

**Making life better  
for everyone**

**2022**

**IMPACT REPORT**

“ We have a moral responsibility to step in and help our communities and we know how to mobilise our voluntary sector to deliver genuine impact.

Tim Houghton

## Welcome to Community First

Community First is a leading voice in Hampshire's voluntary and community sector. Supported by more than 1,000 volunteers and 300 partner organisations, our staff, volunteers and Board of Directors are dedicated to improving the quality of life for people in Hampshire.



**Tim Houghton**  
Community First  
Chief Executive

Working with local authorities and the NHS our staff and volunteers find innovative ways to adapt and maintain services, such as keeping open community hubs, delivering our essential transport, mobility, training, home help, specialist trauma counselling and vital support for young carers.

No-one underestimates the scale of the challenges we face, but we are driven to reduce inequalities in our communities, and support those most affected by the spiralling costs of living and in turn minimising the pressure on our health and social care systems.

Community First is not immune to these challenges and pressures, but our ability to work at scale with staff who have knowledge and insight to deliver locally, was seen during the pandemic and now more than ever, the

voluntary sector needs this ambitious and joined up approach.

Through sharing ours and our members' expertise, reducing duplication through mergers and helping funders and commissioners to build new partnerships with the charity and voluntary sector we are able to provide effective, long lasting community support.

We can only do what we do with your support and I hope that this report inspires you to find out more and work with us in the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim Houghton'.

Tim Houghton  
Chief Executive



# Community First; empowering communities, making life better for everyone

We play a key role in developing a thriving voluntary sector across Hampshire, empowering communities, mobilising members and delivering critical community services, to make life better for everyone.

In response to rising demand and reducing public sector funding, we have built an organisation capable of developing and delivering high quality services to our customers while offering our funders and commissioners peace of mind. We operate at scale and having successfully merged infrastructure organisations covering East Hampshire, Havant, Fareham, New Forest & Winchester, we now manage centrally and deliver locally, enabling more funding to be directed and invested in local frontline community services and eliminating duplication of overheads.

As a leading voice in Hampshire's voluntary sector we bring together the values, resources and talents of our member organisations, empowering grassroots, community-led groups and people whose voices are seldom heard, and building the necessary capacity to fill gaps in services and promote and replicate good ideas.

We mobilised more than 1000 volunteers during the pandemic through our highly regarded Volunteer First digital platform, securing funding to inspire the next generation of younger volunteers and encouraging those in business to share their expertise with the voluntary and community sector. Our high quality training helps make the sector the best it can be.

Operating across 70% of Hampshire, our community transport and mobility services provide a lifeline supporting people with shopping, leisure trips and access to employment and training.

Our successful hubs in Leigh Park in Havant and Clanfield in East Hampshire are once again the beating heart of community life providing places to meet, socialise, join in and access support.

The Hampshire & IoW Social Prescribing Network and our expanding portfolio

of wellbeing services demonstrate the value of early intervention and prevention, connecting people with the services they need to improve their own health and wellbeing while reducing pressure on NHS and social care and keeping people healthy at home for longer. The determination and fortitude shown by our Young Carers in the New Forest is a shining example of the resilience of young people in responding to life's tough challenges.

START our highly regarded sexual trauma and counselling service, operating across Central, West and North Hampshire, brings together RASAC (Rape and Sexual Abuse Counselling Service) and BRASACC (Basingstoke Rape and Sexual Abuse Crisis Centre).

We have built a reputation as the 'go to' voluntary organisation, with the scale and flexibility to deliver rapid response and the capacity and capability to mobilise the sector.

“Empowering individuals and creating enduring connections that make life better for everyone.”



A close-up photograph of a man with a beard and glasses, speaking into a microphone. He is wearing a blue patterned shirt. The background is blurred, showing another person. A large diagonal graphic element in shades of purple and blue runs across the right side of the page.

667

Voluntary, community & social enterprise organisations we supported with guidance and advice.

£574,057

Income generated into voluntary, community & social enterprise organisations with our help.

24

New start-up voluntary, community & social enterprise organisations given guidance and advice.

87

Voluntary, community & social enterprise organisations provided with specialist advice on finances and fundraising.

37

Voluntary, community & social enterprise organisations supported to strengthen their governance.



**I have found the support from Community First very helpful in building our Community Interest Company business plan.**

## Join us

**We make the voluntary sector better; creating thriving and successful community and social enterprise organisations capable of delivering high quality services that help people to be happy and healthy.**

We are giving a voice to our growing membership to get their message across to help inform and influence funders, commissioners and decision makers in statutory bodies and public sector organisations.

