

OBS
OXFORDSHIRE
BREASTFEEDING
SUPPORT



OXFORDSHIRE BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT

Annual Report 2022/23



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Administrative Information

Registered Name

Oxfordshire Breastfeeding Support

Registered Address

2 Wytham Street,
Oxford
OX1 4SU

Email: team@oxbreastfeedingsupport.org

Registered charity no. 1176948

Trustees

Louise Ellis ACA - Treasurer
Laura Prentice - Deputy Chair
Dr Ashvina Segaran - Secretary and Safeguarding
Dr Juliet Rayment - Strategy
Hannah Marshall - Fundraising
Zoe Townsend - Team Liaison
Dr Rain Irshad - Equality Diversity and Inclusion
Khatsha Ali - External Communications
Anna Hodges (resigned April 2022)
Danielle Beaumont-Orr (resigned May 2022)
Sev Gunes-Lasnet (resigned August 2022)
Dr Ilana Levene (resigned November 2022)

Non-clinical Staff

Karin Chandler – Charity Director (joined December 2022)
Hannah Torrence – Clinical Director (joined April 2023)
Catriana McKie - Systems and Safeguarding Lead
Hannah Dingwall-Jones - Administration

Clinical Facilitators

Lisa Mansour (also EDI Lead)
Charlotte Gilman
Julie Gallegos
Cathy Berry
Ruth Viella

Non-clinical Contractors (management and administration)

Jayne Joyce (Project Lead; resigned April 2022)
Kawther Alfasi (Operations Lead, and Interim Project Lead April 2022 – November 2022; resigned November 2022)

Introduction from the Board of Trustees

This year marked significant changes at OBS, in both the staff and trustee team. Kawther Alfasi served as the Interim Project Lead from March to December 2022 and played a vital role in securing more grant funding for the charity. Her efforts left a lasting legacy.

Subsequently, we welcomed Karin Chandler as our first-ever Director in December 2022. Karin brings a range of experience in public sector and charity management, alongside prior roles as a breastfeeding counsellor and doula.

This year we also welcomed Laura Prentice, Ashvina Segaran, Hannah Marshall and Zoe Townsend as trustees and bid farewell to four others, Anna Hodges, Danielle Beaumont-Orr, Sev Gunes-Lasnet, and Ilana Levene. Ilana was our out-going Chair of Trustees and has been involved in OBS and Baby Cafe before it, for the last seven years and we thank her for all her valuable contributions over this period. Needless to say these are big losses, but the change has brought new ideas and energy to the charity which we look forward to developing in 2023/2024.

We have been working hard towards the creation of new systems and structures which will help provide stability to OBS. We have started to work towards employing staff, rather than solely relying on contractor relationships, and are focussing on new avenues for funding and fundraising to prepare for the end of our National Lottery Community Fund grant, which ends in March 2024. Over the next year we are also planning a transition to a social, drop in model of delivery at our in-person sessions. We're eagerly looking forward to witnessing how it all unfolds over time!



Juliet Rayment, on behalf of the Board of Trustees

Aims and Objectives

At OBS we believe that breastfeeding, and breastmilk, are deeply important. Our mission is to increase breastfeeding, provision of breastmilk and responsive feeding for babies in Oxfordshire by:

- Educating and empowering Oxfordshire families to define and achieve their feeding goals.
- Taking a lead role in developing an integrated network of breastfeeding support throughout Oxfordshire, so that all parents can access skilled, timely, local breastfeeding help.

Achievements and Performance

OBS in 2022

- 809 first visits, 828 return visits
 - 900 in-person visits
 - 506 online consultations
 - 147 Zoom group attendances
 - 79 families seen at antenatal sessions
 - 50% of first visitors from outside Oxford city (classed as OX1, OX2, OX3 and OX4)

*“If you do live near Oxfordshire and want any help or support with breastfeeding, relactating, inducing lactation or anything similar at any stage of your journey, Oxfordshire Breastfeeding Support (group) and its page Oxfordshire Breastfeeding Support offer a wealth of information, trained lactation specialists, and literally thousands of supportive mothers who have collectively tried every combination of pumping, breastfeeding, bottle feeding combination and formula feeding, the staff ***WON'T*** make you feel guilty for bottle feeding or weaning or anything of the sort (I combination fed my firstborn breast and formula - as do hundreds of thousands of women, they were massively supportive) - they will give you the unbiased information and support you need to make decisions YOU want to make.”*

Bex, Service User

In-person Sessions

In-person weekly support sessions in Barton, Donnington, Didcot and Kidlington, continued to be well-attended throughout 2022/23. We are pleased to continue our partnership at Barton Neighbourhood Centre and with Donnington Doorstep Family Centre.

