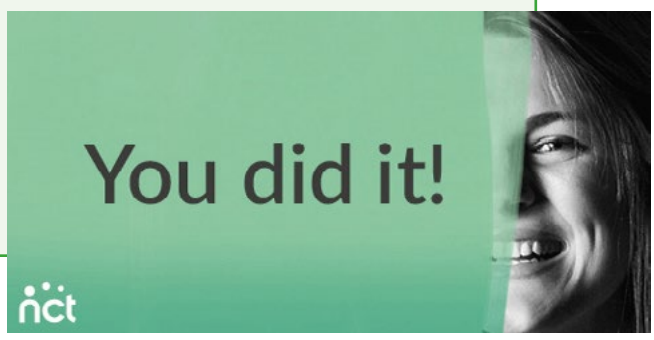
> We want the UK to be the safest place in the world to have a baby. We're striving for a future where everyone who cares about safe and positive experiences of pregnancy, birth, and early parenthood can work together to achieve the best outcomes.

Elizabeth Duff, Senior Policy Officer, NCT

Campaign update: Hidden Half

In 2017 NCT launched its landmark #HiddenHalf campaign, which revealed that half of new mums in the UK experienced emotional or mental health problems during pregnancy or within a year of their child's birth. These findings led to many years of campaigning on postnatal mental health and, in 2020, we celebrated the introduction of six-week maternal health checks into GP contracts in England.

In 2021, we surveyed nearly 900 women, who had a given birth in the previous 12 months, to find out how many were receiving this check. We found that there had been little increase in the number of women receiving the funded six-week postnatal check in primary care, with insufficient attention paid to their mental wellbeing. We called on GPs to provide dedicated time and space for this crucial appointment and will continue to advocate for women in England and the devolved nations to receive this support.





Ensuring parent experiences influence change

We want to make ensure that parents are represented in research at all levels, because too often recommendations can be implemented without consulting the people they impact.

We worked with academics at universities across the UK conducting research into a wide range of topics relevant to expectant and new parents' health and wellbeing. Studies included work to understand more about common postnatal mental health and the barriers to accessing support, testing different approaches to managing Group B strep and pre-eclampsia, and capturing the experiences of new parents during the Covid-19 pandemic.

We also helped to recruit parents to participate in almost 20 studies on a broad range of topics from gestational diabetes to infant sleep. All our external research activities have helped to bring parents' voices into research that will benefit parents throughout the first 1,000 days.

To find out more about our research or get involved, email: research@nct.org.uk

Our thanks

We were delighted to have the opportunity to work with a range of partners across 2021/2022. We would like to thank everyone who collaborated with us for their enthusiastic support.

Each partnership is different in character, but all are united in their desired impact to help new and expectant parents across the UK. We want the UK to be the safest place in the world to have a baby – but this vital ambition is too big to tackle alone. That's why we're so pleased to be working together with other charities, government bodies, businesses, and organisations of all kinds to achieve our goals. We're grateful to have found partners who share our aspirations, inspire new thinking and challenge us to be better and go further in everything we do.

We have seen generous donations of time, services, and goods - everything from welcome packs for babies, to special offers designed to give parents a helping hand. Kind gifts of time have spanned expert professional advice through to hands-on work supporting those in need. Every contribution has made a difference. Thank you.

We're very proud of the businesses and companies we have partnered with to ensure parents receive a better experience in the commercial world, whether raising awareness around special access to utility options or helping connect parent voices into conversations around the financial impact of Covid-19.

As a result of our partnerships, many companies have enhanced their professional benefits offer to their staff teams. Wellbeing for staff goes beyond simple maternity and paternity leave, so we applaud our partners who have taken a proactive approach to ensuring their colleagues receive easy and affordable access to comprehensive training, helpline support, and network connections via NCT. Our hope is that helping working parents through the first 1,000 days uplifts staff morale, enables quick identification and resolution of any transition challenges, and contributes to staff happiness and retention in the long-term.

If you and your company would like to work with NCT in 2022 and beyond, please do get in touch at partnerships@nct.org.uk

Organisations, alliances and networks we have worked with during the year:

Alliance for Maternity Rights; Breastfeeding Alliance; Birthrights, Black Mothers Matter, The Breastfeeding Network; First 1001 Days Movement; FiveXMore; Maternity Action, BPAS; Maternal Mental Health Alliance; One Voice Alliance; Royal College of Midwives; Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists; Institute of Health Visiting; Pregnancy and Baby Charity Network; Peppy Health.

Stakeholder and programme boards we contribute to:

NHS England and Improvement Maternity Transformation Stakeholder Council; Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency; National Maternity and Perinatal Audit clinical reference group; Scottish Government 'The Best Start' Implementation Programme Board; Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW) national review of maternity services; MBRRACE-UK Third Sector Stakeholder Council.

Our service delivery partners:

Alternatives Trust; Magpie Project; Compost London; Mini First Aid, Cross Keys Homes.

Our corporate partners:

Anglian Water Services Limited; Bank of England; Bodyclock Babycare TENS; Childs Farm Limited; John Lewis Partnership plc; Lego; Lidl Great Britain Limited; Mamas and Papas Limited; Partnerships for Good; Savoo; Start-Rite

Funders and commissioners:

BBC Children in Need; Bradford District Care Trust; Bradford Metropolitan Council; Countess of Chester Hospital Trust; Coventry City Council; Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership Trust; Department of Health and Social Care Starting Well Fund; Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS); Halton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG); Hounslow CCG; Leeds City Council; London Borough of Hounslow; Manchester Settlement; Medway Community Healthcare; Middlesbrough Council; Milton Keynes Community Foundation; National Lottery Community Fund; Newham & Tower Hamlets CCG; NHS Lothian; NHSX TechForce 19; Northern Ireland Public Health Agency; Paddington Development Trust; Peabody; Peterborough City Council; Redcar & Cleveland Council; Richmond Council; Royal Berkshire NHS Trust; Scottish Government; Southampton City Council; Southwark Council; St Helens CCG; Stockton-on-Tees Council; Swindon Borough Council; Thriving Community Fund; Twins Trust; Venture Community Association; Wandsworth Council; Warwickshire County Council; Wiltshire Council.

Our partnerships:

The team at Black Mothers Matter, especially Sonah Paton, Aisha Davies and Yomi Oluwatudimu. Joy Warmington, Diane Rutherford, Manisha Patel, Ghiyas Somra and the team at brap. Tayo Medupin, Tope Medupin and Amelia Woods at Hello Brave. Colleagues at the University of Worcester.

Our donors:

We would like to thank all the individuals and families who kindly gave gifts of time or money over the year.


nct
Baby


nct
LIDL
Providing a Lidl Boost for NCT
nct 1ST 1,000 DAYS NEW PARENT SUPPORT
VOLUNTEER





Finally

We'd like to say a special thank you to all our supporters, volunteers, practitioners, staff and Trustees who have helped us reach, connect and support parents throughout their pregnancy, birth and early parenthood.

Our community

- All our practitioners
- All our volunteers and peer supporters
- NCT Diversity Network
- Affinity Network
- Members of the Future of Volunteering Action Team
- Regional Volunteer Support Network – and all members of RVSN
- Practitioner Representative Body.

Student awards

- The NCT President's Award – student who has shown the greatest progress and development. This has been awarded to Jasmine Scarlett.
- The Fiona Cowell Award – student who has overcome great difficulties with good humour, in order to qualify and graduate. This has been awarded to Carol Rhodes.
- The NCT Sheila Kitzinger Award – student who has demonstrated the best understanding of woman-centred care and birth practices, taking into account the wide range of cultures across the UK. This has been awarded to Debbie Sibley.

In memory

In memory of our Trustee and colleague, Heather Trickey, who died last year, we have co-funded with the Centre for Reproductive Research and Communication and BPAS an essay prize, and this year saw the inaugural winner.

Our thoughts are also with Margaret Willock and Deirdre Mackay who both passed away. Margaret was a long-serving volunteer for over 20 years with Harrow branch and Deirdre was the first-ever Branch Coordinator for NCT Mid Cheshire Branch.

Financial review

Financial review

Overall summary

The effects of Covid-19 continued during the financial year, which saw the numbers of antenatal course bookings remain below pre-pandemic levels. Courses were delivered partly online as a full return to face-to-face delivery was not possible. Nonetheless, there was good growth in total income, up 4% from £10.2m to £10.7m in spite of the ending of the government furlough scheme.

During the year, the group delivered an operating surplus of £297k (2021: £973k) before non-operational spend of £70k for reorganisation costs, and £20k of investment expenditure in the next stage of the Salesforce system implementation and investment income. Operating surplus is a key financial target.

NCT courses

Delivery of antenatal and other courses to parents is one of NCT's key activities. Income in this area exceeds expenditure, with surpluses supporting the education and development of current and future NCT Practitioners; delivery of commissioned contracts in the health sector; and work in the policy, research, campaigns, content and information areas.

Income of £8.1m represents a £0.9m increase on the prior year (2021: £7.2m). This growth reflects an increase in the average course price following the removal of discounts as venue cost savings due to social distancing restrictions were passed on to parents.

Total costs increased to £6.0m from £5.3m in 2021 as more courses were delivered in person.

Education and practice

This year saw the new model 'Cert HE in Perinatal Education & Practice' starting for the academic year 2021-22. Fewer students has led to a corresponding decrease in NCT education and practice income from £0.7m to £0.6m. Costs decreased, following decisive action to change the approach in the delivery model.

Programme delivery

Programmes deliver services to parents that are free at the point of access. They are largely commissioned contracts with the National Health Service and Local Authorities, as well as government departments, Trusts and Foundations. This area also delivers the vital NCT Infant Feeding Line.

Income in the year decreased by 6% to £0.5m (2021: £0.6m). Costs attributed to this work, including £0.4m of expenditure on restricted grants receivable, were £1.5m (2021: £1.1m). Although most individual projects cover the direct costs of delivery, this income is not generally sufficient to cover the full costs of the contract management team or support cost allocations. A review of the cost recovery model for programme delivery is being undertaken in 22-23.

Membership, grants and donations

Total donation income has decreased 30% to £1.1m (2021: £1.5m). Grants receivable has fallen from the prior period, however this included £0.4m from the government furlough scheme. Excluding this, the fall was 9% to £1.1m (2021: £1.2m) as there was a reduction in membership and other donations. This had been anticipated as part of a longer-term trend and also affected by the reduced course booking levels impacting the number of parents choosing membership when choosing a course. An attractive, relevant and engaging membership proposition for parents and supporters is under development. Membership activities will also be supported by the replacement of an existing legacy system with a new platform using Salesforce in 2023.

Costs in relation to membership reduced in the year, as the central volunteering and enquiries teams spent a higher portion of their time assisting with other areas of the charity.

Grants receivable, excluding the government furlough scheme, saw excellent growth of 20% to £0.5m (2021: £0.4m) largely due to funding for the Newham Nurture project.

Other trading activities

Community fundraising income increased by 33% to £0.4m, due to a return of some fundraising events and activities. There is an ongoing commitment to work with branch volunteers to safely unlock activities, ensure a sustainable operating model, and grow the number of community-led activities for parents.

Investment income

Income received from cash balances and the investment portfolio was £84k (2021: 77k).

An unrealised gain on the investment portfolio of £303k was recorded at 31 March 2022 in addition to the £394k gain in the twelve months to March 2021, more than reversing the losses of £424k across the previous two years.

Going concern

Significant consideration has been given by the board to the appropriateness of the going concern basis for accounting, as a result of the ongoing Covid-19 situation, our ability to unlock services back to face-to-face and the impending cost of living crisis as we move forward. During the past two years, NCT was required to adapt quickly and has shown resilience through the ability of staff, practitioners and volunteers to adjust and respond. Changes made in the summer 2020 restructure significantly increased NCT's resilience and current modelling shows that this remains sufficient to respond to a range of outcomes. The plan and budget are set to operate within acceptable risk levels and within the risk reserve level. Management accounts regularly re-forecast the yearly outcome which allows quick and appropriate responses to changes in our operating model and demand for our services. On this basis, the amounts held as investments and in light of the strong reserves position, the board are satisfied that the charity is well positioned to respond to a reasonable worst-case scenario.

Investment policy

The Investment Policy is reviewed by the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee regularly. NCT seeks to achieve the best financial return within an acceptable level of risk, which has been defined as low/medium on a scale of low, medium and high. The desired risk level is achieved through a mixed portfolio of low risk cash deposits and medium risk managed investment funds. All investments are made within the Commercial Activities Policy that takes social, environmental and ethical considerations into account.

The investment objective for long-term investments is to generate a return, in excess of inflation, in order to preserve the real terms value of NCT's reserves and support growth of the reserves to, and thereafter within, the range determined by the reserves policy.

The objective for the short-term investments is to seek the highest rate of interest available for cash deposits with a UK financial institution, whilst also spreading deposits amongst institutions.

These funds are held as long term investments, and the charity monitors performance closely, continuing to take regular advice from its investment managers. The performance of the funds over the time held meets the investment objectives.

Under the Investment Policy, NCT considers that it holds a mixed motive investment in NCT Trading Limited. This is because the investment has two aims: firstly, to provide funding which will generate a financial return for NCT; and secondly to contribute to NCT's charitable purpose by promoting goods and services that are beneficial to prospective and new parents. This will assist the charity in achieving its strategic objective of providing new parent support.

The investment in NCT Trading Limited has been made through holding 100% of its issued share capital at a cost of £100.

Total funds

The group balance sheet at 31 March 2022 showed total funds of £5.1m (2021: £4.6m) of which £0.2m (2021: £0.1m) were restricted. Restricted funds, analysed in Note 15, comprise donations and grants subject to donor-imposed conditions. Unrestricted funds were £5.0m (2021: £4.5m), of which £1.3m were represented as fixed assets (2021: £1.3m). The balance of the Group general funds, representing the 'free reserves', were £3.7m at 31 March 2022 (2021: £3.1m).

Reserves policy

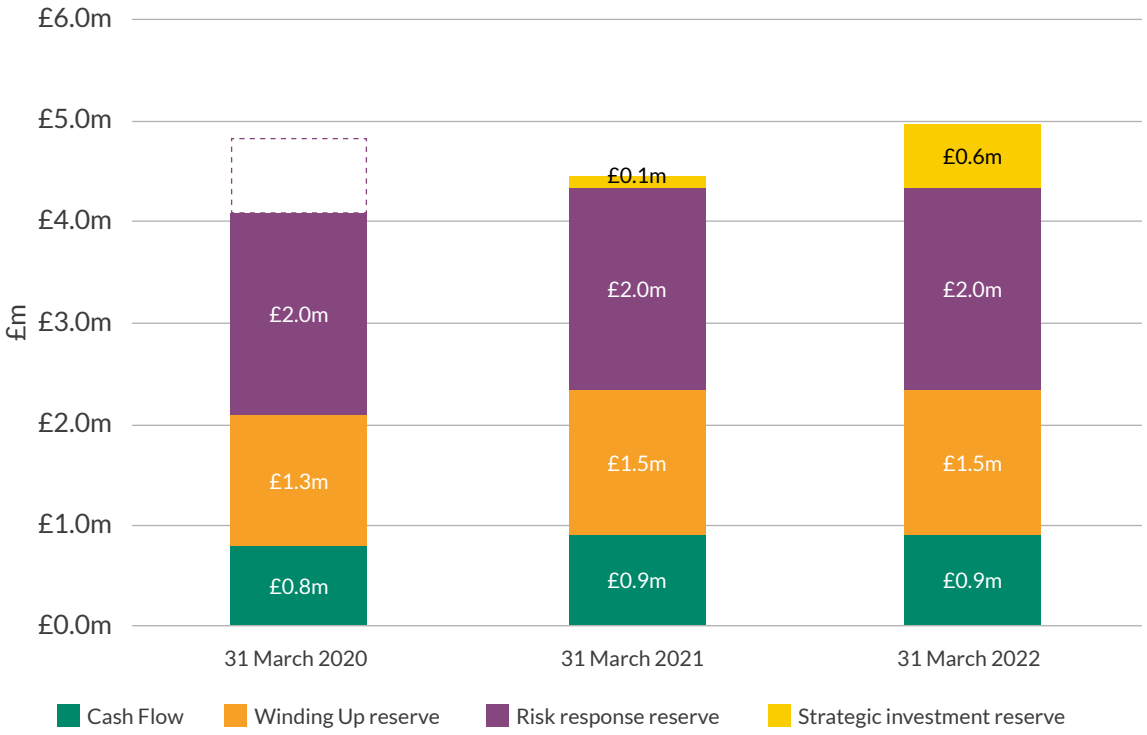
The Reserves Policy provides a dynamic framework for determining available reserves by identifying three components of NCT's risk management reserve:

- the costs of winding up the charity
- funds to respond to uncertainty identified in the risk management process
- cash flow requirements.

The board plan to reduce the target level of the risk response reserve by addressing key risks. By planning for a breakeven operating position over multiple periods, any investment income and gains can be used to increase the strategic development reserve.

The policy also addresses what form each element should be held in. The Fixed Asset Fund represents assets which cannot be converted to cash in the short-term, including property and equipment. As at 31 March 2022, the fund amounted to £1.3m (2021: £1.3m). As these assets are illiquid in nature, they are allocated to the reserve which would cover the costs of winding up the charity.

The amounts held in these reserves at the last three year ends are shown in the table below.



At 31 March 2022, the funds held in the risk management reserve totalled £4.4m, meeting the requirements of the policy. This means that the charity holds sufficient funds to perform an orderly wind up if needed and manage risks as they arise. The remaining group funds as at 31 March 2022 were held in the strategic development reserve of £0.6m (2021: £0.1m) which may be invested in future growth opportunities or to meet one-off items of expenditure.

Risk management

The risk management process identifies the uncertainties and events that could affect the achievement of the strategic objectives. Trustees acknowledge their responsibility for ensuring effective risk management systems and procedures. The board works closely with the Directors Group to identify the most significant risks, mitigate any potential impact of downside risks and exploit the opportunities of upside risks. The board reviews significant changes to the Risk Register throughout the year.

The Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee has delegated authority from the board to:

- review risk management systems and procedures;
- drive continued improvement in the sophistication and impact of our risk management processes;
- advise the board on the principal risks faced and any changes to the Risk Register;
- scrutinise the analysis and management of risks by the Directors Group through a review of the risk register at every meeting; and
- receive periodic deep dive review of significant risks.

Managing each risk is the responsibility of the senior managers within each Directorate.

The Risk Management Policy was revised in July 2022 and forms part of the Charity's Governance Handbook. Through this Policy, we assess the level of gross risk to the achievement of strategic objectives and the likelihood of this occurring given existing activities to manage the risk. The net risk is compared to the agreed risk appetite for each broad category to identify areas where an increased focus is required to manage the risk.

Key risks

There are 27 risks on the Group Risk Register. After assessing existing activities to manage the risk, the three risks that the Board is currently focusing further actions on are listed below, alongside a summary of how likely it is that the risk will crystallise in what timeframe, the potential impact, our plans for managing these risks and recent changes in the risk profile.

- Information Provision - Parents rely on accurate, up to date and easily accessible information. NCT provides this through a variety of channels, including our courses, infant feeding line, postnatal support and our website. The potential impact of getting this wrong is that parents do not have the information they need to make the right decisions and NCT's reputation could be harmed. With the rise of social media, the profile of this risk has risen in recent years, A full review of all the information provided is underway to ensure that parents can access what they need in the manner most relevant to them.

- Information Governance - Personal data must be handled and stored safely to protect sensitive information and ensure full compliance with GDPR legislation. The volume of sensitive information necessary for us to deliver services through practitioners, volunteers and staff requires careful management. The rise in cyber-attacks on charities in the last twelve months has increased the profile of this risk. A series of actions overseen by the Board is being undertaken to protect further against such attacks.

- Investment Returns - NCT holds an investment portfolio in accordance with our Investment Policy which seeks to preserve the real terms value of reserves. The risk that this target will not be met has increased due to recent increases in inflation. Returns are regularly monitored and reported with the Investment Policy updated annually.

During the year to 31 March 2022, significant headway was made on various specific risks. Examples include the challenges faced to safely unlock the delivery of our services on a face-to-face basis against a backdrop of changing government guidance across the four nations; the completion of the staff reorganisation project; and the elimination of any exposure arising from the war in Ukraine.

Public benefit statement

The Board has referred to the relevant guidance (as published by the Charity Commission in its guidance documents PB1 "Public benefit, the public benefit requirement", PB2 "Public benefit: running a charity and PB3 "Public benefit: reporting") and concluded that NCT complies with the duty in Section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to public benefit, because the charitable services delivered provide value to the public in general and new parents in particular.

Structure and governance

NCT (The National Childbirth Trust) is a registered charity. It is a company limited by guarantee governed by its Articles of Association as adopted on 26th September 2015 and amended on 18 October 2018.

NCT is governed by a Board of Trustees who are the directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act. The names of trustees at the date at which the accounts were approved, or who served during the period, are given below. The Board is very grateful for the work and commitment of Jess Figueras, Richard Smothers and Jo Powell who have served NCT and stood down in this period as well as David Shanks' support as Vice Chair, ensuring a NCT member ramained in a Chair role. We also welcomed two trustees to the board in this period.

Name	Start date of most recent term	Date of resignation
Charles Richardson (Honorary Treasurer from 15 July 2022)	Appointed 15 July 2022	—
Chi Evi-Parker	Elected 11 December 2020	—
David Shanks (Vice Chair to 26 May 2021)	Appointed 7 August 2021 [1]	—
Elaine Lambe	Elected 4 November 2021 [2]	—
Ema Ojiako (Honorary Secretary from 21 April 2021)	Appointed 8 March 2021	—
Franciane Husbands-Chevot	Elected 11 December 2020	—
Jessica Figueras (Chair to 31 July 2021)	Appointed 8 October 2020 [3]	Resigned 31 July 2021
Joanne Powell	Elected 16 November 2019	Resigned 1 August 2022
Peter Brown	Elected 13 October 2022 [4]	—
Richard Smothers (Honorary Treasurer to 15 July 2022)	Appointed 5 February 2020 [5]	Resigned 15 July 2022
Sarah Brown (Vice Chair from 27 May 2021)	Elected 4 November 2021 [2]	—
Sherry Bevan (President)	Elected 16 November 2019	—
Stephanie Maurel (Chair from 1 August 2021)	Appointed 7 August 2021 [1]	—
Zoe Stewart-Fields	Elected 26 November 2021	—

[1] Second term, initial term commenced on 7 August 2017
[2] Second term, initial term commenced on 4 November 2017
[3] Second term, initial term commenced on 8 October 2016
[4] Second term, initial term commenced on 13 October 2018
[5] Second term, initial term commenced on 5 February 2016

The charity is a membership charity. Members are organised locally into 333 branches. Many members and volunteers carry out the work of the charity at a local level.

Recruitment and appointment of trustees

The Board of Trustees must have a minimum of nine trustees and a maximum of twelve. Of the maximum, there may be up to eight member elected trustees and four appointed trustees. Any member may stand for election as a trustee, provided they gain the nomination of two other members, are not disbarred from being a trustee, and support the aims and objectives of the charity.

Member-elected trustees are elected to coincide with the Annual General Meeting, whilst appointed trustees may be appointed during the course of the year. Any trustee vacancies arising during the year may also be filled by the board until the date of the next Annual General Meeting.

The process of appointing new trustees is led by the Nominations and Remuneration Committee, based on an assessment of the key skills required by the Board. An executive search firm may be used to attract a diverse range of candidates from different backgrounds. Extensive screening will take place followed by rigorous interviews. All appointments are subject to satisfactory references.

Elected and Appointed Trustees have a term of four years and the President has a term of five years. An individual may serve a maximum of two terms as an Elected Trustee, two terms as an Appointed Trustee and two terms as President.

Further details on the recruitment and appointment of trustees can be found in the Governance Handbook at

https://www.nct.org.uk/sites/default/files/related_documents/2021%2007%2027%20-%20Governance%20Handbook%20final%20v1.pdf

We are keen to talk to anyone interested in standing as a trustee, especially people from a diverse background, to discuss becoming involved. You can contact us at board.secretary@nct.org.uk.

Induction and training of trustees

A comprehensive and structured induction programme is put in place for new trustees. This includes:

- a written briefing about trustees' responsibilities
- detailed presentations covering Strategy; Governance and Critical Incidents; Courses & Income; Practitioners and Education; Impact and Engagement; Volunteering; Finance Overview, Budget, Forecasting and Systems; and Data and Technology
- meetings with the Chair, Chief Executive and other members of the Directors Group.

In addition, the recently appointed Honorary Treasurer also received a full briefing from the outgoing Treasurer and various role-specific materials.

Training is also provided for trustees throughout the year as required, on topics relevant to the Board's current work and strategy.

The Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is ultimately responsible for the governance of the charity to ensure that it acts in the best interests of all parents, who are the charity's beneficiaries. The Board of Trustees sets the strategy, policy and financial framework for the charity and has the responsibility for its overall direction and control. Additionally, the board has responsibility for ensuring the charity complies with the law and the safeguarding of the charity's assets, including its money, property and reputation.

Authority for the day-to-day management of the charity within that framework is delegated to the Chief Executive, supported by the Directors Group. Together they formulate strategy, policy and financial plans for the board's approval, ensure delivery of required performance, and oversee the charity's day-to-day operations.

Each year the board reviews past performance and sets plans within a three-year planning horizon. As part of that review and planning process, the trustees consider how future plans and performance relate to the aims and vision of the charity, and thus to the charitable purpose.

The trustees are committed to ensuring NCT's governance and constitutional framework reflect current thinking on best practice. The Board of Trustees are committed to the principles of the Charity Governance Code.

Board committees

The Board of Trustees is supported in its work by committees. There are two board committees:

- Audit, Risk and Scrutiny ("ARSC") – covering the adequacy of financial control, external reporting, budgeting, performance and risk management.
- Nominations and Remuneration ("NRC") – covering people issues, equity, diversity and inclusion, trustee recruitment and the remuneration policy for senior management and other key groups.

