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NEIGHBOURHOOD NETWORKS

Annual Report

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Introduction

This annual report marks a very special milestone in Neighbourhood Networks which is our 20th operational anniversary.

As tradition would expect we have spent a lot of this year reflecting on the organisation's history and our many stories and memories we have collected over the years since the first network in North Lanarkshire was launched in May 2021.

It also marks a moment to celebrate a coming of age for Neighbourhood Networks as a fully mature, established organisation with a proven track record of successfully supporting and developing people to fully reach their potential.

Everything in Neighbourhood Networks comes back to our core values and I am reminded of the very first of them as I write this piece for this year's report.

As you read through this report, we hope that we have captured a sense of the focus of this work across our networks and out across the communities that we live in and engage with.

**Everyone is different,
and we should all be
respected and encouraged
to be all we can be.**

This special anniversary also provides an opportunity to look back at our previous annual reports we have put together to see the common threads that are woven through.

The reports are speckled with individual member's achievements, many of whom have rightly moved on from formal network membership. One such story from 2012 is [Andrew Rennie's](#) who went on to move through the organisation and served as the Chair of the Board of Trustees. Andrew has used all these experiences to move on to become an active member of an independent network.

We have lots of stories across the reports of collective achievement including the Angels and Airplanes Community Building work, the European Exchange Trips with the Grundvig Fund and all the amazing stories of how people have actively fundraised for other organisations. Networks and members have given back in so many diverse ways, like the Motherwell Network raising £1250 for Beatson's Cancer Charity in 2017.



We note too all the stories which describe how we have invested and developed our staff team. We are committed to learning and development and use Joint Development Days to help our staff grow, often bringing in external facilitation like Cormac Russell, from the [ABCD movement](#), back in 2013. We have recently reconnected with the ABCD work following on from our Conference in March 2022.

The reports clearly evidence the steady growth of the organisation. We have substantially grown from the early days of Neighbourhood Networks where we worked with 3 local authorities and 10 Networks to our current span of 10 local Authorities and 35 Networks. We can say now that we are truly coast to coast, stretching from North Ayrshire right through to East Lothian.

Sadly, and inevitably as we look back, we are reminded too of the places and more poignantly the people we have lost. Their memory is still with us however and we have had much cause to remind ourselves of the impact they made. Like [Alex from North Lanarkshire](#) who in 2013 shared his story with us. Gone but not forgotten.

The reports also evidence some of the challenges that we have faced across our networks and communities. In [2012](#) we noted the impact of austerity on our members and organisation. It feels like we have come full circle in some respects with the financial crisis that is enfolding across the country currently.

I don't underestimate what challenges are still to come but what cannot be denied, however, is that where there are networks, we are all the stronger for their existence. With that knowledge and foundation behind us, here's to another 20 years.

Heather Calvo
Chief Executive Officer

April 2021

Scotland's Virtual Kiltwalk

During 2020, over 25,000 walkers donned a bit of tartan, took on a Kiltwalk Challenge and raised an incredible £5 million, plus the 40% top up of £2 million, meaning a grand total of £7 million went out to 1,302 Scottish Charities.

We signed up as a beneficiary charity for the April 2021 Virtual Kilt Walk with staff and members getting involved in activities in the runup to the weekend of 23rd – 25th April 2021.

Thirteen people joined up, including a couple of full networks, with activities included roller-skating, walking 500,000 steps in a month and running every day for a month. We raised a total of £3,797 from the event which was then used to develop our Neighbourhood Networks Tech Fund.

The Tech Fund was developed specifically to support members who needed some additional support to fund either a device, data package or some additional support such as specialist training. Community Living Workers were asked to submit a short application on behalf of their Network Member highlighting what device and / or support they needed, what was currently getting in the way of the person being digitally connected and what support they may need to make full use of the device.



23-25 APRIL

WALK IT, RUN IT OR JUST FUN IT!

