

Annual Report and Accounts

For the
year ended
31 March 2017



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SeeAbility's Chairman and Chief Executive

An introduction to our Annual Report



This has been an exciting year for SeeAbility in which our positive impact on those we support has continued to grow.

When we embarked on our five-year strategy in 2013, we knew it was ambitious and that the social care environment would continue to be challenging. Looking back there can be no question it has been a resounding success. SeeAbility has gone from strength-to-strength as showcased in this report. With the recent opening of our new Buckinghamshire Support Service in Aylesbury we now provide specialist care and support to 236 people in our direct services. We also reach thousands more through our information and advisory services.

I am very proud to report that SeeAbility has maintained its 100% compliance record with Care Quality Commission inspections achieving ratings of both 'Good' and 'Outstanding'. The charity has remained true to its specialism of supporting people with a combination of sight loss, learning and other disabilities and continues to invest in new and innovative services to enable them to achieve their aspirations.

We continue to promote the rights of the million people with learning disabilities to receive the eye care they desperately need. At our parliamentary event last year we trained almost a thousand people with learning disabilities and their supporters on the importance of good eye care (see page 16).

Through our ground-breaking Children in Focus Campaign we are now recognised as 'the' catalyst for change in eye care and testing for children in special schools; we have now provided specialist sight tests to almost 1,000 children at nine schools (see page 17).

With the arrival of our new Chief Executive, Lisa Hopkins, in September 2016, it was timely to review our strategy. Lisa's passion to be aspirational in the outcomes for people with disabilities led to a review that has been an exercise in 'inclusion'. A wide-ranging consultation process ensured the engagement of those we support, their families and advocates, their clinical teams, our Trustees, our wonderful employees and others. Our new five-year strategy (see pages 6 and 7) takes effect from summer 2017 and continues to be ambitious for the charity.

During the last year, we strengthened our senior leadership and wider management teams by new appointments bringing excellent experience and fresh ideas. Alongside this we carefully monitored our finances in a tough operating environment and I am pleased to report the charity remains in strong financial health.

To deliver our new strategy, people made it clear we needed to raise our profile to better share our specialist know-how. Today, SeeAbility is a well-kept secret, well-loved by those who know us but undiscovered by too many who need our support and resources. This is why we need a strong brand to help us get our message out, diversify our income streams and generate greater public support to help us achieve long-term success. A programme is currently underway to refresh our brand and visual identity, as well as to improve access to our online information and resources.

Across the organisation, we are preparing our systems and processes for the introduction of new data protection regulations in 2018.

Our objective is not only to comply but to give everyone we support and those who donate or campaign with us, total confidence in the way we handle their personal information and in our fundraising activities.

I want to record my thanks to Glen von Malachowski who stood down as a Trustee during the year and to welcome Rona Nicholson and Deborah Hale who were co-opted as Trustees in 2017. I am also very pleased that Gordon Illet agreed to become our new Vice-Chairman. His wide experience of the sector will be invaluable to the organisation. On a note of sadness, John Wood passed away in May 2016 and will be greatly missed.

Lastly, I want to record my thanks to our wonderful employees and volunteers. They add so much value to our services and we are grateful to every one of them for everything they do for those we support.

James Deeley
Chairman



I am in awe of this charity's extraordinary heritage dating back over two hundred years. But I am equally excited about the prospects for SeeAbility and what we could be doing in five years time.

The work I have seen in action has been so impressive and I have been moved by stories of how so many people really do go the extra mile for their SeeAbility colleagues and the people we support.

We have been working extremely hard on our new five-year strategy and it has been co-produced involving the whole organisation. I was delighted that so many people took the time to contribute to the next chapter of SeeAbility's history.

In a survey we conducted, 77% strongly agreed that SeeAbility should be better known for what we do.

The work we are doing to update our brand will help us, but so will recognition in the form of awards. I was really proud of our Association of Optometrists Charity of the Year nomination and Ned Saunders' Optician of the Year award.

I am certain that there is plenty more success and achievement ahead of us.

Lisa Hopkins
Chief Executive

We're moving forward

SeeAbility 2022

We have co-produced our new strategy with the people we support and their families, donors and supporters, staff, volunteers, commissioners and others involved in SeeAbility.

Trustees and senior management team refined the strategy and tested assumptions at a series of away days over 2016/17.

People enthusiastically responded to the engagement process and sent in hundreds of ideas and suggestions. These ideas were further refined and tested with various stakeholders at all levels - both inside and outside our organisation. The final strategy was signed off by Trustees in summer 2017.

Our new brand is being developed to support the delivery of our new five-year organisational strategy and the core idea is 'extraordinary every day'.

We want to show SeeAbility as a confident, contemporary and relevant charity that has been continuously innovating and challenging perceptions for over 200 years.

Vision

Our vision is for inclusive communities where people with sight loss, autism, and learning disabilities participate as equal citizens.

Mission

We champion and deliver ambitious support and preventative services alongside people with learning disabilities, autism, and sight loss, enabling them to realise their goals each and every day.

We will have four key values that drive our work

We are Brave

We believe in being different. We seek new ways of working, thinking and ideas. We want to be extraordinary.

We are Passionate

We want to make a difference. We work as a team to improve for the greater good, not only for the people we support but for our team and SeeAbility as a whole. We are completely committed to each others' successes.

We are Creative

We are enablers. We create solutions by thinking and acting differently. We break down barriers. We don't see rules as boxing us in, but as norms that evolve with us on our way to being the best.

We do what is right

We lead by doing the right thing. We are dependable and believe in delivering on commitments and using sound judgement and common sense to determine what is right.

The new strategy is made up of five key pillars that will underpin our work over the next five years

Sustainability

We invest in our organisation to ensure we are current and relevant by effectively meeting the needs of more people who would most benefit from our work.



Quality

We support people to achieve their goals by ensuring we use our specialist skills and resources effectively.

People we support are involved in organisational decision making.



Influencing

We ensure that everyone with a learning disability and autism, and those that support and work with them, are aware of the prevalence of sight problems, associated concerns, their rights and are able to access practical support when needed.



Partnerships

We strengthen the impact of organisations and individuals who help us achieve our objectives.



Talent

We recognise the contribution of our colleagues and achieve more using each others skills, values, and commitment.



Spreading the word and raising money for our work across the country.

Growing supporters and funds

Our Fundraising Highlights

Thank you to all of our incredible individual, trust, organisational and corporate supporters, who donated, gave grants, painted, cheered and baked for SeeAbility over the past year. All your fundraising efforts brought in a record £1.63m this year towards our vital charitable work for people with sight loss and multiple disabilities.

[52 amazing people](#) raised over £75,000 by taking part in the Virgin Money London Marathon and Prudential RideLondon events, including a team of 13 cyclists from Rutland Partners.

[Our generous supporters](#) raised £56,000 for our Children in Focus Campaign thanks to The Big Give Christmas challenge. Our sponsor, Candis Club, helped us to the total by helping to match half the funds.

[Our kind regular supporters](#) donated £385,000 through payroll giving, direct debits or by playing the SeeAbility Lottery.

[Gifts in Wills](#) continued to have huge impact for our beneficiaries with income of over £432,000. Every gift in a Will, large or small, makes a direct contribution to our vital charitable work.

[Our sincere thanks to SeeAbility supporter Roger Jefcoate](#) for his invaluable help in welcoming local trusts and community representatives to our new Aylesbury building raising over £40,000.



SeeAbility's Fundraising Promise

We aim to operate to the highest standards within our fundraising teams and in all our charitable work.

We do not share, sell, rent or lease your information with other organisations for marketing purposes.

We will always respect your wishes and treat you openly and honestly, with courtesy and respect.

Local government statutory funding meets the essential needs of people in our care but it is our fundraised income that enables us to really enrich people's lives.



Excellent personalised services

Goal One

Our commitment to specialist services is stronger than ever.

We are extremely proud that we continue to have one of the highest compliance levels in social care. Every single one of our services inspected by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) has achieved an overall 'Good' rating and with one rated 'Outstanding'.

Developing specialist services

Our team has grown and we have recruited for two key positions. Brian Robinson joined as Director of Operations with a strong background in providing specialist services for people with learning disabilities and autism. He is particularly passionate about finding creative solutions to help people live the life they choose.

Lois Tozer has been recruited as Head of Specialist Services and has a wealth of knowledge and experience in social care. As a Positive Behaviour Support practitioner she will lead our experienced in-house specialist services team of rehabilitation workers, speech and language therapists, and physiotherapists. They work closely with our support teams to get to know people and develop relationships that result in personalised care and support.

We work every day to enable people to grow in confidence, manage their health and wellbeing, and lead more independent and fulfilling lives. In the last year we responded to 620 skills development and therapy referrals. Our team of speech and language therapists support people with communication difficulties and give practical advice for people who have difficulty eating, drinking and/or swallowing (dysphagia). It's so important everyone safely enjoys their meals.

