



Annual Report and Financial Statements 2023



ARCHITECTS REGISTRATION BOARD
ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
2023

Annual report and financial statements are presented to the House of Commons pursuant to Section 6(4) of the Government Resources and Accounts Act 2000.

This report is in respect of the accounts for the year ended 31st December 2023 for the Architects Registration Board. On 10th of July 2024, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) was renamed as the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG), so this report is filed by MHCLG in respect of the department formerly known as DLUHC.

On 1st July 2024, the Architects Registration Board (ARB) moved its office location from 8 Weymouth Street, London, W1W 5BU, to 5th Floor, 70 Gray's Inn Road, London, WC1X 8NH. This report makes reference to the old address, as this report is in respect of the accounts for the year ended 31st December 2023.



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Part One: Annual Report

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1. Chair and CEO Foreword

Architects play a crucial role in creating a built environment that is safe, sustainable and where everyone in society can live well. As the regulator, our role is to ensure the profession and architects of the future are supported to achieve those goals. We recognise the many continuing challenges facing the profession and those in higher education delivering training to architects of the future. While our statutory responsibility lies in public protection, our regulatory philosophy is to support and encourage quality, enabling architects to operate to their maximum potential. This approach underpins our [Corporate Strategy 2022-26](#) and our [2023 Business Plan](#).¹ Our Annual Report sets out the excellent progress we have made to deliver on the commitments stated in both of these core documents.

In 2023 the Board agreed major changes to the framework within which architects are educated and trained. Our aspiration is to build on the global reputation of UK architectural education and training by modernising the competency outcomes for architects undertaking ARB accredited qualifications; and to improve access to the profession. Our new framework will mean that in future, architects will no longer need three separate qualifications to qualify in the UK (the system commonly referred to as Parts 1, 2 and 3, in place for the past 50 years) but will need to have an ARB accredited Master's level qualification and practice qualification. We have made this change to enable learning providers to innovate, offer opportunities for quicker routes to registration and increase access to the profession from non-traditional routes. As part of these reforms we have brought forward changes to our quality assurance processes, with new standards for learning providers and a new risk-based methodology for the accreditation of qualifications, including a new Accreditation Committee which operates independently of our Board.

Each year on 14 June we remember the victims of the Grenfell Tower tragedy. 2024 will see the seventh anniversary and we at ARB must continue to play our part to ensure architects are at the forefront of the culture change and competency shift required in the built environment. In 2023, under new powers set out in the Building Safety Act 2022, our Board agreed the new statutory continuing professional development (CPD) scheme which will apply to all registered architects from 2024. This new scheme was designed with extensive consultation and piloting, and will now mean CPD is a condition of registration for all architects. The scheme brings architects into line with other regulated professions and provides assurance to the public about their continuing competence and professionalism. The Board has agreed that in the first year of operation architects will need to provide evidence of CPD in relation to environmental sustainability and fire and life safety design. We have worked closely with the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) to ensure their members can choose to record their CPD through RIBA's platform, avoiding duplication.

In 2023 ARB took exciting steps to help UK architects join registers in other parts of the world. We signed mutual recognition agreements (MRAs) with our counterparts in the USA, Australia and New Zealand, making the process that UK architects must follow to join registers in these countries quicker and easier, and vice versa for eligible architects from these countries. Our MRA with the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB, our US counterpart) was the first of its kind and was hailed a 'landmark agreement' by the Government. The agreements we've signed

¹ <https://arb.org.uk/about-arb/accountability/5yearstrategy/>, <https://arb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/ARB-Business-Plan.pdf>

provide opportunities for us to strengthen international business relationships, and to boost jobs, investment and exports.

The Register of Architects is the only complete and authoritative source that includes information for every UK architect. [In April 2023, we published a major piece of research into the makeup of the profession.](#)² Our findings showed which groups are currently overrepresented and which are underrepresented, and provided a clear evidence base for both ARB and the profession to work together to tackle some of the structural and cultural barriers that exist.

We continue to make necessary investments in our IT infrastructure to boost cybersecurity and bring much needed stability to our IT estate. These investments, which began in 2022 and are scheduled to be completed in 2024/25, will also ensure architects can manage their own registration details 24 hours a day and 365 days of the year.

This ambitious reform agenda has provided many challenges for our Board and staff team who have done a fantastic job in 2023. Despite the scale of change, our staff turnover remains (at 13%) below industry comparators, and feedback gathered from our staff engagement survey has been very positive.

It has been a busy, productive year at ARB during which we made some major advances in the way we regulate, improving our capacity to regulate effectively and to keep the public safe. We are confident that 2024 will be equally fruitful and we want to take this opportunity to thank Board members, the staff team and our many associates for their hard work and dedication to our values.



Alan Kershaw,
Chair
31 May 2024



Hugh Simpson,
Chief Executive and Registrar
31 May 2024

² <https://arb.org.uk/architects-today/>

2. About ARB

We are an independent professional regulator, established by Parliament as a statutory body through the Architects Act, in 1997. We are accountable to government.

The law gives us a number of core functions:

- To ensure only those who are suitably competent are allowed to practise as architects. We do this by approving the architecture qualifications required to join the Register of architects.
- We maintain a publicly available Register of architects so anyone using the services of an architect can be confident that they are suitably qualified and are fit to practise.
- We set the standards of conduct and practice the profession must meet and take action when any architect falls below the required standards of conduct or competence.
- We set requirements for and monitor the continuous professional development that architects must undertake, to provide assurance to the public about the continuing competence of the profession.
- We protect the legally restricted title 'architect' and take action against those who use the title but are not registered with ARB.

3. Progress Report

Introduction

In 2023, ARB's priorities were shaped by our annual [Business Plan](#) and by our five-year [Corporate Strategy](#) for 2022-26.³ Taken together, these two documents set out ARB's aims and ambitions for the year. The Corporate Strategy is based upon five pillars:

- Modernising the initial education and training of architects
- Developing and delivering a new model of continuing professional development
- Transforming our systems, processes, and technology
- Investing in our people
- Continuous improvement to our regulatory services

Modernising the initial education and training of architects

In February 2023, ARB launched an [extensive public consultation](#) on proposals for a new regulatory approach to the initial education and training of architects.⁴ The comprehensive reforms called for a new regulatory framework based on educational outcomes or the competencies required for registration. By doing so, we intended to shift our regulatory focus to what an individual must know, what they must be able to do and how they must behave, rather than how and what they are taught. The reforms aim to improve access to the profession by opening new entry points and pathways to becoming an architect, while also enabling learning providers to innovate, thus helping to maintain the UK's global reputation for architectural education.

The consultation closed in May 2023, and ARB [approved the new outcomes-focused regulatory framework in September](#).⁵ Under the new framework, ARB defines the skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours that we expect an architect to be able to demonstrate (that is, the [Academic and Practice Outcomes](#)) through five competency areas: Professionalism and Ethics, Design, Research and Evaluation, Contextual and Architectural Knowledge, and Management Practice and Leadership.⁶ ARB will transition to the new framework and will accredit qualifications at master's level (Level 7, or Scottish Level 11) that meet the new Academic Outcomes and accredit practice qualifications which meet the new Practice Outcomes. ARB will no longer accredit undergraduate degrees, reducing bureaucracy for both ARB and for learning providers. The reforms also include clearer and stronger [Standards for Learning Providers](#) delivering ARB-accredited qualifications and a new evidence-based system of quality assurance to be overseen by an independent Accreditation Committee.⁷

As part of the new outcomes-based approach to professional practical experience (PPE), we proposed removing the requirement that an architect must spend at least two years employed in

³ <https://arb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/ARB-Business-Plan.pdf>, <https://arb.org.uk/about-arb/accountability/5yearstrategy/>

⁴ <https://arb.org.uk/tomorrows-architects/>

⁵ <https://arb.org.uk/consultations/results/education-consultation-results/>

⁶ <https://arb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/ARB-Competency-outcomes.pdf>

⁷ <https://arb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/ARB-Standards-for-learning-providers.pdf>

architecture and to instead focus on the outcomes that must have been met through their participation in PPE, rather than the time spent. However, the majority of consultation respondents disagreed with this proposal. In response to this, the Board decided to appoint a year-long independent Commission to develop new recommendations for how PPE should best be incorporated into an architect's education. The Commission will commence its work in early 2024 by investigating the current problems faced by prospective architects in acquiring suitable PPE and will deliver its recommendations to the Board before the end of the year. For now, we are retaining the two-year minimum duration for PPE.

Developing and delivering a new model of continuing professional development

The Building Safety Act 2022 gave ARB the responsibility for monitoring the training and development that architects carry out throughout their careers. We will do this through a new scheme for continuing professional development (CPD). The scheme is intended to:

- Raise competence levels across the profession;
- Increase public confidence in the profession;
- Improve architects' eligibility to practise in an increasingly regulated area of building safety.