We provide value to members through our community development services, which include support with day-to-day management, governance, policies, finding volunteers business planning and income generation. Delivered flexibly by our local community staff supported by our Interactive Community First Virtual Office.

We can also help find qualified, experienced volunteers and trustees to lead your organisation.

Taking the hassle out of admin, we offer a payroll and bookkeeping service, DBS checks

for staff and volunteers and self-serve access to our online jobs board to promote vacancies.

Members have access to our high-quality training courses, including our free Community First Essential Training designed specifically to meet the needs of our members.

We are passionately committed to creating a strong, influential and thriving voluntary and community sector and enable this through the set-up of new organisations and projects, including community hubs.

Membership is £10 per year. To find out more about the wide range of services and support offered to Community First members, go to: [www.cffirst.org.uk/join-us/](http://www.cffirst.org.uk/join-us/)



# Supporting our Communities



### Transport

Our Community Transport services across Hampshire include Dial-a-Ride and Call & Go – operating more than 40 accessible minibuses.

|                              |        |
|------------------------------|--------|
| Number of trips              | 27,696 |
| Number of passengers carried | 84,598 |
| Number of groups supported   | 4,227  |



### Events Mobility

Providing mobility scooters and wheelchairs for events such as Goodwood Revival and Farnborough Air Show.

|                     |     |
|---------------------|-----|
| Customers supported | 439 |
|---------------------|-----|



### Fareham Voluntary Car Scheme

Giving people the opportunity to get to medical appointments without any hassle, thanks to the kind work of our community volunteers.

|            |     |
|------------|-----|
| Trips made | 722 |
|------------|-----|



### Heart of the Park

A friendly and welcoming space at Leigh Park Community Centre offering a wide range of facilities and activities, as well as providing space for a number of local organisations.

|                 |        |
|-----------------|--------|
| Annual visitors | 11,240 |
|-----------------|--------|



### Wheels to Work

A moped loan service allowing people to independently get to work, apprenticeships, training or job interviews.

|               |    |
|---------------|----|
| Annual hirers | 35 |
|---------------|----|



### Positive Pathways

Supporting Havant Borough residents to volunteer in their community, gain valuable work experience and learn new skills.

|                   |     |
|-------------------|-----|
| Clients supported | 282 |
|-------------------|-----|



### Shopmobility

Our community service that provides mobility scooters to anyone who cannot manage to get around the town or local area easily.

|                     |       |
|---------------------|-------|
| Customers supported | 448   |
| Trips made          | 2,433 |



### Clanfield Centre

We manage the Clanfield Centre on behalf of the community – it's open for classes, sports activities, and food and drink in the wellbeing café.

|              |        |
|--------------|--------|
| Annual users | 47,900 |
|--------------|--------|



### Training

We deliver a wide portfolio of learning opportunities for the voluntary sector and private businesses including first aid, people management and minibus driver training.

|                    |       |
|--------------------|-------|
| Courses held       | 155   |
| Learners supported | 1,240 |



# Supporting our Communities



**Young Carers**

Supporting young carers aged 7-18 with one-to-one work, school support, trips and activities and signposting.

|                                 |     |
|---------------------------------|-----|
| Young Carers/families supported | 220 |
|---------------------------------|-----|



**Gardening**

Our gardening team support vulnerable Fareham and Havant Borough residents with day-to-day garden management.

|                   |    |
|-------------------|----|
| Clients supported | 78 |
|-------------------|----|



**START**

A confidential specialist counselling service for those who have suffered sexual abuse or trauma in North and Mid Hampshire.

|                   |     |
|-------------------|-----|
| Clients supported | 502 |
|-------------------|-----|



**Healthy Walks**

A volunteer-led service encouraging people of all ages to join regular, short walks in their own communities.

|                 |     |
|-----------------|-----|
| Number of walks | 997 |
|-----------------|-----|



**Home Help**

A home-based support service enabling people to maintain their independence.

|                   |     |
|-------------------|-----|
| Clients supported | 280 |
|-------------------|-----|



**Befriending/Shopping**

Assistance for frail, elderly and disabled people who are unable to do their own shopping.

|                   |    |
|-------------------|----|
| Clients supported | 95 |
|-------------------|----|



**Timebank**

A friendly group of individuals, community organisations and businesses who swap skills and exchange support.

|                  |           |
|------------------|-----------|
| Skills exchanged | 951 hours |
|------------------|-----------|



“ I love my job as a Home Help because of how rewarding it is each day knowing that I have helped someone and made a difference.



