



**Trust  
Alliance  
Group**

# 2023

# ANNUAL REPORT

**Including Energy Ombudsman  
and Communications Ombudsman**

[trustalliancegroup.org](https://trustalliancegroup.org)

# IN THIS YEAR'S REPORT

## ANNUAL REPORTING

1. Welcome	3 - 5
2. Foreword from our Chair	6 - 7
3. Group CEO's Review	8 - 9
4. This year's highlights	10
5. Group overview	11 - 25
6. Energy Ombudsman	26 - 27
7. Communications Ombudsman	28 - 29
8. Flexible Resolution Services	30
9. The Internet Commission	31
10. Group Support Services	32 - 33
11. Independent Assessor's report	34 - 35
12. Our Priorities (looking ahead to 2024/2025)	36

## FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

13. Company information	39
14. Strategic report	40 - 44
15. Director's Responsibilities Statement	45
16. Director's report	46 - 48
17. Independent Auditor's report	49 - 51
18. Group Statement of Comprehensive Income	52
19. Group and Company balance sheets	53
20. Group statement of changes in equity	54 - 55
21. Group statement of cash flows	56
22. Notes to the group financial statements	57 - 63
23. Company statement of cash flows	64 - 79

"I am immensely proud of what has been achieved during 2023, despite all of the challenges that were presented"

Foreword From The Chair  
Page 6

"We will continue to develop and invest in the capabilities of the Group to maximise our impact"

CEO's Review  
Page 8

"In 2023, 123k energy disputes were accepted - more than ever before. This reinforces the requirement for our role, with the work we undertake in the energy sector proving more essential than ever"

Energy Ombudsman  
Page 24

# WELCOME

Trust Alliance Group consists of several businesses that were previously part of Ombudsman Services, including Energy Ombudsman, Communications Ombudsman, The Internet Commission, Flexible Resolution Services, and Support Services.

 Energy Ombudsman

Approved by Ofgem since 2008 to independently and impartially handle consumer disputes, the Energy Ombudsman is the only alternative dispute resolution provider in the energy sector.

 Communications Ombudsman

Approved by Ofcom since 2002 to independently and impartially handle consumer disputes, the Communications Ombudsman is the largest provider of alternative dispute resolution in the communications sector.

 Flexible Resolution Services

Flexible Resolution Services provides dispute resolution support for a number of sectors, including energy, telecommunications and parking.

 The Internet Commission

The Internet Commission is an organisation that works to advance trust in digital services across the globe.

 Support Services

The new business unit that supports the delivery of strategic goals and provides services that help the running of the Group, including Group IT, data, finance, governance and risk, Lumin, continuous improvement, legitimacy, public affairs and communications.



To deliver on our purpose of building and maintaining trust, we're developing diverse capabilities in areas such as digital alternative dispute resolution and case management technology.

**OUR PURPOSE**

We exist to build, maintain, and restore trust and confidence between consumers and businesses.

We aid consumer understanding and confidence in a society which is more connected, disrupted and focused on sustainability.

We support consumers and suppliers independently and fairly without favouritism or discrimination.

- By striving to have a deep understanding of consumer behaviour
- By helping suppliers improve service, change culture and build confidence
- By helping industries resolve systemic industry-wide issues
- By using technology and analysing data to improve services and reduce detriment

**OUR VALUES**

Our values define everything we do – they define what we do and how we operate with consumers, suppliers, regulators as well as our colleagues. We believe that being authentic, and aligning our actions, decisions and behaviours with our values will develop trust with our stakeholders and within the industries we operate.

We support our colleagues in living our values and encourage them to highlight where behaviours can better align with our values.

**Openness**

Being authentic about who we are ensures we think and act with humility and honesty

**Balance**

Our respect for other views and perspectives means we listen before we act to create fair processes and considered decisions

**Courage**

We focus on what's right and speaking up when it isn't, trusting each other to keep us safe

**Empathy**

We understand everyone is different and aim to provide an approachable, helpful human voice

# FOREWORD FROM THE CHAIR

**"I am immensely proud of what has been achieved during 2023, despite all of the challenges that were presented."**

The creation of the new group structure has allowed a far greater focus on building out the capabilities of the business but also on delivering against its strategic goals.

Both the Energy and Communications businesses experienced massive growth during 2023, mainly due to factors in the marketplace that would have been hard to predict. The nature of these sectors means that macro changes in the global economy can have a massive impact on consumer behaviour and therefore inbound cases.

The introduction of the European Digital Services Act and the UK's Online Safety Act 2023 have presented a number of interesting opportunities for The Internet Commission and for the wider group. I am encouraged by the progress already made on extending the Group remit in this online safety sector.

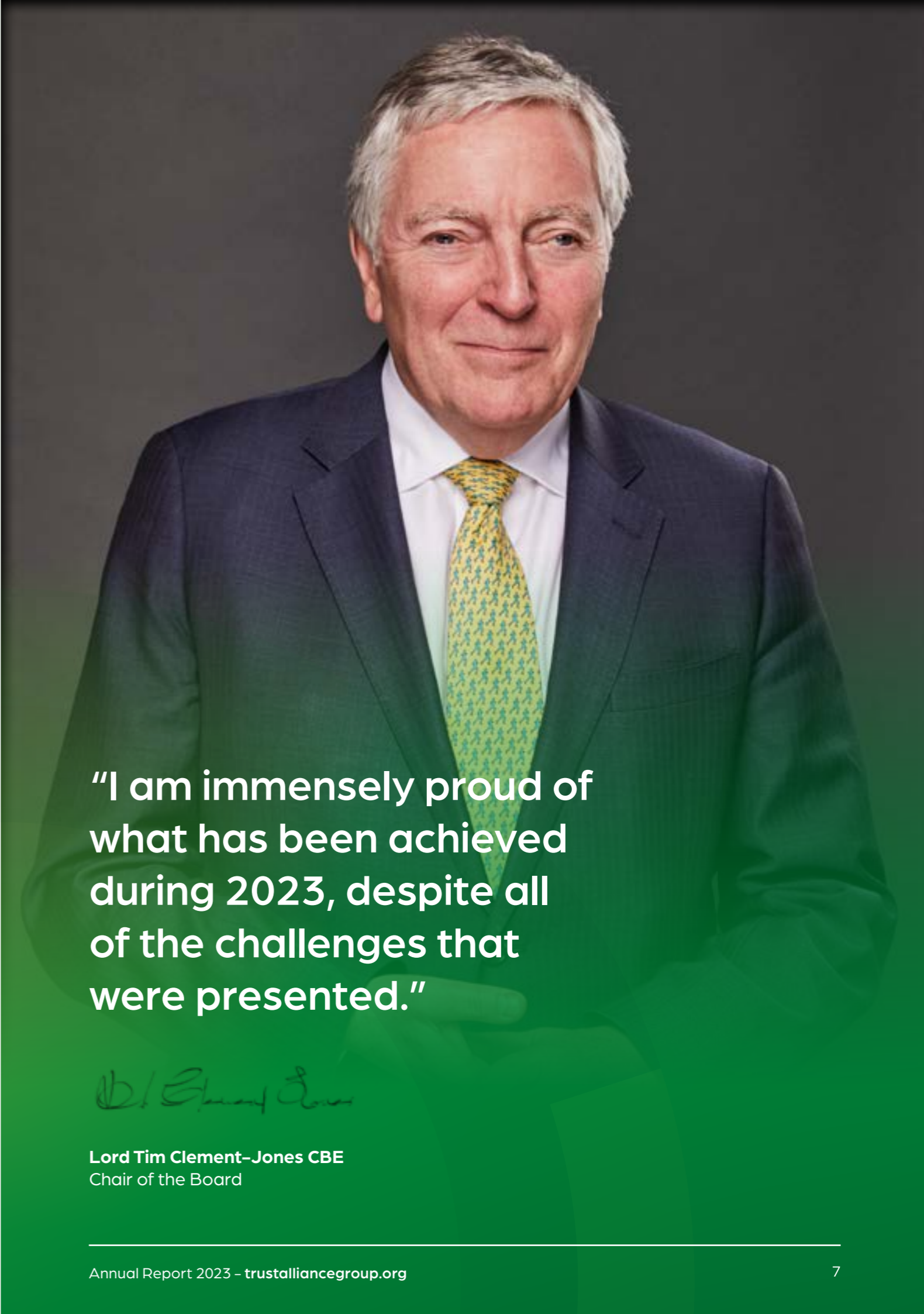
With extending consumer reach and improving accessibility identified as a key priority, the team have been able to clarify the key segments of the population who are most under represented within our user base. They have used this insight to devise strategies that will grow awareness and understanding of the service, guide community outreach activity and enhance internal capability in order to provide additional support for those consumers who need it most. Work has commenced on extending the reach of the two ombudsman businesses to sectors of the community not currently using these services and this will ramp up during 2024.

The Energy business successfully implemented the first year of the broker redress scheme. This sector has a number of further remit extension opportunities and therefore the Group will continue to work with Ofgem and Government on bringing these opportunities to fruition.

At the end of the year, I was pleased to share the appointment of Simon Palmer as the Group's new Chief Executive, having been pivotal in shaping the strategic direction of the business. I am extremely grateful to Matthew Vickers, our previous Group Chief Executive for his contribution to the Group over the past nine years.

As the markets and stakeholder priorities change, it is important that the Group remains relevant by improving its technological, data and other capabilities. This will require an appropriate level of investment so that the Group can continue to grow and maximise its potential.

There has been great progress in just one year and I believe that this is just the start of the journey for Trust Alliance Group. There are more exciting times ahead as the Group continues to focus on and deliver its strategic goals. That means keeping a clear focus on its purpose, ensuring it remains relevant in the markets it supports and looking for opportunities to extend its reach and remit.



**"I am immensely proud of what has been achieved during 2023, despite all of the challenges that were presented."**

**Lord Tim Clement-Jones CBE**  
Chair of the Board

# GROUP CEO'S REVIEW

**"We will continue to develop and invest in the capabilities of the Group to maximise our impact."**

## OVERVIEW

This was the year when we realised the beginning of our journey for Trust Alliance Group and created new consumer channels and new websites that are easier to access and navigate. After months of preparation, we successfully established the new business entities and launched each one internally and externally. Both ombudsman businesses performed well in the face of increased case volumes and our work with external stakeholders delivered a number of new remit opportunities for the Group.

## GROUP PURPOSE AND STRATEGY

Early in the year we outlined three clear strategic goals for the Group which are Relevance, Reach and Remit (see section 5). In addition to effectively running the business, I'm pleased to say that we have made significant progress against each of these. To support this progress, we have made and will continue to invest in Group capabilities.

This annual report provides an update on progress from each area of the business units, starting with the Group strategic functions, followed by the delivery business units, and finally Group Support Services. The strategic goals are referenced throughout.

My highlights of the year are summarised below.

### Group Structure

To support the goal of improving consumer reach and accessibility, we developed new branding for each of the business entities and created new websites and consumer channels for each. For the two ombudsman businesses, it is clear that this has resulted in far clearer signposting for consumers and less confusion for those attempting to find other ombudsman schemes.

### Group Business Summary

During the period, the Energy Ombudsman experienced record volumes of disputes, with over 120k cases accepted. It was clear that, with prices at an all-time high, many consumers struggled with the cost-of-living. Despite this period of change, we consistently achieved our key targets and improved the service to consumers.

The Communications Ombudsman successfully onboarded Virgin Media so that we now look after the whole of the VMO2 business. Despite the large increase in volumes, we continued to hit KPI's during the year.

The newly created Flexible Resolution Services saw a record year for parking appeals submitted, with over 93,000 motorists using our service. We will continue to support Government on the implementation of the Parking (Code of Practice) Act and, when the time comes, will determine the correct role for the Group in delivering the new Single Independent Appeals Service.

## Remit Expansion

Having worked closely with Ofgem and the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) we successfully launched a new dispute resolution scheme for energy brokers. During its first year of operation, 1,890 brokers are now members of the scheme, and we accepted 741 cases, a trend which continued to grow over the 12 months. We were pleased to have been able to demonstrate our ability to deliver a successful remit extension and continue to work closely with Ofgem and DESNZ on other potential opportunities.

## Online Safety

Following the acquisition of The Internet Commission in 2022, the team continued to develop knowledge and capability in the online safety sector. Work was started on new product development for the sector, and I look forward to the first products coming on stream in 2025.

## Colleagues

Our colleagues have underpinned the progress we have made during the year. As a result, colleague engagement, development and wellbeing continues to be a priority for the Group and several improvements to the colleague benefits package were rolled out during the year. As our need to attract and retain talented colleagues increased, we also celebrated the opening of our first three regional workplaces in Birmingham, Nottingham and Peterlee.

## OUTLOOK FOR 2024

With so much progress made during 2023, the Group will continue to focus on its strategic goals, whilst ensuring the continued performance and improvement of our core businesses. We have some very exciting opportunities ahead of us and we will continue to develop and invest in the capabilities of the Group to maximise our impact.

## THANK YOU

I am very pleased with the progress we have made as a Group in the first 12 months. All of this has been achievable with the tremendous support of our colleagues across the Group. I would like to thank them for being on the journey with us and look forward to a successful 2024.

