

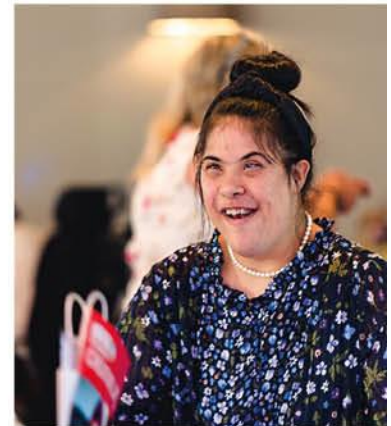



**WE  
CARE**

**Report of the Board  
of Trustees and the  
Financial Statements**

For the year ending March 2023

**creative  
SUPPORT**



**Welcoming Empowering Compassionate Aspirational Respectful Effective**

# CREATIVE SUPPORT LIMITED

31 MARCH 2023

## CONTENTS

	<b>Page Number</b>
Legal and Administrative Details	1
Report for the Board of Trustees	2
Independent Auditor's Report	46
Statement of Comprehensive Income	49
Statement of Financial Position	50
Statement of Changes in Reserves	51
Statement of Cash Flows	52
Notes to the Financial Statements	54

**CREATIVE SUPPORT LIMITED**  
**Legal and Administrative Details**  
**as at 31 March 2023**



**Status:** Community Benefit Society with Charitable Status

**Register Number:** 27440R

**Regulator of Social Housing:** No 4689

**Regulated by:** Financial Conduct Authority (FCA Mutuals)

**Registered Office:** Wellington House  
131, Wellington Road South  
Stockport  
SK1 3TS  
[www.creativesupport.co.uk](http://www.creativesupport.co.uk)

**Honorary Officers:** Joolz Casey (Chair)

**Principal Staff:** Anna Lunts (Chief Executive and Company Secretary)

**Bankers:** Barclays Bank PLC  
UK Banking  
1 Churchill Place  
London  
E14 5HP

**Solicitors:** Trowers & Hamlins  
Heron House  
Albert Square  
Manchester  
M2 5HD

**Auditors:** Beever & Struthers  
One Express  
1 George Leigh Street  
Manchester  
M4 5DL



## **Board of Trustees Report**

The Board of Trustees presents its report and the audited financial statements for the Society for the year ended 31 March 2023. The financial results are presented in the form of the following:

- Statement of Comprehensive Income
- Statement of Financial Position
- Statement of Changes in Reserves
- Statement of Cash Flows
- Notes to the Financial Statements

## **Introduction to Creative Support**

Creative Support is a not-for-profit organisation with a strong commitment to developing and delivering person-centred services for people with care and support needs and preventative services for people who are at risk of social exclusion. We provide high quality supported living, community support, supported housing, residential care and other services in the North West, North East, Yorkshire & Humberside, the Midlands, London and the South East. Creative Support has a reputation for being dynamic, enterprising and customer-focused and for finding innovative ways to deliver services. We are committed to co-production with the people we support and to working in partnership with the local voluntary sector and other agencies to find creative solutions to individual and community needs.

## **A Brief History of Creative Support**

Our organisation was established in 1990 as 'Manchester Housing Consortium' with the aim of developing a range of housing and support services for people with mental health needs in the City of Manchester. In 1991, we registered as an Industrial and Provident Society with charitable status. We changed our name to Creative Support in 1993 to reflect our ambition to become a national provider of charitable services and to emphasise our commitment to developing creative responses to support needs. In January 2012, we registered as a provider of social housing with the TSA (now the Regulator of Social Housing), after managing high quality homes for over 20 years. We became a Community Benefit Society with charitable status in accordance with the new Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014.

We merged with the innovative charity known as the Space Centre in October 2013, which is now re-branded as the Creative Space Centre. Based in Preston, the Creative Space Centre provides amazing sensory experiences for children and adults with a wide range of needs. We are well supported by the independent charity "Friends of Space" which is dedicated to raising funds for equipment and improvements for the sole benefit of the Creative Space Centre.

Creative Support purchased the private company Delos Communities Limited in 2014. Delos was well known and well regarded within Northamptonshire and the surrounding area for providing high quality, person-centred support for people with a learning disability. In January 2016, the assets and liabilities of Delos formally transferred to Creative Support. The ex-Delos services are now fully integrated into Creative Support's service provision in the East Midlands and Delos no longer exists as a registered company.

## **Range of Services**

Creative Support currently provides a wide range of person-centred services for people with a learning disability, mental health needs and other support needs and for older people with care needs. Our service portfolio includes supported living services, community support, specialist outreach services, residential care, respite services and domiciliary care. Creative Support is a major provider of supported housing and we are proud of the quality of our accommodation schemes. Our supported housing for people with mental health needs has a strong reputation for promoting recovery, rehabilitation and empowering service users to move on to greater independence.

The supported living services we deliver for people with a learning disability are recognised as being innovative and person-centred. We provide a number of creative day services which offer service users the opportunity for personal development, social inclusion and pathways into work. We offer individually tailored support for people with autistic spectrum conditions and physical disabilities, while our complex needs services support individuals with a wide range of needs, including experience of trauma and behaviours of concern.

Our Extra Care services enable older people with care needs to retain their independence and to enjoy improved quality of life. We offer personalised support for people with memory loss, including the highly regarded Wilshaw House Day Service in Tameside. We aim to be recognised as a skilled and committed provider of highly personalised care for older people and people with dementia at a time when the demand for such specialist care is increasing.

We continue to provide services that enable people to grow in independence and confidence and to experience enhanced choice and control over their lives. During the last 12 months, we have supported over 6,000 people with care and support needs to enjoy independence, choice and wellbeing. A further 1,202 tenants have benefitted from the provision of high quality supported housing.

### **Our Mission**

Creative Support promotes the independence, inclusion and wellbeing of people with support needs. We do this by working with the people we support, their families and partner agencies to deliver innovative, high quality services that meet individual needs and aspirations in a person-centred way.

### **Our Philosophy and Aims**

Creative Support is committed to a person-centred philosophy of service delivery. We aim to:

- Promote rights, equality, inclusion, opportunity, choice and wellbeing
- Offer respect and unconditional positive regard to the people we support
- Practice in ways that are inclusive, non-discriminatory and anti-oppressive, challenging discrimination, disadvantage and oppression
- Empower people to express their views, be themselves and take control of their own lives
- Provide personalised, compassionate care which promotes the self-esteem, dignity and safety of the people we support
- Use an assets and strengths-based approach which builds upon the abilities, preferences, resources and aspirations of service users
- Provide active and enabling support which promotes confidence, skills and independence
- Be accountable and committed to providing high quality, safe, evidence-based care and support which achieves positive outcomes
- Promote service user involvement and co-production in service design, delivery and evaluation
- Facilitate meaningful activities, social opportunities and relationships, build social networks and encourage informal family and peer support, thereby reducing reliance on formal services
- Create pathways towards education, training, volunteering and paid employment
- Enable people to enjoy a valued lifestyle, to be active citizens and be fully included in their communities
- Deliver social value through working in partnership, engaging with communities and contributing to local social, environmental and economic strategies

## Our Charitable Objectives

Creative Support continues to operate in accordance with our constitution and charitable objectives as stated in our charitable rules, which state that *'The association is formed for the benefit of the community. Its objects shall be to carry on for the benefit of the community:*

- *Providing and managing houses, hostels or social housing and any associated amenities for persons in necessitous circumstances upon terms appropriate to their needs.*
- *Providing for aged, disabled, handicapped (whether mentally or physically) or chronically sick persons in need thereof houses or hostels and any associated amenities specially designed or adapted to meet the disabilities and requirements of such persons.*
- *Providing services including care, support, day services, training, supported employment, counselling, advice or assistance, repairs, maintenance or improvement to property, in each case upon terms appropriate to their means, to aged, disabled, handicapped (whether mentally or physically) or chronically sick person in need together with the provision, procurement or management of facilities and amenities of any kind for such persons.*
- *Any other charitable objects that can be carried out from time to time by an Industrial and Provident Society registered as a provider of social housing with the regulator.'*

## How Our Activities Deliver Public Benefit

We have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing our aims and objectives and in planning our future activities. As detailed in our mission statement, the driving motivation for our organisation is to achieve positive outcomes for the people we support and the wider community. This aim is inherent in all of the activities we undertake and we are required to evidence that beneficial outcomes are being achieved in order to demonstrate value for money to all stakeholders. Public benefits include:

- **Enjoying and Achieving**

We directly enhance people's quality of life through support to access a wide range of meaningful opportunities within the wider and local community. This includes activities relating to education, training, volunteering, paid work, and social and leisure activities, which widen people's social networks and reduce reliance on paid services.

- **Enhanced Economic Well-being**

We promote the economic and financial inclusion of the people we support through maximising income (i.e. benefits and welfare entitlements, access to paid work or volunteering and education opportunities which will lead to paid work), minimise debt, develop daily living skills in relation to budgeting and saving and through strong partnership working with relevant agencies.

- **Making a Positive Contribution**

Our service users experience improved levels of inclusion within their communities through support to make a positive contribution to their local community. This includes enjoying legal and civil rights, undertaking volunteering opportunities and partnership working within local neighbourhoods to promote community cohesion.

- **Staying Safe**

We work hard to keep vulnerable people in the community safe who would be at risk without our support. We support people to develop an awareness of personal safety issues and to wherever possible avoid activities which will cause them harm. We support people to access aids and assistive technologies, which keep them safe whilst enabling independent living in the community.

- **Being Healthy**

We promote health and well-being for people as a key theme in all support delivery, including advice and support around good diet and nutrition, exercise, relaxation and a range of health initiatives, including smoking cessation. We support people to access the full range of resources available to them (including primary and secondary health care services) and to enjoy an equal, if not better, level of healthcare than the general population.

- **Equality of Opportunity**

Creative Support is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all, including staff and service users. We ensure this through fair access to services, anti-discriminatory practice, culturally appropriate service provision and the proactive recruitment of a diverse workforce.

- **Investing in People**

As an Investor in People (Silver Award) and the employer of a significant workforce of over 5,000 people, we pride ourselves on the level of investment we make in the development of our staff. This includes free access to accredited training schemes and opportunities for career progression. We have also participated in a number of apprenticeship, student and work placement schemes to enable people to gain work experience and valuable qualifications.

## **Accountable and Effective Governance**

The Board is committed to ensuring effective governance and viability and to the further development of the strategic planning, risk management and control framework, within which we manage our housing assets and social care services. Creative Support has adopted the NHF's Code of Governance 2011 and is moving towards adoption of the 2020 version. The trustees have undertaken a recent compliance review of the Governance and Financial Viability Standards and the Board confirms that it complies with the standards.

Our Board of Trustees and Senior Management Team have worked together to maintain, review and update our corporate Risk Register, which identifies the main areas of risk and ensures that effective controls are in place to mitigate these risks, wherever possible. We have committed to a work programme to devise a more focused Risk Register to address key risks, supported by more detailed operational risk plans.

The Board is confident that the assurance systems in place are effective and we support an open and positive culture. Over the past year the senior management team have worked hard to improve incident reporting and learning as part of this. Where more serious incidents have occurred, improvements have been made to service delivery that rectify the problems that were identified. Having applied this learning and having assessed the future landscape, the Board recognises that there will be more challenging times ahead. This includes continued workforce challenges, economic uncertainty, increasing regulation and increasing severity of climate events. With this in mind, we are reviewing our strategy, ambitions and governance systems to enable a more proactive approach to anticipating and managing the challenges that these present.

As a not-for profit Registered Provider of Social Housing and provider of social care services, all our assets and resources are used to further our charitable objectives. Our Board and senior managers have a strong commitment to our charitable ethos. Our trustees do not receive any payment for their governance duties, other than for expenses incurred.

We held six full Board meetings over the year 2022-23 and a well-attended AGM took place at our Creative Together Centre on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2022. Our committees in the areas of Finance & Audit, Quality, People & Performance and Housing have met regularly throughout the year. In addition, 'task and finish' meetings have completed pieces of work covering a range of issues, including risk management and incident reviews. Our trustees have also made visits to services and supported our 30<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations across the country in 2022. Two of our trustees provide oversight of the governance of our Complex Care Case Register and use of physical intervention in line with our restraint reduction pledge.

We maintain a record of attendance at Board meetings, which is published below. This does not fully reflect the wider work of the trustees. We would like to thank all of the trustees for attending Board meetings but also for giving their time and expertise on a voluntary basis to attend other meetings and events, undertake interviews, visit services, preside over appeals and offer constructive challenge and professional advice.

Our trustees bring with them a range of valued knowledge and experience from diverse fields, including social housing, health & social care, consultancy, finance and human resources. We would especially like to thank the trustees who chaired the Committees during the year, including Joolz Casey, Paul Calland, Rachael Corbelli, and Fiona King. We would also like to thank Sarah Smith who has provided excellent support and assistance to the trustees in her role as PA to the Board. She is assisted in her work by Megan Mitchell, Hazel Anson and Georgia Randall who take minutes for the Committees.

**Record of Attendance at Board Meetings 2022 – 2023**

The attendance of Trustees at Board meetings held throughout the year is as follows:

Trustee	May 2022	July 2022	Sep 2022	Sep AGM	Nov 2022	Jan 2023	Mar 2023	Total
Joolz Casey	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	7/7
Fiona King	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	7/7
Rachael Corbelli	✓	✓	AP	✓	✓	✓	✓	6/7
Paul Calland	AP	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	6/7
Claire Judkins	✓	✓	✓	AP	✓	✓	AP	5/7
Helen O’Sullivan	✓	✓	AP	✓	✓	AP	✓	5/7
Kashif Ali	AP	✓	✓	✓				3/4
Sharon Burns	✓	X	X	AP	X	✓	AP	2/7
Pete Gibbs	X	X	X	AP				0/4
Pravin Majithia	AP	S						0/2

Key	
✓	Attended
AP	Gave apologies
X	Did not attend or send apologies
S	Sickness



## Key Strategic and Financial Aims

Our Board of Trustees and Management Team devised a 4-year Strategic Plan in 2016, which has since been revised and extended into 2023. A number of key strategic and financial aims emerged from the plan and from subsequent reviews. Our achievements in relation to these key aims in 2022-23 are set out below.

	<b>Aims</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Comments</b>
1	To grow our national social care and supported housing portfolio in a sustainable way	Achieved	We continue to deliver a wide range of services and housing options to customers in 66 local authorities across six English regions. Our turnover increased by £3.94 million (2.9%) from £137.31 million in 2021-22 to £141.25 million in 2022-23. We have maintained a diversified portfolio of activity in terms of client group, service type and geographical distribution.
2	To be successful in over 50% of our tender and framework submissions	Achieved	We were successful in 68% of tender and framework submissions in 2022-23, as compared with 59% in 2021-22 and 58% in 2020-21. Contracts were acquired with 3 new local authorities.
3	To continue to invest in new social housing assets	Achieved	We continue to make plans to acquire or build properties for use as supported housing. During 2022-23, we completed the development of a new scheme jointly commissioned by Greater Manchester authorities for people with complex needs.
4	To maintain over 90% 'Good' and above ratings in our CQC inspections and to achieve at least two 'Outstanding' ratings	Achieved	We achieved a quality rating of 'Good' or above in 90% of our CQC inspected services as at 31 March 2023, which was comparable with 90% at 31 March 2022. Two 'Outstanding' CQC ratings were achieved by our services in Doncaster and Essex at their first inspection and these ratings have been maintained.
5	To achieve a satisfactory operating surplus	Achieved	We delivered an operating surplus (before interest receivable and payable) of £8.43 million in 2022-23 (6% margin) as compared with £11.5 million in 2021-22 (8.2% margin) and £12.52 million in 2020-21 (9.2% margin).
6	To increase and maintain our cash reserves	Achieved	During 2022-23, we generated cash flow of £6.66 million and as at 31 March 2023 we held cash balances of £25.37 million, compared with £25.51 million as at March 2021-22, a small decrease of £0.14 million. This is very positive given that we repaid £3.83 million in loans during the year.
7	To reduce our percentage spending on agency staff	Not Achieved	We spent £13.68 million on agency staff during 2022-23, as compared with £7.57 million in 2021-22, an increase of £6.11 million (81%). The contribution of agency staff costs to total staff costs over the period increased from 6.9% in 2021-22 to 12.0% in 2022-23.
8	To increase the productivity of our staff	Not Achieved	The productivity of our staff (measured by income as a percentage of staff costs) reduced slightly from 126% in 2021-22 to 124% in 2022-23. This is reflected in the increase in staff costs, including spending on agency staff, as a percentage of turnover, which increased from 79% in 2021-22 to 81% in 2022-23.
9	To reduce our overall borrowings and expenditure on interest payments as part of a medium term financial strategy	Achieved	As at 31 March 2023, we had loans of £8.83 million compared with £12.67 million in 2021-22, a reduction of £3.84 million (30%). Borrowing has further reduced since the year-end, with total loans standing at £7.5 million at 31 August 2023. Interest costs arising from loans amounted to £558k in 2022-23, as compared with £492k during 2021-22. This modest increase of £66k was related to the increase in BoE base rate.
10	To further build our charitable reserves and balance sheet	Achieved	As at 31 March 2023, our total reserves (net worth) stood at £95.77 million, compared with £86.11 million in 2021-22, an increase of £9.66 million (11.2%). Reserves have increased significantly by £21.79 million over the previous 2 years from £73.98 million at the end of 2020-21, an increase of 29%.

**Principal Financial Challenges and Risks**

We have identified the following principal financial challenges and risks and proactive ways of managing these:

Principal Financial Challenges	Approach to Managing Challenges
<p><b>Social Care Contracts</b></p> <p>Continued reduced funding in real terms for local authority funded social care has resulted in higher eligibility thresholds, reduced care packages and increased charges to service users. This could result in under-funded or loss-making services and unsustainable contracts.</p> <p>A number of local authorities are facing insolvency and have issued Section 114 notices and this may increase the pressure for contract reductions and efficiencies.</p> <p><b>Prevention Services</b></p> <p>Prevention services are under threat as hard-pressed councils shift attention and resources towards statutory provision. There is a risk that prevention services will be further cut or de-commissioned.</p> <p><b>Commissioning Environment</b></p> <p>Some local authorities are taking outsourced services in-house or creating arms-length wholly owned care companies. Commissioners may decide to use some freedoms post-Brexit to award contracts other than by transparent and competitive processes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We seek contract fee uplifts which achieve full cost recovery for commissioned services, reflecting the impact of increased staff salaries and other costs.</li> <li>• We contribute to fee consultations and cost-of-care exercises to promote fair and sustainable funding for the social care and not-for-profit sectors.</li> <li>• We work collaboratively with commissioners and care managers to remodel services to increase their viability, whilst maximising outcomes.</li> <li>• We engage positively with initiatives such as the 'Three Conversations Model,' 'Just Enough Support' and the implementation of assistive technologies, which may reduce costs, whilst advocating for the people we support.</li> <li>• We promote beneficial outcomes and whole system efficiencies arising from investment in preventative services.</li> <li>• We ensure that the customer experience for all service users, including people who pay towards or self-fund their care is positive.</li> <li>• We review our services and contracts, giving notice on contracts, which are no longer sustainable or declining to tender for services that are not viable.</li> <li>• We ensure that our services are considered attractive and cost-effective in comparison with in-house alternatives.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Supported Housing</b></p> <p>The loss of housing-related support funding could affect the sustainability of supported housing.</p> <p>The continued use of housing benefit to fund rents and service charges in supported housing is assured in the short run but may be subject to future review and restrictions.</p> <p>New regulatory standards for social housing and supported housing will present resource challenges.</p> <p>Housing surpluses contribute positively to the success of Creative Support's housing provision. Customer demand and needs are changing and some models of provision such as shared housing may prove less attractive in the future, reducing occupancy levels and threatening viability.</p> <p>Interest rates have increased significantly and whilst these may have peaked, they are predicted to remain high for at least a year before falling slowly.</p> <p>There may be future pressure on social housing providers to limit rent increases to significantly below CPI plus 1%.</p> <p>Local authority funding processes and pressures on social workers are impacting on occupancy.</p> <p>Risk of increased rent arrears due to local authority administration issues and cost of living pressures impacting on ability and willingness to pay.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We review the sustainability of individual schemes, dispose of loss-making properties and seek to make efficiencies in the management and maintenance of our supported housing.</li> <li>• The financial and social returns on our housing assets are maximised by careful scrutiny and efficient management.</li> <li>• We ensure that our supported housing schemes are regarded as strategically relevant to local authorities and represent value for money.</li> <li>• We review and invest in our housing portfolio to ensure that our schemes are fully occupied, well maintained and continue to be attractive to customers and stakeholders.</li> <li>• We dispose of properties that are no longer fit for purpose or attractive to customers and referring agencies.</li> <li>• Reduced gearing will protect against the impact of interest rate increases and rent increases below CPI.</li> <li>• Void management and monitoring targets and strategies are in place and poor local authority processes are challenged.</li> <li>• Continued proactive review and management of current and former tenant arrears.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Increasing Staff Costs</b></p> <p>Increases in the National Living Wage/Real Living Wage and wage pressures arising from a highly competitive labour market are driving up staff costs, alongside the increased cost of pension auto-enrolment and the Apprentice Levy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will seek fee uplifts commensurate as a minimum with the uplifts in the NLW &amp; RLW, incorporate the cost of these employment-related changes in our service budgets and aim to achieve full cost recovery.</li> <li>• We will aim to secure fee uplifts which allow the introduction of the Real Living Wage and the London Living Wage where applicable.</li> <li>• Services will be redesigned where possible to reduce the impact of increased workforce costs.</li> <li>• We will work with other providers and bodies representing our sector to advocate for contract fee increases that reflect rising staff costs.</li> <li>• We will seek to end contracts that cannot achieve full cost recovery.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Workforce Challenges and Agency Use</b></p> <p>Labour market pressures driven by Brexit, controls on immigration and post-pandemic vacancies in the wider economy, as well as competition from the NHS and other social care employers make it harder to recruit and retain staff, increasing expenditure on recruitment and costly use of agency staff.</p> <p>Agency staff typically cost 40% more than contracted staff and can impact on the quality of services. This is the biggest factor increasing costs and increasing margins.</p> <p>Social care is widely perceived as hard and under-valued work, deterring new entrants to the workforce. Social care is held in less esteem than the NHS.</p> <p>Many jobseekers lack the physical and mental health and personal qualities necessary to undertake demanding care roles.</p> <p>Demographic changes and an ageing workforce present challenges.</p> <p>High quality senior staff, particularly Registered Managers, are especially hard to recruit in a competitive labour market.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proactive recruitment strategies are used, tailored to particular services, segments of the labour market and geographical locations.</li> <li>• We have invested in on-line platforms and social media to recruit staff, increasing the number of applications.</li> <li>• We have become a Home Office licenced sponsor of visas.</li> <li>• We seek to retain our valued staff through targeted retention measures, career development opportunities and showing appreciation by a variety of awards and rewards.</li> <li>• As a Mindful Employer, we will further develop our offer to employees to support their welfare and wellbeing.</li> <li>• Expenditure on agency staffing is carefully monitored with targets for reduction and replacement with permanent staff.</li> <li>• We will aim to significantly increase our team of flexible bank staff and ensure that they are fully trained and effectively utilised.</li> <li>• Talent management and investment in training will create pathways towards management roles.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Debt Collection and Cash Flow</b></p> <p>Cash flow pressures arising from changes in local authority commissioning and payment processes, disaggregated funding streams and delayed payments could create liquidity problems, and require increased resource to manage the administrative burden of these changes.</p> <p>Aged debts may be increasingly difficult to collect.</p> <p>Some of our local authorities lack the resources to process debts efficiently, are facing financial pressures and may even be at risk of insolvency, leading to reduced willingness to pay invoices promptly.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will increase the resourcing and efficiency of our billing and income collection processes.</li> <li>• We will ensure that invoicing and income collection processes are tailored to the needs of people who pay towards or self-fund their care.</li> <li>• We will undertake pre-legal and legal action more readily to recover delayed payments.</li> <li>• We will scrutinise our debtors on a frequent basis and report outturn data against agreed targets to the Board.</li> <li>• We will proactively involve the Executive Team in resolving debt issues.</li> <li>• There will be a whole team approach to debt collection involving the Finance Team, Department Heads and Senior Managers as well as named accountability for specific accounts.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Rising Inflation and Cost of Living Crisis</b></p> <p>Rising inflation will present many challenges and impacts on most of our cost base.</p> <p>Inflation is 6.8% after peaking at 11.1% in October 2023 and is expected to remain high in 2023-24, before falling in the wake of high interest rates and reduced demand.</p> <p>Inflation is particularly acute in respect of energy costs, driven by the impact of the war in Ukraine on wholesale gas prices. There are also strong inflationary pressures on the cost of goods due to supply side constraints and the rising cost of transportation, including office consumables, building materials and foodstuffs. Service costs such as cleaning contracts and professional services are impacted by labour market pressures and associated wage increases.</p> <p>The cost of living crisis is impacting on staff morale and wellbeing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There will be a range of initiatives to support hard-pressed staff and their families, including the Staff Welfare Fund and promotion of Health Assured's financial and debt advice service.</li> <li>• We will mitigate rising utility costs through more efficient energy use, active account management and entering into fixed term contracts where appropriate.</li> <li>• There will be a periodic review of office consumable costs to ensure that prices are competitive.</li> <li>• The rising costs of service contracts will be passed on in increased housing-related service charges, as appropriate.</li> <li>• We will procure maintenance and building works as competitively as possible though widening our approved suppliers and continuing use of competitive tendering.</li> <li>• Budgets will be reviewed and increased to protect the quality of essential provision (such as food budgets in care homes).</li> </ul>
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**Future Prospects**

