



Solving Homelessness & Achieving Independence

Connection Support
(Formerly registered as Connection Oxford)

**TRUSTEES' ANNUAL
REPORT AND
FINANCIAL
STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31 MARCH 2022**

Charity No: 1049740

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Introduction by the Chair of the Board



For many years we have provided support for people who experience problems related to housing or homelessness, those with mental health issues, and refugees and asylum seekers

In times of economic uncertainty and following the coronavirus pandemic, we saw a widening of the inequalities faced by many of our clients and we were able to respond speedily by revisiting our strategic priorities, diversifying income sources and developing new service models. This has therefore necessitated a period of consolidation and stabilisation in terms of governance and leadership, and consequently, we developed a strategic framework which meets the needs of our changing environment. We have enhanced training for our teams, re-established reflective practice post-lockdown, increased the resource in our infrastructure, and appointed new managers to transform our approach to volunteering and client involvement, and increased our marketing and fundraising capacity.

Our growth in recent years has increased our influence in the sector and provided new opportunities to effectively support people and communities. Income grew by 28% during the financial year and we now deliver 32 main services across our three geographic areas, and during 2021-22 we began to leverage our strong reputation and demonstrate our professionalism even more clearly through our communication with stakeholders, including commissioners and other funders.

The last 12 months have shown that the services and resources provided by Connection Support are needed by those communities we support more than ever. We have made some important decisions to focus our resources strategically. By doing so we are now well-placed to meet the challenges for the coming years, and I would like to acknowledge Chris Keating's pivotal role in all that we have achieved since he became Chief Executive. In particular, I would like to thank all of the staff and volunteers at Connection Support for their determination, resilience, and commitment to our goals. I would also like to acknowledge the contribution made by David Waters, Jenny Berrill, David Bayes, and Kelly Bark who retired as Trustees during this period. David Waters served as Chair of Connection Support for over 10 years and Jenny for two years.

Finally, huge thanks to our supporters and donors whose generosity and compassion at this difficult time is truly inspirational.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'James Arnold'.

James Arnold
Chair of the Board of Trustees



Introduction from the CEO

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mark Thompson, and all my colleagues on the Board, staff and management teams for the help, friendship and wisdom that I have been offered in my first year as Chief Executive. It has certainly been a challenging year!



At the time of writing, it's difficult to believe that, at the beginning of this reporting period, the Ukraine war was ten months in the future, our offices were mostly closed due to the pandemic and the rule of six was in place - outdoors only. I'm proud to say that our team rose equally brilliantly to the challenges of society reopening, as they did to it closing down the previous year. One of my passions is seeking out marginalised groups of people who slip through the cracks of public services; the end of the Everyone In campaign provided the opportunity to do exactly that. As people left temporary accommodation, we identified those who had no recourse to public funds, then worked with the Oxfordshire Homeless Movement (OHM) and partner agencies Aspire and Asylum Welcome to create and fund a programme so they could access support as they sought to gain status. I'm really excited to do more self-generated work to meet needs in our communities as we identify them, alongside our core commissioned services.

As well as OHM, we have worked with a broad range of partners across our three areas and this year, I've particularly enjoyed collaborating with the other members of the new Oxfordshire Homelessness Alliance. I'm looking forward to working even more closely together in future and coordinating our efforts to deliver the best possible results for clients. I have also become the Chair of the Oxfordshire Mental Health Partnership, at a pivotal time as we begin to look forward together at the potential future of our partnership services beyond this contractual period. I'm particularly proud of our Step Down Houses and Milton Keynes Housing First services, which were nominated for Homeless Link Awards this year. Our Step Down House was also recognised by King's College London as being the best in its field, nationally. As we grow, we must continue to deliver this level of excellence in all our work. So this year, we have revitalised our organisation so our infrastructure fits our scale and the level of our ambition for clients. Our investments in finance, IT, HR, communication, fundraising and of course, our people, have given us a strong foundation for the future. I feel extremely fortunate to have inherited a team with such astonishing depth and breadth of experience and talent, including lived experience which is so crucial to our work.

I'm grateful that the Board has supported the investments in our people this year, in terms of remuneration, the delivery of more, higher quality training and particularly in allocating resources to ensuring that we have an organisational culture which is truly diverse and inclusive for all. I'm thrilled to be taking this superb team forward into 2023.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Keating". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping "C" and a long horizontal line underneath.

Christopher Keating
Chief Executive Officer



What We Do

Solving Homelessness & Achieving Independence

At Connection Support, we work alongside people to overcome life's challenges. We provide services across Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes through approximately 200 staff and 150 volunteers. We have expertise in supporting people who have problems related to housing or homelessness, those with mental health issues, and refugees and asylum seekers. We also have specialist services working with families and young people. We use a trauma-informed, strength-based approach that is person-centred and tailored to each individual's needs. We work alongside each person to empower them to live as independently as they possibly can. Underpinning our client work is our ongoing commitment to making our organisation even stronger, ensuring it is fit to deliver the highest quality services to meet the growing and evolving needs in society. The principles of partnership and volunteering flow through everything we do. An overview of our 32 main services can be found in the Appendix on page 47.



Values

Our values are not just how we work alongside our clients, but how we work with one another, our partners, and our stakeholders.

- **Empowering** - we enable people to find their strengths and develop resilience
- **Collaborative** – we involve, challenge and advocate
- **Compassionate** – we connect with people and don't give up
- **Personalised** – we believe in finding creative, individual solutions with everybody



Collaborating for Impact

Partnerships

Partnerships are essential to our work at all levels. This year, we laid the foundations for the Oxfordshire Homelessness Alliance with A2 Dominion, Aspire, Elmore Community Services, Homeless Oxfordshire and St Mungo's, LEAF and the City, District and County Councils. This new commissioning environment launched on 1 April 2022, and together, we will share knowledge, collaborate at a strategic level, and manage a joint budget to use our resources efficiently to achieve the best possible outcomes for clients. Our CEO is the current Chair of the Oxfordshire Mental Health Partnership, whose members include the Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust, Response, Restore, Oxfordshire Mind and Elmore Community Services. We are also part of the Oxfordshire Homeless Pathway with Response, Cottsway Housing and Cherwell District Council, and are also on the steering group of the Oxfordshire Homeless Movement.

We enjoy ongoing positive partnerships across all our geographical areas, including working with Aspire, Asylum Welcome and the Oxfordshire Homeless Movement on our project for those with no recourse to public funds in Oxfordshire. We have strong links with the Thames Valley Alliance for our work with offenders and with Thames Valley Police, the Police and Crime Commissioner and local Community Safety Boards. We work with partners including Response, Paradigm, SOHA, A2 Dominion, Cottsway and private landlords to provide high-quality housing for clients whom we support. We also work on a range of specialist projects by collaborating with key partners such as Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust, Elmore Community Services, Buckinghamshire Mind, Oxfordshire Mind, Citizens Advice, the Oasis Partnership and Central and North West London NHS Trust.

Equality, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (EDEI)

We are a charity that promotes social justice. We seek to ensure that the people we work alongside and our team of staff and volunteers have a voice, are included, valued, have equitable access, and have equal opportunities to achieve. We strive to do this through our values and to ensure we are doing everything we can to action our words within our charity, with our partners, the people we work alongside, and the communities we work in.



The Board and leadership made an explicit commitment to Equality, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion this year. We worked with the Diversity Trust CIC to review our current working practices, policies and culture, and identify priorities going forward. We consulted broadly within the organisation as part of the process. Everyday Inclusion and Unconscious Bias training was rolled out to all staff and the Leadership Team has committed to [ACEVO Eight principles to address the diversity deficit in charity leadership](#). We also updated our e-mail signatures to include gender pronouns so members of our team can choose how they are referred to.



Client Involvement and Volunteering

The Board invested in a full-time manager to lead our thinking regarding client involvement and volunteering. The manager was appointed in October 2021 and a Volunteer and Peer-mentoring Coordinator joined the team in Milton Keynes shortly afterwards to establish volunteering there, where it had not existed for many years.



Through these appointments and the development of the strategy, the Board has underlined its commitment to including clients meaningfully and as equals in shaping the services we run. Within our services, we already have an empowering approach to working with clients that values a person's skills and knowledge. Involving clients in decisions about the way we work as an organisation is a natural extension of this principle and will ensure our services truly reflect clients' views and priorities.

The strategy lays out our plans to strengthen volunteering throughout the organisation. By involving a wider group of volunteers from our local communities, we aim to enhance and complement the support we offer to clients, benefit from a more diverse range of skills, views and perspectives and deliver cost-effective services. We also anticipate that the volunteers will raise awareness of our work in their personal and professional networks.

Clients have already been involved in recruiting senior team members this year, most notably the Director of Business Services and the Client Involvement and Volunteering Manager. The Board are also delighted to have recruited a Trustee with lived experience, who will join in 2022/23.



Our Work

Homelessness and Housing Support

Connection Support has its origins in homelessness and housing support, since it began providing floating support in Oxfordshire in 1995. 15 of our 32 main projects still have this as their primary focus. We are proud to still be delivering that original service, now known as the Housing Support Service, and as of 1 April 2022 this becomes part of the new Oxfordshire Homelessness Alliance commissioning structure. In July 2021, we published an internal review of the service, which found that 99% of the 1793 cases referred to this service during the preceding three years had successfully avoided eviction. The report also showed that KPI targets were consistently exceeded, for example for speed of processing of referrals. Just as importantly, the review reinforced Connection Support's reputation for going above and beyond our formal remit when clients needed us; there were numerous examples of our support workers showing tenacity and creativity to help their clients achieve a positive outcome, and being there for them when there was nowhere else for that person to turn.

In our Buckinghamshire Tenancy Sustainment service, which is part of the Rough Sleeper Initiative, 92% of people we worked with were living indoors in the last quarter of the year. 68% successfully maintained settled accommodation and 24% were in temporary accommodation. This year, we provided 83 rooms in shared houses across Oxfordshire for people in the Adult Homeless Pathway; we helped these clients to build skills during their 6-9 months in the accommodation, so they could move on to long-term independent living.

IAN'S STORY

In 2018 Ian was sleeping rough on the streets of Oxford, committing crime to fund his addiction. His relationship with his family had broken down and he was unable to see his children. Four years on he is living in his own flat, a place he can finally call home, and he reflects on how far he's come since receiving help from our Adult Homeless Pathway service:



"Now I've got my own flat. I've built good relationships with my family and I'm seeing my kids – trying to make them proud. I'm very house proud now as well, so I'm always making sure my flat is clean and tidy and paying my bills which I feel is a big achievement. I love waking up in the morning fresh! ...My Support Worker's persistence and determination gave me hope for the future. Knowing someone believed in me made all the difference!"



Research has shown that residents in accommodation based on Housing First principles are 70-90% more likely to remain housed than those using other approaches. We are proud to deliver our Housing First Service in Oxfordshire and Milton Keynes, (see page 9) which is the largest Housing First service in the UK outside the government pilots. In Milton Keynes, we also work with people who have previously been homeless but have low-level support needs in our Next Steps Accommodation Service. In this service, clients stay in our accommodation for up to three years, after which we support them to move on to a new home and at year-end, 94% of clients are up-to-date with their rent or are making progress in dealing with benefits issues to pay rent.