Positive Behaviour Support (PBS)

Almost all behaviour is learnt and behaviour that is challenging to support is no different. We believe challenging behaviour is a form of communication. Understanding the reasons why people display challenging behaviour can help us change what they do. We can reduce challenges for the people we support through a combination of working with the person, their family, friends and the team that knows them best.

We carry out functional assessments and then develop a PBS plan before training the staff team to support the person in line with the assessment. By making small changes to the physical environment or the way support is offered, we can help people take more control of their lives. Our aim is to help people to do what they want to do and get the most out of life while keeping the person safe.

Making it Real

We continue to achieve the Making it Real kitemark for all of our services, with iStatements developed with each person we support. We give people complete control and choice on how they want us to support them and how they live their lives. This is recognition of best practice for creating personalised care and support.

Gabby's nomination

Gabby lives in her own flat in Eastleigh. She receives regular advice from her support workers and relishes her new-found independence. She's able to go out whenever she wants, particularly to go shopping! She cooks for herself and enjoys having people over and entertaining her guests using a range of assistive technology. Gabby has been so pleased with her support that she nominated her support team for a SeeAbility Excellence Award. They won Team of the Year at the 2016 AGM.

More specialist support and accommodation

Goal Two

2016/2017 saw a new supported living service open and another relocated.

We opened a new building in Buckinghamshire in February 2017 which will support 14 people in a purpose-built Aylesbury-based service. It is our first direct service north of the M4 corridor and a whole support team has been recruited by building awareness in a new area for SeeAbility.

In Kent we successfully moved to a new house in Maidstone, better placed to support the six young women who live there. The new house is slightly further out from the centre of town but has a large garden and the ladies are fundraising to build a summerhouse. Read more about their fabulous stories on page 12.

This summer we open a new supported living service in Aldershot and relocate our Fleet-based Fairways Residential Home to the same building. Overall we will be supporting five additional people. While everyone from Fairways is moving to Aldershot, it's wonderful that two people are transferring to more independent living at the new support service.

Supporting more people

SeeAbility supports 236 people in our residential homes, supported living and outreach services, and activity and resource centres. We welcomed 29 people with sight loss and multiple disabilities into our direct services.

MP visits

Over the past year we have received visits from three MPs local to our services, who welcomed the chance to find out more about the challenges that face people with sight loss and multiple disabilities in their constituencies.

Mole Valley MP, Sir Paul Beresford, visited our Leatherhead services, while Neil Parish, MP for Tiverton and Honiton, visited Devon Support Service. We also welcomed Anne Milton, MP for Guildford, to our Denecroft Residential Home, ending with a tour of its new sensory garden.

Guildford sensory garden

The 'Guildford in Bloom' award-winning sensory garden at Denecroft Residential Home was made possible thanks to many hours of hard work by various volunteers, including teams of staff from the University of Surrey on Community Activity Days - hosted by the people we support in Guildford on a regular basis for local businesses.

The garden offers a relaxing space for people with sight loss and multiple disabilities to enjoy, including bright colours, floral scents and a water feature.

Goal One: Excellent personalised services

Kent Support Service

Leaving college and moving into a shared house with friends is the dream of many young adults. SeeAbility made this aspiration a reality for a group of young women with learning disabilities, autism and sight loss who met at Dorton College in Sevenoaks. In 2013, they moved into a house near the centre of Maidstone, Kent.

Earlier this year, they moved to a new property. They now have a wonderful large garden and conservatory.

Kayleigh says: "I don't mind being further from town because I have a bus pass. I go to yoga classes only ten minutes walk away. The staff have been brilliant at supporting me to learn the poses." Kayleigh has Alström syndrome, a rare degenerative genetic illness that causes sight and hearing loss, high blood pressure and type 2 diabetes. The team have reversed her diabetes with a healthy eating plan. "All the staff are wonderful but my keyworker, Karen, goes above and beyond."

"The best thing about living at home is having my own base. I need my space, but I like being with the others sometimes," explains Laura who enjoys her loft room decorated with her favourite elephants.

Lucy (pictured below and front cover) went to college in the south west of England.

The support team helps all the young women with their particular health needs and Lucy needed corneal transplants to help her sight when her keratoconus progressed. "I was really scared but Scott Watkin (*see pages 18–19*) came to see me and really helped as he has been through the same operation." Lucy knows she needs another eye operation to have a cataract removed but feels more relaxed this time around.





Last year Grace had a bad reaction to anaesthetic for a tooth extraction and was seriously ill in hospital for weeks. "I was really weak afterwards and quite emotional. I didn't want to do anything on my own. But Claire and the team supported me to get my confidence and my strength back."

Grace, along with Lucy and Charlotte, is no stranger to public speaking: "Recently I spoke about the importance of good eye care for people with learning disabilities at a conference and last year we spoke to students at Greenwich University. I like speaking though I am a little nervous before I get going."

Laura leads a busy life and works at a sensory garden along with 'Tuck by Truck' with Lucy and Becky, an enterprise that delivers self-service snack trays and offers work to people with learning disabilities and autism. Charlotte works at a special school on the other side of Kent. Every Wednesday in term time, she is up at 6am and on her first bus by 7.20am. She has now gained the confidence to travel the two-hour journey solo both ways. No small achievement for someone with a rare condition called Bardot-Biedl syndrome, but Charlotte is very determined. "I always wanted to work with little children in a special school. But I had to write a lot of letters before I found one to give me a chance."

For Becky, being able to go to the supermarket on her own has been a personal challenge that took time, persistence and specialist support from Deanne, one of SeeAbility's rehabilitation workers.

It can take many months before someone gains the skills and confidence to embark on solo journeys. "If anyone had said a year or two ago that I would be able to take two buses and a train on my own I would have laughed," says Charlotte. "It has been really hard and I was scared, but I feel so proud that I have achieved this."

The women will be climbing the O2 Arena in a bid to raise funds for a new summerhouse. It will be used as a sensory room for them to relax in. "I am determined but scared too. I think it's a good thing I won't be able to look down!" laughs Kayleigh.

Charlotte says: "One day I would like to move into my own flat – still supported by SeeAbility. That's my ambition; it's an exciting idea but maybe a bit overwhelming too."

Goal Two: More specialist support and accommodation

Heather House



Heather House is a remarkable residential nursing home for people with life-limiting conditions and complex health needs, particularly young people with the rare disease CLN3 or juvenile Batten disease. There is currently no cure.

‘Batten disease’ covers several different genetic neurodegenerative diseases. The Batten Disease Family Association (BDFA) estimate between 11 to 17 children and young adults are diagnosed with CLN3 each year with around 100–150 individuals living with Batten disease in the U.K.

Since opening in 1999 in Tadley, Hampshire, Heather House has supported 28 young adults with this rare and devastating disease and nine people are currently enjoying their lives there. Sadly 19 have lived and died with SeeAbility – giving a lasting legacy of the knowledge, skills and passion which the team use daily to face the ‘battle with Batten’ head on and hand-in-hand with them and their families.

Registered Manager, Sarah Kenrick, has led the team for over 18 years and has over 26 years experience with CLN3. That experience has been vital as the team research, develop and adapt their support.

There is no other service like this in the U.K and SeeAbility is considered a world-leader, often called on for advice in the management and treatment of CLN3.

People tend to move into Heather House between the ages of 16 and 18 and the average length of life after that is over seven years – between three and four years longer than in other countries.

Sarah believes it is down to the calm and peaceful atmosphere: “Young people with CLN3 can have an increased number of seizures when they are stressed. We enable people to be more relaxed because it is so tranquil here.”

CLN3 slowly takes people's functions away and SeeAbility's specialist support is vital to maintaining a good life for as long as possible. One of SeeAbility's speech and language therapists is a familiar visitor so people feel safe and their ability to eat and drink is maintained into the very late stages of the disease. Communication is harder to maintain as speech is significantly affected however technology and click switches enable people to have a voice.

Physiotherapy is absolutely essential enabling people to stay well for longer. The focus is on maintaining core strength so the person retains skills for longer. Having full-time therapists and hydrotherapy on site is vital as walking in water keeps people mobile for as long as possible.

The care is personalised to the last detail: from getting the right wheelchair, postural management and offering activities that people really enjoy and want to do. Each young person has their room decorated how they want it.

There is also an incredible core of volunteers who offer added support by just being friends with people. By sitting with someone each week, reading and chatting, volunteers make a huge difference to the people who live at Heather House.

Robert's story

Robert is a young man from Bury and was diagnosed with CLN3 at the age of 25, much later than most. The doctors knew he had Retinitis Pigmentosa and was losing his sight, but Robert wasn't having seizures, a common sign of CLN3.

One of Robert's previous habilitation workers advised mum, Pam, to contact Sarah, who travelled to see the family and help with Robert's diagnosis. Robert's parents were very anxious about moving him so far from home, but he moved into Heather House a year later and has lived happily with SeeAbility for almost five years.

