Annual Report for the Year Ended 31 March 2019

VoiceAbility Advocacy
Company Number 03798884
Charity Number 1076630
“As ever, VoiceAbility’s unrelenting focus this year has been on enabling people to have their voices heard and their rights respected. We have provided advocacy and other services to people who face disadvantage or discrimination, including people with mental health needs and disabled people. I hope that you will join with us in taking pleasure and inspiration from this report, which provides a flavour of the positive change this work has created in people’s lives and communities.

“Over the past year, we have been impressed and frequently moved by the way our local staff and volunteers have supported and empowered people. Time and resources are necessarily finite, and so must be carefully used if we are to achieve the most that we can. In this context, we have been so pleased to observe at first hand throughout the year the remarkable blend of professionalism and focus, combined with kindness and a very human touch, which is shown by VoiceAbility’s staff and volunteers.

“Our work also involves supporting people’s rights on a national level. This year we have used our expertise to influence the development of the Mental Capacity (Amendment) Bill. We recognised fatal short-comings in the version of the Bill that was first presented to Parliament, and have been able to win major concessions from Government. The legislation remains flawed, and our work is continuing to ameliorate this, as you can read later in this report.

“We are pleased to have strengthened our financial position as an organisation, continuing last year’s positive trajectory. This is vital in ensuring that our quality support continues to be available to people who require it. We’ve also strengthened our leadership and governance, welcoming several new Directors and Trustees.

“We’re excited about the year ahead as we embark on a new organisational strategy. In each section of this report, we’ve explained how we will be taking our mission forward into 2019-20 and beyond.

“On behalf of all the Trustees, we express our sincere thanks to the many people who use our services who have helped to shape our provision, and to our members of staff and volunteers for their hard work. We would equally like to express our appreciation to those who have commissioned our work this year, and the agencies and people with whom we have worked in partnership. We look forward to continuing to work together.”

Peter Letley, Chair of Trustees
Jonathan Senker, Chief Executive
Our mission
We support people to overcome barriers and change their lives by strengthening voices and supporting rights.

Our aims
To enable disabled, disadvantaged or socially excluded people to:
- be heard and respected;
- have the same choice, control, and freedom as any other person;
- be safe from violence, discrimination, harm or abuse.

Our vision
- Deliver the best possible quality of support.
- Be the provider of choice for the services we offer.
- Be the source of authority for expert insight on voice and rights.
- Be the place to work/volunteer for anyone who shares our aims.

What we do
We run projects to enable people to design their own services, have a greater say in their communities and more control over their lives. In our annual accounts, all of this work is listed under the heading of ‘Advocacy’, but that heading covers a range of activities.

Advocacy services
We are best known for our advocacy services. Advocacy is about making sure that people’s thoughts and opinions are heard, especially when decisions are being made about their
lives. Advocacy can help people to:

- Think through different choices and options available to them.
- Make their views and wishes clear.
- Get independent and accurate information.
- Understand and assert their rights.

“VoiceAbility has given me a voice, ensuring that I was and am heard in an NHS system where I was ignored. You have helped me to stand up for my rights and for justice. I have felt empowerment, self confidence, self esteem and a desire to stand up for my rights and to challenge things that I believe to be wrong.”
– Feedback to our Redbridge team

Advocates support people to speak up for themselves. Advocates can also speak up for people’s views on their behalf if they are unable to do this for themselves. Face to face, issue-based advocacy is a legal right for many people, especially for people with long term conditions, people detained under the Mental Health Act or people who are deemed under the Mental Capacity Act to lack capacity to make certain decisions.

Peer mentoring

We also offer support through peer advocates, peer supporters and peer mentors. A peer mentor is a trained volunteer who has had similar experiences to the people they are supporting. They listen, provide emotional support, share their experience and insights, advice and encouragement. Peer mentors have a strong track record of enabling those who have learnt not to trust professionals and who feel professionals cannot understand their situation. Peer advocacy can help them to open up, find support and develop their own solutions.
Group advocacy, service user involvement and building community capacity

Our service user involvement groups enable people to meet together, identify common issues, share their experiences and take action, for example by meeting with decision-makers to share their views. Others have developed campaigns that have helped to shape services and solve community issues.

Other services

We are using our expertise to develop new support offers, which you can read more about below under “Objective 2: Develop new services”.

Many of our services make use of our expert Helpline Team (pictured) to field enquiries. Helpline Manager Mark Cooper offers an insight into daily life in the Helpline office:

“Are you part of the NHS?”

“Nobody else is picking up the phone”

“Can you help me – I don’t know what to do”

Those are just some of the opening queries we at Helpline get on a daily basis. As the first point of contact for many of VoiceAbility’s services, we answer emails and phonecalls from potential referrers and people looking for support. We ascertain eligibility, and arrange for the next steps to be taken to ensure that people get the support they are entitled to.

Challenges can include bearing the brunt of people’s frustrations,
managing expectations and dealing with high volumes of calls and referrals – it can also be unpredictable, which certainly keeps things interesting!

Our small but dedicated team are skilled at defusing such situations, having very much learnt in the line of duty. Often, after tricky opening conversations, by the end of a call we will hear these phrases:

“Thank you for helping me”

”I feel like I have been listened to”

“I feel much better now I have spoken to you”

Who we worked with this year

We worked with over 30,000 people this year, many of whom have several support needs. Based on primary support need, over two thirds of the people we work with are those with either mental ill health, a learning disability or dementia. Other primary support needs of
those we work with include: Acquired Brain Injury, Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Older Person, Physical Disability and Physical Ill Health.

