

Annual Report 2023



Chair's Statement

It is a privilege to be Chair of WECIL, and to see the wide range of high quality services we deliver, and to be writing another positive Annual Report.

I will outline a number of developments over the last year, and more detail is in the Chief Executive Officer's Report, but I am particularly pleased that we have a clear strategy - launched at the last Annual General Meeting - and that we also have the financial stability and



the quality of staff and leadership to enable us to deliver what we have promised. We have a particularly strong Senior Leadership Team with Lucie Martin-Jones heading the Community Development Team, Alex Johnston the Independent Living Payment Team, and Matt Justice the Children's and Young People's Services- all with ambitious plans, and also operational competence in their areas.

Dominic Ellison, our CEO's strategic thinking and understanding of systems work, has supported them to develop their provision in positive ways to ensure it is responsive to the needs of Disabled children and adults and their families, and his leadership skills are much appreciated.

The quality of WECIL's work is evidenced in much of the feedback we get - particularly for the relatively new Navigators' Team, who are able to take a person-centred and holistic approach to establishing what people need, and how it can best be provided without passing them from pillar to post, which is so often the experience when Disabled people look for support.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff and managers in WECIL for their hard work over the last year.

Chair's Statement

A different aspect of our expanding role is working with businesses and statutory services, and this year we launched Disability.Inc. with new branding, to develop this further. This is clearly a success story as it is now generating consistent income and exceeding its budget (which was a challenge during Lockdown) but is also raising WECIL's profile and reputation and forging new partnerships.

This approach is really important in terms of the Social Model of Disability, as we are trying to change the environment in which Disabled people need to operate, by getting employers to remove the barriers that Disabled staff and customers face in the wider community, through carrying out access audits, consultancy and Disability Equality Training. Credit goes to Kinny Chinangwa, Ali Browning and their team for this innovative and impactful development.

What I like about being involved in WECIL, is that it is constantly evolving and developing, and the establishment of the Know Your Rights group of People with Learning Difficulties and the Disabled Women Take Action Group (facilitated with Bristol Women's Voice) are both impacting externally through campaigns and awareness raising voice, but also internally, as people with learning difficulties start to agree their own priorities, design services and have a greater say in how WECIL works. We were particularly pleased that Karl Stephenson from the group has joined our Board of Trustees.

I feel we now have a strong governance structure, which is hard to establish in voluntary and community sector organisations, as the role of the trustee comes with significant responsibilities and time commitments. We have an engaged Board with a wide range of experience, the majority of whom are also Disabled people, which adds particular expertise to the decision making. The Quality Sub-Committee continues to provide rigorous scrutiny of our service areas, and the Finance and HR Sub-Committees ensure we are legally compliant and develop best practice in these crucial areas. I would like to thank all my fellow Trustees for their commitment to their role.

During the year, we established an Executive Committee to ensure governance runs smoothly, and I would like to thank Vicki Kaye and Lindi Doy, the Vice-Chairs, for their commitment and wisdom. I am also pleased to see the development of a strong Staff Consultative Committee, enabling staff to work with Trustees, and to be involved in the co-production of policies and procedures, which is improving their quality. The saddest moment of the last year was the untimely death of our Honorary President, Jayne Carr.



She had been awarded this role by the Lord Mayor at the last AGM, having previously held almost all officer roles in the organisation since she joined the Board when it was first set up. Jayne is hugely missed by all of us, and WECIL is not the same without her.

It is clear from the requests for help that we get, that the Cost-of-Living crisis is drastically impacting on Disabled people's ability to thrive, as is the decimation of the statutory sector through the starvation of funds from Central Government.

We recognise the pressure Social Care Departments, Youth and Play Services and the NHS are under, and want to continue to work productively with them in partnership, to improve their service quality and to deliver what Disabled people want. However, we must also continue to put on pressure locally and nationally through our lobbying work with other Disabled People's Organisations, to get the Government to increase the funding and support available for 'adult care', and Disabled children's and young people's services, to make them a priority, and to force them to take radical action to tackle the discrimination and marginalisation that Disabled children and adults face.



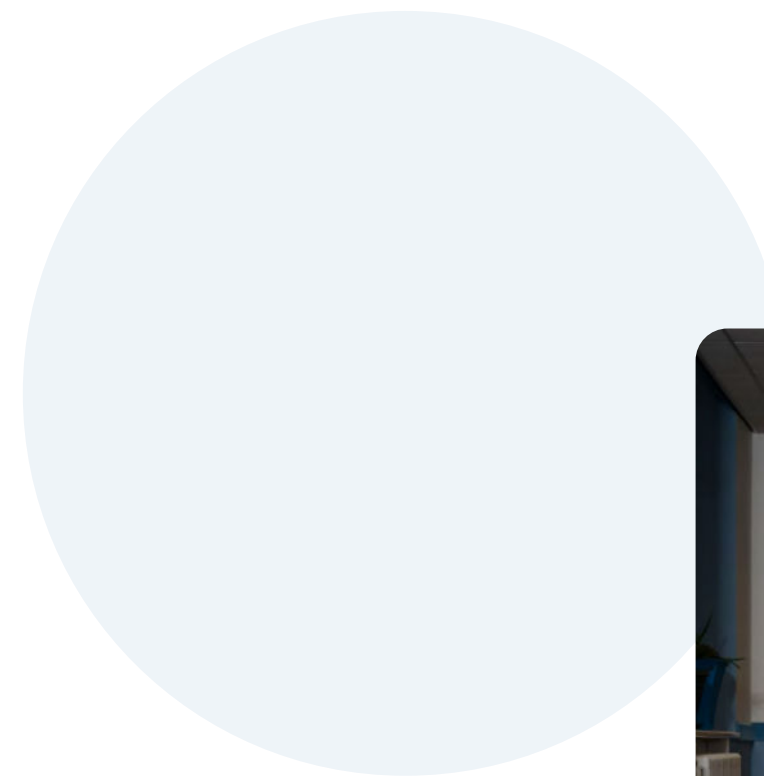
**Jayne Carr - WECIL Trustee
from 1995-2022**

Chair's Statement

We move into the next financial year in a strong position, but with a range of challenges, not least that we are unclear as to our future at the Vassall Centre, as it has planning permission for a major housing development, and we struggle to find suitable premises for our holiday and complex needs provision, and so an affordable and accessible premises strategy is a high priority.

In spite of on-going challenges, I am confident WECIL will continue to evolve and innovate, and to remain the key Disabled People-Led Organisation providing high quality services for Disabled children and adults in the region.

**Ruth Pickersgill MBE
Chair of Trustees.**



Trustees' Annual Report

The Trustees, who are also Directors for the purposes of company law, present their report and the financial statements of the company for the year ended 31 March 2023.

The Trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" (FRS 102) in preparing the annual report and financial statements of the charity. The Annual Report includes the Directors' Report as required under Company Law.

Appointment of Trustees

Trustees are elected at the Annual General Meeting. The Trustees may also co-opt a Trustee to either fill a vacancy or as an additional Trustee. They may remain co-opted but if they wish to become a full Trustee this appointment must be ratified at the next following Annual General Meeting.

Delivering public benefit

The Trustees have due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission when setting their objectives and activities for the year and aim to ensure that the activities of the organisation provide benefit to Disabled people in accordance with WECIL's stated aims and objectives.

WECIL's aims and objectives, as stated in our Memorandum and Articles of Association, are "The support of persons, principally within the West of England, who are Disabled, by providing or encouraging the provision of services which facilitate independence in daily living activities, active participation in, and full inclusion in society."

WECIL was set up to improve the lives of Disabled people within the West of England. This is done by providing support and services to Disabled people to enable them to have choice and control over their lives. The Trustees believe that the activities of the organisation during the last twelve months have once again provided benefit to Disabled people. WECIL has delivered a range of highly regarded services, events and activities that empower Disabled people and are described in more detail in the following report.



Chief Executive Summary

WECIL's 5-Year Strategy was launched with great fanfare at last year's Annual General Meeting, which for the first time was held as part of our annual Access All Areas event, attracting a larger number of members, partners and allies to the AGM.



Our AGM this October will be an opportunity to report to members on how we have progressed against the key objectives that were included in this bold and ambitious strategy.

At the time of writing this Annual Report, WECIL is just over halfway through the first year of the strategy, and I am really pleased to note the progress made across many of the strategic and departmental objectives.

Whilst our Children & Young People's Services have continued to grow significantly – thanks in no small part to securing the contract to deliver Short Breaks services in South Gloucestershire, which moves us towards our ambition of ensuring all core WECIL services are available in each of our core Local Authority areas; the departmental objectives in the strategy focus on encouraging and supporting the children, play and youth sector more broadly to ensure that mainstream provision is inclusive of a wider range of people's needs.

In doing so, we can plan to divest some services to a wider market, which will break the de facto monopoly in Disabled children and young people's provision that WECIL has been compelled to develop in the wake of the closure of so many specialist provider organisations, and support others to ensure a wider range of choice for Disabled young people.

This is one area in which there has been significant progress, as the youth sector in Bristol has come together as Playful Bristol and Youth Work Alliance, with funding from Quartet Community Foundation, to produce a



strategy for the sector in which WECIL have played a leading role; ensuring that inclusion is a key principle of new service design and providing training, support and partnership to providers to achieve this.

Our Community Services team have emphatically delivered on embedding the Navigator Approach across WECIL. The Navigators team, which is funded by a generous three-year grant from the National Lottery Community Fund, has succeeded in providing a single point of access for Disability-related support which works in tandem with all areas of WECIL support provision to ensure that Disabled people can self-direct a package of support to meet their individual challenges and barriers. This could include support from across WECIL services as well as from the network of effective community-based providers which the Navigators continue to grow.

The success of the Navigators is evident in the high demand for the service and the impact that is measured in terms of helping Disabled people meet the objectives they have set themselves, and has led to the growth of the team, attracting further sources of funding to do so. The weekly Navigators

Approach meetings have become a popular opportunity for all WECIL staff to discuss live support cases to explore solutions from the point of view of many areas of expertise and to share learning from creative approaches to meeting diverse need. The platforms provided by peer advocacy groups such as Know Your Rights have influenced service design both within and without WECIL, as well as providing paid opportunities for Disabled people to be consulted on their experience.

Disability.Inc. has successfully launched its new brand identity for WECIL's business support services and is successfully delivering above its year-on-year growth objectives. It is particularly encouraging that when we analyse the new customers we find that much of the growth comes from referrals from previous or long-standing customers of the service, which is an extremely positive form of feedback that indicates the value that organisations of all sectors are placing on the impact of working with a Disabled People's Organisation (DPO) to address their access barriers and deliver on a strategy for full inclusion. Working with our existing customer base we are developing the financial business case for organisations to

Chief Executive Summary

buy these services, as well as measuring the positive impact in opening up opportunities for Disabled people. I am also particularly excited by a new contract for Disability.Inc. to support Somerset Council in removing barriers across the borough.

Through the 'Accessible Somerset' programme WECIL will engage with Disabled people and organisations across Somerset to establish key areas of focus, whilst training, support and access audits will be available to businesses and venues across the county. Unlike other WECIL projects, Disability.Inc. has no geographical boundaries (access audits this year went as far as Edinburgh), and whilst WECIL has no aims to grow its geographical footprint merely for growth's sake, we are excited by the opportunities presented in building relationships with the new Somerset Council and with Disabled people who live there as the county does not have the Disabled leadership enjoyed in our region and in neighbouring areas that have a DPO presence.

Adjacent to our existing area of operation, we are interested in exploring what could be achieved in promoting disability rights in Somerset by extending our core services to there, or supporting the development of a locally-rooted DPO to do so.

Our Independent Living Payments Team have continued to deepen their working relationships with Local Authorities to support greater personalisation in delivery of support under the Care Act. Building effective partnership working is increasing opportunities to impact systems change in how support needs are assessed, funded and met. In this financial year we have run a successful Individual Service Funds pilot with Bristol City Council which is creating opportunities to innovate new ways to meet Disabled people's assessed needs and, in turn, opening up new opportunities for other community sector organisations to provide services. We will shortly be piloting Direct Payments Reviews on behalf of Bristol City Council – this is the first time they have tried delegating Care Act Duties to an external provider.

By working with a Navigator in these reviews, people using a Direct Payment to manage their support needs will have an opportunity to evaluate how effective it has been in meeting their personal objectives, as well as explore further opportunities to access effective support. One way of exploring opportunities will be through WECIL's Create My Support Plan platform, which has undergone a significant upgrade during this year with improvements co-produced with users of the service. The new Create My Support Plan provides a highly accessible tool to create a self-directed



support package and features access to a market place of service providers from across the community sector in the local area.

We see the greatest threat to disability rights, as well as challenges to our current models for financial sustainability, coming in forms of the huge cuts in national funding to Local Authorities for Adult Social Care and Disabled Children's Services, which have resulted in massive budget deficits that have to be met at a local level. Thankfully, we have seen demonstrated again and again that increasing personalisation, choice and control in care and support delivers cost effective solutions and we are in a strong position to support our Local Authority partners in enacting this to the benefit of Disabled people.

