



Attention of the Board - Final Draft Annual Report for SWAN

Vikki Holloway, CEO
August 2024

Chair's introduction to the Annual Report and Financial Statement 2024

I am pleased to introduce the annual report for SWAN for the year 2023-2024 and financial statement for the financial year ending March 2024.

This year has been marked by significant and successful progress and impactful initiatives that continue to underpin our commitment to deliver on our vision and mission toward advocacy and client support in the geographical areas where we have an influence.

Following our comprehensive governance review and the implementation of the board workplan we have continued to reinforce our organisational integrity and strategic direction. Our Board Evaluation Day on the Isle of Wight in June provided a dedicated session for discussion and enhancement of our governance practices. The day also provided valuable insights into the operational business and fostered a culture of continuous improvement and an opportunity for Board development. Furthermore, Board representation at the workforce day in Dorset in December underscored our commitment to engaging with and understanding the needs of our frontline colleagues. This event was instrumental in fostering a stronger connection between the Board and the workforce, ensuring that our strategies are aligned with the needs and aspirations of our team.

We are pleased to welcome two new Trustees who will formally join our number at our AGM in November; their diverse expertise and fresh perspectives will continue to enrich our governance and decision-making processes.

In addition to strengthening our leadership team, we have secured three new contracts for Dorset, including Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole, West Berkshire and Portsmouth. These contracts align with our vision and mission and broaden our scope of influence. We welcomed colleagues who have joined us and will enable us to deliver enhanced services for our commissioners and support to our clients.

All of this would not be possible without the dedication and support of Vikki our CEO, and her senior team. Our thanks go to those who have worked tirelessly to secure a brighter, more stable future. In addition, we thank the support and generosity of our volunteers who enrich the quality of the services we provide.

I thank our funders from individuals donations to grants from charitable trusts, for their generosity, we look forward to working and celebrating our future successes with you. Last but not least, I thank my fellow trustees for their invaluable help and support and the new opportunities for SWAN in the future.

Claire Tough
Chair of the Board of Trustees

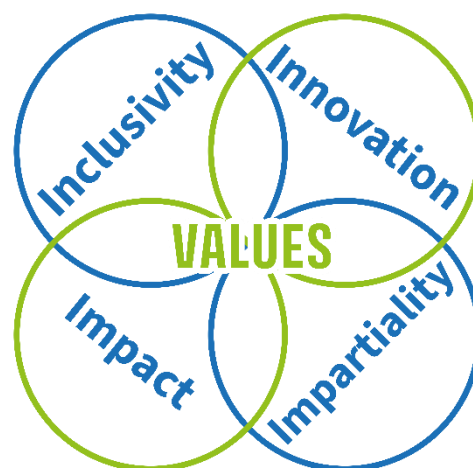
Introduction

SWANs Vision

SWAN is committed to furthering the human rights of individuals by helping people to access their rights, lead the lives they want to lead, live without fear of discrimination and be as independent as possible. SWAN Trustees and workforce are passionate and committed to the work that SWAN does recognising that 'everyone needs someone on their side'.

SWANs Vision is:

'A world without discrimination, with true social justice, where people are treated as equals and have influence on the decisions that affect their lives'.



SWANs Mission

SWAN operates in a competitive environment, delivering services to the most marginalised people in society and striving to ensure that access to rights operates on an equal basis. The people delivering SWAN services are passionate about their work and SWAN is an organisation that cares deeply about justice, fairness and independence.

SWANs Mission is:

'To be a fair and inclusive employer, respected by all stakeholders for delivering high quality, person centred and innovate services that ensure equal access to rights'.

What we do

Advocacy has its foundations in Human Rights, we support people to get the information they need to understand them. Everyone has the right ensure that their wishes are at the centre of decisions being made about them. Advocacy helps people to have their voices heard so that they can achieve the outcomes they want in their life. SWAN provides different types of advocacy to people in a variety of different situations and always seeks to enable as much independence as possible for every individual.

Victim of Crime Advocacy Service (VOCAS)

VOCAS provides enhanced adult advocacy alongside practical and emotional support to victims of crime and anti-social behaviour across Avon and Somerset. VOCAS empowers and enables individuals to cope and recover from their experience as a victim of crime. Some of the cases are complex with multiple issues to be addressed.