**Where we worked this year**

We work across England. In 2018-19 the large majority of our work was in the following areas (marked in orange on the map):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Birmingham</th>
<th>Sunderland</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bradford</td>
<td>Warwickshire and Coventry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cambridgeshire and Peterborough</td>
<td>London Boroughs of Barnet, Enfield and Haringey</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cheshire</td>
<td>London Borough of Brent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Doncaster</td>
<td>London Borough of Camden</td>
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<td>Dudley</td>
<td>London Borough of Harrow</td>
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<td>Hertfordshire</td>
<td>London Borough of Havering</td>
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<td>Lancashire</td>
<td>London Borough of Hounslow</td>
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<td>Lincolnshire</td>
<td>London Borough of Lewisham</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liverpool and Sefton</td>
<td>London Borough of Merton</td>
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<tr>
<td>Northamptonshire</td>
<td>London Borough of Newham</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staffordshire</td>
<td>London Borough of Redbridge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suffolk</td>
<td>London Borough of Wandsworth</td>
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This year we revised the wording of our values, to make sure they are easy to talk about and apply. For each value we also added practical examples of how we can live it out. We now highlight how we are living out our values in the relevant area of work in new policies, processes and communications.

**Passionate**

*We’re dedicated to strengthening voice, supporting rights and changing lives.*

Because we are passionate we:
- Are committed to delivering high quality support.
- Make what we offer accessible to all.
- Work with policy-makers to safeguard and strengthen people’s rights.

**Empowering**

*We enable people to live life to the full.*

Because we are empowering we:
- Support people to speak up for themselves and grow in confidence.
- Equip people to understand and exercise their rights.
- Treat people as individuals with their own unique strengths.

**Collaborative**

*We listen and shape decisions with others.*

Because we are collaborative we:
- Involve people we support in shaping our organisation and what we do.
- Are easy to talk to, considerate and constructive.
- Ask for and respond to feedback so that we can improve.

**Honest**

*We work with integrity and we stick to our principles.*

Because we are honest we:
- Mean what we say and do what we promise.
- Make everything clear and transparent.
- Maintain independence, confidentiality and professionalism.

**Resourceful**

*We think ahead and find effective ways to achieve our mission.*

Because we are resourceful we:
- Focus on solutions.
- Try out new ideas.
- Achieve the most we can with the resources we have.
Strategy to March 2019

In April 2019 we began a new strategy, but in 2018-19 we were still working to the previous strategy so our achievements below are shown against the objectives of the previous strategy. The objectives of the previous strategy were that by 2021 we would have:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Increased our social impact</th>
<th>Introduced new support services</th>
<th>Developed strong partnerships</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>supporting the rights, voices and choices of 40,000 people and demonstrating powerfully the difference that we are making</td>
<td>which meet our social mission, including wider support for people who have dementia and delivery of preventative services</td>
<td>with organisations who share our values and drive.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Excellent user involvement at every level of the organisation

Consistently excellent staff and volunteer engagement

Viewed as an insightful and influential partner with the respect of central and local government, NHS bodies, policy makers and health and social care organisations.
Strategy from April 2019 onwards

From April 2019 onwards, our mission, aims and values remain unchanged, but changes in our sector and listening to staff feedback has driven the development of a new strategy for how we achieve our goals:

Over the next six years we will...

1. Diversify the services we offer:
   People need many kinds of support in order to be heard and have their rights upheld. Advocacy is one vital type of support, but not the only one. So we’ll be working to widen the range of services we offer which can help to achieve this.

2. Improve our organisational capability:
   - **Value our people** - create an even more positive working culture and clearer opportunities for staff development and progression.
   - **Build the basics** - increase clarity and consistency across all our standards, policies, systems and processes whilst maintaining person centred service delivery to individuals.
   - **Drive quality** - improve our ability to evidence our impact and outcomes.
   - **Lead the market** - reflect the high quality of our services in how we look and speak as an organisation and in the digital tools we offer.
   - **Grow authority** - continue to ensure that people’s voices are heard and their rights respected in local and national policy decisions.

For more information on the strategy see: [https://www.voiceability.org/about-us/our-strategy/](https://www.voiceability.org/about-us/our-strategy/)

An investment from our reserves will fund a programme of changes in 2019/20 in order to accelerate delivery of all parts of the new strategy. For example, the investment will seed-fund pilots of new kinds of services and pay for temporary expert assistance on projects to improve our organisational capability.

We have incorporated into the new strategy many elements from the previous strategy that are still crucial – as explained in several ‘plan for the future’ sections in the pages that follow.
Objective 1:
Increase our social impact to support the rights, voices and choices of 40,000 people per year by 2020-21; and demonstrate powerfully the difference that we are making.

“My Mum developed vascular dementia and eventually we decided to move her permanently to a care home. This was an exceptionally stressful period for all the family, as it was very tough to accept my Mum needed care in a residential environment. Immediately after this decision, my Dad changed his mind and wanted my Mum to return to the family home. There was a possibility that he would try to remove my Mum from the care home, and so a Deprivation of Liberty order was instigated, prior to a decision by the Court on Mum’s future.

“Our appointment at this stage as advocate was wonderful. You were able to provide a professional and rational voice to represent my Mum during a very tense and difficult time for our family. It was so important to us that you were able to tread such a diplomatic route in establishing rapport with both my parents, and showing respect to my Dad’s feelings and views. I feel you were able to communicate very well with all family members, and deliver an independent perspective on the situation. I am so grateful to have the support your organisation provides. Thanks for being there and for making the difference.”
– Feedback to our Liverpool & Sefton team
Our reach

There’s a growing number of people who use health and social care and who need our help to give them a real voice and real control. It’s this growing demand that’s driving our ambition to increase our social impact: we want to meet people’s urgent needs.

Where we know we can provide a quality service and make a difference, we continue to look to establish new services. During 2018-19, we expanded our existing provision in Northamptonshire and Doncaster and renewed contracts for Speak Out Council in Cambridge and Peterborough and for our Quality Checkers project in Northamptonshire.