The strategy also indicates the opportunities, as well as the threats, resulting from the significant changes to local NHS organisations. Central to this has been the establishment of Integrated Care Systems. In the first year of the BNSSG Integrated Care Board (ICB), which has replaced the Clinical Commissioning Group, WECIL has been well represented with my own appointment to the Integrated Care Partnership Board (ICPB) which brings together the ICB with the area's Social Care Commissioners (Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Councils), health and social care

Create My Support Plan provides a highly accessible tool to create a self-directed support package.



service providers as well as key voluntary, community and social enterprise sector organisations.

My perspective to this board is multi-faceted as WECIL is both a social care service provider and a membership organisation which offers representation for Disabled people who are users of these services. Whilst the ICB is still in its relative infancy, it is difficult to judge whether this will open up opportunities to deliver new support within health systems. I have however been impressed by the leadership of the ICB Chief Executive, Shane Devlin, who has convened groups of Disabled people and their organisations to provide insight into their experience of the barriers to healthcare and co-produced an action plan for improvement, and it is evident that Shane is sincerely committed to delivering on this plan.

Another positive outcome of the ICPB is that the community sector is coordinating strategically around it. As we do so, we will learn more about each other's work, how to advocate for each other and hopefully avoid inappropriate competing between ourselves. The VCSE Alliance which Voscur is coordinating will provide the vehicle to deliver this and reduce the burden on member organisations in navigating and influencing the system individually. WECIL is participating with national policy work led by Locality which aims to provide a framework for health systems to apply the same Keep it Local principles that have been formally adopted by councils including Bristol and South Gloucestershire which should make it easier for local community organisations to deliver services into the local NHS.



Chief Executive Summary

WECIL has maintained its voice and influence activity at a national level, and it is heartening to see the DPO sector continue to organise for greater impact. DPO Forum England is now meeting regularly with both the Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work and the Minister for Social Care, developing an influential voice in policy and service reform, whereas the Our Voices group of DPO members of Disability Rights UK continues to hold Government to account, for example as a Core Participant in the UK Covid-19 Public Inquiry. WECIL's focus looking ahead is to further engage our membership and participation, through our Community Gatherings, a revised membership offer and in our objective to fund and employ a new Policy and Engagement Lead so that we can support local disability activism to connect with our platform for national influence.

I remain thankful for the hard work and commitment of a dedicated and talented workforce across WECIL, as well our passionate volunteers



and expert Board of Trustees. Their continued hard work has sustained high quality provision and innovated new services which support Disabled people to achieve the independence, choice and control they deserve.

Dominic Ellison
Chief Executive Officer.



Community Engagement and Support

Our Navigators service and Check in and Chat Community (telephone befriending service) were both initially established as short term measures during the COVID pandemic to support Disabled people to navigate the crisis and keep connected.



After what was intended to be a 6-month piece of work starting in October 2020, we quickly saw the value in the work and new way of working and following a series of short term funds and some self-funding, we were ecstatic to be successful in securing our Reaching Communities funding for the Click and Chat Community which would enable us to really embed the 'Navigator's Approach' across the organisation and continue to support Disabled people in the way that best suits them.

As a 'systems thinking' organisation we had for some time been exploring better ways to serve our community. We have historically been regulated by grants and contracts which led us to be driven by KPIs and restrictions over how, why, and when we could support a Disabled person. We know that people are complex individuals who do not fit into a set of pre-determined outcomes. We hear so often about the systems surrounding people failing and not helping them by not listening to what matters to them. We also know that this way of working wastes much time, energy, and money, what we would call 'waste work', as well as often re-traumatising people while their situation becomes more urgent, they fall into crisis, or they become disillusioned and give up.

The flexibility of our National Lottery Community Fund has meant we can work with people in a holistic way, understanding their bigger picture. So often we hear that people appreciate just being listened to. We are not prescriptive about how much time we can spend with a person, where or how we meet with them or what the expected outcomes of our work will be



and this leads us to having a greater understanding of what the needs are and what the real resource is (time, money, expertise) to work with someone in an accessible, holistic way.

As a team we continuously meet, review, and discuss what we are learning, what are the themes, where resource needs to be allocated and how well we feel we are achieving what matters to our community.

We were lucky enough to build a very capable team of Navigators from existing staff who moved into the new team. The benefit of this approach was being able to mobilise quickly and having the experts at the front. Each of our Navigators has a specialism however is also multi-skilled. They know WECIL well and have worked on various services meaning that anyone who picks up a piece of incoming demand either a phone call, online referral, or email, can immediately start working with it.

This could mean bringing another expert or Navigator in to support but ultimately this should mean a seamless experience for the Disabled person, building a trusted relationship with a member of the team and not needing

to repeat their story multiple times. All our team have a lived experience which they bring to the role, either as a Disabled person themselves or as a carer or parent. This is an important aspect in relationship building, having well placed empathy, and understanding the frustrations and challenges our community face when trying to navigate the complex systems that surround them.



Check in and Chat - Befriending

Continuing developing strong connections with isolated clients building trust and rapport. We have been working holistically not only providing befriending matches but referring clients and volunteers into WECIL services and reaching out to external organisation and enabling client referrals for their continuing journey.

