

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

England & Wales · Charity number 1032298

Details

Other names	SANDWELL WOMEN'S AID, SANDWELL WOMEN'S REFUGE, SANDWELL WOMENS' REFUGE
Status	Registered
Legal form	Charitable company
Company number	02791788
Registered	1994-01-28
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

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Phone	01215530090
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Website	www.blackcountrywomensaid.co.uk

Activities

Objects: The Charity's objects, for the public benefit, are to relieve the physical and mental distress of (primarily) women, children and young people and in particular (but not limited to) those who are homeless, are experiencing, have experienced or are affected by violence, abuse or exploitation and/or are in or have been part of the criminal justice system.

Activities: Provision of support, and emergency services to vulnerable women and children experiencing rape, sexual assault and domestic abuse. Services include provision of emergency accommodation, floating support services, community support and counselling. Services also include development with agencies to raise awareness of domestic abuse and develop support systems to enable them to access SWA services.

Classification

- **How:** Provides Buildings/facilities/open Space, Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information
- **What:** General Charitable Purposes, Education/training, The Prevention Or Relief Of Poverty, Accommodation/housing
- **Who:** Children/young People, Elderly/old People, People With Disabilities, People Of A Particular Ethnic Or Racial Origin, Other Charities Or Voluntary Bodies, Other Defined Groups

Geography

- **Area of benefit:** NOT DEFINED, IN PRACTICE THE WEST MIDLANDS
- Birmingham City
- Coventry City
- Dudley
- Sandwell
- Solihull
- Walsall
- Wolverhampton

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£10,283,519	£8,967,246	£9,834,936	212
2024-03-31	£10,016,725	£8,223,119	£8,518,663	197
2023-03-31	£271,816	£7,065,286	£6,725,057	172
2022-03-31	£7,511,649	£5,686,956	£5,189,828	159
2021-03-31	£6,207,209	£5,135,979	£3,365,135	152

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Karen Dowman	Chair	
BOZENA BENTON		
MELVENA MORTON		
Salma Parween Ali		2019-06-19
Victoria Harris		2019-01-01

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

England & Wales - Charity number 1032298

Accounts

REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER: 02791788 (England and Wales)
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1032298

Report of the Trustees and
Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025
for
Black Country Women's Aid

**Contents of the Financial Statements
for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

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Black Country Women's Aid

**Reference and Administrative Details
for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

TRUSTEES

Salma Parween Ali
Bozena Benton
Karen Elizabeth Dowman
Victoria Rebecca Harris
Melvena Morton

COMPANY SECRETARY

Sara Ward

REGISTERED OFFICE

Landchard House
Victoria Street
West Bromich
B70 8HY

**REGISTERED COMPANY
NUMBER**

02791788 (England and Wales)

**REGISTERED CHARITY
NUMBER**

1032298

AUDITORS

TAG Assurance Services Limited
Chartered Accountants and
Registered Auditors
8 Pendeford Place
Pendeford Business Park
Wolverhampton
West Midlands
WV9 5HD

**Report of the Trustees
for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

The trustees who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2025. The trustees have adopted the provisions of Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objectives and aims

Black Country Women's Aid's (BCWA) objectives are:

The Charity's objects, for the public benefit, are to relieve the physical and mental distress of (primarily) women, children and young people and in particular (but not limited to) those who are homeless, are experiencing, have experienced or are affected by violence, abuse or exploitation and/or are in or have been part of the criminal justice system.

Significant activities

BCWA remains committed to the delivery of high-quality services across the West Midlands to victims of violence and abuse. To achieve this BCWA has adopted the following strategies

- Redefining the objectives and activities to ensure that they reflect the work of the charity. These were altered by special resolution on 15 November 2024.
- Delivery of high-quality services; seeking accreditation, external validation evidencing good and effective services that are value for money.
- Maintaining our "tell it once" approach so that victims/survivors can access all the support services they need to rebuild their lives.
- Consulting and involving victims/survivors in service design and delivery to ensure that they meet the needs of victims/survivors.
- Working collaboratively with partners as resources, budgets and services are reduced, to ensure that victim/survivor support is not affected, as we continue to recognise the challenge and difficulties for victims/survivors to disclose their abuse.
- Identifying sources of funding to maintain services through a variety of sources with the aim to reduce reliance on one single source.
- Being data driven. Developing quality systems that capture distance travelled, impact and effectiveness, contributing to statutory partner strategic plans, influencing assessment of need and commissioning of service.

Public benefit

BCWA is a charity that has worked across the Black Country and wider West Midlands for nearly 40 years supporting victims of violence and abuse, providing high quality advice and advocacy as well as emergency accommodation for those wanting to leave violent and abusive homes. We support victims/survivors to rebuild lives after violence and abuse as well as improving their wellbeing and life opportunities to people in our community, regardless of background or circumstance. We do this by providing free access to services, activities and resources, offering guidance and support to those in need, and creating inclusive spaces where individuals can be supported, learn, connect, and thrive. The benefits of our work are open to the public, widely accessible, and designed to create lasting positive change.

The trustees have complied with their duty to have due regard to the commission's public benefit guidance when exercising any powers or duties to which the guidance is relevant.

**Report of the Trustees
for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Development, Activities and Achievements for 2024/5

Two million women are estimated to be victims of violence perpetrated by men each year, in an epidemic so serious it amounts to a "national emergency", with crimes including stalking, harassment, sexual assault and domestic violence affecting one woman in 12 in England and Wales. The number of recorded offences has grown by 37% in the past five years, and perpetrators getting younger, according to figures are contained in the first national analysis of the scale of violence against women and girls (VAWG) by the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), released in July 2024. The new Labour government has ambitious plans to tackle VAWG, pledging to halve current levels within a decade.

The Labour government said that it will "reform the justice system to put the needs of victims first." They pledged to introduce specialist rape and sexual offences teams in every police force, targeting the most prolific and harmful perpetrators and using tactics normally reserved for terrorists and organised crime; introducing domestic abuse experts in 999 control rooms so that victims can talk directly to a specialist, and ensuring there is a legal advocate in every police force area to advise victims from the moment of report to trial. They have also been committed to ensuring schools address misogyny and teach young people about healthy relationships and consent and providing police forces with the powers they need to track and tackle the problem. Labour have also proposed for six police forces to be given powers to charge domestic abuse suspects without the involvement of the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). Based on a pilot implemented by West Yorkshire Police which has invested in a cohort of trained police decision-makers, the plan will extend the use of emergency provisions for the police to charge high-risk domestic abuse suspects where the CPS cannot charge in time. The government also plans to introduce a statutory duty on chief constables and chief crown prosecutors to work together to deliver justice for victims, including a requirement to develop new joint justice arrangements in every area and devise an annual joint charging action plan.

NPCC chiefs have warned of young men being "radicalised" online by influencers such as Andrew Tate and have demanded that technology companies act more quickly to take down extreme material. Louisa Rolfe, NPCC Lead for Domestic Abuse and an Assistant Commissioner at the Metropolitan police, has said that the real figure for victims was probably even higher than the two million victims a year identified, with many offences not being reported, arguing that: "I think it is more, more like 4 million." Police privately argue that delays in bringing domestic abuse prosecutions mean that most victims withdraw their support for a prosecution after seven days. Maggie Blyth, NPCC Lead for VAWG sees the justice system is a major problem: "We don't think it is functioning..... We know that we've got significant delays within the court system. We know that victims are waiting far too long for a criminal justice outcome. And we know that some victims fall away through that process."

Whilst we are committed to the changes it is also clear that more needs to be done to keep women and children safe from domestic abuse.

The year has been challenging with government changes, both in infrastructure and finances, means the sector continues to face significant challenges at a time when there are more victims than ever being identified. Some of the challenges are:

- In early 2025, ahead of the Spending Review, there remained a lack of clarity on the future of victim funding for many services. In addition, complex commissioning processes are having a detrimental impact on the availability of specialised support. Short term, unsustainable funding is damaging for organisations committed to providing more innovative support for victims of VAWG and fuels issues related to staff retention. However, Refuge reported that the prevalence of short-term contracts (one year or less) increased between 2022/23 and 2023/24.
- The rise in National Insurance has impacted the VAWG sector as we were forced to find additional funding for the additional costs when funding allocations are not increased to accommodate this increase. This represents a real term reduction in funding.
- The rise of the far right over the last year surpassed ideological unrest, spilling into violent acts following the tragic murders of three young girls in Southport: Elsie Dot Stancombe, Bebe King and Alice DaSilva. The far right weaponised their deaths, fuelling racist riots that rippled across the UK, resulting in extreme acts of violence by hordes of people against migrants and minoritised people, including attacks on immigration centres and setting fire to multiple hotels housing migrants, many of whom were women escaping domestic abuse. The link between misogyny and extremism has been formalised by the government's decision to categorise misogyny as extremism. It is currently unclear how misogyny will be addressed under this framework, however the VAWG sector has raised concerns about framing misogyny within the prism of counterterrorism due to the historic over-policing of young men from Black and minoritised communities through the government's Prevent strategy.

**Report of the Trustees
for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

- New figures released by the Ministry of Justice in December 2024 showed that the number of sexual offence cases waiting to go to the Crown Court now stands at 11,574, a new record high. This is a 44.5% increase compared to the number waiting at the same time in 2022. The number of adult rape cases waiting to go to court stands at 3,291.

- Latest estimates from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), for the year ending September 2024, show that 2.2% of people aged 16 years and over had experienced sexual assault (including attempted offences). Although there is year-to-year volatility in these estimates, over the last 10 years there has been an increase in sexual assault. The CSEW for the year ending March 2024 estimated 2.6% of people aged 16 to 59 years had experienced sexual assault (including attempted offences) in the last year compared with 1.5% in March 2014. As set out by the ONS, there have been general increases in police recorded sexual offences over the last decade. In the year ending September 2024, there was a 5% increase to 199,445 offences, compared with the previous year (190,620 offences). Of the 199,445 sexual offences recorded in the 12 months up to September 2024, only 4.1% of cases were charged within the year. Roughly 35% (69,958 offences) of all sexual offences recorded by the police in year ending September 2024 were rape offences. This was a 3% increase compared with the year ending September 2023 (67,746 offences). Police outcomes data sets out that of the 69,958 rapes recorded in the 12 months to September 2024, only 2.7% cases were charged within the year.

- The ONS sets out that the police flagged 827,609 offences as domestic abuse-related in the year ending September 2024, including 646,211 violence against the person offences. This was a 6% decrease from the previous year (882,705 offences), mainly because of fewer violence against the person offences (down from 696,935 offences). This is likely, in part, to reflect recent changes in police recording practices. The proportion of violence against the person offences flagged as domestic abuse-related was 33%, like the previous year's 34%. In contrast to the above decrease, the Women's Aid Annual Audit report found their members experienced higher demand for domestic abuse services this year, including with the quantity of cases, their complexity, as well as case lengths.

- In the year ending June 2024, police recorded stalking increased by 12% (to 132,912 offences) and police recorded harassment also increased by 11% (to 293,493 offences) compared with the previous year. Over the same time, there was a 1% decrease in the number of coercive and controlling behaviour offences (44,816 offences). The NPCC's 2024 VAWG Strategic Threat Risk Assessment (STRA) report showed that 40% of all police recorded VAWG was stalking and harassment, with a large proportion these offences being domestic abuse related (51%). The Domestic Homicide Project year 3 report identified that stalking behaviours are one of the most common risk factors for all suspects in domestic homicide.

- According to the ONS, for the year ending March 2024, 5% of people aged 16 and over reported experiencing at least one of the forms of sexual harassment that the ONS asked about within the last 12 months. Prevalence was approximately three times higher among women (8%) compared with men (3%). The likelihood of experiencing sexual harassment was highest among younger age groups. This was particularly the case for women, with 23% of those aged 16 to 24 and 16% of those aged 25 to 34 experiencing some form of sexual harassment in the previous year compared with 5% of those aged 35 and over..

- 77% of girls and young women aged 7-21 have experienced online harm in the last year, and over 1 in 5 girls aged 7-10 have seen "rude images" online. This has doubled since 2021. The largest comprehensive survey of online harms across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, carried out by the Open University, found that women experiencing online violence are significantly more likely to be below the age of 25. Furthermore, in the first six months of 2024, child sexual abuse reports related to sexual extortion were up 19% compared to the same period in 2023, according to the Internet Watch Foundation. Victims are getting younger, with a 25% increase in reports involving 14-15-year-olds compared to the previous year. Whilst boys still make up the majority of victims, there has been a 2,600% increase in reports involving girls..

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- In the year ending March 2024, there were 2,755 Honour-Based Abuse (HBA) related offences recorded by the police in England and Wales, a decrease of 8% compared with the year ending March 2023 (when there were 3,008 offences). This is the first decrease in police-reported offences since the time series began in the year ending March 2020. However, Karma Nirvana, which runs the National Honour Based Abuse Helpline, handled 2,962 cases in the same period, a sharp 13% rise from last year. The decline in police recorded incidents, paired with rising reports to Karma Nirvana, points to potential under-reporting or even misclassification by police forces, rather than a true reduction in HBA incidents, as highlighted in Karma Nirvana's statement on the decline. Of the 2,755 HBA offences recorded in the latest year, 111 were female genital mutilation (FGM) cases and 201 forced marriage offences. The number of FGM offences and forced marriage offences increased slightly (by 25 and 28 offences respectively). Over half (54%; 60 offences) of the FGM offences recorded by the police were reported under the mandatory reporting duty for FGM.

It is vital that BCWA remains highly visible and responsive to victims.

During the year BCWA had 12,493 cases opened and recorded on the BCWA database. We are mindful that this does not represent the total number of victims supported/ referred into service as the data from our multi-agency partnerships is retained on their systems. The cases opened refer to the following services:

- Domestic abuse community services: 8,128
- Rape and sexual violence services: 1,224
- Children's services: 389
- Stalking services: 981
- Therapeutic services: 321
- Modern slavery services: 507
- DA accommodation services: 357 (requests for refuge, of which 61 new clients were accommodated. 50 children/ dependents were also accommodated)
- Women's justice services: 586

In addition, support services were busy:

- 266,390 entries recorded into our case management system
- 53,204 calls made to agencies and clients
- 35,345 emails and texts to clients
- 23,250 calls and texts from clients and agencies
- 92 calls or texts per day to our helpline, or 12 per hour

Please note that this data does not include MDS Services or Women's Justice Mariposa Project.

Trustees, senior management and all staff worked together to devise operational plans. These plans included:

Accessible and Available - BCWA ensures that the public know how to make contact for help, advice and support. Each BCWA centre is in areas with good transport links, discreet locations and accessible for victims needing help and support. We respond when they are ready to talk. Key messaging to victims is vital to let them know that they are not alone, even though they are often made to feel that they are. BCWA knows that a victim making the choice to pick up the phone or make the decision to leave is at significant risk of serious hurt and harm. We respond swiftly and confidently. BCWA works with local councils, strategic partnerships and the business community to promote the services offered. Social media and investment in quality communications ensures that we reach people living in our communities who may be living with abuse. BCWA regularly features on local radio and maintains a high social media presence for greater reach.

BCWA listens and hears the voices of those that we provide services to. This is done in ways that enable a dialogue, feedback and impact; their voice is vital to the future direction of services. Where gaps in service are identified, BCWA aim to respond. The integrated abuse support vision aims to offer help and support to anyone who has experienced abuse and for that service to be under one roof and easily accessible.

**Report of the Trustees
for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

Keeping information safe and secure- BCWA continues to develop its technological systems and resources for accurate record keeping and data capture. During 2024/25, trustees were committed to the development of a new case management system (CMS). A small development team was formed to develop a specification, and a selective tender process was undertaken with industry CMS providers. Improved case records, data and analysis were built into the specification to ensure that BCWA services continue to contribute to local needs assessments. Phase 1 of the new CMS will be launched in April 2026. Achieving Cyber Security standards remains a high priority as victims in services need to be confident that BCWA can store and keep safe information about their abuse. BCWA has achieved the Cyber Security standards both self-assessment and Cyber Essential for the 4th year running.

Making every contact count - BCWA continues to invest time and resources to ensure that there are effective and connected operational systems to identify and support victims of abuse wherever they are living within the West Midlands. The use of social media, promotional campaigns, weekly updates and messaging, as well as joint work with partners, ensures that we reach as many people as possible. Communicating with victims has changed over the years and we need to make sure that we change and respond to in a way victims can engage and access services. BCWA is pleased to be able to offer a range of options for people who need us. Making every contact count means that from the 1st call or conversation victims are given resources and support to enable them to make informed decisions. Feedback from victims/survivors was extremely positive and many commented on the positive engagement they maintain with their support worker.

Positive partnerships - BCWA is a valued partner with both statutory and non-statutory partners. BCWA has made significant contributions to local strategic plans and play an active role in providing information, data, and access to victims to enable strategies and commissions to be developed. BCWA also takes its responsibility seriously to seek additional funds to support local funding strengthening service offers. BCWA acknowledges that it is vital to receive funding from a variety of funders to avoid reliance on statutory funding but also to lever additional funding to support local strategies.

BCWA continues to make a significant contribution to the partnerships across the 4 Black Country authorities (Sandwell, Dudley, Walsall and Wolverhampton) influencing strategic and operational development. These include vital partnerships such as the Sandwell Crime Reduction Partnership/Safer Sandwell, Sandwell Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnership (DASP) Dudley Domestic Board and Dudley Safe and Sound, Walsall Domestic Abuse Board as well as operation groups focusing on young people at risk of exploitation, Youth Justice Board, local multiagency safeguarding arrangements, West Midlands Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO) Board, Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) Board and local Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferencing (MARAC) and Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH) and Stalking Triage Clinics. In addition, the service leads on themes such as domestic abuse, modern slavery and stalking at the Office of the Police Crime Commissioner's Victim's Commission. The Victim's Commission is the PCC's advisory body on the provision of specialist services. The role of the Victim's Commission is to ensure that services have a positive impact on victims, improving the circumstances of individuals affected by crime, to cope with the effects of their experiences and recover from the harm they have experienced.

In addition to the above multi agency partnerships BCWA works with specialist services nationally and across the region to ensure that services are coordinated and meet the highest standards. The organisation has continued its partnerships work with the following: National Stalking Consortium, Specialist Domestic Violence and Abuse Consortium, Rape and Sexual Violence Consortium and the Women's Justice Partnership supporting vulnerable people. This approach continues to demonstrate that agencies cannot work in isolation but are always stronger together.

BCWA continues to work with the Salvation Army and the England and Wales delivery partners on challenging local responses, improving systems and services for victims of modern slavery within the National Referral Mechanism.

BCWA is committed to ensuring that victims have access to food, clothing and shelter and has established positive and committed links with local people, communities and businesses. BCWA supporter's generosity comes in both financial support, essential items such as clothing, toiletries, start-up kits for new mothers. Our links with local foodbanks, other charities and the community voluntary organisations enabled food, clothing and essentials for distribution as families told us how they continue to struggle with meeting the basic needs of their children/family.

**Report of the Trustees
for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

Funding challenges - During 2024/25 many of our statutory partners were awaiting financial settlements to then commission services in line with their needs assessments. This resulted in short term allocations of funding only covering a 12-month period with a view that longer term commissions would materialise from 2025/26. Some commissioners halved the allocation available resulting in a significant reduction in service whilst others carried over the funding with a view to remodel the following year once financial settlements have been agreed. Short term funding creates great instability and service impact for example the loss of the Dudley MASH IDVA not only resulted in redundancy for the employee, but the start of the system for victims to access help and support to be dismantled. The lack of an impact assessment because of this reduction in funding and loss of essential support positions has been to the detriment of the authority's strategy to support victims of abuse. The lack of impact assessments is concerning as funding determines the service rather than the needs assessments and high volumes of victims.

Quality and Performance - Evidencing quality is important to BCWA to ensure that, not only are the values and principles of the charity being adhered to, but the charity demonstrates good value for money against "industry" standards. BCWA is regularly assessed by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) for quality of service and safeguarding, International Standards Organisation (ISO) related to Environmental, business continuity, Information Security and quality standards. Whilst these are conditions of the modern-day slavery support contract, BCWA continues to adopt the standards across all services. During the year BCWA was also preparing for the Women's Aid Federation of England and Wales standards covering all domestic abuse, rape and sexual violence, male services and children and young people services and Lime Culture covering rape and sexual violence services for both adult, males and children and young people. Assessments will take place during the early part of 2025/26. Targets and KPI's are set for all contracts and BCWA has been able to evidence through high quality performance reporting the delivery of service against the specifications. Feedback from both commissioners and services users is positive. Supporting analysis against volumes, trends and patterns informs local strategic needs assessments.

Meeting funder/ commissioners' targets/KPI's - BCWA continues to receive commendations for its professionalism, standards of service and commitment to the Violence Against Women and Girls agenda. BCWA can create solutions to often complex problems and is responsive, innovative and dynamic in its solutions for victims. At all times, BCWA maintain a meaningful dialogue with clients across all services, ensuring that they remain central to the core values and influence the response.

Service details

Community Services - Domestic Abuse

BCWA continues to provide commissioned services for Sandwell, Dudley and Walsall local strategic partnerships and continue to provide domestic abuse support services. High risk victims continue to be supported by an Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA), who provides immediate support and minimises risk linking with local Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC). BCWA is integral to the Walsall and Dudley Strengthening Families model, the Black Country Family Drug and Alcohol Court (FDAC) where highly vulnerable children are identified and support around the family is provided. Both specialist areas will be independently evaluated.

High risk victims continue to be supported by an independent domestic abuse adviser (IDVA). Volumes are increasing and further support has been made available by the West Midlands Office of the Police Crime Commissioner (OPCC) to support this increase and strengthen the regional Multiagency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) that take place across the Black Country.

BCWA is now embedded in local operational spaces. This has enabled victims to access services easily and works with partners to advise on identification and referral to our services. BCWA continues to operate within the following structures:

- Multi agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH) - many referrals are received through this route as partners share information, jointly risk assess and provide a multi-agency response.
- GP Practices - delivering the national Identification and Referral to Improve Safety (IRIS) programme; a GP practice-based model that provides training and education, clinical enquiry, care pathways and an enhanced referral pathway to specialist domestic violence services.
- Accident and Emergency Departments - Based within Russell's Hall Hospital Trust, specialist advocates identify victims presenting with multiple injuries as a result of abuse. BCWA continue to triangulate support for victims in both primary and acute services to reduce risk and increase safety.

