



the best of care

Shaping a Better Future

Annual Report

2022 – 2023



vsa.org.uk



together we are shaping a
better future for vulnerable
children & adults

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Welcome



For more than 150 years, VSA has been an essential source of care and support for North-East of Scotland. Our unwavering commitment to meeting the changing needs of the community drives us to provide a broad range of health and social care services that promote the physical, emotional, mental, and social well-being of every individual we care for.

At VSA, we always aim to go above and beyond in our care to make a positive impact on the lives of those we serve and the communities we are a part of. We continually evaluate our services and actively involve all stakeholders, including service users, colleagues, volunteers, donors, and families, to ensure we are delivering the best possible care and support.

As Chair of the Board of Trustees at VSA, I want to reflect on the challenges of the past 12 months, and remember the times of concern, yet also celebrate VSA's resilience and the ways in which the charity worked together to safely navigate through such uncertain times including increased inflation, and post-pandemic issues.

During the year, VSA maintained its focus on delivering the best of care enabling the best of lives for those who need and use our services. Strategic and operational decisions have been shaped by our consideration of resilience, continuity, and sustainability. Our key outcomes remain delivering high-quality services, financial stability, and promoting the VSA services, brand, and reputation.

I am proud VSA received platinum accreditation from Investors In People, again demonstrating our commitment to inclusion and the engagement of our workforce in everything we do. VSA staff received the real cost of living accredited wage, as a minimum, with most of the staff earning over and above this. People are at the heart of VSA, and we are committed to investing in our staff to ensure that everyone can deliver outstanding care for the vulnerable people who use our services.

We were also able to secure £500,000 from the Scottish Government's Just Transition Fund for a variety of projects at Easter Anguston Farm and Linn Moor Campus. As a result of funding received, the charity has been making upgrades across the farm to become more sustainable, including installing new polytunnels where we will grow our famous strawberries again in the future and encourage 'farm to fork' as well as having a new playpark in place.

Our staff, volunteers, funders, donors, and all supporters of VSA, as always, have exceeded expectations and we wouldn't be able to provide the quality services we do to the people we support without your

amazing time commitment and donations. On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I want to say thank you to all of you for everything you do and continue to do for VSA.

Considering the issues we face as a community, VSA's strategic focus on sustainability and adapting to socio-economic and environmental changes is crucial for long-term success. The challenges of the 21st century and beyond are significant, and they will have a profound impact on the prosperity and well-being of our region for generations to come. From global volatility to rising healthcare needs, from an aging population to the urgent need for carbon neutrality, these challenges are complex and multifaceted.

But we believe that with VSA's commitment to providing the best of lives for the people we support we will rise to meet these challenges head-on. Together, we can shape a brighter future for our community and for all those who need our support.

Kevin Shand
Chair of the Board of Trustees



About VSA

VSA is a leading social care charity with over 150 years of experience providing vital care and support to vulnerable children and adults living in the North-East of Scotland. We support people through some of the most challenging times they have experienced and help them take control of their lives for a brighter and better future.

We support children and adults who are living with:

- Mental health diagnoses
- Learning disabilities
- Loneliness and isolation
- Living with conditions such as Dementia and Parkinson's
- Complex additional learning and support needs
- Living in poverty

Supporting people across the North-East at a glance

71

adults supported through our mental health services

376

people supported through our care at home service

3498

hours a week of support to adults in our learning disability service

196

people supported through our older adult services

Over 25

services

11

adults on our trainee programmes at Easter Anguston Farm

532,896

hours of mental wellbeing support provided

26

children supported at Linn Moor Residential School

130

people supported through our VSA Fuel Fund

5775

teaching hours at Linn Moor School



Our People

Our people are at the heart of VSA, and we are proud of the impact our colleagues make each year changing the lives of children and adults living in our communities.

This is why we have always been proud to invest in our staff to ensure that our team can continue to deliver outstanding care. At VSA, we are a fully accredited SQA Qualification Centre, enabling us to deliver a programme of continuous professional development and provide people with an opportunity to pursue a career in care. As well as our modern apprentice scheme, VSA also gives placements to Foundation Level Apprentices, HNC, and social work students supporting their education and career pathways into a career in health and social care.

What qualifications do we offer?

- HNC Social Services
- SVQs in Social Services & Healthcare
- SVQs in Social Services (Children & Young People)
- PDA Health and Social Care Supervision
- PDA Promoting Excellence in Dementia Skilled Practice
- L&D9DI & L&D11
- We also offer core skills qualifications in numeracy and ICT which are incorporated in our Modern Apprenticeship Programme.