The ending of Covid-related restrictions and the success of the vaccination programme led to increased demand for goods and services in the UK and world economy, increasing the demand for labour at a time when the labour market has lost flexibility since Brexit. Three years after the start of the pandemic, employment levels are still around 55,000 lower than before it began, as workers have exited the workforce due to long Covid, other ill-health or early retirement.

The tight labour market has contributed to significant recruitment and retention challenges, which have intensified as employers compete for workers. The number of unfilled vacancies in social care and the wider economy reached historically high levels at 1.3 million in May 2022, exceeding pre-pandemic figures. Along with cost of living pressures, this has fueled demand for significant pay increases in the care and public sectors. Pay increases across the economy have recently caught up with price rises. Wage increases are expected to remain high in the year ahead, due to ongoing high vacancy levels, inflation-linked increases in the National Living Wage, substantial public sector pay settlements and the expectation of higher real earnings to compensate for the increased cost of housing, food and utilities.

General vacancy levels are now reducing but high social care sector vacancies and specific skill shortages remain. Creative Support has a comprehensive recruitment and retention strategy to address these challenges, including recently becoming a Home Office licenced sponsor of tier 2 migrant workers, which will help to manage this ongoing challenge.

The 9.7% increase in the National Living Wage as of 1 April 2023, as well as the wage pressures associated with current recruitment and retention challenges have significantly increased the cost of social care. The protracted nature of the pandemic and rising costs placed pressure on national and local government budgets in 2023-24 and it is unlikely that local authorities will be able to fully fund these additional costs. These pressures are in addition to historic under-funding of social care and other essential services.

We have seen several of the local authorities that we work with announcing Section 114 notices of insolvency including Slough, Thurrock and Northamptonshire and more recently Birmingham. A recent report from UNISON estimated that local authorities face a £3.5 billion hole in their finances for 2024-25. We expect that deteriorating local authority finances will impact somewhat negatively on our financial performance in the current year and the years ahead. The risks to adult social care and wider public service delivery can only be addressed by increased central government funding to local authorities.



## **Achieving Value for Money**

We are committed to achieving Value for Money across all our activities in accordance with the Regulator of Social Housing's Value for Money Standard. As a Registered Provider of Social Housing, we are required to:

- Adopt a strategic approach to achieving value for money in meeting our objectives
- Robustly assess the performance of our assets and resources (considering financial, social and environmental returns and taking into account our charitable status and the interests of our stakeholders)
- Manage our resources economically, efficiently and effectively to provide quality homes and other services
- Plan and deliver on-going improvements in value for money

We achieve Value for Money in the following principal ways:

- Developing and funding new supported housing provision
- Efficient management of our housing and other assets
- Using and managing our resources (including human resources) efficiently to maximise beneficial outcomes by delivering cost-effective, high quality housing and social care services
- By delivering public benefit and added social value to our service users, stakeholders and the communities within which we operate

We are pleased to be able to demonstrate:

- Continued investment in maintaining the quality and sustainability of our housing assets
- Review and planned disposal of housing assets which do not contribute positively to our financial or strategic plans
- Improvements in fire safety, energy efficiency and disability access for tenants
- Efficient expenditure on infrastructure and back office costs
- Effective policy on managing cash reserves to generate interest payments and to reduce debt levels and servicing costs, whilst protecting working capital
- Evaluation of tenders and housing opportunities to achieve optimum use of available resources
- Geographical consideration of new service developments to ensure efficient and supportive local infrastructure

Our Internal Audit Team has recently expanded its scope to include areas of efficiency such as staff deployment and contract compliance. We have an efficient central and regional infrastructure and senior management team, which is kept under periodic review to ensure sustainability.

The contribution of senior staff pay to our overall expenditure is somewhat lower and more cost-effective than for many comparable providers, demonstrating a commitment to fairness and value for money. However, we balance cost with productivity and the achievement of our charitable objectives. Talent management and investment in professional and management training underpins the effectiveness and retention of senior staff. We have created internal pathways towards middle and senior management roles and we are pleased to have enhanced our senior team through internal progression as well as external recruitment.

Reports of our performance in relation to business targets and KPIs are made to the Committees and the full Board on a bi-monthly basis. For example, a Housing Committee focus on void performance and complaints handling has led to more focused and analytical reporting on voids, specific initiatives to improve occupancy levels and better handling of complaints.

**Key Metrics - Value for Money Standard**

In April 2018, the Regulator of Social Housing published a new Value for Money Standard, which stipulates that we report against a number of standardised metrics in our financial statements. The standardised metrics for Creative Support are published below with a brief commentary. The metrics are compared with a peer comparator (a specialist provider of supported housing) and with the average results for the social housing sector. We have included results against the mandatory metrics for 2022-23, with comments on the performance achieved against our own forecasts and the performance of our peer comparator and the median performance of the wider social housing sector. Projected metrics have been set for 2023-24.

Ref.	Metric description	Detail	Creative Support				Peer Comparator	RSH Global Accounts - Median
			Actual 2021/22	Projected 2022/23	Actual 2022/23	Projected 2023/24		
1	Reinvestment %	During 22-23, we focused on investment in existing stock. We expect increased investment in 2023-24.	2.15%	2.63%	3.59%	4.67%	5.40%	6.50%
2A	New supply delivered (Social housing units) %	We developed a new supported living service in Bury. Investment in new housing is planned to increase in 2023-24.	0.68%	2.14%	0.41%	0.55%	1.50%	1.40%
2B	New supply delivered (Non social housing units) %	Not applicable.	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
3	Gearing %	Gearing has greatly reduced due to our planned approach to paying down debt with positive cash flow. We expect this to fall further in 2023-24 with additional ad-hoc repayments in excess of scheduled payments.	-17.37%	-20.21%	-22.32%	-21.21%	-1.80%	44.10%
4	Earnings before Interest, Tax, Depreciation, Amortisation, Major Repairs Included (EBITDA MRI) Interest Cover	This compares favourably with our peer comparator and wider sector, reflecting the surplus achieved in 2022-23 and lower interest costs associated with the accelerated capital repayments. We are projecting a reduced surplus in 2023-24 due to more adverse operating conditions.	2610.98%	1897%	1521.9%	1169%	611.00%	146.00%
5	Headline social housing cost per unit	Supported housing is acknowledged as being more expensive to operate than general needs social housing. However, we compare well with our peer comparator, reflecting our relative efficiency. In 2022-23, we experienced significant increases in the cost of utilities, property maintenance, safety compliance and housing services as well as wage pressures. We expect costs to increase by 9.8% in 2023-24.	£7,445	£9,159	£9,944	£10,834	£14,045	£4,150.0
6A	Operating margin (social housing lettings only) %	Our operating margin has fallen rather more than we had expected, due to significant increases in costs. We expect a reduced margin in 2023-24 due to on-going cost pressures.	17.01%	13.58%	8.80%	3.69%	10.00%	23.30%
6B	Operating margin (overall) %	The overall operating margin across all our activities is somewhat better than our peer comparator but has reduced compared with 2021-22, mainly due to rising staffing costs, including expenditure on agency staff.	8.20%	5.89%	5.93%	4.41%	5.20%	20.50%
7	Return on capital employed (ROCE) %	The ROCE compares very positively with our peer comparator and the sector in general, attributable to our strong balance sheet. The reduction from the previous year reflects the somewhat lower surplus.	11.26%	7.98%	7.92%	6.12%	3.00%	3.20%

## The Funding and Policy Context for Social Care

There is no doubt that the social care system in England and Wales is significantly under-funded and is failing the vulnerable people who rely on it. Unmet needs for social care are mounting as the demand for care rises, driven by demographic changes, whilst local authority funding fails to keep pace. Demand for care for working-age adults has increased by 22 per cent since 2015/16, partly due to the increase in adults with disabilities as more people with severe disabilities survive childhood. In 2021-22 nearly two million requests for adult social care were made and it is estimated that nearly one-third of requests resulted in no publicly funded support.

Despite an increase in the older population, there has been a reduction in the number of older people receiving long-term care since 2015-16. There are various estimates of the unmet need among older people, with analysis from Age UK putting the figure at 1.5 million citizens. The Nuffield Trust estimated that fewer than half of older people with care needs were receiving funded support. In 2021-22, total expenditure by local government on adult social care was £27 billion. The majority of this was spent on learning disability support for working-age adults and care for older adults. Spending on preventative services and funding for community groups and the voluntary sector has fallen since 2015-16.

There is no national government budget for adult social care in England. Instead, publicly funded social care is mainly financed through local government revenues. The social care system has long been under-resourced as local authority budgets have failed to keep pace with rising labour and other costs and the demographic pressures of rising numbers of older and disabled people with complex care needs. In 2021/22, total spending by local authorities on adult social care was £2.5 billion more in real terms than in 2010/11 but this increase reflected extra short-term funding during the Covid-19 pandemic. Immediately prior to the pandemic, spending per head had in fact fallen compared to 2009/10.

Social care funding is also under pressure from the wider challenges to local government finances. The National Audit Office has estimated that local government spending power (from government funding, council tax and business rates) reduced by 29% in real-terms between 2010/11 and 2021/22. ADASS estimated that the increase in the National Living Wage in 2022-23 cost local authorities an additional £977 million. Local authorities also report concerns about the increased costs of supporting people with increasingly complex needs.

Estimates of the size of the social care 'funding gap' vary. However, there is a bi-partisan consensus that funding needs to increase significantly to meet future demand, improve access to care and pay more for care. In its August 2022 report on the long-term funding of adult social care, the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee recommended that the Government "*urgently needs to allocate more funding to adult social care in the order of several billions each year, at least £7 billion.*"

In October 2022, the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman said it was seeing '*more cases where councils are failing to provide care, or are limiting care, while using cost as the justification*'. It attributed this to 'under-resourced system unable to consistently meet the needs of those it is designed to serve'. The Association of Directors of Adult Social Services reported in November 2022 that more than 9 in 10 adult social services directors in England did not believe there was the 'funding' or 'workforce' to meet care needs of older and disabled people in their area. They stated that most councils continued to report providers handing back contracts, closing or ceasing trading.

Unlike NHS services, social care is not free at the point of use. Anyone who requests public funded social care must undergo a needs assessment and a means test, and only those with highest needs and the lowest financial assets are likely to receive support. If service users have long-term complex health needs, the NHS may also contribute to funding. For people not eligible for full public funding, the total costs across an individual's lifetime will vary depending on their level of need. The government estimates that 1 in 7 adults aged 65 will face lifetime care costs of more than £100,000.

Boris Johnson promised to ‘fix social care’. A White Paper, ‘People at the Heart of Care’ published by the Johnson government in December 2021 announced a programme of reforms to address the ‘catastrophic’ care costs that some individuals face in their lifetimes. These planned reforms were the latest of several unsuccessful attempts to overhaul a complex system of provision, which, unlike most of the NHS, is not free at the point of use. Instead, access to state-funded support is restricted to those with the highest needs and lowest assets.

The reforms for social care were to include an £86,000 cap on lifetime care costs, an extension of the means test so that more people would be eligible for publicly funded social care and increased funding to enable local authorities to pay a ‘fair price for care’. These reforms received widespread approval, despite most experts stating that they did not go far enough to resolve the long-standing problems of adult social care. However, since then Government action to address the pressures on social care has largely been pushed back. In the November 2022 Autumn Statement, the new chancellor Jeremy Hunt, announced that some of these reforms would be postponed until October 2025. This included delaying the increase in the upper threshold, which had been due to rise to £100,000, and the increase in the lower threshold to £20,000, both of which had been planned for October 2023.

The upper threshold determines the level of savings and other assets people can have and still qualify to receive publicly funded care. People with capital below the lower limit are assessed on their income alone. The 2023-24 upper threshold remains at £23,500 and the lower threshold at £14,250, unchanged for the 13<sup>th</sup> consecutive year since 2010-11. By not increasing the thresholds in line with inflation, successive governments have made it harder for people to get publicly funded social care. Another key measure, the Minimum Income Guarantee, which defines the lowest amount of income an individual needing care must be left with after care charges, has also not kept pace with rising costs in recent years although it did increase by 10% in 2023-24.

In September 2022, the short-lived Truss government announced that the recently introduced Health and Social Care Levy which increased national insurance rates for employees and employers by 1.25% would be withdrawn as a response to the cost of living crisis. This has reduced fiscal support for health and social care and threatens the prospects for longer term reform. The Resolution Foundation calculated that the Truss mini-budget cost the nation £30bn, causing roughly half the £60bn hole in the wider public finances.

The 2022 Autumn Statement announced an additional funding package for adult social care of up to £7.5 billion. This was made up of £1.6 billion of new funding via the Better Care Fund (shared between local authorities and the NHS) to get people out of hospital and into care settings, a £1.1 billion grant ring fenced for adult social care, which was also intended to support discharge, £3.2 billion of funding as a grant for adult and children’s social care, transferred from postponing the charging reforms to October 2025 and up to £1.7 billion of revenue-raising powers for local authorities through increased Council Tax. This funding eased some of the pressures on social care but failed to address long-term under-funding.

The DHSC published the ‘Next Steps’ policy paper on 4 April 2023, in which many of the remaining measures from the 2021 White Paper were cut or pushed back. Many local authorities pay providers less than they need to deliver quality care, leading some to hand back contracts or go out of business. Plans to tackle this by funding local authorities to ‘move towards’ paying providers a ‘fair’ cost of care have now, like the cap on care costs, been postponed until at least October 2025.

The King’s Fund stated in response: *“It is very disappointing that the current government’s social care funding and eligibility reforms – including a ‘cap’ on lifetime care costs and changes to the means test – have now been delayed until October 2025. However, these reforms would not by themselves have ‘fixed’ adult social care. While the changes would protect people against the very highest costs of care and enable more people to access state-funded care each year, they would need to go hand in hand with the phasing in of wider system reform of social care that sees quality improved and a strategy for expanding and supporting the workforce, including better pay for care workers. The goal of reform should be a social care system that meets people’s needs more effectively, with a focus on greater personalisation, higher quality and wider availability of services.”*



## Introduction to our Audited Financial Statements for 2022-23

Creative Support acquired Delos Community Limited in 2014. We successfully integrated the operations of the Northamptonshire services into the Creative Support infrastructure 5 years ago. Since then, Delos Community Limited has been dormant and was subsequently dissolved as a separate legal entity. Group accounts are therefore no longer required, and the financial statements presented in this report are for the Society for the year ended 31 March 2023, with comparatives for the year ended 31 March 2022.

### Turnover

During the 2022-23 financial year, the Society's total turnover arising from all activities grew by 2.9% with an increase of £3.94 million to £141.25 million, compared with £137.31 million in the previous year. Total turnover included £12.47 million in respect of social housing lettings, £118.60 million generated by community care contracts and £7.94 million for prevention and wellbeing services. The increase in turnover was mainly attributable to growth in income from community care contracts which increased by £5.16 million (4.6%). Other income was received from Central Government initiatives including the Workforce Recruitment and Retention Fund.

### Expenditure

Total operating expenditure for the year (excluding interest payable and finance servicing costs) increased by £6.83 million (5.4%) from £126.05 million in 2021-22 to £132.88 million, with the biggest increase relating to staff costs. The increased expenditure on staffing was, as forecast, principally due to a significant increase in spending on agency workers, rising from £7.57 million in the previous year to £13.68 million, an increase of £6.11 million (80.8%). The proportion of agency staff costs to total staff costs over the period increased from 6.9% to 12.0%. This upward trend in agency staff costs was sustained throughout the financial year and is expected to continue into 2023-24, albeit at a slightly lower rate of increase.

### Surplus on Activities

The operating surplus for the year amounted to £8.43 million, a margin of 6.0%, compared to the somewhat higher operating surplus of £11.50 million achieved in 2021-22. The reduction in surplus reflects the overall increase in staffing expenditure, particularly agency staff costs.

There was an increase in interest payable from £492k to £558k due to increasing interest rates, albeit the interest cost increases were mitigated by the additional debt reduction payments that reduced the loan value. The surplus for the year after interest payable was £7.93 million, compared with £11.01 million in the previous year, a reduction of 27.9%.

As a not-for-profit company, we are required to generate sufficient surpluses to ensure that we maintain positive cash flow and a sufficient level of working capital and to support future investment in supported housing and our charitable activities. The Trustees regard the overall surplus achieved as a very positive outcome, taking into account the increasingly tight labour market and the imperative to maintain safe and effective services, combined with a challenging external funding environment.

### Cash Flow

Cash flow was not as strong as during 2022-23 due to the reduction in operating surplus. Net cash generated from operating activities was £6.66 million, compared to £15.45 million in 2021-22. At 31 March 2023, the Society held cash balances of £25.37 million as compared with £25.51 million at 31 March 2022. The cash generated for operating activities was used to invest in the upkeep and maintenance of the property portfolio and to fund accelerated repayments of the loan.

### Loans

As at 31 March 2023, the Society held loans of £8.83 million compared with £12.67 million at the end of 2021-22, a reduction of £3.83 million (30.3%). Our loans were successfully re-financed with Barclays bank on competitive and flexible terms in July 2020 and are secured by specific charges on our property assets.

The finance facilities consisted of a 5-year term loan of £20 million and a £3 million revolving credit facility (RCF). It has not been necessary to utilise the RCF during the financial year and consequently the facility was terminated at 31 March 2023.

### **Reserves and Fixed Assets**

Total reserves for the Society have increased by 11.2%, from £86.11 million to £95.77 million. This increase of £9.66 million relates to £7.93m of surpluses generated over the year, plus actuarial gains on defined benefit pension schemes totaling £1.73m.