"Robert's condition deteriorated rapidly in his early twenties, moving to Heather House has given him his life back" say Pam and Gary, Robert's parents. Swallowing becomes more difficult as the disease takes hold and Robert began to lose that ability not long after moving in. The team got him his favourite foods including fish and chips or 'chippy tea' as he's a northern lad – plus ice cream. He's still eating those things at the age of 31 and loves it when the ice cream van visits each week.

More recently Robert began to show signs of distress. The team meticulously monitor everything like blood pressure and heart rate and knew from experience that something wasn't right. He was referred to a cardiologist who quickly fitted a pacemaker.

Robert was soon back laughing and joking, but if SeeAbility hadn't gathered the data it would have taken a lot longer to reach a decision, which could have put Robert's life at risk.



"We feel like we can just be mum and dad now. We know SeeAbility care about Robert and we know he is safe. We trust SeeAbility."

Eye care and vision

Goal Three

We are leading on the case for countrywide reforms of eye care in the community.

SeeAbility held a joint parliamentary reception with the Optical Confederation to release a report and launch a campaign to urge NHS England to meet the eye care needs of people with learning disabilities. The event was well-attended by leading organisations from the eye health, sight loss and disability sectors. Over 20 MPs and Peers were in attendance to add their support and call for an urgent overhaul of the sight testing system, including Justin Tomlinson, Minister for Disabled People and Rt Hon Alistair Burt, Minister for Community and Social Care, both in position at the time. Lord Holmes of Richmond MBE, who hosted the event, said: "The system needs to be designed around the needs of people with learning disabilities, rather than putting barriers in their way."

Maureen and Sally's story

Maureen Rose has campaigned for better awareness and eye care after her daughter, Sally, who has the rare genetic condition 18P Syndrome, lost most of her vision due to glaucoma. In her words: "Nobody had told us Sally's learning disability came with an increased risk of sight problems and because Sally couldn't tell us she was losing her sight, it was too late when we realised something was wrong."

Maureen decided to fight to raise awareness of the high risk of sight problems in people with learning disabilities and the need for more targeted support. Her efforts have seen a funded pathway put in place in Barking and Dagenham, so optometrists can provide tailored sight tests more accessible to people with learning disabilities, including in Sally's day centre.

Clinical framework

As part of a wider website redesign, we improved our online information resources. A new area of the website called 'Looking After Your Eyes' allows people to easily find what they are looking for and signposts users to our free factsheets, many of which are easy read. In the last two months we have seen double the amount of resources downloaded than the 12 months prior to the new website's launch.

Eye care and vision

Sight tests do not just help people get the glasses they need to see clearly but can identify serious sight-threatening issues like cataracts and glaucoma that can then be treated.

Adults with learning disabilities are ten times more likely to have serious sight problems than others. SeeAbility supports people with learning disabilities to get the eye care they need. Over the past year we reached 6,174 people through our training, information and advice, and trained 463 carers and supporters about eye care and vision.

Peer Educator Network

This year we trained 481 people with learning disabilities through our Peer Educator Network, a programme developed by SeeAbility to train self-advocacy groups on good eye care. The network now contains 15 groups, who go on to train more people with learning disabilities and spread our expert knowledge.

One group to join this year was Mencap Ceredigion, becoming the first group in Wales to receive the training. We are delighted to reach new areas like Ceredigion.

Reaching more children

Goal Four

We will soon reach our 1,000th child with learning disabilities via our sight testing programme Children in Focus, making it the biggest global study of its kind.

We know that children with learning disabilities are 28 times more likely to have a serious sight problem than other children and four in ten had no history of eye care before we sight tested in their special school.

This year we carried out a further 687 sight tests in nine special schools and trained 168 teachers in special schools about the importance of eye care and vision. We will begin sight testing in Greater Manchester in the summer term of 2017. Our findings are helping build a strong case for a national programme of sight testing in special schools in England, which is now being actively considered by NHS England, as highlighted on the previous page.

Awards recognition

Ned Saunders was named Dispensing Optician of the Year at the Optician Awards after being shortlisted by a panel of experts. Ned is our dispensing optician and sources glasses that meet the needs of children with learning disabilities, adapting them for each child to ensure they receive the right pair. Read more about Ned on pages 20 and 21.

We were also proud to have been shortlisted for two prestigious national awards by the Association of Optometrists (AOP). SeeAbility was one of three finalists in not only the category of Charity of the Year, but also Optometrist of the Year – recognition of Lisa Donaldson, SeeAbility's Clinical Lead. The AOP Awards recognise the highest levels of achievement in UK optics.

Awards recognition

During the year we were delighted to gain agreement on a new clinical eye care framework for the testing of children in special schools, co-authored and supported by the leading clinical bodies in the sector.

Optix support

We were delighted to be named the official charity of the 2017 Optix conference. Optix is the leading UK business management system for opticians and they kindly donate use of their Enterprise software to our Children in Focus team. It has transformed the way we work by providing a central reference to a team that works from several different school sites.

Over £9,000 was raised at the conference in March and our Optometry Practice Manager, Tania Omany, enjoyed the experience: "It was really great to be part of the Optix conference. We spoke to so many friendly faces and the best part was how committed and supportive they all were about what SeeAbility is doing."

Supporting Makaton users

We successfully developed an easy read factsheet and film for people who use Makaton, a language programme that uses signs and symbols to help people communicate. Both resources will help people with learning disabilities to prepare for an eye test, as well as eye care staff to learn key signs to communicate with people who may not be able to speak.

Goal Three: Eye care and vision

Meet Scott Watkin

Adults with learning disabilities are ten times more likely to have serious sight problems than other people and Scott Watkin is one of those people.

Scott joined SeeAbility as an ambassador for our eye 2 eye campaign and became a full-time employee in 2013.

SeeAbility's Eye Care and Vision Development Officer has a condition called keratoconus, which means his cornea is not flat and is shaped like a rugby ball. His vision can be blurry and distorted, getting worse over time. It forced him to give up gardening at college and he showed challenging behaviour because he couldn't stand the hard contact lenses he was given.

"I have had lots of surgery to correct my keratoconus. I have been lucky to have the right support for my eye care, if I hadn't had it, I would be sitting at home really close to the TV!" says Scott.

Before eye surgery, Scott was unemployed and could only see a metre in front of him. Since his successful corneal grafts, his world has opened up.

It means he is the perfect person to give advice to other people with learning disabilities, because he has direct experience of eye care and hospital treatment.

Scott's role involves a lot of travelling around the country from his Isle of Wight home to talk about good eye care. He learned to travel independently through his employment and always makes early morning meetings in Epsom and London despite his location.

He chairs SeeAbility's Look Here events, where he gives people with learning disabilities information about how and where they can go and get an eye test, and what might happen when they are there.

Scott Watkins Facts

Scott's known for travelling the length and breadth of the country to speak at events. Over the last year, Scott has:

- travelled a staggering 16,057 miles
- spent approximately 350 hours on a train
- made 162 ferry crossings from his home on the Isle of Wight
- had 28 hotel stays



“I want to make sure that people with learning disabilities get good eye care and vision, and to make sure they have a voice, able to make and be a part of making changes.”



In the last year Scott has reached 443 people with learning disabilities through those events and training self-advocacy groups for SeeAbility's Peer Educator Network. He also trained 181 people on how to provide good sight tests for people with learning disabilities, several of those being optometrists in Cheshire and Merseyside.

He's a confident public speaker well known in the disability sector, often giving inspirational talks at national conferences that always have trademark touches of humour.

In July 2016 Scott spoke at the launch of SeeAbility's 'Delivering an Equal Right to Sight' report at our parliamentary reception.

Scott is also involved with SeeAbility's residential and supported living services, helping the people we support to have a voice and get involved in their communities.

He's proud of the development of the 'speak easy' group, who have been influential when interviewing candidates for the new Chief Executive, Director of Operations and Director of People roles.

He is a shining example to people with learning disabilities of what can be achieved with the right support.

Goal Four: Reaching more children

Ned Saunders, Dispensing Optician

In March 2016, 25-year-old Ned Saunders became SeeAbility's first full-time Dispensing Optician joining our team of optometrists and an orthoptist. Ned is a crucial member of the team and his work with SeeAbility has now been recognised nationally with the Optician Awards this year naming him Dispensing Optician of the Year.

Children in special schools have a wide range of disabilities and complex needs, and many have limited mobility or communication difficulties. That means the team has to be creative and sensitive in how they test and assess vision.

Our starting point is no child is too disabled to have a sight test, there is a common misconception you have to be able to read or speak to have your eyes tested. We use a number of techniques: watching how a child uses their vision, are they able to track a moving object, or observing if they can distinguish pictures and colours on some of the materials we use.

"While the optometrist performs the sight test, I'm jumping around attracting the child's attention to ensure they focus across the room. But I'm also thinking about what glasses will fit the child best. I try and get it right first time, even if that fitting only lasts a few seconds before the glasses fly off towards me!" says Ned.

"A crucial part of my job is building trust with the children. One of my top tips is getting someone the child knows well to try a sight test or wear the frames first and letting the child choose which frames they like."

