



# **VoiceAbility**

## **Annual Report**

**April 2022 - March 2023**



**Charity number in England: 1076630**

**Charity number in Scotland: SC050036**

**Company number: 3798884**

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# About VoiceAbility



We have helped people to be involved in decisions about their health, care and wellbeing for over 40 years.



**We believe that everyone has a right to:**

- be heard and respected
- choice, control and freedom
- be safe from violence, discrimination and abuse



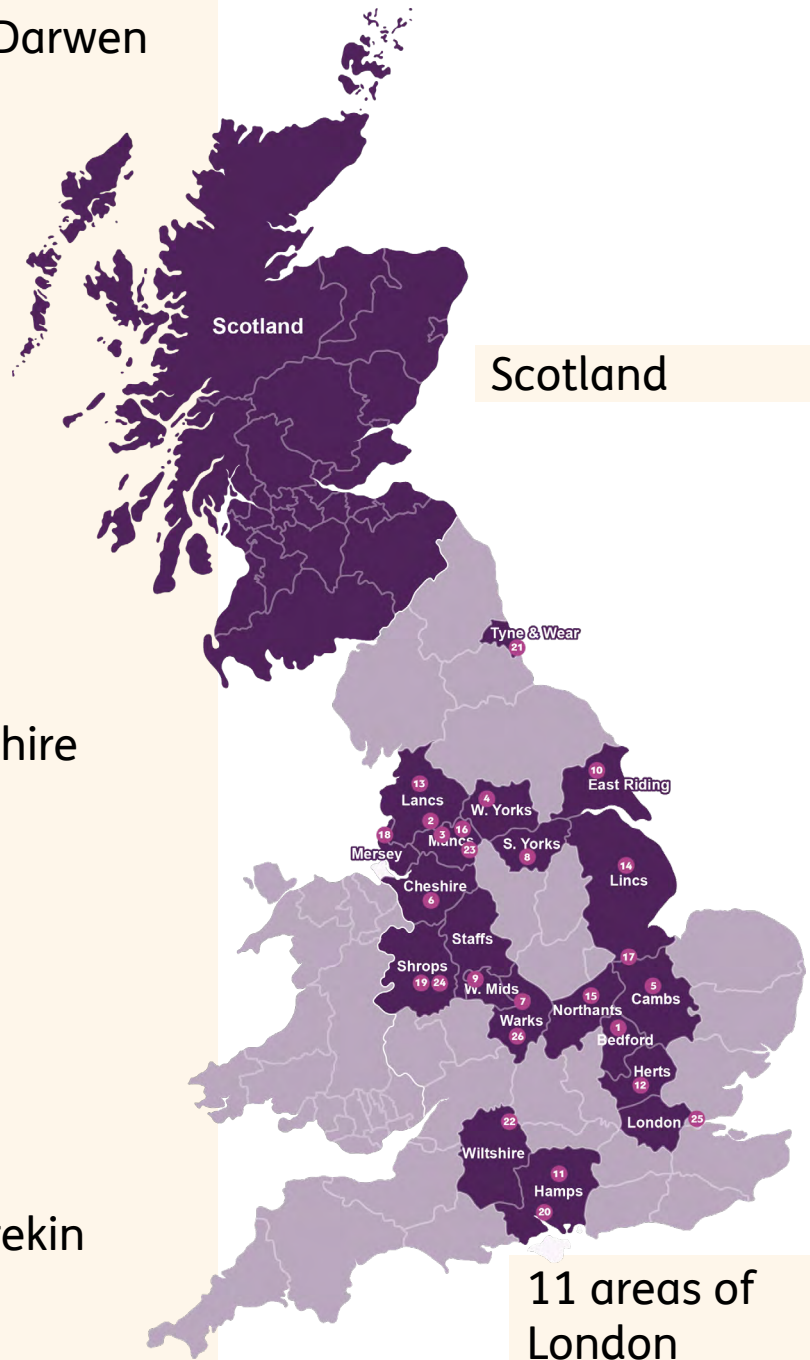
**We want to make sure that:**

- everyone is heard and listened to
- no-one has to make life-changing decisions on their own

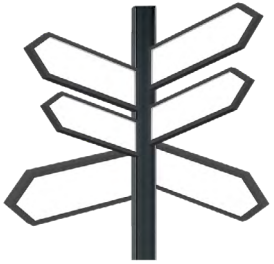


# Where we work

1. Bedford and Bedfordshire
2. Blackburn with Darwen
3. Bolton
4. Bradford
5. Cambridgeshire
6. Cheshire
7. Coventry
8. Doncaster
9. Dudley
10. East Riding
11. Hampshire
12. Hertfordshire
13. Lancashire
14. Lincolnshire
15. Northamptonshire
16. Oldham
17. Peterborough
18. Sefton
19. Shropshire
20. Southampton
21. Sunderland
22. Swindon
23. Tameside
24. Telford and Wrekin
25. Thurrock
26. Warwickshire



# Our values



Our **values** are the things that are most important to us.