Our reserves are principally represented by the equity in our fixed asset portfolio. By the end of the financial year, tangible fixed assets for the Society had increased slightly from £75.53 to £75.84 million, due to investment in capital assets of £3.39m, less depreciation charges of £1.84m, and the planned disposals of properties that met our disposal criteria.

### **Social Housing Provision and Development**

Creative Support is proud to have become a significant provider of social and supported housing. Over the years, we have built our property portfolio by re-investing the surpluses generated by our activities into the purchase and development of properties, and latterly by the construction of new homes, for rental to our service users. The number of social housing tenancies directly owned or leased by the Society at the end of March 2023 was 728, a net decrease of three units over the financial year. Our portfolio of leased and managed housing decreased by two units.

Voids available for letting averaged 5.3% in 2022-23, against a target of 5%. Occupancy levels are expected to rise slightly in 2023-24 as demand rises post-covid. Our greatest challenge when filling voids is the delay in local authority funding decisions for placements that significantly contributes to void levels.

We regularly review the quality and demand for our directly owned and managed properties to ensure that all properties remain viable to manage, are attractive to customers and fit for purpose. The sale of properties that are no longer required has supported the planned reduction in debt levels. We generated receipts of £413k from the sale of a number of properties that were no longer required, with a net gain of £59k. We will continue to make strategic sales and disposals in order to fund our capital expenditure plans and development strategy.

### **Capital Spending**

During 2022-23, capital expenditure on properties totalled £2.68 million. In addition, there was continued IT investment to facilitate improved communications and IT upgrades.

Our Board has approved a total capital expenditure budget of £3.6 million in 2023-24, which includes the commencement of a planned new build scheme on our Reading site, and continuing investments for improving and refurbishing existing properties. The remaining capital expenditure relates to leasehold improvements, acquisition of vehicles and IT infrastructure.

### **Grants Received**

We have been very grateful for the award of a number of grants and other funding initiatives during 2022-23. We would like to acknowledge and thank the funders for these amounts, including a Skills for Care Workforce Development Grant of £99,000 for delivering accredited training including diplomas.

### **Going Concern Statement**

The trustees and management have determined that there is currently no material uncertainty that casts doubt on the Society's ability to continue as a going concern. The Society's activities, its current financial position and factors likely to impact on its future development and prospects are set out within the Trustees Report. The Society has a strong balance sheet, well-structured debt facilities, significant cash reserves, and is expected to continue generating positive cash flow from surpluses generated by operational activities. These elements combine to provide sufficient resources to continue delivering high quality accommodation and social care services whilst maintaining and investing in the Society's assets.

It is acknowledged that there will be pressure on the revenues of local authorities and their ability to fund social care at sustainable levels over the coming year. However, the overall demand for adult social care and supported housing remains strong and the Society's current level of activity is expected to remain relatively constant in the year ahead.

During the years 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23, the Society made significant repayments of debt, which have greatly reduced exposure to interest rate increases. The Society's forecasts demonstrate that it can make planned debt repayments and service its debt facilities whilst continuing to comply with lenders' covenants, despite recent and potentially further increases in BoE base rates due to wider economic factors. The BoE is charged with tackling the high levels of inflation and further increases in interest rates cannot be ruled out. BoE base rate was increased to 5.25% in August 2023, whilst inflation has reduced over the last 12 months, currently running at 6.8 % (as at July 2023) and forecast by the BoE to fall to around 5% by the end of 2023.

There are signs of an easing in the tight labour market, one of the factors fueling rising wage settlements and contributing to inflation, alongside supply side constraints arising from a resurgence in international demand for goods and by significant increases in wholesale energy costs due to the war in Ukraine. The market anticipates some gradual easing of energy costs but expects these to remain high for at least the next year. To manage and mitigate these increased costs we are actively re-tendering our energy contracts.

The economy appears to be growing at slower rates than forecasted after the expected post-pandemic bounce back. Although the UK may avoid a recession in the coming year, the country faces a challenging economic outlook with growth projected at a modest 0.4% in 2023 and 1% in 2024 and longer-term growth estimated at 1.5%. In the short run, this will dampen an over-heated labour market and will have a favourable impact on recruitment and retention. However, in the longer run, reduced growth, or recession, especially if combined with tax reductions, will restrict the fiscal ability of central and local government to adequately fund the NHS and social care and will prevent providers from paying decent wages to staff. This may also result in cuts to preventative and universal services, increasing inequality and unmet needs and creating unfunded demand for services, managed by rationing access to care packages.

### **Social Care Contracts and Services**

Our Tendering and Business Development Team enjoyed another successful year. Tender opportunities have been restored to pre-pandemic levels, enabling a strong pipeline of new service developments and contracts. Although we have retained an appetite for growth, we declined to tender for a greater number of contracts than in the previous year due to concerns regarding sustainability.

We continued to tender for inclusion on frameworks for health and social care services. Over the year, we were awarded places on eleven frameworks and approved lists for health and social care services across the country. Local authorities and CCGs use these frameworks to commission services for supported living, extra care, home care and community support. Success in these areas ensures continued access to the market for commissioned health and social care services.

We also had a busy programme of tendering for existing and new services and we were pleased to retain many contracts whilst being awarded new contracts to provide recovery-focused mental health support, person-centred care and supported living for people with a learning disability, home care and extra care services for older people.

We submitted proposals and tenders for 37 contracts and frameworks in total across 7 English Regions including the North West, North East, Yorkshire & Humberside, West Midlands, East Midlands, London and the South East. We were successful in over two-thirds of these submissions (25 contracts representing a success rate of 68%), which will contribute an additional income stream of around £4.5 million per year. A high proportion of the contracts awarded were mini competitions arising from frameworks. This demonstrates the increasing importance of gaining places on frameworks in order to access contract opportunities.

During the year, we were delighted to retain five of our existing contracts and to be awarded a contract with a new local authority, London Borough of Brent, complementing our presence and existing work in London. This extra care service, known as Visram House, transferred to our management in March 2023.

Setting up new services and mobilising these contracts has involved forging partnerships with commissioners, landlords and community stakeholders and getting to know new service users, their families and multi-disciplinary teams. In some cases, this included carefully planned person-centred transition work to enable people to move successfully from family homes and other placements into their own homes. Five of the new contracts involved the TUPE transfer of staff from outgoing providers to our employment.

### Successful Tender Outcomes

Type	No	Description	Locations	
<b>Frameworks &amp; Approved Lists successfully applied for</b>	<b>11</b>	Supported living services (6) Care & support services (3) Care and support at home (1) Domiciliary care services (1)	Cumbria Lancashire Redcar & Cleveland North Yorkshire Newcastle Bradford	Warrington Tees Valley Shropshire Calderdale Sheffield
<b>New contracts awarded from competitive tendering</b>	<b>9</b>	Learning disability supported living (3) Extra Care Service (4) Complex needs (1) Mental health recovery services (1)	Stockport Doncaster Hull Liverpool Bromley	Harrow Brent Tameside St Helens
<b>Existing contracts re-awarded on tendering</b>	<b>5</b>	Mental health recovery service (1) Mental health supported accommodation (1) Learning disability supported living (1) Dementia Day Service (1) Extra Care Service (1)	Doncaster (2) Knowsley Tameside Leeds	
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>			

### Services in Cumbria and the North West

We have continued to enjoy growth in the North West and to implement new service developments and improvements for people with a learning disability, autism and mental health needs. We now provide services in 19 local authorities across Cumbria and the North West region.

We submitted a tender for supported living services for people with a learning disability in Bolton in 2022, resulting in a new contract to support 28 service users living in seven existing supported living services across Bolton. We welcomed 40 staff who transferred to our employment under TUPE in August 2022. We inherited significant vacancies from the previous provider but due to concerted efforts, we have filled all our vacancies and built up a large local team of bank staff. Improvements have been made to a number of these services and we were delighted to receive a positive PAMMS inspection of these services from the local authority. A new supported living service in a scheme of apartments to be known as Vallets Lane is currently in development.

In Tameside we were delighted to be awarded the 'Support at Home' contract to provide extra care services in four extra care housing schemes across the Borough as of April 2023, with the prospects of a fifth service opening in 2024. Regrettably we decided not to submit a bid to retain our longstanding and well-regarded home care service in the Droylsden area due to the challenging labour market for home care staff and onerous contract conditions. However, we were pleased that most of our staff agreed to transfer to the new provider enabling continuity of care for vulnerable older people.

Wilshaw House, our dementia day care service in Tameside celebrated 25 years of dedicated service delivery in July 2022 with a fabulous celebratory event organised by the 'Friends of Wilshaw House'. The mayor of Tameside and his partner attended along with service users, family members, managers and staff. We were delighted very pleased when our contract to provide this highly valued service was re-awarded in October 2022 following competitive tendering.



In Cumbria, we were delighted when the Laurels Care Home in Carlisle received a High Commendation Award at the Care Home Awards for 'Best Use of Technology and Digital Care Strategy'. We have also received the news that we have been shortlisted for the Chef award in the Great British Care Awards 2023. This award recognises the 'whole home approach' to food and nutrition issues within a care home, providing recognition to catering and care staff for producing excellent nutritious meals.

Liverpool City Council re-awarded us the funding to run the Liverpool Night Café (know as The Liverpool Light) in 2022, an innovative mental health crisis café that provides a warm, welcoming and supportive environment for people who are experiencing mental distress or crisis. This preventative service provides an alternative to statutory mental health provision running from our existing service user hub in central Liverpool. We were also awarded Trailblazer funding for an early intervention mental health project.



In October 2022, we were very pleased to have been re-awarded our contract in Knowsley to provide support to 16 people with a learning disability in Maytree Court. Our bid for a supported living service in St Helens was successful following competitive tendering. This new service known as Heathside will provide support to 12 people with a range of needs, including people with more complex needs. We are currently mobilising this service, recruiting a team of new staff and carrying out assessments.

We were awarded a contract by the Lancashire & South Cumbria CCGs in 2021 to develop and deliver a specialist Transforming Care supported living service in Preston for three women with very complex needs. This service commenced in late 2022, following well-planned transition work with the respective multi-disciplinary teams. Each service user has a bespoke self-contained property that meets their identified needs. Stockport Council undertook a major re-tendering exercise in April 2022 for supported living services for people with a learning disability. We submitted bids for four groups of supported living services in Stockport and we were pleased to be awarded two groups, comprising 12 services. Four of our existing services transferred to new providers and one service transferred in.

In Manchester, our pilot community outreach service for people with a learning disability who are hard to engage was extended based on the successful work carried out. This was followed by a second pilot service to support people on the autistic spectrum living in their own or family homes, with the aim of developing community connections and capacity for independence. During 2022, we successfully mobilised a new service, Dalbeattie Court, an innovative short-stay supported living service for people with a learning disability or autism who need a period of support in order to acquire the skills and confidence to live more independently.

We are proud of our track record in successfully supporting people with complex mental health needs in Manchester. A recent referrer to our Upper Chorlton Road service stated: *"The clinical Team have identified UCR as being the most appropriate placement due to the experience of the staff and the Manager but also because of the good working relationship the Edenfield Centre professionals have with the staff. I can also confirm that as the Clinical Team social worker and having discharged many individual's to Upper Chorlton Road during the past 16 years, we have an excellent working relationship with the Project staff at Creative Support and continue to successfully joint work to provide the best outcomes for the service users."*

We gained a place on the Greater Manchester Framework in 2020 for people with a learning disability and autism who have complex needs, including additional mental health issues, behaviours of concern and forensic histories. Since then, our complex care team have been carrying out needs assessment and transition work with a cohort of individuals with complex needs from three GM local authorities, Bury, Salford and Manchester. A property was purchased and adapted in 2022 and the first service users moved into their new home in spring 2023. We are also members of another GM framework for people with complex mental health needs who are hard to place in existing provision. We continue to seek properties that could meet the needs of individuals referred through this framework.

## Services in the North East

We continue to develop and extend our services in the North East, with our regional office located in Teeside. We now provide services in 11 local authorities in the region, including North Tyneside, Gateshead, Newcastle, South Tyneside, Sunderland, Durham, Hartlepool, Redcar & Cleveland, Stockton-on-Tees, Middlesbrough and Darlington.

Our supported living service in the City of Newcastle continues to offer a successful 'Step-up, Step-down service' for younger people with mental health and other needs. During the year, we were admitted to a Newcastle City Council commissioning framework for supported living. Our service in Gateshead, known as Swanway, which offers a concierge service and personalised support to people with a range of needs living in 12 flats continues to flourish. Also in Gateshead, the contract for our well-respected prevention service was further extended, based on the positive outcomes we achieve for vulnerable people, including individuals at risk of offending or experiencing mental ill health, substance misuse and homelessness. We continue to provide supported living services for people with a learning disability in South Tyneside and services for people with mental health needs and learning disabilities in North Tyneside.

We have maintained our person-centred services for people with a learning disability who can present with behaviours of concern in County Durham. We have continued our partnership with seven other providers to deliver mental health services across the County as part of the Durham Mental Health Alliance.

In September 2022, we opened a new service for people with complex needs living in their own homes in Loftus under the specialist Teesside PBS Framework. Places were also gained on commissioning frameworks in Redcar for support at home services and in Middlesbrough for the provision of complex care and support. We also provide supported living services and community support to people living in Northallerton and Whitby on behalf of North Yorkshire Council and we were pleased to be admitted to the Council's approved list for adult social care.

## Services in Yorkshire and Humberside

Creative Support is pleased to provide prevention and social care services in Calderdale, Kirklees, Bradford, Leeds, Sheffield, Doncaster, North Lincolnshire, North East Lincolnshire and Wakefield for people with a learning disability, autism and mental health needs. During the year we gained a place on Calderdale's Council's Approved Provider List for Supported Living.

We were pleased to be offered our first service in Hull, with a contract to provide an Extra Care & Wellbeing service to older people with care needs in Cecil Gardens. This existing service transferred to us from a private provider in January 2023 and we have worked hard to develop the service and to provide a more holistic model of support. During the year, Leeds Council re-awarded us the contract for the well-established Hampton Crescent extra care service.

In North East Lincolnshire, we have built up our floating support service for vulnerable people with mental health and complex needs and we continue to provide supported living services to people with a learning disability and autism living in five schemes. We support around 40 people in North Lincolnshire with a learning disability and other needs. Our services in this area continue to thrive and have recently been involved in an exciting recruitment campaign with the local authority, the advert will be shared on Sky TV and cinema and the commissioners were thrilled we were a part of it and gave the services £400 thank you voucher. *"We wanted to say thank you to you and your team for your support with the filming for the Proud to Care advertisements. As a way of showing our appreciation, we would like to present you with £400.00 worth of Asda gift vouchers to be spent on your employees. We thank you for your continued support and hard work in delivering quality services to the residents of North Lincolnshire."*

Our well-established supported living services in Doncaster for over 80 people with a learning disability were joined by a new service located in the Askern area, following a competitive tender. The service opened in August 2022 offering support to 21 people in newly built self-contained apartments. We have recently had a successful contract monitoring visit and our commissioners and the professionals involved have been very complimentary about the effective mobilisation and subsequent progress achieved.

One of our support workers has recently been shortlisted as a finalist in the Yorkshire & Humber Region of the Great British Care Awards in the Care Newcomer category. We are proud that the Doncaster supported living services are rated as 'Outstanding' by CQC and generate many positive compliments.

In Bradford, we decided to cease providing home care to older people due to workforce recruitment challenges. However, we continued to provide community based support for people with mental health needs and we offer mental health supported accommodation in eight supported living services across Bradford and Keighley. Our crisis support service for people with mental health needs in North Bradford has been re-commissioned as part of a multi-agency service model. The contract for support to people with a learning disability in five shared living services was extended and we were pleased to have gained a place on Bradford Council's provider list for procuring supported living.

In Sheffield, we continued to provide high quality supported living services to people with a learning disability and we gained a place on the Council's framework for services for people with disabilities. We recently celebrated one of our service users getting engaged in Creative Life magazine. We are very proud that one of our support workers has recently been shortlisted as a finalist in the Yorkshire & Humber Region of the Great British Care Awards in the Housing with Care category. Sheffield also hosted their own Pride festival event last month that everyone enjoyed and we have many events planned for the future.

Our supported living services in Leeds provided support to 34 people with a learning disability and autism in three services. Hall Lane was awarded the Festival Fiesta grant and recently hosted their own festival that was enjoyed by all of the Leeds service users. Our Registered Manager in Leeds last week also received a 'We Care' Registered Managers award and was delighted to receive this recognition. The Courtyard Café in Horsforth and the adjacent 'Creativities' day opportunities project continue to offer people with a learning disability an alternative to traditional day services.

### **Services in the West Midlands**

Services in the West Midlands were provided in 11 local authorities including Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, Wolverhampton, Dudley, Sandwell, Birmingham, Solihull, Telford & Wrekin, Shropshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire. We provide high quality support for people with a learning disability in 32 supported living services across the region.

Our regional offices regularly host events, fostering connections among those we support and their communities. Our goal is to strengthen local partnerships and transform each of our locations into a central community hub that support a strong community presence and builds on the strengths of the people we support. This year, our Staffordshire teams actively participated in both local and Manchester Pride events. Additionally, we've hosted arts sessions at our Birmingham office and co-produced a West Midlands Festival, bringing all services together for one grand event.

We continued to provide our mental health recovery service from hubs in East and South Birmingham that are commissioned by the CCG and delivered as part of a longstanding partnership with Birmingham MIND. The service offers individual recovery planning, wellbeing activities, peer support and pathways to employment, with the aim of promoting recovery, inclusion and independence. A current priority is to build our presence and service offer in Solihull.

In Stoke-on-Trent, Leonora Street, our mental health care home and Robert Heath Street, our supported living service continue to provide recovery focused mental health support. The mental health service known as Firsbrook House in Wolverhampton, which transferred to our management from another provider is now well established.

In Dudley, our Garden Pathways project continued to provide supported employment and a gardening service to vulnerable social housing tenants across the Borough. Sadly, the Council decided to de-commission this preventative service due to budget pressures and the service ended in August 2023.

We have successfully provided a small residential care service known as Doseley Road in Telford for many years and we are now actively planning to transform this to a supported living model. We have identified a more attractive and accessible property, which will better meet the needs of the people we support. The property will be re-modelled to meet identified disability needs and will open in 2024.

Our services in Warwickshire continue to flourish and we now support over 50 people with a learning disability, autism and mental health needs across the County. Hope House, our first supported living service in Oxford is now well established and service users have enjoyed taking part in national events.

### **Services in the East Midlands**

Across the East Midlands, we provided supported living and community support services for people with mental health needs, learning disabilities and autism in Bedford, Derby, Leicester, Leicestershire and Northamptonshire.

We have a large service in Bedford to provide seven supported living services and five residential care homes for 83 people with a learning disability and autism, which transferred to us from three different providers. There has been a lot of focused work to fill staff vacancies and further consolidate improvements in the accommodation and support services. The Bedford Supported living services have a new registered Manager, and she is starting to put her stamp on the service and take on the local Quality Development Plan. A recent compliment from a health professional about a staff member noted: *"It was an absolute pleasure to watch Claire support the gentlemen, her overall approach was positive, caring and evident that she understood the gentleman's needs and communication needs. Claire was also approachable to the others on the wards and caring towards their health and recovery journey."*

In our Bedford residential services, we have been successful in ensuring Landlords internally decorate our properties and they are now looking great. The Houghtons has also benefited from a new, purpose built therapy bath, which is being enjoyed by residents. The services continue to organise events together and it has been a pleasure to see new friendships form across the services, and even a romantic relationship blossom from this joint approach. The residential homes known as 3, The Glade and High Street had PAMMS quality assessments completed by the local authority and were rated as "Good."

The Independent Living Service is a non-statutory service providing preventative outreach support to individuals with a mental health need in Leicester. The contract was expected to end due to funding pressures on the local authority. However commissioners recognised how beneficial the service was and how we had successfully supported 30 individuals during the 3-year contract with tenancy sustainment, mental health recovery goals and increasing community integration. Rather than end the provision of outreach support the local authority consulted with us to re-structure and retain the service. We have also been offered a one-off grant to offer specialist workshops and drop-in sessions for the next 12 months.

In Derby, tenants at Wagtail Close organised a street party for the Coronation, engaging with the wider community down their street. We were also delighted that tenants from Wagtail went to the Creative Space Centre to meet the board, which they thoroughly enjoyed.

We are now working with two unitary authorities in Northamptonshire. We have consolidated our mental health recovery service called Moray Lodge, in attractive purpose-built accommodation. We have a place on the 'Commissioning for a Good Life: Brighter Futures Framework' which is used to procure services for people with complex needs. We successfully de-registered a residential care home for four people with a learning disability in Wellingborough, turning it into a supported living service. We continue to hold regular meetings with local commissioners with good prospects for further development in the area.

### **Services in London and the South East**

We currently provide services in six London boroughs, including Barnet, Brent, Bromley, Camden, Tower Hamlets and Wandsworth. We also support older people and people with a learning disability or mental health needs in West Berkshire, Reading and Slough.

We have been providing services for people with a learning disability who have very complex needs in Braintree, Essex since 2018 under the Transforming Care programme. We were very pleased to be awarded a contract to deliver specialist support to people on the autistic spectrum in a brand new supported living service, known as Medina Road, in the unitary authority of Thurrock in Essex, which opened in April 2022. The service is personalised to the individuals we support and aims to maximize their independence and quality of life.



We acquired three supported living services in Bromley for people with a learning disability through competitive tendering, with the contract commencing in April 2023. Twenty staff transferred to us from another voluntary sector provider under TUPE arrangements.

Pelham House, our supported living service in West Berkshire, continues to provide personalised support to 15 people with a learning disability after the contract was re-awarded in the previous year.