**Report of the Trustees
for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

- Substance misuse commissioned services. Working particularly within the Sandwell Blue Light Project, BCWA is part of the multi-agency operational group to ensure a joint identification and ownership of the highest impact clients both as victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse.
- Early help hubs - working at a local level with a range of professionals supporting victims and working to keep them safe.
- Schools where children have been identified through police notifications. BCWA has worked with West Midlands Police and all 4 LAs in the Black Country supporting children and young people.

Stalking Services

BCWA continues to develop its Stalking service. The team uses several specialist tools, including the SRP (Stalking Risk Profile), SASH (Screening Assessment for Stalking and Harassment) and Dr Jane Monckton-Smith's Homicide Timeline to profile perpetrators. This expertise is invaluable in our advocacy with agencies, such as police and probation, to help them manage offenders, address stalking behaviour directly and safeguard victims. This service continues to be supported by the Office of the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner.

The OPCC was successful in obtaining further Home Office funding for supporting perpetrators of abuse; BCWA provides continued and ongoing support to the victim. The Early Awareness Stalking Intervention ("EASI") pilot is in partnership with HMPPS Psychology Services Group, West Midlands Police and focuses on improving how they identify and address stalking. The vision for Psychology Services Group and West Midlands Police is to trial a cost- and time-efficient, targeted, and evidence-informed intervention for those who are known to have engaged in stalking delivered at the earliest stage possible. Police training is being supported by the Alice Ruggles Trust. The project is being evaluated by the University of Derby in their Faculties of Criminology and Forensic.

The service remains a member of the National Stalking Consortium, chaired by Suzy Lamplugh's Trust. BCWA provides updates of the positive work they continue to achieve locally and, together, plan for National Stalking Week Conference.

During the year the service was instrumental in setting up the first stalking clinic for the region, strengthening the partnership's response and valuing all contributions. This is an ambition realised since the start of the stalking service developed by BCWA.

The stalking clinic:

- holds bespoke multi-agency meetings where high risk referrals are assessed and where the team look at stalking behaviours, the motivations behind them and the history and mental health of the offender.
- identifies and shares organisational learning and feeding back into the partnership for future training and development for partners.
- discusses the profiles and risk of stalkers with all parties sharing intelligence and information - provides feedback and advice to officers to ensure robust management of stalking.
- provides referrals to the independent stalking advocacy caseworker (ISAC) and partner agencies for high risk stalking.
- facilitates case discussions with the ISAC, Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and force stalking tactical lead ensuring victim support and safeguarding dedicated legal advisor to support the application of SPOs and advocating for their use.
- co-ordinates cross-border support to stalking cases as required.

Rape, Sexual Violence and Abuse Services

Ensuring that all victims get access to the valuable services of an ISVA remains a priority. BCWA's team of ISVAs (independent sexual violence advisers) support both male and female survivors of rape and sexual abuse across the Black Country. The service includes specialist advocates who support child and adult victims of childhood sexual abuse. BCWA continues to provide links from the regional Sexual Assault Referrals Centres (SARC) into local services and provides specialist therapeutic interventions. The Independent Sexual Violence Advisers (ISVA) continue to play a key role in helping survivors to access and engage with the criminal justice system, both support and court applications for Criminal Injuries Compensation administration.

BCWA continues to play an active role in the following partnerships:

**Report of the Trustees
for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

- Regional Rape and Sexual Assault strategic group. The vision of this strategy is to reduce and prevent all forms of sexual assault and abuse. The Sexual Assault and Abuse (SAA) Board will work to ensure the West Midlands offers a multi-agency, holistic and seamless service to victims of sexual assault and abuse; to enhance the services provided to those affected through the criminal justice pathway; to provide therapeutic support to victims to help them rebuild their lives and to hold offenders to account for their behaviour.

- Voice of the Victim Forum -This focuses discussions with agencies to discuss how to best ensure that victims remain engaged and their voices heard through the police investigation. Advocating for the consistent use of the victim's code and improve communication between victim and officer via the ISVA is promoted.

- VAWG Local Scrutiny and Involvement Panel (West Midlands) - This meeting provides the opportunity for BCWA to provide an insight into the landscape of support for victims of SV.

BCWA will be working for reaccreditation against the Lime Culture Quality standards for its Adult ISVA service, Ask Marc and children's service towards the end of 2024/25. Through the Independent Accreditation Programme, services are assessed against nationally recognised Quality Standards, supporting continuous improvement, accountability, and consistency across the sector. Services that meet these standards are awarded the Lime Culture Quality Mark - a trusted sign of high-quality, safe, and survivor-focused service delivery.

Specialist Children's independent Sexual violence advisors (CHISVA) continue to support children and young people who have experienced rape and sexual violence. Our specialist children and young people's services support young victims of rape, sexual assault and child sexual exploitation (CSE). This area of work continues to work as partnerships gain a greater understanding of the impact of abuse on children. Working with both adult and child will strengthen relationships and develop resilience and confidence in young people as they progress into adulthood.

Women's Justice

BCWA continues to provide a specialist early-intervention project, commissioned by the Office of the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner via New Chance, through national contracting, where BCWA is a subcontractor of the main contract held by Anawim. These services both provide diversion from custody or from conviction for women in Sandwell, Dudley and Birmingham. Women access this service following arrest or conviction; they are referred by police or via probation to the service. BCWA also remains a vital partner in the West Midlands Women's justice partnership, providing specialist support for women who have offended. Probation officers are co-located within the Women's Justice Centre providing a trauma informed space for women to address their offending behaviour. This is part of the MOJ contracting and lead for this work is Changing Lives, BCWA is a sub-contractor of this contract. The service offers practical and emotional support aimed at helping them to move forward in their lives and avoid future offending. BCWA women's justice workers facilitate relationships with other agencies and rebuild confidence in women that service is there to help. Reductions in other services has meant that there is an increased pressure on this service. Women presenting with mental health challenges and PTSD is increasing.

During the year BCWA worked with the OPCC and partners to develop the Intensive Supervision Court (ISC) in Birmingham (previously names Problem Solving Court). The ISC will be for women serving community orders, for low level offences in Birmingham and will be closely monitored by judges, as part of a new pilot scheme. It forms part of a new community sentencing approach, to tackle the root causes of offenders' behaviour, help them change their ways and cut reoffending. Through the pilot launched in Birmingham Magistrates' Court, when a woman is sentenced, the judge will order them to attend regular review meetings in BCWA women's justice centres, to check they are abiding by the requirements of their community sentence. Women will also have access to specialist drug and alcohol treatment, to help them tackle any substance misuse, which could be driving their behaviour. At the same time, they will receive intensive supervision from the Probation Service, which could include frequent and random drug testing.

Phil Bowen, Director for the Centre of Justice Innovation said: "The evidence suggests that, by combining wraparound supervision with regular judicial oversight which holds people and services to account, we can make a material difference to offending. These pilots allow us to test the effectiveness of these approaches to inform decisions on any potential wider roll-out."

**Report of the Trustees
for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

Accommodation and Outreach Service

BCWA continues to provide a safe accommodation for victims of violence and abuse needing to leave their homes as a result of domestic abuse. Demand for services remain high with demand always outstripping available resources. Families continue to experience financial hardship, the refuge team has built good relationships with the Local Welfare Provision, and a range of charities e.g. The Buttle Trust, to apply for individual grants for families who need help including when they leave and establish their own home. BCWA also raises funds for its appeal "Make a house a home" helping families with basics and essentials when they move out such as household goods, flooring, school supplies and toys for individual children has been particularly supportive of our clients. Parents have expressed their thanks and gratitude for this additional support.

BCWA also aims to make the stay in refuge as supportive but also as fun as possible. Supported by many corporate and individual donors, they support positive activities for the women and children such as fun days out to the seaside and cultural events such as Diwali, Eid and Christmas.

Supporting children living within the safe accommodation provision is vital. Counselling and support for children and young people has been vital. BCWA continues to receive generous gifts and donations to support women and children living in safe accommodation.

BCWA continues to provide units of accommodation as part of the contracted safe house provision and outreach services spanning the West Midlands for victims of Modern-Day Slavery (MDS), in partnership with the Salvation Army, who hold the national contract with the Home Office. Numbers of victims identified and accessing the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) remains steady with over 17,000 victims identified. Demand for accommodation has increased during the year, with BCWA responding with a strategic investment fund, identifying accommodation suitable for purchase or development that meet the needs of victims.

The service works with a range of stakeholders to gather intelligence on locations and vulnerabilities where exploitation operates and takes an active part in the media highlighting the plight of victims. BCWA also contributes to national discussions, legislative changes and acts as expert consultants to the West Midlands Modern Slavery Strategy and West Midlands Police Multi Agency Policy and Procedures. We represent survivors on the West Midlands Anti-Slavery Network, Human Trafficking Advisory Foundation Forum, and PAN West Midlands Multi-Agency Group. During 2024/25 and beyond, BCWA will be working with partners to review the 2015 modern Slavery Act in light of significant changes since its launch.

BCWA continues to work within local strategic partnerships as they increase their awareness of modern slavery and acknowledge the vital role that they play in identifying and coordinating rescue.

BCWA is also committed to identifying victims that have not accessed the NRM but operate in many of our towns and cities. The centre for Analysis of Exploitation (CeAnEx) is gaining an excellent reputation for its field work and analytical research, focusing on sex work from specific communities both on and offline. Funding from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has meant that detailed field work can be undertaken to identify trends and patterns of activity. This essential information informs regional organised crime units (ROCU) and has influenced and shaped activity such as Operation Sandstar across the West Midlands. This is innovative research highlighting exploitative activity with highly vulnerable women and girls and influencing local and national responses.

Counselling and Therapeutic Services

Counselling and specialist therapeutic interventions underpin the support services and are an essential component of a holistic approach to addressing trauma. The service offer continues to combine both face to face and the use of technology to counsel victims.

Business development and finance

Strategic and partnership working remains a vital part of our work. The corporate centre continues to strengthen following investment into key positions in finance, human resources, business and operational development and communications. BCWA produces regular newsletters, use social media, and articles in national press on related issues to highlight the plight of victims of abuse and the impact of national policy on victim's lives.

**Report of the Trustees
for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

Quality, Learning and Enterprise

BCWA has robust internal audit functions auditing the standards and quality of service against national standards. Reports, analysis and trends to strategic partnerships, funders and commissioners are available on a regular basis outlining the performance of the service against specification/commission. Training and development of employees all increased in the last 12 months and employees recognise the impact of training on their practice.

BCWA has continued to strengthen the Workforce development team, focusing on the continual professional development of all its workforce, matching national standards against practice.

Employees are developed through an organisational training plan and encouraged to pursue external qualifications as part of their Professional Development Plan (PDP). This is further strengthened by Employment Competency Frameworks that further develop employee skills and talents. The organisation continues to support the Home Office standards for Independent domestic violence and sexual violence advocacy services as defined by SafeLives, Lime Culture, Women's Aid Federation of England and Wales and Respect and the Care Quality Commission.

BCWA remains an organisation recognised for its expertise in both policy and practice. The senior management team have been involved in the development of national policy, national accredited training courses and the continuing professional development of health and other professionals. During 2024/25 BCWA remained lead trainers within local strategic partners providing expertise on interpersonal violence, abuse and exploitation.

The organisation continues to receive gifts in kind, including toys, food and toiletries from a variety of women's organisations, religious groups, and individuals and other organisations, as well as hours of volunteer time amounting to over 450 hrs.

**Report of the Trustees
for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Income increased overall by 2.5% to £10.28m (2024: £10.02m). Growth was driven by community based support, up 10.45% to £5.10m, and refuge based support, up 8.51% to £1.11m. Modern day slavery income decreased by 2.69% to £3.83m. Donations and legacies fell to £0.2m (2024: £0.37m), reflecting the inherent volatility of this income stream and specific appeals in those years. Charitable activities accounted for 97.8% of total income (2024: 95.6%), with community based support now representing 49.6% of total income (2024: 46.1%). The increased income is a reflection of the increase in funds to support the direct service delivery. The organisation continues to realise its longer term plan to diversify funds away from the statutory funding and has been able to attract new funding streams to support existing services and take on new projects.

Expenditure increased by 9.0% to £8.97m (2024: £8.22m). The rise was primarily attributable to Community services, where costs grew by £0.45m (+9.8%) to £5.02m, reflecting the scale and complexity of demand across community based programmes. Modern Day Slavery (MDS) expenditure rose by £0.10m (+4.31%) to £2.49m and refuge expenditure was unchanged at £1.26m. The charity also incurred additional revenue expenditure on capital projects of £0.18m (2024: nil), primarily relating to improvements to essential assets to sustain service delivery.

Overall, Community accounts for 56.0% of total expenditure (2024: 55.6%), MDS for 27.8% (2024: 29.0%) and Refuge for 14.0% (2024: 15.4%).

Expenses and overheads have been tightly controlled. The increase in expenditure is predominantly due to a response to service increase and the related increase in staff costs in line with our provision of extra services.

The Statement of Financial activities show an increase in funds of £1.32m. Our reserves now stand at £9.83m of which £1.57m is restricted and £8.26m is unrestricted. The balance of unrestricted reserves includes £2.85m related to fixed assets and £3.80m is designated to meet the future commitments. Therefore the balance of free reserves is £1.6m.

Reserves Policy

The Board of Trustees has examined the charity's requirements for reserves in light of the main risks to the organisation.

The Board of Trustees has agreed to support a 3-year strategy that includes:

- Service Continuity Fund - where the organisation maintains costs for closure as well as 6 months' running costs of £1.23m.
- Strategic Development Fund - where the organisation undertakes research and development to inform future service provision and secure additional funds for longer term service delivery costs of £0.39m.
- Property Contingency Fund - provides sufficient funds to maintain the Charity's properties to a high standard and to ensure routine repairs and maintenance are carried out of £0.29m.
- Redundancy Reserve - to cover the potential costs of redundancy over the capped limit to long term employees of £0.18m
- Capital Reserve - comprises funds set aside for the organisation to invest in property in order to meet future demand for its services of £1.69m.

**Report of the Trustees
for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

FUTURE PLANS

Future plans include:

1. Development of regional working opportunities for joint working.
2. Implementation of new policies ensuring that the systems/services are fit for purpose and are high quality and meet nationally recognised quality standards.
3. Development of a new case management system
4. Development of a strategic investment plan for increasing BCWA assets
5. Seeking opportunities for funding new opportunities
6. Preparing services for future tendering
7. Contributing to strategic and operational plans with a range of partners to create a "whole systems approach" to supporting victims wherever they present ensuring that victims remain supported, risks identified and protected.
8. Continuing to influence strategy at a local, regional and national level.
9. Reviewing services; evaluate cost effectiveness, efficiency and operational delivery. Review governance arrangements and strengthen corporate services meeting the need of a growing organisation.
10. Further developing the training and educational programmes and developments working within local educational partnerships and academic institutions
11. Developing a "Women's Centre" approach, widening the opportunities for women
12. Establishing improved solutions to victims of violence and abuse that have little or no access to public funds and ensure that this issue remains high on the strategic agenda.
13. Exploring the implementation of gendered spaces in line with national standards

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

This is a company limited by guarantee and its operations include:

- The provision of supported accommodation for individuals leaving violence, abuse and exploitation.
- Outreach and resettlement support services for children, young people and women moving back into the community after leaving refuge and/or within a safe home.
- The provision of a community-based support and advocacy service for victims of abuse in and out of the criminal justice system.
- Community engagement/involvement and peer support for victims of violence and abuse.
- Delivery of training and awareness raising to both statutory and non-statutory agencies, work with schools, colleges and other educational establishments outlining the effects/impact of abuse, explaining models of interventions.
- Working in partnership both at a strategic and operational level with the statutory and voluntary sector to develop a co-ordinated response to tackling domestic abuse.

Governing Document

The organisation is a charitable company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales, incorporated in 1993 and registered as a charity in 1994. The company was established under a Memorandum of Association which established the objectives and powers of the charitable company and is governed under its Articles of Association as amended on 15 November 2024. In the event of the company being wound up members are required to contribute an amount not exceeding £1.00.

Recruitment and Appointment of Management Committee

The Directors of the Company are also Charity Trustees for the purpose of charity law and under the Articles are known as the members of the Committee. The number of Trustees shall not be less than five and shall not be more than twelve.

Every Trustee will be appointed by the Trustees for a term of five years by a resolution passed at a properly convened Board Meeting.

The Committee, where possible, seek to ensure that the needs of victims of abuse both adults, children and young people are appropriately reflected through the diversity of the Trustee body. To enhance the potential pool of Trustees promotions take place to attract skilled individuals from all sectors to contribute their skill, knowledge and commitment. This is regularly discussed at Board meetings to ensure good representation.

**Report of the Trustees
for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

Trustee Induction and training

Trustees are familiar with the operational work of the charity and are supported by the CEO through a Trustee information pack and the opportunity to visit the various services, as part of an optional induction.

Risk management

The Board of Trustees has conducted a review of the major risks to which the charity is exposed and this is outlined in its Strategic Plan. A risk management policy has been developed with supporting documents of risk appetite and risk register and are updated annually to assess the risks to services and funds and any other changes that the charity faces. The internal governance framework enables risk to be identified at all levels and provides an open, transparent and inclusive culture of information exchange throughout the organisation. All employees have the opportunity to share and express their thoughts and views regarding risk. Risk assessments are maintained and updated regularly across all service areas and summarised within the Executive team discussions who hold and share risk on a day to day basis. Risk is shared within the subcommittee reporting structures with trustees.

BCWA has also faced the following challenges:

- **Political uncertainty** - Future funding priorities remain unclear despite the election. VAWG policy direction is still evolving, and recent Budget changes (including the employer NI rise to 15%) will increase staffing costs, adding pressure to financial sustainability.
- **Financial and economic factors** - Rising or stagnating inflation and the ongoing risk of potential recession could see charitable donations reduce. BCWA will need to closely monitor funding sources as there will be greater competition for donations.
- **Reduction in statutory sector funding** - Local government continue to experience financial pressures. With many taking services "in-house", this may result in a reduction in future commissions. BCWA are actively involved in local strategic needs assessments that will influence and shape future commissions.
- **Increasing costs** - ongoing inflation continues to drive up operating costs BCWA will continue to analyse costs to ensure that all equipment, resources and expenses are good value for money.
- **Public health issues** - COVID, influenza and other public health concerns could further impact charity operations by sickness absence, client access to onsite services, and may spread quickly affecting both staff and clients and/or events planned e.g. in refuge. BCWA will continue to monitor sickness absence, site health issues and client contact/ DNA's. BCWA will aim to reduce risk in events held by considering the time of year and locations and build in some flexibility in the planning stages.
- **Natural disasters** - Climate change is having a global effect on seasons, property and agencies' response. As a result charitable funds may be diverted for disaster relief. In addition BCWA will monitor the Property Management Plan to assess whether damage is being caused to BCWA property and planned maintenance brought forward.
- **Cybersecurity threats** - BCWA are aware that these are increasing and have put measures in place to protect the IT infrastructure. In addition BCWA maintain the Cyber essentials accreditation and works with Hubtel the IT provider to minimise risk. Regular training and IT reports on attempts inform strategy and action.
- **Recruitment and retention** - There have been many challenges to recruit competent employees and subsequently retain competent skilled employees. The market is fast changing and highly competitive. BCWA regularly reviews and benchmarks against its industry comparators and aims to be an employer of choice not exclusively for its salaries but for welfare, social responsibility and opportunity. Succession planning and employee development is crucial.
- **Compliance and standards** - BCWA provides services linked to national contracting that requires more stringent regulatory requirements. BCWA is working to maintain high level standards such as ISO's, professional standards and accreditations, whilst remaining compliant and up to date with charity and company law. Financial procedures are adhered to and regularly reviewed with regard to authorisation of transactions for all project expenditure.

**Report of the Trustees
for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

- **Reputational risks** - BCWA has maintained an excellent track record of service provision and high quality staff however it acknowledges that any controversy or scandal could damage its reputation and impact supporter trust. This in turn may affect future contracting, funding, partnerships and donations. BCWA emphasises across the organisation the responsibility each and every employee has in maintaining and upholding the reputation and values.

All contracted services work within relevant contractual timescales, quality standards and are monitored externally on a quarterly basis and internally on a monthly basis, in accordance with the organisation's performance framework. This ensures a consistent quality of service for all operational aspects of services.

All Service Level Agreements (SLAs) have agreed targets and outcomes and are performance monitored on a quarterly basis. Services aim to work within nationally recognised standards of practice and seek external accreditation, e.g. Women's Aid Federation of England and Wales, Safe Lives, The Survivors Trust, Rape Crisis England and Wales and the British Association of Counsellors and Psychotherapists (BACP).

All grants/funds/contracts awarded are for specific time periods and have project plans and milestones to ensure work is monitored and meeting required standards. Regular contact with commissioners ensures that the work is on target and achieving its expected outcomes.

Board meetings take place every 8 weeks as part of an annual plan supported by a sub-committee structure that enables ongoing reporting and risk management across the organisation.

Organisational Structure

Black Country Women's Aid has a Management Committee/Board of 5 members who meet as a full Board every 8 weeks. The meeting dates are set as part of an annual calendar and the Annual General Meeting is scheduled in advance.

In addition there are sub committees that feed into the main Board. These include;

- Finance Sub Committee
- Quality Sub Committee
- Workforce Development Sub Committee
- Facilities Management Sub Committee

Each Committee has its own Terms of Reference and all work to achieve the main objectives of the organisation. Each meeting is organised to discuss new policies, procedures, issues identified and quality standards. Each subcommittee feeds into the main board for final discussion and ratification. During the year, many of the meetings have been held via the Microsoft Teams platform. This has proven an effective ways to hold business meetings and as the organisation works toward new models of working such as hybrid working, will look towards this being included in its planning. All minutes and decision making are circulated and presented to the full board for recommendation, further discussion and final approval.

Where necessary, E-reports are provided and extraordinary meetings are called. Papers are reported to the next Board meeting for full ratification.

Members come from a variety of related professional backgrounds and are responsible for the strategic direction and policy of the Charity. A skills audit takes place of Board members to ensure that the organisation is equipped with the right skills to reach its full potential. Where practicable, the Trustees undertake an annual business planning event to discuss organisational progress, strategic direction and agree future projections. Co-opted members have no voting rights but are considered an important part of the discussion and debate.

The Trustees delegate responsibility to the Chief Executive who also acts as Company Secretary. In addition, the Chief Executive holds the lead responsibility for policy and performance, financial management, employee recruitment and management, as well as operational service delivery. The Chief Executive delegates tasks to the senior management team who report back on a regular basis.