Join us on Scotland's Virtual Kiltwalk, raise funds for your Charity and Sir Tom Hunter will **top up everything you raise by 50%**

Scotland's Virtual
kiltwalk

Royal Bank
of Scotland

**Arnold
Clark**

H THE HUNTER
FOUNDATION

Birthday Celebration

In typical Neighbourhood Networks ethos and spirit when it came to deciding how best to celebrate our 20th birthday our first step was to form a working group of staff and members.



There were endless ideas from a very enthusiastic group, and we came up with the idea to do 20 things to celebrate our 20 years. We are still working through a very big list but have already achieved a lot.

- 01 Giving seeds to all our staff and members to grow in our gardens or in pots at home
- 02 The Neighbourhood Networks Great Quiz of the year
- 03 We encouraged some Community Stones painting work across our networks
- 04 We had a film project where members learned filmmaking skills and created a film showcasing their talents
- 05 Birthday Poster work from across our networks
- 06 The publication of the Neighbourhood Networks Cookbook
- 07 A Xmas Bake Off competition
- 08 A Dance Project Launch
- 09 Tree Planting where we planted 100's of trees in Cumbernauld Wood one afternoon
- 10 Our Virtual Conference with over 350 people signed up across the 11 events



We have plenty some events planned into the next financial year including the Spring Fete where we celebrate "Neighbourhood Networks got talent" so watch this space in Neighbourhood Networks Report

Networking in Neighbourhood Networks

Neighbourhood Networks, as an organisation, is committed to reciprocity in the relationships we build with other organisations and individuals as well as within our member networks across communities.

We focused on connections and relationships building at our 3-day virtual conference this year. Our workshops involved many partners whom we had benefitted from working with over the years. This includes Pilotlight, an organisation that links 3rd Sector Charities with the Commercial sector. We had benefitted from Pilotlight's input last year and we offered some space to them at our conference to showcase what they have to offer to other Third Sector Charities.

We also had Legal Services Agency and Outside the Box deliver sessions at the Conference. All three of our organisation's have benefited from the Equality and Human Rights Fund from the Scottish Government and by working in partnership we can have a greater impact with this resource.

Paul Barclay from The Conservation Volunteers also took part in our conference. We have a long standing working relationship with his organisation and members and staff have benefitted from their wellbeing work using the local woods as a natural resource.

This led to members and staff planting hundreds of indigenous trees in Cumbernauld Wood this year as a way of giving back to our environment and supporting another agency's valuable work.

Another strong example of partnership working is Neighbourhood Networks contribution to the lhub Collaborative about the redesign of day services across Scotland. We were asked to be Falkirk's Third Sector Partner and throughout the life of this project we have shared our knowledge, skills and experiences with the other agencies and local authorities involved. We bring a unique perspective on what day opportunities can look like where there is creativity and flexibility.

We have also gained much knowledge and made new or refreshed connections to other people and organisation's who can help members achieve their outcomes. An example of this was the reconnection to the Gig Buddies work.

Another reciprocal relationship was with Evaluation Support Scotland (ESS) who we connected with to try out their Measuring Success Tool to evaluate our digital work. We gained insightful feedback about this work and ESS gained users experience of the tool they had developed. Building on this relationship and experience we asked ESS to come and work with our organisation to look at our Feedback and Evaluation more broadly and we hope in the future to have some evaluation champions within Neighbourhood Networks.

Finally, and more broadly across the Social Care spectrum, Neighbourhood Networks has become member the Coalition of Care and Support Providers in Scotland (CCPS). This is a membership organisation whose mission is:

to identify, represent, promote and safeguard the interests of third sector and not-for-profit social care and support providers in Scotland, so that they can maximise the impact they have on meeting social need.

We have benefited significantly from being part of this forum including being better informed about the recent Scottish Government Uplifts for the social care workforce and we continue to stay connected to all the discussions about the development of the National Care Service.

