



2023-24

ANNUAL REPORT
Age UK Cheshire

ADDRESS AND REGISTERED OFFICE

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CHARITABLE OBJECTS:

The objects of the Charity are to promote the following purposes for the benefit of the public and/or older people within the Area of Benefit:

1. preventing or relieving the poverty of older people.
2. preventing or relieving sickness, disease or suffering in older people (whether emotional, mental or physical).
3. promoting equality and diversity.
4. promoting the human rights of older people in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
5. assisting older people in need by reason of ill-health, social exclusion, or other disadvantage; and
6. such other charitable purposes for the benefit of older people as the Charity Trustees from time to time decide.

the outcome of this being the promotion of the well-being of older people.

GOVERNING DOCUMENT:

Memorandum and Articles of Association dated 8 February 2002 and updated 14 February 2024

The company was incorporated on 8 February 2002 but started its activities on 1 May 2002 when the Operations, Assets and Liabilities of Age Concern Cheshire, a charitable trust, were transferred to the company.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE:

Age Concern Cheshire is an independent company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales No. 4369758, Registered Charity No. 1091608. As a result, in the opinion of the trustees, there is no ultimate controlling party.

Age Concern Cheshire trading as Age UK Cheshire is a member of the Age England Association.

DIRECTORS:

Ms S Wentworth - Chair (resigned November 2023)
Ms Rebecca Hemshall (appointed July 2023 and appointed Chair November 2023)
Mr S Bunyan (resigned November 2023)
Mrs V Pasley (resigned November 2023)
Ms C Bower (resigned November 2023)
Mr A Grewal (resigned March 2024)

Ms J Rayner
Mrs B Philps
Ms P Bartlett
Ms N Brooks
Mr D Earnshaw
Mr D Forsyth (appointed July 2023)

The Directors of the company are also Trustees for the purpose of Charity Law. The Board are appointed by the members in accordance with the Articles of Association.

KEY MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL:

Chief Executive
Chief Finance Officer
Head of Human Resources and Volunteering
Head of Operations
Head of Retail and Fundraising

Mr D Maskell
Mrs H Flaherty
Mrs C Cooper (resigned April 2023)
Mrs C McMahon
Mr L Birchall (appointed August 2023)

AUDITORS:

WR Partners
Drake House, Gadbrook Way
Gadbrook Park
Northwich, CW9 7RA

BANKERS:

National Westminster Bank plc
PO Box 6, The Bull Ring
Northwich, CW9 5BN

Report of the Chair and CEO

On behalf of the Trustees, we are pleased to present our annual report, highlighting the remarkable progress Age UK Cheshire has made during the 2023-24 financial year. This report, along with the consolidated financial statements, meets the requirements for a Directors' Report and accounts for Companies Act purposes.

Implementing our Strategy

This annual report marks the first year of implementing the new strategy that Age UK Cheshire adopted in 2023. The 2023 strategy consists of a refreshed Vision, Mission, and Values, supported by eight strategic objectives. The report reviews the progress made against these objectives in the 2023-24 financial year.

Our aim is to support older people in living their best lives by:

- Relieving **loneliness**, so that older people feel connected.
- Combatting **poverty**, so that older people have enough to live on.
- Increasing **independence**, so that older people can live the lives they want to lead.

Progress against the Age UK Cheshire Strategy

Relieving loneliness

Under our objective of relieving loneliness, so that older people feel connected, we have successfully continued and expanded initiatives like Sharing Time and Bright Memories. Sharing Time, our telephone befriending project, has been instrumental in combating social isolation, directly addressing the core goal of relieving loneliness and ensuring older people feel connected. Meanwhile, Bright Memories continues to provide essential support to those with early-stage dementia, further fostering a sense of community and connection. Our Green Connections project has also helped older people reconnect with nature, promoting their well-being and a sense of belonging.

Combatting poverty

Significant achievements were made under our objective of combatting poverty, so that older people have enough to live on. Our Information & Advice services have provided vital support, securing substantial funding to continue these efforts and effectively combat poverty. Additionally, our outreach and engagement activities have been successful, ensuring that more older people receive the help they need to maintain a decent standard of living.

Increasing independence

Increasing independence remains a core objective, so that older people can live the lives they want to lead. Our Safe at Home project was pivotal in preventing falls, while our Independent Living Team continues to empower older people to live fulfilling lives. Furthermore, our Dementia Support and Countess of Chester Hospital Wellbeing projects have been crucial in supporting older individuals and their families, thereby promoting independence and quality of life.

Maintaining high standards

We have maintained high-quality standards across our services, focusing on quality so that older people receive a high standard of service from us. This is reflected in our Net Promoter Scores and ISO 9001:2015 certification. Our unwavering commitment to excellence guarantees that older people receive the best possible support from Age UK Cheshire.

Financial and operational efficiency

Our efforts to generate income have been fruitful, focusing on income so that we can increase the impact we have on older people in Cheshire. We have seen significant growth in retail sales, Gift Aid reclaim, and various successful fundraising activities. Additionally, we have expanded our funding base, securing important grants and donations that bolster our mission and enhance our capacity to support older individuals.

We streamlined our operations to enhance effectiveness, focusing on efficiency so that we use our resources to increase our impact on older people. By implementing new committee structures and cost-saving measures, we have optimised both our governance and our operations, thereby increasing the effectiveness of our projects and support services.

Taking care of our people

We prioritised the well-being and development of our staff and volunteers, focusing on our people who deliver our activities and services. Recognising their contributions through various initiatives and supporting their professional growth has been central to our strategy. Their dedication and hard work are the backbone of our organisation, enabling us to achieve our objectives.

Influencing change

Our influence on policies and issues affecting older people has grown, focusing on influencing the issues and policies that impact older people's lives. Through active engagement in consultations and co-production activities, we have made significant strides in influencing issues and policies that impact older people's lives, thereby advocating for their needs and interests effectively.

Trustee Board changes

In October 2023, Sheila Wentworth stepped down from the Board, and Rebecca Hemshall took up the post as Chair of Trustees. We extend our sincere thanks to Sheila for her years of dedicated service and welcome Rebecca to her new role. The following Trustees also stepped down during the year: Simon Bunyan, Val Pasley, Carrie Bower and Amarjit Grewal. We extend our thanks to all former Trustees for their commitment and dedication to older people in Cheshire.

Future Leadership Transitions

As we look ahead, we announce that our CEO, Dale Maskell, will be leaving the organisation in October 2024, and our CFO, Helen Flaherty will be retiring in September 2024. A successful recruitment campaign has taken place over the Summer of 2024 for successors. Early in the Autumn of 2024 Hannah Taylor will be joining as CEO and Sarah Bunting as CFO. We are confident that the new leadership will continue to drive our mission forward and build on the strong foundation laid by Dale and our current team.

Merging with Age UK Cheshire East

The most significant milestone this year has been our work towards the merger with Age UK Cheshire East. Effective from 30th June 2024, this merger involved the transfer of the Operations, Assets and Liabilities of Age UK Cheshire East into Age UK Cheshire. This strategic move aims to consolidate resources, streamline operations, and enhance our service delivery across the entire Cheshire region.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the Trustees, Senior Leadership Teams, and staff of both Age UK Cheshire and Age UK Cheshire East for their dedication and hard work in bringing about this successful merger. Their commitment has been instrumental in ensuring a smooth transition and positioning us for even greater impact in the future.



Rebecca Hemshall – Chair of Trustees



Dale Maskell – CEO

Date: 24th September 2024

Progress against our plans

Our Strategic Objectives for 2023-24

The 2023-24 financial year represented the first year of the strategy agreed in 2023 by Age UK Cheshire, using a structure of eight key strategic objectives as described below. What follows is a summary of the key achievements of the organisation during the 2023-24 financial year.

OBJECTIVE 1: Relieving loneliness, so that older people feel connected.

A focus on us reaching more people experiencing loneliness in Cheshire.

OBJECTIVE 2: Combatting poverty, so that older people have enough to live on.

A focus on us reaching more people experiencing poverty in Cheshire.

OBJECTIVE 3: Increasing independence, so that older people can live the lives they want to lead.

Focus on us supporting more people to live an independent life in Cheshire.

OBJECTIVE 4: Focusing on quality, so that older people receive a high standard of service from us.

A focus on maintaining and improving the quality of our charitable and paid-for services, and in our internal processes and procedures.

OBJECTIVE 5: Focusing on income, so that we can increase the impact we have on older people in Cheshire.

A focus on us generating more income from a diversity of sources.

OBJECTIVE 6: Focusing on efficiency, so that we use our resources to increase our impact on older people.

A focus on making the best use of people, our skills, our experience, our data, our assets, and our ways of working.

OBJECTIVE 7: Focusing on our people, who deliver our activities and services.

A focus on improving the experiences of staff and volunteers of Age UK Cheshire.

OBJECTIVE 8: Focusing on influencing the issues and policies that impact on older peoples' lives.

Focus on improving policies and procedures that impact on older people, informed by lived experiences and our impact data.

Our Strategic Goals for 2023-24

OBJECTIVE 1: Relieving loneliness, so that older people feel connected.

Objective 1 Goals for 2023-24

2023-24 Goals:	Progress
1.1: Increase the number of people supported with relieving loneliness each quarter.	Throughout the year, 502 people were supported in relieving loneliness. The number of individuals supported each quarter did not increase linearly, with quarter two recording the lowest number at 134, while quarter four saw a significant boost with 309 cases. This variation is attributed to several large-group activities in quarter four that increased the overall numbers.
1.2: Increase the number of people who are new to us, and we reach to support with relieving loneliness each quarter.	Of the 502 individuals supported, 384 were new to our services. The quarter-by-quarter trend showed variation, ranging from 43 new individuals in quarter two to 217 in quarter four, primarily due to the group activities conducted at the year's end.
1.3: Increase the percentage of people that we reach who are living in the areas most at risk of loneliness each quarter.	The effort to combine external datasets with Age UK Cheshire's data turned out to be more challenging than expected. This will require further work and resources in 2024-25 to ensure we can make meaningful comparisons and gain valuable insights.
1.4: Increase the percentage of people that we reach who are new to us and are living in the areas most at risk of loneliness each quarter.	Progress has also been slower due to operational difficulties, such as securing the right expertise. While some work was done with the help of a consultant, more investment in staff time and skills will be needed to move this forward.

Our efforts to relieve loneliness saw significant achievements. The following services contributed to progress towards achieving this objective:

- **Connect All**

Connect All operated in Northwich and Crewe, supporting older people to safely explore and utilise the internet and digital devices. We offered personalised assistance with skills, device loans, and affordable access to online resources. Cheshire East Council and Charitable Trusts funded this service. This service ended in March 2024 due to continuation funding for the activities we were delivering not being forthcoming, despite our best efforts.

- **Sharing Time**

Sharing Time is a telephone befriending service available throughout Cheshire, connecting individuals over 50 with volunteers for regular, supportive conversations. This initiative aims to combat loneliness and foster connections. Charitable Trusts fund this service.

