

Persona

We're all about you

Annual Report 2023





A Message from our Chair

Nearly three years have passed since I became chair of the Persona board, and I remain proud and privileged to be working with such dedicated and talented people in all roles and at all levels of our organisation. The way we seek to live by our values day in day out - **respect**, **enthusiasm**, **adaptability**, **caring** and **honesty** - is what will continue to guide how we tackle exciting but challenging times for our future.

In particular, we will continue to work alongside those who use Persona services in shaping how we make the biggest possible difference to their lives. Staff's commitment to this approach is shown in the success of our Persona Your Voice meetings which have contributed hugely to some key initiatives like the holiday lodge.

So we are well placed for the next stage of our evolution. Crucially, we benefit from a strong and well-earned relationship with our prime contacts in Bury Council, our shareholder which commissions and funds what we do. We are working closely with them on how we can add even more value to the council's and partners' *Let's Do It* strategy, aimed at making Bury the best possible environment for everyone. So over the next period our value of **adaptability** will become all the more important as we work together in developing what we do for maximum benefit for those in need of care and support.

So, a big thank you to all those who use our services, our staff and to our range of partners.
Onwards and very much upwards!



Tony Hunter
Chair of the Board



Welcome to the annual review of Persona 2023.



2023 has been a year of fantastic achievement. In such challenging times maybe it's surprising to hear that, after all isn't health and care a really challenging environment to be in? Reducing budgets, increasing demand, a cost of living crisis. Well yes, all of those things are true and we've had to contend with an awful lot – but in amongst all of that there has been so much that is worthy of celebration, not least of all our achievement of GM Good Employment Charter Member status.

I am so proud that we not only achieved our member status but also an award for Most Improved Large Employer. This matters massively to me because my philosophy has always been that great employment results in great services.

To be recognised as a great employer is so important and to be the first social care employer to receive this honour enables us to set the tone and change the story about working in social care. Too often social care as a career is depicted in a negative light but this allows us to tell a different story – one of fulfilling roles that people can be proud to undertake and with working arrangements that allow people to thrive – not just survive.

Our journey to achieving member status was an enlightening one and that is another reason why achieving it meant so much. The process made us reflect on and analyse our practice, particularly around equality and diversity. By encouraging us to be curious about what we were doing well but also where we could improve, we embraced our **REACH** values in being honest that, whilst our approach to recruitment might tick lots of equality best practice boxes, it placed barriers in the way of some people in our communities. We recognised that what we wanted from recruitment was simply people with the right values. We realised that we needed a recruitment approach where every individual felt **respected** and **cared** about and could perform at their best. We were then able to **adapt** our approach, being **respectful** of how different people may need things to be in order to shine.

Having made those changes it has been amazing to see some fantastic people joining our organisation who may never previously have found us or made it through the recruitment process – not because they weren't right for care but simply because our previous approach didn't enable them to shine.

As always, this annual report provides you with an overview of our year and some amazing pictures that capture the journey. Read it with pride of what great social care and great employment can achieve.

Kat Sowden
Managing Director



Our Finance

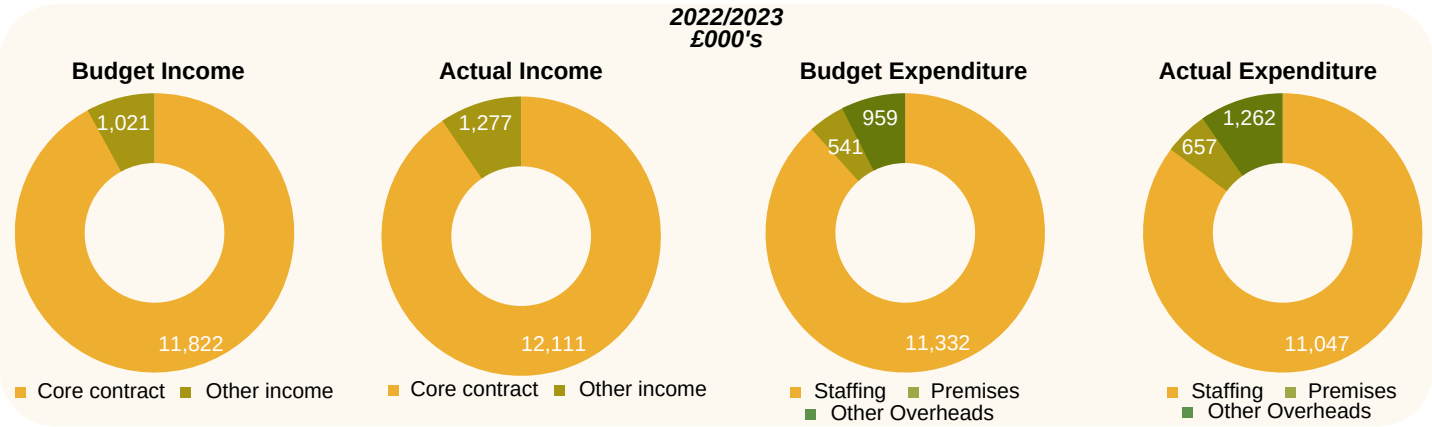
In the financial year to March 2023 Persona made an operational surplus of £421K. The charts below detail actual and budgeted income and expenditure for 2022/23.