“ ”

University of Aberdeen

I just wanted to get in touch and say thank you again for your ongoing support. We are so grateful to be able to offer this early clinical exposure to our junior students, and informal feedback has been incredibly positive. Over the next few months, there will be a formal course evaluation sent out to students, and we will ensure any relevant feedback is passed on.

Meet Sunday



Support Worker at VSA

“The Modern Apprenticeship scheme enables me to improve myself, train myself, and do the job the best I can.

The exciting thing I discovered was that VSA is unlike any other organisation I have worked for before. They have a genuine interest to ensure that you have all the training and knowledge you need — so your career can properly build while doing the job itself.

Undertaking my Modern Apprenticeship helps me be the best I can be. It allows me to focus while I learn. I also gain a better understanding, step by step, of the job itself.”

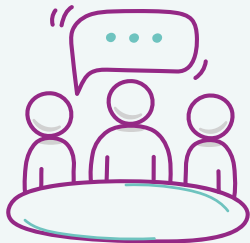
For Sunday, the best thing about working at VSA was very clear. “I’m so happy at the end of the day, the children I support are progressing all the time. Nothing can beat seeing their development before your eyes, it is extremely satisfying.

The working environment is fantastic, everyone is so friendly and approachable. You never feel on your own and help is always there.

I am very proud to be part of VSA — if you have the passion, they will give you the support that you need. If you have an ambition of making a real difference, this is the place to be!”

Key Stats & Figures

82



Behavioural Support Strategies (BSS) training sessions completed



283

recruited to join the VSA family



28

people trained in Mental Health Support



43

students enrolled in Modern Apprenticeships



23

students achieving qualifications



10

Foundation Level Apprenticeships



Our workforce

Our strength and breadth of services are a testament to our wonderfully diverse workforce who continuously strive to provide excellent care and support on behalf of VSA.

As a significant employer in the North East of Scotland and an accredited 'Investor in People', our staff and wider workforce are the bloodline of our organisation.

VSA has a culturally diverse workforce of over 600 employees, bringing with them a strong understanding when it comes to the care and support of our service users who come from all different walks of life and backgrounds.

Our staff population is currently made up of 78% of people who are classified as "British", with 9% of staff originating from the EU and the remaining 13% from a range of other nationalities, although predominantly Nigerian. This is a higher



proportion of ethnicity than the findings of the 2011 census, where 8.2% of Aberdonians stated to be from an ethnic minority (non-white).

Our gender split across our workforce is female (79%) to male (21%) According to the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) 84% of their registered workforce are female, suggesting VSA is performing better in attracting men to our sector

*This will be updated in Census 22 – delayed from 2021.

8% of the VSA workforce have stated that they consider themselves to have a disability (20% of the population in Scotland with only 45% of those employed)





Meet Tracy

Community Support Worker

After an impressive career in retail, Tracy transferred her skills into a new career path at VSA's Care at Home service, making a positive change to people's lives.

"The job gives me a brilliant life balance and allows me to be out in the community which I really enjoy. The different people I meet each day is just so inspiring as well as helping with anything from keeping them company, having breakfast, or talking them through the cost of living."

Tracy is currently combining her role with an SVQ in Social Services and Healthcare through VSA's Modern Apprenticeship programme.

"In retail, so much of the work was all about coaching and development – and now, at VSA, I use those same skills for those I support. I break things into small steps to make things better for them. They may have a number of situations or difficulties causing them anxiety, but when you break things down everything becomes so much more achievable."

"There's lots of different ways that I can help people due to the experiences I've gone through myself. I feel that I can make a real difference for the people around me – the service users, my colleagues and VSA".

Our Services



Locations

Mental Health & Wellbeing Support

- ① Arrdeir House
- ② Westerton Crescent
- ③ St Aubins
- ④ Northfield Lodge
- ⑤ 450 Holburn Street (Abergeldie)

Adult & Later Years in Life Services

- ⑥ Crosby House
- ⑦ Broomhill Park
- ⑧ Broomhill Activity Centre
- ⑨ Cloverfield Grove
- ⑩ Ruthrieston House
- ⑪ Care at Home
- ⑫ VSA Connect

Learning Disability Services

- ⑬ Craigton Grove

Children & Education Services

- ⑭ Easter Anguston Farm
- ⑮ Linn Moor School
- ⑯ Rowanlea Cottage
- ⑰ Rowanlea House

Other Services

- ⑱ VSA Main Head Office
- ⑲ Mercat Bookshop



Our Services

For more than 150 years, VSA has been an essential source of care and support for the North-East of Scotland.

