



**Navigating Gene Mutations
Together**

BRCA+ Chat

Trustees' Annual Report and Financial Statements for the period

1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023

“The BRCA+ Chat charity has helped me find a sense of belonging in a world that can feel so daunting. Their work has helped me find and meet other people going through the same process and sharing our individual stories has helped build a community of hope, support, and love.”

49 Station Road, Polegate, East Sussex, BN26 6EA

BRCA+ Chat is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation governed by a CIO Foundation Constitution and overseen by a Board of Trustees

Registered Charity Number 1195944

Executive Summary

During our second year as a charity, we have continued to build the amazing community of humans navigating a BRCA gene mutation (or other related gene). As a Board of Trustees, we held our first ever face to face Trustee meeting in Sheffield during which we set our strategic plan for the next 12 months. We agreed that our primary focus for the year would be on building our BRCA+ Chat community through a range of formats, including our face to face and online meet ups and our social media presence.

We delivered a series of webinars to build awareness and education of the diverse range of issues people affected by BRCA+ Chat encountered inviting expert speakers where possible to lead them. Topics for these were identified through beneficiary feedback.

We have also developed our governance and organisational structure to ensure that our processes are safe, resilient and have enabled the charity to operate effectively and robustly.

The lived experience of our Board members, BRCA+ Chat buddies, BRCA+ Chat supporters and those that follow our website, newsletter and social media posts remains at the heart of all we do and guides us in our activities, our plans, and our future ambitions.



BRCA+ Chat Trustees meeting face to face for the first time

“I have found this so valuable over the last few years- the stories you've shared, the talks you've organised and the pics you share have helped me so much and I even found my surgeon (who I am SO happy with) through this page! I honestly can't thank you enough.”

Objectives

Our vision is to build a world where people's lives are not determined by their gene mutations.

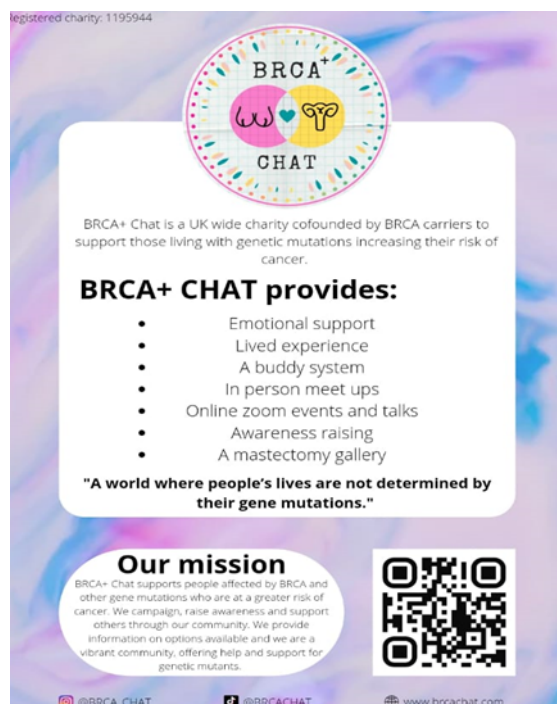
We will work towards this by:

- ✓ Providing emotional, mental and practical support for those affected by BRCA and other gene mutations within the United Kingdom
- ✓ Providing education in the United Kingdom on arising out of or pertaining to BRCA and other gene mutations
- ✓ Creating awareness and campaigning around issues arising out of or pertaining to BRCA and other gene mutations including, but not limited to, better access to genetic testing within the United Kingdom

"By the way, I don't know if I took the time to tell you before, but I am very admiring of what you do. Your strength, the communicative energy you radiate despite all what you went through. Some bad days it really helps me seeing you. I see so much beauty that I hope I'll be able to see in myself when the time will come."

Statutory Declaration on Public Benefit

The trustees declare that they have complied with their duty to have due regard to the guidance on public benefit published by the Charity Commission in exercising their powers or duties.



Registered charity: 1195944

BRCA+ CHAT


BRCA+ Chat is a UK wide charity cofounded by BRCA carriers to support those living with genetic mutations increasing their risk of cancer.