Our rough sleeper work was unusually quiet in the first half of the year, due to the government's Everyone In campaign and we had to adapt creatively to manage the process of moving people on safely when that provision ended. We found that, due to having had a period of living indoors due to the pandemic, many rough sleepers who would not otherwise have engaged with support services built trusting relationships with our staff and became more open to support. This enabled us to help them access the benefits they are entitled to and engage with physical and mental health services, and support with drug or alcohol needs. We also ran the One Recovery Buckinghamshire service for adults, through which we provide 20 flats and guidance to help people who are doing well in recovery from drug or alcohol misuse.

In Milton Keynes, we continued to run Orchard House, which is supported accommodation for homeless single people, most of whom have mental health needs. This year, 79% of clients had an improved score on their outcomes star, which we measured at three monthly intervals, and 100% of leavers considered their wellbeing was better overall than when they moved into Orchard House.

Our work with ex-offenders in Buckinghamshire has gone from strength to strength this year. Since April 2021, our project has assisted 54 people into accommodation and supported them to make positive choices to enable a fresh start.



I referred (client) to you... if it wasn't for the work you did with her, and the support and assistance, she would be spiralling out of control
- Thames Valley Police Officer



OUR WORK IN ACTION...

Step Down Housing & Embedded Housing Workers - Oxfordshire



Our 'Step Down Housing' service prevents homelessness by providing short-term housing for vulnerable patients who are medically ready to be discharged from hospitals in Oxford but lack suitable accommodation to continue their recovery. This includes people who are homeless, have a history of drug or alcohol misuse, or have no recourse to public funds, people with issues with their immigration status, those fleeing domestic violence, or those with mobility issues. We appoint Embedded Housing Workers (EHWs) into the hospitals to upskill medical staff and social workers about the complexities of housing these patients. Discharged patients (whom we call guests) spend up to eight weeks at a local 'Step Down' house with a Support Worker and community medical staff. While they recover, guests are linked to the Homeless Pathway options, local housing team, and outreach services. They are supported with registering with a GP and alcohol and drug support services where necessary and are offered help with benefit claims and budgeting. They are also encouraged to take part in activities such as cooking/reading groups, coffee mornings, and gardening. Partnership is key to the success of this service. To ensure the best outcome for every guest, it is paramount that we work closely with our partner, Response, who provide the accommodation and maintain the houses, and with hospital staff, junior doctors, councils, occupational therapists, mental health teams, addiction support, social workers, care coordinators, and families and friends.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the EHWs' role became more dynamic. Previously they would upskill staff through shadowing, talking to patients and passing on their knowledge of the Homeless Reduction Act. However, the impact of the pandemic on medical teams meant this was no longer feasible and the high changeover of staff didn't allow for training. Therefore, the EHWs had to have direct contact with patients, taking control of housing them. As a result, EHWs were integral in streamlining the discharge process, helping to reduce bed occupancy and the risk of patients contracting COVID-19. They also had to adapt to very short notice periods, sometimes only given hours before a patient was discharged. They went above and beyond their role, taking on the responsibilities of other staff who were unable to be at the hospitals, including completing paperwork with patients, obtaining signed housing forms, and collecting medication. Subsequently, they have become more involved in delivering discharge plans, which has been essential to relieving pressure on NHS resources. The renewal of funding from Oxford Health, Oxfordshire CCG, Oxford City Council and DLUHC for the next five (plus three) years, along with the request for more support in the hospital is a testament to the success of this service.

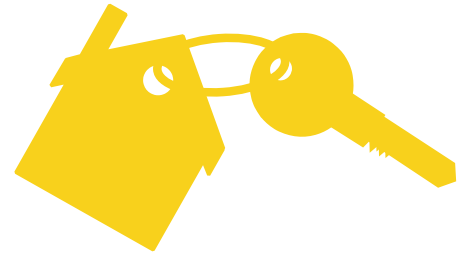


Step Down Housing is performing well against national benchmarks for reducing A&E attendances and emergency admissions.

- Kings College London



Housing First - Milton Keynes



Cross-sector collaboration is key to the success of this service and a multi-agency panel meets every two weeks, to discuss new referrals and provide updates on current clients to ensure the best outcome is achieved for every individual. Client feedback is a testament to our Housing First service, with 99% of clients saying they were satisfied with the service and 95% saying their quality of life has improved.

- John* has spent the longest period out of prison in 25 years since being supported through Housing First. He had been a persistent offender since his late teens (he's now in his late thirties) but with the service, he has been able to secure a tenancy, pay his bills and engage with the Probation Service. (*not his real name)

Families and Independence

It is not unusual for parents to struggle with the challenges of bringing up young children, but for those without a support network or with other financial, health or social issues, this can quickly escalate to a situation where the family is in crisis and needs intensive support, which is expensive in both human and financial terms. The Boost Parenting Advice & Support Service in Buckinghamshire matches volunteers to families who need a helping hand dealing with issues such as establishing healthy routines with their children, encouraging school attendance or who need emotional support to help them to cope. Boost began during the pandemic on digital platforms, and this year it has been transformed into a face-to-face service. We recruited 61 volunteers between January 2021 and January 2022, and helped 141 clients. A client survey showed that 95% of clients felt that support from the service had improved their skills and/or knowledge of parenting.

The Family Solutions Plus project in Oxfordshire was mobilised in 2020 in partnership with Oxfordshire Mind and Elmore Community Services and was fully up and running this year. Support Workers from all three partners are embedded in social work teams alongside similar workers from other voluntary sector services supporting families with domestic abuse and substance misuse issues according to each organisation's specialism. Our service works alongside parents to give them tools to manage their mental health better so they are equipped to provide a stable environment for their children and therefore avoid them being taken into care. Our aim is also to enable parents to be better role models to their children, so they in turn are better parents to the next generation and the cycle of trauma and poor parenting is broken. This unique collaboration with social services is the first time outside agencies have been brought into the process in Oxfordshire and early anecdotal evidence suggests that many children who would have been taken into care have successfully been kept with their families.

For clients in our Self-Directed Support Services, we enable greater independence by helping them tailor their own care arrangements to suit their unique circumstances and lifestyle. In some circumstances, social or healthcare users can be given money in the form of a Direct Payment from their local authority to commission their own services, rather than accept a standard provision. For example, where local authorities may offer access to a day centre, individuals might prefer to meet friends for lunch, go fishing, or attend a local gym, but need support to do so. This service supports the person to employ a carer or personal assistant directly by helping to find suitably qualified employees, providing comprehensive employment advice and offering a Payroll Service to process wages and administrate HMRC responsibilities on the employer's behalf.

“

We have had some awful cases, but have worked with Connection Support and families have been saved from the precipice. Connection Support are good at this difficult, complex work.

- Lead Manager, Oxfordshire County Council

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OUR WORK IN ACTION...

Prevention Matters - Buckinghamshire



**Prevention
Matters**

Loneliness and isolation is a growing issue in society, either due to old age, illness or lack of self-confidence. Our Prevention Matters service in Buckinghamshire matches clients with a community practice worker who helps them get out and about and connect with their communities.

The majority of clients in this service are over 65 and were therefore at greater risk from COVID; they were acutely affected by isolation during the pandemic and many have found it difficult to get out again once restrictions lifted. They are also often uncomfortable with technology and this put them at a digital disadvantage as we emerged from lockdown during 2021, as many services which were traditionally face-to-face had moved online. Something as simple as making an appointment with a GP had become very difficult.

The Prevention Matters team responded by using funds we raised from a corporate partner to purchase tablets and data for these clients. We provided them with training on how to use their devices to access services and reduce their feelings of loneliness.

“

One of our clients was an older lady, who was living alone and was prone to hoarding, which we are seeing more and more often. It was having an impact on her mental and physical health and she was really isolated.

Once she got her tablet, she found the motivation to start clearing her house out. She took it from room to room around the house as she tidied up, either listening to podcasts or watching tv as she went.

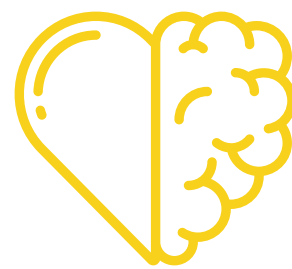
She was also able to speak to her grandchildren online for the first time in a long time. It made a massive difference to her quality of life.'

- Helen Pizans, Operations Manager

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Mental Health

This year, we saw more evidence of the impact that COVID restrictions have had on people with mental health needs. Clinical mental health services became stretched and therefore the complexity of mental health cases coming into our services has increased as well as the volume of referrals.



As restrictions relaxed and people began to access services again, the number of clients in all our Mental Health Support Services in Oxfordshire (whether related to COVID or not) increased by 50% from 88 to 132 clients. 93% of these were successfully closed within two years and more than 80% required no further support two years after we closed their cases.

Our Mental Health Intensive Support Service launched as a targeted pilot in Oxfordshire this year, working with a small number of entrenched rough sleepers with acute mental health needs. These clients had no other options, as every other service felt unequipped to support them; all the clients had been sectioned at some point in their lives, some of them multiple times and some were deemed at risk of death if they spent another winter outdoors. These clients had a history of finding it very difficult to trust people in the mainstream or to engage with services. We provided them with a furnished flat to move into and paid all bills through housing benefits and a service charge so that they did not get into arrears. With the added complexity of entrenched substance misuse or other physical health issues, we provided additional time from a Support Worker to enable the clients to maintain their tenancy which would have been too big a step for them without support. They had lived outside social norms, often for decades, so some of them had to learn basic living skills such as cooking and changing their clothes. The goal of the service was to discover whether it was possible for this client group to adapt to maintain a tenancy and, since the pilot began, all four clients have kept a roof over their heads.

In October 2021, we launched our Out of Hospital Service in Oxfordshire with the aim of avoiding repeated admissions to mental health wards for clients whose complex needs put them outside the remit of the council's tenancy sustainment teams. Oxford City Council (OCC) recognised that their Housing Workers lacked sufficient expertise and experience in engaging with tenants to address their challenging behaviour and non-compliance with tenancy agreements. Connection Support was identified as a partnership organisation due to the successful placement of one of our workers in the OCC Tenancy Sustainment Teams.

Between April 2021 and March 2022, our embedded Mental Health workers supported 25 clients. Clients were referred to the team by OCC and Cherwell District Council Temporary Accommodation Teams, hospital-based embedded housing workers, ward-based social workers and AMHT care coordinators. Our Support Workers have provided support with housing applications, debt, bills and benefits, and applied for funding from grant-giving organisations for the provision of essential household items. The workers identified the importance of developing rapport with clients who had experienced many negative outcomes dealing with professionals and agencies and provided advice regarding mental and physical health problems and motivational support and advocacy.



A key element of the role has been to liaise with a range of professionals to maintain a multi-agency approach. Regular team meetings including with Step Down workers have enabled exchange of information and updates. The total number of emergency hospital admissions during the period for these 25 cases was reduced to 4 (2 clients).

In Milton Keynes, we have continued to work in partnership with the acute mental health wards to support people like Alan (see case study below) to be successfully discharged and re-establish themselves in the community to avoid readmission. This work, funded by the Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust is proving successful; 77.2% of clients in our Acute Hospital Discharge Service, and 100% in the Acute Admissions Avoidance Service reported an improvement in their emotional and mental health and no one we have worked with since the service began in February 2021 has been readmitted to hospital.

