



Impact Report 2022 - 2023



Helping people with a learning disability and autistic people live the life they want to.

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Chair's introduction

It gives me great pleasure to introduce this year's Impact Report.

This was a challenging year for many in the third sector as we start to see the legacy of the pandemic. We have a backdrop of a difficult recruitment market, cost of living crisis and public sector cuts. Thanks to the dedication and care of staff and volunteers at every level of the charity, it has seen the number of people it supports increase, a credit to everyone involved.

This year, after a competitive recruitment process we welcomed five new trustees to the board and appointed a Deputy Chair (Camilla Gauge). As the board and charity develop, we are better placed to face the future. We have already benefited from their individual skills and energy. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the board for going above and beyond in their time commitment.

I hope you will enjoy browsing and be as inspired as I am with the stories from people at the heart of Grace Eyre, who use the services it provides.

Liv Corbishley, Chair

Chief Executive's introduction

Over the past year, we have recovered fully from the Covid pandemic in terms of service delivery, and we have been able to set up some new services. We now support over 550 individuals across Sussex and parts of London.

The past year has been the most challenging in terms of recruitment – especially in recruiting support workers to our services in Brighton & Hove and West Sussex. 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 have been able to raise salaries for our staff by 7% and have introduced a salary scale which has given most staff another 2-3% uplift.

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, CEO



Update from our services

Housing - Grace Eyre Housing supports over **138 people** to safely maintain their tenancies and maximise their independence. The experts from our Housing team have built up positive relationships with landlords from both the private and independent sector alongside housing associations and local councils and sourced high-quality flats and housing across Sussex. The team aim to enable people to choose where they live and who they want to live with, supporting individuals, couples and some mother-and-baby tenants.

The team aim to enable people to choose where they live and who they want to live with.

Shared Lives continues to support **69 people** to live as independently as possible with our approved Shared Lives carers. We had an inspection by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in September 2022, and the inspector judged our Shared Lives scheme to be 'Good' overall and 'Outstanding' in 'Responsive'. This outcome reflects the excellent work the Shared Lives team and the carers do to make sure we provide Responsive, Caring, Safe, Effective and Well Lead support, in line with all CQC categories.

The CQC judged our Shared Lives scheme to be 'Good' overall and 'Outstanding' in 'Responsive'.

Choices (community outreach and supported living service) supports **248 people** across Brighton & Hove and West Sussex. We had an Inspection by the Care Quality Commission in October 2022, and we were found to be providing a 'Good' service overall and 'Outstanding' in 'Caring'. Again, this outcome reflects the excellent work our staff teams do providing support throughout the CQC categories of Responsive, Caring, Safe, Effective and Well Lead.

The CQC found Choices to be providing a 'Good' service overall and 'Outstanding' in 'Caring'.

Active Lives - Active Lives continues to develop its daytime programme, offering a broad range of learning and development opportunities. We also offer a range of arts activities alongside an exciting community-based sports programme. Another key area is our pre-work and volunteer programme preparing people with their CV and the skills they need to take on work opportunities in the local community.

Active Lives continues to develop its daytime programme offering a broad range of learning and development opportunities.

Our Year in numbers

550

people supported across Sussex and parts of London to have great lives

248

people in supported living and accessing the community managed by our Choices team

77

people taking part in day activities (Active Lives)

1263

of outreach hours provided by Choices every week.

69

people in supported arrangements through Shared Lives

4338

support hours provided by Choices every week

138

people who have chosen where and how they want to live supported by Grace Eyre Housing

302

kind and friendly staff



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

We want to be listened to

People with lived experience should be involved in decision making.

This year, Grace Eyre developed a Trustee Training programme to support people into trustee positions in our charity and others. The programme was designed and tested by staff and our trustees with lived experience.

Grace Eyre recognised that while charity boards are trying to be more inclusive, and there is training on being more accessible, there was previously no training for people with a learning disability and autistic people who are or want to become trustees.

This proved a success with five people with a learning disability and/or autistic people trained as part of the pilot and one recruited as a Grace Eyre trustee. A further eight people took part in the training over March/April 2023.





We want to be part of our community

The people we support want to be part of the bigger picture.

In October 2022, our Active Lives Performance Group was able to return to the stage and put on an amazing performance of 'Macbeth: the Musical' for family and friends. Taking place at Exeter Street Hall, the production told the famous Shakespearean tragedy through song and dance.

Grace Eyre has a vibrant artistic heritage, and our activities reflect this with opportunities to express creativity through a variety of different ways. Our performance group sessions help develop drama, dance and musical skills and improve confidence, while working towards events to share with others.