- **Bright Memories**

Bright Memories provides day activity groups for older individuals experiencing the early stages of dementia, enhancing their quality of life through mental, physical, and social activities. This service is a charged-for service and was also supported by the Northwich Care Community.

- **Green Connections**

Green Connections encourages older residents in Crewe to engage with nature, enhancing their living spaces and social ties through gardening projects. Corporate Sponsorship funds this service.

An example of our work on relieving loneliness:

Ben has been experiencing profound loneliness since the passing of his wife. Unfortunately, he is not close to his son or daughter-in-law, which has exacerbated his feelings of isolation. While Ben is capable of doing some shopping, he lacks anyone to talk to about his deeper feelings and concerns.

Ben's primary challenge was emotional isolation. Despite his ability to manage basic tasks like shopping, he had no one to share his thoughts and feelings with. This situation worsened when Ben received a cancer diagnosis, which he felt unable to discuss with his family due to the painful memories of his mother's passing from the same illness.

Recognising the need for a befriender, Age UK Cheshire matched Ben with a much younger volunteer who shared a similar outlook on life. Despite initial concerns about the age difference, the pairing proved successful. Ben found solace in their lengthy, engaging conversations. When Ben felt ready to discuss his cancer diagnosis, he sought the support of his befriender and the coordinator at Age UK Cheshire before speaking to his son. This allowed Ben to process his emotions and prepare for the difficult conversation with his family.

With the support of his befriender, Ben was able to discuss his diagnosis with his son, alleviating some of his emotional burden. The regular calls provided by the befriender continue to be a source of comfort and support for Ben as he undergoes treatment. The befriending service has significantly improved Ben's emotional well-being, helping him feel less isolated and more supported during a challenging time.

OBJECTIVE 2: Combatting poverty, so that older people have enough to live on.

Objective 2 Goals for 2023-24

2023-24 Goals:	Progress
2.1: Increase the number of people supported in combatting poverty each quarter.	Throughout the year, 1,499 people received support in combatting poverty. The number of individuals assisted each quarter varied, ranging from 346 to 548. The significant increase in quarter four was driven by community outreach activities, which expanded our reach substantially.
2.2: Increase the number of people who are new to us, and we reach to combat poverty each quarter.	Of the total individuals supported, 1,170 were new to our services. The number of new individuals assisted each quarter ranged from 234 to 420, reflecting successful outreach and engagement efforts.

<p>2.3: Increase the percentage of people that we reach who are living in the areas most at risk of poverty each quarter.</p>	<p>The complexity of integrating external datasets with Age UK Cheshire data was underestimated, requiring further development and resources in 2024-25 to achieve meaningful comparisons and insights.</p>
<p>2.4: Increase the percentage of people that we reach who are new to us and are living in the areas most at risk of poverty each quarter.</p>	<p>Efforts to increase the percentage of new individuals reached in high-risk areas encountered challenges, including operational delays and resource constraints. Further development is necessary to meet this goal.</p>

We made strides in combatting poverty through our **Information & Advice** service, which provides free, confidential guidance:

- **Information & Advice**

Information & Advice offers free, confidential guidance across Cheshire to older adults and their supporters on various issues, ensuring their well-being and rights are maintained. This service is funded by the National Lottery Community Fund – Reaching Communities until June 2026 and was also supported by funding from national Age UK.

An example of our work on combatting poverty:

Matilda, an 81-year-old woman, resides alone in a rural area of Cheshire. Her days are often brightened by visits to the local garden centre, where she enjoys socialising with her friends. Despite her enjoyment of these social outings, Matilda's daily routine is marked by financial struggles. Her only sources of income are her State Pension and a modest amount of savings.

Matilda faced significant financial difficulties. With limited resources and confidence, she found it challenging to manage her finances and seek additional support. Her friend Jane, recognising Matilda's plight, contacted Age UK Cheshire (AUKC) on her behalf to seek assistance with her financial situation.

Upon receiving Jane's call, AUKC sought Matilda's consent to engage directly. After securing her approval, a comprehensive review of Matilda's circumstances was undertaken. A volunteer conducted a full benefits check, ensuring Matilda was well-prepared for the process by informing her of the appointment details and required information. This preparation allowed Matilda to feel comfortable and confident throughout the discussion.

As a result of the benefits check, Matilda was awarded £285.52 per week in benefit entitlements. This substantial increase in income has greatly alleviated her financial burdens, enabling her to cover her daily living expenses, transport costs, and continue enjoying social outings with friends. Matilda expressed her immense satisfaction with the support, which has significantly improved her quality of life.

OBJECTIVE 3: Increasing independence, so that older people can live the lives they want to lead.

Objective 3 Goals for 2023-24

2023-24 Goals:	Progress
<i>3.1: Increase the number of people supported in increasing their independence each quarter.</i>	Over the year, 1,021 people were supported in increasing their independence. The number of individuals assisted each quarter ranged from 237 to 393. This range reflects the impact of launching new services and expanding existing ones.
<i>3.2: Increase the number of people who are new to us, and we support in increasing their independence each quarter.</i>	A total of 687 new individuals received support throughout the year, with quarterly figures ranging from 143 to 188. These figures highlight our successful efforts in reaching out to new individuals and expanding our services.

Our initiatives to increase independence included several vital services:

- **Safe at Home**

Safe at Home helped prevent falls for over 60s in Cheshire West and Chester through home hazard assessments and advice on home safety. Cheshire West & Chester Council funded this service until September 2023.

- **Independent Living Team**

The Independent Living Team in Cheshire West and Chester supports those aged 65 and over to continue living independently at home. We provide impartial advice on securing care support, with the service currently out to tender for renewal from October 2024 onwards.

- **Dementia Support**

Dementia Support assists individuals newly diagnosed with dementia and their families in Northwich and Nantwich, offering vital guidance and support. This service is contracted through the Cheshire & Merseyside Integrated Care Board until March 2025 for the Nantwich service, and September 2024 for the Northwich service.

- **Countess of Chester Hospital Wellbeing service**

In collaboration with the Community Geriatrician Team at the Countess of Chester Hospital, this service assists individuals in transitioning from hospital to home, focusing on recovery and preventing re-admission. This service is contracted directly with the hospital until March 2026.

- **Community Home First**

Community Home First supports Cheshire West and Chester residents in discharge from hospital, and in home hazard assessment to reduce the risk of falls. Cheshire West and Chester Council fund this service. This funding is supported by Cheshire West and Cheshire Council and the Integrated Care Board.

An example of our work on increasing independence:

Brenda, an 88-year-old woman, has a large family and a rich history as a nurse and home help. Despite her independent spirit, Brenda's days are constrained by numerous health conditions, including memory impairment and osteoarthritis. These conditions severely limit her mobility and increase her risk of falls.

Brenda's primary challenges revolve around her health and mobility. Her conditions make it difficult for her to move around her home safely, and she often relies on her daughter or a family friend to access the community. Recently, her daughter, who is her main carer, fractured her foot, further complicating Brenda's care situation.

The Independent Living Team (ILT) at Age UK Cheshire was contacted to assist Brenda in sourcing a private care package. An Independent Living Adviser helped Brenda apply for a carer's card and find a private care agency for temporary support. This assistance empowered Brenda, allowing her to have control over her care arrangements and alleviate some of the pressure on her daughter.

Brenda now feels reassured with the new knowledge and plans in place to manage her care during her daughter's recovery. She expressed her gratitude to the ILT, highlighting the peace of mind and empowerment she gained from their support. Brenda can now navigate this challenging period with a clear plan and reduced stress on her family.

OBJECTIVE 4: Focusing on quality, so that older people receive a high standard of service from us.

Objective 4 Goals for 2023-24

2023-24 Goals:	Progress
<p>4.1: Achieve a high 'Net Promoter Score' each six months as an overall measure of the quality of the charitable services that we deliver.</p> <p>(The Net Promoter Score (NPS) is an external, benchmarked metric used to measure customer satisfaction and loyalty by asking how likely people are to recommend a product or service to others, with scores ranging from -100 to 100. A good score is considered +50, and an exceptional score as +75).</p>	<p>In November 2023, the survey results indicated an NPS of 67 for charitable services, maintaining an excellent standard when compared to the previous score of 70. This consistent performance reflects positively on the quality of our services.</p>
<p>4.2: Achieve a high 'Net Promoter Score' cumulatively as an overall measure of the direction of travel of the quality of the services that we deliver.</p>	<p>Since January 2022, the cumulative NPS score has been 68.4, reaffirming our commitment to delivering excellent services. This sustained high score demonstrates the effectiveness of our ongoing efforts to enhance service quality.</p>

<p>4.3: Achieve a high ‘Net Promoter Score’ each six months as an overall measure of the quality of the paid-for services that we deliver.</p>	<p>The NPS score for our paid-for services reached 76, placing these services in the exceptional category. This outstanding result highlights the superior quality and satisfaction associated with our paid-for offerings.</p>
<p>4.4: Maintain high standards for ISO and national Age UK quality marks.</p>	<p>During the year, an interim ISO 9001:2015 audit was conducted, and the charity was successfully re-certified. The audit confirmed that our management system meets the required standards, supports effective implementation and maintenance, complies with regulations, tracks performance objectives, utilises an effective internal audit programme, ensures ongoing suitability through reviews, and overall complies with audit standards, with no major non-conformities identified.</p> <p>From a governance perspective, the organisation adopted a new committee structure to support the Board in its efforts to continually improve the governance of the charity.</p>

We maintained and improved delivery of high-quality services, as reflected in our Net Promoter Score (NPS) and ISO 9001:2015 certification. Overall, Age UK Cheshire scored 70 and 69.4 in the NPS in the last two surveys, with a cumulative score of 68.4. A score above 50 is considered excellent, and above 75 as exceptional.

- **ISO interim re-certification:** We successfully achieved interim re-certification for ISO 9001:2015, confirming the robustness and efficacy of our management system.
- **Feedback from the people we work with:** In the November 2023 feedback survey, 82% of respondents reported being very satisfied with our services, with an additional 10% indicating satisfaction. Cumulatively, 81% of respondents expressed that they were very satisfied, and 13% were satisfied. This overwhelmingly positive feedback underscores the high standard of service we provide.

Examples of feedback from the people we have worked with:

“Age UK Cheshire were an absolute lifeline when we had to transfer Mum from a hospital setting into a care home. There was no way I could have undertaken a care home search on my own at what was a very stressful time.”

“I’ve had nothing but the greatest help from Age UK Cheshire and I am quite sure that any friend would find the same!”

“The help, advice and support Age UK offered was outstanding.”

“The phone calls I receive are very comforting as I am bed bound and unable to get out. They help me feel connected to the rest of the world.”

OBJECTIVE 5: Focusing on income, so that we can increase the impact we have on older people in Cheshire.