A draft version of guidance for the new scheme was published in September 2022, alongside a consultation on how we proposed to organise and run the scheme. That consultation closed in January 2023, with the [results from the consultation published in June](#).⁸ A pilot scheme commenced in March 2023, with participants in the scheme trialling the new guidance, and offering feedback so that we could improve the scheme before it was launched. [Final guidance was published in December](#), with the new scheme becoming mandatory for all architects in 2024.⁹

The scheme is activity-based and self-reflective, and it requires an architect to be able to identify what they have learned from the CPD activities they have participated in and to show how they have applied that learning to their practice. The scheme is underpinned by four key principles:

- Improve the overall competence of the profession;
- Tailored by architects to their own practice and needs;
- Proportionate and deliverable;
- Avoid duplication where possible.

Under the scheme, architects are free to choose their own activities – if an architect can show us how they have developed professionally through their participation in that activity and how they have applied the learning outcome to their practice, then we will accept it as valid CPD.

ARB will, on occasion, set mandatory topics as part of the scheme which all architects will have to commit at least part of their CPD to. As an initial requirement, all architects must participate in CPD for fire and life safety and environmental sustainability. ARB has published [competence guidelines](#) for both of these mandatory topics and has signposted to resources to help architects identify

⁸ <https://arb.org.uk/consultations/results/arbs-consultation-on-a-scheme-for-continuing-professional-development/>

⁹ <https://arb.org.uk/architect-information/cpd/>

opportunities to gain relevant CPD.¹⁰ The scheme does not require architects to spend a set amount of time on CPD, nor to log a minimum number of activities. Instead, architects are expected to identify learning outcomes from the activities they have participated in and to show evidence for how they have applied those learning outcomes to their day-to-day practice. ARB suggests that architects undertake at least eight activities per year, but this figure is not mandated.

A new facility for recording CPD will launch on MyARB (our new online portal for architects) in early 2024. Architects who are also members of the Royal Institute of British Architects (the RIBA, a professional membership body) can instead choose to record their CPD on RIBA's CPD platform. All architects will be required to confirm their participation in CPD when they renew their registration at the end of 2024 and pay their retention fees for 2025. The first cohort of architects to have their CPD records audited will be selected in early 2025.

Transforming our technology

In 2023 we completed the first phase of our transformation programme. The improvements delivered included the implementation of our new CRM system and the launch of [MyARB](#).¹¹ MyARB is a self-service portal for architects to access and use registrant services. The portal allows architects to manage their own registrations, which extends to:

- Updating details on the Register and contact and payment details;
- Paying retention fees;
- Downloading certificates and receipts;
- Staying in touch on matters related to statutory registration;
- Managing CPD records (this facility will launch in 2024).

MyARB is available at all times on mobile and desktop, which offers a significant improvement on ARB's service by allowing architects to access registrant services outside of working hours. The CRM has also realised efficiency gains for staff in processing applications and requests from registrants.

ARB continued its IT modernisation by migrating its 'on premises' computer and storage assets into public cloud services; and by rolling out a combined endpoint protection platform and managed detection and response service across its entire IT estate to reduce cybersecurity risk. Staff were also provided with modern laptops and access to Microsoft 365 services and apps to help streamline collaboration and better facilitate hybrid working practices.

Continuous improvement to our regulatory processes

We want architects and the public to benefit from ARB's work as a regulator, and we seek to continuously improve our regulatory processes. Key achievements in this regard for 2023 included:

- Signing Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) with our counterparts in the USA, Australia and New Zealand, enabling UK architects to more easily join professional registers in those territories and for suitably qualified architects from those countries to join the UK Register;

¹⁰ <https://arb.org.uk/architect-information/cpd/mandatory-topic-guidance/>

¹¹ <https://arb.org.uk/myarb/>

- Introducing a new UK Adaptation Assessment for those taking advantage of MRAs, so that we can be assured that individuals who have qualified overseas have demonstrated what is necessary for safe and effective practice in the UK;
- Carrying out and publishing a [detailed analysis of the demographic makeup of the profession](#), so that we could better understand which groups are currently underrepresented.¹² This was accompanied by an announcement of the actions we would take to improve the extent to which the profession reflects society.

Investing in our people

To deliver high quality regulation, we believe that ARB should be an organisation where all our staff and our associates understand our purpose and vision and are committed to their delivery, where staff are well led and well managed, have the right skills and competencies, and are working to a shared set of values and behaviours. To this end, in 2023 we:

- Introduced a new staff performance management system along with a new training programme and support for managers, as part of our work to improve staff retention and the support we offer;
- Completed a review of our non-executive associate group, with the express aim of improving the support offered to ARB associates and access to training when required, including training in equality, diversity and inclusion;
- Adopted new methods of recruitment to improve diversity amongst both staff and associates;
- Carried out a review of the Board, Committee and Non-Executives Annual Review processes, identifying areas for improvement for implementation in forthcoming rounds of reviews;
- Carried out a full review of ARB's future property needs;
- Carried out a full review of our pension scheme, moving to a new provider that would offer better returns to staff;
- Launched a six-month trial of a new flexible bank holiday policy for staff, with the intention of this policy being to acknowledge and accommodate diversity of belief and celebratory practice.

¹² <https://arb.org.uk/architects-today/>

4. Find out more

Our governance

Our work is overseen by a Board of 11 members, all appointed by the Privy Council. This includes an independent, non-executive Chair and ten non-executive Board members: five members of the public and five architects. [More information about ARB's Board is available on our website](#).¹³

You can [learn about our governance and organisation structure](#) in the Financial Statements in Part 2 of this report and on our website.¹⁴

Departmental updates

Our work in 2023 took place in the context of our Corporate Strategy 2022-2026. While these priorities guide our direction of travel, we are at all times committed to continuous improvement across all our regulatory services. Throughout 2023, we continued to meet our statutory functions, including:

- Recognising qualifications for architects to join the Register;
- Managing and maintaining the Register, and ensuring it remains easily accessible so that anyone can check the registration status of any architect;
- Upholding professional standards, including investigating complaints about misconduct and title misuse;
- Managing ARB's governance and international relations;
- Managing ARB's corporate functions to ensure the organisation runs smoothly; and
- Effectively communicating with architects and other audiences to involve them in our policy development and update them on our regulatory approach and their responsibilities.

To see facts and figures demonstrating progress against these statutory functions, visit our website: www.arb.org.uk

¹³ <https://arb.org.uk/about-arb/arbs-board-committees/>

¹⁴ <https://arb.org.uk/about-arb/>

5. Work with us and connect

We are always eager to engage with architects and stakeholders, and to hear their views on the work that we are doing. There are a number of ways to get in touch and receive updates as we develop new approaches to the things we do:

- Architects can join our Architects Engagement Group to take part in events, conversations, or research to help shape our work;
- Sign up to receive ARB Insight, our newsletter;
- Connect with us on social media for regular updates on our work:
 - [X](#)
 - [LinkedIn](#)
 - [Facebook](#)
 - [YouTube](#)
 - [Instagram](#)

[More details for all the above, and other ways to get in touch, can be found on our website.](#)¹⁵

¹⁵ <https://arb.org.uk/talk-to-us/>

Part Two: Financial Statements

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Chapter One: Performance Report

Overview

The Annual Report and Financial Statements follow the requirements of the Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) issued by HM Treasury. Section 5.2 of the FReM requires us to prepare a performance report which approximates to a Strategic report prepared under the Companies Act 2006. It provides information about ARB and our work during the year.

ARB's statutory role and core functions

The Architects Registration Board (ARB) is a UK wide independent professional regulator, established by Parliament as a statutory body, through the Architects Act, in 1997. We are accountable to government.

The law gives us a number of core functions:

- To ensure only those who are suitably competent are allowed to practise as architects. We do this by approving the qualifications required to join the UK Register of Architects.
- We maintain a publicly available Register of Architects so anyone using the services of an architect can be confident that they are suitably qualified and are fit to practise.
- We set the standards of conduct and practice the profession must meet and take action when any architect falls below the required standards of conduct or competence.
- We set requirements for and monitor the continuous professional development that architects must undertake, to provide assurance to the public about the continuing competence of the profession.
- We protect the legally restricted title 'architect'.

We are an arm's-length body, designated as a public corporation, independent of government and majority-funded by fees paid by architects. Our sponsoring department is the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).

Our Board is supported by our Chief Executive and Registrar, senior management and executive teams as well as a range of committees. More information about our structure can be found within our accountability report and on our [website](#).

Our strategic priorities

2023 was the second year of our five-year Corporate Strategy covering the period 2022 to 2026.

Our Strategy describes the approach we want to take for all that we do: being open and engaging; using evidence to drive our policy work and operational delivery; promoting diversity and being responsive to feedback; and demonstrating a willingness to adapt and change positions where the evidence suggests we should. At the heart of our Strategy are five key priorities. These are:

- Continuous improvement in our regulatory services;
- Modernising initial education and training of architects;
- Delivering a new system of continuing professional development for architects;
- Transforming our systems, processes and information technology;
- Investing in our people and building a positive and inclusive culture based on shared values and behaviours.

