



Report of the Board of Trustees and the Financial Statements

For the year ending March 2024



Welcoming Empowering Compassionate Aspirational Respectful Effective



6,356
People
Supported
in 23-24

504
Services

1,223
Homes

**Owned and/
or managed**
by Creative
Support

70

**Local
Authorities**

333

Supported Living
Services & Care
Homes

87

Supported
Accommodation
Services

26

Extra Care
Services

58

Other
Community
Services

2,344

Support for people
with mental
health needs

1,999

Support for people
with a learning
disability or autism

1,290

Support for
older people

723

Support for
people with
other needs

5,320
Staff



**We are
GOLD!**

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE
We invest in people Gold

We achieved Investors
in People **Gold** for the
whole organisation.

Our People and Learning
& Development Teams
achieved **Platinum**



93

Volunteers



4,499

Classroom
Training Attendees



95,338

e-learning
completions



83

**Student
Placements**



Investing in
Volunteers
Accreditation
retained

90%
good or
above



CareQuality
Commission

We achieved a quality
rating of 'Good' or
above in **90%** of
our **CQC** inspected
services

Overall rating for this service	Good	●
Is this service safe?	Good	●
Is the service effective?	Good	●
Is the service caring?	Good	●
Is the service responsive?	Good	●
Is the service well-led?	Good	●

CREATIVE SUPPORT LIMITED

31 MARCH 2024

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Status:	Community Benefit Society with Charitable Status
Register Number:	27440R
Regulator of Social Housing:	No 4689
Regulated by:	Financial Conduct Authority (FCA Mutuals)
Registered Office:	Wellington House 131, Wellington Road South Stockport SK1 3TS www.creativesupport.co.uk
Honorary Officers:	Joolz Casey (Chair)
Principal Staff:	Anna Lunts (Chief Executive)
Bankers:	Barclays Bank PLC UK Banking 1 Churchill Place London E14 5HP
Solicitors:	Trowers & Hamblins Heron House Albert Square Manchester M2 5HD
Auditors:	Beever & Struthers One Express 1 George Leigh Street Manchester M4 5DL

Board of Trustees Report

The Board of Trustees presents its report and the audited financial statements for the Society for the year ended 31 March 2024. The financial results are presented in the form of the following:

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

Introduction to Creative Support

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

A Brief History of Creative Support

Our organisation was established in 1990 as 'Manchester Housing Consortium' with the aim of developing a range of housing and support services for people with mental health needs in the City of Manchester.

In 1991, we registered as an Industrial and Provident Society with charitable status. We changed our name to Creative Support in 1993 to reflect our ambition to become a national provider of charitable services and to emphasise our commitment to developing creative responses to support needs.

In January 2012, we registered as a provider of social housing with the TSA (now the Regulator of Social Housing), after managing high quality homes for over 20 years. We became a Community Benefit Society with charitable status in accordance with the new Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014.

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

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

Range of Services

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

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

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

We continue to provide services that enable people to grow in independence and confidence and to experience enhanced choice and control over their lives. During the last 12 months, we have supported around 6,000 people with care and support needs to enjoy independence, choice and wellbeing. A further 1,223 tenants have benefitted from the provision of high quality supported housing.

Our Mission

Creative Support promotes independence, inclusion, and wellbeing. We do this by working with the people we support, their families and others to meet individual needs and aspirations in a person-centred way. We provide high quality homes and support, enabling people to say:

- I live my best life in a place I call home
- I feel listened to, respected and valued
- I enjoy choices and rights and have control over my life
- I am supported to feel safe
- I am doing the things that matter to me
- I enjoy relationships with others
- I am connected to my community
- I am supported with my wellbeing
- I feel able to reach my full potential

Our We Care Values

Our We Care values underpin everything we do at Creative Support. We are:

Welcoming
Empowering
Compassionate
Aspirational
Respectful
Effective

Our Philosophy

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

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



Our Values and Culture

We treat people with courtesy and **kindness**. We listen attentively to others, communicate in personalised ways and seek to understand what is important to individuals. We empower and support people to make choices and to have control over their own lives. We value each person's strengths and unique qualities and offer **unconditional positive regard**.

We strive to be person-centred and responsive to individual needs and preferences. We treat the people we support with **respect** and consideration and promote their **dignity** and privacy at all times. We offer **compassionate**, relationship-based support which is flexible and reliable.

We work holistically to improve people's wellbeing and **quality of life**. We are hopeful and optimistic about the **possibilities for change**. We enable people to enjoy new opportunities, reach their potential, live the life they want to live and be as **independent** as possible.

We are passionate about promoting accessibility, **equality, diversity and fairness**. We challenge injustice and offensive or discriminatory behaviour wherever we find this. We support people to enjoy **human and civil rights** as active citizens, connected to their communities. We encourage people to speak up and advocate for themselves.

We are committed to **co-production** and to enabling the active involvement and participation of the people we support. We work collaboratively, positively and respectfully with people's families and other agencies. We contribute to progressive partnerships and strategic alliances with others. We achieve positive influence by taking part in campaigns and initiatives which **improve people's lives**.

We believe in **supportive, visible leadership** and positive, co-operative working environments which enable our valued staff to flourish and be the best that they can be. We support wellbeing and resilience and recognise effort and **excellence**.

We are **open, honest and trustworthy**. As individuals, and as an organisation, we have **integrity**. We are professional and accountable for what we do. We accept responsibility and we practice in a diligent and **ethical** manner.

We are curious and reflective and have a **culture of learning** and **continuous improvement**. We appreciate and engage positively with feedback. We acknowledge and learn from our mistakes and those of others. We recognise and celebrate our achievements and those of our colleagues and the people we support. We build a positive profile and reputation.

We aim to be **efficient, innovative and productive** in the use of resources and to maximise beneficial outcomes for our tenants and the people we support. We are adaptable, agile and solution-focused. We seek continuity of direction and purpose whilst valuing our history and **embracing change**.

We strive to provide safe, evidence-based, **high quality and effective** care, delivered by capable, competent and well-supported colleagues who are actively engaged in service development and improvement. We add value to communities, aim to reduce our environmental impact and work towards a successful and **sustainable future**.

We aim high and we challenge ourselves to go the extra mile to support people to achieve their goals and to lead **happy, meaningful and fulfilled lives**.

Charitable Objectives

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

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

How Our Activities Deliver Public Benefit

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

- **Enjoying and Achieving**
We directly enhance people's quality of life through support to access a wide range of meaningful opportunities within the wider and local community. This includes activities relating to education, training, volunteering, paid work, and social and leisure activities, which widen people's social networks and reduce reliance on paid services.
- **Enhanced Economic Well-being**
We promote the economic and financial inclusion of the people we support through maximising income (i.e. benefits and welfare entitlements, access to paid work or volunteering and education opportunities which will lead to paid work), minimise debt, develop daily living skills in relation to budgeting and saving and through strong partnership working with relevant agencies.
- **Making a Positive Contribution**
People we support experience improved levels of inclusion within their communities through support to make a positive contribution to their local community. This includes enjoying legal and civil rights, undertaking volunteering opportunities and partnership working within local neighbourhoods to promote community cohesion and safety.
- **Staying Safe**
We work hard to keep vulnerable people in the community safe who would be at risk without our support. We support people to develop an awareness of personal safety issues and to wherever possible avoid activities which will cause them harm. We support people to access aids and assistive technologies, which keep them safe whilst enabling independent living in the community.
- **Being Healthy**
We promote health and well-being for people as a key theme in all support delivery, including advice and support around good diet and nutrition, exercise, relaxation and a range of health initiatives, including smoking cessation. We support people to access the full range of resources available to them (including primary and secondary health care services) and to enjoy an equal level of healthcare as the general population.

- **Equality of Opportunity**

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

- **Investing in People**

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

- **Wider Community**

Across our wide geographic landscape, we ensure that services are connected and supportive of their local communities through provision of social value delivery based on local needs and objectives. This includes investing spend into the local economy, use of local green spaces and community connection initiatives.

Accountable and Effective Governance

As a not-for-profit Registered Provider of Social Housing and provider of social care services, all our assets and resources are used to further our charitable mission and strategic objectives. Our Board and Executive Team have a strong commitment to our charitable ethos.

The Board is committed to ensuring effective governance and viability and to the further development of the strategic planning, risk management and controls framework within which we manage our housing assets and social care services. Creative Support adopted the NHF's Code of Governance 2020 in March 2024, replacing the previous 2015 Code and also adopted the NHF 2022 Code of Conduct. The Board recently undertook a compliance review of the housing regulator's Governance and Financial Viability Standards and the Board confirms that it complies with the standards.

We appointed Chrissie Cooke to the new role of Vice Chair to support our Chair, Joolz Casey in her busy role. The Chief Executive had held the role of Company Secretary since the society was first constituted in 1991. In order to enhance internal capacity to support our governance, a new stand-alone post of Company Secretary was created. We were pleased to appoint Hazel Beddows to this role in March 2024.

In early 2024, the Board commissioned an external Governance Review to assess the suitability of Creative Support's legal structure and to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the governance of the organisation. Creative Support is constituted as a community benefit society with charitable status. The review advised that this constitutional structure is the most appropriate for our principal activities of providing care and supported housing and there were no recommendations for change.

The Governance Review concluded that *"Creative Support is a high performing and effective organisation which we judge to be well led by the board and the executive."* A number of recommendations for development and improvement were made which are now subject to consideration and implementation.

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

The Board is confident that the assurance systems in place are effective and we support an open and positive culture. Over the past year the senior management team have continued to work with the Board to improve incident reporting and learning as part of this. Where more serious incidents have occurred, improvements have been made to service delivery that rectify the problems that were identified. Having applied this learning and having assessed the future landscape, the Board recognises that there will be challenging times ahead. These include continued workforce recruitment and retention pressures, funding shortfalls and changes in regulation. With this in mind, we have reviewed our strategy, ambitions and governance systems to enable a proactive approach to anticipating and managing the challenges that these present.

We also reviewed our purpose and refreshed our Mission Statement which is now presented in the form of I-Statements to reflect what is important to the people we support. We have reinforced our 'We Care' values and we have defined our culture. We live our mission and values through the positive culture we strive to create and sustain.

During the year we embarked on developing a new long-term strategy to ensure our future success. The Board and Executive Team held two collaborative strategy development days with an external facilitator. We agreed to an over-arching commitment to co-production and to the following six strategic themes:

No.	Strategic Theme
1.	Values and Positive Culture
2.	People Supported Well
3.	Creative People
4.	Homes & Environments for Living Well
5.	Growth & Development
6.	Financial Sustainability

Our new strategy is expected to be approved and signed off by the Board in November 2024.

We held six full Board meetings over the year 2023-24 and two externally-facilitated strategy development days. A well-attended AGM took place at our Creative Together Centre on 27th September 2023. Our committees in the areas of Finance & Audit, Quality, People & Performance and Housing met regularly throughout the year. In addition, 'task and finish' meetings have undertaken pieces of work covering a range of issues, including risk management and incident reviews. Our trustees have also made visits to services across the country. Two of our trustees provide oversight of the governance of our Complex Care Case Register and use of physical intervention in line with our Restraint Reduction Pledge.

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

Our trustees bring with them a range of valued knowledge and experience from diverse fields, including health & social care, social housing, finance, consultancy, marketing and commerce. During the autumn of 2024 we will be seeking to recruit new trustees and to enhance the diversity of our Board.

We especially thank the Chair, the Vice Chair and the trustees who chaired the committees during the year, including Paul Calland, Rachael Corbelli, Claire Judkins and Fiona King. Paul Calland is stepping down from the Board this year after more than six years of committed service. We would like to thank him for his contribution to the work of the Board and in particular the Housing Committee, which has benefitted greatly from his social housing expertise. We would also like to thank Sarah Smith who has provided excellent support to the trustees in her role as PA to the Board. She was ably assisted in her work by Megan Mitchell, Hazel Anson and Georgia Randall who took minutes for the committees.

Record of Attendance at Board Meetings 2023 – 2024

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

Trustee	May 2023	July 2023	Sep 2023	Sep AGM	Nov 2023	Nov Strategy	Jan 2024	Mar 2024	Mar Strategy	Total
Joolz Casey	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	9/9
Fiona King	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	9/9
Rachael Corbelli	✓	AP	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	AP	7/9
Paul Calland	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	AP	8/9
Claire Judkins	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	AP	AP	7/9
Helen O'Sullivan	✓	✓	AP	AP	AP	AP	AP	AP	✓	3/9
Chrissie Cooke	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	AP	✓	✓	8/9
Steven Blezard				✓			✓	✓	✓	3/3

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

Key Strategic and Financial Aims

Our Board of Trustees and Executive Team devised an over-arching Strategic Plan in 2016, which has since been revised and was extended into 2023-24. A number of key strategic and financial aims emerged from the plan and from subsequent reviews. Our achievements in relation to these key aims in 2023-24 are set out below.

	Aims	Outcome	Comments
1	To grow our national social care and supported housing portfolio in a sustainable way	Achieved	We continue to deliver a wide range of services and housing options to customers in 70 local authorities across six English regions. Our turnover increased by £14.58 million (10.3%) from £141.25 million in 2022-23 to £155.83 million in 2023-24. We have maintained a diversified portfolio of activity in terms of client group, service type and geographical distribution.
2	To be successful in over 50% of our tender and framework submissions	Achieved	We were successful in 62% of tender and framework submissions in 2023-24, as compared with 68% in 2022-23 and 59% in 2021-22.
3	To continue to invest in new social housing assets	Achieved	We continue to make plans to acquire or build properties for use as supported housing. During 2023-24, we purchased a property for four people in Telford for use as supported living for people with a learning disability. We also began negotiations to purchase an existing care home in Essex for 18 people with a learning disability.
4	To maintain over 90% 'Good' and above ratings in our CQC inspections and to achieve at least two 'Outstanding' ratings	Achieved	We achieved a quality rating of 'Good' or above in 90% of our CQC inspected services as at 31 March 2024, which was comparable with 90% at 31 March 2023. We maintained two 'Outstanding' CQC ratings for our services in Doncaster and Essex at their first inspection.
5	To achieve a satisfactory surplus for the year	Achieved	We delivered a surplus of £9.08 million in 2023-24 (5.8% margin) as compared with £7.93 million in 2022-23 (5.6% margin) and £11.01 million in 2021-22 (8% margin).
6	To maintain our cash reserves	Achieved	During 2023-24, we generated cash flow from operations of £12.91 million and as at 31 March 2024 we held cash balances of £26.05 million, compared with £25.37 million as at March 2022-23, a small increase of £0.68 million. This is very positive given that we had fully repaid our loans by the end of the year by making repayments of £8.83 million.
7	To reduce our percentage spending on agency staff	Achieved	We spent £10.92 million on agency staff during 2023-24, as compared with £13.68 million in 2022-23, a reduction of £2.76 million (20%). The contribution of agency staff costs to total staff costs (inc. agency costs) fell from 12% in 2022-23 to 8.6% in 2023-24.
8	To increase the productivity of our staff	Not Achieved	The productivity of our staff (measured by income as a percentage of staff costs) was 122% in 2023-24, falling slightly from 124% in the previous year.
9	To reduce our overall borrowings and expenditure on interest payments as part of a medium term financial strategy	Achieved	As at 31 March 2024, we had fully repaid our loans which had stood at £8.83 million at the end of the previous year. Interest costs arising from loans amounted to £442k in 2023-24, as compared with £558k during 2022-23. This reduction was achieved despite the increase of the BoE base rate. Interest received of £660k on cash balances exceeded interest payments by £218k.
10	To further build our charitable reserves and balance sheet	Achieved	As at 31 March 2024, our total charitable reserves (net worth) stood at £104.94 million, compared with £95.77 million in 2022-23, an increase of £9.17 million (9.6%). Reserves have increased significantly by £18.83 million over the previous 2 years from £86.11 million at the end of 2021-22, an increase of 21.9%.

Approach to Risk Management

We have completed extensive focused work on corporate risk management this year, identifying the following key strategic risks as the focus of concentrated assurance work. These are set out in the heat map below. We have adopted a collaborative and inter-departmental approach, underpinned by the newly developed corporate risk policy which uses an 'Enterprise Risk' management methodology, providing a framework for identifying and managing risk and communicating our approach to risk management across the organisation. Moving forward, these corporate strategic risks will be reviewed by identified corporate risk leads biannually, with the view to identify contemporary changes to the risk landscape and implement immediate measures which are monitored frequently for ongoing effectiveness.

Each of the key corporate risks has been rated for likelihood and impact. An overall score has been generated by combining these scores. A detailed Corporate Risk Register has been developed to mitigate these key risks.

