

CHARITY REGISTRATION NUMBER: 514733
COMPANY REGISTRATION NUMBER: 1781525

Disability North
Company Limited by Guarantee
Financial Statements
31 March 2024

STEPHENSON COATES AUDIT LIMITED

Chartered Accountants & Statutory Auditor

West 2, Asama Court

Newcastle Business Park

Newcastle upon Tyne

NE4 7YD

Disability North

Company Limited by Guarantee

Financial Statements

Year ended 31 March 2024

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Disability North

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Executive Committee's Report (Incorporating the Directors' Report)

Year ended 31 March 2024

The Executive Committee, who are also the directors for the purposes of company law, present their report and the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2024.

Reference and administrative details

Registered charity name	Disability North	
Charity registration number	514733	
Company registration number	1781525	
Principal office and registered office	The Dene Centre Castles Farm Road Newcastle upon Tyne NE3 1PH	
Chief Executive Officer	Vici Richardson	
The trustees	L Reynolds (Chair) G Hunter K Morris A Neal T Rowlands L Pritchard (Resigned 12 December 2023) N Sinclair (Appointed 12 December 2023)	
Independent Examiner	Stephenson Coates Audit Limited Chartered Accountants & Statutory Auditor West 2, Asama Court Newcastle Business Park Newcastle upon Tyne NE4 7YD	
Bankers	Lloyds TSB PO Box 8 High Street, Gosforth Newcastle upon Tyne NE3 1JQ Unity Trust Bank Plc Nine Brindley Place Birmingham B1 2HB	
Solicitors	Sintons Law Barrack Road Newcastle upon Tyne NE4 6DB	

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Executive Committees Report (Incorporating the Directors' Report) *(continued)*

Year ended 31 March 2024

Chief Executive Officer foreword

The financial year 2024 has been an incredibly busy year. Demand for our support continues to rise. Alongside others in the voluntary sector, we strive to address the gaps in support created by austerity. As in previous years, our three main services have not only met but exceeded all objectives and targets set by the board and our funders. Our satisfaction and impact surveys demonstrate the profound difference our support makes.

We continue to listen to people's stories, which highlight the challenges faced with financial inclusion, accessing quality care and support, and securing good employment opportunities. Unfortunately, in 2024, lack of access and inclusion remain barriers to living a good and equal life. As a user-led organisation, we are guided by our community, which necessitates adapting and evolving our offer. During 2023-2024, we have enhanced our training for employers and organisations on what good inclusive employment looks like, conducted disability awareness training, and performed access audits. We are encouraged to see businesses and voluntary organisations working with us to ensure barriers to access and inclusion are removed across our region.

One of the highlights of the financial year 2024 was the successful tender for the Newcastle City Council Direct Payment Support Service. Having started my journey within Disability North in the Direct Payment Team, this is a service I am deeply passionate about. My own experience as a direct payment employer has given me invaluable insight into the significant difference that good self-directed support can make to independence and living a full life. We are delighted to once again be Newcastle City Council's Direct Payment Support Service provider.

The financial year 2024 marks the final year of our five-year strategy. It has been an opportunity to reflect on our challenges and achievements while looking forward to our goals for the next five years. In September 2023, we paid tribute to Donald Dempsey, a founding member of Newcastle Council for the Disabled, the original name of Disability North. Donald and his team were fundamental in securing the first purpose-built centre of excellence for the northern region, leading to the construction and official opening of the Dene Centre in 1985.

There is a saying about standing on the shoulders of giants, and Disability North would not be where it is today without the strong foundations laid by pioneers like Donald and many others who have played their part in founding, leading, and working with the organisation over the past 50 years. With a majority of disabled individuals leading our executive board and a committed team, many of whom bring their lived experiences to the organisation, we can focus on the issues that matter most to our community as we continue our mission to promote choice, control, and independence in everything we do.

As we move into 2024-2025 and launch our new five-year strategy, we remain committed to working with our members, stakeholders, and funders. We will continue to be an active voice for change, advocating for a rights-based approach to system improvement and robust local support.

Our vision of choice, control, and independence remains a golden thread throughout all the support we provide. These values, embodied by our staff, ensure that the voice of lived experience is amplified at both local and national levels.

Over the past 12 months, we have collaborated with some incredible funders, without whom none of this would be possible. The Disability North staff team is among the most incredible teams I have ever worked alongside, and without them, we could not achieve our goals. Despite the uncertain and challenging times we face, I am excited to see where the next five years will take us, building on the remarkable work of the past 50 years.

Vici Richardson
Chief Executive Officer
7 November 2024

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Executive Committees Report (Incorporating the Directors' Report) *(continued)*

Year ended 31 March 2024

The Executive Committee present their report together with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2024. The financial statements are also prepared to meet the requirements for a directors' report and accounts for Companies Act purposes.

The financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Companies Act 2006, the Memorandum and Articles of Association, and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objects of the Charitable Company

The charitable company's objects are:

- to promote the relief of disabled people and their inclusion within society, in the geographical area covered by the City of Newcastle upon Tyne, the Counties of Cumbria, Durham, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear and areas adjacent thereto, including York and North Yorkshire;
- to support disabled people by addressing the disadvantage or restriction of activity they experience as a result of social attitudes and environmental barriers;
- to promote and support research of social welfare issues related to disability and to publish the results of such research.

Aims and Activities

The charity's statement of its main aims and principles is:

"Disability North aims to promote inclusion, independence and choice for disabled people in the region".

