Our Impact
2025/2026



Living the life you want

grace eyre
ABILITY
EQUALITY
INDEPENDENCE



Grace Eyre provides people with a learning disability, autistic people and others with high-quality support at home and in the community; inspiring and educational activities; help with training, employment and independent travel; and access to good quality housing in Brighton & Hove, Sussex and beyond.

Our vision and mission

Vision: Life feels good

A society where happiness, rights and inclusion are felt everyday by people with a learning disability, autistic people and everyone we support.

Mission: support feels good

Providing good homes and pioneering support, connections and experiences led by Our Charter, where voice, choice, growth and happiness lead the way.

Our Charter (up until March 2026):

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



Introduction by co-chairs

We are both delighted to introduce this year's Impact Report, celebrating the achievements of the people we support and everyone who contributes to Grace Eyre's success from April 2025 to March 2026.

It has been a landmark year, with Josh becoming the first person with a learning disability or who is autistic to serve as co-chair of Grace Eyre. His leadership has strengthened our commitment to ensuring lived experience remains at the heart of decision-making.

This year also included the development of our revised Charter and the creation of our new strategy, both shaped by the voices and experiences of the people connected to Grace Eyre. While these will guide our work in the years ahead, they also demonstrate our ongoing commitment to rights, choice, inclusion and belonging.

Thank you to our staff, volunteers, trustees, partners, funders, families and supporters. Together, we are helping more people live the lives they choose and creating more inclusive communities.



Anna Cooley
Co-chair



Josh Puglia
Co-chair



Message from our CEO

I am incredibly proud of everything we have achieved together this year.

Across our housing, supported living and community services, we have continued to grow our impact, supporting more people to enjoy greater independence, choice, employment opportunities and connection within their communities. The stories in this report demonstrate what is possible when people are given the right support to thrive.

Alongside this, we completed two major pieces of work for our future: a revised Charter and a new organisational Strategy. Developed with the involvement of the people we support and our wider community, these will help shape the next chapter of Grace Eyre's journey.

Our achievements are only possible because of the dedication of our staff, volunteers, partners and supporters. Together, we are building a future where everyone has the opportunity to live a good life, feel valued and belong.



Eva Eriksson
CEO



Our year in numbers

737
people supported across Sussex and parts of London to have great lives

303
people supported at home and in the community by our Choices team

198
people took part in our Active Lives day activities and projects

322
kind and friendly staff provided excellent service

196
people chose where and how they want to live with support from Grace Eyre Housing

40
people living in supported arrangements through Grace Eyre Shared Lives

74,412
outreach hours provided by our Choices team

185,796
support hours provided by our Choices team



We want to be listened to

The people we support continued to shape Grace Eyre's work this year, as well as influence change beyond our organisation.

This year, our Ambassadors campaigned on proposed benefit changes, contributed directly to consultations with the Department for Work and Pensions, and worked alongside partners to raise awareness of the impact these changes could have on people's lives.

Co-production remained central to everything we do, from reviewing services and creating communications to delivering self-advocacy training and helping shape our newly refreshed Charter.

We consulted with 81 people to create the new Charter, supplemented by informal feedback gathered through events and social spaces. The high level of participation reflects the passion and commitment of both the people we support and our staff in shaping the future of Grace Eyre.

- **500+** Ambassador volunteer hours
- **20+** people trained through self-advocacy workshops
- **22** staff trained in accessibility, co-production and autism
- **New** Grace Eyre Charter developed through organisation-wide consultation.



Josh's story

In 2025, Josh Puglia became co-chair of Grace Eyre's Board of Trustees, making history as the charity's first Board leader with lived experience of a learning disability and/or autism.

Josh's journey with Grace Eyre began in 2020 when he accessed employment support and skills development opportunities. Over time, he became a Grace Eyre Ambassador, helping to represent the voices of people we support, influence campaigns and champion self-advocacy. He later took on a leadership role as Tech Manager for Purple Productions, building confidence, responsibility and professional experience.