The performance group also put on the brilliant 'Christmas in Chicago – And All That Jazz!' this year and had a starring role in our Christmas Carol Concert, a much-loved fundraising event open to the whole community.

"It was beautiful! Everybody had an amazing time. It touched my heart!" - Macbeth: the Musical audience member

We want to have strong and supported relationships

When only 3% of people with a learning disability live with their partners, it is more important than ever to spread the message of our right to love whoever we want.

On 6th August 2022, we returned to the Brighton & Hove Pride LGBTQ+ Community Parade, alongside our friends from Unity Club Nights, Heartventure, Speak Out and Stay Up Late.

Our vintage open top bus, kindly provided for the day by Stagecoach, featured the slogan Equal Able Sexual, which was created with the people we support to tell the world that despite what people think, we have the same rights as anyone else, we are as able as anyone else, and we are as sexual as anyone else.

These words aren't usually controversial, but when applied to people with a learning disability, they take on a new meaning.





We want good housing

97% of people in Shared Lives felt they were part of the family.

Shared Lives Week

Led by Shared Lives Plus and supported by Grace Eyre, Shared Lives Week happens every year in June. Over the week, we celebrate the best of Shared Lives and show our gratitude for the amazing work of our Shared Lives carers and the contribution they make for people in our local communities.

What is it like to be a Shared Lives carer?

Hannah lives with her young family in Brighton and supports two adults with a learning disability, as a Grace Eyre Shared Lives carer.

"I enjoy it because I get to see the reward of the people who live with me being independent and happy, and seeing the small changes that I do to make a positive impact in their life; but also being able to raise my family, work from home and have fun while doing it." - Hannah, Shared Lives carer

"Living with Hannah is great. We go to parties together and we cook together, we get coffee together, we sit in the garden and have tea together. Hannah makes me feel part of her household." - Sheila, supported by Shared Lives

We want jobs

The proportion of adults with a learning disability in paid employment has decreased over time, from 6.0% in 2014/15 to a low of 5.1% in 2020/21.

During 2022/23, between 13 and 15 of our 20 teams had a member of staff with lived experience of a learning disability and/or autism. We have one executive director with lived experience. Our new target, which we will continue to work towards, is 20% of all staff.

We are also committed to helping more people with a learning disability or autistic people into a range of paid employment, volunteer or education opportunities.

In January 2022, we launched our Money and Numbers course, a free 6-week course, funded by the Government's Multiply programme, to increase numeracy skills for adults with a learning disability and/or autistic people.

Mellie's story

Mellie got involved with Grace Eyre after being referred to its employment programme and then, through a job coach, was helped to start a jewellery business, using her own homemade creations.

Following her involvement with the Grace Eyre employment programme, Mellie started working part time at Grace Eyre as a project assistant for Travel Buddy, which trains people with learning disabilities to travel independently, and has since started a new role as a support worker, supporting collage and textiles sessions at our Montefiore Road site. She likes her new role as she loves to meet different people, who are keen to try new things.



Margaret's story



Margaret first got involved with Grace Eyre through the Friendship Group, during lockdown. She was soon volunteering to help run groups and then running them when the leader was on holiday. Through this, she was recommended for Grace Eyre's employment project and encouraged to apply for a position at Grace Eyre as Easy Read Officer, which she was successful in achieving in June 2022. A 10-week training course with Photo Symbols to support her role further developed her skills, helped her make new connections and brought an offer of additional external work. She also took part in Grace Eyre's Trustee Training last year and has since become a trustee for Brighton and Hove Speakout.

Margaret said:

"The employment coach helped me with my application, CV, preparing for the interview and a mock interview. I was also asked to show a piece of work at the interview, which I had prepared in advance and showed I could do the role."

"Working at Grace Eyre has improved my confidence, especially when travelling and when things change. I really like my team who help me to plan ahead. I'm just so happy in my job!"

We want to travel around

Grace Eyre's Travel Training programme transforms the lives of people with a learning disability and autistic people by increasing their confidence to travel independently.

In November 2022, in a UK-first, accessibility advisors at Brighton & Hove Buses and Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) worked together with adults with a learning disability at Grace Eyre to support them in making an integrated journey by both bus and train.

They caught a bus to Brighton Railway Station together and on the way acted out everyday scenarios such as how to deal with a missing bus pass and journey planning, to give their guests the knowledge and confidence to travel independently.

At the station, the eight travellers learnt how to check train times, buy a ticket and ask for assistance. They then boarded a train to Haywards Heath before returning by a specially laid-on 'rail replacement bus', to show the alternative transport used if rail services are disrupted.

