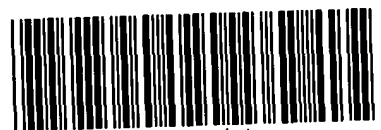


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Annual report & accounts

Year to 31 March 2023



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Trustees' report



We are NCT – the national charity that supports people as they become parents. We are here to support each unique journey of pregnancy, birth and early parenthood.

Our vision

That everyone who becomes a parent feels **confident**, **connected**, and **safe**, because we believe that parents help build the foundations of the future.

Our mission

We're the charity that supports people as they become parents.

Through pregnancy, birth and early parenthood:

- We create opportunities for parents to connect with others
- We share evidence-based information that parents can trust
- We empower parents to make decisions that are right for them
- We listen to parents' experiences and campaign to make things better
- We build local capacity in communities so we can be there for parents, now and in the future.

We are the charity that supports people as they become parents.



Every year we support over 250,000 parents across the UK on their unique journeys through pregnancy, birth, infant feeding, and early parenthood.

We connect, inform and support parents through our antenatal and postnatal courses and services, bringing people together to share information and experiences of pregnancy, birth, and life with a new baby. Our peer support programmes are there for parents who may be under-served by society or who are experiencing challenges with mental health, social isolation, or other unmet needs.

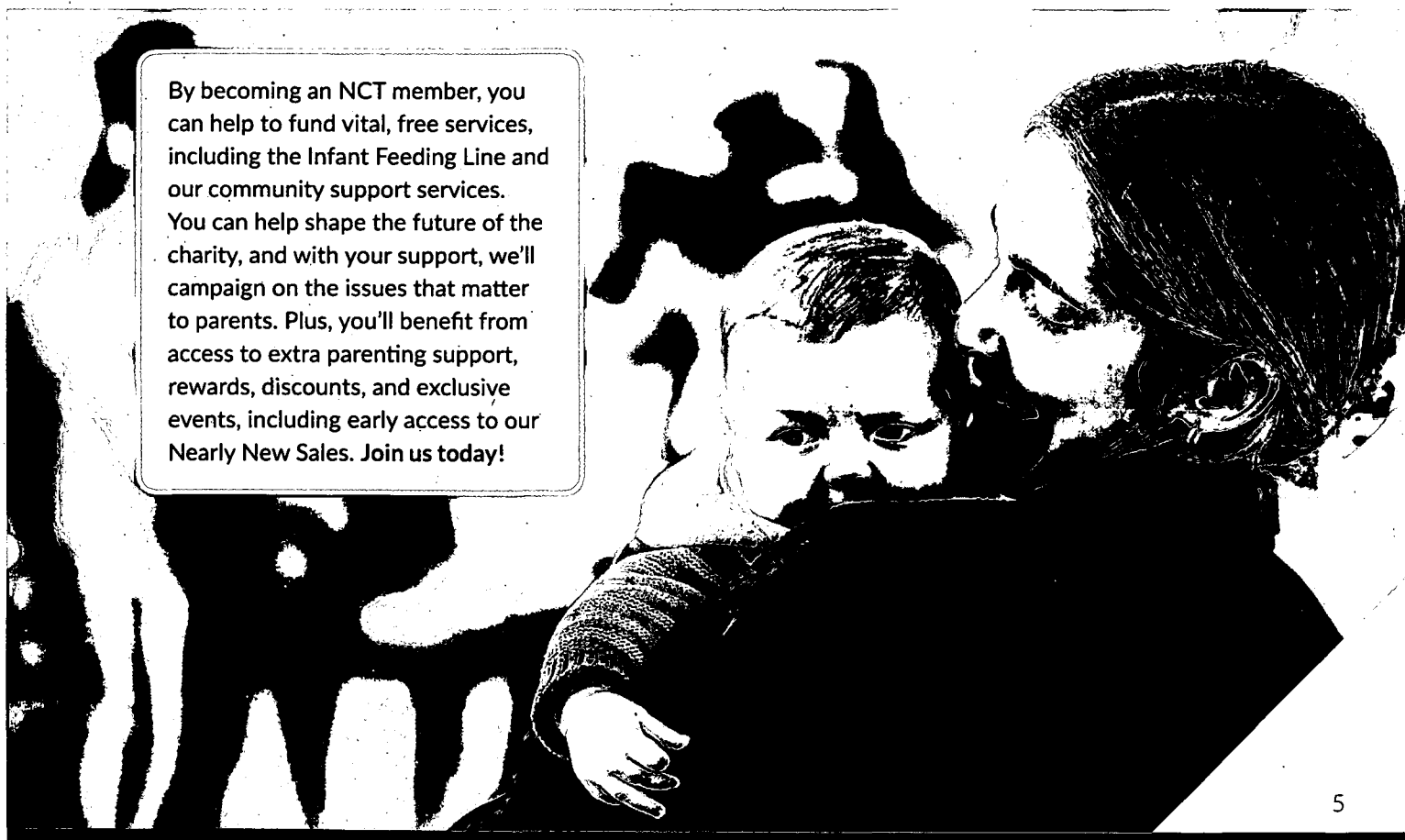
We host thousands of community-based events across the UK. If you're a new or expectant parent, you may have joined one of our Bumps & Babies Groups or visited a Baby Café to access infant feeding support. Many of these activities are run by our volunteers, who give more than 70,000 hours of outstanding community service each year.

We support parents to make informed decisions that feel right for them. We provide access to evidence-based information through our website and free Infant Feeding Line 365 days a year.

Our charity has a proud 67-year history of creating transformative change in the lives of parents. We are a trusted voice, a reassuring presence and a strong advocate, campaigning on the issues that matter most.

Today, we are a membership charity and a strong community of volunteers, practitioners, peer supporters, staff, students, advocates, and campaigners. We have a huge opportunity to positively influence the experience of millions of people as they become parents and to shape a bright future together.

By becoming an NCT member, you can help to fund vital, free services, including the Infant Feeding Line and our community support services. You can help shape the future of the charity, and with your support, we'll campaign on the issues that matter to parents. Plus, you'll benefit from access to extra parenting support, rewards, discounts, and exclusive events, including early access to our Nearly New Sales. Join us today!





Welcome from the Chair



This year marked my first full year as Chair of Trustees at NCT, and I am very proud of what we have achieved together over this relatively short period of time.

Every day our people – our staff, practitioners, students, and volunteers – show up for parents, touching lives across the country and making an incredible impact. The power that our NCT practitioners and volunteers have to change the world is undeniable, and I am particularly humbled by the time, passion, and energy that our people give every day.

Parents need our support to face the new challenges brought on by the long-term impact of the pandemic, the rising cost of living, and inequities in the system that cares for them. We know that we can and must do more. That's why this year the Board guided the development of NCT's new five-year strategy, **For Every Parent**, from its inception through to its approval in March 2023. We highly commend its inclusive and collaborative production and extensive engagement with NCT's community and stakeholders.

Our commitment to inclusion and equity remains steadfast. We have strengthened our governance and leadership in this area, creating a new internal directorate with a focus on inclusion, and have made two key appointments – a new Director of People, Education, and Inclusion and a full-time, permanent Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Lead, who work closely with our teams to ensure our services, information, and support are increasingly fair, equitable, and accessible.

“The Board remains focused on good governance and ensuring our policies reflect real-world challenges.”

My sincere thanks to all the Trustees who give their time to steward our charity. I would particularly like to thank Susy Broekhuizen, who has been actively involved with NCT for over 25 years and will serve on the Board until the end of the 2023 Annual General Meeting. Thank you also to David Shanks and Charles Richardson who are helping, in conjunction with our former Chair, Jess Figueras, to ensure that the strength of our approach to cyber security matches the challenges that we face as an organisation and as a society to keep data private and secure. Finally, I am immensely grateful to the six independent committees and other group members who support the Trustees and bring a wide range of perspectives to critical issues, helping us to stay on top of rapid changes in the external environment. We continue to steward key risks and challenges including the safety of our services, our people and our suppliers, cyber-security, the continuing costs and challenge of our technology and digital environments and safeguarding our future funding at a time of much political and economic unpredictability.

In a difficult economic environment, we were pleased that total income grew during the year. Total expenditure also grew, partly due to a number of strategic investments to ensure that we can deliver better services for parents, and careful management of resources meant that reserves finished the year in line with the agreed policy.

Thank you to everyone who gives time, energy, and commitment to support parents. Together, we make a big difference. And together, we will do more to support all parents now, and in the future.

Stephanie Maurel

Chair of Trustees

Welcome from the Chief Executive



Our charity has a clear and singular mission – **to support people as they become parents.**

Across our NCT community we are working tirelessly towards our vision of a world where everyone who becomes a parent feels confident, connected, and safe.

In the face of complex social and economic challenges, we know our work through pregnancy, birth, and early parenthood has never been more important. Last year hundreds of thousands of people in the UK became parents – be that for the first, or fifth time – in uncertain and challenging times.

A dramatic increase in the cost of living saw more babies born into poverty and more parents struggling to heat their homes, feed themselves, and pay for childcare. New parents also found themselves navigating maternity and postnatal services which are critically underfunded and under-resourced. Inequalities remain stark. Birth experiences and outcomes still vary wildly, too often influenced by where someone lives or by their demographic characteristics and socioeconomic status. Too many families struggle to access the critical support and information they need.

In the face of these new challenges for parents, we know that our charity must adapt and evolve to remain impactful and relevant. We can be bold and do even more. Over the past 12 months we have developed our new five-year strategy, **For Every Parent** – a plan to reach more parents than ever before and help ensure that every parent feels safe and supported during pregnancy, birth, and early parenthood.

We believe that high quality antenatal and postnatal education and support shouldn't be an opportunity only for the few, but that every parent should have the opportunity to develop the skills, access the information, and build the confidence and support networks that are invaluable during this monumental life transition. We shape our work around this ethos.

Last year, we expanded our offer of free antenatal classes and drop-ins, as well as free infant feeding support, often commissioned by NHS trusts across the country, supporting nearly 5,000 parents. Postnatally, we continued to expand our support for new parents through NCT's Infant Feeding Line, Baby Cafés and community drop-ins, and breastfeeding peer support services offered free, community-based breastfeeding and infant feeding support to over 22,000 women and people. We also continued to enhance our wider postnatal offer to parents, including live postnatal talks.

“We continue to campaign, influence, and advocate for better experiences and outcomes for parents, with a focus on addressing health inequalities and the long-term underinvestment in maternity services.”

During 2022 we saw the publication of two major independent reports commissioned to investigate deaths of mothers and babies at NHS trusts in England. The devastating failures identified in both the Shrewsbury and Telford, and East Kent reviews led us to undertake a deep listening exercise with our community, where we heard from volunteers, practitioners, students, staff, and trustees – and above all, new and expectant parents. We then developed a series of important commitments to parents as we continued to accelerate development of our support and services.

2022-23 was also a year of key inquiry, with research and lived experiences being harnessed and shared to better understand the state of maternity discrimination and disparity in the UK today. Through our involvement with the COVID-19 Inquiry, in partnership with other pregnancy and baby charities, we are highlighting how pregnant women, their partners, and new parents, particularly those who experience socioeconomic deprivation and other forms of exclusion and discrimination, were also disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. By scrutinising government decisions and ensuring that the appropriate lessons are learnt, we can support people as they become parents now and into the future.

We know that inclusion and equity are vital for living our values, fulfilling our social responsibilities, and expanding our reach. We are focused on continually improving our organisational culture, policies, and practices. In 2022-23, this included initiating a review of our online content, advancing the NCT Antenatal framework, refreshing our postnatal course offer, and examining our language choices – all to ensure we give parents confidence that our information and services are evidence-based, unbiased, inclusive, and trustworthy.

We could not achieve all we do without the commitment of our people – our staff, practitioners, students, and volunteers. I am so very proud of our shared community spirit. I can only extend my deepest gratitude to all our people. You truly are bold and brave, and your welcoming and collaborative spirit knows no limits. Above all, you continue to learn, stay open, and show compassion, which are the cornerstones of our NCT community. A special mention to our thousands of volunteers, whose commitment and ability to positively reach so many new parents is fantastic. Without you, much of our charitable work would not be possible. Last year this incredible group gave more than 70,000 hours of voluntary community service in support of parents. I too am humbled by the time, passion, and energy that NCT volunteers give. A wholehearted thank you.

Thank you for everything you do in helping to ensure that everyone who becomes a parent feels confident, connected, and safe.

Angela McConville

Chief Executive

Welcome from the NCT President



As the President of this incredible parent-centred movement, I have witnessed first-hand how our values drive so much of what we do. The highlight of my year was working with NCT colleagues to define and communicate NCT's values – the first time that we've so explicitly articulated who we are, and how we want to show up in the world.

People often say, 'it takes a village to raise a family,' but not everyone has the relationships or help they need. Having access to support can make all the difference. That's why NCT is **welcoming** to everyone. We're here to help make every parent feel more confident, connected, and safe, and to enable them to build their own villages of support. Much of this work takes place through our fantastic volunteer-led branches, and over the course of the year I've loved seeing our branches returning to their full range of activities after the pandemic.

Our role in helping people to explore their options and navigate their own pregnancy, birth, feeding, or caring decisions relies on us being **trusted** by parents. As an NCT practitioner myself, I know trust is crucial to delivering high-quality, evidence-based information, support, and services that have impact. This year I opened my own Baby Café to offer specialist infant feeding and breastfeeding support for parents in my local area. My group – like many others around the country – has grown from strength to strength and demonstrates the need for local, **inclusive**, and accessible services that parents can rely on and trust.

“I've witnessed a collaborative spirit in the way we approach our work.”

In the last year, we've worked across teams to improve our own information, services, and support to parents and collaborated with partner organisations on campaigns to create change within the maternity sector. Together we can achieve so much.

This year I've been proud to be involved in the development of our new five-year strategy, **For Every Parent**. As well as being **bold**, the strategy builds on our roots – decades of achievements by our committed, passionate NCT community, as well as the partner organisations and collaborators who have supported our vision.

NCT's new values set a clear and positive framework for how we work together and with parents. I am proud of our staff, volunteers, practitioners, and students who are already living these values every day.

Finally, I would like to take a moment to remember Gail Werkmeister, former NCT President, Trustee, Practitioner and Tutor who passed away in November 2022. For over three decades, Gail worked at both national and local level with parents and alongside antenatal practitioners, breastfeeding counsellors, postnatal leaders, and volunteers. I didn't know Gail well, but I always admired her from afar. She will always be remembered for her contribution to the NCT movement.

Sherry Bevan

NCT President



Looking ahead – *For Every Parent:* NCT's 2023-28 strategy

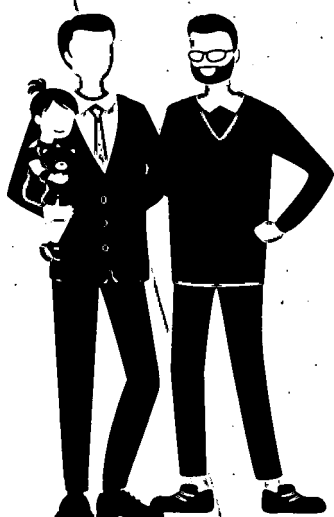


NCT has a proud 67-year history of creating transformative change in the lives of women, new parents, babies and families in the UK. For millions of parents, we have been a trusted voice, a supportive presence, and a strong advocate. We are proud of who we are and what we have achieved together. But we know we can reach more people, do more to support expectant and new parents, and help create a better, more equitable system to support them at this critical, transformative stage of their lives.

Drawing on the experiences and views of parents, our people, the wider NCT community, and our partners and key stakeholders, in 2022-23, we co-developed a new strategy to lead our charity into the future.

Throughout the development process we were focused on ensuring that our vision and mission:

- Are inclusive of all parents, and of our wider community
- Keep the emphasis on parents' experiences
- Explain why supporting and empowering parents is so important
- Capture the idea that becoming a parent is a unique and individual transition, and that our work is focused on this critical period of change in people's lives
- Showcase the breadth and scale of our charity's work and the services we provide.



We're the charity that supports people as they become parents, and this means tackling head on the top challenges facing parents today. The strategy is a response to five key issues – overstretched maternity services, disparities in quality of care, postnatal support in crisis, the rising cost of living, and the diverse and evolving profile of parents in the UK.

Our *For Every Parent* strategy sets a clear direction for our charity to reach more people, do more to support new and expectant parents, and campaign with impact. Achieving our vision will have long-lasting and far-reaching benefits, not just for parents themselves, but also for babies, children, families, and our whole society. We believe that parents help build the foundations of the future, and we will work to ensure that becoming a parent is an equitable and fair experience for everyone.

► Our vision ◀

That everyone who becomes a parent feels **confident**, **connected**, and **safe**, because we believe that parents help build the foundations of the future.

► Our mission ◀

We're the charity that supports people as they become parents.

Through pregnancy, birth and early parenthood:

- We create opportunities for parents to connect with others
- We share evidence-based information that parents can trust
- We empower parents to make decisions that are right for them
- We listen to parents' experiences and campaign to make things better
- We build local capacity in communities so we can be there for parents, now and in the future.

Our values

Our values guide everything we do at NCT.

They help us to navigate the way we work and behave and are interwoven throughout our new strategy. The next five years will see our commitment to these values deepen and grow, as we continue to embed them across our work so that we truly live and breathe these ideals in who we are and what we do.

Welcoming

We are always welcoming, creating connections, and building communities.

Collaborative

We achieve better outcomes by working together.

Inclusive

We ensure equity and inclusion are core to who we are and what we do.

Bold

We are bold, brave, and progressive.

Trusted

We provide trusted, high-quality, evidence-based information, support, and services.

Our strategic priorities for 2023-28

In building our strategy, we engaged with over 200 staff, students, practitioners, volunteers, trustees, parents, members and partner organisations through surveys, interviews, focus groups, events, and workshops.

We formed a clear picture of the turbulent and changing world we find ourselves in, what pregnant women and new parents need, what we must keep at the core of our work and mission, and where we need to adapt and do things differently. Drawing on this diverse range of experiences and community of experts, we coproduced our strategy.

It sets a clear direction for our charity to reach more people, do more to support new and expectant parents, and campaign with impact, with a focus on **four strategic pillars**:

More parents, more impact

Real lives, real change

Great people, great results

Strong foundations, strong future



More parents, more impact

We want to support and empower all people as they become parents – through pregnancy, birth, breastfeeding, infant feeding, and early parenthood. For us, this means building even bigger communities of new parents, tackling health inequalities, and making our services and content more inclusive and accessible.

Real lives, real change

We are reigniting our focus on campaigning and community action.

We will listen to parents' experiences, amplify their voices, and collaborate for change to improve the experiences of pregnancy, birth, and early parenthood. We want everyone who becomes a parent to feel confident, connected, and safe. No exceptions.

Great people, great results

Our people hold the key to our impact. We're building a diverse and inclusive community of staff, practitioners, students, peer supporters, and volunteers who are empowered in their work to support everyone who becomes a parent to feel confident, connected, and safe.

Strong foundations, strong future

To support people as they become parents now and into the future, our charity must be progressive, sustainable, and here for the long-term. We're committed to making it easier for parents to access our services and for our teams to deliver them.



Tackling health inequalities in maternity services and support

Racial injustice and disparities in quality of care

The pressure on UK maternity services was a high-profile issue over the past year. A recurring theme was inequity in the outcomes of childbirth and the perinatal period. NCT regularly attended Parliament and other key public forums to campaign on the issues that matter most to parents. 2022-23 was a year of key inquiry, with research and lived experiences being harnessed and shared to better understand the state of maternity discrimination and disparity in the UK and Channel Islands today.

In May 2022, we welcomed the publication of the **Black Maternity Experiences** report by **Five X More**, a campaigning organisation committed to highlighting and changing Black maternal outcomes in the UK.ⁱ Their report found that Black women experienced distinct and particular challenges in their interactions with healthcare professionals, facing assumptions, bias, and discrimination that directly contributed to negative outcomes for mothers and babies.

This was followed by **Systemic Racism not Broken Bodies** by the charity **Birthrights**ⁱⁱ – which NCT supported through the participatory, lived experience work with women – which presented the stark findings of an inquiry into racial injustice and human rights in UK NHS maternity care.