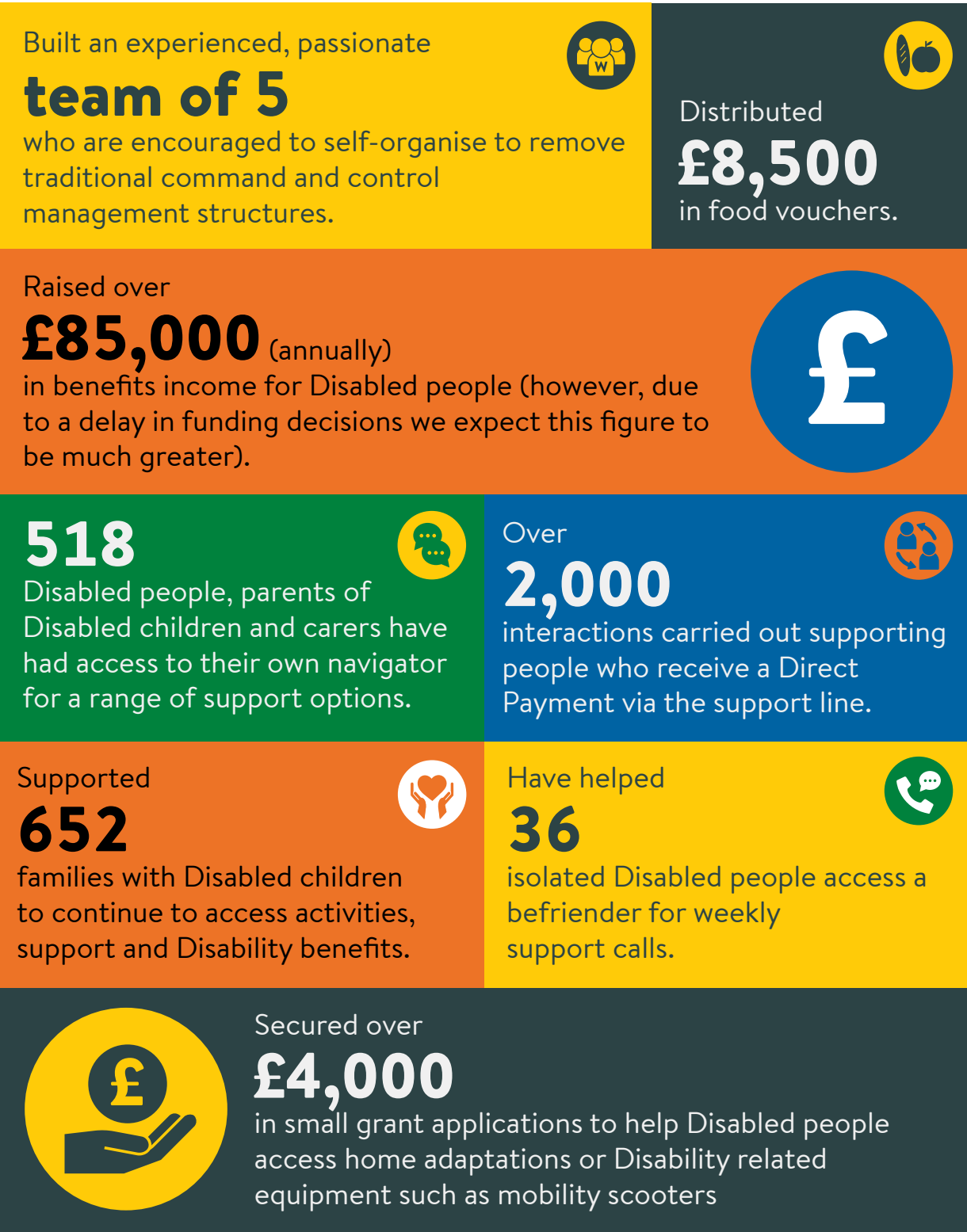


We set boundaries around the length of our service to find a balance of ensuring new referrals coming in can access befriending and clients don't become too reliant on the service.

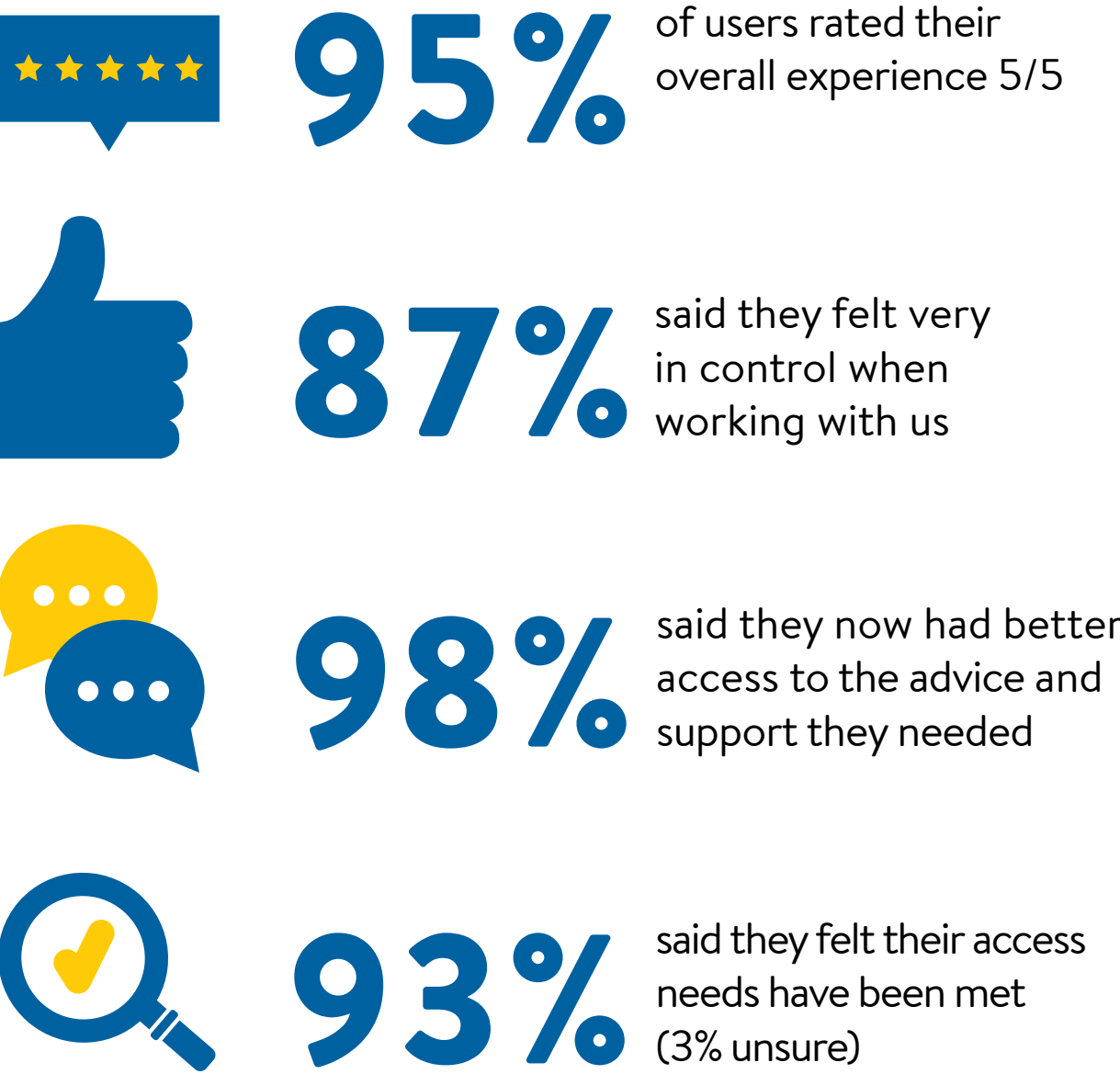
There was the testing out of in-person group befriending which didn't work for the wider group's confidence or barriers to travelling. Gathering further feedback, we plan to build in 1-1 in person befriending with new funding.

The differences we’re making...