These opportunities, alongside our specialist trustee training, helped prepare Josh for governance and leadership at board level. He became a trustee in 2023 before progressing to co-chair two years later.

Today, Josh plays a key role in shaping the charity's strategic direction, as well as contributing to other external strategic groups, ensuring that people with a learning disability and autistic people are represented in decision-making at the highest level.



"I became a trustee because I'm a very big advocate for people who are not only autistic but with a learning disability. It is very important because you get a say and have your voice heard at board level." - Josh

Josh's story demonstrates Grace Eyre's commitment to creating genuine pathways to leadership, ensuring that people with lived experience help shape the future of the organisation.

We want to be part of the community

Everyone deserves opportunities to connect, contribute and belong. Across Sussex, people we support took part in creative, social and community activities that built confidence, friendships and awareness.

Purple Productions delivered 46 inclusive events, bringing together more than 1,500 attendees. The Big Purple Funfest welcomed over 300 people, creating one of the biggest celebrations of inclusion in the region.

Active Lives helped people showcase their talents through art, performance and writing. Our Pioneer Artists, supported by Active Lives, exhibited in Brighton's Artists Open House festival again, this time at a new venue, The Modern Funeral. Situated next to Preston Park station, this new location helped us engage with even more of our community.

At Christmas, we were very happy to be chosen as one of the charities for Brighton & Hove Buses' Santa Bus. We also returned to St. Nicholas' Church in Brighton, where we welcomed over 130 members of our community to a brilliant, sold-out Christmas Concert.

Choices continued to support people to live independently and stay connected to their communities. In Brighton, The Reach provided flexible outcome-focused support, while in West Sussex, the member-led Just Be You social club helped 30 subscribers beat boredom and loneliness.

- **46** social events delivered by Purple Productions
- **1,500+** event attendees
- **303** people supported through Choices services
- **185,796** support hours delivered
- **30** members of the Just Be You social club.



Kindness Changes Everything at Preston Park Station

Led by street artists Sprite and SNUB23 through a series of creative workshops - including two also open to the public, people supported by Grace Eyre helped design and create a vibrant 90-metre mural at Preston Park station in Brighton. Participants explored colour, lettering, stencilling and spray-painting, bringing their own unique perspectives to the project, as well as developing new techniques and skills.

The finished artwork, built around the message "Kindness Changes Everything", was created alongside support workers, local residents and community groups. Now seen by thousands of passengers each day, the mural stands as a lasting celebration of inclusion, creativity and the positive impact of bringing people together, which has raised awareness and prompted donations.

The mural was part of an ongoing partnership with GTR (Govia Thameslink Railway) at Preston Park station, which also includes Grace Eyre posters on platforms and the maintenance of planters by Grace Eyre groups and volunteers.



"From exploring surreal word association to beautifully organised chaos in some of the colour research and spray pen workshops, the fearless creativity (of the people supported by Grace Eyre) in every session is astounding."
- SNUB23, Street Artist

We want strong and supported relationships

Strong relationships are the foundation of a good life.

Through Shared Lives, people were supported to build lasting relationships, increase independence and become active members of their communities through family-based support.

Alongside delivering high-quality local support, Shared Lives secured opportunities to develop services in Barking & Dagenham and Redbridge, helping more people to benefit from relationship-based support.

Choosing who to love, spend time with and build relationships with is a fundamental right. Once again, we were proud to celebrate and support our LGBTQIA+ community at Brighton & Hove Pride, with people we support and colleagues joining thousands of others in a vibrant celebration of identity, inclusion and belonging. We joined up with partners Amaze, Speak Out and Team Domenica, with the co-produced slogan and poster proclaiming, "Still fighting to be me".

Grace Eyre also supported people to have and be able to manage different kinds of personal relationships and this formed an important part of the Learning for Life courses we offered last year.

- **40** people supported through Shared Lives
- Expanded Shared Lives provision by starting new contract in Barking & Dagenham and winning tender to deliver in Redbridge from June 2026
- Joined with **3** other Brighton charities plus Sambalanco samba band to walk together in the Brighton & Hove Community Pride Parade.