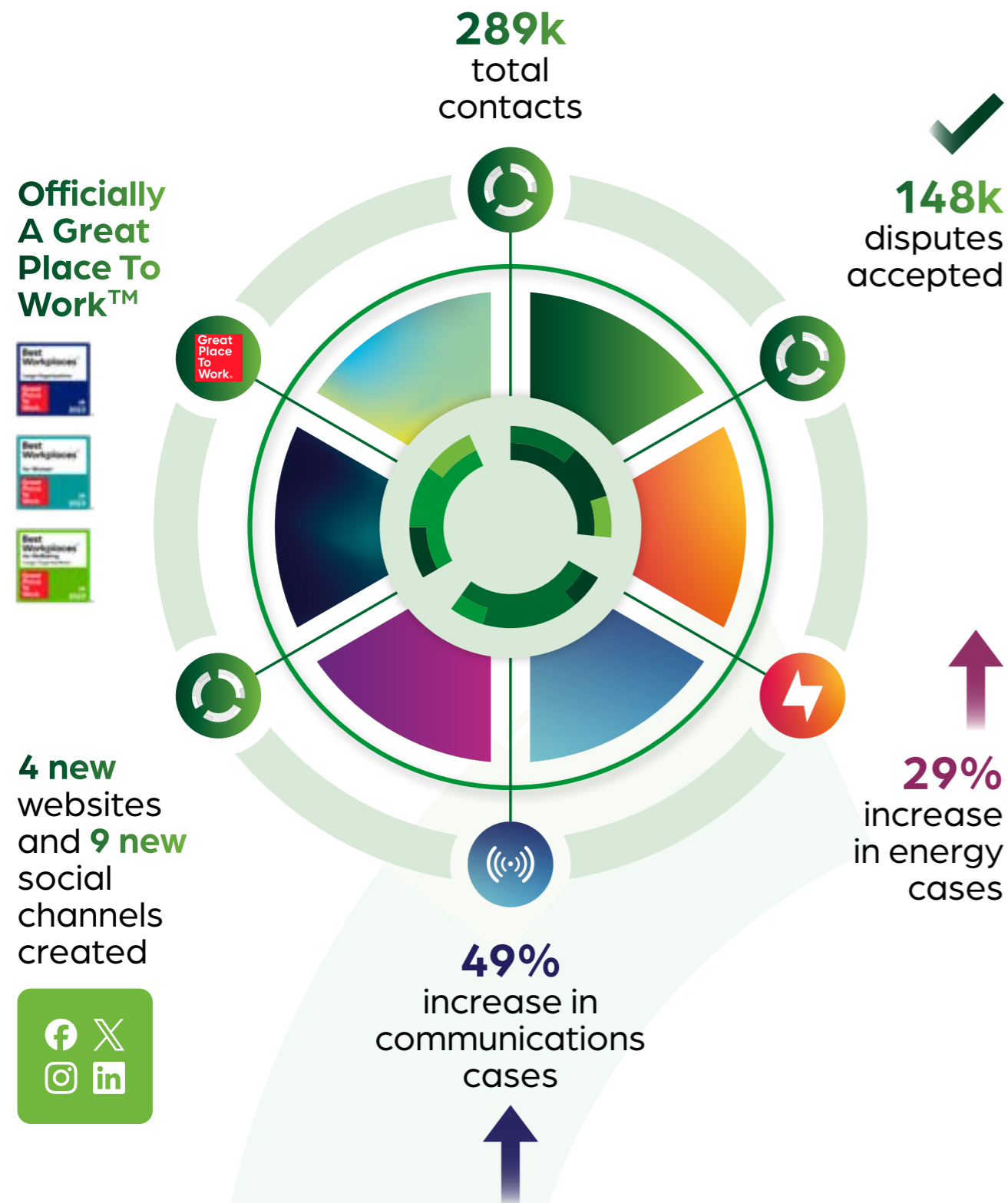
**"All of this has been achievable with the tremendous support of our colleagues across the Group."**



**Simon Palmer FCMA CGMA**  
Group CEO



# THIS YEAR'S HIGHLIGHTS

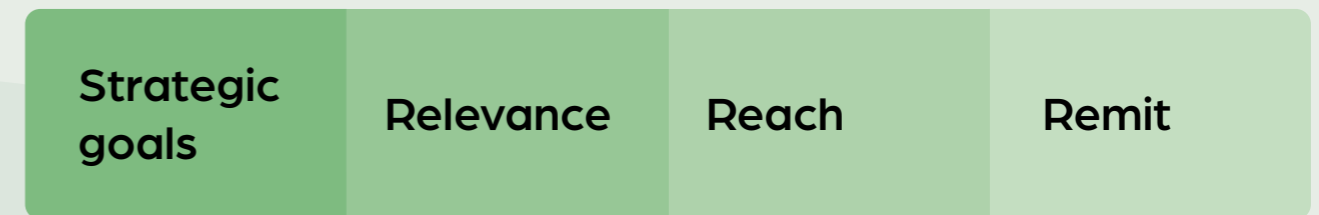


# GROUP OVERVIEW

## 5.1 GROUP STRATEGY

Our key strategic goals for the new Group were embedded during 2022 and evolved during 2023 to encompass:

- **Relevance:** Optimise the current business model to deliver the most efficient service to consumers.
- **Reach:** Maximise reach to enable more consumers to access our services.
- **Remit:** Extend our remit to serve multiple markets:
  - Position services to extend remit as energy markets are disrupted.
  - Leverage expertise to introduce new accreditation / certification products to the online safety market.
  - Develop a new Digital ADR service offering.



In terms of relevance, our new operating model proved its worth with case volumes growing to their highest levels during the year. To cope with this increased volume and continue to improve the consumer experience, we invested further in our operational structure with the introduction of a new leadership level. With a combination of colleagues from within, and outside the business, the increased focus on operational performance and quality is showing real benefits.

In terms of reach, the foundational work was completed on profiling the existing consumer base and understanding the issues affecting the accessibility of the Group. We have already developed an engagement plan which tackles the issues raised by consumers in focus groups to ensure consumers in all segments of the UK population can access the services they need. We have also built strategic relationships with a number of consumer groups that will continue to aid our understanding of the issues affecting accessibility.

The external launch of the new brands has also improved our accessibility and we have already observed better signposting to our core services. Which would suggest brand clarity. Work on increasing brand awareness has also commenced to ensure all consumers are aware of our services and can access them via their channel of choice.

In terms of extending our remit, we launched the dispute resolution scheme for brokers in December 2022 and saw a gradual increase in the number of disputes being logged, the highest being in November at 105.

## 5.1 GROUP STRATEGY CONTINUED

We continued to work with Ofgem and the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero on further extensions in our energy remit.

The Internet Commission, which we acquired in 2022, has enabled us to develop a clear understanding of the challenges in the area of online harms. There is clearly a need for various levels of support for users of all ages and for businesses of all sizes, be they platform providers or the general business community.

The Internet Commission will also continue to utilise its global network of associates to provide insight and thought leadership. However, it is clear that guidance for business is in demand and we will seek to explore opportunities in the short term. Longer term, there is an increasing need for redress in online harms, both in the UK and in Europe, and we will continue to investigate how we can use our experience to support these markets.



 **The Internet Commission**

*“The Internet Commission, which we acquired in 2022, has enabled us to develop a clear understanding of the challenges in the area of online harms”*

## 5.2 STAKEHOLDER FOCUS

The Group brands were launched externally in July. We launched new websites for Trust Alliance Group, Energy Ombudsman, Communications Ombudsman and Flexible Resolution Services, along with several new social media channels to improve consumer engagement.

Our new websites were launched with simpler language, an improved user experience, and with visuals that better represented the brand values. These changes have ensured that we are more accessible and that all stakeholders can access the services they need far more easily.

It has been encouraging to see that the number of consumers accessing the two websites (Energy Ombudsman and Communications Ombudsman) during the first 12 months has been higher than those accessing the previous Ombudsman Services site, which historically attracted several consumers trying to access other ombudsman organisations.

Work continues to optimise these new websites which will further increase accessibility and will ensure that all brands are easily found on search engines, whilst slowly phasing out the old Ombudsman Services website.

The increased brand awareness has resulted in more media enquiries. These opportunities enable us to discuss key themes in our markets, further raise awareness of the services we offer, and have resulted in positive coverage across national print, radio and television. Work has already started on further improving brand awareness and on introducing thought leadership activity into our sectors.

## CONSUMER EXPERIENCE

We continued to survey consumers during the year to measure their satisfaction of the service we delivered from the two ombudsman services.

Our focus for 2023, alongside monitoring the full delivery of our operating model, was identifying ways in which we could continue to make our processes and systems easy to use and more accessible for users. The findings have been fed into our Continuous Improvement programme for 2024.

Our scores for consumers are as follows

NET PROMOTER SCORE

**61.4**

5.5 increase since 2022

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SCORE

**79.2%**

5.9% increase since 2022

CUSTOMER EFFORT SCORE

**31.9**

8.7 increase since 2022

The improvement in metrics is considered to be largely due to the improved communications with consumers, allowing us to set expectations about how the process works, timescales, and next steps. Delivering the decision over the phone also allows us to ensure that the consumer fully understands how the decision has been reached.

## 5.2 STAKEHOLDER FOCUS CONTINUED

### SUPPLIER AND PROVIDER EXPERIENCE

We also continued our business-to-business (B2B) surveys to energy suppliers and communications providers.

Our scores for suppliers and providers are as follows

NET PROMOTER SCORE

**50**

8.7 increase since 2022

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SCORE

**80.7%**

1.4% decrease since 2022

CUSTOMER EFFORT SCORE

**27.3**

11.3 decrease since 2022

The B2B scores appear to be driven by early adoption of the new systems and processes, much of which have now been resolved. We increased direct engagement with both suppliers and providers via a number of channels, and we continue to share case studies in an attempt to resolve the root cause of disputes.



**“It has been encouraging to see that the number of consumers accessing the two websites (Energy Ombudsman and Communications Ombudsman) during the first 12 months has been higher than those accessing the previous Ombudsman Services site”**

## 5.3 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

We continued to engage with a number of external stakeholders during the year with the joint objective of increasing awareness of the Group and supporting the strategic goals.

We continued to engage with Government, regulators, and other stakeholders on key strategic areas such as heat networks, small business support, and the potential of a single private parking appeals service.



Picture: Amanda Solloway, the minister for energy consumers listening in to calls from consumers

The team responded to a wide range of consultations during the year and implemented a programme of successful fringe events at Liberal Democrat, Labour, Conservative, and SNP party conferences across the country.

The rest of the business has also continued to engage with other key UK stakeholders as well as those in Europe and further afield. With a focus on our strategic goals, we collaborate, share insight, and foster relationships with relevant industry regulators (mainly Ofcom and Ofgem), industry associations (such as the Federation of Small Businesses and British Parking Association) and consumer bodies (such as Citizens Advice and Consumer Scotland).



Picture: Business Unit Director, Ed Dodman appearing on BBC Breakfast to discuss smart meters in December

## 5.4 LEGITIMACY

### ACCESSIBILITY

In 2023 we increased our focus on ensuring improved accessibility of our services for consumers and suppliers.

To address this, research was commissioned to understand more about the communities that are under-represented within our consumer base; who those communities may be and why services were not used. This research was supplemented by focus groups which provided even more insight and which is guiding consumer engagement activity in 2024. It also drove recommendations on priority communities and resulted in a focus on developing key relationships with certain populations.

As a result we have developed relationships within the Asian community and areas of high Asian population, such as Leicester, through the council's public health arm. Broader industry relationships have also been developed with national organisations such as National Energy Action. This relationship development activity has provided us with opportunities to raise awareness with front-line workers at regional forums and national conferences.

Finally, as a result of the insight from our community network, we have successfully trialled a new translation service to remove any linguistic barriers to using our service and made changes to our website to improve accessibility as part of our new brand launch.



### ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

The external environment, impacted by energy prices, the cost-of-living crisis and economic and political challenges, meant 2023 was challenging for all our stakeholders, not least the consumers accessing our services. We have therefore taken steps to remain accessible for consumers most in need of our service.

We continued to work on enhancing our internal capabilities to support consumers, suppliers, and colleagues in situations where additional support is required. This involved:

- Providing advice and support to operational colleagues
- Facilitating additional support through social services and the police
- Delivering an internal campaign to ensure colleagues were aware of support available to them through mental health first aiders

Following on from our successful mindset training, and as part of our colleague development programme, we delivered the first modules of our Additional Support course. The course was developed to provide colleagues with further capabilities to supporting and deal with consumers who need more help.



### COMMUNITY

As a Group, we remain committed to making a difference to our local communities.

In 2023 we built out our community programme beyond our Warrington headquarters and developed relationships with local community foodbanks close to our regional offices.

Two areas where we focus our efforts are schools close to our headquarters in Warrington, and in a wider sense, those that are less fortunate or in need of support.

We continued to support the community relationships that were established over the previous two years with Camp Project Wales (Halton), Warrington foodbank, and Mersey Forest. During the year we continued to work with the Cares Family to reduce social isolation amongst older generations. Due to unforeseen circumstances, the charity sadly ceased operating in November 2023 and we will be seeking new charities to continue to make a difference across a range of communities.

We welcomed Room at the Inn as a new charity partner in January. This is a group which provides accommodation to the homeless in Warrington. We kicked off the relationship by renovating the day room for their service users, and have fundraised throughout the year.

## 5.4 LEGITIMACY CONTINUED

### COMMUNITY CONTINUED

During the year, 10% of colleagues volunteered 465 hours across 16 events, making a positive impact on inclusion, reducing isolation, reducing poverty, and helping the environment. We also provided funding and donated essential items to charity partners.

Our work with local primary schools continued, with activities over Easter and Summer, while over 1000 children from seven schools joined us for a Christmas event to meet Santa, receive a gift and have some festive fun.

### ENVIRONMENT

A Net Zero Working Group was established with representatives from across the Group, to create our strategic approach to Net Zero. It focused on foundation knowledge, a Greenhouse Gas review, targets and commitments, projects and initiatives, and strategy development.

Working with our environmental consultant, we developed a more robust approach to reducing our carbon footprint. This included undertaking a full 'Greenhouse Gas Report' to understand our CO2 emissions and completing an audit which is compliant with the 'Energy Saving Opportunities Scheme.'

The audit identified opportunities for positive impacts on the environment by improving energy performance and reducing energy waste. During 2023, we invested in these areas and will continue to do so in 2024 and beyond.



**Picture:**  
Trust Alliance Group delivers Easter treats to local primary schools



**Picture:**  
TAG volunteers with Cares Family community members at Mersey Forest

## 5.5 COLLEAGUE EXPERIENCE

### TALENT STRATEGY

A critical element of the transformation of our consumer journey over the last three years has focused on our colleague experience, and ensuring we attract, retain, and develop the best talent to deliver our roles for today and for the future.

To do this, in 2023 we focused on

Delivering a workplace strategy to attract UK-wide talent

Delivering a new reward and recognition framework

Providing a refreshed communications and engagement approach

### WORKPLACE STRATEGY

In 2023, we trialled and subsequently opened three new regional offices in the UK, whilst continuing to develop the facilities in Warrington. The new offices are in Birmingham, Nottingham, and Peterlee, and provide all colleagues with access to critical facilities that enhance the working experience and enable colleagues to deliver to the best of their abilities.

Whilst continuing to support a hybrid mix of home and office days, the benefits of coming into the office have included better face-to-face time with colleagues and managers, on-the-job support, and personal wellbeing and development.

