



VoiceAbility

Annual Report

April 2021 - March 2022



Charity number in England: 1076630

Charity number in Scotland: SC050036

Company number: 3798884



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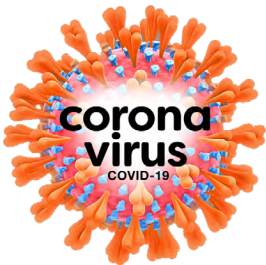
Introduction

By Susan Douglas-Scott CBE
Chair of Trustees

We want everyone to be heard when it matters most. Our advocates help people to have control over their lives.



We support people to speak up for themselves, giving them skills which will help them in the future.



The pandemic was a big challenge. We supported people in a time of uncertainty and change.

Thank you to:

- our staff, volunteers and trustees for their hard work and commitment.
- organisations who have worked with us to help even more people.

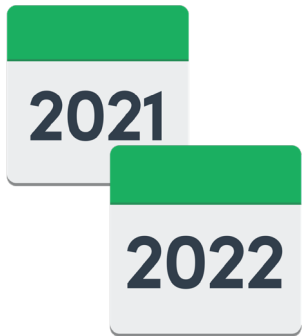




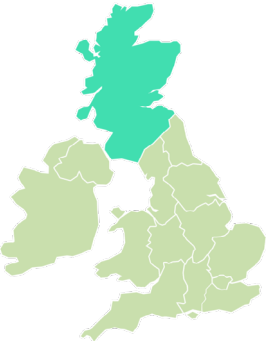
Johnathan Senker

Chief Executive Officer

People should be able to make changes in their own lives. At VoiceAbility, we support people to speak up and make decisions.



This report is about the second year of lock-down. All through the pandemic, our staff and volunteers never stopped supporting people.



We have started a new service in Scotland. We help people to get the benefits they need. Bills and food are more expensive, and people are having to make tough decisions.



Thank you to everyone at VoiceAbility for putting the people we help at the centre of our work.

About VoiceAbility



We support people to be heard when it matters most. We have been doing this for over 40 years.

Many of the people we work with are unwell or disabled. We believe that everyone has a right to:

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



Our aims are to:

- give people the best possible support
- be a great place to work.



Our Values

We are:



- passionate



- empowering



- collaborative



- honest



- resourceful



This year: headlines



People

- We supported more than **26,000** people this year
- We employ over **300** staff
- We have over **50** volunteers



Money

Our income (the money we earn) was **£11 million**. Most of our money comes from local councils and the NHS.

New work

We have started a new service in Scotland, helping people to get benefits. We will help thousands of people.

We also started **11** new advocacy services across England.



Advocacy



The law says that some people must have an advocate.

Advocates help people to be involved in decisions about their health, care and well-being.



Advocates also help people to:

- understand their options
- know their rights
- say what they want to happen

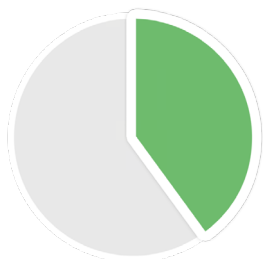
Advocates can also speak up on behalf of people who cannot do this for themselves.



“Having an advocate there is like someone on my side, someone to challenge for me”.

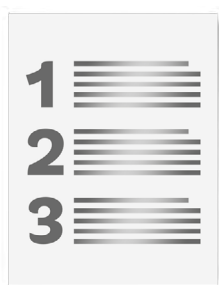


We worked on **34,000** advocacy cases this year. A “case” is one piece of work with a person.



4 in 10 of the people we worked with this year are **over 65** years old.

The 3 most common reasons why people needed support were:



- mental health
- dementia
- learning disability



“I was so nervous about my first appointment with my advocate, Klara. I had been in hospital and using services for a long time.

Klara was friendly, encouraging and understanding.” **Alex, Hertfordshire**



Some types of advocacy we provide:

- **Independent Mental Health Advocacy** for people who are detained under the Mental Health Act.



- **Relevant Person's Representatives** for people who are deprived of their liberty under the Mental Capacity Act.



- **Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy** to support people with decisions about where they will live, or about medical treatment.



- **Care Act Advocacy** for people who find it very hard to be involved in assessments or planning their care.



- **NHS Complaints Advocacy** for people who want to complain about NHS care and treatment.

Children and young people



We worked with **876** young people this year. Our advocates support children and young people who:

- are in care
- have recently left being in care
- have special educational needs
- are disabled
- are in police custody



In some areas of the UK, we provide other services for young people.