During the year we expected a reduction in income from Bury Council for services provided, but due to the staff pay award and the associated increase in contract income being considerably higher than planned, the actual income in the year was a little higher than in 2021/22. Other income was better than budgeted, this was a result of increased income levels across a number of services.

Our payroll costs reduced by £427K compared to the previous year. This was due to the reduction in payroll costs realised from actions to reduce contract value with the council and adjustments to required payroll reserves, offset to a degree by the impact of the pay award.

Premises costs had been planned to reduce by £58K but actually increased by £58K. This was due to the unexpected increase in costs, in particular the increase in energy costs which impacted from early 2022. The increase in energy accounted for the vast majority of the overall building cost increase. Other overheads were higher than both the previous year and the budget. This was due to reserves required to cover planned restructuring costs.

Further progress was made during the year to deliver the 20% reduction in contract price that was requested by Bury Council, this work will continue during 2023/24, by which time it is expected that the reduction will be substantially achieved.



People We Support

Persona continues to deliver flexible services to people living in the borough of Bury.

Quarterly surveys for people receiving support have been positive over the last year with the average overall score for Persona being 99.6% satisfied with the service they receive. This has improved from 98.3% in 2022.

During 2023 there has been no CQC inspection activity, however in December 2022 Shared lives was inspected and received an overall 'Good' rating. It's been a busy year preparing for the changes in the way CQC will inspect under the single assessment framework which is due to go live in the north of England in February 2024.



We have welcomed new people to Persona over the last year either from the family home or from another placement and teams have worked to ensure people have settled well and that they are supported to live the life they choose.

We have seen services working closely together to enable a positive outcome for people; one lady was supported in the emergency bed in Woodbury and the team there worked closely with the supported living team to transition this lady into her new home in supported living.

Shared Lives have also found solutions to difficult situations by finding emergency respite to keep people safe and well.

Our Partners & People We Support Told Us:

'I would like to say a big THANK YOU for making a wonderful day for her and all of us that are close to her. I appreciate the hard work and thought put in by you all. Well done it was great. My daughter would also like to thank you for arranging her vegetarian meal – it was way above her expectations and very enjoyable.'

Elmhurst

'To the lovely ladies who gave us a great night on Thursday. Thank you so much for your hard work and care you show our loved ones every week. We do appreciate you all.'

Get Social at Grundy Hub



'For your kindness and support- especially during the last stages of his end of life pathway. Much thanks to all who supported the funeral arrangements. It was so encouraging to see so many staff and residents bid farewell as the cortège departed, in the cold, thank you.'

Peachment Place

'I want to emphasise my ongoing gratitude for the great care that my brother continues to receive. I believe his needs are met and when I've visited or spoken, the environment seems caring and nurturing and he seems happy.'

Supported Living

'Thank you so much for allowing us to come along and take part in the gardening. The students have thoroughly enjoyed it and learnt so many skills. Looking forward to our new group of students and being able to continue with the venture.'

Get Social at Grundy Hub



That face (above) shows - and rightly so - a great sense of achievement. Well done Persona for working with people to be as independent as possible and enhance their life skills.'

Learning Disability Day Service

'For everything you are doing for my sister and for all the support you've given us. Thank you very much'.

Shared Lives

'Thank you from the family, following a recent stay at Woodbury - they were thrilled with how Woodbury had supported her and how we all managed the transfer to supported living.'

Woodbury

Achievements against our Strategy

It's the final year of our current strategy and we've seen fantastic progress right across the board. At the same time as delivering against this we've also been working hard to reduce our contract by £2.5m to support the council in a challenging financial climate. Here are some of the successes so far:

Our People

We were incredibly proud to be the first social care organisation to achieve Member status of the GM Good Employment Charter (GMGEC). We also won the Most Improved Large Employer Award at the GMGEC Annual Awards.

We made our recruitment approach more inclusive and have seen a significant increase in the number of people approaching us for work, and a fundamental shift in diversity of applicants.

This includes an increase in people under the age of 30 years and the proportion of our workforce from a non-white British background has increased from 9% to 12%. This is helping us build a more sustainable workforce which better reflects the Bury population we serve.