In addition, advisory and task & finish groups enable internal and external experts to be involved in decision-making and governance. There are currently groups for Cybersecurity; Equity, Diversity and Inclusion; and an IT project. There is also a 'Lead Trustee' for safeguarding to provide additional support, scrutiny and oversight in this area. The full board maintains collective responsibility for all these areas and receives update reports at board meetings.

Independent committee members are individuals who bring additional skills, experience and perspectives to the work of our sub-committees. They are not trustees.

Committee membership and Lead Trustee roles as at 31 March 2022 are detailed in the table below.

Name	Role	Committee membership
Chi Evi-Parker	Trustee	—
David Shanks	Trustee	—
Elaine Lambe	Trustee	NRC
Ema Ojiako	Trustee / Honorary Secretary	NRC (Chair)
Franciane Husbands-Chevot	Trustee	ARSC
Faran Johnson	Independent Committee Member	ARSC
Joanne Powell	Trustee	ARSC
Naomi Horsfall	Independent Committee Member	ARSC
Peter Brown	Trustee	NRC
Richard Smothers	Trustee / Honorary Treasurer	ARSC (Chair)
Salima Shariff	Independent Committee Member	NRC
Sarah Brown	Trustee / Vice Chair / Safeguarding Lead Trustee	ARSC
Sherry Bevan	Trustee / President	—
Stephanie Maurel	Trustee / Chair	NRC
Zoe Stewart-Field	Trustee	NRC

Key relationships

NCT wholly owns one active commercial company, NCT Trading Ltd, which gift aids its profits to the charity. The board of NCT Trading Ltd is responsible for its activities, which during 2021-22 consisted of commercial partnerships and sponsorship.

Charity Commission guidance makes it clear that the Board of Trustees is responsible for establishing the overarching principles within which its subsidiary's trading activities must take place. Trustees have established a comprehensive Commercial Activities Policy within which the Trading Board is required to operate.

Trustee benefits

Under the terms of its Articles, the charity is able to pay trustees for the provision of services to achieve its objectives, subject to certain safeguards. This includes the requirement that a majority of the trustees must have received no payments from NCT either as employees or for goods and services supplied to NCT. This year no member of the Board of Trustees received any remuneration in respect of their services as trustees (2020: None). Expenses and other payments to trustees are detailed in Note 9.

Statement of the board's responsibilities as trustees

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

Company law requires trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of the affairs of the charitable company and the group and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable group for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP.
- make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards, including FRS102, have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements.
- 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 that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006, as amended by the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Amendment (No. 2) Regulations 2014. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and the group, and hence for taking reasonable steps to prevent and detect fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

In so far as the trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which NCT's auditor is unaware.
- they have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information.

Remuneration policy

NCT recognises that pay is part of a wider employment offer to staff, which also includes the satisfaction of working for a charity, personal development, family-friendly policies and working practices and a range of other benefits including access to the charity's pension scheme.

NCT operates a benchmarked market rate system, using reputable and appropriate data. NCT aims to pay employees between plus/minus 10% margin of the market median salary for most roles. Employees will not normally be paid less than the lower decile or higher than the higher decile for any role. When benchmarking pay and benefits, NCT will compare against charities of similar size, employee numbers and income, workplace location and competitors. Additionally, a specialist consultancy will be commissioned to independently review the market rate for the salaries of the Directors Group every three years.

Each year, NCT will consider whether to uplift all employees by the cost of living. This will take into account the Consumer Price Index, Retail Price Index and the national average increase in earnings. Any decision will be based on affordability and are at the board's discretion.

Appointment of auditors

Moore Kingston Smith LLP have indicated their willingness to continue in office and are deemed reappointed in accordance with section 487(2) of the Companies Act 2006.

The strategic report, which forms part of the Trustees' Annual Report, is approved by the trustees in their capacity as directors of the company. The Trustees' Report is approved by the Board of Trustees and signed on its behalf by:



Stephanie Maurel
Chair
13 October 2022

Independent Auditor's Report to the Trustees and Members of NCT

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of The National Childbirth Trust for the year ended 31 March 2022 which comprise Group and Parent Charitable Company Statements of Financial Activities (incorporating the Summary Income and Expenditure Account), the Group and Parent Charitable Company Balance Sheets, the Group Cash Flow Statement and the related notes, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the group's and the parent charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2022 and of the group's and the parent charitable company's 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 Companies Act 2006, the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 (as amended) and regulations 6 and 8 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended).

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the 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 other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, 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 there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the strategic report and the trustees' annual report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the strategic report and the trustees' annual report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the group and parent charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the strategic report or the trustees' annual report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 or the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended) require us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the parent charitable company has not kept adequate and sufficient accounting records, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the parent charitable company's financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement set out on page 23, 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 group and parent 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 group or parent charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditor under Section 44(1)(c) of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and under the Companies Act 2006 and report to you in accordance with regulations made under those Acts.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs (UK) we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purposes of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the group and parent charitable company's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the trustees.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the group and parent charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the group or parent charitable company to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.
- Obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding the financial information of the entities or business activities within the group to express an opinion on the consolidated financial statements. We are responsible for the direction, supervision and performance of the group audit. We remain solely responsible for our audit report.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Explanation as to what extent the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below.

The objectives of our audit in respect of fraud, are; to identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements due to fraud; to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding the assessed risks of material misstatement due to fraud, through designing and implementing appropriate responses to those assessed risks; and to respond appropriately to instances of fraud or suspected fraud identified during the audit. However, the primary responsibility for the prevention and detection of fraud rests with both management and those charged with governance of the charitable company.

Our approach was as follows:

- We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory requirements applicable to the charitable company and considered that the most significant are the Companies Act 2006, the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 (as amended), regulations 6 and 8 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended), the Charity SORP, and UK financial reporting standards as issued by the Financial Reporting Council.
- We obtained an understanding of how the charitable company complies with these requirements by discussions with management and those charged with governance.
- We assessed the risk of material misstatement of the financial statements, including the risk of material misstatement due to fraud and how it might occur, by holding discussions with management and those charged with governance.
- We inquired of management and those charged with governance as to any known instances of non-compliance or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations.
- Based on this understanding, we designed specific appropriate audit procedures to identify instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. This included making enquiries of management and those charged with governance and obtaining additional corroborative evidence as required.

There are inherent limitations in the audit procedures described above. We are less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations that are not closely related to events and transactions reflected in the financial statements. Also, the risk of not detecting a material misstatement due to fraud is higher than the risk of not detecting one resulting from error, as fraud may involve deliberate concealment by, for example, forgery or intentional misrepresentations, or through collusion.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006 and to the charitable company's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Section 44(1)(c) of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members and trustees those matters which we are required to state to them in an auditor's report addressed to them and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to any party other than the charitable company and charitable company's members as a body, and the charity's trustees, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



Andrew Stickland
(Senior Statutory Auditor)

for and on behalf of Moore Kingston Smith LLP, Statutory Auditor

11 November 2022

9 Appold Street
London EC2A 2AP

Moore Kingston Smith LLP is eligible to act as auditor in terms of Section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

NCT consolidated group statement of financial activities

Including Income & Expenditure Account for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2022 £'000	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2021 £'000
Income from							
Charitable activities							
NCT Courses		8,104	-	8,104	7,207	-	7,207
Education and Practice		612	-	612	714	-	714
Programme Delivery	3	530	-	530	551	10	561
		9,246	**-**	**9,246**	**8,472**	**10**	**8,482**
Donations							
Membership		539	-	539	696	-	696
Donations		17	-	17	30	-	30
Grants receivable	4	13	500	513	414	369	783
		569	**500**	**1,069**	**1,140**	**369**	**1,509**
Other trading activities							
Community fundraising		184	22	206	71	-	71
Commercial fundraising		207	-	207	231	-	231
Trading		1	-	1	6	-	6
		392	**22**	**414**	**308**	**-**	**308**
Investments							
Interest		-	-	-	1	-	1
Investment portfolio income		84	-	84	76	-	76
		84	-	**84**	**77**		**77**
Other income							
Other income receivable		**48**	**-**	**48**	**37**	**-**	**37**
Total incoming resources		**10,339**	**522**	**10,861**	**10,034**	**379**	**10,413**
Expenditure on							
Charitable activities							
NCT Courses	5	5,993	66	6,059	5,283	133	5,416
Education and Practice		1,034	-	1,034	1,582	-	1,582
Programme Delivery		1,019	435	1,454	822	270	1,092
Policy, research and information		1,180	-	1,180	1,288	-	1,288
		9,226	**501**	**9,727**	**8,975**	**403**	**9,378**
Raising funds							
Membership		**210**	**-**	**210**	**478**	**–**	**478**
Other trading activities							
Community fundraising	6	451	-	451	275	-	275
Commercial fundraising		178	-	178	183	-	183
Trading		47	-	47	37	-	37
		676	**-**	**676**	**495**	**-**	**495**
Total Expenditure	7	**10,112**	**501**	**10,613**	**9,948**	**403**	**10,351**
Net operating income/(expenditure)		**227**	**21**	**248**	**86**	**(24)**	**62**
Gain/(loss) on investment assets	12	303	-	303	394	–	394
Net income/(expenditure) and net movement in funds	8	**530**	**21**	**551**	**480**	**(24)**	**456**
Reconciliation of funds							
Total funds brought forward		4,452	138	4,590	3,972	162	4,134
Total funds carried forward	15,16	**4,982**	**159**	**5,141**	**4,452**	**138**	**4,590**

All of the group's activities derived from continuing operations during the above two financial periods. The group has no recognised gains or losses other than those shown above. The movement in reserves is shown above.

NCT charity statement of financial activities

Including Income & Expenditure Account for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2022 £'000	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2021 £'000
Income from							
Charitable Activities							
NCT Courses		8,104	-	8,104	7,207	-	7,207
Education and Practice		612	-	612	714	-	714
Programme Delivery	3	530	-	530	551	10	561
		9,246	**-**	**9,246**	**8,472**	**10**	**8,482**
Donations and legacies							
Membership		539	-	539	696	-	696
Donations		38	-	38	69	-	69
Grants receivable	4	13	500	513	414	369	783
		590	**500**	**1,090**	**1,179**	**369**	**1,548**
Other trading activities							
Community fundraising		184	22	206	71	-	71
Trading		1	-	1	6	-	6
		185	**22**	**207**	**77**	**-**	**77**
Investments							
Interest		-	-	-	1	-	1
Investment portfolio income		84	-	84	76	-	76
		84	**-**	**84**	**77**		**77**
Other income		**56**	**-**	**56**	**46**	**-**	**46**
Total income		**10,161**	**522**	**10,683**	**9,851**	**379**	**10,230**
Expenditure on							
Charitable activities							
NCT Courses	5	5,993	66	6,059	5,283	133	5,416
Education and Practice		1,034	-	1,034	1,582	-	1,582
Programme Delivery		1,019	435	1,454	822	270	1,092
Policy, research and information		1,180	-	1,180	1,288	-	1,288
		9,226	**501**	**9,727**	**8,975**	**403**	**9,378**
Raising funds							
Membership		**210**	**-**	**210**	**478**	**-**	**478**
Other trading activities							
Community fundraising	6	451	-	451	275	-	275
Trading		47	-	47	37	-	37
		498	**-**	**498**	**312**		**312**
Total resources expended	7	**9,934**	**501**	**10,435**	**9,765**	**403**	**10,168**
Net operating income/(expenditure)		**227**	**21**	**248**	**86**	**(24)**	**62**
Gain/(loss) on investment assets	12	303	-	303	394	-	394
Net income/(expenditure) and net movement in funds	8	**530**	**21**	**551**	**480**	**(24)**	**456**
Reconciliation of funds							
Total funds brought forward		4,452	138	4,590	3,972	162	4,134
Total funds carried forward	15,16	**4,982**	**159**	**5,141**	**4,452**	**138**	**4,590**

All of the NCT's activities derived from continuing operations during the above two financial periods. The charity has no recognised gains or losses other than those shown above. The movement in reserves is shown above.

NCT consolidated and charity balance sheets

as at 31 March 2022

	Notes	2022 Group £'000	2022 Charity £'000	2021 Group £'000	2021 Charity £'000
Fixed Assets					
Intangible Assets	10	-	-	-	-
Tangible Assets	11	1,302	1,302	1,343	1,343
Investments	12	3,789	3,789	3,427	3,427
Total Fixed Assets		**5,091**	**5,091**	**4,770**	**4,770**
Current Assets					
Debtors	13	1,054	1,029	552	583
Short term deposits		76	76	76	76
Cash at bank and in hand		2,584	2,560	2,304	2,243
		3,714	**3,665**	**2,932**	**2,902**
Liabilities					
Creditors:					
Amounts falling due within one year	14	**(3,664)**	**(3,615)**	**(3,112)**	**(3,082)**
Net current assets / (liabilities)		**50**	**50**	**(180)**	**(180)**
Total net assets		**5,141**	**5,141**	**4,590**	**4,590**
Fund balances					
Charitable funds					
Restricted funds	15	**159**	**159**	**138**	**138**
Unrestricted funds	16				
General funds		3,680	3,680	3,109	3,109
Fixed asset fund		1,302	1,302	1,343	1,343
		4,982	**4,982**	**4,452**	**4,452**
Total funds	17	**5,141**	**5,141**	**4,590**	**4,590**

Approved by the Board of Trustees and signed on its behalf



Stephanie Maurel
Chair
13 October 2022

Company Number: 2370573 (England & Wales)

NCT consolidated cash flow statement

for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

	2022 £'000	2021 £'000
Cashflows from Operating Activities		
Net income / (expenditure) for the reporting period	551	456
(Gains)/ Losses on investments	(303)	(394)
Depreciation and amortisation charges	41	68
Investment income	(84)	(76)
Interest receivable	-	(1)
(Increase) / decrease in debtors	(502)	512
Increase / (decrease) in creditors	552	(824)
Net cash provided by operating activities	**255**	**(259)**
Cash flows from Investing Activites		
Purchase of Investments	(975)	(572)
Proceeds from the sale of Investments	907	1,473
Dividends received	84	76
Interest receivable	-	1
Net cash from investing activities	**16**	**978**
Cash flows from Financing Activities		
Payments for finance leases	-	(5)
Net cash from financing activities	**-**	**(5)**
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period	**271**	**714**
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period	**2,476**	**1,762**
Cash and cash equivalents at end of the reporting period	**2,747**	**2,476**

Analysis of cash and cash equivalents	2022 £'000	2021 £'000
Cash at bank and in hand	2,584	2,304
Short term deposits	76	76
Cash held by investment managers	87	96
Total cash and cash equivalents	**2,747**	**2,476**

Notes to the financial statements

1 Principal Accounting Policies

a) Basis of accounting

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies below and comply with the charity's governing document, the Charities Act 2011 and 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 published on 16 July 2014, the Charities Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 as amended in 2014. The charity is a public benefit entity for the purposes of FRS 102 and a registered charity. The charity has therefore also prepared its individual and consolidated financial statements in accordance with FRS 102' (The Charities SORP (FRS 102).

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis and on the historical cost basis, except for the measurement of investments and certain financial assets and liabilities at fair value with movements in value reported within the Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA). The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below and have been applied consistently throughout the year.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charity. Amounts included in the financial statements are rounded to the nearest thousand pounds.

b) Preparation of the accounts on a going concern basis

The trustees have adopted the going concern basis in preparing these accounts after assessing the principal risks and having considered the impact of returning to online courses due to COVID-19 and inflationary factors. The trustees consider that the charity is resilient to the impact of these scenarios.

The trustees considered the impact of the current environment on the business for the 12 months following signature of the financial statements, the viability period and the longer term considering the impacts on income, expenditure and cash flow and consider the charity can absorb and adapt to the environment.

On this basis the trustees have concluded that there are no material uncertainties that impact the use of the going concern basis and that the charity will be able to settle its debts as they fall due for a period of at least 12 months from the date of approval of these financial statements. Accordingly, the going concern basis has continued to be adopted in the preparation of the financial statements.

c) Basis of consolidation

The statement of financial activities and balance sheet consolidate on a line-by-line basis the financial statements of the charity and all its subsidiary undertakings made up to the balance sheet date. Immaterial subsidiaries are not consolidated. The decision on consolidation is based on the degree of control that, in substance, NCT has power to control each undertaking and the extent to which it operates on a unified basis with the parent undertaking.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

d) Income

Incoming resources are recognised in the period in which the charity is entitled to receipt, the receipt is probable and the amount can be measured reliably. Income is deferred only when the charity has to fulfil conditions before becoming entitled to it or when the donor or funder has specified that the income is to be expended in a future accounting period. Legacies are included in the statement of financial activities when the charity is advised by the personal representative of an estate, that payment will be made or property transferred and the amount involved can be measured reliably. Grants, including government grants, have been included as income from charitable activities where these amount to a contract for services or a grant for specific costs. NCT affiliate courses are included in full within incoming resources.

e) Expenditure

Expenditure is included in the statement of financial activities when incurred and includes any attributable VAT, which cannot be recovered. Resources expended comprise the following:

- *Charitable activities, which comprises expenditure on the charity's primary purposes and are categorised as NCT Courses, Education and Practice, Programme Delivery and Policy, Research and Information.*
- *Other trading activities is categorised into community fundraising, commercial fundraising, and retail trading.*
  - » *NCT Courses comprises the costs of providing courses, for parents and prospective parents where the participant generally books the course.*
  - » *Education and Practice comprises the costs of providing training and support for NCT Practitioners who deliver NCT courses.*
  - » *Programme Delivery comprises the costs of delivering services procured under a contract for services or a grant.*
  - » *Policy, research and information comprises the cost of the research team, the library, communications, marketing and providing specialist helplines and journals.*

- *Other trading activities is categorised into community fundraising, commercial fundraising and trading.*
  - » *Community fundraising, which comprises the community fundraising support team, the costs of Branch fundraising activities, and costs associated with the administration of Branches. Many of the fundraising events held by the branches have two objectives, to raise funds for the charity, as well as meeting the aims of the charity in terms of providing postnatal support for families. There is no meaningful way of apportioning the costs of Branch fundraising events between fundraising costs and charitable activities.*
  - » *Commercial fundraising is the cost of obtaining and managing the sponsorship of activities and events and undertakes other business activity on behalf of NCT by NCT Trading Limited.*
  - » *Trading comprises the costs of branch newsletters.*

- *Expenditure on raising funds is categorised into membership only. Membership expenditure comprises the costs of the department that services members and prospective members and the team that provides support to members and Branches.*

f) Basis of apportioning support costs

Support costs, which includes governance costs represent indirect charitable expenditure. In order to carry out the primary purposes of NCT it is necessary to provide support in the form of human resources, financial operations and management, information technology, general management and administration and office services. These costs are apportioned to the other activities within the charity based on the average number of full-time equivalent employees utilised by the activity.

g) Gifts in kind

Assets donated to the charity for its own use, are included in the incoming resources and resources expended at their value to the charity as at the time of the gift.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

h) Tangible and intangible fixed assets

All assets costing more than £1,000 and with an expected useful life exceeding one year are capitalised. Leasehold properties used for the work of the charity are included in these accounts at the cost of acquisition. Software development is capitalised when there is future economic benefit to the charity and ongoing lease costs are not required to use the developed software. Fixed assets are capitalised and depreciated at the following rates per annum, based on cost, in order to write them off over their estimated useful lives:

Category	Asset Group	Rate per annum
Property	Leasehold	2%
	Leasehold improvements	Lease length, minimum 2%
Equipment	End user computer equipment and software	33%
	Computer and telecoms network infrastructure and software	20%
	Furniture	20%
	Other equipment	33%

At the end of each reporting period residual values and useful lives are reviewed and adjusted as necessary. Assets are also reviewed annually for impairment.

i) Fixed asset investments

Listed equities are included in the financial statements at fair value as at the balance sheet date. Investments in subsidiary undertakings are held at cost less impairment. Realised and unrealised gains (or losses) are credited (or debited) to the statement of financial activities in the year in which they arise.

j) Fund accounting

Restricted funds are monies raised for, or their use restricted to, a specific purpose, or contributions subject to donor imposed conditions.

The fixed assets fund represents the net book value of the tangible and intangible fixed assets used in the day-to-day operations of NCT. The value of this fund is not available for working capital.

General funds represent those monies, which are freely available for application towards achieving any charitable purpose that falls within the charity's charitable objects.

k) Leased assets

Rentals applicable to operating leases where substantially all of the benefits and risks of ownership remain with the lessor are charged on a straight-line basis over the lease term.

Rental applicable to finance leases where the terms of the lease transfer substantially all the risks and rewards of ownership to the lessee are recognized as assets at the lower of the assets fair value at the date of inception and the present value of minimum lease payments. The related liability is included in the balance sheet as a finance lease obligation. Lease payments are treated as consisting of capital and interest elements. The interest is charged to the Statement of Financial Activity so as to produce a constant periodic rate of interest in the remaining balance of the liability.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

l) Branches

Branch transactions are considered transactions of the charity.

m) Employee benefits

The costs of short-term employee benefits are recognised as a liability and an expense, unless those costs are required to be recognised as part of the cost of stock or fixed assets. The cost of any unused holiday entitlement is recognised in the period in which the employee's services are received. Termination benefits are recognised immediately as an expense when the company is demonstrably committed to terminate the employment of an employee or to provide termination benefits.

n) Pension costs

The charity as an employer contributes to personal pension plans of its employees. The contributions are set at up to 5% of gross salary and are available to all employees whose contracts are permanent and who have completed three months' service with the charity.

o) Financial Instruments

The National Childbirth Trust has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method. Financial assets held at amortised cost comprise cash at bank and in hand, together with trade and other debtors. Financial liabilities held at amortised cost comprise trade and other creditors.

p) Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Any bank overdrafts would be shown within borrowings in current liabilities.

q) Irrecoverable VAT

All expenditure is charged to the SOFA on an accruals basis including the charge for VAT which is not recoverable.

r) Accounting judgements and estimation uncertainty

In preparing financial statements it is necessary to make certain judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts recognised in the financial statements. The following judgements and estimates are considered by the board to have most significant effect on amounts recognised in the financial statements.

Tangible fixed assets are depreciated to their estimated residual value over their estimated useful economic life as detailed above.

Accrued course expenditure is estimated at the year end date using algorithmic modelling based on contracted hours and pre-agreed rates and anticipated venue costs.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

2 Commercial trading operations

The National Childbirth Trust owns the entire called up ordinary share capital of four companies incorporated in the United Kingdom:

- NCT Trading Limited, which has two principal activities; the promotion of the work of NCT and profit generation;
- NCT (Maternity Sales) Limited which did not trade during the period of these accounts;
- NCT Publishing Limited which did not trade during the period of these accounts; and
- First 1,000 Days Foundation which did not trade during the period of these accounts.

NCT Trading Limited has a deed of covenant to distribute its taxable profit to NCT. A summary of the results of the trading subsidiary for the period are given below.