Supporting Relationships at Grace Eyre

In February, the Just Be You Club's Valentine's party in Bognor celebrated friendship, love and inclusion, bringing couples and friends together in a safe and welcoming social space. Attendees included Kane and Milly, who live together with support from Grace Eyre, as well as other couples who use the club as an opportunity to spend time together.

For people with a learning disability, opportunities to develop romantic relationships can be limited. While around 70% of adults in the general population live as a couple, only 3% of people with a learning disability do so. Through support with consent, relationship skills, safety and practical arrangements, Grace Eyre helps people to build and maintain relationships.

The Valentine's event highlighted how Just Be You is reducing isolation and enabling friendships and partnerships to be formed. By creating spaces where people can connect, Grace Eyre is helping people enjoy the relationships, companionship and sense of belonging that everyone deserves.

"It's good fun meeting people. Before Just Be You, I'd just sit in and watch TV. I felt bored and now I feel happy and excited." - Karen



We want good housing

A safe, stable home is crucial in helping people to thrive.

This year saw continued growth in Grace Eyre Housing and support services, increasing opportunities for people to live independently in homes that meet their needs.

Following a competitive tender process, Grace Eyre was appointed to deliver support at Burwash Lodge, enabling nine people to continue living in their home with high-quality support.

Alongside housing growth, our Peer-to-Peer Tenancy Support programme continued to help tenants build confidence, wellbeing and social connections through meetings, activities and individual support.

- **196** people housed across Sussex
- Burwash Lodge joined Grace Eyre
- **20** tenant meetings delivered across Brighton and West Sussex
- **22** peer support social activities for tenants held
- Individual support provided through **4,062** interactions with new and existing tenants.



Sustaining independence through housing support

When Grace Eyre Housing was required to give up a property, Sally* faced the prospect of moving after living there since 2020. Earlier in her tenancy, she had experienced significant challenges, including anti-social behaviour, arrests, court appearances and difficulties maintaining her home.

Working closely with her housing officer and support worker, Sally received ongoing practical guidance and support to improve her tenancy management skills, maintain her home and address behavioural concerns. At the same time, Grace Eyre advocated on her behalf with the local authority, social worker and Housing Options team to secure suitable long-term accommodation that reflected her support needs.

As a result, Sally made significant progress, developing the skills and confidence needed to live more independently. Through Grace Eyre's advocacy, she successfully moved into a council tenancy, providing a more secure and sustainable housing solution and a strong foundation for her future independence.

*name has been changed



We want jobs

Having opportunities to learn, work and contribute is essential for inclusion. Through our employment and skills programmes, people gained confidence and qualifications to move closer to employment.

Working with West Sussex Adult Education and using ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network), we delivered accredited learning programmes focused on life skills, workplace readiness and career development. Many participants progressed to further training or volunteering opportunities, while others secured paid employment.

We also launched Work-Able this year, our employment campaign that will target employers, legislators and local authorities to raise awareness of the benefits of employing more people with a learning disability and autistic people. In January, Brighton Pavilion MP Sian Berry visited us to learn more about it, saying:

"I fully support Grace Eyre's important Work-Able campaign. I hope to see legislators, employers and local authorities take note and make meaningful progress to help more adults with a learning disability into employment."

- **38** learners took part in employment and life-skills courses
- **16** learners achieved accredited qualifications
- Participants progressed into volunteering, further learning and paid employment
- **10%** of Grace Eyre's own staff have a learning disability and/or are autistic.



Gordon's story

After being a Grace Eyre Member and volunteering with Purple Productions, Gordon successfully applied for the paid role of assistant at The Reach. He helps people to access groups in the community, make new friends and try new experiences. He also researches and organises low-cost activities, creates promotional materials and supports people to take part.

One of Gordon's biggest achievements was securing funding from Brighton, Hove & District Mencap to organise a day trip to London. He planned every aspect of the visit, from accessibility and travel arrangements to budgeting and support needs, enabling a group of people to enjoy a fun, memorable day out together.