The annual Business Plan and the associated work planned for 2023 was designed to support the roadmap to delivery of these priorities.

Our Chief Executive and Registrar's perspective

Our five-year Corporate Strategy sets out a clear statement about the purpose of regulation, ARB's vision and the key strategic priorities the Board has committed to deliver.

We want a world in which the built environment inspires those who live and work in it, reflects the needs of society so that people are safe and can live well, and helps to tackle the fundamental challenges our planet faces. The contribution that regulation can make to this overarching purpose may be small, but we recognise that architects and other professionals in the built environment can achieve their own goals, potential and outcomes only if we are delivering effective regulation.

During 2023, our second year of the Corporate Strategy, we made excellent progress to deliver our five key strategic priorities. The report on our Business Plan sets out progress on these activities in detail.¹⁶ Highlights included the publication of a new framework for the initial education and training of architects and the approval of a new framework for continuing professional development.

We have made significant progress in transforming our systems, processes and technology. We have made it much easier for architects to be able to engage with ARB services, through the provision of a self-service online portal which allows them to manage their own registration information and applications. This transformation has already enabled us to make much needed improvements to our cybersecurity and staff experience, and allows us to better capture, interrogate and publish important data about the profession including data on equality, diversity and inclusion.

In 2023, we took important steps to better provide for our staff's health and wellbeing. For example, a new policy was rolled out so that staff can swap a UK bank holiday for another day of national, religious or cultural significance to them. We also updated our associates' contract to better support this group of over 120 individuals who carry out important work on behalf of ARB. Outcomes from this work can be seen through continued high levels of staff engagement and satisfaction as well as the low staff turnover figures.

Operational highlights from 2023 include the signature, promotion and implementation of mutual recognition agreements with our international counterparts in the United States, Australia and New Zealand; these agreements are now fully operational and assisting UK architects to register in these countries. We also continued to work on the development of a new agreement with the European Union as well as with our counterparts in Hong Kong.

KPIs, risk and uncertainty

Key issues and risks

ARB's five-year Corporate Strategy remains one of the core elements which shape our goals for the 2022 – 2026 period. These goals include modernising the initial education and training of architects, fostering a culture of equality, diversity and inclusivity and embedding a culture of continuous improvement at ARB to increase our efficiency as a regulator.

¹⁶ [ARB Business Plan End of 2023](#)

To create changes within these areas, we engaged in dialogue and consultations with a variety of groups on topics such as the reformation of the initial education and training of architects and mutual recognition agreements (MRAs). We listened to feedback regarding our education reforms and approved new competence outcomes for architects and standards for learning providers and we established a new Accreditation Committee; we applied the same approach to our continuous professional development (CPD) scheme and conducted a pilot exercise to assess its feasibility. We also spent notable resources to plan the creation and operation of a new Professional Practical Experience (PPE) Commission which will assess and make recommendations to ARB regarding accessibility to opportunities for PPE for students.

In 2023, the workload continued to increase, particularly for the Registration department due to the new CPD scheme that will be implemented in 2024 and for the Accreditation team due to the approval of new accreditation fees for learning providers. The latter required significant resources as numerous learning providers required extensive information on the new fees. We carried out a review of ARB's future property requirements and commenced lease negotiations for 2024 onwards.

Although we have improved our IT systems in 2023, they remained a risk throughout the year. As part of the Transformation Programme, we delivered phase 1 of our new registration applications system and began planning for phase 2, including the development of a new case management system and integration of wider IT systems which include HR and finance. We launched MyARB, a self-service portal for architects, and continued its development to include a CPD section. We continued investing in technology upgrades and aimed to reduce the number of events that negatively affect activities of both staff and the public, such as server or power failure.

We have managed these risks through scenario planning around both the impact on the profession and the availability of resources. We are in a good position in terms of cash flow and reserves and so, at the time of writing, our Board is satisfied there is no material uncertainty in relation to ARB as a going concern. At the time of writing, the Board is currently reviewing the proposed fee structure for ARB's accreditation of UK architecture courses. If changes to fees are agreed, any financial impact in 2024 would need to be managed through in year efficiency savings or utilisation of existing reserves.

Performance summary

During 2023, we delivered on our core requirement to ensure that our statutory duties, as set out in the Architects Act 1997, were all met.

In addition, good progress has been made on the priorities set out in our Corporate Strategy, reaching the goals set out in our 2023 Business Plan.

Performance analysis

How performance is measured

In addition to the Corporate Strategy, our Board approves an annual Business Plan for the organisation. At every Board meeting, our Chief Executive and Registrar provides updates on risk linked to organisational and strategic performance. Any emerging concerns about the effective delivery of the Business Plan and core work are raised with the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and the Board in a timely manner. We also have a Business Plan Delivery Group, made up of members of the staff team, to track progress and manage risks in key areas.

We report against fixed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) of our core functions. Our current and previous Business Plans are in the public domain, available to view on our [website](#).

Continuous dialogue took place between our Chief Executive and Registrar, the Board and DLUHC to ensure we managed risks appropriately and effectively and a copy of ARB's risk register was provided to the Department.

Project management support in respect of the IT Transformation Project is firmly embedded, and reports against key project milestones are reported to a Transformation Programme Board.

Development and performance analysis

In addition to the Business Plan and Strategic Plan, we have a number of KPIs for core statutory functions. Our annual performance against key business areas can be found on our [website](#).

Financial performance

The Financial Statements, set out in Chapter Four from page 20 onwards, have been prepared in accordance with the Government's Financial Reporting Manual (FRM).

Our main source of funding is the annual retention fee, paid by every architect on the Register, representing 96% of our total income. Our largest area of spend is the organisation's staffing resources, representing 41% of our operational costs.

We ended the year with an operating surplus of £751,635. The surplus resulted from underspends within our staffing and professional experts as a result of the wider recruitment market and our inability to recruit to certain roles, which have now been filled. There were also a number of IT transformation projects that due to timing of delivery have been rolled into 2024 and the funds ringfenced within our reserves.

As a responsible statutory regulator and employer, we hold reserves so there are funds available should unforeseen circumstances materialise. Such circumstances might include an increase in expenditure or a reduction in income, or the need to respond to a portfolio of organisational risks should one or more of those risks be realised. ARB's reserves policy is to hold at least four months' operating costs as well as our liabilities in the event we are wound-up. The total operating reserves as of 31 December 2023 are £4,789,927 which represents 7.6 months of operating costs and £3,629,000 of estimated wind-up costs.

A majority of the reserves held are not required for cash flow purposes and are invested in a mixed portfolio to ensure that they do not lose their value while not required. We use an external investment broker to manage the portfolio on a day-to-day basis, in line with the Board's Investment Strategy, to maintain at least the real value of its capital.

A breakdown of the changes in reserves can be found in our Financial Statements on page 23.

Non-financial matters

During 2023 and as part of our People Strategy, we rolled out new contracts to over 120 associates, we strengthened our performance reviews and hybrid working policy and implemented a flexible approach to bank holiday policy for our workforce.

We are legally required to respond to all Freedom of Information Act 2000 requests within 20 working days, and subject access requests made under the Data Protection Act 2018 within 40 days.

We received nineteen requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. All nineteen were accepted and all requests were dealt with within the relevant statutory timeframes. To our knowledge, there were no complaints made to the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) about ARB in 2023.

There have been no health and safety incidents reported during the year. All statutory checks and tests such as electrical, emergency lighting, fire safety and air and water quality have been carried out. Staff have also undertaken mandatory health and safety training as required.

Sustainability and environmental impact

ARB has a strong commitment to minimising its impact on the environment from its operating activities. Whilst we are out of scope for the mandatory reporting required by central government, we believe establishing our current impact is critical for us to continue to improve our sustainability.

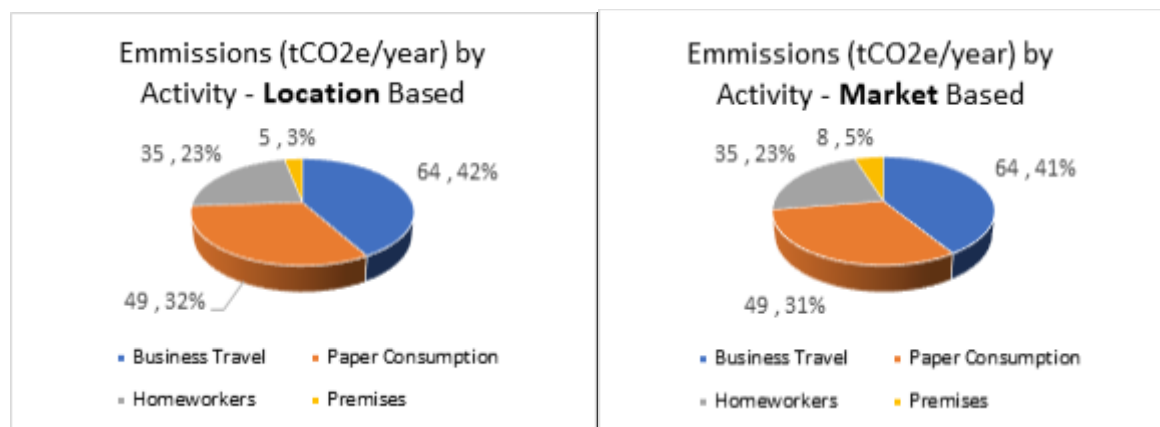
In 2023, we started to expand the data we capture and whilst we do not have previous years for comparison, we are committed to demonstrating our performance going forward.

