

# Children at the Heart

Annual report & accounts 2020-21



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## Our 2018–23 strategy focuses on five priorities for delivering a better childhood:

1. Influencing legislation, policy and practice to make sure it's based on high quality evidence about what works for children.
2. Enabling children and young people to actively participate in decision making and influence change.
3. Bringing organisations together to put the best interests of children first.
4. Developing a workforce that is knowledgeable and skilled to make positive changes for children.
5. Building respect and trust as a pioneering and high-performing charity.

**This annual report sets out the progress we've made during 2020–21.**



## Chair's introduction

What makes NCB unique is our capacity to bring people together to bring about the best for children and young people.

This has never been more apparent to me than in July 2020, when our *Children at the Heart* campaign brought children and young people together with a whole host of partner organisations in England and Northern Ireland to share evidence with the All Party Parliamentary Group for Children.

Combining the voices and experiences of children and young people with research evidence and intelligence from front-line services, we were able to set out, with authority as well as with passion, key evidence to guide the response to the pandemic and set out a positive vision of childhood to unite behind.

My role as Chair of Trustees is essentially to direct NCB towards achieving that vision, through good governance, clear strategies and effective leadership. I would like to thank my fellow Trustees as well as NCB's strategic leadership team for their resourcefulness and support in pursuing that vision over the last year, making good progress in the most challenging of circumstances.

We are crystal clear that we can only achieve our vision through strong networks of organisations working together. During the year, we established new governance arrangements for our Specialist Membership Groups (SMGs), the Anti-Bullying Alliance, Childhood Bereavement Network and now the Schools' Wellbeing Partnership. These arrangements unite us more closely as an NCB family, with stronger links with the Board of Trustees.

Having been part of the NCB Family for 34 years, the Sex Education Forum took the exciting step of becoming an independent charity on 1 April 2021. We achieved a lot together in that time, including the game-changing campaign to make relationships and sex education a statutory requirement. NCB will now work as one of several partners to support the newly-formed charity to ensure the statutory requirement delivers the education our children need.

We know too that we can only achieve our vision through sound strategy and governance,



addressing structural issues that hold us back and responding rapidly to the world we're operating in.

Two crucial areas of development over the last year have been in relation to ethnic diversity and digital capability. We worked with Inclusive Boards to recruit three new Trustees with this in mind. Welcoming Nainan Shah, Ajit Dhaliwal and Shubhi Rajnish enables us to strengthen our digital leadership and accelerate our ongoing effort to ensure an inclusive culture flows from the Board of Trustees through every part of the organisation.

Above all, we cannot achieve our vision without being powered by the voices and experiences of children, young people and families. As Bethan explains later in the report, over the last year we've seen technology bring a new dimension to our work taking children's voices to the heart of Government.

I'd like to thank our Young Representatives Tutu Mukelabai, Bethan Hoggan and Sienna James, and the many more children and young people who have worked with us this year. Beyond the virtual boardroom, they've given evidence to Select Committees, braved media interviews, taken on fundraising challenges, written blogs, published articles and a whole lot more. Having young people at the heart of our organisation strengthens our ambition to work together for a better childhood for the UK.

I am delighted to introduce this year's report to you and proud that we have continued to work in the interest of children in so many rich and diverse ways. It is especially impressive given the difficulties caused for everyone by the pandemic and I would particularly like to thank our brilliant staff team who keep going, no matter what!

**Alison O'Sullivan**

## Chief Executive's welcome

From conducting research on the impact of the pandemic on babies in Lambeth to bringing policy makers and services together to protect our most vulnerable young people throughout the UK, over the last year we have brought every inch of our policy and practice expertise to bear on stopping childhoods from being disrupted and life chances from being derailed.

While adapting and responding to emerging needs, we've not missed a beat in our work to keep delivering the changes that make childhood better: driving improvements to the services children count on and receiving intelligence about work on the ground to influence decision-making.

As well as being dominated by the pandemic, the last year has been defined by ground-shaking moments where underlying structural inequalities have burst to the surface. As a charity we have been working through the aftershock of the murder of George Floyd, determined to engage with openness and wisdom to examine our own organisation as well as the world around us. So far this has included recruiting Black board members, forming an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion staff group powered by Black voices, and intensifying our work to tackle racist bullying.

Everyone's Invited was another seismic moment, when thousands of women and girls shared their experiences of sexual violence and harassment in schools. Through the Anti-Bullying Alliance, we have launched new training and guides to help schools tackle sexual bullying, alongside our wider work to help create a whole-school culture where children are safe, where they feel able to share concerns about abuses of power and gender dynamics, and where their wellbeing is prioritised.

A scandalous photograph of a lockdown 'lunch' provided in lieu of free school meals strengthened the campaign to tackle child hunger, but the longer battle to address the causes and far-reaching consequences of rampant child poverty continues. We brought 80 organisations together through the End Child Poverty Coalition to set out the evidence and call for decisive action.

Pressure on young people's mental health has

been building and building, even before the pandemic piled on a heap of new challenges. Research we published in partnership with UCL showed that one in six 17-year-olds report high levels of psychological distress. We have worked collaboratively to influence policy makers, launching the first youth mental health charter for Northern Ireland and strengthening our Schools' Wellbeing Partnership to drive changes in education and connect schools with the tools they need.

Through the Council for Disabled Children we know the pandemic has been particularly difficult for children with special educational needs and disabilities. Service provision and quality was already patchy, and the system was not delivering the best outcomes. Sudden disruptions in routine, withdrawal of support and anxiety about safety have had an immense impact, on top of financial insecurities and health concerns. We've brought the disabled children's sector together with policy makers at the highest level to share information and improve support.

On 23 March we joined the National Day of Reflection led by Marie Curie, where we reflected not only on our personal losses, but those experienced by thousands of grieving children. Through the Childhood Bereavement Network, we've helped services to adapt and respond effectively to support these children.

This year has painfully exposed and accentuated the vulnerabilities and the fault lines that we already knew were there in the system. Now we must fix them.

**Anna Feuchtwang**  
Chief Executive



# Working together to deliver better childhoods



The Anti-Bullying Alliance brings together organisations and individuals working together to achieve our vision to stop bullying and create safer environments in which children and young people can live, grow, play and learn.

2020–21 highlights include:

- Providing CPD training to over 17,000 participants, developing a new CPD course to help schools reduce sexual bullying, and working with partners to develop a sector-wide better understanding of racist and faith targeted bullying.
- Delivering Anti-Bullying Week, reaching 7.5 million children with 80% of schools taking part.
- Celebrating the impact of the All Together Anti-Bullying Programme, with 71% of schools reporting a fall in bullying as a result.

Read more about our work: [anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk](https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk)



The Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum (NIABF) brings together over 25 regional statutory and voluntary sector organisations committed to stopping the bullying of children and young people in our schools and in our communities.

2020–21 highlights include:

- Delivering Anti-Bullying Week in Northern Ireland.
- Celebrating together through our Anti-Bullying Week Creative Art Competition, engaging with schools throughout Northern Ireland on the theme of United Against Bullying.

Read more about our work: [endbullying.org.uk](https://endbullying.org.uk)



The Childhood Bereavement Network brings together all those supporting bereaved children, young people and their families across the UK.

2020–21 highlights include:

- Equipping and guiding a national network of bereavement services to provide the services children and families count on, at a time of great upheaval and tremendous need, including bringing 2,000 professionals together in a series of lunchtime seminars.
- Working with partners to generate evidence on the impact of the pandemic on grieving children and bereavement services, calling together for Government support.

Read more about our work: [childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk](https://childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk)



Lambeth Early Action Partnership (LEAP) unites local services to improve social & emotional development, communication & language development and diet & nutrition for 0–3 year olds in four South London wards.

2020–21 highlights include:

- Generating research on the impact of the pandemic on early childhood, to share throughout the sector and guide our own service provision.
- Adapting to the pandemic to find new ways to deliver the services local children and families needed, including tools to ensure those most in need receive support at a crucial time.

Read more about our work: [leaplambeth.org.uk](https://leaplambeth.org.uk)



The Schools' Wellbeing Partnership is a national network of more than 50 member organisations working together to improve the wellbeing of all children in education.

2020–21 highlights include:

- Producing Recovery Toolkits to help schools look after the wellbeing of staff and pupils in the return to education.
- Working collaboratively with the Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition on a joint statement on mental health and education during Covid-19.
- Appointing our first independent Chair and becoming a full NCB specialist membership group, leading the charity in the development of mental health and wellbeing in schools.

Read more about our work: [schoolswellbeing.org.uk](https://schoolswellbeing.org.uk)



This year we prepared for an exciting new chapter in the story of the Sex Education Forum, which became an independent charity in April 2021, having been part of the NCB family for 34 years. We worked together for a smooth transition while running a conference, delivering a busy training programme, equipping schools to deliver quality relationships, sex and health education and engaging with a vital national conversation on gender and power dynamics.

NCB is proud of having brought the Sex Education Forum to this point and excited at the prospect of working in partnership with the newly-established charity.

Visit the Sex Education Forum website: [sexeducationforum.org.uk](https://sexeducationforum.org.uk)



The Council for Disabled Children is the umbrella body for the disabled children's sector bringing together professionals, practitioners and policy-makers.

2020–21 highlights include:

- Delivering consultancy, training, resources and events which bring together key stakeholders at the local, regional and national levels.
- Sharing good practice and working collaboratively to overcome challenges related to the implementation of the SEND reforms.
- Ensuring a focus on achieving positive outcomes through effective and well-evidenced joint commissioning.
- Working in partnership to improve access and inclusion for young children with SEND

Read more about our work: [councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk](https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk)

**Every member of the NCB family brings people and organisations together to drive change on particular issues and help deliver a better childhood for the UK.**



# How we drive and deliver change to improve childhoods

This is a snapshot of our work over the past year. Identifying, influencing, implementing and improving; this cycle shapes every aspect of our work to drive and deliver change based on evidence about what works.

## IDENTIFY

Through large-scale research projects, we investigate the needs of children and young people, uncovering evidence and insights that inform major changes to policy and practice that improve children's lives.

During 2020–21:

- We produced **44** research reports on topics ranging from infant mental health to race and faith-targeted bullying.
- We worked collaboratively to generate research evidence to understand the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on early childhood, bereavement services, experiences of bullying, SEND support, and more.
- In Northern Ireland we worked with young people to create and promote the *Our Minds Our Future* charter based on our research to inform the Department of Education's Children & Young People's Emotional Health & Wellbeing in Education Framework.
- We pushed forward with our Living Assessments research project to improve the decision-making process for providing social care support to children and families.

## INFLUENCE

Our research and partnerships give us authority and credibility with policy makers, enabling us to influence legislation at the highest levels in the interests of children and young people.

During 2020–21:

- We've worked both deeply and extensively across Government to inform the response to Covid-19 and reflect feedback from the children's sector.
- We produced **67** policy briefings on subjects ranging from overarching principles for Covid-19 recovery planning to the strategic priorities for responding to childhood trauma.
- We published **18** consultation responses and were mentioned at least **14** times in official Government policy and strategy documents.
- We delivered **5** Learn – Explore – Debate events throughout England to bring the early years sector together with Government.
- From the All Party Parliamentary Groups for Children and Bullying to SEND Roundtable events, we brought young people, partners and senior Parliamentarians together on **5** separate occasions to influence policy making at the highest levels.
- **160** children's organisations joined 120 young people to strengthen our call to put children at the heart of Government spending priorities.

## IMPLEMENT

From local projects to national programmes, we work with partners including local authorities, schools and health care providers to deliver the changes that make childhood better.

During 2020–21:

- We brought **3,574** people together in networks and partnership meetings to collaborate on delivering a better childhood, addressing mental health, bullying, bereavement, early years provision, disability and other issues that put children's welfare at risk.
- We adapted fast to online delivery, holding **662** learning events, from introductory webinars to intensive accelerating working groups. These events engaged a total of **18,474** professionals.
- For example, more than **200** strategic leads and commissioners attended each of our webinars and national events focused on developing better outcomes for children with SEND.
- **82%** of participants who completed evaluation forms for our workforce development activities said the training had improved their confidence and skills, while **87%** rated the training as 'good' or 'excellent'.

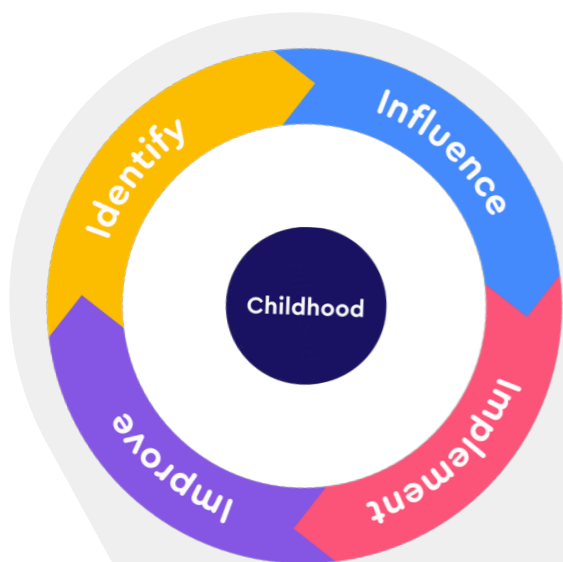
## IMPROVE

By constantly listening to children, young people and our partners, we will never stop building a compelling case about how to create better childhoods.

During 2020–21 we relaunched *Listening to the voices of young children training* and are working with local authorities to roll this out more widely.

Next year we will be building on our *Children at the Heart* campaign, working harder than ever to amplify the voices of children and young people of all ages, bringing people together in support of our vision of a better childhood.

We brought **3,574** people together in networks & partnerships to collaborate on delivering a better childhood.



# 1. Making evidence count

Ensuring decisions affecting children and young people are based on sound research about what works.

Photo: Children and young people in conversation with the Children's Minister and other partners at a virtual Roundtable.



## Making evidence count in the pandemic

Throughout the last year NCB has worked in partnership to generate and interrogate evidence to protect the interests of children and young people, especially those who are most vulnerable.

Since the Covid-19 crisis swept the country, we have been doing our utmost to ensure rapidly changing policies were fit for purpose, reflected the concerns of children, families and professionals, and were communicated swiftly to frontline staff.

This intensive combination of behind-the-scenes meetings with officials, network-gathering and information-sharing took place at great speed as the pandemic unfolded. The Council for Disabled Children, Childhood Bereavement Network and our early years networks were particularly vital hubs for intelligence-sharing throughout the pandemic.

From the outset of the pandemic we produced comprehensive briefings with other leading children's charities to guide support for children in the midst of the crisis and establish a vision for recovery.

Our own research helped to identify the impact of the pandemic on bullying and early childhood development, the extra struggle faced by grieving families, the challenges faced by young people leaving care with insecure immigration status, and more.

Informed by young people's experiences and refined by intelligence from our wider networks, our evidence reached the highest levels of decision-making through a variety of reports, roundtables and strategic meetings.

## Challenging the status quo where rights and welfare are at risk

### Improving mental health and wellbeing

During Infant Mental Health Week in June we launched our *Nurturing Healthy Minds Together* report, exploring how services and parents can work in partnership throughout the UK to support the social and emotional development of under fives.

We updated the research report in the light of the disruption of the pandemic, bringing conversations about infant mental health and authentic parental engagement into sharp focus for decision-makers, commissioners, researchers and practitioners.

In December 2020 we published a summary of the policy recommendations and Young NCB's thoughts on the findings of University College London's report on mental ill health at age 17, drawing on findings from the Millennium Cohort Study. The study showed important new evidence about the extent of psychological distress among teenagers, adding to a strong evidence base that urgent action is required to prioritise the mental health and wellbeing of our young people.

In Northern Ireland we undertook the research to inform the Department of Education's Children & Young People's Emotional Health & Wellbeing in Education Framework, which launched during the year. Working in partnership with organisations across the UK, we worked with young people to create the *Our Minds Our Future* charter and produce a video to raise awareness and make it count.

### Championing an education system that protects children from exclusion

For several years we have been building evidence and influence to support greater inclusion of disabled children and young people, ensuring our children can receive joined-up services in their local area, tailored to their needs and aspirations.

The pandemic put their welfare at risk, with many children unable to access school or receive their usual support services.

With the SEND Review and Care Review around the corner, we gathered evidence and experience from our SEND networks, using the intelligence to guide pandemic decision-making without losing sight of the strategic picture and the changes our children need to see. Our Roundtable events in September and February brought children, young people and key partners together with the Children's Minister to discuss the evidence directly, combining Covid recovery planning with preparation for the SEND Review.

### Tackling unacceptable levels of child poverty

Growing up in poverty restricts a child's chances of doing well at school, of living a healthy and happy life, and of finding well-paid work as adults.

Last year, fresh evidence generated through the End Child Poverty Coalition drew attention to the inequality in the distribution of poverty, with rates rising fastest in the Midlands and northern cities. Insistent that child poverty must be at the heart of the effort to 'level up' the UK, and determined to protect planned cuts to Universal Credit, we led a campaign to call for decisive action. Preventing Government from hiding behind misleading statistics, through a successful complaint to the Statistics Authority's Office, was a small victory – we need many more to protect the UK's children from the grip of poverty.

## Generating new evidence

Last year we generated research evidence to guide responses to the pandemic as well as to inform our long term effort to drive continuous improvement in services and decision-making affecting children.

Through the Childhood Bereavement Network we examined how the pandemic affected bereavement support needs and gaps in provision, including an exploration of the funding needs of the voluntary sector in response, and clear recommendations for action. We also offered expert input into external research studies and policy work through involvement in advisory and reference groups including the national Covid-19 bereavement study, the planning group for the National Day of Reflection on 23 March, and Public Health England's umbrella review of effectiveness of support.

