



**Reach  
Volunteering**

**Impact report 2023**

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# Welcome from our CEO and chair

It's been a truly record-breaking year for us: we attracted more volunteers than ever before, and recorded over 4,500 placements – our highest ever in one year.

As well as running a busy service, we experimented with campaigns for the first time, inspiring people to volunteer by focusing on the motivational power of values like care and compassion, and concern for the future of our planet.

With charities facing so many challenges, including falling volunteer rates, we are glad that our service is bucking the trend. It is encouraging that so many people are willing to share their expertise, for free, to help create a fairer and more sustainable world. We're going to be needing this spirit of generosity, care and compassion more and more, in the future.

We're very grateful to the organisations and volunteers who drive our service, and to the generous partners and funders who enable us to keep running and developing it. And our deepest thanks to our own staff, volunteers, and trustees who have all contributed their time, skills and support to make 2023 such an impactful one for Reach.



**Janet Thorne,  
CEO**



**Jane Ide OBE,  
Chair of Trustees**

# Our impact in 2023: A record-breaking year

Against a backdrop of record-low volunteering rates across the sector, we are proud to have attracted more volunteers than ever.

13,930 people signed up to volunteer through Reach in 2023.

These volunteers bring valuable skills, experience and diversity: 51% who registered in 2023 identified as being from a global majority and 8.3% identified as LGBTQ+.

Volunteers made an amazing 27,524 applications for trustee and volunteer roles through our service – more than three times pre-pandemic levels.



**13,930**

people signed up to volunteer through Reach

**27,524**

applications made for trustee or volunteer roles through Reach

**1,302**

organisations found volunteers or trustees through Reach



We supported 1,302 organisations to find one or more volunteers or trustees to help them grow. In total, those organisations recruited 4,515 trustees and volunteers – the most we have ever recorded in one year.

This year also saw a continued increase in sign-ups from micro-organisations with less than £10,000 income, whose numbers have almost tripled since the pandemic.

We ran two campaigns:

- **Change The Story** highlighted the care, generosity and community-mindedness that motivates people to volunteer.
- **#VolunteerForClimate** brought 4,065 skills-based volunteers to the site keen to transform their climate anxiety into climate action.



# About Reach

## What we do

Reach connects charities and groups with people who want to volunteer their skills.

Working throughout the UK and across every profession, we help social purpose organisations to recruit trustees and volunteers to deliver projects or join their teams in ongoing roles.



# How we do it

- Through our **bespoke online platform**, people volunteer to share their professional skills with good causes, while charities and groups post opportunities – including trustee positions, short-term projects and ongoing operational roles.
- Our **network of partners** – including LinkedIn, Fifth Day and Rest Less – share our roles and inspire more talented professionals to volunteer.
- Our **support and resources** help volunteers and social purpose organisations make the most of skills-based volunteering – and give guidance on how to recruit a strong, diverse board. We offer tools including template recruitment materials and how-to guides.
- In addition to our self-service offer, The **TrusteeWorks** team provides an executive search trustee recruitment service to charities across the UK and helps recruit chairs, treasurers and trustees with specific skills in areas such as marketing, digital, HR and law.

# Why we do it

- Charities and groups are facing a perfect storm of rising costs, recruitment challenges, falling income and growing demand. They need specialist expertise, but often struggle to find people with that expertise within their own networks.
- At the same time, there are thousands of people with valuable skills who would like to volunteer. They are passionate about causes like climate action, human rights and income inequality – but have limited access to opportunities.
- Reach connects these organisations and volunteers, so they can work together to build a thriving, fair and sustainable society. For every £1 of grant funding, our service generates an estimated £80 of skills.

● **£1 of grant funding**

**= an  
estimated  
£80 of  
skills**

# Who uses Reach

## Our organisations

Reach is proud to support a vast range of organisations – from tiny grassroots groups making waves in their communities, to national charities including the NSPCC, Shaw Trust and Spotted.

In 2023, we saw numbers of organisations with an income of under £10,000 continue to rise, with an incredible 427 joining this year.

In June, we added the ability for organisations to report on if they serve, or are led by, people facing structural injustice, with the results showing just how many groups are tackling inequality head-on.