Our unwavering commitment to meeting the changing needs of the community drives us to provide a broad range of health and social care services that promote the physical, emotional, mental, and social well-being of every individual we care for. At VSA, we always aim to go above and beyond in our care to make a positive impact on the lives of those we serve and the communities we are a part of.



Providing quality care across our services

Linn Moor School ★★★★★

Received a 5-star rating from the Care Inspectorate

“We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided, the service was creative at looking at ways to ensure young people’s views were heard. There were strong relationships with young people and families. One family member told us “They’re like family to me”. “

– *Care Inspectorate Report, 2022*

Ruthrieston House ★★★★★

Received a 4/5 star rating from the Care Inspectorate

“Staff knew people well and had developed positive relationships with them. Interactions were noted to be natural, respectful and kind. We saw lots of fun and laughter between staff and people experiencing care which enhanced their day and sense of wellbeing. Family and friends told us they felt well looked after when visiting the care home and were very complimentary about the care their loved ones received.”

– *Care Inspectorate Report, 2022*

Craigton Grove ★★★★★

Received a 4 Star rating from the Care Inspectorate

“We observed staff throughout the service treating people kindly and engaging in warm friendly interactions. People clearly knew and trusted the staff, and their daily routines were enhanced by people feeling part of the team and undertaking jobs and tasks that made them feel included and valued.”

– *Care Inspectorate Report, 2022*





The people we support



One of our service users, Jimmy Spears, marked a very special milestone this year. Jimmy has been part of the VSA family for over 50 years, to celebrate the occasion residents and colleagues joined in on the celebration with a lot of cake.



Sheila Moffat, Manager at VSA said:

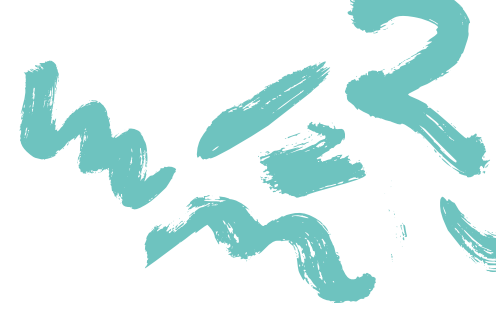
"Jimmy is a huge character, and all staff love working with him as he continually makes us all smile. We were delighted to throw a celebration for him and his 50 years at VSA - he was thrilled with the celebration and enjoyed eating too much cake!"







The people we support



A huge congratulations to Jimmy Lees, a resident of our Broomhill Park service, who earlier this year celebrated his 100th birthday!

The majority of Jimmy's career was spent across The Press and Journal and the Evening Express, becoming news editor in 1975. "It was indeed an exciting career," he said,

"You never knew what was going to happen from one day to the next. Some of it involved harrowing and tragic stories. But others could be quite a laugh. I enjoyed every second of it."

The celebrations were marked with a tea party with Jimmy's friends and fellow residents, as well as a surprise visit from VSA Acting Chief Executive John Booth and Honorary President Fiona Kennedy.



fundraising

Thanks to all of our amazing supporters and donors throughout the course of the year. We wouldn't be able to provide the quality services we do without your amazing generosity. All money raised at VSA goes towards enhancing the lives of the adults and children we support by funding all sorts of activities, equipment, holidays, and housing improvements helping them to live their best possible lives.

With your support and donations, we have:



Our residents have enjoyed days out across Aberdeen, Glasgow, and Edinburgh



Provided music therapy, occupational therapy, and speech and language therapy at Linn Moor School

Provided fuel grants to families



Upgraded our new mental health wellbeing facility Queen Mothers House



Refurbished Crosby House

New play equipment and polytunnels at Easter Anguston Farm



Animal Care at Easter Anguston Farm



Provided our services with Activity Co-ordinators to organise day trips and holidays for the people we support



Our amazing supporters





Incredible Amy Honours Mum

During Christmas, Amy Strath provided the most phenomenal support by donating hundreds of gifts and goodie bags for people across our services. In September, Amy and her family were left devastated when her mum, Janice Strath, sadly passed away suddenly aged just 54.