		← Impact →			
		Risk Score			
Likelihood ↑ ↓	5 Certain	5	10 6. Political environment and wider economy	15	20 3. Safeguarding
	4 Probable	4	8	12 2. Customer experience 4. Workforce and people 10. Technology, data and security	16 1. Health and Safety
	3 Possible	3	6	9 5. Legal and regulatory 8. Financial performance 9. Business disruption 11. Poor culture	12
	2 Unlikely	2	4	6	8
	1 Improbable	1	2	3	4 7. Strategy and Governance
		1 Limited	2 Minor	3 Moderate	4 Major
				5 Critical	

No.	Risk Area	Risk Description	Risk Score
1.	Health and Safety	Major H&S incident causing significant harm, impacting on the health, safety or wellbeing of people we support, staff or others.	16
2.	Customer Experience	Major failure to meet customer expectations leading to significant customer dissatisfaction, serious complaints or loss of business. Adverse media attention related to this, loss of reputation and positive profile, loss of trust and damage to relationships.	12
3.	Safeguarding	Significant safeguarding incident causing significant harm, leading to loss of trust and reputational damage.	20
4.	Workforce/People	Workforce pressures and insufficient staffing levels, resulting in difficulty delivering services and meeting safety or contractual requirements. Failure in recruitment and retention of key roles leading to critical knowledge/skills gap. May be associated with high use of agency staff impacting on financial performance and quality.	12
5.	Legal and Regulatory	Lack of compliance with the law, regulations and regulatory standards (such as poor CQC ratings or breaches, RSH consumer standards, H&S regulations, employment law and data security) which could lead to warnings, penalties, adverse publicity and potential loss of contracts/reputation.	9
6.	Political Environment and Wider Economy	Changes in government policy, legislation and inadequate funding from Local Authorities and the NHS for Social Care. Challenges in the UK and world economy, such as high interest rates, inflation, low growth, recession and financial crisis, leading to adverse operating conditions.	10
7.	Strategy and Governance	Ineffective strategy and inability to deliver strategic plan and social impact objectives. Drift from mission and charitable aims. Poor governance and oversight. Could lead to loss of reputation and falling into decline.	4
8.	Financial Performance	Loss of contracts or failure of contract fees and rents to keep up with increase in wages and other costs. Poor income collection or controls on spending. Poor management of assets or impairment of asset values. Budget deficits, insufficient cash to service activities and future obligations, reduction in net worth/reserves. Could lead to adverse reputation and financial ratings, low growth and falling into decline.	9
9.	Business Disruption	Major incident or loss of essential infrastructure (or business restrictions) impacting on business continuity, contract and service delivery.	9
10.	Technology, Data and Security	Data loss or breaches, system outages, ICT infrastructure breakdown, unavailability of cloud-based and internally hosted software and systems, loss of essential technologies, cyber and other security incidents. Could lead to inefficiency or inability to provide services, loss of trust and confidence or regulatory action.	12
11.	Poor Culture	Departing from Creative Support's values, positive culture and expectations leading to poor service delivery and outcomes, low staff morale, negative media attention, loss of trust and reputation. Associated increased risk of customer/stakeholder dissatisfaction, complaints, safeguarding and other incidents and recruitment & retention challenges.	9

Achieving Value for Money

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

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

We achieve Value for Money in the following principal ways:

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

We are pleased to be able to demonstrate:

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

Our Internal Audit Team has recently expanded its scope to include new areas of our work. We have an efficient central and regional infrastructure and senior management team, which is kept under periodic review to ensure sustainability.

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

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

We benchmark our financial performance and CQC ratings against a group of 25 comparable voluntary sector and commercial providers of social care and supported housing. The sample includes a number of companies that have a significant property portfolio. Creative Support performs well against all criteria and ratios. This annual benchmarking survey produces good evidence for value for money, financial sustainability and quality outcomes.

Key Metrics - Value for Money Standard

In April 2018, the Regulator of Social Housing published a new Value for Money Standard, which stipulates that we report against a number of standardised metrics in our financial statements. The standardised metrics for Creative Support are published below with a brief commentary. The metrics are compared with a peer comparator (a specialist provider of supported housing) and with the average results for the social housing sector. We have documented our results against the mandatory metrics for 2023-24, with comments on the performance achieved against our own forecasts and the performance of our peer comparator and the median performance of the wider social housing sector. Projected metrics have been set for 2024-25.

Ref.	Metric description	Detail	Creative Support				Peer Comparator	RSH Global Accounts - Median
			Actual 2022/23	Projected 2023/24	Actual 2023/24	Projected 2024/25		
1	Reinvestment %	Reinvestment has focused on ensuring all properties are well maintained, with replacements of bathrooms and kitchens in a number of schemes.	3.59%	4.67%	2.99%	6.92%	8.70%	6.70%
2A	New supply delivered (Social housing units) %	There are approved plans to purchase 26 additional units in 2024-25, plus a fund of £1.2m for purchases which are identified during the year, with the potential to deliver a further five units.	0.41%	0.55%	0.54%	4.03%	2.30%	1.30%
2B	New supply delivered (Non social housing units) %	Creative Support does not deliver non-social housing units.	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
3	Gearing %	Overall cash balances with nil loans as at 31 March 2024, leading to negative gearing figures. The gearing compares well to the peer comparator.	-22.32%	-21.21%	-34.94%	-32.84%	-0.90%	45.30%
4	Earnings before Interest, Tax, Depreciation, Amortisation, Major Repairs Included (EBITDA MRI) Interest Cover	Costs have been well controlled during the financial year. There is no interest payable with effect from 1 April 2024, therefore no interest cover calculation.	1521.9%	1169%	2197.76%	N/A	415.00%	128.00%
5	Headline social housing cost per unit	Investment in housing costs per unit, reflects higher cost base of social housing compared to the general needs reflected in the Global accounts.	£9,944	£10,834	£10,163	£10,302	£16,038	£4,586
6A	Operating margin (social housing lettings only) %	The cost base in relation to social housing lettings has been well controlled, but the projected metric takes into account continuing cost pressures, including higher legal costs for dealing with tenancy issues.	8.80%	3.69%	16.31%	11.01%	11.30%	19.80%
6B	Operating margin (overall) %	The overall operating margin is driven by social care activities, which is the main activity of the Society. The outlook is for the pressure on Local Authority funding to increase in 2024 and into 2025, resulting in a lower projected margin for 2024-25.	5.93%	4.41%	5.68%	4.26%	2.70%	18.20%
7	Return on capital employed (ROCE) %	The projected reduction in operating margin is expected to exert a downward pressure on the projected ROCE.	7.92%	6.12%	8.19%	6.46%	1.60%	2.80%

Regulator of Social Housing - Tenant Satisfaction Measures

Background

The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) requires all providers of social housing to complete a Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) survey with their tenants. We were obliged to use a set of 12 standardised questions set by the regulator (with an option to add additional questions of our own).

Methodology

We opted to use a full census approach rather than a sample survey. This survey was only applicable to tenants living in accommodation we own. A total of 697 surveys were sent out. We received 204 completed responses, which was a very pleasing response rate of 30%. Surveys were sent via the post to each tenant with a prepaid envelope for its return. Tenants could also complete the survey online. We sent the survey to all managers so that they were aware and asked them to encourage tenants to complete the survey. We used post as the main method with a personally addressed large print letter to each tenant and we also made an electronic version available. 184 of the returns were made by post (90%) with just 20 (10%) being received electronically.

Survey Results

Standardised TSM Questions	%
TP1 Satisfied with overall service from landlord	92.8%
TP2 Satisfied with overall repairs service	91.1%
TP3 Satisfied with time taken to complete repairs	87%
TP4 Satisfied that their home is well maintained	91%
TP5 Satisfied that their home is safe	94%
TP6 Satisfied that their landlord listens to views / acts upon them	89.6%
TP7 Satisfied their landlord keeps them informed	92%
TP8 Agree that their landlord treats them fairly / with respect	93.1%
TP9 Satisfied with landlord approach to complaints handling	79.2%
TP10 Satisfied that their landlord maintains communal space	91.5%
TP11 Satisfied landlord contributes to local neighbourhood	71.2%
TP12 Satisfied with landlord approach to ASB	80%
Our own additional questions	
CS01 Do you find Creative Support staff helpful and responsive	94.9%
CS02 Do you rate Creative Support as a good / very good landlord	88.8%
CS03 Suggestions how we could improve the home or services we provide	-

110 tenants (54%) responded to the final question about how we could improve. Themes covered by responses included improvements to decorations, anti-social behaviour and a desire for more social interaction with other tenants. We also received positive feedback including compliments for the support staff. Some examples are:

"I would like to go for a meal out with everyone in the flats to bond. We could walk to the nearest restaurant and have a good time. It would be very therapeutic."

"I am very satisfied about my living standards and have no complaints at all."

"Extra ashtrays in the courtyard, a smoking shelter for when it rains."

"I would like our garden revamped, I have drawn a pic of how I would like it and its on our board in our office."

Positive findings

- We are pleased to see the number of tenants who interacted with the survey and some of our concerns about the accessibility of the survey were unfounded.
- It has given us some good figures for future benchmarking / improvements.
- Our tenants are overall very satisfied with the service we offer as a landlord and in particular we are pleased to see the number of tenants who feel we provide safe homes.
- Nearly 95% of tenants find our staff helpful and responsive.

Areas to work on

- We should promote our identity as a social landlord more and look at what we can do to improve CS02.
- We need more tenant involvement and to look at how we communicate with our tenants and involve them in decision making.
- In some cases of anti-social behaviour, other tenants often perceive that nothing is happening, but we are bound by legal processes and confidentiality, so can't always share information with tenants about what is happening. We need to consider ways of improving communication when managing ASB.
- Some of the suggestions we received from tenants were perhaps beyond the scope of the landlord function e.g. some of the socialising responses, but we will work to ensure these are reflected in our other activities as a care and support provider.

What Does the New Labour Government Mean for Social Care?

The Labour Party made no funded commitments on social care in its June 2024 general election manifesto. While the party said it would introduce a fair pay agreement for adult social care workers and indicated it would implement the current government's adult social care charging reforms, it did not allocate any resources to either, prompting speculation that the reforms would yet again be delayed or abandoned and criticism that the policies would require cuts elsewhere.

The party also set out a longer-term plan to create a "national care service", which it said would deliver "consistency of care across the country" through national standards that ensured "high-quality care and ongoing sustainability". However, it did not set out further detail on what this would look like, nor how it would be funded. While it promised to provide councils with multi-year funding settlements there was no commitment to address overall funding levels, despite the Local Government Association (LGA) reporting that local authorities in England faced a £6.2bn funding gap over the next two years.

The manifesto stated: *“Labour will undertake a programme of reform to create a national care service, underpinned by national standards, delivering consistency of care across the country. Services will be locally delivered, with a principle of ‘home first’ that supports people to live independently for as long as possible. Our new standards will ensure high-quality care and ongoing sustainability, and ensure providers behave responsibly. Labour will develop local partnership working between the NHS and social care on hospital discharge.*

“We will enhance partnership working across employers, workers, trade unions and government and establish a fair pay agreement in adult social care. This sector collective agreement will set fair pay, terms and conditions, along with training standards. Labour will consult widely on the design of this agreement, before beginning the process and learn from countries where they operate successfully.

“Alongside these changes, we will build consensus for the longer-term reform needed to create a sustainable national care service. We will explore how we best manage and support an ageing population; how integration with the NHS can be secured; how to best support working age disabled adults; and how to move to a more preventative system.”

There was no reference to the investment required to bring about a fair pay agreement in the costings section of the party’s manifesto, despite increases in minimum pay for care staff requiring councils to raise their fee rates for providers. The LGA calculated that the April 2024 rise in the national living wage, from £10.42 to £11.44 an hour, would cost councils £1.6bn in additional commissioned adult social care costs during 2024-25.

The King’s Fund chief executive Sarah Woolnough recently stated: *“The current social care system in England is not fit for purpose and many people’s needs go unmet, yet it is one of the most over-looked and ignored policy challenges in recent decades. Labour’s plan for a fair pay agreement for care workers would help attract more people to work in the sector, but unless that increase in pay is matched with commensurate increases in local government funding, it will further squeeze already strained care provider and local council budgets.”*

Since their landslide victory the new Labour Government has already discarded some of the previous government’s social care commitments and seems set to repeat the failure of successive governments to tackle the care crisis. Less than a month after the election, Chancellor Rachel Reeves announced that she would not cap costs for older people’s care which was due to have been implemented from October 2025. A day later, Stephen Kinnock, the social care minister, announced that he would scrap the social care training and development fund, introduced by his Conservative predecessor, which was to have allocated £54m to support 37,000 social care workers gain the new level 2 adult social care certificate. Yet again the government appears to prioritise the NHS over social care.

“For decades, successive UK governments have failed to take responsibility for a growing social care crisis. This government must not continue that pattern,” writes Prof Martin Green of Care England, Vic Rayner of National Care Forum and other sector leaders in an open letter to Wes Streeting, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care *“Yet in a little over one month in office, the government has done [and] said little to suggest that social care under their watch will fare much better, a view reinforced by the deafening silence on social care in Sir Keir Starmer’s speech on 27 August. We urge the government to change course.”*

Introduction to our Audited Financial Statements for 2023-24

The financial statements presented in this report are for the Society for the year ended 31 March 2024, with comparatives for the year ended 31 March 2023.

Turnover

During the 2023-24 financial year, the Society's total turnover arising from all activities grew by 10.3% with an increase of £14.58 million to £155.83 million, compared with £141.25 million in the previous year. Total turnover included £14.25 million in respect of social housing lettings, £132.46 million generated by community care contracts and £8.39 million for prevention and wellbeing services. The increase in turnover was mainly attributable to growth in income from community care contracts which increased by £13.86 million (11.7%). Other income was received from central government initiatives including the Workforce Recruitment and Retention Fund.

Expenditure

Total operating expenditure for the year (excluding interest payable and finance servicing costs) increased by £14.09 million (10.6%) from £132.88 million in 2022-23 to £146.97 million, with the biggest increase relating to staff costs. Expenditure on staffing increased by 16.3% to £116.48 million in 2023-24, the increase being attributable to increased staffing numbers (partially due to reduced reliance on agency staff) and cost of living wage increases as a result of increases in the National Living Wage and the Real Living Wage. Expenditure on agency staff was well controlled throughout the financial year, with a 20.2% reduction to £10.92 million in 2023-24. The proportion of agency staff costs to total staff costs over the period reduced from 12.0% to 8.6%. Agency costs are forecast to increase in 2024-25 due to higher fee rates, but usage is expected to stabilise.

Surplus on Activities

The operating surplus for the year amounted to £8.86 million, which was an increase of £0.43 million compared to 2022-23. The operating margin showed a very slight reduction from 6.0% to 5.7%.

Interest rates continued to rise throughout the first quarter of 2023-24, then stabilised for the remainder of the financial year. However, the impact of the accelerated capital repayments on the loan profile led to an overall reduction in interest payable of 20.8% to £0.44 million. The impact of increasing interest rates led to an increase in interest receivable, as funds held as working capital earned interest of £0.66 million compared to £0.06 million in 2022-23. The surplus for the year after interest payable was £9.08 million, compared with £7.93 million in the previous year, an increase of 14.4%.

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

Cash Flow

Cash flow was satisfactory during 2023-24, due to a combination of the increase in operating surplus, and improved debt recovery. Net cash generated from operating activities was £12.91 million, compared to £7.15 million in 2022-23. At 31 March 2024, the Society held cash balances of £26.05 million as compared with £25.37 million at 31 March 2023. The cash generated for operating activities was used to invest in the upkeep and maintenance of the property portfolio and to fund accelerated repayments of the loan.

Loans

As at 31 March 2023, the Society held loans of £8.83 million. The loans were fully repaid during 2023-24. There are no current plans to secure additional bank finance.

Reserves and Fixed Assets

Total reserves for the Society have increased by 9.6%, from £95.77 million to £104.94 million. This increase of £9.17 million relates to £9.08m of surpluses generated over the year, plus actuarial gains on defined benefit pension schemes totaling £0.095 million.

Our reserves are principally represented by the equity in our fixed asset portfolio. By the end of the financial year, tangible fixed assets for the Society had increased slightly from £75.84 to £76.80 million, due to investment in capital assets of £3.67 million, less depreciation charges of £1.89 million, and fixed asset disposals.

Social Housing Provision and Development

Creative Support is proud to have become a significant provider of social and supported housing. Over the years, we have built our property portfolio by re-investing the surpluses generated by our activities into the purchase and development of properties, and latterly by the construction of new homes, for rental to people with support needs. The number of social housing tenancies directly owned or leased by the Society at the end of March 2024 was 738, a net increase of ten units over the financial year. Our portfolio of leased and managed housing increased by eleven units.

Voids available for letting averaged 4.92% in 2023-24 meeting our target of 5%. Occupancy levels are expected to rise slightly in 2024-25 as demand rises. Our greatest challenge when filling voids is the delay in local authority funding decisions for placements, which significantly contributes to void levels.

We regularly review the quality and demand for our directly owned and managed properties to ensure that all properties remain viable to manage, are attractive to customers and fit for purpose. Where a decision is made to sell a property that no longer meets our criteria, we seek to reinvest the sales proceeds in alternative social housing. We will continue to use the proceeds of strategic disposals in order to fund our capital expenditure plans and development strategy.

Capital Spending

During 2023-24, capital expenditure spending on developing and maintaining our properties totalled £2.51 million. In addition, there was continued IT investment to facilitate improved communications and IT upgrades.

Our Board has approved a total capital expenditure budget of £6.62 million in 2024-25, which includes the acquisition of five identified new properties, a fund for opportunities identified throughout the year, as well as continuing investment in improving and refurbishing existing properties. The remaining capital expenditure relates to leasehold improvements, acquisition of vehicles and IT infrastructure and other equipment.

Grants Received

We have been very grateful for the award of a number of grants and other funding initiatives during 2023-24. We would like to acknowledge and thank the funders for these amounts, including a Skills for Care Workforce Development Grant of £124,000 for delivering accredited training including diplomas.

Going Concern Statement

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

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

Future Financial Prospects

UK GDP is expected to grow very modestly by between 0.6% and 1.1% over 2024-25, although the most recent GDP statistics in July 2024 showed no growth at all. Low growth will continue to impact on tax revenues and will limit the new Labour Government's ability to boost public spending.