ALAN'S STORY



When Alan was first introduced to Connection Support, he was being discharged from hospital after the latest in a series of mental health breakdowns. He had always been a hardworking, sociable person but, due to his schizophrenia, a number of bereavements, including his mother passing away and the breakdown of his marriage, he needed support to re-establish his independence.

"Prior to my on-going breakdowns, I was outgoing, confident, sociable, giving, caring and loved being around people."

His support worker was able to help him secure a PIP assessment, book onto a driver awareness course, and withdraw his pensions.

"My support worker took 'ALL' the pressure and 'STRESS' away from dealing with paperwork and looking at emails I did not understand. Tina replied to companies on time and supported me with my PIP assessment and a lot more.... It may not seem like much when I talk about it but to me, it felt like I was drowning. Tina has been my life jacket."

As his confidence and self-esteem grew, she supported him look for work, helping with the paperwork, scanning the documents and managing emails with his employer.

"Tina even ordered my uniform and my boots for me; without this level of kindness and support, I would have really struggled organising everything."

Alan is now enjoying spending time with his family and is looking forward to starting a new job..."I have had so much help both mentally and practically which has made my life and outlook easier and have started regaining an 'I can do' attitude and 'it is possible' to move forward"



Young People

Our Young People's Accommodation Service launched in 2019 and evolved from the historical provision of group accommodation for young people in care in Oxfordshire. The young people move into their own accommodation, either in self-contained units or HMOs (Houses in Multiple Occupation), and are supported to transition into mainstream adult life and full independence in education, training or employment.



Through this service, Connection Support added to its portfolio of properties and established successful partnerships with private landlords and A2 Dominion. As the properties were dispersed and mainly self-contained, we introduced an even more robust on-call system to ensure that clients and landlords had an emergency contact at all times.

Most of the young people in this service lived alone during the pandemic and had pre-existing mental health issues, which made them vulnerable to feelings of isolation during lockdowns. Support Workers continued to hold face-to-face sessions with them outdoors, which enabled them to monitor the young people's mental health and general wellbeing. They continued to help them to develop the skills needed to manage their own home and to look after their health and money responsibly and it was also valuable to get outside their home and go for a walk in the fresh air – something many of them would not have felt comfortable doing alone. Many of the young people had high levels of anxiety so we supported them to manage this as they reconnected with the outside world - all of the young people who were ready to move on from this service this year were supported to settle into new accommodation.

In Buckinghamshire, we had twelve units of accommodation within the Housing Interaction Trust project, which provides accommodation for young people who were at risk of homelessness. They came to us via schools, colleges, GPs or councils for a broad range of reasons – it could be due to conflict with their parents, but also due to family breakdown or because their parent went into residential care themselves and was unable to support their child. Due to the complexity of their needs, including some who had substance misuse issues, they had routinely been rejected from single issue services and many qualified for neither CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) nor adult mental health services. Since the pandemic, the proportion of young people in this service with mental health problems has increased significantly and 95% of clients had have some sort of mental health issue this year, ranging from often severe depression to psychosis. 92% of referrals this year were supported to settle into new accommodation

Our Padstones project operated in two small group properties in Burnham and High Wycombe, as well as move-on accommodation for those who are ready to have less support. It exists to prevent young people from becoming homeless by offering a safe environment with 24-hour support and regular one-to-one key work sessions to help young people to develop their potential and move towards more independent living.



ADRIAN'S STORY



"Adrian came to us in November 2019 and he left in September 2021. He has worked hard over that two years to manage his anxieties to accept the support he needs. While with us, he came to key work on a regular basis and received online support through the Mental Health Team. He had always wanted to attend university but he didn't think this would happen when he first arrived at Padstones. However, with the support of Havenfield Team and an extremely lot of hard work from Adrian, he finally felt he was able to move on and attend University to learn Criminal Psychology. He is doing well and now he is supported from Havenfield as a move-on client. I am extremely proud of how far Adrian has come." - Caroline Sherman-Thomas (Adrian's key worker)

"Within my nearly two years of being at Connection Support, I changed a lot, I achieved this myself but with the helping hand of Connection Support. I needed to become independent and so I was assisted in reaching this goal, this was done by giving a hand when I needed it, nothing was done for me which was what I needed. If there was something I needed to do I was given the help or the direction to do it, this was done throughout my entire time there and contributed massively to me growing as a person making me comfortable enough to move out. Even when I moved out I was given the assistance I needed, i.e. payment for the deposit, help to talk to the agency, moving all my stuff over to the new place etc. All this support was monumental to my current state, from helping me understand and get over some of my mental health issues, to giving me confidence in going to university" Adrian Picasso – Dvorani

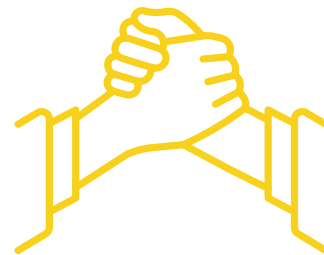
Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Our Refugee Resettlement team provided emotional and practical support to 13 refugee families who arrived in the Cherwell, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse districts under Central Government's UK Resettlement Scheme. When they first arrived, COVID restrictions required them to quarantine in their accommodation and our Support Workers had to shop for them and physically assist them with their day 2 and day 8 PCR tests; they built trust very quickly with the families to help them to understand why the tests and isolation were necessary, why they were not able to take their children outside and to reassure them that they were not imprisoned. The team worked closely with statutory and voluntary agencies across the county to ensure that the families received the necessary support to begin to recover from their trauma and integrate into the community. We established a women's group to provide a forum where they could meet and support each other through the process and helped them manage their finances and tenancies, register with health services and access to education, training and employment opportunities. English and Arabic-speaking volunteers played a vital role in helping families get to know the local area and in providing English conversation to back up the more formal work of the support workers to meet the requirements of the scheme.



OUR WORK IN ACTION...

No Recourse to Public Funds - Oxfordshire



Connection Support, alongside Oxfordshire Homeless Movement, took the initiative to set up a service in partnership with Aspire, Asylum Welcome, Edge and SOHA to help people experiencing homelessness in Oxfordshire who had lost or do not have access to state-funded benefits and housing. Most of those supported were from outside the EEA and had a pending or unresolved asylum claim and, as a result, were not able to work, apply for benefits or access public services apart from basic health care. With no means to support themselves, this group is at risk of homelessness and vulnerable to crime and exploitation. The project, funded fully by fundraising and grants coordinated by the Oxfordshire Homeless Movement, provides medium-term accommodation for participants and supports them to recover from trauma and to resolve their immigration status, enabling them to eventually move into secure long-term housing.

In Buckinghamshire, we continued to provide emergency support to people with no recourse to public funds, a project originally funded by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, and supported this year by charitable donations from the Albert Hunt Trust and Rothschild and Shanly Foundations. We worked closely with Wycombe Homeless Connection and are particularly grateful for access to their invaluable Polish translation service. A dedicated worker supported this group to help them access food, shelter and medical care and connected them with statutory services, such as the NHS, and other charitable organisations who provided advice on employment and the immigration process. Where we have been successful in helping clients to achieve settled status, we supported their applications for benefits which enabled them to move in to either supported, social or privately rented accommodation. Where this was not possible, we supported them to find employment. We have also accessed direct financial support for our participants, to support their day to day living costs, through the British Red Cross Hardship Payment Scheme. In this way, our project provided the connections and support which ensured that individuals became integrated into their communities, with a home and access to all the resources they needed for independent living.

Strategic Plan 2021 - 2023

As social needs increase and evolve, so does our ambition to identify those who fall between the cracks in existing services and to develop innovative ways of helping them to avoid homelessness and achieve independence. We also remain committed to delivering excellence in all our services which we deliver in partnership with local government. To enable this, we have grown our organisation and, as we have done so, consulted with staff, volunteers and clients to identify areas in which we require more robust infrastructure to continue to deliver the quality services that our clients deserve. Our three-year strategic plan, therefore, reflects the required investment of time and resources in organisational development. The strategic goals, mission and values were developed collaboratively through a series of facilitated conversations between all staff members, Board members, leadership and senior managers, then translated into a delivery plan by the leadership team. The strategy was communicated to all staff in a more digestible form and the Chief Executive and senior leadership have personally engaged with all staff in small groups in values workshops throughout the year. The strategy will be refreshed during the midpoint of its lifecycle in 2022-23.

GOAL 1: GROW TO POSITIVELY IMPACT MORE LIVES

Income grew by 28% during the financial year, through a combination of winning new tenders, extension of existing contracts and fundraising for pieces of work where the organisation can make most impact for groups of people who are otherwise falling between the cracks in service provision. Examples of the latter include achieving funding from a range of sources for: the Out of Hospital mental health service in Oxfordshire; our Step Down Houses; the Rough Sleeper Initiative; work with prison-leavers in Buckinghamshire and the hospital discharge project in Milton Keynes. The organisation grew from 160 to 197 employees during this financial year.

- Next year: we will continue to fundraise for potential projects which we are most passionate about and conduct a quality review across our programme delivery.

GOAL 2: INVEST IN OUR INFRASTRUCTURE

We invested in new managerial and operational posts in volunteering/client involvement, communications/marketing, and income generation and rescoped the Head of Finance role and finance team to increase our capacity in that area. We added additional administrative capacity, invested in new HR, IT and rent management systems and developed strategies for IT and volunteering/client involvement.

- Next year: We will introduce further Office 365 features and work towards achieving Cyber Essentials Certification. We will consult internally to design a new client database, introduce a new contract management system and continue to monitor resourcing, plugging gaps as necessary. We will develop a marketing and communications strategy, conduct a complete review of our website and launch a new intranet. We will develop and begin to implement an Equality Diversity Equity and Inclusion strategy and employ a recruitment specialist to enable our managers to focus more on frontline work.



GOAL 3: INVOLVE CLIENTS DIRECTLY IN SHAPING OUR WORK

We invested in a Client Involvement and Volunteering Manager, developed a strategy and are in the early stages of delivering it. See page 7 for more detail

- Next year: we will deliver the client involvement strategy and in particular recruit a Board member with lived experience, develop training and support materials for clients, involve them further in recruitment, ensure staff buy-in to principles of client involvement and establish a system to evaluate the effectiveness of our efforts towards meaningful involvement.

GOAL 4: INVEST IN PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT

This year, we created a comprehensive new training plan, introduced new mandatory training for all staff, much of which is delivered in a modular format, and began to transition back to face to face training sessions where appropriate, including reintroducing reflective practice at the earliest opportunity. Areas in which we have improved or introduced new training include safeguarding, EDEI (equality, diversity, equity and inclusion), unconscious bias, finance for managers, client note-taking, methods of work including Psychologically Informed Environments, trauma-informed care, and motivational interviewing, HR training including line management skills and values-based interviewing. We also reviewed and improved our staff induction procedures. The Board was able to approve a cost-of-living salary increase for staff and Connection Support achieved the Living Wage Employer accreditation.

- Next year: We will implement an enhanced employee benefits package and continue to do all we can to ease the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on our employees. New employee communication processes will be introduced, such as online Town Hall and Team Manager meetings to help employees to share experiences and engage with the organisation and the leadership and we will conduct our first-ever comprehensive staff survey. We will invest in employee wellbeing and establish a competency framework.

