

Annual Report 2023/2024



Registered Charity: 1062675



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What we do...

Assist Neighbourhood Care is a community and voluntary organisation based in Withington, South Manchester. Our priorities are to **reduce social isolation** in the community, provide **volunteering opportunities** and to **support older people** to continue living independently. The majority of our members (and volunteers), live alone.

Running since 1969 we currently connect with over 230 older adults living locally through our social groups and volunteer support services, supported to do so by around 44 volunteers. We receive referrals for older people who may benefit via social workers, GPs, district nurses, friends, neighbours, relatives, social prescribing services, mental health teams etc, and through local word of mouth. We are so proud of the work that we do to help people keep connected, give people something to look forward to and help people to feel that they are not alone.

As a registered charity we are partly funded by Manchester City Council who cover salaries and some overheads. All other costs are raised by fundraising, grants and donations.



Mini trip to Manchester Museum

Social Groups

- Lunch Club
- Coffee Group
- Exercise Classes
- Positive Living Sessions
- Film Club and Tea and Talks
- Day Trips and Events
- Older men's snooker
- Walking and Talking
- Digital Drop In
- Volunteer training and socials

Volunteer Support Services

- Befriending
- Volunteer lifts
- Signposting and Advice
- Form filling and Advocacy
- Transport to social groups
- Wheelchair pushing
- Odd jobs
- Wheelchair/walker loan
- Emergency Shopping
- Lawn mowing/hedge trimming



Coronation Party at Coffee group

Who we are

Withington Assist is governed by a voluntary, elected board of **Trustees** who support the Assist **Staff** and oversee the running of the charity. They meet every other month to check over the finances, provide direction and guidance and to hear a report from the Coordinator on the charity's activities.

Trustees...

Barbara Aston (**Chair**)
 Pip Cotterill (**Deputy Chair**)
 Gemma Glennon
 Sarala Gunawardena (**Secretary**)

Emma Horridge
 Jacqueline Kirkby
 David Lamb
 Meena Shah

Brian Stevenson
 Vicky Wharmby (**Treasurer**)
 Gavin White

Staff...



Jamila Naseem
 (Activities and
 Admin worker)

Mark Thomas
 (Outreach
 Visiter)

Amelia King
 (Coordinator)



Debbie
 (Cook)



Ruby Usher
 (Exercise
 Instructor)



Debra
 McCallion
 (Positive
 Living Coach)

Volunteers...

For 2023-24 we had over 44 Volunteers registered on our books, generously giving their time, skills and kindness to make Assist what it is, including making friendship calls, serving lunches, giving lifts, pushing wheelchairs and being that friendly face for someone



We thank them all for the difference they make to people's lives in the community.

Pauline Ainscough	Susan Keyworth
Dan Ashton	Bethany King
Barbara Aston	Jacque Kirkby
Noreen Barlow	David Lamb
Brenda Barnett	Cal Lavelle
Rosalind Blackman	Ray Lavelle
Paul Borger	Angela McCorkmick
Jane Brown	Annie Mines
Jackie Callow	Joyce Murphy
Pip Cotterill	Pattie O'Donovan
John Crocker	Brendan O'Dornan
Alexandra Davies	Trina Palmer
Elisabeth Diamant	Meena Shah
Faith Escreet	Brian Stevenson
Rose Evans	Heather Steward
Karen (Faz) Fairhurst	Stephney Tait
Deborah Farrell	Vicky Wharmby
Sarala Gunawardena	Bernie Whittaker
Simbur Hasibuah	Gavin White
Baharak Joosandeh	Tom Williams
Michael Kelly	Geraldine Yorke
	Tang Zhenyang

Chair's Report...

Once again, it has been another good year for Assist. We have kept up with all our activities, grown the membership and increased our volunteer numbers. We have also taken on a new member of staff, Jamila, as an activities and admin worker. She has been a brilliant addition to the team, and along with Amelia our coordinator and Debbie, our cook, they keep Assist going.

