

Grace Eyre Impact Report 2021-2022



Chair's Introduction

The achievements this year are many, but a few highlights for me include increased valuable partnerships with other organisations, strengthened finances, securing new contracts, expanding housing, and progressing plans for the Big Build.

The charity remains willing to learn from difficulties and adaptable to opportunities and innovative ideas, a testament to the executive team and staff.

Grace Eyre's mission to deliver Our Charter, created by people with learning disabilities and/or autistic people, remains a very important thread through the work of Grace Eyre and it has been fantastic to see the appointment of someone with a learning disability within the executive team.

This year has seen much progress within the board, from keeping up to date with the Charity Governance Code and how it relates to our work, to improving and developing as a board and training as individuals. We have stronger relationships with the executive team and as a result, have a better oversight and can provide a solid role as a critical friend.

It's been an absolute privilege to be Chair throughout this year, and I want to use this opportunity to say thank you to everyone who is involved with the charity. Grace Eyre is a central point for many of the people that use its services and plays an important role within the local health and social care system. We know there are challenges ahead, in particular staff recruitment and retention, and we are not alone in this, but I do hope this impact report reminds all our wonderful staff what a great place Grace Eyre is, and the difference their dedication and hard work truly makes.



Liv Corbishley

Chair of Trustees

The Grace Eyre Foundation



Chief Executive's Introduction

Over the past year, we have nearly reached our pre-pandemic delivery and we are back up to 95% capacity. That means we are supporting over 600 people with learning disabilities and/or autistic people across Brighton & Hove, West Sussex and parts of London.

Our staff continue to deliver excellent services in very difficult circumstances. We are aware of how the cost-of-living crisis is hitting social care staff so we are campaigning both locally for higher fees from local authorities and nationally, along with other organisations, for better recognition and reward for all social care staff. We will continue to do everything we can to raise salaries and terms and conditions for our staff.

We have continued to work with our stakeholders, especially people who use our services, their families and local authorities in order to deliver the best we can that can make a difference to people's lives.



Eva Eriksson

Chief Executive
The Grace Eyre Foundation

Executive Summary

Grace Eyre works with people with learning disabilities and/or autistic people to make our communities stronger and more equal. Grace Eyre supports and campaigns with people who have learning disabilities and/or autistic people, for more independent lives and inclusive communities. We've been listening to and learning from the people we support for over 120 years.

Despite the ongoing impact following the COVID-19 pandemic, we have been able to make a difference in people's lives. Without Grace Eyre Friendship, over 500 people would have felt lonely and isolated with little opportunity to see their friends and share how the pandemic had affected them. Meanwhile, Travel Buddies and employment support have enabled people to start travelling again and find jobs.

Housing, Shared Lives and Supported Living – Choices (community outreach and supported living service) has ensured people have been safe and enabled them to access what the community has been able to offer during the pandemic. We have enabled more than **100 new people** to access independent and supported living.

Our day services – Active Lives has finally been able to start the rebuilding of community-based activities. We are very excited about our work with the National Development Team for Inclusion - their support around introducing Individual Service Funds will mean more choice and control for the people we support.



Our year in numbers



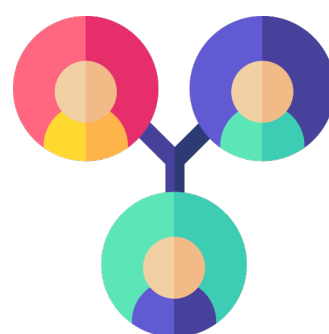
611

Total number of people supported to have great lives



Active Lives

70 People taking part in day activities.



Shared Lives

69 People living in supported arrangements.



Housing

127 People who have chosen where and how they want to live.



Choices

268 People in supported living and accessing the community.

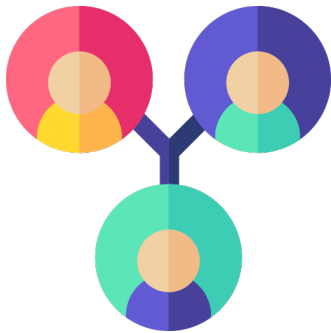
Our Impact



262 Kind and friendly staff



111 People who completed our digital inclusion survey to identify the challenges people face using technology



Shared Lives carers providing support in and from their home:

49 full time carers
53 support carers



Combatting social isolation - Grace Eyre Friendship:

50 regular members
300 online sessions



Supporting people to travel independently - Travel Buddy:

15 trainees



Supporting people into work - Employment Project:

12 people



People with lived experience helping us to make decisions:

- 2** Trustees
- 1** Executive director
- 2** Members of the senior leadership team
- 14** Staff employed by Grace Eyre = 5% of total workforce



Our Campaigns

This year the Grace Eyre Ambassadors told us they wanted a campaign that focused on Our Charter point Being Healthy. We ran a joint research project with Speak Out Brighton & Hove that was funded by the NHS. We found that people with a learning disability were affected a lot more than other people during the COVID-19 pandemic. They had worse healthcare and were more likely to die than other groups, so we ran a campaign which focused on improving this.