Carbon footprint

Our carbon footprint has been calculated using data we have readily available in relation to our energy usage, business travel and paper consumption. However, the calculation for homeworking and landfill are based on data obtained from EcoOnline’s sustainability reporting software. This software tool allows ARB to repeat the calculation annually as well as enabling transparency and consistency of calculations.

A greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions assessment allows ARB to measure the total greenhouse gasses generated, directly and indirectly, in carrying out our activities. This type of assessment, also known as a carbon footprint, is an essential tool in providing ARB with a basis for understanding and managing its climate change impacts. GHG is measured in tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e).

ARB’s market-based carbon emissions for 2023 were 154 tCO₂e and location based were 157 tCO₂e. Below is a breakdown of emissions by activity.



Observations	
Air travel is the largest contributor to emissions, at 60 tonnes of tCO ₂ e, or 38% of total emissions.	During 2023, ARB was the first UK regulator to sign mutual recognition agreements with other countries. These included USA, Australia and New Zealand; as these were the signings, it was felt that a small number of ARB representatives should attend in person.
Paper consumption is the second largest contributor to emissions, at 50 tonnes of tCO ₂ e, or 31%.	<p>The Architects Act 1997 dictates what we need to make available in paper format. Following changes to the Act, in January 2023, we are now able to use electronic forms of communication in relation to the annual fee notice, although we cannot make paperless mandatory.</p> <p>The largest part of the business for paper use is in relation to professional conduct cases. We are exploring how we can reduce the usage as part of our transformation project. We have seen a significant reduction in paper use within our Registration team as part of the transformation programme and the resulting automation of key tasks.</p>

This assessment has been carried out in accordance with the World Business Council for Sustainable Development and World Resources Institute's (WBCSD/WRI) Greenhouse Gas Protocol. This protocol is considered current best practice for reporting greenhouse gas emission. GHG emissions have been reported by the three WBCSD/WRI Scopes.

Emissions Type	Activity	Market based		Location based	
		tCO ₂ e/year	%	tCO ₂ e/year	%
Scope 1*	Direct GHG emissions from sources that are owned or controlled by the company such as natural gas combustion and company owned vehicles	-	0%	-	0%
Scope 2	GHG emissions from the generation of purchased electricity, heat and steam generated off-site	7	5%	4	3%
Scope 3	includes all other indirect emissions such as waste disposal, business travel and staff commuting	150	95%	150	97%
Total		157	100%	154	100%

We do not have any direct (Scope 1*) emissions.

Initiatives to reduce ARB emissions

ARB Weymouth Street office

Our staff team, following the introduction of the hybrid working policy, continue to mix both office work and working from home on a regular basis. One of the factors considered when agreeing the hybrid working policy was the reduction in staff travelling to the office, something that is not only beneficial from a wellbeing perspective but also relevant to our environmental impact.

We also hold the majority of our Board and Committee meetings online, with only Board workshops, a small amount of Board Committees and Professional Conduct Committee hearings being held in person.

By maintaining this hybrid approach for staff and Board meetings, we have calculated that we have saved over one tonne of carbon emissions based on travel to and from the office alone. This calculation is based on individual postcodes relative to the office and mode of transport previously used. We intend to keep the hybrid working policy under regular review.

The office lighting has several motion sensors which automatically switch off after a period of inactivity, these are currently installed in the print room, WC and breakout areas.

We have recycling points in the kitchens and photocopier room. We continue to separate waste for recycling and to encourage staff to do this, no waste was collected from bins at desks. Waste is separated into recyclable and non-recyclable.

Our energy supply is 100% renewable, and we continue to monitor and adjust energy consumption when office attendance is at a minimum. This includes setting the hours when heating and air conditioning units are active.

Staff are encouraged to use scanning and electronic filing. Our committees use electronic documents instead of paper, and print usage is actively managed as part of our drive to reduce waste.

We have built sustainability into our procurement processes, both in terms of specifying sustainable goods where possible, but also looking at criteria relating to sustainability in respect of the service providers we select. A good example of this is our investment broker, Rathbones, who take a well-informed approach to responsible investment and integrate environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors into their investment decision making process. They believe that companies demonstrating strong social and environmental management, alongside good corporate governance, are likely to be sound long-term investments, and will have positive influences on the physical environment and the communities within which we live. They avoid investment in companies that cause harm and prioritise investment in companies that are taking positive steps to mitigate harm and benefit stakeholders.

For 2024, we are exploring alternative office accommodation with a better energy rating, including LED lighting. Our staff team will also have access to a Cycle to Work scheme where we provide a bicycle purchase as part of a salary sacrifice employee benefit, which is exempt from National Insurance.

Chapter Two: Accountability Report

Overview

This section provides an overview of how we ensure accountability, principally through our governance structure and other core assurance mechanisms.

Corporate governance report

Having good governance in place helps us deliver effective regulation and fulfil our core purpose. It helps ensure that, where risks exist, they are suitably mitigated and where problems and challenges emerge, they are dealt with appropriately.

The report outlines our governance and risk management arrangements. It reflects the challenges we have faced during the year and our successes in managing risk, as well as areas where we will be taking steps to improve.

Chief Executive and Registrar's report

ARB Board members are responsible for maintaining and promoting the public's trust and confidence in the integrity of both the organisation and the architects' profession. They are required to adhere to the seven principles of public life.¹⁷

ARB's Board is made up of 11 non-executive members in total, including one independent, non-executive Chair and ten non-executive members (five architect members and five lay members). They are appointed by the Privy Council.

We hold a register of all declarations of interest made by our Board members. We require that register to be updated as and when there are changes, and the declarations are confirmed periodically.

For every Board and Committee meeting, Board members are asked to declare any personal interests which may give rise to a real or perceived conflict of interest. The declaration is then noted, and the member may be asked to recuse themselves from a discussion or decision or speak last on a particular topic.

Due to the nature of our statutory functions, we hold a large amount of data, some of which constitutes personal data. This is managed in compliance with the data protection legislation.

Accounting officer statement

Under the Framework Agreement drawn up jointly between the Architects Registration Board (ARB) and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), we prepare Financial Statements for each financial year in the form, and on the basis, as set out in the government financial reporting manual (FreM)

The Financial Statements are prepared on an accruals basis and must give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of ARB and of its income and expenditure, recognised gains and losses and cash flows for the financial year.

¹⁷ [The Seven Principles of Public Life](#)

In preparing the Financial Statements, the Accounting Officer is required to comply with the requirements of the Government Financial Reporting Manual (FrM) and in particular to:

- Observe any relevant accounting and disclosure requirements, and apply suitable accounting policies on a consistent basis;
- Make judgements and estimates on a reasonable basis;
- State whether applicable accounting standards as set out in the FrM have been followed, and disclose and explain any material departures in the Financial Statements; and
- Prepare the Financial Statements on a going concern basis.

The DLUHC has nominated the Chief Executive and Registrar as Accounting Officer of ARB. Hugh Simpson has been appointed as Chief Executive and Registrar.

The responsibilities of an Accounting Officer are set out in Chapter 3 of 'Managing Public Money' published by the Treasury. They include responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the public finances for which the Accounting Officer is answerable, keeping proper records and safeguarding ARB's assets.

As the appointed Accounting Officer, I confirm that, as far I am aware, there is no relevant audit or other material information of which the entity's auditors are unaware, and that I have taken all the steps to make myself aware of any relevant audit and other material information and to establish that the entity's auditors are aware of that information.

I also confirm that the Annual Report and Financial Statements as a whole are fair, balanced and understandable, and that I take personal responsibility for the Annual Report and Financial Statements and the judgments required for determining that they are fair, balanced and understandable.

Governance statement

Our Board

Information on ARB's Board members can be found on our [website](#).

Our Board ensures ARB is delivering its statutory duties by ensuring there is a clear strategy, policies are appropriately developed and approved, and assurances are given for the delivery of statutory functions. The Board provides leadership and seeks to uphold the values of the organisation.

Further details about the role and purpose of our Board can be found on our [website](#) and in the Annual Report published alongside this document. For more information about our Board members and their individual declarations, view our [website](#). Details of Board members' attendance can be found on page 33.

All Board members are appointed by the Privy Council after consultation with the Secretary of State. ARB has legal powers to appoint temporary Board members if vacancies arise. One temporary Board member was in place during 2023 and a full recruitment campaign will be carried out by DLUHC to make an appointment on a permanent basis in 2024.