In Northern Ireland, our research illuminated the impact of Covid-19 on children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), their families and those who support them.

Research conducted by the Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) showed the impact of the pandemic on young people's experience of bullying with more reporting being bullied online and a negative impact on children's friendships. Our research showed one in three children had been bullied between May and November 2020. During the year ABA also conducted a literature review about levels of racist and faith targeted bullying and developed resources with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils to help schools and other settings reduce bullying.

In November we published new evidence about the combined risks of mental ill health, domestic violence and drug or alcohol misuse, improving understanding and avoid assumptions that risk alienating families rather than supporting children. This research is part of *Living Assessments*, made possible by a five-year investment by Wellcome, and delivered in collaboration with the University of Cambridge, University of Kent, the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Children and the British Association of Social Workers.

# CHILDREN AT THE HEART

Together with children and young people, we're creating a positive vision of childhood and uniting all those who can help to bring it about.

## Building a movement

Over the last year we've taken the voices of children and young people to the heart of Government several times, using a campaign we've united more than 150 children's organisations behind.

*Children at the Heart* grew from our *Manifesto for a Better Childhood*, calling for a cross-Government strategy built on the principle that children and young people themselves must have a say in the political process.

We urged Government to establish a set of binding outcomes, backed by investment, that all departments are accountable for delivering in order to stop children and young people growing up in poverty, improve outcomes in early childhood, create an inclusive education system, and promote and protect our children's wellbeing and mental health.

Having focused initially on the 2019 General Election campaign, we turned our attention last year to guiding the immediate response to, and long-term recovery from, the pandemic, seeking to influence long-term spending priorities to deliver a better childhood for the UK.

## Bringing children's voices to the heart of Government

In June we galvanised our *Children at the Heart* movement to support a joint letter to the Prime Minister urging the Government to make this generation of children as central to the UK's coronavirus recovery plans as health and the economy.

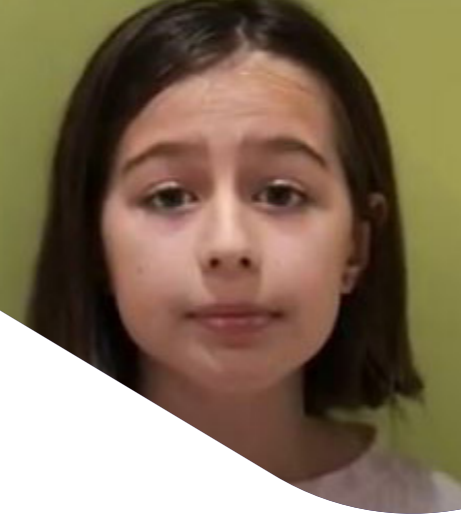
We led the creation of overarching recovery principles, working in partnership with The Children's Society and other leading charities to provide high-level briefings on eight key areas of the services children count on.

NCB worked with the All Party Parliamentary Group chaired by Tim Loughton MP to hold a virtual meeting where children, young people and parents could share ideas and experiences of lockdown with MPs, Peers and representatives from across the children's sector.

In September we worked with children, young people and partners to direct our campaign towards the Chancellor ahead of the Comprehensive Spending Review, asking for urgent investment in mental health, improving education and turning around the crisis facing services for children. The submission was signed by over 120 children, young people and parents, as well as over 160 organisations working across the children's sector.

Our analysis of the Spending Review showed that the approach is still too piecemeal to deliver a better childhood for the UK's children, with major omissions in child poverty, early childhood, mental health and children's social care.

"Public services did not have enough funding before Covid-19, and are now expected to help the extra people impacted by the pandemic and lockdown. These services need long term funding and help to make sure they can continue to work with each other to help children and families." Aayushi, 13.



"I think that the money should be spent on making sure that children and young people's wellbeing is OK after Covid. Yes, it is important that we all get back into education, but we also need all of the other things that have been taken away from us."  
**Lucie, 11**

In December children, young people and parents joined an online meeting of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Children to discuss these issues directly with 20 Parliamentarians including Treasury officials and advisers from the No.10 policy unit.

## Creating a new vision for childhood

In January we led a coalition of children's charities to publish an open letter in the Observer, calling for an independent commission to bring together representatives from across the sector, including charities, school leaders, teaching unions, education experts, doctors and mental health professionals, as well as the Children's Commissioner, to "steer children and young people clear from the lingering effects of Covid-19."

In February, the outgoing Children's Commissioner, Anne Longfield, could not have been clearer in her final speech that children and young people must be at the heart of a joined-up, cross-Government strategy that has their voices as well their welfare at its very centre.

It is heartening that the incoming Children's Commissioner, Dame Rachel de Souza, has taken on the baton, starting her term of office with *The Big Ask*, a monumental consultation with children on their priorities for improving childhood post-Covid. This is set to form the basis for the resulting Childhood Commission, an ambitious report setting out to tackle the problems holding our children back.

Our *Children at the Heart* campaign is now part of a bigger movement of people and organisations determined to work together throughout the UK to deliver the changes that make childhood better.

## What we'll do next year to make evidence count

We will build the evidence about the impact of COVID-19 and make the case for a cross-government recovery plan that puts the wellbeing of babies, children and young people at its heart.

We will campaign for a strategic response to the increasing levels of child poverty.

We will make the case for renewed investment in the services and workforce that children and families rely on at this year's spending review

We will continue to disseminate the learning from the lottery funded A better start programme – investment of ? in 5 sites

We will work with the Government and the disabled children's sector to make sure the SEND green paper delivers real solutions for disabled children, those with special educational needs, and their families.

We will provide evidence to the Independent Review of Children's Social Care so that its conclusions are based on the lived experience of children and young people and the evidence of what works

We will influence the Health and Care Bill so that children and young people are put at the heart of the new health and care system.

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## 2. Involving children & young people

Amplifying the voices of children and families to make policy more relevant and to improve services.

### Involving children and young people in the pandemic

As well as moving all our engagement with children and young people online for the whole of the last year, we have ensured children and young people were involved in shaping our response to and recovery from the pandemic.

Alongside virtual meetings of our main participation groups, Young NCB and FLARE, young people rubbed online shoulders with Government Ministers at Roundtables, Select Committees and other Parliamentary events.

The pandemic also provided a focus for engagement, as young people contributed to several different internal and external evidence-gathering activities seeking to understand its impact.

Even though the pandemic limited our capacity to provide participation training, we were able to train 400 professionals to involve children and young people effectively, as well as continuing internal staff training to keep improving our own participation structures and approaches.

### Putting children and young people at the heart of our work, inside and out

In 2020–21 we engaged 1,304 children and young people through focus groups for research, campaigns and policy development, informing our responses to key Government consultations on topics such as the impact of the pandemic and the development of a mental health charter in Northern Ireland.

This is a 64% increase on our 2019–20 figure, as the shift to online engagement opened up new opportunities for children and young people to be involved and removed some barriers to participation.

#### Media Ambassadors

Children and young people's voices have powered our policy and public affairs activity for many years. We decided to make it official this year by training our first group of media ambassadors to speak out directly on the issues that matter to them.

Young people from projects across NCB met virtually in January and again in March to participate in the training, which included reviewing written articles and practice interviews and reflecting together on the experience of speaking out.

Empowering young people to speak out directly can enable points of view to emerge that may not otherwise be heard if they are counter to the prevailing narrative. For example, two of the Media Ambassadors, Zoya and Disha, spoke to the BBC (left) about their positive experiences of school closures during the lockdown. Paying attention to these experiences is vital if we are to build back education and services to be better than they were before the pandemic.

During the year young people wrote contributions for Children and Young People Now, explored the nuances of being labelled as 'vulnerable', and even wrote a letter to

Children and young people's voices have powered our policy and public affairs activity for many years. This year we trained our first group of media ambassadors to speak out directly on the issues that matter to them.

The Times to object to being labelled as 'snowflakes'.

#### Young Fundraisers

In March we were delighted to learn that 14-year-old Scarlett-Rose Farmer had chosen NCB as the charity to benefit from her running challenge. Running an average of 25km a week for a month, Scarlett-Rose not only smashed the physical aspect of her challenge, but nearly quadrupled her fundraising target, raising almost £2,000.

#### Supporting professionals

Throughout the year our training courses on *Developing Participation Skills and Mechanisms of Effective Participation* enabled professionals across the UK to develop their participation skills and knowledge.

Our *Making Participation Work* project focused on children and young people with SEND, providing participation training for professionals covering topics such as local area SEND inspections, minimum standards and participation frameworks.

We held participation coffee mornings online throughout the year, providing an opportunity for professionals to come together in an informal setting, to discuss a relevant theme or topic. They have been well received by attendees who value the informal nature of the chance to share their successes, challenges and questions.

#### Drawing on the experience of parents

The latest in a series of Expert Parent modules, *Complex Health Needs and Transition* (funded by Together for Short Lives) is a peer-designed and facilitated opportunity for parent carers of children with life-limiting and life-threatening conditions to increase their confidence in

navigating their child's transition to adulthood.

During the year the lead trainers for this module worked closely with CDC colleagues to expand the Programme with new e-learning modules on Supported decision making and the Mental Capacity Act (2005) and Planning for an uncertain future, two areas of vital importance for parent carers.

Alongside the e-learning, we continued to run our Expert Parent Programme workshops, a modular four-hour interactive session delivered by parent carers who can share this expertise and insight to parents who are seeking support to get the best out of the health system for their children.

### What we'll do next year to involve children & young people

We will make sure the impact of Covid-19 on the lives of children and young people is understood and their voices are heard and listened to when recovery plans are being developed and implemented.

We will increase the reach and size of our young researchers advisors group, using digital to break down barriers and embedding the lived experience of young people in our research.

We will champion the role of parents and carers in families and communities, providing support, training and opportunities, shifting power to put parents in the lead.

We will empower young people to speak truth to power, bringing them even closer to the heart of legislative and policy development.

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Photo:  
Young Media Ambassadors  
speaking directly to the BBC.



## Young governance

Children and young people influence our operational and strategic development through our governance framework – the systems and practices we have put in place to ensure children's voices drive us at every level.

"Youth voice and mental health are really important to me and Young NCB has been a crucial part to help me act on them. I've had opportunities to speak to figures across Government, Parliament and Education and I feel that it has been extremely beneficial not only for me but for these key figures to hear young people's voices when they make decisions about us.

I only joined Young NCB back in February, in the early rumours of a pandemic, and I've already had so many opportunities. Even though my involvement has only been virtual, it's been a whirlwind – meeting new amazing and inspirational people, getting to work with my fellow Young NCB members and getting the opportunity to collaborate on such influential campaigns such as our #ChildrenAtTheHeart campaign.

Following on from the social media buzz of the campaign, I attended the live-streamed All Party Parliamentary Group for Children (APPGC) meeting in July. Being part of the virtual APPGC meeting was one of the most exciting opportunities that I have ever taken part in, it was so reassuring to feed directly to politicians about how we as young people think Covid-19 has impacted us and what we want within a recovery plan after COVID-19 comes to an end. There was so much support from NCB staff, they were always on an end of an email to be there to answer any questions or just to speak!

Young NCB has been a crucial support system for me to be able to do something and get on with it, especially during such tricky times. It was always really enjoyable to be logging onto a NCB Zoom meeting, just knowing that I'm going to have an absolute blast."

**Dmitrijs Meiksans, 15 (Photo, right)**

### NCB – at a glance

#### Young NCB

From responding to surveys and consultations to taking part in focus groups, members of Young NCB keep our fingers on the pulse.

Young people on the Advisory Group meet regularly for a deep dive into the world of children's policy and practice, shaping our strategic direction and project development.

#### FLARE

The Council for Disabled Children runs FLARE, a 16-strong group of 13–25 year-olds with SEND. As advisers to the Department for Education, the young people on this group are well used to meeting with the Minister and no strangers to speaking out on the issues that matter.

#### Young Research Advisors

Children and young people's voices and experiences strengthen the quality, relevance and impact of NCB research. Established in 2011, the YRAs are a diverse group of children and young people aged 7–18.

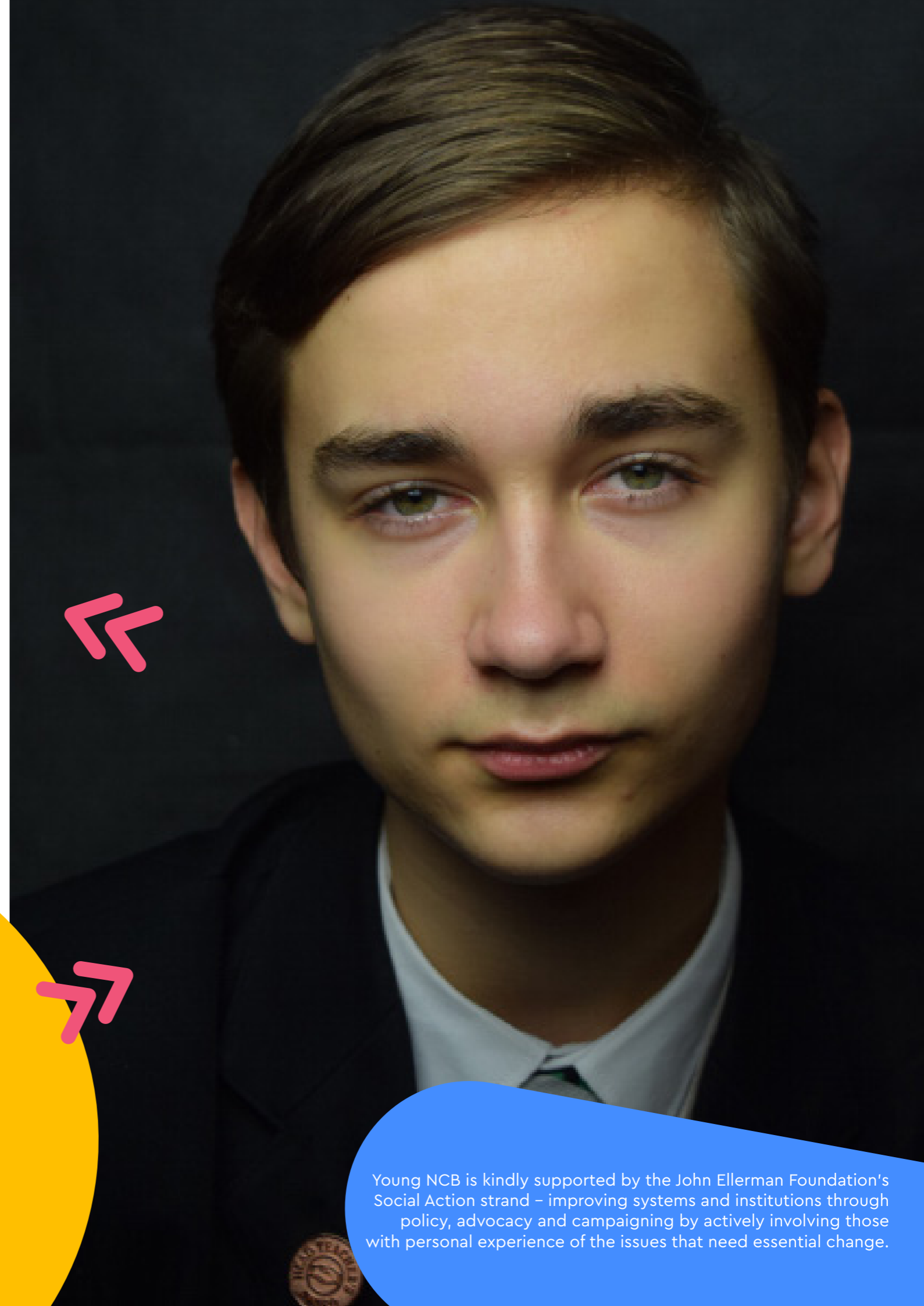
#### Young Representatives to the Board

Members of Young NCB who engage and collaborate with the Board with a view to becoming Trustees themselves in future.

#### Board of Trustees

Our governing documents require us to have two Trustees aged between 18 and 25 at time of appointment.

Young NCB is kindly supported by the John Ellerman Foundation's Social Action strand – improving systems and institutions through policy, advocacy and campaigning by actively involving those with personal experience of the issues that need essential change.



# Raising funds to make a difference

Determined to make a difference for other children and young people, Scarlett-Rose set herself the challenge of running 100K in March 2020 to raise funds for NCB.

Doing lessons at home was fine for me. At the beginning I worked downstairs but my dad was too noisy on the phone so I had to do all my lessons in my bedroom. It wasn't too much of a struggle first time round, but it felt harder in January.

We were talking as a family about children during Covid – especially thinking about children who didn't have the same kind of opportunities as me, like children who didn't have a computer to use at home or a suitable space to work in.

I'd always wanted to run for charity at some point in my life. Some of my friends were doing a 5K or a 10K run for charity, that inspired me. It's easy to just notice the people who are bad influences. These friends were really good influences!

I did some research online for charities that I could support. I've always had love and support

from my family and I wanted to use that to help other people. I went through lots of options and chose the National Children's Bureau.

I wanted to do what I could to help, so I chose a big challenge: to run 100K in a month.

In the build up I was running two 5K runs a week with a longer run at weekends. Then during the challenge itself I had to run three 5K runs and a 10K run for four weeks. Getting up in the morning was the hardest part. Sometimes my legs were hurting before I'd even started.

My dad ran with me. He says that for the first 20 minutes of each run I would moan a lot and struggle, but then we'd get into the groove and get chatting and it wasn't so bad after that.

It was nice to spend so much time together actually. I'm 14, and so at home dad and I would sometimes have silly arguments like most people do. It was great to do something positive together. We had some good laughs along the way. He helped to motivate me and choose different routes to keep it interesting. My favourite run was to the West Ham training ground. We saw a smart car arrive, but I couldn't see who was inside!

