Supporting people with learning disabilities to achieve their dreams and wishes

Annual Review 2017/2018
Our year in numbers

- 15 Ambassadors with learning disabilities
- 88 Volunteers
- 92 Self-employed carers
- 317 Staff
- 442 People with learning disabilities supported

About us

Our vision
Grace Eyre’s vision is for a society where people with learning disabilities are respected as equal citizens, are part of and contribute to their communities, and where people can fulfil their dreams and wishes.

Who we are
Grace Eyre is a vibrant charity that has been supporting people with learning disabilities for over 100 years. All our work is centred around an individual’s or their family’s needs, dreams and wishes.

What we do
We provide housing, support in people’s own homes, and many activities that lead to personal goals being fulfilled — all with the aim of making a positive difference to people’s lives.

Where we work
We support people across Sussex and the South East, including: Brighton & Hove, West Sussex, East Sussex, Lambeth, Hammersmith & Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea, and the City of Westminster.

Annual Review
Looking back on our year

Grace Eyre has supported people with learning disabilities for 120 years, yet we are still growing and innovating.

Grace Eyre Housing expanded its reach and has now housed 66 people with learning disabilities. We also increased the number of places for people in our Supported Living service by taking on our largest contract to date from Brighton & Hove City Council.

We started two innovative new services; the Shared Lives 16+ service in West Sussex and a service model supporting parents with learning disabilities and their children.

It’s been a milestone year. We welcomed two people with learning disabilities as Trustees and another 15 people took up roles as Ambassadors. This means that people with learning disabilities are increasingly leading the way here at Grace Eyre, in line with our vision and mission.

‘I love the charity and want to give my knowledge of what I know. I want to give my heart to a good charity, to change it for the good. I want to spread the word of what people want throughout the charity, to get everyone’s thoughts across to the Board’

Eva Eriksson, CEO

Looking ahead to our year

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I thank everyone in the Grace Eyre community.

It is an unprecedented time in the social care sector — budgets continue to be squeezed. In the coming year, we will work hard to provide the same high-quality care and support to people with learning disabilities.

At the same time, we will take forward our strategy of modernising our day services, which will increasingly localise our services and embed them in the heart of communities.

It is essential to us that the people we serve have a voice and they are involved in the decisions we make as an organisation. We have made big leaps forward but there is more to be done. So I look forward to seeing what we can achieve together in the coming year.

‘I decided to become a trustee because I wanted to do more things with Grace Eyre. Being a trustee means I can help run the way Grace Eyre works in the future so being a volunteer for Grace Eyre is an amazing opportunity for me’

Helen Odeniyi, Chair

‘I love the charity and want to give my knowledge of what I know. I want to give my heart to a good charity, to change it for the good. I want to spread the word of what people want throughout the charity, to get everyone’s thoughts across to the Board’

Kirsty Pentecost, Trustee

Eva Eriksson, CEO

Eva Eriksson, CEO
‘We want to live our lives in the way we want to, getting good support from kind and friendly people’

It’s our staff, self-employed carers, and volunteers that provide such high quality care and support for people with learning disabilities.

Each year, we survey people with learning disabilities who use our services to find out what they think of Grace Eyre. This year, of those surveyed, 90% said that staff and carers helped them to live the life they want, 88% said that they felt staff and carers listen to them. And 85% said they felt staff and carers helped them to live a healthy life.

‘The staff are excellent and when I do have a problem they will sort it’.
— Person with learning disabilities

‘Staff should have a Blue Peter badge! It’s nice to be contacted so much and kept in the loop. Keep up the good work!’ — Carer

We asked some of our staff what they liked best about their job:

‘There’s never a dull moment and no two days are the same. Plus I don’t think there are many jobs where people are genuinely thrilled to see you every morning!’ — Support Worker

‘My job is about empowering people as human beings, focusing on their ability, rather than their disability.’ — Support Worker

We work in partnership with others to provide care and support too.