GOAL 5: DEVELOP OUR HOUSING MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

We have increased the number of properties we manage directly, alongside the provision of support to clients, and continue to work with partner organisations that provide properties. To enable us to ensure we provide quality, well-managed accommodation where that is our responsibility, we recruited a Housing and Facilities Development Manager and established a maintenance post.

- Next year: We will develop a housing management strategy, with the aim of providing a greater quantity of appropriate high-quality accommodation for clients and will review our office estate.



**ALL THAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED THIS
YEAR WOULD HAVE BEEN
IMPOSSIBLE WITHOUT OUR
PARTNERS, DONORS, VOLUNTEERS
AND STAFF - THANK YOU!**

A full list of donors is on page 44.



REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Registered charity name | Connection Support |
| Charity number | 1049740 |
| Company registration number | 03072719 |
| Principal & registered office address | 213 Barns Road (1st floor) Oxford OX4 3UT |
| Trustees | Richard Allman James Arnold (Chair) Paul Aston (appointed 22.05.22) Kelly Bark (retired 01.07.21) David Bayes (retired 14.05.22) Jennifer Berrill (retired 15.05.22) Anne Cooney Emily Dobell Emma Duke (appointed 14.07.22) Liam Moore (appointed 29.09.22) Dipen Parekh (retired 10.06.22) David Waters (retired 07.05.21) Luka Winterborne (appointed 14.05.22) Mike Wortley |
| Company Secretary | Christopher Keating |
| Auditors | Shaw Gibbs (Audit) Limited Chartered Certified Accountants and Statutory Auditors 264 Banbury Road Oxford OX2 7DY |



STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing Document

Connection Support is registered as a charity with the Charity Commission. It is governed by its Articles of Association dated 26 May 1995.

Organisational Structure

The Board is responsible for the governance of the charity. The day-to-day running of the charity is delegated to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who is supported by two Deputy CEOs, the Director of Business Services, and the Head of Finance.

The Trustee Board

Connection Support is governed by a Board of unpaid Trustees who meet with the staff leadership team every two months. The Board delegates monitoring of financial matters to a Finance Sub-committee, which meets once a quarter and delivery of organisational development initiatives to a Development Sub-committee, which meets every two months. Other committees can be formed on a task-focused basis. Under the requirements of the Memorandum and Articles of Association, one third of Board members, or if their number is not a multiple of three, then the number nearest to one third, shall retire from office at the Annual General Meeting each year. Any Trustee appointed between Annual General Meetings shall only retain office until the next Annual General Meeting and then shall be eligible for re-election. The Trustees who served the charity during the year are shown on page 19. Jennifer Berrill was re-elected as the Chair of the Board up to her retirement in September 2021. Jim Arnold was elected as Chair from September 2022.

Recruitment and Appointment of Trustees

The Board aims to ensure that a broad range of experience is represented by Trustees, particularly in health, housing, social care, business and finance. A skills audit of Board members is conducted every two years to inform recruitment and succession planning. Detailed information is provided to prospective Trustees, including governing documents, financial accounts, Charity Commission guidance on the responsibilities of Trustees and information about the charity's services. Applicants are invited to an informal discussion with the CEO followed by a formal interview with two Board Members and the CEO. The interview covers the responsibilities of Trustees, in line with Charity Commission guidance and the Charity Code of Governance. References are taken prior to full Board approval of appointment.

Trustees' Induction and Training

New Trustees are provided with information about the charity including its strategy, plans, organisational structure, finances and risk register. New Trustees meet with the CEO for a full briefing on the charity's work and to agree areas of more specific input. Newly appointed Trustees are supported by a mentor from the Board during their induction period. Training opportunities are circulated to Board members as they arise.



Charitable Objectives

To relieve poverty, sickness and distress in people over the age of 16 and living, or about to live, in local authority, housing association or private accommodation (particularly but not exclusively those who have been in care or have been homeless, those who suffer from mental health problems and those with previous or current addiction to drugs or alcohol) through the provision of advice and advocacy services, counselling support and whatever charitable means the Trustees shall decide.

Statement of Public Benefit

The Trustees take into account the Charity Commission guidance on public benefit and believe that the activities of Connection Support as set out in this report cover the duty of showing public benefit in line with that guidance. Our principal public benefit is to enable vulnerable people to maintain their independence, this includes people with mental health problems, drug and alcohol problems, families, young people, refugees, people who have been homeless, older people and people with an offending background. People who receive support must need this support to enable them to live independently. There is no charge for this support.

Fundraising

Connection Support appointed an Income Generation Manager in 2021 to lead on fundraising activities to support the charity's strategic aims and long-term sustainability. The charity is registered with the Fundraising Regulator and our fundraising activities adhere to the Fundraising Code of Conduct. Our fundraising practice is open, honest, and respectful, and we ensure that the needs of donors who may be in vulnerable circumstances are considered. We did not receive any complaints related to fundraising during this period. The charity is deeply grateful for the support it has received over the year from trusts and foundations, local organisations, town, district and county councils and members of the public. This year, we saw a growing need amongst the people we work with for basic household furniture and provisions. We are grateful to the charitable organisations who responded with their support. Together, we are proud to have been able to provide direct support for families and individuals totalling £43,697, plus £89,298 to respond to the growing demand for emergency support from our welfare funds.

ENVIRONMENT POLICY

Connection Support recognises that our work has an impact on the local, regional, and global environment. We are committed to continuously improving our environmental performance by prioritising sustainability, energy efficiency and making the most effective use of resources.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Connection Support has introduced improved risk management processes this year, including a more detailed risk register, which identifies risks and mitigations in the following categories: governance, external, regulatory and compliance, financial and operational. It highlights the 'hottest' risk which need to most urgently be mitigated and the CEO reviews this monthly with the senior management team to proactively build a culture of risk management as well as bringing it to the board on a two-monthly basis.



FINANCIAL REVIEW

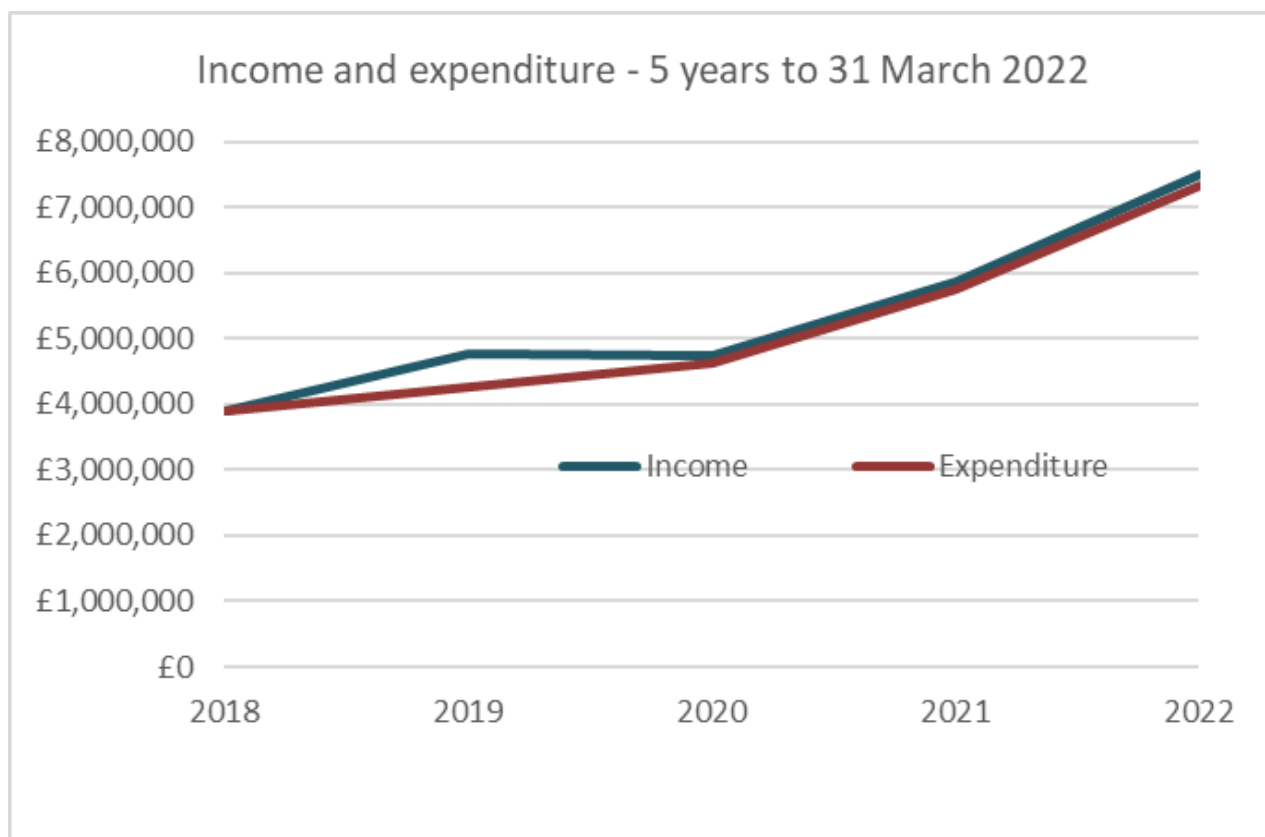
Income this financial year increased by 28% to £7,501,204, reflecting our efforts to raise funds to deliver more services to meet the emerging social needs we identify.

Whilst the majority of our funding has continued to come from contracts with local statutory agencies, this year we have worked to develop new income streams which will allow us to focus our efforts on those areas we have identified as of strategic importance.

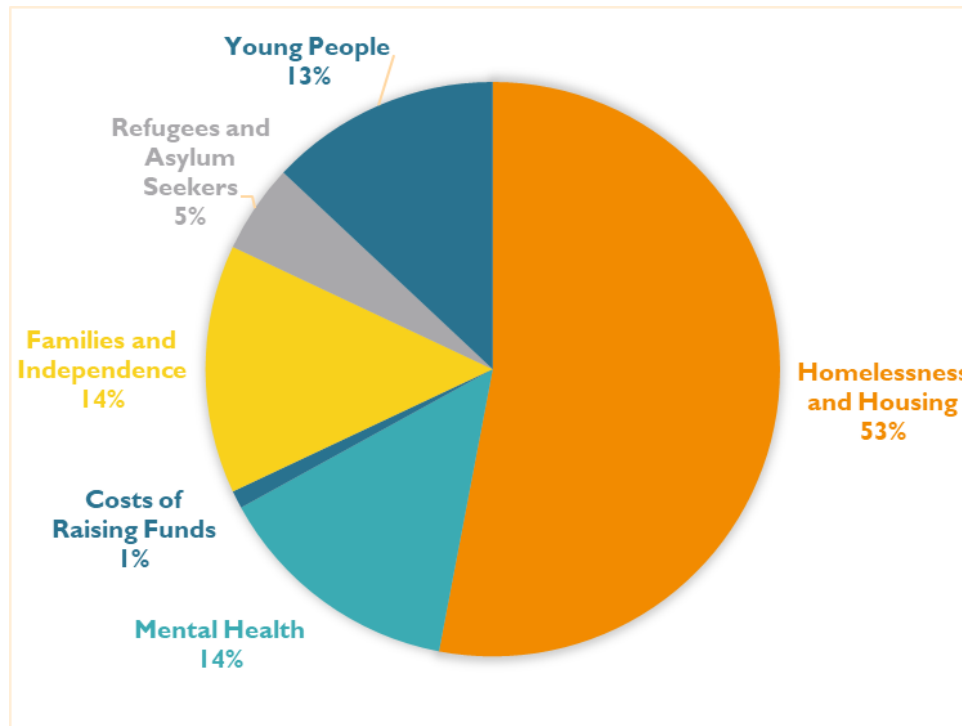
We have appointed an Income Generation Manager to develop our charitable funding income, and are delighted this financial year to have raised £207,897 charitable income. These funds have enabled us to strengthen the support we offer to our existing clients and to develop two projects to support people with no recourse to public funds, who would have otherwise been ineligible to work with us (see page 16). At the same time we have developed our supported accommodation provision, generating £945,373 accommodation income, which we are using to improve our housing services.