**Values** guide us in everything we do.

**We are:**



- **passionate**



- **empowering**



- **collaborative**



- **honest**



- **resourceful**

# This year: headlines

## People

- We supported more than **37,000** people in England and Scotland
- We have over **400** paid staff and **50** volunteers



## Money

- We earned **£11.4 million**
- Most of our money comes from councils, the NHS and the government



## New work

- In 2022 we started helping people in Scotland to apply for benefits. We have helped **1,000** people
- We started new services in **19** areas of England





## Our work: advocacy

Advocates help people to be involved in decisions about their health, care and wellbeing.

Advocates also help people to:

- understand their options
- know their rights
- make decisions

Advocates speak up for people who cannot do these things for themselves.

### Someone we helped this year said:

“Thank you so much for your support. You made me believe again in justice and the kindness of people.”



## Some types of advocacy we provide:



- **Benefits advocacy** for help with applying for benefits from Social Security Scotland



- **Care Act advocacy** for people who find it hard to take part in assessments or planning their care



- **Advocacy for children and young people** who, for example, are in care or going through the Child Protection process



- **Independent mental capacity advocacy** to support people with decisions about where to live, or about medical treatment





- **Independent mental health advocacy** for people who are in hospital under the Mental Health Act



- **NHS complaints advocacy** for people who want to complain about NHS care and treatment



- **Relevant person's representatives** speak up for people who cannot leave their home on their own.

This happens when it would not be safe for the person to be out alone

- **Rule 1.2 representatives** speak up for people who cannot understand or agree to changes to their freedom

# Our work: Connections



- **Involvement and participation:** helping organisations to listen to people who use their services



- **Group advocacy:** people share their experiences and support each other



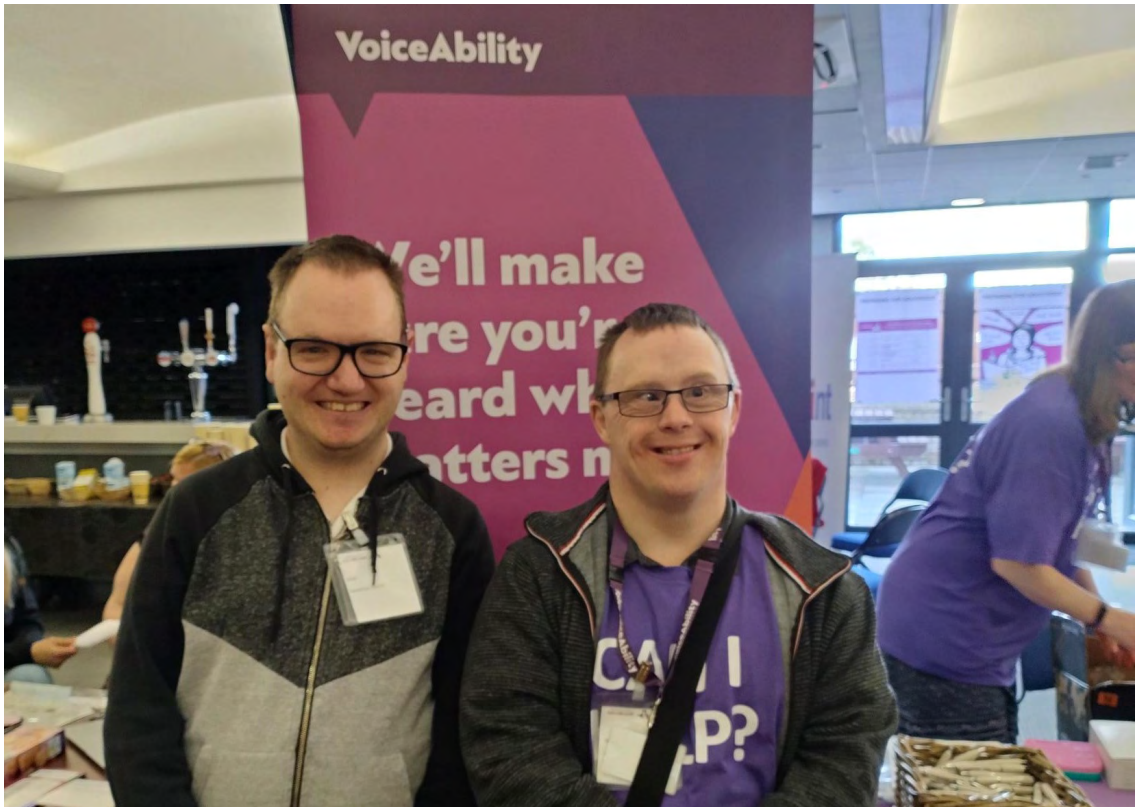
- **Peer mentoring:** people are supported by others who have had similar experiences



# Achievements and plans

This section tells you about some of the work we have done this year, and our plans for next year:

- Our ambitions
- Valuing our people
- Building the basics
- Improving quality
- Leading the way



# Our ambitions

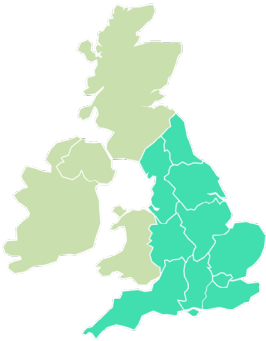
We want to make sure that everyone gets support with life-changing decisions.