We started two new adult advocacy contracts in April 2018, to serve the people of Bradford and Staffordshire, in both cases enabling people to access a wide range of statutory advocacy through one central point of contact. In April 2019, we began to offer Independent Mental Health Advocacy in Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin and we are extending our services in Arden and Solihull to support more care settings with Experts by Experience. Experts by Experience are paid staff with lived experience of using specific services who check the quality of services or support people in similar situations to their own.

We lost on price in competitive tenders for some existing contracts, or decided not to bid to continue them because the resources available were insufficient to deliver the quality of support which we believe people have a right to expect.

Overall this meant that the number of people we supported was slightly higher than last year, continuing our sustained year on year progress towards the 40,000 per annum goal that we set ourselves to achieve by 2021.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of support</th>
<th>Number of people we supported in 2017-18</th>
<th>Number of people we supported in 2018-19</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual advocacy</td>
<td>28,423</td>
<td>30,079</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer mentoring</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group advocacy¹</td>
<td>1,811</td>
<td>1,859</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>30,509</strong></td>
<td><strong>32,048</strong></td>
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</table>

In addition to the people who accessed individual advocacy last year, our award-winning peer mentoring scheme in Camden has continued, helping 100 people, and our peer mentoring scheme in Cambridge was also active this year on a smaller scale than last year as peer mentors have taken on different volunteering roles in local awareness raising. This means the peer mentoring total is lower than last year. Our group advocacy services in Cambridge and Lincolnshire have continued to grow, working on co-production projects and developing ways to increase the skills of members in order to share learning and experience across the community.

Delivering a quality service, achieving quality outcomes

We hold the Quality Performance Mark for advocacy. We pride ourselves on the quality of our work. Training and development for our staff team is a core element to this.

When we start working with each person, we ask them what they want support with and what outcome they want. We get a clear understanding of the specific issue which they want to be addressed as well as any general changes they want to make.

At the end of our advocacy support, each issue is evaluated, looking at how well the

¹ Combined total number of attendees at group sessions and events – may be some cases where someone is counted more than once.
outcome was met. This year, 91% of the specific changes people wanted were either completely or partly achieved.\(^2\) This is the same percentage that we achieved in 2017-18.

Was the issue resolved?

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{chart.png}
\caption{Chart showing the percentage of issues resolved.}
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As well as resolving specific issues people come to us with, we also work towards a series of ‘VOICE’ outcomes with everyone we work with. They includes people developing the skills and confidence they need in order to be able to live the life they want and to advocate for themselves independently. The outcomes are important because our work is more than about solving a specific issue – however important that is. There are ten VOICE outcomes, which link in with the Adult Social Care Outcome Framework (ASOF):

- I am involved in decisions about my life.
- I understand my rights and entitlements.
- I can speak up for myself more.
- I have better support (quality).
- I understand support options available
- I have more choice.
- I live more independently.
- I understand how to keep myself safe.
- I am more confident to keep myself safe.
- I know who to tell if some-one was hurting me.

In almost 4 out of 5 cases (78%) where we recorded at least one of the ten VOICE outcomes, there was a positive change in one or more VOICE outcome. Negative outcomes as a result of our involvement were extremely rare (less than 1%). This is based on records from 41% of people with whom we closed work during the year.

We are not able to gather feedback in the form of VOICE outcome responses from everyone we work with, we gather feedback in the way most appropriate for the person we support, which includes considering their capacity and preferences for communication.

**Plans for the future**

We will strengthen our ability to track impact and monitor quality, outcomes and impact. We will develop and implement a new framework for this.

\(^2\) In these figures we exclude cases if the service user was supported to access another service to resolve their issue; if the referral was a data transfer; or if the outcome was unknown, despite attempts to contact the service user.
Objective 2:
Introduce new support services which meet our social mission, including wider support for people who have dementia and delivery of preventative services.

“I want to pass on my compliments for the Quality Checkers and team at VoiceAbility, especially the hard work of your co-ordinator who ensures that the service keeps supporting people with learning disabilities here in Northamptonshire, and enables us as commissioners to keep a view on how services are performing.

“The Experts by Experience have built a good rapport with our service users over the years, and continue to alter approaches to meet the changing needs in the community.

“In terms of the Care and Treatment Reviews, as a trainer and chair, I also find the Experts by Experience very helpful in ensuring the voice of the patient is heard, which is vital.”

- David Loyd-Hearn, Commissioning Transformation Manager, Northamptonshire Clinical Commissioning Groups

We have been developing a range of new support services which meet our social mission, but these have not always been as specialised (e.g. dementia specialist) as we envisaged when we wrote our strategic objectives. However, delivery of preventative services remains a key focus, with our Experts by Experience and Suffolk Wellbeing Service being good examples of this. We have also developed new work with people in prisons this year.

Experts by Experience

Our Experts by Experience service in Northamptonshire goes from strength to strength and we have now extended it to Coventry and Warwickshire.

Our Experts by Experience in Coventry and Warwickshire have lived experience relevant to transforming care and take part in Care and Treatment Reviews (CTRs) to challenge perceived barriers and ensure all aspects of a person's care and support are considered. This helps to ensure that people with a learning disability are not kept in hospital unnecessarily if they become mentally unwell.

Experts by Experience work alongside the people using services, their family, commissioners and providers to ensure positive risk taking and to support discharge into the community at the earliest opportunity, and to construct a person-centred process of challenge to current care and treatment plans where necessary.

In Northamptonshire, our Experts by Experience continue to carry out Quality Checks and to be involved with CTRs. Quality Checking means that people with a learning disability, autism or both are employed to help us look at the quality of the services they use and tell those who run them how to make them better.

Work in prisons
Our Doncaster team is leading an initiative to introduce statutory and professional advocacy to the three main prisons in Doncaster. They are piloting the scheme in HMP Lindholme, where a team of volunteer healthcare reps have been elected from the inmates.