For me, as an older person in Withington, Assist is very important for our neighbourhood. I value how it gives people something to look forward to and a feeling of family. For people on their own, who don't have anybody, they have Assist. Sometimes when you are older, you can feel invisible. Especially when you are on your own, you have to make a life for yourself to get out of the house for and it can be very hard. So that's what we are doing here, we are helping people to get a life together! You can turn up to a group and everyone is there. We make sure we have good volunteers who make people feel welcome. They need to be very open, to really care, and to know just what to say to take people's minds off things if they need that. Then we have our drivers who bring people in if you can't make it yourself, and the staff in the office helping with practical things and forms, it's all so important.

Looking forward to the year ahead, we are excited to welcome our new paid befriender, Mark Thomas, who will visit those living out in the community who are unable to come in to see us at Assist. We will continue to change to suit people's needs, with digital drop in sorting out people's struggles with all the new technology and a new drop-in advice session to help people with forms, benefits, admin that can become so difficult with older age and changes in systems.

I would like to thank; our board of trustees who take the responsibility for this charity seriously, attending our meetings and supporting our staff; to thank the staff and volunteers who make such a difference; and to the older people themselves who come together to make Assist the place it is.



Coordinator meets the Mayor



Christmas Day Lunch



Barbara Aston, Chair

Commemorations...

Dee Dee Vitty, Syliva White, Mary Walls, Alan Brooks, Ann Poole, Colin Kennedy, Lucy Mo, Sadie Walsh, Jean Doyle, Gladys Foreman. We enjoy getting to know people and all are greatly missed when they go, we appreciated our time with them.

Quotes and Feedback...



Assist has helped me in so many ways, with my pension, when I've been scammed, with paperwork. It annoys me because I have always been so independent but everything is a text or online now. Without it [Assist] I'd feel more vulnerable. But I know I've got Assist at the back of me. I also go on the trips, to the film clubs, and I've been along at Christmas, for people like me, on their own, it is a truly wonderful organisation.

- Pam



It's something to look forward to when you've got a trip planned, you feel safe and don't have to worry about the arrangements, it's all taken care of so you can just relax. We live on our own and it gives you a purpose, a reason to get up in the morning and go and see people it takes your mind of things. Wyn is waiting for a knee operation, we are not well enough or capable to get out so much now, and I can't tell daily how I am going to be but It's wonderful, Assist. -Josie and Wyn

Micheal (driver) is a very nice, joyful and extremely helpful guy. I love coming to Assist for company and to spend time with other people in similar situations and circumstances. As we get older it's harder to get out and about and make friends. Coming to Assist helps reduce loneliness and sitting at home with nothing to do. If I didn't have the volunteer lifts, I wouldn't be able to come or at least only occasionally.

- Khulsoom



Everyone just wants company it's what we have in common and it's the nicest sound, when all are talking and laughing, you can hear it coming round the corridor and you can't beat it, can't put a price on it. We're all different but all the same. We have cake for birthdays and if someone's not been in for a while, we notice. It's nice to be missed, we look out for each other.

-Annie (volunteer)



Withington Assist are not just a charity that provides long term social opportunities and activities for older people, they also encourage older people to volunteer for their charity and play an active role in their community. Charities like Withington Assist support and keep residents well in our communities, catching them before their situation escalates into a point of crisis and sharing health messaging etc. thus creating less demand on NHS and Social Care services later down the line. Sustaining charities such as Withington Assist is essential for our population's health, with reinvestment of any cost savings by prevention intervention back into the charity sector

sector to enable their vital function to continue.

Yasmin Holgeth - Health Development Coordinator for Withington and Old Moat

Thank God for John! I do like to keep the garden nice. When my husband was alive he had it immaculate and I was doing it myself until my falls. When it looks run down, people will think nobody is living there, and then you feel vulnerable to whoever. But gardeners are so expensive, and it needs doing so much in the Summer, and you worry so much about scams these days - **Rose**



Assist is very beneficial to me; I have been volunteering since May 24th, 1984. I feel relaxed here and I enjoy my free meal on Tuesday and cups of tea and help from the staff. On a regular basis I do people's gardens and every week I set rooms for lunch, coffee group and exercise classes. I occasionally shred papers and get the shopping in, deliver newsletters or put a letter in the post box.