Profit and loss account – NCT Trading Ltd	**2022 £'000**	2021 £'000
Turnover	207	231
Cost of sales	-	-
Gross profit	**207**	**231**
Administrative expenses	(186)	(192)
Operating profit before interest	**21**	**39**
Interest payable	–	-
Comprehensive income for the period	**21**	**39**

Balance Sheet – NCT Trading Ltd	**31 March 2022 £'000**	31 March 2021 £'000
Current Assets	21	69
Amounts falling due within one year	(21)	(69)
Net Assets	-	-

The above figures exclude any consolidation adjustments for inter-group profits/losses, which have been reflected in the consolidated statement of financial activities. The accounts figures have been consolidated on a line-by-line basis.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

3 Income: programme delivery contracts

Group and Charity	Unrestricted Funds 2022 £'000	Restricted Funds 2022 £'000	Total 2022 £'000	Unrestricted Funds 2021 £'000	Restricted Funds 2021 £'000	Total 2021 £'000
National Health Service	279	-	279	307	10	317
Local Authorities	229	-	229	219	-	219
Other	22	-	22	25	-	25
	530	**-**	**530**	**551**	**10**	**561**

4 Income: grants receivable

Group and Charity	Unrestricted Funds 2022 £'000	Restricted Funds 2022 £'000	Total 2022 £'000	Unrestricted Funds 2021 £'000	Restricted Funds 2021 £'000	Total 2021 £'000
Parents in Mind	–	12	12	-	-	-
Grants to branches	6	117	123	52	66	118
BBCS	–	50	50	–	73	73
Scottish Health	–	109	109	–	183	183
Newham Nurture	–	212	212	-	47	47
Government Furlough Grant	7	–	7	362	–	362
	13	**500**	**513**	**414**	**369**	**783**

5 Expenditure: NCT courses

Group and Charity	Unrestricted Funds 2022 £'000	Restricted Funds 2022 £'000	Total 2022 £'000	Unrestricted Funds 2021 £'000	Restricted Funds 2021 £'000	Total 2021 £'000
Antenatal	3,840	-	3,840	2,717	–	2,717
Postnatal	79	-	79	81	–	81
General Parental Support	1,026	66	1,092	781	133	884
Apportioned support costs	1,048	-	1,048	1,704	–	1,704
	5,993	**66**	**6,059**	**5,283**	**133**	**5,416**

6 Expenditure: community fundraising

Group and Charity	Unrestricted Funds 2022 £'000	Restricted Funds 2022 £'000	Total 2022 £'000	Total 2021 £'000
Branch fundraising	117	–	117	161
Central fundraising	334	–	334	114
	451	**–**	**451**	**275**

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

7 Support cost allocations

Support costs are allocated to the expenditure headings in the Statement of Financial Activities, on the basis stated in Accounting Policies (note 1), as stated in the tables below:

Group 2022	NCT Courses £'000	Education and Practice £'000	Programme Delivery £'000	Policy, Research & Information £'000	Membership £'000	Community Fundraising £'000	Commercial Fundraising £'000	Trading £'000	Total 2022 £'000
Staff costs	452	151	243	152	37	46	-	10	1,091
Depreciation	16	6	9	7	1	2	-	-	41
Premises and equipment	74	25	40	25	6	7	-	1	178
Office supplies	88	29	47	30	7	9	-	2	212
Insurance	23	8	12	7	2	2	-	-	54
Irrecoverable VAT	76	25	41	25	6	8	-	2	183
Other	319	106	172	107	26	32	-	7	769
Support Costs	**1,048**	**350**	**564**	**353**	**85**	**106**	**-**	**22**	**2,528**
Direct Costs	**5,011**	**684**	**890**	**827**	**125**	**345**	**178**	**25**	**8,085**
Total Costs	**6,059**	**1,034**	**1,454**	**1,180**	**210**	**451**	**178**	**47**	**10,613**

Group 2021	NCT Courses £'000	Education and Practice £'000	Programme Delivery £'000	Policy, Research & Information £'000	Membership £'000	Community Fundraising £'000	Commercial Fundraising £'000	Trading £'000	Total 2021 £'000
Staff costs	664	290	123	137	23	65	-	13	1,315
Depreciation	35	15	6	7	1	3	-	1	68
Premises and equipment	123	54	23	25	4	12	-	2	243
Office supplies	96	42	18	20	3	9	-	2	190
Insurance	36	16	7	8	1	4	-	1	73
Irrecoverable VAT	144	63	27	30	5	14	-	3	286
Other	607	264	111	126	21	59	-	12	1,200
Support Costs	**1,705**	**744**	**315**	**353**	**58**	**166**	**-**	**34**	**3,375**
Direct Costs	**3,711**	**838**	**777**	**935**	**420**	**109**	**183**	**3**	**6,976**
Total Costs	**5,416**	**1,582**	**1,092**	**1,288**	**478**	**275**	**183**	**37**	**10,351**

Charity 2022	NCT Courses £'000	Education and Practice £'000	Programme Delivery £'000	Policy, Research & Information £'000	Membership £'000	Community Fundraising £'000	Trading £'000	Total 2022 £'000
Staff costs	452	151	243	152	37	46	10	1,091
Depreciation	16	6	9	7	1	2	-	41
Premises and equipment	74	25	40	25	6	7	1	178
Office supplies	88	29	47	30	7	9	2	212
Insurance	23	8	12	7	2	2	-	54
Irrecoverable VAT	76	25	41	25	6	8	2	183
Other	319	106	172	107	26	32	7	769
Support Costs	**1,048**	**350**	**564**	**353**	**85**	**106**	**22**	**2,528**
Direct Costs	**5,011**	**684**	**890**	**827**	**125**	**345**	**25**	**7,907**
Total Costs	**6,059**	**1,034**	**1,454**	**1,180**	**210**	**451**	**47**	**10,435**

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

Charity 2021	NCT Courses £'000	Education and Practice £'000	Programme Delivery £'000	Policy, Research & Information £'000	Membership £'000	Community Fundraising £'000	Trading £'000	Total 2021 £'000
Staff costs	664	290	123	137	23	65	13	1,315
Depreciation	35	15	6	7	1	3	1	68
Premises and equipment	123	54	23	25	4	12	2	243
Office supplies	96	42	18	20	3	9	2	190
Insurance	36	16	7	8	1	4	1	73
Irrecoverable VAT	144	63	27	30	5	14	3	286
Other	607	264	111	126	21	59	12	1,200
Support Costs	**1,705**	**744**	**315**	**353**	**58**	**166**	**34**	**3,375**
Direct Costs	**3,711**	**838**	**777**	**935**	**420**	**109**	**3**	**6,793**
Total Costs	**5,416**	**1,582**	**1,092**	**1,288**	**478**	**275**	**37**	**10,168**

8 Net movement in funds

	Group		Charity	
	2022 £'000	2021 £'000	**2022 £'000**	2021 £'000
Net movement in funds is stated after charging:				
Depreciation/amortisation of fixed assets	41	68	41	68
Staff costs (excluding agency staff)	3,905	4,416	3,870	4,374
Operating lease rentals	-	123	-	123
Auditors' remuneration: audit services	51	46	44	40
Auditors' remuneration: non-audit services	1	2	-	1

9 Staff costs and remuneration

Staff costs during the period were as follows:

	Group		Charity	
	Total 2022 £'000	Total 2021 £'000	**Total 2022 £'000**	Total 2021 £'000
Wages and salaries	3,443	3,691	3,412	3,654
Redundancy costs	40	245	40	245
Social security costs	263	289	260	286
Other pension costs	159	191	157	189
	3,905	4,416	3,870	4,374
Payments to agency staff	35	3	35	3
	3,939	**4,419**	**3,904**	**4,377**

Staff costs by function were as follows:

	Group		Charity	
	Total 2022 £'000	Total 2021 £'000	**Total 2022 £'000**	Total 2021 £'000
Raising funds	148	428	148	428
Other trading activities	225	120	190	78
Charitable activities	3,566	3,871	3,566	3,871
	3,939	**4,419**	**3,904**	**4,377**

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

Higher paid employees:

	Group		Charity	
	Total 2022	Total 2021	**Total 2022**	Total 2021
£60,000 – 69,999	3	4	3	4
£70,000 – 79,999	1	1	1	1
£80,000 – 89,999	-	-	-	-
£90,000 – 99,999	-	1	-	1
£100,000 – 109,999	-	-	-	-
£110,000 - 119,999	1	-	1	-
	5	**6**	**5**	**6**

The pension cost for these employees, was £21,508 (2021: £24,697), which included the Chief Executive who received total salaries of £111,375 (2021: £99,000) and pension contributions of £4,455 (2021: £3,959).

The headcount including part-time staff, analysed by function was:

	Group		Charity	
	Number 2022	Number 2021	**Number 2022**	Number 2021
Raising funds	4	2	4	2
Other trading activities	6	6	5	5
Charitable activities	133	153	133	153
Support	17	19	17	19
	160	**180**	**159**	**179**

The average number of full time equivalents, analysed by function was:

	Group		Charity	
	FTEs 2022	FTEs 2021	**FTEs 2022**	FTEs 2021
Raising funds	3.2	1.7	3.2	1.7
Other trading activities	4.8	5.9	3.8	4.9
Charitable activities	86.0	91.9	86.0	91.9
Support	15.6	17.7	15.6	17.7
	109.6	**117.2**	**108.6**	**116.2**

The key management personnel of the charity comprise the trustees and the Directors Group. The total employee benefits of the key management personnel of the charity were £386,422 (2021: £441,386).

Expenses were reimbursed to 5 (2021: 3) members of the Board of Trustees during the year. Their expenses amounted to £301 (2021: £nil) in respect of expenses incurred as a trustee in attending board and related meetings, and £14,572 (2021: £18,046) in respect of expenses incurred for branch support and fees as practitioners or breastfeeding counsellors. No trustees were remunerated in the current or prior year.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

10 Intangible fixed assets

Group and charity	Software £'000	Total 31 March £'000
Cost or valuation		
At 1 April 2021	163	163
Additions	-	-
Disposals	-	-
At 31 March 2022	-	-
Amortisation		
At 1 April 2021	163	163
Charge for period	-	-
On disposals	-	-
At 31 March 2022	163	**163**
Net book values		
At 31 March 2022	-	-
At 31 March 2021	-	-

11 Tangible fixed assets

Group and charity	Property £'000	Equipment £'000	Total 31 March £'000
Cost or valuation			
At 1 April 2021	1,504	366	1,870
Additions	-	-	-
Disposals	-	(107)	(107)
At 31 March 2022	1,504	259	**1,763**
Depreciation			
At 1 April 2021	176	351	**527**
Charge for period	30	11	41
On disposals	-	(107)	(107)
At 31 March 2022	206	255	**461**
Net book values			
At 31 March 2022	1,298	4	**1,302**
At 31 March 2021	1,328	15	**1,343**

Property relates to a leasehold building.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

12 Fixed asset investments

	Group		Charity	
	2022 31 March £	2021 31 March £	**2022 31 March £**	2021 31 March £
Investment in group undertakings:				
NCT (Maternity Sales) Limited	–	–	6	6
NCT Trading Limited	–	–	100	100
NCT Publishing Limited	–	–	2	2
First 1,000 Days Foundation	–	–	-	-
Other investments:				
Managed investment funds	3,789,122	3,427,840	3,789,122	3,427,840
	3,789,122	**3,427,840**	**3,789,122**	**3,427,948**

Material investments held in the portfolio include the following:

Treasury Stock	606,562	606,898	606,562	606,898
SPDR Series Trust S&P 500 ETF (GBP)	359,583	582,952	359,583	582,952
Edgewood L Select Fund US Select Growth IZ (USD)	-	172,610	-	172,610
Ishares PLC MSCO Far East Ex-Japan	137,229	165,759	137,229	165,759
BH Global Ltd NPV Sterling Shares	164,998	132,650	164,998	132,650
Mayfair Capital Invest Mgmt Property Inc Trust	110,408	93,310	110,408	93,310

On 7 August 2013, the 'First 1,000 Days Foundation' was formed as a company limited by guarantee (registered in England and Wales 864816) with the sole member as The National Childbirth Trust. The Company has been dormant since incorporation. Investments in NCT (Maternity Sales) Limited, NCT Trading Limited, and NCT Publishing Limited represent the entire called up share capital of the companies, all of which are incorporated in England.

	Registered Company Number	**Reserves at 31 March 2022 £**	Reserves at 31 March 2021 £
Investment in Group undertakings:			
NCT (Maternity Sales) Limited	01291517	6	6
NCT Trading Limited	02488491	-	-
NCT Publishing Limited	03017833	2	2
First 1,000 Days Foundation	08641816	-	-

Managed investment funds

Group and Charity	**2022 31 March £'000**	2021 31 March £'000
Market value at 1 April 2021	3,331	3,838
Acquisitions	975	572
Disposals	(907)	(1,473)
Net investment gains/ (losses)	303	394
Market value at 31 March 2022	**3,702**	**3,331**
The Market value is represented by:		
Equities	3,095	2,724
Bonds	607	607
	3,702	3,331
Cash held by investment managers	87	96
Total Investment fund	**3,789**	**3,427**

The charity's actively managed investment fund is revalued annually at the balance sheet date. The increase or decrease in value as a result of this valuation is recognised as an unrealised investment gain or loss.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

13 Debtors

	Group		Charity	
	2022 31 March £'000	2021 31 March £'000	**2022 31 March £'000**	2021 31 March £'000
Amounts due from subsidiary undertakings	-	-	32	40
Prepayments and accrued income	519	354	519	346
Trade and branch debtors	523	189	466	188
Tax recoverable	7	9	7	9
Other debtors	5	-	5	-
	1,054	**552**	**1,029**	**583**

14 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	Group		Charity	
	2022 31 March £'000	2021 31 March £'000	**2022 31 March £'000**	2021 31 March £'000
Expense creditors	647	584	647	584
Social security and other taxes	101	97	101	97
Deferred income	2,272	2,085	2,230	2,063
Accruals	644	346	637	338
	3,664	**3,112**	**3,615**	**3,082**

Deferred income relates to course receipts, sponsorship, training and grants, all income is received within a year of recognition.

15 Restricted funds

The income funds of the charity and the group include restricted funds comprising the following unexpended balances of donations and grants held on trusts to be applied for specific purposes:

Group and Charity		**Movements in Funds:**			
	At 1 April 2021 £'000	**Incoming Resources £'000**	**Outgoing Resources £'000**	**Fund Transfer £'000**	**At 31 March 2022 £'000**
Grants and donations received by branches	66	117	66	-	117
Glasgow Service Delivery	44	108	153	-	-
Birth and Beyond Community Support	28	50	77	-	-
Parents in Mind	-	12	12	-	-
Newham Nurture	-	212	193	-	19
Big Give	-	23			23
	138	**522**	**501**	**-**	**159**

Glasgow Service Delivery - Funding to enable us to provide a range of community and hospital breastfeeding peer support services across East Lothian and Glasgow

BBCS – Funding to enable us to continue to provide Birth and Beyond Community Support to mothers who are at risk of isolation and not accessing services across Peterborough and Lincolnshire and extend into Wisbech and Fenland.

Parents in Mind – Funding to enable us to extend our Parents in Mind service in the North West to Warrington and enhance our online offer of support to parents with mild to moderate mental health issues.

Newham Nurture – Funding to enable us to coproduce a programme of support to pregnant women and new parents from low income, migrant and marginalised backgrounds experiencing financial hardship and disadvantage.

Big Give- Funding to enable us to give extra resource to our Infant Feeding Line so that more parents can be supported during peak times.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

16 Unrestricted funds

Group	At 1 April 2021 £'000	Incoming Resources £'000	Outgoing Resources £'000	Unrealised Investment Gains £'000	Transfer Between Funds £'000	At 31 March 2022 £'000
General Funds	3,109	10,339	(10,112)	303	41	3,680
Fixed Assets Fund	1,343	-	-	-	(41)	1,302
	4,452	**10,339**	**(10,112)**	**303**	**-**	**4,982**

Charity	At 1 April 2021 £'000	Incoming Resources £'000	Outgoing Resources £'000	Unrealised Investment Gains £'000	Transfer Between Funds £'000	At 31 March 2022 £'000
General Funds	3,109	10,161	(9,934)	303	41	**3,680**
Fixed Assets Fund	1,343	-	-	-	(41)	**1,302**
	4,452	**10,161**	**(9,934)**	**303**	**-**	**4,982**

17 Analysis of net assets between funds

Fund balances at 31 March 2022 are represented by:

Group	Unrestricted Funds: General Funds £'000	Fixed Asset Fund £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	2022 Total £'000
Fixed assets	-	1,302	-	1,302
Investment assets	3,789	-	-	3,789
Net current assets / (liabilities)	(109)	-	159	50
Total net assets	**3,680**	**1,302**	**159**	**5,141**

Charity	Unrestricted Funds: General Funds £'000	Fixed Asset Fund £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	2022 Total £'000
Fixed assets	-	1,302	-	1,302
Investment assets	3,789	-	-	3,789
Net current assets / (liabilities)	(109)	-	159	50
Total net assets	**3,680**	**1,302**	**159**	**5,141**

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

18 Taxation

The National Childbirth Trust is a registered charity and therefore is not liable to income tax or corporation tax on income derived from its charitable activities, as it falls within the various exemptions available to registered charities. Each year subsidiary companies, which do not have charitable status, may Gift Aid any taxable profits to The National Childbirth Trust. The charity and group is not able to reclaim all VAT suffered on expenditure due to the partial exemption regulations.

19 Operating lease commitments

At 31 March 2022 the group's future minimum operating lease payments were as follows:

	Group		Charity	
	2022 31 March £'000	2021 31 March £'000	**2022 31 March £'000**	2021 31 March £'000
Expire				
Within one year	5	-	5	-
Between one and five years	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-

20 Financial Instruments

The financial statements include the following in respect of items held at fair value at the balance sheet date

	Group		Charity	
	2022 31 March £'000	2021 31 March £'000	**2022 31 March £'000**	2021 31 March £'000
Financial assets measured at fair value through profit and loss	3,702	3,332	3,702	3,332

21 Related party transactions

NCT Trading Limited is a subsidiary of The National Childbirth Trust and its shares are 100% controlled within the group.

During the year the National Childbirth Trust purchased services from NCT Trading of £7k (2021: £7k) on normal commercial terms. The National Childbirth Trust supplied services to NCT Trading of £15k (2021: £16k).

At the 31 March 2022 NCT Trading Limited owed The National Childbirth Trust £32k (2021: £40k).

No members of the Board of Trustees (2021: Nil) had a beneficial interest in contracts with the charity. No member of the board (2021: Nil) had a beneficial interest in a contract with a wholly owned subsidiary of The National Childbirth Trust during the period. At the date of signing the accounts, one (2021: no) trustee were also Directors of NCT Trading Limited.

There are no other related party transactions to disclose other than set out elsewhere in these accounts, including in Note 9.

Reference and administrative information

Charity Registrations:

The National Childbirth Trust ('NCT')
Company Registration: 2370573 (England & Wales)
Registered Charity: 801395
Charity Registered in Scotland: SC041592
VAT: GB 115 0789 24

Registered Office:

Brunel House
11 The Promenade
Clifton Down
Bristol
BS8 3NG

Board of Trustees who are also directors under Company Law at the date of this report are:

Charles Richardson (Hon. Treasurer)

Chi Evi-Parker

David Shanks

Elaine Lambe

Ema Ojiako (Hon. Secretary)

Franciane Husbands-Chevot

Peter Brown

Sarah Brown (Vice Chair)

Sherry Bevan (President)

Stephanie Maurel (Chair)

Zoe Stewart-Field

Directors Group who are not directors for the purposes of Company Law at the date of this report are:

Angela McConville, Chief Executive

Michael Barnett, Director of Finance and Planning

Tina Benson, Interim Director of Course Income and Operations

Emma Cutler, Interim Director of Impact and Engagement

Natasha Simpson, Director of People, Education and Inclusion

Company Secretary

Michael Barnett

Auditor:

Moore Kingston Smith LLP
9 Appold Street
London
EC2A 2AP

Bankers:

Lloyds Bank plc.
39 Threadneedle Street
London
EC2R 8AU

Investment Advisors:

Rathbone Brothers PLC
8 Finsbury Circus
London
EC2M 7AZ

Solicitors:

Bates Wells & Braithwaite London LLP
10 Queen Street Place
London
EC4R 1BE

Kemp Little
Cheapside House
138 Cheapside
London
EC2V 6BJ

Subsidiaries:

First 1,000 Days Foundation (limited by guarantee, dormant)

NCT Trading Limited

NCT (Maternity Sales) Limited (dormant)

NCT Publishing Limited (dormant)

© NCT is a trading name of The National Childbirth Trust. Limited company registered in England and Wales: 2370573.
Registered address: Brunel House, 11 The Promenade, Clifton Down, Bristol BS8 3NG. Registered charity in England and Wales: 801395 and Scotland: SC041592.

des2803

THE NATIONAL CHILDBIRTH TRUST

England & Wales - Charity number 801395

Accounts

Annual report & accounts



nct 1ST 1,000 DAYS NEW PARENT SUPPORT

Year to 31 March 2021

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Front cover image: Mums and babies attending a volunteer-led Walk & Talk in Newham for support during lockdown.

Trustees' report

About us

We are NCT – the national charity for pregnancy, birth and early parenthood.

Our vision

Our vision is of a world in which no parent is isolated, and all parents are supported to build a stronger society.

Our mission

Our mission is to support parents through the first 1,000 days to have the best possible experience of pregnancy, birth and early parenthood.

We achieve our mission through three interconnected aims:

1. Sharing evidence-based knowledge to support parents to make informed decisions.
2. Creating networks of vital support and life-long friendship.
3. Campaigning on the issues that matter most to families through their early experiences of becoming a parent.

Every year, we support thousands of expectant and new parents across the UK and Channel Islands to feel more connected and confident during this major life transition.

We provide evidence-based information, signposting and access to support and services through our website, which is visited over 9 million times a year. We support and empower over 80,000 parents every year through a variety of services tailored to meet their needs.

This includes antenatal and postnatal courses delivered by our skilled practitioners, a range of free community-based activities and events led by our fantastic volunteers, and highly valued breastfeeding and infant feeding support provided by specialist NCT breastfeeding counsellors. In addition, a range of trained peer support programmes support women and families facing specific challenges, such as social isolation, feeding difficulties or poor mental health.



NCT community in Newham

Our impact

27,284
parents attended our Walk & Talk groups, powered by volunteers giving over 7,000 volunteer hours.

70,131
parents supported through NCT classes by 468 practitioners.

7,631
calls to the Infant Feeding Line for support from a breastfeeding counsellor.

7,066
antenatal breastfeeding sessions attended by 69,604 expectant parents.

6,254
women supported at community breastfeeding drop-ins and Baby Cafes.

2,399
parents attending 172 Baby First Aid courses.

3,626
parents supported through breastfeeding peer support.

559
parents supported through our perinatal peer support programmes.

5,091,018
visits to our website for information on pregnancy, labour and birth, infant feeding and life as a parent.

Our community

29,202
members

5,263
volunteers providing friendly, non-judgmental community support

345
volunteer peer supporters active in their communities supporting parents

210
new peer supporters trained to support parents facing specific challenges

Regional volunteer support network of
10 Regional Coordinators

704
practitioners facilitating courses and workshops and providing skilled support

87
new practitioners completing a qualification to support the parents of the future

A practitioner representative body of **11** practitioners

180
employees

14
Trustees volunteering their time and expertise on our Board



Walk & Talk at NCT Reading

Chair's welcome



I'm delighted to introduce my first Annual Report as the new Chair of NCT's Board of Trustees, after four years as a Trustee and at an important moment in our charity's history for reflection, renewal and recovery.

Similarly to many charities across the UK, we faced into significant crisis at the start of the year, when Covid-19 caused a sudden shock to every aspect of our support and services for parents, as well as the way we work, train, volunteer and fundraise.

As a Board of Trustees, we took very difficult decisions to secure the future of our charity so that we could continue to be here for parents. This was done with the support of a strong and hands-on leadership team that helped us to act quickly and decisively.

A year on, I couldn't be prouder of what we have achieved together, navigating a year like no other and being constantly available for parents when they needed us most.

The dedication and passion of the people who work or volunteer across NCT has been inspiring. Over the last year we have shown what we can achieve when we pull together as one team and focus our time, skills and energy where it matters most.

The range of support we have provided and the impact we have achieved, despite the personal, professional and organisational challenges we all faced, is simply outstanding. Thank you to everyone across NCT for the role you played in this, and to our members, supporters and funding partners for helping to sustain our work.

Looking forwards, I have full confidence in the board's strategic vision for recovery and renewal, which has guided our decisions over the last year and given us clear alignment in terms of our focus for the future.

In particular, we know that our people are at the heart of our mission and impact, and we want everyone at NCT to feel secure, valued and supported to thrive. Our work to build an open, diverse and inclusive culture is vitally important, so that we can provide truly inclusive services and support. I appreciate the energy and engagement that our community has shown for our work on equity, diversity and inclusion throughout the year. I am committed to continuing to champion and sponsor this work.

Some of you will already know how passionate I am about the power of volunteering and the important role volunteers play. There is a significant opportunity ahead as we develop our new volunteer strategy and adapt how we offer our activities to ensure that they continue to be done in a safe and sustainable way. All this alongside continuing our campaign and influencing work to improve experiences for parents in the future.

I'd like to thank our outgoing Chair, Jess Figueras, for her four years of leadership and voluntary service with our Board of Trustees. We have made huge progress during that time, reviewing our governance, portfolio of services and data and systems, to help us embrace change and remain a relevant and learning organisation. We welcomed Chi Evi-Parker, Franciane Husbands-Chevot and Ema Ojiako to the board during the year, and Salima Shariff and Faran Johnson to committees. I'd like to thank them for the invaluable time, energy and expertise they have already contributed.

I'd also like to thank the outgoing members of our Executive Team, Juliet Mountford, Cate Kirkbride and Thom Harvey, who were instrumental in leading our charity through the crisis during 2020. Thanks also to members of the Regional Volunteer Support Network and Practitioner Representative Body, who stepped up to strongly support throughout this period.

We were very saddened to learn about the passing of Marsha Taylor-Daniel, who passed away in March 2021. Marsha was a former Trustee and also Chair of the NCT Trading Board, who brought significant expertise, warmth and energy to her work with us. She will be greatly missed.

Very sadly, we also said goodbye to Dr Heather Trickey this year, who stepped down as a Trustee in December 2020 and sadly passed away in July 2021. Heather was a remarkable woman and thought-leader and contributed enormously, not just to NCT, but much more broadly in the field of women's health. As a Board of Trustees, we benefitted hugely from her support and insight, and miss her very much.

All in all, it has been quite a year, and I'd like to extend warm and heartfelt thanks from the Board of Trustees to the whole NCT community and our membership – you have gone above and beyond this year to be there for parents when they needed us most. I have such pride in our charity and the volunteers, practitioners, students and staff that make it what it is. Without us all working together for parents and babies we wouldn't be here today with strong plans underway.

Our achievements leave me feeling optimistic about the future and I'm really excited to help lead NCT in this next stage of our work together.

Stephanie Maurel

Chair

President's welcome



Well, what a year.

When I wrote my President's message 12 months ago, I would not have believed it if you'd told me that we'd be in and out of lockdown so many times.

None of us could have predicted the incredible rollercoaster journey we've all been on over the past 18 months. It has been tough and, at times, exhausting. Tough for NCT as an organisation; tough for parents; tough for our staff; tough for our practitioners and student practitioners; and tough for our volunteers, including our trustees.

Yet through it all, with so many ups and the downs, we've seen shining examples every week of how we've adapted to a more virtual world, hosting online support groups, facilitating online courses, supporting families by phone and video, and running an incredible number of Walk & Talk events.

I'm so proud of every single person at NCT. It's only been with your determination, hard work and commitment that NCT has survived and is still here to help parents navigate those first 1,000 days with more confidence and self-belief.

In my work as a practitioner, I see how much parents genuinely need the support we offer. As I reflect on the past year, I want to acknowledge and recognise that what you do is incredibly valuable, no matter your role, which means that it's essential that you take time to focus on your own wellbeing and nourish your resilience too.

Alongside providing fantastic support, we've also made real inroads into our work on equity, diversity and inclusion. Our new model of education has been launched. We've initiated an exciting project on the Future of Volunteering. We've underlined our commitment to breastfeeding with the breastfeeding and infant feeding engagement project and review of the Baby Café model. And we've transitioned course delivery onto Salesforce.

I'm anticipating that the next 12 months will continue to be a rollercoaster but let's hope the ups and downs aren't so extreme. One thing is for sure, our community has shown how creative and adaptive we can be in the face of change, and this fills me with great hope for the future.

THANK YOU to everyone across the NCT community for everything you have done and that you continue to do for parents. It makes such a difference and is much appreciated.

Sherry Bevan

NCT President

Chief Executive's welcome



600,000 babies were born in lockdown.

I am immensely proud of how NCT responded during 2020. Maintaining and adapting our services with agility and growing our reach and impact with new parents was no modest achievement.

