Who we are and how we work...

Grace Eyre works with people with learning disabilities and/or autism to make our communities stronger and more equal. We’ve been listening to and learning from the people we support for over 120 years now. All our work is developed with people with learning disabilities and/or autism. We always strive to be fully inclusive. We think this is the best way to build a stronger community. We use our experience, skills and creativity so people we support can live independent lives in the way they choose.

‘Together’ is a strong organisational theme. The development of Our Voices Project has been very successful. We are pleased to say that we have 2 Trustees with learning disabilities and a team of 15 Ambassadors. The impact for Grace Eyre is that we are changing the way we plan, deliver and review our services.

We support nearly 600 individuals. We are becoming an employer of choice, and we are taking great steps towards being led by people with learning disabilities and/or autism.

Chair’s introduction

It is with great sadness I present to you my last impact report as I step down after my 8-year service on the board. I am however hugely proud of the organisation I leave behind; one which has risen to every challenge over the years, none more stressful or difficult for those we serve than the Covid 19 pandemic. The team have been working tirelessly to ensure we can continue to support and serve everyone who needs us and most recently reopening our wider service offering in a Covid 19 safe way. We now know this journey we are on isn’t short and making sure that we can continue to help people manage their physical and mental health is paramount, as is staying connected despite all the restrictions.

We continue to grow and develop our resilience and ensure we will be here way into the future. We are about to start our exciting building project to refurbish Montefiore Road to make to make a much better space to deliver the charity’s work through into the future. Housing remains one of our priorities and we plan to continue to develop our offerings in this area.
We also want to expand our employment programmes and develop opportunities to support people as they move through different stages of their lives. We remain absolutely focused on the provision of support and services which helps people achieve their dreams and wishes.

As always I would like to thank the board and executive team at Grace Eyre for their tireless work and efforts in delivering during this complex and difficult time and thank them for always putting the people we serve first in all their decisions.

Helen Rice, Chair

Chief Executive’s introduction

Grace Eyre has continued to support nearly 600 people with learning disabilities and/or autism in the last year and as Helen has mentioned, towards the end of this year, the Covid-19 national emergency happened. We have seen a tremendous dedication by our frontline and office based staff in ensuring the charity could continue to deliver over 80% of our services as usual (or ‘extraordinary usual’ really). The remaining 20% we are now rebuilding.

The reason we wanted to produce an Impact Report was so we could really examine what the difference our services have made to the lives, well-being and happiness of the 600 people we support. We want to make sure that we listen to what people tell us about what we should be doing, how we do it and what the outcome should be for people. We know that people with learning disabilities and/or autism can help us plan, deliver and ensure quality services that can make a difference.

I also want to thank Helen for her support in developing this wonderful organisation – she has been a tremendous help!

Eva Eriksson, Chief Executive
Our Voices Project

Our team of Ambassadors meet in Worthing, Brighton, London and Hove. This is so they can talk to people from across our services and find out what they think. They share ideas and concerns that are discussed, so this means we are always working on what is important.

Our training/recruitment facilitators support our staff recruitment and induction, deliver ongoing training, offer advice and give presentations. They attend meetings outside as well as within Grace Eyre.

The team conducted a big piece of research this year. This was the Our Charter Consultation where we asked people "What is important to you?". 212 total took part and we created a new Our Charter.

Our Charter

Is about living our lives in the way we want to, getting support from kind and friendly people:
1. We want to lead healthy lives
2. We want to have strong and supported relationships
3. We want to travel around where we live
4. We want to have good housing
5. We want to try new things
6. We want to be listened to
7. We want to be part of our communities
8. We want jobs

Why do you like being an Ambassador?

Karen Medcraft – I like meeting up with friends with different disabilities. I like helping people with learning disabilities and I enjoy going to meetings.

Kirsty Pentecost – I like being an ambassador because we can make sure that Grace Eyre is user-led.