The **Improving Our Health campaign** had two main aims:

1. For people to be on the Learning Disability Register
2. For people to have good quality Annual Health Checks.

We raised awareness of these issues by:

- Talking to people from the NHS and other organisations
- Sending our Healthcare Packs to everyone we support
- Training **30 staff and 2 people we support** on good quality annual health checks.

We saw a 400% increase in Annual Health check reporting within Grace Eyre as a result of the campaign.

We also received some funding from Mencap to help people from Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic communities to access the Learning Disability Register. We co-produced a project with the people we support from Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic communities and ran focus groups to identify barriers to accessing the Learning Disability Register and the information needed to get on it. We created a resource in **8 different languages** so that people had information in the format they needed. We have been approached by a number of clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) who have used the information and shared our learning from the project with the Learning Disability Mortality Review team and NHS teams that are running similar projects.



We continued to champion diversity through our **Re-Think Disability** campaign that was promoted with an evening of films at the Komedia in Brighton. Three films were shown that highlighted the disparity of people with a learning disability and challenged the perceptions of people with a learning disability, focussing on their ability (with a capital A). The event was covered by local TV and press and attended by commissioners, staff, the people we support and local community.

Our Mission: Our Charter & what we aim to achieve

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

Grace Eyre's mission is to deliver Our Charter, created by people with learning disabilities and/or autistic people. It informs every aspect of our work.

Our Charter:

- We want to be listened to
- We want to be part of the community
- We want strong and supported relationships
- We want good housing
- We want to try new things
- We want jobs
- We want to be healthy
- We want to travel around.



Our Voices

The Our Voices team promote inclusion and ensure the voices of people with learning disabilities and/or autistic people are heard and included in decisions about Grace Eyre.

There were three team members in 2021/22, since joined by an Easy Read Officer later in 2022, with most having their own lived experience of having a learning disability. The voices of people with a learning disability are also directly represented in Grace Eyre's leadership, through two of our trustees, Karen Medcraft and Kirsty Pentecost, and by the work of our Ambassadors, who make sure everyone can have their voices heard on issues that affect them and are supported by the Our Voices Manager.

Key projects:

- Continuation of the Inclusion and Engagement research project with Speak Out, funded by the NHS (£1,400), to find out what people with learning disability's experience with healthcare during COVID-19 has been and to help us create the aims of the Improving Our Health campaign
- Research funded by Mencap (£4,000) to find out the experience of Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic communities when accessing healthcare support to help improve experiences and outcomes for these groups
- A review of the organisation, using insight from staff and people we support and based on the Social Care Institute of Excellence guidelines, on how we can become more user led. Recommendations from the Supporting Participation Report will inform the Quality Management Framework
- Ongoing, joined up work with the Employment Project and Human Resources on an accessible recruitment plan to make the employment journey as accessible as possible.

Our Voices hosted **59 meetings**, including Ambassador meetings in different Sussex locations, campaign meetings and easy read drop-in sessions.



Thank you to all of our Ambassadors:

- Ben Doehren, Fran Reynolds, Tessa Clark, Kirsty Pentecost, Adam Green, Karen Medcraft, Jonny Schachter, Stuart McCallion and Toby Watkins, for their continuing support
- Caroline Edgington, Shane Pentecost, Jamie Larcombe and Gayle Driver, who stepped down this year
- Stuart Leaney, Carinder Malhi, Rob Achucarro, David Lea and Fahmina Ripa, who we welcomed as new Ambassadors.

We will also sorely miss Chris Rider, an Ambassador and previous Trustee for Grace Eyre, who died in October 2021.

Stuart's story (in his own words)

Since I joined Grace Eyre in March 2021, I have been more motivated by life and grown more confident in myself. My first introduction was through the Friendship Group. I was shy and nervous at first but soon made new friends, and at the time joined lots of Zoom sessions like yoga, art and the Friday night disco. When we could, days at the Grace Eyre beach hut and picnics were so nice, it was great to see people in person again. Interacting with people during a pandemic was so important and I don't know what I would have done without it.