As we reflect on the year gone by, it’s amazing to see what we have achieved. Whilst our community is still experiencing the negative impact of the COVID pandemic, we have ended up playing a key role in Bristol’s Cost of Living crisis response. The team have adapted to the current demand as well as maintaining our values and operating principles.



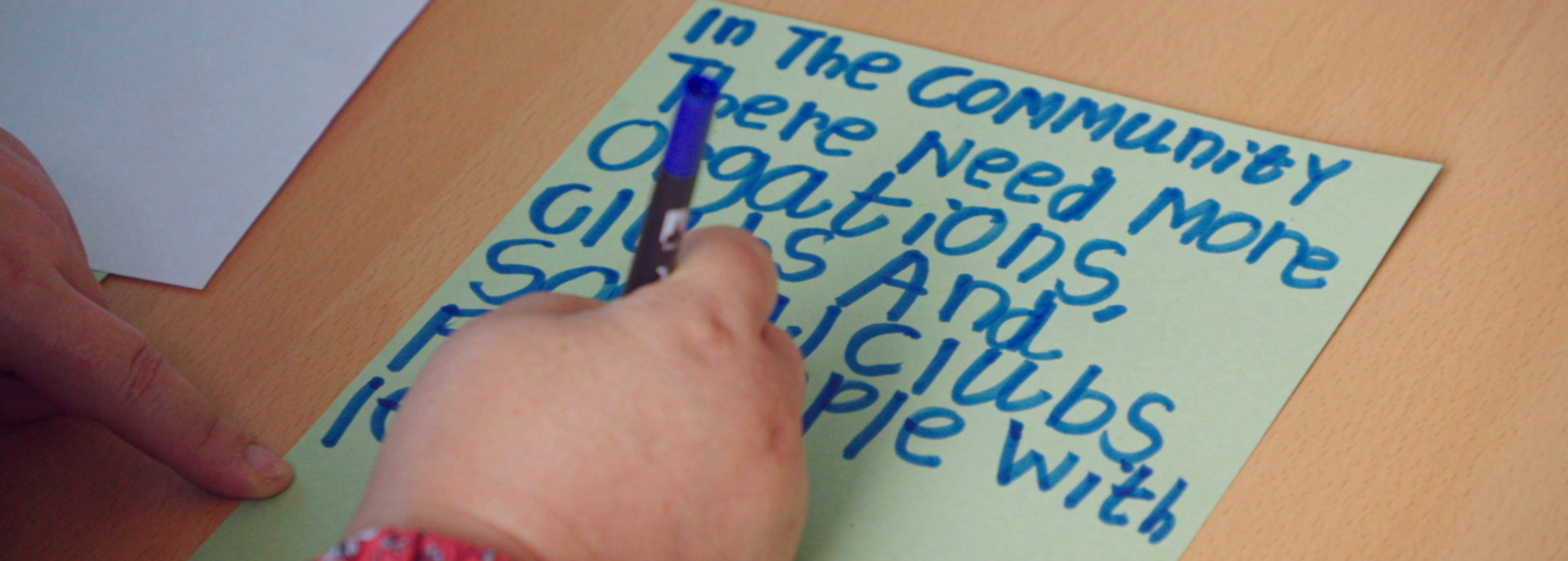
Our impact



Participation and Engagement Work

We have continued to work with different groups of Disabled people on exciting and innovative pieces of participation and engagement work throughout the year whilst raising awareness of the issues that Disabled people face.

Our Know Your Rights team (a group of self-advocates who all have a learning disability and/ or autism), have worked hard to develop a safe, online chat forum to include other people with learning disabilities and/ or autism in discussions which inform and raise important issues their



community are facing. They have also co-produced various activities, meetings, and campaigns to build on membership and raise awareness including through consulting on Easy Read documents, accessibility of spaces and developing accessible information regarding the Cost-of-Living crisis. The team are confident presenting to big groups now and have worked with the SS Great Britain, Milestones Trust and We the Curious on a range of interesting projects which positively impact the inclusion of people with a learning disability and/or autism.

Working in partnership with Bristol Women's Voice, our Disabled Women Take Action team have campaigned against the closure of public toilets in Bristol (an issue that particularly impacts women and even more so, Disabled women) through a range of campaigning and creative projects to raise awareness.

The women have also worked alongside the University of the West of England to influence the curriculum for counselling students to include more detail on the Social Model of Disability and the lived experience of Disabled women who often felt that when accessing therapy their impairment was either not fully understood or too heavily focussed on. We

hope to continue this work with different professions in training.

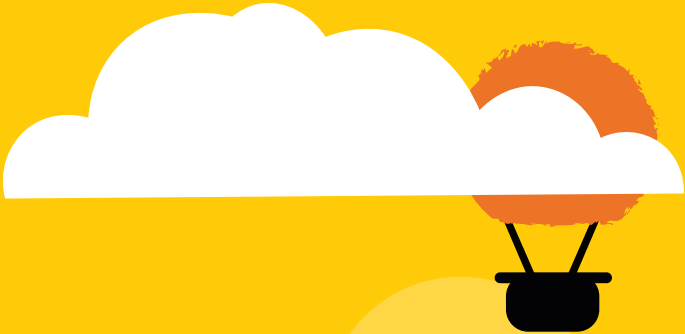
Finally, the second year of Connecting Through Culture As We Age, has seen some fantastic prototypes realised with the support of a wide range of creatives and developers.

The project has been entirely co-produced with older people from different communities including older Disabled people to develop their own projects which increase participation in social, digital and cultural life.

WECIL are supporting the Recycle City project RECYCLE CITY which was founded by Ruth Harrison and is about designing and visioning a future – it is a speculative city founded on the values of creativity, community, opportunity, human and animal welfare, healing, connection, conservation, love, joy and celebration. It is a place where all ages / species can be together.

Lucie Martin-Jones
Head of Community Engagement Services.





Children and Youth Services

The Children and Youth Services department has continued to develop and grow this year.

With new essential services now being offered in South Gloucestershire and further services now being developed within Bath and North East Somerset, the department continues to grow its delivery of high quality services for Disabled Children, Young People and their families. The department was also successful within the recommission of Term-Time Short Breaks ensuring that we can continue to provide vital services within Bath and North East Somerset. Our newly designed services ensure that we now provide a transitional service for Children and Young People within the Keynsham and Saltford area where they are able to be supported by services from aged 5 through to 18. We continue to work hard to deliver an array of high quality provision across key local authority areas:

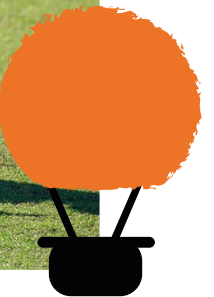


In total WECIL’s Children and Youth Services (including those ran by our sub-contractors) have delivered 940 sessions to Disabled Children and Young People this year across the Bristol and B&NES areas. We have also provided one-to-one volunteer support to 62 families and 1:1 Short Break support to 16 families within the South Gloucestershire area.