Melody Road, our supported living scheme for people with a learning disability in the London Borough of Wandsworth has enjoyed very positive feedback from commissioners and the multi-disciplinary team. Prince of Wales Drive, our Extra Care service in Wandsworth is now well established and thriving.

We provide extra care services to around 400 older people in London, including three services in the London Borough of Bromley, one in Wandsworth and six in Tower Hamlets. We deliver a programme of enjoyable and stimulating activities in these services to promote wellbeing and encourage peer support. We were delighted to be awarded our first service in Brent, an established extra care service for 35 people known as Visram House. We were pleased to welcome 38 of their staff who transferred to our workforce under TUPE.

An example of the many ways in which extra care services can improve health and wellbeing comes from one of our Tower Hamlets Extra Care Services: The service user was diagnosed with a serious health condition in 2021. He was very reluctant to have the surgery he needed but staff continued to encourage him to do so. After almost a year, the service user was told by the doctors that he needed to make a decision on whether he wanted to undergo the treatment or not. With a final push from staff, he agreed to go through with the surgery. The service user met with his medical team in February who confirmed that the surgery was a success. The service user expressed that he was extremely grateful to the staff for encouraging him to undergo this possibly life-saving procedure and thanked them for helping him to make the decision. This is a great example of staff going above and beyond to advocate for and empower vulnerable people to address their health needs.

Harrow Council have awarded us the contract to provide a brand new extra care service in Klute House (named in honour of photographic pioneer, Jeannette Klute). This will be delivered in a purpose-built new building currently being constructed on the iconic Kodak redevelopment site. We expect the start date to be February or March 2024.

## **Prevention, Outreach and Wellbeing Services**

Our prevention services have supported more than 3,000 people across the country by providing advice, enablement and short-term support to prevent homelessness, promote inclusion, resilience and wellbeing. Many of these services incorporate co-production, peer support and volunteering as part of the delivery model and reduce the demand for statutory health and social care services.

Funding for prevention and floating support services has been challenged by the loss of local authority funding from the Supporting People programme. However, we were pleased to have secured extensions to existing contracts for many such valued services. These have included the extension of well-regarded prevention contracts in Dudley and Gateshead. We were very pleased to be re-awarded the contract in Doncaster to provide a floating support service to more than 250 people with mental health needs across the city.

The Wigan prevention services have supported 794 people across the Borough in the year, working closely with our voluntary sector partners, Imagine Independence and Catch 22. Our partnership with both providers ended in March 2023, due to budget pressures.

Our short-term mental health recovery service in Manchester provides a range of personalised practical and therapeutic interventions to promote recovery and independence. A service user wrote to her Key Worker at the end of her support: *“Right from the beginning I have felt very comfortable with you and it helps that we have a similar sense of humour. I feel able to take risks with you, as you support me every step of the way. You have taken the time to really get to know me and this means so much! Never have you assumed anything and never have you told me what to think and this has empowered me so much! You have supported me to try to come to my own conclusions and have confidence in my own abilities. What happens in a session is not final; it can spread over into other areas of my life. The transferrable skills I have gained from you I will continue to try to use going forward. I have been working for 17 months now, which without you*



*would not have been possible. I have also not been in hospital since August 2020! This too would not have been possible without your support!"*

The Liverpool Light service provides preventative and supportive interventions for people experiencing mental distress in a welcoming and therapeutic City Centre Café environment. The Floating Support service in Liverpool for socially excluded groups has continued to deliver targeted interventions to people at risk of homelessness and exclusion in an area of significant deprivation and is now complemented by a successful resettlement project. Our Liverpool prevention services have supported 1,274 people during 2023-24. We have received great feedback about this service including this extract from a letter to Creative Support from the Assistant Head Teacher of Arnot St Mary Primary School:

*"I am writing to provide a brief snapshot of the overwhelmingly positive experience my school have had when working with Creative Support. Towards the end of last year, my school was trying to support a family of two adults and six children who were homeless ("couch surfing"). The children were suffering as a result and attendance was poor. Parental mental health was at its lowest and other, more serious factors were starting to occur. The housing officer would not answer my calls or emails, and social services simply said this does not meet their threshold of need. As a school already stretched with supporting vulnerable families, we were desperate for help. After several conversations with various agencies, I was encouraged to contact Creative Support. After one phone call to them we started to feel hope. Their staff not only understood the complexities of the situation at hand, they dealt with this family with genuine care, concern and respect. There is a dignity in the way they do things at Creative Support, and it is really special.*

*A few months later and the family in question now have keys to a beautiful and safe home. Both parents had years of incorrect benefits rectified, and other debts and financial issues are now under control. One parent is now in employment and the children's' attendance is great. The children are in a much better place, and a family who were heading towards disaster were helped at the eleventh hour. I can't thank Creative Support enough and I know the family feel the same.*

*Currently my school has several families in contact with Creative Support, both to resolve benefits issues and to help with homelessness. Without the skills, knowledge and time of the Creative Support team, I don't know how we would support some of our neediest families. Creative Support is for us the piece of the puzzle that was missing. Their staff will consider any referral we send to them and are excellent at signposting and knowing what steps need to be taken next. In this current climate, we would be lost without their help and expertise. On behalf of the children and families they have helped so far, I cannot thank the team enough. On behalf of my staff, we hope you are around for many more years to come – you are worth your weight in gold".*

## **Transforming Care Services**

During the period 2022-23, we continued to contribute to the national Transforming Care Programme through the further development of bespoke services for individuals with a learning disability and/or autism. Our focus has remained on supporting individuals who have complex needs or challenging behaviour to live in adapted homes in the community, with the right support, rather than in hospitals and institutions.

We started delivering support under the Transforming Care pathway in 2019 to individuals with a learning disability, behaviour that challenges and some individuals with an offending risk or forensic history. Since then, our development work has grown significantly and we are now working with 29 individuals who are either being successfully supported in bespoke placements or are undergoing transition.

Two service users have now moved into our trauma-informed service in Preston and a third is undergoing transition. A new supported living service was developed in 2022-23 in Bury as part of a project jointly commissioned by Bury, Salford and Manchester local authorities under the GM Complex Needs Framework. The property has been comprehensively adapted to meet identified needs and preferences.

We support individuals in a person-centred way to develop and achieve goals, build community connections and enjoy a good quality of life whilst reducing restrictions wherever possible.

Service	Number of people Supported
Thistley Green – Essex	10
Strawberry Gardens – Lancashire	6
Hollins Drive & Perth Close – Warrington	7
Trauma-Informed Service – Preston, Lancashire	3
Greater Manchester Complex Needs Framework - Bury	3



### **Creative Space Centre**

2023 has been a particularly important year for the Creative Space Centre, as we celebrated our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Our sensory garden plans have received planning permission and the works are due to start imminently. During the past few months, with the help of volunteers, we have been preparing the gardens and woodland walk and planning where each sensory section will be, which flowers we will plant, and how we will make each area accessible for our service users.

We have also been fortunate to have received the help of Cinema for All who have very kindly donated state of the art cinema equipment, which within the next few weeks will help us transform our ‘Terrace room’ into a fully accessible and controllable cinema for our service users and their families to enjoy. The Centre has been used by numerous schools, care homes and supported living services.

We have provided accessible events at Halloween, Christmas, Valentine’s Day and Easter, all of which have been fully booked and have received excellent feedback. These events provided safe, fun and accessible activities for our visitors, whilst also raising essential funds to support the repair, replacement and upgrade of equipment within our rooms. This year we have fundraised the highest amount since the charity began through these events and the immense generosity of our supporters.

The Centre has continued to thrive and welcomes over 700 visitors a week, with the rooms in use 7 days a week from 9am to 9pm. The Centre has been used by numerous schools, care homes and supported living services. Over the last year, we have welcomed many new groups and individuals, as well as continuing to support our existing service users, some of whom have been attending for 30 years. Some feedback from families on our Facebook page:

*“Fabulous facilities that are centered on the sensory aspect for children with complex needs: soft surfaces, low lighting, different areas/textures, plenty of space for running around as well as quiet corners for hiding in, music, piano stairs, a soft play slide & the most wonderful lit up ball pit. A lovely calm atmosphere & hoist facilities if required. The staff are great & welcoming too, CCTV in operation & monitored. Would absolutely recommend booking a visit.”*

*“Visited Space 2 yesterday, it was brilliant, our son loved it, a lovely space to see him being able to be free and have fun in a safe environment, the ladies there were lovely and so helpful, the sensory walk was lovely too.”*

*“The Space Centre is a fantastic place. Allows my son to go to soft play and have fun. The staff who work there are lovely. Highly recommend it and feel lucky that such an amazing venue is so close to me!”*

## **Creative Together**

Creative Together aims to be Manchester's most forward thinking and ambitious co-production space. We are led by the service users and facilitate their empowerment by encouraging and modelling belief in possibility. Our strategy for achieving this is to listen to the aims and interests of our members and collaborate with them to organise events and produce items to enable them to demonstrate their successes.

In 2022, we began our co-production journey by helping the members identify their favourite areas of interest at the Centre. These were music, art and textiles. They felt that they needed something to work towards to bring cohesion to the time and money they invested in sessions. They wanted something tangible to present to the world as a symbol of their self-worth. With our encouragement, they helped to organise The Big Event, which consisted of lip sync karaoke, comedy and food. The success of this event succeeded in whetting their appetite for a bigger project and they agreed, together, to work on some art that could be used to print on t-shirts and cushions. By December 22 they were exploring ideas in the art sessions and in January 23 they created the beginnings of the repeat pattern now known as "What's Bugging You?"

All this was happening alongside the organisation of their usual favourites such as Halloween and Christmas parties, trips out to Blackpool and local landmarks and member-led gardening in the courtyard. They planned a Jubilee party for the Queen and painted 70 rainbow coloured union jacks to represent our differences. They rallied the troops for open mic nights, chose the films for a regular afternoon DVD session and wrote their life stories in creative writing. These stories were the inspiration for the first podcast series which, they felt, made sharing more equal.

Building on the success of The Big Event the member's confidence grew exponentially and they decided that summer '23 would be the first Creative Together Music Festival. By February 23, they were designing banners for the stage and were determined to make the event as professional as possible. Regular members meetings created a wish list for the event.

In March 23, the members received the first roll of professionally manufactured upholstery fabric and their sense of achievement was palpable. The unveiling of the bespoke Luxurious Boutique Velvet was emotional with comments such as "*I feel like our voices have been heard*" and "*I feel famous!*". The physical evidence of their endeavours has cemented their belief that they are capable of producing professional quality products and organising events that make a real difference. Going forward, their commitment to the aims and outcomes of the Creative Together Co-production Centre will be a force to be reckoned with.

## **Creative Football**

Creative Football left Creative Support after 16 successful years on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 to start trading independently as a Community Interest Company (CIC). We are immensely proud of Creative Football, which developed from a small group in Blackburn in 2007 to its wider influence across Pennine Lancashire, supporting over 300 people a week. Creative Football was initiated and led by Paul Hardman, Project Manager who was instrumental in developing the team and in forging meaningful local community connections to support the League's continued development. We are confident Creative Football will continue to build upon their success having secured future funding from Sports England and with the dedication of the staff and service user team members. We are delighted that they have decided to retain the name 'Creative Football' and wish them all the best for the future.

## **Celebrating Creative Support's 30<sup>th</sup> Birthday in 2022**

During the summer of 2022, we celebrated our 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with a series of events held at six lovely venues across the country, ensuring that many of our service users and staff could attend. The celebrations culminated in a fantastic national 30<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party in Manchester.

- The **North East** event was held at Durham Cricket Ground in May for 150 guests. Presented by Heather Lowrey, our Area Manager, and a service user in Tyne & Wear, our service user entertainers sang, danced, hula-hooped and read poetry to an enthusiastic audience.

- Our **Yorkshire** event was held at Doncaster Racecourse in May for 160 guests. Our Service Director Lyndsey Downes and Senior Operations Manager, Leanne Paterson co-hosted the event. Service user entertainers sang and even led a fitness class to 'Billie Jean'. The event culminated with Service User Awards announced by Registered Manager Abi Harker.
- The **London & South East** region celebrated with an event held at the Art Pavillion in Tower Hamlets in June for 200 guests. Our London-based Service Director Mahip Singh presided over the event, ably assisted by his local team. DJ Simon played everyone's favourite tunes and Theo sang. The awards ceremony made sure we all knew the Best Storyteller, Gardener and Housemates across London. One of the service users said it was the best day she had had for a long time.
- The **Midlands** service users and staff came together to celebrate at the Botanical Gardens in Birmingham in June for 250 guests. Jointly presented by Service Directors Jonathan Keane and Leigh Birch this beautiful event showcased the amazing talents of our Midlands based service users with singing, dancing, poetry and DJ-ing. The event was rounded off with heartfelt impromptu speeches from service users - you really could feel the love in the room!
- Our **North of England** Event was held at Blackpool's super-glamorous Boulevard Hotel next to the iconic Pleasure Beach in July with over 130 guests. Hosted by Julie Cooke, Service Director, and Diane Burrow, Area Manager, the event displayed a beautiful celebratory film made by a member of staff, poetry, dancing and singing.
- The celebrations drew to a close with our **National 30<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party**, held at the **Manchester Monastery** on the 21<sup>st</sup> July for 350 guests, with Service Directors Julie Cooke, Leigh Birch & Mahip Singh hosting alongside Helen Alton, a service user in Stockport who gave out the achievement and long service awards. Our Chair, Joolz Casey gave warm thanks to all and Chief Executive, Anna Lunts gave a speech outlining some of the milestones and great achievements of our 30-year history. The entertainment brought together some of the amazing regional entertainers and some local Greater Manchester talent to sing and perform. There were wonderful floral displays and a very impressive three-tiered birthday cake.

All these events included a range of service user performances and activities co-produced with local services, creating a vibrant and inclusive atmosphere, the perfect way to celebrate our birthday.

## Events and Initiatives

- During the first half of 2022, we celebrated our 30th Anniversary with a series of events held around the country (see above)
- The latter half of 2022 focused on the theme of 'Going Green', encouraging service users to think about sustainability and eco-friendly choices. We released our 16-page Sustainability Newsletter, sent to services in October with an 'Eco Passport' featuring biodegradable stickers for service users to mark their goals. Our Gardening Competition awarded £50 to four services and service users in the categories 'Best for Wildlife', 'Best Home Grown Food', 'Best Sensory Garden' and 'Best Service User Project'.
- Our 2022 Calendar was launched in December, featuring a selection of service user artwork. We received 44 excellent entries including paintings, collages, textiles and mixed media.
- We marked Black History Month 2022 with a 'Design your own Black Superhero' Zoom session led by Ash who we support in London. We also held an Afro-Caribbean recipe competition. The winning recipe, a Smoked Mackerel Curry sent in by service users in Leeds, was made at a Creative Together and broadcast on Instagram live. We received the following comment: "Thank you Creative Support, the recipe sounds delicious. I've saved the recipe!"
- The annual theme for 2023 is 'Community Connections', with monthly themes encouraging service users to connect with their local community. Along with the annual What's On Guide, we released our brand new Service User Journal in January 2023. The journal is designed to empower service users to engage in meaningful ways with the theme of Community Connections, and to maintain a record to reflect on at the end of the year.

- In February 2023, we had our Community Kindness month, where services across the country were invited to hold 'Creative Coffee Mornings' on 14th February to chat and connect while fundraising for a chosen cause. In Head Office, we had a fantastic turnout and raised £91 for The Wellspring in Stockport.
- In April 2023 we launched a 500 Words Competition, inviting staff to write between 300 and 500 words about their time at Creative Support for the chance to win £500. We received 46 entries with inspiring stories. Our panel of judges chose one overall winner, Katy Gee, Senior Support Worker in Calderdale, and 10 runners-up, who won their choice of a £20 voucher or a 'We Care' branded hoodie.
- As part of April's 'Get on Growing' theme, we offered free sunflower seeds which could be requested by people who want to take part in a sunflower growing competition. Prizes will be awarded for the tallest sunflower, best art and photography.
- A new range of 'We Care' merchandise was produced, including hoodies, t-shirts, tote bags, lanyards, hand sanitiser, notebooks, trolley coins and pens. The merchandise has proved very popular amongst staff, service users and at recruitment events.
- In August 2023, we took part in the Manchester Pride Parade for the fourth time. 26 service users and staff from Tameside, Salford, Leeds, Knowsley, Stockport and Staffordshire participated in the Parade in style on board an eye-catching vintage open top bus. *"It was fantastic. It was a lovely bus and I liked walking. Can't wait to do it again!"* - Michael, a service user in Staffordshire.

### Grants Awarded

- The Coronation Grant to help services celebrate the coronation of King Charles III proved very popular. We granted £9,800 to services to help them mark this special occasion in style with decorations, food and fun activities.
- We ran the popular Gardening Grants programme in 2022 and 2023, supporting services and individual service users to make the most of their gardens. In 2022, we awarded 85 Gardening Grants totalling £7,500 and in 2023, we awarded 54 Gardening Grants worth around £7,000.
- We awarded 25 Festival Fiesta grants worth £9,920. Fiestas were held at services across the country and brilliant photos from these events were shared on social media. There were three different pots of funding available:
  - Four services received 'Grand Fiesta' funding of up to £1000 to support inclusive events involving multiple services from across the region
  - 19 services received 'Get Together Fiesta' funding of up to £300 to host a smaller event
  - Two service users received 'My Fiesta' funding of up to £100 to support an individual to attend a festival in the UK.

### Creative Support & External Awards

- We re-branded our service user awards to 'Creative Stars', reflecting the brilliance of our nominees. Each month service users can be nominated in four categories: the High Flyer award, Eco Friendly award, Positivity Award, and Community Champion award. The winners are chosen by a panel of service user judges, and receive a badge, a voucher and a certificate.
- The Achieve Q Awards were re-launched as the 'We Care' Awards. These awards recognise the people and teams who personify our We Care values and achieve positive outcomes. The first round of award winners was announced in August 2023. A one-off 'Registered Managers 'We Care Awards' ceremony took place at the Registered Managers conference on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2023.





- We continued recognising the achievements of our staff with the Creative People Appreciation Awards. Ten winners are announced each month and each receive a box of Hotel Chocolat chocolates. The winners from each quarter are entered into a Quarterly Prize Draw to win either two days of extra annual leave, an experience of their choice or gift of up to £200.
- We are so proud of the external awards won by our staff. At the ‘Made in Manchester’ Awards, Abbie Dutton-Guiver won Business Support Professional of the Year, and Hazel Beddows won Diversity and Inclusion Champion of the Year. Aliphina Sundire, Support Worker in Leeds, won ‘Best Paid Care or Support Worker of the Year’ at the Leeds Quality in Care Awards. The Laurels care home in Cumbria won a ‘High Commendation’ for ‘Best Use of Technology and Digital Care Strategy’ at the Care Home Awards in London.
- Thistley Green and Lanchester Court were both finalists in the LaingBuisson ‘Best Supported Living Service’ Award on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2022 and Wilshaw House, Tameside, was a finalist for the Dementia Care Award at the Markel 3rd Sector Care Awards on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2023.

## Publications and Newsletters

- We have produced three brilliant issues of **Creative Life** since April 2022. The issues covered the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations, ways to have a ‘Green Christmas’ and promoted the 2023 theme of ‘Community Connections’. Service users are invited to a co-produced editorial group to discuss themes and articles they would like to see in the issue, and whether they would like to write or be supported to contribute to an article. We are currently recruiting service user and volunteer photographers.
- The second and third issues of the staff magazine **Creative People** were released in November 2022 and July 2023, sharing inspirational stories from colleagues and information to support wellbeing and career development. Creative People was posted to the home addresses of all our colleagues and received great feedback such as *“I just wanted to compliment the team involved in putting together the summer issue of Creative People. I thoroughly enjoyed reading it. I felt it was informative, a really pleasant read and brilliantly formatted.”*
- 16 blogs were produced as part of CEO Anna Lunts’ blog series from April 2022 to present. The content was topical and timely, ensuring that it was relevant for staff and service users. The blogs included subjects such as:
  - How the Nationality and Borders Bill Affects Victims of Modern Slavery
  - Racial Disparity in Maternal Healthcare
  - Afro Hair Discrimination in Schools and the Workplace
  - Helping People with Disabilities in Ukraine
  - The Impact of Prepayment Meters
- A number of staff also wrote guest blogs for the website, including Kizzy Green’s blog on the challenges many Black and mixed-race families face when tracing their family histories, and Natalie Beatty’s blog on the barriers autistic children face in education.
- We launched ‘Creative Connect’, a monthly staff email briefing featuring important news updates, company initiatives and policies, information on new developments, awards, key dates, staff incentives and compliments.



## Social Media

We continue to use social media to engage service users, staff and stakeholders with a mix of good news stories, initiatives and competitions. We have grown our Facebook following to over 5,500, and our LinkedIn following to over 6,300. We have reached over 840,000 people with organic Facebook posts since we created our page, and a further 800,000 people through targeted paid advertising for recruitment purposes. Since launching Instagram in 2022, we have gained over 360 followers and reached nearly 14,000 people with our posts.

## **Social Value**

Over the past 12 months, the number of contracts requiring social value commitments and monitoring has grown to 21. The Social Value Team have provided support from the start, working with their tendering team colleagues during the bidding process to generate targets that are both achievable and ambitious to continue the growth of our social value programme across the organisation. Our delivery has shown an increase in new areas including Salford, where our services are exceeding their projected values and have achieved above 100% in 23 out of 25 of their targets this year. The local team received a compliment from the Salford City Council stating “*your report looks really impressive*”. The development of a Creative Support Social Value Framework has continued over the last year, utilising knowledge from existing frameworks including TOMs and HACT and engaging with local teams to discuss new elements such as citizenship and engagement with green initiatives.