# Transport Services

## Kirsty and Jacob's story

Kirsty Grant's 10-year-old son Jacob is severely autistic and has used our community transport service to get to and from school in Winchester since 2017.

Jacob is picked up from home in Bishop's Waltham and dropped off in the afternoon by our driver Steve Holmes. The routine is something mum Kirsty says has "been a godsend for Jacob.

"Jacob is so excited to get on the bus each morning, he runs up to the window to wait for it to arrive. Having the same driver and seat on the bus every day is crucial to keeping Jacob happy as he needs structure and routine.

"Being autistic, he can often have meltdowns and we were worried that he wouldn't like going on the bus, but he loves it, and it has really helped his confidence and added more enjoyment to his daily life.

"He has built close friendships with Steve and the other children taking the bus, something which he wouldn't have had without this service."

Jacob's school referred Kirsty to our service via Hampshire County Council when Jacob was just five years old, and he has taken the bus every day since.

"I take my elder son to school in Bishop's Waltham and without Community First I would really struggle to do both. I'm hoping that once Jacob moves to secondary school, we will be able to continue using this service as it has made such a difference to his behaviour."

Our Transport services include Dial-a-Ride and Call & Go. Learn more at [www.cffirst.org.uk/community-transport](http://www.cffirst.org.uk/community-transport)



“It's been a godsend for Jacob, he is happy as he needs structure and routine.





# New Forest Young Carers – Poppy’s story

Nine-year-old Poppy helps to care for her mum Lizzie, who suffers from MS (Multiple Sclerosis). This condition means Lizzie is sometimes unable to swallow or speak, leaving Poppy responsible for making sure her mum is given the care she needs.

This is a lot of responsibility for Poppy, who has developed separation anxiety as a result and worries about going to school in case Lizzie falls ill.

In 2020, Poppy’s school referred her to our Young Carers service, which provides respite for children aged 7-18 who are looking after someone in their family with a long-term health problem or disability.

Not far from her home in the New Forest, Poppy joins in with after school, weekend and holiday activities at a local scout hut and goes on fun trips to places such as

Paulton’s Park with our staff and other young carers.

Lizzie said: “Poppy has grown in so much confidence and has built close friendships with the staff at Community First and other children who are young carers. The support has eased her anxiety so she’s able to go out and enjoy herself without me being there.

“While doing Christmas craft activities, cookery classes and going on trips, she can forget about her home life and be a child. She made the (Young Carers) team at Community First bangles on the weekend – she’s very selfless and is always kind to others.”

The Young Careers service has also provided Poppy with an Action Care Plan, a handbook that tells Poppy what do

if her mum falls ill. She can give this to paramedics, which informs them about Lizzie’s condition and how she needs to be cared for.

As members of Hampshire’s Young Carers Alliance, we work with Hampshire County Council and other agencies to develop a programme of work in line with County and National policies.

For more information about our Young Carers service, go to [www.cffirst.org.uk/wellbeing/young-carers/](http://www.cffirst.org.uk/wellbeing/young-carers/)



# START – Jane’s journey

“It’s OK not to be OK.” This was the start of Jane’s journey coming to terms with abuse she suffered as a child.

For more than 40 years Jane from North Hampshire hid her terrible secret of sexual abuse at the hands of a sibling and family friend. But now thanks to specialist counsellors from START – Sexual Trauma & Abuse Restorative Therapies – she says the shame is ebbing away and she can start living again.

The service – a partnership with the Police and Crime Commissioner Hampshire & Isle of Wight – operates in Hampshire and brings together the previous RASAC (Rape and Sexual Abuse Counselling Service) supporting Central, West and North Hampshire and BRASACC (Basingstoke Rape and Sexual Abuse Crisis Centre), also operating in the North of the county.

Recounting her experience, Jane said: “For years I pushed it all to the back of my mind and pretended it never happened. I didn’t tell a soul.

“But that was wrong. My life has been affected as have all my relationships. I

have suffered with mental health issues for many years, without processing why. I was recommended to contact START and thank goodness I did. It has changed my life.

“I joined a weekend residential course and have never felt so comfortable with people. I was able to confront my issues safely and fully supported.

“I am no longer ashamed. I’ve stopped pretending it didn’t happen and I’m living again – I’ve even told my children – a huge step.

“I cannot thank everyone at START enough. I’m not a qualified counsellor but I would love to give something back and help others like me – even if it’s just sitting down with a cup of tea and having a chat.”