Many children with learning disabilities and complex needs have special facial features or may use a wheelchair with a headrest, which positions their head at an angle that makes many of the frames stocked in high street practices impossible to wear. Ned spends a lot of his time adapting, repairing and customising frames, making sure that the fit is the best it can be.

"One of my favourite moments was a young boy who is incredibly short-sighted, and his old frames slipped too much due to the angle of his wheelchair headrest. He gave me a truly heart-melting smile when I fitted his new frames!"

Children with learning disabilities are 28 times more likely to have a serious sight problem, and getting the right glasses to be worn correctly, comfortably and confidently is no simple task.





But it's not just a case of finding specialist frames that are comfortable, strong and adjustable – crucially it's also about developing personalised ways to get the children actually wearing their glasses. As Ned explains:

“Going from a blurry world to suddenly seeing in sharp detail is a lot to process. It can be an overwhelming change. Getting a child to wear their glasses is so important but can be really challenging.”

Sometimes a child's behaviour and progress can improve straight away as their view of the world becomes clearer, and often less isolating. But some children - particularly those with autism - find change difficult and need time to get used to their new

glasses. Sensory overload can be overwhelming, but Ned and the SeeAbility optometry team are focused on finding solutions.

“We're working to understand the sensory difficulties that sometimes stop people with learning disabilities wearing glasses. It's exciting to see our strategies helping families and teachers to get children wearing their glasses.

Wearing the right glasses is so beneficial to a child's progress, education and vision. This work with SeeAbility will help them to lead healthier and more independent lives as they grow and develop.”



A small amount of your time, can transform someone's day

Donating time and skills to the people we support

Our Volunteering Highlights

Thank you to all of our volunteers, who give up their time to share a skill or passion with people SeeAbility supports. Whether it's through arts and crafts, keeping fit, getting out in the community or simply having a cup of tea and a chat, our incredible volunteers make such a positive impact, every single day.

At SeeAbility's AGM and Excellence Awards 2016, Stuart Gearing from Fir Tree Lodge in Tadley won the Volunteer of the Year award. Stuart (pictured receiving his award from our Chairman) volunteers with James who lives at Fir Tree Lodge, helping him to improve his social skills.

From our Leatherhead Support Service, Jane Wasbrough, Debbie Mills and Jenny Delafond were awarded with certificates, thanking them each for volunteering with SeeAbility for over ten years.

Thank you to our corporate volunteers, who have spent time at people's homes rejuvenating the gardens or decorating living spaces.

The Denecroft gardening project is one of many examples of the community and volunteers rolling up their sleeves and creating a picturesque garden space for the people we support (pictured right). The project was even lucky enough to be given a Best Neighbourhood Project nomination.



Over 11,000 hours*

*The time given to us by our amazing volunteers over the year.

Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2017

Financial Review

Income

This year overall income rose by 3.7% to £17.69m driven mostly by increased fees and occupancy. Fees and accommodation income rose to £16.04m, up from £15.23m in 2016 (5.3%). Fundraising income also increased by 7.9% to £1.63m.

Expenditure

The cost of fundraising this year was lower than previous years because there was no investment in door-to-door recruitment of regular giving donors. Fundraising costs fell by £0.3m to £0.66m, however the costs of providing support to people using our services increased by £0.73m (5.1%) and was the main element in overall expenditure rising by 2.6% to £16.91m.

Net Income and Movement in Funds

Net Income increased to £0.79m from £0.58m. There was a small loss on valuation of the interest rate swap which is disclosed as "Other gains/losses" and an actuarial loss on the defined pension scheme of £147,000. As a result the net movement in funds was an increase of £0.62m, slightly lower than last year (£0.88m).

Balance Sheet

The Aylesbury building was completed in December and Aldershot was substantially completed by the end of the financial year. Largely due to the construction and fit-out work on these new buildings, our fixed assets increased by £2.48m after depreciation of £0.6m

Current assets increased by £1.12m largely as short-term deposits and bank balances increased by £1.04m. Creditors and accruals also increased by £0.81m resulting in Net Current Assets increasing by £0.31m to £3.54m. The increase in creditors and accruals reflects accrued capital project costs of £0.77m (2016: £0.17m) which will be met by drawing against bank loan facilities.

There was a rise in long-term liabilities due to an increase in bank borrowing by £2.25m used to fund the building projects at Aldershot and Aylesbury. Net assets increased by £0.62m to £24.43m including the defined benefit pension liability.

Cashflow

There was a net cash inflow from operating activities of £1.39m but a cash outflow of £2.48m for investment activities, principally for building the new services in Aldershot and Aylesbury.

Borrowings in the year increased by £2.44m to fund the investment in assets and we repaid £0.17m on existing loans. Payment of interest and fees amounted to £0.14m.

As a result, of these movements, cash and cash equivalents increased by £1.04m to £4.56m.

Reserves Policy

The Trustees' policy on reserves states that reserves shall be used for the following purposes: to provide fixed and working capital; to provide for future contingencies; and to provide a base for future development required to achieve the charity's strategic objectives.

The charity has financial reserves that are a combination of designated, restricted and unrestricted reserves. Restricted reserves are funds that have been given for a specific charitable purpose and designated funds are those that are unrestricted but the Trustees have exercised their discretion to allocate them for a specific purpose. The charity's designated reserves are mainly comprised of fixed assets.

The Trustees consider that the available reserves (i.e. liquid and readily realisable assets, excluding designated and restricted funds represented in these assets) should be maintained in a range between two and three months of operational expenditure, and would equate to a range between £2.7m to £4.0m.

They also recognise that owing to the need for resources to be used to finance planned expansion, there may be periods when reserves cannot be maintained within these limits. The reserve levels required under the reserves policy will be kept under review.

At 31 March 2017, the free reserves calculated in accordance with the policy amounted to £2.97m (£2.6m 2016), this represents a position within the normal range.

Plans for future periods

Our work to campaign for proper state funding for sight tests in special schools across England is continuing and we also will be delivering further sight tests through our optometrists. We will continue to provide information and advisory services including training for teachers in specials schools about eye care and vision.

We will work to increase occupancy in the new services in Aldershot and Aylesbury and we will also look to build another new service for eight individuals on the land owned by See-Ability Limited in Aylesbury. We will continue seeking opportunities to provide care and support and to improve the lives of more people.

The 2013-18 five-year strategy is coming into its final year and a new five-year strategy will be launched during 2017 to build on our current strategy to reach more people needing our services and to remain financially strong.

Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2017

Structure, Governance and Management

The charity was founded as The School for the Indigent Blind in 1799, constituted as a corporate entity in perpetuity under an Act of Parliament in 1826 and granted Royal Patronage in 1911, becoming The Royal School for the Blind. A new constitution in the form of a Statutory Instrument came into force in 1996. Although the legal name of the charity remains The Royal School for the Blind, the operating name of SeeAbility was adopted in 1994.

The object of the charity is to provide or assist in the provision of care, accommodation, training and support for handicapped persons with sensory impairment and in particular such persons with severe visual impairment.

Under the constitution, there is a minimum of eight and a maximum of twelve Trustees who form the Council. All Trustees must be members and, although they can be co-opted in between Annual General Meetings, they are elected formally by members at the AGM.

Membership of SeeAbility is open to anyone over the age of 18 who is accepted by the Council and who pays the annual fee.

Trustees are asked to serve four years and may be re-elected. The number of terms a Trustee can serve is not limited in the constitution but the guideline is two terms of four years. New Trustees are recruited to ensure we have the skills, experience and diversity required. Glen von Malachowski retired during the year and his place as Chairman of the Services and Quality Committee has been filled by Jon Sparkes.

Following the retirement of Michael Buckingham last year, Gordon Ilett has taken on the role of Vice Chairman,

The Council meets six times a year including a strategy review meeting. The majority of Trustees form a quorum and decisions are by a simple majority.

In addition to Council meetings, all Trustees sit on one of either the Services & Quality or Finance & Audit Committee, each of which usually meets in advance of Council meetings and additionally as required. There is also a Governance, Nominations & Remuneration Committee which meets at least twice a year.

Committees have their own terms of reference, with certain decision-making powers as described within a decision matrix. All key strategic decisions are taken by the full Council.

The Chief Executive, Lisa Hopkins, is responsible for day-to-day management of SeeAbility assisted by a leadership team. This team reports on progress against the five-year strategy set in 2013 and the charity's business plan, using a set of key performance indicators. In setting objectives and planning activities, Trustees have given due consideration to the Charity Commission's guidelines on public benefit and more specifically on guidance issued for fee-charging charities. Anyone who has direct support provided by SeeAbility for a fee does so after an assessment by the local authority regarding eligibility and need, and there is thus no restriction on economic grounds.

SeeAbility's public health advisory work is funded by voluntary donations and is available to all.

Pay policy for senior staff

The Council consider the Trustees and the senior management SLT team comprise the key management personnel of the charity in charge of directing and controlling, running and operating the charity on a day-to-day basis. All Trustees give their time freely and no Trustee received remuneration in the year. Details of Trustees' expenses are disclosed in note 5 to the accounts. The pay of the senior staff is reviewed annually and benchmarked against similar roles in the disability and not for profit sector using reports from Xpert HR and salary surveys.