Objective 5 Goals for 2023-24

2023-24 Goals:	Progress
5.1: Grow income through paid-for services and activities.	The Bright Memories service saw a significant income increase of 121%. Additionally, the re-launch of Coach Trips generated substantial revenue, amounting to £18,333. Retail income showed positive growth, increasing by over 10% compared to the previous year.
5.2: Grow income through local fundraising and local corporate activity.	Legacy income experienced an impressive increase of 123%. However, donations and appeals saw a decline, reducing by 24%.
5.3: Grow income through trust fund applications.	During the year £18,619 was secured through applications to Trust Funds.
5.4: Grow income by securing appropriate grants and contracts supplied by statutory partners.	We secured £235,459 through grants and contracts with statutory partners, bolstering our financial resources to support our services.

Our financial stability and impact were bolstered through various income-generating activities.

- **Retail growth:** The increase in retail income is very positive, reflecting effective strategies and customer and donor engagement, resulting in an increase in donations and consequently sales, and an exceptional 43% increase in gift aid.
- **Bright Memories:** There was an improvement in attendance and associated fees at the Bright Memories service throughout the year and a more secure charging agreement with individuals was successfully implemented.
- **Coach Trips:** A new schedule of paid-for coach trips was successfully launched, contributing to our income growth.
- **Fundraising activities:** Numerous personal challenge events were organised, including sponsored Manchester 10k runners, fundraising buckets at Chester races, a boxing sponsored challenge event, and a sponsored half marathon challenge event.
- **External fundraiser:** We continued to use an external fundraiser to support the generation of trust fund and grant income.
- **Community Home First funding:** Funding was secured for the Community Home First project, supporting hospital discharge and home hazard assessment to reduce fall risks.
- **National Lottery Community Fund:** The year marked the beginning of the delivery of the National Lottery Community Fund project for Information & Advice.
- **Countess of Chester Wellbeing Service:** We secured three years of funding for the Countess of Chester Wellbeing Service, ensuring its continued operation.
- **Safe at Home - Falls Prevention:** The Safe at Home Falls Prevention service concluded this year, resulting in the end of its accompanying funding.

Examples of feedback from the people we have worked with:

"My husband attends Bright Memories and I feel that the visits are very beneficial to him."

"I have been on two coach trips with Age UK Cheshire, and both were very enjoyable and such friendly folk, what more can we ask for? Very happy days out!"

"The Bright Memories group days give Mum pleasure and me some freedom."

"I found the coach trip very well organised and the volunteers very helpful and pleasant. Also, for the service we received I thought it was good value for money."

OBJECTIVE 6: Focusing on efficiency, so that we use our resources to increase our impact on older people.

Efforts to streamline our support structure included the SLT, Core Support, and Operations Team absorbing responsibilities, and maintaining efficiency resulting in reduced core costs.

Objective 6 Goals for 2023-24

2023-24 Goals:	Progress
6.1: Maintain a proportionate core support structure for the organisation.	In an effort to streamline core costs, the role of Head of HR & Volunteering was not re-recruited for, with these responsibilities now being managed by the CEO and a small, dedicated HR team. The recruitment of a Finance Manager was paused, and the responsibilities absorbed by the CFO. Additionally, the Operations Team paused the recruitment of a Service Manager post in anticipation of the merger and these responsibilities were split between the Head of Operations and the remaining Service Manager. These measures were taken in anticipation of a new future structure and helped maintain a lean and efficient support structure for the organisation.
6.2: Establish costs per individual measures for the organisation and individual services and activities.	Our organisation provides intensive support, a baseline costing per individual on average was established during the year. This figure reflects the comprehensive nature of our services, as many individuals access multiple services we offer.
6.3: Establish costs per contact measures for the organisation and individual services and activities.	Everyone we support requires a bespoke level of work, recorded as contacts. Contacts vary widely in timescale and complexity. An average baseline costing per contact was established during the year, indicating the volume and intensity of work undertaken by our team.

Efforts to streamline our support structure included the SLT, Core Support, and Operations Team absorbing responsibilities, and maintaining efficiency resulting in reduced core costs.

- **Absorption of responsibilities:** Existing staff, including the CEO and a small HR team, absorbed the responsibilities of the Head of HR & Volunteering post when the vacancy arose, with similar efforts made in Finance and Operations. This reallocation of duties ensured continuity and efficiency in managing HR and volunteering functions.

OBJECTIVE 7: Focusing on our people, who deliver our activities and services.

Objective 7 Goals for 2023-24

2023-24 Goals:	Progress
7.1: Achieve a high 'Net Promoter Score' each six months as an overall measure of the quality of experience as a staff member of the organisation.	Due to a reduction in HR support capacity, planned staff surveys were not conducted. Therefore, data collection was not completed. Conducting a comprehensive staff survey for the newly merged organisation will be a priority for the 2024-25 financial year.
7.2: Achieve a high 'Net Promoter Score' cumulatively as an overall measure of the quality of experience as a staff member of the organisation.	
7.3: Achieve a high 'Net Promoter Score' cumulatively as an overall measure of the quality of experience as a volunteer of the organisation.	The cumulative survey results for volunteer experience yielded a score of 51, which is considered excellent. This rating includes an exceptional score of 75 achieved in the most recent survey round.
7.4: Achieve a high 'Net Promoter Score' each six months as an overall measure of the quality of experience as a volunteer of the organisation.	The April 2024 survey results indicated an NPS of 75 for volunteer experience, highlighting a significant improvement from the previous survey's score of 48.

While planned staff surveys were not conducted due to reduced HR capacity, we achieved high satisfaction scores from volunteers.

- **Town Hall Meetings:** Quarterly in-person Town Hall Meetings were held, supporting team morale and shared learning. Additionally, monthly online Town Hall meetings provided opportunities to share news and updates and engage in joint problem-solving.
- **Staff Survey:** The planned people survey was not conducted due to lower capacity resulting from changes in the HR team and the additional responsibilities taken on by the CEO.
- **Mandatory Training:** All staff members completed mandatory training, ensuring compliance with rules, regulations, and best practices.
- **Volunteer Survey:** The most recent volunteer survey achieved excellent results, the best ever recorded, indicating a high level of satisfaction among volunteers.
- **Volunteer Recognition:** Volunteer recognition events and activities took place throughout the year, acknowledging and celebrating the contributions of our volunteers.

OBJECTIVE 8: Focusing on influencing the issues and policies that impact on older peoples' lives.

Objective 8 Goals for 2023-24

2023-24 Goals:	Progress
8.1: Proactively engage in consultation activities in matters which affect older people.	<p>We actively participated in several consultation activities, submitting detailed responses to Cheshire West and Chester's Future of Transport consultation and the "Let's Talk Adult Social Care - Enabling Great Lives" consultation. One response was submitted on behalf of Age UK Cheshire, and another, which we led on and drafted, represented a coalition of community sector service providers to older people.</p> <p>Additionally, we have been actively participating in the ongoing Age UK network consultation, 'Our Shared Future' regarding the relationship between local Age UKs and the national Age UK Charity.</p>
8.2: Proactively engage in co-production activities in matters which affect older people.	<p>We played a key role in the co-production of Cheshire West and Chester's new Joint Strategic Needs Assessment on loneliness. Until March 2024, our CEO Chaired the Sector Leadership Group in Cheshire West, championing the interests of community sector beneficiaries across Cheshire.</p>
8.3: Increase our social media, website, and magazine audiences.	<p>Our social media presence expanded significantly, with notable increases in engagement and followers across various platforms. While we saw some fluctuations in engagement rates, the overall reach and impact of our digital content have improved, highlighting our successful efforts in increasing awareness and engagement.</p>

We actively engaged in consultation and co-production activities, increasing our social media, website, and magazine audiences.

- **Facebook:** We posted 419 times, an increase from 399 posts the previous year. Our fan base grew to 2,287 from 2,153, and we saw a page engagement rate of 4.31%, a substantial improvement from 0.29%. Page engagements surged to 10,703 from 553, with a slight decrease in page reach to 210,493 from 210,646.
- **X (formerly known as Twitter):** We tweeted 269 times, down from 302, with followers slightly decreasing to 4,169 from 4,197. The engagement rate was 2.01%, compared to 2.57% previously, and post engagements increased to 437 from 396.

- **Instagram:** We increased our posts to 341 from 300, with followers rising to 1,061 from 949. The engagement rate was 8.8%, down from 11.92%, but post reach improved to 15,358 from 14,332, and profile reach was 11,245 compared to 11,748 previously.
- **LinkedIn:** Posts decreased slightly to 279 from 304, with followers increasing to 517 from 465. The post engagement rate was 5.46%, slightly down from 5.87%, with page engagement at 628, down from 930, and page reach at 9,669, down from 10,652.
- **Website:** User numbers were 20,039, down from 24,000 the previous year. This is in some part due to a restructuring of the site led by national Age UK.
- **Magazine:** The number of subscribers reached 329.

A heartfelt thank you to all staff and volunteers who dedicated their time and effort to our projects throughout the year. Their commitment has been instrumental in advancing our mission to relieve loneliness, combat poverty, and increase the independence of older individuals, enabling them to live the lives they want to lead. We extend our gratitude to everyone who worked tirelessly to maintain and enhance the quality of our services, contributing to excellent results, financial stability, and an expanded impact on older people in Cheshire. Their dedication and flexibility in accommodating new responsibilities has been pivotal in delivering our activities and services, influencing issues and policies affecting older people, and enhancing their lives.

Merger with Age UK Cheshire East

In July 2023, the Board of Age UK Cheshire was presented with a proposal for closer collaboration with Age UK Cheshire East. The Board agreed to continue discussions with the Chairs and CEOs of both organisations to explore this potential collaboration further. The intention behind merging was about strategically enhancing the support we offer to older people in Cheshire, whilst also enabling us to benefit from amalgamating resources.

By September 2023, an external consultant was appointed to produce a comprehensive report outlining the feasibility and implications of a merger. His report covered critical areas, including a strategic review addressing legal and regulatory compliance, governance, and organisational structure. Additionally, the report included an operational review focusing on service delivery impact, HR, operational processes, and IT/data security. A market review evaluated income sources and stakeholder relations, while a financial review developed a business case weighing the costs and benefits of the merger. The report further assessed cultural and organisational fit, identified risks and mitigations, and provided final recommendations on merger feasibility and potential models.

The strategic rationale for the merger was clear. Enhanced service delivery was a key factor, proposing an opportunity to expand our services, ensuring better access and comprehensive support for all older people within the two boroughs. Increased impact was another major consideration; through unity, our capacity for advocacy and influence would be significantly enhanced, strengthening our voice in policymaking, and extending our influence for the betterment of local older people. Synergies and efficiency were also critical, as the merger aimed to optimise operational efficiencies by streamlining processes and strategically allocating resources towards frontline service delivery. Improved sustainability and resilience were paramount, with the unified entity possessing greater resilience to navigate financial challenges and ensuring continuous support for older people.