Gordon's success highlights the value of employing people with lived experience. His understanding, enthusiasm and confidence have grown significantly through employment, while the people supported by Grace Eyre benefit from working with someone who truly understands their experiences. His story shows how inclusive employment can build skills, confidence and opportunities, helping people with a learning disability play an active role in their communities.

"After a few years of volunteering, staff gave me the confidence and belief in myself to apply for my role at The Reach. I enjoy meeting and engaging with people and there's so much I'd like to do!" - Gordon



We want to travel around

Independent travel leads to freedom, confidence and new opportunities.

With support from the Motability Foundation, Travel Buddy continued to help people gain the skills and confidence needed to travel independently and access opportunities within their communities across Sussex.

Through practical travel training, group workshops and events such as Drama on the Bus and Try a Train, participants increased their confidence using public transport and making independent journeys, with all attendees saying that they could now access more education, employment and social opportunities.

- **9** people completed independent travel training
- **85** people attended Drama on the Bus and Try a Train workshops
- **104** people attended the Introductory Workshop Series
- **100%** of participants reported an increase to social activities, opportunities and places as a result of Travel Buddy training
- **75%** of participants reported an increase in their ability to make travel-related decisions allowing them to take control and be more independent.



Jonah's story

Jonah joined Grace Eyre's Skills for Life and Skills for Work courses in Worthing to build his confidence and improve his chances of finding employment. To help him attend independently, he also took part in 1:1 Travel Buddy training.

While Jonah was familiar with travelling by bus in Brighton, travelling to Worthing by train was new to him. Over eight weeks, he learned how to plan journeys, buy tickets, use travel information and safely navigate unfamiliar routes. He initially found early starts and road crossings challenging but tackled both with determination.

"I'm doing okay, I need to start pressing for the green man."
- Jonah, week 3

By the end of the programme, Jonah was travelling independently from home to his course venue in Worthing, including buying train tickets and completing the journey safely on his own. His tutor reported that he was arriving on time and ready to learn.

Jonah's story shows how travel training can increase independence, remove barriers to learning and employment, and create new opportunities.



We want to try new things

At Grace Eyre, we believe trying new things builds confidence, develops skills and sparks new interests. Throughout the year, people took part in a range of creative, cultural and community activities that encouraged them to step outside their comfort zones.

People attending Active Lives experienced baroque music for the first time through an interactive performance with the Lowe Ensemble, with several participants enjoying the opportunity to try conducting.

Our Pioneer Artists partnered with eott, a music and mental health group, to design bespoke t-shirts and learn about branding and product development. They also visited AnotherFineMesh in Lewes to screen print their designs onto t-shirts, which were later sold at Grace Eyre events.

In partnership with inclusive cafe Puzzle Bored, eight artists created designs for a community jigsaw project. The winning design was turned into a 500-piece puzzle and sold at Puzzle Bored and Grace Eyre events.

From exploring new art forms and creative industries to showcasing their talents in new ways, people were supported to learn, grow and achieve personal goals through new experiences.

- **8** writers and one visual artist from Grace Eyre Active Lives contributed to the book Elephant in the Room
- **3** designs from Grace Eyre artists chosen to be made into screen-printed t-shirts
- **233** visitors over the three weekends in May came to our Artists Open House.



Elephant in the Room

This year, members of Grace Eyre's Creative Writing Group published a book for the first time. They worked together to create Elephant in the Room, a collection of original short stories that celebrates imagination, creativity and self-expression. The anthology features stories spanning comedy, adventure, romance and personal reflection, alongside art by Pioneer Artist Reg Day.

The project gave participants the opportunity to develop writing, literacy and storytelling skills while sharing their unique perspectives and experiences. After working on it for several months and testing the stories on staff at Grace Eyre, in November the group celebrated the publication of their book with a launch event at Waterstones Brighton, attended by more than 60 friends, family and supporters. It was available for sale on the night and at various other Grace Eyre events following the launch.

Elephant in the Room helped showcase the talents of people with a learning disability and autistic people to a wider audience, demonstrating what can be achieved when people are given the opportunity, support and platform to share their stories with the world.