Janice who was well known in the community, always donated generously to VSA and other local causes. Therefore, when Amy came across bags in the loft which her mum had already started to collect for VSA she decided to finish them off in her mum's memory.

Amy commented: "My mum was just an amazing person, everyone loved her", explained Amy. "I wanted to do something to honour her name and that's when I learned about the incredible charity work that she did, including making up the gift bags.

From there, inspired by her mum, Amy continued the collection and was blown away by the response. "I posted on social media about my plan to keep this amazing idea going for my mum, and we just couldn't believe the number of donations we have received at the house."

Managers and staff across VSA's services have been touched by Amy's generosity. Holly Leiper, Head of Comms & Fundraising at VSA said: "We are truly

thankful to Amy for supporting VSA in this way. She is going to make a real difference for the many people we support this Christmas."

Amy now intends to continue Janice's fundraising each year, meaning her legacy will always bring a much-needed smile to those who need it most.

“ ”

Amy Strath

"We want to name the campaign Jan's Bags - my mum was a great believer in the phrase 'give and you will get'. Although she never looked for any credit or thanks for all the good things she did, I know she will love the thought of keeping the kindness going."





Thank
you for
supporting
VSA's
"Aberdeen
Cares"
Exhibition

VSA's "Aberdeen Cares" Exhibition, which was open to the public during March-May at Aberdeen Art Gallery, was a huge success and attracted over 27,000 visitors in the first month alone.

To mark VSA's 150th anniversary, the exhibition, supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, explored VSA's role in the history of social care in Aberdeen.

Thank you to everyone who visited and supported the exhibition, as well as providing us with such positive feedback.

We are incredibly grateful to Aberdeen Art Gallery, Aberdeen City Council, and The National Heritage Lottery fund for supporting this exciting opportunity to showcase social care through the years.

A special thank you to Lynne Clark, our exhibition Curator and Ben Martin of Aberdeen Art Gallery for making the project a reality.





A Christmas Celebration

Our Honorary President and local singing legend, Fiona Kennedy, hosted a Christmas Celebration sponsored by Ithaca Energy in December at the Salvation Army Citadel.

VSA's Christmas Celebration was a wonderful celebration of the Christmas season with singers, musicians, and guest readers. We also had choirs from across our services including the sheltered housing complex Broomhill Park, Care Home Crosby House, and learning disability Service, Craighton Grove.

It was a lovely evening and really got everyone into the Christmas spirit.



Volunteering

Volunteers are at the heart of VSA, and without the support of individuals, groups, corporate partners, and many others who each year generously give their time, we would not be able to provide the vital services and support that we do.

21

Corporate volunteers groups

55

individual volunteers

“ ”

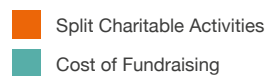
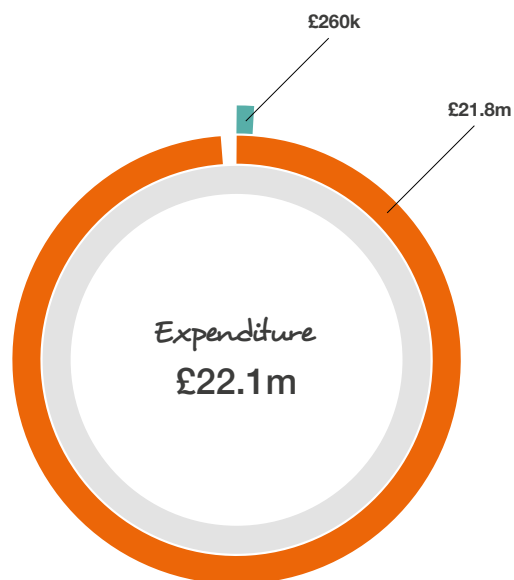
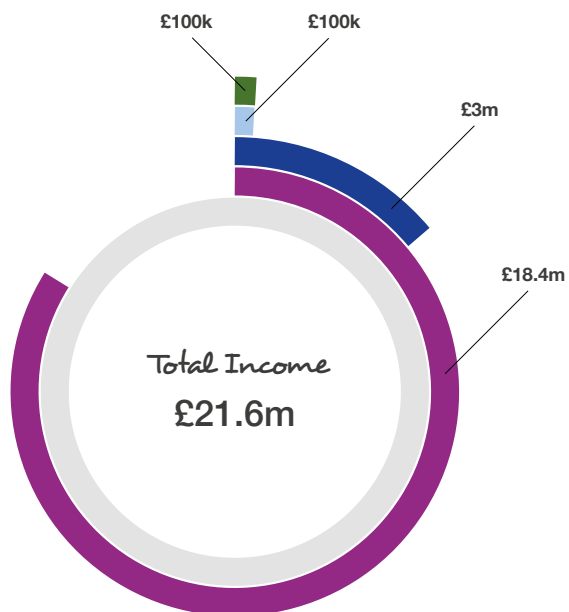
Rachel Reilly, Ithaca Energy