As well as gaining insight and valuable knowledge we are also well placed to share our own experience and capacity within CCPS. This is particularly the case with the work we have done to develop the organisation's Outcome Focused Monitoring System and we are part of a digital workstream for CCPS where we can share this work to the benefit of others.

There are numerous examples of partnership and reciprocity across Neighbourhood Networks and you will find local examples in all our areas including the Connecting Together Group in Falkirk. We can't name them all or do justice in this report but wanted to acknowledge all this work and say a big thank you. Together we are much stronger than the sum of our parts.

Partners of Neighbourhood Networks



DXC Partnership

New digital reuse partnership helps build community connections

Neighbourhood Networks were delighted to receive their first donation of reuse laptops from local technology firm DXC Technology during Summer 2021. Chief Executive of Neighbourhood Networks, Heather Calvo, received 12 refurbished laptops which will go out to those in need from Colin Aitkenhead from DXC Technology.

The digital programme was initially created to help members stay connected and learn new skills during periods of lockdown but has been so successful that it is now a key part of the charities support to help our members develop and use the digital skills required for many areas of everyday life.

Heather Calvo commented

Partnerships like this with DXC Technology make such a difference to the lives of our members. This donation allows us to directly help those who can't afford to purchase their own device and support them to access online services as well as ways to communicate and keep in touch with family and friends. We are greatly appreciative of this partnership and look forward to seeing how this develops.

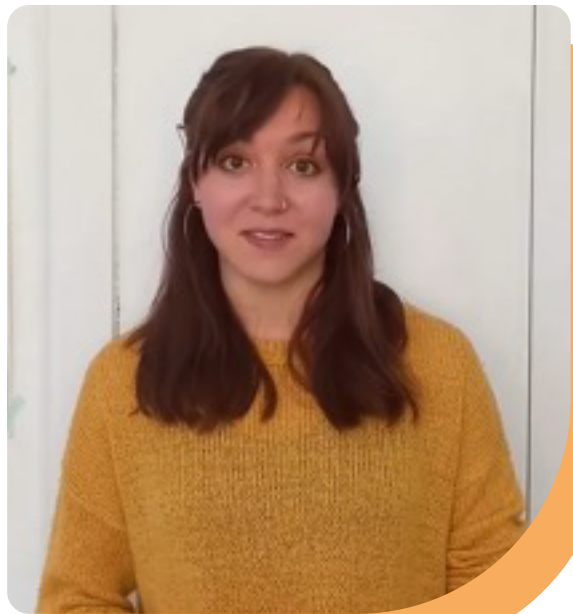


August 2021

Film Work

In July 2021 we launched our Movie project which was something Neighbourhood Networks was really excited about.

Erin was a student who was on Placement from Glasgow University and had a background in film making. As part of Neighbourhood Networks 20th Birthday celebrations members wanted to tell their journey and what Neighbourhood Networks means to them. Members worked with Erin to design a storyboard to showcase what they would like in the movie.



For the Movie Club there was a focus group who worked on material for the movie and did some filming in their local community. To open it out to all the members in the organisation we encouraged members to film any activities they were doing in their local communities to showcase what a day in the life of a member looks like.

We had clips from working in the allotment, travelling to Glasgow, shopping in the local community and local tours. This was a great way to inspire others on how they can get involved in their local community.

Members were involved in the editing process of the movies and made sure it was accessible by adding subtitles. The movie group were so inspired that they began to make lots of short films.

In May 2022 we had a big celebration at the Kelpies where we showcased the members movie for everyone to see. This was a great celebration. Erin also hosted an online Movie premier where she spoke about how this group formed and members shared about their experience before the big premier which other stakeholders were also invited along to.

All of the members movies are on Neighbourhood Networks YouTube channel. The movie club has been a great success for members as not only did they learn new skills, but new friendships were also formed, and confidence built promoting independence. Members have been inspired to continue to grow this skill and are now exploring video making and podcasts to celebrate their own achievements and the work they do with Neighbourhood Networks.