The Chief Executive,, working with her team of Directors, managers and corporate colleagues, takes the lead for developing employees, apprentices and volunteers, ensuring that their learning experience is translated into operational practice in line with good practice.

**Report of the Trustees
for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

Senior Management Structure

BCWA is led by a senior management structure comprising of the Chief Executive Officer, Deputy Chief Executive/ Director of Finance, Director of Community Services, Interim Director of Accommodation Services and Executive Officer.

They are supported by specialist managers assigned to each directorate.

The total salaries of the Management team were £320,600. This represents 6.8% of the total salary cost to the organisation.

The senior management remuneration approach is contained within Pay Policy located within the Financial Regulations - this applies to all positions within the organisation.

Related Parties

The work of the organisation sits within a number of strategic frameworks both locally, regionally and nationally. The Chief Executive, Directors and managers play a significant role across all areas of business including developing and influencing strategy, continuous improvement of services and developing new opportunities to support victims, ensuring financial plans are sustainable and guaranteeing that the victim's voice remains at the centre of all decision making.

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The trustees (who are also the directors of Black Country Women's Aid for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Report of the Trustees and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law, the trustees have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law).

Under company law the trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In so far as the trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditors are unaware; and
- the trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditors are aware of that information.

Black Country Women's Aid (Registered number: 02791788)

**Report of the Trustees
for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

AUDITORS

The auditors, TAG Assurance Services Limited, will be proposed for re-appointment at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Approved by order of the board of trustees on 11 December 2025 and signed on its behalf by:

Karen Elizabeth Dowman - Trustee

Report of the Independent Auditors to the Members of Black Country Women's Aid

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Black Country Women's Aid (the 'charitable company') for the year ended 31 March 2025 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2025 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report, other than the financial statements and our Report of the Independent Auditors thereon.

Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, 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 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.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

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

- the information given in the Report of the Trustees for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Report of the Trustees has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Report of the Independent Auditors to the Members of Black Country Women's Aid

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Report of the Trustees.

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

- adequate accounting records have not been kept or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- the trustees were not entitled to take advantage of the small companies exemption from the requirement to prepare a Strategic Report or in preparing the Report of the Trustees.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Our 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 a Report of the Independent Auditors 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:

- We gained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks within which the charitable company is required to operate and focussed on those that have a direct effect on the determination of material amounts and disclosures within the financial statements - primarily these were the Companies Act 2006, the Charities Act 2011 and the Charities SORP (FRS 102). We assessed compliance with these laws and regulations as part of our audit procedures in respect of related items within the financial statements. Our audit procedures in this regard were limited to enquiry of Trustees and other management and inspection of any regulatory and legal correspondence, if any.
- We identified items within the financial statements at greatest risk of a material impact from irregularities, including fraud, which were considered to be the recognition of grant income and overriding of controls by management. We undertook audit procedures to respond to these risks, including enquiries of management, sample testing on the posting of journals, review of the basis of accounting estimates and a review of the timing of recognition of grant income.
Due to the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we may not have detected some material misstatements within the financial statements despite properly planning and performing our audit in line with auditing standards. This could be due to a number of factors such as collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations or the over-ride of controls. We point out that we are not responsible for preventing non-compliance and cannot be expected to detect non-compliance with all laws and regulations.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our Report of the Independent Auditors.

Report of the Independent Auditors to the Members of Black Country Women's Aid

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditors' 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 charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Shaun Philpott (Senior Statutory Auditor)
for and on behalf of TAG Assurance Services Limited
Chartered Accountants and
Registered Auditors
8 Pendeford Place
Pendeford Business Park
Wolverhampton
West Midlands
WV9 5HD

11 December 2025

Black Country Women's Aid

Statement of Financial Activities (Incorporating an Income and Expenditure Account) for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	31.3.25 Total funds £	31.3.24 Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM					
Donations and legacies	2	196,145	1,000	197,145	372,305
Charitable activities	4				
Refuge based support		1,121,134	-	1,121,134	1,024,017
Community based support		2,513,006	2,584,060	5,097,066	4,614,952
Modern day slavery		3,834,025	-	3,834,025	3,940,124
Other trading activities	3	34,147	2	34,149	65,327
Total		<u>7,698,457</u>	<u>2,585,062</u>	<u>10,283,519</u>	<u>10,016,725</u>
EXPENDITURE ON					
Raising funds	5	18,630	-	18,630	-
Charitable activities	6				
Refuge based support		1,258,769	-	1,258,769	1,264,674
Community based support		2,338,885	2,682,464	5,021,349	4,571,842
Modern day slavery		2,472,380	17,120	2,489,500	2,386,603
Capital projects		178,998	-	178,998	-
Total		<u>6,267,662</u>	<u>2,699,584</u>	<u>8,967,246</u>	<u>8,223,119</u>
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)		1,430,795	(114,522)	1,316,273	1,793,606
Transfers between funds	18	33,552	(33,552)	-	-
Net movement in funds		<u>1,464,347</u>	<u>(148,074)</u>	<u>1,316,273</u>	<u>1,793,606</u>
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		6,795,850	1,722,813	8,518,663	6,725,057
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		<u>8,260,197</u>	<u>1,574,739</u>	<u>9,834,936</u>	<u>8,518,663</u>

The notes form part of these financial statements

Black Country Women's Aid (Registered number: 02791788)

Balance Sheet
31 March 2025

	Notes	31.3.25 £	31.3.24 £
FIXED ASSETS			
Tangible assets	13	3,808,110	2,779,653
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors	14	2,393,969	2,311,407
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>4,056,844</u>	<u>3,809,834</u>
		6,450,813	6,121,241
CREDITORS			
Amounts falling due within one year	15	(423,987)	(382,231)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		<u>6,026,826</u>	<u>5,739,010</u>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		9,834,936	8,518,663
NET ASSETS		<u>9,834,936</u>	<u>8,518,663</u>
FUNDS	18		
Unrestricted funds		8,260,197	6,795,850
Restricted funds		<u>1,574,739</u>	<u>1,722,813</u>
TOTAL FUNDS		<u>9,834,936</u>	<u>8,518,663</u>

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to charitable companies subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on 11 December 2025 and were signed on its behalf by:

Karen Elizabeth Dowman - Trustee

Black Country Women's Aid**Cash Flow Statement
for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

	Notes	31.3.25 £	31.3.24 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Cash generated from operations	1	<u>1,344,690</u>	<u>1,282,492</u>
Net cash provided by operating activities		<u>1,344,690</u>	<u>1,282,492</u>
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		<u>(1,097,680)</u>	<u>(435,525)</u>
Net cash used in investing activities		<u>(1,097,680)</u>	<u>(435,525)</u>
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period		<u>247,010</u>	<u>846,967</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		<u>3,809,834</u>	<u>2,962,867</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period		<u>4,056,844</u>	<u>3,809,834</u>

The notes form part of these financial statements

**Notes to the Cash Flow Statement
for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

1. RECONCILIATION OF NET INCOME TO NET CASH FLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES

	31.3.25 £	31.3.24 £
Net income for the reporting period (as per the Statement of Financial Activities)	1,316,273	1,793,606
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation charges	69,223	67,079
Increase in debtors	(82,562)	(473,001)
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	41,756	(105,192)
Net cash provided by operations	<u>1,344,690</u>	<u>1,282,492</u>

2. ANALYSIS OF CHANGES IN NET FUNDS

	At 1.4.24 £	Cash flow £	At 31.3.25 £
Net cash			
Cash at bank and in hand	<u>3,809,834</u>	<u>247,010</u>	<u>4,056,844</u>
	<u>3,809,834</u>	<u>247,010</u>	<u>4,056,844</u>
Total	<u>3,809,834</u>	<u>247,010</u>	<u>4,056,844</u>

**Notes to the Financial Statements
for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of preparing the financial statements

The financial statements of the charitable company, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019)', Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Companies Act 2006. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

Income

All income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities once the charity has entitlement to the funds, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Charitable activities

Charitable activities are as follows:

Refuge based support
Community based support
Modern slavery
Equipment grants

Resources expended

Staff costs and overhead expenses are allocated to activities on the basis of staff time spent on those activities.

Value added tax is not recoverable by the charity and as such is included in the relevant costs in the Statement of Financial Activities.

Charitable activities comprises of those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them.

Governance costs include those costs associated with meeting the constitutional and statutory requirements of the charity and include the audit fees and costs linked to the strategic management of the charity.

Tangible fixed assets

Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life.

Freehold property	- 4% on cost
Fixtures and fittings	- 33% on cost

Taxation

As a charity, Black Country Women's Aid is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within section 466 to 493 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 to the extent that these are applicable to its charitable objects. No tax charges have arisen in the charity.

Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are donations and other income received or generated for the objects of the charity without specified purposes and are available as general funds.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

Expenditure which meets these criteria is identified to the fund, together with a fair allocation of management and support costs.

Designated funds are unrestricted funds earmarked by the Trustees for particular purposes.

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES - continued

Fund accounting

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

Donated goods and services

Donated goods and services are included at the value to the charity where this can be quantified. The value of services provided by general volunteers has not been included in these accounts.

Pension costs and other post-retirement benefits

The charitable company operates a defined contribution pension scheme. Contributions payable to the charitable company's pension scheme are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities in the period to which they relate.

Hire purchase and leasing commitments

Assets obtained under hire purchase contracts or finance leases are capitalised in the balance sheet. Those held under hire purchase contracts are depreciated over their estimated useful lives. Those held under finance leases are depreciated over their estimated useful lives or the lease term whichever is shorter.

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the statement of financial activity on a straight line basis over the period of the lease.

2. DONATIONS AND LEGACIES

	31.3.25	31.3.24
	£	£
Donations	<u>197,145</u>	<u>372,305</u>

3. OTHER TRADING ACTIVITIES

	31.3.25	31.3.24
	£	£
Management and training fees	<u>34,149</u>	<u>65,327</u>

4. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	Activity	31.3.25	31.3.24
		£	£
Grants and contracts	Refuge based support	459,408	468,331
Accommodation charges	Refuge based support	661,726	555,686
Grants and contracts	Community based support	5,097,066	4,614,952
Grants and contracts	Modern day slavery	<u>3,834,025</u>	<u>3,940,124</u>
		<u>10,052,225</u>	<u>9,579,093</u>

Grants received, included in the above, are as follows:

	31.3.25	31.3.24
	£	£
Refuge: Sandwell MBC - Supporting People	459,408	458,331
Refuge: Sandwell MBC - DCLG	-	10,000
Community: Sandwell MBC - Specialist DV and SV Support	678,628	681,928
Community: Sandwell MBC - Safer Sandwell Partnership	40,000	40,000
Community: Dudley MBC - DA Support Service	406,616	349,021
Community: Walsall MBC - DV/ Children	<u>602,000</u>	<u>602,000</u>
Carried forward	2,186,652	2,141,280

Black Country Women's Aid

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

4. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES - continued

	31.3.25	31.3.24
	£	£
Brought forward	2,186,652	2,141,280
Community: West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner	1,460,015	1,365,291
Community: West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner - DVPP	381,682	266,525
Community: West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner - New Chance	51,629	45,304
Community: West Midlands Police	-	15,000
Community: Changing Lives - Female Service Users	350,146	326,050
Community: Wolverhampton City Council - Our Future	75,000	75,000
Community: Ministry of Justice - Rape and SA Support Fund	300,000	331,957
Community: Ministry of Justice - Female Offenders	99,614	98,208
Community: Home Office Ceanex	63,660	35,483
Community: NHS IRIS Combined Authority	229,428	223,274
Community: SCVO	74,019	64,542
Community: RSVP	53,907	8,043
Community : Big Lottery Community Fund	168,593	87,326
Community: HSBC Funded Therapy Project	23,627	-
Community: Pathfinder IDVA Service	35,000	-
Community: Wodensborough Ormiston Academy	3,502	-
Modern Day Slavery: Salvation Army	3,834,025	3,940,124
	<u>9,390,499</u>	<u>9,023,407</u>

5. RAISING FUNDS

Raising donations and legacies

	31.3.25	31.3.24
	£	£
Fundraising	<u>18,630</u>	<u>-</u>

6. CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES COSTS

	Direct Costs (see note 7)	Support costs (see note 8)	Totals
	£	£	£
Refuge based support	1,119,460	139,309	1,258,769
Community based support	4,115,839	905,510	5,021,349
Modern day slavery	2,124,106	365,394	2,489,500
Capital projects	178,998	-	178,998
	<u>7,538,403</u>	<u>1,410,213</u>	<u>8,948,616</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

7. DIRECT COSTS OF CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	31.3.25	31.3.24
	£	£
Staff costs	6,123,915	5,296,334
Activity costs	288,780	334,080
Office costs	149,277	265,647
Property costs	976,431	784,102
	<u>7,538,403</u>	<u>6,680,163</u>

8. SUPPORT COSTS

	Depreciation	Office costs	Property costs
	£	£	£
Refuge based support	5,210	81,721	18,404
Community based support	33,867	531,192	119,623
Modern day slavery	30,146	204,305	46,009
	<u>69,223</u>	<u>817,218</u>	<u>184,036</u>

	Staff costs, travel etc	Governance costs	Totals
	£	£	£
Refuge based support	32,834	1,140	139,309
Community based support	213,418	7,410	905,510
Modern day slavery	82,084	2,850	365,394
	<u>328,336</u>	<u>11,400</u>	<u>1,410,213</u>

Activity	Basis of allocation
Depreciation	Usage
Office costs	Usage
Property costs	Usage
Staff costs, travel etc	Usage
Governance costs	Usage

Support costs, included in the above, are as follows:

	Refuge based support	Community based support	Modern day slavery	31.3.25	31.3.24
	£	£	£	Total activities	Total activities
				£	£
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	5,210	33,867	30,146	69,223	17,121
Office costs	81,721	531,192	204,305	817,218	783,284
Property costs	18,404	119,623	46,009	184,036	187,037
Staff costs & travel etc	32,834	213,418	82,084	328,336	544,714
Auditors' remuneration	1,140	7,410	2,850	11,400	10,800
	<u>139,309</u>	<u>905,510</u>	<u>365,394</u>	<u>1,410,213</u>	<u>1,542,956</u>

**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

9. NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)

Net income/(expenditure) is stated after charging/(crediting):

	31.3.25	31.3.24
	£	£
Auditors' remuneration	11,400	10,800
Depreciation - owned assets	<u>69,223</u>	<u>67,079</u>

10. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 31 March 2025 nor for the year ended 31 March 2024.

Trustees' expenses

There were no trustees' expenses paid for the year ended 31 March 2025 nor for the year ended 31 March 2024.

11. STAFF COSTS

	2024	2023
	£	£
Wages and salaries	4,748,027	4,158,342
Social security	423,419	385,708
Pension	191,177	166,749
	<u>5,362,623</u>	<u>4,710,799</u>

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	31.3.25	31.3.24
Direct charitable work	187	174
Administration	<u>25</u>	<u>23</u>
	<u>212</u>	<u>197</u>

The number of employees whose employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) exceeded £60,000 was:

	31.3.25	31.3.24
£70,001 - £80,000	1	1
£80,001 - £90,000	1	-
£90,001 - £100,000	-	1
£100,001 - £110,000	<u>1</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>

Black Country Women's Aid considers its key management personnel to be the Chief Executive Officer . The total employment benefits of the key management personnel were £105,923 (2024: £95,997).

The company operates a Group Personal Pension Plan to which the charitable company contributes 5% and employees contribute 3%.

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

12. COMPARATIVES FOR THE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM			
Donations and legacies	203,008	169,297	372,305
Charitable activities			
Refuge based support	1,014,017	10,000	1,024,017
Community based support	2,267,576	2,347,376	4,614,952
Modern day slavery	3,940,124	-	3,940,124
Other trading activities	65,326	1	65,327
Total	<u>7,490,051</u>	<u>2,526,674</u>	<u>10,016,725</u>
EXPENDITURE ON			
Charitable activities			
Refuge based support	1,240,338	24,336	1,264,674
Community based support	2,571,787	2,000,055	4,571,842
Modern day slavery	2,369,482	17,121	2,386,603
Total	<u>6,181,607</u>	<u>2,041,512</u>	<u>8,223,119</u>
NET INCOME	1,308,444	485,162	1,793,606
Transfers between funds	(41,744)	41,744	-
Net movement in funds	<u>1,266,700</u>	<u>526,906</u>	<u>1,793,606</u>
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS			
Total funds brought forward	5,529,150	1,195,907	6,725,057
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	<u>6,795,850</u>	<u>1,722,813</u>	<u>8,518,663</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

13. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Freehold property £	Fixtures and fittings £	Totals £
COST			
At 1 April 2024	2,926,991	123,204	3,050,195
Additions	1,097,680	-	1,097,680
Disposals	-	(49,568)	(49,568)
At 31 March 2025	<u>4,024,671</u>	<u>73,636</u>	<u>4,098,307</u>
DEPRECIATION			
At 1 April 2024	181,838	88,704	270,542
Charge for year	51,973	17,250	69,223
Eliminated on disposal	-	(49,568)	(49,568)
At 31 March 2025	<u>233,811</u>	<u>56,386</u>	<u>290,197</u>
NET BOOK VALUE			
At 31 March 2025	<u>3,790,860</u>	<u>17,250</u>	<u>3,808,110</u>
At 31 March 2024	<u>2,745,153</u>	<u>34,500</u>	<u>2,779,653</u>

14. DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	31.3.25 £	31.3.24 £
Trade debtors	974,400	1,625,717
Rent Receivable	55,274	24,533
Other debtors	1,265,562	572,153
Prepayments	<u>98,733</u>	<u>89,004</u>
	<u>2,393,969</u>	<u>2,311,407</u>

15. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	31.3.25 £	31.3.24 £
Trade creditors	163,932	121,054
Social security and other taxes	171,227	167,838
Other creditors	45,120	52,504
Deferred income	4,904	1
Accrued expenses	<u>38,804</u>	<u>40,834</u>
	<u>423,987</u>	<u>382,231</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

16. SECURED DEBTS

A charge has been secured on the freehold property known as Karen House on 16 March 2020, in favour of the Heart of England Community Foundation, by way of a legal mortgage.

17. ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	31.3.25 Total funds	31.3.24 Total funds
	£	£	£	£
Fixed assets	2,845,323	962,787	3,808,110	2,779,653
Current assets	5,838,861	611,952	6,450,813	6,121,241
Current liabilities	(423,987)	-	(423,987)	(382,231)
	<u>8,260,197</u>	<u>1,574,739</u>	<u>9,834,936</u>	<u>8,518,663</u>

18. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

	At 1.4.24 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 31.3.25 £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	3,109,791	1,430,795	(77,096)	4,463,490
Service Continuity Fund	1,135,414	-	99,000	1,234,414
Strategic Development Fund	383,160	-	14,500	397,660
Property Contingency Fund	265,000	-	26,500	291,500
Redundancy reserve	155,500	-	24,000	179,500
Capital reserve	<u>1,746,985</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(53,352)</u>	<u>1,693,633</u>
	6,795,850	1,430,795	33,552	8,260,197
Restricted funds				
Community Based Support	742,906	(97,402)	(33,552)	611,952
Heart of England Capital Grant	785,610	(17,120)	-	768,490
Bungalows Development	<u>194,297</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>194,297</u>
	<u>1,722,813</u>	<u>(114,522)</u>	<u>(33,552)</u>	<u>1,574,739</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>8,518,663</u>	<u>1,316,273</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>9,834,936</u>

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	7,698,457	(6,267,662)	1,430,795
Restricted funds			
Community Based Support	2,585,062	(2,682,464)	(97,402)
Heart of England Capital Grant	-	(17,120)	(17,120)
	<u>2,585,062</u>	<u>(2,699,584)</u>	<u>(114,522)</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>10,283,519</u>	<u>(8,967,246)</u>	<u>1,316,273</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

18. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

Comparatives for movement in funds

	At 1.4.23 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 31.3.24 £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	2,475,388	1,308,444	(674,041)	3,109,791
Service Continuity Fund	1,081,347	-	54,067	1,135,414
Strategic Development Fund	364,915	-	18,245	383,160
Property Contingency Fund	235,000	-	30,000	265,000
Redundancy reserve	122,500	-	33,000	155,500
Capital reserve	<u>1,250,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>496,985</u>	<u>1,746,985</u>
	5,529,150	1,308,444	(41,744)	6,795,850
Restricted funds				
Refuge Based Support	15,148	10,000	(25,148)	-
Community Based Support	378,028	347,322	17,556	742,906
Heart of England Capital Grant	802,731	(17,121)	-	785,610
Bungalows Development	<u>-</u>	<u>144,961</u>	<u>49,336</u>	<u>194,297</u>
	1,195,907	485,162	41,744	1,722,813
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>6,725,057</u>	<u>1,793,606</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>8,518,663</u>

Comparative net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	7,490,051	(6,181,607)	1,308,444
Restricted funds			
Refuge Based Support	10,000	-	10,000
Community Based Support	2,347,377	(2,000,055)	347,322
Heart of England Capital Grant	-	(17,121)	(17,121)
Bungalows Development	<u>169,297</u>	<u>(24,336)</u>	<u>144,961</u>
	2,526,674	(2,041,512)	485,162
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>10,016,725</u>	<u>(8,223,119)</u>	<u>1,793,606</u>

The General Fund is to meet the day to day cash flow requirements of the charity.

The Service Continuity Fund provides for the costs of closure as well as 6 months running costs in the event of withdrawal of funding.

The Strategic Development Fund provides for the organisation to undertake research and development to inform future service provision and secure additional funds for long term service delivery.

The Property Contingency Fund provides sufficient funds to maintain the Charity's properties to a high standard and to ensure routine repairs and maintenance are carried out.

**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31 March 2025**

18. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

The Redundancy Reserve is to cover the potential costs of redundancy over the capped limit to long term employees.

The Capital Reserve comprises funds set aside for the organisation to invest in property in order to meet future demand for its services.

The Refuge Based Support Fund provides welfare and activities for women and children residing in our refuges.

Community Based Support provides home based support, including support and counselling to women and children who are victims of sexual violence and a helpline for Asian women. Part of this service was previously treated separately as 'Rape Support Service' but as services have changed over the years, it is now more appropriate to encompass these services under one umbrella.

Heart of England Capital Grant is a restricted fund for a capital project, the balance represents the net book value of the assets relating to that fund.