Risk management

The Trustees review the main risks to the charity annually or more often. Through the Finance & Audit Committee and Services & Quality Committee, Trustees have oversight of risk management matters including health and safety, service quality and a balanced scorecard on performance. There are regular audit visits to services, which include checking compliance with policies, including risk assessments.

The main risks identified at the current time, and mitigating actions are:

1. Failure to provide good quality support and meet regulatory standards

The consequence of this failure would be that our reputation would suffer; we could be prosecuted, incur additional costs, lose contracts and potentially be deemed as a failing provider.

This risk is mitigated by a series of controls including a full operations manual, mandatory training and comprehensive quality monitoring visits. There is a staff forum and Whistleblowing Policy to provide channels for concerns to be raised.

As well as quality assurance measures there is positive awareness raising through fundraising and charitable activities.

2. Failure to maintain financial viability when there are changes in the external financial operating environment such as volatility in financial markets, cost inflation and low fee rates resulting in deficits and loss of reserves.

Volatility in financial markets is managed by hedging interest rate risk and an Investment Policy to hold reserves with more than one bank of a good financial standing. Financial models are used to assess acceptable fee levels for referrals and exposure to a single commissioning authority is limited to 20%. Trustees receive a regular forecast of reserves and management accounts including a cash flow forecast. Trustees have agreed a normal range of reserves in the Reserves Policy.

Fundraising income is an important part of the funding for specialist posts and charitable activities and there is a programme of fundraising training in place including the codes of practice that must be met. Expenditure on fundraising activity and projected returns are reviewed to ensure efficient use of charitable funds.

3. Inadequate IT infrastructure and systems could result in failure to provide reliable, cost effective and efficient working methods for staff.

The business systems are hosted on “cloud based” virtual servers and the hosting provider has Business Continuity Plans in place to protect their infrastructure. A specialist data protection audit has been undertaken in preparation for General Data Protection Regulations which become effective in 2018.

4. Insufficient recruitment and retention of people with suitable skills has an impact both on cost and quality when we have to use agency staff.

Salaries are benchmarked to ensure we remain competitive in the median quartile and there is mandatory training and a performance management system in place to ensure high standards are maintained.

5. Failure to ensure that Council membership is commensurate with the strategy and environment.

There is an annual appraisal programme and skills audit for Trustees to ensure the Council has the appropriate mix of skills. There is a biennial external governance review and this year there was an internal audit review of governance.

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The Council of Trustees is responsible for preparing this report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

To do this they must:

- Agree suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently
- Observe the principles and methods of the Charities SORP
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- State whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that this basis applies

Trustees are responsible for keeping and maintaining proper accounting records which comply with statutory requirements; safeguarding the charity's assets; and taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Patron

HRH The Duchess of Gloucester GCVO

President

The Lord Coe CH KBE

Trustees

James Deeley, Chairman

Francois Delbaere

Tania Fitzgerald

Mary Heathcote

Gordon Ilett, Vice Chairman

Glen von Malachowski (resigned 29 September 2016)

Mary Moore

Gareth Mostyn, Treasurer,

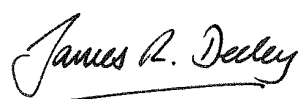
Chairman of Finance & Audit Committee

Jon Sparkes, Chairman of Services & Quality Committee

Paul Ursell

John Wood (died 10 May 2016)

Approved by Council and signed on its behalf,



James Deeley, Chairman

17 July 2017

Annual Report and Accounts For the year ended 31 March 2017

Independent Auditor's Report

Independent Auditor's Report

We have audited the financial statements of SeeAbility for the year ended 31 March 2017 which comprise the Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities, the Group and Charity Balance Sheet, the Consolidated Cash Flow Statement and the related notes. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

This report is made solely to the charity's Trustees, as a body, in accordance with Section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and regulations made under section 154 of that Act. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charity's Trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an Auditors' 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 charity's Trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Respective responsibilities of Trustees and auditors

As explained more fully in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities, the Trustees are responsible for the preparation of financial statements which give a true and fair view.

We have been appointed as auditors under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and report in accordance with regulations made under section 154 of that Act. Our responsibility is to audit and express an opinion on the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland). Those standards require us to comply with the Auditing Practices Board's Ethical Standards for Auditors.

Scope of the audit of the financial statements

A description of the scope of an audit of financial statements is provided on the Financial Reporting Council's website at www.frc.org.uk/auditscopeukprivate.

Opinion on financial statements

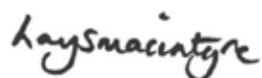
In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the group's and charity's affairs as at 31 March 2017, and of the group's net movement in funds, 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 Charities Act 2011.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Charities Act 2011 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

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



haysmacintyre
Statutory Auditor
26 Red Lion Square
London
WC1R 4AG

17 July 2017

Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities

for the year ended 31 March 2017

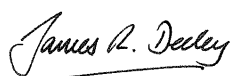
		Unrestricted General Funds	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2017	Total 2016
	Notes	£	£	£	£	£
INCOME						
Donations and Legacies		958,884	-	674,838	1,633,722	1,513,286
Income from Charitable Activities						
Local Authority fees and other operating income	3	16,040,817	-	-	16,040,817	15,232,466
Other Income						
Net gain/(loss) on disposal of fixed assets		-	-	-	-	297,653
Investment Income	2	16,447	-	-	16,447	21,196
Total Income		17,016,148	-	674,838	17,690,986	17,064,601
EXPENDITURE						
Costs of raising funds		515,309	-	146,218	661,527	958,206
Expenditure on charitable activities						
Service Provision Costs		13,918,507	595,928	585,075	15,099,510	14,372,572
Specialist Services		1,012,668	-	-	1,012,668	1,026,748
Housing and Development		137,032	-	-	137,032	127,595
		15,068,207	595,928	585,075	16,249,210	15,526,915
Total Expenditure	4	15,583,516	595,928	731,293	16,910,737	16,485,121
Net income/(expenditure) before transfers		1,432,632	(595,928)	(56,455)	780,249	579,480
Net Gains/(Losses) on Investments	8	7,609	-	-	7,609	(2,180)
Net Income/(Expenditure)		1,440,241	(595,928)	(56,455)	787,858	577,300
Transfers between funds	12	(813,154)	813,154	-	-	-
Other Gains/(Losses)						
Gains/(Losses) on interest rate swaps	4	(19,416)	-	-	(19,416)	(260,046)
Actuarial (loss)/gain on defined benefit pension scheme	6	(147,000)	-	-	(147,000)	564,000
Net Movement in Funds		460,671	217,226	(56,455)	621,442	881,254
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS						
Total Funds brought forward		1,960,703	21,225,043	623,507	23,809,253	22,927,999
Total funds carried forward	12&13	2,421,374	21,442,269	567,052	24,430,695	23,809,253

Balance Sheet

as at 31 March 2017

	Notes	Group		Charity	
		2017	2016	2017	2016
		£	£	£	£
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible fixed assets	7	30,568,266	28,078,282	30,503,067	26,592,747
Investments	8	58,039	70,430	58,040	70,431
		30,626,305	28,148,712	30,561,107	26,663,178
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors & prepayments	9	1,574,915	1,493,943	1,408,833	2,907,139
Assets held for sale		138,000	138,000	138,000	138,000
Short term deposits		4,184,304	3,264,464	4,184,304	3,264,464
Bank balances & cash		373,809	256,078	221,828	195,051
		6,271,028	5,152,485	5,952,965	6,504,654
CREDITORS: Amounts falling due within one year					
Bank loans	10	(170,944)	(152,000)	(170,944)	(152,000)
Creditors & accruals	11	(1,787,449)	(1,560,724)	(1,651,068)	(1,427,359)
Accrued capital project costs		(771,765)	(203,970)	(360,575)	(203,970)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		3,540,870	3,235,791	3,770,378	4,721,325
Total assets less current liabilities		34,167,175	31,384,503	34,331,485	31,384,503
CREDITORS: Amounts falling due after more than one year					
Bank loans	10	(8,955,053)	(6,701,239)	(8,955,053)	(6,701,239)
Pension Scheme Provision for Future Deficit Payments	6	(215,000)	(227,000)	(215,000)	(227,000)
Interest Rate Swap Liability		(560,427)	(541,011)	(560,427)	(541,011)
NET ASSETS (excluding defined benefit scheme liability)		24,436,695	23,915,253	24,601,005	23,915,253
Defined benefit pension scheme liability	6	(6,000)	(106,000)	(6,000)	(106,000)
NET ASSETS		24,430,695	23,809,253	24,595,005	23,809,253
REPRESENTED BY FUNDS:					
Unrestricted - General	12	2,642,374	2,293,703	2,642,373	2,293,703
- Pension reserves	6&12	(221,000)	(333,000)	(221,000)	(333,000)
		2,421,374	1,960,703	2,421,373	1,960,703
- Designated	12	21,442,269	21,225,043	21,606,580	21,225,043
Restricted	13	567,052	623,507	567,052	623,507
		24,430,695	23,809,253	24,595,005	23,809,253