In July 2022 came **Invisible – Maternity Experiences of Muslim Women** from the **Muslim Women's Network UK (MWNUK)**ⁱⁱⁱ, which again we welcomed. All three reports cited women's experiences of discrimination on a personal basis, as well as within the system. Important recommendations included improved cultural training, better quality data collection, and heightened awareness of conditions where diagnosis is based on, for example, the colour of a baby's skin.

NCT has responded publicly to each of these important reports, including a call to action from NCT Chief Executive Angela McConville following the publication of the Black Maternity Experiences report: *"The experiences of Black women and people must be listened to, understood, and worked with to take action to address racial bias in our maternity services. This report makes meaningful recommendations for positive change. Increasing knowledge on identifying and diagnosing conditions that are specific to, and which disproportionately affect Black women, and an improved system to submit feedback and complaints, is crucial."* NCT also responded to the MWN UK report: 'Services need to be tailored to meet the needs of ethnically diverse local populations, and a cultural shift in attitudes and behaviours towards ethnically diverse communities is needed.'

In November 2022, **MBRRACE-UK** published the '**Saving Lives, Improving Mothers' Care**' report^{iv}, which found that Black women were almost four times more likely than white women to die during pregnancy, labour, or postpartum, twice as likely to lose their baby during pregnancy or soon after birth, and more likely to be readmitted to hospital after birth. NCT's Angela McConville responded:

“Safety in birth isn't a 'nice-to-have' – it is a fundamental right. And yet we live in a society where women's and people's safety in pregnancy, birth and postnatally can depend on where they live, their ethnicity and if they experience multiple disadvantages in life. The disparity between women who are Black, Asian and from other ethnic minority backgrounds compared to white women, while decreasing, persist. Sustained focus is needed to deliver equitable maternity care. With the right leadership, behaviours, team working cultures and staffing levels, lives can be saved, and avoidable deaths prevented.”

During 2022-23, NCT collaborated with and supported organisations leading these campaigns for change and continued to raise awareness of key Black maternal health campaigns and services. These included those led by **Five X More**, **The Motherhood Group** and **Black Mothers Matter**, which all brought vital attention to the inequalities in outcomes experienced by Black mothers and those giving birth. We are very grateful to the team at **Black Mothers Matter** who were key collaborators in our work scoping the future of our Infant Feeding Line service. We'd also like to thank **The Motherhood Group's** Chief Executive, Sandra Igwe, who was a guest speaker at our AGM in November 2022, and who helped us unpack the findings from our maternity experiences survey. In addition, we were members of the **RCOG Race Equality Taskforce** across the year, and have also supported the calls of the **Black Maternal Health APPG** since its establishment in 2021.

Failings in quality of care in NHS maternity services

Maternity reviews

2022 saw the publication of two major independent reports commissioned to investigate the deaths of mothers and babies at NHS Trusts in England.

The Independent Review of Maternity Services at The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust, led by Donna Ockenden, was published on 30 March 2022 with responsive commitments from the NHS being pledged in the days following. NCT's Chief Executive responded:

“Safety for women and babies is paramount, and that means receiving personalised, skilled, and compassionate care that responds to their individual needs at every stage of the maternity journey. They must be listened to and respected ... We wholeheartedly support the call for major investment to ensure a safe, skilled maternity workforce who feel valued and supported in their roles.”

October 2022 saw publication of the **Maternity and neonatal services in East Kent: 'Reading the signals' report**, led by Dr Bill Kirkup. Again, NCT responded, stressing heartfelt sympathy for the families affected, the crucial need for parents' voices to be heard, and a call for NHS maternity staff to have positive working environments with strong leadership and a supportive culture.

A third, high-profile maternity review – also led by Donna Ockenden – was launched in September 2022, to investigate failings in maternity care in Nottingham University Hospitals. This review is ongoing.

The weight of evidence and public opinion is clearly moving in one direction. We face the stark reality that only a handful of maternity services are rated as 'outstanding' by the **Care Quality Commission**, with many requiring improvements and some rated as 'inadequate'. And, as discussed above, there are shocking and persistent variations in the quality of maternity care received, with racial bias a particular problem.

NCT's response: new commitments to parents across our services

There are many organisations doing important and trailblazing work to ensure that parents' experiences of pregnancy, birth, and early parenthood are fair and equitable. NCT is committed to joining and amplifying these voices to campaign for change.

In the aftermath of the Ockenden review, we worked closely with our maternity alliances and charity partners. We undertook a deep listening exercise with our community, where we heard from our volunteers, practitioners, students, staff, and trustees. We made sure we were putting parents' voices at the heart of our calls for change, undertaking a survey with over 1,200 new parents to find out about their experiences of maternity care in summer 2022. These workstreams resulted in a series of important commitments to parents as we continued to accelerate the development of our support and services. Our commitments included:

- **Strengthening our NCT Antenatal framework, guidance resources, and Continuing Professional Development that will support its safe, effective, and unbiased delivery**
- **Focusing on our support and services to parents in the postnatal period**
- **Reigniting NCT's work as a powerful campaigning charity**
- **Creating new and refreshed website content that supports everyone, whoever they are, in the decisions they may make as parents.**

In July 2022 we began an in-depth review of NCT Antenatal, ensuring that the information and support we provide to parents continues to be evidence-based, unbiased, and inclusive. We gathered and analysed feedback from parents and practitioners and examined new evidence and best practice approaches from a range of internal stakeholders and external experts. Using a coproduction approach, we built on the findings from the review to update and refresh the content framework for NCT Antenatal, as well as the supporting guidance on the balance of content and recommended approaches.

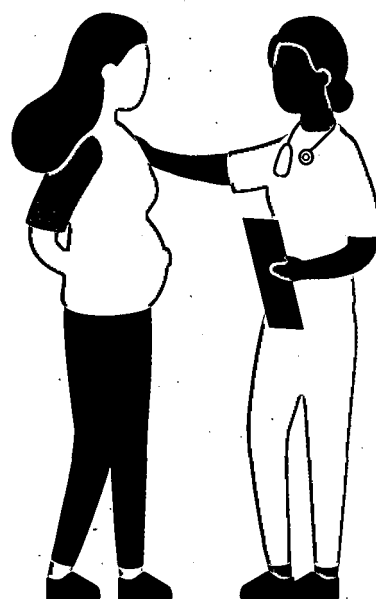
We also initiated our content review project, which is ongoing throughout 2023. First steps included conducting an initial audit of content immediately after the Ockenden review and updating all the web pages that were identified as high priority. We appointed a Senior Digital Content Manager to lead the content review and strategy development. We initiated the content discovery phase, working with teams to understanding the current impact of our parent content, the content needs of all teams across NCT, and understanding the range of ways and preferences parents have in finding and accessing trusted information.

In addition, we commissioned a place of birth rapid literature review, to ensure our information and services were supported through rigorous evidence, especially in this post-pandemic, stretched maternity environment. This has extended to the development of a refreshed Continuing Professional Development programme on place of birth safety for our practitioner community, including a live webinar on the topic by Dr Kirstie Coxon, then Associate Professor in Midwifery at Kingston University and St George's, University of London. We also delivered an online learning module to understand the key findings of the place of birth review and implications for practice. Our online resources for parents about place of birth have also been updated given that the review identified that the additional details we included would be useful to parents in their decision-making.

We have also extended our postnatal feedback collection from parents to include questions in our post-birth course evaluation survey about their maternity care experience. This is sent to all parents who attend NCT Antenatal courses. The data we collect enables us to continue to examine trends in maternity services, in turn influencing the focus of our advocacy and campaigning work.

Campaigning for change

Highlighting parents' experiences of maternity care



In July 2022, NCT responded to a call from the Royal College of Midwives (RCM) for evidence on the impact of shortages in maternity staffing. We surveyed over 1,200 people who had given birth during 2021-2022 about their experiences, seeking to learn if NHS staff working across the maternity disciplines had been able to provide safe and compassionate care.

The findings were presented and discussed at NCT's AGM in November 2022. We were grateful to Abbie Aplin from the RCM, Sandra Igwe from The Motherhood Group, and Francesca Treadaway from Birthrights, who joined NCT's leadership representatives for a discussion panel on the day of the AGM.

What we heard from parents in our survey reflects concerning levels of low staffing in maternity units also reported externally. Though most parents reported kindness and respect from health professionals, an alarming proportion – over half – reported experiencing at least one 'red flag' event, as defined by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), during their intrapartum care. Red flag events are signs that there may not be enough midwives available to give women and babies the care they need; examples include having to wait more than 30 minutes to get pain relief or waiting over an hour to be given stitches. Even more concerning, however, of the people who indicated they had experienced a red flag event, almost half had been affected by two or more events, and one third experienced four or more events. Continuity of care was also found to be a problem, with just one quarter of respondents indicating they could always see a specific midwife or obstetrician antenatally. Continuity of care was least likely to be reported postnatally, with almost two fifths of those surveyed reporting that they could rarely or never see a specific midwife. We shared our insights with the campaign being conducted by the All-Party Parliamentary Groups (APPGs) on Maternity and on Baby Loss.

Recommendations coming from this work include calls for investment in the NHS workforce, and for parents' voices to be heard, resonating with conclusions from the independent reports by Donna Ockenden^{vii} and Bill Kirkup^{viii} discussed above.

Many survey respondents reported particularly poor experiences of postnatal care, which have been exacerbated through the pandemic. In response, we successfully supported campaigns to restore a woman or pregnant person's right to have their birth partner with them on the hospital ward during labour, following Covid-19 restrictions, and for a review of this phase of care, which has become dangerously inadequate. In March 2023, NHS England published a **Three-Year Delivery Plan for Maternity and Neonatal Services**; we are very pleased that since January 2023, NCT is represented on a Postnatal Care Improvement Working Group commissioned to ensure this part of the service is made safer.

National Covid-19 Inquiry

Another key focus of our advocacy work in the year relates to our participation in the Covid-19 Inquiry. **The UK's Covid-19 Inquiry** accepted NCT, along with 12 other charities in the pregnancy and baby charities sector, as a 'core participant' group in February 2023. At the first preliminary hearing, barrister Adam Wagner represented the group, telling the Inquiry how policies implemented at the start of the pandemic had devastating effects on thousands of families during pregnancy and after the birth of their babies. Antenatal and postnatal care are included as specific areas to be covered in the Inquiry's Terms of Reference. More detailed submissions of evidence to the Inquiry are planned for 2023-2024.

Collaborating with NHS trusts to provide antenatal and infant feeding support

NCT has been providing Preparation for Birth and Beyond antenatal courses for the NHS since 2009, and last year we supported over 4,000 parents through the programme.

We are currently working with five NHS Trusts:

- Countess of Chester Hospital Foundation Trust
- Royal Berkshire Hospital Foundation Trust
- North West Anglia Foundation Trust
- Mersey and West Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust
- Oxford University Hospitals Foundation Trust.

These antenatal programmes are tailored to their local area, trust, and place of birth. This year we partnered with three new Trusts: North West Anglia, Mersey and West Lancashire Teaching Hospitals, and Oxford University Hospitals. This has enabled us to support more than 1,000 additional parents with antenatal education, bringing the total number supported across all Trusts in 2022-23 to 4,383.

Many of the families who attend these Preparation for Birth and Beyond courses would not have accessed any antenatal education had it not been for this provision. For many of the parents, English is not their first language and postcode analysis found that over a third of attendees lived in areas of deprivation.¹

Our collaboration in action

We have been working with Royal Berkshire Hospital since 2016 providing antenatal education. During 2022-23, they expanded their commission to include antenatal infant feeding support services. We have worked in collaboration with the Trust's Infant Feeding Team to develop a parent-centred course framework, learning outcomes, and course content. Our aim is to deliver accurate, trusted information and ensure high-quality content for the parents who attend.

One of our new NHS Trusts, Oxford University Hospitals (OUH), has also commissioned infant feeding education as part of their antenatal offer to parents.

¹ Areas in the lower half of the multiple deprivation deciles. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/835115/10D2019_Statistical_Release.pdf Accessed 22 Aug. 23

“We were very fortunate at OUH to secure funding for 12 months of antenatal education for first-time mothers. After a competitive process for the contract, we decided to go with NCT. This has proven to be a fantastic decision. Janie, Cerys and team have gone above and beyond to roll this out extremely quickly. They worked with multiple members of the midwifery team to produce bespoke content and the feedback from women and midwives alike has been exceptional. We feel very grateful to be able to offer this to women and families in Oxfordshire and have very much enjoyed working with them!”

Wendy, Matron for Community and Public Health, Maternity Directorate,
Oxford University Hospitals Foundation Trust

“I love the challenge of working with diverse groups of parents and adapting my delivery style to meet their needs.”

Heidi, NCT Antenatal Practitioner and
Breastfeeding Counsellor

“I emigrated to the UK 3 months ago and had no idea how the system worked. This course will definitely help those who have the same background as me.”

Anon, attendee of a PBB course at Royal Berkshire Hospital

We are delighted that this year over 700 parents attended our NHS-supported infant feeding sessions across the five Trusts.



Newham Nurture

– supporting parents under-served by society



NCT's Newham Nurture Perinatal Partnership is a co-designed service which supports migrant families in Newham who have refugee status, are seeking asylum, or have no recourse to public funds, from pregnancy to early parenthood.

Many of the families that we work with are experiencing homelessness and financial hardship, and are under-served by society in multiple ways. Our programme aims to provide a critical intervention to help these families to have the best possible start in life during this significant transition. In the past year nearly 300 families were supported through this programme, with 49 different languages spoken among them.

In October 2022 Newham Nurture received a Maternity Service, City of Sanctuary award, recognising our work as a welcoming place of safety for people fleeing violence and persecution.

Newham Nurture acts as a bridge by providing culturally safe and appropriate antenatal and postnatal support which is genuinely accessible, with 29 languages spoken within the team. Our partnership works to boost statutory services by supporting families not only to engage with their rights via advocacy and practicalities (translation, creche, travel allowance), but also help to shape local systems for pregnancy, birth, and early childhood service provision for future communities.

Siân Summers-Rees, Chief Officer at City of Sanctuary UK, said:

“Newham Nurture truly exemplifies sanctuary in maternity care. Pregnancy and parenthood can be daunting – even more so when also going through the UK asylum system – but Newham Nurture’s innovative and inclusive programming ensures more families get the care, support, friendship, and community that we all deserve.”

In November 2022, steering group members, volunteers, and staff from the Newham Nurture project came together with partner organisations, funders, and policymakers at a roundtable event to discuss how we can better support migrant and under-served women and pregnant people through pregnancy, birth, and early parenthood. A compelling message from the event was the importance of listening, involving, and genuinely cocreating with those with lived experience in making services accessible and relevant to who they support.

In 2023 it was confirmed that NCT have secured further funding for the Newham Nurture Perinatal Partnership. We are grateful to City Bridge Trust, Royal Docks Trust and Newham Council for their support.



Increased financial pressures and uncertainty for new parents

The UK is in the grip of a cost-of-living crisis, as price inflation has seen the cost of food, energy, and other goods and services, like transport and childcare, rise faster than wages. Increasing financial pressures have forced many parents to make difficult decisions about how to feed their baby, or keep them warm, with research showing that two-thirds of UK parents are concerned about paying for food, energy, and fuel.^x

While everybody has experienced an increase in the cost of living, these pressures are felt more acutely by new parents, who are adapting to the new expenses involved in raising a child or growing their family. The soaring cost of formula milk, for example, has led to some parents and caregivers resorting to unsafe feeding practices.^{xi}

The uncertain economic environment also amplifies the disparities in our society. Cost-of-living pressures particularly affect parents and caregivers on low incomes, or those already under-served or excluded by our society in other ways. Many of the parents who use our community-based services reported that their lives have become more challenging and complex as they face insecurity on multiple fronts.

These economic stressors impact parents' ability to feel confident, connected, and safe. If you can't afford to heat – or even keep – your home, your health and wellbeing, and that of your baby, will suffer. If you can no longer afford a bus fare, you will be at greater risk of isolation with a new baby.

We have worked hard to address these challenges and disparities in our provision of services, support, and information. We have:

- Continued to expand our free-to-access provision – including our antenatal, infant feeding and peer support services.
- Distributed over 3,000 Baby Bundle packages to new families in need.
- Run 76 Nearly New Sales that offered affordable baby items to over 22,000 parents, with over 200,000 items sold.
- Established partnerships that help parents save money on essentials.
- Reviewed our course discount policy so we can help more families to access quality education support.
- Secured the future of our Newham Nurture Perinatal Partnership, which provides critical perinatal support for refugees and asylum seekers, thanks to support from City Bridge Trust.
- Worked closely with other local services such as food banks, baby banks, clothing banks, and emergency accommodation to help parents and families who need support, particularly during the winter months, when the cost-of-living crisis was felt particularly acutely.

NCT Nearly New Sales

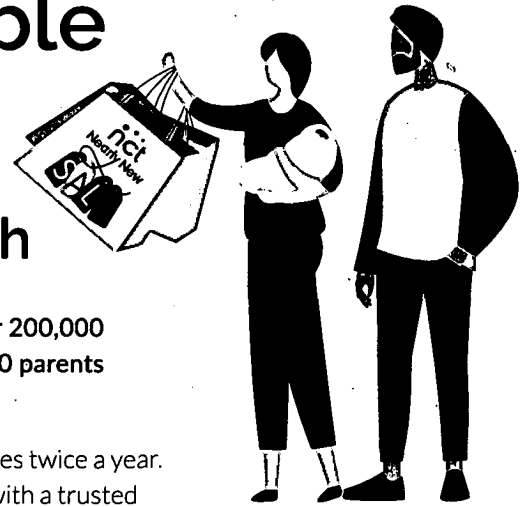
– affordable, sustainable shopping for parents

Spotlight on: NCT Loughborough

NCT Nearly New Sales have continued to grow over the last year, with over 200,000 items sold across 76 Nearly New Sales. These were accessed by over 22,000 parents who were able to ease the cost of parenting and shop more sustainably.

NCT Loughborough's team of volunteers and helpers run NCT Nearly New Sales twice a year. The sales provide hundreds of families in the local community and wider area with a trusted place to find a variety of high-quality items at reasonable cost, carefully displayed for a great shopping experience.

Many parents attend each sale to buy essentials for the next season at a fraction of the cost on the high street and resell their outgrown items.



“ We came for coats and shoes. I can do a whole seasonal wardrobe swap here for basically nothing. ”

Vicki and Andy, parents



As well as being an affordable way parents can shop for their families, the sale supports the wider community. Teachers use the sale to buy items for their classrooms, and support workers shop for clothes and toys for service users.

“NCT Sales are brilliant for good quality things to buy at a good price.”

Liz, Nearly New Sale buyer

And while saving or making some extra money is a top priority for most buyers and sellers at the sales, sustainability is also a big factor. NCT Nearly New Sales help parents play a part in protecting the planet for their children.



“Nearly New Sales are important for the community at the moment as the cost of living is going up. It's a great way to get really good deals but it is also a great way to make a little bit of money back once the children have grown out of things. It's a good cyclic system and saves a lot of things going to rubbish tips.”

Jenny, NCT volunteer

“More and more people are taking up the opportunity to sell and recycle.”

Eileen, NCT volunteer

The sales can only happen thanks to our incredible volunteers and helpers who also enjoy the social side of being part of an NCT family. This is what makes NCT Nearly New Sales so much more than just a place to shop – for parents, volunteers and the local community.

“I am a foster carer and first came to the sales to pick up bits and bobs for my foster children. Now four of my children volunteer here with me, and my mum. It has become a family affair and we enjoy the social aspect.”

Laura, foster parent and NCT volunteer

NCT Baby Bundles

– providing essentials for new families

Spotlight on: NCT Vale of Evesham

NCT Baby Bundles support families in a wide range of circumstances. Run by NCT branch volunteers in 18 different areas across the UK, we provide packs of essential items for parents-to-be and families of newborns in need. This includes, for example, parents who have lost jobs or are unable to work, refugee families, people who have escaped domestic abuse, and young parents. We also know that many families have a surplus of baby clothing and equipment and are keen to see their pre-loved items go to someone who needs it. NCT Baby Bundles is a way to make this happen. Last year, we distributed over 3,000 Baby Bundle packages to new families in need.