“We want to remove the barriers that are preventing them from accessing the support they need. In the past, there was only NHS Complaints Advocacy delivered within the prison. This is a pilot to look at providing a range of services to prisoners, which we hope to roll out to the two other HMP prisons in Doncaster. It’s exciting, it’s something we’ve never done before.”
– Marion, Doncaster team.

Suffolk Wellbeing Service

Working in partnership with several other organisations under the umbrella of the county’s Wellbeing Service, VoiceAbility staff in Suffolk help people identify their individual support needs and get in touch with local organisations or groups which could help. They also empower people using the service to create their own peer support networks – the latest example is a new BME Support Group, set up by a service user.

Plans for the future

We will extend our range of activities in line with our social mission. This will include more service user involvement services alongside our existing advocacy services. We will also improve our digital support with a new website offering self-help tools and online referral options.

Objective 3: Develop strong partnerships with organisations who share our values and drive.

Partnerships are a brilliant way of gathering different skills and experience together, to provide great services for people who need them. At VoiceAbility, we don’t try to have all the answers, but instead work with a wide variety of local and national partners in order to find the solutions which people need.

We have many partnerships with local advocacy providers. This helps to ensure the service combines the benefits of our outstanding quality and expertise, with local knowledge and relationships. It can also help us meet all accessibility requirements, for example, ensuring we have advocates with particular specialisms, such as in working with Deaf BSL users.

- In Lincolnshire we work with Barnardo’s and Age UK.
- In Cambridge and Peterborough we work with NYAS and Cambridgeshire Deaf Association.
- In Sunderland we work with MHM.
- In Suffolk we work with Ace Anglia, IMPACT, Suffolk Family Carers, Suffolk User Forum and the Royal Association for Deaf People.
- In Northamptonshire we work with Deaf Connects.
- In Staffordshire we work with Asist.
Partnering with the Teamwork Trust to deliver self-advocacy training

Our Total Voice Northamptonshire team have been working with the Teamwork Trust to equip young people with skills to advocate for themselves (see Tweet, right).

Working with TED: Empowering older people

In Lincolnshire, this year for the first time we’ve provided bespoke advocacy for older people in collaboration with Talk, Eat, Drink (T.E.D.), a service for people over 50 in East Lindsey. T.E.D. aims to help older people connect with volunteering, social, leisure and health improving activities; reduce loneliness and isolation; encourage people to feel positive about the opportunities that getting older presents; and give older people the chance to have your say in how the services and businesses you use are delivered. By empowering people through advocacy, we’re proud to have been part of this work.

Plans for the future

We will further strengthen our partnerships with other organisations who share our values and the effectiveness of our working relationships with external professionals.

Objective 4:
Excellent user involvement at every level of the organisation

Service involvement strategy

During 2017-18, our service user involvement group (made up of those who are part of volunteering programmes across the organisation) shaped and approved a 2-year service user involvement strategy. The main focus of the strategy is that we want all areas of the organisation to be working within the top tier (green zone) of our user participation ladder.
We began to implement this strategy in 2018-19 by:

- Running a range of services that are specifically to help local authorities involve people in shaping the services they receive.
- Recruiting more disabled people onto our Board of Trustees.

**Working with people with lived experience**

We employ people with lived experience of disability in our staff team generally, and in particular we currently employ more than 20 people who require support within the workplace on the following projects:

- Experts by Experience and Quality Checkers: Use their experience to assess and report what is good and what needs improvements in care services and assist commissioners with Care and Treatment Reviews.
- Speak Out Council: Run consultations, drop-ins and meetings to gather service users’ opinions and concerns and give service users and professionals and opportunity to talk.

Volunteering programmes are incredibly important for us as an organisation, for the people who we work with, and in many cases for the volunteers themselves. We currently have 41 volunteers working across all our services. They work in various roles, including:

- **Peer mentors**: People with lived experience of long-term conditions in Camden use their knowledge to support others to have a voice.
- **Awareness raising**: Volunteers in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough run awareness-raising events and activities to help people connect with advocacy support and other local support services.
- **Service user involvement**: In Lincolnshire, we facilitate for people with lived experience to sit as members of the local Mental Health & Substance Misuse Patient Council and a range of local Service User Involvement projects.
- **Supporting our advocates**: Volunteers in Sunderland carry out a range of support functions, including welfare checks to those Service Users who are waiting for advocacy support, and accompanying advocates on high risk visits requiring 2 people.

**Plans for the future**

We have commissioned external support to accelerate our progress against the service user involvement strategy next year. We will also give managers the tools they need to involve supported people in shaping our services and others’ services.

**Objective 5:**

**Consistently excellent staff and volunteer engagement**

**Improved internal communications**

This year we improved how we communicate with all our staff introducing new methods of internal communication such as:

- Monthly ‘Team Sheet’ tool for team meetings ensures staff hear important news face-to-face wherever possible and have the opportunity to ask questions.
- Relaunched internal email newsletter has resulted in a steady increase in engagement with stories about out different teams around the country and our sector.

**Improved staff recognition**
We also improved reward and benefits for staff and volunteers. Our revised pay policy for staff was introduced in consultation with a staff focus group in April 2017 and in 2019 it will see many of our staff receive a performance related pay rise for the first time. Pay rises are based on individual, departmental and organisational performance.

We launched a new ‘Star Awards’ recognition scheme for staff and volunteers, which allows anyone in the organisation to recognise anyone else they feel is living our values. Jane, an advocate in our Peterborough team, was one of the first staff to receive one of our brand new Star Awards. Jane received the award in recognition of her work in mentoring new starters, including Kayleigh Bass (pictured below with Jane). Jane received the award from her manager, who highlighted how Jane had shown our values of ‘Passionate’ and ‘Empowering’:

“Thank you for supporting our new team members – empowering them to learn, sharing for your passion for our work and enabling them to gain the confidence quickly to take on cases and support people.”
– Sarah, Service Manager for Total Voice Cambridge and Peterborough

Plans for the future
Valuing our staff is a key theme in our new strategy. Next year we will:
• Produce a new programme of training and personal development.
• Review quality and consistency of staff supervision and clarity of expectations across all our roles, to help further improve staff satisfaction.