‘Since Grace Eyre has been involved in the care of (two people with learning disabilities), I have seen huge improvements and inroads into their support and personal development. Well done!’ — Housing Manager

Grace Eyre holds a Gold Investors in People award and remains a Real Living Wage Employer.

Volunteers help us to be more flexible and to extend the high quality support we can give to people with learning disabilities. Our ‘Pilotlight’ scheme matched a local volunteer with a person with learning disabilities so they could complete a personal project of their choice. Jamie wanted to learn more about homelessness and he worked with Helen over 12 weeks to explore how best to help others in need and develop new skills around planning and communication. Together they planned a bake sale and raised £65 for homelessness charities at Christmas!

‘To Helen, a massive thank you for helping me with our new project. I really appreciate that. It means the world to me’ — Jamie

See our staff and volunteering vacancies at grace-eyre.org/jobs
2 ‘We want to be listened to’

This year, we welcomed two people with learning disabilities as Trustees. Now, at the highest level of governance, people with learning disabilities are driving our strategic direction and helping to shape the future.

We widened the reach of our Ambassador roles, which see people with learning disabilities speaking to, and on behalf of, their peers. We now have Ambassadors in West Sussex and London, as well as Brighton & Hove.

Ambassadors consulted with over 100 people with learning disabilities to learn more about their feelings around our move to smaller and more flexible spaces. They questioned and challenged Senior Management Staff at monthly meetings, took up positions in Steering Groups for all kinds of hubs and projects, led workshops at our Staff Conference, and planned and hosted our Annual General Meeting too.

See what people with learning disabilities are saying at askingpeoplewhattheythink.tumblr.com

grace-eyre.org

3 ‘We want to lead healthy lives, with good food, creative minds, laughing, rest and relaxation’

This was our second year of sell-out performances of ‘Grace Eyre Street’ in the Purple Playhouse Theatre. Over five months, people with learning disabilities met weekly to devise, create, and deliver a wholly new dramatic performance. The group chose their own theme, a block of flats on Grace Eyre Street, and characters were based on the kinds of people that the group thought might live in the flats, what they get up to, and how they interact.

Our production was chosen to launch a new initiative from Brighton Fringe in 2018, the ‘Freedom Season’, which aims ‘to celebrate the creative ability of disabled people through increasing awareness and opportunities to participate, create and attend the arts’. This was a real boost to the actors, to see their efforts celebrated in this way, and it helped to alter perceptions of what people with learning disabilities can accomplish.

‘The play was funny, scary, emotional. All of the actors seemed to really enjoy themselves and their passion came across in their performance’

You can even hire it for parties!

The Purple Playhouse Theatre
Call 07736 273402 or email: roomhire@grace-eyre.org
You’re more likely to keep active if you have fun and other people to enjoy yourself with. This year, Lewis started playing Table Cricket, an indoor miniature version of the game played on a large table top. He quickly went on to be a volunteer scorer and umpire and now has a Sports Leader’s Gold Award. His coach says, ‘Lewis has done a fantastic job as a leader. He has worked very hard memorising the rules and practicing regularly. Lewis might umpire the national final at Lords!’

We were proud to support 10 athletes to represent Brighton & Hove at the Special Olympics National Games in Sheffield. These high profiled games give athletes with a learning disability the opportunity to compete and to demonstrate their abilities to a huge audience. The team returned with a variety of gold, silver, and bronze medals and high-achiever ribbons in Power Lifting, Short Mat Bowls, Boccia, Table Tennis and Golf!

‘Not only did we welcome over 900 people through the door but we went on to win ‘Best Artists House’ in Brighton & Hove’

With over 200 works by more than 70 artists, our Montefiore Open House art exhibition in May was a chance to showcase the talent and vision of learning disabled artists to our local community. Not only did we welcome over 900 people through the door but we went on to win ‘Best Artists House’ in Brighton & Hove, beating over 200 other exhibitions via a public vote and final judging panel!