In order to achieve these aims, the charity has the following objectives:

- To anticipate, identify and serve the needs of the disabled population within the geographical area covered by Disability North through the provision of a comprehensive, appropriate range of products and services including information, advice and independent living services;
- To keep abreast of disability issues and initiatives in partnership with international, national, regional and local organisations to increase our level of activity throughout the Northern Region;
- To develop the range of products and services delivered both in consultation with service users and in accordance with demographic and social trends;
- To maintain and develop our role as one of the leading disability service organisations in the North East region.

For the year under review the main objectives were to:

- Prepare and finalise the next five year strategic plan 2024-2029
- Continue to use the results of evaluations and consultations to consolidate existing funding streams and develop new ones to cover the activities and management of Disability North.
- Ensure that all services funded on a contractual basis with statutory agencies and charitable funders deliver services with effectiveness, efficiency and quality to satisfy both our service users, statutory and charitable funders.
- Ensure smooth transition and implementation of Newcastle City Council Direct Payment Support Service
- Continue to explore opportunities to maintain and enhance Disability North's reputation as being one of the region's leading resources for information, advice and support on all aspects of disability.

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Executive Committees Report (Incorporating the Directors' Report) *(continued)*

Year ended 31 March 2024

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES *(continued)*

The significant activities to achieve those objectives were:

- The Chief Executive Officer engaged with statutory and charitable funders to safeguard statutory funding streams where possible and identify opportunities for increases in funding where appropriate.
- The Chief Executive (in consultation with the Board) engaged in work with staff, stakeholders and the community to prepare the five year strategic plan for 2024-2029. This included a perception audit, and survey which went out to members, stakeholders and the wider community.
- Disability North continued to explore opportunities with the aim of increasing funding and income generation for Disability North.
- Our independent Direct Payment Support service and Community Care and Advice service went into its fourth year, continuing to build on the success of the last three years. There was a smooth transition as we took on the contract for Newcastle City Councils Direct Payment Support and increased our staff team as a result.
- The Disability North Service Team continued to provide high quality information and advice services to meet the demand of service users and to fulfil the requirements of statutory and charitable funders.
- We continued to work with local partners, to market and raise awareness of the role of a Personal Assistant training. Due to funding from Skills for Care we were able to offer this training at no charge and to increase the number of courses on offer.
- Developed and began to market our wider training on inclusive employment and offer of access audits.
- The Chief Executive Officer continued to be a voice on numerous national and local networks, ensuring that issues our communities are facing are raised and the voice of lived experience is heard in order to influence policy.

Public Benefit

Disability North's mission is to promote inclusion, independence and choice for disabled people. The benefits to the general public are clearly identifiable. Our services, available to disabled people of all ages are:

- Help to reduce discrimination and remove barriers for disabled people whilst contributing towards creating a fairer and more equal society for all;
- Promote independent living so disabled people can have more control over how they manage their lives;
- Provide choice to disabled people and their carers and families by giving advice, information and support in all areas of their health and social care needs;
- Our services help to alleviate poverty by assisting people to make the best value choices in relation to social care and significantly in the areas of welfare rights and community care.

During the year 2023/24

- We supported 3,401 disabled people and their carers in obtaining benefits to the ongoing value of approximately £11,785,872.
- Disability North has supported over 400 individuals via our direct payment support service and 132 individuals via the community care advice project.
- The work we have supported on disability related expenditure appeals has reduced individual's care charges by a collective £12,619 over the period.
- Our Independent Direct Payment Support Service successful continued into the third year of this service.
- Our Inclusion and Engagement Lead has worked with 28 different organisations, carried out three access audits and delivered 37 PA training courses.
- Our team deliver quality support always with the person at the centre. We have a high retention within our staff team, they work hard to manage increasing workloads and to offer a demand led service to beneficiaries.
- We were delighted to have our accreditation award from Advice Standard Alliance renewed following our audit in February 2024.

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Executive Committees Report (Incorporating the Directors' Report) *(continued)*

Year ended 31 March 2024

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES (continued)

- All statutory and charitable funders were very satisfied with the services provided and the performance monitoring reports submitted throughout the year. Targets in relation to activity for the year under review were exceeded.
- Payroll and Payroll Plus has continued to expand and provides a substantial additional income stream.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Review of Activities Disability North Service Team

The Disability North Service Team provides information, advice, and guidance on a wide range of disability issues. The service is funded by the statutory sector and charitable grants, supplemented by income generated by fundraising and income generated services.

Feedback from our evaluation process shows that people we have supported are:

- 100% Satisfied with appointment system
- 100% Satisfied with help and information given
- 92% Gained financially from help given
- 94% Made a difference to quality of life

This highlight the positive outcomes experienced by disabled people and their family as a result of our support.

Comparison to support delivered in 2023:

Support and advice in claiming benefits: Increase of 39.90%

Independent living: Increase of 52.51%

Community Care advice: Increase of 12.82%

Delivered PA training sessions: Increase of 208.33%

Individuals attended PA training courses: Increase of 161.27%

Benefit awards obtained increase of: 71%

Care charges reduced increase of: 33%

Our Independent Direct Payment Support Service

Our independent direct payment support service provides one-to-one support to individuals managing Direct Payments and Personal Health Budgets. We have been providing Direct Payment Support for 20 years in Newcastle. Since 2020 we have offered this throughout the whole region. The support we offer includes recruiting personal assistants, managing budgets along with advice and support throughout the process. It is a highly personalised service.

During the 23-24 financial year we supported 418 people with their direct payments/personal health budgets. Personal Assistant recruitment continues to be a challenge as it is across the whole of the social care sector. Our team continue to look at creative ways to raise the profile of the role of the Personal Assistant, including attending many job fayres, using social media effectively, working with universities, as well as looking at better digital options for making applications. We have a strong partnership with Newcastle College and have been able to attend sessions to raise awareness of the role of the PA and deliver specific training to their learners on self-directed support. Despite these challenges our team supported recruitment of 267 Personal Assistants.