The accounts were approved by the Council on 17 July 2017, and the following people were authorised to sign on its behalf:



Mr J Deeley, Chairman



Mr G Mostyn, Treasurer



Miss L Hopkins, Chief Executive

Consolidated Cash Flow Statement

for the year ended 31 March 2017

Reconciliation of Net Income to Net Operating Cash Flows	2017	2016
Notes	£	£
Net Income/(Expenditure)	787,858	577,300
Adjustments for:		
Investment income	(16,447)	(21,196)
Net (Gains)/Losses on Investments	(7,609)	2,180
Financing Interest & Fees	139,713	140,875
Depreciation Charge	595,928	652,897
(Surplus)/Loss on disposal of fixed assets	-	(297,653)
Impairment Loss on Assets Held for Sale	-	79,528
(Increase)/Decrease in debtors	(80,972)	(222,169)
Increase/(Decrease) in creditors	226,725	51,197
Non-actuarial movement in pension provision	(259,000)	(327,000)
Net cash provided by operating activities	1,386,196	635,959

CASH FLOW STATEMENT	2017	2016
	£	£
Net cash provided by operating activities	1,386,196	635,959
Cash flows from investing activities:		
Dividends, interest and rents from investments	16,447	21,196
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	(2,518,117)	(1,055,065)
Proceeds from the sale of property, plant and equipment	-	357,900
Proceeds from sale of investments	20,000	-
Net cash used by investing activities	(2,481,670)	(675,969)
Cash flows from financing activities:		
Repayments of borrowing	(165,121)	(158,226)
Financing Interest & Fees	(139,713)	(140,875)
Cash inflows from new borrowing	2,437,879	703,939
Net cash provided by financing activities	2,133,045	404,838
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period	1,037,571	364,828
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period	3,520,542	3,155,714
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period	4,558,113	3,520,542

ANALYSIS OF CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS	2017	2016
	£	£
Cash in hand	373,809	256,078
Notice deposits (less than 3 months)	4,184,304	3,264,464
Total cash and cash equivalents	4,558,113	3,520,542

Notes to the Accounts

For the year ended 31 March 2017

1. Principal Accounting Policies

General information

The Royal School for the Blind (operating as SeeAbility) is a registered charity (charity number: 255913). Its registered office is Newplan House, 41 East Street, Epsom, KT17 1BL.

Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice for Charities 2015 (SORP 2015), the Charities Act 2011 and applicable accounting standards (FRS102). The charity is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS102.

These financial statements consolidate the results, assets and liabilities of the charity's trading subsidiary, See-Ability Limited, on a line by line basis. The charity's own Statement of Financial Activities has not been presented.

The trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties regarding the charity's ability to continue as a going concern.

The principal accounting policies and estimation techniques are as follows:

Income

Income is recognised when the charity has entitlement, when the amount can be measured with sufficient reliability and when receipt is probable.

Local authority fees and other operating income represents amounts receivable from funding bodies and from individuals for the provision of services by the charity.

Legacy income is recognised when entitlement has been proven by the grant of probate, when receipt is judged to be probable and when the amount can be measured reliably. Where subsequent events provide confirmation of the probability or measurement of amounts to which the charity was entitled as at the balance sheet date, an adjustment is made to recognise the related income.

Grant income is recognised in line with the specific requirements of the funding agreement. Investment income and interest receivable are the amounts received and receivable during the year.

Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised when the related liability is incurred.

Charitable activity costs comprise expenditure, including staff costs, directly attributable to each activity. Where costs cannot be directly attributed they have been allocated to activities on a cost-incurred basis.

Support costs have been allocated to each activity based on the number of service users and staff, and directors' time allocations. Governance costs are included within support costs and relate to the management of the charity's assets, organisational administration and compliance with constitutional and statutory requirements.

Expenditure on raising funds comprises costs incurred in encouraging people and organisations to support financially the charity's work. These include the costs of advertising, publicity and of the staging of fundraising events.

Payments in relation to the termination of employment are recognised when the relevant decision-making process has been completed and communicated to all affected parties.

Fund Accounting

General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Designated funds are the unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the Trustees for particular purposes. The aim and use of each designated fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

Restricted funds are funds which are used in accordance with the specific instructions imposed by the donors or which have been raised by the charity for particular purposes.

Finance and Operating Leases

Cost in respect of operating leases is charged on a straight line basis over the lease term. Leasing agreements which transfer to SeeAbility substantially all the benefits and risks of ownership of an asset are treated as if the asset had been purchased outright. The assets are included in fixed assets and the capital elements of the leasing commitments are shown as obligations under finance leases. The lease rentals are treated as consisting of capital and interest elements. The capital element is applied to reduce the outstanding obligations and the interest element is charged against profit. Assets held under finance leases are depreciated over the lease term.

Fixed Assets and Depreciation

Fixed assets are included at either cost or valuation. All fixed assets owned at 1 April 1995 were revalued on that date; subsequent additions have been included at cost. As part of the transition to SORP 2015 a fair value adjustment was applied to the value of certain freehold property as at 1 April 2014. Depreciation is calculated to write off the cost or valuation of assets, net of anticipated disposal proceeds, over their useful economic lives as follows:

Freehold buildings	75 years
Fixtures & fittings	3 or 5 years
Motor vehicles	4 years or lease term

Freehold and leasehold properties are specialised properties used for charitable purposes. The element attributable to completed freehold buildings and improvements is being written off over their expected useful life. The cost of leasehold properties is written off over the term of each lease.

Investments

Investments are stated at market value. Realised and unrealised gains on investments are dealt with in the Statement of Financial Activities.

Basic financial instruments – assets and liabilities

Basic financial instruments transactions that result in the recognition of financial assets and liabilities like trade and other accounts receivable and payable are accounted for on the following basis:

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents includes cash in hand, deposits held at banks, other short-term highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts, when applicable, are shown within current liabilities.

Debtors and creditors

Debtors and creditors are recorded at the transaction price. Any losses arising from impairment are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities.

Interest rate hedging

The charity has entered into interest rate swap arrangements to hedge its exposure to volatility in respect of its long term borrowings, as disclosed in note 10.

The interest rate swap liabilities are recognised at fair value as at the balance sheet date and remeasurement differences are taken to Other gains and losses within the Statement of Financial Activities.

Pensions

Defined benefit scheme

SeeAbility operates a defined benefit pension scheme which has been closed to new members since 1997 and was closed to future accrual in 2009. The surplus or deficit of the scheme is recognised on the balance sheet. Changes in the assets and liabilities of the scheme in the year are disclosed and allocated as follows:

Changes relating to current or past service costs and gains and losses on settlements and curtailments, and pension finance costs arising from changes in the net of the interest costs and expected return on assets, are allocated to the relevant activity heading based on staff costs of employees within the scheme. Pension finance income arising from similar changes is recognised as an incoming resource. Actuarial gains and losses are recognised below net incoming resources.

The assets, liabilities and movements in the surplus or deficit of the scheme are calculated by qualified independent actuaries as an update to the latest full actuarial valuation. Details of the scheme assets and liabilities and major assumptions are shown in Note 6.

Defined contribution scheme

SeeAbility also operates a defined contribution scheme and contributions are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities as they fall due.

Pensions – Growth Plan 3

The charity participates in Growth Plan Series 3, which is a multi-employer defined benefit scheme administered by the Pensions Trust. Employer contributions in respect of current service are recognised as expenditure when they fall due.

Additional contributions in respect of past service deficits are agreed with the Pensions Trust from time to time and a provision is recognised in respect of the present value of the future cash flows relating to these additional contributions. Remeasurement differences arising from changes in the value of the underlying liability are taken to Other gains and losses in the Statement of Financial Activities.

Significant judgements

In preparing these financial statements, management has made judgements in the application of the charity's accounting policies which affect the amounts recognised in the financial statements. Estimates and judgements are continually evaluated and are based on historical experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances.

Key areas subject to judgement and estimation are as follows:

Legacy income

Judgement is applied in the consideration of the likelihood of receipt and reliability of measurement of amounts receivable in respect of legacies to which the charity has established entitlement at the balance sheet date. Subsequent events are monitored to identify those which give additional information about conditions as at the balance sheet date which would warrant adjustment to the financial statements.

Hedge accounting

The applicability of hedge accounting is subject to judgement in respect of the continued effectiveness of the hedging arrangement. Hedge effectiveness is reviewed on an annual basis by management.

Pension scheme accounting

Judgement is applied in the selection of the valuation assumptions applied to the charity's defined benefit pension schemes as set out in note 6.