Our partnership with Didcot Baby Monday ended and we entered into a new partnership with Didcot Community Partnership (DCP), changing our venue to the Soha housing building near Didcot train station.

In Kidlington we work in partnership with Kidlington Community Hub (KCH) to provide co-ordinated support for families. KCH say of the partnership with OBS:

“The KCH provides a variety of family-focused support groups for the local community, and as a part of our programme we have had the privilege to work closely with OBS. Over the past year our partnership has enabled us to frequently signpost between the two charities, reaching more families and increasing our capacity to support those in need. Not only have we been able to work together effectively but we have also developed a good relationship with the local Health Visiting team, who have worked alongside us at sessions to deliver a more comprehensive level of support. Overall we are seeing less isolation, more positive breastfeeding outcomes, and improved maternal mental health.”

Our Donnington session has been piloting a collaboration with the Enhanced Health Visiting (EHV) Service. This has enabled swift OBS referrals for reasons such as faltering growth, tongue-tie, severe mental health issues and safeguarding concerns, and return EHV referrals for additional feeding and social support. Following a post-Covid risk assessment we started to turn Donnington into a more social space for families - putting out baby mats and toys, bringing in additional volunteers to facilitate social interaction between families, and encouraging service users who no longer need extensive feeding support to return the following week(s) without having to book in again. This cautious return to a social space informed our plans to return to a social drop-in model for in-person sessions which we expect to realise in the 2023/24 year.

Our in-person sessions have also generated new fundraising income. In November tablets and card readers were delivered to each facilitator to take to in-person sessions to collect donations. Each tablet is named for a local breastfeeding support legend: Chloe Fisher, Sally Inch and Julie Osbourne. At the first outing at the Kidlington session £25 was immediately donated and volunteer Rachel Rea reported that “the parents were loving the machine at the Kidlington session yesterday!”



"I just wanted to say a huge thank you to the OBS team. I visited a Didcot session back when my little one was a few weeks old as I was having awful problems feeding, was in horrendous pain and at a real low point. I saw a lady called Lisa who couldn't have been more supportive. She made me feel so at ease, showed me such patience and kindness and, in the end, just let me have a big cry while she shared some really supportive words of advice. She was also the person who identified that my son was tongue tied and that this was the cause of the feeding problems I'd been having. If I hadn't gone to the session, I think I'd have given up trying to feed and I can't thank her and the general support from the OBS teams enough. I feel very grateful that such things are available to people as I certainly hadn't anticipated how difficult and emotive breastfeeding could be. Thank you!"

Anonymous Service User



Virtual 1:1 Consultations

We continued to offer virtual zoom sessions for 1:1 support and for parent's unable to attend an in-person session. In May we launched the use of Cliniko, a telehealth platform for virtual 1:1 consultations. The aim is to improve accessibility for families and streamline services. Initial feedback from families and facilitators is positive. The number of attendees at virtual 1:1 consultations has decreased from the 2021 high as in-person attendance grows.

"The online 1:1 session I had on day 3 with my newborn was invaluable. I was being provided with expert advice and reassurance at my convenience, in my own home. The social interaction of groups is so important but the online 1:1s can offer so much in reaching the very vulnerable in the early stages of motherhood and recovery."

Cordie, Service User

OBS Zoom Group

Our monthly zoom group has continued to run offering two parallel learning and discussion groups on "hot topics" related to breastfeeding, such as normal infant sleep, returning to work and starting complementary foods. Each session is co-led by a Facilitator and a Volunteer.

In September a leaflet titled [How to help your baby's sleep \(age 6 months or older\)](#) written by volunteer health visitor Vanessa and edited/formatted by OBS was distributed to attendees of our online OBS Zoom group and added to the [Resources for Parents](#) section of our website.

How to help your baby's sleep (age 6 months or older)



by Vanessa Campion
Health Visitor and OBS Volunteer

Establishing good sleep hygiene

Sleep hygiene is about establishing daily routines and practices that can make sleep more likely to occur. The bedroom environment is also an important part of sleep hygiene.

WHY IS THIS A GOOD IDEA?

What goes on during the day - as well as at bedtime - can help encourage your baby's developing sleeping patterns.