Over the last 12 months we have continued to raise awareness of the team's expertise and have become a leading, trusted voice in self-directed support. Our Chief Executive sits on a number of national forums enabling Disability North to feed into policy and share good practice.

Disability North

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Executive Committees Report (Incorporating the Directors' Report) *(continued)*

Year ended 31 March 2024

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE (continued)

Community Care Advice

We have worked with 132 individuals supporting on community care advice issues. Specifically, 15 individuals have been supported to with their Disability Related Expenditure assessment resulting in £16,763 reduction of care charges.

Independent Living

The varied advice Disability North offers on Independent Living is an important service for the region's disabled people. In the 2023-2024 financial year Disability North responded to 941 requests for advice covering a wide range of equipment and services including: personal care, household items, wheelchairs, scooters, grants and accessible holidays.

Benefits Advice

Disability North's welfare benefits advisors provide an essential service for disabled people, their families, and carers in the North East. We are delighted to be working with Access to Justice Foundation over the next five years to expand our team, along with the Henry Smith Foundation with whom we are entering the third year of funding. The team have continued to exceed funding targets.

During the 2023-2024 staff have continued to keep training up to date, deliver outreach sessions to over 300 people and ensure a responsive personalised service despite the rise in demand.

The team have supported 3,401 disabled people gain almost £12,000,000 worth of benefits, allowing greater opportunities in relation to inclusion and independence.

Many of the individuals have needed help with digital skills to claim online benefits such as Universal Credit and make online applications. There has also been a shift to online applications for Personal Independence Payment and the Blue Badge scheme. We expect to see the support needed for digital inclusion to be a key component of this work.

Training

During 2023/2024 we have established our successful training offer for Personal Assistant Training. We received funding from Skills for Care to run PA training courses alongside Good Employer sessions for those employing Personal Assistants.

During 2023/2024 we have run 34 Personal Assistant Courses, introducing 371 people to the role of a PA. We are really pleased to be working alongside the Community Transport Association and have supported them with the refreshing of training materials and next year will be working with them to co-produce further training.

Our training offer now includes:

- PA Training
- How to get the most from having a PA
- Disability and Inclusion – (Customers and Employees)
- Disability and Inclusion for Managers
- Ability to offer Access Audits / and Consultancy

Disability North

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Executive Committees Report (Incorporating the Directors' Report) *(continued)*

Year ended 31 March 2024

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE *(continued)*

Policy Influencing

Our Chief Executive Officer continues to work closely with partner organisations such as Think Local Act Personal, Skills For Care, National Direct Payment Forum, Disability Rights UK, Inclusion London, Disability Poverty Action Group, Newcastle Voluntary Advisory Group and North of Tyne Combined Authority.

Raising awareness of the issues disabled people face across the North East is a key part of our work, highlighting challenges those who draw on care and support face in self-directing their support and showing best practice. This year we have been involved with the work around self-employment in the Personal Assistant workforce, what does a good direct payment look like and work around values in the new care workforce pathway.

We have continued to engage with the Department of Health and Social Care in work around the social care workforce strategy. We continued to host the Northumberland Parent Carer Forum, which is enabling a strong parent carer voice to their Local Authority.

Our Chief Executive spoke at an event focusing on good transitions which aims to share good practice across the region and open up discussions on ensuring consistency and facilitating good transitions for our disabled young people.

We hosted a roundtable with the child poverty commission to look at issues across the region for households who have at least one disabled family member.

We hosted a Bank of England Community Forum meeting to highlight issues facing disabled people in the North East related to cost of living and finances.

Research

Disability North is part of the Project Advisory Group for a research project led by Professor Janice McLaughlin looking at transitions experiences of disabled young people. We hope that we can take some of the learning from this to help shape better services for our young people across the North East.

We have continued to partner with Northumbria University on the Gender and Sexualities Research project looking at how identity affects disabled young people when recruiting Personal Assistants. This year we worked with them on putting together a film which highlighted the findings from the project.

Disability North (The Dene Centre)

The Executive Committee acknowledges that the Dene Centre building is over 30 years old and that its infrastructure including electrical systems and the general building structure must be monitored for significant deterioration or operational failure.

The new board of trustees along with the new Chief Executive have had a priority focus on ensuring the longevity of the building, as well as exploring a community hub facility. Stage 1 of this approach was to secure funding for a new roof and to explore the provision of a changing places facility within the building. It was hoped that work would start early 2024 but due to a lack of availability of suitable contractors this has now been pushed back to summer 2024. Our changing places facility will be in place by summer 2024.

Our building has undergone an energy efficiency audit and we will look at how we can implement the recommendations into our building improvement work.

Disability North

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Executive Committees Report (Incorporating the Directors' Report) *(continued)*

Year ended 31 March 2024

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE *(continued)*

Disability North continues to rent out space within the Dene Centre to a variety of tenants. Tenants up to 31 March 2024 include: Liveasy, KarePlus, A Time 2 Talk and Age UK Gateshead. Learning for Life Post 16 SEND provision. North East Mobility have a regular booking and use of our outdoor mobility track for their mobility assessments.

During 2023 we received funding from Newcastle City Council to use one of our empty rooms as a warm space. Funds were used to repurpose the room and we were able to provide hot drinks, knit and natter sessions, along with welfare benefits advice.

Strategic Planning

The Chief Executive Officer regularly reports on progress to the Executive Committee.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Financial Position

At 31 March 2024 the charity is reporting a net surplus of £34,058 (2023: deficit £75,939).