**"our consumer journey over the last three years has focused on our colleague experience"**



Picture:  
Colleagues at our Group annual colleague conference in St. George's Hall, Liverpool

## 5.5 COLLEAGUE EXPERIENCE CONTINUED

### REWARD AND RECOGNITION

A key objective for attracting and retaining our talent has been the review and development of our reward framework.

Based on market research and insight from our strategic partners, Kornferry, the reward framework has enabled the Group to:

- **Be clear and consistent with colleagues about what is required across job roles and job levels.**
- **Ensure equality and consistency of reward, based on merit and performance.**
- **Attract new talent through a competitive package.**

To respond to the evolving needs of our colleagues, and a continued focus on wellbeing, our benefits package was also refreshed and refined in 2023. Firstly, we built on existing benefits such as an increase to pension contributions, financial and legal advice/support, and an employee assistance programme. We then introduced new benefits such as a menopause support scheme and a tech purchase scheme.

All new and existing benefits are available to all colleagues, regardless of location.



**Picture:**  
Our Menopause Toolkit was launched to all of our colleagues internally



### RECRUITMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Our commitment to continuous improvement of our services lies not only in the ongoing review of our systems and processes, but in the continuous development of our colleagues.

In 2023 we continued the development of our Learning Academy, appointing a director to lead the team and shape the requirements for colleagues, both for today and the future.

The recruitment of almost 200 colleagues into our consumer-facing operation throughout 2023 meant that a five-week training programme was developed and implemented for these colleagues. Once completed, they could progress to a live environment where they could apply the training and build their case handling abilities.

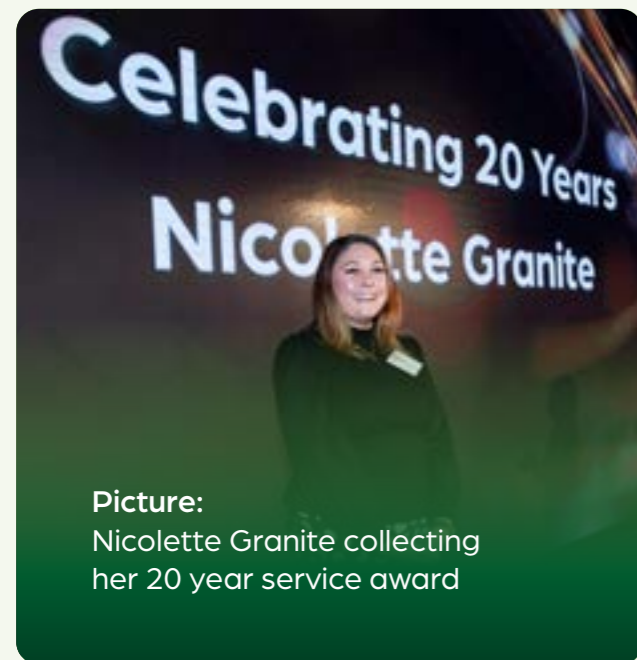
As part of our continuous improvement programme and investment in improving our service, we recruited a new operational leadership team. This team was created to ensure that colleagues are supported day-to-day to deliver the best service to consumers and suppliers, whilst continuing to develop improvements for the future. Some of the roles were filled by internal talent and some were recruited outside of the business, bringing in valuable knowledge and expertise, sharing best practice from other industries.

Ongoing development of our leadership team in 2023 has been through the investment in a dedicated coaching programme alongside a series of quarterly workshops. The design and development of a TAG management development programme was completed in 2023 ready for roll out in 2024.

**WELLBEING**

As a key element of our colleague strategy, we continued to build on the support and initiatives introduced the previous year to improve colleague wellbeing, including items such as flu jabs, access to mental health first aiders across the business, and continued to ensure that all colleagues have the correct equipment for their role.

Volunteering and fundraising opportunities were again available to all our colleagues which has made a difference in our local community.



Picture: Nicolette Granite collecting her 20 year service award

personal development areas are discussed.

To support the development and understanding of each business unit, we also launched Community Engagement Days. They brought together all colleagues from their business unit communities to hear business updates, learn more about our ways of working, and take part in team-building activities.

Furthermore, we also launched a weekly community brief cascade across the whole Group. It ensures that, at the same time every week, every colleague has the chance to hear weekly business messages and ask questions and provide feedback directly to leaders and directors.

At a Group level, our annual colleague conference took place in Liverpool in October, which featured great insight from our guest speakers Gabby Logan and Gary Neville on equality, resilience and high-performance. The conference was a chance for all colleagues to come together to look back on achievements over the last 12 months, celebrate success through our inaugural 2023 TAG Awards, recognise our long servers (which included our first 20-year service award presentation to Nicolette Granite) and provided an opportunity to share our key priorities and objectives for 2024.

The results of our engagement approach were evident in the participation rate of our Great Place to Work survey at an outstanding 93% and a resulting certification with a trust score of 73%.

**COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT**

To create a high-performance culture, listening to and understanding our colleagues, in order to create a high performing culture continued to be a priority.

The primary commitment was to ensure every colleague connected with their line manager on a weekly, face-to-face basis, ensuring wellbeing, job development and



Picture: Energy Ombudsman Leader, Jayne Elkin collecting her Group Superstar award at our annual colleague conference



## KEY ANNUAL RESULTS

**123k**  
accepted cases



**77%**  
of cases upheld



**£16m**  
total remedy  
awarded



**£145**  
average remedy  
awarded



**95.88%**  
of cases decided  
within 56 days



**Top dispute  
categories:**

- Billing
- Smart Meters
- Customer services
- Payments/Debt
- Meters

**35%**  
of consumers reached  
us through signposting



As we entered 2023, energy prices were at a record high, and although they have started to fall from the peak, they remain at historically high levels. This resulted in more consumers than ever closely monitoring and managing their use of energy, asking their energy supplier for support, and situations where they felt unfairly treated.

Some suppliers have struggled to respond to the greater needs of their consumers, and this led to a significant increase in complaints.

In 2023, 123k energy disputes were accepted – more than ever before. This reinforces the requirement of our role, with the work we undertake in the energy sector proving more essential than ever. Resolving disputes in a timely manner, we are extremely proud of the fact that we have consistently met our regulatory KPI's on time: answering calls, responding to correspondence and issuing disputes.

Our new operating model, where each dispute is managed from start to finish by one case

handler, created a better consumer experience which allowed us to understand disputes in more detail and speed up the resolution process.

With the model in full use during 2023, it was encouraging to see that customer satisfaction metrics have improved.

We continued to work with suppliers and the sector overall to improve the dispute handling process and overall customer service. We provided regular data and insights to a number of stakeholders and continue to develop our data capabilities so that we can provide data and insights that are more relevant, regular and easily accessed. Although most of the remedies required were implemented on time, a significant minority were not, causing consumers further frustration. We therefore reviewed processes to ensure that we had the right escalation framework for suppliers to do the right thing for their consumers and we will review again in 2024.

We were also concerned that not all consumers had been informed of their right to use our service by the supplier. Only 35% of consumers accessing our service had evidence of signposting on their case files. This meant there would have been consumers who had unresolved complaints who were unaware of our service. We continued to work with suppliers to remind them of the importance of signposting at the right time, and will continue to focus on this throughout 2024 and beyond.

After the first 12 months of running the energy brokers scheme, there are now 1,890 brokers signed up as members of the scheme, and we believe this is the most definitive list of brokers operating in the sector. There was a total of 741 cases accepted during the first 12 months of the scheme but evidence of effective signposting to us in only 5% of cases, which is low. We will therefore be reminding brokers of their obligation to provide evidence of this for every case.

Disputes were received around how energy suppliers implemented various government support schemes introduced to mitigate cost-of-living pressures, including the Energy Bills Support Scheme for consumers, Energy Bills Relief Scheme (EBRS) and Energy Bills Discount Scheme (EBDS) for businesses. We also agreed to consider how heat network suppliers were passing on the benefits of the EBRS and EBDS to their consumers.

Overall, it was a busy year and forecasts suggest it is not likely to ease up any time soon. The need for consistency for domestic and non-domestic consumers is prevalent, and at the time of writing, the Government and Ofgem were consulting on proposals to allow us to accept complaints from businesses with fewer than 50 employees and we should start to receive complaints from heat networks in 2025.

With the increased need for change to meet net zero demands, and the introduction of new technology in the sector, we will continue to invest in capabilities in developing our systems, data, and colleagues to ensure consumers and suppliers have effective redress processes.

[energyombudsman.org](https://energyombudsman.org)



## KEY ANNUAL RESULTS

**24.5k**  
accepted cases



**33%**  
of cases upheld



**£1.7m**  
total remedy  
awarded



**£145**  
average remedy  
awarded



**99.87%**  
of cases decided  
within 56 days



**Top dispute  
categories:**

- Service Quality
- Billing
- Contract Issues
- Customer Services

**57%**  
of consumers reached  
us through signposting



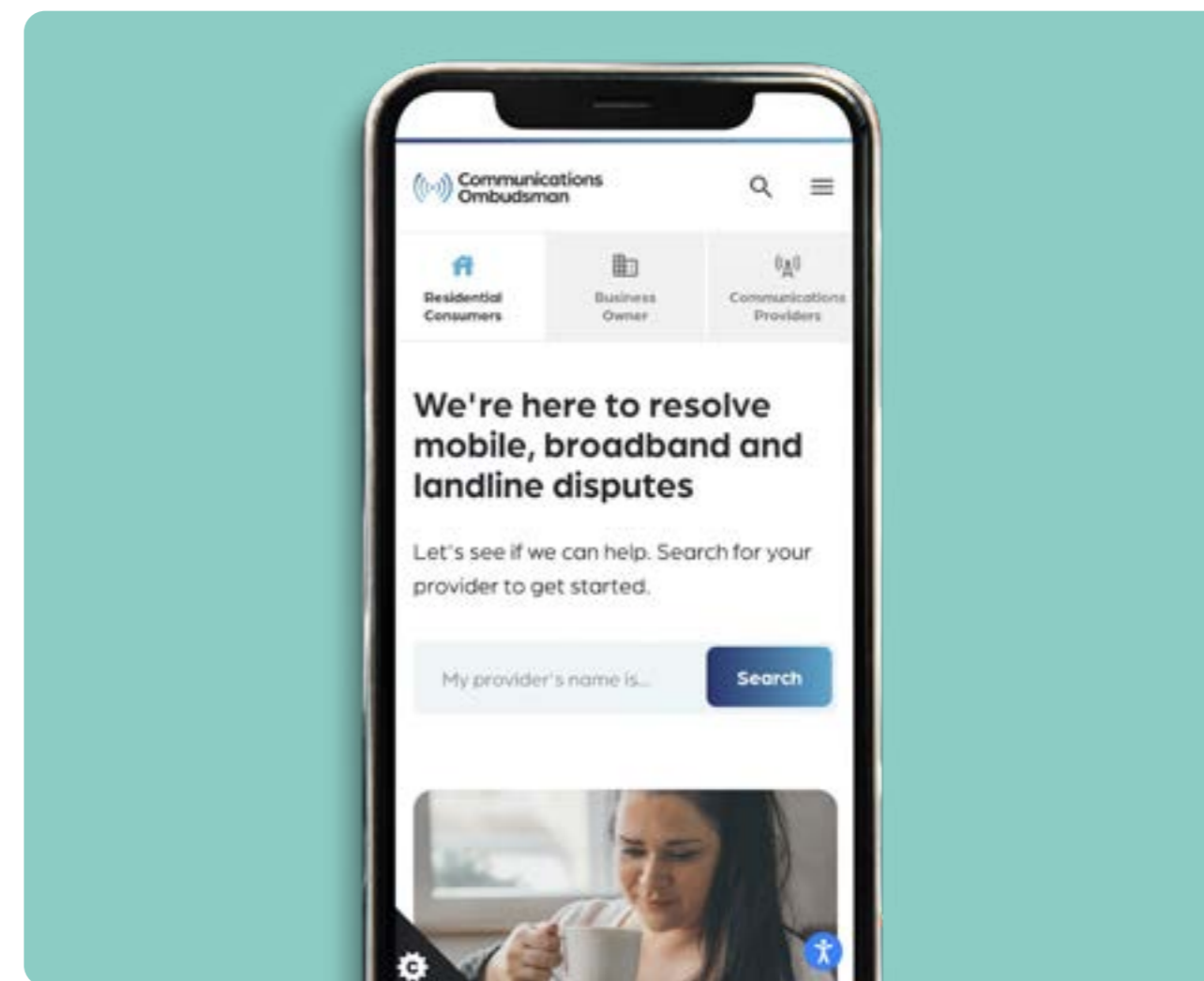
During 2023, we accepted 24,500 communications disputes, making it one of our busiest years on record, compared to 12,400 in 2022. Despite the increase in volume, we continued to meet all regulatory requirements and KPIs, with 99.87% of cases decided within 56 days, and 98.79% of cases completed in under six weeks.

In terms of dispute type, we saw increases in cases involving service quality and contract and billing issues across the board. Our data suggests that this has been driven by heightened consumer awareness of financial commitments and a greater expectation on the performance of goods and services supplied.

Improvements in our data and insights have enabled providers to focus on continuous improvement for their consumers, with a spotlight on signposting and complaint outcomes. By using the data, and our ability to provide a unique perspective on consumer behaviour across differing sectors, we were able to work with providers on the parts of their consumer journey and experience that were driving disputes. As well as dealing with the increase in cases, the team also successfully onboarded Virgin Media, who joined O2, an existing provider. During the change, we ensured consumers had an effective and efficient service, and balanced the needs of other providers' consumers.

Similar to the energy sector, the new operating model delivered several benefits, including a better understanding of individual disputes, a faster process and more person to person contact through the journey; all of which contributed to improved customer satisfaction metrics.

[commsombudsman.org](https://commsombudsman.org)





**POPLA**  
Parking on Private Land Appeals

It was a record year in 2023 for parking appeals submitted to POPLA. Over 93,000 motorists sought our help, believing that they had received incorrect or unfair parking charge notices. This demand shows the continued need for independent appeal handling. We managed the increased demand, with most motorists receiving their decisions within 27 days of cases being ready for assessment.

In parking, we have a dedicated team of appeal assessors who speak to motorists and deal with any queries they have around the appeal process. Answering 98% of all calls within 30 seconds demonstrates our commitment to doing things the right way by making it easy for motorists to access our team.