Sometimes it is all that is needed if a parent feels their child's sleep is more disrupted than normal.



As we transition back to a social drop-in in-person model for breastfeeding support we have begun conversations about the continuation of the online group and the purpose it serves. In early 2023 we took the decision to discontinue the monthly group.

Antenatal Breastfeeding Education Sessions

We have continued to offer monthly antenatal education sessions on Zoom. Attendance figures are higher than pre-pandemic levels: sessions take place in the daytime, and we frequently see people attending from their workplaces, including partners and other supporters. We also offer bespoke antenatal consultations for mothers for service users with previous feeding trauma and/or risk factors for complex feeding problems. Antenatal service users are invited to join our private Facebook group, and are also welcome to attend our in-person sessions to chat with facilitators, volunteers and other families.

In January 2023 we refreshed and renewed our teaching resources for the antenatal education session ensuring they fully represent current practice and offer the best guidance to pregnant women and their families.

“It was also useful to get to know the people delivering the session so that when I had to come back for support immediately after having the baby I felt much more confident to speak to the facilitators even though I was stressed and exhausted.”

Anonymous Service User

Facebook

Our private, closely-moderated Facebook group is a supportive, friendly environment in which mothers can seek feeding support, from other parents, OBS peer supporters and our specialist facilitator team. We are continuing to experiment with its format, channelling it as an avenue for social connectedness between families as well as for providing evidence-based information.

“The Facebook group bolstered my mental health as a sometimes pretty scared first time mum. Just being able to scroll through other peoples’ posts and replies made me aware, at anytime of day or night, that I was not alone. Once I’d plucked up the courage to post, the solidarity I found from facilitators, volunteers and other group members gave me so much strength, validating my decision to feed responsively and always reminding me that my adored, sleep-resisting baby is ‘normal’ and that I’m not doing things totally wrong!”

Jozie Shirreen, Facebook Service User

Other social media platforms have helped us to stay engaged with our service users and supporters.

- Regular social media posting on Facebook and Twitter.
- Increased presence on Instagram and LinkedIn
- Sharing video clips of ‘what to expect’ at our sessions
- Emails to our list



OBS Volunteers

We have continued to encourage growth in the skillsets of our existing volunteers, and to successfully train new volunteer peer supporters via the ABM Peer Supporter course. In 2022/23 we fully revised our volunteering policy and recruitment policy bringing greater clarity for this vital role for OBS. Volunteers are integral to our work at every level: they are a friendly, welcoming face at our sessions, providing support and reassurance, and normalising infant behaviour.

Given the importance of volunteers to OBS we have begun exploring the possibility of bringing training back 'in-house' as was the case pre-pandemic. This would bring benefits of providing bespoke training designed to meet the OBS service while also ensuring consistency of knowledge and approach. Discussions and preparations for this will continue throughout 2023/24.

We are incredibly proud of our OBS volunteers and thrilled that two of our long-standing, committed volunteers received external recognition. In May 2022 Sam Shiel won the OCVA (Oxfordshire Community & Voluntary Action) volunteer of the year award. Sam collected her award at a ceremony on 1st of June attended by Sam and OBS Interim Project Lead Kawther Alfasi.

We were also delighted to welcome our second FNP mother to join us as a volunteer this year.



Supporting Students, Health Professionals and Research

We have continued to offer observations for students and healthcare professionals at our in-person sessions, enabling them to increase their breastfeeding knowledge and competences. We also offered observations of our online Zoom groups, antenatal sessions and online 1:1 consultations.

2022 Observations	
observers registered	123
one-to-ones	10
Antenatal	2
Group	3
Didcot	1
Barton	14
Kidlington	9
Donnington	12
Total in-person	36
Total observations	51
Number who did 1 observation	32
Number who did 2 observations	3
Number who did 3 observations	2
Number who did 4 observations	2
Unique observers	39
Return observers (=>2)	7
Sessions booked but DNA	5

In October Facilitator Charlotte Gilmour, attended the 'System Changers Lunch' organised by the Oxford Hub, seeking to understand the needs and concerns of the Blackbird Leys community, and how they can best be served. Important insights gleaned into the process of embedding services into communities instead of top-down imposition. This work will help drive our ambitions to widen the availability of OBS support throughout Oxfordshire.

Collaborations and Partnerships

We have continued to participate in the Countywide Breastfeeding Strategy Group, which revised the Oxfordshire guidelines on faltering growth. Sharing best practices is critical to continuous improvement, both of our own services and those with which we collaborate.