Payroll services continue to be a source of revenue; income has remained stable. The income generated by our Newcastle service increased by 11%, however, due to lack of capacity we were unable to take on further customers from our York service and this decreased by 40%. We have built further capacity for this service and expect an increase in 24/25.

Uncertainties as always remain within funding streams from Clinical Commissioning Groups and Local authorities but much of the funding for these streams, in line with our expectations, has been confirmed for the forthcoming year (2024-2025). A five year funding award from The Access to Justice Foundation will make a significant difference to the stability of our advice services.

The management team remain committed to the provision of core services within budget.

The charity enjoys good liquidity and has no issues meeting its liabilities when they fall due. The trustees are confident that the charity will continue to operate for at least the next twelve months.

Reserves Policy

The reserves policy is formally reviewed and adopted annually and determines the targets necessary for the achievement of appropriate financial underpinning to ensure that the charitable company's statutory financial objectives are capable of being met. We have set a target for free reserves equivalent to four months expenditure. Free reserves at 31 March 2024 were £252,694 (2023: £250,975), which is the unrestricted reserves excluding the fixed assets and designated reserves. Free reserves currently sit at approximately 4.5 months expenditure, which is considered to be a sufficient position for the charities financial health. Moving forward, reserves are intended to remain at this level. Designated funds of £288,000 at year-end consist of amounts set aside for the roof repair of Disability North's head office.

Unrestricted reserves and restricted reserves were respectively £715,324 and £12,000 at the end of the year (2023: £663,266 and £30,000 respectively). Total reserves at 31 March 2024 show a net assets position of £727,324 (2023: £693,266).

Disability North

Company Limited by Guarantee

Executive Committees Report (Incorporating the Directors' Report) *(continued)*

Year ended 31 March 2024

FINANCIAL REVIEW (continued)

Principal Funding Sources

The principal funders remain as charitable foundations/grants, Local Authorities and Clinical Commissioning groups, without whose annual grants, core work of the charitable company could not continue. The charity is making efforts to increase its base of donors and in this respect the Executive Committee wishes to record its gratitude to all those authorities, organisations, bodies and individuals that provide support to Disability North in the furtherance of its mission. A full list of our principal funders are documented in Note 5 of the financial statements.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Disability North remains in a sound position financially. This financial stability allows the organisation time to focus on strategic growth as well as build on its reserves.

Post balance sheet events

See note 24 of the financial statements.

Hire of conference room facilities

Our training room provides a reasonable priced option to hire. During 2023/2024 we continue to have regular and ad hoc bookings bringing an income stream into the charity.

Office space

Office space available to rent will be reviewed and advertised appropriately.

Funding bids

In addition to statutory funding, the main potential sources of income generation are through successful bids to funding trusts. Disability North continues to focus on sourcing and submitting funding applications.

Payroll

Payroll and Payroll Plus continues to expand and to provide steady, additional income for Disability North.

At the end of March 2024 we had a total of 568 payroll clients. Our payroll service has an excellent reputation and is a truly personalised service. There is a need to look at streamlining some of the work, digitalising it and building capacity within in the team as we currently are nearing capacity.

Statutory Funding

The Chief Executive Officer will continue to work to maintain good relationships with all statutory funders and work to identify any new potential statutory funding streams. One such funding stream was the tender for the Direct Payment Support Contract. Our Chief Executive Officer put in a tender for this contract, which was one we successfully held for 17 years before it was retendered in 2020. We are delighted that the bid submitted early 2023 was successful and we have had a successful first year of this contract.

We have secured continued funding for 2023/2024 via the Integrated Care Board which contributes to our independent living service and welfare benefit advice services.

Partnerships

The Chief Executive Officer will continue to maintain relationships with existing partners and explore opportunities to form new alliances with a variety of organisations with a view to working effectively together.

Disability North

Company Limited by Guarantee

Executive Committees Report (Incorporating the Directors' Report) *(continued)*

Year ended 31 March 2024

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE *(continued)*

Key drivers for the future

The executive committee extended the current strategy into 2023/2024 in order to work on a new 5 year strategy for April 2024. This new strategy has been shaped and influenced by those who use our services, stakeholders, staff and members. Refurbishing the building will begin post year end (see Note 24) and we will be looking at activities that we can run from the centre, making use of our building and grounds. There is a need to look at diversifying income, looking at our digital offer to enhance what we do as well as improving our website and social media presence.

Personalisation, social care crisis, the cost of living crisis, the ageing population and austerity are all continuing themes on the health and social care agenda. The political landscape is changing with a new government, the New North East Combined Authority. Disability North needs to ensure it is well placed to take advantage of all potential opportunities, and to ensure the voice of disabled people is heard at every level. We will work towards raising our profile in the region and ensuring long term financial stability.

FUNDS HELD AS CUSTODIAN TRUSTEE ON BEHALF OF OTHERS

Disability North holds monies on behalf of other organisations relating to a payroll service, this is provided to a number of small organisations and individuals (Note 17).

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing Documents

The charitable company is limited by Guarantee and is governed by its memorandum and articles.

Recruitment and Appointment of Executive Committee

Members of the Executive Committee, who must be members of Disability North, are elected by the members at the annual general meetings or appointed by the Executive Committee until the next annual general meeting when the person appointed is eligible for re-election by the members.

Executive Committee Induction and Training

The induction and training of new members of the Executive Committee is accomplished by selection interviews and an introductory session prior to appointment. Periodic training opportunities and all Charity Commission bulletins and fact sheets are forwarded to members of the charity.

