

# Speaking Up, Fighting Prejudice, Improving Lives

Annual Report 2022 - 2023



My Life My Choice wins Charity Awards 2023



Sara Ryan, My Life My Choice Patron | Michael Edwards, My Life My Choice President

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Charity number: 1187726 | [www.mylifemychoice.org.uk](http://www.mylifemychoice.org.uk)

## Our Vision

Our vision is a world where people with a learning disability are treated without prejudice, and are able to have choice and control over their own lives.

## A Year of Success!

What an amazing year for My Life My Choice (MLMC). More members than ever, more people enjoying activities, more digital inclusion, the Travel Buddy scheme roaring onwards, big funding successes, and our campaign work making a big splash. To cap it all off we only go and win the 2023 Charity Awards - Wow!

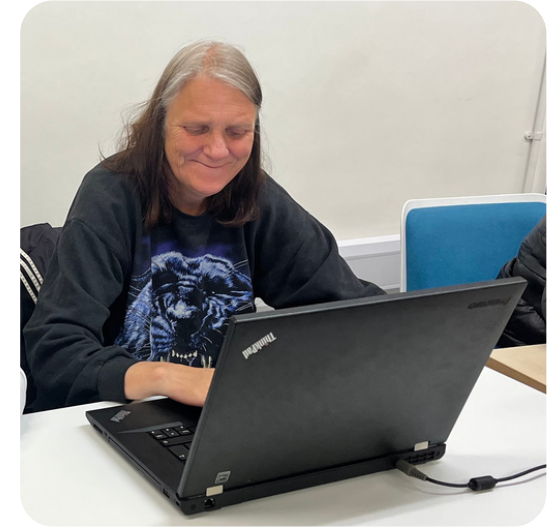
In this 2022/23 Annual Report you can read more about what we've achieved.

Thank you once again to everybody who has supported us.

*Ben McKay & Ady Chappell*  
Co-Chairs of Trustees



Having fun!



Learning new skills



Speaking out



Championing self-advocacy

# Our Trustees

**For us, by us.**

MLMC is a self-advocacy organisation led by 13 trustees, all who have a learning disability. We are proud to be 100% user-led.



**Michael**  
President



**Ben**  
Co-Chair



**Ady**  
Co-Chair



**Paul**  
Vice Chair



**Anup**



**Andy**



**Nigel T**



**Keith**



**Charlene**



**Nigel R**



**Antony**



**Joan**



**Abul**

# 2022-2023 Highlights

**7350**

## Easy Read Mailouts

A monthly hard-copy newsletter is sent to members of MLMC providing advice and sharing member's stories, updates and activities.



Winners!

The Travel Buddy Film won best film in the £350-1 million turnover category at the Smiley Charity Film Awards. Charlene and Luke, who starred in the film, accepted the award.



**£53,840**

Funding received to support our user-led research project "Pioneering Women".



**£396,848**



From the National Lottery Community Fund to fund our Gig Buddy project for a further five years!



Delighted to have received the Charity Award 2023 for the Disability category.

Jack Backwell, active member and former MLMC trustee, announced as a winner of the Learning Disability and Autism Leaders' List 2022.





## Power Up

We received £182,000 in income and paid members £18,000 through this fee earning enterprise.

We delivered:

- 33 consultations activities
- 20 research projects
- 41 inspections of residential care settings for the local authority
- 5 training workshops
- 13 easy read translations

Partners/clients included Mencap, Southend-on-sea Council, University of Sheffield, Open University, The Electoral Commission, University of Oxford, Raphael Samuel History Centre, and the National Institute for Health and Care Research.



## Champions

Ongoing campaigns:

"Don't Lock Us Away" focuses on advocating for the provision of alternative high quality community care for those locked away in secure hospitals. Successes from the year include gaining support from local health trusts, working with other nationwide advocacy groups, and our Co-Chair of trustees being featured in Community Living Magazine.

"We Can't Wait" strives to address longstanding health inequalities by prioritising people with a learning disability on NHS waiting lists. We've successfully secured funding from the local authority to produce a campaign film and accessible materials to help healthcare professionals implement change.



## Self-Advocacy Groups

We ran 8 adult self-advocacy groups across Oxfordshire, and 6 young people's groups. In March we launched a new group in Bicester, and we hope to start one in Witney before the end of 2023.

We provided training sessions, and released an Easy Read workbook, supporting members to become stronger and more confident self advocates.

The groups discussed both local and international issues. The Women's Group engaged in 'craftivism' by knitting a blanket to show their support for women in the USA, after learning that in many places their right to an abortion had been revoked.



## Gig Buddy

This year Gig Buddy hosted 25 social events attended by 79 individuals. Events included a trip to Cotswold Wildlife Park, a boat trip down the Thames, and a wild party at Witney Music Festival!

Our monthly user-led nightclub continued to thrive and a record 117 people attended in December.

The year saw 28 active Gig Buddy pairs, 8 of which were peer-buddies, and the first volunteer training event for 3 years. Together, Gig Buddy pairs did activities such as attending Cher the Musical, head banging at live concerts, and going to a silent disco!



## Travel Buddy

- 23 people received 1:1 travel training through 126 supported travel journeys
- 36 members benefited from 98 companion journeys
- 162 members built their travel confidence and skills at 17 different workshops.

Workshop topics included how to get train passenger assistance, safe travel, & how to get disability rail and buses passes.

Funding from Great Western Railway helped us produce and send easy read train travel guides to all members, and deliver intensive support to 6 members to travel the London Underground.



## Computer Buddy

This year the number of free devices provided to members hit over 100, with thanks to funding received from Oxford Community Foundation's Step Change Fund.

63 members received support in the form of 1:1 sessions or group workshops. As a result, members have reported improved well-being and improved relationships with services, such as the NHS.

Key links have been made with organisations such as Guideposts, in addition to Oxfordshire day centres and the NHS Occupational Health teams to maximise the project's reach.

# Stakeholder Feedback

**My Life My Choice demonstrates "a deep and genuine commitment to being user-led."**

Chris Sherwood, Charity Awards 2023 Judge and RSCPA Chief Executive

**"They are a real guiding light among self-advocacy organisations."**

Stakeholder Consultation Report for My Life My Choice, March 2023

**"My Life My Choice has helped me get more confident, by speaking up and helping others."**

Dawn Wiltshire, MLMC Consultant and Member



96% of staff reported a feeling of inclusion at work\*



92% of staff recommend working for MLMC\*

# Money Report



## Accounts for 2022/23

(Draft figures)

**Income: £432,905**

**Expenditure: £435,774**

**Deficit: £2,869**

**Reserves: £474,674**



# THANK YOU!

A big thank you to all of our supporters and funders who worked in partnership with us during 2022-23.



## A very big thank you also to:

AMMCO Charitable Trust (CT), Arnold Clark Community Fund, Bartlett Taylor CT, Christopher Laing Foundation, Colefax Charitable Trust, Cooper CT, David Solomon's CT, Doris Field CT, Forbes Foundation, Garfield Weston Foundation, Gisela Graham Foundation, Good Things Foundation, Great Western Railway, Grey Court Trust, Imagine Foundation, Invesco Cares, Iron Bridge Trust, Marsh CT, Mr & Mrs Pye Charitable Settlement, Pharsalia CT, Shanly Foundation, Souter CT, Stanton Ballard CT, Stockwell CT, Syder Foundation, Tambour Foundation, The Helianthus CT and Steven Bloch Disability Charitable Trust.

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