The core service offered by START is a confidential, specialist counselling and support service for anyone who has experienced sexual abuse and/or sexual assault, resulting in sexual trauma. The services are offered to everyone, regardless of age, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, cultural or religious background. The duration of counselling varies by individual, with an

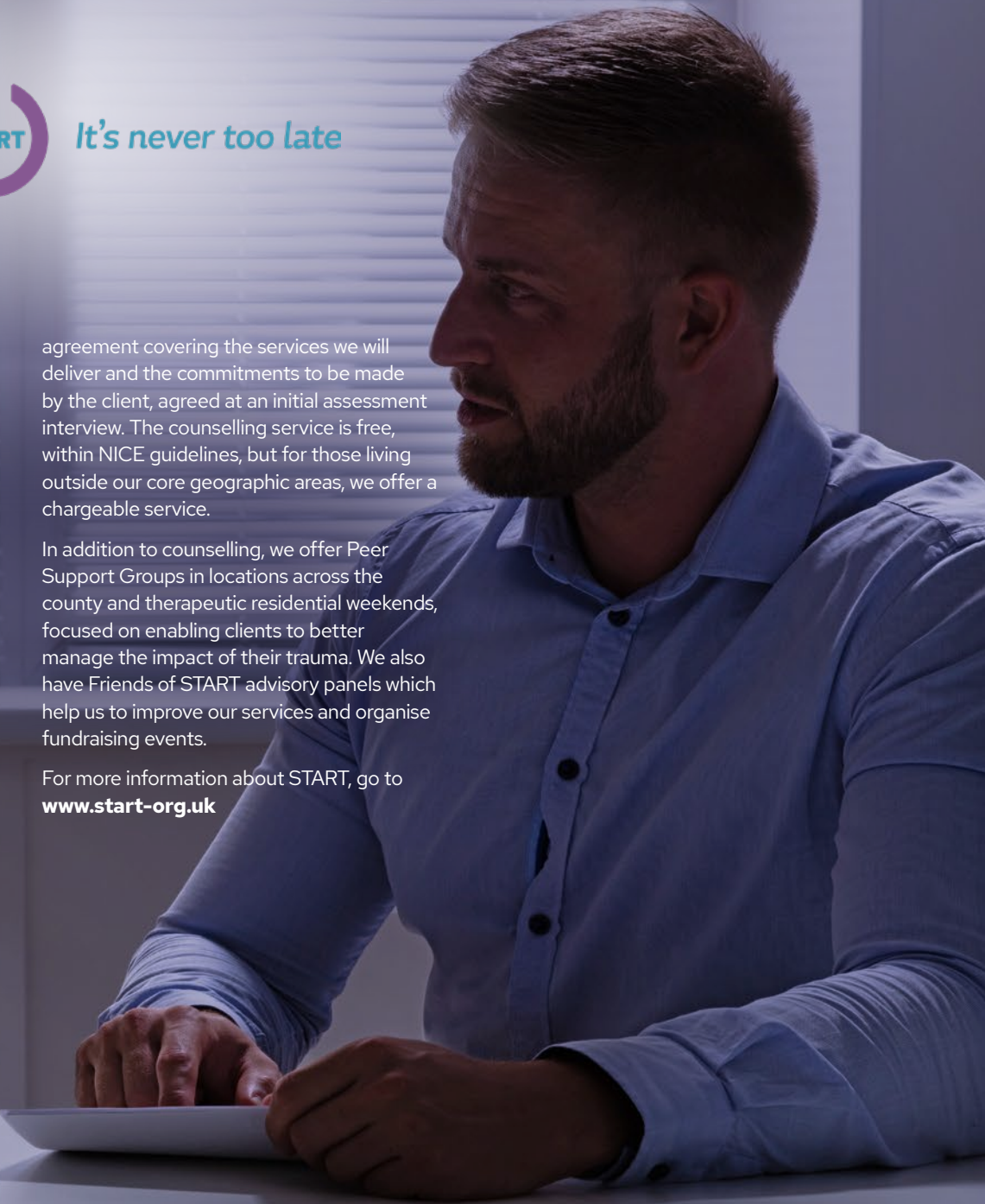


*It’s never too late*

agreement covering the services we will deliver and the commitments to be made by the client, agreed at an initial assessment interview. The counselling service is free, within NICE guidelines, but for those living outside our core geographic areas, we offer a chargeable service.

In addition to counselling, we offer Peer Support Groups in locations across the county and therapeutic residential weekends, focused on enabling clients to better manage the impact of their trauma. We also have Friends of START advisory panels which help us to improve our services and organise fundraising events.