I set myself a £500 fundraising target, and it made me really emotional to see the donations coming in. The positive messages made me feel proud! The donations and messages created a lot of pressure for me, because I didn't want to let people down, but ultimately that's what helped me keep going when I wanted to give up.

My last run was to the Hornchurch FC stadium, where the Chairman is a friend of the family. The club made a generous donation and allowed a few family members and my best friend to cheer me down the home straight on their stadium athletics track. That was a nice finish!

In the end I raised £2K for NCB, and it's nice to know that this money could help more children and young people to have their voices heard. I'm looking forward to finding out more about Young NCB and ways that I can stay involved myself.

**Scarlett-Rose Farmer, 14**



# Finding a voice, finding hope

Bethan used her own experiences of worry and uncertainty to speak directly to policy makers about the issues turning young people's worlds upside down

On the 24th of March 2021, my living room became the House of Commons. And that Zoom meeting room became the Committee Rooms.

That day still feels unreal; as young people, we spend hours trying to plead with adults that our opinions matter and that we deserve to be involved in shaping laws about us, and here I was. After over a year of fear, uncertainty, online learning and way too many hours on screens, here were MPs with a strong message: they care.

That day, I gave evidence to the House of Commons Select Committee on Education. I did it with two of my best friends, in front of MPs who hold power over our lives and our futures.

Our whole world was turned upside down last year, our homes became our colleges, our youth clubs, our places of worship, and we've all dealt with the circumstances differently. The Education Select Committee was running an enquiry about education during lockdown, and when I was asked to give evidence, I leapt at the chance.

As a Politics student, I recognise the importance of government scrutiny and shaping policy involving my life.

"The feeling after being able to speak to these MPs for an hour on how this year has been was indescribable."

We covered different subjects, such as exams, content, teachings, extracurricular activities and our fears and worries for the future. We echoed our fears on subjects such as the future of the job market, or how our exam grades will be seen by employers, as a year who's A Levels/GCSEs were "cancelled".

It was also an opportunity of a lifetime to be able to ask the MPs questions, including one on their role in scrutinising the Government, and also when they think the educational gap that has been widened as a result of covid, will finally even out.

The last year has been the most uncertain. In a year where I should have had the most certainty and power over my life, I've had to choose university courses based on unis I've never seen apart from via a screen, I've had to study and do tests online and battle internet issues or distractions from across my house.

But that zoom call gave me hope for the future.

I'm extremely grateful that the House of Commons made a conscious effort to listen to young people and value our opinions and our experiences, and I really hope they take our views into account when creating further legislation.

**Bethan Hoggan, 17**



"It's been really good for me to be part of the conversation, and have a seat at the table. Because of who I am, and because of my age, I wouldn't have imagined being part of these conversations at this stage of my life."



## Growing up with NCB

Having been involved with NCB for many years, Tutu's curiosity led her to become a Young Representative to the Board, to take a closer look at how the charity operates.

I've been working with NCB for a long time. In my teens in Lancashire I did a lot of local youthwork. I was growing out of that and looked on Google for children's charities to be involved with. I found NCB and filled in the online form to join.

I first got involved with the Young NCB advisory group and the Anti-Bullying Alliance. Over the years I did a few things like helping to develop the campaign for Anti-Bullying Week. I have also helped out at events, behind the scenes or representing young people. It's been overwhelmingly positive, and NCB is really nurturing.

I met one of my closest friends, Priyanka, through Young NCB. We're still best friends now, even though I'm in Norwich and she's in London. Her older sister Thivya is now a Board member.

It was curiosity that led me to become a Young Representative a few years ago. I'd done a lot of work with different parts of NCB over the years, but I hadn't spent a lot of time with the senior leadership team. I was interested in Anna (NCB's chief executive) in particular, who is an amazing woman from my experience. I wanted more insight on what went on behind the scenes.

I do enjoy seeing the back end of things. Many people see the end product, but seeing how decisions were made, what was taken into consideration, the vast amount of research that was done. That was interesting to see.

Since I've joined the Board as a Young Representative, I've enjoyed seeing the business side of running a charity, especially with the marketing and the re-branding, it's constantly updating and adapting.

Mental health has been such a big issue for quite a while. NCB devotes a lot of time and energy to addressing that issue.

If I could make one change that I think would make a huge difference, I'd love there to be a place online for young people to go to talk – like easy access to online therapy I suppose.

I remember discussions about diversity of the children and young people that NCB supports, but how this diversity isn't so well reflected in the people who actually work for NCB. When we discussed this at the Board, I was coming mostly from a position of listening. I knew that my voice would be heard, but I wasn't sure about how I could contribute, especially when it comes to knowledge and experience about HR processes, for example. It's been good that the Board is self-aware and looking at those issues and actively recruiting new Trustees to address this.

It's been really good for me to be part of the conversation, and have a seat at the table. Because of who I am, and because of my age, I wouldn't have imagined being part of these conversations at this stage of my life.

It's also been great to have access to all kinds of different people. I know that if in future I wanted to move into certain jobs I would have guidance from some of the people I've encountered through the Board.

It's like a double plus – I'm so heavily interested and invested in NCB's future, so I get all these benefits when actually I'm just happy to be there representing young people.

I'm in my final year at uni, so there's a lot up in the air at the moment. I'm open to anything that I care about – from working with NCB to continuing biochemistry and going into research sciences, banking, marketing – I still have a passion for business and am interested in that area. I don't have a single route in mind at the moment.

The last year has been challenging, I've had my ups and downs. Having a pause in a lot of things has given me a chance to think about what makes me happy, what I give meaning to within my life. It's made me realise how important certain things are to me, like my role in NCB, I really value that and have really valued being part of all the meetings.

**Tutu Mukelabai, 21**

### 3. Bringing organisations together

Using our convening power to unite all those who can help us put the best interests of children first.

#### Bringing organisations together in the pandemic

Our experience of using online conferencing tools for collaboration between disparate teams enabled us to adapt quickly to the constraints imposed by the pandemic.

While there are aspects of face-to-face interaction that are hard to replicate online, we found that many of our events were able to connect wider audiences than ever before, bringing us closer together across geographical divides.

The pandemic provided a clear focus for much of our partnership activity last year. As well as working with 17 leading charities to provide the Recovery principles and policy briefings referred to in *Making Evidence Count*, every member of the NCB family brought organisations together to respond to the immediate challenges of the pandemic while staying focused on working in partnership towards our long term goals to deliver a better childhood.

#### Transforming early years provision

Our Early Childhood Unit continued to run the National Quality Improvement Network, twice bringing representatives from Regional Quality Improvement Networks together to share intelligence and inform the national picture.

As the Department for Education's Early Years stakeholder engagement partner, we delivered five events focused on supporting early years settings to implement the revised Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The events brought early years practitioners, local authorities, consultants and academics together with officials from the Department for Education and Ofsted to take an in-depth look at reducing unnecessary workload, tracking and assessment.

As well as convening these broad networks, NCB focuses on bringing partners together to drive change in particular aspects of early years provision. Our work shows how joined-up services can transform local systems and improve outcomes for children.

#### Improving access and inclusion

Getting support right for young children with SEND requires joined-up multi-agency systems and a skilled, confident workforce equipped to provide good services with clear pathways to specialist expertise.

The Council for Disabled Children leads the Early Years SEND Partnership, working with Nasen, Contact, The Communication Trust and I CAN, to boost the skills and confidence of early years settings managers, and bring local partners, agencies and services together to improve local strategies throughout 73 local authorities in the five northern regions of England.

A formal evaluation conducted by NCB's research team demonstrated the "tangible and sometimes transformational impact" of our activity last year, as well as exploring barriers and enablers to success, to inform approaches to early years SEND support across the UK.

Photo:  
From our Making It REAL activity to create positive home learning environments.



Our careful balance of regional, local and specialist action learning groups strengthened relationships between partners, in some cases leading to the organic formation of new multi-agency working groups to continue improving early years access beyond the life of the Partnership. In other areas we saw significant expansion of the offer to young children, such as the creation of a new early years speech and language therapist post – the first example, in this local area, of the local authority and health commissioners jointly funding such a service.

#### Raising early achievement in literacy

Engaging parents in their children's early literacy development has been shown to improve children's outcomes and help to narrow the gap between disadvantaged and other children.

Initially developed by the University of Sheffield, Making it REAL (Raising Early Achievement in Literacy) is our award-winning programme that brings practitioners and parents together to create a positive early home learning environment. While we hold Making It REAL training throughout the country, we target particular areas where REAL is part of a wider programme of strategic development or place-based system change.

Last year we expanded The REAL programme, to focus specifically on children with SEND. We delivered *A Special Approach to Making it REAL* across the north west of England, distributing 500 'Special Treasure Chests' and delivering workshops, vodcasts and activity sheets, all designed to improve parents' confidence and establish a positive home learning environment that will stand children and families in good stead for the future.

At the same time we are working in partnership with The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) and NatCen to research the impact of the REAL programme through a randomised control trial, funded by EEF and the Department for Education. Teachers in 53 schools in the north of England attended four inspirational professional

development days with REAL's originators Professors Cathy Nutbrown and Peter Hannon, and then began delivering REAL projects to children in their intervention group.

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic we have worked closely with teachers, utilising their fantastic creativity to adapt the programme to ensure it can continue whilst socially distanced.

#### Preparing for adulthood from the earliest years

At every stage of their learning and development, children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) must not only receive the right support for the stage they are in, they must also receive the right support to prepare them for the next stage of their development. Getting this right from a child's earliest years makes a lasting difference throughout their childhood and into adulthood.

To this end, the Council for Disabled Children has led the development, trialling and review of a tool to support schools in Preparing for Adulthood from the Earliest Years (PFAEY). This is part of a package of tools from the Whole School SEND Consortium to embed good SEND provision in schools.

Working intensively with a group of schools in Oxfordshire, CDC has demonstrated how schools have been able to bring about a wide range of improvements: strengthening pupil voice, a sharper focus on working with families, starting earlier and looking ahead, and prompting more fundamental review of curriculum design, relevance and impact.

A formal evaluation conducted by NCB's research team demonstrated the "tangible and sometimes transformational impact" of our activity last year.



## Joining up systems for children and young people with SEND

### Delivering better outcomes together

Through the Council for Disabled Children's extensive work with local authorities, health and social care agencies throughout the country, we know that effective services depend on joint, outcomes-based planning and commissioning, with systematic sharing of information and data across agencies.

This complex work is right at the heart of our mission. As part of the Delivering Better Outcomes Together programme, in partnership with Mott MacDonald and NDTi, we worked through extensive networks to bring people together in a series of what we call 'accelerated working groups' to understand and overcome the barriers to effective joint working. These national and regional groups identify and enable changes that make the whole system work better for disabled children and those with special educational needs.

Last year we made good progress towards tackling the problem of poor data. This has been highlighted time and again in SEND local area inspections by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission as a key factor undermining joint strategic planning and commissioning.

At the beginning of the year we updated our SEND Data Dashboard to help local areas develop indicators to use as part of an outcomes framework, both to track impact and to target services. By the end of the year we had created a new joint commissioning checklist – a simple, powerful tool providing local areas with a RAG rating framework to assess progress towards effective joint commissioning arrangements.

In 2020–21 we supported 12 local areas on their journey to outcomes-based commissioning, either through the development of a new strategic outcomes framework or through improved implementation and monitoring of an existing one. This builds on the six areas supported in 2019–20 and will continue into the new contract year. Combining detailed case studies and learning from these areas with insight from the accelerated working groups, we create an ongoing cycle of improvement to drive changes throughout the system and

deliver better outcomes for disabled children.

This has led to some significant cultural shifts and noticeably improved relationships between agencies:

*"The journey [developing the outcomes framework] is in itself impactful, it has brought us together as partners across education, health and care and with our families to gain this joint, shared understanding of what is really important to our families."*

Throughout the year we hosted a variety of webinars, each attended by more than 200 participants, a wider audience than before the pandemic. One series brought together Designated Medical Officers and Designated Clinical Officers to support joint working between health services and local authorities. Another focused on SEND Leads and Commissioners. Our national event brought all these audiences together along with strategic parental input, to update the sector, share knowledge and best practice and learn from each other.

### Prioritising social care for disabled children and young people

The national reform programme for children's social care aims to ensure social workers have a robust set of knowledge and skills to meet the needs of vulnerable children and families, as part of a system which understands and supports the unique needs, experiences and strengths of each child. As the Department for Education's Strategic Reform Partner for SEND, we meet this challenge by bringing people together through strong regional networks, delivering workshops, sharing examples of emerging practice, publishing case law briefings and answering policy and practice questions and providing bespoke support.

As well as bringing our regional networks together, we developed new communities of practice to focus on key areas of the system, sharing creative responses to the pandemic and drawing out learning to drive the system forward. These communities focused on the Local Offer (information about what SEND support services are available in each local area) and on Short Breaks (services to enable children with SEND to enjoy time away from their main carer).

Our communities of practice on the role of the Designated Social Care Officer brought 89 professionals together. Embedding this role in local areas will lead to improved relationships and more integrated approaches across education, health and care services.

The SEND Review and forthcoming Care Review create an opportunity for the Government to reprioritise social care for disabled children and young people. Through our networks and communities of practice as well as members meetings and national events, we are developing evidence to drive change in the social care and SEND systems.

### Protecting the rights of children with SEND

Convened by the Council for Disabled Children, the Special Educational Consortium (SEC), is an influential network of 34 organisations covering the voluntary sector, professional bodies and parent groups. As well as sharing information on SEN policy and practice, SEC held meetings with Government officials on finances, school exclusions, behaviour and Ofsted inspections. SEC gave evidence to the Education Select Committee on the impact of lockdown, met with the Children's Minister about the ongoing support of children with SEN, securing important changes to the language of school exclusions.

### Bringing people together to prevent bullying

The theme for Anti-Bullying Week 2020 was 'United Against Bullying'. During the year the Anti-Bullying Alliance embodied this theme by bringing members and partners together to focus on driving change to policy and practice.

Crucially, we reconvened ABA's Race and Faith Targeted Bullying Group which brings together an influential group of 30 individuals and organisations to work on a new strategy to tackle Race and Faith Targeted Bullying.

The year ended with an event bringing children, young people, partners and Parliamentarians together to mark the end of the All Together programme, celebrating the lasting difference we'd made to children's experience of feeling safe and confident at school.

## United for better mental health

As well as bringing people together through the Schools' Wellbeing Partnership, we shared learning from the six HeadStart Partnerships, funded by the National Lottery Community Fund, to explore and test new ways to improve the mental health and wellbeing of young people aged 10 to 16.

In October we brought 220 mental health professionals and commissioners together with representatives of the Department for Education, NHS England and Public Health England, to share national and local perspectives. Each Headstart Partnership presented workshops sharing key learning and insight into their local system responses and interventions to prioritise children's emotional wellbeing amidst the return of education settings in the context of Covid-19, highlighting key learning and good practice.

### What we'll do next year to bring organisations together

We will grow and develop the schools wellbeing partnership, supporting our schools to recover and reconnect post Covid-19.

We will build further collaboration in the early years sector, continuing to advocate for high quality early education and services to promote emotional wellbeing and health for all children.

Through the Childhood Bereavement Network we will work with partners to establish a UK Commission on Bereavement to explore issues affecting grieving children, young people and adults, and make recommendations to improve support.

We will bring stakeholders together and build momentum for change in key policy areas such as child poverty, SEND reform, and investment in children's services.

Strengthen our anti-bullying work with Anti-Bullying Alliance in England, Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum in Northern Ireland and support for partners in Wales.

# Working together with schools to improve wellbeing

Through a variety of programmes, campaigns and partnerships, we're supporting schools to take strides in boosting staff and pupil wellbeing.

## Working together to tackle bullying

Research shows that 30% of children have been bullied in the last year alone, with 17% experiencing bullying online. Bullying does not only blight childhoods, its effects can last long into adulthood, harming health, employment, relationships and more.

The Anti-Bullying Alliance raises awareness of bullying and supports schools to tackle it effectively so children can learn and play without fear of bullying.

### Raising awareness – Anti-Bullying Week

The Anti-Bullying Alliance brought people together to run the 2020 Anti-Bullying Week campaign 'United Against Bullying'. This year 80% of schools took part in the campaign, with 56% of schools joining in Odd Socks Day celebrations as part of Anti-Bullying Week to celebrate what makes us all unique.

In a year when the pandemic was in the media spotlight and schools were stretched to their limits, we still saw 50,000 downloads of our school resource packs and coverage in 46 national newspapers. It was, however, on social media that we saw the biggest growth this year, with an 84% increase in engagement compared to the previous year. We reached a quarter of a billion with the hashtags on Twitter and 44 million on TikTok.

From Ant and Dec and Craig David to the Chancellor, Rishi Sunak, and Education Secretary, Gavin Williamson, social influencers, pop stars, athletes and parliamentarians combined to spread positive awareness and share a strong anti-bullying message.

Independent research showed that 93% of young people think Anti-Bullying Week helps raise awareness of bullying, and 86% think Anti-Bullying Week helps schools tackle bullying.

## Reducing bullying in schools – All Together

In March 2021 we celebrated the end of our All Together whole-school anti-bullying programme, in which schools worked towards All Together status by evidencing their activity to improve their school approach to bullying, and how they've worked to reduce it and improve wellbeing.

Aiming to reduce all bullying, particularly of disabled children or those with special educational needs (SEND), the programme was funded by the Department for Education and delivered by the Anti-Bullying Alliance with support from Achievement for All and Contact.

Since the programme launched four years previously, 4,000 schools have taken part, with 1,200 fully completing programme steps and 638 schools going on to achieve an All Together School award. Evaluation by Professor Peter Smith, Goldsmiths University of London showed::

- **71%** of schools taking part said bullying had reduced in their school as result of the programme. The biggest reduction in bullying was reported by children with SEND.
- **61%** of schools reported improved behaviour among pupils.