Claire Hudson, Travel Buddy Manager for Grace Eyre:

"Like GTR and Brighton & Hove Buses, we want more people to feel confident in using public transport so that they can be a part of and contribute to their communities and it's brilliant to be working together to achieve this."



We want to be healthy

The people we support want to keep fit, have active lives and healthy minds.

This year, we built on our previous successful campaign to improve the health of people with a learning disability by:

- Continuing with the Inclusion and Engagement research project with Brighton and Hove Speak Out, funded by the NHS, to explore the reasons why obesity and type II diabetes is increasing for people with learning disability
- Securing continued funding, also with Brighton and Hove Speak Out, to develop training to support staff to know how to support people to lose weight and be more active
- Continuing to share health packs, including information on health checks, vaccines and exercise, through our website.

We further supported healthy living this year by offering a range of sports activities through our Active Lives timetable, including cricket, tennis, health walks, dance and boccia. We also established strong links with local groups such as Brighton and Hove Athletics Club, which we will build on going forward and, through our ongoing partnership with Special Olympics Sussex, made available a wider community programme, including more opportunities for tennis, swimming and football.



We want to try new things

The people we support want to build their life skills.

Our Choices supported living and outreach service has continued to encourage people to develop their interests and try new things. This year people have visited different parks, attended concerts, been to the cinema, as well as going to college.

Debs' story



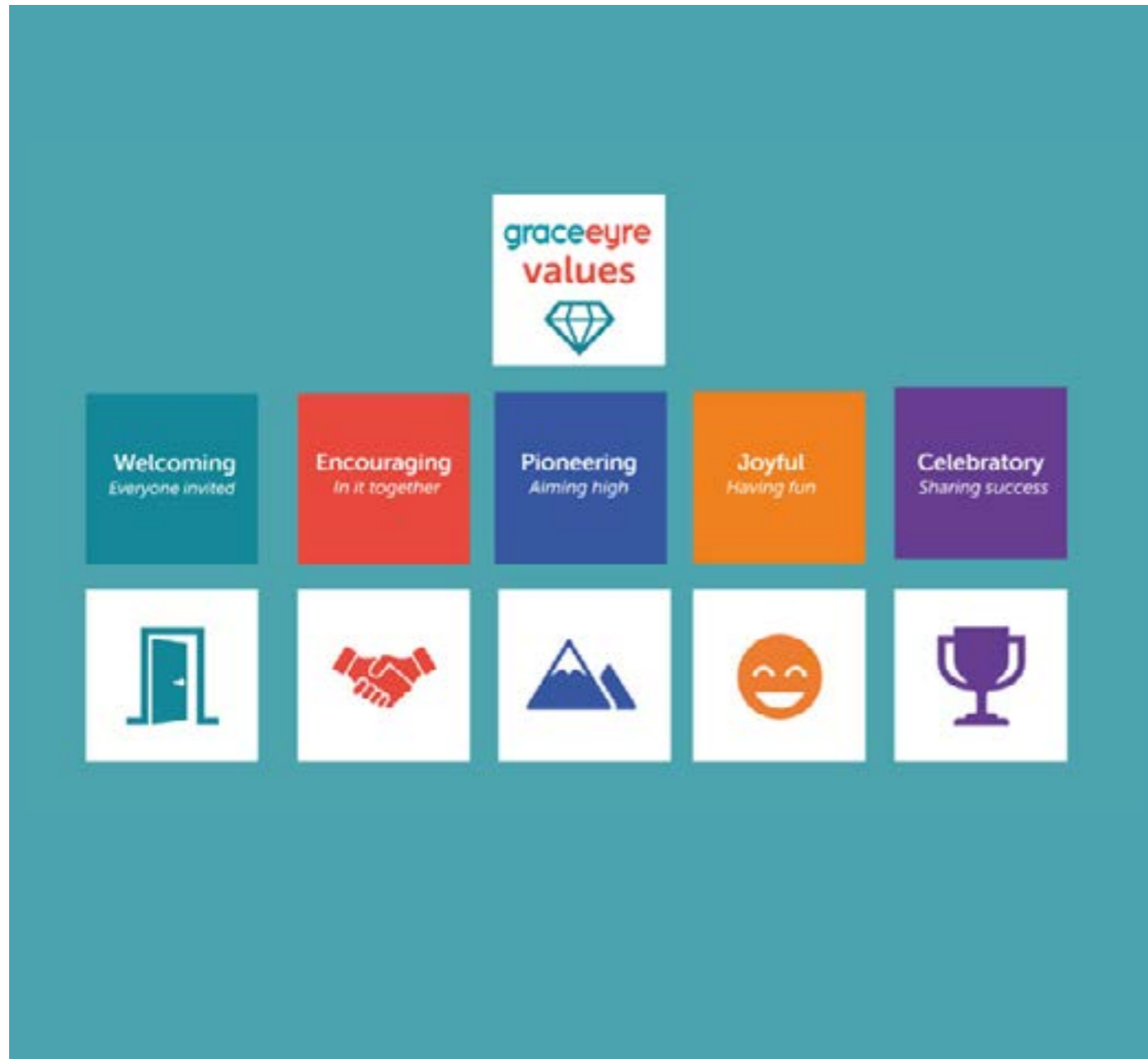
During this year, Debs attended a cookery course at her local college. She was supported by Grace Eyre staff to enrol on the course, to get to and from college each week and also at break time to get a coffee from the college canteen.