‘I like colours and I like different shapes of tissue paper. I like sticking them and cutting out shapes. I really enjoy making art’ — Rosemary
4 ‘We want to travel round where we live’

People with learning disabilities tell us they find it difficult to travel around where they live, to see family and friends when they want to see them, and to participate in community life. They are frustrated at not being able to travel or make plans without relying on others for support. They are fearful of making journeys due to a lack of tolerance and understanding in the community. And these barriers stop them from trying new things, such as education and employment.

So we were delighted to be successful in our bid to bring back our popular independent travel training project. Thanks to an award from the Big Lottery Fund, over five years we will help people with learning disabilities to improve their skills, knowledge, and confidence to travel around where they live. Some people will practise making journeys on public transport in Brighton & Hove alongside a ‘buddy’, others will try out taster sessions using our fun ‘Drama on the Bus’ scenarios, and others will journey to and from a volunteer work placement with a buddy.

5 ‘We want to have good housing’

Grace Eyre Housing makes sure that people with learning disabilities can access high-quality accommodation that meets their needs. Our Shared Lives schemes match a person with learning disabilities to a carer willing to share their home and give ongoing support. We always give person centred support and sometimes we have to think creatively to get the right solution. For example, we know that some people want to become Shared Lives carers but they may not have a suitable home. Working in partnership, Grace Eyre Housing and Shared Lives have found and secured new homes for people to move into, that are safe, secure, and suit the needs of both a carer and the person being supported. We have had some great feedback from the people we have brought together this year, such as, “I love it here and the carer really understands me” and “I feel like I have a fresh start to my life”.

‘The best bit about being a carer is supporting someone to become more independent. It gives them the confidence to be able to work and to be involved in their local community.’ — Sarah

‘I love my home, I like my friendly neighbours, I like the pub, I can eat burgers and drink beer!’ — Stevie

In Chichester, three young adults with learning disabilities were able to move into a shared house together, supported by Grace Eyre. Now our supported living and outreach team support the housemates, helping them to shop and cook for themselves, and travel to and from the nearby college. A time of transition like this can be difficult so we work alongside the families too. One set of parents said, ‘we were very impressed by the ethos of Grace Eyre... this (housing solution) will provide our young adults with independence’
‘We want to have strong and supported relationships’

We are supporting five young women with learning disabilities so that they can care for their babies. For three of these women, they are the sole carers of their child, so a robust network of support is vital. By matching them with dedicated support workers, we have helped the young mothers to gain confidence, develop skills, and build meaningful relationships with all the professionals and family members involved in the circle of care around them.

‘Grace Eyre has supported me throughout my pregnancy and has helped me prepare and develop the skills I needed to become a mother. They are always there when I need them’ — Mother with learning disabilities

‘My support workers have helped me understand that not everyone is against me and that they want to take my baby off me. Everyone involved in my life just want what’s best for me and my child’ — Mother with learning disabilities

Our Purple Club House in Brighton & Hove entered its second year. This is a monthly, full-filled night of music, film, quizzes, and conversations at our Purple Playhouse Theatre — all organised and delivered by people with learning disabilities, from DJs to the front of house and bar staff. This year mixed things up a bit with more live music gigs, some theatre, and bingo too!

‘I like coming to the club because it’s one of the few times I get to see my boyfriend’ — Nat

Our Friendship Group, a social group for adults with learning disabilities, goes from strength to strength in Brighton & Hove, with over 125 activities this year.

We’ve seen an increase in people with learning disabilities making their own connections with each other, with less support from staff. Our Project Worker says: ‘A woman was introduced to the group — she really wanted to go swimming more often and to go out dancing. We told her about Grace Eyre's Purple Club House and she went twice and loved it! Now she takes a taxi to the club with a friend and really enjoys the music and atmosphere. We also set up a fortnightly swim for her to join, with some people swimming but others just watching. Afterwards everyone goes on to have coffee or lunch together’.
7 ‘We want to try new things’

The Department for Education awarded Grace Eyre funding to set up a Shared Lives Transition pilot scheme, one of only 11 schemes in the UK. We now provide support and accommodation to young people aged 16 and 17 who are leaving formal care in West Sussex. Extending Shared Lives is a great solution, as it means the scheme can support young people both before and after the age of 18, meaning that they have continuity and security at a potentially difficult time in their lives. Carers can help young people to bridge the gap between childhood and adult life.