Preparing this Annual Report has provided a very valuable opportunity for reflection on all the achievements of the last year. As you read, I hope you will gain a picture of what the pandemic meant for thousands of new parents and families all across the UK.

I am full of pride and gratitude at how our NCT community have pulled together as a team and continued to provide information, advocacy, support and services for pregnant women and new parents. I have witnessed our people go above and beyond to help parents and each other. Together, we found and continue to find creative ways through.

As we entered the first national lockdown last March, I was only 8 weeks into my role. Along with my Directors and Trustees – and indeed the entire charity sector – we faced very difficult decisions regarding parent services, remote working, online delivery, engagement with our NCT community, financial sustainability, furlough, reorganisation and continually responding to the shifting sands of the situation. Our preparation, and the investment we had made in recent years into important developments – tech, data, new frameworks, new approaches to education… these all served to help in our resilience and, in time, our recovery.

We rapidly established a new strategy for recovery and renewal, which provided clarity and focus. We redoubled our commitments to equity, diversity and inclusion, and made this a central part of our response. We have made significant progress against these strategic goals and towards the future.

Last March, in a matter of weeks, we paused services and pivoted our national courses delivery online. Since then, over 70,000 parents have attended an antenatal course online with us, and 9 out of 10 parents rate the experience as good or excellent. That's a fantastic achievement and one on which we will build throughout our recovery.

NCT Walk and Talks have provided a lifeline for so many isolated, lonely and anxious parents. We supported more than 27,000 people between September and March and recruited more than 700 new NCT volunteers. I'm proud and motivated by how we have also pushed for progress on imagining a bright future for volunteering at NCT, in partnership with our volunteers. The pandemic has amplified the role of volunteers in local communities, and I believe NCT volunteers will have a key role to play in the wellbeing of parents, babies and families in the years ahead.

During 2020-21, our precious infant feeding line received 7,631 calls, 20% higher than during the previous year. From antenatal breastfeeding sessions and community drop-ins facilitated on Zoom, to WhatsApp support groups and our feeding line, 271 breastfeeding counsellors supported over 80,000 parents with preparation and support for feeding their babies during the year.

We've maintained our influencing and campaign work, including support for the #ButNotMaternity, #WhatAboutUs, #BlackMaternalHeath and other campaigns. From challenging restrictions on partners' attendance at scans and appointments, to highlighting maternal inequalities and sharing public health messaging on pregnancy and vaccines, we have continued to influence, campaign, form alliances and be an important voice for pregnancy and birth.

We responded stridently to the 2020 report from MBRRACE-UK which highlighted a constellation of biases impacting the health and maternal outcomes for women with multiple and complex problems. Women living in the most deprived areas are three times more likely to die than those who live in the most affluent areas, demonstrating the need for broader action across community and public health, as well as maternity services. MBRRACE-UK has also shown stark inequalities for women in relation to ethnicity. Black women are four times as likely to die during pregnancy or after birth compared to white women, while mixed-race women are three times as likely and Asian women are twice as likely to die. In the last year a priority for us has been to forge and strengthen a range of important partnerships and alliances, to call for a structural and strategic response to these critical issues.

We faced significant financial challenges during the year with respect to our income and immediate and longer-term cash positions. This required a rapid response, strong focus and decisive action to ensure the charity's survival. The actions we have taken throughout the year have left us with a strong reserves position and balanced financial forecast, leaving us well positioned to recover and rebuild as we move forward.

My sincere thanks to all of you who continue to show such passion, determination and commitment in these most challenging of times. Thank you to everyone who has adapted to and endured home working, zoom, heavier schedules, pay freezes, home schooling, furlough, self-isolation, illness, loss and much more with grace and compassion. Wellbeing has been an important focus throughout this time and I am grateful for all the support that has been evident across our community and rapidly put in place to adapt to the changing environment.

The future will certainly present us with more challenges, and opportunities, I believe. I am confident that NCT will continue to recover, build and renew itself so we can continue to be the national charity for pregnancy, birth and early parenthood throughout 2021 and beyond.

Angela McConville

Chief Executive



Pregnancy in a pandemic

Covid-19 and the prolonged period of social restrictions have had a huge impact on the lives of pregnant women, their partners and families. Parents of babies born in 2020 and 2021 have experienced some or all of their pregnancy and early postnatal period in some form of lockdown, with pregnant women identified as being clinically vulnerable from Covid-19. Many have found becoming a parent in these circumstances incredibly challenging, and have struggled with loneliness, isolation and anxiety.

Hannah talks about pregnancy second-time round, how Covid-19 changed things and the difference her NCT course made.



Hannah and Andy with their newborn baby

> *"When lockdown was announced, whilst I completely understood why, I couldn't help but feel gutted. With six weeks until our due date, our support networks were suddenly snatched away from us, forcing us to get to grips with the everyday challenges of isolation."*

"Heavily pregnant, not only did I feel tired, but also now anxious about the birth given the pandemic. At first, I panicked – and cried a lot."

"For most of my pregnancy, midwife appointments ran as normal, but towards the end, things changed. I would have to wait in my car until I had a phone call, then to be greeted at the back door of the surgery by a midwife who was in a gown and mask. It all felt so surreal."

"The appointments themselves were filled with reassurance and I came away each time feeling relieved that my pregnancy was progressing well. However, with ever-changing advice, it was important that we also stayed up to date with maternity services in our area too."



"NCT was a great source of trusted information throughout my pregnancy. I was able to re-visit what I'd learned during the NCT course we did with our first child to help feel prepared the second time around. NCT also helped me form a great support network with other mums, which is so important."

"I remember going for a growth scan at 36 weeks which meant stepping out of my isolation bubble for the first time. Experiencing that hospital environment, I'll be honest, was quite terrifying at first – doing it alone, seeing midwives masked and gowned up, the black and yellow tape around to enforce the two-metre rule. It was all so odd and so clinical."

"Yet, strangely, I actually came away from this feeling more positive. It mentally prepared me for what was ahead and I told myself to just focus on the reassuring eyes behind the masks."

"Little did I know that because of a very quick labour and giving birth in my car with my husband, I would in fact spent very little time in a hospital anyway!"

The year in review

– our response to Covid-19 and strategy for recovery and renewal

> *"Our vision of 'a world in which no parent is isolated' has never been more compelling or more essential than during Covid-19. Throughout the pandemic, everyone at NCT demonstrated their wholehearted commitment to protecting and supporting parents and each other."*
>
> Angela McConville, Chief Executive, NCT.

It has been a year like no other for NCT, and one in which we can feel proud of the impact we have achieved for pregnant women and new parents.

No part of our charity's work was left untouched by the impact of the pandemic. Some services were rapidly re-imagined for online delivery. Some had to pause or cease entirely. Others were adapted to provide vital in-person support through the darkest days of lockdown. Our campaigning work made the case for compassion and responsiveness to what new parents were facing, at a particularly anxious and isolating times for many.



Initial Covid-19 response

We established an emergency response team early in 2020, and thanks to this preparation and strong response from NCT staff, practitioners, volunteers and students, we were able to adapt directly and responsively to the crisis as it unfolded.

Much of the work over previous years, such as developing our course frameworks, investing in technology, building communities of skilled practitioners volunteers and staff, meant we were able to adapt and keep services available throughout. Our education model adapted quickly to sustain learning for our students and future practitioners, and we maintained a safety-first and parents-first approach throughout that helped ensure focus.

In March 2020, within 24 hours of social distancing being announced, we moved our first antenatal classes online and saw an incredible community response to support parents from across NCT. This was achieved through the dedication and passion of everyone at NCT – our practitioners, staff and volunteers – all of whom ensured we were there for pregnant women and new families up and down the country.

By the end of March 2021, over 70,000 parents had accessed online courses and workshops, over 27,000 parents had attended volunteer-led Walk and Talks, over 18,000 parents had been supported with feeding their babies and we had seen over 5 million visits to our online information centre.



Walk & Talk at NCT Peterborough

Governance

Our Board of Trustees quickly established new ways of working in response to the threats imposed by the pandemic. Covid-19 presented some very real and near-term risks to the charity's future. The board established a Covid Oversight Group (COG), which met twice weekly with senior management to ensure we were making good, robust decisions, within much reduced timeframes.

We saw dramatic pressures on our delivery models, a rise in demand for our online and support line services, and a call for continued campaigning and advocacy for new parents. At the same time, we saw immense pressure on our income forecasts and had to move fast to ensure we could sustain a healthy cashflow to keep the charity safe. Trustees worked incredibly hard and engaged throughout the week during this period to ensure we were safeguarding the future of our organisation and support for parents.

At the same time, the Board of Trustees redoubled the charity's commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion and strongly advocated for an approach that recognised that the pandemic would further deepen health and maternal inequalities.

Strategy for recovery and renewal

The impact of Covid-19 for our charity and our beneficiaries caused us to rethink and reconfirm our priorities. We did this through the rapid development of a new strategy for recovery and renewal. This strategy ensured that we put high impact services at the heart of our work, while ensuring financial sustainability. Decisions were informed by rapid engagement across the NCT community – where we found encouraging alignment on what to protect or pause and on what opportunities might arise out of a challenging situation.

The strategy focused on three key priorities. It identified our antenatal course provision and infant feeding support as essential for national impact and financial sustainability. It set out commitments to being a digital-first organisation, recognising the great strides we had made as a charity in the rapid development of online products and services. It confirmed that protecting and, in time, re-building thriving volunteer-led grassroots and community activity remained a top priority.

This has been an important guiding light for us throughout Covid-19. In particular, we used the Government's exemption for parent support groups in England to launch NCT Walk & Talk, which has grown to be a national programme supporting over 27,000 parents to access vital support during the Autumn and Winter.

Our recovery and renewal strategy puts our people at the heart of our impact and recognises that we need to create an open, inclusive, empowered culture, which speaks out and challenges bias and discrimination, if we are to truly realise our vision of supporting all parents, whoever they are, and whatever their situation.

Managing through the year

It was a particularly tough year for everyone at NCT, who faced personal loss, illness, home-schooling, and continuing disruption to ways of working and volunteering. For our staff team, this included the challenges of the government's furlough scheme and, a major reorganisation which led to almost a third of our workforce being made redundant.

Given pressures on our income and cash, we made an early decision to re-organise our teams, so we could safeguard the charity's future. Regrettably, we needed to reduce the charity's staff costs by one third (£1m per year) to ensure NCT's survival. This was a challenging and emotional time for our team, as we said goodbye to those leaving us and celebrated their contributions to our work and mission over many years.

With change came the opportunity to align our charity's structure with our renewal priorities. We reduced the size of our Senior Leadership Team, creating fewer, more integrated directorates, with greater accountability in our priority areas of impact, inclusion and income. We created a new People, Education and Inclusion directorate, to reflect our commitment to people at the heart of our impact.

The workload and pace of work has been high throughout the year. In response, we have developed agile ways of working. Our practitioners and volunteers worked tirelessly and creatively to find solutions to keep our services available and locally responsive.

We committed to engaging transparently with our NCT community on the impact of the pandemic and implications for our charity's work. This led to frequent communications and online gatherings, where we could share our priorities, plans and choices, as well as ensuring a shared understanding of the risks and financial pressures. These are continuing as part of how we engage with our community and share information on the challenges we are working through together.



Priority 1 – trusted provision of antenatal education and infant feeding support

Leading the way in antenatal education

At the start of the pandemic, we immediately switched our antenatal courses online to make sure parents could still connect with other parents in their area and get the support and information they needed.

The switchover was an enormous team effort. The central staff team worked tirelessly to reschedule thousands of sessions and communicate changes to parents, while practitioners bravely adapted at speed to develop new approaches, facilitate online and learn together.

We maintained a strong focus on parent experience, recognising that this was a time of heightened anxiety when expectant parents needed us more than ever.

During those early weeks and months of the pandemic, parents told us just how grateful they were that our support continued – when so much else was not accessible. We heard from partners that it was one of the only ways they felt involved in the pregnancy, due to the restrictions on attending antenatal appointments and scans.

Feedback from parents over the course of the year has been incredible, with many people praising the flexibility and dedication of their NCT course leaders.

Impact

This financial year we supported over 70,000 parents through our antenatal or postnatal courses. Of the parents who attended our antenatal courses:

93%
said the course helped prepare them for labour and birth

91%
said it helped prepare them for feeding their baby

90%
said it helped them know where to look for support

> *"Our facilitator was incredibly dedicated and caring. It was so impressive that she was able to take the course online so quickly and help us bond as a group."*

> *"Our course instructor went above and beyond to make us feel comfortable, informed and part of a support network."*



Expectant parents on an NCT Antenatal course

> *A fantastic experience that has undoubtably helped prepare us for the arrival of our baby. I was initially unsure of how effective the classes would be online, but if anything, it proved more convenient, and just as personable. Loved it, and would highly recommend to any first-time parents.*

> *The course has put our minds at ease in current situation. Fantastic knowledge, guidance and understanding from our course leader helped us realise we are not alone in this horrible pandemic and ensured we felt NHS and NCT are here to help! Also, I absolutely loved how much the course included partners and how it emphasised their role leading up to labour and during labour itself. Both of us are mind blown and my husband genuinely can't wait for his own skin-to-skin time with the baby!*

Expectant parents attending NCT Antenatal courses.

Prior to the pandemic, we were already working towards a single NCT Antenatal course based on a refreshed course framework, so that we could promote a clear offer to parents and give them a consistently fantastic experience.

In July, we launched the first version of the new NCT Antenatal course framework, an up-to-date and comprehensive balance of themes and topics - informed by parent research and co-produced with practitioners.

We simplified the parent booking journey and continually refreshed our approach to marketing and promotion – demonstrating the value of online courses for parents to maximise reach and impact and secure this key source of revenue for our charity.

Our sharp focus on parent experience, combined with the skill, determination and creativity of our practitioners, meant that we could evolve as the pandemic progressed to meet parents' needs.

Support at a time of heightened anxiety

Priya talks about how her anxiety increased because of Covid-19, how she looked after herself and her tips and advice for other mums-to-be.



Priya with her newborn baby

> *"I've never been anxious before but, during my pregnancy, my anxiety skyrocketed purely because of the uncertainty caused by the pandemic. I managed to control it by taking up hypnobirthing; it has been my saviour. And also having Lou, my NCT teacher – being able to ask questions and feel reassured by her is such a relief."*

"Being pregnant is an amazing experience but there are difficult times too so having a positive mindset helps. You learn so much doing an NCT class and you're in a group of parents-to-be in and around your area who are expecting babies around the same time. The WhatsApp group was amazing, sharing stories, what can help and having the teacher on there made it more reassuring too."



"Even though the classes were on Zoom, it still made a massive impact on me and NCT has been a good support system for me. The guidance during Covid-19 has been incredible. The breastfeeding class was amazing too. I had no idea about latching, baby's feeding position or how to feed using a bottle properly."

"Pregnancy is tough, and it can make you feel alone, but after a call with my NCT teacher, I felt light as rain! I am still in touch with my NCT group, it's amazing what you can learn from one another so I will always be grateful for that. I have met some lifelong friends via the classes and will always recommend to my friends when they become parents."

Breastfeeding and infant feeding support

At NCT, we know just how important it is that new parents can access timely, skilled and specialist support with feeding their baby. That's why we are committed to continuing to train specialist breastfeeding counsellors and skilled breastfeeding peer supporters, and to support them to provide a range of accessible and timely services for families.

In the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic, community drop-ins were forced to close, health visiting services were disrupted, or even re-deployed, and social distancing restrictions meant that family and friends couldn't provide practical and emotional support in the home.

We heard how new parents were finding it incredibly hard to access breastfeeding support and that this was impacting their feeding experiences, compounding feelings of anxiety and isolation.

Specialist support from NCT breastfeeding counsellors

We prioritised breastfeeding and infant feeding support as a key component of our response to the pandemic – maintaining our infant feeding line and supporting services to shift online where possible.

NCT's breastfeeding counsellors adapted quickly to continue to provide invaluable specialist support by phone, video and online, and saw a significant increase in demand for their services.

From antenatal breastfeeding sessions and community drop-ins facilitated on Zoom, to WhatsApp support groups and our infant feeding line, 271 breastfeeding counsellors supported over 75,000 parents with preparation and support for feeding their babies in 2020-21.



Supporting women with care and kindness



Working during the pandemic as an NCT Breastfeeding Counsellor has been eye opening and sad. The pandemic has really highlighted how fragile our maternity systems and health visiting services are in the UK. At the start of the pandemic, women were getting less home visits and support due to fear of Covid-19 transmission, but over time it shifted to a general sense of social isolation and now many having to self-isolate.

The calls we have taken on the infant feeding line over the last year have included the typical requests for support, for example for babies struggling to latch, but also an increase in mothers experiencing mental health issues, often due to loneliness, financial worries and lack of support. This is a complex situation and women in general seem disproportionately disadvantaged. I'm glad we've been there for them, to listen and support, and help them access what other support was available.

Hannah Ashford, NCT breastfeeding counsellor.

Vital support on the NCT infant feeding line

NCT's infant feeding line provides free support from 8am until midnight every day of the week, all year round. NCT breastfeeding counsellors use their person-centred counselling skills to support callers by listening and offering relevant information and signposting – whether parents are breastfeeding, formula feeding or a bit of both.

During 2020-21, 7,631 calls were made to the infant feeding line – 20% higher than during the previous year. We ran an appeal during early stages of the pandemic, raising £40,000 to help us to continue to fund the service during what was a very challenging time for the charity financially.

> *"I feel tonnes better now as I didn't have a clue what I was doing and I kept asking Dr Google but it's so much better to talk to someone who knows something about this."*

> ***"You've been a bit of a lifesaver. I feel like I know what I'm doing now."***

> *"It is so reassuring to know that we can call so late at night as things get stressful at that time."*



Parents supported on the NCT Infant Feeding Line.



Community support for breastfeeding

NCT breastfeeding counsellors adapted quickly to shift their usual community drop-ins or one-to-one support online.

In a matter of weeks, over 30 Baby Cafés or branch drop-ins across the UK adapted their regular in-person services to provide high quality, specialist support remotely, going on to support over 5,000 parents during the year.

Ten of the drop-in services were able to secure grant funding to either set-up or continue running community breastfeeding or postnatal services. National Lottery Awards for All has been an invaluable source of grant income, along with other local community grant providers, some of whom provided Covid-19-specific funds.

Parents were able to attend through a mix of online group support sessions and one-to-one calls. This varied and flexible support has continued, with parents sharing their appreciation for the support.



> *"I had my second baby at home in the midst of lockdown. He was extremely tongue-tied but using the techniques you taught me I managed to make it through and he continued to gain weight until his tongue tie was fixed. Thanks for having me in the group. I long for the days of support groups and meeting other new parents but, for now, the online world and sense of community really helps."*
>
> Mum who attended NCT Malvern Hills Branch breastfeeding drop-in.

> *"Such a great support and helped me to continue feeding. Great to have a safe space to say breastfeeding is hard and then be supported to keep going."*
>
> Mum attending NCT breastfeeding drop-in in Northern Ireland.

Within our commissioned Baby Cafés in Southampton and Hounslow specifically, there are strong partnerships with other health care professionals who all work together to provide support to parents. These strong working relationships have thrived and strengthened during the pandemic, despite support being delivered remotely.

> *"The service provided was invaluable for me, and she has continued to support me and my baby (and thus our wider family) throughout the first six months of breastfeeding. Her empathy, understanding and deep experience of her profession are so very apparent – and to have her as a support for me as new mothers is something I will always be grateful for."*
>
> Mum attending NCT Twickenham and Hounslow breastfeeding drop-in.

> *"On behalf of the Health Visiting Team in Hounslow, I would like to express our thanks to the NCT Baby Café Team for the excellent work you provide. Your breastfeeding counsellors at the Children's Centres especially, have been a support and asset to the Health Visiting Team.*
>
> *The past 14 months have been extraordinarily difficult and challenging for everybody trying to work safely whilst supporting mums and babies to the best of their ability. Our Health Visiting team are delighted to continue to support you with this fantastic work."*
>
> Clinical Service Manager – Hounslow Health Visiting Team.



Breastfeeding counsellors at NCT Twickenham and Hounslow

Breastfeeding peer support

Alongside statutory and specialist support, trained breastfeeding peer supporters play an important role in supporting mothers through active listening, offering evidence-based information and signposting, and creating networks of social support.

We are grateful to local councils in Southampton, Bradford and Peterborough for funding breastfeeding peer support services for families, and to the Scottish government for funding the service across Lothian and Glasgow. During 2020-21, these projects supported 3,626 women with feeding their baby.

In Bradford, women who consent antenatally receive proactive postnatal telephone support from NCT Bradford Breastfeeding Buddies service. At 6-8 weeks, 78% of women contacted were still giving breastmilk, considerably higher than the 49% for the district in general.

These services are in addition to breastfeeding peer support services funded through local NCT branches, including a new cohort of breastfeeding peer supporters trained in Yeovil during Autumn 2020 - thanks to funding from National Lottery Awards for All.

> *"I've been given confidence in my feeding by the group and am so grateful to be feeding/comforting my little boy as I type this after his vaccinations today. I hope other new mums are aware that this fantastic support is available. I was a bit nervous about the zoom meeting initially, but everyone was really approachable. A big thank you from me and my baby boy."*

Mum who attended Lothian Breastfeeding Buddies.

> *"Thanks for organising this – it's great to have online classes etc but this was the first interactive zoom I had with new mums and great to have the support from you, the peer supporters and the health visitor! Great to have my questions answered as they came up! I recommended the group to another mum who I met while I was in hospital and I think she is still hoping to join tomorrow!"*

Mum who attended an online session in Greater Glasgow and Clyde.

Unlocking in-person community breastfeeding support

In the second half of the year, we were able to restart some in-person breastfeeding support, in line with national guidance and exemptions for parent support. We developed Covid-19 safe operating procedures and activity-based risk assessments, implementing a booking system to manage group sizes and social distancing.

Though the requirement for social distancing and mask wearing meant that support couldn't be provided with usual ease, women attending really appreciated the opportunity for in-person support and breastfeeding counsellors and peer supporters reported a strengthening of services by being able to provide a blend of in-person and online support.



NCT peer supporters heading on to a postnatal ward in NCT Lothian

Opening up access to community breastfeeding support

During the early stages of the pandemic, NCT Baby Cafés and breastfeeding drop-ins delivered breastfeeding support remotely. Recognising the need for in-person support alongside the digital offering, we prioritised these services in our phased programme of unlock, developing safe operating procedures to re-open community support from November 2020 and supporting breastfeeding counsellors to restart at a time that felt comfortable for them and their local community.



Venue site visit before returning a Southampton Baby Café to in-person delivery

> *"It's lovely to see other mums and babies locally again especially after we had interacted (online) so much because of lockdown. Thank you."*
>
> New Mum attending Aberdeen City & Shire Branch Early Days Drop-in.

It's been great to be able to support parents in-person again, this is so valuable for the most common issues around positioning and attachment. Parents have been really appreciative and have also enjoyed the opportunity to meet other new parents in person. Support from the central staff team meant that I felt confident that we'd done what was needed to make it as safe as possible.

Megan Stephenson,
NCT Breastfeeding Counsellor,
NCT Cambridge Branch.

In the spring 2021 I started unlocking the breastfeeding support group in Petersfield. I followed the NCT Safe Operating Procedure, making sure the venue was covid-secure with a risk assessment and then assessing how many parents and babies I could safely welcome into the space. It felt amazing to be in person and I'm glad to say that the room layout and one-way system all worked well. I had been worried about facemasks being a barrier to communication but actually, conversation flowed because people were so pleased to see each other! I have had a branch volunteer present each week and it has proved invaluable in welcoming people when I've been providing feeding support with a mum. Word is definitely out now and it's getting more regular attendees. I have also found it an enormous support for my work with breastfeeding mums as being able to offer them a chance to see me in person has helped a lot.

Polly Baynham-Hughes,
NCT Breastfeeding Counsellor,
NCT Petersfield & Liss Branch.



Priority 2 – growing our reputation in digital support

Reaching more parents through digital support

Trusted information brought to life with lived experiences

During the year, we saw over 5 million visits to the information centre on our website from expectant and new parents seeking trusted information on pregnancy, birth and early parenthood – with traffic doubling during the first 3 months of the pandemic.

We responded continually to keep our website up to date with the latest Covid-19 related content and saw increased engagement on our social media channels as parents engaged with us on the issues they were facing. Sharing real life experience through our 'pregnancy in a pandemic' series helped bring our content to life.