I became an Ambassador in April 2021 and, along with the Our Voices Manager, talked about the future of Grace Eyre. I felt involved in decisions and got to talk to, and got to know, different teams within Grace Eyre. I was then introduced to the Employment Project and I found out what I would like to look for in a job and how to develop the skills I needed.

Before I joined Grace Eyre I was depressed, Grace Eyre has changed my life for the better.

I thought I would never be able to find a job but I was supported on a training course at the Grace Eyre office, where I developed my IT skills and extra tasks, like how to frank the mail. I also completed a first aid course, food hygiene and manual handling course. I really enjoyed meeting new friends and colleagues, and learning how the Reception worked at Grace Eyre.

This led me to me to continue onto the Customer Service Training Programme at the Grace Eyre Art Studio in the Brighton Open Market, where I learnt how to use the till, how to display the art, and how to talk to customers. I got to sell art to my dad and my sister, they were so proud of me and it felt really good. During the course, I actually got a paid job as a Photography Assistant which is so much fun. I am learning so much. I've also taken part in a few different films and found a flare for acting! I was also inspired to use some of my photography and make a canvas and a cup to sell at the Art Studio.

Choices

Our Choices service offers supported living and community outreach, providing unique support for each person's needs so they can really enjoy living independently.



184,334 hours of support provided by Choices

On 1st January 2022, we started supporting **22 new people** who transferred over from a service in West Sussex. Some have joined the Ambassadors team and everyone has been building new friendships with the people we already support.

In Brighton, we piloted a new type of support model where people can also access drop-in support to complement our outreach service. Here they can have their needs met, meet new people and develop friendships in a community setting. This will also provide more flexibility for people to get support throughout the week.

Choices have focussed on improving **health and well-being** since COVID-19. Here are some examples of how we have achieved that:



- **Personal trainer** – someone we support hired a personal trainer every week to keep fit and active
- **Annual Health Checks** – people we support are encouraged to see their GPs regularly to ensure they get the correct health care they need
- **Pedal power** – people we support have been partaking in an activity with their support workers where they cycle around the city and along the seafront to keep fit
- **Walking football** – some of the people we support have been keeping fit by taking part in walking football at Hove Park
- **Day activities** – we are making sure people are getting back into day activities again, enjoying music, arts and volunteering
- **Holidays** – people have been going on holiday again. We have had postcards from Spain, Portugal and Camber Sands; and there are future trips planned to France and Butlins
- **Cooking** – people we support are being encouraged to cook their own meals.

Housing

Grace Eyre Housing supports individuals, couples and friendship groups, matching people with quality accommodation that meets their needs.



During the year, Grace Eyre Housing continued to give more people a place they can call home by:

- Managing **90 properties**
- Working with over **50 private landlords and letting agents**
- Working with **2 local authorities** – Brighton & Hove and West Sussex
- Working with **1 Housing Association** – BHT Sussex.

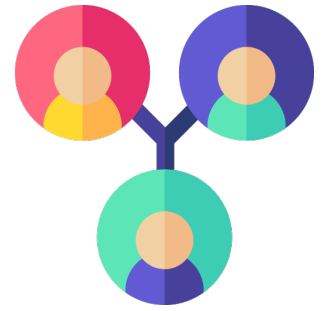
Focus on adaptations & accessibility:

A Grace Eyre Housing tenant needed a new accessible shower room in his home. Housing worked with the tenant, his support team, social work team and West Sussex County Council to put the plan together and install it for him. The tenant is really happy that Grace Eyre was able to adapt his home to meet his needs. The other tenants have also benefitted from the new shower room.



Shared Lives

The Shared Lives scheme supported 69 people with learning disabilities and/or autistic people to live an independent life within their community. They have been matched with 49 paid carers who share their homes and give them the individual support they need.



Shared Lives participated in the Heath Campaign led by Our Voices team focused on improving health outcomes for people and ensuring people have Annual Health Checks with Health Action Plans in place.

Shannon's Story

Shannon is part of our unique Shared Lives community. She is supported by her Shared Lives carer to compete in horse carriage racing. Throughout the year while COVID-19 still presented challenges for everyone, Shannon and her carer were able to continue to safely access the stables during allotted times to care for the horses, prepare equipment, practice for competitions and, most importantly, spend time outdoors being active. Shannon has continued to develop her skills in the sport, working towards and passing tests so she is be able to take part in their shared passion as much as possible.