For more information about START, go to [www.start-org.uk](http://www.start-org.uk)





# Volunteer First

Through our well-established community connections, we're able to locate and post hundreds of up-to-date volunteering opportunities for more than 500 charities and community groups across Hampshire.

We host Volunteer First an innovative online platform for recruiting and placing volunteers, where voluntary and community organisations can upload their vacancies enabling potential volunteers to find their ideal role.

As Hampshire's single point of contact for the CVS network we have seen how people have, over the last couple of years, pulled together to help those most vulnerable and our challenge now is to harness this renewed motivation and not lose momentum. We support and encourage voluntary and community organisations to maximise the talent and enthusiasm of young people through our Young Volunteers Team.

We understand more about the role that voluntary organisations, charities and community groups can play working alongside local authorities and health partners to deliver better outcomes for people and help communities to be resilient.

We support residents of Bordon to swap skills and support one another as part of our Woolmer Forest Timebank Project and offer specialist one-to-one support to Havant Residents who need help to volunteer in our Positive Pathways Team.

To encourage more volunteering the voluntary sector needs ambition, a coherent voice and a clear strategy to realise its full potential, and we at Community First are leading the way. We are a key partner in Hampshire's Volunteering Hub and work with partners like Winchester University to ensure we have clear insights into psychology of volunteering, enabling us to offer practical guidance on recruiting, retaining and motivating volunteers.

We believe when it comes to volunteering there is something for everyone, so to advertise your opportunities or get started on your volunteering journey visit **www.volunteerfirst.co.uk**

## Volunteering

407

Volunteering roles advertised.

1898

Enquires about volunteering roles.

462

Volunteers informed us they had taken up new roles.

127

Young people supported to volunteer.



## Variety the spice of volunteering!

### Barry – Winchester Cathedral

Winchester resident, Barry, was approaching retirement and wanted to find a new activity he could be passionate about and would keep him busy.

“I had felt increasingly isolated from my community during the pandemic and wanted to make myself get out more and be busier once restrictions had been relaxed. I am also approaching retirement and wanted to put some new activities in place in my life in preparation for that transition.”

Keen to get involved with the city’s heritage, Barry came across a Welcome Steward position at Winchester Cathedral on our Volunteer First website.

“Once I applied, they got in touch and within a week or two I was volunteering! It’s been great meeting new people and learning about local history and archaeology.

“Community First’s service was very helpful and I would recommend anyone looking to volunteer to use its platform.”

### William – Emsworth Show Summer Exhibition

Experienced volunteer, William was searching online for a new opportunity when he came across our Volunteer First website.

“I have always enjoyed volunteering and so when I found the Volunteer First website it was a treasure trove of new opportunities.

“I found a great role as a Ground Team Assistant at the Emsworth Horticultural Society’s Summer Exhibition. I helped ensure the smooth running of this busy and popular annual event.

“My advice to other people who think they may want to volunteer, is just to go for it and take advantage of every opportunity you find, as helping out can be so fun and rewarding.”



I have always enjoyed volunteering, and so when I found the Volunteer First website it was a treasure trove of new opportunities.



## Steve Davey from Positive Pathways

Positive Pathways is based in Leigh Park, Havant, and is a scheme designed for Havant Borough residents aged 18+ who need help and support to volunteer in their community. The goal is to increase participation in volunteering, especially for those who are long-term unemployed or who want to reconnect with their community but do not have the confidence to do it alone.

Steve volunteered with Positive Pathways for two years, helping with gardening and painting activities which he really enjoyed. When the Skills and Employment Hub started Steve was our first customer.

Just a couple of months later Steve secured a job with Next as a Cleaning Supervisor, managing a small team. He now recruits, interviews and trains new cleaners for the team.

Steve said: “I have the team to thank for their support in both Positive Pathways and the skills hub. So much so, I think their help has given me the confidence to hold down and keep the job that has helped me improve my self-confidence.”

To register with Positive Pathways, visit [www.cfirfirst.org.uk/volunteering/positive-pathways](http://www.cfirfirst.org.uk/volunteering/positive-pathways)



# The power of social prescribing

There has never been a more important time to recognise the power social prescribing can have on the health and wellbeing of people in our communities.

Both an over-burdened NHS and the cost of living crisis are posing huge risks to public health, yet extra Government funding and collaboration between CVS organisations could have a positive – transformational – effect on people.

Hampshire missed out on the latest round of Government social prescribing funding given to local authorities to help people access activities designed to boost their health and wellbeing.

It awarded £12.7 million in multi-year funding to 11 local authority areas in England, to prescribe activities such as walking and cycling. The new trial aims to improve mental and physical health and reduce disparities across the country.