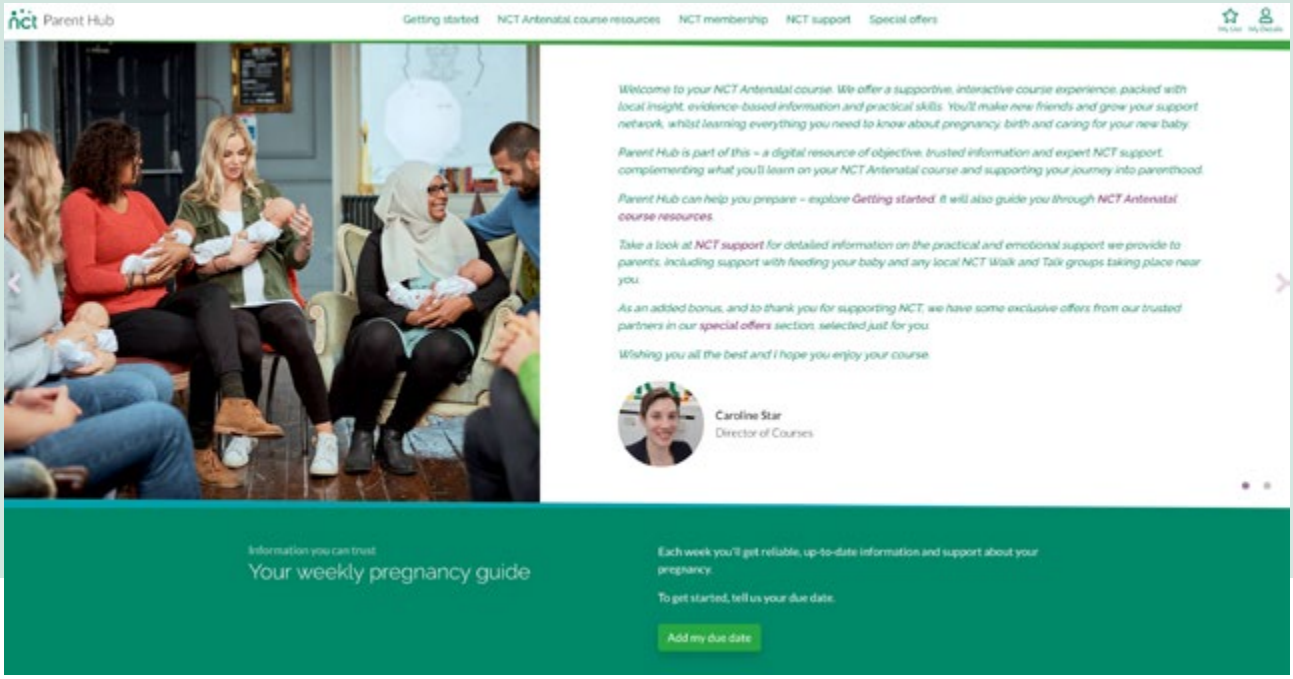
As the pandemic progressed, we responded to the different issues and themes that emerged. In May, new research demonstrated that women from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds were more likely to be hospitalised with Covid-19, and we shared public health messaging to raise awareness and encourage women to seek support or information. We also developed content on coronavirus and employment rights during pregnancy and maternity leave, as the reality of the furlough scheme and risk to employment became apparent.

We helped parents navigate legislation changes, so they understood the support they could access and what exemptions were available to them. Towards the end of the year, attention shifted to the vaccination programme, and we have supported public health campaigns to provide evidence-based content to support informed decision-making.

A 'go to' place for trusted information

In January 2021, we launched an exciting new development – Parent Hub, an exclusive digital platform for parents attending NCT Antenatal courses. Informed by parent and practitioner insight, the new Hub presents our trusted, evidence-based information and signposting in one easy-access place, mapped against the themes of our antenatal course.

Early feedback from parents has been fantastic, demonstrating how this digital resource has provided the 'go to' place for trusted information, helped to answer their questions, consolidate discussions and enhance their learning.



> *"I think all the additional information is absolutely fantastic, it gave us time to look at it and digest without having to look at things straight away and so we could absorb what was going on in the sessions."*

> ***"It is simple and easy to use and understand. Sections are clear and can find what you are looking for easily."***

> *"Has all the information you might need and saves you googling all the horror stories/mixed information on the web."*

Parents accessing information on the new NCT Parent Hub.

Digital innovation

In April 2020, our partnership with Peppy Health and Lactation Consultants of Great Britain secured NHSX 'Techforce19' funding to trial peppy, a digital platform matching perinatal support to vulnerable expectant and new parents during lockdown.

Engagement

10,000 applications to participate were received in three days

1,075 parents supported during the two-week pilot

Average user feedback rating of **8.8/10**

Net promoter score of **60**

£916m potential annual saving to the NHS based on self-reported usage of their services



NCT breastfeeding counsellors and postnatal practitioners involved in the pilot were quick to get going on this fast-paced project, offering chat support, video consultations and facilitated small group sessions to parents via the app. Of participants with a mental wellbeing score corresponding to 'possible depression or anxiety', 48% had moved into the 'normal/moderate' range once the pilot was complete.

> *"It was an enormous privilege to deliver such care and support to new and expectant parents during the COVID19 crisis. The impact we have seen is beyond all expectations. We simply couldn't have done this without our project partners, NCT and LCGB, and most importantly the incredible practitioner community – you mobilised at speed, adapted your normal ways of working and provided vital support and love that made the pilot the success it was. Thank you so much!"*
>
> Max Landry, Mridula Pore and Evan Harris, founders of Peppy Health.

Over the last year, we learnt a lot about how the skills and experience of NCT practitioners can support parents on digital platforms to overcome some of the barriers to support – particularly in the early postnatal period.

We see significant opportunity to build on this learning to really embrace digital and take a more blended approach in the future.



Outdoor parent support at NCT Chester

Priority 3 – protecting and re-building thriving community activity

Parents working together in their local communities to support other parents is one of the most impactful, far-reaching aspects of our work. Being a voice for parents and influencing policy, especially for vulnerable parents, is how we drive change nationally and for parents in the future.

Volunteers supporting parents in their local community

NCT's network of over 5,000 volunteers represent and support communities of parents all over the UK and Channel Islands. Through a range of local activities, events and services, they help parents to feel part of a supportive community and improve their wellbeing. Their community fundraising activities support the work of the charity both locally and nationally. They are passionate advocates for parents, families and our charity.



During Covid-19, NCT volunteers demonstrated their creativity and commitment in adapting to continue free community support online, recognising the sudden and significant isolation that new parents were experiencing. The regional volunteer team stepped up to support volunteers in their parent support and fundraising efforts, while raising the profile of the value of volunteering during this time.

Without the usual network of community groups and activities, or practical and emotional support from friends and family, parents appreciated the online provision that quickly emerged – from online Bumps & Babies groups, evening socials and craft sessions, to postnatal and breastfeeding support groups with specialist NCT practitioners.

We are incredibly grateful for the invaluable support we received from The National Lottery, local councils, supermarkets and community grant organisations who financially supported our community response.

NCT Walk & Talks – a lifeline through the most challenging months

By September 2020, it was clear that the impact of the pandemic and lockdown restrictions on new and expectant parents was huge. Though online activities were filling a gap, we knew that we needed to find a way to enable parents to meet safely to boost their wellbeing.

Building on the existing idea of volunteer-led walks, we launched NCT Walk & Talk. A simple way for parents to meet outdoors, connect and share their experiences of the pandemic and parenthood.

Nothing could have prepared us for quite how quickly Walk & Talk would grow. Within a couple of weeks, it was clear what a lifeline the groups were to new parents. We knew that we had to find a way to make them accessible to as many parents as possible.

Overnight we developed a new volunteer pathway which made it possible to recruit volunteers in areas where we did not have an existing local team. These volunteers were supported by our central staff team to implement Covid-specific safe operating procedures to mitigate risks and keep everyone safe. Walks were able to continue throughout Winter 2020 and the challenging early months of 2021, under specific guidance or exemptions for parent support in England and Scotland. Over 27,000 people attended walks from the launch in September 2020 to March 2021.



Walk & Talk at NCT Hastings & Rother

> *"As a new parent facing a harsh winter and at the height of restrictions, there was not a lot of support around. There were no baby classes and not a lot of ways to make new local friends. I stumbled across the walks on a community FB page. They were a lifeline, I made 4 great friends and we now meet regularly. They've been so supportive and live locally which has been really important."*
>
> Kat, mum attending a Walk & Talk in London.

> *I can't put into words the difference and impact these walks had on my mental health. As a first time mum having my son at the beginning of the pandemic, I'd had many struggles. Simply having an hour of time with other parents outside was amazing.*
>
> Cassandra, attending a Walk & Talk in Manchester.

> *Helped me stop panicking about so many things as I felt that only I was experiencing the same problems, challenges with bringing up a baby for the first time. I now have someone I can share experiences with, good and bad. Don't feel like I'm facing the challenges alone.*
>
> Rebecca, attending a Walk & Talk in Huddersfield.

After parents joined a Walk & Talk, 93% felt less isolated, 94% felt their mood had improved, 70% felt less anxious and 89% felt part of a community.

In the wind, rain, snow and sunshine, our volunteers have been there to welcome over parents with warm, non-judgmental support. This includes over 700 new volunteers, many of whom were new to NCT and leading walks in areas where we hadn't previously had any presence.

> *I volunteered as I wanted to support local parents. I had noticed there wasn't much activities or groups for young children and parents to attend, especially that were free and suitable for parents of more than 1 child under school age.*



> ***As a single parent, with little to no help from the dads, I rely on emotional support from peers, it really helps to know you're going through similar struggles and can have a friend to chat with. Going to groups/meet ups helps widen that social bubble, to help parents feel less isolated. I also believe it helps children with speech development, social skills and many more, to be around other children.***

> *This is the reasons why I felt it would be beneficial to start up a local group where I could get some parents together along with their children to have a little chat and well-paced stroll to help parents feel less isolated.*
>
> Amanda, volunteer leading Walk & Talks in Cornwall.

Preston mum revives local NCT branch

It has been fantastic to see new volunteers setting up NCT events in areas where we hadn't been active for many years, motivated by their experiences as a new parent in a pandemic.

Anna Sky Hulton, along with several other Preston-based volunteers, has revitalised her local NCT branch which had been dormant for four years. Anna Sky talks about what motivated her to volunteer with NCT and the difference they are now making locally:

"We decided to relaunch the Preston branch after meeting on an NCT course in 2020. Despite being on Zoom many of us kept in touch and strong friendships formed. We wanted other parents-to-be and new parents to benefit from a support network and we already have lots of activities planned, including Walk and Talks, which are available to anyone and free."



Anna Sky with her baby



"Early on in my pregnancy I knew I wanted to do an NCT course. A few friends had recommended it to me and met lifelong pals through it. Although I have a number of friends in the area, most had older kids so I liked the idea of meeting others due to have their first child. Our course was moved online due to the pandemic but the group bonded really well."

"We had a WhatsApp group set up via our practitioner which allowed us to talk through concerns outside of the classes and, when restrictions allowed, we met up in person. We found ourselves opening up about childbirth and the ups and downs of being a new parent."

"We come from all walks of life, professions, and backgrounds, but we all have one thing in common and I feel very lucky to have met everyone."

The Preston branch is setting up a Baby Bundles scheme for local families and has been awarded £1,000 from Anwyl Homes Lancashire to help.

Helping parents access essential items

Sadly, the pandemic meant that the demand and need for our Baby Bundle services has been huge. Currently operating in 14 areas across the country, NCT Baby Bundles provide much needed essentials to families in need through close working with referral partners and professional agencies.

Our incredible volunteers adapted quickly to implement new safe operating procedures to keep services open and operating safely. Many sling and nappy libraries also continued during the pandemic, helping parents access to essential items to help manage with a new baby at home during a challenging and isolating time.



NCT West Sussex Coastal

Little Bundles Baby Bank Chichester & Arun

In 2020, the NCT West Sussex Coastal volunteer team received and responded to over 325 referrals.

"*Thank you so much for all your kindness. My health visitor done a referral for me and she has just dropped the stuff over and to say I cried when she left would be an understatement. I am truly thankful for the generous and lovely items I received xxx.*"

"Thank you will never be enough from me. I reached out for a shoebox, and you gave me Christmas. I don't have the words to express my gratitude to you all. Today I realised how much I miss hugs. I want to squeeze you all so much. I really just cannot believe the level of everyone's generosity. You have changed my life, you really have. Knowing I have such kindness surrounding me, from strangers no less, has helped me through a dark few weeks and has now made Christmas in our new home extra special. Along with the gifts, you have given me the strength and hope. I will try to pass on this kindness where and when I can. I will pay it forward, I promise. Merry Christmas."

Mums supported by the NCT West Sussex Coastal Baby Bundles project.

"The team have been amazing, they have ensured that we have a constant stock of "kit" for women who are vulnerable and may not be able to afford the basic essentials for coming into hospital and having a baby. The bags of goodies they provide have been shared with women unable to provide for themselves, including teenage mums, women fleeing domestic abuse and asylum seekers. As well as women who just need an overnight bag as they were not expecting to stay in hospital.

The team from baby bundles have continued to support throughout the pandemic and have gone out of their way discussing their service with our staff."

Head of Midwifery, Worthing & St Richards Hospitals, NHS University Hospitals Sussex.

Support from specialist practitioners

We were pleased to work in partnership with Royal Berkshire, Countess of Chester and Shropshire and Telford NHS Foundation Trusts to adapt our commissioned Preparation for Birth and Beyond antenatal courses to virtual facilitation. This helped 3,296 more parents access free antenatal education and alleviated the pressure on NHS colleagues busy managing the impact of the pandemic on maternity services.

> *"The content was really engaging and focused on some really key areas that I had been unclear on before. I had the opportunity to ask questions which is something I don't feel I can do with any other professional at the moment, everything is so rushed and impersonal. The practitioner was friendly, approachable and very knowledgeable and enthusiastic, it was great to have that time with her – also made a wonderful change from google!"*
>
> Mum attending an online antenatal course at Royal Berkshire.

We embraced digital to offer Introduction to Solids workshops in new locations and to more parents, seeing growth in this service and positive feedback about the online format.

We also worked with postnatal practitioners to adapt our Early Days courses to an online format. Parents attending have had a really positive experience, appreciating the safe space for support and information during the early weeks and months with their new baby.

> *"This course has been so beneficial for me as I start my journey into motherhood. The fact it continued at this stressful time has been invaluable. Now more than ever, it has been a lifeline to chat to other mums with young babies. Having the sessions online works, as our babies are in their own environment – and we haven't forgotten that change of clothes or lost a hat on our way!"*
>
> Mum attending an online Early Days course.

Having had to take the difficult decision to pause our baby massage and yoga services at the start of the pandemic, we were delighted to work with the specialist practitioners involved to design and re-launch these services under a new affiliate brand. This gives greater flexibility for practitioners to promote and deliver their fantastic services locally, in a way that works for them and local parents.

The NCT doula service was also paused for most of the year, though many doulas continued to provide invaluable support through their private practice, often in a voluntary capacity. Our Education Team also supported 15 student doulas to complete their qualification with the University of Worcester. The nature of this service, involving a variety of settings and closer contact, made it more complex to restart in person. However, we were pleased to have been able to develop a safe operating procedure and approach to risk mitigation to enable several of our student doula practitioners to attend births are part of their training and development. We're looking forward to seeing more services resume as restrictions start to ease in 2021.



Perinatal programmes to tackle social isolation

Birth and Beyond Community Supporters

Running in Peterborough & Fenland, Lincolnshire and Hounslow, Birth and Beyond Community Supporters (BBCS) is a peer-support programme for new and expectant mothers experiencing particular challenges, including women who are seeking asylum, fleeing domestic violence or facing financial hardship. The services support families who are traditionally less likely to use statutory services and are at greater risk of social isolation. Volunteers are trained and supported to build trusting relationships with women, to help them access social support and wider services, and positively influence their confidence, self-esteem and emotional wellbeing.

We have been able to continue to support families during the pandemic, thanks to a grant from BBC Children in Need and funding from Hounslow Council's Thriving Community fund.

In 2020 to 2021, 162 families have been supported through the service supported by 52 volunteer peer supporters, with 45 new volunteers trained to sustain and expand the reach of the service as local communities continue to feel the impact of the pandemic.

Peterborough, Wisbech, Fenland and Lincolnshire

Services across Peterborough, Wisbech, Fenland & Lincolnshire were already difficult to access prior to the pandemic due to the rurality of some areas and barriers relating to poverty and language that are experienced by many local families. The pandemic compounded these issues with increasing feelings of isolation, fear and loneliness.

By mapping local provision and identifying gaps, the BBCS team were able to provide one-to-one and group support to parents most in need. This included volunteer-led Walk and Talks, attended by 59 new families and their 67 young children, which have reduced isolation and provided much needed social and emotional support. Volunteers are trained in active-listening and signposting, increasing parents' confidence and helping them to access health services, foodbanks, women's refuges and financial advice – so that they get the support and care they need.



> *Knowing I have had you here if I have needed to talk, with having postnatal depression with my first, I think knowing I've had that person to talk to if I needed has helped my mental health a lot even more so with Covid-19 and not being able to go and see friends and family. Or no baby groups on. So thank you very much for being there for me.*
>
> Mum accessing Birth and Beyond Community Support in Lincolnshire.



> *I used the BBCS service during my pregnancy. I was struggling with daily life, was overcome with anxiety and always focusing on the 'what if'. Having someone to talk to, along with support from the local Mental Health Team helped me to overcome my issues and improved my wellbeing. Having a peer support volunteer gave me someone to talk to when I felt like I had no one else, they never gave an opinion on my situation nor told me what to do. Instead they just listened. I was so lonely and if it wasn't for them I wouldn't have left the house.*
>
> Mum accessing Birth and Beyond Community Support in Peterborough.

Almost half of referrals to the BBCS service come from health professionals looking for trusted additional support for local families.

> *A new referral for your service and also appreciation that you are operating as a service during this time. It is wonderful to be able to share your service and what you do to support mums during this challenging time – thank you.*
>
> Practitioner in Lincolnshire referring a family to the BBCS service.

Parents in Mind

Parents in Mind (PiM) provides one-to-one, group and digital peer support to new and expectant mothers experiencing mild to moderate mental health issues. The volunteer peer supporters are all local women with lived-experience of mental health issues, who are trained to support others through active-listening, social support and signposting. An independent evaluation has demonstrated a statistically significant reduction in anxiety and depression levels for women supported through the service.

Services supporting women across our three sites in Newham, Halton and St. Helens, and Coventry and Warwickshire, have continued during the pandemic thanks to the local Clinical Commissioning Groups and Councils who have commissioned the service – working in close partnership with local community organisations and referral partners.

In 2020 to 2021:

397 women were supported by **101** Parents in Mind peer supporters

62 new volunteer peer supporters were trained to sustain and expand the reach of the service

100% of services users felt 'there is someone I can talk to who understands me'

99% of services users felt 'less isolated and alone'

96% of women felt they had a 'better understanding of where to get help if I need it'

95% of women felt that Parents in Mind 'had helped me access the services I need'

96% of women said that 'generally feel more positive' after accessing the support.

> *"The ability to be open and honest with no judgement... I'm relieved once I have spoken to PiM."*
>
> Isabelle, mum supported through Parents in Mind Halton and St Helens.

> *"Having a safe space to talk and feel supported ...It's taught me to find myself again."*
>
> Sam, mum supported through Parents in Mind Halton and St Helens.



Growing our perinatal peer support services

We have an ambition to further develop and expand our perinatal peer support services to support many more families in the future. This is part of our strategic priority to grow thriving and inclusive communities of parents supporting parents.

Through our work with consultants at Spring Impact, we have developed a roadmap to replicate our peer support model and scale up our programmes, in partnership with local community organisations. During 2021, we have been working closely with Manchester settlement, a local charity who are committed to using their skills and resources to create cycles of community change, to provide peer support training and establish the service to support women in North Manchester.

Thanks to funding from St. Helens Clinical Commissioning Group, we have also been able to innovate and expand the Parents in Mind service to support dads and partners too. The NCT service delivery team and peer support trainers have worked with dads' mental health campaigners Mark Williams and Kieran Anders from Dad Matters to inform the new training and service, based on experiences of becoming a parent and the impact on partners' mental health.

Parents in Mind partners

Catherine Briars, Parents in Mind Project Manager for Halton and St. Helens talks about the opportunity to expand the Parents in Mind service to support partners too.



Catherine Briars and some peer supporter dads

"In 2016, with funding from the Department of Health and Social Care, NCT's Parents in Mind service was developed for pregnant women and new mums, delivered by peer supporters who had struggled with their own emotional wellbeing as a new parent. The service blossomed, referral rates increased, local reputation grew and it was wonderful to see some of our service users go on to volunteer themselves."

"After huge encouragement for our work from commissioners in St Helens, we approached them to see if they would fund a two-year pilot programme of mental health peer support for partners and, aware of the definite local gap for such a service, they agreed."

"We set to work to re-design our peer support training for partners and started training a first cohort of dad peer supporters in May. We'll be offering a blend of remote and face-to-face support from September delivered by a group of game-changing dads who want to shake up some of the stale perceptions of fatherhood and mental health."

"We want to highlight how common new dads' mental health problems are and encourage men not to suffer in silence. Becoming a parent is an emotional rollercoaster, bringing with it significant challenges and we want all parents and their partners to feel safe sharing their difficulties."

"The dads in the group have been awe-inspiring: honest, courageous and resilient and will be great supporters of local fathers. It's important we sow the seeds of this work more widely, and develop support for more parents across the UK."

Rob Dillon is a local steelworker and a football coach in his spare time.

"When I first became a dad, you were expected just to get on with things. You'd often come home tired from work, then look after your wife and baby, then go back to work. I started to struggle emotionally but bottled everything up because that's what you did in those days. I now realise that's how mental health problems can worsen."

"Thankfully, things are changing for the better. The Parents in Mind training has been great and it's paying off already. A relative has a four year old daughter and I've encouraged him to open up because I know he's struggling mentally with the pressure of being a dad. Parents need to know they're not on their own and there is support out there."

Ian Houghton is a project manager from St Helens who has two daughters, one two years old, the other eight months.

"It's not always easy being a dad. Especially if you're tired and anxious and trying to keep up with work. So you try and put on a brave face and pretend you're 100% in control."

"I struggled with anxiety and depression but I managed to get through it and I want to help other dads in a similar position. I've really enjoyed the training through the project, we've formed a very supportive group and we look forward to working with other dads in the community."

In January 2021, we were delighted to be awarded a £471,000 grant from the Department of Health and Social Care's Starting Well fund for Newham Nurture – a new community partnership with Alternatives Trust, The Magpie Project and Compost London. The partnership is co-producing and expanding perinatal support for women from low income, migrant and marginalised backgrounds in the London Borough of Newham.

Newham Nurture – coproduction at its heart

The Newham Nurture programme builds on our well-established Parents in Mind project in the borough, to expand perinatal support through the provision of drop-in antenatal education, breastfeeding and postnatal support, and counselling and family link services, alongside the existing perinatal peer support service.

The programme has a strong focus on co-production, accessibility and inclusion to ensure a meaningful response to the specific barriers and challenges that marginalised women experience in gaining support and engaging with perinatal services. The programme includes access to psychological support, recognising that many of the women have complex needs and have experienced trauma, including those who are survivors of trafficking, domestic violence, seeking asylum or experiencing homelessness.



Three generations at NCT Newham

With coproduction at its heart, the programme's steering group comprises of local women from Black, Asian and minority ethnic and migrant backgrounds with lived experience of local perinatal services. Our coproduction approach permeates through all aspects of the service ensuring the service is inclusive, accessible and person-centred, and builds on the strengths of existing community networks and cultural assets.

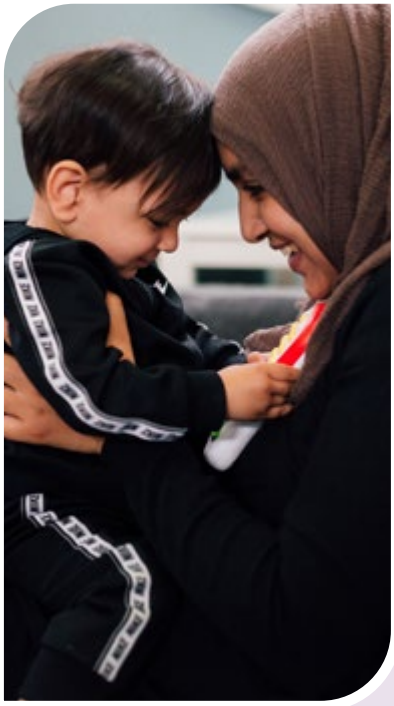
> *"There are many people in our community who have no-one to turn to due to language barriers, social issues or poor mental health who just need a friend to hear and understand them."*
>
> Bulon, peer supporter for
> Newham Nurture and Parents in Mind.

To work with our steering group of eleven women in recent months has been extremely valuable and rewarding, both for our team and the design of the service. I've seen a heartfelt openness amongst the women to acknowledge their own trauma and hardships, and share their diversity of experiences within their perinatal care. This has been testament to their commitment to seeing positive improvements made so that women in our community don't have to overcome the same unacceptable barriers that they faced. Their lived experience and rich insight have shaped every aspect of the programme, with learning implemented across the design of the services, as well as staff training and peer support training.

Belinda Ngugi, Newham Nurture
Perinatal Programme Manager, NCT.

Since inception, NCT has worked collaboratively with Newham's Maternity and Children's Health Services, supporting partner agencies to connect with and support families. We deeply value the role that our voluntary and community sector partners play in meeting the needs of our community. We see NCT and their consortium of partners as a significant player in helping us realise our ambition to make Newham the best place for children and families.

Jason Strelitz, Director of Public
Health, London Borough of Newham.



Alternatives' holistic and therapeutic work with vulnerable women around pregnancy and birth has shown us the extent of the unmet need for perinatal education and support in Newham. We are delighted to be collaborating with these excellent partners on this new project. It has the potential to make a huge impact on the wellbeing of women in our borough who do not currently have access to services and give their children a healthy and secure start in life.

Elizabeth Booker, Director,
Alternatives Trust East London.

We are over the moon to have the opportunity to work with NCT and local partners Alternatives and Compost London to bring vital perinatal services to mums from migrant or marginalised backgrounds. We are excited by the prospect of a bespoke, targeted and meaningful response to the specific barriers and challenges they face gaining support around childbirth and early motherhood.

Jane Williams, CEO and Founder, The Magpie Project.

Campaigning and influencing for change

We've maintained our influencing and campaign work throughout the year, making the case for parents' rights and needs during an incredibly challenging time. We have amplified parents' voices by working in partnership, including our One Voice alliance alongside the Royal College of Midwives, Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, and other important alliances for pregnancy, maternity, breastfeeding and babies.

During the early stages of the pandemic, we worked hard at national level on the response to Covid-19 in relation to maternity services and support for expectant and new parents.

Working closely with the Pregnancy and Baby Charities Network, we had significant input to discussions and efforts to protect and support women and their families at a time of heightened anxiety and re-organisation of services. We were also part of NHS England's campaign to let the public know that the NHS is still there for them, concerned that people weren't attending services when they needed to. We pushed for change in Wales, where guidelines were particularly restrictive for new parents and leading to significant isolation.

We worked with colleagues at NCVO, ACEVO, the Department of Health and Social Care and NHS England to build the case for the charity sector at large, and for pregnancy and new parenthood as a particularly vulnerable time.