Out and About

Funded by Bristol City Council, we are the lead partner of a consortium, including National Autistic Society, Khaas and Sense providing Short Breaks for Disabled Children and Young People across the city. The Out and About contract funds a variety of our different services:

- Bristol Befriending (one-to-one volunteering support for Disabled Children and Young People)
- Bristol Play (sessions for Disabled children aged 5-12)
- Bristol Family Activities (sessions for families with a Disabled child)
- Bristol Youth (sessions for Disabled young people aged 13-19)



Holiday Short Breaks

Funded by Bristol City Council, we deliver a variety of School Holiday sessions for Disabled Children and Young People aged 5-18, particularly those children and young people who display 'complex needs' or 'challenging behavior'. Alongside our commissioned Holiday Short Breaks we provide a Direct Payment service that enable families to use a Direct Payment to purchase sessions for their Disabled child or young person attend – increasing choice and control for families and widening our reach.





Children in Need Inclusion

Funded by BBC Children in Need, we offer evening and weekend sessions for both Disabled and non-disabled young people aged 13-19 from three locations across Bristol: Knowle, Southmead, Hillfields.

Bath and North East Somerset (B&NES) Befriending

Funded by Bath and North East Somerset Council, we provide befriending opportunities to Disabled Children and Young People from 5-21. We work with our volunteers to offer safe and engaging activities that they can do with their linked child/young person on a one-to-one basis.

B&NES Groups

Funded by Bath and North East Somerset Council, we work in partnership with Bath Rugby Foundation, National Autistic Society, and the lead provider Bath Area Play Project. We deliver sessions for Disabled Children and Young People from 8-13 and 13-21 within the B&NES local authority area.

B&NES Holiday Short Breaks

New to WECIL our B&NES Holiday Short Breaks service is funded by Bath and North East Somerset Council. We work in partnership with Bath Area Play Project and Threeways school to delivery School Holiday Sessions for Disabled Children and Young People aged 5-18 during school holidays.

Listening Partnership

Funded by Bristol City Council, the Listening Partnership is a consultative group dedicated to developing the voices of Disabled young people and those with so called 'Special Educational Needs'. The group continues to consult with a range of organisations and services giving a valuable voice to young Disabled people in Bristol.



South Gloucestershire Short Breaks (1:1 Support)

Funded by South Gloucestershire Council and new to WECIL we work in partnership with Sense to provide 1:1 short break support either within the community or within their home to Disabled Children and Young People aged 5-18.

Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme

We have supported 11 Young People to start their Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) Bronze Award. The DofE scheme sees the young people complete 4 sections which include: Learning a new skill, volunteering, completing a new physical activity and an overnight expedition where the Young People learn navigation, outdoor and independent living skills.

Matt Justice
Head of Children and Youth Services.



Independent Living Payments Team and Payroll Social Enterprise

The Independent Living Payments Team are supporting 827 individual Disabled people and families to live the life they choose by supporting them with their Direct Payment.

489 are from across Bristol, 206 in South Gloucestershire, 128 across Bath and North East Somerset, with the remainder in North Somerset.

The Team has increased in size to meet demand with the addition of two new staff that bring even more lived experience of Direct Payments, one Advisor who receives a Direct Payment for her adult son, and the other who has a long career as a Personal Assistant to a Disabled person. Both have had a very positive impact on the team and the community we serve and embed our lived experience principles we bring to the Health and Social Care sector. It is also important to recognise we lost a higher proportion than usual of our community this year, partially due to Covid 19. We also sadly lost one of our founders and WECIL Honorary President, Jayne Carr, who pioneered Direct Payments and was supported by our team with her Direct Payment for two decades. We will miss her hugely.



The team have made some good progress on our Strategic Objectives:

Support the development of a thriving local third sector market meeting Disabled people's support needs using tools such as Individual Service Funds

Our learning this year has been that more flexible use of Direct Payments, using them for what matters to our community, has been best achieved on an individual basis rather than wholesale change. The team have had many successes working with individual Social Workers to use Direct Payments more flexibly giving our community more choice and control over how their care and support needs are met. There are plans in Bristol to start commissioning Individual Service Funds in 2024.



Lead systems change in adoption of Personal Budgets for Disabled children and young people in the West of England

The year has seen us make progress on this objective with the creation of personal budgets for children and young people across Bristol from Bristol's SEND team (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) giving our young people more choice and control over how their education, social and communication needs are met. It is exciting to be to be trailblazing this kind of work, putting our community at the heart of systems change.

The team continue to be at the cutting edge of systems change with an exciting collaboration with an organisation that has a software product that will bring more transparency, control and independence to our community in how they manage their Direct Payment and payroll. We are excited to pilot this in the Autumn of 2023 and launch in 2024.

Despite the challenges of cost of living and the impact of Covid 19, financial performance has been good with unrestricted turnover increasing by £47K on the previous year and the department continuing to achieve a surplus which will enable the WECIL charity to meet its strategic objectives.

The WECIL Payroll Social Enterprise is supporting 640 individual Disabled people and their families with payroll services to help pay their Personal Assistants. The team are immensely proud of the work they do to take away the pressure of paying staff, managing tax and pensions to enable our community to live the life they choose.

The team has increased in capacity too to meet the increasing demand with the addition of a young person that has grown up with WECIL using its Children and Young People's services. He



joined the team as a Payroll Apprentice bringing more lived experience and is performing brilliantly. We hope that he will join the team as a Payroller at the end of his apprenticeship in December 2023. Two of our team have completed or are close to completion of their Chartered Institute for Payroll and Pension Professionals (CIPP) qualifications underpinning their vast experience.

The team have made progress in meeting their strategic objectives:

Use the expertise of WECIL Social Enterprise Ltd to generate new unrestricted income for WECIL by developing our Payroll business beyond the charitable objectives of WECIL

The team are already processing payroll for organisations outside of our

usual Direct Payment employers and are embarking on an ambitious and rapid training programme to grow this part of our business. We have brought in outside help to support us with business planning, and we hope to launch our new product offer, starting with our friends in the charitable sector and other social enterprises, in 2024.

Financially the Payroll Social Enterprise has performed well with a good financial contribution to WECIL Charity, £34k more turnover than budgeted and, despite bigger fluctuations in register than we had anticipated, operated at a surplus of £11k.

Alex Johnston
WECIL Head of Commercial and Social Enterprise.





Disability.Inc.