Tessa Clark – I love being an Ambassador because I have Asperger’s and like helping people with similar conditions. I can help Grace Eyre to support people with disabilities, encourage them to speak out and hear their voices.
Campaigning

Every quarter, Our Voices have campaign meetings to discuss the campaigns that are important to us. We agree what issues to use our voices to support.

• Supported Loving Project USA: The Ambassadors contributed questions that people with learning disabilities and/or autism were asked about their love lives.
• Local Election Hustings: Our Voices, Speak Out and St Johns ran our Local Election Hustings where people with learning disabilities and/or autism got to speak to local councillors.
• Close ATU’s Campaign: The Ambassadors attended protests in Hove and London after the Whorlton Hall scandal. This was to raise awareness of people with learning disabilities and/or autism who are locked up in assessment and treatment units and subject to abusive and institutional practices.
• Royal Sussex County Hospital Survey: The Ambassadors contributed their thoughts on how to make the Royal Sussex County Hospital more accessible to people with learning disabilities and/or autism.
• General Election Hustings: Our Voices, Speak Out and St John’s ran our General Election Hustings where people with learning disabilities and/or autism got to speak to prospective MPs. BBC News and Latest TV came to film.

Our Voices run the Purple Club House every month so people with learning disabilities and/or autism have a great place to go and have fun. It is a social night with DJs, film, live music, quizzes and chatting. 2019-2020 saw 869 people through the doors of the Purple Club House. This was 72 on average per club.

“I am incredibly proud of our team this year. Not only has everyone developed their professional skills but their growth in confidence has been amazing to witness. Supporting co-production throughout the organisation has been a continual learning journey for us all. I am lucky to have such a great team to be on this journey with.”
Cleo Dibb - Our Voices Manager
**Our 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.

**Our Mission** is to work towards Grace Eyre being led by people with learning disabilities and through that deliver high-quality housing, support and activities in their local communities.

**The focus of our work** all about ability, equality and independence. The services we deliver are: Active Lives, Shared Lives, Choices and Housing.

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**Active Lives**

In 2019 – 2020 we supported 203 people with our day activities, delivered in safe and supported environments. Our aim is for each person to have fun, develop meaningful friendships and new skills, and try new experiences. Our activities are organised in four main areas:

- performing and fine art,
- sports, living skills,
- work & volunteering,
- digital skills and leisure.

For adults with learning disabilities and/or autism, the Active Lives programme has many physical, psychological, emotional and sociological benefits, including:

- Reducing loneliness and isolation
- Improving mental health and well-being
- Improving physical health and fitness; mobility, coordination, heart and lung function
- Increased social inclusion and engagement; feeling valued and included within their community
- Wider social networks and development of meaningful friendships
- Increasing confidence and self-esteem transferrable into other areas of life
- Learning & developing new skills; increased employment opportunities, improved communication

As well as directly benefitting our service users, Active Lives also indirectly supports families and carers; providing some respite so that they may dedicate time to themselves to maintain their own health and well-being.
David has a mild learning disability that makes communicating more difficult. He joined the group in October 2019 and regularly participates in activities and planning meetings. He enjoyed the Christmas carvery so much he became a strong advocate for meals out to become a regular event. Now, members are sharing recipe suggestions and photos of their meals on the Facebook group.

Grace Eyre Friendship

Friendships are a vital and enriching part of life; they have a huge impact on our mental health and our happiness. Good friends provide comfort and joy and help to prevent loneliness and isolation.

The Grace Eyre Friendship Group provides a safe environment for the people we support to develop the skills and confidence to not only cope, but to thrive in social situations.

Grace Eyre Friendship is a face-to-face group support members to meet new people, visit new places and take part in activities within their community. Activities include cinema trips, coffee shop visits, restaurant meals, health walks, art sessions and more. Since the social restrictions have been put in place, we have expanded the Group’s private Facebook page and have moved as many of the sessions online as possible, plus introduced new ones. It is exciting to see how this group is growing; bringing new people to Grace Eyre for support.
Employment Project

Our Employment Project aims to increase the employment rate among people with learning disabilities and/or autism. We want to enable people to live as independently as possible and to enjoy their chosen lifestyles, supporting integration in the local community and in the world of work.