Expansion in East Lothian

In response to increased demand for the service we offer in East Lothian we were commissioned by the local authority to develop an additional two networks.

The new networks will be located within Haddington and Musselburgh. The Haddington network will be a generic network and will work with people of all ages. As we currently have a generic network in Musselburgh it was decided that the additional Musselburgh network would be aimed at younger people between the ages of 16 and 25.

It is recognised that if we can avoid younger people becoming lonely and isolated within their communities, that we may be able to prevent a lot of the difficulties that arise in later life because of this loneliness. We are delighted to be given the opportunity to further develop our relationship with East Lothian Council and look forward to working with more people to support them to develop their independence, to use their skills and to achieve positive life outcomes.



October 2021

Equalities Funding & Digital Boost Fund

From October 2021 we were delighted to start a new three year funded programme with Inspiring Scotland and the Equalities and Human Rights Fund.

This funding allows us to grow four key areas of our work:

- Develop a new learning disability network in the Stirling area
- Increase our Network Manager capability in the Lothians to look at researching the need for additional networks in the area and then developing proposals to take this forward
- Increase our Member Involvement team to allow for an increased focus on making network members aware of their human rights and what to do if they are not met
- Increase our finance team to develop an improved finance system to support growth

The Equality & Human Rights Fund's vision is for a Scotland which is inclusive, free from discrimination, and where the human rights of everyone are respected, protected, and fulfilled.

It aims to embed and mainstream equality and human rights within policy and practice in Scotland in line with the ambitions of relevant Scottish Government strategies and the National Performance Framework.

The Equality and Human Rights Fund distribute £7m annually for three years from October 2021 to September 2024 and support 48 organisations that deliver work focused on tackling inequality and discrimination, furthering equality, and advancing the realisation of human rights in Scotland. Neighbourhood Networks also benefitted from the Digital Boost Fund whose contribution enabled us to invest further in some new hardware, including a new server, laptops and mobile phones.



National Lottery Community Fund

During November 2021 we were delighted to receive confirmation of funding from The National Lottery Community Fund – Awards for All.

We received £10,000 towards a series of events and activities that were part of our 20th Birthday Celebrations to bring our membership together as a whole for the first time since before the pandemic.

The funding supported a number of activities, including:

- A Dance project – with online dance lessons progressing to in person lessons and a full dance display to the wider network communities as part of our Spring Celebration,
- Virtual conference British Sign Language support- to allow us to bring in British Sign Language interpreters for our 3 day virtual conference, allowing us to share all our learning and success with the wider community across Scotland,
- Spring Gathering incorporating a talent competition, dance display and much more. This is planned to be held at the Helix Park in Falkirk and will provide an opportunity to bring all our members from across the central belt of Scotland together and showcase their talents and have fun. We look forward to sharing more about this particular event in next years Annual Report.



These events will allow us to build on key skills for our members including independent travel, confidence and self-esteem, and developing friendships and relationships. We greatly appreciate the support from The National Lottery Community Fund for supporting these activities.



December 2021

Festive Cake Decorating Event

In December 2021, we hosted our spectacular 20th Anniversary 'Festive Cake Decorating Competition Event'. Members and staff were provided with the ingredients to get creative and make their own festively decorated cakes.



The event was a huge success with a staggering 74 cakes presented by network members and colleagues. Our panel of judges had the difficult task of choosing the 3 winning showstoppers from all of the amazing cake masterpieces.

The Winners:

1st Place-Elizabeth Mullen (Garnock Valley)

2nd Place-Briege O'Donnell (East Kilbride)

3rd Place-Callum Houldsworth (East Kilbride)

Here are some of the cakes from the event. Well done to our winners and to everyone that took part. What a great way to celebrate the end of 2021!



Tommy's Independent Living Fund Grant

In Neighbourhood Networks we work with many young people who may be eligible to apply for the Transition Fund through ILF Scotland.