## **Volunteers**

In February 2023, we were successfully re-accredited by Investing in Volunteers, receiving a positive report with recommended actions to implement over the coming year. One aim of the volunteering programme was to ensure that recruitment of volunteers was tailored to the local communities and services which we support “*The Social Value Team are proactive in striving to engage volunteers and have tailored volunteer recruitment to suit local communities.*” (Investing in Volunteers Report, 2023). We ensure that all volunteers are appreciated for the support they provide to our organisation and service users and this was reflected in our report, which stated, “*It is clear that all volunteers greatly value their role and experience of volunteering [...] Staff appreciate how volunteers contribute to the organisation*”. Our attractive new Volunteers Handbook was released in July 2023 and will support the promotion of volunteering and good practice across the organisation.

We have continued to grow our volunteer programme, with a 144% increase in the number of active volunteers, despite recruitment challenges due to cost of living pressures and many volunteers having to opt for paid opportunities. Our volunteer and peer support roles enable the acquisition of valuable skills that can lead to paid employment. Two of our Mental Health Crisis Support Volunteers in Birmingham were able to use their volunteering experience to successfully apply for paid positions in the service.

In June, we marked National Volunteers Week with the Volunteers Appreciation Award, which was won by six volunteers from across the country. One of the successful volunteers was Winnie Chan from London:

*I would like to nominate Winnie Chan for the Volunteer Appreciation Award. Winnie began volunteering with Creative Support as a befriender and started having weekly chats with a resident from Donnybrook Court. After the success of Winnie’s befriending work, we developed an additional activity for her to lead. Winnie has great knowledge of the arts so we began doing art sessions. Winnie plans, organises and delivers the sessions with help from me. Winnie puts a great deal of time into the preparations and gives a lot of energy to making it engaging for residents. She offers lots of encouraging feedback and the residents have really enjoyed learning and creating art.*

## **Student Placements**

Our Student Placement programme has continued to grow, with a further 81 social work and other students being supported with high quality placements, enhancing our work and generating £23,850 in income for the organisation. The team have made a further 15 connections with new universities, including Lancaster University and Sheffield Hallam and we now have partnerships with 43 universities.

We actively promote paid work opportunities within Creative Support to our students at the end of their placement and 22% of the students successfully applied for paid roles (14% as Relief Support Workers and 8% as Support Workers). Feedback is an essential part of the developing programme, allowing us to know what works well and identifying any areas for improving the experience of students.

We received very positive feedback from students about their experience in our services and the meaningful support provided by our staff, “*Working at Creative Support has been one of the best experiences I could’ve asked for as a student social worker in my first year [...] the experiences I have been involved in have been far more enriching than I thought I would ever get on my first placement.*” – Student in a West Midlands service.

## Employing a Large and Diverse Workforce

At the end of March 2023, Creative Support employed 5,083 contracted full time, part time and sessional employees amounting to around 3,387 whole-time equivalents. The average length of service of our permanent employees is just under 6.9 years (if previous TUPE service is included) and 4.6 years (if TUPE service is not included). This is a strong indicator of high employee satisfaction and retention, demonstrating that Creative Support has a lower rate of annual staff turnover than the average for the care sector (which was running at 30% nationally according to the Skills for Care 'Size and Structure' Report, July 2023).

We continue to build our team of relief workers to ensure that we can manage peaks in workload in an efficient manner and prevent the use of more expensive agency staff. On average, around 540 of our relief workers work for us each week and all have access to our training programmes and many of our benefits.

During 2022-23, we employed 1,713 new permanent and bank staff. This includes people who have never worked in care who have been motivated by a desire to seek secure and meaningful employment in social care, as well as graduates and people with prior care experience. We have also welcomed back many previous employees during the year. Our HR team successfully managed 18 staff TUPE transfers over 2022-23, welcoming 190 staff into the company from nine employers.

Since Covid-19 restrictions have eased, releasing pent up demand in the wider economy we have seen the job market become highly competitive, putting huge pressure on our organisation and the wider social care sector. Despite this challenging context, we received a total of 18,106 completed job applications in 2022-23, averaging 349 per week, compared with 204 per week in the previous year, a huge increase of 71%, generated by comprehensive recruitment methods. The effective use of social media recruitment platforms has contributed significantly to our successful efforts to reduce the use and associated cost of agency staff. With increased capacity in our recruitment team the average turnaround for on-boarding new employees and ensuring comprehensive pre-employment checks and due diligence is 29 days.

In July 2023, we were delighted to received confirmation from the UK Visa & Immigration (UKVI) service that our application to become a Licensed Sponsor for visa purposes was successful. We can now assign and issue Certificates of Sponsorship (CoS) to employees to support their applications to the UKVI for a 5 year Skilled Worker Visa in Health & Social Care as either a Support Worker or Senior Support Worker. To assist us with this new and complex process we enlisted the support of a regulated visa and sponsorship expert service, Sponsor Licence Experts, who have been assisting us with the organisational application to the UKVI and guiding our employees through the visa application process.

As part of our successful application, the UKVI supplied Creative Support with an initial batch of 57 CoS, with the possibility of requesting more in the future. As we are now a licenced sponsor with the UKVI, we must adhere to strict rules and regulations. To ensure we remain compliant we have begun to put in place a set of robust policies, procedures and checks. This includes the creation of two new policies, the "Right to Work Policy" and "Visa Sponsorship Policy", both of which have been issued and made available to all staff members via email and the Staff Area on the website. We are recruiting a dedicated Compliance Officer who will maintain and monitor the sponsorship process and all right to work checks for the organisation.

We aim to provide structured career pathways that attract new staff and enable all our employees to flourish and develop their career in social care. We participated in a number of initiatives to enable people who have been unemployed or are disadvantaged in the labour market to join our workforce and to experience high quality vocational training. We use Work Trials to give people without experience of social care the opportunity to gain supported work experience and training. We have successfully employed paid graduate interns and have recruited apprentices for trainee roles in our head office as well as our care services.

Staff from BAME groups made up 36% of our workforce on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023. This demonstrates the diverse profile of our workforce and the wider social care sector and the communities in which we work. Our staff gender breakdown shows that 77% of our employees are female and 23% male. We are pleased to report that our last gender pay gap was slightly in favour of female employees in contrast with the national picture. This reflects the number of senior roles in our organisation that are filled by women. As a response to the Black Lives Matter movement, we have adopted a Manifesto for Action and we have appointed an EDI officer.

Retaining our valued staff continues to be a high priority. We know that our staff appreciate our charitable status, person-centred values, high quality training, structured career opportunities and the support and coaching they receive from highly motivated managers. Our salaries and benefits are competitive and are benchmarked positively against similar organisations. We extended our 'Birthday Bonus Leave Day' to all staff, irrespective of length of service from April 2023. In response to requests from staff struggling to cope with cost of living pressures we now offer all employees a choice of weekly pay as an alternative to monthly pay. This has proved to be very popular. We also offer 'Payroll Connect' zoom meetings to staff on request to address any payroll issues.

Initiatives to support staff to maintain their health, wellbeing and resilience have included the provision of hardship grants and confidential advice and counselling from our partner Employee Assistance Scheme provider, Health Assured. Our EAP continues to be promoted and well utilised by our workforce. In the past year, 15% of our employees have contacted Health Assured for support and advice. 78% of these calls were for counselling and 22% for advice. There were 11 referrals for face-to-face counselling, with 72 counselling sessions delivered, 17 referrals for structured telephone counselling with 110 sessions delivered and a further 112 on-line counselling sessions. 30% of employees were on sick leave at the outset of their counselling but after engaging in therapy this reduced to 13%.

Over the last year, we have implemented a new Proactive Rehabilitation Support benefit for all employees involved in any type of incident at work through our Insurers. The benefit provides a comprehensive rehabilitation assessment to support employees back to work after sustaining an accidental workplace injury, with timely access to medical intervention. This service is designed to work closely with the employee, supporting both physical and psychological recovery to enable employees to return to work.

We have recently developed and issued a Staff Menopause Policy, which recognises the impact of the menopause on our female employees. Our new Domestic Violence Policy outlines a set of measures to support employees experiencing domestic violence, including discretionary paid leave as well as access to confidential HR support and signposting to supportive external agencies. A new, holistic staff wellbeing policy is being sent to all staff to promote all the policies and resources that support staff welfare, resilience and wellbeing.

### **Employee Welfare Fund**

We established a Hardship Fund to help our dedicated and hardworking staff who were facing financial hardship as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. We extended the provision of the fund to support our employees in 2022-23 with the cost of living crisis and re-launched the fund as the 'Staff Welfare Fund.' To date we have provided non-refundable grants to 242 employees at a total cost of £46,500. We have set aside a further £10,000 for 2023-24 to continue to support our employees. The grant has assisted employees with a number of different issues including moving costs, bereavement, relationship breakdown, transport, unplanned bills (including utility and veterinary), childcare, vehicle repairs, purchasing new domestic appliances and supporting employees circumstances relating to domestic abuse.

### **Valuing our LGBTQ+ Staff**

We are proud of our long-standing commitment to diversity, inclusion and equality. As a Stonewall Diversity Champion, we actively promote LGBTQ+ inclusion across all levels of our organisation. Our LGBTQ+ employee network continues to thrive and enact positive change from within. Over the past year, our network has led impactful awareness campaigns, including adding pronoun options to email signatures, incorporating LGBTQ+ topics into onboarding and training programs, and participating in PRIDE events. We also continue updating our policies to utilise more inclusive, gender-neutral language in all correspondence. Looking ahead, we remain dedicated to championing LGBTQ+ equality, creating a welcoming environment for LGBTQ+ employees and customers, and working with organisations like Stonewall to drive progress on key issues. We know there is always more work to be done, and we embrace the opportunity to foster a culture of belonging for all.



## Supporting and Developing Our People

### Investors in People: Gold for L&D and People Teams and Silver for the Organisation

Investors in People (IIP) is a nationally recognised quality framework for benchmarking the effectiveness of leadership and people management and development practices. We were successful in November 2022 with our organisational Investors in People re-assessment that takes place annually. We maintain our Silver and Gold status and are preparing for individual assessment for our Customer Care, Payroll and Property Management Teams.

Our full, national 3-year IIP re-assessment begins in September 2023 with planning meetings and will be completed with IIP Gold re-assessment for our L&D and People & Performance Teams in January and February 2024.

### Creative Academy Training

Post-pandemic, the training team are continuing to increase their output of face-to face and classroom training. The table below is a summary of the total national learning and training events delivered in the financial year 2022 - 2023

Training Type	Number
Virtual classroom (with live trainer)	1,064
e-Learning completions	74,912
Classroom (face to face) sessions	353



### Virtual and Digital Learning

In 2022-23, a total of 6,575 staff have attended 1,064 virtual classroom sessions and we have supported approximately 75,000 e-learning course completions on our new learning management software hosted by Learning Pool. This equates to almost 300 e-learning completions taking place every day of the year and just over four webinars each working day.

### Classroom Training

We have delivered and supported a total of 363 classroom sessions in our regional training centres across the country (or sessions delivered in services with staff), which were attended by 1,922 staff members in 2022-2023. The regional statistics are:

	Courses	Attended
<b>Cumbria</b>	13	76
<b>Berkshire</b>	3	21
<b>Doncaster</b>	47	234
<b>Essex</b>	5	37
<b>East Midlands</b>	33	201
<b>London</b>	15	138
<b>North East</b>	78	401
<b>North West</b>	156	768
<b>West Midlands</b>	13	46
<b>Totals</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>1922</b>



**Health and Social Care Diplomas**

Our internal assessment team (5 assessors) continue to deliver our Health & Social Adult Care Diploma qualifications at Levels 2, 3, 4 and 5 in the year 2022-2023, with approximately 120 staff on the programme at any one time. The highest demand remains for Level 3 (support worker level) and Level 5 qualifications (senior staff/managers). We are now working with a new partner training provider, Realise Learning, who have secured us AEB funded Diploma Level 3 Qualifications in specific areas as well as a number of Level 2 Certificate qualifications; these are now being offered to staff after completion of their probationary period.

Diplomas in Health and Social Care	Completions 2022-23
Level 2 Diploma in Health and Social Care	7
Level 3 Diploma in Health and Social Care	36
Level 4 Certificate in Leadership and Management of Health and Social Care Services	3
Level 4 Diploma in Adult Care (RQF)	1
Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management of Health and Social Care Services	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>71</b>



**Apprenticeships**

We currently have 97 contracted staff on Health and Social Care Apprenticeship programmes with external providers across the country. 18 staff completed a Health and Social Care Diploma externally as part of their apprenticeship at Levels 2-5. These level 2 to level 7 apprenticeships are supported primarily through our Apprenticeship Levy funds. Investing in the apprenticeships, particularly at undergraduate and Masters levels adds quality and competency to our senior teams, enhancing the quality of care provision in our services.

**Workforce Development Fund**

We claim Workforce Development Funding (WDF) through Skills for Care to support our Diploma and apprenticeship provision. This funding is allocated through the Department for Health and Social Care and is intended to support the costs of qualification delivery. We claimed a total of £99,000 WDF funding for completed and certificated qualifications in 2022-2023.



**High Quality Training Provider Endorsed by Skills for Care**

We have maintained our ‘Endorsed Provider’ status with Skills for Care, the Royal Society for Public Health, BILD and CPD demonstrating that our training is high quality, learner-focused and meets the needs of the health and social care workforce. These endorsements show that we have an effective annual quality improvement cycle, internal and external moderation and continuing skill and knowledge development for our trainers.

**Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)**

During the year we have trained a further 101 people to become Mental Health First Aiders. 73 of these were from Creative Support services and 28 attendees from outside the company. Attendees were from schools, law firms, sports therapists, social enterprises and mental health charities such as Rochdale and District Mind.



Mental Health First Aid trained staff	Numbers
Creative Support staff	73
External participants	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>101</b>

**Oliver McGowan Understanding Autism Training**

We have two fully qualified Oliver McGowan accredited trainers on our team and we are training a further team member. This will enable us to deliver the Tier 2 Oliver McGowan Classroom based training, which is co-delivered with people with lived experience of learning disabilities and autism.

The Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training on Learning Disability and Autism is named after Oliver McGowan, whose death shone a light on the need for health and social care staff to have better training. The Health and Care Act 2022 introduced a requirement that regulated service providers must ensure their staff receive learning disability and autism training appropriate to their role. We are rolling this out to all staff nationally, prioritising staff who work with people with autism and learning disabilities over the coming year.



**Professional Development Incentives for Staff**

We gifted £45,350 to our staff in the financial year 2022-2023 as a reward for completing their e-learning modules. Staff receive a £50 gift voucher of their choice when they complete 10 e-learning modules in a 12 month period, a £30 gift voucher for completing the Care Certificate and a £50 gift voucher for completing an accredited qualification such as a Diploma, Certificate or Apprenticeship.

**New Learning Management System**

We have introduced a new Learning Management System called Learning Pool. This was a substantial piece of work but is now complete. It gives our staff the ability to access classroom, virtual classroom and e-learning through a personal account. Since its introduction, we have seen a 20% average increase in training attendance (bookings compared to attendance).



## Ensuring Quality and Effective Social Care Governance

Our Quality Team has worked hard to support our services to provide the highest quality of care and support and to achieve the best possible outcomes in CQC and local authority inspections. During the year, the team carried out announced and unannounced internal quality audits and business compliance visits across the country. Support with quality improvement work has also continued nationally. In addition, the Quality Team have provided support and guidance to ensure safe medication management.

The Quality Team takes an overview of social care governance, CQC compliance, Internal Quality Auditing, safeguarding, customer care, complaints & suggestions and person centred review processes. The Quality Team also contributes to policy development and provides practical support to managers to improve services, raise standards and promote good practice. The Quality Team have been reviewing and updating operational templates and procedures over the past year. The work is welcomed by operational managers and leads to much improved quality of records and practice.

Social care governance (SCG) meetings take place to review concerns, to analyse data and to identify any trends arising from quality indicators such as safeguarding alerts, complaints, incidents, accidents, high use of agency staff and the outcome of internal and external inspections. During social care governance meetings, we proactively identify services that may benefit from a quality audit, more intensive monitoring, additional Quality Team input, or management input. The SCG meetings feed back into our Board Committee for Quality and Practice Development, which provides challenge and oversight to the Executive Team and has contributed to task and finish meetings to review specific incidents and actions arising from these.

## Care Quality Commission Inspections

At the end of March 2023, Creative Support had 89 CQC registered locations. Of these, 86 had been inspected, with 77 (90%) locations being rated as 'Good' or above. Our overall CQC ratings compared positively with the national average of 83% (CQC State of Care Report - October 2022).

	Good or Outstanding		Requires Improvement		Total Overall	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Residential Care	6	7%	6	7%	12	14%
Domiciliary/Extra Care and Supported Living	71	83%	3	3%	74	86%
<b>Total</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>100%</b>

The Quality Team is working very hard to support our Registered Managers to ensure that all services currently rated as 'Requires Improvement' will achieve 'Good' at their next inspection. During the year, we have regular national briefing meetings for Registered Managers and we held two well attended virtual Registered Managers conferences. We have meetings with our national CQC officer as part of the CQC Market Oversight Scheme for large providers of social care, ensuring that we have access to emerging CQC inspection themes and intelligence.

### Telford and Shropshire Services

Our supported living services in Telford and Shropshire were inspected in November 2022 and received an overall rating of 'Good,' an improvement on the previous rating of 'Requires Improvement.' Extracts from the report are below:

"People were supported by staff who knew them well and understood how to meet their needs safely. One relative told us, "I couldn't get any better staff coming to look after my relative. They are definitely safe. They know them well."

“The service was consistently managed and well-led. Leaders and the culture they created promoted high-quality, person-centred care.”

“The registered manager promoted a positive culture at the service which was disseminated to staff. One staff member told us, “Everyone is really positive, I really enjoy this job, I couldn't imagine a better job than this.”

### **Leicester Services**

The supported living services in Leicester were inspected in December 2022 and received an overall rating of ‘Good’. Some feedback from the report:

“People received individual care, their independence was promoted, and goals and aspirations were supported. People were supported to have maximum choice and control of their lives and staff supported them in the least restrictive way possible and in their best interests; the policies and systems in the service supported this practice.”

“There was a shared commitment to the culture and values of the service. Staff showed a clear understanding and commitment in providing continued high-quality care that was person-centred. From observations and feedback received, people had developed positive relationships with staff. A relative said, “I know that my relative is out and about now there are no COVID-19 restrictions, they get supported to go to college, shops, visits in the community. I'm very happy with the placement and it gives me peace of mind as I can't care for my relative.”

“Systems and processes were in place to continually assess, monitor and review quality and safety. A relative said, “I get invited to reviews, and to attend health appointments and yes, I'm asked to complete surveys - asking me for feedback periodically, confirmed this. I have excellent communication.”

### **Northampton Services**

Our Northampton Supported Living services were inspected in November 2022. Overall, they received a rating of ‘Good’. Comments from the inspection are below:

“People had the opportunity to try new experiences, develop new skills and gain independence. Staff supported people to pursue educational and leisure interests. One person said, “I like going to college, I enjoy watching films, listening to music, dancing and playing golf. This person showed us their room which they had decorated with their favourite sparkly wallpaper.”

“People were supported to understand their rights and explore meaningful relationships. A relative told us how the service had supported their family member to remain living with a lifelong friend and how important this was to both people to stay together.”

A relative said, “The staff are absolutely brilliant, they deserve to get praise, nothing is ever too much.” Staff spoke very highly of the registered manager and the management team. They told us they felt fully supported by the registered manager, team leaders and their peers. One staff member said, “I believe [the registered manager] is the best manager I have ever had, they are a fantastic role model, they are extremely passionate about the care of the people we support. I have even nominated [the registered manager] for an award.”

### **Chorley Services**

The Chorley Supported Living services received a ‘Good’ rating in their inspection in November 2022. The inspector commented on the service as follows:

“The provider and registered manager had a clear vision for the direction of the service which demonstrated a desire for people to achieve the best outcomes possible. We observed the registered manager had sent people cards to share their ‘what I want to achieve outcomes’. The registered manager told us, “Once we find out people's hopes and dreams, we can find out how we deliver their dreams and which staff member they want to support them.””

“Staff had a good understanding of safeguarding. They understood their responsibilities for keeping people safe and the processes for reporting any concerns.”

We found the service was working within the principles of the MCA and if needed, appropriate legal authorisations were in place for the provider to deprive a person of their liberty. When people lacked capacity to make specific decisions we found the service was following the best interests principle. One staff member commented, "We've got to let [people they supported] make their own choices. I'm all for promoting independence and skills."

### **Station View Extra Care Service, Barrow**

Station View was inspected in September 2022. This was their first inspection with CQC and the service received a 'Good' rating. Some extracts from the inspection report:

"Staff were well trained and skilled at supporting people. Everyone told us the staff had the skills and experience to provide good care. One person told us, "The staff are very skilled; they know what they are doing."

"Relatives told us the staff were proactive in identifying if a person was unwell and supporting them to seek medical attention. One relative told us, "The staff are really good, they notice if [relative] isn't feeling well. They always support her to get the doctor or district nurse; it gives us peace of mind knowing they are there." "The service had a very good reputation in the community, and everyone told us they would recommend it. One person told us, "It is absolutely wonderful. Brilliant. I love the place." A relative told us, "I would definitely recommend it, it is a wonderful service."