We saw drastic improvements in the way schools approach bullying after using our audit and action plan tool. We captured their good practice and inspiring case studies to share with other schools on the programme.

"It's been wonderful – the staff are more confident and the children are able to talk about bullying in a new way. They are more empowered."

Feedback from *All Together* evaluation

## Whole school approaches to mental health and wellbeing

Bullying is a vital strand of our wider work to address mental health and wellbeing in schools.

Three children in every classroom have a diagnosable mental health problem and this number was already on the rise before the pandemic struck. With long waiting lists and high thresholds, only 1 in 4 of these children is able to get the treatment they need.

Mental health problems can intensify as children grow up. By the age of 14, 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 10 boys experience symptoms of depression. By the age of 17, 1 in 6 young people report high levels of psychological distress. This can't go on.

During the year we strengthened our Schools' Wellbeing Partnership to lead our efforts to bring schools together to tackle this most pressing issue. Under the direction of a steering group chaired by Matthew Purves, National Director of Education Services at Academies Enterprise Trust (AET), the Partnership became a fully-fledged NCB specialist membership group in May 2021.

### Providing resources

One issue schools face is navigating an overwhelming array of tools and programmes designed to address mental health and wellbeing, but without a reliable guide for their effectiveness. In October 2020 the Schools' Wellbeing Partnership produced an overview of children and young people's mental health and

wellbeing resources, reports and campaigns to further address this deficit.

When schools were grappling with the challenges of remote learning and lockdown, our *Recovery Toolkits* for primary and secondary schools set out actions and supporting resources to help schools focus on the mental health and wellbeing of staff and pupils.

### Prioritising wellbeing

When we developed a Wellbeing Award for Schools with Optimus Education, we designed it as a means for schools to take a systematic approach to improving the wellbeing and mental health of the whole school community.

The award is built on a robust framework of eight objectives which epitomise best practice. Each of these objectives contains a number of key performance indicators against which schools provide evidence of their achievements.

So far, more than 1,000 schools have completed the award and are able to demonstrate the value they place on approaches to wellbeing. We aim to reach many more. In the meantime, how can parents ascertain how schools who have not completed such an award value the mental health and wellbeing of their pupils?

To answer this question, the Schools' Wellbeing Partnership produced a simple resource for parents setting out five key emotional wellbeing points to consider when choosing a school for their child. From attitudes to behaviour to support for social skills, these five points provide a gateway into a school's wellbeing culture.

Together we are making an overwhelming case for schools to prioritise our children's wellbeing, for it is in everyone's interests. We aren't just making a case though – we are providing the tools for the job.



## 4. Developing the workforce

Training and equipping an up-to-date and skilled workforce to deliver a better childhood throughout the UK.

### Developing the workforce in the pandemic

The needs of the workforce were changing and developing throughout last year, as the delivery environment shifted due to the pandemic.

Across the NCB family, we draw intelligence from our networks about the challenges services are facing, and then provide targeted support and guidance, sharing good practice to overcome barriers and drive improvement.

As well as ensuring our training and support offer was available online, we have adapted the format and focus of webinars and e-learning content delivery to meet ongoing needs.

Given other pressures, we have worked with the sector to keep strategic priorities on people's radar and ensure the workforce has the confidence to continue to deliver, especially for children with SEND.

"Excellent training that brings issues to life. It is also good to know the experiences of other local authorities and share knowledge. Fantastic training. Thank you!"

Feedback from one of our SEND learning and development events.

### Strategic development for the whole workforce

As above, our strategic national and regional networks identify and enable changes that make the whole system work better for children. We then equip and strengthen the workforce to deliver those changes.

#### Delivering better outcomes for children and young people with SEND

Early in the year we moved our extensive training offer online, to keep boosting the skills and confidence of the workforce, including courses designed to address priorities such as improving the quality of advice provided in the Education, Health and Care Plan process, and strengthening person-centred Annual Review processes and meetings.

We made the shift to larger scale online events, regularly reaching hundreds of professionals with a series of learning and development events for our health, social care and SEND networks. These covered topics such as the strategically-important designated social care officer role, along with early help services, SEN support and the Local Offer. Our second series of events included multi-agency priority-setting using our social care audit tool.

The impact of the ongoing pandemic restrictions is creating pressure on different aspects of the system, driving up need for early social care intervention via the Early Help framework. During the year we created webinars to help professionals grow in skills and confidence in this vital area.

Our shared support sessions continued to be well attended throughout the lockdown, providing a space for health and care practitioners to discuss the challenge of engaging with children and young people in challenging circumstances.



Alongside this, we delivered a variety of strategic and practical support to improve outcomes for children with SEND, including workshops on personalisation for NHS England, consultancy and development projects with services throughout the country and a national event to help designated clinical and medical officers excel in their vital role bringing services together.

#### Information, advice and support for children and young people with SEND

Led by the Council for Disabled Children, the Information Advice and Support Programme is a national Government initiative which commenced in June 2018 and has now been extended to run until March 2022.

The programme is being delivered through a partnership arrangement with the Information, Advice and Support Services Network (IASSN) and Contact and seeks to ensure that in every local authority area, children and young people with SEND and their parents have access to impartial and free information, advice and support on education, health and social care through local statutory SEND Information, Advice and Support Services (SEND IASS) and the offer of a national helpline and online advice, which is provided by Contact.

Using financial incentives with SEND IASS the programme has played a vital role in ensuring families, children and young people know how to get the information they need amid the changing picture of the pandemic, striving to provide continuity and reassurance to vulnerable children in the most confusing of circumstances, where the services available to children have varied according to which school they attend and the local area in which they live.

Alongside this we have continued to support the joint commissioning of SEND IASS across the country, working with local authorities and CCGs to ensure sustainable holistic information

advice and support is available in the long term.

IASSN have delivered popular webinars to support services as they adapted to the pandemic and understand the Coronavirus Act 2020. We have published case studies where every single story is not only a learning example for other services, but a story of life-enhancing support that has been maintained and improved for children with SEND.

We have rapidly expanded our e-learning training offer to help services have a better understanding of mental health, social care and holistic outcomes in education, health and care plans, where the end of the year, 1573 people had completed our Holistic Outcomes course.

We have delivered 18 days of IPSEA legal training resulting in 85% of services across England having a member of staff trained to Level 1, 81% to Level 2 and 81% to Level 3. By the end of the year we facilitated 47 intervention sessions with SEND IASS which led to both support and constructive challenge to help managers overcome their barriers to delivery. The response from local services to this support was incredible.

### Developing the early years workforce

#### Early years training and resources

Our Early Childhood Unit strengthens the early years workforce to improve the quality of life of young children. We have developed a variety of resources and approaches for settings and practitioners throughout the UK, and we have the biggest impact by focusing on working intensively across an area to join up systems and equip the workforce to deliver lasting change.

Over the past five years we have worked on an ambitious programme to transform early years systems in Jersey in partnership with Jersey Childcare Trust, engaging with 7,000 people directly, including over 3,000 children, and a

wider audience of over 3,000 practitioners and stakeholders trained and consulted across the island.

To ensure the programme is sustainable once the funding ends we have developed a legacy handover model for the main components, including embedding our Making it REAL approach in early years qualifications at a Jersey College, and handing over our successful Knowledge Makes Change communications.

During the year we combined our flagship early years products – Making It REAL and Knowledge Makes Change – across early years settings primarily in Jersey, Lambeth and the North West, to develop the skills and confidence of practitioners.

We also created a new training course to help practitioners listen to the voices of young children. This is at the heart of early years practice, ensuring that young children's individual needs, preferences, feelings, views and experiences are understood and considered as a matter of course.

### Stakeholder Engagement

Our role as Department for Education (DfE) stakeholder engagement partner for the early years involved keeping information flowing throughout the early years sector at a time of significant policy development, with changes to the Early Years Foundation Stage.

As well as maintaining the Foundation Years website to connect early years practitioners with the latest policy, practice and guidance, we delivered bulletins and newsflashes to bring the latest developments to the early years sector.

Alongside five virtual virtual Learn – Explore – Debate events to discuss key aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) reforms, we were commissioned to run further training events to support their implementation, reaching 150 of the 151 local authorities in England.

### Improving anti-bullying practice

The Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) provides online CPD training and live webinars to help professionals understand, prevent, reduce and respond to all forms of bullying.

We produced important new resources for schools, including a guide to preventing and responding to sexual bullying. At a time when *Everyone's Invited* has drawn attention to failures to keep children safe and address a culture of sexual harassment and violence in schools and online, our new guide and accompanying e-learning supports schools and other professionals as they safeguard, educate and support children in their care.

This guide draws on law and Government guidance, best practice from organisations that specialise in children's safety and/or sexual harms, research literature and consultation with children, including disabled children and those with special educational needs.

Alongside this, we created three new online courses anti-bullying courses, focusing on mental health, care-experienced young people and young carers.

### Strengthening bereavement services

The pandemic has had a profound impact on our experience of loss and grief. Many of us have experienced the loss of family and friends at a time when we have been unable to spend time with or say goodbye to loved ones, when funerals have been so different and it's been much harder for families to get together and support one another.

The Childhood Bereavement Network (CBN) spoke at external events organised by Public Health England, NHS England, Scottish Partnership for Palliative Care, the York St John University Counselling and Mental Health Centre and the Mental Health Leaders Group to raise awareness of the needs of bereaved children and young people grieving during the pandemic.

We also had a vital role to play in helping bereavement services adapt to unimaginably challenging circumstances to help children and young people move forwards in their grief.

### Sharing information and resources

Even before the first UK lockdown had been announced, we worked together with the National Bereavement Alliance to bring our networks of bereavement service managers and practitioners together through weekly webinars to strengthen our collective response to the growing pandemic.

We held 20 webinars during the year, with 10 in the first quarter when the turmoil was greatest. With an average attendance of 175, the webinars supported a total of 950 practitioners, providing a safe space for the sector during a particularly difficult, uncertain and complex time.

Through these webinars, network meetings, email bulletins and more, we maintained a comprehensive information service for our network members throughout the year, keeping services up to date with the latest Government guidance and helping them to adapt safely and effectively.

We produced new resources ourselves, including a guide on *Keeping in touch when you can't be with someone who is so ill that they might die*, as well as maintaining a collated

*Covid-19 Resources Pack* for professionals, drawn from resources shared during our weekly webinars.

### Raising awareness of bereavement support

Together with Grief Encounter, our partners in the Life Matters Taskforce and our members across the UK, we ran Children's Grief Awareness Week in November to raise awareness of the support available for bereaved children and young people. Our theme, #SayTheWords, encouraged families to reach out for support, inviting friends, schools, communities and services to acknowledge their grief and offer support.

We released new findings on bereaved families' struggles during the pandemic and worked with our members across social media to support children and young people to find their voice and talk about their grief, and to help those supporting them to #SayThe Words even if they don't know quite what to say.

### What we'll do next year to develop the workforce:

We will build on our significant success in delivering our digital training offer, developing an e-learning offer to ensure the widest range of practitioners can access quality training and support.

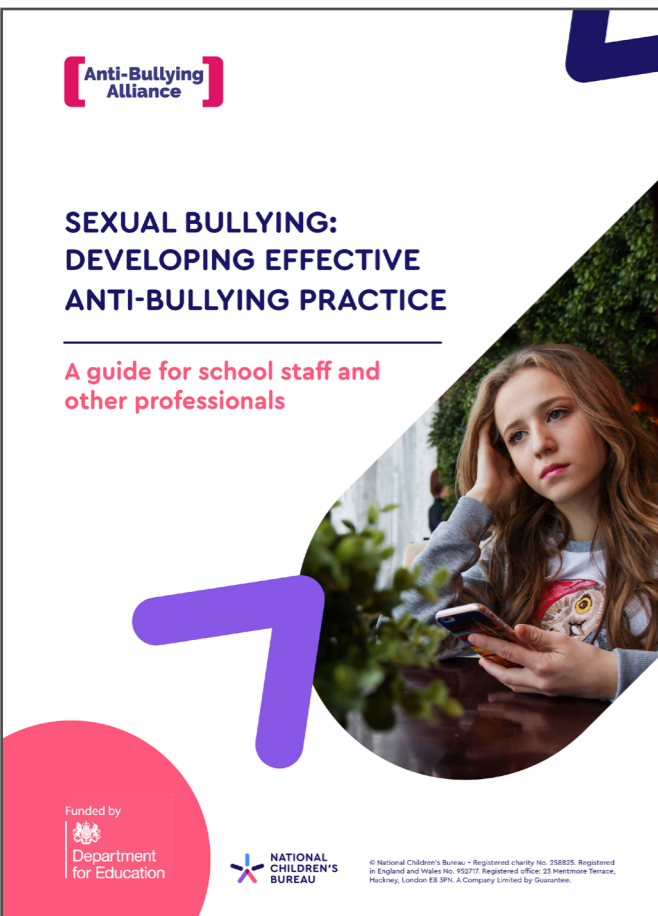
We will work specifically with commissioners and managers in health, education and care, in partnership with families, to build skills in commissioning for better outcomes for vulnerable children and families.

We will build on our programme of co-produced training, ensuring the expertise of children, young people and families as co-trainers is recognised and celebrated.

We will support Headstart mental health and wellbeing sites providing bespoke training support.

The Anti-Bullying Alliance provides free CPD online training courses, including a course covering sexual bullying.

[www.antibullyingalliance.org.uk/onlinetraining](http://www.antibullyingalliance.org.uk/onlinetraining)





# Responding to Covid-19: Local services, national impact



Working together to understand the needs of families with young children, adapt local services and share learning to inform lasting change.

The earliest years of life are a vital time in which children's brains develop rapidly and foundations are laid for the future.

One of five *A Better Start* partnerships funded by The National Lottery Community Fund, the Lambeth Early Action Partnership (LEAP) is just over halfway through a 10-year project to lay the best foundations for children aged 0–3 years in four deprived wards of South London.

Delivering this crucial support throughout the pandemic has required ingenuity and determination to understand emerging and changing needs and adapt to meet them.

## Understanding the impact

LEAP started in April 2020 by interrogating the evidence and producing a research brief to assess the known and likely impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic for children and families, especially those in the LEAP areas. This brief was an important component of NCB's collaborative work on the national Early Years Recovery Briefing.

The pandemic added to the existing stresses of pregnancy and parenting young children, creating conditions for domestic and child abuse to escalate. It cut many families off from the support networks, play facilities, outdoor spaces, groups, children's centres and other sources of support for health, wellbeing and development. Some families who were already experiencing adversities found those challenges intensified; others faced new issues entirely.

The virus and secondary impacts of the pandemic have disproportionately affected disadvantaged areas and Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic communities. This is of major concern to LEAP as a public health initiative operating in four deprived wards where 59% of 0–3 year olds are from a BAME background.

LEAP's Covid-19 activity has been intrinsically linked with our response to heightened awareness and widespread discussion of systemic racism since the killing of George Floyd in May 2020. As well as understanding the racial disparities in the impact of the pandemic, the team explored the impacts of systemic racism, identified areas of action, and celebrated Black families and figures. While this exploration and development around race equality was driven by more than Covid-19 and integrated into the wider programme, this has been an important part of LEAP's provision for families, workforce communications and team activity during the pandemic.

## Adapting local services

The challenge of helping parents through digital and online services when face-to-face meetings were not possible required the team to rapidly adapt its approach to improving diet and nutrition, communication and language, and social and emotional development.

LEAP continuously monitored local and national provision, public messaging and intelligence, including insights from parents, to determine how best to work with partners and networks to provide the best response for young families.

Some developments in services were to address specific needs arising from Covid-19. The *Winter With Us* campaign reached out to families with wide-ranging support, connecting parents with Parent Champions, running learn and play sessions, advising on employment, childcare and money worries and more, all supported through a range of short films from parents sharing their own ideas and experiences.

LEAP included activity packs in food parcels for children's centre clients and provided backing for the Healthy Living Platform in its leadership



Photo:  
Healthy Living Platform  
in action in Lambeth.

of the borough's emergency food response in providing healthy food deliveries to families at risk of going hungry and ensuring new mothers were welcomed home from hospital with a supply of ready cooked meals.

Some developments that were not primarily driven by Covid-19 took on new significance. In late 2020, for example, LEAP started remodelling its domestic violence service run by the Gaia Centre. LEAP strengthened the service's early intervention approach by expanding capacity for outreach and better tailoring it to the client group. This change seems particularly important at a time when the pandemic has escalated domestic abuse, restricted help-seeking opportunities and the visibility of survivors, and affected workforce connectedness.

Another example is the Maternity Vulnerability Assessment Tool (MatVAT), a holistic tool for midwives to measure social vulnerability in pregnant women more consistently. The pandemic changed, and in some cases reduced, face-to-face services for pregnant women. Identifying women with complex social needs became even more important to ensure those most in need receive support at a crucial time.

## Sharing learning

In NCB's role designing and delivering an ambitious programme of shared learning and development support across the entire *A Better Start* programme, we enabled knowledge and ideas to flow between the five local partnerships - in Blackpool, Bradford, Nottingham and

Southend as well as LEAP in Lambeth. Funded by The National Lottery Community Fund, we convened practitioners working in different areas to share their experiences and expertise through cross-organisation communities of practice. Through these insights, we were able to show how health visiting, family mentors, early literacy programmes, breastfeeding support, community engagement, healthy eating programmes, multi-professional health teams and other sources of vital support could be repurposed to help families during lockdown.

A steady stream of articles became the basis of two reports highlighting the *A Better Start* response to Covid-19, and featured in an in-depth article in *Nursery World*, sharing learning far and wide so that others working in early childhood development or place-based systems change could benefit.