"A collection of stories written from the heart, full of chaos, whimsy and warmth, each with their own unique edge, guaranteed to make you smile." - Cerrie Burnell, author

We want to be healthy

Good health is about more than healthcare. It is about having the opportunities, information and support to live well.

Through Active Lives and a range of partnerships, people were supported to improve their physical health, mental wellbeing and social connections, through sport, cooking, gardening and more. Working alongside other organisations including Special Olympics Sussex and Gloji, we delivered inclusive sports and wellbeing activities across Sussex.

Our Ambassadors also continued to highlight and address the health inequalities experienced by people with a learning disability and autistic people. This included a project with Brighton & Hove City councillor Sam Parrott and other partners, which led to improvements to Brighton's A&E processes and to the design of hospital passports, as well as increasing awareness of them.

We also worked with West Sussex County Council on a project to gather insight on the sexual and reproductive health of people in West Sussex, including the barriers faced by some, such as people with a learning disability and autistic people. Alongside several other partners, we engaged with relevant communities to help co-create sexual health campaigns.

- Delivered sporting activities alongside **13** partners
- **15** different Active Lives and community sports and movement sessions offered, regularly attended by more than **150** people
- Over **700** sports and movement sessions run, both within Active Lives and alongside partners in the community.



Weekend Walks with Lulu

Thanks to funding from Brighton & Hove City Council and Active Travel England, Grace Eyre organised Weekend Walks, a peer-led walking group designed to help people become more active, build confidence and reduce loneliness.

The group was led by Lulu, who is supported by Grace Eyre. Lulu shared her passion for walking to plan accessible routes and encourage others to take part. By welcoming friends and family members, the project created an inclusive and supportive environment where people connected with others while enjoying the benefits of regular exercise.

Weekend Walks provided opportunities for people to get out into their local community, develop healthier habits and increase their confidence travelling and socialising with others. The peer-led approach also enabled Lulu to develop and share her leadership skills while supporting and encouraging others to take part.

"Different people came along and everyone enjoyed them. I liked chatting and meeting new people. I enjoyed the different parks. I'd love to do it again, it made me happy."
- Lulu



Our people

None of this would be possible without our staff, volunteers, trustees, carers and Ambassadors.

By March 2026, Grace Eyre employed 322 staff members, equivalent to 235 FTE colleagues.

We are committed to building an organisation where diversity is valued, lived experience is respected and everyone has the opportunity to contribute and thrive.

Our people at a glance:

- 322 staff members (235 FTE)
- Volunteers in a wide range of roles, including support roles, events, 13 Ambassadors and 10 trustees
- 10% of staff identify as having a learning disability and/or being autistic.



Thank you

Thank you to the individuals, trusts, foundations, community groups and corporate partners who supported Grace Eyre throughout 2025/2026.

Your generosity enables us to create opportunities, champion inclusion and improve the lives of people with a learning disability and autistic people across Sussex and beyond.

Together, we are building communities where everyone can be heard, belong and thrive.

We received grants from the following:

- Baily Thomas Charitable Fund – towards core costs
- Brighton & Hove City Council – towards health and well-being
- Brighton, Hove and District Mencap – towards Purple Productions
- Chalk Cliff Trust – towards Pioneer Arts
- Co-op Local Community Fund – towards health and well-being
- Co-op Local Community Fund – towards our adoption of Preston Park Station
- Enjoolata Foundation – towards Purple Productions
- Ernest Kleinwort Charitable Trust – towards core costs
- Govia Thameslink Railway – towards the Preston Park Mural Project
- Motability Foundation – towards Travel Buddy
- Tesco – towards employment.