Hannah, a volunteer from the NCT Vale of Evesham Baby Bundles team explains:

"We know from feedback that some of the families that we support simply could not afford to buy the items that we are able to source for them. Our Bundles are sometimes the difference between a child having an essential item and not."

There's enormous environmental benefit to re-using items for as long as possible and this is a huge driver for me personally. We all have a responsibility to ensure that we use resources carefully and considerately. We've developed our scheme to include offering 'Newborn Packs' for all expectant and new parents - these include pre-loved clothing and part packs of nappies. We have also linked with keen crafters in our local community who can use stained or damaged clothing to create items which are then sold in aid of our scheme."



The NCT Vale of Evesham Baby Bundles team works closely with healthcare professionals to generate referrals into the scheme, which started in March 2021. By its second year of operation referrals had doubled, with demand growing due to the rising cost of living as well as increased awareness of the project by professionals.

“ I think it's a wonderful service, to know that families will be given such beautiful, high-quality items at a time when they're most vulnerable and in need. The fact that it's a 'no questions asked' service is so special – we save many families from feeling shame. It's lovely to see what people can do for other people. ”

Midwife from Vale of Evesham area

“ We got our clothing Bundles, they were amazing. We're all over the moon and so grateful to everyone who helped us. ”

Anon, parent

Partnering to help parents save money on baby essentials

Lidl GB and NCT have worked in partnership to support new parents across the UK since 2019.

New for 2022, NCT and Lidl GB trialled an innovative digital discount across their Lupilu range via monthly QR codes. These offered over 43,000 new and expectant families the opportunity to save money on baby essentials. In a rapidly shifting uncertain economic environment, we are grateful to Lidl GB for their generous support to families.

Aside from digital discounts, Lidl GB has been supporting NCT's Newham Nurture Perinatal Partnership with a donation of 2,200 reusable canvas bags. When our Head of Programmes asked a member of the team about the bags, they said *"we can take hundreds if needed as we have many uses for them."* One of the most popular uses of bags is to provide expectant parents and people with no recourse to public funds with a sustainable hospital bag that they can have as part of their birth preparations. Our huge thanks again to Lidl GB and the Newham Nurture team for helping to make a difference at this critical time.

In 2022- 23 Lidl GB remained the official supplier of disposable nappies at NCT Antenatal courses, providing free nappies to practitioners for use as teaching aids at over 3,200 courses across the UK to help parents practice key baby care.

As part of Lidl GB's continued commitment to supporting parents in their own workforce, NCT provided eligible employees with corporate membership to NCT as well as offering a discount on NCT Antenatal courses.

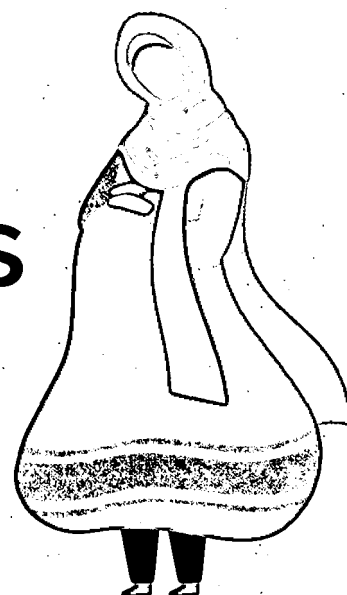
Together we raised awareness of our partnership with key promotions in Lidl GB new store leaflets and at collaborative events. A special mention to the volunteering branch in Basingstoke who took part in a photoshoot that provided new, modern images for the collaboration.

Thank you, Lidl GB, for your support and friendship.

If you have any questions about partnering with NCT, please do contact partnerships@nct.org.uk



Overstretched maternity services



Every year over 605,000 babies are born in the UK^{xii} to parents who form part of an increasingly diverse group of people within our society. The demographic of parents is changing. Latest figures show that almost a third of births are to parents born outside the UK.^{xiii} More babies today are conceived as a result of fertility treatment.^{xiv} The number born by surrogacy^{xv} is also increasing, as are births to people with diverse gender identities or sexual orientations.^{xvi} In 2022, just over half of all live births were registered to women outside of a marriage or civil partnership.^{xvii}

As society changes and the profile of parents and families diversifies, the way we design and deliver support and information must also evolve. Over the past year we have continued to listen, learn, adapt, and innovate, so that we can provide high-quality, personalised support, and inclusive and accessible services.

Becoming a parent – whether for the first or a subsequent time – is often a joyful, positive, and exhilarating experience. It can, however, also be overwhelming, frightening and, at times, full of uncertainty and challenges.

Expectant and new parents need support in the form of high-quality, safe, and personalised maternity care. And yet, in 2022, only 1% of maternity services were rated as outstanding by the Care Quality Commission^{xviii}, meaning that 99% of services have room to improve the quality of care they deliver.

Today, people who are pregnant or have given birth are less likely to report getting the support they need, less likely to get information to make informed decisions about their care, and less likely to feel that their concerns are taken seriously.^{xix} The publication of two highly critical reviews of maternity services in NHS Trusts in England in 2022, referenced earlier in this report, offered extensive insight into the numerous challenges in delivering safe maternity care in the current climate. Not surprisingly, these often-devastating outcomes are directly associated with long-term underinvestment in maternity services.

Chronic underinvestment and staffing shortages are central to the current crisis facing maternity services in the UK. They have led to oversights, errors, and at times, catastrophic outcomes for parents, babies and families. Governing health bodies say the workforce is short of 2,000 midwives^{xx}, 500 obstetricians^{xxi} and 5,000 health visitors^{xxii} to fulfil the needs of new families. Among the consequences of the unprecedented pressures on the maternity workforces are increasingly restricted care options for pregnant people and new parents, when providing choice had previously been enshrined in policy and practice.

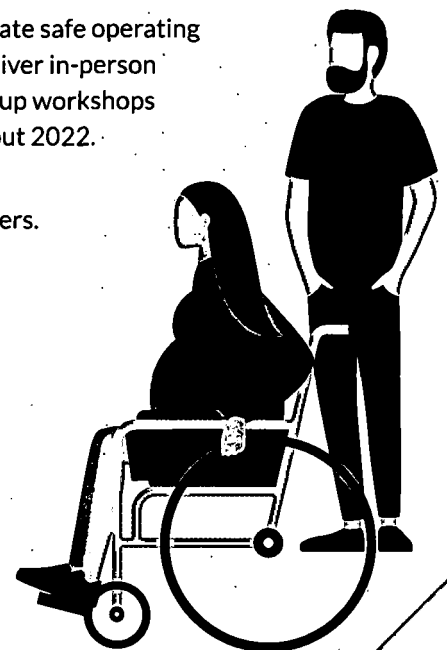
Against this backdrop, our charity's mission – to support every parent during pregnancy, birth, and early parenthood – is more important than ever. Feeling confident and safe when becoming a parent is inextricably linked to adequate support and service provision throughout the antenatal, birth, infant feeding, and postnatal journey.

The inherent challenges of all of these stages are compounded by the realities of life post-pandemic, a cost-of-living and energy crisis, maternity and postnatal services that are underfunded and under-resourced, widespread public sector strikes, and climate change.

While the context in which our charity must operate is undoubtedly increasingly challenging, we are committed to ongoing progress and action to address these issues.

Over the past year, we have:

- Undertaken a deep listening exercise with our community and with parents in light of the Independent review of maternity services at the Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust, which led to a series of commitments to improve our support and services to parents.
- Joined together with other leading pregnancy and maternity organisations to call strongly on government for investment in workforce, leadership, training, and culture in the wake of the damning maternity investigations in Shrewsbury and Telford, and East Kent.
- Reviewed and strengthened our NCT Antenatal framework, ensuring that the information and support we provide to parents continues to be evidence-based, unbiased, inclusive, and trustworthy.
- Undertaken a maternity experiences survey with over 1,200 new parents that highlighted the impact of staffing shortages, the alarming prevalence of 'red flag' events, the lack of continuity of care, and the importance of being listened to and treated with compassion.
- Commissioned a rapid literature review on place of birth, to ensure our information and services are supported through rigorous evidence, and subsequently developed a refreshed Continuing Professional Development programme on place of birth for our practitioner community.
- Expanded the free-to-access support we offer antenatally to parents via NHS Trusts, including antenatal education services and infant feeding support.
- Worked hard throughout the pandemic to regularly review and update safe operating procedures in relation to Covid-19 – supporting practitioners to deliver in-person sessions as safely as possible. We continued to deliver online catch-up workshops for parents who miss sessions that are live and interactive throughout 2022.
- Responded to unprecedented hot weather during summer 2022 by moving sessions online to reduce the risks to parents and practitioners.



NCT Antenatal courses

– beginning a confident and supported parenting journey

NCT Antenatal courses provide practical skills and knowledge and help create support networks so that expectant parents feel confident and ready for life with a new baby. The courses are facilitated by our skilled practitioners, and cover a wide range of topics, including what to expect during the labour and birth, how to feed and care for your new baby, parental wellbeing, and where to find support.

Our post-course evaluation showed:

95% of parents rated our NCT Antenatal course 'good' or 'excellent' this year,
2% higher than 21-22.

Our post-birth evaluation showed:

89% of course attendees felt part of a supportive group of parents and
95% are still in touch after they have had their baby.

84% of parents told us that we helped them identify trusted information, and
86% said their course helped them to consider information and what it means to them.

80% of parents said they had been given tools and strategies to cope with labour, birth, and early parenting.



Hannah's story

I knew I wanted to be a mum, but didn't want to do it in a relationship, so my daughter, Robin, was conceived by IVF using donor sperm. I had heard of NCT from friends who said it was worth it for the group of people I'd meet. It turned out to be way more than that!

As a gay woman, I was nervous about it maybe being me and a bunch of couples. Rosie (my antenatal practitioner) got in touch before the first session and talked about what the sessions would be like. This helped me decide if I wanted my mum – my birth partner – to be there. In the end, she came to all the sessions, and it felt really inclusive. For example, the language was always 'birthing parent' and 'birth partner'.

Rosie went through things like the stages of labour in detail so I was much more aware of what would happen – it made me feel excited and I was actually looking forward to it!

But at my 37-week scan, Robin was breech, and they said because she was small, they wouldn't try and rotate her, so I would need a c-section. At first, I panicked, because this was not what I had planned. But over the next week I completely came to terms with it. Rosie had gone through everything to do with c-sections during the course, so I knew what to expect. At the time, I didn't think I was even listening that carefully – because this wasn't how I was going to give birth. But once I had got over the shock, I realised how much I knew about the process. I knew there would be a lot of people in the room, I knew about the spinal, we had talked about how it might feel – like someone washing-up in your stomach! I said to Rosie at our reunion session 'I am so glad you went through that.' If I hadn't done NCT, I would not have been as calm and relaxed during birth.

The feeding session was also really informative. It helped me understand the biology of how breastfeeding works – things like cluster-feeding and supply. I learned what was 'normal', otherwise I would have probably worried. I contacted Louise (NCT breastfeeding counsellor) a couple of times after the session as well. I have had an amazing breastfeeding journey and again, NCT helped prepare me so much.

The NCT group is really supportive too. We have a WhatsApp group and try and meet up on Mondays. Everyone has had different struggles and I think it's helped us all to share those experiences.

99

Hannah W., 32, Glasgow



Emilton's story

“

My mum is a midwife, and I'd heard family and friends talk about antenatal classes, so I knew it was something we would do to equip us with the knowledge and skills we needed before becoming parents to our son, Asher. My wife, Ornella, looked into different classes and ended up choosing NCT.

For me, the physical aspects of the course were most helpful: being able to see and touch things, and also the demonstrations. For example, we went through the delivery process on the floor. We were shown what a Tens machine is, and learning about nappies and the different types of baby poo was useful preparation – seeing the mustard sauce, seeing the marmite that looked like tar. I don't think it would have been the same if we'd just been shown a picture.

The course definitely helped prepare me for the reality of the birth. It was a confidence builder for the most amazing journey ahead. During the birth, I remember getting my phone out to time the contractions, for example. But the course also taught me that we can ask questions. We can ask 'What's the alternative?' It helped me advocate for what we wanted. For example, we asked for air and gas – and they brought out a Tens machine. This was not what we had asked for, and I felt confident saying that.

The feeding session was also helpful. We looked at things like latch, and we also learned a lot about breastfeeding behaviour. One of the things that stuck with me was the analogy with how many times we eat and drink in a day – say when you drink a cup of tea, you don't drink it all in one go, you take sips. If you think about baby's feeding in the same way, it doesn't seem strange that baby might want to feed all day long or have lots of little snacks. We did struggle at first, and we were able to contact the NCT course leader by Facetime, so she was able to actually see how Asher was latching and help.

One really important message I took from the course was that I need to look after myself in all this too. It's all 'go, go, go' in those early days, but I remembered to stop and ask myself 'How are you actually feeling?' I needed that reminder that I need to look after myself physically and mentally too, as well as my wife and my baby.”

”

Emilton B., 41, Cambridge



NCT Doulas

– supporting parents through labour and birth

NCT's Doula scheme offers personalised physical and emotional support for expectant and new parents during pregnancy, labour, and birth.

Our doulas complete a nine-month course recognised by Doula UK. The course is developed by NCT in partnership with the University of Worcester, and many of those on the course are already experienced practitioners in other specialisms. Once qualified, NCT Doulas can provide families with skilled physical and emotional support, as well as up-to-date knowledge, information, advocacy, and encouragement during pregnancy, labour, and birth.

Great people: Debbie's story

In the 2022-2023 financial year NCT Doulas supported 27 clients. One of our busiest doulas, Debbie, explains what it means for her to be able to support parents:

To work as a doula supporting women through labour and birth, and their partners, is a privilege and honour. It's a beautiful, intimate, momentous time and to help mothers and partners to feel safe, empowered, positive, and supported is incredibly rewarding. I feel passionate about the impact of birth experiences on parenthood and wellbeing. Although in this current climate, there are often challenges in the healthcare and maternity system, I can see first-hand that having a doula to listen and advocate makes a huge difference, and the relationships I build with my clients are very special.

Debbie, NCT Doula

Debbie you were amazing, and no words can express how grateful I am that we met each other. I can't have imagined anyone else being there. It wasn't the birth I imagined but when I felt helpless and lost you got me through it. Holding your hand and listening to you made me feel safe. Thank you so much.

Linda and Pete, parents



There is more information about the NCT Doula scheme on our [website](#).

You can enquire about training with NCT [here](#).

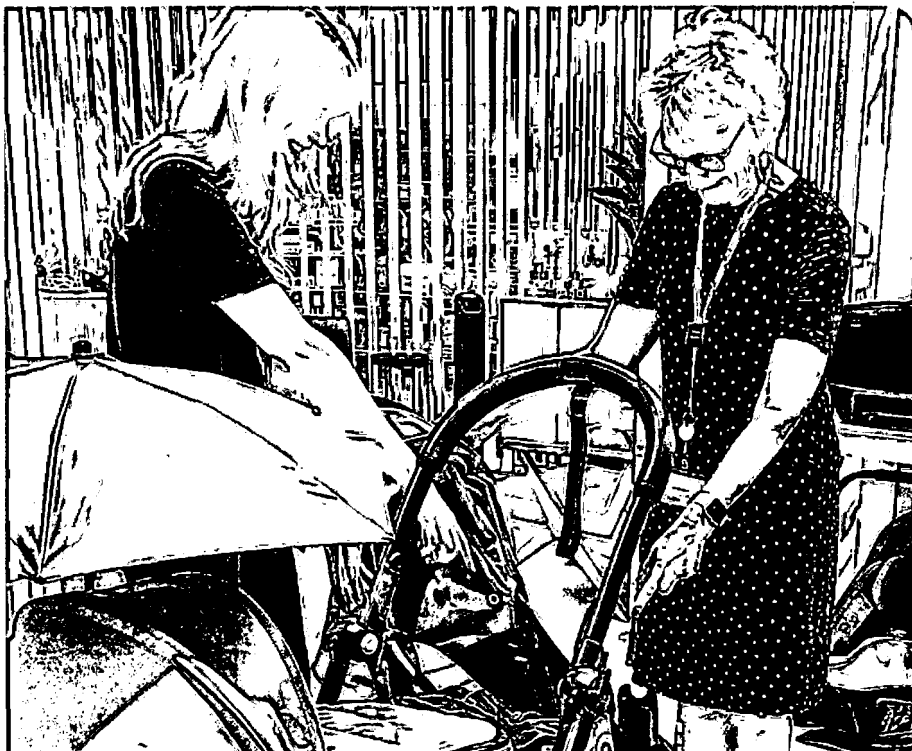
John Lewis & Partners x NCT

– training Partners to support parents

2022 marked the start of a new sector-leading venture between NCT and John Lewis to help expectant and new parents enjoy a welcoming, positive, and inclusive retail experience. Nearly 200 John Lewis Nursery Partners across the UK have been trained to date with plans underway for more Partner training courses in 2023/24.

Our NCT Practitioners and Service Development Team created a bespoke digital training programme to enable John Lewis Nursery Partners to better understand and respond to the needs of all families when preparing for their baby's arrival. Educational modules considered different aspects and perspectives to the parent journey, delivered through live, interactive workshops. The programme was greatly welcomed by John Lewis Partners as a specialist professional development opportunity for their careers, and a way of providing key tools for their day-to-day activities on the shop floor. This included John Lewis's specialist All Things Baby appointments, a free, impartial service held in-store or virtually, depending upon the family's needs. John Lewis Nursery Partners fed back how much the training had improved their confidence in responding to parent questions and concerns.

NCT continues to be proud to work in partnership with John Lewis to ensure that parents are provided with high-quality, up-to-date, relevant and accurate information that responds to their needs and personal preferences during this new life stage.

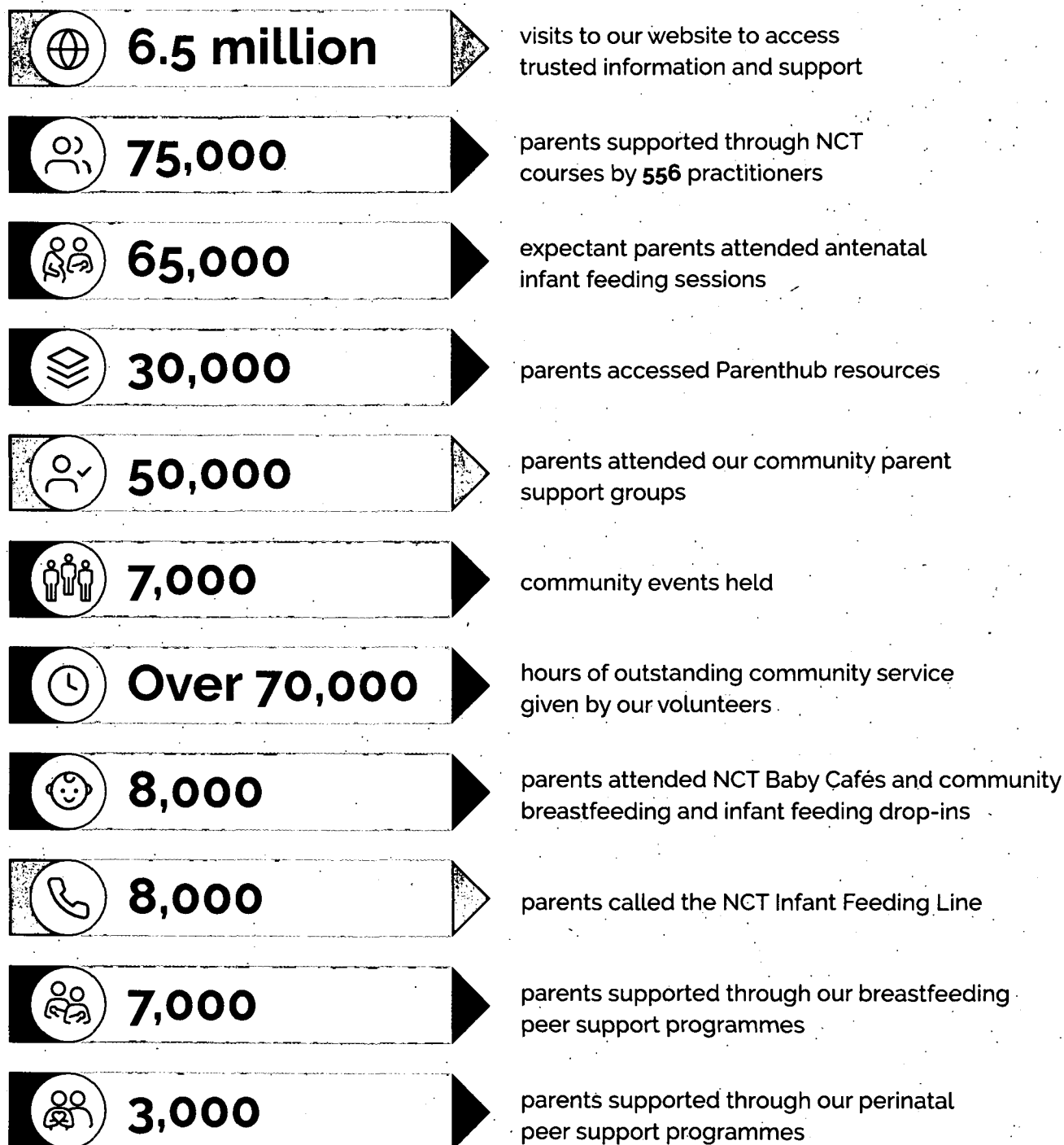


In addition to supporting the parent experience in store, John Lewis kindly continued its discount programme for expectant parents via NCT Antenatal Courses and donated pamper boxes as competition prizes for five lucky families.