Objective 6:
Be viewed as an insightful and influential partner with the respect of central and local government, NHS bodies, policy makers and health and social care organisations

We are proud of the expertise we have developed, and use it wherever we can to improve the lives of the people we support. We do this by driving change in local practice, influencing legislation and providing guidance to the advocacy sector.
We influenced government on DoLS legislation, and helped shape the Mental Capacity (Amendment) Bill and accompanying Code of Practice

VoiceAbility has played an important part, along with others, in improving the Mental Capacity (Amendment) Bill. This Bill which amends the Mental Capacity Act by replacing the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)

The Bill will affect hundreds of thousands of people in the UK who lack capacity to consent, to be deprived of their liberty for the purpose of delivering their care or treatment. These are some of the most vulnerable people in our society such as those with advanced dementia, severe learning disabilities and/or autism, mental ill-health and acquired brain injuries who are living in hospitals and care homes, as well as supported living, shared lives, private and domestic settings.

- VoiceAbility provided extensive analysis, briefings and case studies to parliamentarians and helped to build an effective informal alliance with many other organisations and people.
- Phillippa Ashcroft, our Head of Policy, discussed our concerns directly with the Minister of State for Health, Caroline Dinenage and the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Lord O'Shaughnessy.
- We helped to draft a large number of Amendments to the Bill, leading to substantial modification of it, including in the face of Government resistance and opposition. VoiceAbility was cited many times in the Lords and Commons debates. Our successes included:
  - We successfully challenged the Government’s proposal that the Care Home Manager would have the lead role in deciding whether a person gets an advocate.
  - Our work lessened the inappropriate near-control that the Care Home Manager was to have over the assessment process.
  - Our work increased the right to information given to a person about their detention.

Despite the significant changes we achieved, the Bill, which received Royal Assent on 16th May 2019, remains deeply flawed. It will not properly serve some of the most vulnerable people, as our chief executive Jonathan Senker explains in this blog published by NDTi.

We focus now on the Code of Practice being drafted in relation to the Bill and the revised Mental Capacity Act Code. Several of our advocates working with Phillippa are reviewing drafts and pushing for improvements.

Improving the lives of people with learning disabilities whose behaviour is challenging

Our Chief Executive, Jonathan Senker, was the Chair of NICE’s Guideline Committee producing guidelines on the service design and delivery for people with learning disabilities who have behaviour that challenges. Through this year, Jonathan has been active in promoting the Guidelines so that they are implemented and can produce improvements for people and their families.
His activities have included:
- Helping shape NICE’s Quick Guide for Commissioners.
- Providing expert input to the development of NICE’s Quality Standard (due to be published in July 2019).
- A key-note speech at the keynote speaker at the annual Learning Disability Forum
- Presentation at the Learning Disability Professional Senate
- Leading a well-attended national webinar.
- A guest blog for the Department for Health and Social Care.

Recognising that people who use services are the experts

Based on his work with NICE, Jonathan was invited to provide an opening plenary address (click for video) at the Guidelines International Network Conference. He presented to 450 leading international delegates involved in developing evidence-based guidelines for health and care services. He took this opportunity to demonstrate why fully involving people who use health and care services is not just ‘the right thing to do’, but also, vitally, that it leads to better results.

We stepped forward to help advocates prevent over-medication, in collaboration with NHS England

An estimated 35,000 people with learning disabilities or autism are prescribed psychotropic medicines when they do not have a diagnosed mental health condition, often to manage behaviour which is seen as challenging. There is a national campaign to stop the over-medication of people with a learning disability, autism or both (STOMP).

We approached NHS England for their support to enable us to find a way to mobilise advocates nationally in addressing this. NHS England enthusiastically agreed to our proposal to to define and publicise why many advocates can only fully fulfil their duties and roles if they know about STOMP.

In partnership with the STOMP campaign, we launched top tips for advocates on preventing the over-medication of people with a learning disability, autism or both at this year’s National
Advocacy Conference, in October 2018, along with a briefing on the legal requirements in relation to STOMP. Both the publication are available here.

We continued to work to increase awareness and galvanise action, not only among advocates, but also other professionals. This included presentations to the Learning Disability Professional Senate and Royal College of GPs Learning Disability Group as well as a guest blog for NHS England.

“The expert VoiceAbility team have produced a thoroughly practical resource which I urge advocates and health and social care professionals to read. It makes clear the opportunities and obligations advocates have to support people to have a voice in relation to their medication and quality of life, and how to act upon these.”

We collected local views and submitted these to the Independent Review of the Mental Health Act

The Government have committed to introduce a new Mental Health Bill to transform mental health care, following publication of an independent review of the existing legislation. VoiceAbility was commissioned by the Department of Health and Social Care to gather the views of people who are or have been detained under the Mental Health Act, and these findings informed the independent review. Our teams in Birmingham, Northampton, Doncaster and Camden provided evidence to the review.

We campaigned as part of the Care and Support Alliance and other coalitions

We are proud members of the Care and Support Alliance, a partnership of 80 organisations. We now have over 10,000 followers on Twitter and used our influence to promote the Care and Support Alliance’s #carecrisis campaign on social media.

We also signed National Voice’s open letter to Theresa May, calling for avoidance of a ‘no deal’ Brexit, as this would adversely affect the most vulnerable people in our society, many of whom we support.