2. Investment Income & Interest

	2017	2016
	£	£
Cash and short term deposits	16,447	21,196
	16,447	21,196

3. Fees and other operating income for:

	2017	2016
	£	£
Residential care services	9,248,676	8,599,670
Day services	578,287	585,587
Supported living services	5,126,967	4,958,131
Rents for supported living	1,056,676	1,065,355
Advisory Services	30,211	23,723
	16,040,817	15,232,466

4a. Total Resources Expended

	Staff Costs	Other Direct Costs	Support Costs	Total 2017	Total 2016
	£	£	£	£	£
Continuing Activities:					
Voluntary income	372,740	217,422	71,365	661,527	958,206
Personal support services	11,844,565	942,017	2,312,928	15,099,510	14,372,572
Advisory services	762,713	141,479	108,476	1,012,668	1,026,748
Housing and Development	108,953	13,386	14,693	137,032	127,595
	13,088,971	1,314,304	2,507,462	16,910,737	16,485,121

These activities help us to deliver our strategic goals as following:

Voluntary income: Goals three and four.
 Personal support services: Goal one.
 Advisory services: Goals three and four.
 Housing and Development: Goal two.

4b. Breakdown of Support Costs by Activity

	Management	IT	Finance	Human Resources	Total 2017	Total 2016
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Continuing Activities:						
Raising Funds	43,725	6,194	13,659	7,787	71,365	193,458
Personal support services	1,417,332	200,736	442,614	252,246	2,312,928	1,937,916
Advisory services	66,455	9,415	20,764	11,842	108,476	114,366
Housing and Development	9,004	1,275	2,812	1,602	14,693	14,192
	1,536,516	217,620	479,849	273,477	2,507,462	2,259,932

4c. Staff Costs

	2017	2016
	£	£
Other Direct Costs (above) include:		
Auditors' Remuneration:		
Audit fee	16,550	17,950
Operating lease rentals – land and buildings	163,096	179,573
Operating lease rentals – others	133,862	96,914
Depreciation	595,928	652,897
Loan interest	139,713	140,875

4d. Other Gains/(Losses)

The loss on the two interest rate swaps of £19,416 is recognised in Other Gains/(Losses) (2016: total loss of £260,046 made up of £251,859 for recognition of a new swap and a loss of £8,187 on a pre-existing swap).

5. Staff Costs

	2017	2016
	£	£
Wages and salaries	12,046,798	11,222,259
Social security	790,881	788,610
Pension	239,135	277,084
Life insurance	12,157	11,819
	13,088,971	12,299,772

Support costs are allocated to activities consistently on the basis of the number of service users and staff, and directors' time allocations.

Included within staff costs above are redundancy and termination payments of £33,347 (2015: £49,603) in respect of 8 individuals (2016: 7)

Number of employees who earned over £60,000 including benefits in kind:

Range £60,000 to £69,999	1 Employee (2016: 2 Employee)
Range £70,000 to £79,999	1 Employee (2016: 1 Employee)
Range £80,000 to £89,999	0 Employees (2016: 1 Employee)
Range £90,000 to £99,999	1 Employee (2016: 0 Employees)
Range £100,000 to £109,999	0 Employees (2016: 1 Employee)

Key personnel remuneration totalled £341,506 for the 2017 financial year (2016 was £460,643).

The significant reduction is for two main reasons:

- 1) There was a vacancy for an Operations Director for the majority of the financial year.
- 2) The Fundraising Director was filled by an external contractor, on an interim basis, for this financial year.

Indemnity insurance covering the Council and senior officers of the charity cost £2,914 (2016: £2,519).

Members of the Council receiving remuneration was £Nil (2016: £Nil) and expenses amounted to £517 for travel expenses (2016: £174).

At the year-end the number of employee posts, analysed by function, was:

	2017 Headcount	2016 Headcount	2017 Full Time Equivalent	2016 Full Time Equivalent
Staff numbers	Number	Number		
Residential, Nursing, Day and Advisory Services	469	471	388	389
Personal support services and administration	36	36	31	32
Strategic Development and research	21	22	18	19
Fundraising and Communications	13	11	12	9
	539	540	449	449

6. Pension Schemes – Group and Charity

The Charity offers a defined contribution scheme provided by AEGON where new employees are enrolled at 1% contribution but permanent employees can contribute 3% or 5%, matched by SeeAbility. The Charity also operates two pension schemes administered by The Pensions Trust.

The first scheme is Growth Plan Series 3, a multi employer scheme, which has been reclassified as a defined benefit scheme due to the nature of the minimum capital guarantee associated with it, however it is not possible for the charity to obtain sufficient information to enable it to account for the scheme as a defined benefit scheme, therefore the amount recognised is the net present value of the deficit contributions payable at a discount rate of 1.32% (2016: 2.07%). This scheme was closed to new members during 2012/13.

Reconciliation of Present Value of Deficit Contributions:

Change in the present value of the deficit contributions	2017	2016
	£000	£000
Provision at start of period	227	186
Unwinding of the discount factor (Interest expense)	4	3
Deficit contribution paid	(23)	(21)
Remeasurements – impact of any change in assumptions	7	(4)
Remeasurements – amendments to the contribution schedule	-	63
Provision at end of period	215	227

The second scheme is a defined benefit scheme which was closed to new members in 1997 and is now closed to future accrual. This scheme was valued by The Pensions Trust's actuary at 31 March 2017 in accordance with the financial reporting standard FRS 102. The liabilities were assessed at £16,010,000 (2016: £14,260,000) and the assets were valued at £16,004,000 (2016: £14,154,000) (details below), resulting in a deficit on the scheme of £6,000 (2016: £106,000). The following assumptions were used: price inflation 3.3% (2016: 3.0%); pension increases pre-April 2005 2.35%/post-April 2005 1.75% (2016: 2.1% and 1.7%); earnings increases 3.05% (2016: 2.55%); and discount rate 2.6 % (2016: 3.5%). The assets in the scheme were:

Asset	2017	2016
	£000	£000
Equity Type	5,092	4,245
Bonds	9,864	8,787
Property	1,019	1,062
Other	29	60
	16,004	14,154

Reconciliation of Present Value of Scheme Liabilities:

Change in the present value of the defined benefit obligation	2017	2016
	£000	£000
Opening defined benefit obligation	14,260	15,250
Service cost	62	74
Interest cost	488	465
Actuarial (gains)/losses	1,925	(966)
Benefits paid	(725)	(563)
Closing defined benefit obligations	16,010	14,260

6. Pension Schemes (continued)

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

	2017	2016
	£000	£000
Fair value of plan assets at start of period	14,154	14,212
Interest Income	488	438
Actuarial gains/(losses)	1,785	(343)
Contributions by the employer	302	410
Benefits paid & expenses	(725)	(563)
Closing fair value of the scheme assets	16,004	14,154
Actual Return on Scheme Assets	2,273	95

Defined Benefit Costs Recognised in Profit or Loss

	2017	2016
	£000	£000
Expenses	62	74
Net finance cost/(income)	-	27
Defined benefit costs recognised in profit and loss account	62	101

Amounts Recognised in Other Gains/(Losses):	2017	2016
	£000	£000
Return on plan assets (excluding amounts included in net interest cost) – gain/(loss)	1,785	(343)
Experience gains and losses arising on the plan liabilities - gain/(loss)	414	-
Effects of changes in the demographic and financial assumptions underlying the present value of the plan liabilities - gain/(loss)	(2,339)	966
Total amount recognised in other comprehensive income - gain/(loss)	(140)	623
Remeasurement difference on Growth Plan Series Three	(7)	(59)
Aggregate amount recognised in other gains/(losses)	(147)	564

Pension Schemes (continued)

The pension contribution for the year in respect of the defined benefit scheme was £302,000 (2016: £410,000). This figure includes the sum of £238,000 (2016: £350,000) in respect of the past service deficit. The best estimate of contributions to be paid by the employer to the scheme for the period commencing 1 April 2017 is £302,000.

7. Tangible Fixed Assets

Group	Freehold Land and Buildings	Leasehold Land and Buildings	Fixtures & Fittings	Motor Vehicles	Total
	£	£	£	£	£
Cost or Valuation					
At 1 April 2016	30,432,612	1,085,637	1,805,904	131,443	33,455,596
Additions at cost	2,884,818	-	201,094	-	3,085,912
At 31 March 2017	33,317,430	1,085,637	2,006,998	131,443	36,541,508
Depreciation					
At 1 April 2016	3,470,920	345,681	1,429,279	131,434	5,377,314
Charge for the year	384,026	31,362	180,540	-	595,928
At 31 March 2017	3,854,946	377,043	1,609,819	131,434	5,973,242
Net Book Value					
At 1 April 2016	26,961,692	739,956	376,625	9	28,078,282
At 31 March 2017	29,462,484	708,594	397,179	9	30,568,266

The tangible fixed assets in use at 1 April 1995 were revalued on that date. The freehold land and buildings were valued on an existing use basis by Gerald Eve, Chartered Surveyors, and the other tangible fixed assets by the Council. Subsequent additions have been included at cost. Fair Value Adjustments on selected property resulting from the transition to FRS 102 have been applied from 1st April 2014.