In November 2023, the Board reviewed the consultant's final report, which confirmed alignment of strategic objectives, and it approved pursuing the option which involved Age UK Cheshire East closing and transferring its Operations, Assets and Liabilities to Age UK Cheshire, pending detailed due diligence.

By January 2024, the Terms of Reference for a Collaboration Steering Committee to oversee the due diligence and collaboration work were also approved, marking the committee's initiation. This committee then began meeting to oversee the merger process.

In February 2024, refreshed Articles for Age UK Cheshire were filed at Companies House and approved by the Charity Commission, marking a significant milestone.

In March 2024, the Board received and reviewed the due diligence report and the business case for the merger. The Board unanimously supported the business case and proposed a merger date of 30th June 2024.

By May 2024, a merged budget was presented to the Board, reflecting the consolidated financial planning for the unified organisation.

On 30th June 2024, the merger was successfully completed. The Operations, Assets and Liabilities of Age UK Cheshire East were legally transferred to Age UK Cheshire, consolidating resources and enhancing service delivery across Cheshire. This significant milestone was achieved through the dedication and collaborative efforts of the Trustees, Senior Leadership Teams, and staff from both organisations, ensuring a smooth transition and positioning Age UK Cheshire for an even greater impact in the future.

The strategic rationale for the merger, woven throughout this process, ensured that the decision was driven by a commitment to enhance service delivery, increase advocacy impact, achieve operational efficiencies, and improve sustainability and resilience.

Our Goals for 2024-25:

In the upcoming year, our strategic objectives will continue to focus on key areas: relieving loneliness, combatting poverty, increasing independence, maintaining high-quality services, growing income, enhancing efficiency, supporting our people, and influencing policies affecting older people. These eight goals are central to our mission: Age UK Cheshire is a local organisation working with older people, their families, and their carers to support them in living their best lives. Our continued commitment to these goals ensures that we can effectively support older people in our community.

As part of this ongoing commitment, we will also prioritise the integration of Age UK Cheshire East and Age UK Cheshire into a unified organisation. This merger will enable us to leverage shared resources, standardise our data collection, and streamline our efforts to provide consistent and impactful support across all areas of our work. By harmonising our operations and reporting mechanisms, we aim to improve our transparency and responsiveness, better addressing the needs of older people. This integration is crucial for ensuring our services are accessible, efficient, and of the highest quality, thereby making a substantial difference in the lives of older people in Cheshire.

Financial Review

We ended the year 2023/24 in a strong financial position. Following three years of reported deficits, we are reporting a surplus of £175,241 and a healthy balance sheet. After a difficult 2022/23 the organisation experienced a more stable year in terms of its service delivery, finances and headcount.

During the year we developed our financial reporting building on and reporting against our 3 key strategic objectives of:

- relieving loneliness
- combatting poverty
- increasing independence

as well as retail and other income generation.

The financial report is now a comprehensive pack, comprising detailed management accounts and variance analysis to a top-level performance summary, cashflow and reserves. The forecast to year end is updated monthly showing the likely, best and worst forecasts. The full report is produced for the bi-monthly board meetings with a financial snapshot produced for the intervening months. The annual accounts included here have also been recast to reflect these strategic objectives. The remaining 5 objectives are not shown separately in the financial reports as they are threads common to all services and retail.

We reduced our core costs during the year with core salaries reducing by 16% on prior year. Whilst we had anticipated achieving this through implementing the outcomes of our core cost review, this was achieved by not replacing some key roles – Head of Human Resources and Volunteering, Services Manager and Finance Manager. The recruitment of expertise to develop our reporting capacity using Charity Log and PowerBI was not successful, and recruitment was put on hold. Consequently, our goal for the year of quantifying our value and demonstrating our impact did not progress. This remains a priority for future years.

Our trust fundraiser continued with their successes securing funding for 3 years from the National Lottery for Information and Advice. Funding was also obtained for Connect All and Sharing Time as well as a contribution towards our volunteer coordinator role. However, securing ongoing funding for the Connect All service into 2024/25 proved too challenging and this service closed at the end of March 2024.

Our retail portfolio continued to perform well during 23/24 building on the foundations laid by the Area Retail Manager in the prior year. The Head of Retail and Fundraising role was created during the year reflecting the contribution retail makes to the organisation – not only financially but also as the public facing presence it commands on the high street. Coach trips made an encouraging re-start at the beginning of April 2023 and are now a regular monthly occurrence with most trips fully booked. We further built on our unrestricted income through fundraising initiatives including participants at the Great Manchester Run, a collection at Chester Races and a line-dancing evening.

Income

Total income for 2023/24 is reported at £1,355,086 before a gain in our investment portfolio of £34,613 (total income of £1,389,699 after the gain). This is £131,737 less than prior year at £1,486,823. We were extremely fortunate and grateful to have been left a significant residual legacy totalling £193,030. This has had a huge positive impact on our reserves and cashflow. Retail income increased by £61,306 on 2022/23 to £591,344 in 2023/24 and the income generated by coach trips is reflected in the increase on other activities income to £56,644 from £33,879 last year.

We secured new funding in early 2024 from Cheshire West and Chester Council to deliver the 'Community Home First' project. The funding is in 2 elements with one secured for 2 years and the other for 1 year.

Our total income for the year is broken down into the following principal sources of funding:

- Service level agreements with Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester Councils and Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board delivered either solely or in partnership totalling £212,959 (15.7% of total income)
- Grant funding, both restricted and unrestricted, totalling £197,070 (14.5% of total income)
- Unrestricted income through the charging of fees, donations, fundraising, legacies received and our retail network of £945,057 (69.8% of total income with 43.6% coming from retail and 14.5% from legacies)

OBJECTIVE 1: Relieving loneliness, so that older people feel connected.

Income reduced by £62,063 (27%) year-on-year. Prior year included funding for services which closed by the end of March 2023 being Brightlife, EIP Day Services and Crewe Men in Sheds totalling £112,788. Our primary funding source for Connect All also stopped at the end of March 2023 with the service then being funded for 2023/24 by two smaller grants reducing year on year income by £23,761. Income from Bright Memories and Green Connections both increased year on year. The first by £42,532 thanks to a combination of a grant and increased attendance fees and the second by £37,540 reflecting a full 12 month of funding compared to the prior year. We were successful with a bid to the Lottery Awards for All fund to support Sharing Time for 12 months from January 2024.

Of the total £107,217 funding, £104,717 is grant funded to support the delivery of Sharing Time, Bright Memories, Connect All and Green Connections. The balance consists of a restricted donation for Bright Memories and unrestricted income from attendance fees.

OBJECTIVE 2: Combatting poverty, so that older people have enough to live on.

Our Information and Advice service was primarily funded in the year with grant funding from Age UK and the National Lottery Reaching Communities Fund. We also received a small amount of grant funding to support with energy advice in the beginning of 2024. Income for the Information and Advice service increased by £53,004. Total income within this objective reduced by £88,996 year on year as 2022/23 included £142,000 of Household Support funding which was not received in 2023/24.

Of the total £93,607, £84,853 is grant funded and £8,754 via restricted donation and trust income.

OBJECTIVE 3: Increasing independence, so that older people can live the lives they want to lead.

Total income dropped by £171,893 from 2022/23. Income totalling £208,581 was lost as the contracts for Advocacy was transferred to a new provider in August 2022 and the EIP Falls Prevention contract ceased at the end of September 2023. Service Level Agreement funding for both the Dementia Support and Independent Living contracts remained consistent over both years with funding for Countess of Chester Wellbeing service increasing by £20,753 with a new three-year contract and backdated cost of living increases included. Two new funding streams were secured in the year, both from Cheshire West and Chester, to deliver the Community Home First Service totalling £15,000 in 2023/24.

Of the total £220,459, £212,959 is received via Service Level Agreements and the remaining £7,500 is restricted grant funded.

Other Income

Our retail shops performed well with income for the year £591,344, an increase of £61,306 over last year. There is still further potential for income within our retail portfolio as we struggled to keep all shops open all year during times of sickness and holiday absence.

Legacy income increased by £108,406 to £196,659 from £88,253 in 2022/23. Whilst this is not an area we currently actively promote we were extremely grateful to be a residual beneficiary of a substantial estate for another year.

Total donations reduced year on year by £5,296 with corporate donations reducing by £9,000. Fundraising income of £8,480 was raised in the year.

Other income includes coach trips £18,333; hall hire of Castle Community Centre £3,459; and the sale of surplus iPads £4,537.

Expenditure

Overall expenditure for the year was £1,214,458, a decrease of £376,951 on 2022/23 expenditure of £1,581,409. Expenditure on charitable activities was £572,326 compared to £949,290. The reduction in the proportion of expenditure on charitable activities is primarily due to the changes in the mix of services offered, such as the cessation of higher-cost services, resulting in retail expenditure representing a higher proportion of expenditure overall.

Several factors contribute to the reduction in expenditure in charitable activities. The end of service delivery tying in with the end of funding meant year on year reductions in expenditure in the following service areas:

- Connect All £29,691
- Day services £12,387
- Brightlife £53,182
- Household Support £142,000
- Falls Prevention £24,721
- Advocacy £190,539

Countering this is increased expenditure year on year in the following areas:

- Green Connections £24,770 reflecting a full year of delivery
- Men in Sheds £14,445 one-off costs for the dilapidation requirements Ellesmere Port Shed
- Information and Advice £21,174 in line with the additional funding received
- Countess of Chester Wellbeing £5,331 in line with additional funding
- Community Home First £4,898 new income stream.

The remaining £4,938 consists of smaller balances within Sharing Time, Bright Memories, Dementia Support and Independent Living.

Salaries and associated costs at £772,131 remain our main area of expenditure although this decreased by £218,726 year on year due to the cessation of services during the year and vacancies within core support not being filled. This is despite the organisation awarding pay increases in recognition of the cost-of-living crisis, ranging from 9.7% (in line with the increase in the National Minimum Wage) up to 4% for the Senior Leadership Team. Retail salaries represent 33.7% of the total salary cost. These costs represent 64.1% of our total expenditure (62.6% in 2022/23). Redundancy costs totalling £7,508 were incurred in the year due to the closure of the Falls Prevention and Connect All projects. Other costs remained consistent with prior year with the exception of Governance as this includes £8,775 of legal and professional fees relating to collaboration and merger work with Age UK Cheshire East, and increased audit fees. Following our experience with dilapidation costs for Ellesmere Port shed we have also included £10,000 provision for potential dilapidation costs in our retail premises.

Investment Policy

The trustees, having regard to the liquidity requirements of operating the charity, currently hold the financial reserves in cash, some shares and a low to medium risk, socially responsible portfolio of ethically managed investments for long term growth.

A net gain of £34,613 was recorded for the year, reflecting the position of the financial markets at the end of the financial year. The trustees had reviewed the investments during the prior year and made the decision to consolidate the shares held by the organisation with the investment portfolio and change investment provider. This took longer than expected and did not happen during 2023/24 but will take place during 2024/25. The trustees believe that, in the long term, these investments will continue to return growth and net gains. There is no intention to liquidate these investments in the next year.