For a change of scene, a chance to relax, and to have some fun, we all know that holidays are really important. This year, more people with learning disabilities have been able to try a short break. Our new scheme sees people travel from London to Brighton, or vice versa, to stay with some of our Shared Lives carers. This makes a holiday affordable and gives people the confidence that the kind of support they need is on hand with a trusted provider.

‘Managing the 16+ project is very rewarding. It promotes independence, and gives young people the skills they need to live independently in the future, at a pivotal time in their lives’ — Manager

Grace Eyre took over the management of four supported living services in Brighton & Hove. This was a period of change for people with learning disabilities and the people who support them too. New things can be anything from taking a new bus route, cooking something different at home, or trying a new activity. George tried out volunteering on Reception at our day centre in Hove. George does not use speech but is very capable of understanding what is being said to him and following instructions. Our Supported Employment Project Worker, Lorenzo, described George’s new skills as ‘amazing, he is such a quick learner’.

George worked alongside our Receptionist Bill — providing a friendly welcome and efficient service to everyone visiting the building.

Grace Eyre Choices
Call 01273 201904
or to make a referral email: referrals@grace-eyre.org

grace-eyre.org
8 ‘We want to be part of our communities’

Staff, volunteers, people with learning disabilities, and family and friends all hopped aboard the Grace Eyre bus in the Brighton & Hove Pride Parade in 2017. As an employer and as a service provider, Grace Eyre was proud to take part for the first time. As the organisers describe, Pride is ‘a much needed oasis of joy in challenging times, (where we) come together to show the world that we celebrate and embrace diversity’. It gave us an opportunity to work together with other charities and community groups to shout loudly about the importance of all relationships of all kinds to people with learning disabilities.

Our ‘Grace Eyre Art Studio’ at Brighton Open Market is now a thriving creative studio, shop and exhibition space that is open for three days a week in the heart of the local community. We host exhibitions by Grace Eyre artists, and other local artists, and sometimes they collaborate together. We started a new ‘Customer Service Training’ course too, which not only brings employment skills and knowledge to people with learning disabilities but also connects them to other people in their community, helping to break down barriers and challenge misconceptions.
Foysol worked hard decorating, painting, and laying carpets to make a bright and comfortable home.

Shared Lives Kinship means that someone with a learning disability can live in their own home but they can count on comprehensive support from a professional carer who lives close by. They can call upon the carer as and when they need to, so it has an ‘extended family’ feel.

This is how Val came into the lives of Kelly, Foysol and Matthew.

Val visits the family once a day, talks often on the phone, and is on call whenever they need her.

‘I’m around for all the things that just pop up in everyday life. I help with benefits and other complicated things but it can be as simple as going out for the day or borrowing a drill to put up a shelf!’

It’s this kind of personalised support that is helping Kelly to grow more confident in her parenting skills. At first, it was condition of the family staying together that Foysol remained at home too, to support Kelly and Matthew and not go out to work. Kelly was only able to support her son for 30 minutes at a time on her own.

Now, they can spend hours together, just the two of them.

‘Matt is my first priority. We go to the park, the beach. We went to a farm but he wasn’t bothered about the animals, just the tractors!’

Val has noticed that, by taking small steps, Kelly and Matt’s bond as mother and son has really grown.

‘I offer support but leave space for Kelly to develop as a parent’ — Val, carer

Kelly agrees that having this support in place has helped her ‘to have a family life, it’s allowed me to live independently for the first time’.

Now, Foyasol is back at work and is feeling good about supporting his wife and son. Kelly goes to see her Mum every week on her own, taking Matt on the bus.