Community First hosted its first Hampshire and Isle of Wight Social Prescribing Network Conference in Winchester focusing on demonstrating how and why social prescribing works.

Also known as community referral, social prescribing is non-clinical and connects

people to community services run by a local council or charity. This might include volunteering, cookery classes, gardening or arts activities.

In the Long Term Plan, NHS England claims at least 900,000 people will be referred to social prescribing by 2023/24, but without enough funding, services such as those provided and supported by organisations like Community First, cannot be expanded.

Tim Houghton, Chief Executive of Community First, said: “Social prescribing should be more widely available. At a time where many are struggling to get by, we can see the impact this has on our physical and mental wellbeing. We need help now to allow greater access to these services which can significantly boost people’s health and help them live happier, more independent lives.

“People may be isolated, lonely or stressed and treating these medically is not always the correct approach. Link workers can signpost or support them in dealing with issues around housing, employment, mental health, loneliness or social inclusion, for example.

“Reducing non-medical GP appointments can also help remove the burden on the NHS and deliver a better service for patients.”

Community First delivers social prescribing services to the Hampshire community, as part of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Social Prescribing Network.

The Network is funded by Hampshire’s Clinical Commissioning Groups and has 200 members who deliver, commission, or provide services for or support social prescribing projects countywide.

Community First works with Hampshire County Council, Hampshire and IOW Commissioning Group and local GP practices to deliver counselling services.

It also delivers START, a confidential specialist counselling and support service for anyone who has experienced unwanted sexual abuse and / or sexual assault and has suffered sexual trauma.

Positive Pathways support Havant residents who need help and support to volunteer in their community.

Other services Community First offer which are beneficial to people at this time, include a food pantry service, Health Walks – a free walking scheme led by trained volunteers and an Employment Hub.

“ Social prescribing is about looking at the whole person to see how to help them live fuller, better lives.

Lena Samuels

Lena Samuels Chair, Hampshire & Isle of Wight Integrated Care Board



# Making it pay

Community First is one of the largest independent charities in Hampshire with revenues in excess of £3m and a workforce of 100 paid staff and over 200 volunteers delivering our services.

In 2021/22 we generated revenue in excess of £3.3m, spending and investing more than £3.1m and generating a surplus of £200,000. We continue to diversify our income striking a balance between grant funding and contracts and commissioned services which meet our charitable objectives and customer needs. Services recovered gradually after the pandemic and we, like many organisations, had to adapt to the new normal, recognising the changing pattern in demand and the opportunities to invest in services which helped people tackle the cost of living and support better health and wellbeing.

Community First continues to invest in and modernise the way we support our service users and voluntary community and social enterprise organisations. We have already come a long way merging five organisations into one between 2012 and 2020 resulting in substantial savings on overheads and staff, so that more resources can be targeted at new and improved support services and releasing funds to invest in digital technology.

Our Community First Investment Fund ensures that our reserves are re-invested in activities which deliver impact but are harder to fund or which need pump-priming or piloting.