Many thanks to John Lewis and Partners for their support throughout the last year, we look forward to continuing to work together.

Please do contact
partnerships@nct.org.uk
if you would like to learn more about
this partnership or opportunities to
develop parent-centred training
for your organisation.

Our reach in numbers – 2022-23





Supporting each individual experience of the postnatal period

Postnatal support in crisis

We know from parents just how desperately support is needed in the early days and weeks following the birth of a baby. For years, parents have been telling us about numerous support gaps, including wanting advice and support with their own recovery, as well as caring for and feeding their new baby. Research with new parents, alongside insight via the experiences of our NCT practitioners, has identified the early postnatal period as the biggest gap in parent support, particularly for breastfeeding, but also for adjusting to life as a new parent.

Breastfeeding continues to be a particularly challenging and emotive subject, with many new parents facing challenges or feeling unsupported. The UK is widely known for having some of the lowest breastfeeding rates in the world,^{xxiii} with research showing that up to 90% of parents stop breastfeeding before they want to.^{xxiv}

Many new parents do not get the help they need with their infant feeding decisions – be that establishing breastfeeding, continuing breastfeeding, expressing, pumping, bottle feeding, formula feeding, introducing solids, stopping breastfeeding – or a combination of these.

Unfortunately, the postnatal support and care system that should be stepping in to support parents and new families at this crucial time has been in crisis for many years. Parents across the UK are being offered patchy and inadequate support, impacting both their own health and wellbeing, and that of their baby, during the critical early days and months. This situation has only worsened during and in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, which impacted everything from staffing levels, availability of community provision, health anxiety, and the availability of family support. A national survey^{xxv} documented the extensive impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on maternity services in the UK, with 70% of units reporting a reduction in antenatal appointments, 56% reporting a reduction in postnatal appointments and 89% reporting using remote consultation methods. 59% of units temporarily removed the offer of births at home or in a midwife-led unit. However, more research is needed to understand the longer-term impact on maternity services, outcomes, and experiences.

The 2022 MBRRACE-UK report demonstrated how most maternal deaths occur between six weeks and a year after birth^{xxvi} and postnatal depression affects one in ten new mothers and people who have given birth.^{xxvii} Support and services during this period – when parents and babies are most vulnerable to physical and mental ill health – are failing parents. In communities, the number of health visitors providing postnatal care

has fallen to an all-time low^{xxviii}, while other postnatal support services – including infant feeding support services – have been cut over the last decade.^{xxix} There are signs of further pressures ahead, with an aging workforce and insufficient numbers of health visitors being trained.^{xxx}

We know that postnatal care is critical to securing positive outcomes for parents and babies and, crucially, ensuring that parents feel confident, connected, and safe during this time. Every new parent deserves access to key services, trusted information, reassurance, and continuity of care to guide and protect them during this vulnerable time.

NCT has a crucial role to play in enabling and supporting a system that provides these. This is why we have continued to invest heavily in our postnatal service provision over the past year. We have:

- Supported almost 8,000 parents via our NCT Baby Cafés and community breastfeeding and infant feeding drop-ins, almost 7,000 through our breastfeeding peer support programmes, and almost 8,000 via our NCT Infant Feeding Line.
- Opened 12 new free-to-access Baby Cafés to support new parents with all aspects of breastfeeding and infant feeding.
- Expanded our community-based postnatal infant feeding and mental health support, including training 255 new peer supporters.
- Invested in a programme of parent research and insight to inform the blueprint for the future redesign of our free Infant Feeding Line, so we can help more parents with a wider range of postnatal issues.
- Expanded our perinatal peer support offer across the country, including designing new, specialist services for the partners of those giving birth.
- Secured the future of our Newham Nurture Perinatal Partnership, which provides critical perinatal support for refugees and asylum seekers, thanks to support from City Bridge Trust.
- Supported over 50,000 parents at over 7,000 community events, with NCT volunteers providing over 70,000 hours of outstanding community service.
- Distributed over 3,000 Baby Bundle packages to new families in need.
- Run 76 Nearly New Sales that offered affordable baby items to over 22,000 parents, with over 200,000 items sold.
- Reviewed our course offer, developed a new content framework, and prepared a new course offer ready for launch in Autumn 2023.
- Presented on the dangers and issues during the postnatal period at both international and UK maternity conferences.
- Been invited to join a Postnatal Care Improvement Working Group by NHS England, which has been commissioned to ensure this part of the service is made safer.



NCT Postnatal courses

– adjusting to life with a new baby

NCT postnatal courses and talks help new parents to adjust to life with a new baby, providing a safe space to build a support network, explore different aspects of parenting, ask questions, develop practical skills, and gain insight and knowledge. The course shares evidence-based information, and links parents into local services and support to help them make informed decisions and feel more confident and connected. From Autumn 2023, the name of the course will change from 'Early Days' to 'NCT New Baby'.

This year 83% of parents rated our Early Days postnatal course 'good' or 'excellent'

Inn's story

“

I attended an NCT Antenatal course before giving birth and found it very useful and I made a great group of friends. However, I had a traumatic pregnancy and birth with many complications. I was told there was an increased risk of my baby having Downs, Edwards and Patau's syndromes, I was at risk of blood clots, had low PAPP-A levels, and one of my growth scans showed my placenta failing. I was induced, but baby's heart rate dropped, and my son was born by c-section. My placenta ruptured and I haemorrhaged. Unfortunately, I struggled accessing continuity of care, and post-birth, I struggled with my recovery – physically and mentally. I felt like everyone I knew locally was thriving and doing baby classes, whereas I was struggling. I don't have any family support besides my partner. I couldn't establish breastfeeding at first and felt I had failed as a mother. Luckily, my breastfeeding counsellor from the antenatal session was able to come and help, and I've ended up combi feeding my son.

I felt I needed to debrief about my birth and pregnancy experience more than anything. I did counselling, and had a debrief at the hospital, but it was quite clinical and factual. They missed some things out and it didn't give me the emotional support I needed.

When I got the email about the Early Days course, I decided to try it. It was a 30-minute drive away, but in my mind, I was going to this course to debrief and hopefully hear experiences from other mums.



It was a short and sweet course that lasted about five weeks. The other mums were lovely, and my teacher Lauren was amazing; she was so informative and approachable. She set me up for recovery by giving me that space to debrief. There was something about it being with a group of strangers that helped. I met other mums also combi feeding for their own personal reasons, and I learnt that I wasn't alone. Lauren was so reassuring. I had really wanted to exclusively breastfeed and felt like I'd failed when I couldn't. But the course helped me realise just how much everything I had been through during the birth had impacted on breastfeeding. More importantly, motherhood is a rollercoaster.

There was other useful information too, for example about weaning, and it was so helpful that there were mums with older babies on the course as I picked up tips. But it wasn't all about baby, it was about mum, dad, relationships, and baby development. It's such a great value course. I'm on the WhatsApp group and although I'm not too active, I know I can post there if I have a question. I also know I can reach out to Lauren directly – we've stayed in touch. I hope Lauren realises what a positive impact she has had on my postpartum recovery. I credit Lauren and that course with helping me evade postnatal depression and providing me that support to assist with my recovery.

99

Inn K., 38, Warrington

NCT breastfeeding and infant feeding services

– supportive, inclusive, accessible

NCT supports expectant and new parents with infant feeding and breastfeeding in a myriad of ways, helping them navigate a wide range of changes and challenges during the early days, and throughout their feeding journey. This includes establishing breastfeeding, continuing breastfeeding, expressing, pumping, bottle feeding, formula feeding, introducing solids, stopping breastfeeding – or a combination of these. We have a dedicated Infant Feeding Line, open every day from 8am to midnight, staffed by qualified breastfeeding counsellors. Our volunteer-led branches also support new parents with their feeding decisions, providing invaluable, free-to-access services such as peer support for breastfeeding. This is available in many local areas, often in the form of a closed Facebook group. NCT is also commissioned by Local Authorities and NHS Trusts to provide breastfeeding peer support services in some parts of the UK. We have dedicated teams of staff, peer support trainers, and volunteer peer supporters delivering services across Scotland and the East of England.

Many of our breastfeeding and infant feeding services, such as the Infant Feeding Line and Baby Café, are delivered by NCT breastfeeding counsellors. Our breastfeeding counsellors also deliver the breastfeeding and infant feeding session as part of NCT Antenatal, and many support new parents 1:1 on a voluntary basis.



Our NCT breastfeeding and infant feeding support in numbers

- ▶ **230** breastfeeding counsellors licensed to provide skilled infant feeding support

- ▶ Almost **8,000** parents attended NCT Baby Cafés, and community breastfeeding and infant feeding drop-ins

- ▶ Almost **8,000** parents called the NCT Infant Feeding Line

- ▶ Almost **7,000** parents supported through our breastfeeding peer support programmes by **245** peer supporters

- ▶ Over **63,000** expectant parents attended NCT Antenatal infant feeding sessions

- ▶ Over **700** parents attended NHS infant feeding sessions

Great people: George's story

I have been a qualified breastfeeding counsellor with NCT for over five years and was previously massage and yoga trained as well. I currently facilitate the breastfeeding and infant feeding session for NCT Antenatal, predominantly working across the whole of South Wales, but also parts of Reading, Maidenhead, Marlow, Windsor, as well as Shoreditch in London. I've taught in lots of other parts of the UK previously too. I really enjoy teaching across so many different areas – I notice how the sociocultural factors of parents vary from area to area, and they all have different needs and questions. Different systemic challenges are raised in different areas too, and it's great to empower parents to start challenging or questioning these. Adapting my teaching to different areas and parents' individual needs is a challenge I enjoy taking on!

I also work on the Infant Feeding Line – being able to offer support postnatally is one of my favourite parts of the job. I think sometimes when we think about rates and policies, we can forget that the individual really matters, and this 1-1 work enables us to really centre the support around the individual. I used to be commissioned to do the drop-in for the Bridgnorth branch, which I loved doing, and occasionally do voluntary visits and calls outside my work on the Infant Feeding Line, though this can be harder to fit in.

I've also done a fair amount of focussed work with LGBTQIA+ parents over the years, and have supported parents to induce lactation, and use other aids where needed. I received some feedback recently via the antenatal practitioner where we had had a non-binary parent on the course – not known until after – and they had been really grateful for my use of inclusive language throughout the breastfeeding session.

It's always lovely to receive feedback on the positive difference our work can make. Earlier this year, a parent took the time to email NCT Head Office to provide feedback on my teaching. While I don't think I did anything special, I love that I was able to help, and it was a good reminder that the small things we do can have such a big impact.

”

George Howson, NCT Breastfeeding Counsellor

“ The breastfeeding session was particularly informative, and it was very helpful to have the details of George, the breastfeeding counsellor to contact afterwards. Contact with her definitely contributed to being able to continue breastfeeding, so I am very grateful for this. ”

Anon, parent



NCT Baby Café

– community-based support with feeding for new parents

NCT Baby Café is a free drop-in service in the community, led by NCT breastfeeding counsellors, that any parent or expectant parent can attend for support with feeding their baby. The drop-ins support parents with a range of issues, including getting ready to breastfeed, establishing breastfeeding, continuing breastfeeding, expressing, mixed feeding, formula feeding, introducing solids, or stopping breastfeeding.

The model was first established in 2000. We most recently refreshed the approach in 2021 to deliver a service focused on inclusive feeding support. It continues to provide accessible, high-quality, professional support, which is free at the point of use.

Between April 2022 and March 2023, a total of 7,761 parents were supported at NCT Baby Cafés. In 2023, we completed our first annual snapshot survey, gaining parents' feedback on NCT's branch-led infant feeding services. The survey was completed by 276 parents with:

- 98% reporting they felt supported to feed their baby at the drop-ins
- 91% saying they felt more confident to feed their baby as a result of attending
- 78% agreeing they breastfed or gave their baby breastmilk for longer because they attended the sessions
- 92% saying their mental wellbeing improved due to attending the group, as talking to other parents helped normalise their problems.



We are very pleased that the Baby Café model supported so many parents in 2022-23. Over the coming year, our aim is to extend our community-based breastfeeding and infant feeding provision, so even more parents can be supported and can gain confidence in their feeding decisions. Above all, we are committed to being ever-more inclusive in our provision of quality infant feeding and breastfeeding support, so we can reach more diverse parent audiences across the country.

2022-23 also saw the successful launch of 12 new Baby Cafés in areas including Reading, Bromley, and Sutton Coldfield. Some stand-out successes from our NCT branch-led Baby Cafés during the year included:

- Clapham, who have successfully run an online drop-in for many years, opening a face-to-face Baby Café to complement their virtual service.
- Alton, who embraced the new Baby Café model, updating their branding and inclusive language around feeding.
- Birmingham West, who secured funds to sustain their Northfield Baby Café, after 20 years of running it with volunteers.

“ *The counsellors are so friendly and kind. I call it my safe place as I can go there and talk through issues without feeling judged.* **”**

Anon, parent

“ *It was lovely just to chat with other mums and babies and share experiences. Just chatting to other mums gave me so much more confidence and ideas for tackling each stage.* **”**

Anon, parent

NCT's Infant Feeding Line

– a blueprint for the future

The NCT Infant Feeding Line has been providing vital infant feeding and postnatal support to new parents for over two decades. Staffed by qualified practitioners, it provides free-to-access support for parents struggling with a range of feeding issues and currently receives almost 8,000 calls a year. Increasingly, women and new parents are calling the line with challenges or questions that go beyond infant feeding – notably around mental health and wellbeing, baby development, family, and relationship issues, and how to navigate health services.



In April 2022 we partnered with Good Innovation to look at how we might redesign our Infant Feeding Service to produce a sustainable, flagship, fit-for-purpose resource to meet the needs of all parents into the future. We collaborated with key partner organisations including Black Mothers Matter, and asked the question to a diverse range of parents: 'What do you want from this service?'. We also engaged with breastfeeding counsellors and the wider NCT community to gather their insights and ideas.

We found demand from parents for a digital omni-channel service, one with voice, video and chat formats that delivers more appropriate and seamless support, as well as communication for new parents facing a range of challenges. For example: where someone doesn't have English as their primary spoken language, they might find a text or chat service more accessible for receiving information, while video support may be useful to a parent seeking support with feeding positions.

A blueprint was created in late 2022 that captured the start of our ambitions to be able to support parents from all cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds with an accessible, high-quality, and free-to-access service.

Our current priority is to secure funding to progress this much needed project, with work already underway by NCT's Fundraising and Development Team.

Co-designing perinatal peer support for fathers and partners in Newham

NCT has launched a new community-based support system for local fathers and non-birthing partners in Newham, East London. The initiative builds on our trusted and respected profile in the area, following the success of programmes, including Parents in Mind (for women and pregnant people) and the bespoke Newham Nurture Perinatal Partnership for refugees and asylum seekers, as well as other local community activity.

This latest initiative is specifically designed for expectant and new fathers and partners, supporting them to overcome barriers to receiving support for mild to moderate mental health challenges.

It has been coproduced by fathers and partners from diverse backgrounds, who were consulted to understand their needs and preferences regarding perinatal mental health peer support. Working in collaboration with other community organisations, this involved:

- Gathering information about the challenges non-birthing parents face
- Capturing expectations fathers and partners have regarding support services
- Using this research to design and develop a tailored peer support service that meets the specific needs of the target group.

We held coproduction sessions with parents across Newham lasting 118 hours in total. These involved 166 local parents, including those who identified as fathers, co-parents, and partners with experience of supporting a pregnant partner or caring for a baby under two years old. We gained valuable insights that enabled us to build up a picture of what a welcoming, accessible, inclusive, and safe service for this group should look like.

Our focus has now turned to developing the service model for an accredited peer support programme and training local parent volunteers to be able to support new non-birthing partners with their mental health. From June – October 2023, NCT volunteers and staff will pilot different support engagement methods, with varying locations, delivery times (including evenings and weekends), intensity, and focus, with the aim of meeting the diverse needs set out during the engagement process.

“ I may be a dad, but when it comes to coproduction, I’m not just a spectator, I’m a valuable member of the team. Being consulted and involved in every stage of the process was amazing, and I’m proud of the end result. ”

Anon, coproduction participant

Great people: Imran's story

“Being a father is a remarkable journey, one that has inspired me to dive headfirst into the world of advocating for dads and their partners. Today, I have the privilege to project manage a cause that I know can make a difference. With all this man/dad talk, it was actually a woman (my wife) I credit for my being in this role, for not only sharing the job advert with me but also for her unwavering belief and support in my abilities to excel in this pivotal role.

Through my work with dads, I have come to understand the vital importance of fathers in the lives of their children and the significant impact they have on the overall wellbeing of their families along with the importance of self-care. Something that comes to mind is that in the event of a plane crash, flight attendants always remind passengers to put the oxygen mask on themselves first before assisting others. This powerful reminder resonates on multiple levels, particularly when it comes to the role of being a dad. Taking care of oneself is paramount in order to effectively care for, and support others.

It is this belief that propels me forward in my mission to ensure that dads' and partners' voices and needs are not only heard, but actively addressed.

The Dads and Partners Project holds a special place in my heart. It symbolizes a collective effort to challenge the existing societal norms and stereotypes surrounding fatherhood. It is a platform that allows dads and their partners to share their experiences, struggles, and triumphs, fostering a sense of community and support.

I am motivated by a profound desire to bring about tangible results and ensure that the needs of dads are met. Through the Fathers and Partners Project, I hope to contribute to the creation of policies, programs, and resources that recognize and support the unique experiences of dads. Together, we can build a world where fathers are not only present but actively supported, engaged, nurtured, and empowered.

The Dads and Partners Project is a small step towards a larger revolution, and I am humbled and honoured to play a part in it. Together, let us champion the cause of fatherhood and build a future where dads thrive, families flourish, and children are raised with love and care. ”

**Imran, Project Manager,
Newham Fathers and Partners Project**



Safe, inclusive and sustainable services

For Every Parent – our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion

At NCT, we know we have a clear and fundamental responsibility to ensure fairness, equity, and respect for everyone. Inclusion and equity are vital for fulfilling our social responsibilities and expanding our reach, as well as fostering innovation and enhancing performance. Embracing these principles creates a nurturing and supportive environment that benefits everyone.

The disparities that exist within our society impact on outcomes for both parents and their children. While this is in large part due to systemic challenges that can't easily be resolved, we can mitigate their impact by striving to put inclusivity and accessibility at the heart of all our services, information, and support. Not everyone starts their parenting journey in the same place, and an inclusive, equitable approach ensures that every expectant and new parent has access to essential resources and support during this important life transition, with support personalised to meet individuals at the point of their need. The principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion are cornerstones of our new five-year strategy, *For Every Parent*.