We continued to identify trends and repeat appeals and worked with parking operators and the British Parking Association on solutions. This process enables us to resolve the appeal but also support other motorists who might be impacted by the same issues.

Externally, Government continues to consult on the implementation of the Parking (Code of Practice) Act. We support this and hope that progress can be made to ensure all operators are working to the same enhanced standards to deliver better outcomes for motorists. We will await consultation to further inform us of systemic changes required within the sector and use this information to help define our position in how we operate moving forward.



In October, the Online Safety Act was passed into law, with work now being carried out to bring its protections for children and adults online into effect. This put a range of new duties on social media companies and search services, making them more responsible for users' safety on their platforms. This, alongside the EU's Digital Services Act, increased the importance of the role we play in helping digital organisations understand their impact on society and improve their trust and safety practices.

Throughout the year, we continued to build our network and knowledge, so we are well placed to introduce products which will benefit consumers in online safety.

During the process of building and growing our network, we attended and contributed to several conferences and workshops including TrustCon in San Francisco, Raid: Shaping the Future of Tech Regulation in Brussels and a knowledge sharing workshop: discussing redress against emerging regulatory requirements at the London School of Economics (LSE).

Alongside the events and workshops, we also responded to public consultations including Irish Media Commission: Developing Ireland's First Binding Online Safety Code for Video-Sharing Platform Services and Ofcom's Second Phase of Online Safety Regulation.



With the change to Group structure being introduced early in 2023, the new Support Services division continued to support running the business as well as delivery of the strategic goals.

## LUMIN

Based on the plan to develop a best-in-class case management system, the team started to make improvements to the case submission experience for consumers to make it more user-friendly. Improvements were also made to capture better quality data, which is enabling us to have a more meaningful impact on the sectors we serve.

We also successfully achieved accreditation in ISO 27001:2023. This, combined with ISO 90001, is a testament to the commitment to maintaining high-quality industry standards for security and continual improvement in our processes and services.

Looking ahead, we are working with suppliers to explore ways to access data quicker through platform integration and further improving the consumer experience.



## GOVERNANCE AND RISK

A new risk reporting framework was introduced in line with the Group structure. It aids risk escalation through the business units, into Group and then on to Board. The risk framework, to provide the appropriate level of governance for Board, was ratified and approved by the Audit and Risk Committee.

To ensure the Group stays aligned and connected, a new governance framework around rhythms and routines was introduced – this helps the Group run effectively, aids decision making and communication, and supports individual colleague's needs.

We also introduced a Quality Improvement Team to work collaboratively across the entire Group to drive quality and continuous improvements in quality for each of the business units.

## GROUP IT

During 2023, we continued to invest in our IT capability with the aim of delivering best-in-class service and IT solutions to Group functions. The IT strategy consisted of four key objectives, which included a review and optimisation of cloud platforms that form the foundation for all Group IT systems. This is essential in supporting the future data strategy.

To further enhance security and stability and ensure future proofing, the Group's core network infrastructure was upgraded. This included a complete network refresh programme which achieved Cyber Essentials Plus accreditation, a set of basic technical controls that help protect against common online cyber security threats.

The development of a future operating model will mean leveraging technological solutions to ensure that the business delivers the best and most efficient

service for the market, and enhances accessibility for all stakeholders. This will require implementation of new enterprise-wide systems, ensuring they are fit for purpose, and the embracing of technological innovations such as AI, data and process automation to enhance efficiencies, and deliver greater value for both suppliers and consumers. All of this will need significant investment which will continue in 2024 and beyond.

## DATA

A new data programme was formulated with the aim of establishing a state-of-the-art data function which enhances outcomes for stakeholders through improved, data-driven decisions and increased data literacy. During the year, the Group transitioned to a cloud-based technical stack and expanded its use of data and reporting tools. There was investment in the capability of the team, which is now aligned under Data Management and Business Reporting and Data Science.

Two suppliers were onboarded onto a new direct access BI platform, with the data being refreshed daily. The platform gives anytime access to the suppliers, allowing their teams to interact with their case data in a more dynamic way which enables them to identify trends far earlier than previously.

Data is one of the areas needing most investment over the coming years. Progress has been made over the last two years, however we can further improve the consumer experience, whilst driving sector improvements. This will be achieved through automation and the development of our data science capabilities.

## CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

A continuous test and learn approach was adopted which means that system improvements can be tested and refined before going live. The team also supported all Group improvement projects including reach and energy remit extension. Other key projects included evolving and developing new products for the Lumin and The Internet Commission businesses.

There are significant opportunities around data collection, automation and the development of data science capabilities to **improve the consumer experience** and also to **drive sector improvements**

# INDEPENDENT ASSESSOR'S REPORT

During 2023, the Independent Assessor (IA) role for Trust Alliance Group (TAG, formally Ombudsman Services) was covered by Maurice Livesey (January–October), and Ian Brotherston (October–December). This report covers the finding of both parties during the period.

## SUMMARY

The total number of cases reviewed by the Independent Assessor reduced by more than half, **from 188 in 2022 to 81 in 2023**, and as a percentage of total cases received by TAG reduced by two-thirds, from **0.15% to 0.05%**.

The decrease was considered to be due to the strengthening of how complaints are reviewed internally. The breakdown of the outcome of these complaints is as follows:

- **26% had at least one element upheld.** This compares to 56%, 52%, and 55% in the years 2022–2020 respectively and is significantly below previous years.
- **4% were not upheld.** This compares with 10%, 2% and 11% in the previous years 2022–2020 respectively. In these cases, neither the IA nor TAG found merit in the complaint.
- **70% were justified.** This compares with 34%, 46%, and 34% in the previous years 2022–2020 respectively. In these cases, the IA saw nothing further in the complaint that had not already been acknowledged by TAG.

In summary, a significantly larger proportion of complaints were being identified and corrected within TAG's internal complaints procedure than in previous years, and hence the number of occasions when the IA identifies complaints that have not been previously acknowledged has been reduced. This is a positive reflection on the charges made within TAG to internally address service complaints with increased scrutiny.

### The key areas of complaint showed similar themes to previous years:

- Communication failures
- Remedy implementation
- Reasonable adjustments

### Recommendations during period have included:

- An apology
- Further explanation of the case findings
- Recommendations for the TAG staff to review aspects of its internal processes and procedures for continuous improvement

## OBSERVATIONS

When reviewing 2023, it is clear that significant progress has been made within TAG in both reducing and managing service complaints compared to previous years. Although total cases managed by TAG has increased by 20%, the complaints about the service received reduced.

The IA upheld 26% of the complaints that were reviewed by them, which was substantially down from previous years and reflects how complaints had been dealt with internally with TAG prior to escalation to the IA.

Consumers who had previously made a complaint that escalated to the IA made up almost 26% of all cases reviewed, and this was a substantial increase over the previous year where it was 11%.



# OUR PRIORITIES FOR 2024 – 2025

The priorities for 2024–25 continue to be achieving the strategic goals, whilst also effectively running and improving the business. Clear objectives have been defined under each goal and a programme of improvement projects identified for the year.

- Relevance**

Supporting the relevance goal, the current operating model will continue to be evolved to improve the consumer experience and decision making. At the same time, we will be considering what a future operating model needs to look like so that it delivers for the consumer needs of the next 10 years.
- Reach and Accessibility**

To support the reach and accessibility goal, the two ombudsman businesses will launch educational programmes targeting the under-represented groups and addressing the key barriers identified in the research. This insight will also be used to guide community outreach activity and direct the process improvements needed to ensure these groups can access our service.
- Capability**

We will also continue to develop capability within the group to help colleagues and consumers when additional support may be required. This will include additional training for all colleagues and the establishment of a specialist additional support team.
- Remit**

The next remit opportunities will include introducing a redress scheme for small businesses in Energy, scoping a scheme for heat networks, introducing new products for The Internet Commission, investigating options for delivering redress for the online harms sector (both UK and EU) as well as supporting the Government on introducing a Single Independent Appeals Service (SIAS) for the Parking sector. We will also continue to engage with regulators, Government and other stakeholders to identify other opportunities for building trust between consumers and businesses.
- Growth**

Key to the achievement of these priorities is continued investment in Group capability. Key improvement programmes will therefore include improving technology platforms and strengthening data capture, systems, reporting, and insight generation. This investment will also need to focus on bringing colleagues with the relevant skills to sustain and grow the Group over the next five years.



## COMPANY INFORMATION

### TRUST ALLIANCE GROUP LTD

<b>DIRECTORS</b>	Dr M M Amos Lord T F Clement Jones CBE Mr S A Palmer Mrs O Sodeinde Mr P W Hewitt Mrs J S Davenport Mrs G Drakeford Mr M George	(Appointed 1 July 2023) (Appointed 1 July 2023)
<b>COMPANY NUMBER</b>	04351294	
<b>REGISTERED OFFICE</b>	3300 Daresbury Park Daresbury Warrington WA4 4HS	
<b>AUDITOR</b>	MHA Richard House 9 Winckley Square Preston PR1 3HP	

# CONTENTS

Strategic report	40 – 47
Directors' report	48–50
Directors' responsibilities statement	51
Independent auditor's report	52 – 54
Group statement of comprehensive income	55
Group and company balance sheets	56
Group statement of changes in equity	57 – 58
Group statement of cash flows	59
Notes to the financial statements	60 – 66
Company statement of cash flows	67 – 82
Contact	83

## FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

### Revenue

**£52.9M**

2022: £36.4M

### Surplus/Loss

**£4.6M**

2022: -£1.3M

### Capital and Reserves

**£15.3M**

2022: £10.7M

### Liquidity Ratio

**2.1**

2022: 1.6

## STRATEGIC REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

The directors present the strategic report and financial statements for the Year ended 31 December 2023.

### REVIEW OF THE BUSINESS

Trust Alliance Group is a company which provides independent dispute resolution nationally for the Energy and Communications sectors. The business also administers the Parking on Private Land Appeals (POPLA) service on behalf of the British Parking Association.

Between January and December 2023, our Energy and Communications Ombudsman schemes accepted just over 147,000 disputes from consumers accessing our service. The number of energy cases we accepted increased by 29% compared to 2022, while communications cases increased by 49% from the previous year.

The increase in energy cases was largely due to consumers wanting to know that they were being treated fairly, mainly impacted by the cost-of-living crisis. In the communications sector we saw an increase across all complaint types and we onboarded a new supplier, making our service available to more consumers. Despite these increases, we continued to perform well on key complaint handling metrics.

To ensure consumers were fully supported, the business invested in the recruitment and training of almost 200 colleagues in our consumer-facing operation. All completed a five-week training programme ahead of progressing to a live environment. A series of Leadership Workshops for Directors and Senior Leaders was also rolled out to embed a consistent approach to leadership throughout the Group.

Following the acquisition of The Internet Commission in 2022, colleagues in this business unit have continued to build their network and knowledge, attending, and contributing to events across the world, including the Trust and Safety Professional Annual Summit in San Francisco, plus running several workshops, and responding to public consultations.

Recognising the on-going challenges faced by suppliers, we liaised closely with Ofgem and Ofcom and looked at new ways of working to help suppliers focus their resources on helping their consumers. We support both Ofgem's and Ofcom's continued work within their core regulatory functions and aim to work with them make the retail markets fit for the future.

We have made great progress in ensuring that our remit stays up to date and relevant for consumers. For example, we are working to provide small businesses (with up to 50 employees) with access to free redress via the Energy Ombudsman and the Broker ADR scheme and providing access to the Energy Ombudsman to all consumers on heat networks across the UK.

We are also looking at how we can play our part in helping to build consumer trust by providing access to free redress in the renewables and green heating sector, electric vehicle charging and demand side flexibility. We look forward to working with other stakeholders in undertaking the groundwork to help consumers have trust and confidence in engaging with new technologies and services as part of the future energy sector.

Working with the Communications Ombudsman and The Internet Commission, we are also delivering expert opinion in the UK and across the EU to help make all our lives safer online and are exploring new policy opportunities to support consumers when things go wrong.

Within the parking sector, over 93,000 motorists reached out to our POPLA service for help. This level of demand showed the continued need for independent appeal handling. Our POPLA team coped well with the increased demand and most motorists received a decision within 27 days.

The cost-of-living crisis continued to be a testing time for our colleagues. This saw the Group continue to work hard to support our people and implement several colleague engagement and wellbeing initiatives. The Board is pleased to report that Trust Alliance Group is a certified Great Place To Work again in 2023, and our participation rate increased to its highest level yet at 93%.

## STRATEGIC REPORT CONTINUED FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

### PRINCIPLE ACTIVITIES AND BUSINESS REVIEW

Throughout 2023, we continued to implement our strategic options for the future. The Board had approved three areas of strategic focus around Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) consolidation, diversification and broadening the energy remit. As the market moves from being commodity to service-based, and with technological developments such as electric vehicles, we believe there's more need than ever for consumer protection to keep pace with these advances.

Despite the challenges of increased volumes, we've maintained momentum in our strategic planning as well as focusing on our people and supporting consumers throughout 2023.

### RESULTS

Trust Alliance Group recorded a surplus, after taxation, of £4,643,830 for the year. This was in line with the Board's expectations of achieving a result based on the significant volume increase in the Energy sector caused by the Ukraine war, the cost-of-living crisis and the increase in consumer awareness of our service through better sign posting to our dedicated re-branded websites.

A total of £58,800 of bad debt incurred was in 2023. Of this, £45,460 (77.3%) related to UK Energy Incubator Hub Ltd, which went into administration in 2022. The business was able to absorb this bad debt for the fourth year running, and supporting the energy market with reducing operating costs where we could. Despite our loss position, the business had no need to mutualise these across the energy sector. The Directors continue to focus on cash collection and reducing aged debt to minimise this risk. The Trust Alliance Group has absorbed the impacts of supplier failure for the past four years totalling over £1.1m of written-off debt as we continue to support the energy sector through these difficult periods.

The business has been able to maintain a level of reserves in line with the reserves policy set by the Board. The policy aims to cover a range of three to six months total costs to enable the business to deal with sudden increases or decreases in case volumes, and to invest to sustain a quality service to all sectors.