Of the organisations who say that they run a targeted service:

**67**

led by and for people  
facing racial inequality



**43**

led by and for  
disabled people



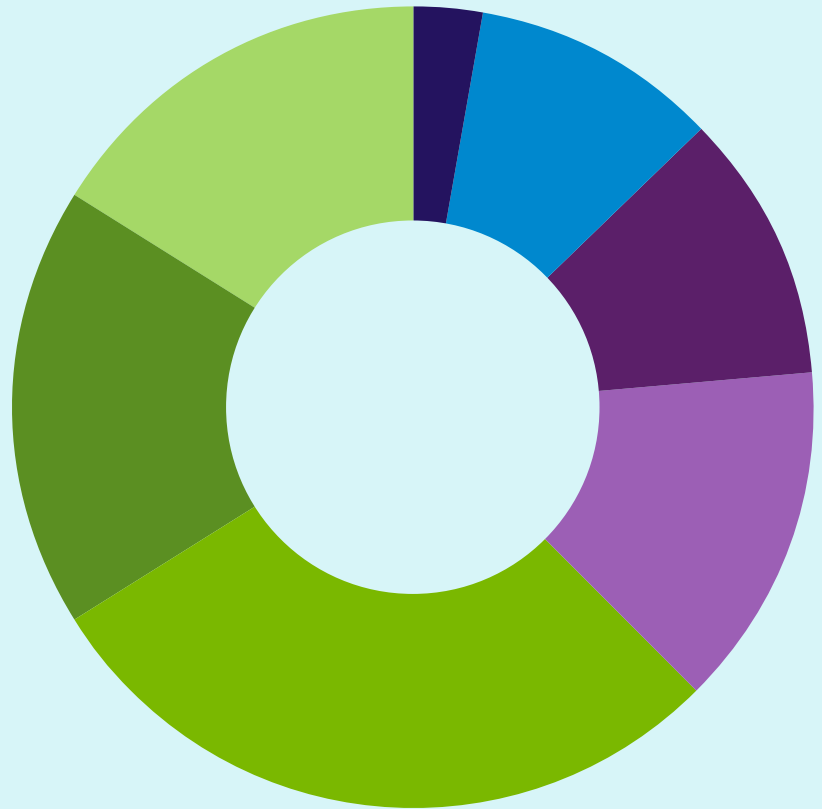
**32**

led by and for people  
who are educationally  
or economically  
disadvantaged



## Annual turnover of organisations using Reach

<b>2.79%</b>	Over £10 million
<b>9.96%</b>	£1m - £10m
<b>11.04%</b>	£500k - £1m
<b>13.68%</b>	£250k - £500k
<b>28.95%</b>	£50k - £250k
<b>17.73%</b>	£10k - £50k
<b>15.87%</b>	Under £10k



**62%**

of organisations with an annual turnover of under £250,000

**904**

organisations (33.59%) had a turnover of under £50,000

**207%**

increase in micro organisations (under £10k) using Reach since 2019

# Who uses Reach

## Volunteers

In 2023, we helped place volunteers with a vast array of skills, including 127 software developers, 103 HR experts and 66 fundraising bid writers.

Our volunteers are employees, freelancers, people transitioning careers and those who are retired. Some have never considered volunteering before, others are serial volunteers and trustees, and all have a diverse range of backgrounds and identities. This diversity is particularly important for trustee positions, given the lack of diversity often found on charity boards.



Volunteers placed in 2023 included:

**127**

software developers



**103**

HR experts

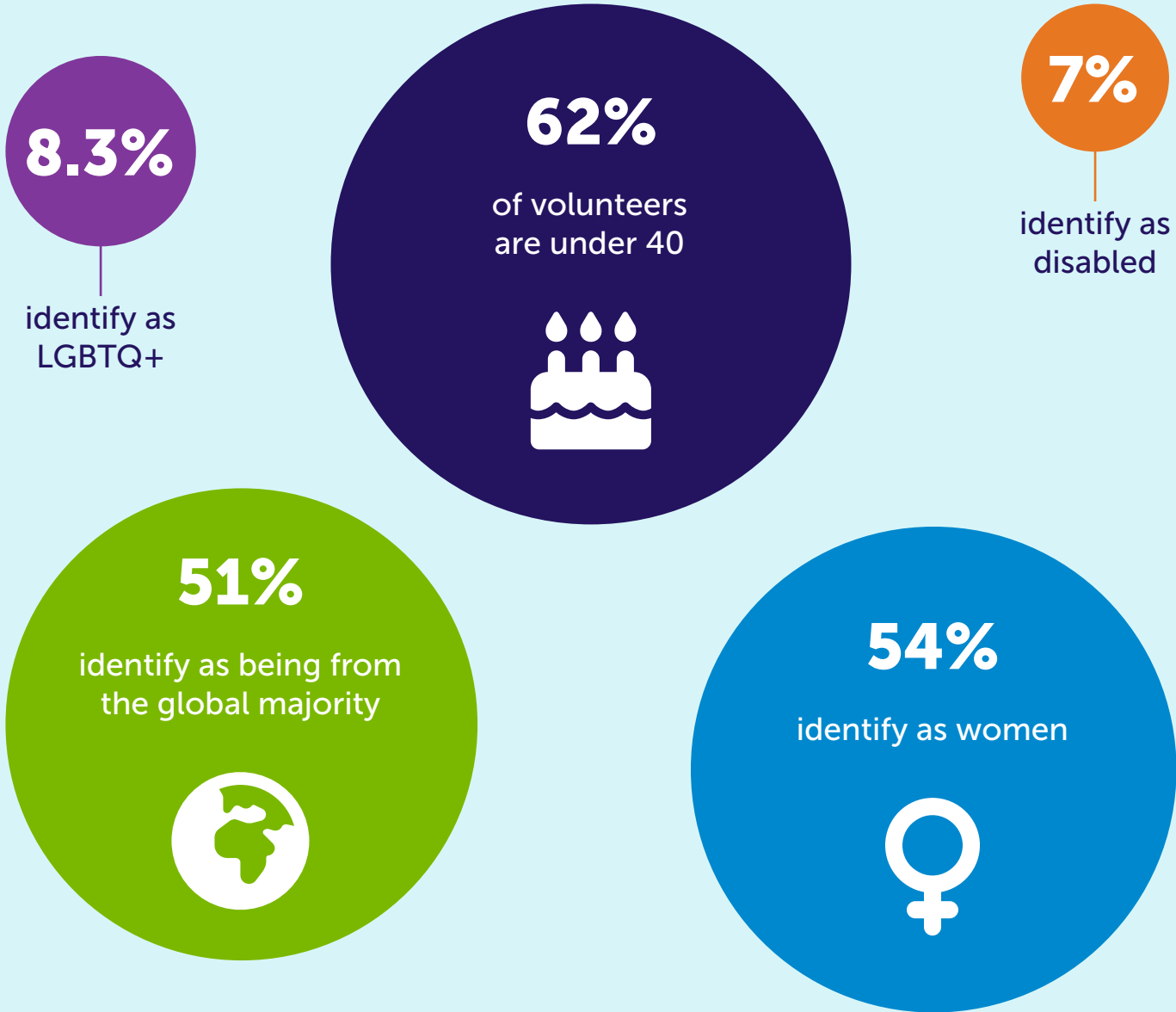


**66**

fundraising bid writers



# Characteristics of volunteers who joined Reach in 2023

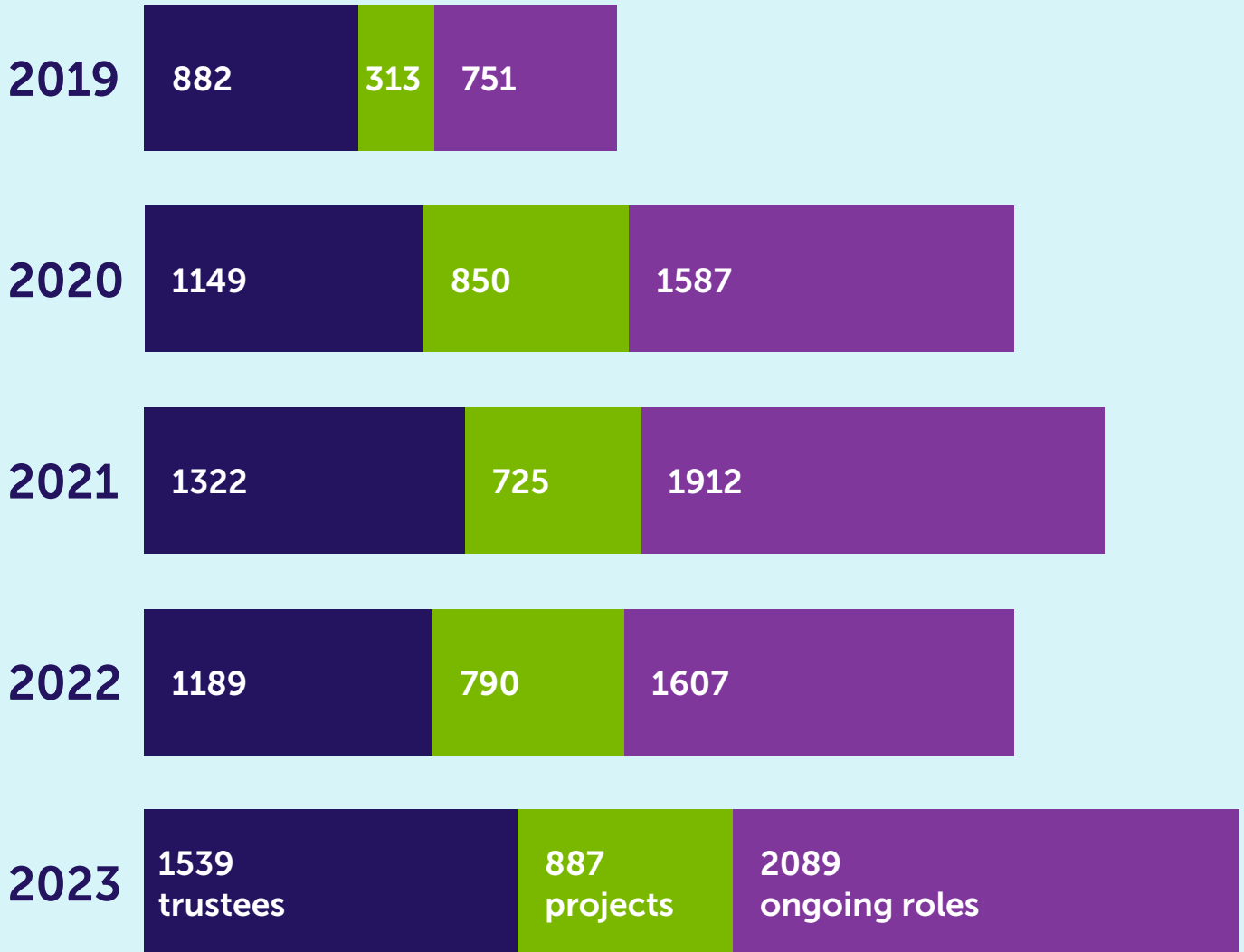


# Our achievements in 2023

- Helping charities and groups build their capacity and capability
- Building strong, diverse boards
- Helping people discover the power of civic action
- Powering the climate action movement



## Reach placements since 2019



# Helping charities and groups build their capacity and capability

Skills-based volunteering can fix seemingly unsolvable problems, establish or expand new programmes of work, and bring in expertise that would otherwise be costly.

Some organisations come to Reach to find specialist expertise to help them grow and adapt – like those who have navigated data protection and rebranding exercises with the help of Reach’s community. Other organisations use Reach to build their core teams – like those whose social media and marketing functions are run by volunteers. Many fantastic volunteer-led organisations are now scaling their work thanks to this additional capacity.

In 2023, organisations recruited 2,976 volunteers to take on projects or join their teams in on-going roles – from accountants transforming finance strategy, to UX designers bringing new digital platforms to life. At a time when funding opportunities and other resources for nonprofits are shrinking, volunteers are able to keep services not just running, but thriving.

Our free platform allows organisations to network outside of their existing spheres of influence and connection. This is especially helpful for grassroots organisations or those run by marginalised groups, who may not have the same access to professional networks as their peers.

**2,976**

volunteers recruited  
in 2023

**94%**

of organisations  
surveyed said that the  
volunteer had helped  
their organisation  
to be more  
effective