Over the past year, we have undertaken an extensive review of the language we use across all our information, content, and services, as part of our plan to ensure that our communications are inclusive of all parents and all parenting experiences. We also initiated our content review project, updating priority pages, appointing a Senior Digital Content Manager and beginning a content discovery phase. Another priority has been to review and strengthen our NCT Antenatal framework, ensuring that the information and support we provide to parents continues to be evidence-based, unbiased, inclusive, and trustworthy. We also commissioned an extensive scoping and feasibility project to redesign our Infant Feeding Line so it can better meet the needs of parents from different backgrounds and support them with a wider range of postnatal challenges.

On the campaigning and influencing front, we submitted evidence to an inquiry into racial injustice in UK maternity services led by **Birthrights** and supported the inquiry through the participatory work with women. We have continued to raise awareness of key Black maternal health campaigns and services including those led by **Five X More**, **The Motherhood Group** and **Black Mothers Matter**, which are bringing vital attention to the inequalities in outcomes experienced by Black mothers and birthing parents. In addition, we were members of the **RCOG Race Equality Taskforce** in the year, and have also supported the work and calls of the **Black Maternal Health APPG** since its establishment in 2021.

Building an equitable, inclusive organisation



NCT is committed to building a diverse, inclusive, and welcoming community that brings together people with different identities, backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives. Welcoming a diverse range of voices helps us to generate fresh ideas, identify gaps in our thinking and approach, and ensures we find inclusive solutions to the challenges faced by parents. We value and incorporate different perspectives when developing our charity's strategies and services to ensure our work resonates with the most diverse communities of parents possible.

We're creating inclusive spaces and services because we want all parents to feel welcome, respected, and understood. We actively encourage the exchange of diverse perspectives, knowledge sharing, and development of strong, supportive networks. Our aim is to break down social stigmas and stereotypes both within and beyond parenting experiences, challenging biases, and prejudice, and promoting fairness, acceptance and understanding. Over the past year, we have invested significantly in equity, diversity, and inclusion at NCT.

In 2022, we appointed a new Director of People, Education, and Inclusion, a vital leadership role in the ongoing transformation of our charity, placing our people, inclusion, education, and wellbeing at the centre of everything we do. We also appointed a full-time, permanent Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Lead. This role has helped ensure that diversity and inclusion are embedded in every workstream within our plans for the years ahead, including our content and communications, volunteer and practice support, service delivery, quality assurance, campaigning and influencing, and complaint handling.

We continued to develop and grow our NCT Diversity Network, a space for NCT's community to explore issues, identify opportunities, learn together, coproduce work and policies, and to build a community of consultees and champions for equity, diversity, and inclusion at NCT. We also continued to support the Affinity network, an independently run support network for NCT's Black and Brown practitioners, students, and staff, led by experienced senior practitioners.

We developed a programme of Continuing Professional Development, learning and development for our staff, practitioners, students, and volunteers, including anti-racism and anti-discriminatory practice, as well as initiatives that support wellbeing in the workplace. We also embedded our anti-racism and anti-discriminatory approach within the new training pathways for NCT practitioners. In parallel, we reviewed our quality support policy and practices for practitioners to ensure that we are supporting our workforce to make changes where required in a way that is unbiased and fair. In 2023, we invested in an internal Allyship programme in collaboration with external provider Diversity Dreaming, to encourage and support the NCT community to embrace and practice allyship, the act of supporting and advocating for marginalised individuals and communities.

Great people: Louise Oliver, NCT's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Lead



“

I am in this role to contribute towards creating a fair and just organisation and to continue our journey as a charity that celebrates differences and takes equitable action to ensure everyone has the same opportunity to succeed, whether that's as a member of staff, volunteer, practitioner, student, or as an expectant or new parent. I am excited about being able to play an integral part in leading, shaping, and supporting NCT's equity, diversity, and inclusion work as we expand our reach and aim to support even more parents with high-quality, accessible information and services.

”

**Louise Oliver,
NCT Equity, Diversity,
and Inclusion Lead**

NCT Allyship



In the Autumn of 2022, NCT developed an internal Allyship programme in collaboration with external provider Diversity Dreaming. The programme aims to encourage and support the NCT community to embrace and practice allyship.

Allyship is the act of supporting and advocating for marginalised individuals and communities. Allies amplify marginalised voices, educate themselves about different communities and various forms of oppression, and use their privilege to create positive change.

Through allyship, we can challenge systemic oppression, bias, and discrimination, break down barriers, cultivate empathy, and pave the way for a more equitable, inclusive society.

The programme launched in March 2023 with an event attended by staff, practitioners, and volunteers from across the NCT community. 92% of attendees said that the session had supported them to live NCT's value of inclusion at a practical level.

This is an ongoing and rapidly developing area of our work, which we will continue to develop over the coming years.



“[It was] a reminder that allyship is an ongoing process and a good reminder that it covers a wide range of areas. [It was an] acknowledgment that it's a journey we are all on.”

Allyship Programme launch attendee

Training our workforce of the future

The UK's only higher education qualification in parent education

In 2021 we worked in partnership with the University of Worcester to launch a new model of education and training. This year our first cohort of students qualified and began working with parents as NCT practitioners, playing their part in supporting people as they become parents.

The **NCT Perinatal Education and Practice CertHE** trains practitioners to facilitate our NCT courses – both antenatally and postnatally. The revised training programme aims to build confidence and skills by developing deeper understanding through 'learning by doing'. There is a strong 'in-practice' element, where students shadow an experienced NCT practitioner, and, under their guidance, practise both facilitation and active listening in a real-world environment.

Every year detailed evaluation is carried out by the NCT Education Team, gathering feedback from students and tutors, as well as from those newly qualified and from colleagues in the Practice Team. This evaluation is then used to make improvements and adjustments so that the course is always evolving. Initial evaluation has been broadly positive so far, showing the new structure and content is enabling students to move into practice with the skills and knowledge they need to facilitate confidently and safely, using an anti-discriminatory approach.



“The placement was fundamental to my confidence in ‘going alone’. I’ve just started my fifth antenatal group and am now tweaking my plan as I see what’s working well and what can be developed further. I’m still in touch with my NCT placement practitioner, speak with my peers often, and have just signed up for a few of NCT’s CPD sessions – I felt I needed to find my feet before being ready to learn even more, but now feels like the right time to develop my practice little by little.”

Helen, CertHE graduate and
newly qualified Antenatal Practitioner

“The NCT community is just amazing, you never feel alone, you always feel you’ve got someone to turn to if you’ve got questions or are doubting yourself... there’s always someone you can count on.”

Anon, NCT student

The **NCT Breastfeeding and Perinatal Support** training pathway is for students and practitioners to train to provide one-to-one support postnatally and with infant feeding. This pathway has also evaluated positively:

“The quality of the course is really high, with fantastic tutors. I found the role plays daunting at the beginning, but my confidence has been built as we’ve gone through them.”

Anon, NCT student

Gemma is an NCT volunteer and is currently on the pathway. Although initially apprehensive about returning to formal study, she said:

“It’s turned out to be one of the best decisions I’ve made. The support from tutors and fellow students has been excellent. There’s a wonderful culture of everyone wanting each other to succeed. The course has challenged me academically and personally, juggling studying with family life, but the sense of pride and achievement has made the effort more than worthwhile. I’ve even decided to continue studying in September and am excited to see where my journey will go next!”

Gemma, NCT student

Alongside the skills for working one-to-one with parents, Gemma also reflected on wider changes as a result of the training:

“The course has improved my skills as a volunteer massively. After just a couple of months I noticed a change in my interactions with the families at the groups I volunteered at.”

Gemma, NCT student

Anti-discriminatory Practice for NCT students

Building on the partnership and education work NCT did with **brap**, a charity that supports organisations to make equality a reality, we've been further developing the anti-discriminatory practice module which all NCT students undertake.

This year the module has been brought in-house and further developed by Karen Hall, Lucy Joyce (Tutors) and Louise Oliver (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Lead), pulling together their experience as educators and their wider learning and experience with equity, diversity, and inclusion issues. Ongoing learning continues across the NCT Education Team, so that tutors can bring anti-discrimination principles into their work and include an anti-discrimination focus when planning taught sessions and tutorials.

“Our experience of delivering the module, as well as evaluations from students, has indicated that it's much-needed work, and that our students are coming to it from very different places. We have seen some wonderful lightbulb moments, but also been challenged in often unexpected ways. We have learned a lot from developing and delivering the training this year and will bring this learning into our planning for next year's students.”

Karen Hall, NCT Tutor



85 practitioners completed a qualification to support the parents of the future in 2022-23:

- ▷ **50** antenatal practitioners
- ▶ **31** breastfeeding counsellors
- ▶ **16** postnatal practitioners
- ▶ **18** doulas
- ▷ **10** yoga for pregnancy teachers
- ▶ **4** mother and baby yoga teachers
- ▶ **10** baby massage teachers

We were also delighted to welcome a number of practitioners back-into practice during 2022-23. This follows a review of our Return to Practice pathway, which has resulted in a new, more straightforward personalised way to return to practice.

Student awards

- The NCT President's Award – student who has shown the greatest progress and development. This has been awarded to **Lisa Smith**.
- The Fiona Cowell Award – student who has overcome great difficulties with good humour, in order to qualify and graduate. This has been awarded to **Rebecca Dufton**.
- The NCT Sheila Kitzinger Award – student who has demonstrated the best understanding of birthing parent-centred care and birth practices, taking into account the wide range of cultures across the UK. This has been awarded to **Catherine Muldoon**.

Strong foundations for a sustainable future

To support people as they become parents now and into the future, NCT must be progressive, sustainable, and here for the long-term. We're committed to making it easier for parents to access our services and for our teams to deliver them.

In 2022-23 we continued to invest in making sure that our foundations are strong for the future. Considerable effort went into a project to update our membership platform, to move it from a legacy system onto a modern platform integrated with courses to make signing up easier for parents and eliminating potential cyber risks. This addressed various data protection issues such as being able to hold personal data more securely and making it easier to keep data up-to-date and accurate. Other efforts to address cyber risks included investments in new devices for staff, decommissioning servers, and updating systems.

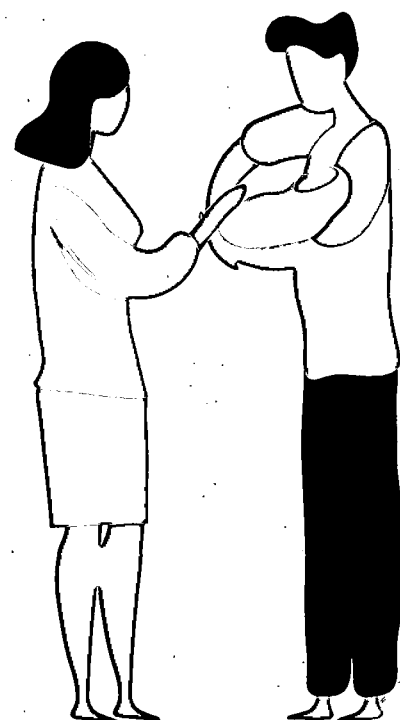
In this post-Covid world, improvements and investments have also been made in our policies and practices around health and safety, including the appointment of a Health and Safety Lead in April 2022. Changes have been made to our Health and Safety Management Systems to ensure that relevant documents and advice are easily accessible and fit for purpose. Specific training has been developed and an audit and inspection schedule presented to the Board.

We invested significantly in our safeguarding function, including a five-month secondment for a staff member to focus full-time on progressing our NCT Safeguarding Improvement Action Plan.

One outcome from the secondment was the creation of a new Designated Safeguarding Lead role, providing dedicated time for safeguarding, leading the NCT Safeguarding Team, developing and delivering training, managing complex cases, and supporting the Programme Delivery Team in practice. We have also invested in an external trainer for safeguarding training for our practitioner community, Directors Group, and Board of Trustees.

Climate change has been high on the agenda, and NCT is committed to playing our part in protecting the environment for future generations. Over the past year, we have held facilitated workshops for our Directors Group and Board of Trustees to discuss our approach to climate change and sustainability. In the year ahead we will continue to look at our policies, practices, service design, and partnering arrangements through the lens of climate and environmental responsibility.

We continue to challenge ourselves to ensure that all our services are safe, inclusive, and sustainable.



Our thanks

Organisations, alliances, and networks that we have worked with during the year

Alliance for Maternity Rights; Alternatives Trust; Birthrights; Black Mothers Matter; brap; Breastfeeding Alliance; Breastfeeding Network; British Pregnancy Advisory Service; City of Sanctuary; Compost London; First 1001 Days Movement; Five X More; Good Innovation; Hello Brave; Institute of Health Visiting; Magpie Project; Maternal Mental Health Alliance; Maternity Action; Mini First Aid; One Voice Partnership; Partnerships for Good; Pregnancy and Baby Charity Network; Royal College of Midwives; Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists; The Motherhood Group; University of Worcester.

Stakeholder and programme boards that we contributed to

Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW) National Review of Maternity Services; MBRRACE-UK Third Sector Stakeholder Council; Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency; National Maternity and Perinatal Audit Clinical Reference Group; NHS England and Improvement Maternity Transformation Stakeholder Council; Scottish Government 'The Best Start' Implementation Programme Board.

Funders and commissioners

Babycare TENS; John Lewis Plc; Lidl Great Britain Limited; Market Research Society.

Bradford District Care Trust; Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West LMNS; Cambridgeshire County Council; Coop Community Fund; Countess of Chester Hospital NHS Foundation Trust; Coventry & Warwickshire Partnership NHS Trust; Cross Keys Homes; Department of Health and Social Care Starting Well Fund; Durham County Council Area Action Partnership; East Sussex Public Health; Ely Primary Care Network; Evelyn Trust; Halton CCG; Hampshire County Council; Hounslow CCG; Knowsley CCG; Leeds City Council; Medway Community Healthcare; Middlesbrough Council; National Lottery; Newham & Tower Hamlets CCG; NHS Lothian; Norfolk Community Foundation; Northern Ireland Public Health Agency; North West Anglia NHS Foundation Trust; Paddington Development Trust; Peabody Housing Association; Peterborough City Council; Redcar and Cleveland Council; Richard Lawes Foundation; Richmond Council; Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust; Scottish Government; Southwark Council; St Helens CCG; Stockton-on-Tees Council; Swindon Borough Council; Twins Trust; Venture Community Association; Wandsworth Council; Warrington CCG; Wiltshire Council.

Individual donors

Our sincere thanks to everyone who kindly donated in 2022-23 to help us reach, connect, and support more parents through pregnancy, birth and early parenthood.

We remember Joyce Crosfield, Gail Werkmeister, Caroline Pearce and their loved ones who generously included NCT as part of their legacies.

We thank the amazing work of the family of Roscoe Barnaby Carter, who raised funds in his memory to support families in Malvern.

We are grateful to everyone who donated to help NCT's Infant Feeding Line as a service for women and families.

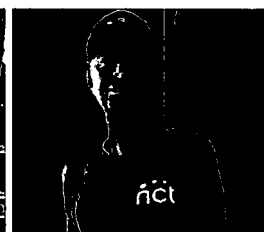
Our community

We are inspired by the efforts and generosity of the NCT community who continue to amaze us every day. To all our members, supporters, volunteers, practitioners, students, staff, and Trustees, you have all made a difference.

- All our members
- All our volunteers and peer supporters
- All our practitioners
- All our staff
- All our students
- NCT Diversity and Affinity Networks
- Practitioner Representative Body
- Our Board of Trustees
- Our Patron, Baroness Julia Cumberlege



A huge thank you and congratulations to our six amazing #TeamNCT runners who ran and finished the London Marathon on 2 October 2022. They achieved some fantastic times, and their dedication to running and fundraising for NCT has been so inspiring, raising £7940 to support parents across the UK. Thank you to: Amy Bird; Tina Cobb; Andrew Graham, with support from Karen; Mohammed Haroon; Samantha Makinen; Helen Whiting.



In memory

Our thoughts are with the families and friends of Joyce Crosfield, Caroline Pearce, and Gail Werkmeister, who sadly passed away last year.

Joyce Crosfield was a founder member of NCT. We would like to record our sincere thanks to Joyce for her contributions to NCT as a founder member and for her longstanding support of the vital work of the charity helping expectant and new parents.

Caroline Pearce was a much-loved member of the NCT Community for nearly two decades. The impact of her personal contributions as a Tutor, Antenatal Practitioner, Doula, Baby Massage Practitioner, and friend to many staff will stay with the charity and across many individual lives as well as those of new parents and NCT staff for the years to come.

Gail Werkmeister was a former NCT President, Trustee, Practitioner, and Tutor. Her work with NCT spanned three decades, and we are enormously grateful to Gail for her many contributions to the NCT Community and towards helping expectant and new parents, at both national and local levels.

Financial review

Financial review

Overall summary

Good growth in total organisational income, up 5% from £10.7m to £11.3m, was delivered during the year. This was despite the challenging economic conditions, notably the effect of the cost-of-living crisis on new and expectant parents, which meant that antenatal course bookings remain below pre-pandemic levels. We were particularly pleased with the increase in income from Programme Delivery and Grants Receivable with the wider reach that this enabled us to have during the period.

Operating costs grew partly due to inflationary pressures and partly due to prudent increases in key areas. These included expenditure to enhance our long-term prospects through the development of the *For Every Parent* strategy; to reduce our overall risk profile in areas such as safeguarding and health & safety; to support our ongoing efforts around EDI; and to improve the information that we provide to new and expectant parents.

The net result for the year was a small operating deficit of £0.1m (2022: surplus of £0.3m) before investment income of £0.1m (2022: £0.1m), non-operational spend of £0.4m (2022: £0.1m) invested this year in the next stage of the Salesforce system implementation and investment losses of £0.1m (2022: gain of £0.3m). The operating position is a key financial target and was managed very closely in line with the approved Reserves Policy.

The total net income / expenditure for the year was £ - 0.6m (2022: £ + 0.6m) after non-operating expenditure, investment income and losses on investment assets. Again, this was in line with the requirements of the Reserves Policy.

NCT Courses

Delivery of antenatal and other courses to parents is one of NCT's key educational activities. Income in this area exceeds expenditure, with surpluses supporting the education and development of current and future NCT Practitioners; the delivery of commissioned services in the health sector; and work in the policy, research, campaigns, content and information areas, including the much needed delivery of the NCT Infant Feeding Line.

Income from courses of £8.4m represents a £0.3m increase on the prior year (2022: £8.1m). This growth reflects an increase in the average course price following a pricing review in 2022. Total costs increased slightly to £6.2m from £6.1m in 2022.

Education and Practice

Fewer students, partly due to the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on the affordability of fees, has led to a corresponding decrease in NCT education and practice income from £0.6m to £0.5m. Costs grew slightly from £1.0m to £1.1m as the need to train the practitioners of the future remains a key objective.

Programme Delivery

Programme Delivery provides local and national services to parents that are free at the point of access. They are largely commissioned contracts with the National Health Service, including hospital trusts and health boards, and local authorities as well as central government departments. This work is also supported through funding from Trusts and Foundations. This area also delivers the vital NCT Infant Feeding Line.

Income for Programme Delivery in the year grew by 55% to £0.8m (2022: £0.5m).

Membership, grants and donations

Total donation income has decreased 7% to £1.0m (2022: £1.1m) largely due a £0.2m fall in membership income continuing the longer-term trend. The latest phase of Salesforce development is focused on the area of membership. Work is underway to consider the future of our NCT membership proposition to ensure it remains attractive, trusted and meaningful for parents and supporters.

Grants receivable saw excellent growth of 17% to £0.6m (2022: £0.5m) largely due to an increase in branch grants and funding for projects in Scotland.

Other trading activities

Total income from other trading activities rose by 24% to £0.5m (2022: £0.4m). This was due to the return of branch activities after the impact of the pandemic in the previous year more than offsetting a decline in income from corporate partners due to a decision to phase out the distribution of gift bags.