"A massive thanks.... You have both been amazing, always polite and always ready to speak to me when I needed you. I could not have done it without your help, and it really feels like you work is giving some of my life back"



Client

Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy (IMCA)

Our IMCA service provides independent advocacy for people who are deemed to lack capacity and have no-one else to represent them in decisions being made about their life. This may include where they live, what medical treatment they receive, what care and support they need or as part of 'protective measures' to ensure they are safe from harm or neglect. IMCA advocates also work with people who are subject to a Deprivation of Liberty Order (DoLS)

Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)

Advocacy is provided for people who experience deprivations of liberty through their living accommodations and/or their care planning approaches. Advocates ensure that restrictions are necessary and proportionate, and that mental capacity and best interest decisions have been fairly made, or whether an application to the court of protection is necessary to challenge a decision. Some advocacy for DoLS is provided by IMCAs and some can be provided for by any paid or volunteer advocate who is appointed as the Paid Representative.



Professional

All your advocates that we have worked with provide excellent service. They are experienced, knowledgeable and dedicated to their clients. They are flexible when needed, approachable and easy to work with."

Independent Mental Health Advocacy (IMHA)

IMHA's have a regular presence on wards to support people at tribunals, appeals, care plan meetings and those on ward rounds who have been detained under a mental health section, a Community Treatment Order or Guardianship, an informal inpatient at a mental health hospital or a Carer of a qualifying patient. Advocates help people to access records and legal support; communicate with professionals and understand their rights in relation to their legal situation, their medication, and their right (or not) to temporarily or permanently leave the place of detention. IMHA's also facilitate 'Have your Say' meetings on wards to provide feedback on their experience and raise any issues to the ward.

Independent Care Act Advocacy (ICAA)

The Care Act of 2014 ensures that people who have 'substantial difficulty' in understanding the Care Act processes and have no other appropriate person to support them is entitled to an independent advocate. 'Substantial difficulty' may be due to a learning disability or a physical or mental health condition. The aim is to ensure an individual's wishes are at the heart of the process and to enable them to be involved as fully as possible.

Independent Health Complaints Advocacy (IHCA)

This service is provided to anyone over the age of 18 who has a complaint about any NHS funded service within the previous year. We support people to consider the outcome they would like from making the complaint and we adapt the level of advocacy support required during the complaint process to suit the individual. SWAN provides a range of self-advocacy tools for people to pursue their own complaint if they feel able to do so. Health complaints can be long and complicated with many cases staying active for more than 12 months.

"I need to let you know that I am physically crying with relief. Today's meeting is astonishing for my brain(s). SWAN managed to filter through my garbled/chaotic way of trying to communicate and managed to --without exception-- capture EVERYTHING I am struggling with and put it in understandable concise form, without judgement, and secondly, my visitor (advocate) was the most decent, understanding, warm, validating human being I have ever met."



Community, Self or Generic Advocacy

Community advocates work with individuals who have difficulty being involved in decisions that affect them due to learning difficulties, physical or mental health issues, acquired brain injury and dementia. Advocates ensure that individuals are afforded fair and equal treatment through knowledge of all available options and access to relevant information and professional advice. This includes a wide variety of issues including benefits assessments, medical appointments, employment issues, gaining access to care and support, working with their care provider and making complaints. Other Community advocates work to promote and support self-advocacy within their localities for people with a range of disabilities, commonly shared experiences and concerns. This advocacy support is accessed through our Be Heard projects. (please see volunteering)

Non-instructed Advocacy

Non-instructed advocacy uses different approaches when an advocate is representing a person who is unable to instruct and/or consent to advocacy provision. The approaches used focus on all or some of the person's

circumstances, for example, their unique needs and views or the appropriateness of their care or accommodation services or as part of formal health and social care decision making to ensure the person's views are at the heart of these processes. Not all advocates will use non-instructed advocacy, but it is an important part of independent advocacy knowledge and non-instructed advocacy training is provided to all active advocates.

"Advocate helped me to have a better understanding of the client and they managed to open a line of communication that we were struggling with."



Children and Young People's Advocacy (CYP)

CYP supports children and young people who are looked after, within child safety legislation or who are receiving health & social care services. SWAN does not hold a current CYP Service, but many advocacy instances occur where children and young people have a right to access advocacy in other situations. These include IMHAs who work with young people detained on ward and young people who are transitioning to adult social care services and have a right to access a Care Act Advocate. IMCAs may also work with young people aged 16yrs+ as Be Heard Community Advocates.