## STRATEGIC REPORT CONTINUED FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

### RISK

Risk Management forms part of the Board's system of governance, contributing to and protecting the performance of the business. Trust Alliance Group recognises that risk management is an important tool and therefore has a robust framework in place to facilitate controlled risk-taking. This includes regular risk reviews by senior management, with the most significant corporate risks considered by the Audit and Risk Committee and Board as appropriate.

A key risk to the business is the variability in case volumes driven by factors which are outside its control, such as the volume of cases in the energy market caused by pricing issues. This risk is mitigated by on-going forecasting and planning to ensure the business remains financially sound and can provide an effective service to all its stakeholders. Additional resource has been put in place to manage increased volumes and assist with maintaining key performance indicators.

Given the significant investment in implementation, the operational change risks will also be a continued focus for the Committee in the coming year.

### INTERNAL AUDIT

The Board recognises the need for independent assurance as part of the third line of defence, ensuring that first line management controls and the second line Risk and Compliance functions are operating effectively.

To ensure a continued robust system of internal audit, an in-house internal auditor continues to provide independent assurance to the Audit and Risk Committee. Reports provided to the Board include risk management, governance, and internal control processes across the business.

### OUR PEOPLE

The Board recognises that the Group's ongoing commitment to the wellbeing and development of our colleagues is a key element of our colleague strategy as we continue to build on the support and initiatives introduced the previous year. This included access to flu jabs and mental health first aiders and ensuring that all colleagues have the correct equipment for their role through DSE assessments.

The colleague benefits package was also reviewed, adding new benefits whilst also enhancing existing ones, such as pension contributions. We also place great emphasis on one-to-one coaching and face-to-face time with line managers to support colleague wellbeing.

## STRATEGIC REPORT CONTINUED FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

### KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

#### DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

We continue to make progress towards ensuring we meet our strategic goal of broadening our reach and our services are accessible to all.

Our aim is to be a legitimate, trustworthy organisation through our reach and access work, all the time ensuring all our stakeholders are central to our plans. We work closely with the Board, SLT and across the organisation to deliver the necessary change.

Over the last 12 months, we have developed a deeper understanding of under-represented consumers through establishing good relationships with organisations based within those communities and key geographic areas. We're partnering with community organisations to develop plans for medium and long-term actions.

Our Academy Team has delivered foundation Inclusion and Additional Support training to all colleagues as part of the Mindset training. The team also rolled out e-learning sessions to operational colleagues for key additional support elements, including responding to self-harm, signposting, reasonable adjustment, and wellbeing.

We continue to mark key events in our cultural calendar to celebrate and educate. In 2023, we marked International Women's Day, Pride, Black History Month with colleague participation, speaker sessions, colleague content and community support initiatives.

Our colleagues are important to the work that we do, and their health and wellbeing is one of our main priorities. We support them to be their best at work and home, and to help with life's many challenges a suite of welfare provisions including legal, financial, and circumstantial support is available to everyone.

The Board takes a close interest in ensuring that the business has the right talent in the right roles, regardless of background, and Trust Alliance Group continues to meet gender pay reporting requirements.

### ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

The Board takes its environmental responsibilities seriously and is committed to reducing the impact the Group has on the environment.

Through our close working relationship with our environment consultant, Envantage, we've developed a robust approach to reducing our carbon footprint. In 2023, we undertook a Green House Gas report to understand our CO2 emissions the previous year, which highlighted a marked increase but an improved baseline, plus we completed an audit which is compliant with the Energy Saving Opportunities Scheme.

A Net Zero Working Group was also established to create our strategic approach, focusing on foundation environment knowledge, greenhouse gas review and projects and initiatives.

### CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The Board supports the community work the Group undertakes and encourages all colleagues to actively support our local community. In 2023 we continued to make a difference in our local areas of Halton and Warrington, contributing to:

- Inclusion;
- Reducing Hardship;
- Environment; and
- Local School Children

## STRATEGIC REPORT CONTINUED FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

### CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY CONTINUED

We welcomed Room At The Inn as a new charity partner in January to support with refurbishment volunteering and donations. We also extended our community support further by developing relationships with organisations local to our regional workplaces.

Our volunteering and fundraising efforts in 2023 had the following impact:

- raised over £25,000 to our charities
- volunteered over 600 hours of colleague time

In December we welcomed 1000 primary school children from seven local primary schools for a special Christmas experience at our Daresbury office. Over 150 colleagues volunteered a total of 462 hours to make the children's visit across the week memorable. We received some fantastic feedback in the form of handmade cards from the children, showing their gratitude for the experience we delivered.

We will be reviewing our community work in 2024 to deliver further impact locally, regionally and further afield, to ensure we embed this work throughout our business structure.

### OTHER INFORMATION AND EXPLANATIONS

#### FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

In the longer-term, the Group's strategic planning process has identified some new possibilities and strategic options for the future. Central to these will be the core values of the Group and the role the Ombudsman plays in society – and ensuring this remains relevant in an ever-changing world.

## STRATEGIC REPORT CONTINUED FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

### PROMOTING THE SUCCESS OF THE COMPANY

The Directors of the company, as those within all UK companies, must act in accordance with the duties detailed in section 172 of the UK Companies Act 2006 which is summarised as follows:

A director of a company must act in the way he considers, in good faith, would most likely promote the success of the company for the benefit of its members, and in doing so have regard (amongst other matters) to:

- The likely consequence of any decision in the long term,
- The interests of the company's employees
- The need to foster the company's business relationships with suppliers, customers and others,
- The impact of the company's operations on the community and environment
- The desirability of the company maintaining a reputation for high standards of business conduct, and The need to act fairly as between members of the company'

### INDUCTION

Board members attend the same 'Introduction to TAG' induction training that all other colleagues attend. This includes obtaining a full understanding of topics such as Group structure, Group purpose and additional support. Their induction also includes time with key departments across the Group so that they fully understand the key business processes and with the leadership team to further embed understanding of roles and remits. Time is particularly set aside within Operations to understand the consumer journey and the operational model. Previous board packs and a thorough understanding of Group strategic direction ensure a solid foundation is set.

### GOVERNANCE AND RISK

The Directors fulfil their duties partly through a governance framework and a scheme of delegation. Through the scheme of delegation, the Board reserves the power to appoint the Group Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and it is the Group CEO who then has the delegated responsibility to appoint the directors of the subsidiary companies. The following aims to summarise the activities in place and how Directors fulfil their duties supported by process and structure across Trust Alliance Group (TAG).

Risk Management forms part of the Board's system of governance, contributing to and protecting the performance of the business. TAG recognises that risk management is an important tool and therefore has a robust framework in place to facilitate controlled risk-taking. This includes regular risk reviews by senior management, with the most significant corporate risks considered by the Audit and Risk Committee and Board as appropriate.

A key risk to the business is the variability in case volumes driven by factors which are outside of its control, such as the volume of cases in the energy market caused by the on-going energy crisis. This risk is mitigated by regular forecasting and planning to ensure the business remains financially sound and can provide an effective service to all of its stakeholders.

The Board recognises the need for independent assurance as part of the third line of defence, ensuring that first line management controls and the second line Risk and Compliance functions are operating effectively. To ensure a continued robust system of internal audit, an in-house internal auditor continues to provide independent assurance to the Audit and Risk Committee. Reports provided to the Board include risk management, governance, and internal control processes across the business.

## STRATEGIC REPORT CONTINUED FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

### COLLEAGUE FOCUS

Whilst driving the success of the company and its impact on the sectors in which it operates, the interest of the company's employees remains a key strategic focus for the board and supporting management team. All colleagues attend a mindset training and, as part of the colleague development programme, an Additional Support course is provided. This equips colleagues in providing additional support to consumers and other colleagues who need it.

This support includes introducing Working Together principles, the identification and classification of additional support needs, signposting where required and responding to consumer support requirements and personal wellbeing.

Leadership workshops for Directors and Senior Leaders embed a consistent approach to leadership within the business. Leadership development training is delivered to provide managers with the skills they need to be successful in their daily roles whilst preparing them for progression opportunities. Coaching is also provided for senior leaders to ensure ongoing support and all new leaders, joining the Group, attend a specialist onboarding programme.

With the ongoing challenge of the financial climate, there is a focus on colleague wellbeing (physical and mental). This includes access to mental health first aiders, financial and legal advice/support, an employee assistance programme, free flu jabs, in-house or sourced gym facilities and access to the pantry (either directly or via food parcels) which provides free food essentials for colleagues. In 2023, the overall colleague benefits package was reviewed with new benefits introduced, including menopause support and increased pension contributions.

### KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Externally, TAG has several key stakeholders that are key to its continued success that should be considered under s172 requirements. TAG is the parent company of a number of external facing business units including the Energy Ombudsman, Communications Ombudsman and The Digital Responsibility Network.

Although the role of each business unit may differ, the same principles in adherence to s172 apply. Stakeholders listed in s172 include suppliers, providers, regulatory bodies, and customers (referred to by TAG as consumers).

Suppliers and providers have dedicated relationship teams who promote collaboration in improving the customer experience based on insights. Relationships with regulators are held at various levels, including board. Where applicable, systemic issues are discussed to identify and inform how improvements to the relevant sector are brought about. These relationships, including the sharing of forecasting data, help maintain a long-term vision to act in good faith contributing to the continued success of the company.

The insights provided by the relevant business unit also feed into other key Stakeholder relationships, such as Citizens Advice and Consumer Advice Scotland, to encourage transparency and build further trust with consumers. Relationships are held with government and officials via the Policy and Public Affairs team – extending to board members where appropriate.

### COMMUNITY

In addition to the relationships referenced above, TAG also works closely with several local charities. Charity partners are chosen based on the themes of inclusion, reducing hardship and environment. Colleague volunteering and fundraising opportunities are delivered on an ongoing basis, all of which make a difference to local communities. Last year, 10% of colleagues volunteered 465 hours across 16 events with charity partners.

## STRATEGIC REPORT CONTINUED FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

### ENVIRONMENT

The environmental impact of the organisation is monitored, and the appropriate steps taken to act accordingly for the benefit of the environment.

Following the completion of a full 'Green House Gas Report' to understand CO2 emissions in 2022, an internal audit was undertaken which complies with the 'Energy Saving Opportunities Scheme'. This led to TAG's Net Zero working group with representatives from across TAG's business units. The Group's key focus areas include Foundation Environment knowledge, targets and commitments, and strategy development.

### SUMMARY

Professional conduct is imperative in all areas of the business, from the governance that provides the guardrails for a safe operation, to the support provided for colleagues and the community. The board has implemented an annual internal audit programme, approved by ARC and introduced quality improvement and service improvement functions to the business. The Quality improvement function has a group remit and extends beyond the operational function, to ensure assurance on quality is provided across the entire Group. As part of the risk approach, there is a mandatory Rhythms and Routines process that ensures awareness and risk is fed both up and down through the Group including board members.

On behalf of the Board



**Lord Tim Clement-Jones CBE**  
Chair of the Board

8th August 2024

**DIRECTORS' REPORT  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

The directors present their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2023.

**PRINCIPLE ACTIVITIES**

The principal activity of the company and group continued to be that of independent dispute resolution.

**RESULTS**

The results for the year are set out on page 55.

**DIRECTORS**

The directors who held office during the year and up to the date of signature of the financial statements were as follows:

Dr M M Amos	
Lord T F Clement Jones CBE	
Mr B J Landers	(Resigned 1 August 2023)
Mr M J Vickers	(Resigned 28 November 2023)
Mr S A Palmer	
Mrs O Sodeinde	
Mr P W Hewitt	
Mrs J S Davenport	(Appointed 1 July 2023)
Mrs G Drakeford	(Appointed 1 July 2023)
Mr M George	

**DISABLED PERSONS**

Applications for employment by disabled persons are always fully considered, bearing in mind the aptitudes of the applicant concerned. In the event of members of staff becoming disabled, every effort is made to ensure that their employment within the group continues and that the appropriate training is arranged. It is the policy of the group that the training, career development and promotion of disabled persons should, as far as possible, be identical to that of other employees.

**EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT**

The Group's policy is to consult and discuss with employees, through unions, staff councils and at meetings, matters likely to affect employees' interests.

Information about matters of concern to employees is given through information bulletins and reports which seek to achieve a common awareness on the part of all employees of the financial and economic factors affecting the group's performance.

**AUDITOR**

Following the merger of MHA Moore & Smalley with MHA, the company's independent auditor has now become MHA. A resolution to reappoint MHA as independent auditor will be proposed at the next Annual General Meeting.

**ENERGY AND CARBON REPORT**

As the company has consumed more than 40,000 kWh of energy in this reporting period, it does not qualify as a low energy user under these regulations and is required to report on its emissions, energy consumption or energy efficiency activities.

**DIRECTORS' REPORT CONTINUED  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

	2023 kWh	2022 kWh
<b>Energy Consumption</b>		
<b>Aggregate of energy consumption in the year</b>		
Electricity purchased	1,041,961	-
	1,041,961	-
	<u>1,041,961</u>	<u>-</u>
	2023 metric tonnes	2022 metric tonnes
<b>Emissions of CO2 equivalent</b>		
<b>Scope 1 – direct emissions</b>		
Gas combustion	-	-
Fuel consumed for owned transport	-	-
	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
	-	-
<b>Scope 2 – indirect emissions</b>		
Electricity purchased	215.76	-
<b>Scope 3 – other indirect emissions</b>		
Fuel consumed for transport not owned by the group	-	-
	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
<b>Total gross emissions</b>	<u>215.76</u>	<u>-</u>
<b>Intensity ratio</b>		
Tonnes CO2e per employee	0.33	-
	<u>0.33</u>	<u>-</u>

**QUANTIFICATION AND REPORTING METHODOLOGY**

The group has followed the 2019 HM Government Environmental Reporting Guidelines. The group has also used the GHG Reporting Protocol – Corporate Standard and have used the 2020 UK Government's Conversion Factors for Company Reporting.

**INTENSITY MEASUREMENT**

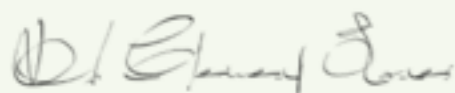
The chosen intensity measurement ratio is total gross emissions in metric tonnes CO2e per employee, the recommended ratio for the sector.

**STATEMENT OF DISCLOSURE TO AUDITOR**

So far as each person who was a director at the date of approving this report is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the auditor of the company is unaware. Additionally, the directors individually have taken all the necessary steps that they ought to have taken as directors in order to make themselves aware of all relevant audit information and to establish that the auditor of the company is aware of that information.