During 2019 we have worked on a strategy that will support more growth in this area. ‘Let’s Work Together’ will give us the stage to campaign, to apply for additional funding and most importantly get more people with learning disabilities and/or autism into paid jobs that are satisfying.

Toby Watkins, Kitchen Head, Angel Cake Café

“I get to serve customers, make sure they are okay, and if there are any problems people come to me…I can feel confident that I can train other people.”

This is Toby. Toby has a learning disability and first accessed Grace Eyre 11 years ago, as a Travel Buddy Volunteer. As a volunteer, Toby very proudly supported several people over 6 weeks to learn the skills necessary to travel independently, and this is something he looks back on with fond memories.

His first employed role was as Kitchen Assistant at Grace Eyre’s Café. Many years of dedicated hard work, tailored support and training has meant that Toby has been able to take on the role of Kitchen Head. With support of Grace Eyre managers and supported employment staff he has been able to undertake qualifications in Food Safety and Catering (L2), First Aid and Fire Safety. Toby is looking forward to being an active part of Grace Eyre’s employment programme, and hopes to be able to pass on his skills to new volunteers looking for work.

Toby speaks about Grace Eyre having a positive effect on his personal life and he has made many meaningful friendships. He has been able to transfer the skills he has learnt at work to get creative in the kitchen at home.
**Jon’s journey to independence**

Hi, my name is Jon and I wanted to talk about my time being supported by Sarah in Shared Lives. I used to live in Guildford where I was homeless and became addicted to drugs. After being in some supported service my experience of them had not been very good. I chose to move down to Brighton, I had a good social worker who put me in touch with Russ, the manager of Shared Lives. I was so unhappy I remember calling him all the time to see what he could do to help me. After a time, I met Sarah my Shared Lives carer with my mum. I remember my head looking down to the floor and not wanting to look at anybody, with my hood over my head.

I had a few meetings to get to know Sarah and Russ, to find out what Shared Lives was about; I couldn’t wait to move in and start my new life. Things didn’t always go to plan when I moved, I had some ups and downs, but the Shared Lives team and Sarah worked with me. Sarah has always been real with me and non-judgemental as I had a lot going on.

After settling in and a few twists and turns I can say it’s been a privilege to be supported by Sarah, she’s on hand to help me with the day to day and the difficult. I have made friends and often go out with Stevie to the café or pub. Sarah has helped me to take care of my well-being and even got me to the dentist which has got my confidence back as I now have a new smile.

There are still things I want to do. I’m not going to be with Sarah forever as my plan is to move on to my own place when the time is right. I really am glad I met Sarah and our crew, and I can’t believe how far I have come.
Choices – Our Supported Living Service

Many people with learning disabilities and/or autism enjoy living in their own home, or shared accommodation. Our Choices service provides unique support for each person’s needs so they can really enjoy living independently. Choices supports 217 people and offers two types of service: supported living and community outreach support. Choices is a flexible service varying from 24-hour daily support to 1 - 20 hours of support per week.

We support people to help them manage their money, maintain a place to live, meet new friends, learn new skills and understand their health and well-being. Helping people to feel confident within their community and live more freely.