Active Lives

Our Active Lives service offers creative and social activities to suit all abilities and tastes.

As we have come out of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have been able to remain open all year and deliver a safe and effective service. The number of people accessing the service changed over the course of the pandemic, but since March 2021 has grown steadily, rising from the 29 people we supported last year to **70** by March 2022. This year we started to use more community venues to deliver fun and engaging activities, with creative projects like textiles and mosaics being particularly popular, while also maintaining our online offer of fun activities and forums to keep in contact with families and carers. We will continue to grow and build our capacity further in 2022/23.



Grace Eyre Friendship Group

Throughout the pandemic the Grace Eyre Friendship Group grew substantially, especially online, as we delivered exciting and varied activities to help combat social isolation and loneliness. This year, we delivered over **300 sessions to 150 people**. We have also created films, ran various in-person activities, including cinema and bowling trips, and are looking to do more across Sussex.



Sports in the Community

Grace Eyre is proud of its long-term working relationship with Special Olympics Brighton & Hove. As part of our core delivery we run various sports activities including cricket, tennis, swimming and football. We also run Health Walks with local volunteers and Art in the Park sessions at St. Ann's Well Gardens in Hove.

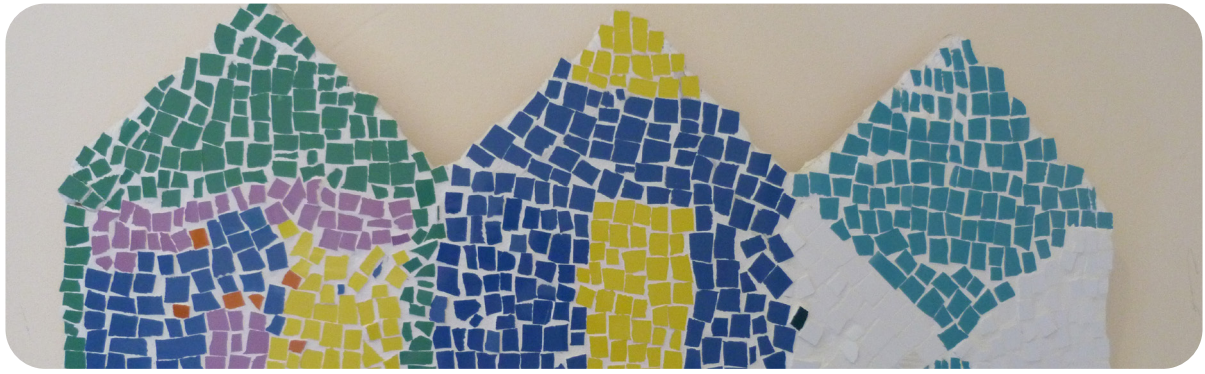
Travel Buddy Project

Despite the challenges of the pandemic and the reluctance people had to returning to public transport, Grace Eyre met our target of **15 trainees** learning a significant journey to college, to volunteer or to work, and **delivered 20 workshops** to promote the project while teaching all participants the fundamentals of travel safety. Thank you to Brighton & Hove Buses whose support has been invaluable.



Employment Project

While the pandemic has had an obvious impact on people being able to find work, the Grace Eyre Employment Project consisting of the Work Buddy Pilot, Let's Work Together and the Art Studio at Brighton Open Market made impressive progress, helping **12 people** into paid work. The project exceeded all its targets; one learner was nominated for Adult Learner of the Year; and Grace Eyre won The Sue Robson Award Community Provider of the Year at the London Consortium Awards.



Plans for next year

The strategic plan – **Our Plan 2020-2025** – has been reviewed by the Trustees and remains the plan going forward.

Our key priorities around user leadership still hold true and we will recruit to have **four Trustees with lived experience**. Unfortunately, one trustee with lived experience stepped down which has prompted the organisation to develop a training programme for prospective trustees with lived experience. With the employment of a Director of Inclusion & Projects, we will be reviewing and consulting on a new Inclusion Strategy which will have a transformative effect on the charity going forward.

We are now setting up a **Digital Inclusion Project** after surveying **111 people** who use our services around technology. We have been able to identify the gaps and will be seeking funding to ensure we can make a difference in including people with learning disabilities in the technological revolution that has happened during the pandemic.

Grace Eyre is continuing to **develop our campaigning** with the success of the first campaign around Improving Our Health which we will continue to monitor. We have also launched a campaign called Rethink Disability, which challenges people's perception of disability and asks us to look at people's abilities instead.