This culminated in an online conference showing how *A Better Start* has made co-production with local parents a cornerstone of its approach, demonstrating the importance of putting families in the driving seat, even when grappling with the challenges of a year like no other.

As our summary report on the *A Better Start* response to Covid-19 concluded, it is clear that the virus will be with us for some time to come, and with it will emerge further evidence on its impact on young children, families and communities. We will continue to learn and adapt to make sure the needs of these families and communities continue to come first.

## 5. Growing respect & trust

Putting into practice our core governance principles of leadership, integrity, transparency and accountability.

### Embedding Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

The increased prominence of the Black Lives Matter movement in 2020 reinforced the importance of the principles and statement of intent developed last year, setting the cultural tone at NCB and making a contribution towards addressing the issue across the wider charitable sector.

We have finalised and implemented our staff Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity plan and are committed to embedding this plan in all aspects of our work, from staff and Trustee recruitment through our own staff policies to requiring suppliers to share their position and policy on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion with us.

We are working closely with our staff to ensure we continue to learn alongside and from each other as we strive to role model good practice in the sector. Our annual staff survey revealed that whilst staff recognise there is much to do to make NCB truly diverse, 73% of staff consider us to be an inclusive organisation. Whilst we are clear there is much more we can and will do, this a promising position to build upon.

### Embracing digital

The first anniversary of occupation of our new office in London Fields arrived as we moved into another national lockdown, but the legacy of changes made to how we work as part of this office move proved more valuable than ever.

With a fully cloud-based IT infrastructure and with all staff able to use video conferencing, webinar and other tools to bring people together internally and externally, we were able to move overnight to a full digital delivery model. In the staff survey, 90% of staff agreed or strongly agreed that they "have the tools and technology to work effectively away from the office".

The pandemic provided an accelerate to our digital development as we effectively translated

face-to-face delivery to the online world. In many cases this change was accompanied by increased accessibility and inclusivity, increasing levels of participation tenfold in some cases.

We have recently appointed a Head of Digital, a new role at NCB, to lead the dedicated digital team and drive forward our Digital Strategy as we work with funders and partners to determine the proportion of online delivery to retain in the long-term.

### Calm (and collaborative) in a crisis

NCB exists to bring organisations together to bring about the best for children and young people. Our trusted relationships with Government and partners enabled us to play a key role in supporting decision-making throughout the pandemic, based on sound evidence and intelligence from throughout our networks, including from children and young people themselves.

### Supporting a new charity

All relationships grow and change and we are proud of the responsible and professional way we have supported the Sex Education Forum (SEF) to establish as an independent entity, having been part of the NCB Family for 34 years. Both groups of Trustees maintained focus on delivering SEF's mission, ensuring clear communication with members with no adverse impact on their experience. There was an inevitable challenge to untangle systems and a range of legal and logistical issues to navigate. This was tackled systematically and with openness and transparency, keeping to tight deadlines and using our learning to improve our governance processes.

### Driving efficiency, compliance and accreditation

We continue to prioritise good governance, compliance with regulation and adoption of

best practice in all areas of operations. Key achievements in the year include compliance with Making Tax Digital and IR35 regulations as well as keeping abreast of data protection implications of leaving the EU.

We continued to improve efficiency this year through measures such as implementation of optical character recognition software to automate much of our purchase invoice processing and we have initiated a process to select software to automate more HR processes.

Having paid Living Wage as a minimum for many years we are proud to have received accreditation as a Living Wage employer.

### Looking after our people

Looking after our people's wellbeing and sense of belonging has been a priority through the past year and the additional challenges of enforced remote working. Focus has been on clear and frequent communications and finding opportunities to bring us together, even if virtually, in small and large groups.

Investment has also been made in developing our managers with training for all those with line management responsibility and we are nearing completion of an ambitious leadership development programme which was conceived pre-pandemic and moved to virtual delivery after the initial session.

Implementation of a new Performance Management Framework has simplified processes and increased consistency supporting both managers and staff to have constructive conversation, monitor progress against goals throughout the year and provide opportunity to regularly discuss workload and wellbeing.

### New ways of working

Our staff are NCB's greatest asset and we are proud of our value driven culture. NCB has long history supporting both informal and formal flexible working arrangements with policies expanded to reflect what we have learnt during recent experiences. We are working on a "Ways of Working" guide to be introduced during 2021/22 as we transition back to more face to face working. We expect the majority of staff to continue to work with a higher degree of flexibility than before the pandemic but also recognise the values of bringing people together and are looking forward to spending time with colleagues again.

73%

of staff consider us to be an inclusive organisation. That's not enough.

We're addressing this by setting the culture at Board level and bringing staff together to embed our shared Equality, Diversity & Inclusion plan at every level of the organisation.

### What we'll do next year to grow respect & trust

We will focus on delivering the ambitious second year of our five-year Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity plan, embedding this work in every area of the organisation.

With inclusion firmly in mind, we will recruit a further five Trustees with at least two under the age of 25. We will also recruit additional Young Representatives to keep amplifying the voices of young people at the heart of our governance.

We will build on our robust management of the short-term financial challenges presented by the pandemic to develop a five-year financial plan, accompanied by a wide ranging fundraising strategy, to maintain long-term financial sustainability.

We will drive our Digital Strategy forward, focusing especially on using digital to bring organisations together and provide a mix of free and paid-for learning opportunities to develop the workforce.

We will use the opportunity of returning to face to face delivery and our office spaces to further develop operational culture and enable all staff to work with even greater flexibility, promoting collaboration, efficiency and wellbeing.



# Trustees' Annual Report

Incorporating the Directors' Strategic Report and Administrative Report for Companies Act Purposes

The Trustees of The National Children's Bureau present their Annual Report for the Year-Ended 31st March 2021 under the Charities Act 2011 and the Companies Act 2006, including the Directors' Report and the Strategic Report under the 2006 Act, together with the audited financial statements for the year.

### Board of Trustees

- Yvonne Campbell
- Terrence Collis (to December 2020)
- Ajit Dhaliwal (from October 2020)
- Fergal McFerran
- Thivya Jeyashanker
- Clare Laxton
- Page Nyame-Satterthwaite
- Alison O'Sullivan, Chair
- Elizabeth Railton CBE, Vice-Chair
- Shubhi Rajnish (from October 2020)
- Nainan Shah (from October 2020)
- Kiki Syrad (to December 2020)
- Robert Whelan, Treasurer
- Brendan Whittle (to March 2021)

Members of the Board of Trustees under charity law are also Directors of the charitable company for the purpose of company law.

### Young Representatives to the Board

- Bethan Hoggan
- Sienna James
- Mwitumwa Mukelabai

### Independent Members

- Sheena Parker (Finance, Risk & Audit Committee)
- Laura Sercombe (Selection Committee)
- Judith Worthy (Finance, Risk & Audit Committee)

### Strategic Leadership Team

- Anna Feuchtwang, Chief Executive
- Annamarie Hassall MBE, Director of Practice and Programmes
- Dame Christine Lenehan, Director of Practice and Programmes
- Celine McStravick, Director of NCB Northern Ireland
- Rachel Rand, Director of Finance and Corporate Services

### Auditors

Crowe U.K. LLP  
55 Ludgate Hill, London EC4M 7JW

### Bankers

Barclays Bank PLC  
1 Churchill Place, London E14 5HP

### Investment managers

CCLA Investment Management Ltd  
80 Cheapside, London EC2V 6DZ

## Administrative Information

The National Children's Bureau (NCB) was registered as a charity in 1969 (charity number 258825), although it was founded in 1963 as the National Bureau for Cooperation in Child Care. NCB is also a company limited by guarantee (registration number 952717) and has a subsidiary trading company, National Children's Bureau Enterprises Ltd (registration number 2633796).

NCB's Registered Office is at 23 Mentmore Terrace, Hackney, London, E8 3PN.

NCB was established for the public benefit in order to advance the well-being of children and young people in particular by (but not limited to):

- relieving poverty, sickness and distress
- safeguarding and maintaining health and well-being
- encouraging positive and supportive family and other environments for children and young people
- advancing education and training
- reducing inequalities
- ensuring that children and young people have a strong voice in all matters that affect their lives.

For the purposes of carrying out these objects, NCB's Articles of Association expect it to promote and organise cooperation and partnerships and to influence and inform policy, practice and service development by bringing together voluntary organisations, statutory authorities, individual professionals and all those concerned with the well-being of children and young people.

The liability of members in respect of the guarantee, as set out in the Articles, is limited to £1 per corporate member of the company.

## Governance and Management

NCB is committed to upholding its organisational culture and values in line with the seven principles of the Charity Governance Code (updated 2020):

- Organisational Purpose
- Leadership
- Integrity
- Decision Making, Risk and Control

- Board Effectiveness
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Openness and Accountability

NCB's Board of Trustees and Strategic Leadership Team reflect these standards across practices, function and behaviours, conscious of the fact that the organisational culture is influenced and embedded from these levels. The Governance Code is also embedded across NCB particularly with regard to setting the foundations for the governance objectives and outcomes in the organisational strategy 2018-2023.

As set out in the Memorandum and Articles of Association, NCB's Board of Trustees comprises a maximum membership of fifteen, including the Chair, Vice-Chair, and Treasurer and at least two Trustees must be under the age of 25 years at the time of appointment to fulfill NCB's young governance requirements. Each Board member serves a maximum of two terms each of three-years, with the possibility of a one-year extension at the end of their second term in exceptional circumstances. At year-end 31 March 2021, the Board membership was 11 with the above requirements met.

Over the reporting period, one Trustee retired from the Board upon conclusion of full term of services and two resigned from the Board after serving one term owing to other professional commitments. Three new Trustees were successfully appointed through a wide reaching, transparent and robust recruitment process conducted with Inclusive Boards.

The induction of new Trustees has been refreshed with a new programme introducing the role of the charity Trustee, NCB leadership, governance, finance, development, core delivery programme and with a buddy system in place for further support in navigating the Board's business and the work for NCB.

In addition to the appointed Trustees aged under 25, the Board remains committed to ensuring the voice of young people is represented with three Young Representatives continuing to serve across the year, bringing highly valued insight and perspectives and providing direct link to the work of Young NCB.

The Board remains fully committed to promoting an inclusive approach, recognising that diversity strengthens leadership, effectiveness and decision making by harnessing a broader range

of perspectives. The Board recognises that lived experience is as valuable as professional expertise and will continue to develop and enhance its structures and ways of working to support this.

As part of the process, the Board periodically reviews its collective membership and individual expertise, lived experience and development requirements, annual one to ones with each Trustee and either the Chair or Vice-Chair and external effectiveness reviews will be undertaken periodically to obtain independent assessment and advice.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Board swiftly and effectively moved its arrangements online and throughout the year has reviewed and modified its working arrangements to best deliver its duties and function remotely. The Honorary Officers have been extended from the Chair, Vice-Chair and Treasurers to include the Chairs of standing committees and advisory groups and has met frequently across the year particularly to provide additional support to the Executive across this period of change and transition.

The Board of Trustees has revised its annual schedule maintaining the four Business Meetings to focus on statutory and strategic matters and has added four Reflective Sessions to explore and consider broader themes. The Board has revised its overarching governance framework, structures and terms of reference and memberships to committees and groups to ensure an appropriate balance of expertise and perspectives to inform dialogue and decision making, as well as providing development opportunities for Trustees.

The Finance, Risk and Audit Committee (FRAC) ensures that NCB is compliant in its financial obligations, auditing standards and legal requirements of regulatory bodies, including the Charity Commission, through an appropriate framework of policies, processes and controls. Previously, the Major Grants and Contracts Committee (MGCC) had specific remits focused on contracts of significant financial and reputational risks. With such contracts successfully being delivered, the MGCC has been disbanded and key contract reporting incorporated into the FRAC's quarterly business.

The scope of the Selection Committee has broadened beyond the remits of Board membership, succession planning and Trustee

recruitment, to include all matters pertaining to 'people' including equality, diversity and inclusion and that key strategic objectives set out in NCB's People Plan are progressed inline with NCB's vision, mission and values. To reflect the change, the committee has been renamed the People and Culture Committee.

The Board may establish advisory groups to support the development of strategic objectives, with the Fundraising Advisory Committee (FAC) a prime example of how these groups can be highly beneficial in this capacity having supported the development of NCB's income diversification plan. The FAC has been disbanded in that capacity with a new Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) established to provide such support in a broader context.

## Senior Pay

NCB aims to ensure that all staff are paid on a grade appropriate to the nature of the work and the experience, knowledge and skills needed to carry out the job within the organisation.

NCB also aims to ensure that all jobs are at a pay level which is reasonable when compared with the external market pay ranges for the charity and civil service sectors. The grades of all roles are assessed as part of NCB's job evaluation process, with the exception of the Chief Executive's and Directors' salaries which are determined by the Remuneration Committee of the Board of Trustees.

## Fundraising

NCB has not contracted the services of professional fundraisers or commercial participators. NCB benefits as one of four recipients from donations secured by Childlife, a consortium charity whose methods include door-to-door, street fundraising and payroll giving. All activity lines are rigorously observant of industry recognised, best practice in ethical fundraising.

We delegate our low level individual giving because our work does not lend itself to a large scale, fundraising opportunity with the general public. Accordingly, the advice we give to those wishing to fundraise on our behalf, is offered on a case-by-case basis, with Institute of Fundraising best practice in mind.

NCB and Childlife are registered with the Fundraising Regulator. No complaints have been received about our fundraising activities.

## Risk and Internal Control

The Trustees continue to review the risks facing NCB group, controls in place and mitigating actions being taken using the organisation's general statement of risk appetite with its corresponding set of principles around generally acceptable levels of risks.

The Trustees remain of the view that appropriate control procedures are in place to manage risks and that the systems of financial control comply in all material aspects with the guidelines issued by the Charity Commission.

The Trustees note the following specific areas that give rise to the potential major risks for the next financial year:

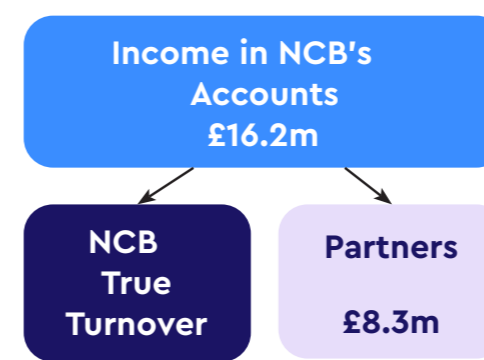
Risk	Mitigating action
<p><b>Financial</b> Longer-term implications of the global Covid-19 pandemic such as a UK/global recession and re-prioritisation of funding to short-term recovery initiatives resulting in an in-year deficit and reduction of unrestricted reserves (and longer term financial unsustainability).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial planning time horizons extended to up to five years and accompanied by longer-term fundraising strategy.</li> <li>Spending controls over budgeted but uncommitted spend kept at the tighter levels introduced in the prior year.</li> <li>Financial monitoring "Exception Reporting" introduced to supplement the established Quarterly current year reforecasting to provide earlier information to support both operational and strategic decision making.</li> <li>Development of range of mitigating actions to reduce costs in the event of substantial multi-year reduction of income. Potential financial and non-financial impacts of each to be fully assessed to enable strategic deployment at short notice if required.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Delivery</b> Failure to adapt delivery models to meet the changing, and possibly as yet unknown, ways of working post pandemic. Misjudgments may lead to reduced impact for beneficiaries, impaired relationships with funders and partners, and financial penalties for missed KPIs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Close liaison with funders and delivery partners to agree delivery expectations upfront, where possible building in flexibility to switch delivery models during the programme if required by changes in the external landscape.</li> <li>Senior leadership and management teams focused on maintaining and building upon strong stakeholder relationships.</li> <li>Project costing tools updated to accurately reflect the costs of high quality virtual delivery, incorporating learnings from the past year.</li> </ul>
<p><b>People</b> Whilst the extended period of enforced home working has been very challenging for some staff, others are fearful of a return to face to face working and uncertainty exists for all staff over the establishment of future work patterns. If not properly managed there is the potential for hybrid working styles to lead to a more fragmented workforce resulting in lower productivity on both personal and organisational levels.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Detailed guidance for post pandemic ways of working developed in collaboration with staff and introduced over an extended transition period designed to enable all staff, including our younger workforce, to be fully vaccinated before being required to travel and/or work face to face.</li> <li>Regular surveys of staff conducted to enable timely response to changes in levels of concern and regular evaluation of the ways of working guidance and application planned throughout the year.</li> <li>Flexible working policies refreshed and extended to offer extensive guidance over, and support for, both informal and formal flexible working arrangements.</li> </ul>

# Financial Review

## Understanding NCB's finances

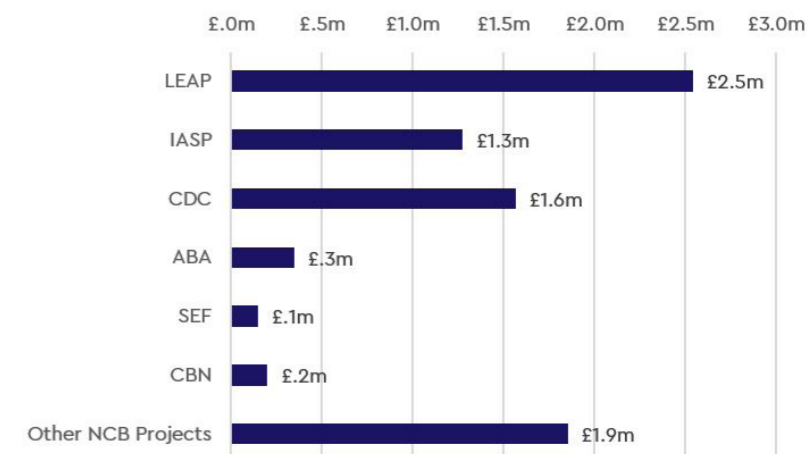
### Leading partnerships

Income shown in NCB's latest accounts is £16.2m. However, this is inflated by £8.3m of funding that is received by NCB, but is passed on to partner organisations, leaving a core income of £7.9m.



voice in the sector, including the Council for Disabled Children, the Anti-Bullying Alliance, the Childhood Bereavement Network, and the Sex Education Forum.