Bungalows Development is a restricted fund for a capital project where the balance represents funds specifically donated to the project by third parties such as HSBC, Garfield Weston, The Clothworkers' Foundation and the Eveson Charitable Trust.

19. RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

There were no related party transactions for the year ended 31 March 2025.

This document was delivered using electronic communications and authenticated in accordance with the registrar's rules relating to electronic form, authentication and manner of delivery under section 1072 of the Companies Act 2006.

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

England & Wales - Charity number 1032298

Accounts

REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER: 02791788 (England and Wales)
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1032298

**Report of the Trustees and
Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024
for
Black Country Women's Aid**

**Contents of the Financial Statements
for the Year Ended 31 March 2024**

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Black Country Women's Aid

Reference and Administrative Details for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

TRUSTEES	Salma Parween Ali Bozena Benton Karen Elizabeth Dowman Victoria Rebecca Harris Melvena Morton
COMPANY SECRETARY	Sara Ward
REGISTERED OFFICE	Landchard House Victoria Street West Bromich B70 8HY
REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER	02791788 (England and Wales)
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER	1032298
AUDITORS	TAG Assurance Services Limited Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditors 8 Pendeford Place Pendeford Business Park Wolverhampton West Midlands WV9 5HD

**Report of the Trustees
for the Year Ended 31 March 2024**

The trustees who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2024. The trustees have adopted the provisions of Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objectives and aims

Black Country Women's Aid's (BCWA) objectives are:

- i) to relieve the physical and mental distress of women who are homeless and/or have been gravely or persistently mistreated by their husbands, the men with whom they are living, the fathers of their children or any other members of their family; and
- ii) to relieve the physical and mental distress of children affected by the disruption in the home.

Significant activities

The main objectives and activities of the year have continued to focus on the development of quality support services for victims of violence, abuse and exploitation both in and out of refuge. The strategies employed to assist the charity in meeting these objectives included the following:

- Delivery of high quality services that include emergency accommodation as well as community- based support for both adult and child victims of violence and abuse including victims of modern slavery
- Sustaining and further development of services to meet victims' needs across the Black Country area and where necessary further afield.
- Identifying and applying for additional funds to sustain existing services and develop new responses to meet victims' needs.
- Developing systems that capture, cope and recover outcomes for victims. This information is used to demonstrate the effectiveness and impact of support services and evidence the need for additional services via commissioning/tendering.
- Responding to the changing and complex needs of victims. BCWA will achieve this by ensuring that it creates opportunities to engage through increased partnership work and better coordination.

Public benefit

These essential services provide a valuable public benefit to the citizens of the Black Country, West Midlands and throughout the UK.

The trustees have complied with their duty to have due regard to the commission's public benefit guidance when exercising any powers or duties to which the guidance is relevant.

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ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

Development, Activities and Achievements for 2023/4

In February 2023 a raft of new measures were announced to deal with domestic abuse. There will be a legal duty placed upon a 'range of agencies' so that there is a joined up approach to identify and tackle domestic abuse. Violence against women is to be treated as a national threat - on a par with terrorism.

Rishi Sunak:

"No woman or girl should ever have to feel unsafe in her home or community and I am determined to stamp out these appalling crimes. As well as extra support for victims, we're making it a priority for the police to tackle violence against women and girls and toughening up the way offenders are managed - preventing more of these crimes from happening in the first place, and bringing more perpetrators to justice. Government will also require police forces to treat violence against women and girls as a national threat, as set out in a new strategic policing requirement published today. This means tackling these crimes will be as important as tackling threats like terrorism, serious and organised crime and child sexual abuse."

Greater emphasis is to be placed on the 'ask for ANI' (Action Needed Immediately) - the code word scheme that enables victims of abuse to ask for immediate help in participating Pharmacies and Job Centres. Over 5,000 pharmacies including Boots, Lloyds and community pharmacies are enrolled on the scheme.

Home Secretary, Suella Braverman:

".....police forces in England and Wales will now have to treat violence against women and girls as a national threat and more victims will be protected from harm."

While we are seeing some of the impact of the Domestic Abuse Act becoming law, it is also clear that more needs to be done to keep women and children safe from domestic abuse. During the year BCWA contributed to the national audit conducted by the Women's Aid Federation for England. The key findings were as follows:

- o Many women struggled to access services equipped to meet their needs: Almost a quarter of survivors (22.3%) reported having a physical health disability, however, only 1.1% of refuge vacancies listed on Routes to Support in 2021-22 were suitable for a woman with limited mobility and just 0.9% of vacancies could accommodate a woman requiring a wheelchair accessible space. Whilst 4,611 (12.1%) service users were not British nationals and, of these, 30% did not have recourse to public funds (NRPF), only 9.1% of all vacancies could consider women with NRPF. Most women (62.0%) had children, with an average of 1.3 children per service user, and yet, less than half of refuge vacancies could accommodate a woman with two children.
- o Shortfalls persist in refuge bedspaces and vacancies: The increase we saw in the number of bedspaces during 2020-21 (largely as a result of emergency Covid-19 funding) appears to have been sustained over 2021-22 and bedspaces have increased (1st May 2022) by a further 55. There is, however, still a 23.2% shortfall. Meanwhile, despite this increase in the number of spaces, 229 fewer vacancies were made available during 2021-22 overall compared to 2020-21, when vacancies were already at significantly lower levels due to the impact of the pandemic.
- o Experiences of service providers around the implementation of the duty were mixed: Some reported feeling optimism for service expansion from the increase in dedicated funding (49.2% of respondents running refuge services had received funding as a result of the statutory duty), however, there were also significant concerns around the commercialisation of commissioning and variation in the way that local authorities were interpreting the regulations and guidance. Services were concerned about decommissioning of specialist services, particularly those run 'by and for' Black and minoritised women, in favour of competitive tenders, more generic housing-focused providers and taking services 'in-house'.

It was vital that BCWA remained highly visible and responsive to victims.

Overall referral numbers 2023/24

12,096 cases were opened during 2023/24. These included:

- Domestic abuse community services: **7,986** (of these, 290 referrals were into Ask MARC DA male specialist support services)
- Rape and sexual violence services: **1,346** (of these, 70 referrals were into Ask MARC SV male specialist support services)
- Children's services: **178**
- Stalking services: **930**
- Therapeutic services: **413**
- Modern slavery services: **528**

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- DA accommodation services: **288** (requests for refuge, of which **86** new clients were accommodated)
- Women's justice services: **427**

A year in our service 2023-2024

- **258,978** entries recorded into our case management system
- **52,661** calls made to agencies and clients
- **33,594** emails and texts to clients
- **25,125** calls and texts from clients and agencies
- **13** calls or texts per hour to our helpline

Trustees, senior management and all staff worked together to devise operational plans. These plans included:

Being where victims can reach us - BCWA ensures that the general public know how to make contact for help, advice and support. Each BCWA centre is located in areas with good transport links, discreet locations and which are accessible for victims needing help and support. We respond when they are ready to talk. Key messaging to victims is vital to let them know that they are not alone even though they are often made to feel that they are. BCWA knows that a victim making the choice to pick up the phone or make the decision to leave is at significant risk of serious hurt and harm. We respond swiftly and confidently. BCWA works with local councils, strategic partnerships and the business community to promote the services offered. Social media and investment in quality communications ensures that we reach people living in our communities who may be living with abuse. BCWA regularly features on local radio and maintains a high social media presence for greater reach. Unfortunately due to funding BCWA were forced to close the office in Walsall. To mitigate the loss of office space BCWA worked with local partners to identify alternative spaces to connect with victims/survivors so that the quality of service was not affected.

BCWA listens and hears the voices of those that we provide services to. This is done in ways that enable a dialogue, feedback and impact; their voice is vital to the future direction of services. Where gaps in service are identified BCWA aim to respond. The integrated abuse support vision aims to offer help and support to anyone who has experienced abuse and for that service to be under one roof and easily accessible.

Secure and Quality information - BCWA continue to develop its technological systems and resources for accurate record keeping and data capture. Much of this informs strategic partnerships, influences strategy and identifies trends and changes to enable responses to be appropriate and proportionate. We have been able to analyse information to ensure that services reflect the needs of the communities we serve, ensure efficient use of precious staff resources and manage the increasing volumes. Achieving Cyber Security standards remains a high priority as victims in services need to be confident that BCWA is able to store and keep safe information about their abuse. BCWA has achieved the Cyber Essential standards both self-assessment and Cyber Essentials Plus for the 3rd year running. During the year BCWA also prepared submissions for the IASME Cyber Assurance standard level 1. This provides assurance that BCWA has put into place a range of important cyber security, and data protection measures.

Quality information has been vital to share information at Domestic homicide reviews. It is essential that accurate information about the support BCWA and partners have provided (or not) is analysed to enable improvements to systems, procedures and partner working. Trustees agreed that in 2024/25 BCWA would invest into a new data system. BCWA will be working with IT providers to develop a more up to date system of case management and data capture.

Making every contact count - BCWA continue to invest time and resources to ensure that there are effective and connected operational systems to identify and support victims of abuse where ever they living within the West Midlands. The use of social media, promotional campaigns, weekly updates and messaging as well as joint work with partners, ensures that we reach as many people as possible. Communicating with victims has changed over the years and we need to make sure that we change and respond to in a way victims can engage and access services. Since COVID, there has been a slow recovery from online communication to face to face. However, BCWA is pleased to be able to offer a range of options for people who need us. Making every contact count means that from the 1st call or conversation victims are given resources and support to enable them to make informed decisions. Feedback from victims/survivors was extremely positive and many commented on the positive engagement they maintain with their support worker.

Being there at court - The post COVID pandemic continues to have an impact on the operation of the criminal justice system and the support available to victims. A hard-hitting report by domestic abuse charity, Advance, reveals that women are failed at every stage of the criminal justice system and is calling for drastic change. Her Story, Her Justice shines a spotlight on each juncture where survivors of domestic abuse are let down - from the minute they report abuse to the police, through to a traumatising and often unsuccessful prosecution process as they seek justice and protection through the courts. The shameful fact is that 96% of domestic abuse crimes do NOT result in a prosecution. Even in cases where prosecution is successful, Advance has found that survivors often receive inadequate information and protection following their abuser's conviction.

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These failures are a key reason why prosecutions and convictions have been on the downslide since 2015, says Advance. In 2023, there were nearly 300,000 more reports of domestic abuse-related crimes to the police than in 2018. Yet, in that same period there were nearly 40,000 fewer prosecutions by the CPS - and less than 5% of reported crimes lead to a prosecution.

Advance's CEO, Liz Mack, explains:

"We must shine a light on the shockingly low rate of prosecutions and convictions for domestic abuse, and the re-traumatisation of women during the fractured and protracted criminal justice process, in order to campaign for urgent change. With this national campaign we will highlight the systemic failures which are preventing women from seeing justice."

The Domestic Abuse Commissioner, Nicole Jacobs, says:

"Domestic abuse is a devastating and widespread crime, making up one in six reports to the police. Yet as Her Story, Her Justice makes clear, victims and survivors are still being failed at every stage of the criminal justice system.

We're constantly asking ourselves how criminal justice system can improve. In this report you have the insight of frontline staff that have been working on the ground for years to do just that: improve criminal justice outcomes for victims and survivors.

This is exactly the kind of information that should be in front of every criminal justice leader as they work to bring our system up to a standard that victims and survivors can believe in.

It's time government and policing leaders to get to grips with this very serious problem. This report gives vital insights from the front line and a blueprint to make that a reality."

Delays in court hearings and postponed cases have meant that there is a significant backlog of court hearings. Many victims in BC'S services are supported by Independent Domestic Advisers (IDVA's) and Independent Sexual Violence Advisers (ISVA's). For BCWA support staff, this has meant that victims are within the service longer than previously recorded, trauma levels are higher and there is an increasing volume of new referrals into the service to support, creating genuine pressure points in the service. There is no doubt that this will have a lasting impact on victims and will challenge resources into the next financial year. BCWA will continue to support victims at court and voice victims concerns in strategic and policy spaces.

Maintaining positive partnerships - BCWA is a valued partner with both statutory and non-statutory partners. BCWA has made significant contributions to local strategic plans and play an active role in providing information, data, and access to victims to enable strategies and commissions to be developed. BCWA also takes its responsibility seriously to seek additional funds to support local funding strengthening service offers. BCWA acknowledges that it is vital to receive funding from a variety of funders to avoid reliance on statutory funding but also to lever additional funding to support local strategies.

BCWA continues to makes a significant contribution to the partnerships across the 4 Black Country authorities (Sandwell, Dudley, Walsall and Wolverhampton), influencing strategic and operational development. These include vital partnerships such as the Sandwell Crime Reduction Partnership/Safer Sandwell, Sandwell Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnership (DASP) Dudley Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnership and Forum (DDAF) and Dudley Safe and Sound, Walsall Domestic Abuse Strategic Group (DASG) and Violent Leads Group as well as operational groups focusing on young people at risk of exploitation, Local Safeguarding Children's and Adults Board, West Midlands Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO) Board, Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) Board and local Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferencing (MARAC) and Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH) as well as taking thematic leads on domestic abuse, modern slavery and stalking at the Office of the Police Crime Commissioner's Victim's Commission. The Victims Commission is the PCC's advisory body on the provision of specialist services. The role of the Victim's Commission is to ensure that services have a positive impact on victims, improving the circumstances of individuals affected by crime, to cope with the effects of their experiences and recover from the harm they have experienced.

In addition to the above multi agency partnerships, BCWA works with specialist services nationally and across the region to ensure that services are coordinated and meet the highest standards. The organisation has continued its partnerships work with the following: National Stalking Consortium, Specialist Domestic Violence and Abuse Consortium, Rape and Sexual Violence Consortium and the Women's Justice Partnership supporting vulnerable people. This approach continues to demonstrate that agencies cannot work in isolation, but are always stronger together.

During 2023/24 the BCWA Chief Executive worked hard to ensure that services across the Black Country were represented and funding secured. This approach remains integral to the future of specialist services as we continue to face challenges. The Office of the Police Crime Commissioners Victim's Commission has succeeded in building a culture of collaboration and ownership for victim care through the voluntary and community sector, so that they experience quality support from the first point of contact.

BCWA continues to work with The Salvation Army and the England and Wales delivery partners on challenging local responses, improving systems and services for victims of modern slavery within the National Referral Mechanism.

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Cost of living crisis continues - Sadly, women continue to be disproportionately affected by the cost-of-living crisis, particularly those who find themselves living in an abusive household or in an abusive relationship. This is even more acute for Black women and women of other ethnic minorities, who experience significantly higher rates of poverty. Women's Aid surveyed women who have experienced domestic abuse in the past year and the majority (96%) said the crisis has had a negative impact on their financial situation. Some women face the impossible choice between staying in an abusive relationship, or leaving and experiencing further financial hardship or destitution. Several charities have expressed concern that the situation is making it difficult for women to escape from their abusers. In some cases, women have been required to return to live with their abusers because they cannot afford to live alone. Almost three quarters of women (73%) living with, or having financial links with, their abuser said that the cost-of-living crisis had either prevented them from leaving or made it harder for them to leave. This has left them at risk in an unsafe home. The situation is often compounded by the fact that abusers sometimes cut off their victims from any financial resources (for more information, see our article on economic control). Abusers are relying on the cost-of-living crisis to further justify restricting access to money, leaving victims cut off.

BCWA is committed to ensuring that victims have access to food, clothing and shelter and has established positive and committed links with local people, communities and businesses. BCWA supporter's generosity comes in both financial support as well as essential items such as clothing, toiletries, start-up kits for new mothers and any call outs for help when someone we support has very little on arrival into refuge. Our links with local foodbanks, other charities and the community voluntary organisations enabled food, clothing and essentials for distribution, as families told us how they continue to struggle with meeting the basic needs of their children/family.

Sustaining Quality Services - BCWA have worked hard to identify new areas of funding to support commissioned and contracted services. Funding was secured for a longer period (2yrs) resulting in a reduction in the pressures to seek funding by mid-year. We have maximised the opportunity by reviewing and remodelling services to ensure maximum efficiency and front line work. We know that this may not be the pattern of funding in the future, as in 2024/25, we face a number of commissions ending. The political landscape is likely to change and there will be uncertainty towards the end of 2024/25.

Quality is essential to the organisation. BCWA is assessed externally by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) for quality of service and safeguarding. BCWA works within the framework of International Standards Organisation (ISO) related to health & safety environmental, business continuity, information security and quality standards. Whilst these are conditions of the modern day slavery support contract, BCWA continues to adopt the standards across all services. Regular internal strategic and operational review enables all services to remain relevant, victim focused and of high quality.

Funders/commissioners continue to express satisfaction with the standards of service delivery, performance as well as BCWA's ability to be responsive, innovative and dynamic in its solutions for victims. At all times BCWA maintain a meaningful dialogue with clients across all services, ensuring that they remain central to the core values and influence the response.

Service details

Community Services - Domestic Abuse

BCWA continues to provide commissioned services for Sandwell, Dudley and Walsall local strategic partnerships and continues to provide domestic abuse support services. High risk victims continue to be supported by an Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) who provide immediate support and minimise risk, linking with local Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC). BCWA is integral to the Walsall Strengthening Families model and the Black Country Family Drug and Alcohol Court (FDAC), where highly vulnerable children are identified and support around the family is provided. Both specialist areas will be independently evaluated.

High risk victims continue to be supported by an independent domestic abuse adviser (IDVA). Volumes are increasing and further support has been made available by the West Midlands Office of the Police Crime Commissioner (OPCC) to support this increase and strengthen the regional Multiagency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) that take place across the Black Country.

BCWA is now embedded in local operational spaces. This has enabled victims to access services easily and works with partners to advise on identification and referral to our services. BCWA continue to operate within the following structures:

- o Multi agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH) - many referrals are received through this route as partners share information, jointly risk assess and provide a multi-agency response.
- o GP Practices - delivering the national Identification and Referral to Improve Safety (IRIS) programme; a GP practice based model that provides training and education, clinical enquiry, care pathways and an enhanced referral pathway to specialist domestic violence services.
- o Accident and Emergency Departments - Based within Russell's Hall Hospital Trust, specialist advocates identify victims presenting with multiple injuries as a result of abuse. BCWA continue to triangulate support for victims in both primary and acute services to reduce risk and increase safety.

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- o Substance misuse commissioned services. Working particularly within the Sandwell Blue Light Project BCWA is part of the multi-agency operational group to ensure a joint identification and ownership of the highest impact clients, both as victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse.
- o Early help hubs. Working at a local level with a range of professionals supporting victims and working to keep them safe.
- o Schools where children have been identified through police notifications. BCWA has worked with West Midlands Police, Walsall MBC and the Home Office to secure funds to support children and young people.

Stalking Services

BCWA continues to develop its Stalking service. The team uses a number of specialist tools, including the SRP (Stalking Risk Profile), SASH (Screening Assessment for Stalking and Harassment) and Dr Jane Monckton-Smith's Homicide Timeline to profile perpetrators. This expertise is invaluable in our advocacy with agencies such as police and probation, to help them manage offenders, address stalking behaviour directly and safeguard victims. This service continues to be supported by the Office of the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner.

The OPCC was successful in obtaining Home Office funding for supporting perpetrators of abuse; BCWA provides continued and ongoing support to the victim. The Early Awareness Stalking Intervention ("EASI") pilot is in partnership with HMPPS Psychology Services Group and West Midlands Police and focuses on improving how they identify and address stalking. The vision for Psychology Services Group and West Midlands Police is to trial a cost- and time-efficient, targeted, and evidence-informed intervention for those who are known to have engaged in stalking, delivered at the earliest stage possible. Police training is being supported by the Alice Ruggles Trust. The project is being evaluated by the University of Derby in their Faculties of Criminology and Forensics.

The service remains a member of the National Stalking Consortium chaired by Suzy Lamplugh's Trust. BCWA provide updates of the positive work they continue to achieve locally and together plan for National Stalking Week Conference.

During the year the service was instrumental in setting up the first stalking clinic for the region, strengthening the partnerships response valuing all contributions. This is an ambition realised since the start of the stalking service developed by BCWA.

The stalking clinic:

- holds bespoke multi-agency meetings where high risk referrals are assessed and where the team look at stalking behaviours, the motivations behind them and the history and mental health of the offender
- identifies and shares organisational learning and feeding back into the partnership for future training and development for partners
- discusses the profiles and risk of stalkers with all parties sharing intelligence and information
- provides feedback and advice to officers to ensure robust management of stalking
- provides referrals to the independent stalking advocacy caseworker (ISAC) and partner agencies for high risk stalking
- facilitates case discussions with the ISAC, Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and force stalking tactical lead, ensuring victim support and safeguarding dedicated legal advisor to support the application of SPOs and advocating for their use
- co-ordinates cross-border support to stalking cases, as required.

Rape, Sexual Violence and Abuse Services

Every victim and survivor of sexual violence should be able to access a high-quality, well managed ISVA service, wherever they are in the country, regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, sexuality or beliefs; and whether or not they have chosen to engage with the criminal justice process.

Ensuring that all victims get access to the valuable services of an ISVA remains constant. BCWA's team of ISVAs (independent sexual violence advisers) who support both male and female survivors of rape and sexual abuse across the Black Country (Sandwell, Dudley, Wolverhampton and Walsall). The service includes specialist advocates who support child and adult victims of childhood sexual abuse. BCWA continue to provide links from the regional Sexual Assault Referrals Centres (SARC) into local services and provides specialist therapeutic interventions. The Independent Sexual Violence Advisers (ISVA) continue to play a key role in helping survivors to access and engage with the criminal justice system, both through support in court and with applications for Criminal Injuries Compensation administration.

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BCWA continues to play an active role in the following partnerships:

- Regional Rape and Sexual Assault strategic group. The vision of this strategy is to reduce and prevent all forms of sexual assault and abuse. The Sexual Assault and Abuse (SAA) Board will work to ensure the West Midlands offers a multi-agency, holistic and seamless service to victims of sexual assault and abuse; to enhance the services provided to those affected through the criminal justice pathway, to provide therapeutic support to victims to help them rebuild their lives and to hold offenders to account for their behaviour.
- Voice of the Victim Forum - this focuses discussions with agencies to discuss how to best ensure that victims remain engaged and their voices heard through the police investigation. It advocates for the consistent use of the victims code and improved communication between victim and officer via the ISVA.
- VAWG Local Scrutiny and Involvement Panel (West Midlands) - This meeting provides the opportunity for BCWA to provide an insight into the landscape of support for victims of SV. This particular quarter focused on the impact of DHR's and what we can learn from them from a CPS perspective.