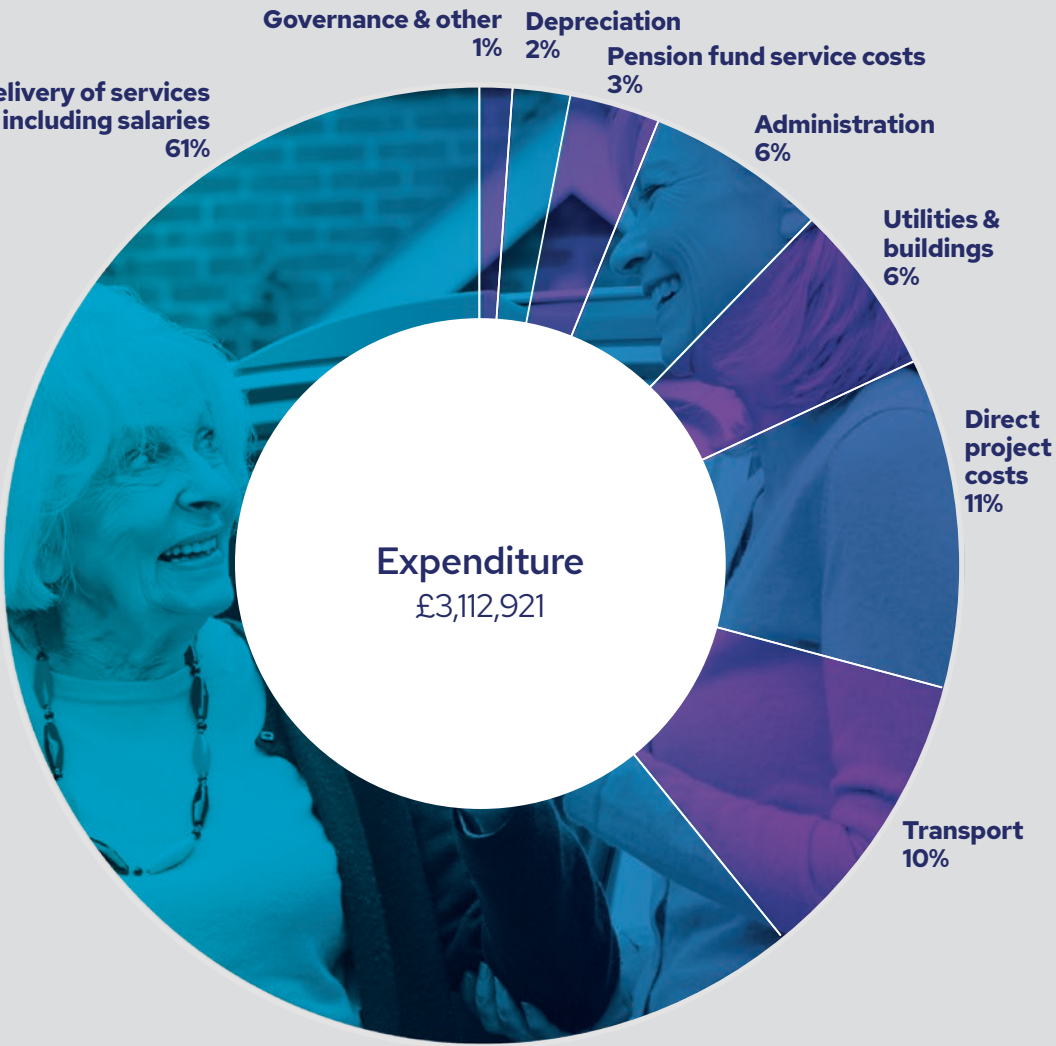
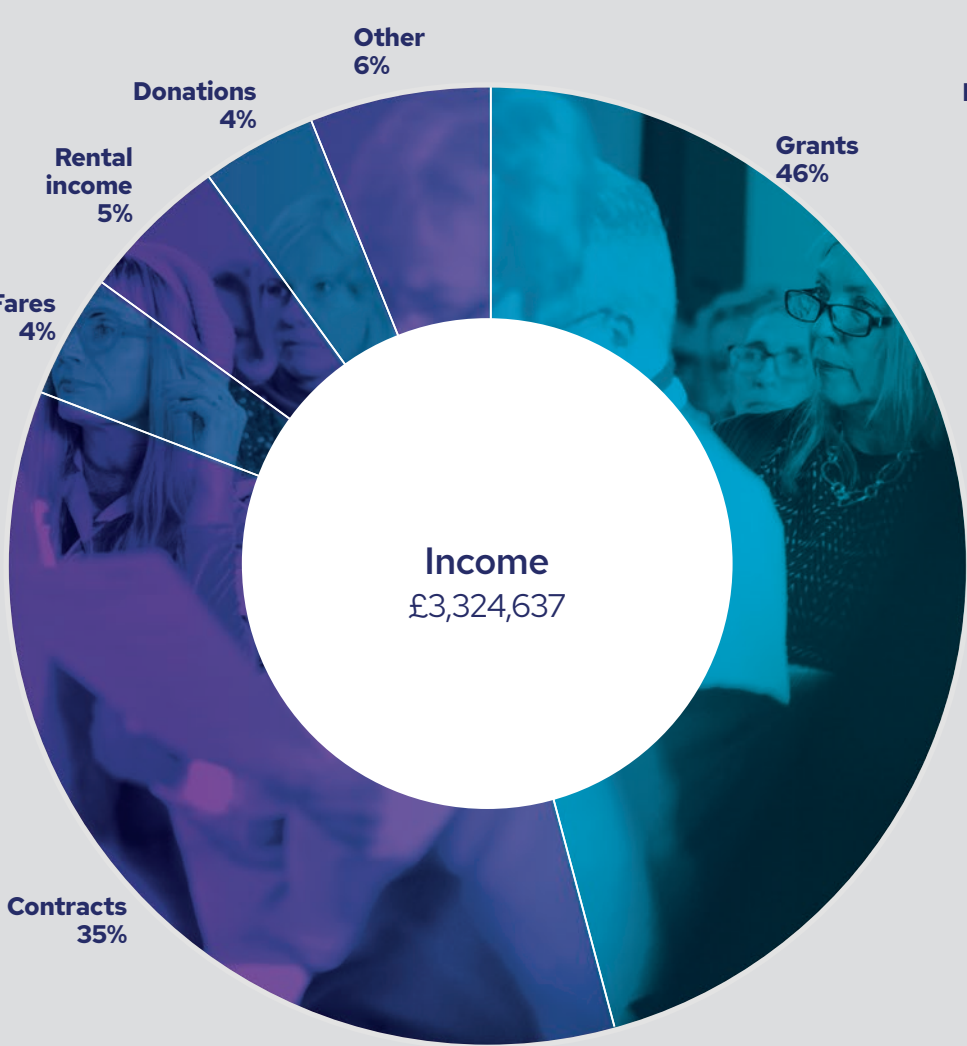
We continue to operate against a backdrop of further reductions and challenges in public sector funding. It's incumbent on Community First to identify new revenue streams and provide the expertise to unlock and access these. We are investing in more fundraising capacity to support our member groups.