Performance Report

Our Goals and Performance during 2023-2024

SWAN has developed the following strategic goals to further the charitable objects of the organisation and deliver its Vision and Mission.

1. Embed organisational resilience by generating financial and people capacity to increase its outcomes and impact
2. Enhance our profile, build our reputation and expand our geographical footprint in the South-West and nationally
3. Increase our influence, capacity and ability to act through the development of strategic alliances and partnerships

The achievement of the strategic goals will increase revenue, efficiencies, collaboration and advocacy awareness through a broader geographical footprint. Furthermore, it will encourage a healthy workforce through strong retention and cultural cohesion. The cultural foundations of SWAN are of vital importance and built on trust, accountability and personal responsibility which is a tangible thread through all that we do, underpinning relationships, decisions and behaviour.

Top Issues Supported



Rights under the Mental Capacity Act

Supporting people to be at the centres of decision-making processes



Rights under the Mental Health Act

Supporting people to be fully involved with and challenge their care and treatment



Access to Health and Social Care

Supporting applications for Needs and Care Assessments



Health and Social Care Complaints

Supporting people to use formal processes regarding their health or social care experience



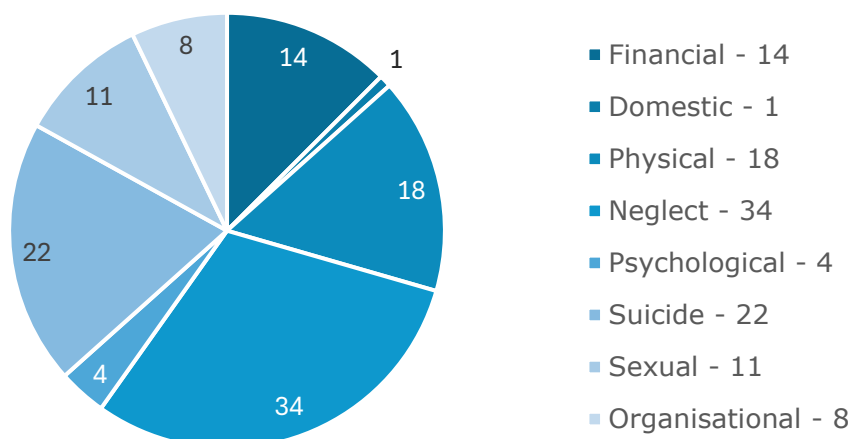
Parents Advocacy

Supporting parents with additional learning needs who are within children and family services

SWAN delivers advocacy in the South of England and in 2023-24 expanded its geographical footprint through the awarding of advocacy contracts in Dorset, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole, West Berkshire and Portsmouth. This adds to SWANs existing portfolio of Somerset, North Somerset, South Gloucestershire, Bath and North East Somerset, Isle of Wight and Bristol. We aim for a local and responsive approach with hub and office spaces, working closely with Commissioners and tailoring the services to the individual requirements of the contracts.