The Treasury published an audit at the end of July 2024 stating that there was a £21.9bn shortfall in the public finances, citing the principal causes as higher than expected public sector pay rises, overspending on some programmes, unforeseen costs and ongoing funding for military assistance to Ukraine. To contribute to this shortfall, the new Chancellor Rachel Reeves has announced the scrapping of the previous government's commitments, including the planned cap on social care charges from October 2025.

Creative Support obtains 90% of its funding for social care services from local authorities, which receive nearly a quarter of their funding from central government. The legacy of the pandemic and below inflation central government funding continue to place pressure on local government finances. The 9.8% increase in the National Living Wage (NLW) and the 10% increase in the Real Living Wage (RLW) from 1 April 2024 as well as the recruitment and retention pressures being experienced by the social care sector have significantly increased the cost of social care. Central government funding for local government is insufficient to fully fund these additional costs. Many of our commissioning local authorities aspire to pay providers at a level that supports payment of at least the RLW for social care staff but will struggle to achieve this.

The local authority commissioning context for social care services in the year ahead is likely to be challenging. Future prospects will be constrained by the poor state of the public finances, with local authorities in England facing a funding gap of £6.2bn over the next two years, according to the latest analysis from the Local Government Association. The projected funding gap has widened since last October when the LGA was warning of a £4bn gap over two years. Four local authorities declared themselves effectively bankrupt in 2023 (Birmingham, Nottingham, Thurrock and Woking) and in February 2024 a record 19 councils in England (including a number in which we provide services) were handed multi-million pound government bailout agreements totalling £2.5bn to prevent them collapsing into bankruptcy.

The rising cost and growing demand for social care for children and adults and temporary housing for homeless families is widely cited as the principal cause of deteriorating local authority finances. We therefore anticipate an ongoing struggle to achieve fee uplifts from local authorities which fully fund increases in wage costs. With a landslide general election victory in July, the new Labour Government is expected to be more supportive of publicly funded services and the NHS, however the prospects for social care will be impacted by low growth, previous tax cuts and the Labour narrative of fiscal discipline.

Fee uplifts for 2024-25 have been broadly in line with our budget expectations. However, the funding gap has widened and will impact on our future ability to secure uplifts which take account of rising wage costs and non-wage inflation. The above-inflation and higher than expected increases in NLW and RLW have had an impact on all salaries as well as front-line worker pay.

Recruitment and retention challenges and rising staff costs continue to present the greatest risk to our future finances. Our participation in the visa scheme for non-UK citizens in health & social care has proved to be very helpful. However, the scheme is costly to administer and is likely to be less attractive as restrictions on dependents accompanying the visa holder came into force in spring 2024. The new Labour government appears unwilling to remove these restrictions.

Our agency staff use and costs peaked at the end of 2022-23 and we expect this to continue at current levels throughout 2024-25. This view is supported by organisational and sector-wide data on application rates, new hires and slower staff turnover. However, this positive trend could easily be reversed by any increase in general UK growth and any further restrictions on immigration.

Prices are expected to rise by 2.2% (measured by CPI) over 2024, after peaking at the 41 year 12-month high of 11.1% in October 2022, just missing the mandated 2% target, before falling to 2% in 2025. Wages have grown by around 4% over the same period. Our non-staff costs continue to be much higher than those pre-pandemic, particularly the cost of building and maintenance costs and utilities.

There was a widely expected reduction of 0.25% in the Bank of England base rate to 5% in August 2024. Markets expect at least one further reduction in base rate to 4.75% before the end of 2024 and modest further reductions in 2025. As at the end of FY 2023-24 we had healthy cash balances, creating an opportunity to completely repay our loans. This will insulate Creative Support from the cost and volatility of interest rates which are expected to remain high for some time. Our improved cash position is expected to generate interest payments of over £1 million over 2024-25.

Over 2023-24 we were pleased to have been awarded a number of contracts for new and existing services from successfully participating in competitive tendering exercises. These have involved a wide range of service models and customer needs. Our quality offer, efficient and responsive infrastructure and competitive cost base have helped us to remain competitive in tendering exercises.

A number of contracts that reached the end of their term in the previous year have been extended into 2024-25 and beyond, usually on the basis of the same or improved terms. In addition to tendering opportunities we continue to see an increase in organic growth and call-off opportunities from the many procurement frameworks that we have been admitted to. However, our appetite to tender for new services remains constrained by workforce challenges and in some cases by unsustainably low fee levels.

Despite these pressures the longer term prospects for the wider social care market and for Creative Support are expected to remain positive, with continuing demographic trends driving strong demand for social care services and supported housing.

In summary, we anticipate ongoing cost pressures in the year ahead, although broadly within our budget, and shortfalls in funding for some services rendering them less viable. However, we expect to see continued growth in turnover with positive cash generation and further strengthening of our strong balance sheet in FY 24-25. The associated cash generated by future surpluses will create options for future investment in social housing assets and expansion of our charitable activities.

Social Care Contracts and Services

It has been another successful year for our Tendering and Development Team. We have seen steady publication of opportunities alongside a larger number of our existing contracts coming up for renewal as the impact of the pandemic on procurement draws to a close. We have continued a healthy approach to growth and expansion into new areas of the country, whilst building on existing activity. We have taken a robust approach to evaluating the strategic relevance and sustainability of tender opportunities.

We continued to tender for inclusion on frameworks, Dynamic Purchasing Systems and approved provider lists for support and housing services. Over the year, we were awarded places on 11 frameworks for health and social care services and accommodation across the country. Local authorities and ICBs use these frameworks to commission services for supported living, extra care, home care, outreach and community support. Success in these areas has ensured retention of current services we deliver, continued access to the market for new placements and commissioned health and social care services via mini competitions.

We also had a busy programme of tendering for new and existing services this year, with 49% of future projected income from contracts awarded being attributed to new activity. We were delighted to retain five of our existing contracts, including a number of longstanding services. We were also pleased to be successful in a variety of new tenders for Extra Care developments for older adults, trauma-informed mental health supported accommodation, preventative mental health services and supported living services for people with a learning disability.

We submitted proposals and tenders for 45 contracts and frameworks in total across 7 English Regions including the North West, North East, Yorkshire, West Midlands, East Midlands, London and the South East. We were successful in over two-thirds of these submissions (28 contracts representing a success rate of 62%), which will contribute an additional income stream of around £7.7 million in the 2024-25 year, with total

income generated from all successful tenders amounting to around £16 million. A sizable proportion of our submissions continued to be via mini competitions and from joining frameworks as the mechanism for continuing contracts for existing services. This evidences the need to continue our focus on framework applications in order to access contract opportunities.

During the year, we were particularly pleased to be awarded a contract with a new local authority, Oldham. We now deliver services within all 10 Greater Manchester boroughs. We began delivering these three new mental health services (offering a core and cluster accommodation model) in October 2023.

Mobilising contracts awarded has involved both setting up new services and transferring existing delivery and staff teams to our organisation. Seven of the new contracts involved the TUPE transfer of staff from outgoing providers to our employment, including two large scale mobilisations which required transferring 22 services, 134 staff members and the care and support for 109 people.

Successful Tender Outcomes

Type	No.	Description	Locations	
Frameworks & Approved Lists successfully applied for	11	Supported living/accommodation (6) Complex needs (2) Extra Care services (1) Multiple needs (2)	Wandsworth Lancashire Trafford Redcar & Cleveland Newcastle Blackpool	Durham Doncaster Worcestershire Sheffield Newham
New contracts awarded from competitive tendering	9	Learning disability supported living (4) Extra Care service (1) Mental health pathway (1) Mental health supported accommodation (3)	Brent Oldham Bury Wakefield	Telford (2) Essex Wandsworth Wigan
Existing contracts re-awarded on tendering	8	Short Breaks service (1) Learning disability supported living (1) Mental health supported housing (2) Complex lives services (1) Extra Care services (3)	St Helens Doncaster Tameside Lancashire	Cumberland (2) Newcastle Westmorland & Furness
Total	28			

Services in the North West

We have continued to enjoy growth in the North West and to implement new service developments and improvements for people with a learning disability, autism and mental health needs. We now provide services in 19 local authorities across Cumbria and the North West region and in all 10 of the Greater Manchester authorities. During the year we were admitted to commissioning frameworks in Blackpool, Lancashire and Trafford.

We were pleased to be awarded our first service for many years in Oldham, involving the transfer of three existing supported accommodation services for 13 people with mental health needs. This was a very challenging service mobilisation as there were no staff available to transfer under TUPE. We have also taken responsibility for housing management at these services.

In Cumbria, the Laurels care home for older people received many accolades and compliments. We were delighted to receive a High Commendation Award at the Care Home Awards for 'Best Use of Technology and Digital Care Strategy'. We were also shortlisted for the Chef award in the Great British Care Awards 2023. This award recognises the 'whole home approach' to food and nutrition issues within a care home, providing recognition to catering staff for producing nutritious meals. We received many compliments for our compassionate care for the residents and their families. Contracts for our three Extra Care services in Cumbria known as Burnside Court, Heysham Gardens and Station View were all re-awarded when re-tendered during the year.

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



We were very pleased to have been re-awarded our contract in St Helens to provide person-centred short breaks to people with a learning disability and respite for their families. In the previous year we were awarded the contract to develop Heathside, a new supported living service in St Helens for seven people with a range of needs, including complex needs. The first tenants moved into this new-build service in April 2024 with well-planned transitions.

We were awarded a small contract in Bury to provide a mental health navigator service for people with housing needs. Our hospital discharge service for people with mental health needs in Manchester was further extended, enabling us to continue working closely with in-patient services to enable people to find pathways out of hospital.

In Tameside, we were pleased to be re-awarded our existing contract to provide mental health supported accommodation, rehabilitation and respite in two supported housing schemes for up to 28 people in the borough, with the new contract commencing on 1 April 2024. Additionally, we were awarded the contract for four Extra Care services in the borough. Three of these are existing schemes and one is a new build scheme which is currently in development.

We were successful in our bid to provide recovery-focused mental health support in Wigan to 76 tenants living in nine existing supported accommodation schemes across the borough. This involved the transfer of 96 staff from three different providers in August 2024 and will require significant investment of support from our Quality and HR Teams.

Services in the North East

We continue to develop and extend our services in the North East, with our regional office located in Teesside. We now provide services in 12 local authorities in the region, including North Tyneside, Gateshead, Newcastle, South Tyneside, Sunderland, Durham, Hartlepool, Redcar & Cleveland, Stockton-on-Tees, Middlesbrough, Darlington and North Yorkshire.

During the year, our contract for a 'Step-up, Step-down service' for younger people with mental health and other needs in the City of Newcastle was re-awarded. We were admitted to Newcastle's commissioning framework for housing with care. In Gateshead, the contract for our well-respected prevention service was further extended, based on the positive outcomes we achieve for vulnerable people, including individuals at risk of offending or experiencing mental ill health, substance misuse and homelessness.

We continue to provide supported living services for people with a learning disability in South Tyneside and services for people with mental health needs and learning disabilities in North Tyneside. We gained a place on South Tyneside's framework for the provision of supported living services for individuals with high level needs.

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

A place was also gained on the Redcar supported living framework and the Durham panel for development of specialist supported accommodation. We continued providing person-centred community based support and supported living in North Yorkshire, in Whitby and Northallerton.

Services in Yorkshire and Humberside

Creative Support is pleased to provide prevention and social care services in Calderdale, Kirklees, Bradford, Leeds, Sheffield, Doncaster, North Lincolnshire, North East Lincolnshire and Wakefield for people with a learning disability, autism and mental health needs. Our services include four Extra Care services for older people in Hull, Leeds and Wakefield.

In North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire, we continue to provide 16 supported living and outreach services for people with a learning disability and autism and a floating support service for vulnerable people with mental health and complex needs. We recently celebrated our 10-year anniversary at the Willows in Grimsby and had a wonderful party, which was attended by our local councillor. We also provide housing related support in North East Lincolnshire to adults with complex needs, to support them to find and maintain a tenancy and we provide low level housing related support to around 50 adults with learning difficulties, who live in their own homes.

We were delighted to be re-awarded the contract for our well-established supported living services in Doncaster for around 100 people with a learning disability for a further 6.5 years. These include a newly-built service for younger people who are moving towards greater independence. Our new service model has a strong emphasis on delivering social value and building community connections. We also deliver provide housing related support to 250 adults experiencing mental ill health, as well as providing eight units of supported housing for people with long term mental health needs in their journey to more independent living.

In Sheffield, we continued to provide high quality supported living services to people with a learning disability and we gained a place on the Council's framework for enhanced supported living for people with complex needs.

Towards the end of the year we were very pleased to be awarded our first contract for supported living services in Wakefield for 40 people with a learning disability, with 13 services transferring to our management from two outgoing providers. We are working hard to create a unified staff team and a strong positive person-centred culture.

In Calderdale and Kirklees we support people with a learning disability and autism in 12 supported living services. There is a strong commitment to co-production and service user involvement in these services. During the year we gained a place on Calderdale Council's Approved Provider List for supported living.

Our supported living services in Leeds provided support to 34 people with a learning disability and autism in three services. The Courtyard Café in Horsforth and the adjacent 'Creativities' day opportunities project continue to offer people with a learning disability an alternative to traditional day services.

In Bradford, we continued to provide community based support for people with mental health needs and we offer mental health supported accommodation in eight services across Bradford and Keighley. Our crisis support service for people with mental health needs in Bradford has been re-commissioned as part of a multi-agency service model involving the NHS and voluntary sector partners.

Services in the West Midlands

Services in the West Midlands were provided in 12 local authorities in 2023-24, including Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, Wolverhampton, Dudley, Sandwell, Birmingham, Solihull, Telford & Wrekin, Shropshire, Warwickshire, Worcestershire and Oxfordshire. During the year we gained a place on the Birmingham framework for the provision of supported living.

Leonora Street, our mental health care home and Robert Heath Street, our supported living service continue to provide recovery focused mental health support in Stoke-on-Trent. We have five supported living services in Staffordshire and recently enabled three brothers to successfully move into supported living for the first time from their family home, resulting in very positive feedback from their parents: *"It's really nice to see how well D, S and W have settled into their new home. All 3 lads appear very happy which puts our minds at ease. With the support of your team and Caroline it was a really smooth transition, they are very comfortable with all the staff and really love their own space and independence."*

In Wolverhampton we offer six services for people with a learning disability and mental health needs and we support eight people with a learning disability in neighbouring Sandwell. In Dudley, we provide six supported living services for people with a learning disability across the Borough. Sadly, the contract for our preventative mental health service ended when the contract was re-configured and re-tendered. However, we have retained our welcoming and attractive Dudley Hub which is used for co-produced activities for the people we support.

Across Telford & Wrekin we offer six supported living services for people with a learning disability, including a new service for four people. An existing mental health service known as Orchard Place transferred to our management during the year and we are currently working hard with commissioners to mobilise a completely new mental health supported accommodation service for 12 people.

We successfully provided a small residential care service known as Doseley Road in Telford for many years and we have transformed this into a supported living model, utilising a spacious new property that we acquired in 2023 and refurbished to meet the needs of individuals. This is a much more attractive and accessible property, which will better meet the needs of the people we support.

We continued to provide our mental health recovery service and crisis café from hubs in East and South Birmingham that are commissioned by the CCG and delivered as part of a longstanding partnership with Birmingham MIND. The service offers individual recovery planning, co-produced wellbeing activities, peer support and pathways to employment, with the aim of promoting recovery, inclusion and independence.

Our services in Warwickshire continue to flourish and we now support over 50 people with a learning disability, autism and mental health needs across the county. Hope House, our first supported living service in Oxford is now well established. Following our admission to the framework for supported living in Worcestershire we hope to develop additional services to complement our two existing services for people with a learning disability and mental health needs.

Services in the East Midlands

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

In Derby, we support 24 people with a learning disability in two supported living services and we provide mental health outreach support across the city.

We have a large service in Bedford to provide seven supported living services and four residential care homes for over 80 people with a learning disability and autism. We have been given a 2-year contract extension for all of our services in Bedford.

We continue to provide a range of services across Leicester and Leicestershire, including seven mental health services and 12 supported living services for people with a learning disability.

We are now working with two unitary authorities in Northamptonshire and we provide residential care, supported living and community support for people who have a learning disability. Moray Lodge, our mental health recovery in Northampton is now well established. Our personalised day service in Wellingborough currently supports 24 people to enjoy sports, arts and other enjoyable community activities. We have re-modelled the Chestnuts service from residential care to supported living, enabling individuals to enjoy a more independent life.

Services in London and the South East

We currently provide services in six London boroughs, including Barnet, Brent, Bromley, Camden, Tower Hamlets and Wandsworth, with a new service in development in Harrow. We also support older people and people with a learning disability or mental health needs in Thurrock, Essex, West Berkshire, Reading and Slough. During the year we were admitted to frameworks for the provision of supported living for the London boroughs of Wandsworth and Newham.

Pelham House, our supported living service in West Berkshire, continues to provide personalised support to 15 people with a learning disability with a very dedicated team of staff. In Reading we continued to provide support to people with a learning disability and mental health needs. During the year we began actively consulting with stakeholders to develop a new-build scheme of 8 flats on land we own in Reading. We also provided community support to older people and people with a learning disability in the adjoining borough of Slough.