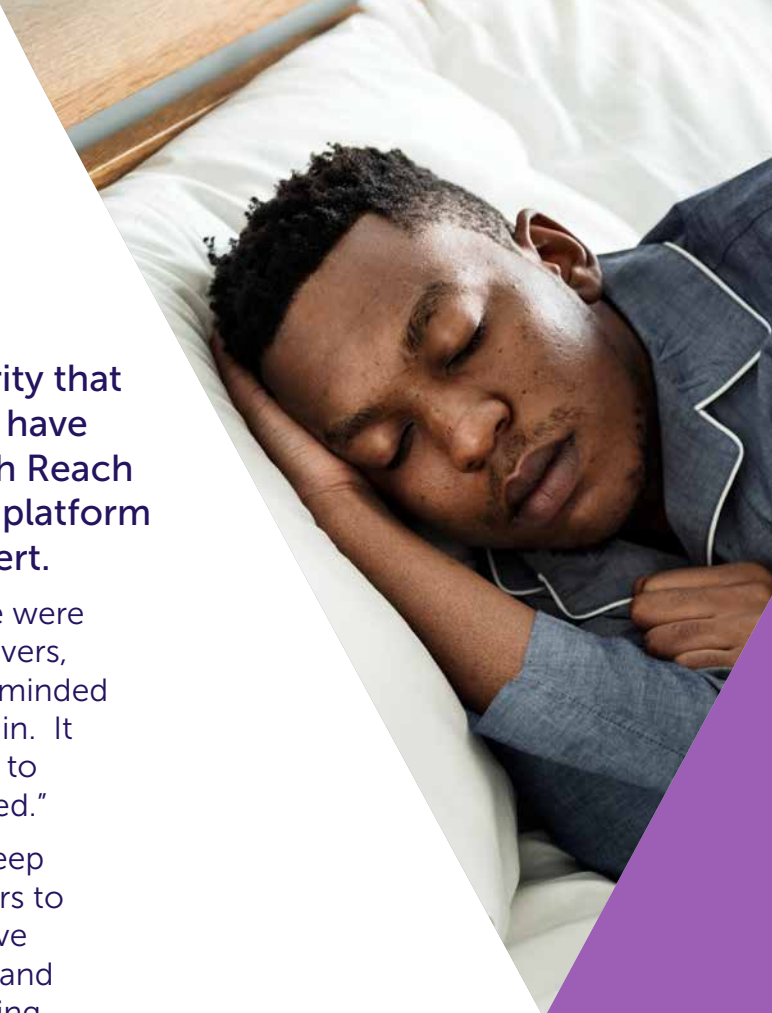
# Case study: The Sleep Charity

The Sleep Charity is a small national charity that empowers the nation to sleep well. They have recruited a number of volunteers through Reach including board members, an e-learning platform designer, a photographer and an HR expert.

"I never imagined prior to using Reach that there were so many skilled people out there," says Vicki Beevers, CEO and Founder. "I'd had a somewhat narrow-minded view of what roles volunteers may be interested in. It makes complete sense, however, to utilise them to share the skills they have professionally developed."

After COVID forced organisations online, The Sleep Charity had its first experience of using volunteers to build their e-learning platform. Since then, they've continued to work with a pro-bono team to expand the platform, allowing them to deliver their training internationally. Vicki explains that this would be financially impossible without the support of volunteers.

"I recommend Reach all the time," says Vicki. "As co-chair of NVCO's Small Charities Advisory Panel, I think small charities are having a challenging time right now and anything that can help to support them is hugely important."



**“For years now, Reach Volunteering has been an invaluable portal for providing us with an impressive range of younger and more racially diverse volunteers. We’ve onboarded individuals with IT and database management, social media, partnership development, HR and project management skills... Some have stayed with us for a few months, many over a year.”**

Action for Trustee Racial Diversity, a volunteer-led independent campaign to increase the representation of people from Black and Asian backgrounds on trustee boards

**“Since October last year, three volunteers have assisted us with all our digital activities – keeping social media active, engaging with stakeholders, revamping our branding. They have improved the quality of our work as well as filling gaps in paid staffing.”**

Light Foundations, a social enterprise supporting young people through personal and career development

**“The skills and experience of Reach’s volunteers are excellent. We easily recruited two trustees, a graphic designer, a website designer, a copywriter, and a fundraising bid writer. Each one has brought much-needed expertise and helped us grow much faster than we anticipated.”**

Lunch Club, a newly established local charity tackling food insecurity and social isolation



# Building strong, diverse boards

Reach is the single largest source of trustees to the sector. In 2023, charities appointed 1,539 trustees through our service – including 67 chairs, 150 treasurers, 58 trustees with experience in income generation, 47 with an HR background and 25 'digital' trustees.

Not only did these trustees bring essential expertise to the boards that they joined – they also brought much needed diversity. Reach applicants were more likely than the general UK population to identify as LGBTQ+ or as coming from a global majority community. They were also far more diverse in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, sexuality and disability than trustees as a whole.