The £7.9m 2020/21 net income (i.e. excluding money to partners) can be broken down as follows:



£4.6m of the funds managed on to partners is under the Information, Advice and Support Programme (IASP) we run on behalf of the Department for Education. A further £3.0m, the vast majority of the remaining amount, went to partners in the Lambeth Early Action Partnership (LEAP), a 10-year programme funded by the Big Lottery as part of their A Better Start initiative.

This situation is common for NCB, as one of our great strengths is convening the children's sector and therefore we are often asked, by Government and others, to lead partnerships. Part of our role, for the funder's convenience, is to receive, distribute and steward funding among partner organisations involved in a particular programme.

We still recognise this as income in our accounts, despite not funding NCB activity, for two reasons:

- We are required to by accounting standards.
- It helps ensure our budget holders have ease of visibility of all their financial transactions, helping ensure our excellent financial management.

### NCB's structure

NCB is a family, bringing together expert membership networks to provide a unifying

## NCB's unrestricted income

NCB's accounts for 2020/21 show unrestricted income of £8.2m. It is important to understand that, according to charity accounting rules, this must include income earned by NCB through contracts and the sale of training and memberships, even though this income merely covers the unavoidable cost of delivering those contracted services. Only the £124k shown as unrestricted donations and legacies was genuinely given to NCB with free choice as to how to use it.

## NCB's reserves and reserves policy

In line with the Charity Commission's best practice, NCB's Trustees maintain a reserves policy. Whilst we would otherwise spend our funds on achieving charitable impact, we retain sufficient free reserves (ie unrestricted funds, excluding those tied up in our property or set aside to be spent soon), to protect against the impact of volatility in future funding, disruption to operations and other risks, and to invest in adapting and evolving our services, to ensure we sustain our impact for future beneficiaries.

NCB's trustees have adapted a standard, benchmarked framework to assess the reserves required to safeguard the charity against future

risks and provide for future opportunities. In their assessment, the trustees review the organisation's risk register and consider the possible financial impacts of those risks, of which the following are considered material:

- NCB may need to cover costs and ensure continuity of impact and, ultimately, solvency in the case of abrupt changes to funding over the coming years.
- Government funding, specifically, could be delayed or significantly changed, initially due to coronavirus disruption to spending plans, requiring NCB to cover staff and other costs in an interim period.
- The defined benefit pension scheme is valued on a triennial basis. We do not require input from reserves in the current period. Macro-economic conditions could increase the need for additional funding in future.
- We will need to continue to make cyclical investment in new products and services, to meet emerging policy aims and societal needs and generate the next income streams for NCB to sustain the charity.
- Other adverse events could require unbudgeted payment, such as failure of compliance with HMRC or GDPR.
- Costs would need to be met in the event of closing the charity down, eg administrator costs, redundancies. (While this is not remotely perceived to be needed, it is prudent to set this aside at all times.)

NCB typically only receives around £100k of donation-type income each year, with all other income tied closely to delivery expenditure. This means it is difficult to rebuild free reserves after they are spent, which encourages NCB to take a more conservative approach to retaining these funds for adverse events.

The current free reserves have been built primarily from the recent sale of freehold property (net of reinvestment in the new London office), meaning Trustees consider there to be less pressure to promptly spend these funds than if they had been donated with the expectation of achieving timely impact. NCB anticipates that the need for its system improvement, to continue delivering a better childhood, will continue to exist for the foreseeable future.

Trustees therefore assess that NCB should hold a minimum of £1m at any time. In considering the above risks, Trustees are also comfortable

that reserves significantly higher than this also represent an appropriate balance between using funds for impact and maintaining organisational integrity to ensure NCB continues to meet the future anticipated need to improve childhoods for years to come. This considers that the risks above are extremely unlikely to all be of imminent concern at any one time.

Current free reserves are £1.8m (with a further £0.8m designated against specific risks), in line with this policy and rightly at the higher end in light of the need to continue to manage through some disruption ahead due to coronavirus impacts. As is outlined elsewhere in this report this disruption will impact funding across multiple years, but this is not anticipated to be severe, still leaving appropriate reserves to cover the other needs and risks listed. NCB's operational budget is to break even, matching income and expenditure, while delivering across this strategic period and therefore maintain these reserves. In addition to this aim, our agreed budget for 2021/22 anticipates a small deficit, as we continue to deliver the full breadth of our core activities, underwriting these where funding is difficult to find, and invest in our future development to grow our scale and evolve to meet emerging needs, including strengthening our ability to deliver our impact digitally. We will therefore continue to look for external funding for all our programmes and investment funding to help us develop new solutions to meet these emerging needs.

In addition to our free reserves, we have now completed the work on our long leasehold property asset and, having capitalised or expensed our spend to date, we have designated less than £0.1m of funds at this year end to cover final finishing touches, and £0.4m for potential further VAT costs under the capital goods scheme. Funds from underspending against the original £5.7m budget, and from VAT recovery to date, have been released to free reserves above. Designated funds total £0.9m and £5.6m including the fixed asset fund.

NCB also has a long-term pension deficit, which is managed via an agreed, standard recovery plan (and against which we designate a small amount of reserves to help meet periodic changes in the recovery plan), and restricted project funds of £0.9m (2020 £0.7m) received in advance and strictly ring-fenced for delivery of the projects agreed with the funders. The total funds held by the charity therefore stand at £1.5m (2020 £0.8m).

## Summary for the year under review

2020/21 was the third year of the new five year strategy and accompanying income generation strategy, designed to grow and strengthen the diversity of income generating areas of the business. These two strategies have combined to address the deficits experienced in recent years and bring the organisation to run at a break even on unrestricted funds again this year (as in the previous two years), maintaining our strong reserves, and plan to do so in future years.

The result seen in the financial statements can be broken down as follows:

There was a small operating surplus on unrestricted funds (excluding the pension scheme) of £0.2m (2020 £0.2m), representing an important continuation of running at break-even whilst maintaining investment in income generation for future years.

Net income from operational restricted funds was £0.2m, reflecting merely the timing of spend on grant funded projects.

This resulted in the net of NCB's assets and current liabilities being strengthened to £8.6m (2020 £8.2m) and free reserves moving to £1.8m (2020 £2.0m), largely from releasing underspend from the funds set aside for purchasing and fitting out the new office, as well as designated further funds for key strategic priorities in 2021/22. NCB is therefore in a strong financial position, with free reserves above the policy minimum set out above, a significant property asset and a strong, strategic income generation approach to help ease the disruption in 2020/21 and continue the strong financial performance in the years ahead.

Alongside this positive result and position, NCB's overall net assets increased from £0.8m to £1.5m due to a slight decrease in the actuarial valuation of the liability in our defined benefit pension scheme from £7.4m to £7.1m. Whilst we must show the valuation according to FRS102 methodology in our accounts, this is a very long-term liability. NCB manages this in a long-term approach with the fund, meeting all funding requirements set out by the fund's actuaries every three years and the latest

valuation for contribution purposes showed the fund in surplus. Our continuing break-even result for this year is strong evidence that we will continue to sustainably meet any pension fund requirements.

### Financial performance

#### Income

Overall income decreased during the year from £20.8m in 2019/20 to £16.2m. Unrestricted income reduced to £8.2m (£10.9m in 2019/20), reflecting mainly a reduction in subcontracts and funding passing through to partners on our main, continuing major contract, while restricted income lessened from £9.9m to £8.0m, reflecting the change in activity in our 'A Better Start' programme for National Lottery Community Fund. Outside of these the charity continues to hold a number of government contracts and has secured significant grants for its projects and research from a range of government, trust and other sources. The latter are listed in full at the back of this report.

#### Fundraising

Our 2018–21 Fundraising Strategy set out to strengthen our funding through Trusts and Foundations, build our range of contracts with the National Lottery and maintain the important source of statutory funding for delivery of our work to build a better childhood. This remains an important foundation for NCB, which we are now building on with further development of community fundraising and traded income.

Our relationship with the National Lottery has continued to flourish, both directly as a trusted partner delivering multi-year programmes, and indirectly, such as being part of a successful bid led by NatCen to play a key role in the National Lottery Community Fund Strategic National Evaluation of the A Better Start Programme.

As our fundraising team has become more firmly established, we have started to strengthen relationships with Trusts and Foundations, especially those who could support our core functions. We have received a grant from the

Paul Hamlyn Foundation for a project testing an advocacy model for care leavers with insecure immigration status and the John Ellerman Foundation continue their support to ensure that the voices of children and young people are central to our policy and campaigning work.

This is not just about the fundraising team – we have been developing the fundraising culture of the organisation as a whole. This is reflected in teams across NCB all having income generation targets and an active role to play in our fundraising strategy. It is also reflected in young people who have not been involved with NCB before choosing to raise funds for us because they resonate with our cause.

NCB is proud to be part of the charity Childlife, which has adapted its individual giving and payroll giving fundraising activity to meet the challenges posed by the pandemic. As well as raising valuable income, Childlife has united the four member charities on integrated campaigns to connect donors with information and support about mental health.

During the year we have evolved our Fundraising Advisory Committee into a Strategic Advisory Group to energise and guide our strategic development activity.

Key successes include:

- We won a capacity-building grant to enhance our theory of change processes, strengthening the link between project activities and intended outcomes. This work is being done in association with our evaluation partner New Philanthropy Capital.
- We have secured funding for an ambitious 3-year project to deliver Making it REAL in all Early Years settings Lewisham. Supported by the Charity of Sir Richard Whittington, we aim to improve the communication, language and literacy of two to four year olds across Lewisham to increase their school readiness and close the attainment gap between disadvantaged children and their peers.
- Our Participation team was successful in their application to be part of the NHS England and NHS Improvement Framework for the Provision of Lived Experience Service(s), and our Health team was successful in tendering to be on the Personalised Care Framework run by Capita on behalf of NHSE/I.

## Expenditure

Expenditure decreased in line with the changes

in activity on our major contracts and grants, as expected and outlined above, from £21.0m last year to £16.1m this year.

## Financial position

NCB's total reserves increased from negative £0.8m at the start of the year to £1.5m at the end of the year. NCB has a strong general funds position (£1.8m) retained in line with the reserves policy by virtue of the break-even performance in the year, alongside further funds designated to meet specific needs or risks in the near future. In addition total assets, less current liabilities, includes the funds invested in and held aside for the our main London office (£8.6m 2021, £8.2m 2020).

Whilst the deficit in the pension fund (£7.1m, £7.5m 2020) is still significant, this is a long-term liability subject to fluctuations in economic conditions at the balance sheet date and is being managed and paid off under a standard recovery plan, with annual contributions managed comfortably within our annual budgeting.

## Other matters

### Disruption from Covid-19

NCB has continued to experience disruption to its operations due to Covid-19, as have most organisations. In addition to the explanation of this impact given in the report above, there was again very minor financial impact in the year under review and we anticipate some impact in the year ahead (2021/22) and beyond. This impact is being kept under review, and includes:

- Continuation of the vast majority of our delivery under government and other contracts, with much delivery switching to digital, and therefore maintenance of a good level of our major income streams.
- Some ongoing change in focus of our work and therefore resources, including in our LEAP programme in Lambeth (funded by National Lottery Community Fund), to focus on more direct reactive and recovery work for our beneficiaries.
- The costs associated with mothballing our office spaces and universal home working.
- The furloughing of a small number of staff, working outside of public funded programmes, and therefore limited use of the UK government's Coronavirus Job Retention

Scheme and some residual costs.

We expect the ongoing impacts to our finances to be similar, but tapering off in line with the phased return to normal face to face operations.

## Leasehold Property

NCB completed on the purchase of a property in March 2019 to act as a main office. Fit out of the space was completed, and the office brought into use, in September 2019, with final retention works completed in 2020/21. Trustees have retained a small amount of designated funds to allow for some final works to enhance the space, delayed due to Covid-19 restrictions. Further details are set out in the financial statements and notes 7 and 16 to the accounts.

## Pension fund

The valuation of NCB's defined benefit pension scheme as at 31 March 2021 (under FRS102 principles) has seen a decrease in the scheme deficit to £7.1m (from £7.4m in 2020), mainly due to change in inflation assumptions and the discount rate used to measure the future liabilities. Estimates used by the actuary in the calculation of this accounting deficit valuation have been benchmarked by the Trustees and are considered appropriate. Further details are shown in Note 18 to the accounts.

NCB closed its defined benefit scheme to new entrants in 2012/13 and now runs a defined contribution scheme for new starters. NCB continues to meet and monitor its annual obligations to the scheme, including the repayment of the deficit, as agreed with the scheme provider. The latest triennial valuation (as at 31st March 2019) calculated that no deficit recovery contributions were required for the next three years. NCB continues to hold funds to meet future increased obligations over the long term, and to allow proactive and responsive management of the scheme as it evolves, including in light of the impact of the Covid-19 virus on the investment of the fund's assets.

## Going concern

As is normal in the preparation of accounts, Trustees are required to determine whether the accounts are to be compiled on a going concern basis. All organisations will be placing increased scrutiny on this exercise in light of the ongoing disruption caused by the Covid-19 virus and the measures to control its spread, as well as future

economic influences, and NCB is no different.

The recent sale of the freehold property, and subsequent investment in a new property has put NCB in a strong reserves and cash position. This took place alongside restructuring, three subsequent years of break-even financial performance in running our charitable activities and the establishment of a medium-term financial strategy to strengthen the diversity of our income while continuing to break-even each year.

NCB currently holds £1.8m of free reserves, which meets the reserves policy set out above, including in light of the impacts from the Covid-19 disruption described above, and assures the Board of Trustees we can meet any risks that become issues, and puts NCB in a good position for the coming period.

Taking all these factors into consideration Trustees believe it is reasonable to expect that NCB will generate sufficient resources to finance its operations for the foreseeable future and believe there are no material uncertainties that call into doubt the charity's ability to continue. Accordingly the accounts have been prepared on the basis that the charity is a going concern.

## Subsidiary

National Children's Bureau Enterprises Ltd exists to manage, as and when appropriate, conference and lettings programmes, various funding activities and support services for other charities. Its results are consolidated in these financial statements. The majority of work has largely been stopped, and the residual, incidental trading activity handled within the charity itself, resulting in no turnover or profit in the company for the year, as was the case in the prior year. The company was dormant throughout the financial year. Any profit made by NCB Enterprises' is gift aided to the charity.

## Investment Policy

NCB's investment policy is to limit investment in more volatile assets and to keep key reserves in cash deposits. The Trustees continue to monitor this approach to investment, to ensure the best use of the significant funds from the sale of the freehold property. This is the role of the Investment Committee which is chaired by a Trustee, with the Chair and the Treasurer as members, and with the Chief Executive and the Finance Director in attendance.

The Investment Committee advises the Board on investment policy to ensure risk, return and liquidity are balanced in the best interests of the charity and, where necessary, will seek independent external advice. In addition, it recommends to the Board the proportion of its investments to be held in longer term funds against maintaining prudent cash, or cash equivalent, balances, or retaining for use directly on charitable activities, infrastructure and operations.

For any future investment in equities and other financial products, the charity will continue with an ethical investment policy, including avoiding companies with more than 50 percent of their turnover in gambling, tobacco or armaments. The Investment Committee will also advise the Board on maintaining a reasoned ethical approach, and will seek to take external advice to set this against the need for proper returns on new funds.

## Public benefit

The trustees continue to have regard to the public benefit provided by NCB in relation to its charitable purposes and have given due consideration to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on this subject.

We review aims, objectives and activities annually and, as part of that process, we consider the outputs of our activities, assess the benefit of those outputs on the lives of disadvantaged children and young people and develop future objectives to ensure that our work continues to deliver our charitable aims, which is reflected in our mission to improve children and young people's experiences and life chances by reducing the impact of inequalities. The trustees believe NCB can clearly demonstrate that it provides a public benefit.

## Statement of responsibilities

### Incorporating the Directors' Strategic Report and Administrative Report for Companies Act Purposes

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Strategic Report, the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards) and applicable law. Under company law the trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of its net incoming resources for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue to operate.

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

Insofar as each of the trustees of the company at the date of approval of this report is aware there is no relevant audit information (information

needed by the company's auditor in connection with preparing the audit report) of which the company's auditor is unaware. Each trustee has taken all of the steps that he/ she should have taken as a trustee in order to make himself/ herself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the company's auditor is aware of that information.

### Compliance with statutory requirements

The financial statements have been prepared in compliance with current statutory requirements, the Memorandum and Articles of Association and the Statement of Recommended Practice 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities' (SORP FRS 102) issued under the auspices of the Charity Commission.

### Funders, stakeholders and sponsors

We would like to express our grateful thanks to government departments, charitable bodies, companies and individuals for their considerable support in financing NCB's activities.

### Auditors

Crowe U.K. LLP has indicated its willingness to be reappointed statutory auditor.