### **Closed and Open Cultures Campaign**

During 2021, the CQC became very concerned about their findings of closed cultures in regulated settings, particularly in services for people with mental health needs, learning disability and autism. In these services, people are more likely to be at risk of deliberate or unintentional harm. The CQC note that this risk has been further exacerbated during the pandemic by more services becoming closed environments due to a lack of visitors, and from the potential impacts of staffing and management pressures. The CQC shared learning from a sample of 29 inspections where they found evidence of closed cultures with the main themes being incidents of abuse and restrictive practice, issues with staff competence and training, a cover-up culture, lack of leadership and management oversight and poor quality reporting.

We have responded to this through our own campaign. In 2022 our Quality Manager and Customer Care Manager developed a comprehensive training pack 'Preventing Closed Cultures, Promoting Open Cultures' which included training videos in which scenarios were enacted by service users and staff. The training was initially arranged with all Senior Managers and is now being run on a monthly basis for all staff. The training also reinforces our Core Values, Safeguarding policies and reporting procedures, Code Red and Whistleblowing Policy, Code of Practice, Incident Reporting Policy and our Duty of Care. We have produced blogs and discussed the history of abusive practice (such as Whorlton Hall and Winterbourne) and common themes associated with closed cultures.

Over 350 staff have benefitted from this important training. Managers that have attended this training have committed to developing their own practice to prevent closed cultures by observing and listening more, being visible, maintaining an 'open door', identifying and addressing poor practice and sharing good practice. We are currently reviewing our training by having a stronger focus on recognising a closed culture and breaches of human rights, supported by a new policy on human rights.

In August 2023 we relaunched our Code Red campaign. This tells staff that it is never too late to speak up, no issues or concerns are too small and that is never the wrong time to raise concerns when someone is not getting the care and support they need or is being treated poorly. Code Red aims to promote an open culture of individual responsibility and escalation, which is followed by effective action.



We are introducing an internal 'We Care' Independent Visitor programme for service users who are identified as being particularly vulnerable as they may not be protected by scrutiny from relatives, advocates or external support. They will receive proactive visits to check on their environment, wellbeing and quality of life from an independent manager or member of the quality team. The Independent Visitors will report any concerns and will suggest areas for improvement. We hope that in time we may be able to recruit suitably qualified lay people to undertake these roles to provide added external assurance.



## Complex Care & Practice Development Hub

We have continued our commitment to support services to improve the quality of lives of the individuals we support through our commitment to the Restraint Reduction Network (RRN) and our Strategic Plan. Our Strategic Plan focusses upon supporting services to focus more heavily upon preventative work and strategies through enhanced staff training, use of Positive Behaviour Support and improving approaches to Person Centred Planning to support individuals to improve their quality of life and to achieve their aspirations.

### Reducing Restrictive Interventions

The table below shows the positive impact of the significant efforts and work of the Complex Care Team and staff that we train and support. As a member of the Restraint Reduction Network, we have pledged to reduce the use of restrictive interventions, and in particular, the use of physical intervention (PI) and we are delighted to note the progress we have made over a 6-year period.

Our trustees meet annually to review our progress in reducing the use of restraint in accordance with this pledge. In the last 12 months, there were 1,598 recorded complex care events. Of these, there were 35 occasions during which some form of physical intervention was used, with the remaining 96.9% events being managed by proactive strategies. There are now just 10 service users who have some form of physical intervention as part of their agreed care plan and eight of these people were supported with the use of PI over a 12-month period.



	May 2019	May 2020	May 2021	May 2022	May 2023
No of people with Physical Intervention in their Care Plan	27	17	15	13	10

### Positive Response Model Training and Good Governance

During 2020, we made a commitment with Positive Response organisation to use their model of restrictive intervention training that is based within a framework that prioritises the use of proactive strategies to manage behaviours of concern. We chose the Positive Response model due to their excellent credentials and because they are led by Dr David Allen, a well-respected figure in the field of Complex Care. Positive Response is committed to providing a high level of governance over how we deliver the training to our staff and use the agreed restrictive interventions. All our training is delivered in the context of individual needs and supports effective application from theory to practice due to the involvement our practitioners have in supporting these services.

### Person-Centred Planning Campaign

We continue to campaign to improve approaches to Person-Centred Planning using support from our Person-Centred Planning Lead. We have also embarked on a programme to enable our managers and staff to better describe the positive outcomes attained in relation to service user goals and to create visually appealing records of achievement. We are recruiting other members of the team to focus on wider support for practice development across all services. Our aim is to create communities of practice to engage and share experience, skills and knowledge within the organisation.

### **Achieving Positive Outcomes**

We have many great examples of individuals with complex needs benefitting from reduced restrictions and achieving positive outcomes.

For example, Isabel (not her real name) lived in her own property in the North East within a service supporting 13 other tenants. It was identified that she was not coping with the shared living environment and was highly distressed for many hours a day. This impacted on her, her mum, her co-tenants and the staff team daily. We worked with the team, her multi-agency team and identified that she was in chronic pain and had not had her medication reviewed for some time. We identified strategies that would be helpful to her, advocated that she had a medication review and worked with her health team to arrange a best interests process in order to facilitate a knee operation that included supporting her to cooperate with essential after care. The operation was really positive for her and reduced her pain. She still gets upset but she is coping by sitting down to rest her legs, having 1:1 calm time and deep breathing, spending time with mum, feeling she is in control and making choices.

The care team now support her with a low stimulus approach and structured tasks that have clear steps and outcomes, such as baking a cake. Isabel was due to move on to a service with less communal space but she is currently doing so well that she may stay at the service as she now considers this her home. Her quality of life has improved, she goes every day and engages with a wide range of community activities.

She is now able to cope with spending time with others in the shared areas of the service and is able to enjoy other people’s company. We have removed the need for low level physical intervention from her positive behaviour support plan as the risks associated with her behaviour have greatly reduced.

### **Customer Care**

We remain committed to providing excellent customer care and we strive to be as accessible and responsive as possible to people who want to make a complaint or share positive feedback about our services. We received 206 complaints in 2022-23 compared with 248 in 2021-22, a reduction of 17%, with a mean number of complaints of 17 per month. This continues an established downward trend in the number of formal complaints received. This is very positive and is based on effective informal complaints handling by managers at a local level. Compliments increased by 35%, rising from 569 in 2021-22 to 773 in 2022-23, with a mean of 64 compliments per month.

<b>Month</b>	<b>Complaints Received</b>	<b>Compliments Received</b>
April 22	7	67
May 22	10	86
June 22	24	69
July 22	14	58
August 22	26	47
September 22	22	48
October 22	21	81
November 22	21	70
December 22	21	60
January 23	15	75
February 23	16	61
March 23	9	51
<b>Total for period</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>773</b>

During 2022-23, we received 10 complaints specifically related to our housing provision. Eight of these complaints were investigated and responded to within 10 working days and two within a further 10 days, Eight of these complaints were upheld. All KPIs for handling our housing complaints were met in accordance with our Housing Complaints Policy.

### **Examples of compliments received in 2022-23**

*“Had an amazing visit to The Laurels today, could have stayed all afternoon, it was like visiting my mam in her own home. When I arrived, she was getting her nails varnished by one of the amazing staff. She asked me if I had come for my nails too (she thought she was at the salon). While she enjoyed her nails, I was able to spend time with my uncle who was enjoying the sunshine through his bedroom window. Then my mam come to take me to her room to show me her new cushion, which she crocheted, and this was put together by my Sister-in-Law. After asking me the time, she shooed me off so she didn’t miss lunch.*

*I write this post to let people know the positives that can happen for older people. After a few awful years and sadly losing my dad, life’s thrown a curve ball and I have my mam back happier than I ever thought possible. I have no hesitation in recommending The Laurels to any of my friends whose older family members may be struggling.”* Facebook post from daughter of service user at **The Laurels Care Home in Carlisle**.

*“I just wanted to send you a quick update with my compliments for Aimee and Lauren at Foresters Fold. I have been involved with a number of service users for a few years now and can only comment on what a positive impact Aimee and Lauren are bringing to the service. Over the last few months, we have completed three reviews for service users and I really cannot fault them, their communication prior to and following the review made it a seamless process and their knowledge of the service users they support is impeccable. They have followed up on agreed actions that we discuss during the reviews, it is clear to see that person-centred approach is at the centre of their practice. They interact with the residents in a respectful, person-centred and dignified approach and it really was a pleasure to witness. They really are a credit to your service and merit the recognition they rightfully deserve!”* Compliment from Social Worker regarding staff at **Foresters Fold Supported Living Service in Dudley**.

*“I would like to express my appreciation for the carers currently based at Newlands, Vicky seems to be the lead carer and P’s key-worker. Vicky over the last few years has driven the change at Newlands with her ideas and constant attention to making things happen for the ladies, whether it is days out to the seaside, visits to parks/cinema, craft work to keep the ladies minds active, shopping sprees, party planning, all with the understanding that financing these activities is equally important. There is constant feedback from Vicky. The home (Newlands) is a happy place. On another front Vicky has paid attention to detail within the home at Newlands, making improvements with pictures of activities the ladies have undertaken, creating memories, it feels like a lovely place to live.”* Compliment from the relative of a service user at **Newlands Drive Supported Living Service in Doncaster**.

Feedback from Commissioners at Wigan Council regarding the **Wigan Wellbeing and Resilience Service** was really positive. The commissioners said that we were a ‘flagship service’ and that we had ‘hit a bar’ for other services to aim for. They commented on the rigorous audits, stats, and the throughput of cases for new starters and case closures, and they were impressed that we had so many connections in the borough. For example, the mental health team, adult social care, women’s refuge, and autism services just to name a few. We are doing weekly drop-ins, talking referrals straight from source, as well as the multiple streams that refer into the service which is 30 plus. It is amazing to get this feedback as we have been established in the borough for 8 years. We left the meeting on another high note, saying that they felt the work that we do and the reports that we provide were ‘flawless’. We were able to evidence that the team provide person-centred support, and that we holistically identify individual support needs and record accurate data focusing on the individuals aspirations, goals and achievements and a safe discharge from the service. They said the work we do is incredible and spoke of our smooth transition from referral to assessment, to allocated worker and then for people to be enabled to be as independent as possible.

## **Ensuring Safety and Business Continuity**

Our Health and Safety Team continues to support the safe provision of our supported housing and social care services through undertaking planned health and safety audits, providing up-to-date health and safety advice and liaising with statutory bodies including the fire service and environmental health. We have retained our CHAS accreditation (Contractors Health and Safety Accreditation Scheme), demonstrating compliance with nationally recognised standards in respect of health and safety.

During 2022-23, we reported 17 accidents to the HSE under RIDDOR, compared with 16 in the previous year. The most significant areas of safety concern were slips, trips and falls, violence at work and fire related incidents.

Over the past 12 months, fire safety has continued to be a major focus of our work. We continue to invest in fire safety improvement works and ensure our own properties comply with the Fire Safety Act 2021 and Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022. To support compliance with these regulations we have developed a new staff training package on how to inspect fire doors and redrafted our local fire policy for services to use. Additionally the Health and Safety Team have received specialist fire door training from the Fire Protection Association.

We make every effort to ensure that our properties are safe and we are pleased to report that in 2022-23 gas safety, and electrical installation inspections were carried out by the required date in 100% of our homes. In response to sector-wide concerns about the impact of mould and damp in rented housing following the tragic death of two-year old Awaab Ishak in Rochdale we have introduced a Damp and Mould Register to record all incidences of damp and mould in our properties and those of our partner landlords to ensure that effective action is taken and documented.

Since we re-tendered our insurance services in 2022, we have developed a strong relationship with our new main insurer, Travelers, supported by our broker Aon. Travelers have provided us with Claims Defensibility training for senior staff and 41 managers have completed this excellent training. As part of their package Travelers provide our staff with free rehabilitation services, including physiotherapy, following any work-related injuries. We have referred 18 staff to this service and 16 staff have taken up this offer.

Business Continuity Plans and robust 24-hour management systems are in place and are regularly evaluated to ensure that we can maintain continuous service delivery in the event of unexpected events and emergencies, including further Covid-19 outbreaks. We have also developed a system of initial health and safety inspections for new services and contracts to ensure that the environment is suitable and safe for our staff to deliver services from. The outcomes of these inspections are reviewed by our Executive Team and our Social Care Governance meetings on a monthly basis.

The Annual Staff Health and Safety Survey was carried out in December 2022. This generated 143 staff responses. Overall, the feedback from the survey demonstrated high levels of health and safety awareness and understanding, and a pleasing level of confidence in the measures put in place to maintain health and safety within Creative Support. There were two areas where staff identified concerns. The first of these was the process of completing a driver check in order to drive a company vehicle; we have moved this process online to make it easier for all staff to access as a result of the survey. The second concern related to maintenance concerns that are the responsibility of external landlords. Our Health and Safety Manager has successfully supported our staff to escalate safety concerns with other landlords.

## **Membership and Links with Other Organisations**

We are members of many national organisations and networks, including ACEVO, BILD, Homeless Link, Housing and Support Alliance, Mind, Mencap, NCVO, NAPA, Nacro, National Autistic Society, Sitra, Values into Actions, VODG and many others. We greatly value our membership of the National Housing Federation, which represents our sector so well at all levels of local, and central government.

We have maintained formal partnerships with a number of voluntary organisations with which we deliver services on an innovative consortia basis. These included Birmingham MIND, Catch 22 and Imagine Independence. In Durham, we work with a number of voluntary mental health providers in a collaborative mental health alliance that offers a coordinated and joined up service model across the County.

## **A National Provider of Quality Support Services and Supported Housing**

We are pleased to be working with a very wide range of local authorities including Borough Councils, City Councils and County Councils and we are now experienced in operating in a wide range of environments, ranging from inner cities to rural areas. During 2022-23, Creative Support provided or was developing new services in 66 local authorities across England:

Bedford Council	Manchester City Council
Birmingham Council	Middlesbrough City Council
Blackburn with Darwen	Newcastle City Council
Blackpool Council	North East Lincolnshire County Council
Bolton MBC	Northamptonshire County Council
Bradford City Council	North Lincolnshire County Council
Bury MBC	North Tyneside MBC
Calderdale MBC	North Yorkshire Council
Central Bedfordshire Council	Reading Borough Council
Cheshire East Council	Redcar with Cleveland MBC
Cumbria County Council	Rochdale MBC
Derby City Council	St Helens MBC
Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council	Salford City Council
Dudley MBC	Sandwell Metropolitan BC
Durham County Council	Sheffield City Council
Essex County Council	Shropshire County Council
Gateshead MBC	Slough Borough Council
Halton Borough Council	South Tyneside MBC
Hartlepool Council	Staffordshire County Council
Hull City Council	Stockport MBC
Kirklees Council	Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
Knowsley Council	Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Lancashire County Council	Sunderland City Council
Leeds City Council	Tameside MBC
Leicester City Council	Telford & Wrekin Council
Leicestershire County Council	Thurrock Council
Liverpool City Council	Trafford Council
London Borough of Barnet	Wakefield Council
London Borough of Brent	Warrington Borough Council
London Borough of Bromley	Warwickshire County Council
London Borough of Camden	Wigan Borough Council
London Borough of Tower Hamlets	Wolverhampton City Council
London Borough of Wandsworth	Worcestershire County Council

In addition to services in the above authorities, Creative Support is a member of commissioning frameworks to provide services commissioned by Cheshire West, Cambridgeshire County Council, Gloucestershire County Council, Hertfordshire and the London Boroughs of Barking & Dagenham, Enfield, Lewisham and Waltham Forest.

Over the last 12 months, Creative Support has continued to enjoy a growing national profile and geographical reach as well as an ambition for providing high quality person-centred services. We are recognised as being one of the largest national not-for-profit providers of prevention and social care services operating in England.

Our current strategy is to build on our existing portfolio of supported housing, social care services and community partnerships. We are committed to the co-production model of service delivery in which service users are actively empowered as citizens in their community and as co-producers of their support. We will continue to develop new services and housing options where we believe we can offer value for money and work in partnership to enable service users to make positive changes in their lives.



## **A Message from the Chair**

I am pleased to be able to reflect on all that we accomplished in 2022-23. We celebrated Creative Support's 30<sup>th</sup> birthday in style last summer with six inclusive parties in beautiful venues. It was a wonderful opportunity to meet with staff and services users from across the country and we created some wonderful memories.

We said goodbye to Kashif Ali who stepped down from the Board after completing nine years as a trustee and we thank him for his loyal service. Last year we welcomed two new trustees to the Board with valuable skills and experience.

I would like to thank all the trustees and acknowledge their important work, which has included visits to services and meetings with staff and the people we support. Particular thanks go to the Chairs of the sub-committees for all the good work they do in leading their committees and taking forward our priorities. I am pleased that this year we recruited a new trustee who has agreed to take on the role of 'Vice Chair'. We will be reviewing the remit of all of our committees in the coming year to ensure there is effective oversight and continuous improvement in all key areas of our work.

We have worked with the Executive Team to strengthen our governance and we will be building on this going forward. Last year we met for an Away Day with our senior team at our Creative Together Centre and reviewed our mission and purpose. We are holding a further Strategy Day in November 2023 and we will be setting the strategic direction for the future.

Our CQC quality ratings have remained favourable at around 90% 'Good' or above but we are striving to improve the ratings for those services that are rated as 'Needs Improvement' and we have supported our registered managers and senior staff with a clear focus on those services and other services that have experienced quality challenges.

I am personally pleased that we have reduced our use of restrictive practices in line with our restraint reduction pledge and our support for the Restraint Reduction Network. Work to prevent closed cultures and promote open cultures has gathered momentum and we welcome the introduction of our new 'We Care' Independent Visitor role to provide added assurance of the wellbeing and quality of life of people we support.

There has been a big focus recently on creating community connections after the pandemic and we gave out £19,000 in grants to enable people to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee and the King's Coronation with co-produced festivities. Our publications and on-line postings have showcased so many fantastic events and we have increased our social media presence.

We heard many powerful stories of service user achievements and of people growing in confidence and independence and we were pleased to acknowledge these with our 'Creative Stars' awards, judged by service user panels. The Creative Voices event at the wonderful Creative Space Centre in June 2023 was attended by over 30 service users and staff from across the country and we are planning other ways to strengthen co-production and give a voice to our tenants and the people we support.

Working in social care takes commitment, energy and kindness and I would like to thank all our staff for their compassionate care and imaginative support. I am pleased that we are investing in initiatives that support employee wellbeing and resilience at a time of acute cost of living and other pressures. We are proud of those staff who received external recognition in regional and national care awards and we launched our own 'We Care' awards to reward staff who exemplify our values and have gone the extra mile to enable the people we support to live their best lives.

We ended the year with strong financial results, which have enabled us to repay part of our loans ahead of schedule, ensuring a firmer financial footing for the future. We know that in the year ahead we will need to stay focused in the face of ongoing recruitment and retention challenges and the growing pressure on central and local government finances.

Thank you to all for your commitment to Creative Support and for your support for our work and person-centred values.

Joolz Casey  
**Chair of the Board of Trustees, September 2023**

## Statement of the Board's Responsibilities in Respect of the Accounts

The Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 and registered social housing legislation require the Board to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Society and of the Income and Expenditure for the period of account. Under these regulations, the Board has elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with UK accounting standards including FRS102, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland.

In preparing these financial statements, the Board is required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently,
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent,
- State whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements, and
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Society will continue in business.

The Board is responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Society and enable it to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Co-operative and Community Benefit Society Act 2014, the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 and the Accounting Direction for Private Registered Providers of Social Housing 2022. It has general responsibility for taking reasonable steps to safeguard the assets of the Society and to prevent and detect fraud and other irregularities.

The Board is responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the Society's website. Legislation in the UK governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

## Members of the Board of Trustees

The following served as members of the Board of Trustees during the year and up to the date of this report:

Kashif Ali	Resigned 22 September 2022
Sharon Burns	Resigned 22 June 2023
Paul Calland	
Joolz Casey	
Peter Gibbs	Resigned 22 September 2022
Fiona King	
Pravin Majithia	Appointed 25 November 2021 Resigned 28 July 2022
Rachel Corbelli	
Helen O'Sullivan	Appointed 26 May 2022
Claire Judkins	Appointed 26 May 2022
Chrissie Cooke	Appointed 25 May 2023

## **Independent Auditor's Report to the members of Creative Support Limited**

### **Opinion**

We have audited the financial statements of Creative Support Limited (the 'Society') for the year ended 31 March 2023 which comprise the Statement of Comprehensive Income, the Statement of Financial Position, the Statement of Changes in Reserves, the Statement of Cash Flows and the notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies in note 1. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the Society's affairs as at 31 March 2023 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014, the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 and the Accounting Direction for Private Registered Providers of Social Housing 2022.

### **Basis for opinion**

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the Society in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

### **Conclusions relating to going concern**

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Board's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the Society's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Board with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

### **Other information**

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The Board is responsible for the other information. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

**Matters on which we are required to report by exception**

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 or the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the Society has not maintained a satisfactory system of control over transactions; or
- the Society has not kept proper accounting records; or
- the Society's financial statements are not in agreement with books of account; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

**Responsibilities of the Board**

As explained more fully in the Statement of the Board's responsibilities in respect of the accounts set out on page 45, the Board is responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Board determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Board is responsible for assessing the Society's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Board either intends to liquidate the Society or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

**Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements**

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's web-site at [www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities](http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities). This description forms part of our auditor's report.

**Extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud**

We identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, and then design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, including obtaining audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

In identifying and addressing risks of material misstatement in respect of irregularities, including fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations, our procedures included the following:

- We obtained an understanding of laws, regulations and guidance that affect the Society, focusing on those that had a direct effect on the financial statements or that had a fundamental effect on its operations. Key laws, regulations and guidance that we identified included the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014, the NHF Code of Governance, the Regulatory Standards, the Statement of Recommended Practice for registered housing providers: Housing SORP 2018, the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008, the Accounting Direction for Private Registered Providers of Social Housing 2022, tax legislation, health and safety legislation, and employment legislation.
- We enquired of the Board and reviewed correspondence and Board meeting minutes for evidence of non-compliance with relevant laws and regulations. We also reviewed controls the Board have in place, where necessary, to ensure compliance.
- We gained an understanding of the controls that the Board have in place to prevent and detect fraud. We enquired of the Board about any incidences of fraud that had taken place during the accounting period.
- The risk of fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations was discussed within the audit team and tests were planned and performed to address these risks. We identified the potential for fraud in the following areas: laws related to the provision of social housing recognising the regulated nature of the Society's activities.



- We reviewed financial statements disclosures and supporting documentation to assess compliance with relevant laws and regulations discussed above.
- We enquired of the Board about actual and potential litigation and claims.
- We performed analytical procedures to identify any unusual or unexpected relationships that might indicate risks of material misstatement due to fraud.
- In addressing the risk of fraud due to management override of internal controls we tested the appropriateness of journal entries and assessed whether the judgements made in making accounting estimates were indicative of a potential bias.

Due to the inherent limitations of an audit, there is an unavoidable risk that we may not have detected some material misstatements in the financial statements, even though we have properly planned and performed our audit in accordance with auditing standards. For example, as with any audit, there remained a higher risk of non-detection of irregularities, as these may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal controls. We are not responsible for preventing fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations and cannot be expected to detect all fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations.

**Use of our report**

This report is made solely to the Society's members as a body, in accordance with section 87 of the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 and Section 128 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Society's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Society and the Society's members as a body for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

*Beever and Struthers*

**Beever and Struthers**  
Statutory Auditor  
One Express  
1 George Leigh Street  
Manchester  
M4 5DL

Date: 27/9/23



**CREATIVE SUPPORT LIMITED**  
**Statement of Comprehensive Income**



	Note	Year ended 31 Mar 23	Year ended 31 Mar 22
		£'000	£'000
Turnover	2	141,252	137,308
Operating expenditure		(132,882)	(126,052)
Gain on disposal of housing property	5	59	241
<b>Operating surplus</b>		<b>8,429</b>	11,497
Interest receivable		62	4
Interest payable and financing costs	6	(558)	(492)
<b>Surplus for the year</b>	7	<b>7,933</b>	11,009
Actuarial gains on defined benefit pension schemes	16	1,731	1,119
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>		<b>9,664</b>	12,128

**The results relate wholly to continuing activities and the notes on pages 53 to 73 form an integral part of these accounts.**

**CREATIVE SUPPORT LIMITED**  
Statement of Financial Position



		At 31 Mar 23	At 31 Mar 22
	Note	Society £'000	Society £'000
<b>Fixed assets</b>			
Intangible assets and goodwill	10	120	224
Tangible fixed assets	11	<u>75,836</u>	<u>75,529</u>
		75,956	75,753
<b>Current assets</b>			
Trade and other debtors	12	20,532	17,769
Cash and cash equivalents	13	<u>25,369</u>	<u>25,513</u>
		45,901	43,282
<b>Less: Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</b>	14	<u>(15,434)</u>	<u>(16,955)</u>
<b>Net current assets</b>		<u>30,467</u>	<u>26,327</u>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>			
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	15	(10,459)	(14,239)
<b>Provisions for liabilities and charges</b>			
	Pensions -DB liability	16	(31)
	Other provisions	18	(163)
		(1,595)	(1,595)
		(140)	(140)
<b>Total net assets</b>		<u>95,770</u>	<u>86,106</u>
<b>Reserves</b>			
Non-equity share capital	20	-	-
Revenue reserve		92,879	84,946
Pension reserve		<u>2,151</u>	<u>420</u>
		95,030	85,366
Restricted reserve		7	7
Revaluation reserve		733	733
<b>Total reserves</b>		<u>95,770</u>	<u>86,106</u>

The financial statements on pages 49 to 73 were approved and authorised for issue by the Board on 22 September 2023 and were signed on its behalf by:

**Board Member:**  
Helen O'Sullivan

**Board Member:**  
Fiona King

**Company Secretary:**  
Anna Lunts

The notes on pages 53 to 73 form an integral part of these accounts

**CREATIVE SUPPORT LIMITED**  
**Statement of Changes in Reserves**



	Revenue reserve	Restricted reserve	Revaluation Reserve	Pensions reserve	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Balance at 31 March 2021</b>	73,937	7	733	(699)	<b>73,978</b>
Surplus from Statement of Comprehensive Income	11,009	-	-	-	<b>11,009</b>
<b>Other Comprehensive Income for the year:</b>					
Actuarial gains on defined benefit pension schemes	-	-	-	1,119	<b>1,119</b>
<b>Balance at 31 March 2022</b>	84,946	7	733	420	86,106
Surplus from Statement of Comprehensive Income	7,933	-	-	-	<b>7,933</b>
<b>Other Comprehensive Income for the year:</b>					
Actuarial gains on defined benefit pension schemes	-	-	-	1,731	<b>1,731</b>
<b>Balance at 31 March 2023</b>	<u>92,879</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>733</u>	<u>2,151</u>	<u>95,770</u>

The notes on pages 53 to 73 form an integral part of these accounts.

	Note	Year ended 31 Mar 23 £'000	Year ended 31 Mar 22 £'000
<b>Net cash generated from operating activities</b>	Note (a)	<b>7,146</b>	15,894
<b>Cash flow from investing activities</b>			
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(3,391)	(2,251)
Proceeds from sale of tangible fixed assets		420	823
Grants received (repaid)		-	634
Interest received		62	4
		<u>(2,909)</u>	<u>(790)</u>
<b>Cash flow from financing activities</b>			
Interest paid		(548)	(445)
Repayment of borrowings		(3,833)	(5,333)
		<u>(4,381)</u>	<u>(5,778)</u>
<b>Net change in cash and cash equivalents</b>		<b>(144)</b>	9,326
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of the year</b>		<b>25,513</b>	16,187
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at end of the year</b>		<u><b>25,369</b></u>	<u>25,513</u>
		<u><u>25,369</u></u>	<u><u>25,513</u></u>
<b>Note (a)</b>		<b>Year ended 31 Mar 23 £'000</b>	<b>Year ended 31 Mar 22 £'000</b>
<b>Cash flow from operating activities</b>			
Surplus for the year		7,933	11,009
<b>Adjustments for non-cash items:</b>			
Depreciation and impairment of tangible fixed assets		2,723	1,970
Amortisation of intangible assets		104	104
Pension costs less contributions payable		157	210
(Increase)/decrease in trade and other debtors		(2,763)	974
(Decrease)/increase in trade and other creditors		(1,434)	1,407
(Decrease)/increase in provisions		23	-
Gain on disposal of tangible fixed assets		(59)	(241)
<b>Adjustments for investing or financing activities:</b>			
Government grants utilised in the year		(34)	(27)
Interest payable		558	492
Interest receivable		(62)	(4)
<b>Net cash generated from operating activities</b>		<u><b>7,146</b></u>	<u>15,894</u>
		<u><u>7,146</u></u>	<u><u>15,894</u></u>

The notes on pages 53 to 73 form an integral part of these accounts.

## Legal Status

Creative Support Limited is incorporated in England under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 and is registered with the Regulator of Social Housing as a Private Registered Provider of Social Housing. The registered office is Wellington House, 131 Wellington Road, Stockport, SK1 3TS.

## 1. Principal Accounting Policies

### Basis of Accounting

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with applicable United Kingdom Accounting Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (UK GAAP) and the Statement of Recommended Practice for registered housing providers: Housing SORP 2018.

The financial statements comply with the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014, the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 and the Accounting Direction for Private Registered Providers of Social Housing 2022. The accounts are prepared on the historical cost basis of accounting and are presented in sterling £'000 for the year ended 31 March 2023.

The Society elected to measure certain housing properties held for letting at fair value at the date of transition to FRS 102 and use the fair value as deemed cost.

### Going concern

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis which assumes an ability to continue operating for the foreseeable future. The Society's activities, its current financial position and factors likely to impact on its future development and prospects are set out within the Trustees Report. The Society has in place well-structured debt facilities, cash reserves, and generates positive cash from operations. These elements combine to provide sufficient resources to continue delivering high quality accommodation and care services whilst maintaining and investing in the Society's assets.

The Trustees have determined that there is currently no material uncertainty that casts doubt on the Society's ability to continue as a going concern. As set out in greater detail within the Trustees Report, Management and Trustees do not consider Covid-19 will have a significant impact on the Society's finances in the coming year due to a combination of factors including the high take up of the Covid-19 vaccination by staff and maintenance of an adequate reserve of PPE.

We remain aware of the global economic challenges faced due to inflation and the cost of living crisis, plus the tight labour market and rising wage costs. We will monitor the financial performance of our contracts closely, and work with funders to sustain these contracts. We have already begun the process of securing a number of fixed price energy contracts, which when combined with government initiatives will mitigate the increase in energy costs. Taking these factors into account, the Board has a reasonable expectation that the Society has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future, being a period of at least twelve months after the date on which the report and financial statements are signed. For this reason, it continues to adopt the going concern basis in the financial statements.

The Society had a loan facility repayable as at 31 March 2023 with one high street lender of £8.833 million. The revolving credit facility was terminated at 31 March 2023, as it was assessed as no longer required, and had not been utilised throughout the financial year. A combination of scheduled and additional capital repayments during the 2022-2023 financial year have resulted in an overall reduction in debt of £3.833 million. The term of the loan is 5 years from July 2020 and the Society's plans and forecasts demonstrate that it can comply with all contractual and regulatory expectations, whilst servicing its debt facilities and continuing to comply with lender's covenants.

On this basis, the Board has a reasonable expectation that the Society has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future, being a period of at least twelve months after the date on which the report and financial statements are signed. For this reason, it continues to adopt the going concern basis in the financial statements.



### Critical accounting judgements and key sources of estimation and uncertainty

The preparation of the financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts reported for assets and liabilities as at the balance sheet date and the amounts reported for revenues and expenses during the year. However, the nature of estimation means that actual outcomes could differ from those estimates. The following judgements (apart from those involving estimates) have had the most significant effect on amounts recognised in the financial statements:-

#### 1. Principal Accounting Policies (continued)

- a. **Categorisation of housing properties**  
The Society has undertaken a detailed review of the intended use of all housing properties. In determining the intended use, the Society has considered if the asset is held for social benefit or to earn commercial rentals.

- b. **Impairment.**  
An impairment review was undertaken at the year-end, due to the significant economic challenges across the UK, being considered a trigger event, and following the assessment of impairment, no significant impairment losses were identified in the reporting period as all impairment tests as detailed below demonstrated that asset values exceeded net book values of each property.  
Reviews for impairment of housing properties are carried out when a trigger has occurred and any impairment loss in a cash generating unit is recognised by a charge to the Statement of Comprehensive Income. Impairment is recognised where the carrying value of a cash generating unit exceeds the higher of its net realisable value or its value in use. A cash generating unit is normally a group of properties at scheme level whose cash income can be separately identified. The Society has identified a cash generating unit for impairment assessment purposes at a property scheme level.

Following a trigger for impairment, the Society perform impairment tests based on fair value less costs to sell or a value in use calculation. The fair value less costs to sell calculation is based on available data from sales transactions in an arm's length transaction on similar cash generating units (properties) or observable market prices less incremental costs for disposing of the properties. The value in use calculation is based on either a depreciated replacement cost or a discounted cash flow model. The depreciated replacement cost is based on available data of the cost of constructing or acquiring replacement properties to provide the same level of service potential to the Society as the existing property. The cash flows are derived from the business plan for the next 30 years and do not include restructuring activities that the Society is not yet permitted to or significant future investments that will enhance the asset's performance of the cash generating unit being tested. The recoverable amount is most sensitive to the discount rate used for the discounted cash flow model as well as the expected future cash flows and the growth rate used for extrapolation purposes.

- c. **Provisions for doubtful debts**  
**Tenancy arrears**  
The provision is assessed on a per tenancy basis, based on the age of the debt, with prudent provision rates between 10% and 100% which take into account historic factors plus specific factors prevailing at the Balance Sheet date.

**Other debtors**

Other debtors are assessed by reference to post year end receipts and other known issues relating to specific debtors, from which a review of individual accounts is undertaken to consider whether a specific provision is required.

- d. **Pension Asset**  
FRS 102 requires that defined benefit plan surpluses are recognised only to the extent that they are recoverable either through reduced contributions in the future or through refunds from the plan. The accounting valuations of The Lancashire County Pension Fund, West Yorkshire Pension Fund and Royal County of Berkshire Pension Fund (SBC – Floating Support) identified a total accounting surplus of £4.624M.

The Society has judged that there is insufficient evidence to support the recoverability of the plans' surpluses and therefore has not recognised the pension asset position, restricting the surpluses to £nil, and reducing actuarial gains by the same amount.

Other key sources of estimation and assumptions:

- a. **Tangible fixed assets.** Tangible fixed assets are depreciated over their useful lives taking into account residual values, where appropriate. The actual lives of the assets and residual values are assessed annually and may vary depending on a number of factors. In re-assessing asset lives, factors such as technological innovation, product life cycles and maintenance programmes are taken into account. Residual value assessments consider issues such as future market conditions, the remaining life of the asset and projected disposal values.

#### **Goodwill**

Goodwill arising on an acquisition of a subsidiary undertaking is the difference between the fair value of the consideration paid and the fair value of the assets and liabilities acquired. Subsequently goodwill is carried at cost less accumulated amortisation and impairment losses.

Amortisation is calculated on the straight-line basis over the estimated useful life. The Society establishes a reliable estimate of the useful life of goodwill arising on business combinations based on a variety of factors such as the expected use of the acquired business, the expected useful life of the cash generating units to which the goodwill is attributed, any legal, regulatory or contractual provisions that can limit useful life and assumptions that market participants would consider in respect of similar businesses. Goodwill is written off over a period of 10 years.

#### **Turnover and revenue recognition**

Turnover represents amounts due for the provision of care and support, rental income receivable, amortised capital grant, revenue grants, and other income and are recognised in relation to the period when the goods or services have been supplied.

Rental income is recognised when the property is available for let, net of voids. Contract income for support services and Supporting People Income is recognised under the contractual arrangements.

#### **Service charges**

Service charge income and costs are recognised on an accruals basis. The Society operates fixed service charges on a scheme by scheme basis in full consultation with residents.

Where periodic expenditure is required a provision may be built up over the years, in consultation with the residents; until these costs are incurred this liability is held in the Statement of Financial Position within long term creditors

#### **Loan interest costs**

Loan interest costs are calculated using the effective interest method of the difference between the loan amount at initial recognition and amount of maturity of the related loan.

#### **Loan finance issue costs**

These are amortised over the life of the related loan. Loans are stated in the Statement of Financial Position at the amount of the net proceeds after issue, plus increases to account for any subsequent amounts amortised.

#### **Taxation**

The society is incorporated with charitable status under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Regulations 1969. No charge to Corporation Tax arises as a result of the society's activities.

#### **Operating leases**

Costs in respect of operating leases are charged to the Statement of Comprehensive Income on a straight line basis over the term of the lease.

#### **Valuation of investments**

Investments in subsidiaries are measured at cost less accumulated impairment

#### **Tangible fixed assets and depreciation**

Housing properties

Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost, less accumulated depreciation.

Certain housing properties held for letting are included at deemed cost following election to use fair value on transition for those assets.

Housing properties under construction are stated at cost and are not depreciated. These are reclassified as housing properties on practical completion of construction.  
Freehold land is not depreciated.

**1. Principal Accounting Policies (continued)**

Where a housing property comprises two or more major components with substantially different useful economic lives (UELs), each component is accounted for separately and depreciated over its individual UEL. Expenditure relating to subsequent replacement or renewal of components is capitalised as incurred.

The Society depreciates freehold housing properties by component on a straight-line basis over the estimated UELs of the component categories.

UELs for identified components are as follows:

	Years
Kitchens	10
Bathroom	15
Roofs	50
Heating	20
Windows	30
Structure	100

The Society depreciates housing properties held on long term leases in the same manner as freehold properties, except where the unexpired lease term is shorter than the longest component life envisaged, in which case the unexpired term of the lease is adopted as the useful economic life of the relevant component category.

Depreciation is charged on other tangible fixed assets on a straight-line basis over the expected economic useful lives which are as follows:

	Years
Motor vehicles	5
Furniture and equipment	5
Short leasehold improvements	5

**Short-term debtors and creditors**

Debtors and creditors with no stated interest rate and receivable or payable within one year are recorded at transaction price. Any losses arising from impairment are recognised in the income statement in other operating expenses.

**Non-government grants**

Grants received from non-government sources are recognised under the performance model. If there are no specific performance requirements the grants are recognised when received or receivable. Where grant is received with specific performance requirements it is recognised as a liability until the conditions are met and then it is recognised as Turnover.

**Social Housing and other government grants (SHG)**

Where developments have been financed wholly or partly by social housing and other grants, the amount of the grant received has been included as deferred income and recognised in Turnover over the estimated useful life of the associated asset structure (not land), under the accruals model. SHG received for items of cost written off in the Statement of Comprehensive Income Account is included as part of Turnover.

**1. Principal Accounting Policies (continued)**

SHG must be recycled by the Society under certain conditions, if a property is sold, or if another relevant event takes place. In these cases, the SHG can be used for projects approved by the Homes England. However, SHG may have to be repaid if certain conditions are not met. If grant is not required to be recycled or repaid, any unamortised grant is recognised as Turnover. In certain circumstances, SHG may be repayable, and, in that event, is a subordinated unsecured repayable debt.

**Holiday pay accrual**

A liability is recognised to the extent of any unused holiday pay entitlement which has accrued at the balance sheet date and carried forward to future periods. This is measured at the undiscounted salary cost of the future holiday entitlement so accrued at the balance sheet date.

**Impairment of Financial Assets**

Financial assets are assessed at each reporting date to determine whether there is any objective evidence that a financial asset or group of financial assets is impaired. If there is objective evidence of impairment, an impairment loss is recognised in profit or loss immediately.

The following financial instruments are assessed individually for impairment:

- (a) All equity instruments regardless of significance; and
- (b) Other financial assets that are individually significant.

Other financial instruments are assessed for impairment either individually or grouped on the basis of similar credit risk characteristics.

An impairment loss is measured as follows on the following instruments measured at cost or amortised cost:

- (a) For an instrument measured at amortised cost, the impairment loss is the difference between the asset's carrying amount and the present value of the estimated future cash flows discounted at the asset's original effective interest rate.
- (b) For an instrument measured at cost less impairment, the impairment loss is the difference between the asset's carrying amount and the best estimate of the amount that the entity would receive for the asset if it were to be sold at the reporting date.

If, in a subsequent period, the amount of an impairment loss decreases and the decrease can be related objectively to an event occurring after the impairment was recognised, the previously recognised impairment loss is reversed either directly or by adjusting an allowance account. The reversal cannot result in a carrying amount (net of any allowance account) which exceeds what the carrying amount would have been had the impairment not previously been recognised. The amount of the reversal is recognised in profit or loss immediately.

**Retirement benefits**

There are eight pension schemes, four of which are Local Government defined benefit pension schemes based on final pensionable salary, one is the NHS pension scheme also based on final pensionable pay, and one of which is a Society-wide auto enrolment scheme. Details of the schemes are set out in Note 16. Contributions from the Society and participating employees are paid into independently administered funds.

Employees joining the Society from 1 October 2013, who are eligible, are auto enrolled in the Company defined contribution scheme to which the Society contributes in line with statutory requirements for auto enrolment. The Society also operates 2 additional defined contribution schemes which are closed to new members.

The costs of the defined contribution pension schemes is charged to the Statement of Comprehensive Income in the year in which paid.

Payments into the NHS pension scheme are determined by the Department of Health and charged to the Statement of Comprehensive Income in the year in which paid.

Payments in relation to the four Local Government defined benefit pension schemes are made in accordance with triennial calculations by professionally qualified independent actuaries. All of the Society's defined benefit schemes arose following transfers in of staff under TUPE regulations and no members have eligibility to enter the schemes after the date of the TUPE transfer.

## 1. Principal Accounting Policies (continued)

As at 31 March 2023, the Directors have obtained FRS 102 valuations of assets and liabilities. Scheme assets are measured using market values. Scheme liabilities are measured using a projected unit method and discounted at the current rate of return on a high quality corporate bond of equivalent term and currency to the liability. The total pension scheme deficit on these Local Government Pension Schemes at 31 March 2023 is recognised in full in the financial statements. The movement in scheme deficit is split between operating charges, finance items and, in other comprehensive income, actuarial gains and losses.

The accounting liability for each scheme has been calculated by the Scheme Actuary based on a number of critical assumptions which are set out in detail in Note 16. These key assumptions include future salary increases, inflation rates, discount rates and mortality rates. Variations in any of the assumptions can have a significant impact on the value of the stated net accounting liability. The liability would increase if the discount rate decreases or if the inflation rate /life expectancy rates were higher. A corresponding reduction in the liability would result from a decrease in the discount rate or if there was a reduction in the inflation rate/ life expectancy rates.

The net accounting pension liability at 31 March 2023, included on the Balance Sheet within Provisions for Liabilities and Charges, is £31,000. The amount expensed to operating expenditure in the financial year was £236,000 inclusive of interest costs.

### Financial Instruments

Financial assets and financial liabilities are measured at transaction price initially, plus, in the case of a financial asset or financial liability not at fair value through profit or loss, transaction costs that are directly attributable to the acquisition or issue of the financial asset or financial liability.