Expenditure for the financial year was £7,342,445, increasing by 27.9%. This resulted in a net surplus for the financial year of £158,759.

We have continued to ensure that funds are committed wherever possible to support our charitable work, with expenditure levels closely tracking our income as in prior years (see below)



We have always worked hard to ensure that as much of our funding as possible goes directly to support the people we work with. In line with this, 97% of our income for the financial year supported our charitable activities. Of the remaining balance, 1% supported our initiative to generate charitable funds, and 2% strengthened reserves to keep funds within our target range for organisational stability (see below).



Reserves Policy

It is the policy of Connection Support to maintain free unrestricted reserves (that is, unrestricted reserves not invested in fixed assets or designated for specific purposes) at a target level which can finance at least four months' full payroll and operational costs. This has been established as the level which provides Connection Support with the financial stability to deliver the organisation's core activities, without compromising the principle that the income received will be used to support the charitable objectives of the organisation wherever possible. Whilst this reserves policy is designed primarily to satisfy Connection Support's charitable objectives, the level of four months' reserves additionally provides a window for the Senior Leadership Team to manage cashflow issues, in the event of delays receiving income due from Local Authority debtors.

As an additional requirement, Connection Support ensures that unrestricted reserves are maintained at a level which can support the winding up of the organisation in a solvent manner, should this scenario occur. Winding up costs are currently calculated to be at a level which is lower than the 4 months running costs.

At 31 March 2022 Connection Support held free reserves of £2,109,130, compared to a minimum target level of £1,850,000. In addition to this, £106,600 reserves were designated at the year-end to support the planned implementation of a new client database.



Investment Policy

Connection Support aims to maintain its free reserves in a way which ensures that (i) funds are accessible to support the liquidity of the organisation on a day-to-day basis, whilst also (ii) upholding the value of the organisational balance sheet against rising inflation in the longer term.

To achieve this, the trustees have established a multipronged approach:

- For the current 3-year strategic period, the trustees have planned investment of approximately £250,000 per year into organisational development. In the last two years, this has proved successful, yielding a return in diversified income streams and more robust risk management processes.
- To the extent that reserves are required to support the routine cashflow demands associated with local authority contract funding, funds are held in instant access bank and building society accounts.
- Funds which the Board have set aside to achieve longer term growth, are maintained in an investment fund, designed to return a rate of the Consumer Price Index + 2% over a ten-year period.

The Finance Subcommittee of the Board of Trustees review the performance of investments on a quarterly basis.



ACCOUNTS

Trustees responsibilities in relation to the Financial Statements

The directors of the charitable company, who are Trustees for the purposes of charity law, who served during the year and up to the date of this report are set out on page 19. Members of the charitable company guarantee to contribute an amount not exceeding £1 to the assets of the charitable company in the event of a winding up. The total number of such guarantees at 31 March 2022 was seven. The Trustees (who are also the directors of Connection Support for the purposes of Company Law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice). Company Law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period.

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

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charitable company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and which enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act and Companies Act 2006. They are responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In so far as the Trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditor is unaware; and
- the Trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information.

Appointment of auditors: Shaw Gibbs (Audit) Limited are recommended for re-appointment at the AGM under section 487(2) of the Companies Act 2006.

Approved by the Board and signed on its behalf by:



James Arnold
Chair of the Board of Trustees



INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF CONNECTION SUPPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Connection Support (the 'charity') for the year ended 31 March 2022 which comprise the statement of financial activities, the balance sheet, the statement of cash flows and notes to the financial statements, including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2022 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, 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 Companies Act 2006.

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 charity 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 trustee directors' 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 charity'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 trustee directors 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 trustee directors are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. 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 course of 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 this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. 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 Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 require us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the information given in the financial statements is inconsistent in any material respect with the trustee directors' report; or
- sufficient accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of Trustee Directors

As explained more fully in the statement of Trustee Directors' responsibilities, the Trustee Directors, who are also the directors of the Charity for the purpose of company law, are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Trustee Directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Trustee Directors are responsible for assessing the Charity'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 Trustee Directors either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.



Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditor under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and report in accordance with the Act and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

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.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is detailed below.

1. At the planning stage of the audit we gain an understanding of the laws and regulations which apply to the company and how the management seek to comply with those laws regulations. This helps us to plan appropriate risk assessments.
2. During the audit we focused on relevant risk areas and review the compliance with the laws and regulations by making relevant enquiries and undertaking corroboration, for example by reviewing Board Minutes and other documentation.
3. We assessed the risk of material misstatement in the financial statements including as a result of fraud and undertook procedures including:
 - a. Reviewing the controls set in place by management
 - a. Making enquiries of management as to whether they consider fraud or other irregularity may have taken place, or where such opportunity might exist
 - b. Challenging management assumptions with regard to accounting estimates
 - c. Identifying and testing journal entries, particularly those which appear to be unusual by size or nature

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

A further description of our responsibilities is available on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: <https://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities>. This description forms part of our auditor's report.



Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's trustees as a body, in accordance with Part 4 of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report or for the opinions we have formed.

Stephen Howard Neal (Senior Statutory Auditor)
For and on behalf of Shaw Gibbs (Audit) Limited

Chartered Certified Accountants
Statutory Auditor

264 Banbury Road
Oxford
Oxfordshire
OX2 7DY

Shaw Gibbs (Audit) Limited is eligible for appointment as auditor of the charity by virtue of its eligibility for appointment as auditor of a company under section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.



STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

| | Notes | Unrestricted Funds 2022 | Restricted Funds 2022 | Total Funds 2022 | Unrestricted funds 2021 | Restricted Funds 2021 | Total funds 2021 |
|--|-------|----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| | | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Income from: | | | | | | | |
| Voluntary income | 3 | 4,429 | 203,468 | 207,897 | 3,607 | 165,049 | 168,656 |
| Income from charitable activities: | | | | | | | |
| Service contract income | 4 | 6,353,178 | - | 6,353,178 | 5,353,805 | - | 5,353,805 |
| Accommodation income | 4 | 945,573 | - | 945,573 | | | |
| Bank interest & gain/(loss) on investments | 5 | (5,444) | - | (5,444) | 1,250 | - | 1,250 |
| Other income | 6 | - | - | - | 326,619 | 6,450 | 333,069 |
| Total income | | 7,297,736 | 203,468 | 7,501,204 | 5,685,281 | 171,499 | 5,856,780 |
| Expenditure on: | | | | | | | |
| Costs of raising funds | 7 | 53,088 | - | 53,088 | 18,094 | - | 18,094 |
| Costs of charitable activities: | | | | | 5,661,456 | 81,292 | 5,742,748 |
| Homelessness and housing | 8 | 3,763,306 | 144,646 | 3,907,952 | | | |
| Mental health | 8 | 1,060,291 | - | 1,060,291 | | | |
| Families & independence | 8 | 1,032,538 | - | 1,032,538 | | | |
| Young people | 8 | 904,800 | 30,074 | 934,874 | | | |
| Refugee and asylum seekers | 8 | 271,367 | 82,335 | 353,702 | | | |
| Total expenditure | 9 | 7,085,390 | 257,055 | 7,342,445 | 5,679,550 | 81,292 | 5,760,842 |
| Net income/(expenditure) and net movement in funds for the year | | 212,346 | (53,587) | 158,759 | 5,731 | 90,207 | 95,938 |
| Total funds brought forward | | 2,003,384 | 119,198 | 2,122,582 | 1,997,653 | 28,991 | 2,026,644 |
| Total funds carried forward | | 2,215,730 | 65,611 | 2,281,341 | 2,003,384 | 119,198 | 2,122,582 |

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses in the year and therefore a statement of total recognised gains and losses has not been prepared.

All of the above amounts relate to continuing activities.

The notes on pages 33 to 46 form part of these financial statements.

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2022

| | | 2022 | 2022 | 2021 | 2021 |
|---|-------|-----------|------------------|-----------|------------------|
| | | £ | £ | Restated | Restated |
| | Notes | | | £ | £ |
| Fixed assets | | | | | |
| Tangible Assets | 13 | | 392,245 | | 406,336 |
| Current assets | | | | | |
| Debtors | 14 | 1,206,183 | | 932,388 | |
| Cash at bank | | 964,003 | | 1,298,468 | |
| Global investments | | 241,577 | | - | |
| | | 2,411,763 | | 2,230,856 | |
| Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year | 15 | (522,667) | | (514,610) | |
| Total net current assets less current liabilities: | | | 1,889,096 | | 1,716,246 |
| Total net assets | | | 2,281,341 | | 2,122,582 |
| The funds of the charity: | | | | | |
| Restricted funds | 16 | | 65,611 | | 119,198 |
| Unrestricted funds: | | | | | |
| Designated funds | 16 | 106,600 | | 300,000 | |
| Unrestricted Income funds | 16 | 2,109,130 | | 1,703,384 | |
| | | | 2,215,730 | | 2,003,384 |
| Total charity funds | | | 2,281,341 | | 2,122,582 |

These financial statements were approved by the Board at their AGM on 3 November 2022 and are signed on its behalf by:



James Arnold
Chair of the Board of Trustees

The notes on pages 33 to 46 form part of these financial statements.

Company number: 03072719

Charity Number: 1049740



STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

| | Notes | 2022 £ | 2021 £ |
|--|-------|------------------|------------------|
| Cash used in operating activities | 17 | <u>(77,523)</u> | <u>54,077</u> |
| Cash flows from investing activities | | | |
| Interest income/(loss on investment activities) | 5 | (5,444) | 1,250 |
| Purchase of tangible fixed assets | 13 | (9,922) | (58,247) |
| Purchase of current asset investments | | (241,576) | |
| Cash provided by (used in) investing activities | | <u>(256,942)</u> | <u>(56,997)</u> |
| Cash flows from financing activities | | - | - |
| Cash used in financing activities | | <u>-</u> | <u>-</u> |
| Increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents in the year | | (334,465) | (2,920) |
| Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year | | 1,298,468 | 1,301,388 |
| Total cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year | | <u>964,003</u> | <u>1,298,468</u> |



NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

I. COMPANY STATUS

Connection Support is a company limited by guarantee incorporated in England and Wales.