Val knows that the journey is ongoing, ‘as Matt develops, new challenges will come up but Kelly is developing better ways to deal with things.’

But the future is much more certain. Kelly is excited, ‘Matt will have his own bedroom when he is two years old and we will decorate it with all Thomas the Tank Engine stuff!’

* Not his real name
Grace Eyre Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities for year Ended 31 March 2018

Balance Sheet  2018  2017  £  £
Fixed Assets  2,146,891  1,874,007
Net Current Assets  419,803  632,624
Long Term Liabilities (1,037,035) (697,361)
Total Assets Less Current Liabilities  1,529,659  1,809,270

Funds
Unrestricted  1,154,553  1,373,119
Revaluation Reserve  179,544  179,544
Restricted  195,562  256,607
Total  1,529,659  1,809,270

Income and Expenditure  2017  2018  £  £
Incoming Resources
Donations & Gifts  175,737  194,651
Investment Income  1,082  3,772
Active Lives Income  1,206,824  1,299,091
Shared Lives Income  2,178,374  1,948,579
Choices Income  3,548,450  1,924,386
Activities for Generating Funds  40,521  49,142
Grace Eyre Housing CIC  510,913  352,138
Purple Playhouse Theatre CIC  21,877  22,514
Total Income  7,683,778  5,794,273

Resources Expended
Costs of Charitable Activities  7,778,792  5,722,666
Costs of Generating Funds  184,597  150,348
Total Resources Expended  7,963,389  5,873,014

Thank you

These are the people who make our work happen

Our Staff
ALL our hard working staff across Sussex and London
Chief Executive — Eva Eriksson
Deputy Chief Executive — Chris Bland
Operations Director — John Medway
Finance Director — Mark Ainsworth
New Business and Development Director — Miranda Keast

Our Trustees
Peter Boorman
Tracy Cullen
Joanna Holt
Helen Odeniyi (Chair)
Simon Owen
Kirsty Pentecost
Chris Rider
Hannah Thatcher (Treasurer)
Jade Vallance
Ben Wood

Our Patrons
Jenny Barnard-Langston
Tony Fellingham

Our Ambassadors
Kirsty Pentecost
Fran Reynolds
Tessa Clark
Ashanti Richards
Caroline Clark
Josh Vaughan
Matthew Hellett
Laura Nye
Jo Pardoe
Shannon Pooley
Tony Miller
Ben Doehren
Becky Ellis
Shane Pentecost
Deborah Tompsett

Our Volunteers
ALL our hard working and supportive volunteers

Contracts
Brighton & Hove City Council
West Sussex County Council
London Borough of Lambeth
London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham
Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea
City of Westminster
And other local authorities

Grant Making
Big Lottery Fund
Sport England
Trusts and Foundations
Baily Thomas Charitable Trust
Boost Charitable Trust
Bosher Hinton Foundation
Brighton & Hove Food Partnership
Good Food Grant
CM Keyser Charitable Trust
Dan Maskell Tennis Trust
Ernest Kleinwort Charitable Trust
Lawn Tennis Association
Lynn Foundation
Middlesex Sports Foundation
One Stop Shop Carriers for Causes (Groundwork)
Postcode Community Trust
Sir Jules Thorn Charitable Trust (Ann Rylands Small Donations)

These summarised accounts may not contain sufficient information to allow for a full understanding of the financial affairs of Grace Eyre.
For further information please consult the full accounts which can be obtained by writing to the Finance & IT Director, The Grace Eyre Foundation, 36 Montefiore Road, Sussex BN3 6EP.

Annual Review
Grace-eyre.org
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Instagram/CafeGraceEyre
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grace-eyre.org

GET INVOLVED
Make a donation or fundraise. See how to have fun with friends and family by raising life changing funds.
grace-eyre.org/ways-to-donate

GET IN TOUCH
01273 201900
enquiries@grace-eyre.org
You can send letters or donations to:
Grace Eyre,
36 Montefiore Road,
Hove, East Sussex
BN3 6EP

Registered charity number: 1020192