BCWA is proud to have achieved Lime Culture Quality standards for its Adult ISVA service, Ask Marc and children's service. The Quality Standards set out the standards for ISVA services across four domains: Leadership and Governance, Access and Engagement, Service Delivery, and Outcomes and Evaluation.

Specialist Children's independent Sexual violence advisors (CHISVA) continue to support children and young people who have experienced rape and sexual violence. Our specialist children and young people's services support young victims of rape, sexual assault, child sexual exploitation (CSE) and domestic violence. This area of work continues to work as partnerships gain a greater understanding of the impact of abuse on children. Working with both adult and child will strengthen relationships and develop resilience and confidence in young people as they progress into adulthood.

Women's Justice

BCWA continues to provide a specialist early-intervention project, commissioned by the Office of the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner via New Chance, where BCWA is a subcontractor of the main contract held by Changing Lives. These services both provides diversion from custody or from conviction for women in Sandwell, Dudley and Birmingham. Women access this service following arrest or conviction and they are referred by police or via probation to the service. Probation officers are co-located within the Women's Justice Centres providing a trauma informed space for women who have offended. The service offers practical and emotional support aimed at helping them to move forward in their lives and avoid future offending. BCWA women's justice workers facilitate relationships with other agencies and rebuild confidence in women that service are there to help. Reductions in other services has meant that there is an increased pressure on this service. Women presenting with mental health challenges and PTSD are increasing. BCWA continues to encourage the co-location of professionals and, during the year, worked with probation and sexual health professionals to develop a Women's trauma Informed Health Care Pilot. The sexual health screening and general women's health services were brought into the centre to break down barriers of accessing healthcare services. All women in BCWA service can access the service. During the year, the partnership had been nominated and awarded the Kathy Biggar trophy with the Butler Trust.

During the year BCWA worked with the OPCC and partners to develop the Intensive Supervision Court (ISC) in Birmingham (previously named the Problem Solving Court). The ISC will be for women serving community orders, for low level offences in Birmingham, will be closely monitored by judges, as part of a new pilot scheme. It forms part of a new community sentencing approach, to tackle the root causes of offenders' behaviour, help them change their ways and cut reoffending. Through the pilot launched in Birmingham Magistrates' Court, when a woman is sentenced, the judge will order them to attend regular review meetings in BCWA women's justice centres, to check they are abiding by the requirements of their community sentence. Women will also have access to specialist drug and alcohol treatment, to help them tackle any substance misuse, which could be driving their behaviour. At the same time, they will receive intensive supervision from the Probation Service, which could include frequent and random drug testing.

The pilot, which forms part of the Government's 10-Year Drug Strategy, and was made possible following the Government's Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts (PCSC) Act 2022, with a statutory instrument laid in Parliament to launch the 18-month pilot.

Phil Bowen, Director for the Centre of Justice Innovation, said: "The evidence suggests that, by combining wraparound supervision with regular judicial oversight which holds people and services to account, we can make a material difference to offending. These pilots allow us to test the effectiveness of these approaches in order to inform decisions on any potential wider roll-out."

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Accommodation and Outreach Service (domestic abuse and modern day slavery victims care contract)

BCWA continue to provide a safe accommodation for victims of violence and abuse following the success of the commission the previous year. New systems and procedures were put in place against the new commission. Demand for services remain high, with demand always outstripping need. Families continue to experience financial hardship. The refuge team has built good relationships with the Local Welfare Provision, and a range of charities e.g. The Buttle Trust, to apply for individual grants for families who need help including when they leave and establish their own home. BCWA also raise funds for its appeal, "Make a house a home", helping families with basics and essentials when they move out such as household goods, flooring, school supplies and toys for individual children. This has been particularly supportive of our clients. Parents have expressed their thanks and gratitude for this additional support.

BCWA also aim to make the stay in refuge as supportive, but also, as fun as possible. Supported by many corporate and individual donors, they support positive activities for the women and children, such as fun days out to the seaside and cultural events such as Diwali, Eid and Christmas.

BCWA is committed to identifying additional units of accommodation to meet needs and demand. Supporting children living within the safe accommodation provision is crucial. Counselling and support for children and young people has been vital. BCWA continue to receive generous gifts and donations to support women and children living in safe accommodation, with one donor covering the cost of all school uniforms, their Christmas dinner and funds to contribute to rent costs.

BCWA continue to provide units of accommodation and outreach services spanning the West Midlands for victims of Modern Day Slavery (MDS) in partnership with the Salvation Army, who hold the national contract with the Home Office. Each year sees an increase in victims accessing the service, demonstrating greater awareness and understanding of modern slavery and the extent of it within our communities. Risks are very high for the victims, as often the traffickers will make significant attempts to find them. Therefore, security needs to be high for both victims and staff providing this vital service.

The service works with a range of stakeholders to gather intelligence on locations and vulnerabilities where exploitation operates and takes an active part in the media, highlighting the plight of victims. BCWA also contributes to national discussions, legislative changes and acts as expert consultants to the West Midlands Modern Slavery Strategy and West Midlands Police Multi Agency Policy and Procedures. We represent survivors on the West Midlands Anti-Slavery Network, Human Trafficking Advisory Foundation Forum, and PAN West Midlands Multi-Agency Group.

BCWA continues to work within local strategic partnerships as they increase their awareness of modern slavery and acknowledge the vital role that they play in identifying and coordinating rescue.

Legal restrictions on economic activity may be increasing risks of exploitation in other contexts. Concerns have been raised for sex workers as nightclubs close, and sex work is pushed underground, making workers increasingly vulnerable to trafficking.

Counselling and Therapeutic Services

Counselling and specialist therapeutic interventions underpin the support services and are an essential component of a holistic approach to addressing trauma. The service offer continues to combine both face to face and the use of technology to counsel victims.

Business development and finance

Strategic and partnership working remains a vital part of our work. The corporate centre continues to strengthen following investment into key positions in finance, human resources, business and operational development and communications. BCWA produce regular newsletters, use social media, and publish articles in the national press on related issues to highlight the plight of victims of abuse and the impact of national policy on victims' lives.

Quality, Learning and Enterprise

BCWA have robust internal audit functions auditing the standards and quality of service against national standards. Reports, analysis and trends for strategic partnerships, funders and commissioners are available on a regular basis, outlining the performance of the service against specification/commission. Training and development of employees, all increased in the last 12 months and employees recognise the impact of training on their practice.

BCWA has continued with many of the online learning opportunities established during COVID and has since developed a Workforce development team to focus on the continual professional development of all its workforce, matching national standards against practice.

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Employees are developed through an organisational training plan and encouraged to pursue external qualifications as part of their Professional Development Plan (PDP). This will be further strengthened as we move towards Employment Competency Frameworks to further develop our employee skills and talents. The organisation continues to support the Home Office standards for Independent domestic violence and sexual violence advocacy services, as defined by SafeLives, Lime Culture, Women's Aid Federation of England and Wales, Respect and the Care Quality Commission.

BCWA remains an organisation recognised for its expertise in both policy and practice. The senior management team have been involved in the development of national policy, national accredited training courses and the continuing professional development of health and other professionals. During 2023/24 BCWA remained lead trainers within local strategic partners providing expertise on interpersonal violence, abuse and exploitation.

The organisation continues to receive gifts in kind, including toys, food and toiletries from a variety of women's organisations, religious groups, and individuals and other organisations, as well as hours of volunteer time amounting to over 300 hrs.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Our income increased to £10,016,725 from £8,600,515, an increase of 16%, whilst expenditure rose from £7,065,286 to £8,223,119. The increased income is a reflection of the increase in funds to support the direct service delivery. The organisation continues to realise its longer term plan to diversify funds away from the statutory funding and has been able to attract new funding streams to support existing services and take on new projects.

Expenses and overheads have been tightly controlled and new contracts reflect the savings shown. The increase in expenditure is due to a response to service increase, where operational and staff costs increased in line with our provision of extra services.

The Statement of Financial activities shows an increase in funds of £1,793,606. Our reserves now stand at £8,518,663 of which £1,722,813 is restricted and £6,795,850 is unrestricted. The balance of unrestricted reserves includes £3,686,059 which is designated to meet future commitments. Therefore the balance of free reserves is £3,109,791 of which £1,799,746 relates to fixed assets.

Reserves Policy

The Board of Trustees has examined the charity's requirements for reserves in light of the main risks to the organisation.

The Board of Trustees has agreed to support a 3-year strategy that includes:

- Strategic Development Fund - where the organisation undertakes research and development to inform future service provision and secure additional funds for longer term service delivery costs of £383,160.
- Service Continuity Fund - where the organisation maintains costs for closure as well as 6 months' running costs of £1,135,414.
- Property Contingency Fund - where the organisation has to ensure sufficient funds to maintain the properties to a high standard, ensure routine repairs and maintenance and be prepared in the event of major structural damage - £265,000.
- Redundancy Reserve - where the organisation will pay the redundancy over the capped limit to long term employees - £155,500.
- Capital Reserve - where the organisation will invest in property to meet the demand of the services - £1,746,985.

**Report of the Trustees
for the Year Ended 31 March 2024**

FUTURE PLANS

Future plans include:

1. Development of regional working opportunities for joint working.
2. Implementation of new policies ensuring that the systems are fit for purpose, are high quality and meet nationally recognised quality standards.
3. Development and implementation of a new case management system.
4. Development of a strategic investment plan for increasing BCWA assets.
5. Seeking opportunities for funding new opportunities.
6. Preparing services for future tendering.
7. Contribute to strategic and operational plans with a range of partners to create a "whole systems approach" to supporting victims wherever they present ensuring that victims remain supported, risks identified and protected.
8. Continue to influence strategy at a local, regional and national level.
9. Reviewing services; evaluating cost effectiveness, efficiency and operational delivery. Reviewing governance arrangements and strengthening corporate services meeting the needs of a growing organisation.
10. Further development of the training and educational programmes and developments, working within local educational partnerships and academic institutions.
11. Establishing improved solutions to victims of violence and abuse that have little or no access to public funds and ensure that this issue remains high on the strategic agenda.
12. Developing a "Women's Centre" approach, widening the opportunities for women.
13. Exploring the implementation of gendered spaces in line with national standards.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

This is a company limited by guarantee and its operations include:

- The provision of supported accommodation for individuals leaving violence, abuse and exploitation.
- Outreach and resettlement support services for children, young people and women moving back into the community after leaving refuge and/or within a safe home.
- The provision of a community-based support and advocacy service for victims of abuse in and out of the criminal justice system.
- Community engagement/involvement and peer support for victims of violence and abuse.
- Delivery of training and awareness raising to both statutory and non-statutory agencies, work with schools, colleges and other educational establishments outlining the effects/impact of abuse, explaining models of interventions.
- Working in partnership both at a strategic and operational level with the statutory and voluntary sector to develop a co-ordinated response to tackling domestic abuse.

Governing Document

The organisation is a charitable company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales, incorporated in 1993 and registered as a charity in 1994. The company was established under a Memorandum of Association which established the objectives and powers of the charitable company and is governed under its Articles of Association. In the event of the company being wound up members are required to contribute an amount not exceeding £1.00.

Recruitment and Appointment of Management Committee

The Directors of the Company are also Charity Trustees for the purpose of charity law and under the Articles are known as the members of the Management Committee. Under the requirements of the Memorandum and Articles of Association, the members of the management committee must be re-elected each year.

The Management Committee, where possible, seeks to ensure that the needs of victims of abuse whether adults, children or young people are appropriately reflected through the diversity of the Trustee body. To enhance the potential pool of Trustees, promotions take place to attract skilled individuals from all sectors to contribute their skill, knowledge and commitment. This is regularly discussed at Board meetings to ensure good representation.

**Report of the Trustees
for the Year Ended 31 March 2024**

Trustee Induction and training

Trustees are familiar with the operational work of the charity and are supported by the CEO through a Trustee information pack and the opportunity to visit the various services, as part of an optional induction.

Risk management

The Board of Trustees has conducted a review of the major risks to which the charity is exposed and this is outlined in its Strategic Plan. A risk management policy has been developed with supporting documents of risk appetite and risk register and are updated annually to assess the risks to services and funds and any other changes that the charity faces. The internal governance framework enables risk to be identified at all levels and provides an open, transparent and inclusive culture of information exchange throughout the organisation. All employees have the opportunity to share and express their thoughts and views regarding risk. Risk assessments are maintained and updated regularly across all service areas and summarised within the Executive team discussions who hold and share risk on a day to day basis. Risk is shared within the subcommittee reporting structures with trustees.

BCWA consider the organisation faces the following risks:

- Political uncertainty - The recent general election may cause some uncertainty for future funding. Whilst the Violence against Women and Girls agenda remains highly political, it is difficult to assess the direction each political party will take.
- Financial and economic factors - Rising or stagnating inflation and the ongoing risk of potential recession could see charitable donations reduce. BCWA will need to closely monitor funding sources as there will be greater competition for donations.
- Reduction in statutory sector funding - Local government continue to experience financial pressures. With many taking services "in-house", this may result in a reduction in future commissions. BCWA are actively involved in local strategic needs assessments that will influence and shape future commissions.
- Increasing costs - inflation is likely to increase and continue to drive up operating costs. BCWA will continue to analyse costs to ensure that all equipment, resources and expenses are good value for money.
- Public health issues - COVID, influenza and other public health concerns could further impact charity operations by sickness absence, client access to onsite services, and may spread quickly affecting both staff and clients and/or events planned e.g. in refuge. BCWA will continue to monitor sickness absence, site health issues and client contact/DNA's. BCWA will aim to reduce risk in events held by considering the time of year and locations and build in some flexibility in the planning stages.
- Natural disasters - Climate change is having a global effect on seasons, property and agencies response. As a result, charitable funds may be diverted for disaster relief. In addition BCWA will monitor the Property Management Plan to assess whether damage is being caused to BCWA property and bring planned maintenance brought forward.
- Cybersecurity threats - BCWA are aware that these are increasing and have put measures in place to increase the security of the IT infrastructure. In addition BCWA maintain the Cyber essentials accreditation and works with Hubtel ,the IT provider, to minimise risk. Regular training and IT reports inform strategy and action.
- Recruitment and retention - There have been many challenges to recruit competent employees and subsequently retain competent skilled employees. The market is fast changing and highly competitive. BCWA regularly reviews and benchmarks against its industry comparators and aims to be an employer of choice, not exclusively for its salaries, but for welfare, social responsibility and opportunity. Succession planning and employee development is crucial.
- Compliance and standards - BCWA provide services linked to national contracting that requires more stringent regulatory requirements. BCWA is working to maintain high level standards such as ISO's, professional standards and accreditations whilst remaining compliant and up to date with charity and company law. Financial procedures are adhered to and regularly reviewed with regard to authorisation of transactions for all project expenditure.
- Reputational risks - BCWA have maintained an excellent track record of service provision and high quality staff. However, it acknowledges that any controversy or scandal could damage its reputation and impact supporter trust. This in turn may affect future contracting, funding, partnerships and donations. BCWA emphasise across the organisation the responsibility each and every employee has in maintaining and upholding the reputation and values.

All contracted services work within relevant contractual timescales, quality standards and are monitored externally on a quarterly basis and internally on a monthly basis, in accordance with the organisation's performance framework. This ensures a consistent quality of service for all operational aspects of services.

**Report of the Trustees
for the Year Ended 31 March 2024**

All Service Level Agreements (SLAs) have agreed targets and outcomes and are performance monitored on a quarterly basis. Services aim to work within nationally recognised standards of practice and seek external accreditation, e.g. Women's Aid Federation of England and Wales, Safe Lives, The Survivors Trust, Rape Crisis England and Wales and the British Association of Counsellors and Psychotherapists (BACP).

All grants/funds/contracts awarded are for specific time periods and have project plans and milestones to ensure work is monitored and meeting required standards. Regular contact with commissioners ensures that the work is on target and achieving its expected outcomes.

Board meetings take place every 8 weeks as part of an annual plan supported by a sub-committee structure that enables ongoing reporting and risk management across the organisation.

Organisational Structure

Black Country Women's Aid has a Management Committee/Board of 5 members who meet as a full Board every 8 weeks. The meeting dates are set as part of an annual calendar and the Annual General Meeting is scheduled in advance.

In addition there are sub committees that feed into the main Board. These include;

- Finance Sub Committee
- Quality Sub Committee
- Workforce Development Sub Committee
- Facilities Management Sub Committee

Each Committee has its own Terms of Reference and all work to achieve the main objectives of the organisation. Each meeting is organised to discuss new policies, procedures, issues identified and quality standards. Each subcommittee feeds into the main board for final discussion and ratification. During the year, many of the meetings have been held via the Microsoft Teams platform. This has proven an effective way to hold business meetings and as the organisation works toward new models of working such as hybrid working, will look towards this being included in its planning. All minutes and decision making is circulated and presented to the full board for recommendation, further discussion and final approval.

Where necessary, E-reports are provided and extraordinary meetings are called. Papers are reported to the next Board meeting for full ratification.

Members come from a variety of related professional backgrounds and are responsible for the strategic direction and policy of the Charity. A skills audit takes place of Board members to ensure that the organisation is equipped with the right skills to reach its full potential. Where practicable, the Trustees undertake an annual business planning event to discuss organisational progress, strategic direction and agree future projections. Co-opted members have no voting rights but are considered an important part of the discussion and debate.

The Trustees delegate responsibility to the Chief Executive who also acts as Company Secretary. In addition, the Chief Executive holds the lead responsibility for policy and performance, financial management, employee recruitment and management, as well as operational service delivery. The Chief Executive delegates tasks to the senior management team who report back on a regular basis.

The Chief Executive,, working with her team of Directors, managers and corporate colleagues, takes the lead for developing employees, apprentices and volunteers, ensuring that their learning experience is translated into operational practice in line with good practice.

Senior Management Structure

BCWA is led by a senior management structure comprising of the Chief Executive Officer, Deputy Chief Executive/ Director of Finance, Director of Community Services, Interim Director of Accommodation Services and Executive Officer.

They are supported by specialist managers assigned to each directorate.

The total salaries of the Management team were £346,314. This represents 7% of the total salary cost to the organisation.

The senior management remuneration approach is contained within Pay Policy located within the Financial Regulations - this applies to all positions within the organisation.

**Report of the Trustees
for the Year Ended 31 March 2024**

Related Parties

The work of the organisation sits within a number of strategic frameworks both locally, regionally and nationally. The Chief Executive, Directors and managers play a significant role across all areas of business including developing and influencing strategy, continuous improvement of services and developing new opportunities to support victims, ensuring financial plans are sustainable and guaranteeing that the victim's voice remains at the centre of all decision making.

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The trustees (who are also the directors of Black Country Women's Aid for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Report of the Trustees and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charity SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In so far as the trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditors are unaware; and
- the trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditors are aware of that information.

AUDITORS

The auditors, TAG Assurance Services Limited, will be proposed for re-appointment at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Approved by order of the board of trustees on 20 December 2024 and signed on its behalf by:

Karen Elizabeth Dowman - Trustee

Report of the Independent Auditors to the Members of Black Country Women's Aid

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Black Country Women's Aid (the 'charitable company') for the year ended 31 March 2024 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2024 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report, other than the financial statements and our Report of the Independent Auditors thereon.

Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, 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 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.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

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

- the information given in the Report of the Trustees for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Report of the Trustees has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Report of the Trustees.

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

- adequate accounting records have not been kept or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- the trustees were not entitled to take advantage of the small companies exemption from the requirement to prepare a Strategic Report or in preparing the Report of the Trustees.