The registered office is 213 Barns Road, Oxford, OX4 3UT.

The liability of each member is limited to £1 on a winding up of the company. The total number of such guarantees as at 31 March 2022 was seven.

2. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of accounting

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), the Charities Act 2011 and the Companies Act 2006.

Connection Support meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note(s).

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charity. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £1.

Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity.

Designated funds are unrestricted funds earmarked by the Board of Trustees for particular purposes.

Restricted funds are subjected to restrictions on their expenditure imposed by the donor or through the terms of a fundraising appeal.

Incoming resources

All incoming resources are included in the statement of financial activities when the charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy.

Income received by way of grants, donations and gifts is included in full in the Statement of Financial Activities when receivable. Grants, where entitlement is not conditional on the delivery of a specific performance by the charity, are recognised when the charity becomes unconditionally entitled to the grant.



Resources expended

Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category. Expenditure represents amounts invoiced, including value added tax which cannot be recovered.

Tangible Fixed assets

All assets costing more than £1,000 are capitalised.

Depreciation is recognised so as to write off the cost or valuation of assets less their residual values over their useful lives on the following bases:

| | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| Computer Equipment | 25% reducing balance |
| Equipment & Furnishings | 25% reducing balance |
| Buildings | 2% straight line |

When Connection Support furnishes a new unit of supported accommodation, set-up purchases are treated as a single asset and depreciated accordingly. This is intended to maintain consistency of practice with the depreciation on furniture and fittings claimed through Housing Benefit for supported accommodation.

The gain or loss arising on the disposal of an asset is determined as the difference between the sale proceeds and the carrying value of the asset, and is credited or charged to profit or loss.

Taxation

The Charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.

Pension costs

The charity operates a money purchase (defined contribution) pension scheme. Contributions payable to this scheme, or appropriate scheme of the employee's choice, are charged to the profit and loss account in the period to which they relate. These contributions are invested separately from the charity's assets. Pension arrangements are in line with auto-enrolment requirements.

Operating lease agreements

Rentals applicable to operating leases where substantially all of the benefits and risks of ownership remain with the lessor are charged against profits on a straight-line basis over the period of the lease.

Finance leases agreements

Finance leases are recorded as an asset on the balance sheet and as an obligation to pay future rentals. Rental payments are apportioned between the finance charge and a reduction of the outstanding obligation for future amounts payable. Assets capitalised under a finance lease are depreciated over the shorter of the lease term and its useful life.



Irrecoverable VAT

All resources expended are classified under activity headings that aggregate all costs related to the category. Irrecoverable VAT is charged against the category of resources expended in relation to which it was incurred.

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts.

Financial instruments

The charity has elected to apply the provisions of Section 11 'Basic Financial Instruments' and Section 12 'Other Financial Instruments Issues' of FRS 102 to all of its financial instruments.

Financial instruments are recognised when the charity becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Financial assets are offset, with the net amounts presented in the charity, when there is a legally enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously.

Prior year restatement

The funds held on behalf of clients which was offset against cash at bank in the prior year has been restated and shown separately as funds held on behalf of clients within creditors and the cash at bank balance increased as a result of this.

Going concern

At the time of approving the financial statements, the Trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus, the Trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.



3. VOLUNTARY INCOME

| | Unrestricted funds | Restricted funds | Total funds |
|--|-----------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| | 2022 | 2022 | 2022 |
| | £ | £ | £ |
| Donations | 4,429 | 20,102 | 24,531 |
| The Albert Hunt Trust | - | 5,000 | 5,000 |
| Heart of Bucks Community Foundation | - | 800 | 800 |
| The UK Ministry of Justice | - | 5,000 | 5,000 |
| Oxford Friends Action on Poverty (OXFAP) | - | 6,395 | 6,395 |
| Oxford Poverty Action Trust (OxPAT) | - | - | - |
| Oxfordshire Community Foundation | - | 78,240 | 78,240 |
| The Percy Bilton Charity | - | 500 | 500 |
| Red Kite Foundation | - | 7,001 | 7,001 |
| The Rothschild Foundation | - | 50,000 | 50,000 |
| Shanley Foundation | - | 2,500 | 2,500 |
| South Oxfordshire District Council- Covid transportation grant | - | 12,180 | 12,180 |
| Vale of White Horse District Council - Covid transportation grant | - | 13,750 | 13,750 |
| The Syder Foundation | - | 2,000 | 2,000 |
| Total | 4,429 | 203,468 | 207,897 |



4. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

| | Unrestricted | Restricted | Total Funds | Total Funds All Unrestricted |
|---|------------------|------------|------------------|------------------------------------|
| | 2022 | 2022 | 2022 | 2021 |
| | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Charitable income: service contracts | | | | |
| Buckinghamshire County Council | 1,838,911 | - | 1,838,911 | 1,583,829 |
| Central & <u>North West</u> London NHS Foundation Trust | 160,891 | - | 160,894 | |
| Cherwell District Council | 295,074 | - | 295,074 | 274,643 |
| Milton Keynes Council | 1,137,250 | - | 1,137,250 | 854,095 |
| Oxford City Council | 404,622 | - | 404,622 | 220,738 |
| Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust | 491,025 | - | 491,025 | 761,974 |
| Oxfordshire County Council | 1,580,603 | - | 1,580,603 | 1,102,404 |
| Oxfordshire Mind | 132,596 | - | 132,596 | - |
| South Oxfordshire District Council | 70,319 | - | 70,319 | 57,814 |
| South Staffs and Shrops Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust | 54,748 | - | 54,748 | 54,210 |
| Thames Valley Police | 21,286 | - | 21,286 | - |
| Vale of White Horse District Council | 70,577 | - | 70,577 | 57,729 |
| West Oxfordshire District Council | 28,022 | - | 28,022 | 8,022 |
| Income from other charitable activities | 67,254 | - | 67,254 | 378,347 |
| | 6,353,178 | - | 6,353,178 | 5,353,805 |
| Charitable income: housing | | | | |
| Housing income | 945,573 | - | 945,573 | 326,619 |
| Total charitable income | 7,298,751 | - | 7,298,751 | 5,680,424 |

5. INVESTMENT INCOME

| | Unrestricted | Restricted | Total Funds | Total Funds (All Unrestricted) |
|----------------------------|----------------|------------|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| | 2022 | 2022 | 2022 | 2021 |
| | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Bank interest | 446 | - | 446 | 1,250 |
| Gain/(loss) on investments | (5,890) | - | (5,890) | - |
| Total | (5,444) | - | (5,444) | 1,250 |



6. OTHER INCOME

| | Total 2022 £ | Unrestricted 2021 £ | Restricted 2021 £ | Total Funds 2021 £ |
|--------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Other income | - | 326,619 | 6,450 | 333,069 |

7. EXPENDITURE ON RAISING FUNDS

| | Unrestricted 2022 £ | Restricted 2022 £ | Total Funds 2022 £ | Total Funds (All Unrestricted) 2021 £ |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| Staff costs (see note 11) | 28,074 | - | 28,074 | - |
| Website & publicity | 25,014 | - | 25,014 | 18,094 |
| Total | 53,088 | - | 53,088 | 18,094 |



8. EXPENDITURE ON CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

| Unrestricted costs | Staff costs | Support costs | Housing costs | Direct client support | Total |
|----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| | Unrestricted 2022 | Unrestricted 2022 | Unrestricted 2022 | Unrestricted 2022 | Unrestricted 2022 |
| | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Homelessness and housing | 2,638,353 | 416,420 | 647,396 | 61,137 | 3,763,306 |
| Mental health | 863,125 | 153,041 | 40,496 | 3,629 | 1,060,291 |
| Families and independence | 888,144 | 144,327 | - | 67 | 1,032,538 |
| Young people | 546,909 | 67,551 | 287,958 | 2,382 | 904,800 |
| Refugee and asylum seekers | 213,994 | 45,402 | - | 11,971 | 271,367 |
| Total | 5,150,525 | 826,741 | 975,850 | 79,186 | 7,032,302 |

| Restricted costs | Staff costs | Support costs | Housing costs | Direct client support | Total |
|----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| | Restricted 2022 | Restricted 2022 | Restricted 2022 | Restricted 2022 | Restricted 2022 |
| | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Homelessness and housing | 40,165 | 21,216 | 23,982 | 59,283 | 144,646 |
| Mental health | - | - | - | - | - |
| Families and independence | - | - | - | - | - |
| Young people | - | - | 25,703 | 4,371 | 30,074 |
| Refugee and asylum seekers | 50,625 | 8,732 | - | 22,978 | 82,335 |
| Total | 90,790 | 29,948 | 49,685 | 86,632 | 257,055 |



8. EXPENDITURE ON CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES, CONTINUED

| | Staff costs | Support costs | Housing costs | Direct client support | |
|------------------------------------|------------------|----------------|------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Total charitable activities | Total | Total | Total | Total | Total |
| | 2022 | 2022 | 2022 | 2022 | 2022 |
| | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Homelessness and housing | 2,678,518 | 437,636 | 671,378 | 120,420 | 3,907,952 |
| Mental health | 863,125 | 153,041 | 40,496 | 3,629 | 1,060,291 |
| Families and independence | 888,144 | 144,327 | - | 67 | 1,032,538 |
| Young people | 546,909 | 67,551 | 313,661 | 6,753 | 934,874 |
| Refugee and asylum seekers | 264,619 | 54,134 | - | 34,949 | 353,702 |
| Total | 5,241,315 | 856,689 | 1,025,535 | 165,818 | 7,289,357 |
| Reference | Note 11 | Note 9 | | | |

| Prior year charitable activities: | Unrestricted | Restricted | Total Funds |
|--|------------------|---------------|------------------|
| | 2021 | 2021 | 2021 |
| | £ | £ | £ |
| Staff costs (see note 11) | 4,226,892 | - | 4,226,892 |
| Support costs (see note 9) | 840,120 | - | 840,120 |
| Direct client support | 68,956 | 81,292 | 150,248 |
| Housing costs | 525,488 | - | 525,488 |
| Total charitable activities | 5,661,456 | 81,292 | 5,742,748 |

9. SUPPORT COSTS

| | Unrestricted | Restricted | Total | Total |
|--|----------------|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| | 2022 | 2022 | 2022 | All Unrestricted |
| | £ | £ | £ | 2021 |
| | | | | £ |
| Travel and subsistence | 114,779 | 7,441 | 122,220 | 69,025 |
| Governance - audit fees (see note 10) | 9,708 | 60 | 9,768 | 6,016 |
| Office costs | 289,391 | 19,040 | 308,431 | 463,787 |
| Insurance | 26,598 | 385 | 26,983 | 23,327 |
| Consultancy and legal fees | 52,891 | 180 | 53,071 | 18,609 |
| IT and communications | 325,611 | 2,476 | 328,088 | 213,833 |
| Bank charges | 1,719 | 141 | 1,860 | 2,542 |
| Other costs | 6,042 | 225 | 6,267 | 42,981 |
| Total allocated to charitable expenditure | 826,739 | 29,948 | 856,687 | 840,120 |



10. NET OUTGOING/INCOMING RESOURCES FOR THE YEAR

This is stated after charging:

| | Unrestricted funds 2022 £ | Restricted funds 2022 £ | Total funds 2022 £ | Total funds All Unrestricted 2021 |
|--|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| Depreciation on buildings | 7,500 | - | 7,500 | 7,500 |
| Depreciation on property fixtures & fittings | 7,374 | - | 7,374 | 7,313 |
| Depreciation on office equipment | 8,337 | - | 8,337 | 15,980 |
| Loss on disposal of fixed assets | 802 | - | 802 | - |
| Auditor's remuneration | 9,708 | 60 | 9,768 | 6,016 |

11. STAFF COSTS

| | Charitable activities 2022 £ | Expenditure on Raising Funds 2022 £ | Total 2022 £ | Total 2021 £ |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|--------------------|--------------------|
| Wages | 4,705,867 | 25,355 | 4,731,222 | 3,815,212 |
| Social security costs | 328,242 | 2,083 | 330,325 | 277,039 |
| Employers Pension Contributions | 113,666 | 636 | 114,303 | 96,910 |
| Training | 61,889 | - | 61,889 | 29,924 |
| Recruitment | 31,650 | - | 31,650 | 7,807 |
| Total | 5,241,315 | 28,074 | 5,269,389 | 4,226,892 |

One employee of the company earned between £60,000 and £70,000 during the year ended 31 March 2022. All other employees earned less than £60,000. No employees earned over £60,000 during the year ended 31 March 2021.