Organisational Structure

The Executive Committee is ultimately responsible for the activities of the organisation. The Senior Executives of the charitable company attend the meetings of the Executive Committee but are not eligible to vote.

Related Parties

Details of related parties arising through third party connections with members of the Executive Committee are given in note 22 to the accounts.

Pay policy for senior staff

The Executive Committee and senior management team comprise the key management of the charity and are in charge of directing, controlling, running and operating the charity on a day to day basis. All Executive Committee members give their time freely and no director received remuneration during the year. The pay of senior staff is reviewed annually by the board along with all other staff.

Disability North

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Executive Committees Report (Incorporating the Directors' Report) *(continued)*

Year ended 31 March 2024

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT *(continued)*

Risk Management Policy

The Executive Committee has assessed the major risks to which the charitable company is exposed, and are satisfied that systems and controls are in place to mitigate exposure to the major risks. The Executive Committee formally reviews the Risk Assessment Policy, which covers every area of activity every year.

Decision Making

The Board entrusts the Chief Executive with the responsibility of making day-to-day operational decisions for the charity, this involves close collaboration with the senior management team. These decisions adhere to the Financial Control Policy, Delegated Responsibilities Procedure, and align with the current operational plan and budget.

The strategic direction is established by the Board, culminating in an annual organisational plan with detailed implementation plans for each team. Matters beyond the Chief Executive's delegated remit are presented to the Board for consideration. A comprehensive bi-monthly report and financial update are prepared for the Board's review.

Executive Committee's responsibilities statement

The Executive Committee, who are also directors for the purposes of company law, are responsible for preparing the Executive Committee Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the charity's Executive Committee to prepare financial statements for each year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, for that period.

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the applicable Charities SORP;
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The Executive Committee are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charity's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

A resolution proposing that Stephenson Coates Audit Limited will be re-appointed as independent examiners of the company will be put to the Annual General Meeting.

The Executive Committees' annual report was approved on 7 November 2024 and signed on behalf of the Executive Committee by:

L Reynolds
Chair

Disability North

Company Limited by Guarantee

Independent Examiner's Report to the Members of Disability North

Year ended 31 March 2024

I report on the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024, which comprise the statement of financial activities (including income and expenditure account), balance sheet, statement of cash flows and the related notes to the accounts.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's Executive Committee of the company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law), you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your charity's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 (the '2011 Act'). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5) (b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's report

Since the company's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe:

- accounting records were not kept in respect of the company as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
- the accounts do not accord with those accounting records; or
- the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
- the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended practice for accounting and reporting by charities [applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)].

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

John Oswald BA FCA
STEPHENSON COATES AUDIT LIMITED
Chartered accountants
West 2, Asama Court
Newcastle Business Park
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE4 7YD

7 November 2024

Disability North

Company Limited by Guarantee

Statement of Financial Activities (including income and expenditure account)

Year ended 31 March 2024

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	2024 Restricted funds £	Total funds £	2023 Total funds £
Income and endowments					
Donations and legacies	5	16,943	132,546	149,489	126,031
Charitable activities	6	431,529	-	431,529	257,416
Other trading activities	7	56,986	-	56,986	64,101
Investment income		5,114	-	5,114	1,407
Other income		3,000	-	3,000	3,074
Total income		<u>513,572</u>	<u>132,546</u>	<u>646,118</u>	<u>452,029</u>
Expenditure					
Expenditure on charitable activities	8	461,722	150,546	612,268	512,866
Pension liability	18	-	-	-	13,117
Total expenditure		<u>461,722</u>	<u>150,546</u>	<u>612,268</u>	<u>525,983</u>
Net gain /(loss) on investments	14	208	-	208	(1,985)
Net income / (expenditure)		<u>52,058</u>	<u>(18,000)</u>	<u>34,058</u>	<u>(75,939)</u>
Actuarial gain on defined benefit pension scheme	18	-	-	-	628,445
Net movement in funds		<u>52,058</u>	<u>(18,000)</u>	<u>34,058</u>	<u>552,506</u>
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward		663,266	30,000	693,266	140,760
Total funds carried forward	19,20	<u>715,324</u>	<u>12,000</u>	<u>727,324</u>	<u>693,266</u>

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

The notes on page 17 - 25 form part of these financial statements.

Disability North

Company Limited by Guarantee

Balance Sheet

31 March 2024

		2024	2023
		£	£
Fixed assets			
Tangible fixed assets	13	174,630	182,291
Investments	14	25,857	25,649
		<u>200,488</u>	<u>207,940</u>
Current assets			
Stock		-	300
Debtors	15	84,212	380,801
Cash at bank and in hand		561,439	141,819
		<u>645,651</u>	<u>522,920</u>
Liabilities			
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	16	(118,815)	(37,594)
Net current assets		<u>526,836</u>	<u>485,326</u>
Total assets less current liabilities		<u>727,324</u>	<u>693,266</u>
Net assets		<u>727,324</u>	<u>693,266</u>
Funds of the charity			
Unrestricted funds		715,324	663,266
Restricted funds		12,000	30,000
Total charity funds	19, 20	<u>727,324</u>	<u>693,266</u>

For the financial year in question the company was entitled to exemption under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies. No members have required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006. The Directors acknowledge their responsibility for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and for the preparation of accounts.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

These financial statements were approved by the Executive Committee and authorised for issue on 7 November 2024, and are signed on behalf of the Executive Committee by:

L Reynolds
Chair

Company registration number - 1781525

The notes on page 17 - 25 form part of these financial statements.