Last year, 36,601 users also logged on to view The Trustee Recruitment Cycle – our guide to inclusive board recruitment. The site combines written guidance and template resources to support boards through each stage of the recruitment process, from reflecting on board diversity to inducting their new trustee. 76% of users reported finding the cycle useful, with 63% saying it was "extremely useful".

**1,539**

trustees appointed  
through Reach  
in 2023

**92%**

of organisations  
surveyed said their  
trustee helped their  
organisation  
become more  
effective

# Case study: Finding property professionals for Safe in Sussex

Safe in Sussex provides practical and emotional support, information and advice to adults and young people experiencing domestic abuse.



Leslie Groves,  
Chair of Trustees,  
Safe in Sussex

In 2023, they came to Reach's platform seeking two trustees – one to replace an existing board member, and another to help steer strategic decisions about the charity's refuge accommodation.

Leslie Groves, Chair of Trustees, says: "We had never previously recruited for this type of expertise, but felt it was important as we sought to grow our existing property portfolio and improve our financial sustainability." The charity also wanted to be proactive about finding candidates that were from the global majority. This had been hard to do through local networks – partly, as Leslie explains, "due to affinity bias" and the demographics of their area.

Thankfully, it didn't take long for Safe in Sussex to find a match. With only two spots on the board to fill, the charity agreed to take on an extra member as they had such "an excellent response rate with very strong candidates." One new trustee was born outside of the UK, and the other two brought expertise from the private and public housing sectors.

"In recent years, we have recruited intentionally with diversity in mind – be it in skills or background" says Leslie. "And the different backgrounds of the new trustees we recruited have certainly helped bring in new conversations and ways of thinking. It has also brought to the fore the issues facing different ethnic groups when it comes to domestic abuse."

**“I heartily recommend Reach to other charities. We found people local to us [who weren’t in our existing networks], which is helpful as we’re in a small area of the South West.”**

Vision North Somerset, a rehabilitation and support service for people with significant sight loss

**“Many board members come from similar backgrounds and have often trained with one of just a handful of training providers. Consequently, there is a real risk of groupthink and so it is essential that we have independent board members like Niru, who are able to diversify the board’s experience and skill set.”**

The Civil Mediation Council, a charity promoting and providing greater access to mediation



# Case study: Building a board from scratch

One of the unique features of Reach's service is the ability to search the community and approach people to ask them to consider applying. This is a particularly powerful tool for charities recruiting a chair, looking for specialist expertise, or creating a board for a new venture.

The Movements Trusts began with the idea to create an organisation that financially supported environmental and social movements. At the time, Tarek Hasan was between careers and looking for a sense of engagement and purpose. "I was grateful to discover Reach Volunteering," he explains "...which was able to connect me with a number of fantastic organisations that were in need of motivated people to help push their organisations forward."

Tarek was initially recruited to help establish the charity, and The Movements Trust was born 6 months after his appointment, where he is now Chair of Trustees. Since then, Tarek has recruited a further three trustees through Reach, who brought a mix of grant funding and charity leadership skills to the board.

"Volunteering at The Movements Trust has genuinely been one of the pleasures of my adult life, from the skills I have learnt to the positive societal impact we aspire to make," says Tarek. "We now have a really strong board, who are helping us to play a critical part in empowering movements to enact change."



**Tarek Hasan,  
Chair of Trustees,  
The Movements Trust**

**"Volunteering at  
The Movements  
Trust has  
genuinely been  
one of the  
pleasures of  
my adult life."**

# Case study: Using TrusteeWorks to find the perfect board

TrusteeWorks is Reach's executive search service, helping organisations to find the ideal trustees for their board. In 2023, the team was approached by RoSA – a Warwickshire based charity that offers confidential services for survivors of rape, sexual violence and childhood sexual abuse – after their efforts to recruit board members via other platforms had failed.

First, RoSA were assigned a TrusteeWorks consultant, who spent time getting to know the Board's requirements and to develop an appealing recruitment pack. She then embarked on a search for candidates – using the Reach platform, LinkedIn Talent Solutions and the TrusteeWork's team's extensive networks to identify, contact and encourage applications from a diverse range of fully engaged candidates..

"Our consultant listened to what we wanted and therefore sent through appropriate candidates," says Maureen Roberts, Treasurer. "The quality of the candidates was so high that we wanted to interview all of the applicants!" After interviewing the potential trustees, RoSA appointed two trustees and a Vice Chair, bringing a broad range of skills and experience.