The average number of employees during the period was 189 (2021 – 163). All employees are involved in the provision of the Company's objects.



12. COMMITMENTS UNDER OPERATING LEASES

| | Property 2022 £ | Office equipment 2022 £ | Total 2022 £ | Property 2021 £ | Office equipment 2021 £ | Total 2021 £ |
|---------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Within 1 year | 314,891 | 23,005 | 337,896 | 277,313 | - | 277,313 |
| Within 2 to 5 years | 72,380 | 23,005 | 95,385 | 263,236 | - | 263,236 |
| Total | 387,271 | 46,010 | 433,281 | 540,549 | - | 540,549 |

13. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

| | Computer Equipment £ | Office Equipment £ | Buildings £ | Total £ |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| COST | | | | |
| At 1 April 2021 | 101,266 | 128,447 | 375,000 | 604,713 |
| Additions | 2,364 | 7,558 | - | 9,922 |
| Disposals | - | (1,425) | - | (1,425) |
| At 31 March 2022 | 103,650 | 134,580 | 375,000 | 613,210 |
| DEPRECIATION | | | | |
| At 1 April 2021 | 69,368 | 106,509 | 22,500 | 198,377 |
| Charge for the year | 8,337 | 7,374 | 7,500 | 23,211 |
| Depreciation on disposals | - | (623) | - | (623) |
| At 31 March 2022 | 77,705 | 113,260 | 30,000 | 220,965 |
| NET BOOK VALUE | | | | |
| At 31 March 2022 | 25,925 | 21,320 | 345,000 | 392,245 |
| At 31 March 2021 | 31,898 | 21,938 | 352,500 | 406,336 |

14. DEBTORS

| | 2022 £ | 2021 £ |
|-------------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Grants due | 797,641 | 835,311 |
| Prepayments and other debtors | 125,328 | 61,394 |
| Housing income due | 283,214 | 35,683 |
| Total | 1,206,183 | 932,388 |



15. CREDITORS DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

| | 2022 | 2021 |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| | £ | £ |
| Taxation and social security | 94,688 | 82,380 |
| Employers pension contributions (note 19) | 21,066 | 17,990 |
| Deferred income: grants | 119,741 | 126,054 |
| Funds held on behalf of clients (note 18) | 14,987 | 21,171 |
| Accruals | 142,827 | 95,349 |
| Accounts payable and other creditors | 129,358 | 171,666 |
| Total | 522,667 | 514,610 |

16. STATEMENT OF FUNDS

| | Balance at 1 April 2021 | Incoming resources | Outgoing resources | Transfers | Balance as at 31 March 2022 |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------|-----------------------------------|
| | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Unrestricted funds | 1,703,384 | 7,297,736 | (7,085,390) | 193,400 | 2,109,130 |
| Contingency funds | 300,000 | - | - | (300,000) | - |
| Designated funds | - | - | - | 106,600 | 106,600 |
| Total | 2,003,384 | 7,297,736 | (7,085,390) | - | 2,215,730 |

The payroll contingency fund has been transferred to unrestricted reserves. Connection Support's Free Reserves Policy supports payroll contingencies by providing that unrestricted reserves will be maintained at a level equivalent to meet a minimum of three months' payroll and operational costs.

£106,600 funds have been designated to support planned development to IT systems, including the client support database, in the two financial years ahead.

Unrestricted funds at 31 March 2022 were represented as follows:

| | |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| Cash at bank and in hand | £ 903,947 |
| Debtors | 1,206,183 |
| Total | 2,109,130 |



16. STATEMENT OF FUNDS CONTINUED

| Restricted funds | Brought forward | Incoming resources | Resources expended | Transfers | Carried forward |
|---|------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Barclays Charities Trust | 71,404 | - | (71,404) | | - |
| Groundworks | 1,850 | - | (390) | (1,460) | - |
| Heart of Bucks - direct client support | 965 | 800 | (1,556) | (209) | - |
| Ministry of Justice - ex-offender project | - | 5,000 | (1,195) | | 3,805 |
| Oxford Friends Action on Poverty | 1,500 | - | (294) | | 1,206 |
| Oxford Poverty Action Trust (OxPAT) | 1,610 | 6,395 | (3,887) | | 4,118 |
| Oxfordshire Homeless Movement & Oxfordshire Community Foundation - Supporting clients with no recourse to public funds in Oxfordshire | - | 78,240 | (74,033) | | 4,207 |
| The Albert Hunt Trust: supporting clients in Buckinghamshire | - | 5,000 | (5,000) | | - |
| The Percy Bilton Charity: young people's supported accommodation | - | 500 | (500) | | - |
| The Red Kite Foundation - ex-offenders' project | - | 7,001 | - | | 7,001 |
| Rothschild Foundation: projects to support clients in Buckinghamshire | 4,129 | 50,000 | (50,919) | | 3,210 |
| Shanley Foundation: supporting clients with no recourse to public funds | 80 | 2,500 | (2,580) | | - |
| South Oxfordshire District Council - Covid transportation | - | 12,180 | (12,1810) | | - |
| Syder Foundation - project for client rehabilitation | - | 2,000 | (434) | | 1,566 |
| Thomas Hickman Charity - support for clients in Aylesbury | 3,341 | - | (2,115) | | 1,226 |
| Vale of White Horse District Council - Covid transportation | - | 13,750 | (13,750) | | - |
| Donations for client welfare | 13,951 | 9,485 | (10,826) | | 12,610 |
| Donations for Oxfordshire Homeless Pathway clients | 51 | 1,423 | (232) | | 1,242 |
| Donations for refugees in Banbury | - | 300 | - | | 300 |
| Donations for rough sleeper outreach in Oxfordshire | 5,983 | 400 | - | | 6,383 |
| Donations for client welfare in Buckinghamshire | 123 | 521 | (644) | 1,669 | 1,669 |
| Donations for rough sleeper outreach in Buckinghamshire | 90 | - | (90) | | - |
| Donations for the welfare of young people in Padstones supported accommodation, Buckinghamshire | 14,121 | 7,973 | (5,025) | | 17,069 |
| Total | 119,198 | 203,468 | (257,054) | - | 65,612 |



17. CASH GENERATED FROM OPERATIONS

| | 2022 | 2021 |
|---|-----------------|---------------|
| | £ | £ |
| Net movement in funds | 158,759 | 95,938 |
| Add back: loss on disposal of fixed assets | 802 | - |
| Add back: depreciation charge | 23,210 | 30,793 |
| Add back net investments costs/(deduct) interest income shown in investing activities | 5,444 | (1,250) |
| Decrease (increase) in debtors | (273,795) | (183,156) |
| Increase (decrease) in creditors | 8,057 | 111,752 |
| Net cash used in operating activities | (77,523) | 54,077 |

18. FUNDS RECEIVED AS AGENT FOR CLIENTS

Connection receives grant monies as agent on behalf of clients who do not have their own bank accounts.

| | 2022 | 2021 |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|
| | £ | £ |
| <u>At 1 April 2021/2020</u> | 21,171 | 26,678 |
| Adjustment to prior year balance – grant repayments made to donors | (2,350) | - |
| Historical balances repaid or transferred to support client welfare in the year | (9,485) | - |
| Receipt of client funds | 43,731 | 40,735 |
| Payment of client funds | (38,080) | (46,242) |
| <u>At 31 March 2022 / 2021</u> | <u>14,987</u> | <u>21,171</u> |

19. PENSIONS

| | 2022 | 2021 |
|--|----------|--------|
| | £ | £ |
| Charge to the statement of financial activities in respect of defined contribution schemes | £114,303 | 96,910 |

Connection Support operates a defined contribution pension scheme for all qualifying members. Contributions payable to this scheme, or appropriate scheme of the employee's choice, are charged to the profit and loss accounts in the period to which they relate. These contributions are invested separately from the charity's assets. Pension arrangements are in line with auto-enrolment requirements.

At the year-end 31 March 2022 the amounts payable to pension schemes totalled £21,066.



20. TRUSTEE REMUNERATION, KEY MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL & RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

No member of the Board of Trustees received any remuneration during the year.

The charity Trustees were not paid or received any other benefits from employment with the charity in the year (2021: nil). No Trustees were reimbursed for travel expenses during the year (2021: nil). No Trustee received payment for professional or other services supplied to the charity (2021: nil).

The key management personnel of the charity comprise the Trustees, the Chief Executive Officer and the two Deputy Chief Executive Officers. The total employee benefits of the key management personnel were £181,715 (2021: Chief Executive Officer and one Deputy Chief Executive Officer, £101,416).

No Trustee or other person related to the charity had any personal interest in any contract or transaction entered into by the charity during the year.



APPENDIX - Overview of Services

HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING

1. **Adult Homeless Pathway (Oxfordshire)** - Providing accommodation and support to single homeless people over the age of 18 across North Oxfordshire, West Oxfordshire, and Oxford City. We have 83 rooms in a mixture of shared houses in Oxford, Witney, and Banbury in which we can support clients for 6-9 months to help them build skills and move onto long-term independent living and a further six properties which provide additional transitional accommodation for a year, for those moving on from the Pathway.
2. **Supported Lettings (Oxford City)** - We work with clients when they move into social housing for the duration of their 12-month probationary period of their tenancies. This is specifically for clients who would, without our interventions, be considered unsuitable for social housing. We help them with all aspects of tenancy sustainment, for example, utilities set-up, social inclusion, change of benefits, change of GP, mental/physical health or substance misuse.
3. **Embedded Housing Workers (Oxfordshire)** - EHWs are located at hospitals across Oxfordshire to reduce the number of patients who have extended stays in hospital because, although they are medically well enough to go home, they either have no housing provision at all, or there are barriers to them returning to their own accommodation. The work with medical teams to reduce the number of patients discharged with no housing provision in place and prevent repeat admission of rough sleepers. They ensure presentations to local housing authorities are done in a managed way, identify and understand patients' housing issues to enable a successful discharge, and monitor and report on outcomes.
4. **Housing First (Milton Keynes)** - An evidence-based approach that puts the provision of an independent home first, followed by personalised support, to enable individuals with a history of entrenched or repeat homelessness to begin recovery. Research shows that through this approach residents are 70-90% more likely to remain housed. Working with Milton Keynes Council, who provide the accommodation, our 'Housing First' service supports adults over the age of 18 who have been rough sleeping in Milton Keynes and have a local connection to the area.
5. **Housing First (Oxfordshire)** - Housing First Oxfordshire provides a home and intensive support to former rough sleepers during their journey from rough sleeping to a more settled lifestyle within their own home and to improve their health and wellbeing.
6. **Housing Support Service (Oxfordshire)** - Connection Support has been running the Housing Support Service in Oxfordshire since its foundation in 1995. The service is delivered by floating support workers, using a person-centred approach, to enable clients who are at risk of homelessness to maintain their tenancies and access services to avoid entering the homeless pathway. The team support and equip clients with the tools to manage their money, navigate benefits, be independent and avoid homelessness.