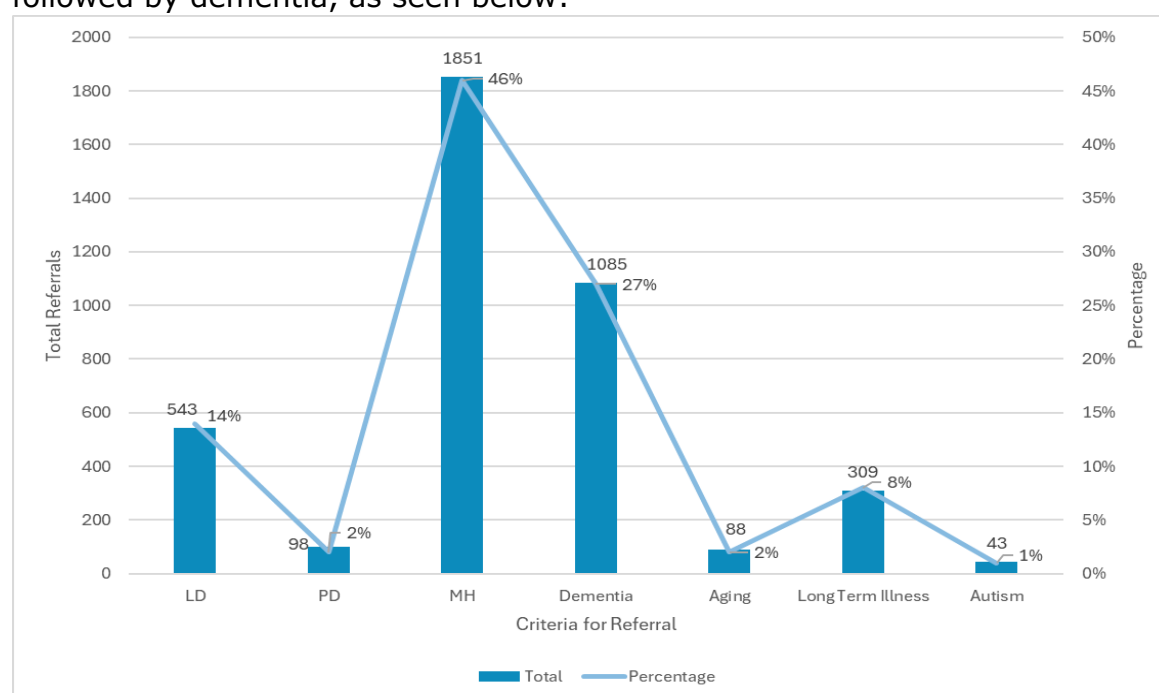


In working toward achieving the strategic goals during financial year 2023-24 SWAN held 9,249 active cases and received 6,517 referrals from partner organisations and self-referrals. During this time SWAN supported through the following themes:

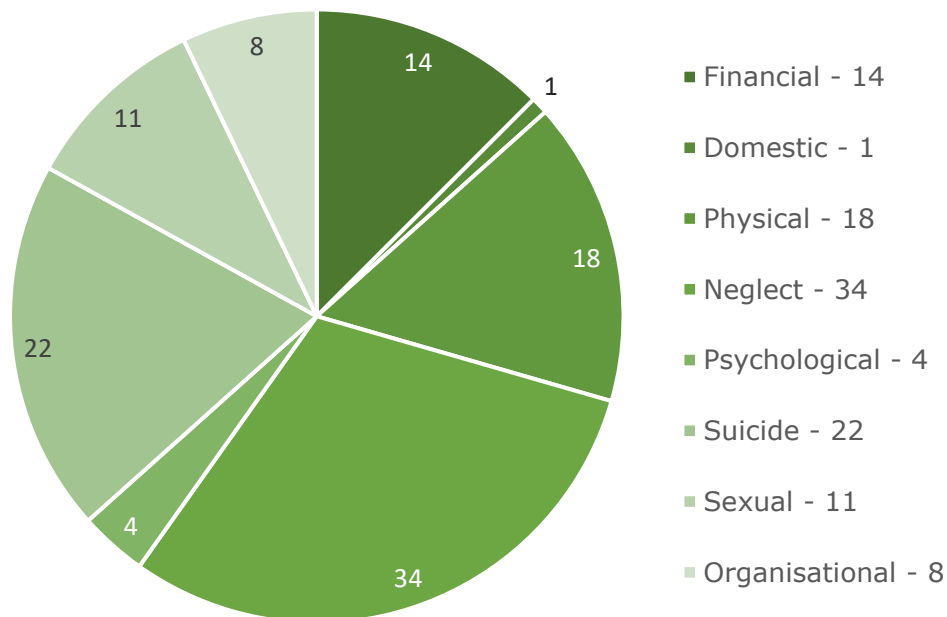


SWAN operates a 'no wrong door' ethos and individuals can access our services through a variety of means. Our **Advocacy Support Team** who receive referrals into SWAN are highly experienced in assessing eligibility and communicating with vulnerable people. They provide support to clients through first response advocacy, triage and expert sign-posting. During the financial year the team answered a total of 9035 calls and spent the equivalent of 20 days, 8 hours and 52 minutes talking time with clients.