We challenged local practice to ensure the safety of those we support

For example, this year, our Doncaster team were a great example of challenging local practice. In Doncaster, our RPRs are required to record whenever they challenge a Do Not Attempt CPR (DNACPR) order. We noticed that these challenges were being made more frequently than expected. Our Service Manager contacted the local Healthwatch, flagging the issue. Healthwatch recognised the issue as one they had also identified and carried out research to compare it to national trends. This research confirmed that there was likely to be an issue in Doncaster.
A meeting was arranged between Voiceability, Healthwatch and Doncaster Council. Following presentation of both our local data and Healthwatch’s national information the Council acknowledged the issue and provided guidance for professionals in the form of checklists to work through before a DNACPR could be agreed.

These checks were based on those used by our teams to challenge DNACPR decisions. The introduction of this guidance has resulted in the reduction of instances in which our Paid RPRs find DNACPRs which require challenging.

**Plans for the future**

Next year we will increase our influence and impact by:

- Continuing and developing our current policy work and producing publications and information products.
- Helping managers to influence local decision making, by offering them coaching and tools to support them to network effectively.
- Improving our brand, including a refreshed visual identity.
REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Trustees
Peter Letley (Chair)
Philip Tatt
Cliff Broadhurst (Audit & Risk Committee Chair)
Kate Markey (Audit & Risk Committee Member)
Susan Brown
Jonathan Lepper (resigned 19/12/18)
Andrew Weston (appointed 28/01/19)
Louisa Whait (appointed 28/01/19)
Matthew Smith (appointed 28/01/19)

Secretary
Richard Jones

Chief Executive Officer
Jonathan Senker

Registered Office
The Old Granary - Westwick, Oakington
Cambridge CB24 3AR
Incorporated in United Kingdom, Company Number 03798884
Registered in England and Wales, Charity Number 1076630

Auditors
Sayer Vincent LLP
Invicta House, 108-114 Golden Lane
London EC1Y 0TL

Bankers
National Westminster Bank Plc
23 Market Street
Cambridge CB2 3PA

Solicitors
Hethertons LLP Solicitors
7-9 Rougier Street
York YO1 6HZ
The organisation is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 30th June 1999 and registered as a charity on 19th July 1999. The Company was established under a Memorandum of Association which established the objects and powers of the Company. It is governed by its Articles of Association which, following changes introduced by the Companies Act 2006, now also contain its objects and powers. In the event of the company being wound up members are required to contribute an amount not exceeding £1.

The financial statements comply with current statutory requirements, the memorandum and articles of association and the Statement of Recommended Practice - Accounting and Reporting by Charities: SORP applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with FRS 102. This trustees’ annual report includes a directors’ report as required by company law.

Appointment of Trustees

As set out in the Articles of Association, members of the Board of Trustees must be appointed by an ordinary resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the Trustees and must be appointed for a term of three years. On ceasing to be a Trustee a person may be reappointed provided that no one may serve as a Trustee for more than a maximum of 3 consecutive terms, after which they must cease to be a Trustee for at least 12 months before they are eligible to be re-appointed.

The Board members bring insight from their own lived experience of disability, understanding of the Charity's social mission, and traditional business and commercial skills. The range of experience is kept under review and in the event of any shortfalls, new Trustees are sought to fill the gaps.

Trustee Induction and Training

New Trustees undergo a period of induction to brief them on the values, direction and work of VoiceAbility Advocacy, their legal obligations under charity and company law and good practice duties, the contents of the Memorandum and Articles of Association, the Board and decision making processes, the business plan and recent financial performance of the Charity. During the induction they view our services and meet with key employees and other Trustees. Trustees are encouraged to participate in external and internally run training and development where this will facilitate the undertaking of their role.
The Board of Trustees administers the Charity. The Board meets once per quarter with additional meetings when required to deal with issues of strategy in more depth.

VoiceAbility also has within its constitution an Audit and Risk Committee, known as ARC. The ARC members meet once per quarter in advance of the Board meetings to review and discuss matters such as management and statutory accounts, risk and Governance. In addition to the Audit and Risk sub-committee, there is an Investment Committee. The Investment Committee convenes twice a year. The purpose of the committee is to ensure that the Charity is investing funds in line with the Investment Policy.

The Trustees have delegated the day to day responsibility for the provision of services to the Chief Executive Officer. The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for recommending strategy to the Board, for the management of its external profile and influencing work, ensuring that the Charity delivers the services in line with its mission and requirements and ensuring that key performance indicators are met across the range of social and business objectives. The Chief Executive Officer leads an Executive Management Team whose members are the executive managers of the Charity.

The principal risks and uncertainties facing the organisation are centred around five key areas:

- IMPACT – The desired impact of activities is not delivered or cannot be adequately evidenced
- FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY – Our ability to continue to make an impact in the medium to long term is threatened
- COMPLIANCE - The organisation fails to meet regulatory, legal or contract compliance requirements or expectations
- REPUTATION – We do not respond effectively to any incident that could result in damage to VoiceAbility's reputation
- SAFEGUARDING – We fail to adequately protect staff, volunteers or vulnerable people from harm or abuse

The steps to manage these risks are set out below.

The Trustees are responsible for setting the tone and influencing the culture of risk management within VoiceAbility.

The Executive Management Team have established a risk register, identifying the types of risks faced and prioritising them in terms of potential impact and likelihood of occurrence. Having due regard to the strength of the current internal controls and procedures already in place, a series of mitigating actions have been identified to appropriately address these risks.

The Executive Management Team, the Audit & Risk Committee, and the Board of Trustees, periodically review the risks and the risk management strategies to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the organisation.
Public Benefit

We have referred to the guidance in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing our aims and objectives and in planning our future activities. In particular, the Trustees consider how planned activities will contribute to the aims and objectives they have set.

Directors’ Liabilities

- There are no specific provisions relating specifically to Directors’ liabilities to report;
- There are no qualifying third party indemnity provisions which are the direct responsibility of the Charity;
- There are no qualifying pension scheme indemnity provisions, due to the charity operating a Defined Contribution scheme.