Disability North

Company Limited by Guarantee

Statement of Cash Flows

Year ended 31 March 2024

	2024	2023
	£	£
Cash flows from operating activities		
Net income	34,058	552,506
<i>Adjustments for:</i>		
Depreciation charges	12,323	10,877
(Gain) / loss on investment	(208)	1,985
Interest received	(5,114)	(1,407)
<i>Changes in:</i>		
Trade and other debtors	296,589	(271,769)
Trade and other creditors	81,520	(334,683)
Cash generated from operations	<u>419,168</u>	<u>(42,491)</u>
Net cash from operating activities	<u>419,168</u>	<u>(42,491)</u>
Cash flows from investing activities		
Payments for the acquisition of tangible fixed assets	(4,662)	-
Interest received	5,114	1,407
Net cash used in investing activities	<u>452</u>	<u>1,407</u>
Net increase / (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	419,620	(41,084)
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year	141,819	182,903
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year	<u>561,439</u>	<u>141,819</u>

The notes on page 17 - 25 form part of these financial statements.

Disability North

Company Limited by Guarantee

Notes to the Financial Statements

Year ended 31 March 2024

1. General information

The charity is a private company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales and a registered charity in England and Wales. The address of the registered office is The Dene Centre, Castles Farm Road, Newcastle Upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear, NE3 1PH.

2. Statement of compliance

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

3. Accounting policies

The significant accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all years presented unless otherwise stated.

Basis of preparation

Disability North meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. The financial statements are prepared under the historical cost convention or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note(s). The financial statements are prepared in Sterling which is the functional currency of the charity and rounded to the nearest £1.

Going concern

The financial statements are prepared on a going concern basis. The Executive Committee have reviewed the annual budgets and considered relevant information. Actual results are monitored against budget along with cash flows. Based on these assessments and the current resources available, the Executive Committee have concluded that there are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue, and they can continue to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the annual report and accounts.

Fund accounting

- Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the Executive Committee in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.
- Restricted funds are subject to restrictions on their expenditure imposed by the funder, donor or through the terms of an appeal.
- Designated funds are unrestricted funds earmarked by the Executive Committee for particular purposes

Income

Income is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the item(s) of income have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Where income has related expenditure (as with fundraising or contract income), the income and related expenditure are reported gross in the Statement of Financial Activities.

Donations, grants and gifts are recognised when receivable. In the event that a donation is subject to fulfilling performance conditions before the charity is entitled to the funds, the income is deferred and not recognised until it is probable that those conditions will be fulfilled in the reporting period. Income from Gift Aid tax reclaims is recognised for any donations with relevant Gift Aid certificates recognised in income for the year. Any amounts of Gift Aid not received by the year-end are accounted for in income and accrued income in debtors.

Income from contracts, government and other grants, whether 'capital' grants or 'revenue' grants, are recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the grants have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably and is not deferred.

Disability North

Company Limited by Guarantee

Notes to the Financial Statements

Year ended 31 March 2024

3. Accounting policies (*continued*)

Income (*continued*)

For legacies, entitlement is taken on a case by case basis as the earlier of the date on which: the charity is aware that probate has been granted, the estate has been finalised and notification has been made by the executor(s) to the charity that a distribution will be made, or when a distribution is received from the estate.

Clothing and other items donated for resale through the charity's shop are included as incoming resources within activities for generating funds when they are sold.

Income received in advance for a future fundraising event or for a grant received relating to the following year are deferred until the criteria for income recognition are met.

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

Sponsorship from events, fundraising and events registration fees are recognised in income when the event takes place. Trading income is recognised on point of sale for both donated and purchased goods.

Donated goods and services

Donated services or facilities are recognised 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 is probable and that economic benefit can be measured reliably.

Expenditure

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. All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis under the following headings.

Expenditure on charitable activities includes the costs of providing specialist care and support, community services, research and other activities undertaken to further the purposes of the charity and their associated support costs.

Support costs comprise those costs which are incurred directly in support of expenditure on the objects of the charity and include governance cost, finance, and office costs. Governance costs are those costs incurred in connection with the compliance with constitutional and statutory requirements of the charity.

Taxation

The charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.

Tangible assets

Tangible fixed assets other than freehold land are stated at cost less depreciation. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost less estimated residual value of each asset over its expected useful life, as follows:

Leasehold land	Over the period of the lease
Leasehold buildings	Reducing balance over 40 years
Furniture and equipment	Reducing balance over 1 to 10 years

Disability North

Company Limited by Guarantee

Notes to the Financial Statements

Year ended 31 March 2024

3. Accounting policies (*continued*)

Investments

Fixed asset investments are stated at market value.

Current assets

Amounts owing to the charity at 31 March in respect of grants and service level agreement income are shown as debtors less provisions for amounts that may prove uncollectible. Short term deposits represent cash held on deposit at the bank. Cash at bank and in hand represents bank balances at close of business on 31 March.

Creditors

Creditors are recognised where 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 are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

Leases

Rentals payable under operating leases are charged against income on a straight line basis over the base term.

Pensions

The charitable company contributes to a defined contribution pension scheme for employees. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the charitable company. The annual contributions payable are charged to the SoFA.

Voluntary assistance

Time is expended on the charity's activities and governance which is donated free of charge. It is impractical to quantify the value of the time given, and accordingly it is neither recorded as donated income nor as an expense in the financial statements.

Critical accounting estimates and judgements

Estimates and judgements are continually evaluated and are based on historical experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances. The Charity makes estimates and assumptions concerning the future. The resulting accounting estimates and assumptions will, by definition, seldom equal the related actual results.

There are no critical judgements, significant assumptions concerning the future and key sources of estimation of uncertainty at the reporting date that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year.