We have been providing services for people with a learning disability who have very complex needs in Braintree, Essex since 2018 under the Transforming Care programme and have achieved great outcomes for the individuals we support. In April 2024 we were awarded a second contract in Essex to provide support to six people living in an existing service (Moulsham Lodge) in Chelmsford. In November 2023, we began negotiating to acquire Nightingale Close in Witham, Essex, a care home comprising three six-bed bungalows which we hope to transform over time into a supported living model.

We acquired three supported living services in Bromley for people with a learning disability through competitive tendering, with the contract commencing in April 2023. Twenty staff transferred to us from another voluntary sector provider under TUPE. We are pleased to have made a number of positive changes to these services.

In the London Borough of Wandsworth, commissioners re-configured and re-tendered their learning disability contracts in 2023-24 and we were pleased to be awarded the contract for four services providing supported living for 18 people. We welcomed staff transferring under TUPE from two outgoing providers. As part of this re-configuration we sadly no longer support the service users at Melody Road, whom we had supported to make great progress in their lives. We wish them and their staff every future happiness.

We opened a further service in Wandsworth for seven people with a learning disability known as Colson Way, in new-build accommodation developed by the borough. Each tenant has their own self-contained flat and the opportunity to grow in confidence and independence. The service featured in a promotional video for the council following a visit to the service from Councillor Dikerdem who spent time chatting with staff and tenants.

We provide Extra Care services to around 400 older people in London, including three services in the London Borough of Bromley, one in Wandsworth and six in Tower Hamlets. We deliver a programme of enjoyable and stimulating activities in these services to promote wellbeing and encourage peer support. In the previous year we were delighted to be awarded our first contract in Brent, an established Extra Care service for 35 people known as Visram House. Since then we have been awarded a second contract in Brent to provide Extra Care in the Honeypot Lane scheme.

In the previous year Harrow Council awarded us the contract to provide a brand new Extra Care service in Klute Apartments, named in honour of photographic pioneer, Jeannette Klute. This will be delivered in a purpose-built new building on the iconic Kodak redevelopment site. The service opened in July 2024.

Prevention, Outreach and Wellbeing Services

Our prevention services have supported 2,500 people across the country by providing advice, enablement and short-term support to prevent homelessness, promote inclusion, resilience and wellbeing. Many of these services incorporate co-production, peer support and volunteering as part of the delivery model and reduce the demand for statutory health and social care services.

Funding for prevention and floating support services has been challenged by the loss of local authority funding from the Supporting People programme. However, we were pleased to have secured extensions to existing contracts for many such valued services. These have included the extension of our well-regarded prevention contracts in Wigan and Gateshead.

Our floating support service in Doncaster provides a recovery focused outreach service to more than 250 people with mental health needs across the city. The service has experienced high demand for the duration of the contract and has achieved some excellent outcomes. These include supporting tenants to find a suitable place they can call home, access the benefits they are entitled to and find pathways to volunteering and paid work. The service recently received a compliment from a person we support from the LGBTQ community who felt that no other service had accepted her for who she was or helped to meet her goals until she found the Doncaster team, which had fully met her needs.

The Wigan prevention services supported 511 people across the Borough this year. The team continue to receive positive feedback from the people we support, who have said that the service has helped them to regain their confidence, build trust and improve their life skills such as travel and money management.

Funding was secured for a further year for The Liverpool Light service which provides preventative and supportive interventions for people experiencing mental distress in a welcoming and therapeutic city centre Café environment. Our floating support service in Liverpool for socially excluded groups continued to deliver targeted interventions to over 1,000 people at risk of homelessness and exclusion in an area of significant deprivation.

The Wigan prevention services supported 511 people across the Borough this year. The team continue to receive positive feedback from the people we support, who have said that the service has helped them to regain their confidence, build trust and improve their life skills such as travel and money management.

Transforming Care Services

During the period 2023-24, we continued our contribution to the national Transforming Care Programme through the further development of bespoke services for individuals with a learning disability and/or autism. Our focus has remained on supporting individuals who have complex needs or challenging behaviour to live in adapted homes in the community, with the right support, rather than in hospitals and institutions.



We started delivering support under the Transforming Care pathway in 2019 to individuals with a learning disability, behaviours of concern and some individuals with an offending risk or forensic history. Since then, our development work has grown significantly and we are now working with 28 individuals who are either being successfully supported in bespoke placements or are undergoing transitions.

A third person moved into our trauma-informed service in Preston. A new supported living service opened in Bury as part of a project jointly commissioned by Bury, Salford and Manchester local authorities under the GM Complex Needs Framework. The property has been comprehensively adapted to meet identified needs and preferences.

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

Creative Space Centre

2023-24 has been another brilliant year for the Creative Space Centre with lots of change and new initiatives. At the beginning of 2024 we were thrilled to open our Accessible Cinema which is a bespoke space that can be used by anybody, with any need. People can walk around, make noise or pause the film. People with mobility needs can be hoisted or sit in the most appropriate seating for them. This enables everybody to be able to have a full and sensory cinematic experience.



We now offer a haircutting service for those who would struggle to access a high street hairdresser. Craig Henderson is very experienced in working with people with additional needs and comes to Creative Space once a month so that haircuts can take place in familiar surroundings.

Our three sensory rooms are as busy as ever, supporting people from 9am – 9pm, seven days a week. The Centre has been used by numerous schools, care homes and supported living services. Over the last year, we have welcomed many new groups and individuals, as well as continuing to support our existing service users, some of whom have been attending for over 30 years and many travelling large distances to access our unique resources. We hope to refurbish Space 1 by the end of the year, which is a huge and very exciting project. We've consulted with people who use the Centre and will be including climbing equipment, spinning equipment and a lot of the old favourites.

The restoration project for our heritage gardens is steadily moving forward. It is taking a lot of planning but will definitely be worth it. All the gardens will be easily accessible with raised beds, activities, picnic areas and lushly grassed areas. We are looking forward to garden fetes, sports days and other outdoor events next year.

We continue to work closely with the Friends of Space (FOS) who support us with many of our projects and by repairing and replacing equipment. There is a very healthy £317,941 in the bank, with most of this ring-fenced for the garden project and the Space 1 refurbishment. This year alone FOS have received £63,233 in donations and fundraising activities they and others have carried out. Individuals supporting us with their own events on Just Giving, Charities Trust and MyDonate have donated an impressive total of £6,407.

Friends of Space were lucky enough to receive a donation of £20,000 from local business owner Darren Whitman. This has paid for most of the cinema room project. Karen Sutton, a long term fundraiser for FOS, has raised over £8,000 this year alone with various events, particularly coach day trips. Pete Marquis continues to support us and money is still coming in (£25,000 this year) from his Gala Ball at the end of 2022 where he raised a huge £101,605 for Creative Space Centre. What an amazing night that was! Penwortham and Stoneyhurst Golf clubs both nominated Friends of Space as their charity of the year and managed to raise a fantastic £5,550 between them. We've been without a fundraiser for some time so are very pleased to have recently appointed to this role and we hope that this appointment will further enhance our fundraising efforts and programme of events.

Some feedback from people who use our amazing resources:

"What a fantastic time we had today!! As always The Space Centre provided a fun play and sensory experience for our families. It's amazing how a bit of fun can really lift the spirits." High Five

"Summer Club Week 1 - trip out to The Space Centre. Everyone had lots of fun in this amazing sensory environment." Chatsworth Community College

"Thanks again to the staff at the Space Centre on our last visit. We were made to feel so welcome, it was a really great experience." Staff member from Autism Initiatives

Creative Together

It has been a fantastic year for Creative Together, our co-production centre based on Swan Street in Manchester. Our members had decided that, after the success of The Big Event in 2023, that they wanted a full-scale music festival that would take place over a weekend. We held the co-produced 'Be You Not Them' music festival in July 2023, with every aspect of the event co-produced with members, from performances to planning, banner making to tickets and merchandise. A centre member said: *"We are believers and achievers – before we all lacked confidence."*

Creative Together hosted a Creative Support Eurovision Song Contest with over 20 contestants who sent over their videos and gave live performances. The winners were chosen by the members and won an all-expenses paid trip to Manchester to perform exclusively at the 'Be You Not Them' music festival.

Centre members designed their own patterned fabric and worked with a manufacturer to produce cushions. The project, titled “What’s Bugging You?” resulted in vibrant cushions which were sold out during a Christmas sale at Head office. *“All the work we’ve done, making the products, artwork and designing the site on Shopify makes me really proud of Creative Support and the service users. We’ve worked really hard this year.”*

We worked with a nearby business to hold our art exhibition in May 2023. This successful event will be held annually. In November the members wrote a Christmas story. We welcomed Ukrainian refugees to share food by working with the charity Europa and supplied youth workshop space for the local charity Kids of Colour.

26 students and volunteers have joined us this year. Members organised social events for Halloween, Christmas and the King’s Coronation. We have worked collaboratively with 38 Creative Support services and over 40 local organisations and companies. We delivered 432 sessions to build people’s confidence and alleviate loneliness. We launched the ‘Sight Loss Social’, the first younger people’s social group for those who are visually impaired. Members created hand sewn banners for Manchester Pride 2023.

Our International Women’s Day event was very successful, attracting the general public, staff from head office and local businesses – all beautifully welcomed by the members whose confidence is growing by the week. They are self-appointed ambassadors. As one member noted *“We are not afraid to show people what we can achieve, we want to send a positive message to other people out there who may be in a similar position”*

Events and Initiatives

- Our Marketing initiative in 2023 was ‘Community Connections’, which celebrated engaging with your local community following the lockdowns held in recent years. One of the highlights of the year was the summer of ‘Festival Fiesta’ events held in services, which were co-produced with the people we support and featured lots of music, dancing, party games and delicious food.
- We celebrated Black History Month in October 2023, with a website article series all about the history and significance of black hair. The series was written in collaboration with our EDI Lead Kizzy Green. We also celebrated the achievements of our black members of staff and people we support through our ‘Black Excellence Showcase’ on our website and social media.
- The Marketing team has held two Engagement Workshops, in October 2023 and April 2024. The events were attended by people we support to find out more about what the Marketing and Communications teams do, from writing their own stories, to designing their own magazine spreads. Those who attended the first workshop were made co-editors of the ‘Inspiring Ideas’ edition of Creative Life magazine, and suggested features they wanted to see in the magazine, such as ‘Pets Corner’.
- We celebrated International Women’s Day in March 2024 with an event at Head Office to raise money for the charity In Place of War, a global organisation that uses creativity in places of conflict as a tool for positive change. Colleagues gathered to watch specially recorded videos from In Place of War. We also held a sale of second-hand books written by women, which sparked lots of interesting conversations about our favourite writers.
- Our 2024 calendar and Christmas card were both well received. The calendar included diverse and engaging artwork from the people we support and staff members in many different mediums including photography, painting, embroidery and sculpture. The Christmas card featured artwork from Carolyn, who we support in Halifax.
- In January 2024, we launched our 2024 Marketing initiative, ‘the Year of Living Well’. Throughout the year, we have been exploring how we can keep ourselves healthy and well, both physically and mentally. The Year of Living Well is supported by a bespoke journal for the people we support and our staff to engage with and complete. The journal includes tips on living a healthy lifestyle, as well as interactive activities, puzzles and mindful colouring-in pages.



- We launched the Healthy Heart Prize Draw in February 2024, where we asked the people we support and our staff to send photos of themselves trying out new exercises and activities. Three entrants won a smart watch.
- We launched the Healthy Eating Prize Draw in June 2024. This prize draw required photos of the people we support and our staff making their favourite healthy recipe. Winners received a box of fresh vegetables to use in their next cooking adventures.
- Across summer 2024, many services held their own 'Sporty Summer' events, in line with the summer marketing initiative of being active and trying new sports.
- We held our annual Gala event at the Mercure Manchester Hotel in June, with over 200 people from across the country attending to celebrate Creative Support award winners, enjoy a delicious three course meal, and dance at the disco.
- Creative Support was proud to be the headline sponsor of Stockport Pride 2024. Around 25 staff and people we support took part in the parade through the town centre and welcomed people to our stall.
- In August 2024 we took part in the Manchester Pride Parade once again. Over 30 people we support and staff took part in our colourful parade. People we support took part in the planning of the day and made banners and posters which we carried on the day.

Grants Awarded

- Our Gardening Grant programme returned in 2023, supporting services and individuals to make the most of their gardens. In 2023-24, we awarded 54 Gardening Grants worth around £7,000. Our Warwick Street service in Barrow-in-Furness received a gardening grant and completely transformed their outside area. They used their grant to buy plants to brighten the space. They can now use their garden as a relaxing place to sit when friends and family visit.
- We awarded £9,800 in grants to people we support to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles. Parties were held with friends, families and neighbours.
- We awarded 25 Festival Fiesta grants worth £9,920. Fiestas were held at services across the country and brilliant photos from these events were shared on social media. In Warrington, services used their Festival Fiesta grant to hold a music festival complete with overnight camping in tents. The event was so popular that staff and the people we support decided to make the festival an annual event.
- The 'Be the Difference' grant programme was launched in December 2023. The programme encourages services to co-produce ideas for activities, social clubs and events that are not currently provided within their local community. The 2023 programme awarded 12 grants worth £7,900. Services in Teesside used their money to establish a bowling league with the people they support to socialise whilst taking part in an activity they enjoy.
- Our 'Sporty Summer' grants were launched in Spring 2024, to provide funding for services looking to hold co-produced, sports-themed events in the summer. The Sporty Summer programme awarded 12 grants worth £6,000. Services in Tameside used their Sporty Summer grant to hire out Tameside Cycle Circuit, where the people they support could try out disability-friendly bikes.

Creative Support Internal & External Awards

- The Creative Stars awards highlight the fantastic achievements of the people we support. Individuals can be nominated in four categories: The High Flyer Award, Eco-Friendly Award, Positivity Award and Community Champion Award. The winners are selected by a panel of people we support and staff members from different services around the country. Winners receive a badge, a shopping voucher and a certificate.

- The 'We Care' Awards recognise the people and teams who personify our 'We Care' values and achieve positive outcomes. Four 'regular' award rounds have taken place since the awards were launched in 2023, as well as special 'one off' award rounds for Registered Managers and staff members who work in administration roles. Between April 2023 and March 2024, the judging panels awarded three Gold awards, 19 Silver awards and 27 other We Care Awards. At the Gala, Purchasing Officer Jean Brookfield, winner of the We Care Customer Care award, said: *"I'm so proud to work for a beautiful company. We're like one big family, and I wanted to say thank you so much."*
- Our Creative People Appreciation Awards are held monthly to recognise the achievements of ten staff members and/or teams. The winners receive a box of Hotel Chocolat chocolates. All winners are then entered into Quarterly Prize Draws for the chance to win either two days of extra annual leave or a gift worth up to £200. A total of 120 Creative Appreciation Awards were given out during the year.
- We are very proud of the external awards won by our members of staff at national and regional ceremonies. We had a number of award wins at the regional Great British Care Awards. Sharon Taylor, a Support Worker from Doncaster, was highly commended at the national final in Birmingham.
- At the Care Home Awards 2023 in London, the Laurels Care Home in Cumbria was Highly Commended in the 'Best Use of Technology and Digital Care Strategy' category. Thyme Lodge in St Helens was a finalist at the 2024 Care Home Awards in the 'Best for Specialist Care' category.
- The Internal Audits Department won 'Team of the Year' at the 2024 'Made in Manchester' Awards for young professionals, where we had three finalists.
- We had seven finalists at the Housing with Care Awards, including support worker Hayley Pickering from Wellingborough who won the 'Care and Support Worker' award, and Rachel Jenkins, also from Wellingborough, who was Highly Commended in the 'Frontline Leader' category.
- We were also delighted to be finalists at the Employee Benefits Awards in London in recognition of our excellent employee benefit offer, including our staff welfare fund.

Publications and Newsletters

- We have produced three engaging issues of Creative Life magazine since April 2023. The magazine's themes have included the 2023 marketing initiative 'Community Connections', stories and photos from Manchester Pride in 2023, and an edition all about 'Inspiring Ideas' about health and wellbeing. The 'Inspiring Ideas' issue was also our 40th edition of Creative Life, which was celebrated with a double page spread about the history of the magazine.
- We have organised well-attended workshops to further increase co-production and the active involvement of people we support in the production of Creative Life and our other publications. We are proud of the wonderful contributions from people we support including creative ideas, content and photographs.
- There have been three issues of Creative People magazine since April 2023. The magazine focuses on the achievements of our wonderful staff, and shares information and advice about wellbeing, career development, training opportunities and staff benefits. Creative People is posted to the home addresses of all of our colleagues, as well as our services.
- The 500 words competition 2023 invited our staff to write about their experience of working for Creative Support. We received 46 incredible entries with inspiring stories that we have used in recruitment campaigns and social media. Our overall winner was Katy Gee, Senior Support Worker in Calderdale who told us that *"I didn't realise that I would become such a massive part of service users lives and it's been wonderful. They've taught me how to just live in the moment, to not be afraid to be who you are and to love unconditionally."*

- We have published 12 blogs as part of CEO Anna Lunt's blog series. The content reacts to contemporary current affairs and timely issues, ensuring that the content is relevant to staff members and the people we support. Blogs have been written on subjects including:
 - Domestic Violence and Mental Health
 - A Reflection on the Manchester Airport Incident
 - The Infected Blood Scandal and Closed Cultures
 - The Changing Landscape for Volunteers
 - Autism and Education
- We have continued to publish Creative Connect, our monthly email newsletter for staff. The email features important news and key dates, award winner announcements, policy updates, staff incentives and compliments.
- Our Communications team has placed greater emphasis on preparing and issuing press releases about organisation-wide and service-specific events and achievements. We are proud to have been published in a number of national and local publications within the last year.
- We have launched the first episode of the Creative Community Podcast, which will share stories from the people we support around the country. The first episode featuring Sheila, a resident of the Laurels Care Home in Cumbria, received positive comments. Sheila shared her knowledge of the history of Carlisle.