Under the Trustees' depreciation policy of 75 years on buildings, an annual impairment review was carried out and concluded that there was no impairment.

Freehold land and buildings with a net book value of £229,511 (2016: £1,485,535) are held by See-Ability Limited. See-Ability Limited sold the completed Aylesbury property to the SeeAbility charity for £2,849,000.

8. Fixed Assets Investments

	2017		2016	
	£	£	£	£
UK Quoted Investments at Market Value brought forward	70,430		72,610	
Disposal of Investment	(20,000)			
Net Investment Gains included in the Statement of Financial Activities	7,609		(2,180)	
Market value carried forward		58,039		70,430
Group total (see note (b) below)		58,039		70,430
Investment in subsidiary undertaking		1		1
Charity total		58,040		70,431

(a) SeeAbility owns See-Ability Limited a company registered in England. The company commenced trading during 2012/13 and trading figures have been included in the consolidated accounts.

(b) The historical cost of investments as at 31 March 2017 was £9,597 (2016: £13,597). One investment (UK Government bonds: 2.5% consolidated stock) has matured and £20,000 was received.

9. Debtors

	Group		Charity	
	2017	2016	2017	2016
	£	£	£	£
Trade debtors	1,192,677	1,114,506	1,192,677	1,114,506
Pre-payments and accrued income	326,338	289,437	160,256	260,680
Accrued legacy income	55,900	90,000	55,900	90,000
Amounts receivable from See-Ability Limited	-	-	-	1,441,953
	1,574,915	1,493,943	1,408,833	2,907,139

10. Bank Loans

Total loan facilities are £10.5m and as at the year end £9.1m of these facilities had been drawn. There are two interest rate swaps, one to fix the interest on £2.6m (this commenced on 30 December 2016) until 2026 and one amortising swap to fix the interest on £2.3m (2016: £2.3m) until 2021.

Bank Loans are Repayable as Follows	Group		Charity	
	2017	2016	2017	2016
	£	£	£	£
Within one year	170,944	152,000	170,944	152,000
Due after more than one year but within five years	1,161,477	644,213	1,161,477	644,213
Due after more than five years	7,793,576	6,057,026	7,793,576	6,057,026
	9,125,997	6,853,239	9,125,997	6,853,239

11. Creditors and Accruals

Amounts falling due within one year	Group		Charity	
	2017	2016	2017	2016
	£	£	£	£
Trade creditors	262,829	306,005	261,740	305,748
Other creditors	287,573	531,377	126,554	531,376
Taxation and social security costs	202,881	204,294	202,881	204,294
Amounts due to SeeAbility Limited	-	-	25,727	-
Pension outstanding contributions	85,219	40,194	85,219	40,194
General accruals	696,459	264,004	696,459	130,897
Deferred income	252,488	214,850	252,488	214,850
	1,787,449	1,560,724	1,651,068	1,427,359

12. Unrestricted Funds

The funds of the Charity include the following designated funds which have been set aside out of unrestricted funds.

	Balance 1 April 2016	Income	Expenditure	Gains/ (Losses)	Transfers	Balance 31 March 2017
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Designated funds	21,225,043	-	(595,928)	-	813,154	21,442,269
General funds	2,293,703	17,016,148	(15,583,516)	(11,807)	(1,072,154)	2,642,374
Pension reserve	(333,000)	-	-	(147,000)	259,000	(221,000)
	23,185,746	17,016,148	(16,179,444)	(158,807)	-	23,863,643

The designated funds are made up of two elements as described below:-

Tangible Fixed Assets: Designated funds of £21,606,580 represent the written-down value of tangible fixed assets used by the Charity to provide its residential, nursing, day care, rehabilitation, and other services, less outstanding loans used to finance those assets.

The transfers between funds consist of £813,154 from the General Fund to Designated Funds to reflect the net additions to fixed assets for the year, together with £259,000 from the General Fund to the Pension Reserve for remedial contributions for the year paid towards the deficit on the defined benefit pension scheme.

13. Restricted Funds

	Balance 1 April 2016	Movement in Resources		Balance 31 March 2017
	£	Incoming £	Outgoing and transfers £	£
Work with Adults	161,597	148,829	(163,318)	147,108
Work with Volunteers	8,100	15,599	(19,700)	3,999
Other Funds	453,810	510,410	(548,275)	415,945
	623,507	674,838	(731,293)	567,052

All of the funds received from the Greater London Fund for the Blind (a total of £134,779) have been allocated to specific projects spanning across adult, volunteer and other work.

The “Other Funds” carried forward balance includes £254,022 for the Children in Focus Campaign. Income was £376,774 and expenditure £327,845 for this campaign. (2016: income £265,480 and expenditure £229,224).

14. Analysis of Assets Between Funds

	Tangible Fixed Assets	Investments	Net Other Assets	Total
	£	£	£	£
Restricted Funds	-	-	567,052	567,052
Unrestricted Designated Funds	30,568,266	-	(9,125,997)	21,442,269
General Funds	-	58,039	2,363,335	2,421,374
	30,568,266	58,039	(6,195,610)	24,430,695

15. Capital Commitments

Capital commitments at year end were £Nil (2016 £2,501,822).

16. Contingent Liabilities

Under the management agreement with First Wessex Housing Association, SeeAbility is liable to pay them rent for 9 flats at Meadowbank regardless of whether they are occupied. If all flats were to remain unoccupied for a full year the cost would be £68,251 (2016: £67,623).

A Strategic Supplier Agreement with one funding authority contains a volume rebate that will trigger a payment of £36,000 when incremental new business of £300,000 has been provided.

17. Operating Leases

The Charity has the following operating lease commitments at 31 March 2017:-

Full Lease Commitments	2017	2016
	£	£
Land and buildings:		
Newplan House, Epsom		
Payable in Less than One Year	72,634	72,634
Payable in More than One Year, but less than Five Years	78,686	151,319
	<hr/> 151,320	<hr/> 223,953
Others:		
Payable in Less than One Year	133,862	96,914
Payable in More than One Year, but less than Five Years	201,136	148,459
Payable in More than Five Years	53,807	80,278
	<hr/> 388,805	<hr/> 325,651

As consideration for SeeAbility taking up a lease on the ground floor of Newplan House the landlord granted a nineteen month rent free period from 26 April 2013. The rent free period is being amortised over six years being the period up to a break clause in the lease.

18. Financial Instruments

	2017	2016
	£	£
Financial assets measured at fair value	58,039	70,430
Financial assets measured at amortised cost	5,750,790	4,635,047
Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost	9,976,618	7,957,815
Financial liabilities measured at fair value	560,427	541,011

Financial assets measured at fair value comprise listed investments.

Financial assets measured at amortised cost comprise cash, trade debtors and other debtors.

Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost comprise trade creditors, other creditors and amounts due in respect of the Growth Plan 3 pension scheme.

Financial liabilities measured at fair value comprise interest rate swaps.

19. Comparative Statement of Financial Activities

		Unrestricted General Funds	Unrestricted Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2016
	Notes	£	£	£	£
INCOME					
Donations and Legacies		751,752	-	761,534	1,513,286
Income from Charitable Activities					
Local Authority fees and other operating income	3	15,232,466	-	-	15,232,466
Other Income					
Net gain/(loss) on disposal of fixed assets		297,653	-	-	297,653
Investment Income	2	21,196	-	-	21,196
Total Income		16,303,067	-	761,534	17,064,601
EXPENDITURE					
Costs of raising funds:		690,437	-	267,769	958,206
Expenditure on charitable activities					
Service Provision Costs		13,271,231	652,896	448,445	14,372,572
Specialist Services		1,026,748	-	-	1,026,748
Housing and Development		127,595	-	-	127,595
		14,425,574	652,896	448,445	15,526,915
Total Expenditure	4	15,116,011	652,896	716,214	16,485,121
Net income/(expenditure) before transfers		1,187,057	(652,897)	45,319	579,479
Net Gains/(Losses) on Investments		(2,180)	-	-	(2,180)
Net Income/(Expenditure)		1,184,876	(652,896)	45,320	577,300
Transfers between funds	12	(405,285)	405,285	-	-
Other Gains/(Losses)	4	(260,046)	-	-	(260,046)
Actuarial (loss)/gain on defined benefit pension scheme	6	564,000	-	-	564,000
Net Movement in Funds		1,083,545	(247,611)	45,320	881,254
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total Funds brought forward		877,158	21,472,654	578,187	22,927,999
Total funds carried forward	12&13	1,960,703	21,225,043	623,507	23,809,253

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We couldn't have done it without you...

Thank you and acknowledgements

We'd like to thank all of our supporters over the past year for their generosity, which is helping us to provide the people we support with high quality care and enables us to reach out to people with learning disabilities and spread our message. We would particularly like to acknowledge the support of the following charitable trusts, companies and people:

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I don’t know another charity
that can **move mountains** like
SeeAbility does.”**

Professor Maggie Woodhouse OBE,
University of Cardiff

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