Reserves

The trustees annually review the financial risk assessment, and the Reserves policy is subsequently amended. The level of reserves the organisation believes sufficient in based on:

- Meeting the Charity's objectives
- Ensuring adequate working capital to prevent cash flow problems
- Time and resource needed to restructure the organisation in the event of a downturn in funding streams, redundancy costs and the impact on core costs in particular.
- Implications of operational risks including lease commitments and compliance with law and regulation.
- The ability to protect the Charity's ongoing core services without serious disruption.

Our reserves requirement is considered annually with regard to the above factors and is therefore expected to change.

Total reserves for the organisation as at 31 March 2024 were £965,590; the balance of free reserves being £553,030. The charity has designated reserves of £89,799, comprising a designation for the Net Book Value of assets of £16,799 and further specific designations of £73,000 as detailed in note 23 to the accounts. In addition, the organisation holds restricted reserves of £40,678 and endowment funds of £282,083 of which £257,083 are expendable.

The trustees have considered the minimum amount of reserves required to meet the above requirements and the target is £548,320. Our year end free reserves are higher than this by £4,710 at £553,030.

In calculating the reserves target, the trustees considered the following four reserve areas:

- Income risk reserve
- Adversity reserve
- Working capital reserve
- Opportunity reserve

In light of the recent merger with Cheshire East, the Trustees have carefully evaluated both the potential risks and opportunities. The Reserves Policy includes provisions for anticipated income fluctuations and operational challenges resulting from the merger. Additionally, while acknowledging the significant balance of unrestricted reserves, the Trustees have agreed that this should be leveraged effectively to explore new opportunities that align with the Charity's objectives, ensuring financial stability and continued service delivery.

Financial Plans for Future Periods

As detailed in the CEO report earlier, following nearly 12 months of collaboration and hard work the merger between Age UK Cheshire and Age UK Cheshire East took place on 30th June 2024. The financial justification for the merger formed a key part of the decision process ensuring the resulting organisation remains a going concern with strong financial foundations on which to develop and achieve its strategic objectives.

Most of the financial plans for 2024/25 involve the integration of the two organisations financial systems and processes, including payroll, to ensure a seamless transition for all financial stakeholders. Merged budgets for 2024/25 and 2025/26 were approved as part of the merger process. The regular financial reporting to trustees will be expanded to reflect the merged organisation from July 2024 onwards.

Following a transition period allowing the new, larger organisation to find its feet and settle down, work will start on streamlining the financial commitments in line with the merged budget. This will include looking at suppliers, particularly those for IT and phone systems, exploring the future shape of the organisation and ensuring we are fit for purpose for the coming years.

Our retail portfolio has now increased to 9 shops, expanding our unrestricted income potential considerably. A new EPOS system was implemented in all shops at the start of July ensuring consistency of reporting and ability to manage gift aid.

We will continue to make longer term projections of forecasts and cashflow. The organisation has a strong balance sheets, reserves and cash position following the merger and will continue to ensure this is used for the benefit of older people in Cheshire.

Structure, Governance & Management

Age UK Cheshire is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee and is governed by its Memorandum and Articles. The charity has one wholly owned subsidiary, Age Concern Trading in Cheshire Ltd, a trading company. The subsidiary has not traded during the year.

Following legal advice our updated Articles were approved, adopted, implemented and filed at Companies House in February 2024.

The charity also complies with the Brand Partnership Agreement of National Age UK.

Trustees

The Board of Trustees of Age UK Cheshire currently comprises seven members with a further five members joining from Age UK Cheshire East on 1st July 2024 following the merger. Trustees are appointed by a decision of the existing Trustees, and can serve for an initial three years, and for a maximum of three terms in total. Trustees of the charity are directors of both the charity, company limited by guarantee, and the wholly owned subsidiary trading company limited by guarantee.

When a Trustee vacancy arises, we identify specific skills which would benefit our Board and Age UK Cheshire. The need for specific skills is incorporated into the advertisement and role description for the vacant post. Trustee vacancies are advertised using a variety of sources including local press, our website, social media, online job sites, internal promotion and being featured on the website of other voluntary organisations. Applicants are asked to complete an expression of interest and forward their CV. If successfully shortlisted, they are then invited to attend interviews with members of the Board and the Senior Leadership Team.

Once recruited, a comprehensive induction plan ensures new trustees are given the opportunity to undertake training and develop their knowledge of the services we offer. Newly appointed Trustees are supported in establishing relationships with the key individuals with whom they will be working, including the Chair of the Board, Chairs of the Committees, and the Senior Leadership team.

Annually the board reviews its own performance, that of its committees and of individual trustees, including the Chair. For 2023/24 this was achieved through a combination of external reviews, questionnaires, individual and group discussions. A comprehensive skills analysis was also conducted prior to the merger with Age UK Cheshire East.

Trustee Meetings

During 2023/24 the Board met six times.

A collaboration steering committee was formed during the year comprising of representatives from both Age UK Cheshire and Age UK Cheshire East boards as well as the CEOs of both organisations supported by external project management consultants. This committee oversaw the collaboration and merger process of the two organisations, directing its work and ensuring governance and legal compliance.

Following the review of its governance processes in 2022/23, the following sub committees were created and implemented at the start of April 2023.

Governance, Nomination, and Remuneration Committee (GNRC):

The key responsibilities of this committee are:

- To oversee AUKC's governance framework and Board effectiveness.
- To ensure that Board and its committees have an appropriate blend of skills and experience.
- To propose succession planning for Board and committee membership.
- To review succession planning for the Chief Executive and other Senior Leadership Team (SLT) roles.
- To propose and oversee arrangements for assessing Board, Committee and member performance and Chief Executive appraisal.
- To recommend to Board the remuneration of the Chief Executive and SLT members and the staff pay award.

Risk, Audit, and Finance Committee (RAFC):

The key responsibilities of this committee are:

- To provide assurance to the Board on the effectiveness of AUKC's internal control and risk management systems.
- To provide assurance to the Board on AUKC's financial strategies, budgeting, and strategic planning processes.
- To provide assurance to the Board that AUKC complies with relevant laws, regulations, accounting policies and practices and its own policies.
- To oversee the relationship with the external auditors.
- To oversee the arrangements for internal audit.
- To provide advice and make recommendations to the Board about matters within its remit.

Both these sub-committees are working well and will continue for the foreseeable future.

Senior Leadership Team

A Chief Executive is appointed by the trustees to manage the day-to-day operations of the Charity and is supported by a senior leadership team (SLT) with clear lines of responsibility for specific areas of the organisation. To facilitate efficient operations, the Chief Executive has delegated authority, within terms of delegation approved by the trustees, for operational matters including finance, employment, income generation and services activity.

The trustees work with the SLT to develop the longer-term strategic plans for the Charity. Responsibility for the implementation of these plans is delegated to the SLT.

Pay Policy for Senior Staff

The directors consider the key management personnel of the Charity to be the board of directors, who are the Charity's trustees, and the Senior Leadership Team who are in charge of directing and controlling, running and operating the Charity on a day-to-day basis. All directors give of their time freely and no director received remuneration. Details of director's expenses are disclosed in note 13 to the accounts.

The Governance, Nomination and Remuneration Committee (GNRC) recommends to Board the remuneration of the Chief Executive and SLT members, and the staff pay award.

Volunteers

At the end of March 2024, we had 159 (130) active volunteers supporting us on a weekly basis each giving an average of 2.1 (2.3) hours per week, this was an increase in volunteers on the previous year. The total number of volunteering hours for the year was 17,031 (15,542) which equates to 9.04 (8.24) full time members of staff.

Their commitment, dedication and contribution to the Charity is invaluable and all volunteers have our ongoing gratitude.

Fundraising Activities

Age UK Cheshire is committed to ensuring that fundraising activities are conducted in an ethical manner. Age UK Cheshire's maintains a 'Fundraising Policy' which states its position on fundraising practice and documents the standards expected regarding all fundraising activity performed by its staff, volunteers and casual representatives. Age UK Cheshire is a full member of the Institute of Fundraising and is signed-up to support the Code of Fundraising Practice, which is held by the Fundraising Regulator. Fundraising activity is monitored by the Trustee board.

Age UK Cheshire has developed a fundraising charter that makes the following commitments:

- We do not undertake any fundraising door-to-door activity.
- We do not ask for direct debit donations on the street.
- We do not share or sell people's data.
- We do not 'cold-call' people for fundraising purposes.
- We only phone people with whom we have an existing relationship or who have already given us permission to contact them.
- Every communication from us to members of the public always includes information on how to opt out from future communications.
- Donations are not to be requested or accepted from an individual if there are reasonable grounds for believing, in the course of staff or volunteer's engagement with the individual, that they are in vulnerable circumstances, which mean they are unable to make an informed decision to donate.
- Our fundraising is regulated by the Fundraising Regulator and as such we abide by the Code of Fundraising Practice.
- We keep our fundraising practices under review, and we work with others with the aim of improving practice across the Age UK network and the charity sector as a whole.
- We encourage supporters to share feedback with us so we can address any enquiries and concerns.

Risk

The financial risk assessment policy has been reviewed and updated where appropriate; particularly considering the life cycle of some projects, the impact of current legislation on the delivery of our services, and the vulnerability of some of our contracts due to the financial pressures being exerted on local authorities and health bodies. The financial risk assessment also formed part of the consideration for the Charity's reserves level.

During the year, the corporate risk register was regularly reviewed, and the Trustees are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate the Charity's exposure to major risks which were considered in terms of:

- Governance
- Operational risks
- Financial risks
- Environmental and external risks
- Compliance

This is reviewed in detail twice annually by the Senior Leadership Team and the Risk, Audit and Finance Committee. The highest risk areas are reported to Board along with mitigating actions.

Statement of trustees' responsibilities

Charity Law requires the Trustees to prepare an Annual Report and Financial Statements for the financial year which give a true and fair view of the charity and its subsidiary company's performance and activities during the year and its financial position at the end of the year.

In preparing these reports and financial statements the Trustees follow best practice and:

- consider the Charity Commission guidance on public benefit
- review the objectives and activities to ensure they continue to reflect the organisation's aims as well as furthering the charitable purposes for public benefit
- continue to select suitable accounting policies and ensure they are applied consistently
- state whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed and that any departure from this has been fully disclosed and explained within the financial statements.
- produce the financial statements as a going concern unless it is clearly inappropriate to do so.

Trustees are responsible for maintaining accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy the financial position of the charity and its subsidiary company and to ensure the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and its subsidiary company and for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Statement of Disclosure to Auditors

The trustees confirm that, as far as they are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the Charity's auditors are unaware. They have taken all steps that they ought to as trustees in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Charity's auditors are aware of that information.

Auditors

WR Partners were re-appointed as the organisation's auditors for a further year term until 2023/24 at the Annual General Meeting in November 2023.