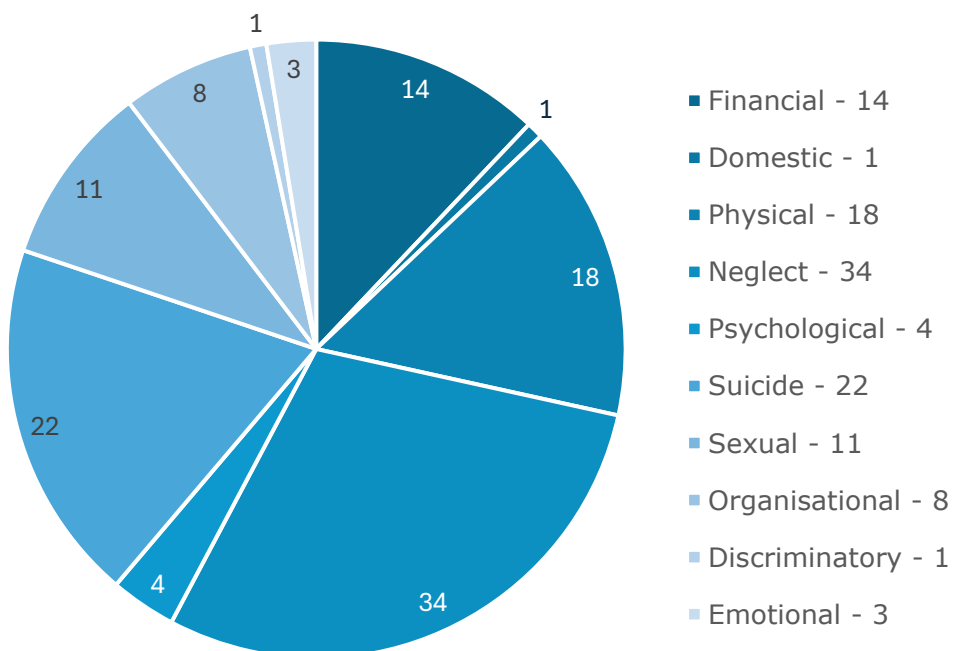
During 2023-2024 our largest number of referrals related to mental health, followed by dementia, as seen below:



SWAN spent a total of 61,824 hours on the different types of advocacy, categorised below:



Safeguarding our clients are an important part of our work and advocates remain vigilant in raising safeguarding alerts. During 2023-24 advocates raised 116 concerns in the following categories:



Pro-active Safeguarding

In March 2023 we attended the Somerset Council Safeguarding conference. We provided a workshop alongside other workshop providers to highlight the benefits and purpose of involving Independent Advocacy in safeguarding procedures. SWAN had an information stall throughout the day with information and guidance for professionals on making referrals, working with independent advocacy and the role of the independent advocate.

SWAN delivered a webinar at Stop Adult Abuse Week in November regarding the role of the advocate in safeguarding which focussed on a case study about self-neglect. Positive feedback was given from all who attended.

How SWAN lived its Values

Our Values are central to our approach and the work we do on a daily basis. We work hard to ensure that we demonstrate our commitment to them in all of our work:



Inclusivity – we work with people to find the best way to deliver advocacy to them and their communities. In 2023-2024 we delivered Be Heard Projects to support people who weren't entitled to statutory advocacy to develop self-advocacy skills and confidence.



Innovation – we are independent from other agencies meaning we can determine new ways to deliver advocacy in the way that people need it. During the reporting period we supported individuals to develop person directed Advocacy Plans and provided advocacy coaching sessions.



Impact – we find new ways to measure our impact and use that information to improve what we do and how we do it. During the financial year, in partnership with experts by experience to ensure accessibility, we launched our bespoke online client outcomes surveys for all contacts and projects.



Impartiality – In 2023-24 we continued efforts to ensure advocacy is accessible to everyone to ensure everyone can access social justice. This included prisoners, homeless people and those at risk of homelessness and individuals subject to hate crime.

Training and Education

SWANs in house training continues to be an excellent resource ensuring that all advocates are appropriately trained in Independent Advocacy and receive regular workshops to upskill on all disciplines. During 2023-24 SWAN registered 23 members of staff to complete the Independent Advocacy Qualification and as of March 2024 75% of advocacy staff were qualified or qualifying. Furthermore,

the whole workforce complete mandatory training in Safeguarding; GDPR; Health and Safety and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

During 2023-24 SWAN welcomed Mental Capacity Act and other legal updates and training from Butlers LLP. External development for the workforce was also provided on a variety of topics including:

- Staff Autism Awareness delivered by an Expert by Experience
- Human Rights Training delivered by the British Institute of Human Rights
- IMHA fir Children and Young People delivered by NYAS
- Trauma Informed Practice delivered by Change of Perspective
- Working with neurodiversity delivered by Neurobox