Report of the Independent Auditors to the Members of Black Country Women's Aid

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Our 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 a Report of the Independent Auditors 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:

- We gained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks within which the charitable company is required to operate and focussed on those that have a direct effect on the determination of material amounts and disclosures within the financial statements - primarily these were the Companies Act 2006, the Charities Act 2011 and the Charities SORP (FRS 102). We assessed compliance with these laws and regulations as part of our audit procedures in respect of related items within the financial statements. Our audit procedures in this regard were limited to enquiry of Trustees and other management and inspection of any regulatory and legal correspondence, if any.
- We identified items within the financial statements at greatest risk of a material impact from irregularities, including fraud, which were considered to be the recognition of grant income and overriding of controls by management. We undertook audit procedures to respond to these risks, including enquiries of management, sample testing on the posting of journals, review of the basis of accounting estimates and a review of the timing of recognition of grant income.
- Due to the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we may not have detected some material misstatements within the financial statements despite properly planning and performing our audit in line with auditing standards. This could be due to a number of factors such as collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations or the over-ride of controls. We point out that we are not responsible for preventing non-compliance and cannot be expected to detect non-compliance with all laws and regulations.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our Report of the Independent Auditors.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditors' 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 charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Shaun Philpott (Senior Statutory Auditor)
for and on behalf of TAG Assurance Services Limited
Chartered Accountants and
Registered Auditors
8 Pendeford Place
Pendeford Business Park
Wolverhampton
West Midlands
WV9 5HD

20 December 2024

Black Country Women's Aid

Statement of Financial Activities (Incorporating an Income and Expenditure Account) for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	31.3.24 Total funds £	31.3.23 Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM					
Donations and legacies	2	203,008	169,297	372,305	155,357
Charitable activities	4				
Refuge based support		1,014,017	10,000	1,024,017	993,750
Community based support		2,267,576	2,347,376	4,614,952	3,870,432
Modern day slavery		3,940,124	-	3,940,124	3,464,517
Other trading activities	3	65,326	1	65,327	116,459
Total		<u>7,490,051</u>	<u>2,526,674</u>	<u>10,016,725</u>	<u>8,600,515</u>
EXPENDITURE ON					
Charitable activities	5				
Refuge based support		1,240,338	24,336	1,264,674	1,202,657
Community based support		2,571,787	2,000,055	4,571,842	3,823,652
Modern day slavery		2,369,482	17,121	2,386,603	2,038,977
Total		<u>6,181,607</u>	<u>2,041,512</u>	<u>8,223,119</u>	<u>7,065,286</u>
NET INCOME		1,308,444	485,162	1,793,606	1,535,229
Transfers between funds	17	(41,744)	41,744	-	-
Net movement in funds		<u>1,266,700</u>	<u>526,906</u>	<u>1,793,606</u>	<u>1,535,229</u>
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		5,529,150	1,195,907	6,725,057	5,189,828
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		<u>6,795,850</u>	<u>1,722,813</u>	<u>8,518,663</u>	<u>6,725,057</u>

The notes form part of these financial statements

Black Country Women's Aid (Registered number: 02791788)**Balance Sheet
31 March 2024**

	Notes	31.3.24 £	31.3.23 £
FIXED ASSETS			
Tangible assets	12	2,779,653	2,411,207
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors	13	2,311,407	1,838,406
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>3,809,834</u>	<u>2,962,867</u>
		6,121,241	4,801,273
CREDITORS			
Amounts falling due within one year	14	(382,231)	(487,423)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		<u>5,739,010</u>	<u>4,313,850</u>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		8,518,663	6,725,057
NET ASSETS		<u>8,518,663</u>	<u>6,725,057</u>
FUNDS	17		
Unrestricted funds		6,795,850	5,529,150
Restricted funds		<u>1,722,813</u>	<u>1,195,907</u>
TOTAL FUNDS		<u>8,518,663</u>	<u>6,725,057</u>

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to charitable companies subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on 20 December 2024 and were signed on its behalf by:

Karen Elizabeth Dowman - Trustee

Black Country Women's Aid

Cash Flow Statement for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

	Notes	31.3.24 £	31.3.23 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Cash generated from operations	1	<u>1,282,492</u>	<u>2,115,487</u>
Net cash provided by operating activities		<u>1,282,492</u>	<u>2,115,487</u>
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		<u>(435,525)</u>	<u>(1,246,692)</u>
Net cash used in investing activities		<u>(435,525)</u>	<u>(1,246,692)</u>
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period		<u>846,967</u>	<u>868,795</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		<u>2,962,867</u>	<u>2,094,072</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period		<u>3,809,834</u>	<u>2,962,867</u>

The notes form part of these financial statements

Notes to the Cash Flow Statement
for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

1. RECONCILIATION OF NET INCOME TO NET CASH FLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES

	31.3.24 £	31.3.23 £
Net income for the reporting period (as per the Statement of Financial Activities)	1,793,606	1,535,229
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation charges	67,079	39,508
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	(473,001)	249,670
(Decrease)/increase in creditors	(105,192)	291,080
Net cash provided by operations	<u>1,282,492</u>	<u>2,115,487</u>

2. ANALYSIS OF CHANGES IN NET FUNDS

	At 1.4.23 £	Cash flow £	At 31.3.24 £
Net cash			
Cash at bank and in hand	<u>2,962,867</u>	<u>846,967</u>	<u>3,809,834</u>
	<u>2,962,867</u>	<u>846,967</u>	<u>3,809,834</u>
Total	<u>2,962,867</u>	<u>846,967</u>	<u>3,809,834</u>

**Notes to the Financial Statements
for the Year Ended 31 March 2024**

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of preparing the financial statements

The financial statements of the charitable company, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019)', Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Companies Act 2006. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

Income

All income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities once the charity has entitlement to the funds, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Charitable activities

Charitable activities are as follows:

Refuge based support
Community based support
Modern slavery
Equipment grants

Resources expended

Staff costs and overhead expenses are allocated to activities on the basis of staff time spent on those activities.

Value added tax is not recoverable by the charity and as such is included in the relevant costs in the Statement of Financial Activities.

Charitable activities comprises of those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them.

Governance costs include those costs associated with meeting the constitutional and statutory requirements of the charity and include the audit fees and costs linked to the strategic management of the charity.

Tangible fixed assets

Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life.

Freehold property	- 4% on cost
Fixtures and fittings	- 33% on cost

Taxation

As a charity, Black Country Women's Aid is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within section 466 to 493 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 to the extent that these are applicable to its charitable objects. No tax charges have arisen in the charity.

Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are donations and other income received or generated for the objects of the charity without specified purposes and are available as general funds.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

Expenditure which meets these criteria is identified to the fund, together with a fair allocation of management and support costs.

Designated funds are unrestricted funds earmarked by the Trustees for particular purposes.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

Donated goods and services

Donated goods and services are included at the value to the charity where this can be quantified. The value of services provided by general volunteers has not been included in these accounts.

Pension costs and other post-retirement benefits

The charitable company operates a defined contribution pension scheme. Contributions payable to the charitable company's pension scheme are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities in the period to which they relate.

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES - continued

Pension costs and other post-retirement benefits

Hire purchase and leasing commitments

Assets obtained under hire purchase contracts or finance leases are capitalised in the balance sheet. Those held under hire purchase contracts are depreciated over their estimated useful lives. Those held under finance leases are depreciated over their estimated useful lives or the lease term whichever is shorter.

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the statement of financial activity on a straight line basis over the period of the lease.

2. DONATIONS AND LEGACIES

	31.3.24	31.3.23
	£	£
Donations	<u>372,305</u>	<u>155,357</u>

3. OTHER TRADING ACTIVITIES

	31.3.24	31.3.23
	£	£
Management and training fees	<u>65,327</u>	<u>116,459</u>

4. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	Activity	31.3.24	31.3.23
		£	£
Grants and contracts	Refuge based support	468,331	468,960
Accommodation charges	Refuge based support	555,686	524,790
Grants and contracts	Community based support	4,614,952	3,870,432
Grants and contracts	Modern day slavery	<u>3,940,124</u>	<u>3,464,517</u>
		<u>9,579,093</u>	<u>8,328,699</u>

Grants received, included in the above, are as follows:

	31.3.24	31.3.23
	£	£
Refuge: Sandwell MBC - Supporting People	458,331	331,399
Refuge: Sandwell MBC - DCLG	10,000	50,000
Community: Sandwell MBC - Specialist DV and SV Support	681,928	601,767
Community: Sandwell MBC - Safer Sandwell Partnership	40,000	40,000
Community: Dudley MBC - DA Support Service	349,021	283,878
Community: Walsall MBC - DV/ Children	602,000	621,750
Community: West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner	1,365,291	1,268,206
Community: West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner - DVPP	266,525	-
Community: West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner - New Chance	45,304	44,574
Community: West Midlands Police	15,000	-
Community: Changing Lives - Female Service Users	326,050	209,926
Community: Wolverhampton City Council - Our Future	75,000	149,718
Community: Ministry of Justice - Rape and SA Support Fund	331,957	413,432
Community: Ministry of Justice - Female Offenders	98,208	-
Community: Home Office Ceanex	35,483	-
Community: NHS IRIS Combined Authority	223,274	189,810
Community: SCVO	64,542	131,583
Community: RSVP	8,043	3,349
Community : Big Lottery Community Fund	87,326	-
Modern Day Slavery: Salvation Army	<u>3,940,124</u>	<u>3,464,517</u>
	<u>9,023,407</u>	<u>7,803,909</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

5. CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES COSTS

	Direct Costs (see note 6) £	Support costs (see note 7) £	Totals £
Refuge based support	1,112,091	152,583	1,264,674
Community based support	3,580,049	991,793	4,571,842
Modern day slavery	1,988,023	398,580	2,386,603
	<u>6,680,163</u>	<u>1,542,956</u>	<u>8,223,119</u>

6. DIRECT COSTS OF CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	31.3.24 £	31.3.23 £
Staff costs	5,296,334	4,664,755
Activity costs	334,080	272,950
Office costs	265,647	157,515
Property costs	784,102	875,695
	<u>6,680,163</u>	<u>5,970,915</u>

7. SUPPORT COSTS

	Depreciation £	Office costs £	Property costs £
Refuge based support	-	78,328	18,704
Community based support	-	509,135	121,574
Modern day slavery	17,121	195,821	46,759
	<u>17,121</u>	<u>783,284</u>	<u>187,037</u>

	Staff costs, travel etc £	Governance costs £	Totals £
Refuge based support	54,471	1,080	152,583
Community based support	354,064	7,020	991,793
Modern day slavery	136,179	2,700	398,580
	<u>544,714</u>	<u>10,800</u>	<u>1,542,956</u>

Activity	Basis of allocation
Depreciation	Usage
Office costs	Usage
Property costs	Usage
Staff costs, travel etc	Usage
Governance costs	Usage

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

7. **SUPPORT COSTS - continued**

Support costs, included in the above, are as follows:

				31.3.24	31.3.23
	Refuge based support £	Community based support £	Modern day slavery £	Total activities £	Total activities £
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	-	-	17,121	17,121	17,121
Office costs	78,328	509,135	195,821	783,284	523,588
Property costs	18,704	121,574	46,759	187,037	170,459
Staff costs & travel etc	54,471	354,064	136,179	544,714	372,823
Auditors' remuneration	1,080	7,020	2,700	10,800	10,380
	<u>152,583</u>	<u>991,793</u>	<u>398,580</u>	<u>1,542,956</u>	<u>1,094,371</u>

8. **NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)**

Net income/(expenditure) is stated after charging/(crediting):

	31.3.24	31.3.23
	£	£
Auditors' remuneration	10,800	10,380
Depreciation - owned assets	<u>67,079</u>	<u>39,508</u>

9. **TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS**

There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 31 March 2024 nor for the year ended 31 March 2023.

Trustees' expenses

There were no trustees' expenses paid for the year ended 31 March 2024 nor for the year ended 31 March 2023.

10. **STAFF COSTS**

	2024	2023
	£	£
Wages and salaries	4,748,027	4,158,342
Social security	423,419	385,708
Pension	191,177	166,749
	<u>5,362,623</u>	<u>4,710,799</u>

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	31.3.24	31.3.23
Direct charitable work	174	149
Administration	23	23
	<u>197</u>	<u>172</u>

The number of employees whose employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) exceeded £60,000 was:

	31.3.24	31.3.23
£70,001 - £80,000	1	1
£90,001 - £100,000	1	1
	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

10. STAFF COSTS - continued

Black Country Women's Aid considers its key management personnel to be the Chief Executive Officer . The total employment benefits of the key management personnel were £95,997 (2023: £91,672).

The company operates a Group Personal Pension Plan to which the charitable company contributes 5% and employees contribute 3%.

11. COMPARATIVES FOR THE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM			
Donations and legacies	155,357	-	155,357
Charitable activities			
Refuge based support	943,750	50,000	993,750
Community based support	1,692,512	2,177,920	3,870,432
Modern day slavery	3,464,517	-	3,464,517
Other trading activities	67,419	49,040	116,459
Total	<u>6,323,555</u>	<u>2,276,960</u>	<u>8,600,515</u>
EXPENDITURE ON			
Charitable activities			
Refuge based support	1,149,645	53,012	1,202,657
Community based support	1,492,963	2,330,689	3,823,652
Modern day slavery	2,021,788	17,189	2,038,977
Total	<u>4,664,396</u>	<u>2,400,890</u>	<u>7,065,286</u>
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)	1,659,159	(123,930)	1,535,229
Transfers between funds	(1,599)	1,599	-
Net movement in funds	<u>1,657,560</u>	<u>(122,331)</u>	<u>1,535,229</u>
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS			
Total funds brought forward	3,871,590	1,318,238	5,189,828
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	<u>5,529,150</u>	<u>1,195,907</u>	<u>6,725,057</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

12. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Freehold property £	Fixtures and fittings £	Totals £
COST			
At 1 April 2023	2,491,466	123,204	2,614,670
Additions	435,525	-	435,525
At 31 March 2024	<u>2,926,991</u>	<u>123,204</u>	<u>3,050,195</u>
DEPRECIATION			
At 1 April 2023	132,009	71,454	203,463
Charge for year	49,829	17,250	67,079
At 31 March 2024	<u>181,838</u>	<u>88,704</u>	<u>270,542</u>
NET BOOK VALUE			
At 31 March 2024	<u>2,745,153</u>	<u>34,500</u>	<u>2,779,653</u>
At 31 March 2023	<u>2,359,457</u>	<u>51,750</u>	<u>2,411,207</u>

13. DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	31.3.24 £	31.3.23 £
Trade debtors	1,625,717	1,168,560
Rent Receivable	24,533	66,802
Other debtors	572,153	505,866
Prepayments	89,004	97,178
	<u>2,311,407</u>	<u>1,838,406</u>

14. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	31.3.24 £	31.3.23 £
Trade creditors	121,054	169,926
Social security and other taxes	167,838	186,448
Other creditors	52,504	47,734
Deferred income	1	43,881
Accrued expenses	40,834	39,434
	<u>382,231</u>	<u>487,423</u>

15. SECURED DEBTS

A charge has been secured on the freehold property known as Karen House on 16 March 2020, in favour of the Heart of England Community Foundation, by way of a legal mortgage.

16. ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	31.3.24 Total funds £	31.3.23 Total funds £
Fixed assets	1,799,746	979,907	2,779,653	2,411,207
Current assets	5,378,335	742,906	6,121,241	4,801,273
Current liabilities	<u>(382,231)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(382,231)</u>	<u>(487,423)</u>
	<u>6,795,850</u>	<u>1,722,813</u>	<u>8,518,663</u>	<u>6,725,057</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

17. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

	At 1.4.23 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 31.3.24 £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	2,475,388	1,308,444	(674,041)	3,109,791
Service Continuity Fund	1,081,347	-	54,067	1,135,414
Strategic Development Fund	364,915	-	18,245	383,160
Property Contingency Fund	235,000	-	30,000	265,000
Redundancy reserve	122,500	-	33,000	155,500
Capital reserve	1,250,000	-	496,985	1,746,985
	<u>5,529,150</u>	<u>1,308,444</u>	<u>(41,744)</u>	<u>6,795,850</u>
Restricted funds				
Refuge Based Support	15,148	10,000	(25,148)	-
Community Based Support	378,028	347,322	17,556	742,906
Heart of England Capital Grant	802,731	(17,121)	-	785,610
Bungalows Development	-	144,961	49,336	194,297
	<u>1,195,907</u>	<u>485,162</u>	<u>41,744</u>	<u>1,722,813</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>6,725,057</u>	<u>1,793,606</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>8,518,663</u>

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	7,490,051	(6,181,607)	1,308,444
Restricted funds			
Refuge Based Support	10,000	-	10,000
Community Based Support	2,347,377	(2,000,055)	347,322
Heart of England Capital Grant	-	(17,121)	(17,121)
Bungalows Development	169,297	(24,336)	144,961
	<u>2,526,674</u>	<u>(2,041,512)</u>	<u>485,162</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>10,016,725</u>	<u>(8,223,119)</u>	<u>1,793,606</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

17. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

Comparatives for movement in funds

	At 1.4.22 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 31.3.23 £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	2,000,568	1,659,159	(1,184,339)	2,475,388
Service Continuity Fund	496,022	-	585,325	1,081,347
Strategic Development Fund	175,000	-	189,915	364,915
Property Contingency Fund	100,000	-	135,000	235,000
Redundancy reserve	100,000	-	22,500	122,500
Capital reserve	1,000,000	-	250,000	1,250,000
	<u>3,871,590</u>	<u>1,659,159</u>	<u>(1,599)</u>	<u>5,529,150</u>
Restricted funds				
Refuge Based Support	18,160	(3,012)	-	15,148
Community Based Support	481,757	(103,729)	-	378,028
Heart of England Capital Grant	818,321	(17,189)	1,599	802,731
	<u>1,318,238</u>	<u>(123,930)</u>	<u>1,599</u>	<u>1,195,907</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>5,189,828</u>	<u>1,535,229</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>6,725,057</u>

Comparative net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	6,323,555	(4,664,396)	1,659,159
Restricted funds			
Refuge Based Support	50,000	(53,012)	(3,012)
Community Based Support	2,226,960	(2,330,689)	(103,729)
Heart of England Capital Grant	-	(17,189)	(17,189)
	<u>2,276,960</u>	<u>(2,400,890)</u>	<u>(123,930)</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>8,600,515</u>	<u>(7,065,286)</u>	<u>1,535,229</u>

The General Fund is to meet the day to day cash flow requirements of the charity.

The Service Continuity Fund provides for the costs of closure as well as 6 months running costs in the event of withdrawal of funding.

The Strategic Development Fund provides for the organisation to undertake research and development to inform future service provision and secure additional funds for long term service delivery.

The Property Contingency Fund provides sufficient funds to maintain the Charity's properties to a high standard and to ensure routine repairs and maintenance are carried out.

The Redundancy Reserve is to cover the potential costs of redundancy over the capped limit to long term employees.

The Capital Reserve comprises funds set aside for the organisation to invest in property in order to meet future demand for its services.

The Refuge Based Support Fund provides welfare and activities for women and children residing in our refuges.

**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31 March 2024**

17. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

Community Based Support provides home based support, including support and counselling to women and children who are victims of sexual violence and a helpline for Asian women. Part of this service was previously treated separately as 'Rape Support Service' but as services have changed over the years, it is now more appropriate to encompass these services under one umbrella.

Heart of England Capital Grant is a restricted fund for a capital project, the balance represents the net book value of the assets relating to that fund.

Bungalows Development is a restricted fund for a capital project where the balance represents funds specifically donated to the project by third parties such as HSBC, Garfield Weston, The Clothworkers' Foundation and the Eveson Charitable Trust.

18. RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

There were no related party transactions for the year ended 31 March 2024.

This document was delivered using electronic communications and authenticated in accordance with the registrar's rules relating to electronic form, authentication and manner of delivery under section 1072 of the Companies Act 2006.

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

England & Wales - Charity number 1032298

Accounts

REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER: 02791788
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1032298

**Report of the Trustees and
Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2023
for
BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID**

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

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FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023**

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BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID
Reference and Administrative Details
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

TRUSTEES	Karen Elizabeth Dowman Bozena Benton Melvena Morton Salma Parween Ali Victoria Rebecca Harris
COMPANY SECRETARY	Sara Jane Ward BSc (Hons) PG Dip Hou
REGISTERED OFFICE	Landchard House Victoria Street West Bromwich B70 8HY
REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER	02791788
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER	1032298
AUDITORS	Copia Wealth & Tax Limited Chartered Accountants Statutory Auditors 8 Pendeford Place Pendeford Business Park Wobaston Road Wolverhampton WV9 5HD

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

Report of the Trustees FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

The trustees who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2023. The trustees have adopted the provisions of Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objectives and aims

Black Country Women's Aid's (BCWA) objectives are:

- i) to relieve the physical and mental distress of women who are homeless and/or have been gravely or persistently mistreated by their husbands, the men with whom they are living, the fathers of their children or any other members of their family; and
- ii) to relieve the physical and mental distress of children affected by the disruption in the home.

Significant activities

The main objectives and activities of the year have continued to focus on the development of quality support services for victims of violence, abuse and exploitation both in and out of refuge. The strategies employed to assist the charity in meeting these objectives included the following:

- Delivery of high quality services that include emergency accommodation as well as community based support for both adult and child victims of violence and abuse including victims of modern slavery
- Sustaining and further development of services to meet victims' needs across the Black Country area and where necessary further afield.
- Identifying and applying for additional funds to sustain existing services and develop new responses to meet victims' needs.
- Developing systems that capture, cope and recover outcomes for victims. This information is used to demonstrate the effectiveness and impact of support services and evidence the need for additional services via commissioning/tendering.
- Responding to the changing and complex needs of victims. BCWA will achieve this by ensuring that it creates opportunities to engage through increased partnership work and better coordination.

Public benefit

These essential services provide a valuable public benefit to the citizens of the Black Country, West Midlands and throughout the UK.

The trustees have complied with their duty to have due regard to the commission's public benefit guidance when exercising any powers or duties to which the guidance is relevant.

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

Report of the Trustees FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

Development, Activities and Achievements for 2022/23

In October 2022 Women's Aid England and Wales releases research on how UK public attitudes 'tolerate' domestic abuse. More than a third of UK adults believe domestic abuse is not a reflection of wider society, and instead a case of perpetrators being just 'bad people', according to research published by Women's Aid.

Farah Nazeer, chief executive of Women's Aid England and Wales said: "While it is true that only abusers are responsible for their actions, effective responses to domestic abuse need to address the tolerance throughout our society which enables them to act."

The charity's findings also uncovered that respondents with stereotypical views of gender roles and underlying misogynistic views are more tolerant of the impact of domestic abuse and less aware of its nature. This research shows many people are aware of domestic abuse and the harm it causes, but also illustrates how societal sexism and victim blaming enables and excuses domestic abuse. Shockingly, however, many adults do not view societal views as harmful in this way.

She added "To challenge this, individuals, communities and more must come together to raise awareness and increase understanding of the societal norms underpinning abuse. This must start with education about healthy relationships and include training of professionals who may come into contact with domestic abuse survivors. We must all challenge the everyday sexism and misogyny in society, which is the root of all violence against women. Women's Aid is calling on everyone to play their part- until domestic abuse is entirely intolerable."

In July 2022, the charity launched its Come Together to End Domestic Abuse campaign ahead of their 50th birthday in 2024. The campaign emphasises that everyone has a role to play to end domestic abuse and make it intolerable in society. As part of the campaign, Women's Aid issued a survey to determine UK adults' attitudes to domestic abuse and to better understand where and why domestic abuse is 'tolerated' in our society.

Key findings of the survey include:

- UK adults are likely to see perceived 'poor behaviour' by the victim as an excuse for the abuse they experience. For example, there was a 17% drop in those who think it's extremely wrong for the husband to control what his wife wears to the gym if she has previously been unfaithful.

- UK adults also see the abuser's perceived wellbeing or repentance as an excuse for abusive behaviour. There was a 15% drop (from 81% to 66%) in those who thought the husband was really wrong to slap his wife when he later apologised.

- 34% believe domestic abuse is the result of just 'bad people' rather than a reflection of sexism in wider society enabling it. Findings indicate that those with a belief that the root cause of domestic abuse is in the individual rather than societal inequality are less likely to see the harm caused by abusive behaviours or understand it as a pattern of behaviour.

- Men are more likely to view domestic abuse as a private matter to be resolved within the relationship or family (7% compared to 2% of women).

- Only 9% of UK adults believe it's likely that they will be a victim of domestic abuse in the future (10% of women and 8% of men). Yet a much higher percentage, 37%, reported they had experienced one or more types of abusive behaviour in the past (46% of women and 27% of men).

- Those behaviours classed as emotional/psychological abuse, controlling behaviour or stalking are perceived as less harmful than others. This indicates a need to increase understanding of the escalatory nature of domestic abuse and the harm caused by coercive control.

Sexual violence in intimate relationships is downplayed compared to physical abuse. UK adults were more likely to report that the man's behaviour is extremely wrong and that it caused the wife a great deal of harm in a scenario of physical abuse (71%) compared to a scenario of sexual abuse (60%).