Social Media

We continue to use social media to engage the people we support, staff and stakeholders with a mix of good news stories, initiatives and competitions. We have also been posting more video content on main feed posts and 'Stories' which have proved popular on social media. We have grown our Facebook following to over 5,900 and reached over 207,000 people on Facebook between April 2023 and August 2024 through organic posts. On LinkedIn, we have grown our followers to over 7,000, with a reach of over 30,000 people in the past year. Since launching Instagram in 2022, we have gained over 480 followers and reached over 4,500 people with our posts between April 2023 and August 2024.

Social Value

The number of contracts monitoring their social value has increased to 24 over the last year, with continued interdepartmental work between the Tendering Team and the Social Value Team during the bidding process to generate targets which are achievable and ambitious, continuing to push for growth of social value delivery across the contracts and develop new and innovative ways to deliver against commitments.

We have successfully delivered 104% of our targets on the Tameside Mental Health Community Recovery Service contract within the first three years of the five-year total contract, achieving over 100% individually on 50% of the contract targets including number of local people hired on the contract, hours spent supporting unemployed people, student placements and befriending initiatives. We are also ahead of scheduled progress on both of our Tameside Learning Disability Supported Accommodation contracts (Area 3 and Area 4) achieving 96% and 99%, which is above the predicted 80% of target delivery achieved by this reporting period of the contract, with areas of strength including staff completing qualifications and volunteering hours for local VCSEs.

In our Learning Disability services in Tameside, we had a set of environmental commitments in our social value delivery, which we decided to target by maintaining a local allotment plot in Denton. Over the course of the contract, we have seen this develop significantly into an initiative beneficial to many of the people we support. As well as enjoying gardening and socialising with others they are now able to harvest their herbs and vegetables for everyone at the service, which are used to make regular roast dinners which have become a great community gathering for all 17 residents. The initiative has brought people together to benefit the environment and learn new skills, *"I'm learning a lot. I like picking the herbs for my cooking. It's my choice what I pick and it makes the food taste nice"* was feedback from someone we support to attend.

The Social Value Team have closely supported services with the monitoring of progress to ensure gaps have been identified in early stages, resulting in successful adaptations of delivery to meet contract targets. In Trafford, there was a growing gap against the target for in-kind contributions to local community projects. We partnered with a local voluntary organisation, Trafford Carers and offered them the free use of a private room at our office for counselling sessions, successfully increasing our delivery from 0% to 30% over one reporting period.

In addition, we have now included the creation of Social Value delivery guides and monitoring templates into the mobilisation process for new services, with introductory sessions during the early stages to ensure we are embedding social value planning and delivery from the onset of new contracts.

Volunteers

Our Volunteers programme has continued to grow with 93 active volunteers and 57 new volunteers recruited over the course of the year. We placed a focus on diversifying our volunteer roles to attract more applicants and meet the specific needs of services and people we support. Through consultations, we were able to identify and fill new roles such as Walking Group Volunteer, Gamer Befriender, Knitting Group Volunteer and many more. We increased our reach geographically with new areas for volunteers including Accrington, Whitley Bay, Leeds and Stoke-on-Trent. We continue to receive positive feedback from volunteers in their posts such as *"the experience has been invaluable and I am profoundly thankful for the opportunity to contribute to such a compassionate and dedicated team."*

We worked in partnership with four external companies including the Department of Business and Trade, Fanatics and Firebrand, to support over 77 corporate volunteers who joined services in Manchester, Leicester, Stockport, London and Salford on a number of projects including creating sensory gardens, rejuvenating outdoor spaces and litter picking.

During the year we were re-assessed for Investors in Volunteers and were delighted to be recognised for excellence in the management of volunteers. To celebrate National Volunteers Week, we sent out appreciation certificates to all of our amazing volunteers and we awarded six volunteer awards in recognition of those who made a special contribution to our work.

A number of volunteers and peer mentors went on to gain paid employment including two long-standing volunteers who have acquired paid jobs in our Birmingham mental health hubs.

Placements

We are proud to contribute to the training and development of professional staff in health and social care and have continued to grow our student placement programme. We now have partnerships with 32 organisations including 22 universities, 9 schools and colleges and the Growth Company. We worked with 15 organisations for the first time, such as London Metropolitan University (Health and Social Care), the University of Greenwich (Social Work), and Keele University (Social Work).

The number of placements completed through the course of the year increased to 83, adding great value to the work of our paid staff and generating an expected income of £28,850. This is inclusive of 27 Social Work, 27 Nursing, 14 Health and Social Care, eight Psychology and one Occupational Therapy student placements with an additional four placements in partnership with Salford Employ and two general work experience placements with local colleges. Many students have taken up bank or permanent paid roles with Creative Support after their placements and have introduced fellow students to work with us.

In January, we redesigned our feedback form for students to capture more concise feedback with the aims of increasing the volume of feedback. Between January and March, 50% of the students completed and returned their feedback forms, with 100% stating they were happy with their placement and 100% stating they would recommend undertaking a placement with Creative Support to other students. We have received lots of positive feedback including *"I thoroughly enjoyed my placement and will miss both the staff and service users a lot. Everyone was very welcoming to me and helped me to get involved at any opportunity, I couldn't have been offered a better team."*

Employing a Large and Diverse Workforce

At the end of March 2024, Creative Support employed 5,320 contracted full-time, part-time and sessional employees amounting to 3,678 whole-time equivalents. The average length of service of our permanent employees is just under 5.3 years (if previous TUPE service is included) and 4.6 years (if TUPE service is not included). This is a strong indicator of high employee satisfaction and retention, demonstrating that Creative Support has a lower rate of annual staff turnover than the average for the care sector (which was running at 26% nationally according to the Skills for Care 'Size and Structure' Report, July 2024).

During 2023-24, we employed 1,870 new permanent and bank staff. This includes people who have never worked in care who have been motivated by a desire to seek secure and meaningful employment in social care, as well as graduates and people with prior care experience. We have also welcomed back many previous employees during the year. Our HR team successfully managed 16 staff TUPE transfers over 2023-24, welcoming 72 staff into the company from seven voluntary sector and private employers.

We continue to build our team of relief workers to ensure that we can manage peaks in workload in an efficient manner and prevent the use of more expensive agency staff. On average, over 500 of our relief workers work for us each week and all have access to our training programmes and many of our benefits. At least five of our relief workers transfer to permanent roles every week, contributing greatly to our recruitment efforts.

We have seen the job market become highly competitive in recent years, putting huge pressure on our organisation and the wider social care sector. Despite this challenging context, we received a total of 55,115 completed job applications in 2023-24, averaging 1,060 per week, compared with 349 per week in the previous year, a huge increase of 203%, generated by comprehensive recruitment methods. The effective use of social media recruitment platforms has contributed significantly to our successful efforts to reduce the use and associated cost of agency staff. With increased capacity in our recruitment team the average turnaround for on-boarding new employees and ensuring comprehensive pre-employment checks and due diligence is 28 days.

In July 2023, we were delighted to receive confirmation from the UK Visa & Immigration (UKVI) service that our application to become a Licensed Sponsor for visa purposes was successful. We can now assign and issue Certificates of Sponsorship (CoS) to employees to support their applications to the UKVI for (up to) 5-year Skilled Worker Visas in Health & Social Care as either a Support Worker or Senior Support Worker. To assist us with these complex processes we continue to enlist the support of a regulated visa and sponsorship expert service.

As a licenced sponsor with the UKVI, we must adhere to strict rules and regulations. To ensure we remain compliant we implemented a set of robust policies, procedures and checks. We have successfully recruited a dedicated HR Data Compliance Coordinator and HR Data Compliance Officer who maintain and monitor the sponsorship process and all right to work checks for the organisation. As expected we had our first UKVI Visa Sponsorship Compliance Inspection over two days in July 2024, which involved five individual interviews with sponsored staff and a lengthy interview with the Visa Sponsorship Team. The UKVI Inspector also conducted full compliance and audit checks of both hardcopy and electronic data. We understand the UKVI were satisfied that as an organisation we were fully compliant.

As of 31st March 2024 we had assigned 224 Certificates of Sponsorship to employees and 218 of these remain employed with ourselves. Our ability to sponsor staff has significantly contributed to our recruitment drive and has enabled us to retain experienced staff on study and post-study visas.

We aim to provide structured career pathways that attract new staff and support all our employees to flourish and develop their career in social care. We participated in a number of initiatives to enable people who have been unemployed or are disadvantaged in the labour market to join our workforce and to experience high quality vocational training. We use Work Trials to give people without experience of social care the opportunity to gain supported work experience and training.

Staff from BAME groups made up 42% of our workforce on 31st March 2024. This demonstrates the diverse profile of our workforce and the wider social care sector and the communities in which we work. As a response to the Black Lives Matter movement, we adopted a Manifesto for Action and we have appointed an EDI Officer to lead on our commitments.

Our staff gender breakdown shows that 74% of our employees are female and 26% are male. We are pleased to report that our last gender pay gap was slightly in favour of female employees in contrast with the national picture. This reflects the number of senior roles in our organisation that are filled by women.

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

Initiatives to support staff to maintain their health, wellbeing and resilience have included the provision of hardship grants and confidential advice and counselling from our partner Employee Assistance Scheme provider, Health Assured. Our EAP continues to be promoted and well-utilised by our workforce. In the past year, 12.9% of our employees have contacted Health Assured for support and advice. 77.7% of these calls were for counselling and 22.3% for advice. There were 11 referrals for face-to-face counselling, with 297 counselling sessions delivered, 11 referrals for structured telephone counselling with 84 sessions delivered and a further 116 on-line counselling sessions. It is noteworthy that 26.1% of employees were on sick leave at the outset of their counselling but after engaging in therapy 88.7% of those off work at the start of therapy returned post-therapy.

Over the last year, we have continued to use a new Proactive Rehabilitation Support benefit for all employees involved in any type of incident at work, accessed through our Insurers. The benefit provides a comprehensive rehabilitation assessment to support employees back to work after sustaining an accidental workplace injury, with timely access to medical intervention. This service works closely with the employee, supporting both physical and psychological recovery to enable employees to return to work. A total of 37 employees were referred to the service and 35 took up our offer during 2023-24.

We have supported a number of staff under the provisions of Staff Menopause Policy, which recognises the impact of the menopause on our female employees and our Domestic Violence Policy. The latter policy outlines a set of measures to support employees experiencing domestic violence, including discretionary paid leave as well as access to confidential HR support and signposting to supportive external agencies.

Employee Welfare Fund

We have kept the Staff Welfare Fund open and accessible throughout 2023-24. Out of the 147 applications received, non-repayable grants of up to £350 have been given to 30 staff, with a total expenditure of £8,025. We have also been able to provide financial support by offering a loan to a further 24 staff members. Unsuccessful grant applicants have been supported with an information pack with links to other resources and organisations offering support and seven applicants received other welfare interventions from HR.

All applications are considered in a confidential and compassionate manner. Staff coordinating the Welfare Fund have completed First Aid Mental Health training to support staff with their mental health around their finances, and we provide staff with ongoing support from Creative Support's Employee Assistance Programme.

Since we introduced the fund during the pandemic we have received 866 applications and supported just over 350 employees with the grant, resulting in total expenditure of £53,500.

'The staff welfare fund is a fantastic idea, and has helped my family greatly through such a difficult time, relieving so much financial pressure and was able to use the grant towards white goods for myself and my children after leaving a horrible situation. I can't thank the staff member who helped me so much and also took time out of her day to find other resources to help my situation. Thanks again!' - Employee North East

'I would like to show great appreciation for the welfare fund, the support has been impeccable. It has enabled me to balance my life and get back on track as I have been struggling with childcare. I am a single parent and with the cost of living it's been hard, but Creative Support has helped me a lot and I appreciate how fast the process was.' – Employee North West

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion: Anti-Racism

It has been a productive year for our work on anti-racism and EDI, which has benefitting greatly from our EDI Engagement Lead commencing in their role in June 2023. It is imperative that work in this area is led by the experiences and voices of our staff, and so early work has centred on conducting a programme of detailed feedback interviews with staff members of colour to gain insight into their experiences in all aspects of their work and employment. As of March 31st 2024, 100 of these in-depth conversations have been completed, with feedback informing initiatives and the prioritisation of work streams.

Building from these interviews and commitments set out in our Black Lives Matter Manifesto for Action, work during the year has involved embedding regular initiatives to increase visibility and celebration of the rich diversity of culture, heritage and ethnicities within our workforce. This has included publication of a quarterly EDI newsletter, pieces within our staff & service user magazines as well as topical and seasonal cultural celebrations. We have further developed and established new tailored support mechanisms, including a regular peer network, a cohort of six local EDI Champions within services, and delivery of the EDI Helpdesk for individual staff, managers or teams to seek advice, guidance or specialist support around any challenges they are facing around racism.

As part of our commitment to anti-racism education and allyship, we have updated and improved our anti-racism training course which forms part of the induction programme for every staff member of Creative Support. This has included the recruitment of seven staff members of colour to co-deliver this training, bringing their valuable lived experiences as well as their skill as facilitators.

The Engagement Lead role has also increased capacity for proactive work and responsiveness to take forward developments as they are identified. For example, this has included acting on feedback shared with the EDI network to make lotas available to some of our services – ensuring that our bathroom facilities are inclusive and respectful for staff and visitors of different faiths. This has also involved the delivery of two bespoke classroom training sessions for staff teams requiring additional support around experiences of racism, and individualised support and development work with five service teams across the country.

We have continued to invest in initiatives to encourage and support progression and inclusion of staff of colour at all levels of the organisation, including enrolment of 16 staff members to date on the Skills for Care Moving Up Programme, which is a specific leadership programme for Black and Asian staff working in the health & social care sector.

We are proud to already be seeing the positive impact of this work, and that staff members across the county have been empowered to run with their own initiatives, such as Aisha's Eid party in Stockton, which was attended by over 100 local people and Cecil Gardens' 'Nigerian and Ghanaian Night' in Hull, organised by our care staff for colleagues and people they support to celebrate all of the elements that make up their identity as health & social care workers as graduates, Black men/women, mothers/fathers, brothers/sisters, Africans, Ghanaians and Nigerians.

"We are not all the same and that should be our greatest strength. We should draw on the differences in who we are, what we have experienced, what we think and the differences in what we have to share. To create care and support that serves everyone, it is imperative that we include everyone." Statement developed by EDI Champion Nurudeen and colleagues in Warwickshire as part of their diversity notice board initiative.

Valuing our LGBTQ+ Staff

We are deeply committed to diversity, inclusion, and equality. As a proud Stonewall Diversity Champion, we actively promote LGBTQ+ inclusion across all levels of our organisation, with our LGBTQ+ employee network driving meaningful change, raising awareness, and nurturing a strong sense of community for staff across the country. Attendance at our meetings increased significantly, with staff joining remotely from across the country, and in person at Head Office.



This year, we celebrated key milestones, including serving as the headline sponsor of Stockport Pride. We were joined by staff and service users who enjoyed walking in the parade and volunteering at a Creative Support stall. We also marched in the Manchester Pride parade with our staff and service users, and ran a campaign to promote Pride events across the country.

We launched impactful campaigns for Non-Binary Awareness Week and LGBTQ+ History Month, distributing resources and sharing inspiring stories across the whole organisation. This included producing pronoun badges for staff and service users, sharing articles about inspiring LGBTQ+ figures, and distributing informative posters. We also ran a campaign in collaboration with the EDI Network to celebrate Black LGBTQ+ figures, raising awareness about intersectionality across the organisation. The network continued to share stories and resources throughout the year on the staff website, including book reviews, personal articles and resources about allyship.

One thing which we are particularly proud of this year is the work completed to strengthen our support for employees undergoing gender transition. We worked collaboratively with staff who are trans* to update our policy on gender-affirming medical appointments, ensuring that our organisational approach aligned with the lived experiences of those impacted. We also developed a dedicated LGBTQ+ equality policy.

Looking forward, we remain passionate about championing LGBTQ+ equality and partnering with the EDI Network to ensure an inclusive, intersectional approach. We are excited to expand our efforts by developing regional networks, creating even more opportunities to make a positive impact on the lives of our LGBTQ+ staff.



Training and Developing Our People

Investors in People (IIP) is a globally recognised framework for excellence in people management, serving as a benchmark for organisations striving to create a thriving workplace culture. Our organisation's commitment to supporting and developing our employees has been validated through our recent IIP accreditations.



In December 2023 we were delighted to be informed that we had been awarded IIP Gold for the whole organisation. This was followed in March 2024 by the award of IIP Platinum status for our Learning and Development (L&D) and Human Resources (HR) teams. This is a remarkable recognition of our dedication to nurturing talent, leadership, and overall employee development.

What These Accreditations Mean for Us

These prestigious awards are not just symbols of our success - they represent the outcome of years of strategic effort, dedication to best practices, and a deep commitment to our people. The Platinum status awarded to our L&D and HR teams signifies our exceptional performance in developing and supporting our staff. It highlights our leadership in talent development, employee engagement, and creating a culture of continuous improvement.