## DIRECTORS' REPORT CONTINUED FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

On behalf of the Board



**Lord Tim Clement-Jones CBE**

Chair of the Board

8th August 2024

## DIRECTORS' RESPONSIBILITIES STATEMENT TO THE MEMBERS OF TRUST ALLIANCE GROUP LIMITED

The directors are responsible for preparing the Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the directors have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). Under company law the directors must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the group and company, and of the surplus or deficit of the group for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the directors are required to:

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

The directors are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the group's and company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the group and company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the group and company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF TRUST ALLIANCE GROUP LIMITED

### OPINION

We have audited the financial statements of The Trust Alliance Group Limited (the 'parent company') and its subsidiaries (the 'group') for the year ended 31 December 2023 which comprise the group statement of comprehensive income, the group balance sheet, the company balance sheet, the group statement of changes in equity, the company statement of changes in equity, the group statement of cash flows, the company statement of cash flows and notes to the financial statements, including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 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 company's affairs as at 31 December 2023 and of the group's surplus for the year ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

### 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 group and parent 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 directors' 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 group's and parent 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 directors 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 directors are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. 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. 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 course of 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 this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. 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.

## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT CONTINUED TO THE MEMBERS OF TRUST ALLIANCE GROUP LIMITED

### OPINIONS ON OTHER MATTERS PRESCRIBED BY THE COMPANIES ACT 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of our audit:

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

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

### MATTERS ON WHICH WE ARE REQUIRED TO REPORT BY EXCEPTION

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept by the parent company, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the parent company financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of directors' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

### RESPONSIBILITIES OF DIRECTORS

As explained more fully in the directors' responsibilities statement, the directors 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 directors 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 directors are responsible for assessing the parent 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 directors either intend to liquidate the parent company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

### AUDITOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE AUDIT OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

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

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 specific procedures for this engagement and the extent to which these are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is detailed below.

- Enquiries with management about any known or suspected instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations and fraud;
- Challenging assumptions and judgements made by management in their significant accounting estimates,
- Auditing the risk of management override of controls, including through testing journal entries and other adjustments for appropriateness;

## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT CONTINUED TO THE MEMBERS OF TRUST ALLIANCE GROUP LIMITED

- Reviewing Board minutes and resolutions; and
- Auditing the risk of fraud and management override of revenue by incorporating data analytics into our sampling of source entries and testing specific transactions to determine the completeness of revenue.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

A further description of our responsibilities is available on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: <https://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities>. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

### USE OF OUR REPORT

This report is made solely to the company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the company and the company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

*Nicola Mason*

**Nicola Mason (Senior Statutory Auditor)**  
Senior Statutory Auditor  
For and on behalf of MHA, Statutory Auditor  
Preston, United Kingdom

9th August 2024

MHA is the trading name of MacIntyre Hudson LLP, a limited liability partnership in England and Wales (registered number OC312313)

## GROUP STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

	Notes	2023 £	2022 £
<b>Turnover</b>	3	52,976,026	36,418,752
Administrative expenses		(48,036,131)	(37,305,424)
<b>Operating surplus/(loss)</b>	7	4,939,895	(886,672)
Interest receivable and similar income	8	33,198	46,030
Change in value of investments	10	67,618	(349,011)
		5,040,711	(1,189,653)
<b>Surplus/(loss) before taxation</b>			
Tax on (loss)/surplus	9	(396,881)	(114,904)
<b>Surplus/(loss) for the financial year</b>		4,643,830	(1,304,557)

Total comprehensive income for the year is all attributable to the parent company.

## GROUP AND COMPANY BALANCE SHEETS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

	Notes	Group 2023 £	Group 2022 £	Company 2023 £	Company 2022 £
<b>Fixed assets</b>					
Intangible assets	11	3,873,353	2,593,636	–	2,593,636
Tangible assets	12	2,537,404	2,857,476	1,519,837	2,779,547
Investments	13	3,469,372	3,420,900	3,469,472	3,421,000
		<u>9,880,129</u>	<u>8,872,012</u>	<u>4,989,309</u>	<u>8,794,183</u>
<b>Current assets</b>					
Debtors	15	8,960,308	7,684,156	21,619,395	12,894,000
Cash at bank and in hand		5,200,730	3,566,946	193,788	3,048,934
		<u>14,161,038</u>	<u>11,251,102</u>	<u>21,813,183</u>	<u>15,942,934</u>
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</b>					
	16	<u>(6,645,828)</u>	<u>(6,961,911)</u>	<u>(15,647,104)</u>	<u>(11,538,714)</u>
<b>Net Current Assets</b>					
		<u>7,515,210</u>	<u>4,289,191</u>	<u>6,166,079</u>	<u>4,404,220</u>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>					
		<u>17,395,339</u>	<u>13,161,203</u>	<u>11,155,388</u>	<u>13,198,403</u>
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due after more than on year</b>					
	17	<u>(630,816)</u>	<u>(1,454,975)</u>	<u>(630,816)</u>	<u>(1,454,975)</u>
<b>Provisions for liabilities</b>					
Provisions	19	<u>(877,759)</u>	<u>(845,058)</u>	<u>(811,780)</u>	<u>(845,058)</u>
Deferred Tax liability	20	<u>(547,665)</u>	<u>(165,901)</u>	<u>(222,181)</u>	<u>(148,191)</u>
		<u>(1,425,424)</u>	<u>(1,010,959)</u>	<u>(1,033,961)</u>	<u>(993,249)</u>
<b>Net assets</b>					
		<u>15,339,099</u>	<u>10,695,269</u>	<u>9,490,611</u>	<u>10,750,179</u>
<b>Capital and reserves</b>					
Income and Expenditure account		<u>15,339,099</u>	<u>10,695,269</u>	<u>9,490,611</u>	<u>10,750,179</u>

As permitted by s408 Companies Act 2006, the company has not presented its own income and expenditure account and related notes. The company's deficit for the year was £1,259,568 (2022 – £1,115,663 deficit).

The financial statements were approved by the Board of directors and authorised for issue on 8th August 2024 and are signed on its behalf by:

**Lord T F Clement-Jones CBE**  
Director

The notes on pages 57 to 75 are an integral part of these financial statements.

Company Registration No. 04351294

## GROUP STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

	Income and Expenditure £
<b>Balance at 1 January 2022</b>	11,999,826
<b>Year ended 31 December 2022:</b>	
Loss and total comprehensive income for the year	<u>(1,304,557)</u>
<b>Balance at 31 December 2022</b>	10,695,269
<b>Period ended 31 December 2023:</b>	
Surplus and total comprehensive income for the period	<u>4,643,830</u>
<b>Balance at 31 December 2023</b>	<u>15,339,099</u>

**COMPANY STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

	Income and Expenditure £
Balance at 1 January 2022	11,865,843
<b>Year ended 31 December 2022:</b>	
Loss and total comprehensive income for the year	(1,115,664)
Balance at 31 December 2022	10,750,179
<b>Year ended 31 December 2023:</b>	
Deficit and total comprehensive income for the period	(1,259,568)
<b>Balance at 31 December 2023</b>	<b>9,490,611</b>

**GROUP STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**

	Notes	2023 £	2023 £	2022 £	2022 £
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>					
Cash generated from operations	25	5,240,073		477,495	
Income taxes paid		(77,942)		(1,003)	
<b>Net cash inflow from operating activities</b>		<b>5,162,131</b>		<b>476,492</b>	
<b>Investing activities</b>					
Purchase of intangible assets		(2,465,452)		(2,597,881)	
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(536,171)		(1,059,290)	
Valuation changes in investments		(48,472)		375,015	
Receipts arising from loans made		67,618		(349,011)	
Interest received		33,198		46,030	
<b>Net cash used in investing activities</b>		<b>(2,949,279)</b>		<b>(3,585,137)</b>	
<b>Financing activities</b>					
Proceeds of a new finance lease		-		1,300,000	
Repayment of finance lease		(579,068)		(513,336)	
<b>Net cash (used in)/generated from financing activities</b>		<b>(579,068)</b>		<b>786,664</b>	
<b>Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents</b>		<b>1,633,784</b>		<b>(2,321,981)</b>	
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year		3,566,946		5,888,927	
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at end of year</b>		<b>5,200,730</b>		<b>3,566,946</b>	

## NOTES TO THE GROUP FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

### 1 COMPANY INFORMATION

Trust Alliance Group Limited ("the company") is a private limited company domiciled and incorporated in England and Wales. The registered office is 3300 Daresbury Park, Daresbury, Warrington, WA4 4HS.

The group consists of Trust Alliance Group Limited and all of its subsidiaries.

#### 1.1 ACCOUNTING CONVENTION

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" ("FRS 102") and the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the company. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention. The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below.

#### 1.2 BUSINESS COMBINATIONS

In the parent company financial statements, the cost of a business combination is the fair value at the acquisition date of the assets given, equity instruments issued and liabilities incurred or assumed, plus costs directly attributable to the business combination. The excess of the cost of a business combination over the fair value of the identifiable assets, liabilities and contingent liabilities acquired is recognised as goodwill. The cost of the combination includes the estimated amount of contingent consideration that is probable and can be measured reliably, and is adjusted for changes in contingent consideration after the acquisition date. Provisional fair values recognised for business combinations in previous periods are adjusted retrospectively for final fair values determined in the 12 months following the acquisition date. Investments in subsidiaries, joint ventures and associates are accounted for at cost less impairment.

Deferred tax is recognised on differences between the value of assets (other than goodwill) and liabilities recognised in a business combination accounted for using the purchase method and the amounts that can be deducted or assessed for tax, considering the manner in which the carrying amount of the asset or liability is expected to be recovered or settled. The deferred tax recognised is adjusted against goodwill or negative goodwill.

#### 1.3 BASIS OF CONSOLIDATION

The consolidated group financial statements consist of the financial statements of the parent company Trust Alliance Group Limited together with all entities controlled by the parent company (its subsidiaries).

All financial statements are made up to 31 December 2023. Where necessary, adjustments are made to the financial statements of subsidiaries to bring the accounting policies used into line with those used by other members of the group.

All intra-group transactions, balances and unrealised gains on transactions between group companies are eliminated on consolidation. Unrealised losses are also eliminated unless the transaction provides evidence of an impairment of the asset transferred.

Subsidiaries are consolidated in the group's financial statements from the date that control commences until the date that control ceases.

## NOTES TO THE GROUP FINANCIAL STATEMENTS CONTINUED FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

### 1 ACCOUNTING POLICIES CONTINUED

Entities in which the group holds an interest and which are jointly controlled by the group and one or more other venturers under a contractual arrangement are treated as joint ventures. Entities other than subsidiary undertakings or joint ventures, in which the group has a participating interest and over whose operating and financial policies the group exercises a significant influence, are treated as associates.

#### 1.4 GOING CONCERN

The financial statements have been prepared on the going concern basis of accounting.

The directors continue to assess the impact of supplier failures on all aspects of the business and measures have been taken to ensure the Group remains financially sound, whilst also providing the most appropriate service to consumers and participating companies in the current circumstances.

Specifically, the Group has been able to support hybrid working and focus on the wellbeing of colleagues, together with ensuring the continued availability of the Group's services to all stakeholders, with a particular focus on the more vulnerable consumers.

The directors have reasonable expectation that the Group has adequate resources to continue to operational existence for the foreseeable future. This, the directors continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

#### 1.5 TURNOVER

Turnover represents subscription and case fee income of the service and any costs recovered in setting up new ombudsman services.

Case fee income is recognised dependent on the progress of the case and the stage of completion at the period end.

Subscriptions are included in the financial statements as they become receivable or due.

#### 1.6 RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT EXPENDITURE

Research expenditure is written-off against profits in the year in which it is incurred. Identifiable development expenditure is capitalised to the extent that the technical, commercial and financial feasibility can be demonstrated.

#### 1.7 INTANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS OTHER THAN GOODWILL

Intangible assets acquired separately from a business are recognised at cost and are subsequently measured at cost less accumulated amortisation and accumulated impairment losses.

Intangible assets acquired on business combinations are recognised separately from goodwill at the acquisition date where it is probable that the expected future economic benefits that are attributable to the asset will flow to the entity and the fair value of the asset can be measured reliably; the intangible asset arises from contractual or other legal rights; and the intangible asset is separable from the entity.

Amortisation is recognised so as to write off the cost or valuation of assets less their residual values over their useful lives on the following bases:

Software	33% - 50% straight line
Assets under construction	No amortisation charged

## NOTES TO THE GROUP FINANCIAL STATEMENTS CONTINUED FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

### 1 ACCOUNTING POLICIES CONTINUED

#### 1.8 TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

Tangible fixed assets are initially measured at cost and subsequently measured at cost or valuation, net of depreciation and any impairment losses.

Depreciation is recognised so as to write off the cost or valuation of assets less their residual values over their useful lives on the following bases:

Leasehold improvements	Over the period of the lease
Fixtures and fittings	20% - 50% straight line
Computers	33% straight line or over life of the lease

The gain or loss arising on the disposal of an asset is determined as the difference between the sale proceeds and the carrying value of the asset, and is recognised in the income and expenditure account.

#### 1.9 FIXED ASSET INVESTMENTS

Equity investments are measured at fair value through surplus or deficit.

In the parent company financial statements, investments in subsidiaries are initially measured at cost and subsequently measured at cost less any accumulated impairment losses.

A subsidiary is an entity controlled by the group. Control is the power to govern the financial and operating policies of the entity so as to obtain benefits from its activities.

#### 1.10 BORROWING COSTS RELATED TO FIXED ASSETS

Borrowing costs directly attributable to the acquisition, construction or production of qualifying assets, which are assets that necessarily take a substantial period of time to get ready for their intended use or sale, are added to the cost of those assets, until such time as the assets are substantially ready for their intended use or sale.

#### 1.11 IMPAIRMENT OF FIXED ASSETS

At each reporting period end date, the group reviews the carrying amounts of its tangible and intangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have suffered an impairment loss. If any such indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset is estimated in order to determine the extent of the impairment loss (if any). Where it is not possible to estimate the recoverable amount of an individual asset, the company estimates the recoverable amount of the cash-generating unit to which the asset belongs.