Perceptions of different forms of control: The majority (59%) of UK adults believe that a man checking his wife's bank statements and not allowing her to check his is extremely wrong. While less than half (46%) of UK adults believe that the husband checking his wife's clothes before she goes to the gym is extremely wrong. While both scenarios describe forms of controlling behaviour, it appears that the UK public perceive controlling behaviours related to finances to be less acceptable than controlling behaviours related to self-expression and clothing, especially if it is presented as well intentioned.

UK adults are less likely to perceive verbal abuse as wrong and harmful, compared to other actions which may be classified as emotional or psychological abuse, such as sharing explicit images. A much greater proportion of the population believe that a man sharing explicit images of a partner is extremely wrong (84%) compared to a scenario where a husband repeatedly criticises his wife (49%).

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

Report of the Trustees FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Significant proportions of the population hold some survivors responsible for the abuse they experience. When responding to a scenario of marital rape, 67% of respondents said the husband's behaviour was extremely wrong. This dropped to 55%, however, when the scenario changed to one where the wife had initiated the sexual contact before changing her mind. Similarly, actions seen as 'bad behaviour' such as infidelity are seen as justification for abuse. This would indicate that victim blaming is still pervasive and needs to be addressed as the UK public's attitude towards domestic abuse is influenced by the behaviour of the person being abused.

Prioritisation of men's wellbeing over harm to women: The research shows the impact or harm of particular types of abuse, notably sexual abuse and control, are downplayed. It is also apparent that the impact of men's actions, for some people, is used to excuse abusive behaviour. This was evident in scenarios where the men could be perceived as repentant or well intentioned, and where their own mental health was impacted by the end of the relationship.

The Cost of living continues to have a significant impact on women escaping abuse. Findings from a new Women's Aid England and Wales report show the shocking impact of the cost of living crisis, as 15.4% of women supported by the charity's No Woman Turned Away project report not having enough money to pay for essentials such as food for themselves and their children, phone bills, or transportation whilst waiting for a refuge space. This is an increase of 4% from the previous year. Based on the project's work during 2022, the report highlights the numerous challenges faced by women most marginalised by society when it comes to accessing help to escape domestic abuse. For the 254 women who engaged and finished being supported by the No Woman Turned Away Project between 1st January and 31st December 2022, 40.2% of women came from Black and minority backgrounds, 36.5% had no recourse to public funds and 24.4% had a disability. The report demonstrates that due to the continued impact of the cost of living crisis and the lack of suitable refuges, women who were unable to find place in a suitable refuge faced greater risks, including homelessness or being forced to remain with the perpetrator.

The findings show that the project continued to provide women with vital support, especially those for whom structural inequalities and a lack of resources within the refuge network posed challenges and dangers. In 2022, specialist practitioners committed over 1,098 hours of support, looking at a host of issues, such as safety planning, immigration support, safeguarding housing, emotional support and others. This reflects the complex nature of domestic abuse and the many forms it can take, with a large proportion of women saying that they experienced emotional abuse (88.4%), controlling behaviours (66.5%) and financial abuse (49%).

The report also continues to demonstrate the impact of the Domestic Abuse Act (2021) and the work that remains to be done. While the Act brought about changes to the priority need for accommodation for those affected by homelessness due to domestic abuse and introduced a statutory duty for local authorities to fund domestic abuse support, the findings of this report suggest that the support required by survivors is still not in place. Women who are already vulnerable are made more so by the lack of refuge spaces that could accommodate their needs, which leads to many being placed in inadequate accommodation or forced to remain with their abusers. This demonstrates that sufficient and secure funding must be provided to meet the support needs of all women, including expert services 'by and for' Black and minoritised women, and other marginalised groups. It is paramount that all women, regardless of their status, location, or needs, receive adequate support and the resources needed to help them escape domestic abuse.

While we are seeing some of the impact of the Domestic Abuse Act becoming law, it is also clear that more needs to be done to keep women and children safe from domestic abuse. We are incredibly grateful to the No Woman Turned Away project and we will continue to support it in providing help and care to women.

It was vital that BCWA remained highly visible and responsive to victims.

During the year BCWA had **10,617** referrals into its services and recorded on the BCWA database. More specifically we saw increases in referrals into Stalking (31%) and Ask Marc (53%) from previous years as a result of new ways of working and improved promotions. We are mindful that this does not represent the total number of victims supported/referred into service as our co-located partnerships strengthened, we agreed for these specific areas of service that we would include them on multi-agency access data bases. BCWA does not retain these numbers on its database.

Total number of referrals into BCWA services 2022-23: **10,617**

Domestic abuse community services:	7,094
Rape and sexual violence services:	1,109
Children's services:	123
Stalking Services	888
Therapeutic Services	391
Domestic Abuse refuge	248
Women's Justice Services	280
Ask Marc	484

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

Report of the Trustees FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

The support services were busy too;

- o 213,464 entries recorded into BWCA case management system
- o 46,605 calls made to agencies and clients
- o 24,053 emails and texts to clients
- o 18,666 calls and texts from clients and agencies
- o 9 calls or texts per hour to our helpline

There was a significant decrease in referrals into children's services due to projects finishing and cases reduced despite continuing demand for the service.

Trustees, senior management and all staff worked together to devise operational plans. These plans included;

Maintaining a contact centre - BCWA ensures that the general public know how to make contact for help, advice and support. Each BCWA centre is located in areas with good transport links, discreet locations and accessible for victims needing help and support. We respond when they are ready to talk. Key messaging to victims is vital to let them know that they are not alone even though they are often made to feel that they are. BCWA knows that a victim making the choice to pick up the phone or make the decision to leave is at significant risk of serious hurt and harm. We respond swiftly and confidently. BCWA works with local councils, strategic partnerships and the business community to promote the services offered. Social media, investment in quality communications ensures that we reach people living in our communities who may be living with abuse. BCWA regularly features on local radio and maintaining a high social media presence for greater reach.

Strengthening the IT infrastructure - BCWA continue to develop its technological systems and resources for accurate record keeping and data capture. Much of this informs strategic partnerships, influences strategy and identifies trends and changes to enable responses to be appropriate and proportionate. We have been able to analyse information to ensure that services reflect the needs of the communities we serve, ensure efficient use of precious staff resources and manage the increasing volumes. Achieving Cyber Security standards remains a high priority as victims in services need to be confident that BCWA is able to store and keep safe information about their abuse. Quality information has been vital to share information at Domestic homicide reviews where it is vital that accurate information about the support BCWA and partners have provided (or not) to enable systems, procedures and partners to make improvements.

Making sure we responded to victims and their children - BCWA continue to invest time and resources to ensure that there are effective and connected operational systems to identify and support victims of abuse where ever they living within the West Midlands. Making every contact count means that from the first call or conversation victims are given resources and support to enable them to make informed decisions. Feedback from victims/survivors was extremely positive and many commented on the positive engagement they maintain with their support worker. Throughout the year BCWA undertook surveys with those accessing the service and summary conclusions indicated that significant numbers would recommend BCWA to others and 97% were satisfied with BCWA support. Victims told us that they felt more confident to know what to do if another incident occurred

Supporting victims when legal proceedings were delayed and suspended - The post Covid-19 pandemic continues to have an impact on the operation of the criminal justice system and the support available to victims. Delays in court hearings, postponed cases have meant that there is a significant backlog of court hearings. Many victims in BCWA services supported by Independent Domestic Advisers (IDVA's) and Independent Sexual Violence Advisers (ISVAs) were devastated when they realised cases would be delayed and suspensions preventing them from moving forward and/or recovering and seeking justice. For the services this has meant that many have felt re-traumatised by such decisions and have needed further support and counselling as a result. For BCWA support staff, this has meant that victims are within the service longer than previously recorded, trauma levels higher and an increasing volume of new referrals into the service to support, creating genuine pressure points in the service. Despite other statutory services increasing their use of technology this did not provide solutions to enable trials to go ahead both in the magistrates' courts and Crown Court at anything close to normal levels. There is no doubt that this will have a lasting impact on victims and will challenge resources into the next financial year.

Maintaining positive partnerships - BCWA is a valued partner with both statutory and non-statutory partners. BCWA has made significant contributions to local strategic plans such as domestic, rape and asexual violence needs assessments in line with requirements of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and the National Strategy for Rape and Sexual Abuse. It has been vital to share information, data, victim's experiences and voice and, where necessary, facilitate conversations with researchers to ensure that victims voices are heard when developing strategies.

The cost of living crisis continues to have an impact on victims and community partnerships have provided a vital lifeline to assist victims "make ends meet". BCWA is committed to ensuring that victims have access to food clothing and shelter and has established positive and committed links with local people, communities and businesses. BCWA supporters' generosity comes in both financial support as well as essential items such as clothing, toiletries, start-up kits for new mothers and any call outs for help when someone we support has very little on arrival into refuge. Our links with local foodbanks, other charities and the community voluntary organisations enabled food, clothing and essential for distribution as families told us how they continue to struggle with meeting the basic needs of their children/family.

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

Report of the Trustees FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

BCWA continues to make a significant contribution to the partnerships across the 4 Black Country authorities (Sandwell, Dudley, Walsall and Wolverhampton) influencing strategic and operational development. These include vital partnerships such as the Sandwell Crime Reduction Partnership/Safer Sandwell, Sandwell Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnership (DASP) Dudley Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnership and Forum (DDAF) and Dudley Safe and Sound, Walsall Domestic Abuse Strategic Group (DASG) and Violent Leads Group, as well as operation groups focusing on young people at risk of exploitation, Local Safeguarding Children's and Adults Board, West Midlands Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO) Board, Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) Board and local Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferencing (MARAC) and Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH), as well as taking thematic leads on domestic abuse, modern slavery and stalking at the Office of the Police Crime Commissioner's Victim's Commission. The Victims' Commission is the PCC's advisory body on the provision of specialist services. The role of the Victims' Commission is to ensure that services have a positive impact on victims, improving the circumstances of individuals affected by crime, to cope with the effects of their experiences and recover from the harm they have experienced.

In addition to the above multi agency partnerships, BCWA works with specialist services nationally and across the region to ensure that services are coordinated and meet the highest standards. The organisation has continued its partnership work with the following: National Stalking Consortium, Specialist Domestic Violence and Abuse Consortium, Rape and Sexual Violence Consortium and the Women's Justice Partnership supporting vulnerable people. This approach continues to demonstrate that agencies cannot work in isolation but are always stronger together.

For much of the year, the BCWA Chief Executive worked hard to ensure that services across the Black Country were represented and funding secured. This approach remains integral to the future of specialist services as we continue to face challenges. The Office of the Police Crime Commissioners Victim's Commission has succeeded in building a culture of collaboration and ownership for victim care through the voluntary and community sector so that they experience quality support from the first point of contact.

BCWA listens and hears the voices of those that we provide services to. This is done in ways that enable a dialogue, feedback and impact; their voice is vital to the future direction of services. Where gaps in service are identified BCWA aims to respond. The integrated abuse support vision aims to offer help and support to anyone who has experienced abuse and for that service to be under one roof and easily accessible.

BCWA continues to work with the Salvation Army and the England and Wales delivery partners on challenging local responses, improving systems and services for victims of modern slavery within the National Referral Mechanism.

Sustaining Services

BCWA have worked hard to secure contracts, identify new areas of funding and work in collaboration with partners to secure regional funds. Services continue to be available through open tender processes, however, they are tendered with reduced budgets and often demanding specifications.

Despite this ongoing pressure the organisation continues to experience success via tendering opportunities, joint bids with partners, funding applications to a variety of sources and maintains a good knowledge of external funders' interests and priorities. Funders/commissioners continue to express satisfaction with the standards of service delivery and performance, as well as BCWA's ability to be responsive, innovative and dynamic in its solutions for victims. At all times BCWA maintain a meaningful dialogue with clients across all services ensuring that they remain central to the core values and influence the response.

Quality is essential to the organisation. BCWA is assessed externally by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) for quality of service and safeguarding, International Standards Organisation (ISO) related to Environmental, business continuity, Information Security and quality standards. Whilst these are conditions of the modern day slavery support contract, BCWA has adopted the standards across all services. Regular internal strategic and operational review enables all services to remain relevant, victim focused and of high quality. Internal and external performance management and review ensure that services are delivered in accordance with contract or funder requirements maximising the resources available.

Community Services - Domestic Abuse

BCWA continues to provide commissioned services for Sandwell, Dudley and Walsall local strategic partnerships and continue to provide domestic abuse support services. High risk victims continue to be supported by an Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA), who provide immediate support and minimise risk, linking with local Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC). BCWA is integral to the Walsall Strengthening Families model and the Black Country Family Drug and Alcohol Court (FDAC), where highly vulnerable children are identified and support around the family is provided. Both specialist areas will be independently evaluated.

High risk victims continue to be supported by an independent domestic abuse adviser (IDVA). Volumes are increasing and further support has been made available by the West Midlands Office of the Police Crime Commissioner (OPCC) to support this increase and strengthen the regional Multiagency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) that take place across the Black Country.

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

Report of the Trustees FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

BCWA is now embedded in local operational spaces. This has enabled victims to access services easily and works with partners to advise on identification and referral to our services. BCWA continue to operate within the following structures:

- o Multi agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH) - many referrals are received through this route as partners share information, jointly risk assess and provide a multi-agency response.
- o GP Practices - delivering the national Identification and Referral to Improve Safety (IRIS) programme; a GP practice-based model that provides training and education, clinical enquiry, care pathways and an enhanced referral pathway to specialist domestic violence services.
- o Accident and Emergency Departments - Based within Russell's Hall Hospital Trust, specialist advocates identify victims presenting with multiple injuries as a result of abuse. BCWA continue to triangulate support for victims in both primary and acute services to reduce risk and increase safety
- o Substance misuse commissioned services. Working particularly within the Sandwell Blue Light Project, BCWA is part of the multi-agency operational group to ensure a joint identification and ownership of the highest impact clients, both as victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse.
- o Early help hubs. Working at a local level with a range of professional's supporting victims and working to keep them safe.
- o Schools where children have been identified through police notifications. BCWA has worked with West Midlands Police, Walsall MBC and the Home Office to secure funds to support children and young people.

Stalking Services

BCWA continues to develop its Stalking service. The team uses a number of specialist tools, including the SRP (Stalking Risk Profile), SASH (Screening Assessment for Stalking and Harassment) and Dr Jane Monckton-Smith's Homicide Timeline to profile perpetrators. This expertise is invaluable in our advocacy with agencies such as police and probation, to help them manage offenders, address stalking behaviour directly and safeguard victims. This service continues to be supported by the Office of the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner.

The OPCC was successful in obtaining Home Office funding for supporting perpetrators of abuse; BCWA provides continued and ongoing support to the victim. The Early Awareness Stalking Intervention ("EASI") pilot is in partnership with HMPPS Psychology Services Group, West Midlands Police and focuses on improving how they identify and address stalking. The vision for Psychology Services Group and West Midlands Police is to trial a cost- and time-efficient, targeted, and evidence-informed intervention for those who are known to have engaged in stalking, delivered at the earliest stage possible. Police training is being supported by the Alice Ruggles Trust. The project is being evaluated by the University of Derby in their Faculties of Criminology and Forensic

Rape, Sexual Violence and Exploitation Services

Independent Sexual Violence Advisers (ISVA) play a key role in helping survivors to access and engage with the criminal justice system. Police investigations and case progression had been significantly affected during COVID and continued relationships with specialist police officers ensures that victims achieve the wrap around support they need.

BCWA has been proactive in the response to the End to End rape Review and challenging systems and procedures that have not/do not always service victims well. Ensuring that all victims get access to the valuable services of an ISVA remains constant. BCWA's team of ISVAs (independent sexual violence advisers) who support both male and female survivors of rape and sexual abuse across the Black Country; in Sandwell, Dudley, Wolverhampton and Walsall. The service includes specialist advocates who support child and adult victims of childhood sexual abuse. BCWA continue to provide links from the regional Sexual Assault Referrals Centres (SARC) into local services and provides specialist therapeutic interventions. The ISVA continues to support at court and complete the Criminal Injuries Compensation administration with the victim. Where necessary the ISVA provides advice and guidance to colleagues within the criminal justice arena.

Children and Young People Services

Specialist ISVA's (CHISVA) continue to support children and young people who have experienced rape and sexual violence. Our specialist children and young people's services support young victims of rape, sexual assault, child sexual exploitation (CSE) and domestic violence. This area of work continues to work as partnerships gain a greater understanding of the impact of abuse on children. Working with both adult and child will strengthen relationships and develop resilience and confidence in young people as they progress into adulthood.

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

Report of the Trustees FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Women's Justice

During the year BCWA worked with Women's Justice Partners to develop the future shape of women's services in light of the renationalisation of the National Probation Services. As a provider in the Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRC), BCWA supported lead partner Changing Lives (National Charity) to deliver the regional women's offer under the new probation arrangements. Existing contracts via the CRC were extended to ensure smooth transition from the CRC contracting arrangement to the new one. BCWA continues to provide a specialist early-intervention project, commissioned by the Office of the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner, which provides diversion from custody for women in Sandwell and Dudley, called New Chance. Women access this service following arrest; they are referred by police to our service, which offers practical and emotional support aimed at helping them to move forward in their lives and avoid future offending. Despite the funding ending from the The Eveson Trust, BCWA felt that we could not end the support to street homeless women post COVID. The service continues to receive positive feedback and is often told they are a lifeline to many women. Women will often present with multiple disadvantage and in need of many agencies to help. Their experiences of rejection (from services) mean that support is intensive and long term so women know that we are always there for them. BCWA women's justice workers facilitate relationships with other agencies and rebuild confidence in women that service are there to help. Reductions in other services has meant that there is an increased pressure on this service. Women presenting with mental health challenges and PTSD is increasing. BCWA continues to encourage the co-location of professionals such as sexual health professionals and probation offices. The service and partners launched the Women's Health Care pilot providing access to women's health services and screening within a BCWA site. All women in BCWA service can access the service.

Accommodation and Outreach Service

Sandwell MBC recommissioned BCWA to provide a safe accommodation for victims of violence and abuse, following a redefined service specification and tendering process. Demand for services remain high with demand always outstripping need. BCWA is committed to identifying additional units of accommodation to meet needs and demand. Supporting children living within the safe accommodation provision is vital. Their lives had been significantly affected as a result of COVID and the effects on their lives living with domestic abuse, potentially long term. Counselling and support for children and young people has been vital. BCWA continue to receive generous gifts and donations to support women and children living in safe accommodation, with one donor covering the cost of all school uniforms, their Christmas dinner and funds to contribute to rent costs.

BCWA continue to provide units of accommodation and outreach services spanning the West Midlands for victims of Modern Day Slavery (MDS) in partnership with the Salvation Army, who hold the national contract with the Home Office. Each year sees an increase in victims accessing the service, demonstrating greater awareness and understanding of modern slavery and the extent of it within our communities. Risks are very high for the victims, as often the traffickers will make significant attempts to find them. Therefore, security needs to be high for both victims and staff providing this vital service.

The service works with a range of stakeholders to gather intelligence on locations and vulnerabilities, where exploitation operates and takes an active part in the media highlighting the plight of victims. BCWA also contributes to national discussions, legislative changes and acts as expert consultants to the West Midlands Modern Slavery Strategy and West Midlands Police Multi Agency Policy and Procedures. We represent survivors on the West Midlands Anti-Slavery Network, Human Trafficking Advisory Foundation Forum, and PAN West Midlands Multi-Agency Group.

BCWA has contributed to discussions regarding The Modern Slavery Statutory Guidance, updated to reflect the changes introduced by the Nationality and Borders Act 2022. The guidance came into effect from 30 January 2023. The guidance introduces a number of new changes including a reduced Reflection and Recovery Period (30 days instead of the previous 45 days), additional recovery periods, new thresholds for reasonable grounds and an updated definition of human trafficking. It also sets out the indicators of modern slavery and confirms that, when determining whether a person is a victim of modern slavery, regard can be had to a potential victim's age, family relationships and physical or mental disabilities, which impair a person's ability to protect themselves. BCWA will monitor the impact of the legislation on victims within relevant partnerships.

BCWA continues to work within local strategic partnerships as they increase their awareness of modern slavery and acknowledge the vital role that they play in identifying and coordinating rescue.

Legal restrictions on economic activity may be increasing risks of exploitation in other contexts. Concerns have been raised for sex workers as nightclubs shut, and sex work is pushed underground, making workers increasingly vulnerable to trafficking.

Counselling and Therapeutic Services

Counselling and specialist therapeutic interventions underpin the support services and are an essential component of a holistic approach to addressing trauma. The service offer continues to combine both face to face and the use of technology to counsel victims.

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

Report of the Trustees FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Business development and finance

Strategic and partnership working remains a vital part of our work. The corporate centre continues to strengthen following investment into key positions in finance, human resources, business and operational development and communications. BCWA produce regular newsletters, use social media, and articles in national press on related issues to highlight the plight of victims of abuse and the impact of national policy on victim's lives.

Quality, Learning and Enterprise

BCWA have robust internal audit functions, auditing the standards and quality of service against national standards. Reports, analysis and trends to strategic partnerships, funders and commissioners are available on a regular basis, outlining the performance of the service against specification/commission. Training and development of employees all increased in the last 12 months and employees recognise the impact of training on their practice.

BCWA has continued with many of the online learning opportunities established during COVID and has since developed a Workforce development team to focus on the continual professional development of all its workforce, matching national standards against practice. The appointment of 2 Project Officers located within the Executive team has enabled BCWA to pursue an internal audit function to assess standards and quality. BCWA will strengthen this function in the next financial year as it looks towards specialist roles, focused on contract/standard compliance, data management and quality management.

Employees are developed through an organisational training plan and encouraged to pursue external qualifications as part of their Professional Development Plan (PDP). This will be further strengthened as we move towards Employment Competency Frameworks to further develop our employee skills and talents. The organisation continues to support the Home Office standards for Independent domestic violence and sexual violence advocacy services as defined by SafeLives, Lime Culture, Women's Aid Federation of England and Wales and Respect and the Care Quality commission.

BCWA remains an organisation recognised for its expertise in both policy and practice. The senior management team have been involved in the development of national policy, national accredited training courses and the continuing professional development of health and other professionals. During 2022/23, BCWA remained lead trainers within local strategic partners, providing expertise on interpersonal violence, abuse and exploitation.

The organisation continues to receive gifts in kind, including toys, food and toiletries from a variety of women's organisations, religious groups, and individuals and other organisations, as well as hours of volunteer time amounting to over 300 hrs.