For the entire organisation, achieving Gold accreditation demonstrates our strong foundation in people management across all departments. It is a testament to the positive and inclusive culture we have built, which empowers every employee to thrive and contribute meaningfully to our collective success. This achievement reassures both current and prospective employees that we are an organisation that prioritises their growth, well-being, and professional fulfillment.

Creative Academy Learning & Development

The Learning & Development department continues to focus on a blended style of training delivery, through face-to-face classroom sessions and virtual classrooms, as well as e-learning training developed by our innovative Digital Coordination Team and managed through Learning Pool (our LMS).

Training Type	No. of sessions & attendees
Virtual classroom (with live trainer)	1211 (7,268)
e-Learning completions	176 cohorts (95,388)
Classroom (face to face) sessions	658 (4499)



Virtual and Digital Learning

In 2023-2024, a total of 7,268 staff attended 1,211 virtual classroom sessions and we supported 95,388 individual e-learning course completions on our new learning management software Learning Pool. This equates to 381 e-learning completions and four webinars taking place every working day (based on 250 working days in a year) and four webinars each working day.

Classroom Training

We have delivered and supported a total of 658 classroom sessions in our regional training centres across the country (or sessions delivered in services with staff), which were attended by 4,499 staff members in 2023-2024. The regional statistics are:

	No. Courses	No. Attended
Cumbria	39	225
Berkshire	3	26
Doncaster	17	131
Essex	19	122
East Midlands	34	217
London	71	432
North East	102	528
North West	304	2465
West Midlands	54	255
Yorkshire & Humber	15	98
Totals	658	4499

Health and Social Care Diplomas

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

Diplomas in Health and Social Care	Completed 2023-2024
Level 2 Diploma in Health and Social Care	10
Level 3 Diploma in Health and Social Care	51
Level 4 Certificate in Leadership and Management of Health and Social Care Services	4
Level 4 Diploma in Adult Care (RQF)	2
Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management of Health and Social Care Services	20
Total	87



Apprenticeships

We currently have 93 staff on Apprenticeship programmes with external providers across the country. 31 staff completed a Health and Social Care Diploma externally as part of their apprenticeship at Levels 2-5. These level 2 to level 7 apprenticeships are supported primarily through our Apprenticeship Levy funds. Investing in the apprenticeships, particularly at undergraduate and Masters levels adds quality and competency to our senior teams, enhancing the quality of care provision in our services. As well as in health and social care apprenticeships, we are also supporting staff in business administration, chartered manager, team leader and payroll apprenticeships.

Workforce Development Fund

We successfully claimed Workforce Development Funding (WDF) of £124,000 for the delivery of completed and certificated qualifications in the period April 2023 - March 2024. The Workforce Development Fund (WDF) is undergoing significant modification as part of broader changes in funding for health and social care. Despite this, Creative Academy has managed to secure £100,000 WDF funding for the 2024-25 financial year. This funding will enable continued investment in the development of our workforce.



High Quality Training Provider Endorsed by Skills for Care

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

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)

Over the past year, we have trained a further 225 people to become Mental Health First Aiders. 195 of these were from Creative Support services and 30 attendees from outside the company. Attendees were from construction companies, digital transformation companies, retail and educational institutions.



Mental Health First Aid trained staff	Numbers
Creative Support staff	195
External participants	30
Total	225

Training Incentives

We gifted incentives of over £90,000 to our staff in the year 2023-2024 as a reward for completing e-learning modules. Staff receive a £50 gift voucher of their choice when they complete 10 e-learning modules in a 12-month period, a £30 gift voucher for completing the Care Certificate and a £50 gift voucher for completing an accredited qualification such as a Diploma, Certificate or Apprenticeship.

Learning Management System

In June 2023, we successfully introduced a new digital Learning Management System called Learning Pool. This was a substantial project and the system is now available to all staff.



It gives our staff the ability to access classroom, virtual classroom and e-learning through a personal account and enables their managers to monitor training attendance and compliance. Since its introduction, we have seen a 20% average increase in training attendance (bookings compared to attendance) and 92% of staff state that they find Learning Pool easy to use. We continually seek feedback to ensure that we are improving and developing our digital delivery for all staff.

Ensuring Quality and Effective Social Care Governance

Our Quality Team has worked hard in the past year to support our services to provide the highest quality of care and support. Our focus is on ensuring that we are enabling the people we support to experience a great quality of life and that we achieve the best possible outcomes in CQC and local authority inspections.

During the year, the team have carried out internal quality audits and compliance visits across the country. As well as a planned audit schedule we offer focused support with quality improvement. The Quality Team have provided support and guidance in best practice to ensure safe medication management and have co-ordinated and undertaken 'We Care' independent visits. Support has been provided to prepare services for external inspections, such as CQC, PAMMS and Local Authority visits and the Quality Team have worked proactively to devise and support quality improvement plans, working in partnership with operational teams and stakeholders, to achieve the best outcomes.

Support has been provided to operational managers in completing investigations and addressing complex complaints. We have also provided responsive quality visits where incidents have occurred. The Quality Team has supported operational teams through providing on-site coaching and skills development and we have delivered bespoke training around Closed Cultures and Professional Boundaries.

Activity	No.
Quality audits and visits	102
We Care visits	19
PEG compliance checks	10
No of services supported with quality improvement	13

The Quality Team takes an overview of social care governance, CQC compliance, Internal Quality Auditing, safeguarding, and customer care, complaints & suggestions. The Quality Team also contributes to policy development and provides practical support to managers to improve services, raise standards and promote good practice. The Quality Team have supported the implementation of new digital systems, with further support to services to ensure quality compliance. The work is welcomed by operational managers and leads to much improved quality of records and practice.

National social care governance (SCG) meetings take place monthly to review concerns, analyse data and identify any trends arising from quality indicators such as safeguarding alerts, complaints, incidents, accidents, high use of agency staff and the outcome of internal and external inspections. During social care governance meetings, we proactively identify services that may benefit from a quality audit, more intensive monitoring, additional Quality Team or senior management input.

The SCG meetings report back to our Committee for Quality and Practice Development, which provides challenge and oversight to the Executive Team. The committee has organised task and finish meetings to review specific incidents and actions arising from these. The trustees on this committee have lead roles for overseeing serious incidents, safeguarding concerns and our interventions for people with complex care needs. They also oversee a programme of Board visits to services which enables essential insight into the quality of our services and the outcomes achieved for the people we support.

Care Quality Commission Inspections

At the end of March 2024, Creative Support had 87 CQC registered locations. Of these, 80 had been inspected, with 72 (90%) locations being rated as 'Good' or above. Two services in Doncaster and Essex are currently rated as 'Outstanding'. There were seven services which had yet to be inspected and are therefore unrated. Eight services were rated as 'Requires Improvement'. There were four inspections during 2023-24, including London Supported Living Services, Tameside Personalised Services, Stockport Extra Care Services and South Manchester Women's service, all of which received an overall rating of 'Good' and were assessed as being 'Good' in all areas. Our overall CQC ratings compared positively with the national average of 83% (CQC State of Care Report - October 2023).

	Good or Outstanding		Requires Improvement		Total Overall	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Residential Care	5	6%	5	6%	10	12%
Domiciliary/Extra Care and Supported Living	67	84%	3	4%	70	88%
Total	72	90%	8	10%	80	100%

Our Quality Team are continuing a programme of audits and improvement work within a number of services and registered locations, with a particular focus on the services that have yet to be inspected or are rated as 'Requires Improvement'. The Quality Team are mentoring and supporting our Registered Managers to ensure that services currently rated as 'Requires Improvement' will achieve 'Good' at their next inspection.

During the year, we held regular national briefing meetings for Registered Managers and two well attended virtual Registered Managers conferences. The CQC have re-focused their approach to inspections which are now explicitly risk-based and data driven. We are supporting our Registered Managers to respond positively to the new inspection methodology through training, peer support, briefings and our conferences for Registered Managers.

Creative Support is a member of the CQC Market Oversight Scheme (MOS) for large providers of social care, ensuring that we have access to emerging CQC inspection themes and intelligence. There are currently 65 corporate providers in the MOS, including large national charities as well as private providers. Creative Support's CQC ratings of 90% good or above are somewhat ahead of our MOS peers and the wider regulated social care sector. The most recent feedback from our CQC MOS Relationship Manager, who has personally tracked our performance over an 8-year period: *"I have no concerns about you as a leadership team, consider you a low risk provider. Your ratings profile is really positive. You are a good, well performing organisation. Keep doing what you are doing, you are doing a great job. Overall, Creative Support are performing +9% above the national ASC average for Good and Outstanding ratings and 4% above comparable peers in the market oversight scheme."*

London Services – June 2023

Our London Supported Living Services were inspected in June 2023 and retained their overall 'Good' rating. Comments from the report below:

'Staff demonstrated best practice around assessing mental capacity, supporting decision-making and best interest decision making. For example, we saw a detailed MCA record that included key words to better support the person's understanding, an assessment of proposed restrictions, and detailed documents of best interest decision meetings involving professionals and family members.'

Staff told us they were valued and listened to, staff said the management team were supportive and approachable. One staff member said, *"We have meetings, I feel able to raise anything that I feel I need to in the meetings or at other times."*

Tameside Personalised Services – July 2023

Tameside Personalised Services were inspected in July 2023. This was their first inspection with CQC and the service received a 'Good' rating.

'We received positive feedback from the relatives of people using the service. One relative told us, *"[name] has difficult behaviour, they [staff] manage them well. Incidents of temper and loud swearing are now less frequent; they understand the warning signs. [service user's name] is more settled, she no longer wants to come home."*

Staff supported people to make decisions and where necessary decisions were made in their best interest. People had choice in their decision making and were able to share their views including when they varied from the views of their family. As a result, people attended activities they enjoyed and spent more time with family.

We received multiple positive comments about the staff from relatives and people using the service. One relative told us, *"Staff are delightful, excellent. I cannot speak highly enough about them; they keep me informed. When I visit I can tell [relative] is happy. The rapport is excellent and genuine."*

Staff supported people to maintain and increase their independence, where possible. People were encouraged and supported to complete daily lifestyle tasks. One relative told us, *"They [staff] try to help [relative] lead as independent a life as possible."*

Staff told us they knew how to communicate well with people. We observed staff understanding people's communication through their expressions. We observed staff using forms of sign language to communicate with people.

Staff supported people to engage in activities at their own pace. Staff had suggested an activity to a person at the service they felt they would enjoy and would also benefit their health and wellbeing. The person had anxieties around this activity. Staff supported the person to become familiar with the activity over a period of months and gradually built up their exposure. This process enabled the person to successfully take part in the activity and they were able to express their joy and pride at achieving this goal.

The registered managers and wider management team promoted a positive culture throughout the service. Staff told us they felt empowered to make suggestions of how to improve the service and how to provide additional support to people to help them achieve their goals. Staff felt listened to in response to their suggestions.

The management team and staff were passionate and committed to improving care for people. Staff were curious and consistently wanted to create more opportunities for people to improve their lives. The provider was open to new ideas from staff to further improve the service.'

Stockport Extra Care – November 2023

Our Extra Care service in Stockport were inspected in November 2023 and received an overall rating of 'Good'. Extracts from the report are below:

'The registered manager and management team were committed to the service and people they supported, and responsive to any aspects of the service which could be improved. The service had good working relationships with other services. External professionals consistently spoke positively about how the service worked together and told us communication was very effective.

People told us they were well treated, and staff were kind and respectful. One person told us, *"They know how I want to be supported. The staff are really good, and we can have a laugh."* Relatives confirmed this.

People's dignity and privacy was respected by staff. One person said, *"They always knock before they come in and ask before supporting you."* Relatives shared this view, with one relative feeding back, *"The staff can't be faulted. They are always very respectful and my [family member] loves them to death."*

South Manchester Women's Service – December 2023

Our South Manchester Women's Service was inspected in December 2023 and retained their 'Good' overall rating. Comments from the inspection report below:

'People were protected from the risk of abuse. Staff received safeguarding training and were confident of the process to follow if they had any safeguarding concerns. One staff member commented, *"Safeguarding is an area that we are all encouraged to regularly discuss and is forefront in the care we provide."*

People told us they felt safe. Comments included *"I feel safe, I am content here and treated well"* and *"I do feel safe here, the carers are very kind and I can trust them."*

Staff felt that the service was well organised and they understood their roles. One staff member said, *"We all work so well together and I feel I can share any issues with any of the managers. The support is really good; any issues are sorted out quickly."*

Staff felt respected, valued and supported and that they were fairly treated. One staff member said, *"I do feel listened to and kept informed about any changes."* Staff were actively encouraged by the registered managers to raise any concerns in confidence." Another staff member said, *"It really is a great place to work, I feel people are kept safe and I am clear about my role at the service."*

The ethos of the service was to be open, transparent and honest. The registered manager had achieved an internal award entitled 'Most Developed Registered Manager' and had demonstrated a dedication to their role at the service. They said, *"The people we support are at the heart of the support, their wellbeing and safety is paramount."* Staff told us the whole management team led by example.'

Complex Care & Practice Development

Over the last six months we have increased the number of practitioners within the team. These additional resources and strengths have enabled us to deliver comprehensive advice and support to more people with differing needs across our services. We now have three Positive Behaviour Support Practitioners, a PBS Facilitator, a Person-Centred Practice Facilitator and a Forensic Social Care Practitioner within the team. Our team continues to promote collaborative working and following the success of our Complex Care conference in February 2024 we are launching our Community of Practice in September 2024.

Reducing Restrictive Interventions

We continue to be proud of our commitment to reducing physical intervention. Our trustees meet bi-annually to review our progress in reducing the use of restraint in accordance with our pledge to the Restraint Reduction Network. From February 2023 to July 2024 there were 1,375 recorded Complex Care Events. There were 31 events involving the use of breakaway and there were six events where a brief physical intervention was used. The remaining 97.3% events were effectively managed using proactive strategies. Overall, just seven people have some form of physical intervention prescribed as part of their agreed care plan and our aim is to reduce this further. The table shows the continual reduction of people who have restraint in their plans and we are delighted to have discontinued the use of seated hold within the organisation.



	May 2019	May 2020	May 2021	May 2022	May 2023	May 2024
No. of people with Physical Intervention in their Care Plan	27	17	15	13	10	7

Achieving Positive Outcomes

As well as supporting service-wide improvements, we are also able to contribute to the achievement of positive outcomes for individuals. We have many great examples of individuals with complex needs benefitting from reduced restrictions and achieving positive outcomes but of particular note is our Tameside Intensive Support Service. Working closely with core teams and external professionals we have been involved in reviewing the support we provide to individuals who have experienced high levels of restrictions in their lives due to their presentation of anxiety and aggressive behaviour. Behavioural events involving aggression have been managed in a much less restrictive way and changes to support have reduced overall anxiety. Using this reflective and collaborative approach to plan and problem solve with the team we have been able to change key aspects of people's support and to be more proactive, with great outcomes. As a result of the continued partnership work we received a compliment from an Assistant Psychologist who visits every two weeks who shared *'I love coming here, all the staff are so engaged and person centred, it is a really lovely service to come and work with'*.

Example of a Positive Outcome

John (not his real name) who lives in intensively supported accommodation in Lancashire experienced a period where his tenancy was at risk, his mental health had declined and he was saying he needed to return to hospital. His distress was expressed through aggressive incidents and his quality of life was impacted.

Alternative placements were being sought and there were many agencies involved. Over an extended period, we addressed immediate concerns around safety and the environment then worked to promote positive engagement through a structured approach to his day. We increased the quality of interactions across the whole team by targeting key times in the day for managers to work alongside John and his staff. Along with a change in medication and support from external professionals visiting him at home, we successfully prevented his placement breaking down and the Intensive Support Team are no longer involved.

Over the last eight months John is more relaxed and has continued to respond positively to the changes we made to his support. He absolutely loves tractors and has been decorating his flat with tractor pictures and has been to Murton Park Tractor Museum in York which is something new for him and demonstrates the increased confidence and reduced anxiety. He is now really proud of his ability to work through a difficult period and is more emotionally resilient.

Customer Care

We remain committed to providing excellent customer care and we strive to be as accessible and responsive as possible to people who want to make a complaint or share positive feedback about our services. We received 283 complaints in 2023-24 compared with 206 in 2022-23, an increase of 37.3%, with a mean number of complaints of 24 per month. We received 529 compliments, averaging 44 per month.

Month	Complaints Received	Compliments Received
April 23	21	71
May 23	25	50
June 23	33	39
July 23	25	39
August 23	32	30
September 23	26	44
October 23	18	33
November 23	28	58
December 23	19	45
January 24	16	33
February 24	22	35
March 24	18	52
Total for Period	283	529

Housing Complaints

We record complaints relating to our housing provision separately from our social care services. Therefore, these complaints are not included in the above table. During 2023-24, we received 35 complaints specifically relating to our housing or housing services. 32 of these complaints were investigated and responded to within 10 working days and 3 within a further 10 days.

All KPIs for handling our housing complaints were met in accordance with our Housing Complaints Policy. We produced our first Housing Complaints Performance Report and this has now been published on our website in accordance with the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman.