Fundraising

We are not currently a fundraising charity, with our income deriving primarily from local government, NHS and central government contracts and grants. We do however have some trust and grant funding and are therefore registered with the fundraising regulator. We follow their guidance when evaluating potential approaches to grant giving bodies. VoiceAbility does not use any professional fundraisers and no fundraising is undertaken on our behalf by third parties.

Disabled Employees

We recognise the importance and benefits of having disabled people involved in and leading the organisation’s work at every level including in governance roles, as employees and as volunteers. In relation to employment, the expertise in various aspects of our work which disabled people bring are valued strongly. Disabled applicants who meet the minimum essential criteria for posts are guaranteed interviews and we encourage applicants to identify any adjustments which are needed to ensure that they can participate equally in selection processes.

Training has been provided to managers on equality and employment, including specifically on disability equality.

The organisation has a full policy on diversity and employment, which underlines our approach to exceed legal requirements in relation to diversity as we recognise the importance and value to the organisation and to people using our services of a workforce which is diverse in relation to all protected characteristics, including disability.

We are continuing to work to improve the experience of and contribution by all employees, including disabled employees. We have built on the guidance published in July 2016 and have now been recognised as Disability Confident employer.

We have paid posts which specifically require personal insights that come from having a
learning disability, particularly Expert by Experience posts and our Speak Out Leaders. Additionally, we have roles of peer mentors and peer supporters which have provided work skills and therefore routes into employment for people who have used long-term mental health and substance use services.

Employee Involvement

VoiceAbility’s Trustees and Directors recognise employee engagement to be one of the most powerful drivers of organisational performance and of our success in enabling people who use our services to achieve their outcomes. It is central to our strategy.

The following are amongst measures which we take to promote effective employee involvement and engagement as well as to ensure that colleagues throughout the organisation are well-informed.

- Cross sectional employee groups, who help to develop critical organisational policies and practices, ranging from our pay policy and salary benchmarking to our approach to learning and development. As part of VoiceAbility’s strategy these groups will be formalised in the form of a Staff Forum.

- Regular attendance of the Chief Executive and other members of the Executive Management Team at team meetings throughout the organisation, to discuss the organisation’s direction and development and to seek, receive and act on feedback.

- Weekly ‘open phone’ times publicised to all members of staff, at which the Chief Executive seeks and receives feedback and responds to issues of concern. An alternative of email contact at any time is also made available to all colleagues.

- Regular internal communication updates and bulletins, including Newsflash (a monthly e-update written by staff and distributed to all teams) and Managers Bulletin which is available to all managers and senior practitioners.

- A well-maintained intranet site, VoiceAbilityWorld and on-line collaboration tools, including webinars and extensive use of Microsoft Teams.

- Regular team and supervision meetings held throughout the organisation.

Pay Policy

VoiceAbility operates an objective outcome pay policy. Staff are placed within bandings dependent on skillset and experience, and upon successful completion of agreed annual objectives, have the opportunity to progress in the banding by way of incremental ‘spine points’. Regular supervisions and appraisals ensure that pay progression is measurable within a band, ensuring greater transparency and understanding of pay related decisions.

Although the Executive Management Team are covered by the banding pay, ultimately decisions regarding the remuneration of these roles, and that of the Chief Executive, are made by the Board.
Overview
The Trustees are pleased that the Charity has once again significantly improved on the prior year’s result, keeping expenditure low and maximising efficiency in the delivery of our contracts.

- We generated a total operating income of £9,037,733 – 4.2% higher than last year (2018 - £8,677,301).
- Total expenditure of £8,818,075 is 0.7% higher than last year (2018 - £8,755,258).
- The result for the year is a surplus of £291,506.

The results over the last 3 years have continued to improve:
2016/17: £568,660 (deficit)
2017/18: £62,276 (deficit)
2018/19: £291,506 (surplus)

In 2018-19, VoiceAbility tightened up on cost analysis; where we would previously charge expenditure under an umbrella nominal code of ‘Activity Costs’, we have developed budget holders’ understanding and provided them more concise tools to record greater detail on all spend. This can be seen in note 4a where ‘Other Direct Costs’ has significantly reduced but Sub Contractor, Travel, Rent etc have all increased.

The Trustees are delighted with the major improvements made to the Sales Ledger process; not only have Trade Debtors reduced by £204,265 from 2018, Accrued Income has reduced by £400,644, a total reduction of £604,909. This illustrates that not only have we improved our sales invoicing process, in that we are in a position to invoice rather than accrue, but also the follow up credit control process, recovering debt in a much more timely manner.

Reserves
The reserves carried forward as at 31st March 2019 stand at £3,123,709:

General: £2,148,709
Designated: £975,000
Restricted: nil

£725,000 has been transferred from general reserves to designated reserves. This is to fund a programme of changes over the period 2019 to 2022 (with a large majority of the activity taking place in 2019/20). The programme will accelerate delivery of all parts of our new organisational strategy, which is described earlier in this document. We have budgeted the investment to cover pilots of new kinds of services to support the diversification part of our strategy; and to pay for temporary expert assistance on organisational capability projects required by the strategy.

The Unrestricted Reserves are those funds that are available to be used on the charitable objects, to be spent as the Trustees see fit.

The Trustees hold Unrestricted Reserves as either General Reserves or Designated Reserves. General Reserves are there to support the day-to-day operations of the organisation and to ensure that VoiceAbility is able to meet its future financial obligations. Designated Reserves are held as unrestricted funds that have been earmarked for a particular purpose by the Trustees.
VoiceAbility adopts a risk-based approach to determine the value of General Reserves necessary to meet its future financial obligations, taking into account the reliability of income streams and the extent to which expenditure is committed, as well as the major risks to which the charity is exposed.

VoiceAbility uses two approaches to inform decision-making over the value of General Reserves required in any one year. One provides a finite time-based cover for the committed expenditure faced by the organisation; the other places a financial value on facing the key unmitigated risks identified in the Risk Register.