With a rich pool of new talent, the charity was able to set up sub-committees for the first time. "Our new trustees have been truly fantastic," says Maureen. "Having this broad background and experience base has enabled us to have really fulsome, professional discussions at board meetings and enabled us to do more as a charity. They have quickly and easily become invaluable members of our board."



# Helping people discover the power of civic action

Ever since the onset of the pandemic, we have seen a surge of people wanting to offer their skills and expertise – to help charities and groups working hard to tackle societal challenges.

In 2023, the numbers rose even further, breaking all previous records: 13,930 new volunteers joined our service, and we supported an astonishing 27,524 applications for trustee and volunteer roles – more than three times pre-pandemic levels.

This growth is encouraging because volunteering has been at a record-low in the wider sector, with small charities, in particular, struggling to recruit. Reach has a unique advantage in encouraging volunteer engagement – since we reach a wide audience through our partnerships, and pool together a variety of flexible roles from across the sector.

In January 2023, our #ChangeTheStory campaign highlighted the care and concern that inspires people to volunteer. 14 organisations – including Global Action Plan, Volunteering Matters and Inspiring Scotland – joined our campaign, celebrating values like solidarity, compassion and care for nature that bring volunteers together. In collaboration with Common Cause Foundation, we ran a community of practice with other volunteer-involving organisations, exploring how to draw on the power of these intrinsic motivations to create a ‘ripple effect’ that benefits wider civil society.

**13,930**

new volunteers joined Reach in 2023

**27,524**

applications for trustee and volunteer roles through Reach during 2023

**“I’ve volunteered with some truly inspiring social entrepreneurs, to provide specialist knowledge, bring new perspectives and even deliver large-scale events. It’s developed my sense of accountability, given me a support network and the opportunity to develop and implement my ideas.”**

Rosemary, a volunteer for multiple climate organisations



**Rosemary,  
volunteer**

**“Being a Trustee has been great, if a steep learning curve! It gives me the opportunity to meet new people, apply myself in new ways, whilst also making use of my existing expertise – all for a cause that I’m passionate about.”**

Kelly, a trustee with The Humane Research Trust CIO

**“Volunteering gives me the opportunity to learn flexibility and give back to my community. It is both empowering and rewarding.”**

Tracy, a researcher with Health Action Group

# Case study: Creating a cohesive brand for Cancer Education UK

When he was made redundant, Tom, a creative director, wanted to use both his time and expertise to make a real difference. Through Reach, he found a voluntary role as Creative Lead at Cancer Education UK (CEDUK) – a start-up cancer charity educating and supporting people from the global majority and low socio-economic communities.

CEDUK did not have a consistent visual style, and they knew their content and messaging could be better designed to engage with their audience. Tom worked with the founder and a team of volunteers to help the charity rebrand and redefine their vision. He developed a refreshed brand guide including a new logo, colour palette, a revised tone of voice, a new meaningful strapline, a positioning statement, clearly defined services, and an application guide. This helped CEDUK build more credibility as an organisation and provided them with a strategy and kit of assets to bring cohesion to their communications.

Tom says: “As an advocate for equality and challenging disparities, I shared CEDUK’s ethos and knew that I could add value. There’s a great sense of purpose from making a difference and seeing the impact you have as a volunteer.”





# Powering the climate action movement

Reach is committed to tackling the climate crisis, and believes it is a significant threat to the mission of all social purpose groups. Likewise, we believe volunteering is one of the easiest and most tangible ways for individuals to take climate action – with the added benefit of reducing their eco-anxiety.

In 2023, we launched a new campaign, #VolunteerForClimate, encouraging professionals to volunteer their skills with climate action groups recruiting through Reach. We brought together over 100 volunteering opportunities at a wide array of organisations, from established charities to new, innovative volunteer-led groups. In response, over 2,000 skills-based volunteers joined Reach to get involved.

This year, we also worked closely with others to support more charities to take action on climate. We are a Learning Partner for NPC's Everyone's Environment programme which brings together over 50 social and environmental charities to accelerate action on the social impacts of the environmental crises. Our CEO is a member of ACEVO's Climate Action Working Group, and, in July, was featured on the Third Sector podcast about Reach's own journey to weave environmental considerations into our mission.