Responsible Fundraising

NCT is supported in its charitable fundraising by so many amazing supporters spanning companies, charities, individual donors and volunteer fundraisers. We would like to thank everyone for their efforts to make a difference to parents across the UK. Our fundraising activities, led by the central charity and volunteer branches, are monitored by appropriate members of the Senior Leadership Team. We do not use mass audience commercial fundraising operations such as telephone call services or face-to-face street fundraisers.

Our overarching safeguarding commitment to all members of the NCT community encompasses protection of people in vulnerable circumstances including a dedicated point of contact for any concerns in this regard that is open to the entire charity. As a registered member of the Fundraising Regulator Directory, we are proud of our commitment to continuously reflect upon, learn and evolve our fundraising practices.

Investment income and asset movements

Income received from cash balances and the investment portfolio was £93k (2022: £84k). A loss of £0.1m was recorded on the investment portfolio (2022: a gain of £0.3m) reflecting market movements.

Going concern

Due consideration has been given by the Board to the appropriateness of the going concern basis for accounting. While the movement in total funds showed a fall of £0.6m in the year, the level at the end of the year was in line with the targeted Reserves Policy. The plan and budget for the coming year was set to operate within acceptable risk levels and within the risk reserve level. Management accounts regularly re-forecast the yearly outcome, which allows quick and appropriate responses to changes in our operating model and demand for our services. On this basis, the amounts held as investments and in light of the strong reserves position, the Board is satisfied that the charity is well positioned to respond to a reasonable worst-case scenario.

Investment Policy

The Investment Policy is reviewed by the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee regularly and the latest version was approved by the Board in May 2023. NCT seeks to achieve the best financial return within an acceptable level of risk, which has been defined as medium on a scale of low, medium and high. The desired risk level is achieved through a mixed portfolio of low-risk cash deposits and medium risk managed investment funds held for the long term. All investments are made within the terms of the NCT Commercial and Charitable Activities Policy that takes social, environmental and ethical considerations into account.

The investment objective for long-term investments is to generate a return in excess of inflation in order to preserve the real terms value of NCT's reserves and support growth of the reserves to, and thereafter within, the range determined by the reserves policy. The charity monitors performance closely and continues to take regular advice from its investment managers. The performance of the funds over the time held meets the investment objectives.

The investment objective for the short-term investments is to seek the highest rate of interest available for cash deposits with a UK FSCA regulated financial institution, with deposits made with different institutions where practicable.

Under the Investment Policy, NCT considers that it holds a mixed motive investment in NCT Trading Limited. This is because the investment has two aims: firstly, to provide funding which will generate a financial return for NCT; and secondly to contribute to NCT's charitable purpose by promoting goods and services that are beneficial to prospective and new parents. This will assist the charity in achieving its strategic objective of providing new parent support.

The investment in NCT Trading Limited has been made through holding 100% of its issued share capital at a cost of £100.

Total Funds

The group balance sheet at 31 March 2023 showed total funds of £4.6m (2022: £5.1m) of which £0.2m (2022: £0.2m) were restricted. Restricted funds, analysed in Note 15, comprise donations and grants subject to donor-imposed conditions. Unrestricted funds were £4.4m (2022: £5.0m); of which £1.3m were represented as fixed assets (2022: £1.3m). The balance of the Group general funds, representing the 'free reserves', were £3.1m at 31 March 2023 (2022: £3.7m).

Reserves Policy

The Reserves Policy provides a dynamic framework for determining available reserves by identifying three components of NCT's risk management reserve:

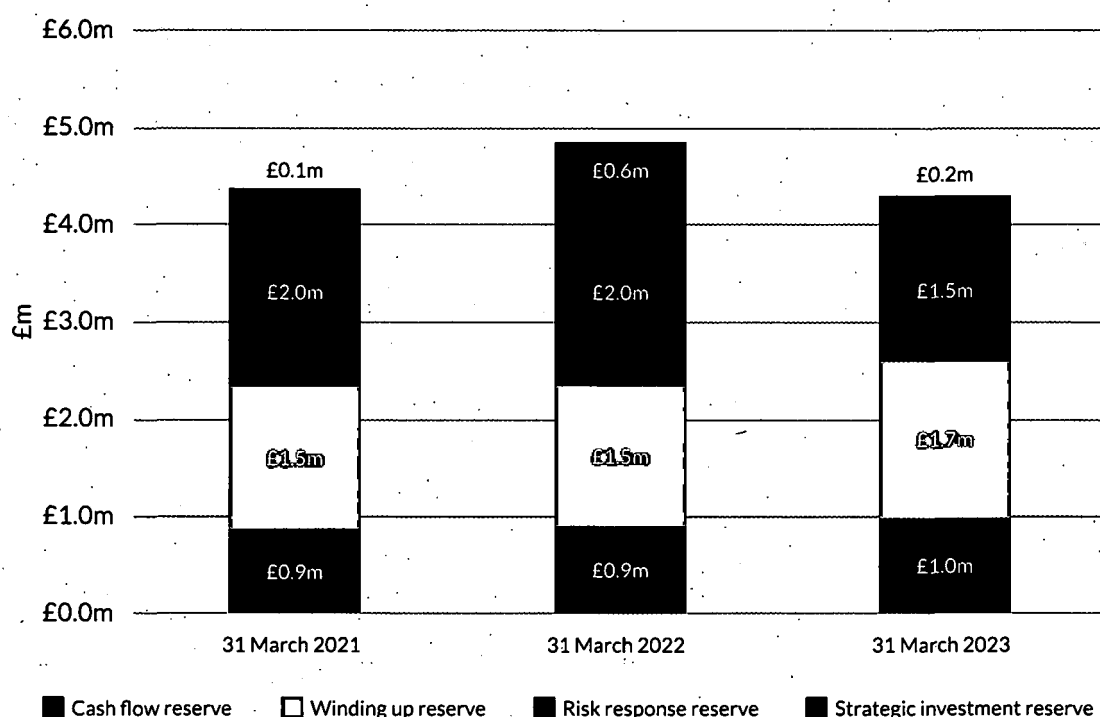
- Cash flow reserve to cover cash flow requirements;
- Winding up reserve to cover the costs of winding up the charity; and
- Risk response reserve to respond to uncertainty identified in the risk management process.

Any surplus funds beyond these considerations represent the strategic development reserve.

The Board determined a target risk management reserve level of £4.2m in March 2023. This comprises £1.0m for cash flow requirements, £1.7m for the costs of winding up and £1.5m to respond to uncertainty identified in the risk management process. Compared with the previously agreed levels, the amounts in the cash flow reserve and winding up reserve have grown to reflect the current size of the group. The level of the risk response reserve has been reduced from the level of £2.0m as originally set in 2017 when the group had a much larger trading operation and higher risks relating to legacy IT solutions.

The Board plans to reduce the target level of the risk response reserve further by continuing to address key risks. By planning for a breakeven operating position over multiple periods, any investment income and gains can be used to increase the strategic development reserve.

The amounts held in these reserves at the last three year ends are shown below.



At 31 March 2023, total unrestricted funds were £4.4m, exceeding the required risk management reserve level of £4.2m meeting the requirements of the policy. This means that the charity holds sufficient funds to perform an orderly wind up if needed and manage risks as they arise. The remaining group funds as at 31 March 2023 were held in the strategic development reserve of £0.2m (2022: £0.6m). Any funds held in the strategic development reserve at the end of each year are used to invest in future growth opportunities to meet one-off items of expenditure during the following year.

Risk management

The risk management process identifies the uncertainties and events that could affect the achievement of the strategic objectives. Trustees acknowledge their responsibility for ensuring effective risk management systems and procedures. The Board works closely with the Directors Group to identify the most significant risks, mitigate any potential impact of downside risks and exploit the opportunities of upside risks. The Board reviews the full Risk Register every year and receives regular updates on significant changes to the profile of individual risks throughout the year.

The Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee has delegated authority from the Board to:

- review risk management systems and procedures;
- drive continued improvement in the sophistication and impact of our risk management processes;
- advise the Board on the principal risks faced and any changes to the Risk Register;
- scrutinise the analysis and management of risks by the Directors Group through a review of the Risk Register at every meeting; and
- receive periodic deep dive reviews of significant risks.

Managing each risk is the responsibility of the senior managers within each Directorate.

The Risk Management Policy is reviewed every year. Through this Policy, the level of gross risk to the achievement of strategic objectives is assessed and the likelihood of this occurring given existing activities to manage the risk appraised. The net risk is compared to the agreed risk appetite for each broad category to identify areas where increased focus is required to manage individual risks.

Key Risks

There are 27 risks on the Group Risk Register. After assessing existing activities to manage the risk, the four risks that the Board has a particular focus on are listed below, alongside a summary of how likely it is that the risk will crystallise in what timeframe, the potential impact, our plans for managing these risks and recent changes in the risk profile.

- **Information Provision** - Parents rely on accurate, up-to-date, evidence-based and accessible information. NCT provides this through a variety of channels, including our courses, Parent Hub, infant feeding line, postnatal support, community provision and our website. The potential impact of getting this wrong is that parents do not have the information they need to make the right decisions. This could also impact NCT's reputation. A review of our parent content, information, course content and frameworks and organisational language has continued during the year and is ongoing.
- **Information Governance including Cyber** - Personal and corporate data must be handled and stored safely to protect sensitive information and ensure full compliance with GDPR legislation. The volume of sensitive information necessary for us to deliver services through practitioners, volunteers and staff requires careful management. Cyber-attacks on charities continue to be a concern and a Cyber Risk Register with Board oversight is used to prioritise activities to prevent such attacks. A dedicated Data Protection Officer was appointed during the year to increase resources in this area.
- **Investment Returns** - NCT holds an investment portfolio in accordance with our Investment Policy which seeks to preserve the real terms value of reserves. The risk that this target will not be met has increased due to recent increases in inflation and interest rate volatility. Returns are regularly monitored and reported with the Investment Policy updated annually.

- Fulfilment of Courses – Resources and workforce, especially our NCT practitioners, must be available to meet the demand from parents for services and support. Insufficient resources will restrict the ability to engage parents, have a positive impact and, in turn, generate surpluses to fund other core NCT parent services. The cost-of-living crisis is having an impact on the number of people wishing to train as a practitioner, so the scoring of this risk has risen during the last 12 months. Extensive activities were undertaken during the year within the courses team to engage, support and retain our practitioner community alongside the Education Team's work to continue to recruit and support students.

Public Benefit Statement

The Board has referred to the relevant guidance (as published by the Charity Commission in its guidance documents PB1 "Public benefit, the public benefit requirement", PB2 "Public benefit: running a charity and PB3 "Public benefit: reporting") and concluded that NCT complies with the duty in Section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to public benefit because the charitable services delivered provide value to the public in general and new parents in particular.

Structure and governance

NCT (The National Childbirth Trust) is a registered charity. It is a company limited by guarantee governed by its Articles of Association as adopted on 26th September 2015 and amended on 18 October 2018.

NCT is governed by a Board of Trustees who are the directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act. The names of trustees at the date at which the accounts were approved, or who served during the period, are given below. The Board is very grateful for the work and commitment of Jess Figueras, Richard Smothers and Jo Powell who have served NCT and stood down in this period as well as David Shanks' support as Vice Chair, ensuring a NCT member remained in a Chair role. We also welcomed two trustees to the board in this period.

Name	Start date of most recent term	Date of resignation
Charles Richardson (Honorary Treasurer from 15 July 2022)	Appointed 15 July 2022	—
Chi Evi-Parker	Elected 11 December 2020	—
David Shanks	Appointed 7 August 2021 ¹	—
Elaine Lambe	Elected 26 November 2021 ²	—
Ema Ojiako (Honorary Secretary)	Appointed 8 March 2021	—
Franciane Husbands-Chevot	Elected 11 December 2020	—
Joanne Powell	Elected 16 November 2019	Resigned 1 August 2022
Peter Brown	Appointed to act as Elected 8 December 2022	—
Richard Smothers (Honorary Treasurer to 15 July 2022)	Appointed 5 February 2020	Resigned 15 July 2022
Sarah Brown (Vice Chair)	Elected 26 November 2021 ²	—
Sherry Bevan (President)	Elected 16 November 2019	—
Stephanie Maurel (Chair)	Appointed 7 August 2021 ¹	—
Susy Broekhuizen	Appointed to act as Elected 8 December 2022	—
Zoe Stewart-Fields	Elected 26 November 2021	—

¹ Second term, initial term commenced on 7 August 2017

² Second term, initial term commenced on 4 November 2017

The charity is a membership charity. Members are organised locally into 333 branches. Many members and volunteers carry out the work of the charity at a local level.

Recruitment and appointment of trustees

The Board of Trustees must have a minimum of nine trustees and a maximum of twelve. Of the maximum, there may be up to eight member elected trustees and four appointed trustees. Any member may stand for election as a trustee subject to the restrictions laid down in the Governance handbook.

Member-elected trustees are elected to coincide with the Annual General Meeting, whilst appointed trustees may be appointed during the course of the year. Any trustee vacancies arising during the year may also be filled by the Board until the date of the next Annual General Meeting.

The process of appointing new trustees is led by the Nominations and Remuneration Committee based on an assessment of the key skills required by the Board. An executive search firm may be used to attract a diverse range of candidates from different backgrounds. Extensive screening will take place followed by rigorous interviews. All appointments are subject to satisfactory references.

Elected and Appointed Trustees have a term of four years and the President has a term of five years. An individual may serve a maximum of two terms as an Elected Trustee, two terms as an Appointed Trustee and two terms as President.

Further details on the recruitment and appointment of trustees can be found in the Governance Handbook at

https://www.nct.org.uk/sites/default/files/related_documents/2021%2007%2027%20-%20Governance%20Handbook%20final%20v1.pdf.

We are keen to talk to anyone interested in standing as a trustee or serving as an Independent Committee member, especially people who will bring unique skills and experiences. To discuss becoming involved, please contact us at board.secretary@nct.org.uk.

Induction and training of trustees

A comprehensive and structured induction programme is put in place for new trustees. This includes:

- a written briefing about trustees' responsibilities;
- detailed presentations covering Strategy; Governance and Critical Incidents; Courses & Income; Practitioners and Education; Impact and Engagement; Volunteering; Finance Overview, Budget, Forecasting and Systems; and Data and Technology; and
- meetings with the Chair, Chief Executive and other members of the Directors Group.

In addition, access is provided to specific training that is tailored to the incoming trustee.

Training is also provided during the year for trustees, for example at the Board Away Day session on topics relevant to the Board's current work and strategy or through access to external courses as required.

The Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is ultimately responsible for the governance of the Charity to ensure that it acts in the best interests of all parents, who are the Charity's beneficiaries. The Board of Trustees sets the strategy, policy and financial framework for the Charity and has the responsibility for its overall direction and control. Additionally, the Board has responsibility for ensuring that the Charity complies with the law and the safeguarding of the Charity's assets, including its money, property and reputation.

Authority for the day-to-day management of the charity within that framework is delegated to the Chief Executive, supported by colleagues on the Directors Group. Together, they formulate strategy, policy and financial plans for the Board's approval, ensure delivery of required performance and oversee the Charity's day-to-day operations.

Each year, the Board reviews past performance and sets plans within a forward-looking planning horizon. As part of that review and planning process, the trustees consider how future plans and performance relate to the aims and vision of the Charity and thus to the charitable purpose.

The trustees are committed to ensuring NCT's governance and constitutional framework reflect current thinking on best practice. The Board of Trustees is committed to the principles of the Charity Governance Code.

Board committees

The Board of Trustees is supported in its work by committees. There are two Board committees.

- Audit, Risk and Scrutiny [ARSC] - covering the adequacy of financial control, external reporting, budgeting, performance and risk management.
- Nominations and Remuneration [NRC] - covering people issues, equity, diversity and inclusion, trustee recruitment and the remuneration policy for senior management and other key groups.

In addition, advisory and task & finish groups enable internal and external experts to be involved in decision-making and governance. During the year, there were groups for Cybersecurity; Equity, Diversity and Inclusion; and an IT project. There is also a 'Lead Trustee' for safeguarding to provide additional support, scrutiny and oversight in this area. The full Board maintains collective responsibility for all these areas and receives update reports at Board meetings.

Independent committee members are individuals who bring additional skills, experience and perspectives to the work of our sub-committees. They are not trustees.

Committee membership and lead trustee roles as at 31 March 2023 are detailed in the table below.

Name	Role	Committee membership
Charles Richardson	Trustee / Honorary Treasurer	ARSC (Chair)
Chi Evi-Parker	Trustee	—
David Shanks	Trustee	—
Elaine Lambe	Trustee	NRC
Ema Ojiako	Trustee / Honorary Secretary	NRC (Chair)
Franciane Husbands-Chevot	Trustee	ARSC
Faran Johnson	Independent Committee Member	ARSC
Naomi Horsfall	Independent Committee Member	ARSC
Peter Brown	Trustee	NRC
Salima Shariff	Independent Committee Member	NRC
Sarah Brown	Trustee / Vice Chair / Safeguarding Lead Trustee	ARSC
Sherry Bevan	Trustee / President	—
Stephanie Maurel	Trustee / Chair	NRC
Susy Broekhuizen	Trustee	—
Zoe Stewart-Field	Trustee	NRC

Key relationships

NCT wholly owns one active commercial company, NCT Trading Ltd, which gift aids its profits to the charity. The Board of NCT Trading Ltd is responsible for its activities, which during 2022-23 mainly consisted of commercial partnerships and sponsorship.

Charity Commission guidance makes it clear that the Board of Trustees is responsible for establishing the overarching principles within which its subsidiary's trading activities must take place. Trustees have established a comprehensive Commercial and Charitable Activities Policy within which the Trading Board is required to operate.

Trustee benefits

Under the terms of its Articles, the Charity is able to pay trustees for the provision of services to achieve its objectives, subject to certain safeguards. This includes the requirement that a majority of the trustees must have received no payments from NCT either as employees or for goods and services supplied to NCT. This year, no member of the Board of Trustees received any remuneration in respect of their services as trustees (2022: None). Expenses and other payments to trustees are detailed in Note 9.

Statement of the Board's responsibilities as trustees

The trustees (who are also directors of NCT for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice). Members of the Directors Group are not Directors as defined on Company Law.

Company law requires trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of the affairs of the charitable company and the group and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable group for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards, including FRS102, have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that 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 and the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006, as amended by the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Amendment (No. 2) Regulations 2014. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and the group, and hence for taking reasonable steps to prevent and detect fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

In so far as the trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which NCT's auditor is unaware; and
- they have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information.

Remuneration Policy

NCT recognises that pay is part of a wider employment offer for employees, which also includes the satisfaction of working for a charity, personal development opportunities, family-friendly policies and practices, annual leave and absence policies and a range of other benefits including access to the pension scheme.

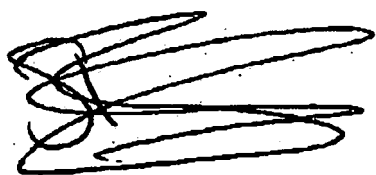
NCT operates a benchmarked market rate system, using reputable and appropriate data. NCT aims to pay employees between plus/minus 10% margin of the market median salary for most roles. Employees will not normally be paid less than the lower decile or higher than the higher decile for any role. When benchmarking pay and benefits, NCT will compare against charities of similar size, employee numbers and income, workplace location and competitors. Additionally, a specialist consultancy will be commissioned to independently review the market rate for the salaries of the Directors Group every three years.

Each year, NCT will consider whether to uplift all employee salaries by the cost of living. This will take into account the Consumer Price Index, Retail Price Index and the national average increase in earnings. Any decisions will be based on affordability and are at the Board's discretion.

Appointment of Auditors

Moore Kingston Smith LLP have indicated their willingness to continue in office and are deemed reappointed in accordance with section 487(2) of the Companies Act 2006.

The strategic report, which forms part of the Trustees' Annual Report, is approved by the trustees in their capacity as directors of the company. The Trustees' Report is approved by the Board of Trustees and signed on its behalf by:



Stephanie Maurel
Chair
21 September 2023

Independent Auditor's Report to the Trustees and Members of NCT

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of The National Childbirth Trust for the year ended 31 March 2023 which comprise Group and Parent Charitable Company Statements of Financial Activities (incorporating the Summary Income and Expenditure Account), the Group and Parent Charitable Company Balance Sheets, the Group Cash Flow Statement and the related notes, including a summary of 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 parent charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2023 and of the group's and the parent charitable company's 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 Companies Act 2006, the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 (as amended) and regulations 6 and 8 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended).