People We Support

We've seen a steady increase in people receiving support via Shared Lives and an increase in the number of people seeing Shared Lives carer as a role they want to take on.

We've been working hard to ensure managers and teams are well prepared for the upcoming changes to the CQC inspection framework.

We've designated 13 of our beds at Elmhurst as Intermediate Managed Care beds (IMC) in order to support the wider health and care system with step-up and step-down opportunities.



Our Partners

Our Persona Your Voice committee has gone from strength to strength and has shaped the decision to purchase a holiday lodge for people we support, as well as informing the design of a central events calendar.

Our Staff Your Voice has been re-launched via our Staff Director and four new Ambassador roles, aligned to key areas of the strategy.

We've played a stronger role in integrated health and care.

We're leading the Ageing in Place project for Bury which has seen development of a hyper-local steering board of organisations and residents in Moorside coming together to improve that locality for people over 50 years of age.



**AGEING
IN PLACE
PATHFINDER**
DOING THINGS DIFFERENTLY
FOR GREATER MANCHESTER



Our Assets

We've refurbished some disused space at Grundy Hub to create offices and a training room which have reduced our overhead costs and enabled The Green to come back in to operation as a community café.

Our roll out of enabling technology has continued.

We've taken a number of steps to better understand and reduce our carbon impact.







Our Wider Impact

Beyond our direct impact on the people we support and our financial performance, we are always seeking ways that we can support Bury more broadly by adding social value.

Here are some of the areas we have progressed this year:

Social Impact

Our wider social impact has seen a focus on supporting more people into employment. We've worked with a range of local partners to develop pathways to employment including volunteering and work experience. We've provided 16 work placements and 9 volunteer opportunities. Six of these resulted in employment with Persona or another employer. This work has been completed alongside the development of our approach to recruitment including our 'third way'. The 'third way' is an outcome from recruitment where someone is not quite ready for appointment but where we work with them to signpost for training or to provide work experience so that they are then able to gain employment in a care role.

We've also continued to work in partnership with a range of not-for-profit organisations to share our venues for free via our Social Spaces scheme.



Partner in the Integrated Care System

Our role as a partner in the integrated health and care system has strengthened with active roles in delivery of the intermediate care service and leadership of workforce issues at a system level.

In particular we have been sharing our experiences in achieving GMGEC Member status and our inclusive recruitment approach with partners across Bury and wider within Greater Manchester, with the aim of improving employment standards across the sector.



Inclusion

Our approach to recruitment has been specifically designed to broaden our reach and enable more people to consider working with us. As a result we have seen more young people joining our workforce and an increase in non White British people from 9% of our workforce to 12%.

Carbon Impact

We've been taking the time to understand our carbon impact and to identify areas where we can reduce our impact and enable us to become Net Zero by 2038. This directly supports the council's ambition as outlined in the *Let's Do It* strategy.

In order to achieve our Net Zero goal, we launched our Green Plan, appointed a Green Ambassador and allocated £25k for initiatives which aimed to reduce carbon emissions.

So far we have:

- swapped our diesel maintenance vehicles for electric vehicles
- replaced all lighting at Elmhurst with LED
- explored green heating alternatives and implemented these where viable
- developed a business case for electricity generation via solar panels
- introduced composting bins
- put in place rainwater butts
- adopted new technology to reduce the need for printing
- increased recycling facilities



Stories



Macc has earned his Gold Duke of Edinburgh award and was invited down to Buckingham Palace for an award ceremony delivered by Prince Edward! He travelled there with his nan on the train. 'I was excited but nervous, since it was my first time going to London and I wasn't sure what to expect. My nan is really proud that I got my DofE and she was happy to be invited to the garden party too! The event was very busy, there were lots of other people getting their awards and Prince Edward gave a speech congratulating us all. We all had carrot cake and a cup of tea in the garden. There were brass bands and the weather was sunny. I really feel like all my hard work has paid off.'

Liz and Gill are volunteers for Jigsaw Social Group. They make sure fellow members are comfortable and have all they need during trips to places like Blackpool, Chester Zoo, restaurants and the cinema.

Liz says 'I have more free time on my hands so I want to help out. It makes me happy, helping people stay safe and enjoy themselves. I get to see different places and do things I wouldn't normally do and I have made some good friends'.

Gill wanted more experience and says 'it makes me feel brilliant because I'm doing something constructive with my life and helping others'.



Lucy's moved in with her boyfriend, Alex, and his family, who also invited her to Australia with them for a wedding. She says the holiday was a once in a lifetime experience and she enjoyed seeing everyone celebrating together. They spent two weeks in Thailand too, where the food, 'was gorgeous and there was so much seafood to try'. She says 'I really like living with Alex and his family. I have got a lot better at cooking, we all cook together and help out. I make things like pasta, homemade burgers, gammon and mussels. I have also learnt that I can be more independent and do more things on my own confidently too.'