By trying this new activity, she has met new people, made new friends, found something she enjoys and can look forward to, tried new foods, and learnt to be independent in the kitchen when both cooking and cleaning. She has used some of her new skills at home by cooking meals for herself and all her house mates!

"I like it, I like cooking and seeing my friends" - Debs

Our valued staff

This year, with Grace Eyre staff, we created our new organisational values.



Our values are a set of standards we can aspire to that motivate, engage and empower us to work towards a shared goal. They are the shared traits and qualities of the people of Grace Eyre and will bring our vision, mission, Charter and Our Plan to life.

We continued to be a real living wage employer and introduced a cost-of-living package for staff

We also welcomed many new staff to the Grace Eyre team as we rose to meet the national challenge of recruitment to our sector.



Meet George, Grace Eyre's Recruitment Lead



Recruitment in the social care sector has been challenging due to external factors such as the pandemic and Brexit.

George was recruited to attract new talent to Grace Eyre, to raise the charity's profile to be an employer of choice in the social care sector and to recruit support workers for both our core teams and Flexible Support Worker Team.

A typical week for George includes, attending job fairs, liaising with local job centres and ensuring our adverts are on all relevant job boards, are up to date and reflect our current hiring needs.

George's achievements so far include a big student recruitment drive last October, which resulted in onboarding 32 staff at one time to support our Flexible Support Team in Brighton and Hove.

Finances



Income year to March 2023

Donations and Legacies	£167,815
Charitable Activities	£10,362,786
Other Trading Activities	£42,323
Investments	£2,399

Expenditure year to March 2023

Raising Funds	£128,606
Charitable Activities	£10,380,890

Money that came in/money spent

Money that came in	£10,550,592
Money we spent	£10,484,765
Surplus	£65,827

Our funders and partnerships

Thank you to all our Funders and Partnerships for 2022/23:

Sussex Unity Lodge
Nationwide Trust and Community Grants
Movement for Good
Sussex NHS Commissioners
Brighton & Hove City Council
The Edward Gostling Foundation
Active Sussex
Arthur Bate Fund
Chalk Cliff Trust
David Solomons Charitable Trust
Waitrose
Coop Foundation
Zurich
The Baily Thomas Charitable Fund
The Clothworkers Foundation
The Wolfson Foundation
The Lawson Trust
Arnold Clark
ESF
National Lottery Community Fund
Heart Research UK
University of Brighton
Mencap

A special thank you to Brighton & Hove Estate Agents Association who chose Grace Eyre as their Charity of the Year from January 2023.



How you can get involved

Grace Eyre is a charity, and we can't support people who depend on our services without your help. Now more than ever, people with learning disabilities are feeling alone. We know our services and activities are a lifeline for our community.

Your action matters. It will help build communities where people with learning disabilities feel respected, valued and able to contribute. Get involved today.

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



Future plans

Our strategic plan has been updated in the first part of the 2023/24 year and will inform all our plans to 2027.

'Our Plan 2020–27' updates the previous five-year plan following several recent challenges including the Covid pandemic, cost-of-living crisis and cuts to local authority funding.

Through the following ways, our revised, but still ambitious, plan will enable us to rise to these challenges, realise our vision and achieve our main aim – to help people with a learning disability and autistic people to live the lives they want and dream of:

- Making up for losses caused by cuts to social care by finding alternative ways of making money by trying new things
- Refurbishing our headquarters in Montefiore Road through the Big Build project
- Continuing to deliver excellent services led by and for people with learning disabilities in housing, supported living, community outreach, activities, other projects and in our Shared Lives scheme
- Prioritising raising money for our Employment Project, as we understand how important having a job is for a growing number of people with a learning disability and/or autistic people

We look forward to working together to make this happen!



GET IN TOUCH

01273 201900
enquiries@grace-eyre.org

You can send letters or
donations to:

Grace Eyre
36 Montefiore Road
Hove
East Sussex

Registered charity number: 102019