“Our teams have volunteered to create the Ithaca ‘sensory’ Garden at Linn Moor, clearing ground, erecting fences and planting shrubs and trees, designed to stimulate students’ senses - touch, taste, and sound - using different plants and materials which help the children with their cognitive, emotional, physical, social and communication development.”





Financial Stats



Thank you to our amazing supporters

We would like to thank all of our incredible supporters who across the year have donated financially or given their time and energy to help VSA. Special thanks goes to:

Acciona

A G Bain Trust

Adam McLachlan

AGM Campbell

Aleksandra Jurczak

BP Exploration & Operating Co Ltd

Bradley Anderson

Cathy Clark

Chris Lamb

Communities Mental Health & Wellbeing Fund

CNOOC International

CNR International (UK) Ltd

Craig Donaldson

Derek Smith

Diane Edwards

Faithful + Gould

Finnies the Jeweller

Fiona Kennedy OBE DL

G & J Investments Ltd

Inspiring Scotland

Ithaca Energy UK Ltd

ITC Hydraulics

John Clark Motor Group

John Gordon Charitable Trust

John Shivas Memorial Trust

Just Transition Fund

Laura Scott

Maersk Training

McHardy Financial

Meikle Foundation

Michael Forbes

Morningfield Association

Michael & Ruth Crawford

NYOP Education Ltd

Robert Barr's Charitable Trust

Sharon Caie

Shell UK

Subsea 7

The James Sim Charitable Trust

The Ina Scott Sutherland Trust

The Thomas Primrose Trust

WL Gore & Associates

Everyone who has supported VSA

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

1926 – 2022

We joined the nation in mourning the loss of the nation's beloved Queen, Elizabeth II, and Our Patron. Our thoughts are very much with the Royal family, who mourn the loss of their mother, grandmother and great-grandmother.



Throughout Her Majesty's long life, she has truly led a life of service and selfless dedication, putting the needs of the people and the charities she supports before her own. She has been a beacon of light in some of our country's darkest hours. We are thankful for the support Her Majesty has shown us over her reign, and we will remain profoundly thankful for her contribution to helping change the lives of vulnerable children and adults across the North East of Scotland.

May she rest in peace.

Finance & Trustee Information

Patron

The late Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

President

The Lord Provost of Aberdeen,
Councillor David Cameron

Honorary Presidents

Fiona Kennedy, OBE DL
Maggie Wilson

Vice Presidents

Lady Joan Catto, MBE DL
Mr James Stevenson
Mr Mathew Finnie

Chair of the Board of Trustees

Kevin Shand

Honorary Treasurer

Gordon Edwards

Chief Executive

Sue Freeth (appointed June 2023)
John Booth (Acting Chief Executive September 2022 - June 2023)

Honorary Law Agent

Burness Paull LLP

External Auditors

Hall Morrice LLP

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31st March 2023

The trustees are pleased to present their trustee report together with the audited financial statements for the year to 31st March, 2023.

Directors and Trustees April 2022-March 2023

The directors of Aberdeen Association of Social Service (the charity operating as VSA) are its trustees for the purpose of charity law.

The trustees of Aberdeen Association of Social Service who were in office during the year and up to the date of signing the financial statements were:

Mr K Shand (Chair from October 2022)

Mrs M Wilson (Resigned October 2022)

Mr J Knowles (Vice Chair)

Mr G Edwards (Treasurer)

Mr S Burt

Mrs M Gibson

Prof J Harper

Prof S D Heys

Mr A McBurnie

Mr P Murray (Resigned October 2022)

Mr G S Poon

Mrs A Powe (Resigned October 2022)

Dr D P B Watson

Mr G Watt

Mrs C E Wilkie

Reference and Administrative Details

Charity Name

Aberdeen Association
of Social Service

Operating Name

VSA

Charity

Registration Number

SC012950

Registered office and Principal office

38 Castle Street
Aberdeen
AB11 5YU