Our Growth Strategy remains the same despite a small setback during the two years of COVID-19 where we saw a negative growth of -6.4% in 2020/21 and a negative -9% growth this year. However, we are predicting 25%+ growth for the coming year. We will continue to grow an average of 15% per year and ensure our loss-making services of Active Lives and Shared Lives come back into profitability. We know that we can make a difference to people's lives, and this is the reason for our strategy. We will also continue to raise capital for our Big Build which is now estimated to cost £3.95 million.

We delivered a salary increase of 5-7% uplift to our support workers in April 2022 but we are acutely aware that this might not be enough. Grace Eyre staff remain our most valued asset and in recognition of this, we intend to ensure our front facing staff will continue to receive a decent salary and terms and conditions.

Grace Eyre Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities for year ended 31st March 2022

Income from:

Donations and gifts	534,831
Investment income	410
Charitable activities	7,095,671
Resources for generating funds	13,327
Grace Eyre Housing	1,439,470
Total income	9,083,709

Expenditure on:

Raising funds	89,965
Charitable activities	7,480,634
Grace Eyre Housing	1,256,711
Total expenditure	8,827,310



Marketing

The expansion of the Marketing department is making a real difference to increasing our supporter base and making Grace Eyre more visible in the city.

The recruitment of a Director of Income Generation to lead this department, along with New Business and Fundraising, will place Marketing in a prominent position as we move forward with future campaigning, including a large organisational awareness and Big Build fundraising initiative. A refresh of the Marketing & Fundraising strategy which has been agreed, focusses on ways to create more independent trading activities and diversification of our funding streams to create more sustainability and drive our growth strategy.

Fundraising

Thank you to all those who provided funds to support our work this year:



Arnold Clark Community Fund
Asda Foundation
Brighton & Hove City Council
Brighton District Nursing
Association Trust
Brighton, Hove & District Mencap
Society
Chalk Cliff Trust
European Social Fund
Gatwick Airport Community Trust
Ian Askew Charitable Trust
Mencap
Munro Charitable Trust
National Lottery Community Fund
Openwork Foundation
Santa Barbara Heights Charitable
Trust
Shanly Foundation
Sussex NHS Commissioners
Tony Barnard Foundation
Transpetrol Foundation

- Our employment project, Let's Work Together, received grants of £20,000 from the European Social Fund and £10,000 from the Openwork Foundation. This enabled us to provide employment support, workplace skills training and work experience for people to increase their employability progression routes.
- Brighton & Hove City Council (£8,628) and the local Mencap Society (£2,000) both continued their support of the Friendship Group in Brighton & Hove, enabling members to meet new people, try new things, have fun, and make strong, meaningful friendships.
- Grants from the Gatwick Airport Community Trust (£2,500), Shanly Foundation (£1,000), and Munro Charitable Trust (£1,000) have enabled us to widen support of people through the Friendship Group throughout West Sussex.
- Brighton & Hove City Council continued to support our Open Market Art Studio with a grant of £9,231 which provides a professional space for the people we support to exhibit and sell pieces of their artwork.
- The National Lottery Community Fund also continued to support our Travel Buddy project. Entering into its fifth and final year, the project supports people to develop the skills and confidence to travel independently.
- A grant of £7,500 from the Brighton District Nursing Association Trust and £5,000 from the Chalk Cliff Trust enabled us to support people to return to Active Lives, working with them to overcome barriers and anxieties following the pandemic with a co-produced programme of meaningful activities.
- A grant of £4,891 from the Sussex NHS Commissioners enabled us to support people to receive their COVID-19 vaccinations, providing easy-read accessible information, peer-to-peer support and access to quiet vaccination sessions.
- This year, with support from the Asda Foundation (£1,000), Tony Barnard Foundation (£500) and Ian Askew Charitable Trust (£500) we have been able to start re-developing our allotment which is a fantastic place for people to learn horticultural skills, spend time outdoors and support mental health.
- We received a grant of £5,000 from Brighton & Hove City Council's Winter Support Fund. This, together with a grant of £2,500 from the Arnold Clark Community Fund enabled us to provide vital support for our tenants throughout the winter, including help with utility bills, adaptations to improve heat retention in their homes, and provision of blankets and warm clothing.

A big thank you to our staff, trustees, patrons, ambassadors, volunteers, contractors, corporates, community and supporters. You make our work happen.

GET IN TOUCH

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You can send letters or
donations to:

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