This Annual Report of the Trustees, under the Charities Act 2011 and the Companies Act 2006, was approved by the Board of Trustees on 30th June 2021, including approving in their capacity as company directors the Strategic Report contained therein, and is signed as authorised on its behalf by:

*Alison O'Sullivan*

Alison O'Sullivan  
Chair

National Children's Bureau  
Company Number: 952717



# Independent Auditor's Report

## Independent Auditor's Report to the Members and Trustees of National Children's Bureau

### Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of National Children's Bureau ('the charitable company') and its subsidiary ('the group') for the year ended 31 March 2021 which comprise the Group Statement of Financial Activities, the Group and Company Balance Sheets, the Group Cash Flow and notes to the financial statements, including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the group's and the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2021 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

### Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the group in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We

believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

### Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustee's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's or the group's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

### Other information

The trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to

determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

### Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion based on the work undertaken in the course of our audit

- the information given in the trustees' report, which includes the directors' report and the strategic report prepared for the purposes of company law, for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the strategic report and the directors' report included within the trustees' report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

### Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In light of the knowledge and understanding of the group and the charitable company and their environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the strategic report or the directors' report included within the trustees' report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Companies Act 2006 require us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate and proper accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

### Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement (set out on page 47), the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes

of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

### Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Details of the extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations are set out below.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: [www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities](http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities). This description forms part of our auditor's report.

### Extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We identified and assessed the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements from irregularities, whether due to fraud or error,

and discussed these between our audit team members. We then designed and performed audit procedures responsive to those risks, including obtaining audit evidence sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks within which the charitable company and group operates, focusing on those laws and regulations that have a direct effect on the determination of material amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The laws and regulations we considered in this context were the UK Companies Act together with the Charities SORP (FRS102) 2019. We assessed the required compliance with these laws and regulations as part of our audit procedures on the related financial statement items.

In addition, we considered provisions of other laws and regulations that do not have a direct effect on the financial statements but compliance with which might be fundamental to the charitable company's and the group's ability to operate or to avoid a material penalty. We also considered the opportunities and incentives that may exist within the charitable company and the group for fraud

Auditing standards limit the required audit procedures to identify non-compliance with these laws and regulations to enquiry of the Trustees and other management and inspection of regulatory and legal correspondence, if any.

We identified the greatest risk of material impact on the financial statements from irregularities, including fraud, to be within the timing of recognition of grant and contract income and the override of controls by management. Our audit procedures to respond to these risks included enquiries of management, and the Finance, Risk & Audit Committee about their own identification and assessment of the risks of irregularities, sample testing on the posting of journals, reviewing accounting estimates for biases, reviewing regulatory correspondence with the Charity Commission, and reading minutes of meetings of those charged with governance.

Owing to the inherent limitations of an audit, there is an unavoidable risk that we may not have detected some material misstatements in the financial statements, even though we have properly planned and performed our audit in accordance with auditing standards. For example, the further removed non-compliance

with laws and regulations (irregularities) is from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, the less likely the inherently limited procedures required by auditing standards would identify it. In addition, as with any audit, there remained a higher risk of non-detection of irregularities, as these may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal controls. We are not responsible for preventing non-compliance and cannot be expected to detect non-compliance with all laws and regulations.

### Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



**Tina Allison**  
Senior Statutory Auditor  
For and on behalf of  
Crowe U.K. LLP  
Statutory Auditor

London

Date: 22 July 2021

## Consolidated statement of financial activities

(Incorporating an income and expenditure account)  
Year ended 31 March 2021

		Restricted funds	Unrestricted pension reserve	Unrestricted other funds	2021	2020
	Notes	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Income from:</b>	1 & 2					
Donations and legacies		39	-	124	163	175
Charitable activities		7,974	-	8,096	16,070	20,559
Other trading activities		-	-	4	4	4
Income from investments	3	-	-	2	2	35
<b>Total</b>		<b>8,013</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>8,226</b>	<b>16,239</b>	<b>20,773</b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>	1, 4 & 7					
Raising funds						
Fundraising		-	-	31	31	32
Charitable activities		7,808	-	8,025	15,833	20,231
Exceptional costs	6	-	-	-	-	160
Operating pension scheme movements in year	18	-	305	-	305	609
<b>Total</b>		<b>7,808</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>8,056</b>	<b>16,169</b>	<b>21,032</b>
<b>Net income (expenditure)</b>		<b>205</b>	<b>(305)</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>(259)</b>
<b>Other recognised (losses) / gains:</b>						
Actuarial gains / (losses) on defined benefit pension scheme	18	-	626	-	626	2,048
<b>Net movement in funds</b>		<b>205</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>696</b>	<b>1,789</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>						
Total funds brought forward		711	(7,446)	7,534	799	(990)
Total funds carried forward		<b>916</b>	<b>(7,125)</b>	<b>7,704</b>	<b>1,495</b>	<b>799</b>

Notes 1 to 19 form part of these financial statements.  
Full comparative figures are shown in note 19.

## Balance sheets

As at 31 March 2021

	Notes	Group		Charity	
		2021	2020	2021	2020
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Fixed assets:</b>					
Tangible assets	1 & 7	4,662	4,808	4,662	4,808
Shares in subsidiary undertaking	11	-	-	-	-
<b>Total fixed assets</b>		<b>4,662</b>	<b>4,808</b>	<b>4,662</b>	<b>4,808</b>
<b>Current assets:</b>					
Debtors	12	1,326	1,858	1,326	1,858
Notice deposits	10	3,040	1,038	3,040	1,038
Cash at bank		4,498	7,352	4,498	7,352
<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>8,864</b>	<b>10,248</b>	<b>8,864</b>	<b>10,248</b>
<b>Liabilities:</b>					
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	13	(4,906)	(6,811)	(4,911)	(6,816)
<b>Net current assets</b>		<b>3,958</b>	<b>3,437</b>	<b>3,953</b>	<b>3,432</b>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>		<b>8,620</b>	<b>8,245</b>	<b>8,615</b>	<b>8,240</b>
Defined benefit pension scheme liability		(7,125)	(7,446)	(7,125)	(7,446)
<b>Total net assets / (liabilities)</b>	17	<b>1,495</b>	<b>799</b>	<b>1,490</b>	<b>794</b>
<b>The funds of the charity:</b>					
Restricted funds	1 & 15	916	711	916	711
Unrestricted funds:					
- Other funds	1 & 16	7,636	7,434	7,631	7,429
- Designated new building fund	1 & 16	68	100	68	100
Unrestricted pension reserve	18	(7,125)	(7,446)	(7,125)	(7,446)
<b>Total charity funds</b>		<b>1,495</b>	<b>799</b>	<b>1,490</b>	<b>794</b>

Notes 1 to 19 form part of these financial statements. The net result of the charity for the year ending 31 March 2021 was a surplus of £0.7m (2020 surplus of £1.8m).

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Trustees on 30th June 2021 and were signed on their behalf by:

*Alison O'Sullivan*

Alison O'Sullivan, Chair  
National Children's Bureau, Company number: 952717

## Consolidated cash flow statement

For the period ended 31 March 2021

	2021	2020
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>
	£'000	£'000
<b>Net cash (used in) / provided by operating activities</b>	<b>(808)</b>	<b>324</b>
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>		
Interest and dividends from investments	2	35
Purchase of leasehold property and equipment	(46)	(1,438)
<b>Net cash provided by investing activities</b>	<b>(44)</b>	<b>(1,403)</b>
<b>Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period</b>	<b>(852)</b>	<b>(1,079)</b>
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period	8,390	9,469
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period</b>	<b>7,538</b>	<b>8,390</b>
<b>Analysis of cash and cash equivalents</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>
	£'000	£'000
Cash in hand	4,498	7,352
Notice deposits	3,040	1,038
<b>Total cash and cash equivalents</b>	<b>7,538</b>	<b>8,390</b>
<b>Reconciliation of cash flows from operating activities</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>
	£'000	£'000
Net income/(expenditure) for the reporting period (as per the Statement of Financial Activities)	70	(259)
Adjustments for:		
- Depreciation charges	192	122
- (Decrease) / increase in creditors	(1,905)	133
- Decrease / (increase) in debtors	532	(246)
- Interest and dividends receivable	(2)	(35)
- Pension reserve net expense, excluding actuarial gains	305	609
<b>Net cash (used in) / provided by operating activities</b>	<b>(808)</b>	<b>324</b>

# Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2021

## 1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

### Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015) – Charities SORP (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

NCB is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee, incorporated in the UK and registered at 23 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN. The charity meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

### Going Concern

After making enquiries, the Trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue its activities for the foreseeable future. Accordingly they continue to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the financial statements as outlined in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities.

### Group accounts

Group financial statements have been prepared on a line by line consolidation basis in respect of NCB and its wholly owned subsidiary National Children's Bureau Enterprises Limited (Note 11). No separate statement of Financial Activities has been presented for the charity alone as permitted by Section 408 of Companies Act 2006.

The charity has taken advantage of the exemptions in FRS 102 from the requirements to present a charity-only Cash Flow Statement and certain disclosures regarding the charity's financial instruments.

### Consortium charity

NCB is one of four charities in the field of childcare which receive grants from the consortium undertaking, Childlife. The grants are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities with Donations and appeals. The accounts of Childlife are considered not material for the purpose of consolidation.

### Income

Income includes donations on a received basis. Grant and contract income is recognised when the charity has entitlement, any performance conditions are met, it is probable that income will be received and the amount can be reliably measured. All other income is recognised on a receivable basis in respect of the year.

### Income in advance

Income is treated as received in advance only when the charity has to fulfil conditions before becoming entitled to it.

### Expenditure

All expenses are accounted for on an accruals basis. Expenditure is classified under NCB's principal categories of activity rather than types of expenses in order to provide more useful information to users of the financial statements.

Expenditure comprises direct expenditure, including staff costs, attributable to the activity. Where costs cannot be directly attributed, they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with budgeted use of the resources. Support services are allocated by income or by full-time equivalent staff.

Fundraising costs are those incurred in seeking legacies and donations.

Support services includes chief executive office, governance, facilities, finance, human resources and equipment depreciation.

Governance includes trustees, audit and general legal expenses.

## 1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Continued)

### Value added tax

NCB is a partially-exempt body for VAT purposes. Expenditure subject to VAT, which is not fully recoverable by NCB, is shown inclusive of irrecoverable VAT in the financial statements.

### Pension costs

NCB is an admitted body of the South Yorkshire Pension Fund (SYPF), which is a defined benefit scheme. Employer's contribution to the pension scheme, which are made in accordance with consulting actuaries' periodic calculations to spread the cost of pensions over the employees' working lives, are charged in the year in which they become payable.

A cost of pension is calculated by the actuaries to comply with the accounting standard FRS 102 allocated to activities in proportion to employer contributions.

Employers' contributions are also made to a defined contribution scheme, managed by Standard Life, and employees' personal pensions. These are charged in the year in which they become payable.

### Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are stated at their original cost (including any incidental expenses of acquisition such as surveyors' fees).

Leasehold property, shown at cost, is depreciated on a straight line basis over 100 years. Fitting out costs have been capitalised and are depreciated on a straight line basis over 20 years.

Furniture and IT equipment, shown at cost, is depreciated on a straight line basis at 20% to 33% per annum. Software is depreciated on a straight line basis over seven years. All fixed assets costing under £500 are written off in the year of purchase.

### Lease Commitments

Rental costs under operating leases are charged to the SOFA in equal amounts over the period of the leases.

### Investments

Investments are stated at market valuation at

the balance sheet date. The surplus or deficit of this revaluation is shown in the Statement of Financial Activities as unrealised gains or losses.

On disposal of investments the differences between their opening valuation for the year (or cost if acquired during the year) and the proceeds are shown as realised investment gains or losses in the Statement of Financial Activities.

### Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and in hand includes cash and short term liquid investments with a short maturity of one month or less from the date of acquisition or opening of deposit or similar account.

### Financial Instruments

The company only has financial assets and liabilities of a kind that qualifies as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value, and subsequently measured at the settlement value.

### Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

### Creditors and provisions

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the group has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

### Fund accounting

Restricted funds are funds subject to specific conditions imposed by donors. The purpose and use of restricted funds are set out in note 15.

Designated funds comprise funds which have been designated at the discretion of the Board of Management for specific purposes. The purpose and use of designated funds are set out in note 16.

The Fixed Asset fund, in note 16, represent the investment in tangible assets.

General funds are available for use in furtherance of the general objectives of NCB.

### Key judgements and assumptions

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, Trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying values of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates. The estimates

and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an on-going basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised if the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods if the revision affects the current and future periods.

Details of the main accounting estimates can be found in the notes to the accounts. The valuation of the defined benefit pension scheme is in note 18.

## 2. INCOME

	Government grant income £'000	Other grant income £'000	Other income £'000	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
Donations and legacies	-	-	163	163	175
Charitable activities	1,658	6,314	8,098	16,070	20,559
Other trading activities	-	-	4	4	4
Income from investments	-	-	2	2	35
Totals for 2020	1,658	6,314	8,267	16,239	20,773
	1,698	8,100	10,975	20,773	

Government grants are for project delivery work secured by a bidding process.

## 3. INVESTMENT INCOME

	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
<b>Notice deposits:</b>		
Bank and other interest receivable	2	35

## 4. EXPENDITURE

	Staff £'000	Other expenses £'000	Support services £'000	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
<b>Raising funds</b>					
Fundraising	30	1	-	31	32
<b>Charitable activities</b>	4,440	10,276	1,117	15,833	20,231
Support services	459	658	(1,117)	-	-
Exceptional	-	-	-	-	160
Expenditure before pension scheme movements	4,929	10,935	-	15,864	20,423
Totals for 2020	5,171	15,252	-	20,423	

### Support services

Facilities	551	625
Human resources	162	122
Finance	225	248
Governance (see below)	35	28
Management	144	142
	1,117	1,165

### Governance costs

Trustees' expenses	-	5
Auditors' remuneration (excluding non-governance costs listed below)	23	19
Other expenses	12	4
	35	28

### Expenditure includes

Depreciation	192	122
Auditors' remuneration		
- Statutory audit current year provision	21	19
- Statutory audit under/(over)provision prior year	1	(1)
- Project audits prior and current years	3	7
- Other work	1	1

	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
	551	625
	162	122
	225	248
	35	28
	144	142
	1,117	1,165

	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
	-	5
	23	19
	12	4
	35	28

	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
	192	122
	21	19
	1	(1)
	3	7
	1	1

## 5. STAFF AND TRUSTEES

	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
<b>Staff costs</b>		
Salaries and wages	4,113	4,134
Social security costs	431	420
Staff pension cost	385	617
	<u>4,929</u>	<u>5,171</u>
	2021 number	2020 number
<b>Average head count staff numbers</b>		
Full-time staff	87	91
Part-time staff	20	18
	<u>107</u>	<u>109</u>
<b>Staff earning over £60,000</b>		
Between £60,000 and £70,000	5	5
Between £70,000 and £80,000	2	2
Between £100,000 and £110,000	1	1

The key management personnel of the parent company, the Charity, comprise the Trustees, Chief Executive, Director of Finance & Corporate Services, Director of NCB Northern Ireland and two further Practice & Programmes Directors. The total employee remuneration and benefits received by the five key management personnel were £471k (2020 £458k).

In compliance with recent recommendations for disclosure from the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), NCB has chosen to disclose the full-time equivalent, gross salaries of the strategic leadership team at 31 March 2021:

Role	Salary
Chief Executive	£103,703
Director of Finance and Corporate Services	£78,193
Co-Director of Practice & Programmes	£75,375
Co-Director of Practice & Programmes	£75,375
Director of NCB Northern Ireland	£63,880

No remuneration is payable to trustees. Travel and accommodation expenses totalling £106 (2020: £5,473) were reimbursed to one trustees (2020: six).

Trustee Indemnity Insurance £896 (2020: £650) was purchased in the year.

£22k redundancy costs were incurred in the year (2020: £160k) of which £6k is unpaid at the year end (2020 £7k).

## 6. EXCEPTIONAL COSTS

Costs in relation to restructuring include:

	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
Payments in respect of redundancy	-	57
Pension costs in respect of redundancy	-	103
	<u>-</u>	<u>160</u>

## 7. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

Valuation	Leasehold property	Furniture and equipment	Total
<b>Group and charity</b>			
Valuation as at 1 April 2020	4,574	497	5,071
Additions	42	4	46
Valuation as at 31 March 2021	<u>4,616</u>	<u>501</u>	<u>5,117</u>
Depreciation as at 1 April 2020	49	214	263
Charge	99	93	192
Depreciation as at 31 March 2021	<u>148</u>	<u>307</u>	<u>455</u>
<b>Net book value as at 31 March 2021</b>	<b>4,468</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>4,662</b>
Net book value as at 31 March 2020	4,525	283	4,808

In March 2018 NCB exchanged contracts to purchase a 250 year lease on a property as a new London office, completed the purchase in March 2019 and completed office fit-out works and began using the office in September 2019. Amounts already paid are capitalised above and now include all retention payments. Trustees have set aside funds for some additional costs, as set out in note 16.

## 8. CAPITAL COMMITMENTS

Amounts contracted for but not provided in the financial statements, all relating to the future property purchase, amounted to £nil (2020 £0.03m).

Further details of planned expenditure are also set out in note 16.

## 9. OPERATING LEASE COMMITMENTS

The Group has annual commitments under non-cancellable operating leases expiring as follows:

	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
<b>Due within one year</b>		
Land and buildings	2	6
Equipment	4	3
<b>Due in 2 to 5 years</b>		
Equipment	2	5
	<u>8</u>	<u>14</u>

Lease payments recognised in the year amounted to £21k (2020: £135k).

## 10. NOTICE DEPOSITS

	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
<b>Group and charity</b>		
<b>Notice deposits</b>		
Barclays	512	511
CCLA	2,528	527
	<u>3,040</u>	<u>1,038</u>

## 11. SHARES IN SUBSIDIARY UNDERTAKING

This represents NCB's holding of 100 ordinary shares of £1 each, which is a 100% interest, in the share capital of National Children's Bureau Enterprises Limited, a company registered in England and Wales (no. 2633796) and a wholly owned subsidiary of the charity. The company gift aids its taxable profits to NCB. A summary of its trading results is shown below. Financial statements are filed with the Registrar of Companies. The results of the subsidiary undertaking have been consolidated on a line by line basis.