SWAN works in partnership with other organisations to provide valuable advocacy training and information. During 2023-24 SWAN were invited as a guest speaker at a variety of events including:

- Somerset Council Safeguarding Adults Board multidisciplinary conference
- Continuing Health Care conference – Somerset Council
- University of West England for social work students and trainee Best Interest Assessors

SWAN provided two 'Introduction to Advocacy' training sessions to Somerset Local Authority newly qualified social workers which was well received and attended. Social work students at Yeovil College received an introduction to Independent Advocacy teaching session from our Social Work Practice Assessor / Service Manager. SWAN also contributed the advocacy element for Adult Social Care online social care staff training for South Gloucestershire Council; Co-produced the Easy Read in-house Health and Safety training and provided 52 workshops to staff from multiple trainers, including Experts by Experience, to upskill the workforce.



**Social Work
Student**

"I've learned about advocacy and really making sure that the service users are able make their own decisions about their lives."

"Having a member of staff from an advocacy service speak first hand to students provides insights that I cannot easily replicate as a social work lecturer..."

coming together as professionals with different backgrounds also helps students understand some of the challenges associated with multi-agency working and the unique role that independent advocacy plays in person centred planning."



**Social Work
Lecturer UWE**

Volunteering

SWAN is complimented by our volunteers and experts by experience, who selflessly give their time to provide support to individuals and add value to our services. Our volunteers progress through a bespoke and dedicated volunteer induction and training programme and some volunteers go on to become paid members of staff. During 2023-24 SWAN recruited 17 volunteers and benefitted from 524hrs (excluding student placement hours) of volunteer advocacy.

Projects and placements that SWAN volunteers have contributed to include:

Be Heard Programmes

- Be Heard in Somerset which was held at the Recovery College was co-delivered by our volunteer peer advocacy coach and provided 40 hours of Be Heard workshops to people who have experienced mental ill health.
- Be Heard Autistic Adults included an Advisory Group of three Experts by Experience and two external professionals who met and discussed all aspects of the project from leaflet design to the lay out of the tool kits. The was delivered by six volunteers who supported 19 individuals with 103 hours of advocacy coaching

"We are delighted with the service you have been offering via the Be Heard project. The experts who have received support have given often glowing reviews."



Professional



Client

"I don't think you all quite understand what this service has done for me. I also don't think you will ever know just how much this has helped me change myself. I mention this because besides the issues I was facing this service has given me the room to work on myself and those I love the most. It's given me hope and a will to do some things to improve my life. It's just given my head some space. I will never be able to show you all the true extent to which this helped and best of all it still is."

Experts by experience are critical to ensure that the work we do is accessible. SWAN has created an advisory group of experts by experience in Somerset to aid us in co-producing aspects of our service. The group has four neurodiverse members, one member with a learning disability and one member with a physical disability. SWAN has also benefitted from the recruitment of a volunteer with a learning disability who supports our work creating accessible information for people with learning disabilities and helps us at the office, and a volunteer with autism to be an Advocacy Coach on the Autistic Adults project. They also provided Autism Awareness training to our staff.

Two volunteers progressed on to paid positions within SWAN, 1 of whom had been out of work since 2007, but volunteering gave her the confidence to look for full time paid employment again.

Partnership Working

Every Victim Matters

Stand Against Racism and Inequality (SARI)'s National Lottery funded Every Victim Matters (EVM) service continued this year. EVM is a hate crime awareness and support service in Somerset, North Somerset and Bath and North East Somerset (BaNES). Once again SARI partnered with SWAN and The Diversity Trust to deliver the hate crime awareness element.

In-person Empowerment sessions were delivered to North Somerset Disability Access Group and People First North Somerset's Speaking Up Group. At these sessions all attendees reported an increased understanding of hate crime, how to report it, and where to get further support.

"It's good to know help is out there, and how to access it"

Member of North Somerset Disability Access Group

Online training was delivered to Alliance Homes and SWAN contributed to the 'Open Access' virtual sessions led by SARI with The Diversity Trust, the online Interfaith Round Table and an open access virtual Hate and Mate Crime session.