The Board met to seek assurance that the executive continued to ensure that ARB delivered its statutory functions including the prescription of qualifications and making decisions regarding the registration and annual retention fee for architects. The Board carried out regular assurance activities including scrutiny of operational and financial performance. It also reviewed the Risk Register on a

regular basis to ensure there were appropriate governance and assurance arrangements in place. The Transformation Assurance Group, with two Board members, continued to meet regularly with staff to enable to the Board to be assured about this key priority area for ARB.

In 2023, the Board oversaw the successful delivery of key business plan commitments and operational improvements. It also approved revised guidance to the profession on professional indemnity insurance and considered proposed new procedures for UK adaptation assessments to form part of the new international routes for registration as well as undertaking a review of the Committees terms of reference and membership.

ARB became a host of the Boardroom Apprentices Programme, a programme supported by DLUHC and aimed at creating a diverse pool of capable and ready Board members by enabling practical experience, skills and knowledge on existing boards.

During 2023, all Board members took part in an individual annual review meeting with the Chair, providing each member with an opportunity to discuss individual priorities. The Chair also participated in an annual review meeting with an independent, external reviewer. The Senior Independent Board member met with the Board without the Board Chair present and met with the Executive without the CEO and Registrar present, to provide an overview of the role and allow an opportunity for any concerns to be raised.

Corporate governance

Our Board's work is governed by the [General Rules](#), which it has established to fulfil its duties under the Architects Act 1997. The Board is also guided by the *Board Member's Handbook* which covers, in broad terms, how the tasks the Board performs should be executed to align with the Standards for Public Life.

Risk assessment

The Committee's agreed internal audit plan for 2023 involved TIAA Ltd. (ARB's internal audit partner) carrying out five internal audits in 2023. The first assessed were the project management arrangements for ARB's CRM, a key part of ARB's ongoing IT Transformation Programme. The second was an assurance review of complaints that went through the Professional Conduct Committee (PCC) process. This looked at standard operating procedures and reviewed a sample of closed cases for quality assurance. The third area for internal audit was around Information and Communications Technology with a focus on cyber security. The purpose of the audit was to evaluate the processes in place to mitigate cyber risks with the scope covering the five key steps of the National Cyber Security Centre 10 steps to cyber security. The fourth area to be covered related to the new Accreditation Methodology and assessed the preparation and readiness for the move to the new Accreditation process. The final area for internal audit was the Integrity of the Register which looked at the quality of data held and how quality assurance was undertaken. Follow-up work was also carried out by TIAA Ltd to check progress on the implementation of findings from the above-mentioned audits.

The Board has overall responsibility for risk management and is aided by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC). The Board has oversight procedures to ensure appropriate systems of control are in place, as well as robust and transparent risk reporting mechanisms. 2023 has seen several changes in the Committee, both in membership and in its terms of reference. At the start of the year, Cindy Leslie (Lay Board member) was the Chair of the ARAC, with Liz Male (Lay Board member) and Mark Bottomley (Architect Board member) as Committee members. From April 2023, Thomas McDermott

(Lay Board Member) became the Committee Chair, with Cindy Leslie (Lay Board Member), Mark Bottomley (Architect Board Member) and Will Freeman (Architect Board Member); Dónall Curtin was the Committee’s Independent member throughout the year. All Committee meeting minutes were reviewed by the Board and the Committee presented an Annual Report detailing its work in 2023 mapped against its Terms of Reference.

The Board reviewed the Risk Register throughout the year, approving changes to risk headings where applicable.

Key operational risks in 2023 largely related to ongoing work on the various workstreams of ARB’s five-year strategy. These included heightened areas of risk owing to the ongoing IT Transformation Programme, as well as an enhanced risk concerning proposed changes to the structure of initial education and training of architects. Updates on areas of higher risk areas were provided at each standard 2023 ARAC meeting.

In 2023, the ARAC also led on the appointment of a new external audit firm and following a full tender process, the new firm, HW Fisher LLP is taking up the post for the year ended 31 December 2023.

Remuneration report

Our policy

Our People Committee (previously the Remuneration and Appointments Committee) is chaired by Liz Male (Lay Board member) who took over from Derek Bray (Lay Board member) in April 2023. Its other members are Stephen McCusker (Architect Board member), Samantha Peters (temporary Lay Board member), Teri Okoro (Architect Board member) and Ian Muir (an independent member).

The purpose of the Committee is to approve ARB’s people strategy, including our approach to leadership and management, reward and recognition and work to encourage equity, diversity and inclusion. The Committee makes recommendations to the Board regarding the remuneration and reward package offered to all staff, Board members and associates, and that the package is reviewed and amended appropriately.

Remuneration of our Board

Board members receive an annual attendance amount, paid monthly. The rates of the 2023 annual pay are shown below:

Role/s	Annual remuneration
Board chair	£41,147
Board member	£8,360
Board member with Committee chair responsibility	£9,928
Board member and Prescription Committee member*	£12,000

*The Prescription Committee became the Accreditation Committee in September 2023 and those Board members working on the Prescription Committee ceased to receive this higher rate.

The total remuneration paid to Board members for their work on the Board, its committees and other Board business during 2023 was £143,145 (£133,363 in 2022).

Board members are also able to claim travel and subsistence expenses. Expenses totalling £39,380 (£19,257 in 2022) were claimed during the year. Claiming patterns continue to change and meetings are a mix of online and in person; 2023 saw increased engagement with stakeholders, particularly from the Chair of the Board. As required by our Framework Agreement with DLUHC, we have a policy for travel and subsistence expenses for Board members and staff.

Staff report

Overview

Our workforce is a key asset and consists of people with expert knowledge and experience in our areas of responsibility. We continue to work on strategies to ensure we retain and develop this talent. This section provides an overview of key staffing facts and our commitment to being a good employer.

Pension entitlements

We provide our employees with access to a contributory group personal pension scheme (otherwise known as a defined contribution, or DC arrangement). Our liability for this arrangement ceases when employment comes to an end. This arrangement meets all statutory requirements for employment law relating to employer sponsored pension arrangements.

Additionally, we have a closed (paid up) occupational money purchase scheme (which is also a DC arrangement). There are, however, no contributions being made to this scheme, nor have there been for several years. There are no liabilities for future contributions to this scheme and the scheme was wound up and transferred to named policy holders in December 2023.

Fair pay disclosures

Reporting bodies are required to disclose the relationship between the remuneration of the highest-paid employee in their organisation and the median remuneration of the organisation's workforce.

Total remuneration includes salary, non-consolidated performance-related pay and benefits-in-kind. It does not include severance payment or employer pension contributions.

The mid-banded remuneration of our highest paid employee in the financial year end 2023 was £143,128 (£124,058 in 2022). This is 3.65 times higher than the median remuneration of our workforce (3.35 times in 2022). The median remuneration of the workforce was £39,257 (£36,968 in 2022).

Staff composition and cost

The composition and numbers of ARB staff in post as of 31 December 2023 were:

	2023		2022	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Chief Executive and Registrar	0	1	0	1
Permanent Staff	28	16	26	18
Fixed Term/Agency	11	6	3	1
TOTAL Split	39	23	29	20
Total Employees	62		49	

As of 31 December 2023, ARB had a permanent headcount of 45, including a senior leadership group and the Chief Executive and Registrar. On average, over the year, there were 49 employees costing £3,375,667; further information can be found in Note 6 of our Financial Statements.

Staff turnover for 2023 was 13% (9% in 2022). Whilst there has been a small increase in the figure, it remains lower than the national average across all sectors with staff mainly leaving for career and educational purposes.

Staff time lost through absence during 2023 was 529 days (379 in 2022). This is equivalent to 11 days per employee based on an average head count of 49 (44 in 2022).

Policies and other employee matters

We aim to have a workforce that is reflective of all sections of society and where each employee feels respected and able to give their best. In 2023, a flexible bank holiday scheme was launched which allows the workforce to swap up to four days of bank holiday for alternative days of national, religious or cultural significance that are more meaningful to them. We also reviewed and then confirmed our hybrid working policy which supports flexibility for staff.

To achieve a diverse pool of candidates when recruiting, all our job descriptions are carefully drafted to ensure that the skills and knowledge we ask for reflect the job requirements and do not place unnecessary restrictions on applicants. Applicants are also invited to complete an equality monitoring form, which is received separately from the application form and is not available to the short-listing panel. All applicants are invited to provide details of any disabilities so that reasonable adjustments can be made for the selection process. Equality monitoring forms are analysed in respect to steps that can be taken to further equality and inclusion.

We continue to be supportive of staff with disabilities and appreciate the value that all employees bring to their roles. During the year we received our Disability Confidence award. Regular one-to-one meetings provide the opportunity to identify the need for adjustments for disabled staff in employment, as well as reviewing those adjustments to ensure they continue to be relevant.

We take proactive steps to promote a culture that understands, accepts and supports both physical and mental disabilities in the workplace. Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) training is incorporated into the annual training plan and is one of the ways we seek to re-enforce diversity. The wellbeing of our staff team is supported by the range of benefits offered by the organisation, along with external support and training on mental health and wellbeing. During our annual performance reviews and regular one-to-one meetings, consideration is given to the specific training needs of our staff.