We have supported several young people to apply for this with some life changing outcome achieved. Here is Tommy's story:

Tommy joined Neighbourhood Networks while we were still in lockdown. He had been self-isolating for a prolonged period due to various health conditions that had a significant impact on Tommy's mental health. Tommy was feeling very isolated, lonely and was suffering from bouts of low mood.

Due to ill health Tommy was not able to walk for long distances without becoming breathless, this was something he used to love doing especially walking on the beach and getting out to explore.

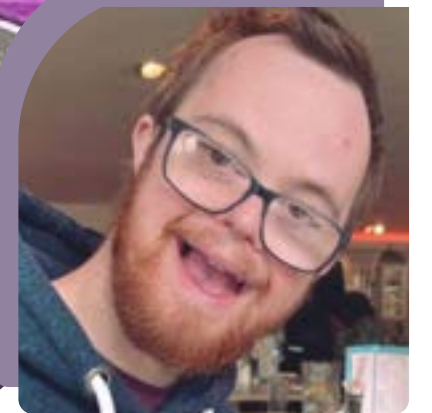
Neighbourhood Networks worked with Tommy and put together an ILF application; we spent a great deal of time looking at equipment that would be suitable for him, assessed if it would meet his needs and that it was something that he wanted. In the application we applied for an electric trike suitable for off-road use; the purpose of this was to have access to the beach, a new mobile phone and a DJ Controller.

Tommy's application was successful and he was awarded the full amount he applied for. The trike has opened up his world once again meaning he can visit the beach and participate in activities.

Tommy enjoyed his first visit to the beach without having to worry about accessibility problems. This has meant both he and his mum are free to get out again without feeling like prisoners in their own home.

The phone has kept Tommy connected with family and friends as he is able to converse via Zoom, Text and WhatsApp. The DJ Controller also has allowed him to pursue his passion for music. Tommy has grown in confidence and his mum describes it as having her son back again as he is smiling and full of happiness.

Tommy's Story



Developing the Team

This year as in previous years Neighbourhood Networks have continued to recognise the value in staff training, learning and development.

All staff have taken part in the appraisal process the outcome of which was the development plans for all staff and the development of an organisational training strategy. The focus of our training this year has been to ensure that all staff have completed core training.

The core training programme has been developed to ensure staff have the skills they need to confidently carry out their role, this will have a positive impact on the support members receive. We aim to make sure all staff members who join the organisation have the same training opportunities.

The core training programme consists of the following items of training;

Adult Support and Protection
Child Protection
Learning Disabilities Awareness
Visual Impairment Awareness
Autism Awareness
Epilepsy Awareness
Scottish Mental Health First Aid
Marketing and Publicity



In addition to the above core training staff are supported to take part in a robust induction programme which includes various pieces of training including:

Office 365 Skills

Outcome Focused Monitoring System
(in-house recording system)

Support Planning

Policies and Procedures

Values, Mission and Vision

We have continued to offer support to staff to achieve qualifications to meet the requirements for registration with the Scottish Social Services Council, we are making good progress with this and are ahead of schedule for ensuring that all staff have achieved their qualifications within the required timeframe.

Despite the restrictions presented by COVID we have managed to continue bring all staff together virtually to engage in Joint Development Sessions, these sessions are an opportunity for staff who work remotely to come together with colleagues from other areas of the organisation to engage in the sharing of good practice, to engage in training and learning that is common to all areas of the organisation and to allow for learning across the organisation.

We look forward to the year ahead and all the learning opportunities that this will undoubtedly present for staff across the organisation.



Virtual Conference

In March 2022 Neighbourhood Networks hosted its first virtual conference from the 29th to the 31st of March 2022. The conference title was “**Networks as Agents of Change – Together Anything is Possible**”

We wanted to capture some of the stories of resilience and adaptability in Neighbourhood Networks as we also celebrated our 20th birthday year. We hope that the stories we shared in this conference celebrated the potential for the human spirit of connectedness to prevail despite the challenging experience of living through the Covid 19 pandemic.