Recoverable amount is the higher of fair value less costs to sell and value in use. In assessing value in use, the estimated future cash flows are discounted to their present value using a pre-tax discount rate that reflects current market assessments of the time value of money and the risks specific to the asset for which the estimates of future cash flows have not been adjusted.

If the recoverable amount of an asset is estimated to be less than its carrying amount, the carrying amount of the asset is reduced to its recoverable amount. An impairment loss is recognised immediately in surplus or deficit, unless the relevant asset is carried at a revalued amount, in which case the impairment loss is treated as a revaluation decrease to the extent it reverses a previous upwards revaluation.

## NOTES TO THE GROUP FINANCIAL STATEMENTS CONTINUED FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

### 1 ACCOUNTING POLICIES CONTINUED

Recognised impairment losses are reversed if, and only if, the reasons for the impairment loss have ceased to apply. Where an impairment loss subsequently reverses, the carrying amount of the asset (or cash-generating unit) is increased to the revised estimate of its recoverable amount, but so that the increased carrying amount does not exceed the carrying amount that would have been determined had no impairment loss been recognised for the asset (or cash-generating unit) in prior years. A reversal of an impairment loss is recognised immediately in surplus or deficit, unless the relevant asset is carried at a revalued amount, in which case the reversal of the impairment loss is treated as a revaluation increase.

#### 1.12 CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS

Cash and cash equivalents are basic financial assets and 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. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities.

#### 1.13 FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

The group has elected to apply the provisions of Section 11 'Basic Financial Instruments' and Section 12 'Other Financial Instruments Issues' of FRS 102 to all of its financial instruments.

Financial instruments are recognised in the group's balance sheet when the group becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Financial assets and liabilities are offset and the net amounts presented in the financial statements when there is a legally enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously.

#### BASIC FINANCIAL ASSETS

Basic financial assets, which include debtors and cash and bank balances, are initially measured at transaction price including transaction costs and are subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the transaction is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial assets classified as receivable within one year are not amortised.

#### OTHER FINANCIAL ASSETS

Other financial assets, including investments in equity instruments which are not subsidiaries, associates or joint ventures, are initially measured at fair value, which is normally the transaction price. Such assets are subsequently carried at fair value and the changes in fair value are recognised in surplus or deficit, except that investments in equity instruments that are not publicly traded and whose fair values cannot be measured reliably are measured at cost less impairment.

## NOTES TO THE GROUP FINANCIAL STATEMENTS CONTINUED FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

### 1 ACCOUNTING POLICIES (CONTINUED)

#### IMPAIRMENT OF FINANCIAL ASSETS

Financial assets, other than those held at fair value through surplus and deficit, are assessed for indicators of impairment at each reporting end date.

Financial assets are impaired where there is objective evidence that, as a result of one or more events that occurred after the initial recognition of the financial asset, the estimated future cash flows have been affected. If an asset is impaired, the impairment loss is the difference between the carrying amount and the present value of the estimated cash flows discounted at the asset's original effective interest rate. The impairment loss is recognised in surplus or deficit.

If there is a decrease in the impairment loss arising from an event occurring after the impairment was recognised, the impairment is reversed. The reversal is such that the current carrying amount does not exceed what the carrying amount would have been, had the impairment not previously been recognised. The impairment reversal is recognised in surplus or deficit.

#### DERECOGNITION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS

Financial assets are derecognised only when the contractual rights to the cash flows from the asset expire or are settled, or when the group transfers the financial asset and substantially all the risks and rewards of ownership to another entity, or if some significant risks and rewards of ownership are retained but control of the asset has transferred to another party that is able to sell the asset in its entirety to an unrelated third party.

#### CLASSIFICATION OF FINANCIAL LIABILITIES

Financial liabilities and equity instruments are classified according to the substance of the contractual arrangements entered into. An equity instrument is any contract that evidences a residual interest in the assets of the group after deducting all of its liabilities.

#### BASIC FINANCIAL LIABILITIES

Basic financial liabilities, including creditors, bank loans, loans from fellow group companies and preference shares that are classified as debt, are initially recognised at transaction price unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial liabilities classified as payable within one year are not amortised.

Debt instruments are subsequently carried at amortised cost, using the effective interest rate method.

Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of business from suppliers. Amounts payable are classified as current liabilities if payment is due within one year or less. If not, they are presented as non-current liabilities. Trade creditors are recognised initially at transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

#### OTHER FINANCIAL LIABILITIES

There are no other financial liabilities held by the Group.

#### DERECOGNITION OF FINANCIAL LIABILITIES

Financial liabilities are derecognised when the group's contractual obligations expire or are discharged or cancelled.

## NOTES TO THE GROUP FINANCIAL STATEMENTS CONTINUED FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

### 1 ACCOUNTING POLICIES (CONTINUED)

#### 1.14 EQUITY INSTRUMENTS

Equity instruments issued by the Group are recorded at the proceeds received, net of transaction costs. Dividends payable on equity instruments are recognised as liabilities once they are no longer at the discretion of the Group.

#### 1.15 TAXATION

The tax expense represents the sum of the tax currently payable and deferred tax.

##### CURRENT TAX

The tax currently payable is based on taxable profit for the year. Taxable profit differs from net profit as reported in the profit and loss account because it excludes items of income or expense that are taxable or deductible in other years and it further excludes items that are never taxable or deductible. The Group's liability for current tax is calculated using tax rates that have been enacted or substantively enacted by the reporting end date.

##### DEFERRED TAX

Trust Alliance Group Limited is only liable to taxation on its investment activities. Deferred tax is provided for on unrealised gains on the valuation of investments.

#### 1.16 PROVISIONS

Provisions are recognised when the Group has a legal or constructive present obligation as a result of a past event, it is probable that the Group will be required to settle that obligation and a reliable estimate can be made of the amount of the obligation.

The amount recognised as a provision is the best estimate of the consideration required to settle the present obligation at the reporting end date, taking into account the risks and uncertainties surrounding the obligation. Where the effect of the time value of money is material, the amount expected to be required to settle the obligation is recognised at present value. When a provision is measured at present value, the unwinding of the discount is recognised as a finance cost in surplus or deficit in the period in which it arises.

#### 1.17 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 stock or 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.

#### 1.18 RETIREMENT BENEFITS

Payments to defined contribution retirement benefit schemes are charged as an expense as they fall due.

## NOTES TO THE GROUP FINANCIAL STATEMENTS CONTINUED

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

#### 1 ACCOUNTING POLICIES CONTINUED

##### 1.19 LEASES

Leases are classified as finance leases whenever the terms of the lease transfer substantially all the risks and rewards of ownership to the lessees. All other leases are classified as operating leases.

Assets held under finance leases are recognised as assets at the lower of the assets fair value at the date of inception and the present value of the 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 profit or loss so as to produce a constant periodic rate of interest on the remaining balance of the liability.

Rentals payable under operating leases, including any lease incentives received, are charged to surplus or deficit on a straight line basis over the term of the relevant lease except where another more systematic basis is more representative of the time pattern in which economic benefits from the leased asset are consumed.

##### 1.20 FOREIGN EXCHANGE

Transactions in currencies other than pounds sterling are recorded at the rates of exchange prevailing at the dates of the transactions. At each reporting end date, monetary assets and liabilities that are denominated in foreign currencies are retranslated at the rates prevailing on the reporting end date. Gains and losses arising on translation in the period are included in profit or loss.

#### 2 JUDGEMENTS AND KEY SOURCES OF ESTIMATION UNCERTAINTY

In the application of the Group's accounting policies, the directors are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised where the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods where the revision affects both current and future periods.

##### CRITICAL JUDGEMENTS DILAPIDATIONS PROVISION

The dilapidations provision is based on an average cost per square metre for the property leased to provide an estimate of likely costs. This is based on historic experience of likely costs but the eventual cost may differ.

##### BAD DEBT PROVISION

The bad debt provision is based on an estimate of how much is ultimately recoverable from debtors.

## COMPANY STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

	Notes	2023 £	2023 £	2022 £	2022 £
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>					
Cash (absorbed by)/generated from operations	28		(2,286,600)		116,554
Income taxes paid			(8,624)		(19,915)
<b>Net cash (outflow)/inflow from operating activities</b>			<b>(2,295,224)</b>		<b>96,639</b>
<b>Investing activities</b>					
Purchase of intangible assets		-		(2,597,881)	
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		-		(1,007,205)	
Purchase of investments		(48,472)		375,015	
Receipts arising from loans made		67,618		(349,011)	
Interest received		-		46,018	
<b>Net cash generated from/ (used) in investing activities</b>			<b>19,146</b>		<b>(3,533,064)</b>
<b>Financing activities</b>					
Proceeds of a new finance lease		-		1,300,000	
Repayment of borrowings		(579,068)		(513,331)	
<b>Net cash (used in)/ generated from</b>			<b>(579,068)</b>		<b>786,669</b>
<b>Net decrease in cash and cash equivalents</b>			<b>(2,855,146)</b>		<b>(2,649,756)</b>
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year			3,048,934		5,698,690
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at end of year</b>			<b>193,788</b>		<b>3,048,934</b>

### COMPANY STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS CONTINUED FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

#### 3 TURNOVER AND OTHER REVENUE

	2023 £	2022 £
Turnover	52,976,026	36,418,752
Other significant revenue		
Interest Income	33,198	46,030

The total turnover of the group for the year has been derived from its principal activity wholly undertaken in the UK.

#### 4 AUDITOR'S REMUNERATION

	2023 £	2022 £
Fees payable to company's auditor and associates:		
<b>For Audit Services</b>		
Audit of the financial statements of the group and company	60,000	27,135
<b>For other services</b>		
Taxation compliance services	3,500	2,500
All other non-audit services	5,500	3,500
	9,000	6,000

#### 5 EMPLOYEES

The average monthly number of persons (including directors) employed by the group and company during the Year was:

	Group 2023 Number	Group 2022 Number	Company 2023 Number	Company 2022 Number
Management and administration	655	598	-	565

### COMPANY STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS CONTINUED FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

#### 5 EMPLOYEES CONTINUED

Their aggregate remuneration comprised:

	Group 2023 £	Group 2022 £	Company 2023 £	Company 2022 £
Wages and salaries	32,081,173	17,940,249	-	12,485,586
Social security costs	2,362,879	1,749,721	-	1,190,880
Pension costs	936,555	668,970	-	474,978
	35,380,607	20,358,940	-	14,151,444
Redundancy payments made or committed	551,989	462,851	-	270,764

#### 6 DIRECTORS' REMUNERATION

	2023 £	2022 £
Remuneration for qualifying services	950,190	513,463
Company pension contributions to defined contribution schemes	66,271	33,506
	1,016,461	546,969

The number of directors for whom retirement benefits are accruing under defined contribution schemes amounted to 7 (2022 - 6).

Remuneration disclosed above includes the following amounts paid to the highest paid director:

	2023 £	2022 £
Remuneration for qualifying services	512,252	180,600
Company pension contributions to defined contribution schemes	41,512	16,447

**COMPANY STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS CONTINUED**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**
**7 OPERATING (LOSS)/PROFIT**

	2023 £	2022 £
Operating profit/(loss) for the year is stated after charging/(crediting):		
Exchange losses	105	81
Research and development costs	-	126,422
Depreciation of owned tangible fixed assets	920,217	711,166
Amortisation of intangible assets	1,083,016	1,374,195
Release of negative goodwill	-	(38,746)
Operating lease charges	785,510	676,354
	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>

**8 INTEREST RECEIVABLE AND SIMILAR INCOME**

	2023 £	2022 £
<b>Interest Income</b>		
Interest on bank deposits	33,198	46,030
	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>

**9 TAXATION**

	2023 £	2022 £
<b>Current tax</b>		
UK corporation tax on profits for the current period	-	33,580
Adjustments in respect of prior periods	15,117	(4,550)
	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
Total current tax	15,117	29,030
	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
<b>Deferred tax</b>		
Origination and reversal of timing differences	381,764	85,874
	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
Total tax charge	396,881	114,904
	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>

**COMPANY STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS CONTINUED**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**
**9 TAXATION CONTINUED**

The actual charge for the Year can be reconciled to the expected charge/(credit) for the Year based on the surplus or deficit and the standard rate of tax as follows:

	2023 £	2022 £
Profit/(loss) before taxation	5,040,711	(1,189,653)
	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
Expected tax charge/(credit) based on the standard rate of corporation tax in the UK of 25.00% (2022: 19.00%)	1,260,178	(226,034)
Tax effect of expenses that are not deductible in determining taxable profit	(12,184)	(1)
Tax effect of income not taxable in determining taxable profit	-	(2,969)
Adjustments in respect of prior years	-	115
Permanent capital allowances in excess of depreciation	3,381,272	-
Depreciation on assets not qualifying for tax allowances	(920,217)	-
Amortisation on assets not qualifying for tax allowances	(629)	-
Deferred tax charge on investment gain	67,618	-
Exempt activity	(3,379,157)	343,793
	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>
Taxation charge	396,881	114,904
	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>

Trust Alliance Group Limited is liable to corporation tax on its investment income but is exempt from corporation tax on Alternative Dispute Resolution activities, which are not considered to be trading activities for the purposes of taxation.