One of our main focuses and achievements this year was to launch our Business Support Brand, Disability.Inc. and push our marketing strategy to boost our online presence and sale of our key services to new customers.



Throughout 2022 we worked on the details of a brand guideline and social media campaign aimed at the launch of Disability.Inc. This would coincide with the successful launch of our new website at our Access All Areas event in October 2022 which allowed us to showcase the services we provide and the impact those services have had on some of our key customers and strategic partners. Launching Disability.Inc. has ensured a clear social enterprise brand within WECIL that allows businesses to better understand the difference between our charitable services and our chargeable services. The launch of the brand, website and clear social media strategy with The Discourse has seen sales increase this year by over 120% from the last financial year.

Training

Our focus for the year was to implement a new method of training delivery by having a trainer with lived experience and adding a lived experience facilitator. This will allow two different viewpoints on disability and allow attendees to feel comfortable to ask questions in a safe environment. This method has enabled us to deliver more bespoke requests for different types of businesses and organisations.

Disability.Inc. continued to support Bristol City Council with delivering Disability Equality Training to organisations on their We Work for Everyone Programme. We also improved our bespoke offers through further expertise from our Lived Experience Facilitators who have different impairments and health conditions. This was highlighted through training that we developed for Bristol Health Partners, Creative Youth Network, Off the Record, South Gloucestershire Council and Somerset Council.

Over the last year we delivered 42 training sessions and created new working relationships with 12 organisations which included Brighter Places Housing Association and Royal West of England Academy.

Accessibility Support

This year has been our most successful having provided accessibility support to 30 organisations throughout the UK. Disability.Inc. provided continued support to our strategic partners Burges Salmon by delivering an access audit of their offices in London and Edinburgh to create accessible consistency in all their working environments.

Disability.Inc. extended its working relationship with local authorities in the region by supporting council redevelopment initiatives. We were commissioned by Bristol City Council to provide accessibility support to the development of the Frome Gateway and Castle Park as part of the City Development Delivery Plan. Disability.Inc. was also commissioned by Bristol City Council to provide accessibility support to Phase 1 of the Community Resilience Fund by delivering several Accessible Venues Workshops to support community organisations who are applying to the fund for accessibility improvements. The workshops focused on how to make your community space more accessible, using the knowledge to fully understand what type of improvements are needed.

Accessible guidance was provided in the form of communication and digital access advice for organisations looking to improve their websites and



Disability.Inc. extended its working relationship with local authorities in the region by supporting council redevelopment initiatives.



accessible and inclusive guides for their service users. This was highlighted in the working relationships with Locality and our partners We the Curious where we piloted our digital audit offer while providing guidance to Renewable Energy Consumer Code in relation to information given to code members.

The biggest accessibility support projects were with Avon & Somerset Police auditing Police Headquarters in Portishead and Bridwell Station in the City Centre and travelling to Taunton to provide an audit at Hestercombe House and Gardens, a large 50 acre site which houses a museum, wedding venue and nature reserve.

Finishing the year with new members to WECIL's Access & Inclusion Team (WAIT) was a positive outcome as we expanded the representation of impairments and health conditions within the team to give a wide range of lived experience towards different types of accessibility support.

Consultancy

We continue to deliver our workASSURED contract to the University of the West of England. Throughout this financial year we supported 36 individual staff members and their managers.

“[the advisor] was professional throughout, extremely informative and allowed me to just pour out all of my thoughts and fears without judgement.

[the advisor] totally guided me through and made me feel valued and above all that my feelings were not unusual or minor.”

“[the advisor] has ensured I have a wealth of information and has provided excellent advice to both myself and my manager. My experience of WECIL has been incredibly positive.”

“I received extremely practical advice, certain things I never would have thought of such as starting later when possible, were suggested. Moreover, my need for ADHD mentoring was understood.”

“The suggestions were all reasonable yet impactful. Most were implemented successfully before the final meeting.”

We delivered 17 topic-specific sessions for 149 Managers and HR personnel. We delivered a pilot of workASSURED for Bath Spa University providing support to 3 staff members, their managers and HR.



We also provided one off ad-hoc support to a studio resident at the Watershed and for one member of staff at Burges Salmon. We are excited to see the demand for the workASSURED service increasing and that we have been able to assist both Disabled people in work and their managers to understand, identify and implement reasonable adjustments.

We were commissioned by South Gloucestershire Council's Learning and Skills Team to support up to 10 employers based in the region to achieve Disability Confident Employer status to improve employer engagement with South Gloucestershire Community and Skills team's existing employment and training programmes and to improve employment opportunities for the local community.

We worked with 10 employers and Airbus, Aardman, Paul's Place, Bromford, Inclusive Change and Bradley Stoke Town Council have all achieved Disability Confident Employer Status. Our Media have commissioned us to provide 25 hours of consultancy support, which started in this financial year. We provided feedback and guidance on their careers page on their website, job adverts and job descriptions, and general advice on their recruitment process and communications.



**Ali Browning and
Kinny Chinangwa
Disability.Inc
Business Partners.**

Financial Review

We have achieved an excellent financial result in the Financial Year Ending 2023.

Prior to the start of the Financial Year, WECIL's Trustees approved a budget with an unrestricted loss of (£139,946), based on forecast income and expenditure. The Trustees did so with the expectation of winning new business in year based on recent performance. The positive variance on our unrestricted result of £140,310 demonstrates that the confidence was well placed. In terms of money coming into the charity,



our unrestricted income overperformed budget by £113,106. 57% of total income is unrestricted putting the charity in a strong position to make decisions around its sustainability.

In total 72% of spend within year was on direct service delivery, with 28% being spent on Overheads. This reflects the industry average very closely, with charities earning over £1m per year spending 70% on 'Charitable Activities' (Distribution of spending by charity, 2019/20 - Source: National Council for Voluntary Organisations [NCVO]). The vast majority (75%) of WECIL spend is on Staff Costs – this is fairly consistent across restricted and unrestricted areas. 'Activity Costs' make up 9% of total spend (19% of restricted spend). 'Office Costs' make up 7% of total spend – this is 3% of restricted spend and 10% of unrestricted spend, which is due to printing and postage costs for our Payroll Business and for Governance. Our Premises Costs currently represent just 2% of spend. 'Other Costs' – which include Legal and Professional Services (fundraising, accountancy, audit) make up 8% of total costs.