01 Launch Event with contributions from the journalist Michael McEwan, MSP Clare Adamson and **Neighbourhood Networks creative Writing Group**.

02 Networks as Agents of Change - Community Building Session where we heard about Angels and Aeroplanes, a community building movement that Neighbourhood Networks has facilitated.

03 Networks as Agents of Change - Networking Panel Discussion where we heard from other partners that Neighbourhood Networks has engaged with in recent years and learned about how this has led to innovative practice.

04 How we met where Members share stories of how networking led to new relationships being formed.

05 International Networking Event where we heard about some international networking and connections between Neighbourhood Networks, KeyRing, Community Connections (NZ), FAIDD (Finland) and Pameijer (NL). This webinar was launch pad for an international conference being hosted in May.

06 Networking and Sharing Skills where we watched an inspiring film that was made and heard from members about the connections they made while sharing a common interest.

07 Digital Connection and Inclusion where we heard about Neighbourhood Network digital development over the last two years and how we overcame some of the challenges of the pandemic.

08 Legal Services Agency where we heard about Neighbourhood Networks links with LSA (**Legal Services Agency**) and how these connections are helping access legal support to challenge discrimination.

09 Pilotlight, connecting the Third Sector with the Commercial World where we learned about the benefits and opportunities to link with the Business World using Pilotlight Programmes.

10 Governance and Member Involvement. This was an interactive session to hear about Neighbourhood Networks creates a collaborative space where people using services can influence policy, practice and strategy across the organisation.

11 Networking to Change Communities and Event End. This was an interactive session facilitated by **Outside the Box** which focused on harnessing the power of the Human Rights Act and bringing people together to bring about collective change.

This session ended of our three-day event, and we closed on some conference highlights and some final words from our creative writing group. The experience of putting on the Conference was truly a team effort and the only way we could achieve our very ambitious goals was to enlist a myriad of people's help along the way. We are so grateful for the contribution of our members, staff, trustees and external partner to make this happen. A particular mention is due to our friends at Community Connections in New Zealand who despite the time difference attended every event.

The conference was a steep learning curve for everyone involved and we benefited hugely from some help and connection along the way. We were particularly grateful to Cassie and her colleagues from the **Alliance** who generously shared their learning with us about a previous event they had hosted. This gave us the confidence, tools and motivation to throw ourselves into the deep end for our first event of this type.

We were also grateful for the **Awards for all Grant** that we received that helped to fund the BLS interpreters that came and signed at the event to help the sessions be more inclusive.

Financials

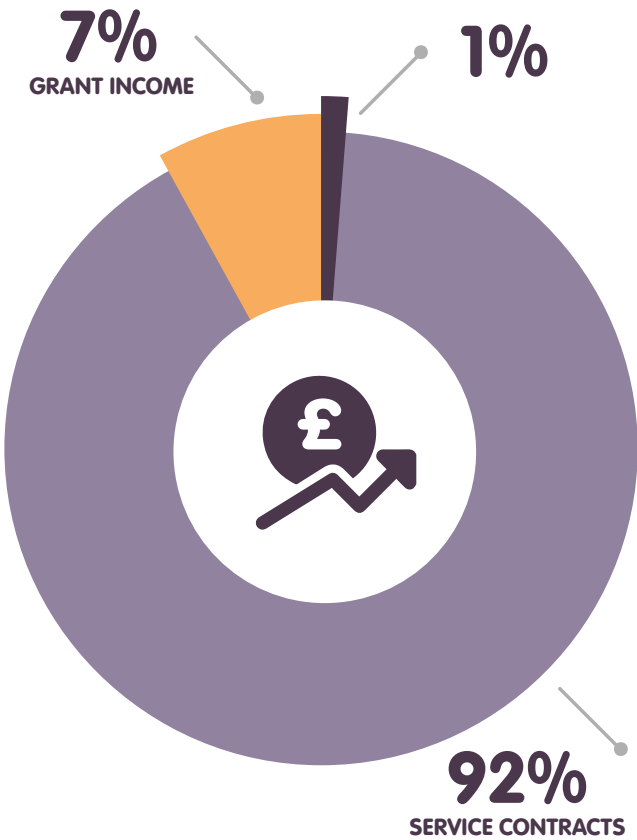
Our financial activities to 31 March 2022