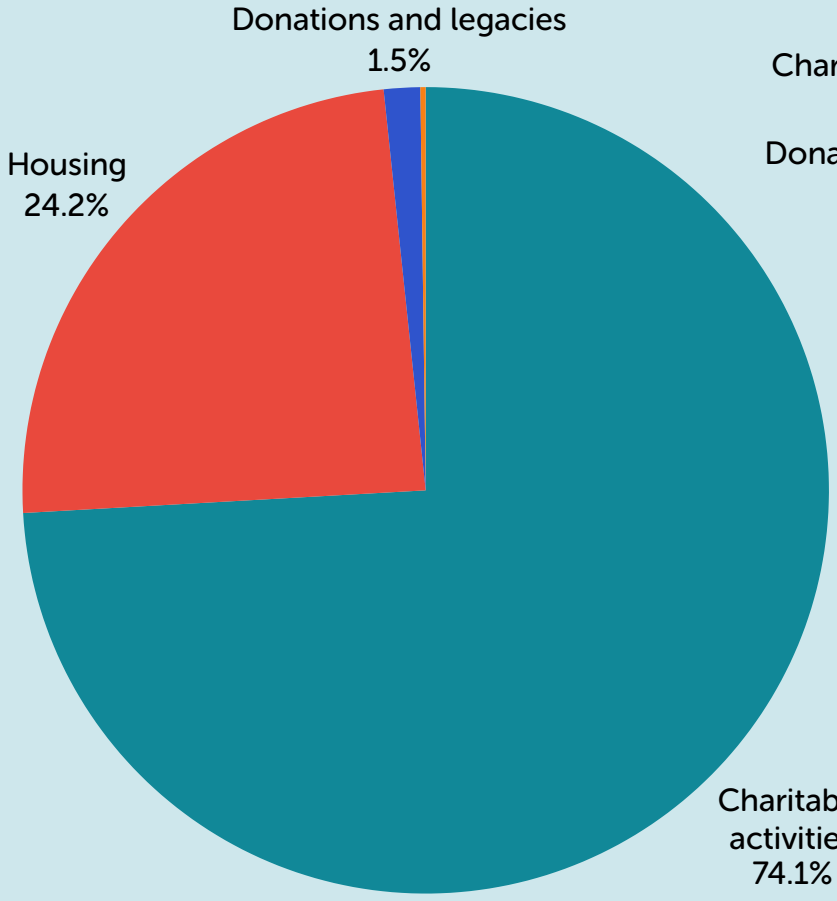


Finances to March 2026

Grace Eyre grew its services and reach throughout 2025/26, particularly through the expansion of Grace Eyre Housing, as well as our supported living services and day opportunities. We also received invaluable grants and donations that supported innovative projects and other vital work, complementing our commissioned funding.

Despite this being a challenging time for the whole social care sector, as demonstrated by the stories and impact highlighted throughout this report, we continued to prioritise delivering high-quality services and support while maintaining our commitment to being a Real Living Wage employer.

Looking ahead, we are determined to build on this growth so that more people can access quality support from Grace Eyre, helping them to develop independence, increase choice and access employment.



Income sources:
Charitable activities £9,922,629, 74.1%
Housing £3,244,462, 24.2%
Donations and legacies £194,674, 1.5%
Other trading activities and investments £2,8381, 0.2%

Be part of it

Grace Eyre is a charity and we can't support people who depend on our services without your help. We know our services and activities are a lifeline for our community. To continue to make a real impact on the lives of hundreds of people with a learning disability, autistic people and others, we need you.

Your action matters. It will help build communities where people with a learning disability and/or autistic people feel respected, valued and able to contribute.

Get involved today by visiting our website at grace-eyre.org. You can:

- Donate
- Raise money
- Volunteer
- Be a corporate partner
- Leave a gift in your will.



Looking ahead

This year, people we support, staff, families, trustees and partners came together to shape **Our Plan 2026-2029: From Foundations to Feelings**.