## Things we have achieved this year

- helped **1,000** people in Scotland with their benefits applications
- facilitated **5** 'Connections' groups
- launched new services in **19 areas** of England

## Work we want to do next year

- work in more areas
- use technology to help more people
- find new ways to help people





# Valuing our people

We want VoiceAbility to be a great place to work.

## Things we have achieved this year

- given some of our lowest-paid staff pay rises, to make our pay fairer
- launched a new computer system to help us look after our people and pay



## Work we want to do next year

- find more ways to make sure that everyone is paid fairly





## Building the basics

We want to make sure that the whole of VoiceAbility is working well.

### Things we have achieved this year



- reviewed all our policies and procedures
- launched new systems and training to help manage our work

### Work we want to do next year



- find ways to improve, using information we have collected about our work
- improve how we use computer systems, so we can spend more time helping people



# Improving quality

We want to give people the best support, and measure the difference we make.



## Things we have achieved this year

- the Quality Performance Mark: the national standard for advocacy
- developed new safeguarding training
- improved how we measure the difference we make



## Work we want to do next year

- involve people we support in our work to make services better
- find out more about what people think of our services
- start a new volunteer programme







## Leading the way

We want people's voices to be heard when the government makes decisions.

### Things we have achieved this year

#### Helped with the update of the Mental Health Act:



- People will be given advocacy unless they say they don't want it
- People who have chosen to be in hospital will also be given advocacy



#### Campaigned for the Liberty Protection Safeguards to be launched:

- We are very disappointed that this will not happen until after the next general election







We have also:

- helped to lead the Advocacy Leadership Network of over 50 organisations
- worked with the Department for Education to try to improve advocacy for children and young people

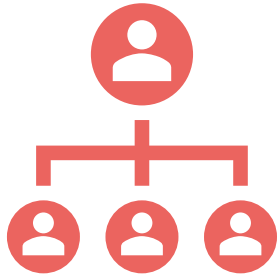


### Work we want to do next year:

- work towards creating a national advocacy service for people with learning disabilities and autistic people in secure hospitals
- set up more citizen and community advocacy
- find ways to make sure that all advocacy services are good quality



# How we are run: governance



**Governance** means how our charity is run. We follow laws and guidelines.

We must look after our money, and do the work in our contracts. Our **trustees** make sure that this happens.



## Trustees

We had **10** trustees in the year 2022-2023. All trustees get training about their role, how to make decisions, and what our plans are.



## Employees

The Chief Executive, Jonathan Senker, runs VoiceAbility day-to-day.

Our staff are involved in making decisions. For example, there is a National Staff Forum and an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Forum.



## Auditor



The auditor is an independent expert: they are not employed by VoiceAbility.

They check that our annual report and accounts are correct and that we are following the law.



Our auditor is  
Sayer Vincent LLP.

## Annual Report



This is an Easy Read summary of our main report.

The full report contains all the information we must share by law.



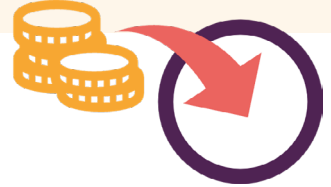
You can read it here:

<https://www.voiceability.org/assets/download/VA-ACCOUNTS-FINAL-2023-WEBSITE.pdf>

# Our money



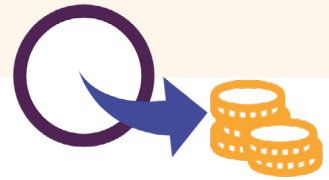
## Money in: £11.4 million



Most of this money is from local councils, the NHS and the government:

- Contracts: **£10.9 million**
- Donations: **£2,000**

## Money out: £12.4 million



Spent on, for example:

- Staff: **£7.8 million**
- Travel: **£337,000**

## Reserves: £3 million

- Reserves are like savings, to use in the future, and to invest in things like development and equipment





## A message from our Chair: Susan Douglas-Scott CBE

People tell us that we improve their lives. As a disabled person myself, this makes me very happy.



We want more people to be heard. So VoiceAbility is growing! We improved lots of things at VoiceAbility this year, including:



- a new committee to look at our performance
- a new management structure
- helping staff to feel connection and belonging at work

*Thank  
you!*

Thank you to our staff and volunteers. We will support even more people to be heard, when it matters most.

## **A message from our Chief Executive: Jonathan Senker**

I spent lots of time this year with the people we support. This has been inspiring. I have seen the life-changing difference we make.

I have also seen that care services can be all about meeting needs, not about the colourful and varied lives of the people they support.







Our staff and volunteers use passion, empathy and advocacy to help people to be properly understood.

**But there is so much more to do, before everyone has a voice.**

We want to:

- make sure that more people have their voices heard
- end the abuse of people with learning disabilities and autistic people in secure hospitals and care homes
- help people to get support in their local community, not in hospitals



I am grateful to all our staff, volunteers and funders for their commitment to our work.