Expenditure on consultancy

We sometimes need specialist advice in areas such as the interpretation of EU law, employment advice, IT, insurance and legal challenges.

Due to the broad ranging spectrum of advice required, and to use our resources as efficiently as possible, we procure such services from a small number of suppliers as and when required.

Off-payroll engagements

We do not use consultants to fill positions in the permanent employee complement. All employee posts are filled by either permanent or fixed-term employees, or (for short-term needs) by workers provided by employment agencies. Similarly, there are no off-payroll engagements.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hugh Simpson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Hugh Simpson
Chief Executive and Registrar
31 May 2024

Chapter Three:

Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Architects Registration Board

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Architects Registration Board ('ARB') for the year ended 31 December 2023 which comprise the statement of comprehensive income, statement of financial position, statement of cash flows, statement of changes in reserves, 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 the Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) which applies UK adopted international accounting standards.

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of ARB's affairs as at 31 December 2023 and of its surplus for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM).

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 ARB 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 Accounting Officer's 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 ARB'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 Accounting Officer 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 Accounting Officer is responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and 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.

Responsibilities of the Accounting Officer

As explained more fully in the Accounting Officer statement set out on page 10 and 11, the Accounting Officer is 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 Accounting Officer determines 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 Accounting Officer is responsible for assessing ARB'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 ARB is to be liquidated or to cease operations.

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.

The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is detailed below.

As part of our planning process:

- We enquired of the Accounting Officer the systems and controls ARB has in place, the areas of the financial statements that are most susceptible to the risk of irregularities and fraud, and whether there was any known, suspected or alleged fraud. The Accounting Officer did not inform us of any known, suspected or alleged fraud.
- We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks applicable to ARB. We determined that the following were most relevant: the Framework Agreement drawn up jointly between the ARB and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities; the 2022/23 Government Financial Reporting Manual (FRM); Corporate Governance in Central Government's Code of Good Practice; the Treasury guidance on Managing Public Money.
- We considered the incentives and opportunities that exist in ARB, including the extent of management bias, which present a potential for irregularities and fraud to be perpetuated, and tailored our risk assessment accordingly.
- Using our knowledge of ARB, together with the discussions held with ARB at the planning stage, we formed a conclusion on the risk of misstatement due to irregularities including fraud and tailored our procedures according to this risk assessment.

The key procedures we undertook to detect irregularities including fraud during the course of the audit included:

- Identifying and testing journal entries and the overall accounting records, in particular those that were significant and unusual.
- Reviewing the financial statement disclosures and determining whether accounting policies have been appropriately applied.
- Reviewing and challenging the assumptions and judgements used by Accounting Officer in making significant accounting estimates, in particular in relation to the useful economic life of intangible assets.
- Assessing the extent of compliance, or lack of, with the relevant laws and regulations.
- Testing key income lines, in particular cut-off, for evidence of management bias.
- Performing a physical verification of key assets.
- Obtaining third-party confirmation of material bank balances.
- Documenting and verifying all significant related party balances and transactions.
- Reviewing documentation such as ARB board minutes and correspondence with solicitors, for discussions of irregularities including fraud.

Owing to the inherent limitations of an audit, there is an unavoidable risk that we may not have detected some material misstatements in the financial statements even though we have properly planned and performed our audit in accordance with auditing standards. The primary responsibility for the prevention and detection of irregularities and fraud rests with the Accounting Officer.

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 Board members of ARB, as a body, in accordance with the Framework Agreement drawn up jointly between the ARB and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Board 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 ARB and the Board members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

HW Fisher LLP
 Chartered Accountants
 Statutory Auditor
 Acre House
 11-15 William Road
 London
 NW1 3ER
 United Kingdom
 31 May 2024

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Chapter Four: Financial Statements

Statement of comprehensive income for the year ending 31 December 2023

	Notes	2023 £	2022 £
INCOME			
Registration and retention fees	3	7,854,442	6,589,273
Govt. Grant Income		21,778	150,235
Prescribed examinations		314,960	243,187
Penalties and sundry receipts	4	76,630	59,745
Total operating income		8,267,810	7,042,440
EXPENDITURE			
Employee salaries and benefits	6	3,375,667	2,752,338
Office costs	7	698,554	539,124
		4,074,221	3,291,462
Printing and records	8	41,828	20,624
IT charges	9	1,060,624	1,006,020
Board allowances and expenses		186,301	152,620
Legal and other professional charges	10	1,532,957	1,202,919
Other administrative expenses	11	613,182	489,374
Finance costs	18.3	7,062	10,997
		3,441,954	2,882,554
Total operating expenditure		7,516,175	6,174,016
OPERATIONAL SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR		751,635	868,424
Investment income	5	248,476	158,230
Net gain/(loss) on investments	14	318,411	(667,739)
SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR BEFORE TAXATION		1,318,522	1,026,654
Taxation	19	(102,312)	161,196
SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR		1,216,210	520,111
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR		1,216,210	520,111

All activities are continuing.

Comparatives have been represented to include the net loss on investments before the surplus for the year before taxation and the associated deferred tax has been included within taxation. This is to be consistent with the year ended 31 December 2023 and better reflect presentational requirements.

Statement of financial position at 31 December 2023

	Notes	2023	2022
		£	£
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Property, plant and equipment	12	32,285	59,764
Right-of-use assets	18.1	134,654	311,643
Intangible assets	13	2,245,994	103,635
Investments	14	6,917,946	6,414,173
Total non-current assets		9,330,879	6,889,215
CURRENT ASSETS			
Trade and other receivables	15	225,873	184,581
Cash and cash equivalents		9,409,850	9,860,388
Total current assets		9,635,723	10,044,969
TOTAL ASSETS		18,966,602	16,934,184
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Trade and other payables	16	983,217	731,841
Deferred income		7,466,026	6,732,949
Lease liability	18.2	75,157	251,470
Total current liabilities		8,524,400	7,716,260
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Lease liability	18.2	-	64,257
		-	64,257
Provision for liabilities	20	217,325	145,000
ASSETS LESS LIABILITIES		10,224,877	9,008,667
RESERVES			
Operating reserve		4,789,927	3,514,457
Closure reserve		3,629,000	3,629,000
Designated reserve		1,268,248	1,661,248
Revaluation reserve		537,702	203,962
TOTAL RESERVES		10,224,877	9,008,667

These Financial Statements were approved by the Board and Accounting Officer and authorised for issue on 31 May 2024

Alan Kershaw, Chair of the Board



Hugh Simpson, Accounting officer (Chief Executive and Registrar)



Statement of cash flows for the year ended 31 December 2023

	2023	2022
	£	£
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Operational surplus for the year	751,635	868,424
Adjustments for non-cash transactions		
Depreciation and amortisation	264,540	127,965
Depreciation of right-of-use asset	249,314	186,986
Additions of right-to-use assets	(72,325)	-
Changes in operating assets and liabilities		
(Increase)/decrease in trade and other receivables	(41,292)	79,400
Decrease in trade, other payables and deferred income	954,467	961,662
Net cash inflow from operating activities	1,354,704	1,356,013
Cash flows from investment activities		
Proceeds from the sale of investments	671,906	2,254,859
Dividends and interest received	248,476	158,230
Purchase of investments	(857,268)	(2,021,544)
Purchases of intangibles and tangible assets	(2,379,421)	(174,335)
Net cash (outflow)/inflow from investing activities	(2,316,307)	217,210
Cash flows from financing activities		
Payments of principal on lease (note 18.4)	(240,570)	(182,902)
Net cash (outflow) from financing activities	(240,570)	(182,902)
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents	(450,538)	2,258,745
Cash and cash equivalents at the start of the year	9,860,388	7,601,643
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year	9,409,850	9,860,388

All cash is represented by cash in hand and at bank.

Statement of changes in reserves at 31 December 2023

	At 1 January 2023	Movement in year	Transfers between reserves	At 31 December 2023
	£	£	£	£
Operating reserve	3,514,457	1,207,470	68,000	4,789,927
Closure reserve	3,629,000	-	-	3,629,000
Designated reserves				
Maintenance	68,000	-	(68,000)	-
Transformation	1,593,248	(325,000)	-	1,268,248
Revaluation reserve	203,962	333,740	-	537,702
Total	9,008,667	1,216,210	-	10,224,877

Operating reserve

ARB's reserves policy is to hold operating reserve sufficient to ensure that ARB can continue in operation for the foreseeable future. The level of reserves is set taking into account the risks faced by ARB in terms of a decline in income or increase in expenditure and the time that would be taken to return ARB to a balanced budget by reducing costs or adjusting the annual registration fee.

The total operating reserves as of 31 December 2023 is £4,789,927 which represents 7.6 months of operating costs.