In September we continued our partnership work with Motherkind Cafe with a session on breastfeeding grief and trauma, led by Facilitator Lisa Mansour.



“The breastfeeding grief and trauma Motherkind session we ran in September felt like important work. There were 8 attendees including a pregnant mother. Most came with complex feelings about breastfeeding/m and lactation, all left feeling heard and a little lighter. We talked about what went (or might go) wrong, what might have helped, shared information about how lactation works and listened without judgement to everyone’s feelings about their own experiences. We were able to offer follow up online 1:1 support to those who could benefit and made recommendations for other services for some.”

Although it can be tough to talk about feelings of loss and perceived failure to breastfeed it is a very important part of what we do at OBS: to meet mothers and other parents where they are, really listen and help them understand that they did not fail, but rather that they were failed by a chronic lack of appropriate infant feeding support in our society.

We hope to offer this session again soon.”

Lisa, OBS Facilitator

Widening Access and Family Nurse Partnership

Our work with Family Nurse Partnership (FNP) continues to evolve and expand offering joint virtual antenatal conversations and flexible postnatal feeding support to teenage mothers via text, WhatsApp, and virtual consultations.

“OBS has made me more confident about feeding my baby”

FNP Client

Our Black Breastfeeding Week campaign in August focused on amplifying voices and raising awareness of health inequalities for Black and Black-mixed women and birthing people.

We also published an inspiring case study by service user Lucy Dixon, who spoke about the complex way in which her African background shaped her attitudes towards motherhood and breastfeeding.



The constant attachment which breastfeeding, co-sleeping and sling-wearing necessitates removed almost all possibility of 'freedom', and I found the fear and acute panic which I viewed motherhood with start to melt away.

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Lucy and Otis

Read her full story

 #BBW22

We continue to focus on issues of accessibility and privacy for sessions and practical measures have included rearranging furniture and purchasing an additional screen at Kidlington

Fundraising

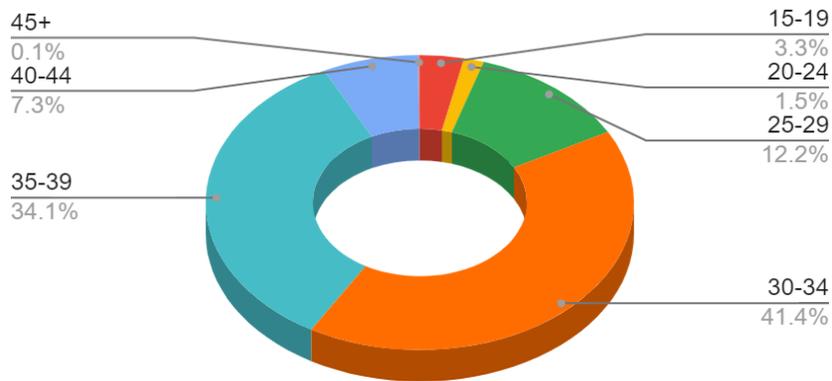
In December we launched our first Big Give fundraising campaign and successfully raised £5,095 from the OBS community. The event climaxed with a Winter Party in December at Donnington Doorstep, bringing together staff, volunteers, service users, trustees, health care professionals and other supporters.