Examples of Compliments Received in 2023-2024

Compliment from a family member to the staff team at Regency Court Extra Care service in Bromley:
My mother moved into Regency Court nearly 3 months ago. I can't speak highly enough of the care team here. They are always cheerful, helpful and very organised at giving appropriate care. The speed which care is adapted to clients changing needs is amazing. The family had many, many queries when Mum first moved in as we were very anxious. The Regency care team were so patient and helpful. The quality of Mum's life has improved 100% since moving to Regency largely due to the care team. Social care gets a lot of bad press but our whole family has nothing but praise for the care team at Regency.

Compliment from the Mother of a service user who lives in supported living in Warrington: *In all the 21 years of having J, this is the first time I've felt like he lives a normal life. Playing golf and going to the pub with the boys! Why not?! It has filled my heart with pure joy. Carl, keep doing what you're doing please. You're giving him a life! You're not seeing his autism as a barrier and you're trying new things all the time! I can't tell you how happy I am!*

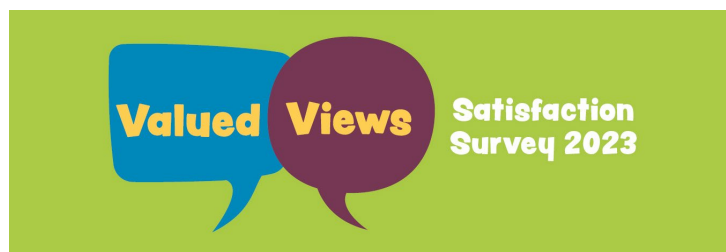
Compliment from Barbara Potter, LeDeR Reviewer for North East England NHS for staff in a supported living service in Middlesbrough. *Barbara said that it's clear that the care and compassion for D through his whole time in your service was impeccable. She thanked the team for how well we supported D to live his life to the fullest and that we didn't falter with the level of excellent care even in his death. Barbara advised that it's not often that they see such dedication from staff teams when a person is hospitalised for as long as D was, especially staying with him at the end and taking care of more formal arrangements after his passing. She has no doubt he was cared for, respected and had a happy life with us and his housemates and described the service as an "example of excellent practice".*

Feedback from a student who was on placement at Oakvale mental health supported accommodation in Bradford: *This placement really gave me a good view of what working in the healthcare sector is about. The opportunities to network and work along professionals already in healthcare was also an amazing opportunity. I was exposed to many new challenges on each day of my placement. This exposure gave me new opportunities for growth as I was able to get out of my comfort zone while learning new skills. The new skills and insights I have gained are invaluable. The staff at Creative Support Oakvale are amazing. The environment created was positive and I was easily able to fit in and work with the rest of the staff. My placement was amazing and I enjoyed every bit of it. I would like to say thank you to Rebecka and the rest of the staff for being so welcoming. I appreciated the hands-on experience I was able to gain and it has been my absolute pleasure working with such an amazing team of people.*

Compliment received from a family member of a service user at The Laurels care home who sadly recently passed away: *Our mum went into the Laurels Care Home in February 2022, aged 95 after living a very long independent life. Mum actually worked at the Laurels some 40 years ago but it was a huge upheaval in her life to leave her home, a place she was adamant she was not going to leave. At first Mum would just sit in her room and read and did not want to socialise with the residents in the communal areas. However, with gentle encouragement from the staff and Shirleyann, Mum ventured downstairs and never looked back.*

Although my sister and I live locally in Carlisle, we have 3 siblings and lots of grandchildren and great grandchildren throughout the UK and beyond. Being able to see their mum/Gran/Great Gran on the Laurels Facebook is brilliant. They can see all the amazing activities the residents are involved in and what a beautiful place the Laurels is but more importantly they can see how happy she is and how the staff, led brilliantly by Shirleyann, Layla and Peter go the extra miles to look after our family matriarch. I often received texts from the family commenting on what Mum had been doing today and it helped them feel part of her life.

Mum's health deteriorated this year and she became very frail. Mum passed away peacefully in the Laurels which she regarded as her home, surrounded by her children. The staff were absolutely amazing. As well as looking after our Mum they gave us, her family, so much support. They fed us through the night, gave us cakes during the day, held our hands for comfort and continued to look after Mum, chatting to her even though she had become unresponsive. As a family we want to say thank you to the Laurels, we want you to know what an amazing place it is, staffed by a caring and supportive team and we could not have asked for a better place for our Mum to end her very long life of 97 years.



Valued Views - Creative Support's Annual Customer Satisfaction Survey

The 2023 survey generated 314 responses, of these responses 188 were received by post and 126 were completed online via Survey Monkey. The survey responses represent about 8% of all current service users. 42 respondents left valuable comments and suggestions with their feedback.

Quantitative outcomes

We chose to use the same format and five questions as the previous year. A high percentage of respondents answered 'YES' for each of the questions. The average score was 96.6%. The main area for improvement is to ensure people we support are aware of how to report an issue or concern.

2023 results with comparison for previous years

No	Question	2019 - Yes	2020 - Yes	2021 - Yes	2023 - Yes
1.	Are you happy with your service from Creative Support?	97%	98%	99%	97%
2.	Are staff supportive and caring?	98%	99%	99.8%	98%
3.	Are you treated with dignity and respect?	99%	99%	99%	98%
4.	Do you know how to raise an issue if you needed to?	94%	94%	94%	94%
5.	Is your service helping you to achieve your goals?	95%	95%	98%	96%
	Average score	96.6%	97%	98%	96.6%

Comments and suggestions- key themes

More than one person mentioned a desire for the following in their feedback:

- Greater consistency of personnel, and a reduction in staff turnover generally (5).
- More opportunities to travel by car/greater availability of cars use for service users (3).
- More computer/IT-based activities and learning opportunities (2).
- Wanting more encouragement from staff (4).
- Additional time allocated to activities, more activities to be offered (6).

Claire Robinson (Head of Quality) contacted everyone who gave a comment to acknowledge their feedback and suggestions.

Ensuring Safety and Business Continuity

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

During 2023-24, we reported 39 accidents to the HSE under RIDDOR, compared with 17 in the previous year. The most significant areas of safety concern were slips, trips and falls and violence at work.

Over the past 12 months, fire safety has continued to be a significant focus of our work. We continue to invest in fire safety improvement works and ensure our own properties comply with the Fire Safety Act 2021 and Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022. Additionally, the Health and Safety Team have received A17B Level 3 Award Passive Fire Protection training from the Fire Protection Association. As an adjunct to this work we have also reviewed our COSHH policy and introduced a new COSHH risk assessment to make the process easier for services to manage.

We make every effort to ensure that our properties are safe and we are pleased to report that in 2023-24 gas safety, and electrical installation inspections were carried out by the required date in 100% of our homes. Our response to sector-wide concerns regarding damp and mould has proved to be very effective with an increase in partnership working with external landlords to address any issues in service user accommodation. The next Annual Staff Health and Safety Survey will be carried out in December 2024 to gauge staff opinions and concerns regarding health and safety in their services.

Since we re-tendered our insurance services in 2022, we have developed a strong relationship with our new main insurer, Travelers, and in light of our successful partnership we have renewed our insurance with Travelers for a further period. Travelers have provided us with Claims Defensibility training, REACT accident and root cause analysis and IOSH Managing Safely training for 50 managers. As part of their insurance package Travelers provide our staff with proactive rehabilitation support services, including physiotherapy, following any work-related injuries. We have referred 37 staff to this service and 35 staff have taken up this offer.

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

Memberships and Partnerships

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

We have maintained formal partnerships with a number of voluntary organisations with which we deliver services on an innovative consortia basis. These included Birmingham MIND and the Durham Mental Health Alliance of voluntary sector providers that works collaboratively to offer a coordinated and joined up service model across the County.

A National Provider of Quality Support Services and Supported Housing

We are pleased to be working with a very wide range of local authorities including Borough Councils, City Councils and County Councils and we are now experienced in operating in a wide range of environments, ranging from inner cities to rural areas. During 2023-24, Creative Support provided or was developing new services in 70 local authorities across England:

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

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

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

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

A Message from the Chair

I am pleased to reflect on a year filled with achievements and accomplishments. The importance of working together through collaboration with colleagues, and co-production with the people we support, has really shone through this year with many excellent outcomes.

I would like to thank all our trustees for the important work they have undertaken this year, including visiting services across England, meeting with members of staff and the people we support, and taking part in Task and Finish Groups. In particular, I would like to thank Chrissie Cooke for taking on the role of Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees. We were also pleased to welcome Hazel Beddows as our new Company Secretary. In this role, Hazel will be responsible for ensuring the organisation operates within its charitable rules and ethos, working closely with the Board of Trustees and Executive Team to ensure effective and robust governance processes.

We have continued to build on the efforts made in previous years to strengthen our governance. We commissioned a governance review which provided insightful recommendations and confirmed that Creative Support is a “high performing and effective” organisation which is “well led by the Board and the Executive”. The Board of Trustees and the Executive Team have worked together on developing our new Strategic Plan. The strategy will outline Creative Support’s priorities and strategic direction for the next five years. We have sought to capture the views and priorities of the people we support through co-producing the work around the Strategic Plan.

I am pleased that Creative Support has ended the year once again with strong financial results. We have repaid our loans in full and now have strong reserves, creating the foundation for future sustainability and investment in homes and other resources.

The work to strengthen our culture has continued as we strive to be kind, inclusive and empowering in everything we do. We are pleased to have developed an updated Mission Statement for Creative Support, which has been built around ‘I statements’ reflecting what is important to the people we support. The Mission Statement serves as a reminder to everyone that Creative Support’s purpose is to enable the people we support to live their best lives.

We are very proud that the organisation received two prestigious accreditations from Investors In People, with the organisation as a whole attaining Gold accreditation and the Learning & Development and HR teams being awarded Platinum.

It has been a pleasure to see Creative Support recognised externally through national awards such as the Great British Care Awards, the Made in Manchester Awards and the Housing with Care Awards. We are immensely proud of all our award winners and nominees. Alongside over 200 people from our Creative Support community, we celebrated the winners of our internal awards; the We Care Awards, Creative Stars and Volunteers Awards, at a fantastic gala event in Manchester. It was a privilege to hear speeches from many people we support across the country and we look forward to another celebration next year.

Across the country we have seen excellent examples of co-production in action, from Creative Together’s vibrant music festivals to the insightful and engaging Creative Voices events held at the Space Centre in Preston and Visram House in London.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank everyone for their support and commitment to embodying our ‘We Care’ values in all that we do at Creative Support.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Members of the Board of Trustees

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

Sharon Burns	Resigned 22 June 2023
Paul Calland	
Joolz Casey(Chair)	
Fiona King	
Rachel Corbelli	
Helen O'Sullivan	
Claire Judkins	
Chrissie Cooke	Appointed 25 May 2023
Steven Blezard	Appointed 23 November 2023 Resigned 22 August 2024

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

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Creative Support Limited (the 'Society') for the year ended 31 March 2024 which comprise the Statement of Comprehensive Income, the Statement of Financial Position, the Statement of Changes in Reserves, the Statement of Cash Flows and the notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies in note 1. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the Society's affairs as at 31 March 2024 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014, the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 and the Accounting Direction for Private Registered Providers of Social Housing 2022.

Basis for opinion

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

Conclusions relating to going concern

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

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

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

Other information

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

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

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

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

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

Responsibilities of the Board

As explained more fully in the Statement of the Board's responsibilities in respect of the accounts set out on page 52, the Board is responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Board determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

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

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Use of our report

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

Beever and Struthers

Beever and Struthers

Statutory Auditor
One Express
1 George Leigh Street
Manchester
M4 5DL

Date: 26 September 2024

CREATIVE SUPPORT LIMITED
Statement of Comprehensive Income



	Note	Year ended 31 Mar 24	Year ended 31 Mar 23
		£'000	£'000
Turnover	2	155,832	141,252
Operating expenditure		(146,974)	(132,882)
Gain on disposal of housing property	5	-	59
Operating surplus		8,858	8,429
Interest receivable		660	62
Interest payable and financing costs	6	(442)	(558)
Surplus for the year	7	9,076	7,933
Actuarial (losses)/gains on defined benefit pension schemes	16	95	1,731
Total comprehensive income for the year		9,171	9,664

The results relate wholly to continuing activities and the notes on pages 56 to 80 form an integral part of these accounts.

The financial statements on pages 56 to 80 were approved and authorised for issue by the Board on 23 September 2024 and were signed on its behalf by:

Board Member:
Helen O'Sullivan

Board Member:
Fiona King

Company Secretary:
Anna Lunts

The notes on pages 60 to 80 form an integral part of these accounts

CREATIVE SUPPORT LIMITED
Statement of Financial Position



		At 31 Mar 24	At 31 Mar 23
	Note	Society £'000	Society £'000
Fixed assets			
Intangible assets and goodwill	10	28	120
Tangible fixed assets	11	76,800	75,836
		<u>76,828</u>	<u>75,956</u>
Current assets			
Trade and other debtors	12	19,202	20,532
Cash and cash equivalents	13	26,052	25,369
		<u>45,254</u>	<u>45,901</u>
Less: Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	14	(13,873)	(15,434)
Net current assets		<u>31,381</u>	<u>30,467</u>
Total assets less current liabilities		<u>108,209</u>	<u>106,423</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	15	(3,103)	(10,459)
Provisions for liabilities and charges			
Pensions -DB liability	16	(3)	(31)
Other provisions	18	(162)	(163)
		<u>104,941</u>	<u>95,770</u>
Total net assets		<u>104,941</u>	<u>95,770</u>
Reserves			
Non-equity share capital	20	-	-
Revenue reserve		101,955	92,879
Pension reserve		2,246	2,151
		<u>104,201</u>	<u>95,030</u>
Restricted reserve		7	7
Revaluation reserve		733	733
Total reserves		<u>104,941</u>	<u>95,770</u>

The financial statements on pages 56 to 80 were approved and authorised for issue by the Board on 23 September 2024 and were signed on its behalf by:

Board Member:
Helen O'Sullivan

Board Member:
Fiona King

Company Secretary:
Anna Lunts

The notes on pages 60 to 80 form an integral part of these accounts

CREATIVE SUPPORT LIMITED
Statement of Changes in Reserves



	Revenue reserve	Restricted reserve	Revaluation Reserve	Pensions reserve	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Balance at 31 March 2022	84,946	7	733	420	86,106
Surplus from Statement of Comprehensive Income	7,933	-	-	-	7,933
Other Comprehensive Income for the year:					
Actuarial gains on defined benefit pension schemes	-	-	-	1,731	1,731
Balance at 31 March 2023	92,879	7	733	2,151	95,770
Surplus from Statement of Comprehensive Income	9,076	-	-	-	9,076
Other Comprehensive Income for the year:					
Actuarial gains on defined benefit pension schemes	-	-	-	95	95
Balance at 31 March 2024	<u>101,955</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>733</u>	<u>2,246</u>	<u>104,941</u>

The notes on pages 60 to 80 form an integral part of these accounts.

CREATIVE SUPPORT LIMITED
Statement of Cash Flows



	Note	Year ended 31 Mar 24 £'000	Year ended 31 Mar 23 £'000
Net cash generated from operating activities	Note (a)	12,914	7,146
Cash flow from investing activities			
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(3,664)	(3,391)
Proceeds from sale of tangible fixed assets		48	420
Grants received (repaid)		-	-
Interest received		660	62
		(2,956)	(2,909)
Cash flow from financing activities			
Interest paid		(442)	(548)
Repayment of borrowings		(8,833)	(3,833)
		(9,275)	(4,381)
Net change in cash and cash equivalents		683	(144)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of the year		25,369	25,513
Cash and cash equivalents at end of the year		26,052	25,369
Note (a)		Year ended 31 Mar 24 £'000	Year ended 31 Mar 23 £'000
Cash flow from operating activities			
Surplus for the year		9,076	7,933
Adjustments for non-cash items:			
Depreciation and impairment of tangible fixed assets		2,652	2,723
Amortisation of intangible assets		92	104
Pension costs less contributions payable		67	157
(Increase)/decrease in trade and other debtors		1,330	(2,763)
(Decrease)/increase in trade and other creditors		(109)	(1,434)
(Decrease)/increase in provisions		(1)	23
Gain on disposal of tangible fixed assets		-	(59)
Adjustments for investing or financing activities:			
Government grants utilised in the year		25	(34)
Interest payable		442	558
Interest receivable		(660)	(62)
Net cash generated from operating activities		12,914	7,146

The notes on pages 60 to 80 form an integral part of these accounts.

Legal Status

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

1. Principal Accounting Policies

Basis of Accounting

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

The financial statements comply with the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014, the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 and the Accounting Direction for Private Registered Providers of Social Housing 2022. The accounts are prepared on the historical cost basis of accounting and are presented in sterling £'000 for the year ended 31 March 2024.

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

Going concern

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

The Trustees have determined that there is currently no material uncertainty that casts doubt on the Society's ability to continue as a going concern.

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

The Society had a loan facility repayable as at 31 March 2023 with one high street lender of £8.833 million. A combination of scheduled and additional capital repayments during the 2023-2024 financial year have resulted in repayments in the year totalling £8.333 million, which fully repaid the loan facility by 22 March 2024, resulting in a nil balance as at 31 March 2024. The Society's forecasts demonstrate that there will be no additional loan requirement based on the Strategic Plan 2024.

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

1. Principal Accounting Policies (continued)

Critical accounting judgements and key sources of estimation and uncertainty

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

- a. **Categorisation of housing properties**
The Society has undertaken a detailed review of the intended use of all housing properties. In determining the intended use, the Society has considered if the asset is held for social benefit or to earn commercial rentals.
- b. **Impairment.**
After consideration of a number of factors including economic, political and regional issues, it was concluded that there was no trigger for impairment identified. Therefore, there was no requirement for an impairment review to be undertaken at the year-end.