Closure reserve

The framework agreement with DLUHC requires ARB to maintain its assets at a sufficient level to cover its liabilities if ARB were to be wound up. We continue to set aside £3,629,000. The major elements of this reserve relate to:

- a significant shortfall in income in the period following notice of closure by the DLUHC resulting from an inability to collect all registration fees due during that period; and
- redundancies, lease termination costs and costs associated with winding up existing regulatory cases.

Designated reserve

On 31 December 2023, designated reserves represented the Maintenance Reserve of £0 which was established to cover the regular cost of redecoration of the offices.

In addition, £1,268,248 has been designated for IT transformation in 2024.

Revaluation reserve

At 31 December 2023, the revaluation reserve represented the closing market value less historic cost value of ARB's investments.

Notes to the Financial Statements

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

The Architects Registration Board is incorporated under the Architects Act 1997. ARB's principal activity is acting as the statutory regulator for architects in the UK. ARB is an arm's-length body overseen by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) our sponsoring government department.

2. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

a) Basis of accounting

The Financial Statements have been prepared in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) as adopted and interpreted by the Government Financial Reporting Manual (FRm) issued by HM Treasury.

Where the FRm permits a choice of accounting policy, the accounting policy which is judged to be most appropriate to the particular circumstances of ARB for the purpose of giving a true and fair view has been selected. The particular policies adopted by ARB are described below. They have been applied consistently in dealing with items that are considered material to the Financial Statements.

These Financial Statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention modified to account for the revaluation of investments. Figures are presented in pounds sterling, which is the functional currency of ARB and rounded to the nearest pound. Transactions denominated in foreign currencies are translated into sterling at the exchange rate at the dates of the transactions.

After making enquiries the Board has a reasonable expectation that the organisation will be able to continue its activities for the foreseeable future. Accordingly, they continue to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the Financial Statements.

b) Adoption of new and revised standards and changes in accounting policies

In the current year a number of amendments to IFRSs issued by the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB) and endorsed by the UK Endorsement Board became mandatorily effective for an accounting period that begins on or after 1 January 2024. The relevant amendment for ARB are:

Effective from 1 January 2024:

Amendments to IAS 1 Presentation of Financial Statements:

- Non-current Liabilities with Covenants
- Deferral of Effective Date Amendment

Management anticipates that these new standards, interpretations and amendments will be adopted in the financial statements as and when they are applicable and adoption of these new standards, interpretations and amendments will be reviewed for their impact on the financial statements prior to their initial application.

c) Staff costs

In accordance with IAS 19 Employee Benefits, all short-term staff costs payable at the year-end, which will be paid within one year from the date of reporting, are recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Income.

d) Pensions

ARB operates a defined contribution pension scheme where ARB pays established annual contribution rates into a separate fund. The amount of pension benefit that a member receives in retirement is dependent on the performance of the fund. ARB recognises the cost of these contributions in the Statement of Comprehensive Income when they fall due. There are no further payment obligations for ARB once the contributions have been paid.

e) Leases

ARB has one lease. It has elected to recognise this right-of-use asset at an amount equal to the lease liability and depreciated on a straight-line method over the remaining years.

f) Value Added Tax on purchases

ARB is unable to recover the VAT it pays on its expenditure due to the VAT status of its supplies. Therefore, all expenditure disclosed in the Financial Statements includes any VAT paid.

g) Income

Income is recognised to the extent that it is probable that the economic benefits will flow to ARB and the revenue can be reliably measured. Income is measured at the fair value of the consideration received. Income arising from the provision of services is recognised when and to the extent that ARB obtains the right to consideration in exchange for the performance of its contractual obligations.

Retention fees are recognised in the period over which they entitle an individual to be listed on the Architects Register. Registration, penalties and prescribed examination fees are recognised in the year in which the registration or prescribed examination takes. Income from investments and cash is recognised in the period in which ARB becomes entitled to the income.

Retention fees relating to future periods are included in deferred income.

It is considered that ARB has one operating segment.

h) Grants

Grants which relate to revenue are recognised in income in the period the related costs are incurred by the entity for which the grant is intended to compensate.

i) Corporation tax and deferred tax

ARB is liable for tax on income earned and gains on investments during the year. The tax expense is recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Income.

Deferred tax is recognised in respect of timing differences that have originated but not reversed at the reporting date where transactions or events that result in an obligation to pay more tax in the future or a right to pay less tax in the future have occurred at the reporting date. Timing differences are differences between the entity's taxable operating surplus and its results as stated in the Financial Statements that arise from the inclusion of gains and losses in tax assessments in periods different from those in which they are recognised in the Financial Statements.

Deferred tax is measured at the average tax rates that are expected to apply in the periods in which the timing differences are expected to reverse; based on tax rates and laws that have been enacted or substantively enacted by the reporting date. Deferred tax is measured on an undiscounted basis.

j) Plant, equipment, and intangible assets

Expenditure of £500 or more on plant and equipment or intangible assets is capitalised where it is expected to bring benefit over future years. On initial recognition, assets are measured at cost and include all costs directly attributable to bringing them into working condition.

All non-current assets are reviewed annually for impairment. Plant and equipment are depreciated, and intangible assets are amortised from the time the item comes into operational use, at rates calculated to write them down to the estimated residual value on a straight-line basis over their estimated useful lives.

The following annual rates are used:

- *Leasehold improvements* - over ten years
- *Office furniture and equipment* - over five years
- *IT equipment* - over three years
- *Intangibles* - over six years

The intangible assets are considered to have a definite life and are amortised over a period of six years.

k) Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents comprise cash at bank and in hand and short-term deposits with maturity dates of three months or fewer.

l) Investments

The fair value of the investments is based on the closing market value at the accounting date. Gains and losses arising from changes in market value are included within the Statement of Comprehensive Income.

m) Trade and other payables

Trade payables are obligations on the basis of normal credit terms and do not bear interest. They are categorised as financial liabilities at amortised cost.

n) Provisions

Provisions are recognised in the statement of financial position where there is a legal or constructive obligation to settle a liability and the amount can be estimated with reasonable certainty.

o) Critical accounting estimates and judgements

The significant area of estimation relates to our intangible assets created as a result of the IT transformation programme.

These assets are amortised from when they become operational and for a period of 6 years, which in our judgement represents the useful economical life (UEL) of those assets.

In establishing the UEL of these assets a certain amount of judgement was required and therefore can be subject to change in future years.

The key considerations in estimating the UEL were:

- The platform the systems are built on (Power BI) and that it is unlikely it will become obsolete within the next 6 years. This assessment is based on the number of updates and new features being released by Microsoft as well as seeking the views of our Technical Project Manager.

- As a regulator, there is unlikely to be significant changes in legislation that would mean major changes or scrapping of our new systems.

There is also judgement in relation to project management costs as this is an estimate of the percentage of time spent on the various elements of the project.

We will re-assess the UEL on an annual basis given the fast pace of change within the IT environment.

	2023	2022
	£	£
3. REVENUE - REGISTRATION & RETENTION FEES		
Registration fees	87,502	85,817
Retention fees	7,766,940	6,503,456
	7,854,442	6,589,273
4. REVENUE - PENALTIES AND SUNDRY RECEIPTS		
Penalties paid on reinstatement to the Register	66,200	48,845
Sundry receipts	10,430	10,900
	76,630	59,745
5. INVESTMENT INCOME		
Income from investment portfolio	160,646	144,936
Interest on bank deposits	87,830	13,294
	248,476	158,230
6. EMPLOYEE SALARIES AND BENEFITS		
	£	£
Wages and salaries	2,241,758	1,912,089
Social security	257,063	219,870
Other pension costs	414,818	327,238
Medical and permanent health insurance	31,863	34,242
Recruitment costs	91,522	82,295
Staff training	33,392	22,245
Temporary staff	305,251	154,359
	3,375,667	2,752,338

Salaries in respect of the senior management team within the following ranges:

	2023	2022
£80,000 - £85,000	-	2
£85,000 - £90,000	1	2
£95,000 - £100,000	4	1
£120,000 - £125,000	1	1
£130,000 - £135,000	1	-

Payments were made into defined contribution pension schemes totalling £148,443 (£109,813 in 2022) in respect of these employees.