BRCA+ CHAT provides:

- Emotional support
- Lived experience
- A buddy system
- In person meet ups
- Online zoom events and talks
- Awareness raising
- A mastectomy gallery

"A world where people's lives are not determined by their gene mutations."

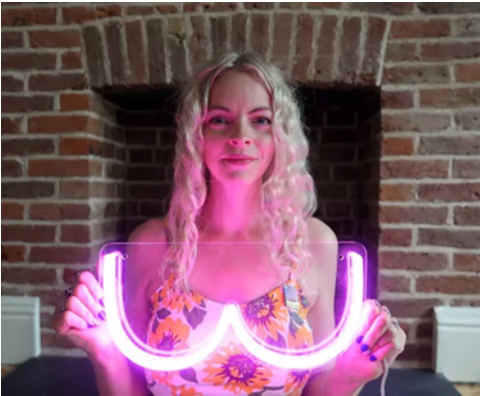
Our mission
BRCA+ Chat supports people affected by BRCA and other gene mutations who are at a greater risk of cancer. We campaign, raise awareness and support others through our community. We provide information on options available and we are a vibrant community, offering help and support for genetic mutants.



www.brcachat.com

[@BRCA_CHAT](https://www.instagram.com/BRCA_CHAT) [@BRCACHAT](https://www.facebook.com/BRCACHAT)

Overview

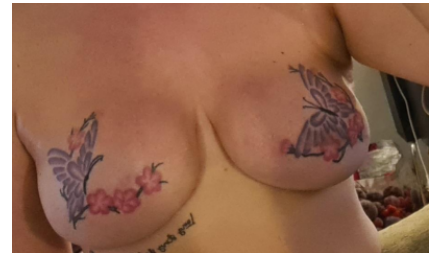


Despite having no staff and limited resources, we are so proud of what we have achieved this year, led by the energy, passion, commitment and incredible hard work of our Chair, Christen Williams.

Through our events and activities, we have reached nearly 900 people to share knowledge, information, and community. We have more than 2,000 followers on our social media platforms and are reaching three times that number across UK and the world. We have grown our

wonderful group of BRCA buddies who use their lived experience to support others at the start of their journeys to nearly 150.

Our website continues to be important in promoting our messages of love and positivity to people living or affected by BRCA type gene mutations. Our mastectomy gallery is a unique resource for anyone facing preventative breast surgery and we are so grateful to the many previvors who have shared their images.



An image from our gallery

“Hi! I just came across your page and wanted to say a massive thanks for sharing so much info about BRCA. I’m in the midst of prepping for my upcoming mastectomy, and just binge watched a whole bunch of your YouTube videos which were so, so helpful. The mastectomy gallery was awesome too! I really appreciate that you’ve shared so much of your journey, it’s helped me feel a lot less nervous and alone.”

We have received loads of messages of hope and thanks as well as requests for information and advice. Whilst we are clear that we are not medical experts, and that we can only provide information based on the experiences within our community, we will always try to signpost to accredited sources and highlight new research and news when it is published. Mostly however, it is emotional support that we give.

During the year, we have joined national and local campaigns to add our voice to the need for more information, support, and genetic testing.

“Before knowing about this amazing charity I was so alone with me feelings, no one understood and now I have a whole support network ❤️❤️❤️ it has made such a difference to my mental health, cannot thank you enough for the amazing work you do 💋💋💋 love ya ❤️❤️”

Activities

Peer support

Our fantastic BRCA buddies are all inspirational peer models who share their own journeys and experiences to support others. As our network expands, we are keen to better support our buddies and introduce a more structured resource to link BRCA affected humans with those buddies that might be best placed to support them.

"You've made me feel a bit more normal - so thanks for welcoming me in too."

Meet ups

We held three face to face meet ups during the year in Edinburgh, Sheffield and London. These were attended by 33 people. We also held an online peer support group meeting which 25 people attended. Feedback from these has been incredible and through them we have recruited more buddies and been able to link buddies up with others in their areas to build local BRCA communities.

We are planning even more during the coming year!