Throughout the year, we maintained a strong focus on highlighting inequalities, influencing externally and working with others to bring about better experiences and more equitable outcomes. MBRRACE-UK reports have demonstrated stark inequalities for women of Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds, and that our health and social care system does not work well for women experiencing challenging and complex circumstances. To drive action to end these inequalities, we are working as members of the RCOG's Race Equality Taskforce, supporting Birthright's racial justice inquiry and amplifying FiveXMore's campaign and advocacy work.

Our work as part of the MHRA Medicines in Pregnancy and Breastfeeding consortium was particularly important this year, in relation to the Covid-19 vaccination, giving us opportunity to highlight the anxieties and pressures that pregnant women were experiencing and the urgent need for clear evidence and information. We have also added our voice to the call for urgent action and funding to recover overstretched workforces in maternity and health visiting services and called for wider commitments in relation to postnatal care.

Through roundtables and ongoing discussion with the Royal Foundation, we informed their landmark Big Change Starts Small report and the launch of the Centre for Early Childhood. As a member of the First 1001 Days movement, we have campaigned on the need to protect babies and their parents from harm during the pandemic, highlighting the baby blindspot and appealing for the government to invest in catch-up funding for babies.



The significant impact of the pandemic for women, parents and babies, as well as for the services supporting them, means that our voice and influencing work is as important as ever.

Hidden Half campaign re-visited

In March 2021, we revisited our Hidden Half campaign to see if new mums were getting the six-week check they that was promised, after we successfully secured funding in England for a dedicated GP maternal postnatal check.

We surveyed women in England who'd had a baby in the last 12 months and were disappointed to find that a quarter of the mums we talked to were still not being asked about their emotional or mental health at their six-week GP check-up, with the focus increasingly on the baby. We will be continuing to highlight this issue through our communications and policy work to raise awareness of the issue and ensure dedicated time and space for this crucial appointment.

Kate Silverton, a first-time mum from Poole, Dorset, who helped with our #HiddenHalf campaign, shares her experience of the postnatal check.



Kate Silverton with her baby

"I had a difficult birth and, as it was lockdown, there was very little help with recovery. A midwife came round to my home but, as she talked over me, I didn't feel very comfortable with her."

"I did have an appointment with my GP after about six or eight weeks. The doctor asked: 'You're okay aren't you?', then it felt like I was being shoved out of the door! No-one asked me about my mental health or checked my c-section scar or my weight."

"I felt quite traumatised after my labour. Luckily I could talk to my husband and I'd like to think I was clued up enough about mental health to be able to recognise if I was becoming ill."

"I saw the NCT post on Facebook, asking for people's experiences of their six-week postnatal check-up with their GP. I didn't even know such a thing existed until I saw the post!"

"I think it would have been extremely helpful to have been asked about my mental health at this point. It would have enabled me to open up and discuss the concerns I was having and help with my anxiety.

"My story was used on the Huffington Post website and also in a Guardian article. I was really happy to help out with the #HiddenHalf campaign and, hopefully, my experiences can help to improve services for other women in future."

Working together to strengthen our charity

Ensuring a safe and sustainable re-start for in-person activities

At the start of the year, little did we know how long the pandemic would go on for or quite what the future impact would be for our communities and the way we deliver services.

In the summer of 2020, following the announcements of easing of restrictions, we set out our approach for re-starting services in a safe and sustainable way. This approach has withstood the test of time, enabling us to navigate numerous guidance updates and varying levels of restriction and lockdown.

At every decision point we continue to take a number of factors into account:

Guidance and legislation – we're continually reviewing this across the UK and Channel Islands. We regularly talk to colleagues at the Royal College of Midwives and Royal College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology to discuss how guidance is evolving specifically for pregnant women and new parents.

Safety - this is our number one priority, for parents and for staff, students, volunteers and practitioners. In particular, women in their third trimester were identified as clinically vulnerable at the start of the pandemic.

Support – we need to be confident we can provide volunteers, practitioners and staff with the safe operating procedures, activity-based risk assessments and support they need to be able to offer support in a way that feels safe and acceptable. This has meant focusing on doing a few high impact activities well, before moving on to the next.

Sustainability – we need to be confident we can keep everything running smoothly and safely and respond quickly to any change in guidance or outbreaks of Covid-19. This helps us to avoid stopping and starting services, but instead focus on restarting those activities where we have greatest confidence in the longevity of our operational approach.

Informed by emerging evidence on transmission and the risks of Covid-19, we focused first on contactless high impact activities for example Baby Bundles for families experiencing financial hardship and outdoor social support activities, before moving on to support and services taking place at home or indoors.

Clear communications and support for our volunteers, practitioners and staff has been critical, to ensure everyone felt confident and comfortable in their role.

Shared learning across the sector

We were pleased to work with the Breastfeeding Network, in collaboration with an alliance of supporting organisations and in consultation with Public Health England, to develop a guide to re-starting support services for expectant and new parents during Covid-19. The guide provides a set of principles and considerations for organisations to work through so that they can decide when and how to restart their face-to-face support services safely and with confidence.



This work recognised the commitment and capability across the third sector to ensure community support thrives, and that collaboration and shared learning is more important than ever.

We are grateful to all of the individuals and organisations who contributed to the principles set out in this guide.

Equity, diversity and inclusion

Core to our new strategy for recovery is the explicit aim of becoming a more inclusive, open and empowering charity so that we can support all parents, whoever they are, and whatever their situation.

We are committed to equity, diversity and inclusion across all that we do – in our support and services, employment practices, volunteering, fundraising, communications and policy work. We know that to meet this commitment and to drive real change, we need to face into the reality that inequality, discrimination and racism are systemic. We have a responsibility to our beneficiaries, and everyone at NCT, to examine our own culture, practices and policies, while highlighting inequalities and working with others to bring about more equitable outcomes.

In July 2020, Trustees approved a reinvigorated equity, diversity and inclusion plan, and we subsequently appointed *brap* as an independent inclusion advisor and learning partner. brap is a charity transforming the way we think and do equality, supporting organisations, communities, and cities with meaningful approaches to learning, change, research, and engagement. A new Directorate focused on People, Education & Inclusion has been established and the NCT Diversity Network has been set up to help inform and drive action. Thank you to everyone who has been involved so far in this important work.

We made good progress during the year, reviewing our recruitment practices and pursuing a positive action programme to further diversify our governance and leadership make up and practices; developing anti-racism and anti-discrimination training for our people; embedding a focus on anti-discriminatory practice, including a specific module, in our new model of student education; and setting up a review of our quality and feedback processes from an equity and inclusion perspective.

We have also committed to undertake the charity's first comprehensive all-community Diversity Audit to provide strong baseline data from which to further develop our equity, diversity and inclusion priorities over the next 3-5 years.



NCT Perinatal Link Worker and Senior Counsellor in Newham with multi-lingual books donated by UK Reads

The future of volunteering

The development of a new volunteer strategy was approved by Trustees as a key strategic project for 2021, as part of our strategy for recovery and renewal. Recognising the impact of Covid-19 on our volunteer-led parent support and community fundraising activities, as well as trends in volunteering nationally, we wanted to take the opportunity to re-imagine how we best support parents in local communities.

In February 2021, we commissioned Tayo Medupin and Amelia Woods of Hello Brave to work with us on the Future of Volunteering project, powered by an Action Team of ten staff and volunteers.



A young volunteer at NCT Worcester & Droitwich

The team set out to develop a vision for volunteering to engage and inspire volunteers across the UK and Channel Islands, and to develop an action-orientated strategy to help prioritise investments of attention, time and money over the next 6 to 18 months.

The fast paced and high-quality work of the Action Team involved speaking to people from across our community, including parents, volunteers, staff, trustees and practitioners.

The work shone a spotlight on the impact that NCT volunteers can have for parents by building strong, inclusive networks that boost wellbeing through warm, non-judgmental support. The recommendations of the project were clear; to unlock the power of volunteering we need to start with the foundations, and the changes that make a difference to volunteers and parents on the ground.

It also highlighted the barrier that our requirements of mandatory membership were causing to volunteer recruitment and inclusion. That is why we are delighted to have already put the first Future of Volunteering recommendation into action and removed all membership requirements for volunteer roles.

In the next phase of work, we are looking forward to building on the team's inspiring mix of collaboration and coproduction to explore how we can develop volunteer roles that make it easier for volunteers to sustain and scale safe quality support for parents. We'll also review the support we offer volunteers right across NCT, to help power local volunteering every step of the way.

Future of Volunteering Action Team

The Future of Volunteering project was powered by an Action Team, bringing together ten volunteers and staff to plan, research and analyse, and make recommendations for change. Adilla shares her experience of working with the team.

"I cannot thank you enough for choosing me to be part of the Future of Volunteering action team. It was an exciting and worthwhile experience for both NCT and myself. Not only did I meet passionate people who care about NCT and our role in supporting parents, I also learnt a hell of a lot. I believe the team also learnt a lot from each other.



Adilla

Working with Hello Brave ensured we were on track, and they encouraged the ideas to come from us, giving us all autonomy, which worked perfectly – their ways of working were first class.

We all know teamwork is important and essential to accomplish overall objectives and goals, and working with this team was no exception. The diverse perspectives enabled us to come up with winning innovations and ideas. The vast experience across the team ensured I learned a lot along the project timeline and contributed heavily towards the end strategies.

I can honestly say in all my time working in the corporate world, this has to be the most meaningful project I have worked on, as volunteering helps parents feel good about themselves and know they are not on their own."

Adilla, Volunteer Action Team member.

Training NCT practitioners of the future

NCT partners with the University of Worcester to train and develop the practitioners of the future. All of our teaching and learning for student practitioners moved online at the start of the year, with NCT tutors doing an outstanding job to support 205 students to continue their studies and to welcome 67 new students to our courses.

From tutorials, study days and drop-in sessions to online assessments and exams, students responded brilliantly to the challenges of year, balancing studying against the wider impact of the pandemic on their personal and professional lives.

In 2020 to 2021, 87 students completed qualifications to support parents:

- **43** antenatal practitioners
- **34** breastfeeding counsellors
- **21** postnatal practitioners
- **9** yoga for pregnancy teachers
- **9** mother and baby yoga teachers
- **15** doulas
- **15** baby massage teachers

In July, NCT Education received a glowing External Examiner's report, noting the quality of learning and assessment, as well as the detailed and constructive feedback provided to students to support their learning. Our tutors clearly provide an excellent educational experience that we feel very proud of.

> *"There is a focus on reflection, communication and practical skills which ensures students will be well equipped to be practitioners, rather than just understanding theory."*
>
> **Amy Brown, Professor of Public Health at Swansea University, External Examiner for NCT training pathways at the University of Worcester.**

In December, we were delighted to see our education partner, the University of Worcester, win the inaugural Times Higher Education award for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. The judges were impressed with "the University's sustained, whole institutional approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, which places students at the centre".

We're looking forward to continuing to work with the University of Worcester on our shared commitment to providing education pathways with a strong focus on accessibility, inclusion and anti-discriminatory practice.



The new NCT Perinatal Education and Practice Certificate in Higher Education

Alongside this ongoing teaching and learning, we restarted work to develop our new model of education, having paused for six months while we focused on responding to Covid-19.

Our Board of Trustees had previously approved a Level 4 Certificate in Higher Education pathway with the University of Worcester to train future practitioners to facilitate NCT Antenatal. We took the opportunity to review our previous assumptions and recommendations based on learning from the pandemic, strengthening elements of blended learning to ensure a good balance of online and face-to-face learning.

In January 2021, we were delighted to launch student recruitment for this new course, titled the NCT Perinatal Education and Practice Certificate in Higher Education – a comprehensive, cohesive and vibrant training programme, with a strong in-practice element to bring the learning to life. A key focus is on anti-discriminatory practice, embedded both within the modules and through a specific unit co-developed with our inclusion and learning partner, brap.

The course was validated by the University of Worcester with the Chair of the validation event – Richard Woolley, Professor of Education and Inclusion at the University of Worcester – outlining areas of notable good practice worthy of commendation and dissemination.

Our collaborative and team approach was praised, along with our creative and innovative approaches and our 'passion, vision and clear philosophical outlook'. Our colleagues at the university also spoke highly of the quality and strength of our course and our teaching, and the dedication of tutors to their students.

Recruitment to the course was in full swing by the end of the year and we're looking forward to welcoming our first cohort of students to the new course in September 2021.

Knowledge, skills and qualities to plug the postnatal gap

We have also made good progress with the second stage of work on our model of education, to develop a training pathway for practitioners providing one-to-one support postnatally and with breastfeeding.

The one-to-one training pathway is being developed to have an accessible and flexible structure, to enable practitioners to take different routes through our model of education as they develop their practice. This flexible structure will support new and existing practitioners to add one-to-one breastfeeding and/or postnatal support to their portfolio, as well as enabling those who have trained in one-to-one support to add facilitation training.

Development of the pathway is underway, with a pilot planned for September 2021 focusing on one-to-one breastfeeding support, in preparation for launching the training pathway with a full cohort in September 2022.



Migration to Salesforce

This year we completed the first phase of work to update our technology platforms and transform the way we manage our data, migrating our course booking, financial and administration data to Parentforce – our customised version of Salesforce. The transition to Parentforce has not been straightforward, with teams needing to unpick many years of layered complexity within existing systems.

This work is critical to making it easier to manage our bookings, data and people, meet our data compliance obligations, and address the costs and risks associated with our legacy systems.

Careful attention was paid to testing and assurance in all aspects of the transition, to ensure continuity of the course booking journey for parents and to maintain the integrity of our data.

The data migration workstream proved challenging and migration was delayed into the Autumn to allow for further testing and development.

We were delighted to see Parentforce Go Live in November 2020, with a smooth and supported transition for practitioners and our team of parent service administrators, and no disruption to the parent booking journey. Extensive training was provided for all users in advance of going live, including short video modules and user guides, and regular opportunities for support.

Being on Parentforce has already enabled us to develop, trial and implement a 'Quick Book' process for parents where they can book courses directly online. We have also been able to offer additional value to corporate partners, thanks to improved audience segmentation on the new platform.

Our thanks

We'd like to say a special thank you to all our supporters, volunteers and practitioners who have helped us reach, connect and support parents throughout their pregnancy, birth and early parenthood.

Our community

The NCT Diversity Network.

The Affinity Support Network.

All our volunteers and peer supporters.

Members of the Future of Volunteering Action Team.

Regional Volunteer Support Network – Chair, Fiona Doyle, Deputy-Chair, Caroline Legg, and all members of RVSN.

All our practitioners.

Practitioner Representative Body (PRB) – Co-chairs, Noreen Hart and Hannah Ashford, Vice Chairs, Ros Vinall and Susy Broekhuizen, and all members of the PRB.

In recognition (significant awards, deaths, retirements)

Everyone who has fundraised for NCT, locally and nationally, to help sustain our support for parents.

Everyone at NCT, who faced illness, bereavement and personal loss during the pandemic, in a very challenging year personally and professionally.

The many staff colleagues who we said goodbye to during the year, who made a very significant contribution to our work and mission over many years.

Heather Trickey, former Trustee, Honorary Secretary, research manager and breastfeeding counsellor, who passed away in July 2021, having made a significant intellectual contribution to NCT and more broadly in the field of women's health.

Marsha Daniel-Taylor, former Trustee, Trading Board Chair, who passed away in March 2021, having brought significant experience, expertise and energy to the NCT Trading Board.

Margaret Willock, NCT Harrow Bumps & Babies volunteer, who passed away in March 2021, having welcomed parents to the group with a hot cup of tea for over twenty years.

Thank you to Sarah McMahon, outgoing Chair of the Practitioner Representative Body.

Thank you to Elgan Owen, outgoing Regional Coordinator for Wales and former Chair of the Regional Volunteer Support Network.

Congratulations to our education partner, University of Worcester, for winning the inaugural Times Higher Education award for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

Our Partners

Joy Warmington, Diane Rutherford, Manisha Patel, Ghiyas Somra and the team at brap.

Tayo Medupin and Amelia Woods at Hello Brave.

Organisations, alliances and networks that we have worked with during the year: Royal College of Midwives; Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists; Institute of Health Visiting; the Breastfeeding Network; Pregnancy and Baby Charity Network; First 1001 Days Movement; One Voice partnership; Breastfeeding Alliance; Maternal Mental Health Alliance; Alliance for Maternity Rights; Peppy Health, Birthrights, FiveXMore, Black Mothers Matter, Maternity Action, BPAS.

Stakeholder and programme boards that we contribute to: NHS England and Improvement Maternity Transformation Stakeholder Council; Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency; National Maternity and Perinatal Audit clinical reference group; Scottish Government 'The Best Start' Implementation Programme Board; Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW) national review of maternity services; MBRRACE-UK Third Sector Stakeholder Council.

Our service delivery partners: Alternatives Trust; Magpie Project; Compost London; British Red Cross.

Our corporate partners: Anglian Water Services Limited; Body Clock Healthcare Limited; Childs Farm Limited; Jennis Fitness Limited; John Lewis Plc; Lidl Great Britain Limited; Mamas & Papas Limited; Seraphine Limited

Our funders and commissioners: BBC Children in Need; Bradford District Care Trust; Bradford Metropolitan Council; Countess of Chester Hospital Trust; Coventry City Council; Department of Health and Social Care Starting Well Fund; Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS); Halton CCG; Hounslow CCG; Leeds City Council; London Borough of Hounslow; Manchester Settlement; Medway Community Healthcare; Middlesbrough Council; Milton Keynes Community Foundation; National Lottery Community Fund; Newham & Tower Hamlets CCG; NHS Lothian; NHSX TechForce 19; Northern Ireland Public Health Agency; Paddington Development Trust; Peabody; Peterborough City Council; Peterborough Local Maternity System; Redcar & Cleveland Council; Richmond Council; Royal Berkshire NHS Trust; Scottish Government; Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Local Maternity System; Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin CCG & NHS Trust; Southampton City Council; Southwark Council; St Helens CCG; Stockton-on-Tees Council; Swindon Borough Council; Thriving Community Fund; Twins Trust; Venture Community Association; Wandsworth Council; Warwickshire County Council; Wiltshire Council.

Financial review

Financial review

Overall summary

The effects of Covid-19 began before the beginning of the financial year and led to a challenging year, which saw the numbers of antenatal bookings drop significantly, affecting income. All services that could were transitioned to online delivery and some services, such as our face-to-face volunteering activities and community fundraising events had to be paused due to social distancing. Income reduced by 26% from £14.0m to £10.4m.

We received support through the government furlough scheme of £0.4m, which affected 57 staff. Despite this support, in July 2021, when the future availability of government support and the return to face-to-face activities were uncertain, we undertook an organisational restructure in order to secure the future of the charity. The restructure resulted in 42 staff redundancies and was necessary to ensure our future operating model was sustainable.

Despite the challenging year, we made significant headway on a number of critical risk mitigation projects including going live with our Salesforce 'Parentforce' course management system, planning our new model of education and working towards a new single NCT Antenatal course framework.

We measure operating surplus as the reported operating surplus / deficit before investment income, strategic investment and exceptional costs. This is our key financial target. During the year, the group delivered a reported operating surplus of over £900k before non-operational spend of £300k for reorganisation costs and £600k planned investment in the completion of our Salesforce system migration.

Course delivery direct to parents

Delivery of antenatal and other courses to parents is one of NCT's key activities. Income in this area exceeds expenditure. The courses surplus funds the education and development of current and future NCT practitioners, supports our commissioned contracts in the health sector, policy, research, campaigns, content and information work.

Income of £7.2m represents a £3.1m reduction on the prior year (2020: £10.3m). This reflects both a reduction in bookings and also course price, which was discounted to pass on to parents savings made by the charity in delivering the courses online during the social distancing restrictions.

Total costs decreased to £5.3m from £8.2m in 2020, which reflects the reduction in direct costs of delivering our courses online, and also a decrease in allocated support costs from our Salesforce systems project.

NCT education and practice

This year saw both a reforming of NCT's model of practitioner education, with a new model 'Cert HE in Perinatal Education & Practice' starting for the academic year 2021-22, and also a change in the delivery of the current education model to online.

Slightly fewer students has seen a corresponding decrease in NCT education and practice income from £0.75m to £0.71m. Costs have decreased because a significant proportion of costs pre-pandemic were as a result of face-to-face delivery (venues, travel etc).

Programme delivery contracts

Our programmes deliver free at point of access services to parents, and are largely commissioned contracts supported on behalf of the National Health Service and Local Authorities, as well as government departments, Trusts and Foundations. Income has risen by 36% to £0.6m (2020: £0.5m). Costs attributed to this work amount to £1.1m and are lower than the prior year (2020: £1.4m), including £0.3m of expenditure on restricted projects. Although most individual projects cover the direct costs of delivery, this income is not generally sufficient to cover the full costs of the contract management team or support cost allocations.

Donations (including NCT membership)

Total donation income has increased 1% to £1.5m (2020: £1.4m). Grants receivable has grown from the prior period, however this included £0.4m from the government furlough scheme and there was a reduction in membership and other donations. This had been anticipated as part of a longer-term trend and also affected by the reduced course booking levels impacting the number of parents choosing membership when choosing a course. We continue to work to develop an attractive, relevant and engaging membership proposition for parents and supporters.

Other trading activities

Community fundraising income has fallen by 91% due to the effect of Covid-19 on community fundraising events, activities and partnerships that would have taken place in a more typical year. We are committed to continue to work with our branch volunteers to safely unlock activities and develop a sustainable operating fundraising model, as restrictions lift and into the future.

Investment income

Income received as a result of interest on cash balances and investment portfolio returns amounts to £77k. The £78k reduction on the prior year is a result of lower funds held in our investment portfolio during the year.

An unrealised gain on the investment portfolio of £394k was recorded at 31 March 2021 partially reversing the loss of £424k in the prior year. Market performance in March 2020 was heavily impacted by the Covid-19 crisis. These funds are held as long term investments and it is anticipated their value will be restored over time. The charity will monitor this closely and continue to take regular advice from its investment managers.

Going concern

Significant consideration has been given by the board to the appropriateness of the going concern basis for accounting, as a result of the Covid-19 crisis and our ability to unlock services back to face-to-face as we move forward. During the year, NCT was required to adapt quickly and has shown resilience through staff, practitioners and volunteers to adapt and respond. Lower income levels during and post Covid-19 led to the summer 2020 restructure which significantly increased NCT's resilience and current modelling is considered sufficient to respond to a range of outcomes. The plan and budget are set to operate within the acceptable risk levels and within the risk reserve level. Management accounts

re-forecast the yearly outcome monthly which allows quick and appropriate responses to changes in our operating model and demand for our services. On this basis and in light of the strong reserves position the board are satisfied that the charity is well positioned to respond to a reasonable worst-case scenario, acknowledging that in the most severe scenarios further cost reductions are likely to be necessary.

Investment policy

The investment policy is reviewed by the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee regularly. Under this policy NCT considers that it holds a mixed motive investment in NCT Trading Limited. This is because the investment has two aims: firstly, to provide funding which will generate a financial return for NCT; and secondly to contribute to NCT's charitable purpose by promoting goods and services that are beneficial to prospective and new parents. This will assist the charity in achieving its strategic objective of providing new parent support.

The investment in NCT Trading Limited has been made through holding 100% of its issued share capital at a cost of £100.

Reserves policy

As at 31 March 2021, the group reserve level was £4.6m, £4.5m unrestricted and £0.1m restricted reserves, the unrestricted reserves make up risk reserves and strategic reserves. The reserves policy provides a dynamic framework for determining available reserves by identifying the three components of NCT's risk management reserve, which comprise the costs of winding down, funds to protect against uncertainty identified in the risk management process and cash flow requirements. Any surplus funds beyond these considerations represent the strategic development reserve.

The board have determined a target risk management reserve level of £4.4m, comprising the costs of winding down, £2.0m, funds to protect against uncertainty identified in the risk management process, £1.4m, and cash flow requirements, £1.0m.

At 31 March 2021, the risk management reserve level amounted to £4.5m (2020: £4.0m). This means that the charity holds sufficient funds to perform an orderly wind up if needed and manage risks as they arise.

The board plan to reduce the target level of risk reserves by addressing key risks. They plan to maintain a breakeven operating position but apply investment income and gains to the risk reserve in future periods.

The strategic development reserve was £0.1m (2020: £nil).

The policy also addresses what form each element should be held in. The Fixed Asset Fund represents assets which cannot be converted to cash in the short-term including property and equipment; given their illiquid nature these funds are allocated to the element of the risk management reserve which would cover the costs of winding up the charity. At 31 March 2021 the fund amounted to £1.3m (2020: £1.4m).

Financial position

The Group balance sheet at 31 March 2021 shows total funds of £4.6m (2020: £4.1m) of which £0.1m (2020: £0.2m) is restricted and £1.3m (2020: £1.4m) is designated as the fixed assets fund. Restricted funds, analysed in Note 15, comprise donations and grants subject to donor-imposed conditions. The balance of the group general funds, representing the 'free reserves', of the group at 31 March 2021 was £3.1m (2020: £2.6m).

Risk management

Our risk management process helps us identify the uncertainties or events that could stop us achieving our strategic objectives. This work is a key driver of our one and three-year plans.

Trustees acknowledge their responsibility for ensuring effective risk management systems and procedures at NCT. The board works closely with the Senior Leadership Team in the identification and mitigation of risk.

As a board, our focus is on ensuring that the most significant risks are being identified and managed effectively. We participate in periodic workshops designed to identify and analyse individual risks and to articulate organisational risk appetite. The charity risk register is reviewed at four of our meetings of the Board of Trustees throughout the year.

The Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee has delegated authority from the board to review risk management systems and procedures and to advise the board as to the principal risks faced by the NCT Group. The committee drives continued improvement in the sophistication and impact of our risk management processes, as well as scrutinising the Senior Leadership Team's analysis and response to risks identified through regular reviews of the risk register at each meeting. In addition to this the committee receives a deep dive review of at least one key risk from the Senior Leadership Team at each meeting.

Each risk is owned by a member of the Senior Leadership Team, who work to implement actions and report on their impact.