Post Balance Sheet Events

On 30th June 2024 the Operations, Assets and Liabilities of Age UK Cheshire East were transferred to Age UK Cheshire.



By order of the Trustees
Rebecca Hemshall (Chair)

Date: 24th September 2024

Independent Auditors' Report to The Members of Age Concern Cheshire

We have audited the financial statements of Age Concern Cheshire (the 'parent charitable company') and its subsidiary (the group) for the year ended 31st March 2024 which comprise the Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities, the Consolidated Balance Sheet, the Company Balance Sheet, the Consolidated Cash Flow Statement and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the Group's and of the parent company affairs as at 31st March 2024 and of the group's incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditors responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the group in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the group's and parent charitable company's financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the group's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the

financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 require us to report to you if, in our opinion:

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

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the Statement of Trustees Responsibilities, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

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

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue a Report of the Independent Auditors that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

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

The audit team obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks that are applicable to the Group and determined that the most significant are those that relate to the reporting framework (FRS102 and the Companies Act 2006), the relevant tax compliance regulations, employment law, Health and Safety Regulations and the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

We understood how the Group is complying with these frameworks by making enquiries of management and those responsible for legal and compliance procedures. We also reviewed board minutes to identify any recorded instances of irregularity or non-compliance that might have a material impact on the financial statements.

We assessed the susceptibility of the Group's financial statements to material misstatement, including how fraud might occur by meeting with key management to understand where they considered there was susceptibility to fraud. Based on our understanding our procedures involved enquiries of

management and those charged with governance, manual journal entry testing, cashbook reviews for large and unusual items and the challenge of significant accounting estimates used in preparing the financial statements.

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

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our Report of the Independent Auditors.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Part 4 of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an 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 charitable company and its members, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

WR Partners is eligible for appointment as auditor of the charity by virtue of its eligibility for appointment as auditor of a company under of section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

WR Partners Chartered Accountants

Drake House
Gadbrook Park
Northwich
Cheshire
CW9 7RA

Date: 12 November 2024

Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities for year ending 31 March 2024 (including consolidated income and expenditure account)

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Endowment Funds £	2024 Total £	2023 Total £
Income						
Donations and legacies	4	213,463	-	-	213,463	110,353
Income from charitable activities	5					
Strategic Aims						
Relieving Loneliness	Objective 1	64,260	107,217	-	171,477	233,540
Combatting Poverty	Objective 2	-	93,608	-	93,608	182,604
Increasing Independence	Objective 3	212,959	7,500	-	220,459	392,352
Income from other trading activities						
Retail		591,344	-	-	591,344	530,038
Trading subsidiary	6	-	-	-	-	-
Other activities		56,644	-	-	56,644	33,879
Investment income	7	4,222	-	3,869	8,091	4,057
Total incoming resources		1,142,892	208,325	3,869	1,355,086	1,486,823
Expenditure: Costs of raising funds						
Investment Management Costs	8	2,379	-	-	2,379	2,425
Retail		582,839	-	-	582,839	581,471
Trading subsidiary	6	-	-	-	-	-
Other Activities		56,914	-	-	56,914	48,223
Expenditure on charitable activities	9					
Strategic Aims						
Relieving Loneliness	Objective 1	124,744	93,412	-	218,156	276,523
Combatting Poverty	Objective 2	-	85,184	-	85,184	206,010
Increasing Independence	Objective 3	264,088	4,898	-	268,986	466,757
Total expenditure		1,030,964	183,494	-	1,214,458	1,581,409
Net income/expenditure before gains and losses on investments and transfer		111,928	24,831	3,869	140,628	(94,586)
Net gains/(losses) on investments	18	34,613	-	-	34,613	(16,936)
Transfer	23	10,011	-	(10,011)	-	-
Net movement in funds		156,552	24,831	(6,142)	175,241	(111,522)
Reconciliation of Funds						
Total funds brought forward	23	486,277	15,847	288,225	790,349	901,871
Total funds carried forward	23,24	642,829	40,678	282,083	965,590	790,349

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year. All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities

Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities for year ending 31 March 2023 For Comparison

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Endowment Funds £	2023 Total £
Income					
Donations and legacies	4	110,353	-	-	110,353
Income from charitable activities	5				
Strategic Aims					
Relieving Loneliness	Objective 1	69,621	163,919	-	233,540
Combatting Poverty	Objective 2	162,364	20,240	-	182,604
Increasing Independence	Objective 3	392,352	-	-	392,352
Income from other trading activities					
Retail		530,038	-	-	530,038
Trading subsidiary	6	-	-	-	-
Other activities		33,879	-	-	33,879
Investment income	7	2,795	-	1,262	4,057
Total incoming resources		1,301,402	184,159	1,262	1,486,823
Expenditure: Costs of raising funds					
Investment Management Costs	8	2,425	-	-	2,425
Retail		581,471	-	-	581,471
Trading subsidiary	6	-	-	-	-
Other Activities		48,223	-	-	48,223
Expenditure on charitable activities	9				
Strategic Aims					
Relieving Loneliness	Objective 1	115,085	161,438	-	276,523
Combatting Poverty	Objective 2	192,410	13,600	-	206,010
Increasing Independence	Objective 3	466,757	-	-	466,757
Total expenditure		1,406,371	175,038	-	1,581,409
Net income/expenditure before gains and losses on investments and transfer		(105,969)	9,121	1,262	(94,586)
Net gains/(losses) on investments	18	(16,936)	-	-	(16,936)
Transfer	23	5,940	(5,940)	-	-
Net movement in funds		(115,965)	3,181	1,262	(111,522)
Reconciliation of Funds					
Total funds brought forward	23	602,242	12,666	286,963	901,871
Total funds carried forward	23,24	483,277	15,847	288,225	790,349

Consolidated Balance Sheet
as at 31 March 2024
Registered Company Number 4369758

	Note	Group 2024 £	Group 2023 £	Charity 2024 £	Charity 2023 £
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	17	16,799	14,599	16,799	14,599
Investments	18	371,154	336,541	371,156	336,543
Total Fixed Assets		387,953	351,140	387,955	351,142
Current Assets					
Debtors	19	302,315	182,212	304,979	184,876
Cash at bank and in hand		470,168	351,906	470,168	351,906
Total Current Assets		772,483	534,118	775,147	536,782
Liabilities					
Creditors falling due within one year	20	(194,846)	(94,909)	(194,846)	(94,909)
Net Current Assets		577,637	439,209	580,301	441,873
Total assets less current liabilities		965,590	790,349	968,256	793,015
Net Assets	24	965,590	790,349	968,256	793,015
The funds of the charity:					
Unrestricted income funds		553,030	421,538	555,696	424,204
Designated funds		89,799	64,739	89,799	64,739
Permanent endowment funds		25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000
Expendable endowment funds		257,083	263,225	257,083	263,225
Restricted funds		40,678	15,847	40,678	15,847
Total charity funds	23	965,590	790,349	968,256	793,015

The trustees have prepared the group accounts in accordance with section 398 of the Companies Act 2006 and section 138 of the Charities Act 2011. These accounts are prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act relating to small companies and constitute the annual accounts required by the Companies Act 2006 and are for circulation to members of the company.

The notes at pages 33 to 47 form part of these accounts

Signed:



Name REBECCA HEMSHALL, Chair of Trustees on behalf of the trustees

Approved by the trustees on: 24th September 2024

**Statement of Cash Flows and Consolidated Statement of Cash Flows
for year ending 31 March 2024**

	Note	Group 2024 £	Group 2023 £	Charity 2024 £	Charity 2023 £
Cash used in operating activities	25	121,044	(210,757)	121,044	(210,757)
Cash flows from investing activities					
Interest Income		8,091	4,057	8,091	4,057
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(10,873)	(3,022)	(10,873)	(3,022)
Cash provided by (used in) investing activities		(2,782)	1,035	(2,782)	1,035
Cash flows from financing activities					
Repayment of borrowing		-	-	-	-
Cash used in financing activities		-	-	-	-
Increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents in the year		118,262	(209,722)	118,262	(209,722)
Cash and cash equivalents as the beginning of the year		351,906	561,628	351,906	561,628
Total cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year per balance sheet		470,168	351,906	470,168	351,906

Notes on the accounts ending 31st March 2024**1. Accounting policies**

The principal accounting policies adopted, judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty in the preparation of the financial statements are as follows:

(a) Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to Charities in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and the Republic of Ireland (Charities SORP FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

Age Concern Cheshire operating as Age UK Cheshire meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note.

The functional presentation currency is sterling (£)

(b) Preparation of the accounts on an ongoing basis

The trustees assess whether the use of going concern is appropriate i.e. whether there are any material uncertainties related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the ability of the group to continue as a going concern. The trustees make this assessment in respect of a period of at least one year from the date of authorisation for issue of the financial statements and have concluded that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future and there are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern, thus they continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

(c) Group financial statements

The financial statements consolidate the results of the charity and its wholly owned subsidiary Age Concern Trading in Cheshire Ltd on a line-by-line basis. A separate Statement of Financial Activities and Income and Expenditure Account for the Charity has not been presented as the trustees haven taken advantage of the exemption afforded by section 408 of the Companies Act 2006.

(d) Income

Income is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the item of income has been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably and is not deferred.

For legacies, entitlement is taken as the earlier date on which either: the charity is aware that probate has been granted, the estate has been finalised and notification has been made by the executors to the Charity that a distribution will be made, or when a distribution is received from the estate. Receipt of a legacy, in whole or part, is only considered probable when the amount can be measured reliably and the charity has been notified of the executor's intention to make a distribution. Where legacies are notified to the charity, or the charity is aware of the granting of probate, and the criteria for income recognition have not been met, then the legacy is treated as a contingent asset and disclosed if material.

Incoming resources from grants, where related to performance and specific deliverables, are accounted for as the charity earns the right to consideration by its performance.

(e) Donated services, facilities and goods

Donated professional services and donated facilities are recognised as income when the charity has control over the item, any conditions associated with the donated item have been met, the receipt of economic benefit from the use of the item by the charity is probable and that economic benefit can be measured reliably. On receipt, donated professional services and facilities result in the recognition of income and an expense.

No amount is included with the Financial Statements for volunteer time in line with the SORP (FRS 102). Further detail is given in the Trustees Annual Report.

As it is not practicable to estimate the value of donated goods with sufficient reliability, the income is included in the financial period in which the donated goods are sold.

(f) Interest Receivable

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity. This is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the Bank.

(g) Fund Accounting

Funds held by the charity are:

Unrestricted general funds – these are funds that can be used in accordance with the charitable objects at the discretion of the trustees.

Designated funds – these are funds set aside by the trustees out of unrestricted general funds for specific future purposes or projects.

Restricted funds – these are funds that can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor and when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

Endowment funds – These are funds of which a certain amount is a permanent endowment and as such is non-expendable. The balance and any interest accrued is expendable and will be treated as part of the general funds of the organisation.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

When a restricted project has come to an end, any excess of expenditure over income is supported by way of transfer from unrestricted funds.