During the year, we were successful with a number of funding bids and tenders with local authorities, the National Community Lottery Fund, Office of Police & Crime Commissioner and Clinical Commissioning Groups (now Integrated Care Board) and we were also successful in maintaining investment in voluntary sector infrastructure support and Transport from HCC and district partners.



**We came out of the pandemic having delivered and strengthened our crisis response, with a strong balance sheet and the potential to invest reserves, along with the continuity of our experienced board and staff team.**

Beverley Jones, Chairman, Community First





# Looking to the future

The voluntary and community sector has never been more relevant than it is today.

Community First is ideally placed – identifying needs with local communities and mobilising organisations and empowering volunteers to offer partners and commissioners innovative solutions.

We're now one of the largest charities in Hampshire with revenues of £3.3m, 100 staff, more than 200 volunteers and the ability to reach and engage 1,000 volunteers.

We have worked hard to eliminate duplication and work at scale meaning we are a fit for purpose organisation to face today's challenges.

This year we will continue to provide focus groups pooling the power and showcasing the impact of small local charities. Support

health, wellbeing and social care by helping families and young people develop skills making the economy more innovative, resilient and productive.

Further investment in volunteering has to remain a priority as it promotes opportunities for people to engage with their community, fostering belonging and enriching lives.

Last but not least, we have long valued the role and importance of community hubs creating safe and welcoming spaces for communities to come together. We want to increase these and will seek investment and support for community associations as well as opportunities for asset transfer.



As a joint strategic partner, Community First makes an important contribution to shaping, improving and delivering services using a range of community centred approaches. In particular, they provide the NHS with VCSE sector specialist expertise and perspective, contribute insights and assets to support health and wellbeing, provide expertise in service redesign and addressing health inequalities and enable two-way engagement between health and the VCSE sector to champion the role of VCSE providers in local places and neighbourhoods.

**Campbell Todd**  
**Locality Director for Havant Borough & Healthy Communities Lead**  
**Hampshire and Isle of Wight Integrated Care Board**





# Thank you to partners and funders

We have worked with our partners, members, not-for-profit groups, schools, colleges, local business, and the general public throughout the community during 2022; with our collaborations wide and diverse. We continue to champion the sector and work hard to make lives better. As ever, we would like to say "Thank You" to all our funders and partners for their invaluable support and to all the businesses who have generously donated equipment and materials for our volunteering events and appeals.





## Leadership Team



**Tim Houghton**  
Chief Executive Officer  
[tim.houghton@cfirst.org.uk](mailto:tim.houghton@cfirst.org.uk)



**Hywel Small**  
Performance & Operations Director  
[hywel.small@cfirst.org.uk](mailto:hywel.small@cfirst.org.uk)



**Mandy Harris**  
Community Development Director  
[mandy.harris@cfirst.org.uk](mailto:mandy.harris@cfirst.org.uk)



**Tanya Dowthwaite**  
Finance Director  
[tanya.dowthwaite@cfirst.org.uk](mailto:tanya.dowthwaite@cfirst.org.uk)



General enquiries: **0300 500 8085**

Email: **[support@cfirst.org.uk](mailto:support@cfirst.org.uk)**

**[www.cfirst.org.uk](http://www.cfirst.org.uk)**

Registered Office: **Leigh Park Community Centre,**  
Dunsbury Way, Leigh Park, Havant, PO9 5BG