Stories



Andrew used to weigh 21 stone and asked ANSAR, who offer one to one support for health and fitness, to help him lose weight. They created a plan for Andrew to follow and introduced healthier options into his diet. This soon became the norm for him but he still has a treat day every Saturday.

Every Wednesday Andrew goes on walks to different places and has made some friends along the way. He always takes his packed lunch with him to eat on his adventures. After working hard for three years, he has lost an impressive six stone! Congratulations, Andrew!

Matthew was really surprised when he received his invitation to the King's garden party, which the Mayoress of Whitefield had applied for after meeting Matthew.

He travelled to London by train with Janet, his support worker and stayed in a hotel near Euston. They explored the palace gardens, which Matthew said were stunning, and met lots of different military people throughout the day.

They saw King Charles and Kate, Princess of Wales, from a distance too. Afterwards, Matthew and Janet went for a nice meal and then met up with his girlfriend, who lives in London. 'I wish I could do it all again', he said.



Chayim has moved into his own home. He says 'sometimes it feels lonely, as when I lived with a family there was always someone around. I feel more independent having my own home. I never had to think about basic things like organising gas and electricity before. I didn't enjoy it as much as I thought at first, but I'll get used to it. I miss having more people around, but I do get my own space and can organise my own time and what I do. The best thing is having more independence and choice of what I do, I now choose to walk to local places more instead of getting a lift which gives me more time with the support worker and is good exercise for me. I am sure this is the best solution for me'.

Our People

This year has been a year of celebrations. As an organisation we became members of the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter, along with winning the Most Improved Large Employer award at their annual ceremony. This recognition highlights how committed we are to supporting our staff to be their best by providing a range of good employment initiatives for our staff. Here are some of the highlights from this year:



Recruitment and Progression

Our focus this year has been around recruitment and encouraging a wide range of people to consider social care as a career option. Firstly, we have reviewed our recruitment and selection process to ensure that this is inclusive for all and that it seeks the input from both our staff and the people we support in deciding who is appointable for our vacancies.

Secondly, we have invested in a Rising Stars Programme for existing staff who would like the opportunity to upskill and develop in preparation for becoming the leaders and managers of the future.

Finally, we developed four ambassador roles to support the implementation of key areas of our strategy, which provides the opportunity for staff to progress and develop in areas where they have a particular passion.



Recognition

This year we have reviewed our approach to recognition by introducing our 'Living the Values – Above and Beyond' monthly awards for staff who go the extra mile and/or give little acts of kindness to those around them. Each staff member who wins the monthly award receives a £50 voucher of their choice and at the end of the year they will be entered into a draw to win a stay in our new holiday lodge.



Learning and Development

Our commitment to learning and development continued this year, with 55 new starters supported to complete the Care Certificate and 5 staff supported to complete their Level 2 Adult Care Worker Diploma.

We also held our annual staff workshop which provides the opportunity for all staff to have some time away from the day job and focus on themselves and their development. The focus this year was on how we can use our foundation Art of Being Brilliant skills to be the best version of ourselves, with an added emphasis on how we seek to understand others.

Looking Ahead

The coming months and years are likely to continue to be challenging as we see continued financial pressures for the council as our main commissioner. The cost of living crisis definitely hasn't gone away and we know that those financial pressures pose very real concerns for the wellbeing of our workforce and the people we support, so we'll continue to take steps to support around this wherever we can.

Despite this we have some really great opportunities coming up. As we finish the 2023/24 strategy we'll continue to take forward initiatives that reduce our carbon impact. We'll also be getting the restructure of Supported Living Service fully implemented and rolling out Care Control to this area of the organisation.

Our brand new holiday lodge will be open for bookings and The Green will be up and running again as a vibrant café and community hub. We'll be taking forward recommendations from an externally commissioned review of day services to look at how we can deliver services for the future and we'll be continuing to grow our Shared Lives community.



Alongside delivering the current strategy, we are also well on with the development of the strategy for 2024 and beyond. This strategy is aligned to the council's *Let's Do It* Strategy, as well as being fully informed by commissioners in terms of the areas where we can add most value. This includes developing solutions to support younger people as well as those with more complex needs and taking an approach which enables people wherever possible.

The strategy is being developed with a focus on impact; we are starting with the end in mind by thinking about the difference we want to make in people's lives and ensuring we are clear on desired outcomes and can then measure progress against these. We're planning to focus on the strategy and what it means at our 2024 staff workshops.



Persona

We're all about you

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Persona Care and Support



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