In a year that tested us like no other, we increased our Networks by 32% to 37 across central Scotland, allowing us to support over 400 members. Our growth reflected our ability to adapt and deliver our peer support networks no matter what, continuing a hybrid model of support including a digital programme. Income increased by 26% to £1,151k (2021 - £911k) and expenditure by 24% to £1,087k (2021 - £877k), finishing the year with a surplus of £65k and reserves of £525k, in line with our reserves policy.

INCOME

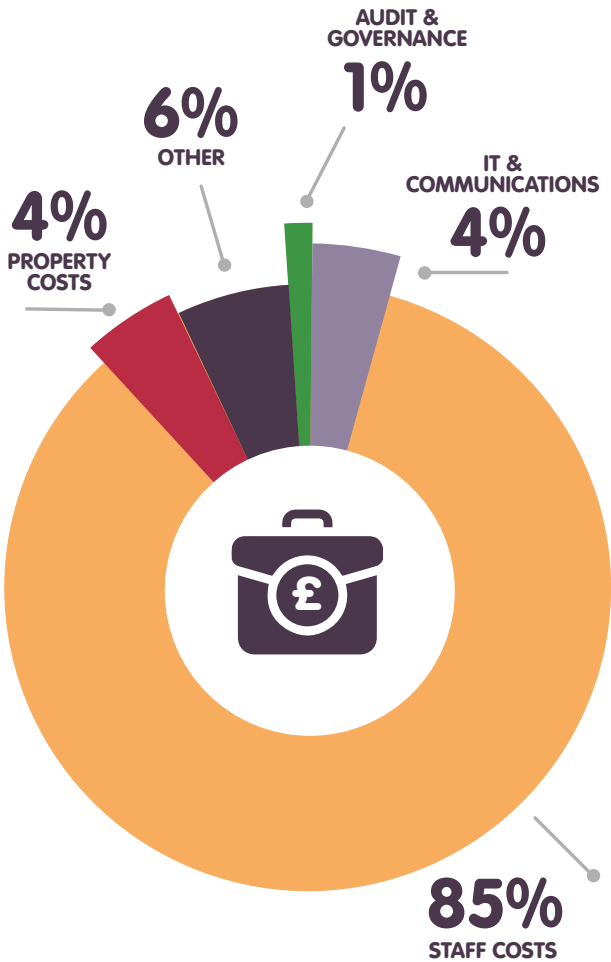
Service Contract income is received from local authorities across central Scotland including North & South Lanarkshire, East & Midlothian, Glasgow, West Dunbartonshire, Falkirk and North Ayrshire.

We received grant income from The Big Lottery, Digital Boost, VANL and NHS Forth Valley and through the the Scottish Government we secured money from Equalities & Human Rights, Communitis Mental Health Wellbeing and a Social care bonus.



EXPENDITURE

Our biggest asset is our dedicated staff team and this is where the majority of our money was invested, equating to 85% of our total expenditure. Our property and other costs include rent, utilities, administration, project costs, subscriptions, consultancy and professional fees equated to 10% of our overall spend. We invested in our IT thanks to the Digital Boost fund, equating to 4% of our total expenditure, bringing staff and members up to date digitally.



Thank you

We would like to extend our thanks to all of the contributors to this report, our staff team, our funders, local authority partners, supporters and most importantly to our members who show us that 'Together Anything is Possible'.

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