Through the risk management policy, NCT aims to recognise the level of gross risk in our current and proposed activities and seeks to reduce this to an acceptable level of net risk.

For each identified risk we identify likelihood and impact. Risks are then categorized by velocity, which is a measure of the time they would take to fully manifest. Over the year we have begun to formalise our approach to risk tolerance by assigning each risk to a group, such as strategic, people, finance, market or technology. This allows the charity to express a risk appetite for each broad category and the responses to individual risks to be developed in light of this intention.

At 31 March 2021 the three most significant risks to our strategy were identified as:

- Public Health Crisis

  From its emergence in March 2020, Covid-19 has presented an existential threat to NCT. Operationally it has been possible to respond to the impact of social distancing measures by the introduction of online course delivery, home working and remote delivery of other services and activities. However, in addition to material reductions in our primary course income stream, the majority of our branch parent support and fundraising activities were paused. The current year stabilised the financial underpinning of the charity, however the risk of another public health crisis or the deepening of the current one is possible. A focused business plan and budget for the year ahead is in place and teams are working across the charity to deliver on this.

- Reduction in demand for antenatal education

  Changes to new parent behaviour, a shift in the competitive landscape and a c.10% reduction in live births in the United Kingdom since 2012 present a threat NCT's ability to operate at the current level. The resultant reduction in delivery (and operating margin) could reduce NCT's ability to increase the reach and expand the scope of its work. In parallel, NCT faces the risk of being unable to match the supply of practitioners to parents' geographically-distributed demand. Work is underway to safeguard practitioner availability, ensure positive engagement with practitioners and the charity is committed to having a sustainable education programme in place to develop future generations of practitioners.

- Retaining key people and skill

  Reductions made to staffing levels in the year have reduced the capacity within the staffing team, impacting the support that can be given centrally to parents, practitioners and volunteers. There are a number of roles that are single points of contact holding key skills, responsibilities and knowledge. When the income of the charity improves, we plan to rebuild these areas of the team to reduce reliance on the single points of contact, increase support and rebuild resilience within the teams.

  Safeguarding the physical and mental wellbeing of our people, including staff, practitioners, students and volunteers throughout lockdown and the easing of restrictions has been an organisation priority this year, and we have established new teams, approaches and programmes to help promote wellbeing and good mental health, including a newly established mental health first aid team.

Public benefit statement

We believe that we have complied with the duty in Section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to public benefit guidance (as published by the Charity Commission in its guidance documents PB1 "Public benefit, the public benefit requirement", PB2 "Public benefit: running a charity and PB3 "Public benefit: reporting"), because our charitable services provide value to the public in general and new parents in particular.

Structure and governance

NCT (The National Childbirth Trust) is a registered charity. It is a company limited by guarantee governed by its Articles of Association as adopted on 26th September 2015 and amended on 18 October 2018.

NCT is governed by a Board of Trustees who are the directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act. The names of trustees at the date at which the accounts were approved, or who served during the period, are given below. The board is very grateful for the work and commitment of trustees who have served NCT and stood down in 2020-21. We also welcomed three trustees to the board in this period.

Name	Date of most recent appointment	Date of resignation
Chi Evi-Parker	Elected 11 December 2020	—
Clarissa Ayo-Dele Smith	Elected 13 October 2018	Resigned 11 September 2020
David Shanks (Vice Chair – to 26 May 2021)	Appointed 7 August 2021**	—
Elaine Lambe	Elected 4 November 2017	—
Ema Ojiako (Honorary Secretary – from 21 April 2021)	Appointed 8 March 2021	—
Franciane Husbands-Chevot	Elected 11 December 2020	—
Heather Trickey (Honarary Secretary – from 23 July 2020 to 11 December 2020)	Elected 13 October 2018	Resigned 11 December 2020
Jessica Figueras (Chair – to 31 July 2021)	Appointed 8 October 2020 ***	Resigned 31 July 2021
Joanne Powell	Elected 16 November 2019	—
Peter Brown	Elected 13 October 2018	—
Richard Smothers (Honorary Treasurer)	Appointed 5 February 2020*	—
Sarah Brown (Honorary Secretary to 20 July 2020/ Vice Chair – from 27 May 2021)	Elected 4 November 2017	—
Sherry Bevan (President)	Elected 16 November 2019	—
Stephanie Maurel (Chair – from 1 August 2021)	Appointed 7 August 2021**	—

* Second appointment, initial appointment 5 February 2016
** Second appointment, initial appointment 7 August 2017
*** Second appointment, initially elected 8 October 2016

The charity is a membership charity. Members are organised locally into 333 branches. Many members and volunteers carry out the work of the charity at a local level.

Recruitment and appointment of trustees

The Board of Trustees may have up to eight member-elected trustees and four appointed trustees. Any member may stand for election as a trustee, provided they gain the nomination of two other members, are not disbarred from being a trustee and support the aims and objectives of the charity.

Member-elected trustees are elected to coincide with the Annual General Meeting, whilst appointed trustees may be appointed during the course of the year. Any member-elected trustee vacancies arising during the year may also be filled by the board.

Elected and Appointed Trustees have a term of four years and the President has a term of five years. An individual may serve a maximum of two terms as an Elected Trustee, two terms as an Appointed Trustee and two terms as President.

The Nominations and Remuneration Committee of the board has the responsibility for maintaining and enhancing the mix, diversity and balance of NCT's trustees. To this end it keeps under review the vacancies and likely vacancies available on the board and the skills, experience, diversity profile and other qualities the board needs.

Prior to the Annual General Meeting the Committee notifies members of the number of elected trustee vacancies available and the skills and experience being sought at the time, and invites nominations. Roles are advertised on the charity's website where a downloadable candidate information pack is available. Opportunities are offered for those expressing an interest to discuss, with current trustees, the role and how they could contribute to the work of the board.

The board, usually upon the recommendation of the Nominations and Remuneration Committee, may fill any vacancy for an Elected Trustee by making a temporary appointment lasting up until the next AGM.

Induction and training of trustees

Induction for new trustees currently consists of comprehensive written briefing about trustees' responsibilities, the work of the board and the charity's strategy, policies, and governance. In addition, new trustees have induction meetings with the Chair, Chief Executive and other members of the Senior Leadership Team.

Training is also provided during the year for trustees as required on topics relevant to the board's current work and strategy.

The Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is ultimately responsible for the governance of the charity to ensure that it acts in the best interests of all parents, who are the charity's beneficiaries. The Board of Trustees sets the strategy, policy and financial framework for the charity and has the responsibility for its overall direction and control. Additionally, the board has responsibility for ensuring the charity complies with the law and the safeguarding of the charity's assets, including its money, property and reputation.

Authority for the day-to-day management of the charity within that framework is delegated to the Chief Executive, supported by the Senior Leadership Team. Together they formulate strategy, policy and financial plans for the board's approval, ensure delivery of required performance, and oversee the charity's day-to-day operations.

Each year the board reviews past performance and sets plans within a three-year planning horizon. As part of that review and planning process the trustees consider how future plans and performance relate to our aims and vision, and thus to our charitable purpose.

The trustees are committed to ensuring NCT's governance and constitutional framework reflect current thinking on best practice. The Board of Trustees are committed to the principles of the Charity Governance Code.

Board committees

The Board of Trustees is supported in its work by committees. There are two board committees:

- Audit, Risk and Scrutiny – covering the adequacy of financial control, external reporting of performance, and budget and risk management.
- Nominations and Remuneration – covering people issues, equity, diversity and inclusion, trustee recruitment and the remuneration policy for senior management and other key groups.

In addition, a number of task and finish and / or advisory groups across NCT's work enable internal and external stakeholders to be involved in decision-making.

Trustees can take on 'lead trustee' roles in relation to a key strands of NCT's duties and projects to provide additional support, scrutiny and oversight. The full board maintains collective responsibility for all these areas and receive update reports from lead trustees at board meetings.

Independent committee members are individuals who bring additional skills, experience and perspectives to the work of our sub-committees. They are not trustees.

Committee membership and lead trustee roles as at 31 March 2021 are detailed in the table below.

Name	Role	Committee membership	Lead trustee role
Chi Evi-Parker	Trustee	—	—
David Shanks	Trustee / Vice Chair	—	—
Elaine Lambe	Trustee	Audit, Risk & Scrutiny	—
Ema Ojiako	Trustee	Nominations & Remuneration (Chair)	—
Franciane Husbands-Chevot	Trustee	Nominations & Remuneration	—
Faran Johnson	Independent Committee Member	Audit, Risk & Scrutiny	—
Jessica Figueras*	Trustee / Chair	All ex-officio	—
Naomi Horsfall	Independent Committee Member	Audit, Risk & Scrutiny	—
Joanne Powell	Trustee	Audit, Risk & Scrutiny	—
Peter Brown	Trustee	Nominations & Remuneration	—
Richard Smothers	Trustee / Honorary Treasurer	Audit, Risk & Scrutiny (Chair)	—
Salima Shariff	Independent Committee Member	Nominations & Remuneration	—
Sarah Brown	Trustee / Honorary Secretary	Nominations & Remuneration	—
Stephanie Maurel	Trustee	Audit, Risk & Scrutiny	Safeguarding

*The Chair sits ex officio on all committees.

Key relationships

NCT wholly owns one active commercial company, NCT Trading Ltd, which gift aids its profits to the charity. The board of NCT Trading Ltd is responsible for its activities, which during 2020-21 consisted of commercial partnerships and sponsorship.

Charity Commission guidance makes it clear that the Board of Trustees is responsible for establishing the overarching principles within which its subsidiary's trading activities must take place. Trustees have established a comprehensive Commercial Activities Policy within which the Trading Board is required to operate.

Trustee benefits

Under the terms of its Articles, the charity is able to pay trustees for the provision of services to achieve its objectives, subject to certain safeguards. This includes the requirement that a majority of the trustees must have received no payments from NCT either as employees or for goods and services supplied to NCT. This year no member of the Board of Trustees received any remuneration in respect of their services as trustees (2020: None). Expenses and other payments to trustees are detailed in Note 9.

Statement of the board's responsibilities as trustees

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

Company law requires trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of the affairs of the charitable company and the group and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable group for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP
- make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards, including FRS102, have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- 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 that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006, as amended by the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Amendment (No. 2) Regulations 2014. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and the group and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

In so far as the trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which NCT's auditor is unaware
- they have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information.

Employees and volunteers

The Board of Trustees would like to thank all NCT staff, volunteers, NCT practitioners, members and supporters for their commitment to the vision and work of NCT.

During 2020-21, NCT (including NCT Trading Limited) employed an average of 117 (2020: 141) full time equivalent salaried staff.

At the end of March 2021, NCT had 29,202 (2020: 37,292) members. In addition, the charity had 5,263 (2020: 5,576) registered volunteers, 704 (2020: 760) trained NCT practitioners (antenatal course leaders, breastfeeding counsellors and postnatal leaders) and 272 (2020: 205) students.

Remuneration policy

NCT recognises that pay is part of a wider employment offer to staff, which also includes the satisfaction of working for a charity, personal development, family-friendly policies and working practices and a range of other benefits including access to the charity's pension scheme.

NCT operates a benchmarked market rate system, using reputable and appropriate data. NCT aims to pay employees between plus/minus 10% margin of the market median salary for most roles. Employees will not normally be paid less than the lower decile or higher than the higher decile for any role. NCT will take into account the following factors when benchmarking pay and benefits including comparing against charities of similar size, employee numbers and income, workplace location and competitors. Additionally, a specialist consultancy will be commissioned to independently review the market rate for the salaries of the Senior Leadership Team every three years.

Each year NCT will consider whether to uplift all employees by the cost of living. This will take into account the Consumer Price Index, Retail Price Index and the national average increase in earnings. Any decision will be based on affordability and are at the board's discretion.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

NCT is committed to equity, diversity and inclusion across all that we do – service delivery, programmes, volunteering, communications, fundraising and in our employment practices.

We aim to ensure that no parent, volunteer, student, contractor, practitioner, supplier or employee receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of race, colour, national or ethnic origins, sex, sexual orientation or perceived sexuality, marital status, disability, class, age, politics, religion or beliefs.

Core to our new strategy for recovery is the explicit aim of becoming a more inclusive, open and empowering charity so that we can support all parents, whoever they are, and whatever their situation.

A reinvigorated action plan was approved by the board in summer 2020, and an independent inclusion adviser was subsequently appointed. A new Directorate focused on People, Education & Inclusion has been established and the NCT Diversity Network has been set up to help inform and drive action.

We made good progress during the year, including taking positive action programme to further diversify our governance and leadership make up and practices. We are also undertaking the charity's first comprehensive all-community Diversity Audit to provide strong baseline data from which to further develop our equity, diversity and inclusion priorities over the next 3-5 years.

Appointment of auditors

Moore Kingston Smith LLP have indicated their willingness to continue in office and are deemed reappointed in accordance with section 487(2) of the Companies Act 2006.

The strategic report, which forms part of the Trustees' Annual Report, is approved by the trustees in their capacity as directors of the company. The Trustees' Report is approved by the Board of Trustees and signed on its behalf by:



Stephanie Maurel
Chair
14 October 2021

Independent auditor's report to the trustees and members of NCT

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of The National Childbirth Trust (NCT) for the year ended 31 March 2021 which comprise Group and Parent Charitable Company Statements of Financial Activities (incorporating the Summary Income and Expenditure Account), the Group and Parent Charitable Company Balance Sheets, the Group Cash Flow Statement and the related notes, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the group's and the parent charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2021 and of the group's and the parent charitable company's 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 Companies Act 2006, the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 (as amended) and regulations 6 and 8 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended).

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the 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 other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, 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 there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the strategic report and the trustees' annual report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the strategic report and the trustees' annual report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the group and parent charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the strategic report or the trustees' annual report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 or the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended) require us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the parent charitable company has not kept adequate and sufficient accounting records, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the parent charitable company's financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement set out on page 23, 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 group and parent 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 group or parent charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditor under Section 44(1)(c) of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and under the Companies Act 2006 and report to you in accordance with regulations made under those Acts.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below.

Explanation as to what extent the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud

The objectives of our audit in respect of fraud, are; to identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements due to fraud; to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding the assessed risks of material misstatement due to fraud, through designing and implementing appropriate responses to those assessed risks; and to respond appropriately to instances of fraud or suspected fraud identified during the audit. However, the primary responsibility for the prevention and detection of fraud rests with both management and those charged with governance of the charitable company.

Our approach was as follows:

- We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory requirements applicable to the charitable company and considered that the most significant are the Companies Act 2006, the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 (as amended), regulations 6 and 8 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended), the Charity SORP, and UK financial reporting standards as issued by the Financial Reporting Council.
- We obtained an understanding of how the charitable company complies with these requirements by discussions with management and those charged with governance.
- We assessed the risk of material misstatement of the financial statements, including the risk of material misstatement due to fraud and how it might occur, by holding discussions with management and those charged with governance.
- We inquired of management and those charged with governance as to any known instances of non-compliance or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations.
- Based on this understanding, we designed specific appropriate audit procedures to identify instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. This included making enquiries of management and those charged with governance and obtaining additional corroborative evidence as required.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs (UK) we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.

- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purposes of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the group and parent charitable company's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the trustees.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the group and parent charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the group or parent charitable company to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.
- Obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding the financial information of the entities or business activities within the group to express an opinion on the consolidated financial statements. We are responsible for the direction, supervision and performance of the group audit. We remain solely responsible for our audit report.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006 and to the charitable company's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Section 44(1)(c) of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members and trustees those matters which we are required to state to them in an auditor's report addressed to them and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to any party other than the charitable company and charitable company's members as a body, and the charity's trustees, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



Andrew Stickland
(Senior Statutory Auditor)

for and on behalf of Moore Kingston Smith LLP, Statutory Auditor
15 November 2021

Devonshire House
60 Goswell Road
London EC1M 7AD

Moore Kingston Smith LLP is eligible to act as an auditor in terms of Section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

NCT consolidated group statement of financial activities

Including Income & Expenditure Account for the Year Ended 31 March 2021

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2021 £'000	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2020 £'000
Income from							
Charitable activities							
NCT Courses		7,207	–	7,207	10,258	–	10,258
Education and Practice		714	–	714	753	–	753
Professional Publications		–	–	–	–	–	–
Programme Delivery	3	551	10	561	515	4	519
		8,472	**10**	**8,482**	**11,526**	**4**	**11,530**
Donations							
Membership		696	–	696	945	–	945
Donations		30	–	30	34	–	34
Grants receivable	4	414	369	783	82	339	421
		1,140	**369**	**1,509**	**1,061**	**339**	**1,400**
Other trading activities							
Community fundraising		71	–	71	800	–	800
Commercial fundraising		231	–	231	312	–	312
Trading		6	–	6	28	–	28
		308	**–**	**308**	**1,140**	**–**	**1,140**
Investments							
Interest		1	–	1	9	–	9
Investment portfolio income		76	–	76	146	–	146
		77		**77**	**155**		**155**
Other income							
Other income receivable		**37**	**–**	**37**	**120**	**–**	**120**
Total incoming resources		**10,034**	**379**	**10,413**	**14,002**	**343**	**14,345**
Expenditure on							
Charitable activities							
NCT Courses	5	5,283	133	5,416	8,169	124	8,293
Education and Practice		1,582	–	1,582	2,685	–	2,685
Programme Delivery		822	270	1,092	1,174	261	1,435
Policy, research and information		1,288	–	1,288	2,440	–	2,440
		8,975	**403**	**9,378**	**14,468**	**385**	**14,853**
Other trading activities							
Community fundraising	6	275	–	275	691	–	691
Commercial fundraising		183	–	183	174	–	174
Trading		37	–	37	120	–	120
		495	**–**	**495**	**985**	**–**	**985**
Raising funds							
Membership		**478**	**–**	**478**	**628**	**–**	**628**
Total Expenditure	7	**9,948**	**403**	**10,351**	**16,081**	**385**	**16,466**
Net operating income/(expenditure)		**86**	**(24)**	**62**	**(2,079)**	**(42)**	**(2,121)**
Gain/(loss) on investment assets	12	394	–	394	(423)	–	(423)
Net income/(expenditure) and net movement in funds	8	**480**	**(24)**	**456**	**(2,502)**	**(42)**	**(2,544)**
Reconciliation of funds							
Total funds brought forward		3,972	162	4,134	6,474	204	6,678
Total funds carried forward	15,16	**4,452**	**138**	**4,590**	**3,972**	**162**	**4,134**

All of the group's activities derived from continuing operations during the above two financial periods. The group has no recognised gains or losses other than those shown above. The movement in reserves is shown above.

NCT charity statement of financial activities

Including Income & Expenditure Account for the Year Ended 31 March 2021

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2021 £'000	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2020 £'000
Income from							
Charitable Activities							
NCT Courses		7,207	–	7,207	10,258	–	10,258
Education and Practice		714	–	714	753	–	753
Professional Publications		–	–	–	–	–	–
Programme Delivery	3	551	10	561	515	4	519
		8,472	**10**	**8,482**	**11,526**	**4**	**11,530**
Donations and legacies							
Membership		696	–	696	945	–	945
Donations		69	–	69	159	–	159
Grants receivable	4	414	369	783	82	339	421
		1,179	**369**	**1,548**	**1,186**	**339**	**1,525**
Other trading activities							
Community fundraising		71	–	71	800	–	800
Trading		6	–	6	28	–	28
		77	**–**	**77**	**828**	**–**	**828**
Investments							
Interest		1	–	1	9	–	9
Investment portfolio income		76	–	76	146	–	146
		77		**77**	**155**		**155**
Other income		**46**	**–**	**46**	**145**	**–**	**145**
Total income		**9,851**	**379**	**10,230**	**13,840**	**343**	**14,183**
Expenditure on							
Charitable activities							
NCT Courses	5	5,283	133	5,416	8,169	124	8,293
Education and Practice		1,582	–	1,582	2,685	–	2,685
Programme Delivery		822	270	1,092	1,174	261	1,435
Policy, research and information		1,288	–	1,288	2,440	–	2,440
		8,975	**403**	**9,378**	**14,468**	**385**	**14,853**
Other trading activities							
Community fundraising	6	275	–	275	691	–	691
Trading		37	–	37	132	–	132
		312	**–**	**312**	**823**	**–**	**823**
Raising funds							
Membership		**478**	**–**	**478**	**628**	**–**	**628**
Total resources expended	7	**9,765**	**403**	**10,168**	**15,919**	**385**	**16,304**
Net operating income/(expenditure)		**86**	**(24)**	**62**	**(2,079)**	**(42)**	**(2,121)**
Gain/(loss) on investment assets	12	394	–	394	(423)	–	(423)
Net income/(expenditure) and net movement in funds	8	**480**	**(24)**	**456**	**(2,502)**	**(42)**	**(2,544)**
Reconciliation of funds							
Total funds brought forward		3,972	162	4,134	6,474	204	6,678
Total funds carried forward	15,16	**4,452**	**138**	**4,590**	**3,972**	**162**	**4,134**

All of the NCT's activities derived from continuing operations during the above two financial periods. The charity has no recognised gains or losses other than those shown above. The movement in reserves is shown above.

NCT balance sheets

as at 31 March 2021

	Notes	2021 Group £'000	2021 Charity £'000	2020 Group £'000	2020 Charity £'000
Fixed Assets					
Intangible Assets	10	–	–	–	–
Tangible Assets	11	1,343	1,343	1,410	1,410
Investments	12	3,427	3,427	3,976	3,976
Total Fixed Assets		**4,770**	**4,770**	**5,386**	**5,386**
Current Assets					
Debtors	13	552	583	1,064	1,103
Short term deposits		76	76	75	75
Cash at bank and in hand		2,304	2,243	1,549	1,430
		2,932	**2,902**	**2,688**	**2,608**
Creditors					
Amounts falling due within one year	14	**(3,112)**	**(3,082)**	**(3,940)**	**(3,860)**
Net current liabilities		**(180)**	**(180)**	**(1,252)**	**(1,252)**
Total net assets		**4,590**	**4,590**	**4,134**	**4,134**
Fund balances					
Charitable funds					
Restricted funds	15	**138**	**138**	**162**	**162**
Unrestricted funds	16				
General funds		3,109	3,109	2,562	2,562
Fixed asset fund		1,343	1,343	1,410	1,410
		4,452	**4,452**	**3,972**	**3,972**
Total funds	17	**4,590**	**4,590**	**4,134**	**4,134**

Approved by the Board of Trustees and signed on its behalf



Stephanie Maurel
Chair
14 October 2021

Company Number: 2370573 (England & Wales)

NCT consolidated cash flow statement

for the Year Ended 31 March 2021

Cashflows from Operating Activities

	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
Net surplus / (deficit) for the reporting period	456	(2,544)
(Gains)/ Losses on investments	(394)	423
Depreciation and amortisation charge	68	122
Loss on disposal of fixed assets	-	-
Investment income	(76)	(146)
Interest receivable	(1)	(9)
(Increase) / decrease in debtors	512	287
Increase / (decrease) in creditors	(824)	72
Net cash provided by operating activities	**(259)**	**(1,795)**
Cash flows from Investing Activites		
Payments to acquire tangible fixed assets	-	(10)
Purchase of Investments	(572)	(408)
Proceeds from the sale of Investments	1,473	1,072
Dividends received	76	146
Interest receivable	1	9
Net cash from investing activities	**978**	**809**
Cash flows from Financing Activities		
Payments for finance leases	(5)	(10)
Net cash from financing activities	**(5)**	**(10)**
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period	**714**	**(996)**
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period	**1,762**	**2,758**
Cash and cash equivalents at end of the reporting period	**2,476**	**1,762**

Analysis of cash and cash equivalents	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
Cash at bank and in hand	2,304	1,549
Short term deposits	76	75
Cash held by investment managers	96	138
Total cash and cash equivalents	**2,476**	**1,762**

Notes to the financial statements

1 Principal Accounting Policies

a) Basis of accounting

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies below and comply with the charity's governing document, the Charities Act 2011 and 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 published on 16 July 2014, the Charities Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 as amended in 2014. The charity is a public benefit entity for the purposes of FRS 102 and a registered charity. The charity has therefore also prepared its individual and consolidated financial statements in accordance with FRS 102' (The Charities SORP (FRS 102).

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis and on the historical cost basis, except for the measurement of investments and certain financial assets and liabilities at fair value with movements in value reported within the Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA). The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below and have been applied consistently throughout the year.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charity. Amounts included in the financial statements are rounded to the nearest thousand pounds.

b) Preparation of the accounts on a going concern basis

The trustees have adopted the going concern basis in preparing these accounts after assessing the principal risks and having considered the impact of long unlock period after COVID-19. The major variables are the comfort of parents and practitioners during unlock.

The trustees considered the impact of the current environment on the business for the 12 months following signature of the financial statements, the viability period and the longer term considering the impacts on income, expenditure and cash flow and consider the charity can absorb and adapt to the environment.