Autistic Adults Project

SWAN worked collaboratively with SASS (Somerset Autism Spectrum Service) to develop and deliver the Be Heard for Autistic Adults Project. SASS is a specialist multidisciplinary NHS team comprising of Psychology, Nursing, Occupational Therapy and Administration, Spark Somerset (an organisation that provides information, advice, training and support to Somerset's voluntary sector) and local autistic adults. Following this consultation SWAN was awarded funding to provide the Autism Advocacy pilot project. The relationship with SASS and Spark has been maintained and SWAN have become members of the original steering group responsible for creating the pilot proposal. From launch date on 1st September 2023, fifteen Autistic adults were referred into the service and six Volunteer Advocacy Coaches were recruited and trained, some of them also being Autistic and others having professional or personal experience of supporting Autistic adults.

"Many thanks for accepting my referrals, I'm not sure how us and our clients ever managed without this service!"



Professional



Professional

"My experience with the Be Heard Advocacy scheme has been brilliant thus far. After every referral, I receive a prompt email confirming the receipt of the referral. I have then been kept informed and up to date of any developments e.g., the person being allocated, and have been asked for advice regarding clients where necessary. It is great to be collaborating and sharing information in this way to support client outcomes. Very much appreciated, thank you for all your hard work!"

ARC England Training Partnership

SWAN has its own internal assessors and work in partnerships with ARC England Training Centre, to provide training for the Independent Advocacy Qualification. The partnership with ARC England is now established and all advocates requiring qualification are registered with them. Two qualified TAQA assessors from SWAN work closely with ARC England to directly provide assessor tasks for qualifying SWAN staff whilst under the guidance and requirements of the ARC England registered Training Centre.

SWAN is grateful to all its partners for the work we do together.



SWAN's Governance and Management

Legal Status and Charity Objectives

Swan Advocacy is a company limited by guarantee 06599429 incorporated on 21st May 2008 and registered as a charity 1125679 on 1st September 2008 with the legal framework set out in the governing documents, the Memorandum and Articles of Association. Prior to this, from 1999 Swan Advocacy operated as an unincorporated charity under the name of South Wiltshire Advocacy Network. For the purposes of the registered company and legal requirements, it is referred to as "Swan Advocacy", however the charity now trades as 'SWAN' (South West Advocacy Network).

Objectives of the Charity

SWAN's objectives are expressed in the governing document, as follows:

The objects for which the Company is established are:

- a) the relief of those in need, by reason of youth, age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship, or other disadvantage in particular but not exclusively by the delivery of advocacy, money management and debt counselling.*
- b) the advancement of education in particular but not exclusively through the delivery of self-advocacy, training and end of life planning.*
- c) the advancement of human rights, conflict resolution or reconciliation or the promotion of religious or racial harmony or equality and diversity, in particular but not exclusively by the provision of statutory advocacy and victim support services.*

Primarily, but not solely, in counties across the South West of England or adjoining the South West.

Under Charities Act 2011, Public Benefit requirement, Trustees have a duty to report on how SWAN meets its charitable objectives for the public benefit. The strategic report provides information on how SWAN has achieved this primarily delivered through the provision of advocacy and during 2023/24 SWAN provided 59,754 advocacy hours and helped 6,264 individuals to have their voice heard.

Governance

The Trustee board is responsible for the governance of the Charity and ensuring that it delivers its objectives. Operational management is delegated by the Trustees to the Chief Executive who is accountable to the Board. The Trustees are also Directors of the company for the purpose of company law. All Trustees are appointed through a transparent recruitment and selection process and are elected to the Board at the annual AGM. The skills and experience required for

the organisation is reviewed through annual board appraisals and in 2023 an external Governance Review against the Charity Code of Governance was commissioned. The review noted that SWAN has very recently transitioned from being a small charity to a larger one which creates certain challenges. The report stated that *'Despite the resourcing challenges, SWAN has made significant progress. It has many of the right mechanisms in place, in development, or planned'*.

During the reporting period, the Trustees met formally four times for Board meetings and held an AGM in November. The meetings were all in person at the Head Office in Taunton. The Chief Executive and the Director of Finance and Central Services attend all Board meetings and other members of the Senior Leadership Group attend as required. The Board held two further evaluation days, one in Taunton and one on the Isle of Wight where presentations and discussions with other members of the Senior Leadership Group take place. A full workforce event was held in December giving Trustees the opportunity to meet with the entire workforce.

Due to the size of the organisation and the Board, there are no sub-committees, and all information is discussed at Board level. This is kept under review as SWAN continues to grow. A Trustee Task and Finish Group with members from the Board is enacted when there are specific pieces of work to undertake. In April 2023 all Trustees completed Governance Training for Boards.