(h) Expenditure and irrecoverable VAT

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

(i) Allocation of support costs

Support costs are those functions which assist the work of the charity but do not directly undertake charitable activities. These include back office costs, finance, human resources, payroll, governance and senior management costs. The basis on which these support costs have been allocated are set out in note 11.

(j) Operating leases

The charity classifies the lease of photocopiers as operating leases; the title to the equipment remains with the lessor and the equipment is usually replaced every 5 years. Rental charges are on a straight line basis over the term of the lease.

(k) Tangible fixed assets

Fixed assets are shown at original cost or, if donated, at their value on the date of the gift, less accumulated depreciation. Depreciation is provided in equal annual instalments over their estimated useful lives at the following annual rates:

Motor Vehicles	20% straight line basis
Computer equipment, Plant and Machinery	33% straight line basis
Shop fittings and other assets	20% straight line basis
Tenants improvements	Straight line basis over the shorter of the remaining term of the lease or expected useful life

Items of a capital nature with a cost greater than or equal to £300 are capitalised.

Assets purchased with restricted funds are depreciated over the remaining funding term of the restricted fund on a straight line basis.

(l) Stocks

Stock is included at the lower of cost or net realisable value after making due allowance for obsolete and slow moving items.

(m) Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

(n) Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short-term liquidity investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

(o) Creditors and Provisions

Creditors and provisions are recognised when the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

(p) Financial instruments

The charity only has financial assets and liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value.

(q) Redundancy and Severance Payments

Redundancy payments are made in line with contractual obligations and amounted to £7,508 (2023: £5,995)

(r) Pension costs

The charity operates a group personal and stakeholder pension scheme, both of which are defined contribution schemes. The contributions to the schemes are charged to the statement of financial activities as they become payable. The charity also set up a new pension scheme under its automatic enrolment compliance obligations which became effective on 1st July 2014. Employees joining these schemes contract directly with the insurance company. The charity makes a matching contribution of 5% (after successful completion of a probationary period) and acts as an agent in collecting and paying over employee pension contributions.

The pension costs charge represents contributions payable by the charity and its trading company to the funds and amounted to £26,851 (2023: £34,576). Contributions totalling £nil (2023: £nil) were due to the funds at the end of the year.

(s) Investments

The Charity's quoted investments are valued at open market value.

The Charity's shareholding in the wholly owned subsidiary Age Concern Trading in Cheshire is included in the balance sheet at the cost of the share capital less any impairment.

2. Legal Status of the Charity

The charity is a company limited by guarantee and has no share capital. In the event of the charity being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per member of the charity.

3. Performance of the charity

The consolidated statement of financial activities includes the results of the charity's wholly owned subsidiary Age Concern trading in Cheshire Ltd.

The summary financial performance of the charity alone is

	2024 £	2023
Income	1,389,699	1,469,887
Gift aid from subsidiary company	-	-
	<hr/> 1,389,699	<hr/> 1,469,887
Expenditure on charitable activities	(1,214,458)	(1,581,409)
Net income	<hr/> 175,241	<hr/> (111,522)
 Total funds brought forward	 793,015	 904,537
Total funds carried forward	<hr/> 968,256	<hr/> 793,015
Represented by:		
Unrestricted funds	555,696	424,204
Designated funds	89,799	64,739
Restricted funds	40,678	15,847
Permanent Endowment funds	25,000	25,000
Expendable Endowment funds	257,083	263,225
	<hr/> 968,256	<hr/> 793,015

4. Income from donations and legacies

Donations	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2024 Total £	2023 Total £
Legacies	196,659	-	196,659	88,253
Donations and appeals	16,804	-	16,804	22,100
Total	<hr/> 213,463	<hr/> -	<hr/> 213,463	<hr/> 110,353

5. Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2024 Total £	2023 Total £
Objective 1 Relieving Loneliness				
Sharing Time	8,474	5,000	13,474	19,060
Connect All	553	21,500	22,053	45,814
Green Connections	115	58,217	58,332	20,792
Dementia Day Services (Bright Memories)	55,118	22,500	77,618	35,086
Day Services	-	-	-	35,423
Ageing Better (Brightlife)	-	-	-	53,182
Men in Sheds	-	-	-	24,183
	64,260	107,217	171,477	233,540
Objective 2 Combatting Poverty				
Information and Advice	-	93,608	93,608	40,604
Household Support	-	-	-	142,000
	-	93,608	93,608	182,604
Objective 3 Increasing Independence				
Wellbeing Coordinator	52,864	-	52,864	32,110
Dementia Support Services	52,851	-	52,851	51,917
Falls Prevention	16,494	-	16,494	41,753
Community Home First	7,500	7,500	15,000	-
Independent Living	83,250	-	83,250	83,250
Advocacy	-	-	-	183,322
	212,959	7,500	220,459	392,352
Total	277,219	208,325	485,544	808,496

6. Net income from trading activity of subsidiary

The charity has a wholly owned trading subsidiary, Age Concern Trading in Cheshire Limited, which ceased trading on 31st March 2018. A summary of its results is shown below. Audited accounts will be filed with the Registrar of Companies.

	2024 £	2023 £
Turnover	-	-
Administration expenses	-	-
Net profit	-	-
Amount gift aided to the charity	-	-
Retained in subsidiary	-	-
Current assets	2	2
Current liabilities	(2,668)	(2,668)
Total net assets	(2,666)	(2,666)
Aggregated share capital and reserves	(2,666)	(2,666)

7. Investment income

	2024 £	2023 £
Dividends received	1,601	1,372
Interest received	6,490	2,685
Total	8,091	4,057

8. Investment management charges

	2024 £	2023 £
Aviva Fund	2,379	2,425
Total	2,379	2,425

9. Expenditure on charitable activities

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2024 Total £	2023 Total £
Objective 1 Relieving Loneliness				
Sharing Time	18,448	5,000	23,448	21,286
Connect All	15,679	21,500	37,179	66,870
Green Connections	-	44,412	44,412	19,642
Dementia Day Services (Bright Memories)	58,095	22,500	80,595	85,079
Day Services	-	-	-	12,387
Ageing Better (Brightlife)	-	-	-	53,182
Men in Sheds	32,522	-	32,522	18,077
	124,744	93,412	218,156	276,523
Objective 2 Combatting Poverty				
Information and Advice	-	85,184	85,184	64,010
Household Support	-	-	-	142,000
	-	85,184	85,184	206,010
Objective 3 Increasing Independence				
Wellbeing Coordinator	47,733	-	47,733	42,402
Dementia Support Services	57,248	-	57,248	62,350
Falls Prevention	40,166	-	40,166	64,887
Community Home First	-	4,898	4,898	-
Independent Living	118,941	-	118,941	106,579
Advocacy	-	-	-	190,539
	264,088	4,898	268,986	466,757
Total	388,832	183,494	572,326	949,290

10. Summary analysis of expenditure and related income for charitable activities

This table shows the costs of the three main charitable ambitions and the sources of income directly to support those ambitions.

	Objective 1 £	Objective 2 £	Objective 3 £	Total £
Costs (see note 9)	(218,156)	(85,184)	(268,986)	(572,326)
Income from fees and charges	55,118	-	-	55,118
Direct service level agreement or grant support	104,832	93,608	220,459	418,899
Net cost funded from other income	(58,206)	8,424	(48,527)	(98,309)

11. Analysis of direct charitable activity and support costs

The Charity initially identifies the costs of its support functions and apportions them between the charitable activities undertaken.

The following table details the types of expenditure for both direct charitable activities and support costs. It also details the basis of apportionment for support costs.

	Direct Charitable £	Support £	2024 Total £	2023 Total £	Basis of apportionment
Salaries	256,935	175,206	432,141	632,554	Allocated on time
Travel, training, recruitment	13,357	5,027	18,384	27,893	Allocated on time
Premises and associated costs	32,605	12,231	44,836	19,796	Pro rata to full time equivalents
Office costs	7,812	30,934	38,746	75,752	Pro rata to full time equivalents
Tutors, legal and professional	-	(625)	(625)	26,989	Allocated on time
Other direct activity costs	13,352	7,645	20,997	142,706	Allocated on time
Depreciation	257	2,383	2,640	6,165	Pro rata to full time equivalents
Irrecoverable VAT	-	9,139	9,139	13,040	Allocated to the activity to which they relate
Governance	-	6,068	6,068	4,395	Pro rata to full time equivalents
Total	324,318	248,008	572,326	949,290	

12. Net incoming resources

This is stated after charging:	2024	2023
	£	£
Operating leases – equipment	-	-
Loss on sale of fixed assets	-	3,914
Depreciation	8,673	14,560
Property rental	93,503	105,598
Auditor's remuneration	9,500	6,680

13. Analysis of staff costs, trustee remuneration and expenses, and the cost of key management personnel

	2024	2023
	£	£
Salaries and wages	702,236	895,363
Social security costs	43,044	60,918
Pension costs	26,851	34,576
	772,131	990,857

No employee had employee benefits in excess of £60,000 (2023: nil). Pension costs are allocated to activities in line with the associated staffing costs incurred.

The charity trustees were not paid nor received any other benefit from employment with the charity or its subsidiary in the year (2023: £nil). No charity trustee was reimbursed travel expenses in the year (2023: £nil). No charity trustee received payment for professional or other services supplied to the charity (2023: £nil).

The key management personnel of the parent charity comprise the trustees, the Chief Executive Officer, the Chief Finance Officer, the Head of Operations, the Head of Human Resources & Volunteering and the Head of Retail and Fundraising. The total employment benefits of the key management personnel of the Charity was £180,727 (2023: £241,891). As the key management personnel for the group are the same, the total employment benefits for the group are also £180,727 (2023: £241,891). The Head of Human Resources and Volunteering left the charity in April 2023 and the Head of Retail and Fundraising was appointed in June 2023.

During the year redundancy costs amounted to £7,508.42 (2023: £5,995.50)

14. Staff Numbers

The average monthly head count was 44 staff (2023: 54 staff) and the average monthly number of full-time equivalent employees (including part time staff) during the year was as follows:

	2024	2023
	Number	Number
Objective 1 Relieving Loneliness	5	8
Objective 2 Combatting Poverty	3	2
Objective 3 Increasing Independence	7	12
Retail	12	13
Commercial	-	1
	27	36

15. Related Party Transactions

Age Concern Trading in Cheshire Limited ceased to trade on the 31 March 2018.

16. Taxation

The company is a registered charity whose charitable activities are fully exempt from United Kingdom corporation and capital gains tax.