7. OFFICE COSTS	2023	2022
	£	£
Depreciation on right-of-use asset	249,314	186,986
Rent & Service Charges	32,608	92,573
Rates	120,099	129,276
Building related costs	20,533	12,560
Electricity	19,637	19,433
Office cleaning	36,453	29,382
Postage and telephone	30,882	48,774
Maintenance of office equipment	20,313	12,654
Depreciation: Transformation Project Amortisation	156,921	-
Depreciation: furniture and equipment	11,794	7,486
	698,554	539,124
8. PRINTING AND RECORDS	2023	2022
	£	£
Printing	37,813	15,845
Stationery	1,521	2,840
Journals and newspapers	2,494	1,939
	41,828	20,624
9. IT Charges	2023	2022
	£	£
Amortisation: IT equipment and development	95,826	113,566
IT operational costs	410,192	391,662
IT transformation projects	554,606	500,792
	1,060,624	1,006,020
10. LEGAL AND OTHER PROFESSIONAL CHARGES	2023	2022
	£	£
Remuneration to external auditors:		
External audit services	33,600	23,840
Other services - corporation tax compliance advice	3,000	6,300
Internal Audit	14,250	10,980
Legal expenses and professional charges – regulation	1,020,008	649,089
General legal, specialist advice and insurance	462,099	512,710
	1,532,957	1,202,919

11. OTHER ADMINISTRATION EXPENSES	2023	2022
	£	£
Bank charges	158,939	176,729
Staff travel expenses	55,594	13,405
Prescribed examination and prescription	263,169	200,403
Prescription & Qualification	6,207	-
Architects Council of Europe (ACE)	43,034	40,831
Public and professional awareness	225	(1,102)
Room hire and other sundry expenditure	86,014	59,108
	613,182	489,374

12. Plant and equipment				
	Leasehold improvements	Office furniture & equipment	IT equipment	Total
	£	£	£	£
Cost				
At 1 January 2023	517,325	175,937	374,680	1,067,942
Additions	-	2,172	1,998	4,170
Disposals	-	-	(21,727)	(21,727)
At 31 December 2023	517,325	178,109	354,951	1,050,385
Accumulated Depreciation				
At 1 January 2023	517,325	148,748	342,105	1,008,178
Charge for the year	-	11,794	19,855	31,649
Disposals	-	-	(21,727)	(21,727)
At 31 December 2023	517,325	160,542	340,233	1,018,100
Carrying amount				
At 31 December 2023	-	17,567	14,720	32,285
<i>At 31 December 2022</i>	-	27,189	32,575	59,764

13. INTANGIBLE ASSETS (IT Development Costs)

	2023	2022
	£	£
Cost		
At the start of the year	886,606	882,850
Additions	2,375,251	122,340
Disposals	(270,174)	(118,584)
At the end of the year	2,991,683	886,606

Accumulated Depreciation		
At the start of the year	782,971	829,357
Charge for the year	232,892	72,198
Disposals	(270,174)	(118,584)
At the end of the year	745,689	782,971

Carrying amount		
At the end of the year	2,245,994	103,635

<i>At the end of the year</i>	103,635	53,493
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14. INVESTMENTS	2023	2022
	£	£
At market value		
At start of the year	6,414,173	7,315,227
Additions	857,268	2,021,544
Disposal proceeds	(671,906)	(2,254,859)
Net gain/(loss) on investments	318,411	(667,739)
At the end of year	6,917,946	6,414,173
Cost at the end of year	6,380,244	6,210,211

All investments are managed by Rathbones and are invested in a mixture of Gilts (UK Sovereign debt), Corporate Bonds and Equity funds. All investments are Level 1.

15. TRADE AND OTHER RECEIVABLES	2023	2022
	£	£
Other receivables	21,909	4,299
Prepayments	203,964	180,282
	225,873	184,581

16. TRADE AND OTHER PAYABLES	2023	2022
	£	£
Trade payables	238,209	265,764
Corporation tax	33,295	-
Deferred tax liability	135,062	66,045
Other taxation and social security	103,362	84,734
Accruals	473,289	315,298
	983,217	731,841

It is ARB's policy to pay undisputed invoices within 30 days of receipt. 97% of invoices were paid within 30 days of receipt. Trade payables are all due within 12 months.

17. PENSIONS

The Staff Pension Scheme is a defined contribution scheme. The cost of contributions during the period was £414,818 (£327,238 in 2022). No payments remained outstanding at the year-end and there were no prepaid contributions at the date of the statement of financial position. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the Architects Registration Board in an independently administered fund.

18. LEASING

ARB has elected to recognise a right-of-use asset at an amount equal to the lease liability and depreciated on a straight-line method over the remaining years. The only current lease is that of our London office which expires in April 2024.

LEASING RIGHT OF USE ASSETS	2023	2022
	£	£
Right of use assets	134,654	311,643

18.1 Lease Assets – Right of use

Balance at start of the year	311,643	498,629
Additions	72,325	-
Depreciation	(249,314)	(186,986)
Balance at end of the year	134,654	311,643

18.2 Lease Liabilities

Balance at start of the year	315,727	498,629
Reduction in lease liability	(240,570)	(182,902)
Balance at end of the year	75,157	315,727

Current lease liability	75,157	251,470
Non-current liability	-	64,257

Amounts relating to lease recognised for the reporting period.

18.3 Total expenses relating to lease

Depreciation charge for the right of use asset	249,314	186,986
Interest expense on lease liabilities	7,062	10,997
Total expenses related to lease	256,376	197,983

18.4 Cash flow activity

Cash outflow for lease - Financing activity		
Principal - rent	240,570	182,902
Interest	7,062	10,997
Total cash outflows	247,632	193,899

19. Taxation

ARB is a mutual trading organisation and is therefore taxed only on sources of income outside of our obligations within the Architects Act 1997. Corporation tax is calculated on the investment income and gains during the period.

Tax charge in the period	2023	2022
Taxable profit to 31/3/2023	34,903	-
Taxable profit from 31/3/2023	106,650	-
Profit before tax	141,553	-
For the period to 31/3/2023 at 19%	6,632	-
For the period from 1/4/2023 at 25%	26,663	-
Tax calculated	33,295	-
Deferred taxation	69,017	(161,196)
Total tax recognised in total comprehensive income statement	102,312	(161,196)
Movement in deferred taxation - at the start of the year		
Opening deferred taxation	66,045	227,241
Charge within the year	69,017	(161,196)
As at 31/12/24	135,062	66,045

From the 1 April 2023, the corporation tax rate increased from 19% to 25%. As the company's financial year straddles this date, a blended corporation tax rate of 23.52% has been applied which is calculated by apportioning the two tax rates on a weighted basis for the proportion of the financial year for which each main tax rate was applicable.

20. PROVISIONS FOR LIABILITIES

	Dilapidations * ¹	Panellists* ²	Total
	£	£	£
At 1 January 2023	60,000	85,000	145,000
Additions	72,325	-	72,325
At 31 December 2023	132,325	85,000	217,325

*¹There is a need to recognise a dilapidation provision under any future lease obligations.

*²The provision for potential additional panellist costs reflects our prudent estimate of the possible wider impact of a claim to an employment tribunal for additional sums by Professional Conduct panellist members. Panellists were independent contractors who sit on our Professional Conduct Committee. Given the potential liability still existed at 31 December 2023, the decision has been made for the £85k provision to remain in the Financial Statements. This is considered sufficient to cover the estimated liability in respect of holiday pay for individuals on the Committee.

This section does not form part of the financial statements.

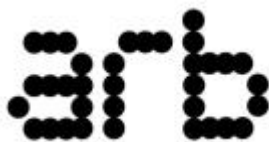
Board member remuneration and expenses.

Meeting attendance	Board meetings	Board workshops	Audit and Risk Assurance Committee	People Committee	Prescription Committee	2023 Remuneration	2023 travel and subsistence claims
Number of meetings held during 2023	6	5	7	5	5		
Alan Kershaw (Chair, lay member)	6	5	1*	1*	-	£41,146.92	£22,317.90
Mark Bottomley (Architect member) Senior Independent Board member Member of ARAC	6	5	7	-	-	£9,927.60	£186.00
Emeritus Professor ADH Crook (Lay member) Chair of Prescription Committee Jan to Sept 2023	5	5	-	-	5	£11,495.01	£1,689.90
Will Freeman (Architect member) Member of ARAC	6	5	5	-	-	£8,360.04	£6.40
Stephen McCusker (Architect member) Member of People Committee	6	4	-	5	-	£8,360.04	£2,437.85
Professor Elena Marco (Architect member) Member of Prescription Committee Jan to Sept 2023	5	5	-	-	4	£10,798.36	£913.19
Derek Bray (Lay member) Chair of People Committee - Jan to March 2023 Resigned from the Board effective 31 March 2023	1	1	-	0	-	£2,481.90	£275.08
Dr Teri Okoro (Lay member) Member of People Committee from April 2023	6	5	-	3	-	£8,360.04	£186.00
Cindy Leslie (Lay member) Chair of ARAC Jan to March 2023 Member of ARAC from April 2023	6	5	7	-	-	£8,751.93	£0.00
Liz Male (Lay member) Member of ARAC Jan to March 2023 Chair of People Committee April to Dec 2023	6	3	1	5	-	£9,535.71	£186.00
Thomas McDermott (Lay member) Joined the Board on 9 January 2023 Chair of ARAC from April 2023	6	4	6	-	-	£9,377.34	£0.00
Samantha Peters (Lay member) Joined the Board on 28 March 2023 Member of People Committee from April 2023	5	2	-	2	-	£6,270.03	£613.25
* Not a formal member of the committee - attended as an observer							

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- email info@arb.org.uk
- call 020 7580 5861
- write to us at ARB, 8 Weymouth Street, W1W 5BU

We'll consider your request and get back to you within 14 days.



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