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 charitable company 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 trustees' 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 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 other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information. 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.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, 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 there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. 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 the audit:

- the information given in the strategic report and the trustees' annual report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the strategic report and the trustees' annual report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

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

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 or the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended) require us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the parent charitable company has not kept adequate and sufficient accounting records, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the parent charitable company's 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 23, 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 group and parent 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 group or parent 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

We have been appointed as auditor under Section 44(1)(c) of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and under the Companies Act 2006 and report to you in accordance with regulations made under those Acts.

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 aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs (UK) we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purposes of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the group and parent charitable company's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the trustees.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the group and parent charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the group or parent charitable company to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.
- Obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding the financial information of the entities or business activities within the group to express an opinion on the consolidated financial statements. We are responsible for the direction, supervision and performance of the group audit. We remain solely responsible for our audit report.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Explanation as to what extent the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below.

The objectives of our audit in respect of fraud, are; to identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements due to fraud; to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding the assessed risks of material misstatement due to fraud, through designing and implementing appropriate responses to those assessed risks; and to respond appropriately to instances of fraud or suspected fraud identified during the audit. However, the primary responsibility for the prevention and detection of fraud rests with both management and those charged with governance of the charitable company.

Our approach was as follows:

- We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory requirements applicable to the charitable company and considered that the most significant are the Companies Act 2006, the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 (as amended), regulations 6 and 8 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended), the Charity SORP, and UK financial reporting standards as issued by the Financial Reporting Council.
- We obtained an understanding of how the charitable company complies with these requirements by discussions with management and those charged with governance.
- We assessed the risk of material misstatement of the financial statements, including the risk of material misstatement due to fraud and how it might occur, by holding discussions with management and those charged with governance.
- We inquired of management and those charged with governance as to any known instances of non-compliance or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations.
- Based on this understanding, we designed specific appropriate audit procedures to identify instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. This included making enquiries of management and those charged with governance and obtaining additional corroborative evidence as required.

There are inherent limitations in the audit procedures described above. We are less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations that are not closely related to events and transactions reflected in the financial statements. Also, the risk of not detecting a material misstatement due to fraud is higher than the risk of not detecting one resulting from error, as fraud may involve deliberate concealment by, for example, forgery or intentional misrepresentations, or through collusion.

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 and to the charitable company's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Section 44(1) (c) of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members and trustees those matters which we are required to state to them in an auditor's report addressed to them and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to any party other than the charitable company and charitable company's members as a body, and the charity's trustees, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Moore Kingston Smith LLP

Andrew Stickland
(Senior Statutory Auditor)

for and on behalf of Moore Kingston Smith LLP, Statutory Auditor
16 October 2023

9 Appold Street
London EC2A 2AP

Moore Kingston Smith LLP is eligible to act as auditor in terms of Section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

NCT consolidated group statement of financial activities

Including Income & Expenditure Account for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2023 £'000	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2022 £'000
Income from							
Donations							
Membership		345	2	347	539	-	539
Donations		13	-	13	17	-	17
Grants receivable	4	19	579	598	13	500	513
		<u>377</u>	<u>581</u>	<u>958</u>	<u>569</u>	<u>500</u>	<u>1,069</u>
Charitable activities							
NCT Courses		8,376	-	8,376	8,104	-	8,104
Education and Practice		452	-	452	612	-	612
Programme Delivery	3	820	-	820	530	-	530
		<u>9,648</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>9,648</u>	<u>9,246</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>9,246</u>
Other trading activities							
Community fundraising		334	42	376	184	22	206
Commercial fundraising		135	-	135	207	-	207
Trading		4	-	4	1	-	1
		<u>473</u>	<u>42</u>	<u>515</u>	<u>392</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>414</u>
Investments							
Investment portfolio income		93	-	93	84	-	84
		<u>93</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>93</u>	<u>84</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>84</u>
Other income							
Other income receivable		37	-	37	48	-	48
		<u>37</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>37</u>	<u>48</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>48</u>
Total incoming resources		10,628	623	11,251	10,339	522	10,861
Expenditure on							
Raising funds							
Membership		239	-	239	210	-	210
Charitable activities							
NCT Courses	5	6,098	117	6,215	5,993	66	6,059
Education and Practice		1,114	-	1,114	1,034	-	1,034
Programme Delivery		1,713	461	2,174	1,019	435	1,454
Policy, research and information		1,196	-	1,196	1,180	-	1,180
		<u>10,121</u>	<u>578</u>	<u>10,699</u>	<u>9,226</u>	<u>501</u>	<u>9,727</u>
Other trading activities							
Community fundraising	6	553	8	561	451	-	451
Commercial fundraising		56	-	56	178	-	178
Trading		101	-	101	47	-	47
		<u>710</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>718</u>	<u>746</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>746</u>
Total Expenditure	7	11,070	586	11,656	10,112	501	10,613
Net operating income/(expenditure)		(442)	37	(405)	227	21	248
Gain/(loss) on investment assets	12	(148)	-	(148)	303	-	303
Net income/(expenditure) and net movement in funds	8	(590)	37	(553)	530	21	551
Reconciliation of funds							
Total funds brought forward		4,982	159	5,141	4,452	138	4,590
Total funds carried forward	15,16	4,392	196	4,588	4,982	159	5,141

All of the group's activities are derived from continuing operations during the above two financial periods. The group has no recognised gains or losses other than those shown above. The movement in reserves is shown above.

NCT charity statement of financial activities

Including Income & Expenditure Account for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2023 £'000	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2022 £'000
Income from							
Donations and legacies							
Membership		345	2	347	539	-	539
Donations		64	-	64	38	-	38
Grants receivable	4	19	579	598	13	500	513
		<u>428</u>	<u>581</u>	<u>1,009</u>	<u>590</u>	<u>500</u>	<u>1,090</u>
Charitable Activities							
NCT Courses		8,376	-	8,376	8,104	-	8,104
Education and Practice		452	-	452	612	-	612
Programme Delivery	3	820	-	820	530	-	530
		<u>9,648</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>9,648</u>	<u>9,246</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>9,246</u>
Other trading activities							
Community fundraising		334	42	376	184	22	206
Trading		4	-	4	1	-	1
		<u>338</u>	<u>42</u>	<u>380</u>	<u>185</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>207</u>
Investments							
Investment portfolio income		93	-	93	84	-	84
		<u>93</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>93</u>	<u>84</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>84</u>
Other income							
		65	-	65	56	-	56
Total income		<u>10,572</u>	<u>623</u>	<u>11,195</u>	<u>10,161</u>	<u>522</u>	<u>10,683</u>
Expenditure on							
Raising funds							
Membership		239	-	239	210	-	210
Charitable activities							
NCT Courses	5	6,098	117	6,215	5,993	66	6,059
Education and Practice		1,114	-	1,114	1,034	-	1,034
Programme Delivery		1,713	461	2,174	1,019	435	1,454
Policy, research and information		1,196	-	1,196	1,180	-	1,180
		<u>10,121</u>	<u>578</u>	<u>10,699</u>	<u>9,226</u>	<u>501</u>	<u>9,727</u>
Other trading activities							
Community fundraising	6	553	8	561	451	-	451
Trading		101	-	101	47	-	47
		<u>654</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>662</u>	<u>498</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>498</u>
Total resources expended	7	<u>11,014</u>	<u>586</u>	<u>11,600</u>	<u>9,934</u>	<u>501</u>	<u>10,435</u>
Net operating income/(expenditure)		<u>(442)</u>	<u>37</u>	<u>(405)</u>	<u>227</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>248</u>
Gain/(loss) on investment assets	12	(148)	-	(148)	303	-	303
Net income/(expenditure) and net movement in funds	8	<u>(590)</u>	<u>37</u>	<u>(553)</u>	<u>530</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>551</u>
Reconciliation of funds							
Total funds brought forward		4,982	159	5,141	4,452	138	4,590
Total funds carried forward	15,16	<u>4,392</u>	<u>196</u>	<u>4,588</u>	<u>4,982</u>	<u>159</u>	<u>5,141</u>

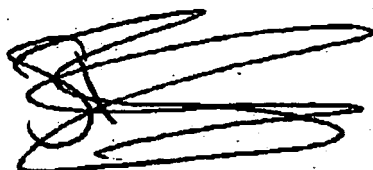
All of the NCT's activities are derived from continuing operations during the above two financial periods. The charity has no recognised gains or losses other than those shown above. The movement in reserves is shown above.

NCT consolidated and charity balance sheets

as at 31 March 2023

	Notes	2023 Group £'000	2023 Charity £'000	2022 Group £'000	2022 Charity £'000
Fixed Assets					
Intangible Assets	10	-	-	-	-
Tangible Assets	11	1,270	1,270	1,302	1,302
Investments	12	3,707	3,707	3,789	3,789
Total Fixed Assets		4,977	4,977	5,091	5,091
Current Assets					
Debtors	13	948	979	1,054	1,029
Short term deposits		76	76	76	76
Cash at bank and in hand		2,297	2,236	2,584	2,560
		3,321	3,291	3,714	3,665
Liabilities					
Creditors:					
Amounts falling due within one year	14	(3,710)	(3,680)	(3,664)	(3,615)
Net current assets / (liabilities)		(389)	(389)	50	50
Total net assets		4,588	4,588	5,141	5,141
Fund balances					
Charitable funds					
Restricted funds	15	196	196	159	159
Unrestricted funds	16				
General funds		3,122	3,122	3,680	3,680
Fixed asset fund		1,270	1,270	1,302	1,302
		4,392	4,392	4,982	4,982
Total funds	17	4,588	4,588	5,141	5,141

Approved by the Board of Trustees and signed on its behalf



Stephanie Maurel
Chair
21 September 2023

The National Childbirth Trust
Company Number: 2370573 (England & Wales)

NCT consolidated cash flow statement

for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Cashflows from Operating Activities		
Net income / (expenditure) for the reporting period	(553)	551
(Gains)/ Losses on investments	148	(303)
Depreciation and amortisation charges	32	41
Investment income	(93)	(84)
(Increase) / decrease in debtors	106	(502)
Increase / (decrease) in creditors	46	552
Net cash provided by operating activities	(314)	255
Cash flows from Investing Activities		
Purchase of Investments	(940)	(975)
Proceeds from the sale of Investments	936	907
Dividends received	93	84
Net cash from investing activities	89	16
Cash flows from Financing Activities		
Net cash from financing activities	-	-
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period	(225)	271
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period	2,747	2,476
Cash and cash equivalents at end of the reporting period	2,522	2,747

	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Analysis of cash and cash equivalents		
Cash at bank and in hand	2,297	2,584
Short term deposits	76	76
Cash held by investment managers	149	87
Total cash and cash equivalents	2,522	2,747

Notes to the financial statements

1 Principal Accounting Policies

a) Basis of accounting

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies below and comply with the charity's governing document, the Charities Act 2011 and 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, the Charities Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 as amended in 2014. The charity is a public benefit entity for the purposes of FRS 102 and a registered charity. The charity has therefore also prepared its individual and consolidated financial statements in accordance with FRS 102 (The Charities SORP (FRS 102)).

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis and on the historical cost basis, except for the measurement of investments and certain financial assets and liabilities at fair value with movements in value reported within the Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA). The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below and have been applied consistently throughout the year.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charity. Amounts included in the financial statements are rounded to the nearest thousand pounds.

b) Preparation of the accounts on a going concern basis

The trustees have adopted the going concern basis in preparing these accounts after assessing the principal risks and having considered the impact of returning to online courses due to COVID-19 and inflationary factors. The trustees consider that the charity is resilient to the impact of these scenarios.

The trustees considered the impact of the expected future environment on the business for the 12 months following signature of the financial statements, the viability period and the longer term considering the impacts on income, expenditure and cash flow and consider the charity can absorb and adapt to the environment.

On this basis the trustees have concluded that there are no material uncertainties that impact the use of the going concern basis and that the charity will be able to settle its debts as they fall due for a period of at least 12 months from the date of approval of these financial statements. Accordingly, the going concern basis has continued to be adopted in the preparation of the financial statements.

c) Basis of consolidation

The statement of financial activities and balance sheet consolidate on a line-by-line basis the financial statements of the charity and all its subsidiary undertakings made up to the balance sheet date.

Immaterial subsidiaries are not consolidated. The decision on consolidation is based on the power NCT has to control each undertaking.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

d) Income

Incoming resources are recognised in the period in which the charity is entitled to receipt, the receipt is probable and the amount can be measured reliably. Income is deferred only when the charity has to fulfil conditions outside of its control before becoming entitled to it or when the donor or funder has specified that the income is to be expended in a future accounting period. Legacies are included in the statement of financial activities when the charity is advised by the personal representative of an estate that payment will be made or property transferred and the amount involved can be measured reliably. Grants, including government grants, have been included as income from charitable activities where these amount to a contract for services or a grant for specific costs. Fees from NCT affiliates are included in full within incoming resources.

e) Expenditure

Expenditure is included in the statement of financial activities when incurred and includes any attributable VAT, which cannot be recovered. Resources expended comprise the following:

- *Charitable activities*, which comprises expenditure on the charity's primary purposes and are categorised as NCT Courses, Education and Practice, Programme Delivery and Policy, Research and Information.
 - » *NCT Courses* comprises the costs of providing courses, for parents and expectant parents where a participant generally books the course.
 - » *Education and Practice* comprises the costs of providing training and support for students and NCT Practitioners who deliver NCT courses.
 - » *Programme Delivery* comprises the costs of delivering services procured under a contract for services or a grant and providing specialist helplines.
 - » *Policy, research and information* comprises the cost of the research and service development teams, as well as communications and marketing.
- *Expenditure on raising funds* is categorised into membership only. Membership expenditure comprises the costs of the department that services members and prospective members and the team that provides support to members and Branches.
- *Other trading activities* is categorised into community fundraising, commercial fundraising and trading.
 - » *Community fundraising*, which comprises the community fundraising support team, the costs of Branch fundraising activities and costs associated with the administration of Branches. Many of the fundraising events held by the branches have two objectives, to raise funds for the charity as well as meeting the aims of the charity in terms of providing postnatal support for families. There is no meaningful way of apportioning the costs of Branch fundraising events between fundraising costs and charitable activities.
 - » *Commercial fundraising* is the cost of obtaining and managing the sponsorship of activities and events and undertakes other business activity on behalf of NCT by NCT Trading Limited.
 - » *Trading* comprises the costs of supporting other trading activities.

f) Basis of apportioning support costs

Support costs, which includes governance costs, represent indirect charitable expenditure. In order to carry out the primary purposes of NCT, it is necessary to provide support in the form of human resources, financial operations and management, information technology, general management and administration and office services. These costs are apportioned to the other activities within the charity based on the average number of full-time equivalent employees utilised by the activity.

g) Gifts in kind

Facilities and services donated to the charity for its own use are included in incoming resources and expenditure at their value to the charity as at the time of the gift.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

h) Tangible and intangible fixed assets

All assets costing more than £1,000 and with an expected useful life exceeding one year are capitalised. Leasehold properties used for the work of the charity are included in these accounts at the cost of acquisition. Software development is capitalised when there is future economic benefit to the charity and ongoing lease costs are not required to use the developed software. Fixed assets are capitalised and depreciated at the following rates per annum, based on cost, in order to write them off over their estimated useful lives at the rates shown below.

Category	Asset Group	Rate per annum
Property	Leasehold	2%
	Leasehold improvements	Lease length or on a component basis, minimum 2%
Equipment	End user computer equipment and software	33%
	Computer and telecoms network infrastructure and software	20%
	Furniture	20%
	Other equipment	33%

At the end of each reporting period, residual values and useful lives are reviewed and adjusted as necessary. Assets are also reviewed annually for impairment.

i) Fixed asset investments

Listed equities are included in the financial statements at fair value as at the balance sheet date. Investments in subsidiary undertakings are held at cost less impairment. Realised and unrealised gains (or losses) are credited (or debited) to the statement of financial activities in the year in which they arise.

j) Fund accounting

Restricted funds are monies raised for, or their use restricted to, a specific purpose, or contributions subject to donor imposed conditions.

The fixed assets fund represents the net book value of the tangible and intangible fixed assets used in the day-to-day operations of NCT. The value of this fund is not available for working capital.

General funds represent those monies, which are freely available for application towards achieving any charitable purpose that falls within the charity's charitable objects.

k) Leased assets

Rentals applicable to operating leases where substantially all of the benefits and risks of ownership remain with the lessor are charged on a straight-line basis over the lease term.

Rental applicable to finance leases where the terms of the lease transfer substantially all the risks and rewards of ownership to the lessee are recognized as assets at the lower of the assets fair value at the date of inception and the present value of minimum lease payments. The related liability is included in the balance sheet as a finance lease obligation. Lease payments are treated as consisting of capital and interest elements. The interest is charged to the Statement of Financial Activity so as to produce a constant periodic rate of interest in the remaining balance of the liability.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

l) Branches

Branch transactions are considered transactions of the charity.

m) Employee benefits

The costs of short-term employee benefits are recognised as a liability and an expense, unless those costs are required to be recognised as part of the cost of fixed assets. The cost of any unused holiday entitlement is recognised in the period in which the employee's services are received. Termination benefits are recognised immediately as an expense when the company is demonstrably committed to terminate the employment of an employee or to provide termination benefits.

n) Debtors

Debtors are stated at their net realisable value after allowing for bad and doubtful debts.

o) Creditors

Creditors are amounts owed by the charity. They are measured at the amount that the charity expects to have to pay to settle the debt.

p) Pension costs

The charity as an employer contributes to personal pension plans of its employees. The contributions are set at up to 5% of gross salary and are available to all employees whose contracts are permanent and who have completed three months' service with the charity.

q) Redundancy costs

Redundancy costs are recognised when there is a legal or constructive obligation.

r) Financial Instruments

The National Childbirth Trust has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method. Financial assets held at amortised cost comprise cash at bank and in hand, together with trade and other debtors. Financial liabilities held at amortised cost comprise trade and other creditors.

s) Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Any bank overdrafts would be shown within borrowings in current liabilities.

t) Irrecoverable VAT

All expenditure is charged to the SOFA on an accruals basis including the charge for VAT which is not recoverable.

u) Accounting judgements and estimation uncertainty

In preparing financial statements it is necessary to make certain judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts recognised in the financial statements. The following judgements and estimates are considered by the Board to have the most significant effect on amounts recognised in the financial statements.

Tangible fixed assets are depreciated to their estimated residual value over their estimated useful economic life as detailed above.

Accrued course expenditure is estimated at the year end date using algorithmic modelling based on contracted hours and pre-agreed rates and anticipated venue costs.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

2 Commercial trading operations

The National Childbirth Trust owns the entire called up ordinary share capital of four companies incorporated in the United Kingdom:

- NCT Trading Limited, which has two principal activities; the promotion of the work of NCT and profit generation;
- NCT (Maternity Sales) Limited which did not trade during the period of these accounts;
- NCT Publishing Limited which did not trade during the period of these accounts; and
- First 1,000 Days Foundation which did not trade during the period of these accounts.

NCT Trading Limited has a deed of covenant to distribute its taxable profit to NCT. A summary of the results of the trading subsidiary for the period are given below.