"Such a wonderful meeting. Thank you so much lovely. Finally speaking to ladies who understand has made such a difference to my mood! I can't wait to meet up again soon I hope 😊"



London Meet-Up May 22

Webinars

We held five webinars with 185 people attending. Subjects were as diverse as the images in our mastectomy gallery - CHAT Skin Melanoma, CHAT Nip Tats, CHAT Dating, CHAT sex post mastectomy and CHAT To Nip or Not to Nip. The most popular was our webinar about sex post mastectomy with 64 people attending.

The webinars always spark lots of discussion and we are continually identifying new subjects based on the feedback we receive.

"I am going to have to go now but I just wanted to say this has been super lovely and you are both absolute babes and thank you for sharing all of this! Definitely will be attending the next one, please make sure there are more :) x"

"Thank you SO MUCH for being so open and answering my million questions".

"The BRCA info meeting was superb. Sooo grateful, it was so informative and reassuring and wonderful expertise!!"

"Thank you! My head feels well clearer around future decisions now!"

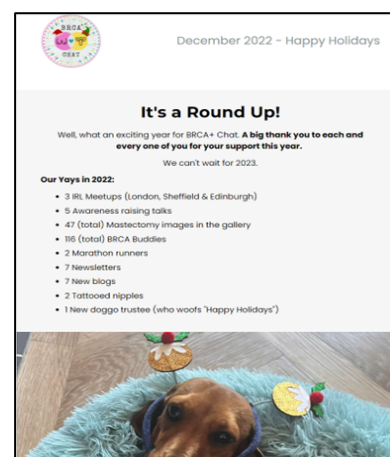
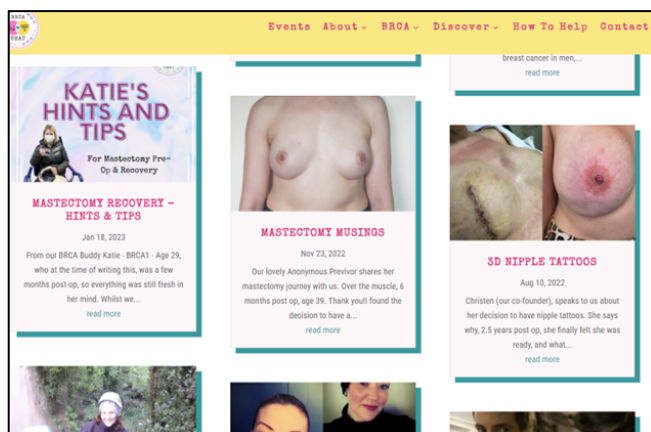
Insta Live

In December, we held our first ever Instagram Live event about genetic testing. We have 618 views which was incredible and led to us guest speaking on an Instagram Live Panel to discuss grief "Moving Forward, not Moving on" which had 617 views.

"I think your insta pages are invaluable for people like me who are new to the BRCA journey and wanting real accounts, not just what you get from Google and hospital leaflets! Thank you! Xxx"

Newsletters, Blogs, etc

Our newsletters and blogs are an important way of keeping people informed about our plans, upcoming events, and news about everything BRCA. We sent out eight newsletters and published five blogs during the year.



Social media and website resources

Reaching out to anyone who may be struggling with their BRCA status is a vital aspect of our work. Our board of Trustees are (mostly) all BRCA+ Humans, who all felt overwhelmed and alone when first diagnosed. We recognised a need for more support services in the U.K – and just wanted a friendly BRCA buddy to spell it out to us. This is how BRCA+ Chat developed and the more people we can help to feel less overwhelmed and alone, the better we feel.

We have some big plans to make our online communications even more engaging and eye catching and are hoping to get some pro bono support for this next year as well as building a communications strategy for funding bids to grants and trusts.

Our BRCA community is built on sharing messages of hope, knowledge, experiences, and the better we can do this, the more our community will grow, and no one will be alone.

"I just wanted to say how brilliant your website and Instagram has been. Just had my double mastectomy with reconstruction straight to OTM implants. Your information has been invaluable and helped me to understand what to expect throughout this journey. I'm sure this has and will continue to help post op. Christen vlog post op was most helpful."