7. Next Steps Accommodation (Milton Keynes) - Next Steps Accommodation placements are for people identified with low-level support needs who have previously been homeless and require support and interventions to sustain a tenancy. Clients can live in the accommodation for a fixed-term period of three years. After the fixed period clients are supported to access alternative properties and we secure long-term accommodation for people who are identified as ready to move on.

8. One Recovery Bucks (Buckinghamshire) - ORB provides support into rented accommodation for people over the age of 18 who are doing well in their recovery from drug or alcohol addiction (they must have abstained for at least 3 months). Pre-tenancy support is provided, alongside guidance on sustaining a tenancy and help with budgeting, accessing benefits, paying bills, training opportunities and employment. We have a total of 20 flats across the county.

9. Orchard House (Milton Keynes) - Supported accommodation for vulnerable homeless single people with medium to high mental health needs. There is 24/7 support on site and they also have one-to-one key workers to help them prepare to move on to a more independent lifestyle and an improved quality of life.

10. Reset (Buckinghamshire) - Support for ex-offenders to access accommodation and make positive life choices to reduce the risk of them reoffending and returning to prison. The team provides support with finding accommodation, tenancy sustainment, accessing benefits, training, education, and employment opportunities, help with physical or mental health issues or substance abuse.

11. Rough Sleeper Outreach and Rough Sleeper Initiative (Buckinghamshire) - Our Rough Sleeper Outreach Service enables rough sleepers to build a better future beyond street life. We support people living on the streets of Buckinghamshire to find more settled accommodation and receive the benefits they are entitled to. We enable them to access health, addiction, and other support services relevant to their individual needs. The Rough Sleeper Initiative has twenty-one emergency beds available for rough sleepers and support to enable them to move on successfully. This service also has a tenancy sustainment element, which provides life tools and support to rough sleepers in Buckinghamshire, so they can live independently in their own rented home. We help clients manage their money – rental payments, bills, budgeting, access to benefits, training, routes to employment, and access support for mental and physical health issues.

12. Rough Sleeper Outreach (Oxfordshire) - Our Outreach service in Oxfordshire helps people who are sleeping rough to find settled accommodation. Support workers also help them access health and mental health services, drug, and alcohol support services, and receive the benefits they are entitled to.



13. Step Down Housing (Oxfordshire) - Short-term housing for vulnerable patients who are medically ready to be discharged from the Oxfordshire University or Oxfordshire Foundation Trust Hospitals but lack suitable accommodation to continue their recovery. This includes people who are homeless, have a history of drug/alcohol misuse, people who have no recourse to public funds or issues with their immigration status, those fleeing domestic violence, or people with mobility issues. We appoint Embedded Housing Workers (EHWs) into the hospitals to upskill medical staff and social workers about the complexities of housing these patients.

14. South and Vale Floating Support and Winter Night Shelter - Our support workers are embedded alongside housing officers to support clients placed within temp accommodation to move on to more settled accommodation and provide resettlement for the initial weeks of their new tenancies. (This service also covers a Winter Night Shelter provision for rough sleepers within South and Vale, although this has only been held once due to COVID.

15. Tenancy Ready (Oxfordshire) - Run in connection with Oxford City Council, this project helps new tenants to understand what the expectations are around managing and sustaining a tenancy either through social housing or the private sector.

FAMILIES AND INDEPENDENCE

16. Boost Parenting Advice & Support (Buckinghamshire) - Boost provides support, motivation, encouragement, and advice to parents living in Buckinghamshire to take steps towards creating a more stable and positive environment in which their children can thrive.

17. Direct Payment Support Services (Milton Keynes) - In some circumstances, social or health care users can be given money in the form of a Direct Payment from their local authority to commission their own services which enables disabled people to tailor their own care arrangements to suit their unique circumstances and lifestyle. Where local authorities may tend to offer, for example access to a day centre, individuals might prefer to meet friends for lunch, to go fishing, or attend a local gym, but need support to do so. This service supports the person to employ a carer or personal assistant directly by helping to find suitably qualified employees, providing comprehensive employment advice and offering a Payroll Service to process payslips and administer HMRC responsibilities on the employer's behalf.

18. Family Solutions Plus (Oxfordshire) - Support for parents and carers who experience mental health issues that then impact the home environment for their children to the extent that they are under a plan with social services. In partnership with Oxfordshire Mind and Elmore Community Services, clients are offered up to six individual sessions with adult facing practitioners embedded in social care teams. These mental health workers provide tools to help parents learn how to manage their mental health better in order to stabilise their environment and ultimately prevent the need for their children to be placed into the care system.



19. Prevention Matters (Buckinghamshire) - Prevention Matters supports people over the age of 18 who are struggling to remain independent in their own house, having difficulty getting out and about, recovering from an illness or feeling lonely, isolated or anxious. The support workers help them to regain their confidence and maintain their independence.

MENTAL HEALTH

20. Acute Hospital Discharge, Acute Admissions Avoidance Service and Blessings (Milton Keynes) - Supporting clients who have been admitted into the acute mental health wards and supporting them back into the community and to sustain their tenancy.

21. Mental Health Intensive Support Service (Oxfordshire) - Support for up to five people with the highest and most complex mental health needs and who have not succeeded at independent living in the past. This client group have a history of street homelessness and require intensive support to gain the most basic life skills to enable them to adapt to living indoors, set up home and maintain a tenancy.

22. Mental Health Support Service (Oxfordshire) - As part of the Oxfordshire Mental Health Partnership we provide focused support for between 6 months to 2 years to help people with severe and enduring mental health issues move forward. Offering support around housing, benefits and social inclusion, this supports recovery and enables the clients to live more independently. Some of the team are embedded in the Adult Mental Health Teams to identify and support those patients who present with housing needs straight away.

23. Mental Health Support Service (Milton Keynes) - We offer housing related-support to help clients with mental health needs to avoid homelessness or to sustain a tenancy and maintain their independence. It's a flexible service, which will meet with clients in the local community or in their home. Support moves with them wherever they go and the service complements and works in partnership with any statutory or voluntary agency where our support cannot wholly meet the needs of the individual. 'Windrush' is also part of this service – independent supported accommodation for clients with Autism.

24. Out of Hospital (Oxfordshire) - Our specialist support workers partner with a multi-disciplinary team of psychiatrists, social workers, and housing officers to support people with complex mental health who are homeless (or at risk of homelessness). They work to help people to move on from hospital to settled accommodation and prevent them returning to hospital in the future by solving housing and other linked issues to give them increased stability.

25. Rise and Shine (Oxfordshire) - The Rise & Shine service operates in partnership with Elmore Community Services. It provides targeted support for up to six months to help people to recover from mental health problems many of which were made worse as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. We work alongside clients to provide short-term interventions to help improve mental well-being and enable recovery, build up their confidence and improve self-esteem.



26. SafeHaven+ (Buckinghamshire) - Working alongside Buckinghamshire Mind, Citizens Advice, Oasis Partnership and Adult Mental Health Teams this service provides support to adults with mental health issues and potentially complex needs. The project as a whole aims to avoid crisis and admission to hospital and improve overall mental health and wellbeing and Connection Support's role is to provide intensive support specifically relating to housing.

REFUGEES AND ASYLUM-SEEKERS

27. Refugee Resettlement Support (Oxfordshire) - This service is for refugees resettling in the UK as part of Central Government's UK Resettlement Scheme. The families supported live in the South and Vale and the Cherwell District areas of Oxfordshire and we provide a range of emotional and practical support to help the families settle into everyday life. The team supports families from Syria, Iraq and Sudan to manage the transition from living in camps and unsettled accommodation to making a home in Oxfordshire, and helps them to adapt to different social norms legal frameworks. We work with them through the whole process from airport pick up to the point they can live independently and manage their tenancy without the need for support. The team connects the families to health services and mental health support, schools, English language classes, employment opportunities and local community groups. Working alongside volunteers they also provide information about culture and life in Britain to enable them to make those steps towards living a settled life in the UK.

28. No Recourse to Public Funds (Buckinghamshire) - Providing support to people experiencing homelessness in Buckinghamshire who do not have access to state-funded benefits and housing. People in this situation are often not allowed to work, neither are they eligible for benefits, nor allowed to use public services except for basic health care. This leaves them at high risk of abuse and exploitation. The aim is to help this group of people move on from the trauma of homelessness, by offering them dignified accommodation, whilst they receive help and advice to resolve any legal matters and help them to get their lives back on track.

29. No Recourse to Public Funds (Oxfordshire) - Helping people experiencing homelessness in Oxfordshire who have lost or don't have access to state-funded benefits and housing. This project is funded by the Oxfordshire Homeless Movement, and the aim is to provide tailored support to allow these people to become self-sufficient and take practical steps to rebuild their lives. We work in partnership with Aspire and Asylum Welcome to help this group of people move on from the trauma of homelessness. Working with local housing association SOHA and Edge Housing, we can offer these clients dignified accommodation, whilst they receive help and advice to resolve any legal matters and help them to get their lives back on track.



YOUNG PEOPLE

30. Housing Interaction Trust (Buckinghamshire) - We have twelve units of accommodation specifically for young people to support those who have nowhere else to go. We support the young people to develop general household skills, budget and manage their finances, maintain personal health, prepare for independent accommodation and manage individual personal and emotional matters.

31. Padstones Supported Accommodation (Buckinghamshire) - Padstones prevents young people (aged 16-25 years) becoming homeless by providing accommodation along with 24/7 support. The team empower young people and develop their resilience, skills and knowledge to prevent the risk of homelessness arising again. It provides a safe and secure environment for residents to develop their potential and move towards more independent living. Accommodation is in two small residential projects in Burnham and High Wycombe, which are staffed 24 hours a day and young people also have a key worker for one-to-one support. For young people ready to move on from the higher support units, Padstones offers other accommodation with lower-level support. This stage is to prepare the young person further towards being completely independent. A Floating Support Worker is available to assist when the time comes to move on.

32. Young People's Supported Accommodation (Buckinghamshire) - YPSA provides supported accommodation in Buckinghamshire and South Oxfordshire for young people (aged 16-25 years) leaving care. Young people referred to us by Oxfordshire County Council are provided with their own accommodation and regular visits from a Support Worker to help them gain confidence in living independently.