Alan is supported through Choices by Marcy

When Alan was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s in 2019, he needed some assistive equipment to help him to maintain his independence. This included the Footprint Watch, which Alan loves. Once he was given the training, he has been able to use this technology when he feels lost, can’t remember things or just needs help. He has been able to maintain his independence to do the activities he loves, like meeting up with friends at his local pub or restaurants.
Tony is in his early 60s and lives with his sister Sandra. He has autism and isn’t very verbal, especially when you first meet him, but we became comfortable with each other quite quickly. Having seen a lot of films together, I approached Sandra with the idea of supporting him with his love of football. I am a Chelsea fan. One of our earliest games in the season was a League Cup game at home to Grimsby Town. The tickets were only £10, I asked Sandra if it was ok to offer to take Tony. She was happy, and on the day of the game a friend gave me free corporate tickets! On top of this Chelsea won 7-1, it was a brilliant night, Tony enjoyed himself so much. At football Tony really comes alive, he is far more verbal and confident than you are likely to see him anywhere else. He loves to call out and cheer on the team, laughing at other people’s comments and having a great time. This whole new footballing adventure has really thrilled Tony, and his family are delighted as well. His sister Sandra says: “He’s absolutely over the moon with all the football he’s going to, it’s better than a lottery win for him. If our mum could see him now, she’d be so happy for him.”
Grace Eyre Housing: Accessing funds to help our tenants

The job of a Housing Officer can be so varied and exciting, we try to keep regular contact with all our tenants so that we can help where we can. Last month one of my tenants was finding it a struggle to replace furniture that was beyond repair and very old. I wanted to help so I discovered a fund that I could apply to on her behalf. I completed an online application form and put forward a case for my application.

A month later I received a reply from the funder, we were successful in our application to receive funds. It was great to be able to help our tenant buy a new mattress for her bed and some drawers and wardrobes. Such items are basic and essential furniture that we all have a right to. Helping our tenants in as many ways as we can is what I enjoy most about my role as a Housing Officer. I know that this is greatly appreciated by our tenants and makes enjoying their home even more pleasurable.

“I am so pleased with my new furniture. Having these drawers means I can keep my flat clean and tidy so that my daughter can play with her toys in her room.”

Housing

Grace Eyre Housing CIC has now operated for nine years and has employed staff for eight years. We work with lots of different landlords and housing providers across Sussex. We support individuals, couples and friendship groups, matching people with quality accommodation that meets their needs.

The success of Grace Eyre Housing means that we now have 104 bed spaces in successful and good housing, it also means that this service is now contributing a very healthy percentage towards the charity’s central costs.

104 people now living in their own home
‘Sharing Our Voices’ supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund

The ‘Sharing Our Voices’ history project enables people with learning disabilities and/or autism to explore their own history. This project will create a digital archive of Grace Eyre Woodhead’s life and work. Grace pioneered the Shared Lives model of care in the early 20th century. This had a big impact on the lives of people with learning disabilities, as many were restricted to institutions and kept away from wider society.

The project will bring together people who have lived in Shared Lives arrangements from the 1950s to now, recording their stories and experiences.

A big percentage of the team who will be responsible for delivering all aspects of the project are people with learning disabilities and/or autism. Sharing Our Voices will be a project by people with learning disabilities, for people with learning disabilities.

Over 24 months, the project will deliver:
• a new digital archive of oral history,
• a stronger public record of Grace Eyre Woodhead’s activism and impact upon society,
• and a new dramatic performance created and performed by people with learning disabilities at the Brighton Fringe Festival 2021.

This will amplify the voices of people with learning disabilities and/or autism and engage our local community in Brighton & Hove with their own heritage.
Marketing and Fundraising

Currently our income from fundraising is around 2% and our target is to grow this to 5%. The board have agreed a Marketing and Fundraising strategy 2020 – 2025 which has included employing a new Head of Marketing and Fundraising and a Trust and Grants Fundraiser. The aim is to engage our local community and create additional income streams such as community and corporate fundraising. To grow our Trust and Grants income to support all areas of our business will be a challenge.

At the end of the year we started a project to evaluate our current branding and tone of voice, with the aim of supporting our ambitions to grow our income streams.