	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Profit and loss account – NCT Trading Ltd		
Turnover	135	207
Cost of sales		
Gross profit	135	207
Administrative expenses	(84)	(186)
Operating profit before interest	51	21
Interest payable	-	-
Comprehensive income for the period	51	21
	31 March 2023	31 March 2022
Balance Sheet – NCT Trading Ltd	£'000	£'000
Current Assets	83	21
Amounts falling due within one year	(83)	(21)
Net Assets	-	-

The above figures exclude any consolidation adjustments for inter-group profits/losses, which have been reflected in the consolidated statement of financial activities. The accounts figures have been consolidated on a line-by-line basis.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

3 Income: programme delivery

Group and Charity	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2023 £'000	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2022 £'000
National Health Service	475	-	475	279	-	279
Local Authorities	250	-	250	229	-	229
Other	95	-	95	22	-	22
	820	-	820	530	-	530

4 Income: grants receivable

Group and Charity	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2023 £'000	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2022 £'000
Parents in Mind	-	-	-	-	12	12
Grants to branches	19	166	185	6	117	123
BBCS	-	17	17	-	50	50
Scottish Health	-	184	184	-	109	109
Newham Nurture	-	212	212	-	212	212
Government Furlough Grant	-	-	-	7	-	7
	19	579	598	13	500	513

Grants receivable includes government grants for Scottish Health and Newham Nurture and totalled £396k (2022: £328k).

5 Expenditure: NCT courses

Group and Charity	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2023 £'000	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2022 £'000
Antenatal	3,966	-	3,966	3,840	-	3,840
Postnatal	38	-	38	79	-	79
General Parental Support	865	117	982	1,026	66	1,092
Apportioned support costs	1,229	-	1,229	1,048	-	1,048
	6,098	117	6,215	5,993	66	6,059

6 Expenditure: community fundraising

Group and Charity	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2023 £'000	Total 2022 £'000
Branch fundraising	364	8	372	117
Central fundraising	189	-	189	334
	553	8	561	451

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

7 Support cost allocations

Support costs are allocated to the expenditure headings in the Statement of Financial Activities, on the basis stated in the Accounting Policies (note 1), as stated in the tables below.

Group 2023	NCT Courses £'000	Education and Practice £'000	Programme Delivery £'000	Policy, Research & Information £'000	Membership £'000	Community Fundraising £'000	Commercial Fundraising £'000	Trading £'000	Total 2023 £'000
Staff costs	481	153	302	142	36	45	-	16	1,175
Depreciation	14	4	8	4	1	1	-	-	32
Premises and equipment	61	19	39	18	5	6	-	2	150
Office supplies	133	42	84	39	10	13	-	4	325
Insurance	31	10	19	9	2	3	-	1	75
Irrecoverable VAT	104	33	65	31	8	10	-	3	254
Governance	4	1	3	2	-	-	-	-	10
Other	401	128	252	118	31	38	-	13	981
Support Costs	1,229	390	772	363	93	116	-	39	3,002
Direct Costs	4,986	724	1,402	833	146	445	56	62	8,654
Total Costs	6,215	1,114	2,174	1,196	239	561	56	101	11,656

Group 2022	NCT Courses £'000	Education and Practice £'000	Programme Delivery £'000	Policy, Research & Information £'000	Membership £'000	Community Fundraising £'000	Commercial Fundraising £'000	Trading £'000	Total 2022 £'000
Staff costs	452	151	243	152	37	46	-	10	1,091
Depreciation	16	6	9	7	1	2	-	-	41
Premises and equipment	74	25	40	25	6	7	-	1	178
Office supplies	88	29	47	30	7	9	-	2	212
Insurance	23	8	12	7	2	2	-	-	54
Irrecoverable VAT	76	25	41	25	6	8	-	2	183
Governance	10	3	6	3	1	1	-	-	24
Other	309	103	166	104	25	31	-	7	745
Support Costs	1,048	350	564	353	85	106	-	22	2,528
Direct Costs	5,011	684	890	827	125	345	178	25	7,907
Total Costs	6,059	1,034	1,454	1,180	210	451	178	47	10,435

Charity 2023	NCT Courses £'000	Education and Practice £'000	Programme Delivery £'000	Policy, Research & Information £'000	Membership £'000	Community Fundraising £'000	Trading £'000	Total 2023 £'000
Staff costs	481	153	302	142	36	45	16	1,175
Depreciation	14	4	8	4	1	1	-	32
Premises and equipment	61	19	39	18	5	6	2	150
Office supplies	133	42	84	39	10	13	4	325
Insurance	31	10	19	9	2	3	1	75
Irrecoverable VAT	104	33	65	31	8	10	3	254
Governance	4	1	3	2	-	-	-	10
Other	401	128	252	118	31	38	13	981
Support Costs	1,229	390	772	363	93	116	39	3,002
Direct Costs	4,986	724	1,402	833	146	445	62	8,598
Total Costs	6,215	1,114	2,174	1,196	239	561	101	11,600

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

Charity 2022	NCT Courses £'000	Education and Practice £'000	Programme Delivery £'000	Policy, Research & Information £'000	Membership £'000	Community Fundraising £'000	Trading £'000	Total 2022 £'000
Staff costs	452	151	243	152	37	46	10	1,091
Depreciation	16	6	9	7	1	2	-	41
Premises and equipment	74	25	40	25	6	7	1	178
Office supplies	88	29	47	30	7	9	2	212
Insurance	23	8	12	7	2	2	-	54
Irrecoverable VAT	76	25	41	25	6	8	2	183
Governance	10	3	6	3	1	1	-	24
Other	310	103	166	104	25	31	7	745
Support Costs	1,048	350	564	353	85	106	22	2,528
Direct Costs	5,011	684	890	827	125	345	25	7,907
Total Costs	6,059	1,034	1,454	1,180	210	451	47	10,435

8 Net movement in funds

	Group		Charity	
	2023 £'000	2022 £'000	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Net movement in funds is stated after charging:				
Depreciation/amortisation of fixed assets	32	41	32	41
Staff costs (excluding agency staff)	4,341	3,905	4,310	3,870
Operating lease rentals	11	5	11	5
Auditors' remuneration: audit services	46	51	38	44
Auditors' remuneration: non-audit services	1	1	-	-
Investment management fees	26	26	26	26
Gifts in kind from corporate partners	5	-	5	-

9 Staff costs and remuneration

Staff costs during the period were as follows:

	Group		Charity	
	Total 2023 £'000	Total 2022 £'000	Total 2023 £'000	Total 2022 £'000
Wages and salaries	3,859	3,443	3,833	3,412
Redundancy costs	1	40	1	40
Social security costs	310	263	307	260
Other pension costs	171	159	169	157
	4,341	3,905	4,310	3,870
Payments to agency staff	44	35	44	35
	4,385	3,939	4,354	3,904

There were no outstanding redundancy costs at the balance sheet date.

Staff costs by function were as follows:

	Group		Charity	
	Total 2023 £'000	Total 2022 £'000	Total 2023 £'000	Total 2022 £'000
Raising funds	162	148	162	148
Other trading activities	273	225	242	190
Charitable activities	3,950	3,566	3,950	3,566
	4,385	3,939	4,354	3,904

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

Higher paid employees:

	Group		Charity	
	Total 2023	Total 2022	Total 2023	Total 2022
£60,000 – 69,999	3	3	3	3
£70,000 – 79,999	1	1	1	1
£80,000 – 89,999	-	-	-	-
£90,000 – 99,999	-	-	-	-
£100,000 – 109,999	-	-	-	-
£110,000 – 119,999	1	1	1	1
	5	5	5	5

The pension cost for these employees, was £13,012 (2022: £21,508), which included the Chief Executive who received a total salary of £115,660 (2022: £111,375) and pension contributions of £4,626 (2022: £4,455).

The average headcount including part-time staff, analysed by function was:

	Group		Charity	
	Number 2023	Number 2022	Number 2023	Number 2022
Raising funds	4	4	4	4
Other trading activities	7	6	6	5
Charitable activities	140	133	140	133
Support	21	17	21	17
	172	160	171	159

The average number of full time equivalents, analysed by function was:

	Group		Charity	
	FTEs 2023	FTEs 2022	FTEs 2023	FTEs 2022
Raising funds	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2
Other trading activities	5.4	4.8	4.4	3.8
Charitable activities	95.0	86.0	95.0	86.0
Support	18.2	15.6	18.2	15.6
	121.8	109.6	120.8	108.6

The key management personnel of the charity comprise the trustees and the Directors Group. The total employee benefits of the key management personnel of the charity were £425,765 (2022: £386,422).

Expenses were reimbursed to 5 (2022: 5) members of the Board of Trustees during the year. Their expenses amounted to £1,112 (2022: £301) in respect of expenses incurred as a trustee in attending board and related meetings, and £16,104 (2022: £14,572) in respect of expenses incurred for branch support and fees as practitioners or breastfeeding counsellors. No trustees were remunerated in the current or prior year.

We are very grateful to our excellent volunteers. Given the absence of a reliable measurement basis, donated services from our volunteers are not included within the financial statements. Our network of volunteers offered welcoming and inclusive activities, supported over 50,000 parents at over 7,000 community events and provided over 70,000 hours of outstanding community service. More details of the crucial role volunteers contribute is provided in the Trustees' Report.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

10 Intangible fixed assets

Group and charity

	Software £'000	Total 31 March £'000
Cost or valuation		
At 1 April 2022	163	163
Additions	-	-
Disposals	(35)	(35)
At 31 March 2023	128	128
Amortisation		
At 1 April 2022	163	163
Charge for period	-	-
On disposals	(35)	(35)
At 31 March 2023	128	128
Net book values		
At 31 March 2023	-	-
At 31 March 2022	-	-

11 Tangible fixed assets

Group and charity

	Property £'000	Equipment £'000	Total 31 March £'000
Cost or valuation			
At 1 April 2022	1,504	259	1,763
Additions	-	-	-
Disposals	-	-	-
At 31 March 2023	1,504	259	1,763
Depreciation			
At 1 April 2022	206	255	461
Charge for period	30	2	32
On disposals	-	-	-
At 31 March 2023	236	257	493
Net book values			
At 31 March 2023	1,268	2	1,270
At 31 March 2022	1,298	4	1,302

Property relates to a leasehold building.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

12 Fixed asset investments

	Group		Charity	
	2023 31 March	2022 31 March	2023 31 March	2022 31 March
	£	£	£	£
Investment in group undertakings:				
NCT (Maternity Sales) Limited	-	-	6	6
NCT Trading Limited	-	-	100	100
NCT Publishing Limited	-	-	2	2
First 1,000 Days Foundation	-	-	-	-
Other investments:				
Managed investment funds	3,707,453	3,789,122	3,707,453	3,789,122
	3,707,453	3,789,122	3,707,561	3,789,230

Material investments held in the portfolio include the following:

Treasury Stock	675,345	606,562	675,345	606,562
SPDR Series Trust S&P 500 ETF (GBP)	164,733	359,583	164,733	359,583
Aspect Capital Diversified Trends	119,362	-	119,362	-
Ishares PLC MSCO Far East Ex-Japan	70,067	137,229	70,067	137,229
BH Global Ltd NPV Sterling Shares	147,111	164,998	147,111	164,998
Mayfair Capital Invest Mgmt Property Inc Trust	90,084	110,408	90,084	110,408
Shell PLC (EUR)	101,574	107,829	101,574	107,829

On 7 August 2013, the 'First 1,000 Days Foundation' was formed as a company limited by guarantee (registered in England and Wales 864816) with the sole member as The National Childbirth Trust. The Company has been dormant since incorporation. Investments in NCT (Maternity Sales) Limited, NCT Trading Limited, and NCT Publishing Limited represent the entire called up share capital of the companies, all of which are incorporated in England.

	Registered Company Number	Reserves at 31 March 2023 £	Reserves at 31 March 2022 £
Investment in Group undertakings:			
NCT (Maternity Sales) Limited	01291517	6	6
NCT Trading Limited	02488491	-	-
NCT Publishing Limited	03017833	2	2
First 1,000 Days Foundation	08641816	-	-

Managed investment funds

Group and Charity	2023 31 March £'000	2022 31 March £'000
Market value at 1 April 2022	3,702	3,331
Acquisitions	940	975
Disposals	(936)	(907)
Net investment gains/ (losses)	(148)	303
Market value at 31 March 2023	3,558	3,702
The Market value is represented by:		
Equities	2,883	3,095
Bonds	675	607
	3,558	3,702
Cash held by investment managers	149	87
Total Investment fund	3,707	3,789

The charity's actively managed investment fund is revalued annually at the balance sheet date. The increase or decrease in value as a result of this valuation is recognised as an unrealised investment gain or loss.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

13 Debtors

	Group		Charity	
	2023 31 March £'000	2022 31 March £'000	2023 31 March £'000	2022 31 March £'000
Amounts due from subsidiary undertakings	-	-	54	32
Prepayments and accrued income	401	519	400	519
Trade and branch debtors	541	523	519	466
Tax recoverable	4	7	4	7
Other debtors	2	5	2	5
	948	1,054	979	1,029

'Trade and branch debtors' includes £25,000 (2022: £nil) due in more than one year.

14 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	Group		Charity	
	2023 31 March £'000	2022 31 March £'000	2023 31 March £'000	2022 31 March £'000
Expense creditors	431	647	431	647
Social security and other taxes	95	101	95	101
Deferred income	2,663	2,272	2,643	2,230
Accruals	521	644	511	637
	3,710	3,664	3,680	3,615

Movement in Deferred Income

Group and Charity	At 1 April 2022 £'000	Deferred £'000	Released £'000	At 31 March 2023 £'000
NCT Courses	1,89	2,165	1,849	2,165
Programme Delivery	381	478	381	478
Total for the Charity	2,230	2,643	2,230	2,643
Commercial Fundraising	42	20	42	20
Total for the Group	2,272	2,663	2,272	2,663

Deferred income relates to courses and contracts for services which have not been delivered at the balance sheet date.

15 Restricted funds

The income funds of the charity and the group include restricted funds comprising the following unexpended balances of donations and grants held on trusts to be applied for specific purposes:

Group and Charity	Movements in Funds:				At 31 March 2023 £'000
	At 1 April 2022 £'000	Incoming Resources £'000	Outgoing Resources £'000	Fund Transfer £'000	
Grants and donations received by branches	117	166	117	-	166
Glasgow Service Delivery	-	184	184	-	-
Birth and Beyond Community Support	19	17	17	-	-
Newham Nurture	23	212	231	-	-
Big Give	-	6	27	-	2
LIDL	-	38	10	-	28
	159	623	586	-	196

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

Glasgow Service Delivery – Funding to enable us to provide a range of community and hospital breastfeeding peer support services across East Lothian and Glasgow

BBCS – Funding to enable us to continue to provide Birth and Beyond Community Support to mothers who are at risk of isolation and not accessing services across Peterborough and Lincolnshire and extended into Wisbech and Fenland.

Newham Nurture – Funding to enable us to coproduce a programme of support to pregnant women and new parents from low income, migrant and marginalised backgrounds experiencing financial hardship and disadvantage.

Big Give – Funding to enable us to give extra resource to our Infant Feeding Line so that more parents can be supported during peak times.

LIDL – Funding to enable us to support parents through the cost-of-living crisis by providing free-to-access services.

16 Unrestricted funds

Group	At 1 April 2022 £'000	Incoming Resources £'000	Outgoing Resources £'000	Unrealised Investment Gains/ (Losses) £'000	Transfer Between Funds £'000	At 31 March 2023 £'000
General Funds	3,680	10,628	11,070	(148)	32	3,122
Fixed Assets Fund	1,302	-	-	-	(32)	1,270
	4,982	10,628	11,070	(148)	-	4,392

Charity	At 1 April 2022 £'000	Incoming Resources £'000	Outgoing Resources £'000	Unrealised Investment Gains/ (Losses) £'000	Transfer Between Funds £'000	At 31 March 2023 £'000
General Funds	3,680	10,572	11,014	(148)	32	3,122
Fixed Assets Fund	1,302	-	-	-	(32)	1,270
	4,982	10,572	11,014	(148)	-	4,392

17 Analysis of net assets between funds

Fund balances at 31 March 2023 are represented by:

Group	Unrestricted Funds:			2023 Total £'000
	General Funds £'000	Fixed Asset Fund £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	
Fixed assets	-	1,270	-	1,270
Investment assets	3,707	-	-	3,707
Net current assets / (liabilities)	(585)	-	196	(389)
Total net assets	3,122	1,270	196	4,588

Charity	Unrestricted Funds:			2023 Total £'000
	General Funds £'000	Fixed Asset Fund £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	
Fixed assets	-	1,270	-	1,270
Investment assets	3,707	-	-	3,707
Net current assets / (liabilities)	(585)	-	196	(389)
Total net assets	3,122	1,270	196	4,588

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

18 Taxation

The National Childbirth Trust is a registered charity and therefore is not liable to income tax or corporation tax on income derived from its charitable activities, as it falls within the various exemptions available to registered charities. Each year subsidiary companies, which do not have charitable status, may Gift Aid any taxable profits to The National Childbirth Trust. The charity and group is not able to reclaim all VAT suffered on expenditure due to the partial exemption regulations.

19 Operating lease commitments

At 31 March 2023 the group's future minimum operating lease payments were as follows:

	Group		Charity	
	2023 31 March £'000	2022 31 March £'000	2023 31 March £'000	2022 31 March £'000
Expire				
Within one year	6	5	6	5
Between one and five years	-	-	-	-
	<u>6</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>5</u>

20 Financial Instruments

The financial statements include the following in respect of items held at fair value at the balance sheet date

	Group		Charity	
	2023 31 March £'000	2022 31 March £'000	2023 31 March £'000	2022 31 March £'000
Financial assets measured at fair value through profit and loss	3,558	3,702	3,558	3,702

21 Related party transactions

NCT Trading Limited is a subsidiary of The National Childbirth Trust and its shares are 100% controlled within the group.

During the year the National Childbirth Trust purchased services from NCT Trading of £7k (2022: £7k) on normal commercial terms. The National Childbirth Trust supplied services to NCT Trading of £44k (2022: £15k).

At the 31 March 2023 NCT Trading Limited owed The National Childbirth Trust £54k (2022: £32k).

No members of the Board of Trustees (2022: Nil) had a beneficial interest in contracts with the charity. No member of the board (2022: Nil) had a beneficial interest in a contract with a wholly owned subsidiary of The National Childbirth Trust during the period. At the date of signing the accounts, three (2022: one) trustees were also Directors of NCT Trading Limited.

There are no other related party transactions to disclose other than set out elsewhere in these accounts, including in Note 9.

Reference and administrative information

Charity Registrations:

The National Childbirth Trust ('NCT')
 Company Registration: 2370573 (England & Wales)
 Registered Charity: 801395
 Charity Registered in Scotland: SC041592
 VAT: GB 115 0789 24

Registered Office:

Brunel House
 11 The Promenade
 Clifton Down
 Bristol
 BS8 3NG

Board of Trustees who are also directors under Company Law at the date of this report are:

Charles Richardson (Honorary Treasurer)
 Chi Evi-Parker
 David Shanks
 Elaine Lambe
 Ema Ojiako (Honorary Secretary)
 Franciane Husbands-Chevot
 Peter Brown
 Sarah Brown (Vice Chair)
 Sherry Bevan (President)
 Stephanie Maurel (Chair)
 Susy Broekhuizen
 Zoe Stewart-Field

Directors Group who are not directors for the purposes of Company Law at the date of this report are:

Angela McConville, Chief Executive
 Michael Barnett, Director of Finance and Planning
 Emma Cutler, Director of Impact and Engagement
 Natasha Simpson, Director of People, Education and Inclusion
 Tope Medupin, Director of Operations

Company Secretary

Michael Barnett

Auditor:

Moore Kingston Smith LLP
 9 Appold Street
 London
 EC2A 2AP

Bankers:

Lloyds Bank plc
 39 Threadneedle Street
 London
 EC2R 8AU

Investment Advisors:

Rathbone Brothers PLC
 8 Finsbury Circus
 London
 EC2M 7AZ

Solicitors:

Bates Wells & Braithwaite London LLP
 10 Queen Street Place
 London
 EC4R 1BE

Kemp Little
 Cheapside House
 138 Cheapside
 London
 EC2V 6BJ

Subsidiaries:

First 1,000 Days Foundation (limited by guarantee, dormant)
 NCT (Maternity Sales) Limited (dormant)
 NCT Publishing Limited (dormant)
 NCT Trading Limited



© NCT is a trading name of The National Childbirth Trust. Limited company registered in England and Wales: 2370573.
Registered address: Brunel House, 11 The Promenade, Clifton Down, Bristol BS8 3NG.
Registered charity in England and Wales: 801395 and Scotland: SC041592.