4. Limited by guarantee

Disability North is a company limited by guarantee and accordingly does not have a share capital.

Every member of the company undertakes to contribute such amount as may be required not exceeding £1 to the assets of the charitable company in the event of its being wound up while he or she is a member, or within one year after he or she ceases to be a member.

Disability North

Company Limited by Guarantee

Notes to the Financial Statements

Year ended 31 March 2024

5. Donations and legacies

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2024 £	2023 £
Donations	7,818	500	8,318	17,751
<i>Grants</i>				
The Henry Smith Charity	-	60,000	60,000	60,000
Julia and Hans Rausing		48,000	48,000	-
Skills for Care		11,920	11,920	-
The Access to Justice Foundation (ILTA) *	-	8,126	8,126	-
Digital Inclusion project	6,625	-	6,625	
St James Place	-	4,000	4,000	-
Tyne Charitable grant	2,000	-	2,000	
Other	500	-	500	4,000
Garfield Weston	-	-	-	15,000
Newcastle City Council	-	-	-	6,000
ScrewFix	-	-	-	5,000
Connected Voice	-	-	-	4,000
Together Fund	-	-	-	9,280
Newcastle Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	-	-	-	5,000
	<hr/> 16,943	<hr/> 132,546	<hr/> 149,489	<hr/> 126,031

* Improving Lives Through Advice (ILTA) grant from The Access to Justice Foundation and The National Lottery Community Fund, thanks to National Lottery players

6. Charitable activities

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2024 £	2023 £
Contractual payments	254,516	-	254,516	106,430
Sale of goods and services	177,014	-	177,014	150,986
	<hr/> 431,529	<hr/> -	<hr/> 431,529	<hr/> 257,416

7. Other trading activities

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2024 £	2023 £
Fundraising events	1,424	-	1,424	3,176
Rent and room hire	55,562	-	55,562	60,925
	<hr/> 56,986	<hr/> -	<hr/> 56,986	<hr/> 64,101

Disability North

Company Limited by Guarantee

Notes to the Financial Statements

Year ended 31 March 2024

8. Charitable Activities Costs

	Activities undertaken directly	Support costs	2024	2023
	£	£	£	£
Independent living	360,184	102,187	462,371	387,305
Benefit, advice and support	116,769	33,128	149,897	125,561
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	476,953	135,315	612,268	512,866

9. Support Costs

	2024	2023
	£	£
Salaries	50,435	51,577
Water rates	2,412	885
Electricity & Gas	6,636	3,795
Insurance	3,079	2,713
Repairs & Maintenance	16,479	31,894
Cleaning	11,473	3,911
Telephone	1,288	2,234
Photocopying, postage, printing & stationary	4,976	10,986
Training, travel & entertaining	2,207	4,813
Publicity, marketing & advertising	3,928	12,698
Professional fees	7,979	10,535
Bank charges	2,530	895
Depreciation	12,323	10,716
Sundry	6,656	9,054
Governance costs (note 11)	2,915	2,650
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	135,315	159,356

10. Net movement in funds

Net movement in funds is stated after charging:

	2024	2023
	£	£
Independent examiner's remuneration	2,915	2,650
Depreciation	12,323	10,877

11. Executive committee remuneration, benefits, expenses and governance costs

There were no executive committee remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 31 March 2024 (2023: Nil). Executive committees expenses paid for the year ended 31 March 2024 was £Nil (2023: Nil).

Governance costs were limited to the cost of the independent examination, which is disclosed in Note 10.

Disability North

Company Limited by Guarantee

Notes to the Financial Statements

Year ended 31 March 2024

12. Staff costs

The total staff costs and employee benefits for the reporting period are analysed as follows:

	2024	<i>2023</i>
	£	£
Gross Wages and Salaries	395,262	292,297
Employers National Insurance	24,822	16,459
Employers Pension	10,341	17,451
	<u>430,425</u>	<u>326,207</u>

The average number of employees during the year was 21 (2023: 16) with all employee time involved in providing either direct charitable services, support to the governance of the charity or support services to charitable activities. No employee received employee benefits of more than £60,000 during the year (2023: Nil).

The Key Management Personnel of the charity comprises the Executive Committee, the Chief Executive Officer and Senior Managers. The total employee benefits of the Key Management Personnel of the Charity was £126,088 (2023: £128,943).

13. Tangible fixed assets

	Long leasehold land	Long leasehold buildings	Furniture & equipment	Total
Cost	£	£	£	£
At 1 April 2023	50,847	687,335	36,567	774,749
Additions	-	-	4,662	4,662
At 31 March 2024	<u>50,847</u>	<u>687,335</u>	<u>41,229</u>	<u>779,411</u>
Depreciation				
At 1 April 2023	9,197	554,581	28,680	592,458
Charge for year	484	7,809	4,030	12,323
At 31 March 2024	<u>9,681</u>	<u>562,390</u>	<u>32,710</u>	<u>604,781</u>
Net Book Value				
At 31 March 2024	<u>41,166</u>	<u>124,945</u>	<u>8,519</u>	<u>174,630</u>
<i>At 31 March 2023</i>	<u>41,650</u>	<u>132,754</u>	<u>7,887</u>	<u>182,291</u>

All tangible fixed assets are held for the purposes of the charity.
Parts of the building are let to organisations with related objectives.