- John (volunteer)

Rising to new challenges for 2024/2025

In a world that seems to be getting more and more complicated, it can be the very simple things that become the most valued. A regular phone call, a homecooked lunch, a room of friendly faces- perhaps now more than ever with **technology** taking over so many services, the power of being with real people is to be valued and protected.

In Withington, for example, all the banks have closed. Managing health, finance, housing- everything seems to be switching to the internet or onto automated phone systems that are difficult to navigate. We are so pleased to have our **digital volunteers** sitting with people one to one; setting up emails, logging into NHS portals, managing bills etc. This enables people to adapt and retain their independence but is a challenge we are keeping an eye on, feeding back to larger organisations about the difficulties people face.

Alongside this, we are also seeing the effects of the **cost of living crisis**, with our own bills going up, prices rising and people feeling financially squeezed. To make sure that people do not become isolated, we are committed to keeping our donation suggestions the same, but also to making sure that people feel welcome to groups whether they are able to donate or not. For 24/25 we have been awarded a council grant to set up an **advice drop in** for older people needing help with pension credit, forms, benefits, accessing financial help etc. as well as taking on a **new outreach worker**, visiting people in their homes.

On a larger scale, we are finding that there is increasing emphasis being placed on the **climate crisis**, which looms large on the horizon and is difficult to think about. Practically, we continue to adapt Assist to run in as green a way as we can using the reduce, reuse, recycle principle. We have also successfully trialled a blister pack recycling scheme, and formed a partnership with Ladybarn Community centre and Withington Baths to fund the recycling boxes and enliven our green spaces.

Finally the other challenge I would like to note is the increase in referrals for people who have been diagnosed with **dementia**. Whilst we do not currently provide any specific groups or services and cannot take on new referrals, we do support many members who develop dementia during their time with us.

This job is a privilege; to work with so many different people who are all coming together to make sure that no one need feel alone. I'd personally like to say thank you to our trustees, our volunteers and our staff old and new for creating in Assist a truly special place that values everyone it comes into contact with. Here's to another year!

Amelia King
Coordinator.

Details from our Financial Accounts



Receipts and Payments Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024

	Notes	31 March 2024			31 March 2023		
		Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds
		£	£	£	£	£	£
Receipts:							
Grant, donations and contributions	2	19,839	28,248	48,087	13,286	49,484	62,770
Local Authority Contract		37,892	-	37,892	36,900	-	36,900
Total		57,731	28,248	85,979	50,186	49,484	99,670
Payments:							
Direct Charitable Expenditure	3	16,830	19,740	36,570	11,557	32,796	44,353
Management and Administration	4	35,314	-	35,314	50,628	1,963	52,591
Total		52,144	19,740	71,884	62,185	34,759	96,944
Net receipts/(payments)		5,587	8,508	14,095	(11,999)	14,725	2,726
Cash funds at 31 March 2023		65,528	20,823	86,351	63,694	19,931	83,625
Transfers between funds		-	0	-	13,833	(13,833)	-
Cash funds at 31 March 2024	5	71,115	29,331	100,446	65,528	20,823	86,351

Statement of Assets and Liabilities as at 31 March 2024

	31 March 2024			31 March 2023		
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted income funds	Total	Unrestricted funds	Restricted income funds	Total
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Cash Funds						
Cash at bank	71,063	29,331	100,394	65,241	20,823	86,064
Cash in hand	52	-	52	287	-	287
	71,115	29,331	100,446	65,528	20,823	86,351

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on 29th October 2024 and signed on their behalf:

Independent examiner's report to the Trustees of Assist

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Assist (the Charity) for the year ended 31 March 2024.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

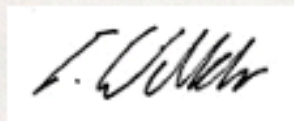
I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

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

1. Accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. The accounts do not accord with those records.

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.



Emma Willder, FCMA, CGMA, CG(Affiliated)

Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants

Date:

Beyond Profit Ltd
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Horwich
Bolton
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Thank you to our funders...

And finally; A BIG THANK YOU to our Funders, to the Withington Methodist Church for housing us so supportively, and for all donations from members, friends and family. Without this financial support, Assist would not exist to provide the support and care to all those who use its services.

We are very grateful for every pound we receive and spend it wisely.





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