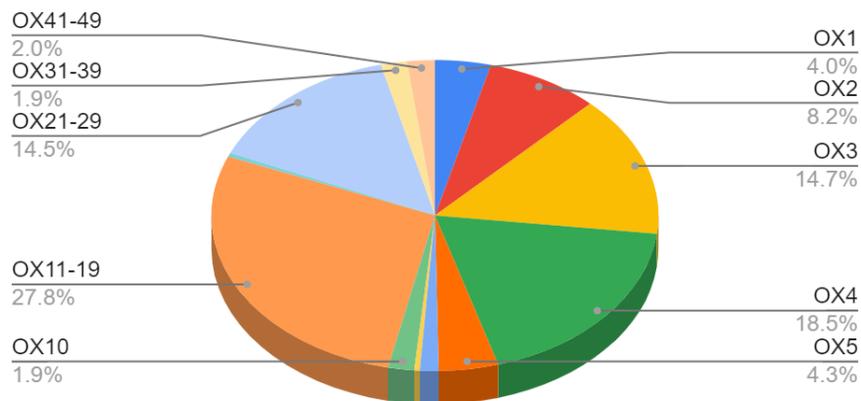
About our Service Users

Service User Profile 2022

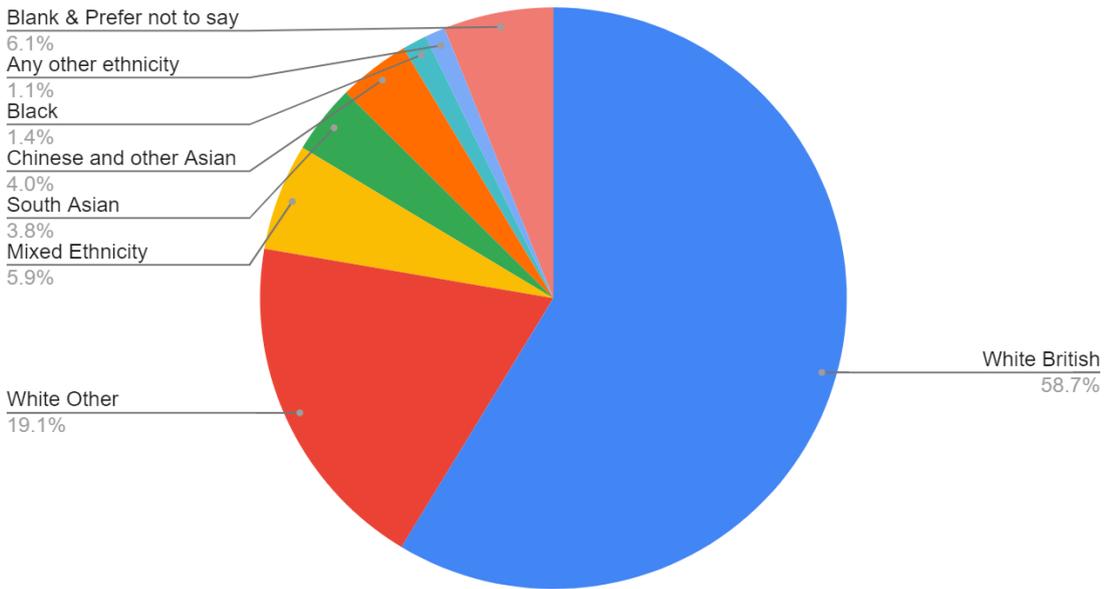
Mother's age at first visit 2022



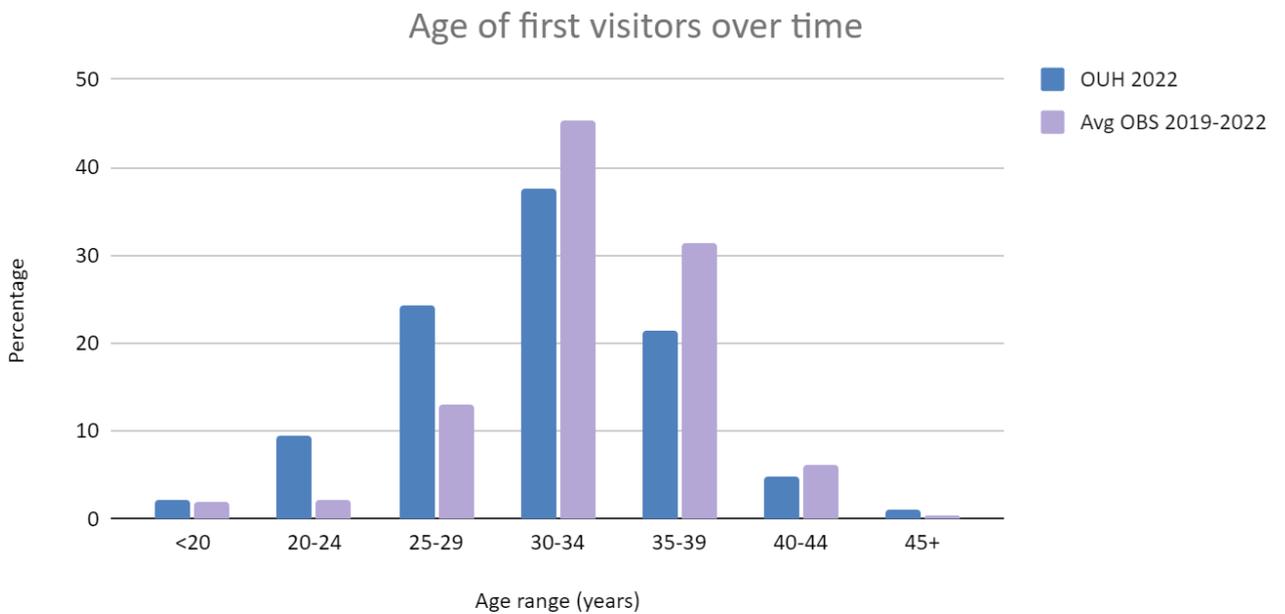
Postcodes 2022 first visitors



Ethnicity of OBS users 2022



Age of first visitors to OBS over time (2019 - 2022) compared against the average for the local NHS hospital trust in 2022. Below shows how we stack up against the local community over the last few years. The development of the FNP programmes continues to engage younger mothers with OBS.



Financial Report

This year saw OBS once again with a small deficit in funding as the organisation navigated its way out of funding targeted at meeting the needs of the pandemic and back to a more stable grant and donation income position.

Our Lottery grant entered the fourth year of funding and reduced to £21k (2021/22 £29k), and this was used primarily to fund Didcot and online sessions. The planned expenditure on a new location, Banbury, continued to be reallocated to providing ongoing 1:1 virtual and group support as we transitioned our way out of the pandemic response. It is envisaged that during 23/24 new drop in sessions will open with a corresponding drop in 1:1 online support, which will become targeted towards vulnerable families.

In the next financial year the element of our income provided by the Lottery grant will reduce further, with this funding source due to end on 31st March 2024. We are looking to build other sources of grant funding to supplement the significant level of donor income that we are fortunate to receive.

[Find the full 2022/23 accounts here.](#)

During 2022/23 a deficit of £1,474 was recorded (2021/22 deficit £642) with income and expenditure incurred being very similar for the prior year. We had budgeted for a higher deficit, but expenditure was lower than expected as the full employment model was delayed due to negotiations over contract terms. By the end of 2024, all work for OBS will be undertaken by employees of the organisation rather than being contracted to self employed freelancers.

Income for the year was £77,851 (2021/22 £74,429).

Included in this figure is £21k of Lottery grant funding and £37k of donation income. The donation income was unrestricted and we were able to use this funding to meet the running costs of our core face to face sessions and to contribute towards the management overheads of running the organisation.

Expenses during the year were £79,325 (2021/22 £75,071).