**10 CHANGE IN VALUE OF INVESTMENTS**

	2023 £	2022 £
<b>Fair value gains/(losses) on financial instruments</b>		
Change in value of investments	67,618	(349,011)
	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>

**COMPANY STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS CONTINUED**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**
**11 INTANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS**

Group	Software £	Assets under construction £	Total £
<b>Cost</b>			
At 1 January 2023	2,622,869	1,073,713	3,696,582
Additions	504,293	1,961,159	2,465,452
Transfers	(1,102,947)	(63,972)	(1,166,919)
Transfers from assets under construction	2,144,433	(2,144,433)	-
At 31 December 2023	4,168,648	826,467	4,995,115
<b>Amortisation and impairment</b>			
At 1 January 2023	1,102,946	-	1,102,946
Amortisation charged for the year	1,121,762	-	1,121,762
Transfers	(1,102,946)	-	(1,102,946)
At 31 December 2023	1,121,762	-	1,121,762
<b>Carrying Amount</b>			
At 31 December 2023	3,046,886	826,467	3,873,353
At 31 December 2022	1,519,923	1,073,713	2,593,636
<b>Company</b>			
Company	Software £	Assets under construction £	Total £
<b>Cost</b>			
At 1 January 2023	2,622,869	(1,073,713)	3,696,582
Transfers	(2,622,869)	(1,073,713)	(3,696,582)
At 31 December 2023	-	-	-
<b>Amortisation and impairment</b>			
At 1 January 2023	1,102,946	-	1,102,946
Transfers	(1,102,946)	-	(1,102,946)
At 31 December 2023	-	-	-
<b>Carrying Amount</b>			
At 31 December 2023	-	-	-
At 31 December 2022	1,519,923	1,073,713	2,593,636

**COMPANY STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS CONTINUED**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**
**12 TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS**

Group	Leasehold improve- ments £	Assets under construction £	Fixtures and fittings £	Computers £	Total £
<b>Cost</b>					
At 1 January 2023	2,517,498	-	1,827,451	953,515	5,298,464
Additions	136,698	5,385	48,499	345,589	536,171
Transfers	(380,786)	63,972	(962,319)	(520,186)	(1,799,319)
Transfers from assets under construction	-	(63,972)	-	63,972	-
At 31 December 2023	2,273,410	5,385	913,631	842,890	4,035,316
<b>Depreciation and impairment</b>					
At 1 January 2023	687,697	-	1,109,264	644,027	2,440,988
Depreciation charged in the year	495,527	-	183,924	240,766	920,217
Transfers	(380,787)	-	(962,319)	(520,187)	(1,863,293)
At 31 December 2023	802,437	-	330,869	364,606	1,497,912
<b>Carrying amount</b>					
At 31 December 2023	1,470,973	5,385	582,762	478,284	2,537,404
At 31 December 2022	1,829,801	-	718,187	309,488	2,857,476

**COMPANY STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS CONTINUED**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**
**12 TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS CONTINUED**

Company	Leasehold improvements £	Fixtures and fittings £	Computers £	Total £
<b>Cost</b>				
At 1 January 2023	2,517,498	1,827,451	804,675	5,149,624
Transfers	(906,983)	(1,090,773)	(576,902)	(2,574,658)
At 31 December 2023	1,610,515	736,678	227,773	2,574,966
<b>Depreciation and impairment</b>				
At 1 January 2023	687,697	1,109,264	573,116	2,370,077
Depreciation charged in the year	325,901	147,336	75,108	548,345
Transfers	(380,787)	(962,319)	(520,187)	(1,863,293)
At 31 December 2023	632,811	294,281	128,037	1,055,129
<b>Carrying Amount</b>				
At 31 December 2023	977,704	442,397	99,736	1,519,837
At 31 December 2022	1,829,801	718,187	231,559	2,779,547

The net carrying value of tangible fixed assets includes the following in respect of assets held under finance leases or hire purchase contracts.

	Group 2023 £	Group 2022 £	Company 2023 £	Company 2022 £
Leasehold Improvements	1,210,391	1,593,841	1,210,391	1,593,841

**COMPANY STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS CONTINUED**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**
**13 FIXED ASSET INVESTMENTS**

	Notes	Group 2023 £	Group 2022 £	Company 2023 £	Company 2022 £
Investments in subsidiaries	14	-	-	100	100
Listed investments		3,469,372	3,420,900	3,469,372	3,420,900
		3,469,372	3,420,900	3,469,472	3,421,000

**MOVEMENTS IN FIXED ASSET INVESTMENTS**

Group	Investments £		
<b>Cost or valuation</b>			
At 1 January 2023			3,420,900
Valuation changes			48,472
At 31 December 2023			3,469,372
<b>Carrying amount</b>			
At 31 December 2023			3,469,372
At 31 December 2022			3,420,900
<b>Company</b>	<b>Shares in subsidiaries £</b>	<b>Other Investments £</b>	<b>Total £</b>
<b>Cost or valuation</b>			
At 1 January 2023	100	3,420,900	3,421,000
Valuation changes	-	48,472	48,472
At 31 December 2023	100	3,469,372	3,469,472
<b>Carrying amount</b>			
At 31 December 2023	100	3,469,372	3,469,472
At 31 December 2022	100	3,420,900	3,421,000

## COMPANY STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS CONTINUED FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

### 14 SUBSIDIARIES

Details of the company's subsidiaries at 31 December 2023 are as follows:

Name of undertaking	Registered Office	Class of shares held	% Held Direct
Lumin Tech Limited	England and Wales	Ordinary	100.00
Digital Responsibility Network Limited	England and Wales	Ordinary	100.00
Tag Support Services Limited	England and Wales	Ordinary	100.00
Energy Ombudsman Limited	England and Wales	Ordinary	100.00
Flexible Resolution Services Limited	England and Wales	Ordinary	100.00
Communications Ombudsman Limited	England and Wales	Ordinary	100.00

### 15 DEBTORS

Amounts falling due within one year	Group 2023 £	Group 2022 £	Company 2023 £	Company 2022 £
Trade debtors	6,835,174	6,548,169	65,125	6,546,859
Other debtors	524,725	33,526	21,339,270	5,279,659
Prepayment and accrued income	1,600,409	1,102,461	215,000	1,067,482
	<u>8,960,308</u>	<u>7,684,156</u>	<u>21,619,395</u>	<u>12,894,000</u>

## COMPANY STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS CONTINUED FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

### 16 CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	Notes	Group 2023 £	Group 2022 £	Company 2023 £	Company 2022 £
Obligations under finance leases	18	577,935	579,068	577,935	579,068
Trade creditors		1,564,624	1,727,088	10,711	1,596,997
Corporation tax payable		-	62,824	-	-
Other taxation and social security		2,529,195	1,618,553	150,930	1,023,198
Other creditors		285,484	193,187	14,653,077	5,617,132
Accruals and deferred income		1,688,590	2,781,191	254,451	2,722,319
		<u>6,645,828</u>	<u>6,961,911</u>	<u>15,647,104</u>	<u>11,538,714</u>

### 17 CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE AFTER MORE THAN ONE YEAR

	Notes	Group 2023 £	Group 2022 £	Company 2023 £	Company 2022 £
Obligations under finance leases	18	138,380	716,315	138,380	716,315
Accruals and deferred income		492,436	738,660	492,436	738,660
		<u>630,816</u>	<u>1,454,975</u>	<u>630,816</u>	<u>1,454,975</u>

Accruals and deferred income due after more than one year relates to the receipt of a lease premium which is being spread over the life of the lease.

### 18 FINANCE LEASE OBLIGATIONS

	Group 2023 £	Group 2022 £	Company 2023 £	Company 2022 £
Future minimum lease payments due under finance leases:				
Within one year	577,935	579,068	577,935	579,068
In two to five years	138,380	716,315	138,380	716,315
	<u>716,315</u>	<u>1,295,383</u>	<u>716,315</u>	<u>1,295,383</u>

Finance lease payments represent rentals payable by the company or group for certain items of leasehold improvements. Leases include purchase options at the end of the lease period, and no restrictions are placed on the use of the assets. The average lease term is 3 years. All leases are on a fixed repayment basis and no arrangements have been entered into for contingent rental payments.

**COMPANY STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS CONTINUED**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**
**19 PROVISIONS FOR LIABILITIES**

	Group 2023 £	Group 2022 £	Company 2023 £	Company 2022 £
Dilapidations provision	811,780	780,579	811,780	780,579
Other provisions	65,979	64,479	-	64,479
	<u>877,759</u>	<u>845,058</u>	<u>811,780</u>	<u>845,058</u>

**MOVEMENTS ON PROVISIONS:**

	Dilapidations Provision £	Other provisions £	Total £
<b>Group</b>			
At 1 January 2023	1,592,359	64,479	1,656,838
Additional provisions in the year	-	65,979	65,979
Reversal of provision	(780,579)	(64,479)	(845,058)
At 31 December 2023	<u>811,780</u>	<u>65,979</u>	<u>877,759</u>

	Dilapidations Provision £	Other provisions £	Total £
<b>Company</b>			
At 1 January 2023	1,592,359	64,479	1,656,838
Reversal of provision	(780,579)	(64,479)	(845,058)
At 31 December 2023	<u>811,780</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>811,780</u>

**COMPANY STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS CONTINUED**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023**
**20 DEFERRED TAXATION**

The following are the major deferred tax liabilities and assets recognised by the group and company, and movements thereon:

	Liabilities 2023 £	Liabilities 2022 £
<b>Group</b>		
Accelerated capital allowances	655,915	17,710
Tax losses	(325,770)	-
Retirement benefit obligations	(4,661)	-
Investments	222,181	148,191
	<u>547,665</u>	<u>165,901</u>

	Liabilities 2023 £	Liabilities 2022 £
<b>Company</b>		
Investments	222,181	148,191

**Movements in the year:**

	Group 2023 £	Company 2022 £
Liability at 1 January 2023	165,901	148,191
Charge to profit or loss	381,764	73,990
Liability at 31 December 2023	<u>547,665</u>	<u>222,181</u>

**21 RETIREMENT BENEFIT SCHEMES**
**Defined contribution schemes**

	2023 £	2022 £
Charge to surplus or deficit in respect of defined contribution schemes	<u>936,555</u>	<u>668,970</u>

A defined contribution pension scheme is operated for all qualifying employees. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the group in an independently administered fund.

## COMPANY STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS CONTINUED FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

### 22 OPERATING LEASE COMMITMENTS

#### Lessee

At the reporting end date the group had outstanding commitments for future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases, which fall due as follows:

	Group 2023 £	Group 2022 £	Company 2023 £	Company 2022 £
Within one year	1,129,674	944,275	944,275	944,275
Between two and five years	1,776,184	2,720,459	1,776,184	2,720,459
	<u>2,905,858</u>	<u>3,664,734</u>	<u>2,720,459</u>	<u>3,664,734</u>

### 23 RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

#### Remuneration of key management personnel

The remuneration of key management personnel is as follows.

	2023 £	2022 £
Aggregate compensation	<u>1,098,438</u>	<u>1,141,062</u>

The remuneration of key management personnel is set by the Remuneration Committee and is benchmarked against remuneration of similar sized companies according to data provided by Towers Watson.

There is no overall controlling party of the company.

### 24 CONTINGENT LIABILITY

The Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Services provided by Trust Alliance Group have been treated as a non-trading activity and therefore not subject to corporation tax. This is on the basis that:-

- There is a statutory duty on certain companies to give their customers access to appropriate ADR.
- A statutory authority has given approval to Trust Alliance Group Limited to provide the ADR service
- Trust Alliance Group Limited governance, independence and structure require approval by Of tel and Of gem.
- Trust Alliance Group Limited charges for its services on the basis of covering costs.

HMRC has challenged the status of the activities for tax purposes and has raised additional tax assessments. HMRC have completed a review of their position and upheld the assessments. Independent advice has been obtained by Trust Alliance Group Limited in support of the original treatment of the income as not subject to tax. The case will now go to tribunal. If HMRC's position were upheld, the liability to HMRC would be approximately £2.4million comprising tax of £2.2m and interest and penalties of £0.2m. As the assessments are disputed by the company, this potential liability has not been recognised in the financial statements.

## COMPANY STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS CONTINUED FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

### 25 CASH GENERATED FROM GROUP OPERATIONS

Group	2023 £	2022 £
Surplus/(deficit) for the year after tax	4,643,830	(1,304,557)
<b>Adjustments for:</b>		
Taxation charged	396,881	79,556
Investment income	(33,198)	(46,030)
Amortisation and impairment of intangible assets	1,121,762	1,335,449
Depreciation and impairment of tangible fixed assets	920,217	711,166
Change in value of investments	(67,618)	349,011
Increase/(decrease) in provisions	32,701	(47,825)
<b>Movements in working capital:</b>		
Increase in debtors	(1,276,152)	(2,976,850)
(Decrease)/increase in creditors	(498,350)	2,377,575
<b>Cash generated from operations</b>	<u>5,240,073</u>	<u>477,495</u>

### 26 ANALYSIS OF CHANGES IN NET FUNDS - GROUP

	1 January 2023 £	Cash flows £	31 December 2023 £
Cash at bank and in hand	3,566,946	1,633,784	5,200,730
Obligations under finance leases	(1,295,383)	579,068	(716,315)
	<u>2,271,563</u>	<u>2,212,852</u>	<u>4,484,415</u>

## COMPANY STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS CONTINUED FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

### 27 ANALYSIS OF CHANGES IN NET FUNDS/(DEBT) – COMPANY

	1 January 2023 £	Cash flows £	31 December 2023 £
Cash at bank and in hand	3,048,934	(2,855,146)	193,788
Obligations under finance leases	(1,295,383)	579,068	(716,315)
	<u>1,753,551</u>	<u>(2,276,078)</u>	<u>(522,527)</u>

### 28 CASH (ABSORBED BY)/GENERATED FROM OPERATIONS – COMPANY

Company	2023 £	2022 £
Loss for the year after tax	(1,259,568)	(1,115,664)
<b>Adjustments for:</b>		
Taxation charged	82,614	51,607
Investment income	-	(46,018)
Amortisation and impairment of intangible assets	-	1,335,449
Depreciation and impairment of tangible fixed assets	548,345	671,458
Change in value of investments	(67,618)	349,011
Decrease in provisions	(33,278)	(47,825)
<b>Movements in working capital:</b>		
Increase in debtors	(5,420,394)	(7,899,454)
Increase in creditors	3,863,299	6,817,990
<b>Cash (absorbed by)/generated from operations</b>	<u>(2,286,600)</u>	<u>116,554</u>



Our team are happy to provide guidance and answer any questions you may have, provide technical support or respond to your feedback about our service.

#### Getting in touch

Trust Alliance Group  
3300 Daresbury Park  
Warrington  
WA4 4HS

enquiry@trustalliancegroup.org

#### Social Media

Trust Alliance Group

@trustalliancegp

#### Additional support:

We are committed to treating everybody with fairness and respect. Our commitment includes providing additional support to consumers needing help to access our services fully.

Please see below some of the services we can help with:

- Speaking to us in a foreign language and translation services
- Visual impairments (including Braille)
- Hearing impairments (including Sign language)
- Accessibility

If you need anymore information or would like to request access to any of the services above, you can do this over the phone, online or in writing.

[www.trustalliancegroup.org](http://www.trustalliancegroup.org)



# Trust Alliance Group

 Energy  
Ombudsman

 Communications  
Ombudsman

 Flexible  
Resolution  
Services

 The Internet  
Commission

 Lumin

 Support  
Services