On this basis the trustees have concluded that there are no material uncertainties that impact the use of the going concern basis and that the charity will be able to settle its debts as they fall due for a period of at least 12 months from the date of approval of these financial statements. Accordingly the going concern basis has continued to be adopted in the preparation of the financial statements.

c) Basis of consolidation

The statement of financial activities and balance sheet consolidate on a line-by-line basis the financial statements of the charity and all its subsidiary undertakings made up to the balance sheet date. Immaterial subsidiaries are not consolidated. The decision on consolidation is based on the degree of control that, in substance, NCT has power to control each undertaking and the extent to which it operates on a unified basis with the parent undertaking.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

d) Income

Incoming resources are recognised in the period in which the charity is entitled to receipt, the receipt is probable and the amount can be measured reliably. Income is deferred only when the charity has to fulfil conditions before becoming entitled to it or when the donor or funder has specified that the income is to be expended in a future accounting period. Legacies are included in the statement of financial activities when the charity is advised by the personal representative of an estate, that payment will be made or property transferred and the amount involved can be measured reliably. Grants, including government grants, have been included as income from charitable activities where these amount to a contract for services or a grant for specific costs. NCT affiliate courses are included in full within incoming resources.

e) Expenditure

Expenditure is included in the statement of financial activities when incurred and includes any attributable VAT, which cannot be recovered. Resources expended comprise the following:

- *Expenditure on raising funds* is categorised into membership only. Membership expenditure comprises the costs of the department that services members and prospective members and the team that provides support to members and Branches.
- *Other trading activities is categorised into community fundraising, commercial fundraising, and retail trading.*
  - *Community fundraising*, which comprises the community fundraising support team, the costs of Branch fundraising activities, and costs associated with the administration of Branches. Many of the fundraising events held by the branches have two objectives, to raise funds for the charity, as well as meeting the aims of the charity in terms of providing postnatal support for families. There is no meaningful way of apportioning the costs of Branch fundraising events between fundraising costs and charitable activities.
  - *Commercial fundraising* is the cost of obtaining and managing the sponsorship of activities and events and undertakes other business activity on behalf of NCT by NCT Trading Limited.
  - *Trading* comprises the costs of branch newsletters.
- *Charitable activities*, which comprises expenditure on the charity's primary purposes and are categorised as NCT Courses, Education and Practice, Programme Delivery, and Policy, Research and Information.
  - *NCT Courses* comprises the costs of providing courses, for parents and prospective parents where the participant generally books the course.
  - *Education and Practice* comprises the costs of providing training and support for NCT Practitioners who deliver NCT courses.
  - *Programme Delivery* comprises the costs of delivering services procured under a contract for services or a grant.
  - *Policy, research and information* comprises the cost of the research team, the library, communications, marketing and providing specialist helplines and journals.

f) Basis of apportioning support costs

Support costs, which includes governance costs represent indirect charitable expenditure. In order to carry out the primary purposes of NCT it is necessary to provide support in the form of human resources, financial operations and management, information technology, general management and administration and office services. These costs are apportioned to the other activities within the charity based on the average number of full-time equivalent employees utilised by the activity.

g) Gifts in kind

Assets donated to the charity for its own use, are included in the incoming resources and resources expended at their value to the charity as at the time of the gift.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

h) Tangible and intangible fixed assets

All assets costing more than £1,000 and with an expected useful life exceeding one year are capitalised. Leasehold properties used for the work of the charity are included in these accounts at the cost of acquisition. Software development is capitalised when there is future economic benefit to the charity and ongoing lease costs are not required to use the developed software. Fixed assets are capitalised and depreciated at the following rates per annum, based on cost, in order to write them off over their estimated useful lives:

Category	Asset Group	Rate per annum
Property	Leasehold	2%
	Leasehold improvements	Lease length, minimum 2%
Equipment	End user computer equipment and software	33%
	Computer and telecoms network infrastructure and software	20%
	Furniture	20%
	Other equipment	33%

At the end of each reporting period residual values and useful lives are reviewed and adjusted as necessary. Assets are also reviewed annually for impairment.

i) Fixed asset investments

Listed equities are included in the financial statements at fair value as at the balance sheet date. Investments in subsidiary undertakings are held at cost less impairment. Realised and unrealised gains (or losses) are credited (or debited) to the statement of financial activities in the year in which they arise.

j) Stocks

Stocks represent goods for resale and are stated at the lower of cost and net realisable value.

k) Fund accounting

Restricted funds are monies raised for, or their use restricted to, a specific purpose, or contributions subject to donor imposed conditions.

The fixed assets fund represents the net book value of the tangible and intangible fixed assets used in the day-to-day operations of NCT. The value of this fund is not available for working capital.

General funds represent those monies, which are freely available for application towards achieving any charitable purpose that falls within the charity's charitable objects.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

l) Leased assets

Rentals applicable to operating leases where substantially all of the benefits and risks of ownership remain with the lessor are charged on a straight-line basis over the lease term.

Rental applicable to finance leases where the terms of the lease transfer substantially all the risks and rewards of ownership to the lessee are recognized as assets at the lower of the assets fair value at the date of inception and the present value of minimum lease payments. The related liability is included in the balance sheet as a finance lease obligation. Lease payments are treated as consisting of capital and interest elements. The interest is charged to the Statement of Financial Activity so as to produce a constant periodic rate of interest in the remaining balance of the liability.

m) Branches

Branch transactions are considered transactions of the charity.

n) Employee benefits

The costs of short-term employee benefits are recognised as a liability and an expense, unless those costs are required to be recognised as part of the cost of stock or fixed assets. The cost of any unused holiday entitlement is recognised in the period in which the employee's services are received. Termination benefits are recognised immediately as an expense when the company is demonstrably committed to terminate the employment of an employee or to provide termination benefits.

o) Pension costs

The charity as an employer contributes to personal pension plans of its employees. The contributions are set at up to 5% of gross salary and are available to all employees whose contracts are permanent and who have completed three months' service with the charity.

p) Financial Instruments

The National Childbirth Trust has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method. Financial assets held at amortised cost comprise cash at bank and in hand, together with trade and other debtors. Financial liabilities held at amortised cost comprise trade and other creditors.

q) Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Any bank overdrafts would be shown within borrowings in current liabilities.

r) Irrecoverable VAT

All expenditure is charged to the SOFA on an accruals basis including the charge for VAT which is not recoverable.

s) Accounting judgements and estimation uncertainty

In preparing financial statements it is necessary to make certain judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts recognised in the financial statements. The following judgements and estimates are considered by the board to have most significant effect on amounts recognised in the financial statements.

Tangible fixed assets are depreciated to their estimated residual value over their estimated useful economic life as detailed above.

Accrued course expenditure is estimated at the year end date using algorithmic modelling based on contracted hours and pre-agreed rates and anticipated venue costs.

2 Commercial trading operations

The National Childbirth Trust owns the entire called up ordinary share capital of four companies incorporated in the United Kingdom:

- NCT Trading Limited, which has two principal activities; the promotion of the work of NCT and profit generation;
- NCT (Maternity Sales) Limited which did not trade during the period of these accounts;
- NCT Publishing Limited which did not trade during the period of these accounts;
- First 1,000 Days Foundation which did not trade during the period of these accounts.

NCT Trading Limited has a deed of covenant to distribute its taxable profit to NCT. A summary of the results of the trading subsidiary for the period are given below.

Profit and loss account – NCT Trading Ltd	**2021 £'000**	2020 £'000
Turnover	231	312
Cost of sales	–	–
Gross profit	**231**	**312**
Administrative expenses	(192)	(187)
Operating profit before interest	**39**	**125**
Interest payable	–	–
Comprehensive income for the period	**39**	**125**

Balance Sheet – NCT Trading Ltd	**31 March 2021 £'000**	31 March 2020 £'000
Current Assets	69	207
Amounts falling due within one year	(69)	(207)
Net Assets	**–**	**–**

The above figures exclude any consolidation adjustments for inter-group profits/losses, which have been reflected in the consolidated statement of financial activities. The accounts figures have been consolidated on a line-by-line basis.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

3 Income: programme delivery contracts

Group and Charity	Unrestricted Funds 2021 £'000	Restricted Funds 2021 £'000	Total 2021 £'000	Unrestricted Funds 2020 £'000	Restricted Funds 2020 £'000	Total 2020 £'000
National Health Service	307	10	317	280	–	280
Local Authorities	219	–	219	203	4	207
Baby Café	–	–	–	2	–	2
Other	25	–	25	30	–	30
	551	**10**	**561**	**515**	**4**	**519**

4 Income: grants receivable

Group and Charity	Unrestricted Funds 2021 £'000	Restricted Funds 2021 £'000	Total 2021 £'000	Unrestricted Funds 2020 £'000	Restricted Funds 2020 £'000	Total 2020 £'000
Parents in Mind	–	–	–	7	–	7
NESTA	–	–	–	–	19	19
Grants to branches	52	66	118	75	133	208
BBCS	–	73	73	–	97	97
Scottish Health	–	183	183	–	90	90
Newham Nurture	–	47	47	–	–	–
Furlough Grant	362	–	362	–	–	–
	414	**369**	**783**	**82**	**339**	**421**

5 Expenditure: NCT courses

Group and Charity	Unrestricted Funds 2021 £'000	Restricted Funds 2021 £'000	Total 2021 £'000	Unrestricted Funds 2020 £'000	Restricted Funds 2020 £'000	Total 2020 £'000
Antenatal	2,717	–	2,717	5,240	–	5,240
Postnatal	81	–	81	295	–	295
General Parental Support	781	133	884	720	124	844
Apportioned support costs	1,704	–	1,704	1,914	–	1,914
	5,283	**133**	**5,416**	**8,169**	**124**	**8,293**

6 Expenditure: community fundraising

Group and Charity	Unrestricted Funds 2021 £'000	Restricted Funds 2021 £'000	Total 2021 £'000	Total 2020 £'000
Branch fundraising	161	–	161	518
Central fundraising	114	–	114	173
	275	**–**	**275**	**691**

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

7 Support cost allocations

Support costs are allocated to the expenditure headings in the Statement of Financial Activities, on the basis stated in Accounting Policies (note 1), as stated in the tables below:

Group	Membership £'000	Community Fundraising £'000	Commercial Fundraising £'000	Trading £'000	NCT Courses £'000	Education and Practice £'000	Programme Delivery £'000	Policy, Research & Information £'000	Total 2021 £'000
Staff costs	23	65	–	13	664	290	123	137	1,315
Depreciation	1	3	–	1	35	15	6	7	68
Premises and equipment	4	12	–	2	123	54	23	25	243
Office supplies	3	9	–	2	96	42	18	20	190
Insurance	1	4	–	1	36	16	7	8	73
Irrecoverable VAT	5	14	–	3	144	63	27	30	286
Other	21	59	–	12	607	264	111	126	1,200
Support Costs	**58**	**166**	**–**	**34**	**1,705**	**744**	**315**	**353**	**3,375**
Direct Costs	**420**	**109**	**183**	**3**	**3,711**	**838**	**777**	**935**	**6,976**
Total Costs	**478**	**275**	**183**	**37**	**5,416**	**1,582**	**1,092**	**1,288**	**10,351**

Group	Membership £'000	Community Fundraising £'000	Commercial Fundraising £'000	Trading £'000	NCT Courses £'000	Education and Practice £'000	Programme Delivery £'000	Policy, Research & Information £'000	Total 2020 £'000
Staff costs	18	91	–	29	493	351	143	152	1,277
Depreciation	2	9	–	3	47	34	14	15	124
Premises and equipment	4	21	–	7	113	80	33	35	293
Office supplies	5	26	–	8	140	99	40	43	361
Insurance	1	5	–	2	27	19	8	8	70
Irrecoverable VAT	7	34	–	11	184	131	53	57	477
Other	33	169	–	54	911	649	264	282	2,362
Support Costs	**70**	**355**	**–**	**114**	**1,915**	**1,363**	**555**	**592**	**4,964**
Direct Costs	**558**	**336**	**174**	**6**	**6,378**	**1,322**	**880**	**1,848**	**11,502**
Total Costs	**628**	**691**	**174**	**120**	**8,293**	**2,685**	**1,435**	**2,440**	**16,466**

Charity	Membership £'000	Community Fundraising £'000	Trading £'000	NCT Courses £'000	Education and Practice £'000	Programme Delivery £'000	Policy, Research & Information £'000	Total 2021 £'000
Staff costs	23	65	13	664	290	123	137	1,315
Depreciation	1	3	1	35	15	6	7	68
Premises and equipment	4	12	2	123	54	23	25	243
Office supplies	3	9	2	96	42	18	20	190
Insurance	1	4	1	36	16	7	8	73
Irrecoverable VAT	5	14	3	144	63	27	30	286
Other	21	59	12	607	264	111	126	1,200
Support Costs	**58**	**166**	**34**	**1,705**	**744**	**315**	**353**	**3,375**
Direct Costs	**420**	**109**	**3**	**3,711**	**838**	**777**	**935**	**6,793**
Total Costs	**478**	**275**	**37**	**5,416**	**1,582**	**1,092**	**1,288**	**10,168**

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

Charity	Membership £'000	Community Fundraising £'000	Trading £'000	NCT Courses £'000	Education and Practice £'000	Programme Delivery £'000	Policy, Research & Information £'000	Total 2020 £'000
Staff costs	18	91	29	493	351	143	152	1,277
Depreciation	2	9	3	47	34	14	15	124
Premises and equipment	4	21	7	113	80	33	35	293
Office supplies	5	26	8	140	99	40	43	361
Insurance	1	5	2	27	19	8	8	70
Irrecoverable VAT	7	34	11	184	131	53	57	477
Other	33	169	54	911	649	264	282	2,362
Support Costs	**70**	**355**	**114**	**1,915**	**1,363**	**555**	**592**	**4,964**
Direct Costs	**558**	**336**	**18**	**6,378**	**1,322**	**880**	**1,848**	**11,340**
Total Costs	**628**	**691**	**132**	**8,293**	**2,685**	**1,435**	**2,440**	**16,304**

8 Net movement in funds

	Group		Charity	
	2021 £'000	2020 £'000	**2021 £'000**	2020 £'000
Net movement in funds is stated after charging:				
Depreciation/amortisation of fixed assets	68	122	68	122
Staff costs (excluding agency staff)	4,416	5,324	4,374	5,239
Operating lease rentals	123	157	123	157
Auditors' remuneration: audit services	46	39	40	34
Auditors' remuneration: non-audit services	2	2	1	1

9 Staff costs and remuneration of the Board of Trustees

Staff costs during the period were as follows:

	Group		Charity	
	Total 2021 £'000	Total 2020 £'000	**Total 2021 £'000**	Total 2020 £'000
Wages and salaries	3,691	4,673	3,654	4,600
Redundancy costs	245	81	245	81
Social security costs	289	352	286	345
Other pension costs	191	217	189	213
	4,416	5,323	4,374	5,239
Payments to agency staff	3	15	3	15
	4,419	**5,338**	**4,377**	**5,254**

Staff costs by function were as follows:

	Group		Charity	
	Total 2021 £'000	Total 2020 £'000	**Total 2021 £'000**	Total 2020 £'000
Raising funds	428	513	428	513
Other trading activities	120	205	78	121
Charitable activities	3,871	4,620	3,871	4,620
	4,419	**5,338**	**4,377**	**5,254**

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

Higher paid employees:

	Group		Charity	
	Total 2021	Total 2020	**Total 2021**	Total 2020
£60,000 – 69,999	4	5	4	5
£70,000 – 79,999	1	2	1	2
£80,000 – 89,999	–	1	–	1
£90,000 – 99,999	1	1	1	1
£100,000 – 110,999	–	–	–	–
	6	**9**	**6**	**9**

The pension cost for these employees, was £24,697 (2020: £35,327), which included the Chief Executive/s who received total salaries of £99,000 (2020: £101,308) and pension contributions of £3,959 (2020: £3,839).

The headcount including part-time staff, analysed by function was:

	Group		Charity	
	Number 2021	Number 2020	**Number 2021**	Number 2020
Raising funds	2	2	2	2
Other trading activities	6	12	5	12
Charitable activities	153	186	153	184
Support	19	20	19	20
	180	**220**	**179**	**218**

The average number of full time equivalents, analysed by function was:

	Group		Charity	
	FTEs 2021	FTEs 2020	**FTEs 2021**	FTEs 2020
Raising funds	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7
Other trading activities	5.9	11.4	4.9	11.4
Charitable activities	91.9	108.4	91.9	106.4
Support	17.7	19.0	17.7	19.0
	117.2	**140.5**	**116.2**	**138.5**

The key management personnel of the charity comprise the trustees and the executive team. The total employee benefits of the key management personnel of the charity were £441,386 (2020: £394,774).

Expenses were reimbursed to 3 (2020: 9) members of the Board of Trustees during the year. Their expenses amounted to £nil (2020: £4,235) in respect of expenses incurred as a trustee in attending board and related meetings, and £18,046 (2020: £13,059) in respect of expenses incurred for branch support and fees as practitioners or breastfeeding counsellors. No trustees were remunerated in the current or prior year.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

10 Intangible fixed assets

Group and charity	Software £'000	Total 31 March £'000
Cost or valuation		
At 1 April 2020	163	163
Additions	–	–
Disposals	–	–
At 31 March 2021	–	–
Amortisation		
At 1 April 2020	163	163
Charge for period	–	–
On disposals	–	–
At 31 March 2021	163	**163**
Net book values		
At 31 March 2021	–	**–**
At 31 March 2020	–	–

11 Tangible fixed assets

Group and charity	Property £'000	Equipment £'000	Total 31 March £'000
Cost or valuation			
At 1 April 2020	1,504	394	1,898
Additions	–	–	–
Disposals	–	(29)	(29)
At 31 March 2021	1,504	365	**1,870**
Depreciation			
At 1 April 2020	146	342	488
Charge for period	30	37	68
On disposals	–	(29)	(29)
At 31 March 2021	176	**351**	**527**
Net book values			
At 31 March 2021	1,328	15	**1,343**
At 31 March 2020	1,358	52	**1,410**

Property relates to a leasehold building.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

12 Fixed asset investments

	Group		Charity	
	2021 31 March £	2020 31 March £	**2021 31 March £**	2020 31 March £
Investment in group undertakings:				
NCT (Maternity Sales) Limited	–	–	6	6
NCT Trading Limited	–	–	100	100
NCT Publishing Limited	–	–	2	2
First 1,000 Days Foundation	–	–	–	–
Other investments:				
Managed investment funds	3,427,840	3,975,622	3,427,840	3,975,622
	3,427,840	**3,975,622**	**3,427,948**	**3,975,730**

Material investments held in the portfolio include the following:

Treasury Stock	606,898	979,557	606,898	807,693
SPDR Series Trust S&P 500 ETF (GBP)	582,952	634,905	582,952	634,905
Edgewood L Select Fund US Select Growth IZ (USD)	172,610	–	172,610	–
Ishares PLC MSCO Far East Ex-Japan	165,759	152,400	165,759	152,400
BH Global Ltd NPV Sterling Shares	132,650	144,068	132,650	144,068

On 7 August 2013, the 'First 1,000 Days Foundation' was formed as a company limited by guarantee (registered in England and Wales 864816) with the sole member as The National Childbirth Trust. The Company has been dormant since incorporation. Investments in NCT (Maternity Sales) Limited, NCT Trading Limited, and NCT Publishing Limited represent the entire called up share capital of the companies, all of which are incorporated in England.

	Registered Company Number	**Reserves at 31 March 2021 £**	Reserves at 31 March 2020 £
Investment in Group undertakings:			
NCT (Maternity Sales) Limited	01291517	6	6
NCT Trading Limited	02488491	–	–
NCT Publishing Limited	03017833	2	2
First 1,000 Days Foundation	08641816	–	–

Managed investment funds

Group and Charity	**2021 31 March £'000**	2020 31 March £'000
Market value at 1 April 2020	3,838	4,925
Acquisitions	572	408
Disposals	(1,473)	(1,072)
Net investment gains/ (losses)	394	(423)
Market value at 31 March 2021	**3,331**	**3,838**
The Market value is represented by:		
Equities	2,724	2,858
Bonds	607	980
	3,331	3,838
Cash held by investment managers	96	138
Total Investment fund	**3,427**	**3,976**

The charity's actively managed investment fund is revalued annually at the balance sheet date. The increase or decrease in value as a result of this valuation is recognised as an unrealised investment gain or loss.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

13 Debtors

	Group		Charity	
	2021 31 March £'000	2020 31 March £'000	**2021 31 March £'000**	2020 31 March £'000
Amounts due from subsidiary undertakings	–	–	40	127
Prepayments and accrued income	354	598	346	598
Trade and branch debtors	189	457	188	369
Tax recoverable	9	9	9	9
	552	**1,064**	**583**	**1,103**

14 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	Group		Charity	
	2021 31 March £'000	2020 31 March £'000	**2021 31 March £'000**	2020 31 March £'000
Obligation under finance lease	–	5	–	5
Expense creditors	584	729	584	729
Social security and other taxes	97	110	97	110
Deferred income	2,085	2,499	2,063	2,425
Accruals	346	597	338	591
	3,112	**3,940**	**3,082**	**3,860**

Deferred income relates to sponsorship, training courses and grants.

15 Restricted funds

The income funds of the charity and the group include restricted funds comprising the following unexpended balances of donations and grants held on trusts to be applied for specific purposes:

Group and Charity		**Movements in Funds:**			
	At 1 April 2020 £'000	**Incoming Resources £'000**	**Outgoing Resources £'000**	**Fund Transfer £'000**	**At 31 March 2021 £'000**
Grants and donations received by branches	133	66	(133)	–	66
Glasgow Service Delivery	1	193	(150)	–	44
BBCS	28	73	(73)	–	28
Newham Nurture	–	47	(47)	–	–
	162	**379**	**(403)**	**–**	**138**

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

16 Unrestricted funds

Group	At 1 April 2020 £'000	Incoming Resources £'000	Outgoing Resources £'000	Unrealised Investment Gains £'000	Transfer Between Funds £'000	At 31 March 2021 £'000
General Funds	2,562	10.034	(9.948)	394	67	3,109
Fixed Assets Fund	1,410	–	–	–	(67)	1,343
	3,972	**10,034**	**(9,948)**	**394**	**–**	**4,452**

Charity	At 1 April 2020 £'000	Incoming Resources £'000	Outgoing Resources £'000	Unrealised Investment Gains £'000	Transfer Between Funds £'000	At 31 March 2021 £'000
General Funds	2,562	9,851	(9,765)	394	67	3,108
Fixed Assets Fund	1,410	–	–	–	(67)	1,343
	3,972	**9,851**	**(9,765)**	**394**	**–**	**4,452**

17 Analysis of net assets between funds

Fund balances at 31 March 2021 are represented by:

Group	Unrestricted Funds: General Funds £'000	Fixed Asset Fund £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	2021 Total £'000
Fixed assets	–	1,343	–	1,343
Investment assets	3,427	–	–	3,427
Net current assets	(318)	–	138	(180)
Total net assets	**3,109**	**1,343**	**138**	**4,590**

Charity	Unrestricted Funds: General Funds £'000	Fixed Asset Fund £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	2021 Total £'000
Fixed assets	–	1,343	–	1,343
Investment assets	3,427	–	–	3,427
Net current assets	(318)	–	138	(180)
Total net assets	**3,109**	**1,343**	**138**	**4,590**

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

18 Taxation

The National Childbirth Trust is a registered charity and therefore is not liable to income tax or corporation tax on income derived from its charitable activities, as it falls within the various exemptions available to registered charities. Each year subsidiary companies, which do not have charitable status, may Gift Aid any taxable profits to The National Childbirth Trust. The charity and group is not able to reclaim all VAT suffered on expenditure due to the partial exemption regulations.

19 Operating lease commitments

At 31 March 2021 the group's future minimum operating lease payments were as follows:

	Group		Charity	
	2021 31 March £'000	2020 31 March £'000	**2021 31 March £'000**	2020 31 March £'000
Expire				
Within one year	–	157	–	157
Between one and five years	–	–	–	–
	–	**157**	**–**	**157**

20 Financial Instruments

The financial statements include the following in respect of items held at fair value at the balance sheet date

	Group		Charity	
	2021 31 March £'000	2020 31 March £'000	**2021 31 March £'000**	2020 31 March £'000
Financial assets measured at fair value through profit and loss	3,332	3,838	3,332	3,838
Financial assets measured at amortised cost	319	615	311	527
Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost	(899)	(1,159)	(853)	(1,026)
	2,751	3,294	**2,790**	3,339

21 Related party transactions

NCT Trading Limited is a subsidiary of The National Childbirth Trust and its shares are 100% controlled within the group.

During the year the National Childbirth Trust purchased services from NCT Trading of £7k (2020: £7k) on normal commercial terms. The National Childbirth Trust supplied services to NCT Trading of £16k (2020: £32k).

At the 31 March 2021 NCT Trading Limited owed The National Childbirth Trust £40k (2020: £127k).

No members of the Board of Trustees (2020: Nil) had a beneficial interest in contracts with the charity. No member of the board (2020: Nil) had a beneficial interest in a contract with a wholly owned subsidiary of The National Childbirth Trust during the period. At the date of signing the accounts, no (2020: no) trustees were also Directors of NCT Trading Limited.

There are no other related party transactions to disclose other than set out elsewhere in these accounts.

Reference and administrative information

Charity Registrations:

The National Childbirth Trust ('NCT')
Company Registration: 2370573 (England & Wales)
Registered Charity: 801395
Charity Registered in Scotland: SC041592
VAT: GB 115 0789 24

Registered Office:

Brunel House
11 The Promenade
Clifton Down
Bristol
BS8 3NG

Board of Trustees:

Chi Evi-Parker

David Shanks

Elaine Lambe

Ema Ojiako (Hon. Secretary)

Franciane Husbands-Chevot

Jessica Figueras

Joanne Powell

Peter Brown

Richard Smothers (Hon. Treasurer)

Sarah Brown (Vice Chair)

Sherry Bevan (President)

Stephanie Maurel (Chair)

Directors Group:

Angela McConville, Chief Executive

Caroline Star, Director of Courses and Income

Sarah McMullen, Director of Impact and Engagement

Jennifer Wells, Interim Director of People, Education and Inclusion

Company Secretary

Grace Dalley

Auditors:

Moore Kingston Smith LLP
Devonshire House
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London
EC1M 7AD

Bankers:

Lloyds Bank plc.
39 Threadneedle Street
London
EC2R 8AU

Investment Advisors:

Rathbone Brothers PLC
8 Finsbury Circus
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EC2M 7AZ

Solicitors:

Bates Wells & Braithwaite London LLP
10 Queen Street Place
London
EC4R 1BE

Kemp Little
Cheapside House
138 Cheapside
London
EC2V 6BJ

Subsidiaries:

First 1,000 Days Foundation (limited by guarantee, dormant)

NCT Trading Limited

NCT (Maternity Sales) Limited (dormant)

NCT Publishing Limited (dormant)

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Registered address: Brunel House, 11 The Promenade, Clifton Down, Bristol BS8 3NG. Registered charity in England and Wales: 801395 and Scotland: SC041592.

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