Reviews for impairment of housing properties are carried out when a trigger has occurred and any impairment loss in a cash generating unit is recognised by a charge to the Statement of Comprehensive Income. Impairment is recognised where the carrying value of a cash generating unit exceeds the higher of its net realisable value or its value in use. A cash generating unit is normally a group of properties at scheme level whose cash income can be separately identified. The Society has identified a cash generating unit for impairment assessment purposes at a property scheme level.

- c. **Provisions for doubtful debts**
Tenancy arrears
The provision is assessed on a per tenancy basis, based on the age of the debt, with prudent provision rates between 10% and 100% which take into account historic factors plus specific factors prevailing at the Balance Sheet date.
Other debtors
Other debtors are assessed by reference to post year-end receipts and other known issues relating to specific debtors, from which a review of individual accounts is undertaken to consider whether a specific provision is required.
- d. **Pension Asset**
FRS 102 requires that defined benefit plan surpluses are recognised only to the extent that they are recoverable either through reduced contributions in the future or through refunds from the plan. The accounting valuations of The Lancashire County Pension Fund and West Yorkshire Pension Fund identified a total accounting surplus of £5.206M.

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

1. Principal Accounting Policies (continued)

Other key sources of estimation and assumptions:

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

Goodwill

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

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

Turnover and revenue recognition

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

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

Service charges

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

Loan interest costs

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

Loan finance issue costs

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

Taxation

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

Operating leases

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

1. Principal Accounting Policies (continued)

Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Housing properties

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

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

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

Freehold land is not depreciated.

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

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

UELs for identified components are as follows:

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

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

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

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

Short-term debtors and creditors

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

Non-government grants

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

1. Principal Accounting Policies (continued)

Social Housing and other government grants (SHG)

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

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

Holiday pay accrual

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

Impairment of Financial Assets

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

The following financial instruments are assessed individually for impairment:

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

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

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

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

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

Retirement benefits

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

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

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

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

1. Principal Accounting Policies (continued)

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

As at 31 March 2024, the Directors have obtained FRS 102 valuations of assets and liabilities. Scheme assets are measured using market values. Scheme liabilities are measured using a projected unit method and discounted at the current rate of return on a high quality corporate bond of equivalent term and currency to the liability. The total pension scheme deficit on these Local Government Pension Schemes at 31 March 2024 is recognised in full in the financial statements. The movement in scheme deficit is split between operating charges, finance items and, in other comprehensive income, actuarial gains and losses.

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

The net accounting pension liability at 31 March 2024, included on the Balance Sheet within Provisions for Liabilities and Charges, is £3,000. The amount expensed to operating expenditure in the financial year was £67,000 inclusive of interest costs.

Financial Instruments

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

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

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

Financial instruments held by the Society are classified as follows:

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

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

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

2 Turnover

	Note	2024	2023
		Turnover	Turnover
		£'000	£'000
Social housing lettings	3	14,252	12,465
Other social housing activities			
Community Care		132,455	118,596
Prevention and wellbeing		8,393	7,942
Activities other than social housing			
Revenue grants		126	104
Donations		28	11
Other income including grants for Infection Control and testing, and Workforce capacity Funding		578	2,134
Total		155,832	141,252

Revenue grants includes grants received from Skills for Care amounting to £124,000 (2023: £99,000).

3 Income and Expenditure from Social Housing Lettings

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

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Income		
Rent receivable net of identifiable service charges and voids	7,525	6,479
Service charge income	6,694	5,952
Amortised government grants	33	34
Turnover from Social Housing Lettings	14,252	12,465
Operating expenditure on Social Housing Lettings	11,927	11,368
Operating Surplus on Social Housing Lettings	2,325	1,097
Void losses (being rental income lost as a result of property not being let, although it is available for letting)	699	655

4. Accommodation in Management

As at 31 March 2024, the Society had 1,223 units of supported housing under management (2023: 1,202) as set out below:-

	Owned		Managed/leased	
	Supported Housing - Other	Supported Housing - Older people	Supported Housing - Other	Supported Housing - Older people
At 1 April 2023	728	-	423	51
Additions	15		13	-
Disposals/decommissioned	(5)		(2)	-
At 31 March 2024	738	-	434	51

5. Gains on disposals of housing properties

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Proceeds of sales, net of selling expenses	-	413
Less: net book value on disposals	-	(354)
Net gain	-	59

6. Interest and financing costs

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
On loans repayable within five years	442	548
On loans wholly or partly repayable in more than five years	-	-
Defined benefit pension charge	-	10
	442	558

7. Surplus on ordinary activities

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
The operating surplus is stated after charging/(crediting):-		
Auditors remuneration (excluding VAT):		
Audit of the financial statements	43	43
Operating lease rentals:		
Land and buildings	934	899
Plant and machinery	100	101
Depreciation of social housing properties	1,088	1,096
Depreciation of other properties	158	224
Depreciation of other fixed assets	642	518
Rent losses from bad debts	69	63

8. Employee information

	2024	2023	2024	2023
	Full time equivalents	Full time equivalents	No.	No.
The average number of persons employed during the year expressed in full time equivalents (37.5 hours per week) and headcount was :-				
Senior Management	86	84	91	86
Housing, Support, and Care	3,342	3,035	4,939	4,760
Administration	250	200	290	237
	3,678	3,319	5,320	5,083

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Staff costs (including directors' emoluments detailed in note 9)		
Wages and salaries	105,491	90,685
Social Security costs	8,715	7,521
Other pension costs	2,270	1,917
	116,476	100,123

Agency staff costs incurred by Creative Support amounting to £10,917,000 (2023: £13,680,000) are not included in the analysis above. These costs are incurred to provide cover for hours required on contracts that are not delivered by contracted staff

8. Employee information (continued)

	2024	2023
	No.	No.
Aggregate number of full time equivalent staff whose remuneration exceeded £60,000 in the period (including directors detailed in note9):		
£60,001 - £70,000	5	1
£70,001 - £80,000	1	4
£80,001 - £90,000	4	4
£90,001 - £100,000	3	2
£100,001-£110,000	1	-

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

9. Key management personnel and directors' remuneration

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

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Salary	1,044	838
Benefits in kind	46	49
Pension contributions	34	26
	1,124	913
Aggregate consideration payable to Directors for loss of office	-	-

The emoluments of the highest paid director, excluding pension contributions, were £106,171 (2023: £94,789) and are included in the above analysis.

The Chief Executive received remuneration for the year ending 31 March 2024 totalling £97,586 (2023: £91,093), comprising basic salary of £87,675 (2023: £87,675) and additional payments of £9,911 (2023: £3,418) in lieu of holidays not taken. Employer contributions of £0 (2023: £0) were made during the year to a personal pension plan on behalf of the Chief Executive. The pension scheme is a defined contribution scheme funded by annual contributions by the employer and employee. No enhanced or special terms apply. There are no additional pension arrangements.

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

None of the Trustees received emoluments. One trustee received reimbursed expenses totalling £1,189 (2023: £1,612, 3 trustees).

10. **Intangible assets and goodwill**

	£'000
Cost or valuation	
At 31 March 2023	1,040
Additions	-
At 31 March 2024	1,040
Amortisation	
At 31 March 2023	920
Amortisation in year	92
At 31 March 2024	1,012
Net book value	
At 31 March 2024	28
At 31 March 2023	120

CREATIVE SUPPORT LIMITED
Notes to the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024



11. Tangible fixed assets

	Total Housing Properties	Project Furniture and Equipment	Office Equipment	Motor Vehicles	Total fixed assets
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Cost					
At start of the year	87,580	1,982	2,114	1,164	92,840
Additions	2,506	270	653	235	3,664
Disposals	(1,327)	(583)	(153)	(218)	(2,281)
At end of the year	<u>88,759</u>	<u>1,669</u>	<u>2,614</u>	<u>1,181</u>	<u>94,223</u>
Depreciation and impairment					
At start of the year	13,505	1,560	1,221	718	17,004
Charge for the year	1,247	164	326	152	1,889
Disposals	(547)	(580)	(153)	(190)	(1,470)
At end of the year	<u>14,205</u>	<u>1,144</u>	<u>1,394</u>	<u>680</u>	<u>17,423</u>
Net book value at the end of the year	<u>74,554</u>	<u>525</u>	<u>1,220</u>	<u>501</u>	<u>76,800</u>
Net book value at the start of the year	<u>74,075</u>	<u>422</u>	<u>893</u>	<u>446</u>	<u>75,836</u>
Housing Properties comprise:				2024	2023
Freeholds				56,280	55,772
Long leaseholds				18,044	18,065
Short leaseholds				230	238
				<u>74,554</u>	<u>74,075</u>

12. Trade and other debtors

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Rent arrears	956	925
Less: provision for bad debts	(290)	(221)
	666	704
Grants, supported tenancy and other contract fees receivable	9,337	12,532
Less: provision for bad debts and credit notes	(2,026)	(2,160)
Other debtors	411	213
Prepayment and accrued income	10,814	9,243
	19,202	20,532
Debtors are all due within one year.		

13. Cash and cash equivalents

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Cash at bank short term deposits	26,052	25,369
	26,052	25,369

At the balance sheet date, Creative Support acting as appointee, court approved deputy or other approved representative, held funds on behalf of clients supported by Creative Support in a separate general account amounting to £317,648 (2023: £174,078) and in individual accounts amounting to £5,849,622 (2023: £9,633,080). These funds have not been included in the assets or liabilities of the Society.

14. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	Note	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Loans and overdrafts	17	-	1,333
Refinance costs		-	(95)
		<u>-</u>	<u>1,238</u>
Trade creditors		2,755	3,991
Other taxation and social security payable		3,122	2,362
Accruals and deferred income		6,490	6,676
Deferred Capital Grant	19	34	34
Other creditors		1,472	1,133
		<u>13,873</u>	<u>15,434</u>

The loans were secured by specific charges on the Society's property portfolio. As at 31 March 2024, all loans had been repaid in full.

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

		2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Loans	17	-	7,500
Refinance costs		-	(119)
		<u>-</u>	<u>7,381</u>
Deferred Capital Grant	19	3,103	3,078
		<u>3,103</u>	<u>10,459</u>

The loans were secured by specific charges on the Society's property portfolio. As at 31 March 2024, all loans had been repaid in full.

16. Pension obligations

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

(i) Membership details

Scheme	Active members at 31 March 2024	Type of scheme
Legal & General Group Personal Pension Scheme	79	Defined contribution
Royal London Group Personal Pension Scheme	7	Defined contribution
NHS Pension Scheme	52	Defined benefit
Local Government schemes	13	Defined benefit
Peoples Pension (auto-enrolment)	4,014	Defined contribution

(ii) Defined Contribution pension schemes

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

(iii) Money Purchase Occupational Pension Scheme

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

(iv) Defined Benefit pension schemes

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

(v) NHS Pension Scheme

Pension Costs

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

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

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

a) Accounting valuation

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

The valuation of scheme liability as at 31 March 2024, is based on valuation data as 31 March 2023, updated to 31 March 2024 with summary global member and accounting data. In undertaking this actuarial assessment, the methodology prescribed in IAS 19, relevant FReM interpretations, and the discount rate prescribed by HM Treasury have also been used.

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

16. Pension obligations (continued)

b) Full actuarial (funding) valuation

The last published actuarial valuation undertaken for the NHS Pension Scheme was completed for the year ending 31 March 2022. The Scheme Regulations allow for the level of contribution rates to be changed by the Secretary of State for Health, with the consent of HM Treasury, and consideration of the advice of the Scheme Actuary and appropriate employee and employer representatives as deemed appropriate.

(vi) Local Government Pension Schemes

LGPS Scheme	Administering body
Lancashire County Pension Fund	Lancashire County Council
West Yorkshire Pension Fund	City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council
London Borough of Bromley Pension Fund	London Borough of Bromley

Each LGPS is a multi-employer scheme, administered under the regulations governing the Local Government Pension Scheme, and a defined benefit scheme. The most recent formal actuarial valuation was completed as at 31 March 2022 and rolled forward allowing for the different financial assumptions required under FRS102, to 31 March 2024 by a qualified independent actuary.

The employer's contributions to the LGPS by the Society for the year ended 31 March 2024 were £21,000 (2023:£69,000) at a contribution rate between 0.0% and 28.1% of pensionable salaries. The employers' contribution rate for the year ended 31 March 2025 has been set at between 0% and 23.2%. Estimated contributions to the LGPSs during the accounting period commencing 1 April 2024 are £12,000.

Principal actuarial assumptions
Financial assumptions

	31 March 2024	31 March 2023
	% per annum	% per annum
Discount rate	4.8% - 4.9%	4.7% - 4.9%
Future salary increases	3.85% - 4.2%	3.85% - 4.2%
Future pension increases	2% - 2.8%	2.7% - 2.9%
Inflation assumptions	2.6% - 2.7%	2.7% - 2.7%

The post-retirement mortality assumptions adopted to value the benefit obligation at 31 March 2024 and 31 March 2023 are based on different assumptions within each scheme including SAPS 3 and SAPS 3 middle.

The Lancashire County Pension Fund and West Yorkshire Pension Fund have a total gross accounting surplus at the reporting date of £5.206M. In line with FRS 102 requirements the Society has recognised an asset on the balance sheet to the extent that it is able to recover the surplus, either through reduced contributions in the future, or through refunds from the plan.

Membership of the Royal County of Berkshire Pension Fund ended in the year when staff members transferred to a new employer under TUPE.

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

16. Pension obligations (continued)

The assumed life expectations on retirement at age 65 are:

	2024	2023
	No. of years	No. of years
Retiring today:		
Males	21 - 21.8	21.1 - 22.2
Females	23.5 - 24.2	23.8 - 24.6
Retiring in 20 years:		
Males	22.3 - 22.8	22.3 - 23.3
Females	25.2 - 25.8	25.3 - 26.1

Amounts recognised in surplus or deficit

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Current service costs	65	221
Administrative expenses	2	5
Amounts charged to operating costs	67	226
Net interest	-	10
Amounts charged to other finance costs	-	10
Actuarial gains	95	1,731

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

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Opening scheme liabilities	9,607	15,958
Recognition of present value of scheme liabilities	(2,201)	(1,196)
Current service cost	65	221
Interest cost	349	398
Remeasurements	(203)	(5,486)
Members contributions	19	35
Benefits paid (net)	(181)	(323)
Closing scheme liabilities	7,455	9,607

16. Pension obligations (continued)

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

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Opening fair value of plan assets	9,576	14,363
Recognition of fair value of plan assets	(2,182)	(1,065)
Administration expenses	(2)	(5)
Interest income	349	388
Return on plan assets (in excess of interest income)	(148)	(3,886)
Contributions by employer	21	69
Members contributions	19	35
Benefits paid (net)	(181)	(323)
Closing fair value of plan assets	7,452	9,576
	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Actual return on scheme assets	978	201

Amounts recognised in the Statement of Financial Position

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Fair value of plan assets	7,452	9,576
Present value of scheme liabilities	(7,455)	(9,607)
FRS 102 (deficit) in the schemes	(3)	(31)

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

	2024	2023
	%	%
Equities	0.1% - 79.4%	0.1% - 80.8%
Gilts	0.0% - 8.5%	0.0% - 6.9%
Bonds	0.1% - 12.0%	0.2% - 14.0%
Properties	1.3% - 6.0%	1.5% - 13.0%
Cash	1.8% - 5.8%	0.8% - 2.7%
Other	3.3% - 96.7%	2.1% - 97.4%

17. Analysis of Changes in Net debt

	At 1 April 2023 £'000	Cash Flows £'000	Non cash movements £'000	At 31 March 2024 £'000
Cash and cash Equivalents	25,369	683	-	26,052
Housing Loans Due in one year	(1,333)	1,333	-	-
Housing Loans Due after one year	(7,500)	7,500	-	-
	16,536	9,516	-	26,052

18. Provisions for liabilities and charges

	At 1 April 2023 £'000	Additional provision £'000	Released/ utilised £'000	At 31 March 2024 £'000
Dilapidations provisions	163	-	(1)	162

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

19. Deferred capital grant

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
At start of the year	3,112	3,146
Grant received / (disposed of) in the year	58	-
Released to income in the year	(33)	(34)
At the end of the year	3,137	3,112
Amount due to be released in less than 1 year	34	34
Amount due to be released after more than 1 year	3,103	3,078
	3,137	3,112

20. Non-equity share capital

	2024	2023
	£	£
Association		
Allotted Issued and Fully Paid		
At the start of the year	70	70
Issued during the year	-	-
At the end of the year	70	70

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

21. Capital commitments

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Capital expenditure that has been contracted for but has not been provided for in the financial statements	581	298
Capital expenditure that has been authorised by the Board but has not yet been contracted for	2,025	-
	2,606	298

22. Operating leases

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

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Within one year	750	864
Between one and five years	1,957	1,977
Later than five years	843	48
	3,550	2,889

23. Grant and financial assistance

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
The total accumulated government grant and financial assistance received or receivable at 31 March:		
Total gross grant at end of year	3,388	3,330
Total cumulative amortisation at the start of the year	(218)	(184)
Recognised as income in statement of Comprehensive Income in the year	(33)	(34)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Held as deferred capital grant at end of year	3,137	3,112
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

24. Related parties

There are no related party transactions (2023: none).



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