For the first approach, the Trustees require a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 6-month’s worth of fixed costs cover to be held in General Reserves. The Trustees consider these periods a reasonable and realistic amount of time to curtail, change or serve notice on contractual agreements with suppliers or staff.

Fixed costs are defined in this context as those that VoiceAbility are legally obliged to pay for a period of time regardless of delivery levels and income streams. These costs comprise Influenceable Costs (Premises, Communications & Software, and Helpline) and Central Function Costs. Due to the predominantly contract-based nature of the income streams, it is assumed that operational staff are subject to TUPE legislation and as such are not included in these calculations.

The second approach used is to aggregate the assessed financial impact of the key unmitigated risks identified in the VoiceAbility Risk Register and assume that these risks occur either concurrently or sequentially over a timeframe that does not allow recovery between events. The quantification of those risks will be assessed by the EMT and validated by the Audit & Risk Committee alongside the annual review of the Risk Register.

Utilising the outcomes of these two approaches the Audit & Risk Committee will make recommendations to the Board of Trustees on the required value of the General Reserves for each financial year as part of the approval of the annual budget.

Employing the first method, the level of reserves required to cover monthly fixed costs of £149,000 is between £596,000 and £894,000 (4-6 months). Taking the undesignated, unrestricted reserves as at 31st March 2019, VoiceAbility are in a position to cover their monthly fixed costs for 14 months. The Trustees recognise that the current level of reserves are higher than the policy requirement and are looking at ways to appropriately further the objects of the Charity, using these excess reserves.

**Investments & Bank Accounts**

VoiceAbility’s Investment Committee manages its investment portfolio with the support of management company CCLA. At the end of 2018-19 a total of £849,500 had been invested, a movement on last year due to the purchase of additional units at a cost of £60,000 in December 2018, Below shows the results of our investment year on year:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>1,385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>87,877</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-18</td>
<td>15,681</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-19</td>
<td>71,848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>176,791</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In March 2018, a new savings bank account, offering preferable interest rates to that of our current savings account, was opened. Throughout the year, transfers have been made to and from our current account with a view to optimise interest receivable. In 2018-19, £7,758 interest was received, significantly higher than prior year (2018: £1,547).
Going Concern
The charity has sufficient financial resources and longer-term contracts with a number of commissioners and suppliers across different geographic areas. As a consequence, the directors believe that the charity is well placed to manage its business risks successfully, despite the current uncertain economic outlook that is inevitable with changing national policies and Brexit.

After making enquiries, the directors have a reasonable expectation that the Charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Accordingly, they continue to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the annual report and accounts.

Events since the balance sheet date
There are no significant post balance sheet events to note.
Statement of Trustees Responsibilities

Company Law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period.

In preparing those financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

a) Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;

b) Observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;

c) Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;

d) Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Charity will continue to operate

e) State whether applicable UK accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities. The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company’s website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Disclosure of Information to the Auditors

So far as each person who was a director at the date of approving this report is aware, there is no relevant audit information, being information needed by the auditor in connection with preparing its report, of which the auditor is unaware. Having made enquiries of fellow directors and the Charity’s auditor, each director has taken all the steps that he/she is obliged to take as a director in order to make himself/herself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information.

This report along with the financial statements was approved by the Trustees on ________________________ and signed on their behalf by:

Cliff Broadhurst
Director and Trustee
Independent Auditor’s Report to the Members of VoiceAbility Advocacy

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of VoiceAbility Advocacy (the ‘parent charitable company’) and its subsidiaries (the ‘group’) for the year ended 31 March 2018 which comprise the consolidated statement of financial activities, the group and parent charitable company balance sheets, the consolidated statement of cash flows and the notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 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 group’s and of the parent charitable company’s affairs as at 31 March 2018 and of the group’s incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended
● Have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice
● Have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Act 2011

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 group 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

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the ISAs (UK) require us to report to you where:
● The trustees’ use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is not appropriate; or
● The trustees have not disclosed in the financial statements any identified material uncertainties that may cast significant doubt about the group’s or the parent charitable company’s ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue.
Other information

The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the trustees’ annual report, including the strategic report, other than the financial statements and our auditor’s report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, 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.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

● The information given in the trustees’ annual report, including the strategic report, for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements

● The trustees’ annual report, including the strategic report, has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the group and the parent charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the trustees’ annual report, including the strategic report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Companies Act 2006 and Charities Act 2011 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

● Adequate accounting records have not been kept by the parent charitable company, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or

● The parent charitable company financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or

● Certain disclosures of trustees’ remuneration specified by law are not made; or

● We have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or

Responsibilities of Trustees

As explained more fully in the statement of trustees’ responsibilities set out in the trustees’ annual report, the trustees (who are also the directors of the parent charitable company for the purposes of company law) are 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 trustees determine 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 trustees are responsible for assessing the group’s and the parent charitable company’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 trustees either intend to liquidate the group or the parent charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor’s responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed auditor under the Companies Act 2006 and section 151 of the Charities Act 2011 and report in accordance with those Acts.

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.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs (UK), we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the group’s internal control
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the trustees
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the trustees’ use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the group’s or the parent charitable company’s ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor’s report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor’s report. However, future events or conditions may cause the group or the parent charitable company to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation
- Obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding the financial information of the entities or business activities within the group to express an opinion on the consolidated financial statements. We are responsible for the direction, supervision
and performance of the group audit. We remain solely responsible for our audit opinion.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006 and section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and regulations made under section 154 of that Act. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company'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 charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Judith Miller (Senior statutory auditor)
Date
for and on behalf of Sayer Vincent LLP, Statutory Auditor
Invicta House, 108-114 Golden Lane, LONDON, EC1Y 0TL

Sayer Vincent LLP is eligible to act as auditor in terms of section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006