At the end of each reporting period, financial instruments are measured as follows, without any deduction for transaction costs the entity may incur on sale or other disposal:

Debt instruments that meet the conditions in paragraph 11.8(b) of FRS 102 are measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, except where the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction. In this case the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest for a similar debt.

Financial instruments held by the Society are classified as follows:

- Financial assets such as cash, current asset investments and receivables are classified as loans and receivables and held at amortised cost using the effective interest method,
- Financial liabilities such as bonds and loans are held at amortised cost using the effective interest method,
- Loans to or from subsidiaries including those that are due on demand are held at amortised cost using the effective interest method,
- Commitments to receive or make a loan to another entity which meet the conditions above are held at cost less impairment.

Financial assets and financial liabilities at fair value are classified using the following fair value hierarchy:

- (a) The best evidence of fair value is a quoted price in an active market.
- (b) When quoted prices are unavailable, the price of a recent transaction for an identical asset, adjusted to reflect any circumstances specific to the sale, such as a distress sale, if appropriate.
- (c) Where there is no active market or recent transactions then a valuation technique is used to estimate what the transaction price would have been on the measurement date in an arm's length exchange motivated by normal business considerations.



**2 Turnover**

	Note	2023	2022
		Turnover	Turnover
		£'000	£'000
Social housing lettings	3	12,465	11,846
Other social housing activities			
Community Care		118,596	113,437
Prevention and wellbeing		7,942	7,797
Activities other than social housing			
Revenue grants		104	183
Coronavirus JRS		-	23
Donations		11	3
Other income including grants for Infection Control and testing, and Workforce Capacity Funding		2,134	4,019
<b>Total</b>		<b>141,252</b>	<b>137,308</b>

Revenue grants includes grants received from Skills for Care amounting to £99,000 (2022: £183,300).

**3 Income and Expenditure from Social Housing Lettings**

All income from social housing lettings arises in relation to supported housing and housing for older people.

	2023	2022
	£'000	£'000
<b>Income</b>		
Rent receivable net of identifiable service charges and voids	6,479	6,382
Service charge income	5,952	5,437
Amortised government grants	34	27
<b>Turnover from Social Housing Lettings</b>	<b>12,465</b>	<b>11,846</b>
Operating expenditure on Social Housing Lettings	11,368	9,831
<b>Operating Surplus on Social Housing Lettings</b>	<b>1,097</b>	<b>2,015</b>
<b>Void losses</b> (being rental income lost as a result of property not being let, although it is available for letting)	655	578

#### 4. Accommodation in Management

As at 31 March 2023, the Society had 1,202 units of supported housing under management (2022: 1,207) as set out below:-

	Owned		Managed/leased	
	Supported Housing - Other	Supported Housing - Older people	Supported Housing - Other	Supported Housing - Older people
At 1 April 2022	731	-	425	51
Additions	3	-	5	-
Disposals/decommissioned	(6)	-	(7)	-
At 31 March 2023	<b>728</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>423</b>	<b>51</b>

#### 5. Gains on disposals of housing properties

	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Proceeds of sales, net of selling expenses	413	772
Less: net book value on disposals	(354)	(531)
Net gain	<b>59</b>	<b>241</b>

#### 6. Interest and financing costs

	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
On loans repayable within five years	548	445
On loans wholly or partly repayable in more than five years	-	-
Defined benefit pension charge	10	47
	<b>558</b>	<b>492</b>

**7. Surplus on ordinary activities**

	<b>2023</b>	2022
	<b>£'000</b>	£'000
The operating surplus is stated after charging/(crediting):-		
Auditors remuneration (excluding VAT):		
Audit of the financial statements	<b>43</b>	41
Operating lease rentals:		
Land and buildings	<b>899</b>	902
Plant and machinery	<b>101</b>	98
Depreciation of social housing properties	<b>1,096</b>	1,075
Depreciation of other fixed assets	<b>742</b>	781
Rent losses from bad debts	<b>63</b>	13

**8. Employee information**

	<b>2023</b>	2022	<b>2023</b>	2022
	<b>Full time</b>	<b>Full time</b>	<b>No.</b>	No.
	<b>equivalents</b>	<b>equivalents</b>		
The average number of persons employed during the year expressed in full time equivalents (37.5 hours per week) and headcount was :-				
Senior Management	<b>84</b>	70	<b>86</b>	76
Housing, Support, and Care	<b>3,035</b>	3,114	<b>4,760</b>	4,729
Administration	<b>200</b>	203	<b>237</b>	236
	<b>3,319</b>	3,387	<b>5,083</b>	5,041
			<b>2023</b>	2022
			<b>£'000</b>	£'000
Staff costs (including directors' emoluments detailed in note 9)				
Wages and salaries			<b>90,685</b>	92,122
Social Security costs			<b>7,521</b>	7,083
Other pension costs			<b>1,917</b>	2,141
			<b>100,123</b>	101,346

Agency staff costs incurred by Creative Support amounting to £13,680 (2022: £7,566) are not included in the analysis above. These costs are incurred to provide cover for hours required on contracts that are not delivered by contracted staff

**8. Employee information (continued)**

	<b>2023</b>	2022
	<b>No.</b>	No.
Aggregate number of full time equivalent staff whose remuneration exceeded £60,000 in the period (including directors detailed in note9):		
£60,001 - £70,000	<b>1</b>	3
£70,001 - £80,000	<b>4</b>	5
£80,001 - £90,000	<b>4</b>	1
£90,001 - £100,000	<b>2</b>	1

Remuneration includes salary, taxable benefits for the provision of lease cars, and pension contributions.

**9. Key management personnel and directors' remuneration**

The aggregate remuneration for key management personnel charged in the year is:

	<b>2023</b>	2022
	<b>£'000</b>	£'000
Salary	<b>838</b>	789
Benefits in kind	<b>49</b>	62
Pension contributions	<b>26</b>	22
	<b>913</b>	873

The emoluments of the highest paid director, excluding pension contributions, were £94,789 (2022: £92,153) and are included in the above analysis.

The Chief Executive received remuneration for the year ending 31 March 2023 totalling £91,093 (2022: £87,675), comprising basic salary of £87,675 (2022: £87,675) and additional payments of £3,418 (2022: £0) in lieu of holidays not taken. Employer contributions of £0 (2022: £0) were made during the year to a personal pension plan on behalf of the Chief Executive. The pension scheme is a defined contribution scheme funded by annual contributions by the employer and employee. No enhanced or special terms apply. There are no additional pension arrangements.

Directors and key management personnel are defined as members of the Board, the Chief Executive and any other person who is a member of the Senior Management Team or its equivalent.

None of the Trustees received emoluments. Three trustees received reimbursed expenses totalling £1,612 (2022: £0, 2 trustees).

10. **Intangible assets and goodwill**

	<b>£'000</b>
<b>Cost or valuation</b>	
At 31 March 2022	<b>1,040</b>
Additions	-
At 31 March 2023	<b>1,040</b>
<b>Amortisation</b>	
At 31 March 2022	<b>816</b>
Amortisation in year	<b>104</b>
At 31 March 2023	<b>920</b>
<b>Net book value</b>	
At 31 March 2023	<b>120</b>
At 31 March 2022	<b>224</b>



**CREATIVE SUPPORT LIMITED**  
**Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023**



**11. Tangible fixed assets**

	<b>Total Housing Properties</b>	<b>Project Furniture and Equipment</b>	<b>Office Equipment</b>	<b>Motor Vehicles £'000</b>	<b>Total fixed assets</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
<b>Cost</b>					
At start of the year	86,884	2,479	1,904	1,032	92,299
Additions	2,675	163	354	199	3,391
Disposals	(1,979)	(660)	(144)	(67)	(2,850)
At end of the year	<u>87,580</u>	<u>1,982</u>	<u>2,114</u>	<u>1,164</u>	<u>92,840</u>
<b>Depreciation and impairment</b>					
At start of the year	12,929	2,073	1,116	652	16,770
Charge for the year	1,315	144	248	131	1,838
Disposals	(739)	(657)	(143)	(65)	(1,604)
At end of the year	<u>13,505</u>	<u>1,560</u>	<u>1,221</u>	<u>718</u>	<u>17,004</u>
<b>Net book value at the end of the year</b>	<u>74,075</u>	<u>422</u>	<u>893</u>	<u>446</u>	<u>75,836</u>
<b>Net book value at the start of the year</b>	<u>73,955</u>	<u>406</u>	<u>788</u>	<u>380</u>	<u>75,529</u>
<b>Housing Properties comprise:</b>				<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
Freeholds				55,772	55,612
Long leaseholds				18,065	17,952
Short leaseholds				238	391
				<u>74,075</u>	<u>73,955</u>

**12. Trade and other debtors**

	<b>2023</b>	2022
	<b>£'000</b>	£'000
Rent arrears	<b>925</b>	815
Less: provision for bad debts	<b>(221)</b>	(202)
	<b>704</b>	613
Grants, supported tenancy and other contract fees receivable	<b>12,532</b>	10,375
Less: provision for bad debts and credit notes	<b>(2,160)</b>	(1,728)
Other debtors	<b>213</b>	266
Prepayment and accrued income	<b>9,243</b>	8,243
	<b>20,532</b>	17,769
Debtors are all due within one year.		

**13. Cash and cash equivalents**

	<b>2023</b>	2022
	<b>£'000</b>	£'000
<b>Cash at bank short term deposits</b>	<b>25,369</b>	25,513
	<b>25,369</b>	25,513

**14. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year**

	Note	<b>2023</b>	2022
		<b>£'000</b>	£'000
Loans and overdrafts	17	<b>1,333</b>	1,333
Refinance costs		<b>(95)</b>	(94)
		<b>1,238</b>	<b>1,239</b>
Trade creditors		<b>3,991</b>	3,035
Other taxation and social security payable		<b>2,362</b>	2,585
Accruals and deferred income		<b>6,676</b>	8,932
Deferred Capital Grant	19	<b>34</b>	27
Other creditors		<b>1,133</b>	1,137
		<b>15,434</b>	16,955

**14. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year (continued)**

The loans are secured by specific charges on the Society's property portfolio. As at 31 March 2023, loans totalling £8,833,333 were outstanding (2022 - £12,666,667) with high street lenders at normal commercial rates. The loans are repayable on a quarterly basis, plus interest calculated by reference to SONIA. The finance facilities consist of a 5 year term loan with an initial amount of £20 million, and a £3m Revolving Credit Facility (terminated at 31 March 2023, and not utilised throughout the financial year). The structure of the finance facilities means that the current liability within the loan (i.e. due within 12 months of the year-end) is £1.333 million.

**15. Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year**

		<b>2023</b>	2022
		<b>£'000</b>	£'000
Loans	17	<b>7,500</b>	11,333
Refinance costs		<b>(119)</b>	(213)
		<b>7,381</b>	11,120
Deferred Capital Grant	19	<b>3,078</b>	3,119
		<b>10,459</b>	14,239

**16. Pension obligations**

The cost of providing retirement pensions and related benefits is charged to the accounts over the periods benefitting from the employees' services. The Society makes contributions to eight pension schemes.

**(i) Membership details**

Scheme	Active members at 31 March 2023	Type of scheme
Legal & General Group Personal Pension Scheme	89	Defined contribution
Royal London Group Personal Pension Scheme	9	Defined contribution
NHS Pension Scheme	67	Defined benefit
Local Government schemes	20	Defined benefit
Peoples Pension (auto-enrolment)	3,889	Defined contribution

**(ii) Defined Contribution pension schemes**

The Society makes contributions of up to 6% gross salary to employees' money purchase pension schemes. The actual percentage contribution is dependent upon length of service.

**(iii) Money Purchase Occupational Pension Scheme**

All eligible staff who are not in one of the other schemes are auto enrolled into a money purchase occupational pension scheme operated by the Peoples' Pension. Membership of this scheme fluctuates as staff members have the right to opt out.

**(iv) Defined Benefit pension schemes**

The Society has employees in four defined benefit schemes, arising as a result of TUPE transfers of staff. Details of the defined benefit schemes are set out below.

**(v) NHS Pension Scheme**

**Pension Costs**

Past and present employees are covered by the provisions of the two NHS Pension Schemes. Details of the benefits payable and rules of the Schemes can be found on the NHS Pensions website at [www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/pensions](http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/pensions). Both are unfunded defined benefit schemes that cover NHS employers, GP practices and other bodies, allowed under the direction of the Secretary of State in England and Wales. They are not designed to be run in a way that would enable NHS bodies to identify their share of the underlying scheme assets and liabilities.

Therefore, each scheme is accounted for as if it were a defined contribution scheme: the cost to the NHS body of participating in each scheme is taken as equal to the contributions payable to that scheme for the accounting period.

In order that the defined benefit obligations recognised in the financial statements do not differ materially from those that would be determined at the reporting date by a formal actuarial valuation, the FReM requires that "the period between formal valuations shall be four years, with approximate assessments in intervening years". An outline of these follows:

**a) Accounting valuation**

A valuation of scheme liability is carried out annually by the scheme actuary (currently the Government Actuary's Department) as at the end of the reporting period. This utilises an actuarial assessment for the previous accounting period in conjunction with updated membership and financial data for the current reporting period, and are accepted as providing suitably robust figures for financial reporting purposes.

The valuation of scheme liability as at 31 March 2016, is based on valuation data as 31 March 2015, updated to 31 March 2016 with summary global member and accounting data. In undertaking this actuarial assessment, the methodology prescribed in IAS 19, relevant FReM interpretations, and the discount rate prescribed by HM Treasury have also been used.

The latest assessment of the liabilities of the scheme is contained in the scheme actuary report, which forms part of the annual NHS Pension Scheme (England and Wales) Pension Accounts. These accounts can be viewed on the NHS Pensions website and are published annually. Copies can also be obtained from The Stationery Office.



**16. Pension obligations (continued)**

**b) Full actuarial (funding) valuation**

The last published actuarial valuation undertaken for the NHS Pension Scheme was completed for the year ending 31 March 2016. The Scheme Regulations allow for the level of contribution rates to be changed by the Secretary of State for Health, with the consent of HM Treasury, and consideration of the advice of the Scheme Actuary and appropriate employee and employer representatives as deemed appropriate.

**(vi) Local Government Pension Schemes**

<b>LGPS Scheme</b>	<b>Administering body</b>
Lancashire County Pension Fund	Lancashire County Council
West Yorkshire Pension Fund	City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council
The Royal County of Berkshire Pension Fund	Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
London Borough of Bromley Pension Fund	London Borough of Bromley

Each LGPS is a multi-employer scheme, administered under the regulations governing the Local Government Pension Scheme, and a defined benefit scheme. The most recent formal actuarial valuation was completed as at 31 March 2022 and rolled forward allowing for the different financial assumptions required under FRS102, to 31 March 2023 by a qualified independent actuary.

The employer’s contributions to the LGPS by the Society for the year ended 31 March 2023 were £69,000 (2022:£79,000) at a contribution rate between 0.0% and 23.5% of pensionable salaries. The employers’ contribution rate for the year ended 31 March 2024 has been set at between 0% and 28.1%. Estimated contributions to the LGPSs during the accounting period commencing 1 April 2023 are £67,000.

**Principal actuarial assumptions**  
**Financial assumptions**

	<b>31 March 2023</b>	<b>31 March 2022</b>
	<b>% per annum</b>	<b>% per annum</b>
Discount rate	4.7% - 4.9%	2.6% - 3.3%
Future salary increases	3.85% - 4.2%	4.2% - 4.9%
Future pension increases	2.7% - 2.9%	3.0% - 3.5%
Inflation assumptions	2.7% - 2.7%	2.8% - 3.4%

The post-retirement mortality assumptions adopted to value the benefit obligation at 31 March 2023 and 31 March 2022 are based on different assumptions within each scheme including S3PA, CIM2021, and actual recent mortality of members within the Fund.

The Lancashire County Pension Fund, West Yorkshire Pension Fund and Royal County of Berkshire Pension Fund (SBC – Floating Support) have a total gross accounting surplus at the reporting date of £4.624M. In line with FRS 102 requirements the Society has recognised an asset on the balance sheet to the extent that it is able to recover the surplus, either through reduced contributions in the future, or through refunds from the plan.

The Society has judged that the surpluses are not recoverable and accordingly, the Society has not recognised the pension asset position, restricting the surpluses to £nil, and reducing actuarial gains by the same amount in respect of these schemes.



**16. Pension obligations (continued)**

The assumed life expectations on retirement at age 65 are:

	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
	<b>No. of years</b>	<b>No. of years</b>
Retiring today:		
Males	21.1 - 22.2	21.3 - 22.8
Females	23.8 - 24.6	24.0 - 25.3
Retiring in 20 years:		
Males	22.3 - 23.3	22.5 - 24.6
Females	25.3 - 26.1	25.4 - 27.2

**Amounts recognised in surplus or deficit**

	<b>2023</b>	2022
	<b>£'000</b>	£'000
Current service costs	221	284
Administrative expenses	5	5
<b>Amounts charged to operating costs</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>289</b>
Net interest	10	47
<b>Amounts charged to other finance costs</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>47</b>
Actuarial gains	1,731	1,119

**Reconciliation of opening and closing balances of the present value of scheme liabilities**

	<b>2023</b>	2022
	<b>£'000</b>	£'000
Opening scheme liabilities	<b>15,958</b>	16,804
Recognition of present value of scheme liabilities	(1,196)	(666)
Current service cost	221	284
Interest cost	398	310
Remeasurements	(5,486)	(559)
Members contributions	35	39
Benefits paid (net)	(323)	(254)
Closing scheme liabilities	<b>9,607</b>	<b>15,958</b>

**16. Pension obligations (continued)**

**Reconciliation of opening and closing balances of the fair value of plan assets**

	<b>2023</b>	2022
	<b>£'000</b>	£'000
Opening fair value of plan assets	<b>14,363</b>	14,347
Recognition of fair value of plan assets	(1,065)	(628)
Administration expenses	(5)	(5)
Interest income	388	263
Return on plan assets (in excess of interest income)	(3,886)	522
Contributions by employer	69	79
Members contributions	35	39
Benefits paid (net)	(323)	(254)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Closing fair value of plan assets	<b>9,576</b>	<b>14,363</b>
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>
	<b>2023</b>	2022
	<b>£'000</b>	£'000
<b>Actual return on scheme assets</b>	<hr/> <hr/> 201	<hr/> <hr/> 1,711

**Amounts recognised in the Statement of Financial Position**

	<b>2023</b>	2022
	<b>£'000</b>	£'000
Fair value of plan assets	<b>9,576</b>	14,363
Present value of scheme liabilities	<b>(9,607)</b>	(15,958)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>FRS 102 deficit in the schemes</b>	<b>(31)</b>	<b>(1,595)</b>
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

**Major categories of plan assets as a percentage of total plan assets**

	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
	%	%
Equities	0.1% - 80.8%	0.1% - 79.8%
Gilts	0.0% - 6.9%	0.8% - 2.9%
Bonds	0.2% - 14.0%	0.0% - 16.0%
Properties	1.5% - 13.0%	1.6% - 12.0%
Cash	0.8% - 2.7%	2.0% - 2.9%
Other	2.1% - 97.4%	1.1% - 95.0%

**17. Analysis of Changes in Net debt**

	At 1 April 2022	Cash Flows	Non cash movements	At 31 March 2023
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Cash and cash Equivalents	25,513	(144)	-	25,369
Housing Loans Due in one year	(1,333)	-	-	(1,333)
Housing Loans Due after one year	(11,333)	3,833	-	(7,500)
	<b>12,847</b>	<b>3,689</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>16,536</b>

**18. Provisions for liabilities and charges**

	At 1 April 2022	Additional provision	Released/ utilised	At 31 March 2023
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Dilapidations provisions	140	46	(23)	<b>163</b>

The dilapidations provision relates to amounts payable to return leased properties to their former state upon surrender of the lease.

**19. Deferred capital grant**

	2023	2022
	£'000	£'000
At start of the year	<b>3,146</b>	2,539
Grant received / (disposed of) in the year	-	634
Released to income in the year	<b>(34)</b>	(27)
At the end of the year	<b>3,112</b>	3,146
Amount due to be released in less than 1 year	<b>34</b>	27
Amount due to be released after more than 1 year	<b>3,078</b>	3,119
	<b>3,112</b>	3,146

**20. Non-equity share capital**

	<b>2023</b>	2022
	£	£
Association		
Allotted Issued and Fully Paid		
At the start of the year	<b>70</b>	70
Issued during the year	-	-
At the end of the year	<b>70</b>	<b>70</b>

The par value of each share is £1. The shares do not have a right to any dividend or distribution in a winding-up, and are not redeemable. Each share has full voting rights. All shares are fully paid.

**21. Capital commitments**

	<b>2023</b>	2022
	£'000	£'000
Capital expenditure that has been contracted for but has not been provided for in the financial statements	<b>298</b>	259
Capital expenditure that has been authorised by the Board but has not yet been contracted for	-	-
	<b>298</b>	259

**22. Operating leases**

The future minimum lease payments of non-cancellable operating leases are as follows:

	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
	£'000	£'000
Within one year	<b>864</b>	861
Between one and five years	<b>1,977</b>	1,912
Later than five years	<b>48</b>	110
	<b>2,889</b>	2,883

**23. Grant and financial assistance**

	<b>2023</b>	2022
	<b>£'000</b>	£'000
The total accumulated government grant and financial assistance received or receivable at 31 March:		
Total gross grant at end of year	<b>3,330</b>	3,330
Total cumulative amortisation at the start of the year	<b>184</b>	157
Recognised as income in statement of Comprehensive Income in the year	<b>34</b>	27
Held as deferred capital grant at end of year	<b>3,112</b>	3,146

**24. Related parties**

There are no related party transactions (2022: none).





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