The costs of running the organisation remained broadly comparable from the prior year, with some increases in project management costs and fees and expenses. These arose from the change in using employees in the project management and

administration roles as opposed to freelance contractors. In 2023/24 all session facilitators are expected to become employees.

[A reserves policy](#) has been agreed by the Trustees and is reviewed annually to ensure that the appropriate levels of reserves are maintained and OBS is able to continue to fund its activities without unnecessary disruption.

Donors

Unrestricted income has been generously donated by:

- Two anonymous, long standing, individual donors
- Matched payroll giving scheme
- Regular giving by supporters through LocalGiving , Paypal and at in-person sessions

Restricted donations have been received from:

- Lottery funding: £21,000
- Local Giving Magic Little Grants £500
- Doris Field Charitable Trust £500
- OCF Cost of Living Grant £2,370
- OCF Contain Grant £8,438

and all our other generous donors and supporters



Louise Ellis, ACA, OBS Treasurer

Risk Management

The major risk to OBS, as with many other small charities, is financial. The ending of our current National Lottery funding in March 2024 provides a particular challenge. To address this, we recruited a trustee with experience in charity fundraising in 2022 and a Director.

As highlighted in the last annual report the capacity of our volunteers remains a risk to OBS, particularly as demand for the service grows. We have strengthened our volunteering policy, code of conduct and volunteer recruitment processes in an effort to mitigate some of this risk. There has been a significant turnover of trustees within the last year which also highlights the risk of lack of volunteering capacity. Our trustees are predominantly women with young children who also work professionally and it can be difficult to manage competing demands on time. Before the end of 2023 we plan to recruit for three additional trustees to help manage workloads and provide further continuity.

Safeguarding risks remain uppermost in our minds and we have updated and reviewed our safeguarding policy and procedures. These have been further strengthened by the appointment of our new Designated Safeguarding Lead, Catriana McKie and Safeguarding Trustee Dr Ashvina Segaran.

Looking Towards 2023/24

We look forward with enthusiasm to the upcoming year and the planned return to a drop-in social model to our in-person sessions. We will also finalise the move of our facilitators from contractors to employees recognising fully the vital and irreplaceable role they play in OBS.