Our Children & Young People's Services have shown significant growth within year again – with total income of £505,792 - a 31% increase on the year ending 2022 figure of £385,874. This department now represents 39% of total organisational income for the year and 70% of total Restricted income for the organisation. A large contribution to this growth in year has been from a new contract to deliver Short Breaks in South Gloucestershire attracting £52.7k of new income and delivering on a key objective that all



WECIL core services should be delivered in all of WECIL's core local authority areas (Bristol, South Gloucestershire, Bath and North East Somerset and North Somerset). We also saw a significant increase in funds to deliver Holiday Short Breaks in Bristol - £34k above budget. This was due to an increase in the number of sessions, providing £23.3k for additional funded places, but also in an increase in the number of families using Direct Payments to purchase this service directly – overperforming by £10.7k and demonstrating that this new model which was developed to increase choice and control for families is meeting their needs.

Over half of the Community departmental expenditure is towards delivery of the Navigators service which has proven to be highly impactful in meeting the holistic needs of Disabled people contacting WECIL with any disability related challenge, the income for which was received from The National Lottery Community Fund in the previous year.

Our Independent Living Payments Team, including our Payroll Bureau, has continued to perform exceedingly well, overperforming budget income by

£82k, and previous year's income by £47k, due to an increased number of referrals as more Disabled people choose to receive their Direct Payments support from a Disabled People's Organisation in preference to a private sector support agency and our close working with Local Authority Adult Social Care teams continues to strengthen the trust between us to build systems that deliver choice and control to Disabled people in how they receive their support.

Our Business Support Services performance has shown an incredible turnaround in financial performance. In the accounts for Year Ending 2022 we disclosed disappointment in the speed of recovery of this service from the catastrophic impact that the pandemic had on its performance. These services however are regarded as vital to WECIL as they impact the systems that exclude Disabled people across employment and access to business and services across the region, as well as providing social enterprise income for WECIL to invest across all of services for Disabled people. As such, we committed to investing in the development and growth of these services and under the new Disability.Inc. branding they have shown a remarkable

Financial Review

124% growth in unrestricted income on previous year income and continue to develop from there.

Fundraising

Due to the nature of our funding, which primarily divides between contracts, grants and trade, WECIL does very few formal fundraising activities. During



Financial Year Ending 2023, we raised £1,201 in donations. WECIL Ltd voluntarily comply with The Code of Fundraising Practice, published by Fundraising Regulator and developed by Institute of Fundraising (IoF) and Public Fundraising Association (PFRA). We have not received any complaints about our fundraising activities. WECIL always strives to protect our service users, clients and customers as well as other members of the general public from any unreasonable intrusion or other unacceptable behaviour due to any fund raising activities carried out on our behalf.

Reserves policy

As part of the YE2024 budget setting process, the Trustees agreed a new Reserves Policy at the Board Meeting on 11th February 2023 to set the reserves held to cover all liabilities in the event of unplanned closure (liabilities include staff redundancy payments, leases, outstanding debts and three months' worth of running costs

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to ensure smooth transition for users of the services) to a minimum of 30% of the previous year's expenditure. Unrestricted reserves held in excess of this figure at the year end are in part in expectation of relocation costs as the premises in which WECIL's offices are currently based are due for demolition. WECIL are considering all options for future premises including long-term lease, purchase or developing new premises.

The Trustees are committed to ensuring the smooth transition of support to Disabled people when/if service funding ends. In these situations, it is sometimes necessary to extend the service for a short period of time whilst funding applications are pending or service users are signposted to other organisations.

At the year end the group held reserves totalling £1,111,723 (2022 £1,256,659) of which £338,728 (2022 £472,834) were restricted and £772,995 (2022 £783,825) were unrestricted.

Investment Policy

Trustees unanimously agreed to take a cautious approach to all small and large investments. There is an established quarterly monitoring and review process.

Year end funds include £490,587 of funds held in a low-risk portfolio of shares managed by an investment company. This portfolio is a longer-term investment to yield greater returns in a time when banks are offering very low interest rates. Investments have sufficient flexibility to withdraw and add further funds should this be required in the future.

Plans for future periods

In the financial year 2022/23 WECIL launched a new 5-year strategy which details our ambitions to combine the growth and enhancement our own provision with supporting the development of a wider market of services with a range of practitioners better skilled to support Disabled children and adults.

These plans include

- Fully embedding the Navigator service across WECIL and integrating with the new Health and Social Care frameworks
- Promoting wider use of personal budgets across Adult Social Care and Disabled children's services and developing new services to meet the diversification of their use



- Supporting mainstream providers of children's services to be inclusive of Disabled children and young people
- Maximising opportunities to make services available digitally as well as in person
- Developing a Transitions Service to provide appropriate pathways to adult services that match the needs of Disabled young people aged 16-25

Given the redevelopment of the Vassall Centre site, WECIL also needs to develop plans to relocate its office function and bring its services into the communities it serves. This is in addition to the need to develop a specialist premises for the provision of support to Disabled children and young people with complex needs.

INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS	Unrestricted Funds (£)	Restricted Funds 2023 (£)	Total Funds (£)	Total Funds 2022 (£)
Donations and legacies	22,701	(64,403)	(41,702)	911
Charitable activities	623,271	684,658	1,307,929	1,537,980
Other trading activities	170,091	-	170,091	146,896
Investment income	3,841	-	3,841	998
TOTAL INCOME	819,904	620,255	1,440,159	1,686,785
EXPENDITURE				
Expenditure on raising funds:				
Costs of other trading activities	130,967	-	130,967	72,334
Investment management costs	3,700	-	3,700	4,800
Expenditure on charitable activities	684,873	754,361	1,439,234	1,312,697
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	819,540	754,361	1,573,901	1,389,831
Net (losses)/gains on investments	(11,194)	-	(11,194)	20,118
Net (expenditure)/income and net movement in funds	(10,830)	(134,106)	(144,936)	317,072
Reconciliation of funds: Total funds brought forward	783,825	472,834	1,256,659	939,587
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	772,995	338,728	1,111,723	1,256,659

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year. All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

	2023 (£)	2022 (£)
FIXED ASSETS		
Intangible assets	29,720	32,617
Tangible fixed assets	-	598
Investments	490,587	502,782
	520,307	535,997
CURRENT ASSETS		
Debtors	457,851	545,401
Cash at bank and in hand	516,862	443,467
	974,713	988,868
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	383,297	268,206
NET CURRENT ASSETS	591,416	720,662
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES	1,111,723	1,256,659
NET ASSETS	1,111,723	1,256,659
FUNDS OF THE CHARITY		
Restricted funds	338,728	472,834
Unrestricted funds	772,995	783,825
TOTAL CHARITY FUNDS	1,111,723	1,256,659

These financial statements were approved by the board of trustees and authorised for issue on the 7th of August 2023, and are signed on behalf of the board by:

Ruth Pickersgill
Director.

Company registration number 03030167



supporting independent living

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