On departure from the previous property, letting activities and shared services have wound down. Activity may start up again from the new office, once social distancing restrictions allow more practical use of the space again, and from emerging fundraising approaches.

The company has been dormant for the whole financial year. The net assets brought and carried forward are £5k, with the debtor due from the charity, NCB. An audit was not performed.

## 12. DEBTORS

	GROUP		CHARITY	
	2021 £'000	2020 £'000	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
Trade debtors	479	1,054	479	1,054
Other debtors and prepayments	248	108	248	108
Accrued income ( grants due for projects)	599	696	599	696
	<u>1,326</u>	<u>1,858</u>	<u>1,326</u>	<u>1,858</u>

### 13. CREDITORS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	GROUP		CHARITY	
	2021 £'000	2020 £'000	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
Trade Creditors	1,726	3,332	1,726	3,332
Social Security and other taxes	1,084	687	1,084	687
Pension contributions	44	41	44	41
Amount due to subsidiary undertaking	-	-	5	5
Other creditors and accrued charges	1,806	2,576	1,806	2,576
Income received in advance	246	175	246	175
	<u>4,906</u>	<u>6,811</u>	<u>4,911</u>	<u>6,816</u>

	B/fwd	Received	Income	C/fwd
	1 Apr 2020 £'000	2021 £'000	2021 £'000	31 Mar 2021 £'000
Income received in advance in respect of 2020/21				
Services and other income	175	8,338	8,267	246
	<u>175</u>	<u>8,338</u>	<u>8,267</u>	<u>246</u>

### 14. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

NCB Enterprises Ltd (a wholly owned subsidiary of NCB, also registered at 23 Mentmore Terrace, London E8 3PN) did not trade in 2020–21.

The amount owed from the parent company at 31st March 2021 was £5,374 (2020: £5,374). Further details are shown in note 11.

Annamarie Hassall was a director of Childlife; a consortium which donated £62,500 to NCB during 2020–21.

### 15. RESTRICTED FUNDS

Group and Charity	B/fwd	Income	Expenses	C/fwd
	1 Apr 2020 £'000	£'000	£'000	31 Mar 2021 £'000
<b>Project and Unit funds</b>				
Grants from Government Departments	43	1,658	(1,541)	160
Grants from Big Lottery	57	5,504	(5,506)	55
Other grants and income	588	851	(761)	678
Supplementary Notes Page 65	688	8,013	(7,808)	893
	<u>688</u>	<u>8,013</u>	<u>(7,808)</u>	<u>893</u>
<b>Other funds</b>				
	23	-	-	23
	<u>711</u>	<u>8,013</u>	<u>(7,808)</u>	<u>916</u>

### 15. RESTRICTED FUNDS (Continued)

Comparative figures for prior year

Group and Charity	B/fwd	Income	Expenses	C/fwd
	1 Apr 2019 £'000	£'000	£'000	31 Mar 2020 £'000
<b>Project and unit funds</b>				
Grants from Government Departments	173	1,698	(1,828)	43
Grants from Big Lottery	28	7,401	(7,372)	57
Other grants and income	296	789	(497)	588
	<u>497</u>	<u>9,888</u>	<u>(9,697)</u>	<u>688</u>
<b>Other funds</b>				
	23	-	-	23
	<u>520</u>	<u>9,888</u>	<u>(9,697)</u>	<u>711</u>

### 16. UNRESTRICTED OTHER FUNDS

	B/fwd	Income	Expenses	Allocations and transfers	C/fwd
	1 Apr 2020 £'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	31 Mar 2021 £'000
<b>Designated funds</b>					
Fixed asset fund	4,808	-	(192)	45	4,661
Strategic priorities fund	-	-	-	400	400
Capital Goods Scheme fund	413	-	-	(38)	375
New building fund	100	-	-	(32)	68
Pension fund	192	4	(21)	241	416
	<u>5,513</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>(213)</u>	<u>616</u>	<u>5,920</u>
<b>General Funds</b>					
	2,021	8,222	(7,843)	(616)	1,784
<b>Group - unrestricted funds before pension reserve</b>	<u>7,534</u>	<u>8,226</u>	<u>(8,056)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>7,704</u>
<b>Group - unrestricted funds before pension reserve</b>					
Charity - unrestricted funds	7,529				7,699
Subsidiary undertaking	5				5
	<u>7,529</u>				<u>7,699</u>



## 16. UNRESTRICTED OTHER FUNDS (Continued)

Comparative figures for the prior year

	B/fwd 1 Apr 2019 £'000	Income £'000	Expenses £'000	Allocations and transfers £'000	C/fwd 31 Mar 2020 £'000
<b>Designated funds</b>					
Fixed asset fund – designated element	3,492	–	(122)	1,438	4,808
Capital Goods Scheme fund	–	–	–	413	413
New building fund	2,373	–	–	(2,273)	100
Pension fund	102	4	(198)	284	192
	5,967	4	(320)	(138)	5,513
General Funds	1,408	10,881	(10,406)	138	2,021
<b>Group – unrestricted funds before pension reserve</b>	<b>7,375</b>	<b>10,885</b>	<b>(10,726)</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>7,534</b>
<b>Group – unrestricted funds before pension reserve</b>					
Charity – unrestricted funds	7,370				7,529
Subsidiary undertaking	5				5

The **Fixed asset fund** represents the net book value of tangible fixed assets.

The **Pension fund** is used to support funding the agreed annual deficit recovery contributions to the defined benefit pension scheme, as well as other small ad hoc pension costs.

The **New building fund** is set aside to fund the remaining costs for the purchase (and all associated fees), fit-out and move to the new London office property. For the costs already recognised see note 7 and for those committed to see note 8.

The **Capital Goods Scheme fund** is set aside for any additional expense of unrecovered VAT during the ten year period of the Capital Goods Scheme that NCB is required to run regarding expenditure on the new leasehold property. This represents NCB's full exposure through the period.

The **Strategic Priorities Fund** is set aside for our investment in 2021/22 in enhancing our digital capabilities, strengthening the diversity of our income, and supporting our core policy work, for which we do not anticipate finding external funding during the year ahead.

**General funds** represent the net of accumulated surplus and deficits of income and expenditure after transfers to designated funds.

## 17. ANALYSIS OF GROUP NET ASSETS / (LIABILITIES) BETWEEN FUNDS

	Tangible Fixed Assets £'000	Net Current Assets £'000	Pension Scheme Liability £'000	Total £'000
Restricted Funds	–	916	–	916
Unrestricted – other funds	4,661	3,043	–	7,704
Net Assets before Pension Reserve	4,661	3,959	–	8,620
Pension Reserve	–	–	(7,125)	(7,125)
Group Net Assets	4,661	3,959	(7,125)	1,495

Comparative figures for the prior year

	Tangible Fixed Assets £'000	Net Current Assets £'000	Pension Scheme Liability £'000	Total £'000
Restricted Funds	–	711	–	711
Unrestricted – other funds	4,808	2,726	–	7,534
Net Assets before Pension Reserve	4,808	3,437	–	8,245
Pension Reserve	–	–	(7,446)	(7,446)
Group Net Assets	4,808	3,437	(7,446)	799

## 18. PENSION ARRANGEMENTS

The disclosures set out below relate to pension arrangements to which contributions are made by the charity – a defined benefit scheme, a defined contribution scheme and individual personal pension arrangements.

### Defined benefit scheme

The charity is an admitted body to the South Yorkshire Pension Fund (SYPF), which is a defined benefit scheme, managed by the South Yorkshire Pension Authority (SYPA). The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the charity by South Yorkshire Pensions Authority. Contributions to the scheme are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities so as to spread the cost of pensions over the employees' working lives with the charity. The cost of NCB's contribution to SYPF for the year ended 31 March 2021 was £197,644 (2020 £434,627, including deficit recovery repayment £179,900).

There are two different valuations which are relevant to the scheme.

### Triennial valuation

A full triennial actuarial valuation is carried out every three years. This is used to determine the funding position of the scheme and calculate the cash contributions to the scheme to close the deficit position if one exists.

Following the March 2019 valuation, the contribution rate was increased to variable rates between 24% and 28% of pensionable salaries from 1 April 2020. This includes the contribution from the employee. There is no deficit recovery payment due across this triennial period.

The actuarial method in use at the most recent triennial valuation was the Projected Unit method.

### Accounting valuation

The charity is required to comply with the full requirements of FRS102 in valuing the scheme for the annual accounts. A further valuation of the scheme for accounting purposes as at 31 March 2021 was therefore undertaken by a qualified independent actuary. This valuation is undertaken using a series of assumptions and judgments which are agreed by Trustees. The valuation of the scheme is very sensitive to these assumptions and thus there is a significant risk that this valuation will change materially during the coming year, as it has in past years.

The deficit decreased from £7.4m to £7.1m during the year. The key assumptions and results of the valuation are shown below

Set out below are disclosures required for the purposes of FRS 102.

The fair value of assets in the scheme and the expected return were:

	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
<b>Assets</b>		
Equities	19,449	17,603
Government bonds	5,347	4,597
Other bonds	3,248	2,486
Property	3,605	3,064
Cash	555	1,021
Other	7,407	5,278
Total market value of assets	39,611	34,049
Present value of scheme liabilities	(46,736)	(41,495)
(Deficit) in the scheme	(7,125)	(7,446)

	2021 Assumptions	2020 Assumptions	2019 Assumptions	2018 Assumptions	2017 Assumptions
<b>The major assumptions used by the actuary were:</b>					
Increase in salaries	3.0%	3.4%	2.8%	2.8%	2.8%
Rate of increase in pensions	2.8%	2.2%	2.3%	2.2%	2.3%
Discount rate	2.1%	2.4%	2.4%	2.7%	2.8%
Inflation assumption	2.7%	2.1%	2.2%	2.1%	2.3%

	2021 £'000	2020 £'000	2019 £'000	2018 £'000	2017 £'000
<b>Analysis of the amount charged to operating result</b>					
Current service cost	321	370	347	408	343
Past service cost	-	306	-	-	-
Administration expenses	5	5	5	5	7
Curtailment loss	-	150	-	-	298
Total operating charge	326	831	352	413	648
<b>Analysis of other finance (expense) income</b>					
Expected return on pension scheme assets	805	862	933	943	1,010
Interest on pension scheme liabilities	(982)	(1,075)	(1,106)	(1,138)	(1,169)
Net (expense) income	(177)	(213)	(173)	(195)	(159)
<b>Analysis of remeasurements – liabilities and assets</b>					
Remeasurements – assets	5,738	(2,324)	1,100	461	5,021
Remeasurements – liabilities	996	2,282	0	377	144
Change in assumptions	(6,108)	2,090	(3,228)	0	(7,381)
Net (loss) / gain	626	2,048	(2,128)	838	(2,216)
<b>Movement in (deficit) during the year:</b>					
Deficit in scheme at beginning of year	(7,446)	(8,885)	(6,570)	(7,163)	(4,719)
Movements in year					
Operating charge	(326)	(831)	(352)	(413)	(648)
Employer contributions	198	435	338	363	579
Other finance expense	(177)	(213)	(173)	(195)	(159)
Remeasurements (loss) gain – liabilities and assets	626	2,048	(2,128)	838	(2,216)
Deficit in scheme at end of year	(7,125)	(7,446)	(8,885)	(6,570)	(7,163)

### Defined contribution scheme

The charity participates in a defined contribution scheme independently managed by Standard Life. Contributions to the scheme are charged to the statement of financial activities as they become payable. NCB makes twice the employees' percentage contribution, up to a maximum of 8% of pensionable salaries. The cost of NCB's contributions for the year ended 31 March 2021 was £181,479 (2020: £163,600).

### Personal pension plans

Payments are also made to employees' personal pensions which are charged in the year in which they become payable. NCB matches employees' contributions up to a maximum of 8% of pensionable salaries. The cost of NCB's contributions for the year ended 31 March 2021 was £6,030 (2020: £5,912).

## 19. CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES WITH COMPARATIVES

	Notes	Restricted Funds £'000	Un-restricted Pension Reserve £'000	Un-restricted Other Funds £'000	2021 £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Un-restricted Pension Reserve £'000	Un-restricted Other Funds £'000	2020 £'000
<b>Income from:</b>	1 & 2								
Donations and legacies		39	-	124	163	61	-	114	175
Charitable activities		7,974	-	8,096	16,070	9,827	-	10,732	20,559
Other trading activities		-	-	4	4	-	-	4	4
Income from investments	3	-	-	2	2	-	-	35	35
<b>Total</b>		<b>8,013</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>8,226</b>	<b>16,239</b>	<b>9,888</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>10,885</b>	<b>20,773</b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>	1, 4 & 7								
Raising funds									
Fundraising		-	-	31	31	-	-	32	32
Other trading activities		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Charitable activities		7,808	-	8,025	15,833	9,697	-	10,534	20,231
Restructure	6	-	-	-	0	-	-	160	160
Operating pension scheme movements in year	18	-	305	-	305	-	609	-	609
<b>Total</b>		<b>7,808</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>8,056</b>	<b>16,169</b>	<b>9,697</b>	<b>609</b>	<b>10,726</b>	<b>21,032</b>
<b>Net (expenditure)</b>		<b>205</b>	<b>(305)</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>(609)</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>(259)</b>
<b>Other recognised (losses) / gains:</b>									
Actuarial gains / (losses) on defined benefit pension scheme	18	-	626	-	626	-	2,048	-	2,048
Gain on sale of fixed assets		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Net movement in funds</b>		<b>205</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>696</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>1,439</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>1,789</b>

## SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE (unaudited)

For the year ended 31 March 2021

Project	Funder	Funding balances 31 March 2020 £	Income £	Expend- iture £	Funding balances 31 March 2021 £
Lambeth Early Action Partnership	National Lottery Community Fund	55,857	5,504,200	5,504,762	55,295
	Lambeth CCG	21,447	-	-	21,447
	LB Lambeth	117,256	-	-	117,256
Childhood Bereavement Network	Baring Foundation	-	29,904	-	29,904
REAL in Lewisham	The Charity of Sir Richard Whittington	-	112,517	-	112,517
Community Foundation – Maurice Healy	Community Foundation	-	9,926	8,077	1,849
EYSEND 20-21	Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport	-	191,000	191,000	-
	Department for Education	-	850,413	850,413	-
	Department for Education	-	68,366	68,366	-
	Department for Education	-	251,451	251,451	-
All Together programme Variation 01					
Anti Bullying Forum (NI)	Department of Education (NI)	-	87,935	87,935	-
The REAL Programme (as part of the Home Learning Environment Round)	Education Endowment Foundation	230,643	159,767	169,353	221,057
Friends, Families and Travellers	Esmee Fairbairn Foundation	-	4,980	4,980	-
European Youth tackling Obesity	EU commission	10,231	-	-	10,231
Research Donations	Haskel Family Foundation	818	-	818	-
Childhood Bereavement Network	Other Funders	15,000	-	15,000	-
Children missing education	Lankelly Chase Foundation	806	-	806	-
Lottery Development Grant	National Lottery Community Fund	1,356	-	1,356	-
	NHS England	-	22,650	8,794	13,856
Autism Service Delivery Evaluation					
Community of Practice	NHS England	29,683	-	12,529	17,154
Health – SEND reforms CCG support	NHS England	5,075	11,375	10,657	5,793
Integrated Personal Commissioning Programme	NHS England	8,755	10,151	9,101	9,805
	Other Funder	-	1,000	1,000	-
NHS England Joint Training	NHS England	-	9,900	9,900	-
NHS Regional	NHS England	-	73,602	-	73,602
NW Learning & Autism	NHS England	-	29,983	-	29,983
Participation of Children and Young People in Transforming Care	NHS England	142	-	142	-
Making Space for RSE	Public Health England	-	24,863	24,863	-
Outside the Box in Haringey PHE	Public Health England	15,126	6,376	21,502	-
SEF HBT Bullying	Together for Short Lives	4,401	26,190	30,591	-
True Colours CDC Core	True Colours Trust	50,000	50,000	59,530	40,470
True Colours Timing	True Colours Trust	1,462	-	11	1,451
Use and Understanding of Data on Disabled Children	True Colours Trust	85	-	85	-
Jersey Early Childhood Development	UBS Optimus	16,394	85,000	101,394	-
Diverse Friendships	University of Bristol	5,715	5,775	11,490	-
ETHOS project	University of Roehampton	875	-	875	-
Anti-Bullying Week Donations	Various	46,450	39,235	51,250	34,435
Childhood Bereavement Network – Research	Waldron Trust	25,000	-	-	25,000
	True Colours Trust	1,059	-	-	1,059
	True Colours Trust	23,958	-	23,958	-
True Colours Covid	True Colours Trust	-	38,721	38,721	-
True Colours 1662	True Colours Trust	-	84,148	49,038	35,110
True Colours 1743	True Colours Trust	-	34,153	10,097	24,056
Living Assessment	Wellcome Trust	-	68,925	56,991	11,934
YEF Capacity Building Grant	Youth Endowment Fund	-	49,007	49,007	-
Young Minds	Young Minds	291	-	291	-
Youth Access	Youth Access	-	27,366	27,366	-
Job Retention Scheme	HMRC	-	44,740	44,740	-
		<b>687,885</b>	<b>8,013,619</b>	<b>7,808,240</b>	<b>893,264</b>



**NATIONAL  
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## United for a better childhood

The National Children's Bureau brings people and organisations together to drive change in society and deliver a better childhood for the UK. We interrogate policy, uncover evidence and develop better ways of supporting children and families.

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**NATIONAL CHILDREN'S BUREAU**

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