It’s all about the people

Grace Eyre has struggled in ensuring we are an employer of choice in an environment where social care has been neglected and undervalued. Grace Eyre understands the importance of recruiting and retaining ‘kind and friendly staff’. To support this we have maintained ‘Real Living Wage’ employer status, we have invested in an enhanced HR department and employed a Training & Development co-ordinator. We have improved the ratio of managers and support workers in both Choices and Active Lives and have delivered several management development initiatives. We have managed to raise salaries for all our staff on an annual basis although we wish we could have done more. Ironically with the Covid-19 emergency, it is likely that recruitment and retention will be easier, and we might see a more stable and skilled workforce as a result. If social care will ultimately be given greater funding remains to be seen.

317 employed staff
56 volunteers
Grants
National Lottery Heritage Fund
Brighton and Hove City Council
Shared Lives Plus Ltd
National Lottery Community Fund
Tennis Sussex
London Learning Consortium – ESF Community Grant
The Lawson Trust

Fundraising
Valerian Designs
Asda Foundation
Mayor’s Charity
Brighton Fringe
John Mann Appreciation Society
St Christopher’s School
Irwin Mitchell
Iceland Visitors
A to Z Creatives Ltd
Resound & Rebelles
And all the individuals who decided to donate to Grace Eyre

Raising £134,240

Thank you from everyone at Grace Eyre for your support

Raising £128,188
**Going forward...**

A new strategic plan was agreed in December 2019 after a long consultation with Our Voices, our Ambassadors, staff, service users, managers and senior managers. A Theory of Change Strategic Map 2020 – 2025 was agreed, taking into consideration some of the lessons we have learned.

**Key lessons we have learned**

- Growth in services, trading and fundraising is crucial to our financial viability
- Our Voices and the contribution of people with learning disabilities and/or autism to our planning and service delivery is just beginning to have an impact, so more work with co-production is needed
- Covid-19 pandemic is likely to have a serious impact on the charity financially and in meeting the increasing needs of the people we support
- We continue to be a high-quality support provider for people with learning disabilities and/or autism
- We have much better financial skills and knowledge across the organisation
- We know how our community-based projects and activities will work going forward, even if we start smaller than intended
- Innovation and new ways of working brought on by Covid-19 will continue
- Technology has been key
- Managers and the leadership they provide is crucial in ensuring we continue to improve the quality of our services
- An employment strategy to ensure more people with learning disabilities and/or autism can access job opportunities is a priority for the future
- The Big Build is just starting and the improvements this will bring will support our continued success.

We believe the need for our services will increase in 2020 - 2021 because of the effects of Covid 19. We are committed to delivering quality services and finding new ways of doing so whilst meeting the social distancing rules for the foreseeable future.
## Grace Eyre Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities for year Ended 31 March 2020

### Balance Sheet

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<tr>
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<th>2020</th>
<th>2019</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fixed Assets</strong></td>
<td>£1,903,525</td>
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<td><strong>Current Assets</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Long-Term Liabilities</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Current Assets Less Current Liabilities</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Unrestricted</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Designated</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Restricted</strong></td>
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### Income and Expenditure

#### Incoming Resources

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<tr>
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<th>2019</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Donations &amp; Gifts</strong></td>
<td>£158,344</td>
<td>£185,469</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Investment Income</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Active Lives Income</strong></td>
<td>£1,253,558</td>
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<td><strong>Shared Lives Income</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Choices Income</strong></td>
<td>£4,041,230</td>
<td>£4,275,404</td>
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<td><strong>Resources for Generating Funds</strong></td>
<td>£67,570</td>
<td>£51,892</td>
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<td><strong>Gains on Disposal of Fixed Assets</strong></td>
<td>£1,039,122</td>
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<td><strong>Grace Eyre Housing</strong></td>
<td>£863,196</td>
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<td><strong>Purple Playhouse Theatre</strong></td>
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<td>£23,265</td>
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<td><strong>Total Income</strong></td>
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#### Resources Expended

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<th>2020</th>
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<td><strong>Cost of Charitable Activities</strong></td>
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<td>£8,577,129</td>
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<td><strong>Cost of Generating Funds</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Total Resources Expended</strong></td>
<td>£9,155,417</td>
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