For example:

- mental health advocacy
- young people under child protection





Leading Change

We are involved in changes to laws and policies. Laws and policies are the rules that everyone has to follow.



There are 2 big changes happening in government at the moment:

- The Mental Health Act
- The Liberty Protection Safeguards



We belong to groups where we offer our expertise and experience to make laws and policies better for everyone.



We want to protect people's rights. This type of change can take a long time, but it will help everyone in the UK if we get it right.

Connections



Our connections services are growing every year. Here are some examples:

Group Advocacy

People share their experiences and support each other.



We encourage the groups to run themselves.

Peer mentoring

Peer mentors have had similar experiences to the people they support.



This can help with building trust and understanding.

Mentors listen, support, and help people to help themselves.





Involvement and participation

We work with lots of health and care organisations.

We help them to listen to the views of people who use their services.

We employ people with learning disabilities and autistic people on some of these projects.



We co-produced a training video for lawyers who work in the Court of Protection.



Here is a link to more information:
[Participation and Communication in the Court of Protection.](#)

More about VoiceAbility



How we support people

We support most people face-to-face. It is very important for us to visit people and see where they are living.



Safeguarding

Safeguarding is our top priority. We are always working to improve the ways we protect people from abuse.



Quality

We have achieved the Quality Performance Mark. This an award which shows that we meet the national standards for advocacy.



We also have our own Advocacy Standards and training programmes, to help all our staff to do a good job.

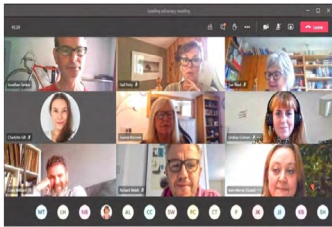


Working in Partnership

We want everyone to have a voice when it matters most. We can't do this on our own.



So, we work with other organisations who all want the same thing. We are stronger together.



We run the [Advocacy Leadership Network](#). 50 organisations take part.

We belong to lots of groups, including:



- Health and Wellbeing Alliance
- Care and Support Alliance
- Association of Mental Health Providers
- National Voices

Our Leadership teams

This year, we created 2 new teams:

- Executive Leadership Team
- Senior Management Team

The teams help VoiceAbility to make decisions, improve services, support our staff and start new projects.

Supporting our staff

We can give people the best support by making sure our staff are:

- knowledgeable
- always learning
- paid fairly
- involved in our development





We must also recruit the right staff.
We are improving the way we do this.

We will improve our communication,
both inside and outside VoiceAbility.



Plans for the future

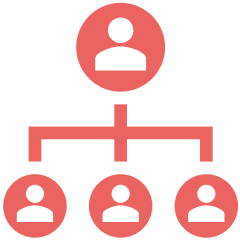
Our aim is to offer a much bigger
range of services, to help people to be
heard and get their rights upheld.

We will do this by improving
VoiceAbility in lots of different ways:

- valuing our people
- getting the basics right
- improving quality
- leading the way
- influencing policies



Governance



Governance is about how our charity is run. We must follow laws and guidelines. We must look after our money, and deliver our contracts. Our trustees make sure that all of this happens.



Trustees

We had **11** trustees in the year 2021-2022. All trustees get training about their role, how to make decisions, and what our plans are.



Employees

The Chief Executive Officer works closely with our trustees, and runs VoiceAbility day-to-day.



Employees are involved in making decisions. For example, we run a Health, Safety and Wellbeing Forum for staff.

Auditor

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

They make sure that our annual report and accounts are correct and that we are following the law - based on the information they are given.



Our auditor is
Sayer Vincent LLP.



Annual Report

This is an Easy Read summary of our main report.

The full report contains detailed information that we must provide by law. It is available on our website and on the Charity Commission website.



[Click here to read the full Report](#)

Our Money

Money in: £11 million

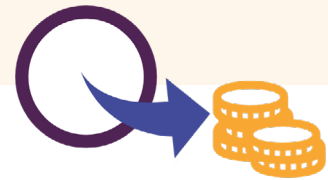


This came from:

- Contracts: **£10.9 million**
- Investments: **£37,000**
- Donations: **£4,800**



Money out: £10.3 million



Spent on, for example:

- Staff: **£7.8 million**
- Sub-contractors: **£804,000**
- Travel: **£248,000**



Reserves: £4 million

- Our reserves are like savings. We save money to use in the future, and to invest in things like development and equipment.