"Honestly don't know what do without this webpage. I wouldn't be prepared at all. I obviously don't know you or your mum, but I am sure she would be so proud of you, this account and the networking you've created !! For people like me 😊xxx"

Campaigning



Christen at No 10

Our fab co-founder Christen was invited to number 10 to discuss issues women face in terms of health for International Women's Day. She was there raising awareness about the inconsistency of support across the UK and that women are being diagnosed with cancer whilst waiting for mastectomies.

We also campaigned on lots of other issues including the challenges men face around BRCA mutations. We will continue to raise awareness of BRCA type mutations at every opportunity and the need for better testing and support.

Fundraisers

We would not have been able to do any of this without the brilliant people (and pets) that support us, give such wonderful feedback and raise money for us to develop and grow our services.

This year we have had fundraisers completing the Edinburgh marathon, the Brighton half marathon and delivering a Christmas carol concert. We also have numerous individuals who have contributed individual amounts to our charity.



Future Plans

Our plans for the coming year are to strengthen our buddy network and build our BRCA community, to develop our communications and branding to engage with more people affected by BRCA type gene mutations and to increase our events and activities.

Thank you to all our amazing supporters!!!



Governance and Financial Review

Trustees

Christen Williams (Chair)

Lisa Bancroft (Secretary)

Janine Duncan (Treasurer)

Alex Williams

Eleanor Howie

Kate Biles

Bank

Metro Bank

Recruitment and appointment of Trustees

The Trustees are recruited through word of mouth or BRCA+ Chat advertising. The Trustees conduct an annual audit of the Board to identify where new Trustees with specialist skills or knowledge can benefit the charity. Prospective Trustees are interviewed by at least two members of the Trustee Board and then invited to attend a Trustee meeting to introduce themselves and their reasons for wanting to be a Trustee to the current Board members. A vote of the existing Trustees is then taken to confirm appointment.

Statement of the Charity's Policy on Reserves

Cash at bank at 31.03.2023 was £11,845 in unrestricted funds. The Trustees policy on reserves is to hold enough reserves to cover dissolution of the charity. This is reviewed annually. They are confident that the charity has enough funds to cover any dissolution costs.

Details of Any Funds Materially in Deficit

The Trustees declare that the charity had no funds which were materially in deficit at the date of the statement of assets and liabilities.

State of the Charity's Finances

Thanks to the efforts of our many supporters who have raised funds for us our reserves have doubled in the past year and the Board has made plans in the coming year to use these funds to meet our objectives by budgeting for admin and specialist support services to provide more comprehensive support for our beneficiaries.

Restricted Funds

The charity did not receive any restricted funds.

Designated Funds

We did not receive any designated funds during the year.

Particulars of Any Outstanding Guarantee Given by the Charity

The Trustees declare that the charity has given no guarantee where potential liability is outstanding at the date of the statement of assets and liabilities.

Particulars of Any Outstanding Debt

The Trustees declare that the charity has no outstanding debts which are secured by an express charge on any of the assets of the charity at the date of the statement of assets and liabilities.

Declaration

The Trustees declare that they have approved this report and authorised that it be signed on their behalf.

Christen Williams

24th January 2024



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

BRCA+ Chat

1195944

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period from	01.04.2022	To	31.03.2023
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Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Donations	5,842	-	-	5,842	6,878
Fundraising event - London Parks	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	5,842	-	-	5,842	6,878
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	5,842	-	-	5,842	6,878
A3 Payments					
BRCA buddies materials	178	-	-	178	-
Training	30	-	-	30	-
Website costs	175	-	-	175	-
Trustee Expenses	409	-	-	409	-
Licences	35	-	-	35	-
Insurance	48	-	-	48	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	875	-	-	875	-
A4 Asset and investment purchases. (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	875	-	-	875	-
Net of receipts/(payments)	4,967	-	-	4,967	6,878
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	6,878	-	-	6,878	-
Cash funds this year end	11,845	-	-	11,845	6,878

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Bank account	11,845	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds <small>(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))</small>	11,845	-	-

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

Categories	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment assets			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

Categories	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

Categories	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
	Kate Piles	24.1.24