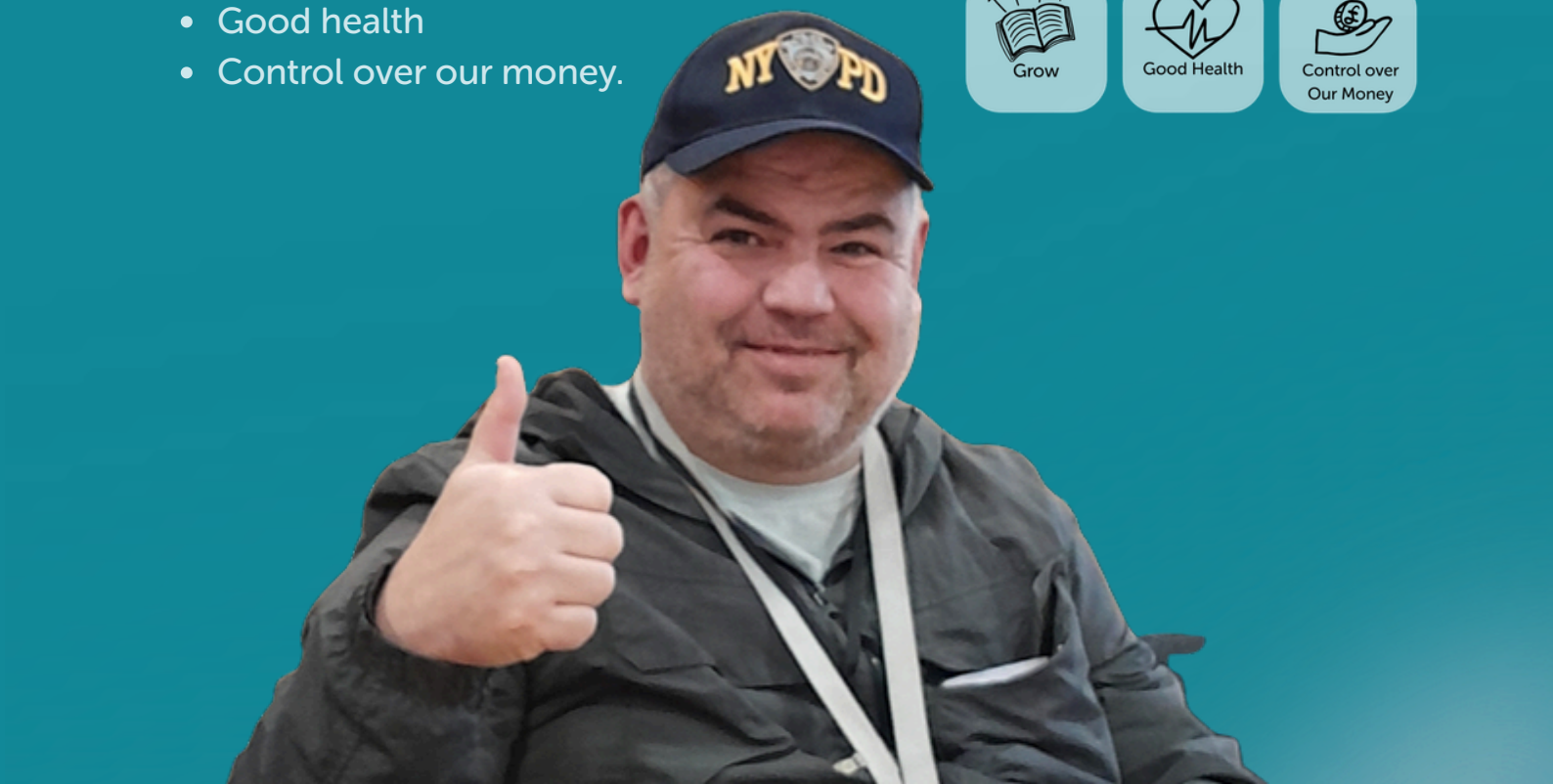
The new strategy builds on the strong foundations created over many years while focusing on what matters most: how people feel. It commits Grace Eyre to creating more opportunities for people to experience happiness, connection, choice and belonging.

Using co-production, we also reviewed and refreshed Our Charter, which will guide everything we do going forward, as we continue working towards a future where life feels good for everyone we support.

Our revised Charter sets out the rights of everyone we support to:

- Be listened to
- Belong in our communities
- Strong relationships
- Choose where we live
- Paid jobs
- Travel around
- Grow
- Good health
- Control over our money.





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