**100+**

volunteering opportunities through #VolunteerForClimate

**2,000+**

skills-based volunteers joined Reach to #VolunteerForClimate

**“Making our film was a really valuable experience. The work was interesting, the people were good to work with and I feel that I played a small yet important part in achieving something good which benefits all of us. I’ve since become more involved in a local sustainable community gardening project.”**

Peter, professional photographer on volunteering with The Centre for Big Synergy

**“Very happy to be starting a new Trustee Treasurer role with a brilliant, small environmental charity/social enterprise local to me. Thank you Reach Volunteering for highlighting this and so many other fantastic volunteer opportunities in your climate crisis campaign.”**

Liz, Treasurer for the Forest Recycling Project FRP

**“Although I was already extremely conscious of my impact, I am far from perfect. I try to take action on climate change where I can, but volunteering definitely reiterated the importance that small changes can make and I feel even more conscious of my choices now.”**

Hannah, volunteer for Climate Ed

# Case study: Shade the UK

Shade the UK is a non-profit organisation aiming to adapt the built environment and public spaces to protect vulnerable populations against increased temperatures due to climate change. They needed help creating articles for an Info Hub on their website so that more people in the UK have the knowledge and tools to deal with heatwaves, and protect themselves and others.

As a small team of volunteers themselves, Shade the UK struggled with the resources needed to plan, research, and draft impactful articles on climate change and overheating. However, through Reach, they found a number of enthusiastic and talented writers from a range of backgrounds.

Their volunteer writers are helping them to address the lack of awareness about overheating and its harmful impact on humans – especially the vulnerable – in the UK, as well as the solutions out there to combat this.

Shreya Kapur from Shade the UK says: “We now have a brilliant team of eight proactive volunteers, all providing their unique perspective on the climate crisis and helping to build our knowledge base. It’s been so successful that we’re now looking for social media and fundraising volunteers.”



Shreya Kapur,  
Shade the UK

**“We now have a brilliant team of eight proactive volunteers, all providing their unique perspective.”**

# Our partners and supporters

Our strength comes from collaboration and we are very grateful to our partners, who share our opportunities on their platforms and collaborate with and support us in our broader work.

- Partners including LinkedIn, Rest Less and Fifth Day help us reach a wider audience by sharing our roles with their communities. This year, we were delighted to welcome two new partners: the Social Value Company, who help companies and their employees to get involved with civil society, and Bar in the Community, who share our roles to their audience of legal professionals.
- We work closely with a network of like-minded organisations, who care about improving governance and building capacity in civil society. These colleagues include Getting on Board, Action for Trustee Racial Diversity, Association of Chairs, Young Trustees Movement, Charterpath, Cranfield Trust, Pilotlight and other members of the Pro Bono Association, NPC and members of the Everyone's Environment programme.
- We are grateful to Common Cause Foundation for sharing their expertise for our #ChangeTheStory campaign, and for their generous pro bono support of our community of practice.
- We are proud to be a lead partner in the Charity Governance Awards, sponsored by The Clothworkers Company.



Most of the charities and groups we support are small, and cannot afford to pay for our service.

We are very grateful to the following individuals and grantmaking bodies who generously support our work.

Donors:

- City Bridge Foundation
- The Clothworkers Company
- Dulverton Trust
- The Peacock Trust
- The 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust
- Meikle Foundation
- Sir James Knott Trust
- Hadrian Trust
- Johnson Brothers
- Harold Hyam Wingate Foundation
- The Astor Foundation
- Schrodgers Charity Trust
- Broyst Foundation
- Marsh Charitable Trust
- Anonymous donor

In-kind support:

- LinkedIn
- Prospectus
- Common Cause Foundation

Partners:

- Lloyds Bank Foundation England and Wales
- GSK



CITY BRIDGE  
FOUNDATION



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COMPANY



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CHARITY TRUST

THE DULVERTON TRUST

# Thank yous

Reach would like to say a huge thank you to the many people and organisations that help us work towards our vision, including:

- the many people who generously sign up to volunteer their expertise, especially in these challenging times
- the inspiring charities and groups that create such rewarding opportunities for people to contribute to their work, and which are making change in so many resourceful ways
- our own trustees and volunteers, who give their time, skills and experience freely, in service of Reach
- our staff team who work hard to achieve our goals
- our many partners who are an essential part of our service delivery, and a crucial part of the wider ecosphere of support for social purpose organisations
- our generous funders, who enable us to provide our service freely and at scale







# Reach Volunteering

Connecting people, skills and good causes

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