Risk Management

A comprehensive Board Assurance Framework and Strategic Risk Register is in place and is agreed on an annual basis. Trustees review the major risks to the organisation on a quarterly basis at Board meetings. Systems are in place to monitor, and control identified risks to mitigate the impact they may have on the Charity. The Senior Leadership Group review the operational and strategic risks on a systematic basis by way of standing agenda items to ensure that current and emerging risks are considered regularly and raised to the Board if required. The Governance review stated: *'The Business and Risk Assurance Framework is a set of robust decision-making processes that are subject to constant refinement'*.

In April 2022 SWAN was reaccredited for a further three years with the Advocacy Quality Performance Mark (AQPM), the only accreditation specifically aimed at Advocacy organisations. The organisation continues to monitor progress against the standards.

In September 2023 SWAN was awarded the Charity Excellence Framework Quality Mark, an annual accreditation process that compares organisational performance and governance with sector averages. We achieved an overall performance rate of 75%, an increase of 11% and 73% for governance, an

increase of 8% on previous results. This continues to be a work in progress through ongoing Board and organisational development activities.

SWAN partners with SSG Health and Safety advisers who conduct a comprehensive annual audit of the organisations Health and Safety policies, procedures and processes. The 2023-24 audit demonstrated that SWAN is compliant with no major issues and that minor areas for improvement are addressed.

Organisational structure and people

The operation of the organisation is delegated to a full-time Chief Executive who is supported by a Senior Leadership Group including Director of Business Development and Marketing and a Director of Finance and Central Support; two Head of Services who lead on day-to-day operations, a Volunteer Manager and a Training Manager. SWAN has a head office in Taunton and two hub offices, one in Bristol and one on the Isle of Wight. Since the awarding of the contract for Dorset, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole a new office will be opening in the Dorset area.

During 2023-24 SWAN employed on average 119 staff which equated to 81.5 full time positions and the work of the Charity has been enhanced by the recruitment of 17 volunteers. SWAN staff and volunteers have a wide array of skills and experiences, all advocates are either qualified or registered to complete the required level of training in Independent Advocacy.

SWAN continues to expand, and accredited management training is in place for all managers within the organisation. Between October 2023 and January 2024 thirteen managers attended the Institute of Leadership bespoke and accredited 8-week managers programme, delivered by Access2hr. SWAN is committed to ensuring that all staff and managers have the skills required to enable them to thrive and enjoy their working life within the organisation.

As an organisation we are committed to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). We have a Workforce EDI Group which includes a Trustee and workforce members from all delivery areas, representing all diversity streams. This year the group planned how we can better capture service demographics, worked to ensure our organisational strategy included specific EDI targets, consulted on relevant organisational policies and procedures including our Menopause Policy and identified and sourced specialist training. At the December 2023 workforce event, the workforce committed to developing Team Charters to focus on creating positive working relationships and supporting the introduction of new people into SWAN. This remains a living process.

Remuneration Policy for Staff

Employee salaries are set at a specific scale and level, which allows for progression in the role at a salary which is reflective of similar organisations pay. An incremental rise is considered every April following the completion of a positive appraisal review. Any substantial changes to remuneration are agreed by the Board as required. An adjustment of 4% cost of living increase was made to the SWAN pay scales for 2023-24 and incremental rises were paid where eligible. SWAN staff pay is determined by the pay scale for all employees except for the Chief Executive whose pay is determined by the Board.

Responsibilities of the Board

SWAN Board of Trustees, who are directors of the company, work closely with the Chief Executive to set the strategic direction of the organisation. It is their responsibility to safeguard the assets of the Charity and ensure the financial statements comply with the relevant acts and legislation. Trustees volunteer their time, skills and expertise freely and receive no financial benefit from the charity, expenses that are incurred may be reclaimed and these are disclosed as required.

Company law requires that Trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a 'true and fair' view of the income and expenditure and financial state of affairs of the Charity. The Trustees must keep proper accounting records that disclose the financial position of the charity with reasonable accuracy at any given time. Each Trustee confirms that as far as they are aware there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditor is unaware; also that individually, all steps that should have been taken to be aware of any relevant audit information have been taken and to ensure the charitable company's auditor is aware of information that comes to light. This is confirmed in accordance with the provisions of s148 of Companies Act 2006.