Disability North

Company Limited by Guarantee

Notes to the Financial Statements

Year ended 31 March 2024

14. Fixed asset investments

	2024	2023
	£	£
UK managed bond	25,857	25,649
UK managed bond	£	
At 1 April 2023	25,649	
Unrealised gain	208	
At 31 March 2024	<u>25,857</u>	
Historical cost	<u>24,442</u>	

15. Debtors

	2024	2023
	£	£
Trade debtors	69,086	77,148
Other debtors	15,126	303,653
	<u>84,212</u>	<u>380,801</u>

16. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2024	2023
	£	£
Trade creditors	382	18,775
Taxation and social security	17,397	14,744
Accruals and deferred income	96,906	3,715
Other creditors	4,130	360
	<u>118,815</u>	<u>37,594</u>

Included within accruals and deferred income is £91,591 (2023: £Nil) of deferred income that will be released in full in FY 2025. This is the Improving Lives Through Advice (ILTA) grant from The Access to Justice Foundation and The National Lottery Community Fund, thanks to National Lottery players. The work is being completed March 24 - Feb 25.

17. Holding accounts

During the year Disability North held monies on behalf of individuals and organisations in relation to the payroll plus service provided to service users.

<u>Holding account</u>	£
At 1 April 2023	2,136,931
Income	8,484,510
Expenditure	<u>(8,077,491)</u>
At 31 March 2024	<u>2,543,950</u>

Disability North

Company Limited by Guarantee

Notes to the Financial Statements

Year ended 31 March 2024

18. Pensions and other post-retirement benefits

Defined contribution plans

A money purchase stakeholder pension scheme is offered to new employees. During the year contributions of £10,341 (2023 - £17,451) were paid, the employer's contribution rate is 5%.

Defined benefit scheme

The charitable company's employees have previously belonged to a Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) with the Tyne and Wear Pension Fund. This was a funded defined benefit scheme, with the assets held in separate trustee administered funds. The defined benefit scheme was closed to new entrants on 1 April 2004.

During the prior year, the last employee of the scheme left the organisation, triggering the scheme's exit valuation. The total surplus of the scheme after exit was valued at £291,300. The amount that was charged to the statement of financial activities as the actuarial gain on revaluation was £628,445.

The surplus was received in cash by the charity in the current financial year, and accounted for as a debtor balance in the prior year.

19. Analysis of charitable funds

	At 1 April 2023	Income	Expenditure	Gains / (losses)	Transfer between funds	At 31 March 2024
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted						
General	433,266	513,572	(461,722)	208	(58,000)	427,324
Designated*	230,000	-	-	-	58,000	288,000
	663,266	513,572	(461,722)	208	-	715,324
Restricted						
The Henry Smith Charity	30,000	60,000	(90,000)	-	-	-
Julia and Hans Rausing	-	48,000	(40,000)	-	-	8,000
Skills for Care	-	11,920	(11,920)	-	-	-
The Access to Justice Fund (ILTA) ^	-	8,126	(8,126)	-	-	-
St James Place	-	4,000	-	-	-	4,000
Other	-	500	(500)	-	-	-
	30,000	132,546	(150,546)	-	-	12,000
	693,266	646,118	(612,268)	208	-	727,324

* Designated funds are the amounts ring-fenced for repairs to the roof at the Dene Centre. In the prior year, the estimated cost of the roof repair was £230,000. The latest estimates are now at £288,000; as such £58,000 has been designated for this work from the charities unrestricted funds in the current year. Work is planned to begin in the Summer / Autumn of 2024.

^ Improving Lives Through Advice (ILTA) grant from The Access to Justice Foundation and The National Lottery Community Fund, thanks to National Lottery players

Disability North

Company Limited by Guarantee

Notes to the Financial Statements

Year ended 31 March 2024

19. Analysis of charitable funds (continued)

Prior year comparatives:

	At 1 April 2022	Income	Expenditure	Gains / (losses)	Transfer between funds	At 31 March 2023
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted						
General	(86,937)	358,029	(416,983)	626,460	(47,303)	433,266
Designated*	182,697	-	-	-	47,303	230,000
	95,760	358,029	(416,983)	626,460	-	663,266
Restricted						
Sir James Knott Trust	25,000	-	(25,000)	-	-	-
Newcastle City Council	20,000	6,000	(26,000)	-	-	-
The Henry Smith Charity	-	60,000	(30,000)	-	-	30,000
Garfield Weston	-	15,000	(15,000)	-	-	-
Connected Voice	-	4,000	(4,000)	-	-	-
ScrewFix	-	5,000	(5,000)	-	-	-
Other	-	4,000	(4,000)	-	-	-
	45,000	94,000	(109,000)	-	-	30,000
	140,760	452,029	(525,983)	626,460	-	693,266

20. Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £	Total Funds 2023 £
Tangible fixed assets	174,630	-	174,630	182,291
Investments	25,857	-	25,857	25,649
Current assets	633,651	12,000	645,651	522,920
Current liabilities	(118,815)	-	(118,815)	(37,594)
Net assets	<u>715,324</u>	<u>12,000</u>	<u>727,324</u>	<u>693,266</u>

21. Lease commitments

Total future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases:

	2024 £	2023 £
Due not later than one year	4,400	4,400
Due later than one year and not later than five years	9,900	14,300

Disability North

Company Limited by Guarantee

Notes to the Financial Statements

Year ended 31 March 2024

22. Related parties

There were no related party transactions in the current year.

In the prior year, £5,000 was received from Newcastle Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust for charitable activities performed by Disability North. £2,500 of this income was paid out to We are all Disabled, a community interest charity which Dr Lucy Reynolds founded and was a trustee of.

23. Capital commitments

At year end, the charity had committed to £14,000 capital expenditure work on the changing places facility at The Dene Centre.

24. Post balance sheet events

Subsequent to the year end, works to the roof at Disability North are set to begin. The cost of this repair project is estimated at £288,000.