17. Tangible fixed assets

GROUP	Office Equip £	Computer Equip £	Shop Fittings £	Motor Vehicle £	Tenants Impnts £	Lease Premises £	Plant and Machinery £	Total £
Cost:								
At 1 April 2023	3,640	10,177	8,310	33,158	189,600	3,000	-	247,885
Additions	3,223	2,664	1,875	-	3,111	-	-	10,873
Disposals	(3,229)	(4,887)	(5,268)	-	-	-	-	(13,384)
31 March 2024	3,634	7,954	4,917	33,158	192,711	3,000	-	245,374
Depreciation:								
At 1 April 2023	3,479	9,264	6,572	27,793	183,178	3,000	-	233,286
Charge for the year	268	1,052	664	4,021	2,668	-	-	8,673
Disposals	(3,229)	(4,887)	(5,268)	-	-	-	-	(13,384)
31 March 2024	518	5,429	1,968	31,814	185,846	3,000	-	228,575
Net book value at 31/03/24	3,116	2,525	2,949	1,344	6,865	-	-	16,799
Net book value at 31/03/23	161	913	1,738	5,365	6,422	-	-	14,599

18. Investments

Group	2024 £	2023 £
Market value at 1 April 2023	336,543	353,479
Additions at cost	-	
Unrealised gain/(loss) in year	34,613	(16,936)
Market Value as at 31 March 2024	371,156	336,543
Listed on UK Stock Exchange	364,154	329,541
National Savings Income Bond	7,000	7,000
As above	371,154	336,541
Investment in subsidiary company (see note 6)	2	2
Charity	371,156	336,543

19. Debtors

	Group 2024 £	2023 £	Charity 2024 £	2023 £
Trade debtors	33,025	33,208	33,025	33,208
Other debtors	6,485	5,450	6,485	5,450
Prepayments and accrued income	262,805	143,554	262,805	143,554
Amount due from subsidiary	-	-	2,664	2,664
	302,315	182,212	304,979	184,876

20. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	Group 2024 £	2023 £	Charity 2024 £	2023 £
Trade creditors	35,171	34,949	35,171	34,949
Short term compensated absences	13,559	18,320	13,559	18,320
Other creditors and accruals	60,248	12,532	60,248	12,532
Deferred income	85,868	29,108	85,868	29,108
Taxation and social security costs	-	-	-	-
	194,846	94,909	194,846	94,909

21. Deferred Income

	2024 £	2023 £
Balance at 1 April 2023	29,108	62,801
Fees received	188,527	49,900
Released to Statement of Financial Activities	(131,767)	(83,593)
Balance at 31 March 2024	85,868	29,108

Income is deferred on the basis that the entitlement is dependent of the achievement of future project outcomes.

Deferred income consists of Green Connections £20,791 (2023: £29,108) and new deferred income of Sharing Time £15,000; Community Home First £22,500; I&A £27,577

22. Financial commitments

At 31 March 2024 the charity had future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases which expire as follows:

Group and Charity	Land and buildings 2024 £	Other 2024 £	Land and buildings 2023 £	Other 2023 £
Less the one year	44,500	-	54,778	-
Between two and five years	105,917	-	118,500	-
Over five years	78,167	-	110,083	-
	228,584	-	283,361	-

23. Movement of funds

	Balance at 1 April 2023	Incoming resources	Expended resources	Transfers	Balance at 31 March 2024
Unrestricted funds					
General funds	424,204	1,177,505	(1,015,963)	(30,050)	555,696
Designated funds					
IT, communications and digital	-	-	-	9,000	9,000
Governance review	3,140	-	-	(3,140)	-
Data development and impact reporting	-	-	-	5,000	5,000
Retail EPOS and gift aid	-	-	-	27,000	27,000
Marketing Collateral	-	-	-	5,000	5,000
Retail shops refurbishment	8,000	-	-	(3,000)	5,000
Staff wellbeing	4,000	-	(913)	1,913	5,000
Cyber Security and Insurance	2,000	-	(1,335)	(665)	-
Merger Costs	25,000	-	(8,775)	775	17,000
Furniture Bright Memories / Castle	5,000	-	(3,978)	(1,022)	-
Show our Value	3,000	-	-	(3,000)	-
NBV assets	14,599	-	-	2,200	16,799
	488,943	1,177,505	(1,030,964)	10,011	645,495
Restricted funds					
Vauxhall gifts fund	1,907	-	-	-	1,907
Wear Purple	6,110	-	-	-	6,110
Information and Advice	6,680	93,608	(85,184)	-	15,104
Connect All	-	21,500	(21,500)	-	-
Dementia day services	-	22,500	(22,500)	-	-
Sharing Time	-	5,000	(5,000)	-	-
Green Connections	1,150	58,217	(44,412)	-	14,955
Community Home First	-	7,500	(4,898)	-	2,602
	15,847	208,325	(183,494)	-	40,678
Endowment funds					
Permanent endowment	25,000	-	-	-	25,000
Expendable endowment	263,225	3,869	-	(10,011)	257,083
	288,225	3,869	-	(10,011)	282,083
Total Charity funds	793,015	1,389,699	(1,214,458)	-	968,256
Non charitable trading fund	(2,666)	-	-	-	(2,666)
Total group funds	790,349	1,389,699	(1,214,458)	-	965,590

Name of fund	Description, nature and purposed of fund
General fund	The 'free' reserves after allowing for all designated funds
Designated funds	
IT, communications and digital	IT equipment is becoming old, unreliable and inefficient. This fund will allow replacement of the older devices
Governance Review	A commitment with solicitors to complete a review of our Memorandum and Articles of Association. This is still ongoing with an estimate of costs to completion
Data development and impact reporting	To develop data collection and robustness in order to support impact reporting
Retail EPOS and Gift Aid	To implement EPOS and gift aid systems into the 4 new shops acquired post merger. To also update existing EPOS system
Marketing Collateral	The merger of AUKCE and AUKC will mean that marketing collateral is potentially out of date and inaccurate. This designated fund will ensure up to date, accurate and relevant marketing collateral is available
Retail Shops refurbishment	This designated fund will allow fixtures and fittings in the 4 new retail premises acquired following merger with Age UK Cheshire East
Cyber security and insurance	An area of increased risk to the organisation. This designation is now complete following review of insurance, purchase of a cyber insurance policy and implementation of multi factor authorisation with Office 365
Merger Costs	A fund to support pursuing the potential collaboration/merger with Age UK Cheshire East. Due to a delayed merger start date (July 24 instead of anticipated April 24); some merger costs will be incurred in 2024/25. This fund has therefore been carried over.
Furniture Bright Memories / Castle	Designated funds to replace tables which are becoming unsafe and chairs which are old and worn. Chairs have been purchased and the designation is now complete.
Show our Value	Funding to produce short videos to demonstrate our value by telling our story and presenting case studies Due to the merger this work has not been done. It is not anticipated to be done in 2024/25. As a result, the designation has been released.
NBV assets	A designation for the net book value of the organisation's assets.
Restricted funds	
Vauxhall gifts fund	A fund to provide emergency aid to older people in need.
Wear Purple	A small fund to deliver Arts Projects across Cheshire West and Chester
Information and advice	New restricted funding from the National Lottery July 2023 onwards supporting the project for three years to March 2026 and allowing for some expansion into home visits. Includes funding from Cadent energy advice (via Cheshire West and Chester)
Green Connections	Restricted fund to deliver green and gardening projects in the Crewe area
Community Home First	A restricted grant from Cheshire West and Chester to support Home Hazard assessments within the Community Home First service.

Comparative information in respect of the preceding period is as follows:

	Balance at 1 April 2022	Incoming resources	Expended resources	Transfers	Balance at 31 March 2023
Unrestricted funds					
General funds	516,257	1,284,466	(1,400,977)	24,458	424,204
Designated funds					
Comfort funds	203	-	-	(203)	-
IT, communications and digital	4,906	-	-	(4,096)	-
Governance review	3,000	-	-	140	3,140
Data – Power BI / Charity log	10,000	-	(2,850)	(7,150)	-
Retail shops refurbishment	16,491	-	-	(8,491)	8,000
Trustee recruitment	5,000	-	(1,500)	(3,500)	-
Staff wellbeing	4,000	-	(1,044)	1,044	4,000
Castle Garden	15,000	-	-	(15,000)	-
Cyber Security and Insurance	-	-	-	2,000	2,000
Merger Costs	-	-	-	25,000	25,000
Furniture Bright Memories / Castle	-	-	-	5,000	5,000
Show our Value	-	-	-	3,000	3,000
NBV assets	30,051			(15,452)	14,599
	604,908	1,284,466	(1,406,371)	5,940	488,943
Restricted funds					
Vauxhall gifts fund	1,947	-	(40)	-	1,907
Men in Sheds	-	24,017	(18,077)	(5,940)	-
Ageing Better (Brightlife)	-	53,182	(53,182)	-	-
Wear Purple	6,110	-	-	-	6,110
Information and Advice	-	20,240	(13,560)	-	6,680
Connect All	1,182	45,000	(46,182)	-	-
Dementia day services	3,427	7,428	(10,855)	-	-
Sharing Time	-	13,500	(13,500)	-	-
Green Connections	-	20,792	(19,642)	-	1,150
	12,666	184,159	(175,038)	(5,940)	15,847
Endowment funds					
Permanent endowment	25,000	-	-	-	25,000
Expendable endowment	261,963	1,262	-	-	263,225
	286,963	1,262	-	-	288,225
Total Charity funds	904,538	1,469,887	(1,581,409)	-	793,015
Non charitable trading fund	(2,666)	-	-	-	(2,666)
Total group funds	901,871	1,469,887	(1,581,409)	-	790,349

24. Analysis of group net assets between funds

Fund balances at 31 March 2024 are represented by	General fund	Designated funds	Endowment funds	Restricted funds	Total funds
Tangible fixed assets	371,154	16,799	-	-	387,953
Cash at Bank and in Hand	76,539	-	282,083	111,546	470,168
Other net current assets/(liabilities)	105,337	73,000	-	(70,868)	107,469
Total	553,030	89,799	282,083	40,678	965,590

25. Reconciliation of net movement in funds to net cash flow from operating activities

	Group 2024 £	2023 £	Charity 2024 £	2023 £
Net movement in funds	175,241	(111,522)	175,241	(111,522)
Add back losses/ (deduct gains) on investments	(34,613)	16,936	(34,613)	16,936
Add back depreciation charge	8,673	14,560	8,673	14,560
Add back loss on disposal of assets	-	3,914	-	(3,914)
Deduct interest income shown in investing activities	(8,091)	(4,057)	(8,091)	(4,057)
Decrease (increase) in debtors	(120,103)	20,123	(120,103)	20,123
Increase (decrease) in creditors	99,937	(150,710)	99,937	(150,710)
Net cash used in operating activities	121,044	(210,757)	121,044	(210,757)

26. Ultimate Parent Undertaking

The ultimate parent undertaking is Age Concern Cheshire a charitable company incorporated in the UK. Details of the purpose and activities of the parent undertaking are disclosed in the Report of the Trustees. The public can obtain a copy of the consolidated financial statements from the charity's website www.ageukcheshire.org.uk.

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