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

Report of the Trustees FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Our income increased from £7,511,649 to £8,600,515, an increase of 14%, whilst expenditure rose from £5,686,956 to £7,065,286. The increased income is a reflection of the increase in funds to support the direct service delivery. The organisation continues to realise its longer term plan to diversify funds away from the statutory funding and has been able to attract new funding streams to support existing services and take on new projects.

Expenses and overheads have been tightly controlled and new contracts reflect the savings shown. The increase in expenditure is due to a response to service increase, where operational and staff costs increased in line with our provision of extra services.

The Statement of Financial activities shows an increase in funds of £1,535,229. Our reserves now stand at £6,725,057 of which £1,195,907 is restricted and £5,529,150 is unrestricted. The balance of unrestricted reserves includes £3,053,762 which is designated to meet future commitments. Therefore the balance of free reserves is £2,475,388 of which £1,608,476 relates to fixed assets and £866,912 relates to net current assets.

Reserves Policy

The Board of Trustees has examined the charity's requirements for reserves in light of the main risks to the organisation.

The Board of Trustees has agreed to support a 3-year strategy that includes:

- Strategic Development Fund - where the organisation undertakes research and development to inform future service provision and secure additional funds for longer term service delivery costs of £364,915.
- Service Continuity Fund - where the organisation maintains costs for closure as well as 6 months' running costs of £1,081,347.
- Property Contingency Fund - where the organisation has to ensure sufficient funds to maintain the properties to a high standard, ensure routine repairs and maintenance and be prepared in the event of major structural damage - £235,000.
- Redundancy Reserve - where the organisation will pay the redundancy over the capped limit to long term employees - £122,500.
- Capital Reserve - where the organisation will invest in property to meet the demand of the services - £1,250,000.

FUTURE PLANS

Future plans include:

1. Development of regional working opportunities for joint working and tender opportunities.
2. Implementation of new policies ensuring that the systems are fit for purpose.
3. Securing work currently provided via tendering and commissioning.
4. Improving integration across all services addressing the increasing complexities of victims presenting into service.
5. Identifying new opportunities for funding to sustain and continue essential work.
6. Contributing to strategic and operational plans with a range of partners to create a "whole systems approach" to supporting victims wherever they present ensuring that victims remain supported, risks identified and protected.
7. Continuing to influence strategy at a local, regional and national level.
8. Ensuring consistency and quality of services for victims.
9. Reviewing services; evaluating cost effectiveness, efficiency and operational delivery. Reviewing governance arrangements and strengthening corporate services meeting the needs of a growing organisation.
10. Further development of the training and educational programmes and developments working within local educational partnerships and academic institutions.
11. Establishing improved solutions to victims of violence and abuse that have little or no access to public funds and ensure that this issue remains high on the strategic agenda.
12. Ensuring that all services meet nationally recognised quality standards.
13. Creating different and new strategic partnerships and joint working to meet the needs of vulnerable people with complex and diverse issues.
14. Increasing the property portfolio by purchase and other legal arrangements.
15. Developing a "Women's Centre" approach, widening the opportunities for women
16. Exploring the implementation of gendered spaces in line with national standards

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

Report of the Trustees FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

This is a company limited by guarantee and its operations include:

- The provision of supported accommodation for individuals leaving violence, abuse and exploitation.
- Outreach and resettlement support services for children, young people and adult victims living in the community.
- The provision of a community-based support and advocacy service for victims of abuse in and out of the criminal justice system.
- Community engagement/involvement and peer support for victims of violence and abuse.
- Delivery of training and awareness raising to both statutory and non-statutory agencies, work with schools, colleges and other educational establishments outlining the effects/ impact of abuse explaining models of interventions.
- Working in partnership both at a strategic and operational level with the statutory and voluntary sector to develop a co-ordinated response to tackling domestic abuse.

Governing Document

The organisation is a charitable company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales, incorporated in 1993 and registered as a charity in 1994. The company was established under a Memorandum of Association which established the objectives and powers of the charitable company and is governed under its Articles of Association. In the event of the company being wound up members are required to contribute an amount not exceeding £1.00.

Recruitment and Appointment of Management Committee

The Directors of the Company are also Charity Trustees for the purpose of charity law and under the Articles are known as the members of the Management Committee. Under the requirements of the Memorandum and Articles of Association, the members of the management committee must be re-elected each year.

The Management Committee, where possible, seeks to ensure that the needs of victims of abuse whether adults, children or young people are appropriately reflected through the diversity of the Trustee body. To enhance the potential pool of Trustees, promotions take place to attract skilled individuals from all sectors to contribute their skill, knowledge and commitment. This is regularly discussed at Board meetings to ensure good representation.

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID
Report of the Trustees
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Trustee Induction and training

Trustees are familiar with the operational work of the charity and are supported by the CEO through a Trustee information pack and the opportunity to visit the various services, as part of an optional induction.

Risk management

The management committee has conducted a review of the major risks to which the charity is exposed and this is outlined in its Strategic Plan. A risk register has been developed and will be updated annually to assess the risks to services and funds and any other changes that the charity faces.

Financial procedures are adhered to and regularly reviewed with regard to authorisation of transactions for all project expenditure.

All contracted services work within relevant contractual timescales, quality standards and are monitored externally on a quarterly basis and internally on a monthly basis, in accordance with the organisation's performance framework. This ensures a consistent quality of service for all operational aspects of services.

All Service Level Agreements (SLAs) have agreed targets and outcomes and are performance monitored on a quarterly basis. Services aim to work within nationally recognised standards of practice and seek external accreditation, e.g. Women's Aid Federation of England and Wales, Safe Lives, The Survivors Trust, Rape Crisis England and Wales and the British Association of Counsellors and Psychotherapists (BACP).

All grants/funds/contracts awarded are for specific time periods and have project plans and milestones to ensure work is monitored and meeting required standards. Regular contact with commissioners ensures that the work is on target and achieving its expected outcomes.

Board meetings take place every 8 weeks as part of an annual plan supported by a subcommittee structure that enables ongoing reporting and risk management across the organisation.

Organisational Structure

Black Country Women's Aid has a Management Committee/Board of 5 members who meet as a full Board every 8 weeks. The meeting dates are set as part of an annual calendar agreed at the start of each new reporting year.

In addition, there is a sub-committee structure that enables detailed operational and strategic reports to be presented and discussed. Each committee has its own Terms of Reference and an agreed work plan and assigned policies and procedures to ensure regular review and relevance. Meetings are scheduled to take place in between Board meetings to ensure necessary discussion and ratification. All minutes and decision making is circulated and presented to the full board for recommendation, further discussion and final approval. These include:

- Finance subcommittee that reports specifically around the finances and budgets and infrastructure assets of the organisation.
- Facilities Management sub committee that oversees property management and health and safety.
- Quality sub committee that reports on standards and quality of services.
- Workforce Development subcommittee that focuses on human resource standards and practice and employee development.

Legal personnel advice is outsourced to Peninsula Business services and available for managers 24 hours a day. All personnel matters are reported to the Board and, where necessary, a special committee is called.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) holds regular meetings with the senior management team consisting of all corporate and operational managers. This enables connectivity with the Trustees and throughout the organisation. Information is cascaded to employees to ensure they are kept up to date. The CEO also produces regular bulletins for all staff outlining key organisational messages. This was vital during COVID and enabled direct communication channels with staff.

Where necessary, E-reports are provided and extraordinary meetings are called. Papers are reported to the next Board meeting for full ratification.

Members come from a variety of related professional backgrounds and are responsible for the strategic direction and policy of the Charity. A skills audit takes place of Board members to ensure that the organisation is equipped with the right skills to reach its full potential. Where practicable, the Trustees undertake an annual business planning event to discuss organisational progress, strategic direction and agree future projections.

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

Report of the Trustees FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

The Trustees delegate responsibility to the CEO who also acts as Company Secretary. In addition, the CEO holds the lead responsibility for policy and performance, financial management, employee recruitment and management, as well as operational service delivery. The CEO delegates tasks to lead personnel - Deputy Chief Executive/ Director of Finance on all financial matters and the appointed service leads on operational matters who report back on a regular basis.

The CEO, working with her team of Heads of Service, managers and corporate colleagues, takes the lead for developing employees, apprentices and volunteers ensuring that their learning experience is translated into operational practice in line with good practice.

Senior Management Structure

BCWA is led by a senior management structure comprising of the Chief Executive Officer, Deputy Chief Executive/ Director of Finance, Director of Community Services, Interim Director of Accommodation, Head of Rape and Sexual Violence and Abuse support services incorporating Therapeutic services, Head of Modern Slavery (x2), Head of Workforce Development and the Executive Officer. The total salaries of the Senior Management team were £401,590, (2021/22 £387,003). This represents 11% of the total salary cost to the organisation.

The senior management remuneration approach is to adopt the following principles:

- Internal job evaluation taking into account the distinct elements of the role
- Internal job evaluation against comparative positions within the organisation
- External benchmarking based on market factors

Related Parties

The work of the organisation sits within a number of strategic frameworks both locally, regionally and nationally. The CEO and managers play a significant role across all areas of business including developing and influencing strategy, continuous improvement of services and developing new opportunities to support victims, ensuring financial plans are sustainable and guaranteeing that the victim's voice remains at the centre of all decision making.

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The trustees (who are also the directors of Black Country Women's Aid for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Report of the Trustees and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charity SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In so far as the trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditors are unaware; and
- the trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditors are aware of that information.

AUDITORS

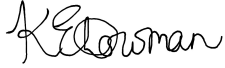
The auditors, Copia Wealth & Tax Limited, will be proposed for re-appointment at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting.

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

**Report of the Trustees
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023**

This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Approved by order of the board of trustees on 13 December 2023 and signed on its behalf by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K Dowman', with a stylized, cursive script.

Karen Elizabeth Dowman - Trustee

Report of the Independent Auditors to the Members of Black Country Women's Aid

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Black Country Women's Aid (the 'charitable company') for the year ended 31 March 2023 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2023 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report, other than the financial statements and our Report of the Independent Auditors thereon.

Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, 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 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.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

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

- the information given in the Report of the Trustees for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Report of the Trustees has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Report of the Trustees.

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

- adequate accounting records have not been kept or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- the trustees were not entitled to take advantage of the small companies exemption from the requirement to prepare a Strategic Report or in preparing the Report of the Trustees.

Report of the Independent Auditors to the Members of Black Country Women's Aid

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Our 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 a Report of the Independent Auditors 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:

- We gained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks within which the charitable company is required to operate and focussed on those that have a direct effect on the determination of material amounts and disclosures within the financial statements - primarily these were the Companies Act 2006, the Charities Act 2011 and the Charities SORP (FRS 102). We assessed compliance with these laws and regulations as part of our audit procedures in respect of related items within the financial statements. Our audit procedures in this regard were limited to enquiry of Trustees and other management and inspection of any regulatory and legal correspondence, if any.
- We identified items within the financial statements at greatest risk of a material impact from irregularities, including fraud, which were considered to be the recognition of grant income and overriding of controls by management. We undertook audit procedures to respond to these risks, including enquiries of management, sample testing on the posting of journals, review of the basis of accounting estimates and a review of the timing of recognition of grant income.
- Due to the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we may not have detected some material misstatements within the financial statements despite properly planning and performing our audit in line with auditing standards. This could be due to a number of factors such as collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations or the over-ride of controls. We point out that we are not responsible for preventing non-compliance and cannot be expected to detect non-compliance with all laws and regulations.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our Report of the Independent Auditors.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditors' 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 charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

S D Philpott

Shaun Philpott (Senior Statutory Auditor)
for and on behalf of Copia Wealth & Tax Limited
Chartered Accountants
Statutory Auditors
8 Pendeford Place
Pendeford Business Park
Wobaston Road
Wolverhampton
WV9 5HD

13 December 2023

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

**Statement of Financial Activities
(Incorporating an Income and Expenditure Account)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023**

		Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2023 Total funds £	2022 Total funds £
	Notes				
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM					
Donations and legacies	2	155,357	-	155,357	91,994
Charitable activities	4				
Refuge based support		943,750	50,000	993,750	874,629
Community based support		1,692,512	2,177,920	3,870,432	3,680,480
Modern day slavery		3,464,517	-	3,464,517	2,724,260
Capital projects		-	-	-	60,519
Other trading activities	3	67,419	49,040	116,459	79,767
Total		6,323,555	2,276,960	8,600,515	7,511,649
EXPENDITURE ON					
Charitable activities	5				
Refuge based support		1,149,645	53,012	1,202,657	893,634
Community based support		1,492,963	2,330,689	3,823,652	2,908,053
Modern day slavery		2,021,788	17,189	2,038,977	1,885,269
Total		4,664,396	2,400,890	7,065,286	5,686,956
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)		1,659,159	(123,930)	1,535,229	1,824,693
Transfers between funds	17	(1,599)	1,599	-	-
Net movement in funds		1,657,560	(122,331)	1,535,229	1,824,693
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		3,871,590	1,318,238	5,189,828	3,365,135
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		5,529,150	1,195,907	6,725,057	5,189,828

The notes form part of these financial statements

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

Balance Sheet 31 MARCH 2023

	Notes	2023 £	2022 £
FIXED ASSETS			
Tangible assets	12	2,411,207	1,204,023
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors	13	1,838,406	2,088,076
Cash at bank and in hand		2,962,867	2,094,072
		4,801,273	4,182,148
CREDITORS			
Amounts falling due within one year	14	(487,423)	(196,343)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		4,313,850	3,985,805
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		6,725,057	5,189,828
NET ASSETS		6,725,057	5,189,828
FUNDS	17		
Unrestricted funds		5,529,150	3,871,590
Restricted funds		1,195,907	1,318,238
TOTAL FUNDS		6,725,057	5,189,828

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to charitable companies subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on 13 December 2023 and were signed on its behalf by:



Karen Elizabeth Dowman - Trustee

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

Cash Flow Statement
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

	Notes	2023 £	2022 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Cash generated from operations	1	<u>2,115,487</u>	<u>718,945</u>
Net cash provided by operating activities		<u>2,115,487</u>	<u>718,945</u>
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		<u>(1,246,692)</u>	<u>(91,712)</u>
Net cash used in investing activities		<u>(1,246,692)</u>	<u>(91,712)</u>
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period		<u>868,795</u>	<u>627,233</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		<u>2,094,072</u>	<u>1,466,839</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period		<u><u>2,962,867</u></u>	<u><u>2,094,072</u></u>

The notes form part of these financial statements

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

**Notes to the Cash Flow Statement
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023**

1. RECONCILIATION OF NET INCOME TO NET CASH FLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES

	2023	2022
	£	£
Net income for the reporting period (as per the Statement of Financial Activities)	1,535,229	1,824,693
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation charges	39,508	33,020
Decrease/(increase) in debtors	249,670	(720,357)
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	291,080	(418,411)
Net cash provided by operations	2,115,487	718,945

2. ANALYSIS OF CHANGES IN NET FUNDS

	At 1.4.22	Cash flow	At 31.3.23
	£	£	£
Net cash			
Cash at bank and in hand	2,094,072	868,795	2,962,867
	2,094,072	868,795	2,962,867
Total	2,094,072	868,795	2,962,867

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

Notes to the Financial Statements FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of preparing the financial statements

The financial statements of the charitable company, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019)', Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Companies Act 2006. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

Income

All income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities once the charity has entitlement to the funds, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Charitable activities

Charitable activities are as follows:

Refuge based support
Community based support
Modern slavery
Equipment grants

Resources expended

Staff costs and overhead expenses are allocated to activities on the basis of staff time spent on those activities.

Value added tax is not recoverable by the charity and as such is included in the relevant costs in the Statement of Financial Activities.

Charitable activities comprises of those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them.

Governance costs include those costs associated with meeting the constitutional and statutory requirements of the charity and include the audit fees and costs linked to the strategic management of the charity.

Tangible fixed assets

Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life.

Freehold property	- 2% on cost
Fixtures and fittings	- 33% on cost

Taxation

As a charity, Black Country Women's Aid is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within section 466 to 493 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 to the extent that these are applicable to its charitable objects. No tax charges have arisen in the charity.

Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are donations and other income received or generated for the objects of the charity without specified purposes and are available as general funds.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes. Expenditure which meets these criteria is identified to the fund, together with a fair allocation of management and support costs.

Designated funds are unrestricted funds earmarked by the Trustees for particular purposes.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

Donated goods and services

Donated goods and services are included at the value to the charity where this can be quantified. The value of services provided by general volunteers has not been included in these accounts.

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES - continued

Pension costs and other post-retirement benefits

The charitable company operates a defined contribution pension scheme. Contributions payable to the charitable company's pension scheme are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities in the period to which they relate.

Hire purchase and leasing commitments

Assets obtained under hire purchase contracts or finance leases are capitalised in the balance sheet. Those held under hire purchase contracts are depreciated over their estimated useful lives. Those held under finance leases are depreciated over their estimated useful lives or the lease term whichever is shorter.

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the statement of financial activity on a straight line basis over the period of the lease.

2. DONATIONS AND LEGACIES

	2023	2022
	£	£
Donations	<u>155,357</u>	<u>91,994</u>

3. OTHER TRADING ACTIVITIES

	2023	2022
	£	£
Management and training fees	<u>116,459</u>	<u>79,767</u>

4. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	Activity	2023	2022
		£	£
Grants and contracts	Refuge based support	468,960	425,407
Accommodation charges	Refuge based support	524,790	449,222
Grants and contracts	Community based support	3,870,432	3,680,480
Grants and contracts	Modern day slavery	3,464,517	2,724,260
Grants and contracts	Capital projects	-	60,519
		<u>8,328,699</u>	<u>7,339,888</u>

Grants received, included in the above, are as follows:

	2023	2022
	£	£
Refuge: Sandwell MBC - Supporting People	331,399	305,979
Refuge: Sandwell MBC - DCLG	50,000	119,428
Community: Sandwell MBC - Specialist DV and SV Support	601,767	328,143
Community: Sandwell MBC - Safer Sandwell Partnership	40,000	40,000
Community: Dudley MBC - DA Support Service	283,878	123,424
Community: Dudley MBC - ED Advocacy Project	-	57,135
Community: Walsall MBC - DV/ Children	621,750	359,957
Community: West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner	1,268,206	1,391,652
Community: West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner - New Chance	44,574	44,109
Community: West Midlands Police - VRU	-	6,915
Community: SWM Probation Trust - Female Service Users	-	73,902
Community: Changing Lives - Female Service Users	209,926	170,792
Community: Home Office - CSE and Our Future	149,718	363,055
Community: Ministry of Justice - Rape and SA Support Fund	413,432	385,542
Community: NHS Sandwell and West Birmingham - ED Advocacy Project	-	19,156
Community: NHS IRIS Combined Authority	189,810	197,671
Community: Children in Need - Young People's Advocate	-	11,123
Community: Homeless Link	-	24,761
Carried forward	<u>4,204,460</u>	<u>4,022,744</u>

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

4. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES - continued

	2023 £	2022 £
Brought forward	4,204,460	4,022,744
Community: SCVO	131,583	50,881
Community: RSVP	3,349	3,262
Community: Eveson Charitable Trust	-	29,000
Modern Day Slavery: Salvation Army	3,464,517	2,724,260
Modern Day Slavery: Capital Projects: Heart of England - Building Better Lives	-	60,519
	<u>7,803,909</u>	<u>6,890,666</u>

5. CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES COSTS

	Direct Costs (see note 6) £	Support costs (see note 7) £	Totals £
Refuge based support	1,094,933	107,724	1,202,657
Community based support	3,123,439	700,213	3,823,652
Modern day slavery	1,752,543	286,434	2,038,977
	<u>5,970,915</u>	<u>1,094,371</u>	<u>7,065,286</u>

6. DIRECT COSTS OF CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	2023 £	2022 £
Staff costs	4,664,755	4,035,041
Activity costs	272,950	180,526
Office costs	157,515	157,315
Property costs	875,695	645,960
	<u>5,970,915</u>	<u>5,018,842</u>

7. SUPPORT COSTS

	Depreciation £	Office costs £	Property costs £
Refuge based support	-	52,359	17,045
Community based support	-	340,332	110,799
Modern day slavery	17,121	130,897	42,615
	<u>17,121</u>	<u>523,588</u>	<u>170,459</u>
	Staff costs, travel etc £	Governance costs £	Totals £
Refuge based support	37,282	1,038	107,724
Community based support	242,335	6,747	700,213
Modern day slavery	93,206	2,595	286,434
	<u>372,823</u>	<u>10,380</u>	<u>1,094,371</u>

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

7. SUPPORT COSTS - continued

Activity	Basis of allocation
Depreciation	Usage
Office costs	Usage
Property costs	Usage
Staff costs, travel etc	Usage
Governance costs	Usage

Support costs, included in the above, are as follows:

				2023	2022
	Refuge based support £	Community based support £	Modern day slavery £	Total activities £	Total activities £
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	-	-	17,121	17,121	17,090
Office costs	52,359	340,332	130,897	523,588	254,842
Property costs	17,045	110,799	42,615	170,459	154,327
Staff costs & travel etc	37,282	242,335	93,206	372,823	231,895
Auditors' remuneration	1,038	6,747	2,595	10,380	9,960
	<u>107,724</u>	<u>700,213</u>	<u>286,434</u>	<u>1,094,371</u>	<u>668,114</u>

8. NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)

Net income/(expenditure) is stated after charging/(crediting):

	2023 £	2022 £
Auditors' remuneration	10,380	9,960
Depreciation - owned assets	<u>39,508</u>	<u>33,020</u>

9. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 31 March 2023 nor for the year ended 31 March 2022.

Trustees' expenses

There were no trustees' expenses paid for the year ended 31 March 2023 nor for the year ended 31 March 2022.

10. STAFF COSTS

	2023 £	2022 £
Wages and salaries	4,158,342	3,490,828
Social security	385,708	292,817
Pension	166,749	137,954
	<u>4,710,799</u>	<u>3,921,599</u>

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	2023	2022
Direct charitable work	149	141
Administration	23	18
	<u>172</u>	<u>159</u>

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

10. STAFF COSTS - continued

The number of employees whose employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) exceeded £60,000 was:

	2023	2022
£70,001 - £80,000	1	-
£80,001 - £90,000	-	1
£90,001 - £100,000	1	-
	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>

Black Country Women's Aid considers its key management personnel to be the Chief Executive Officer . The total employment benefits of the key management personnel were £91,672 (2022: £84,181).

The company operates a Group Personal Pension Plan to which the charitable company contributes 5% and employees contribute 3%.

11. COMPARATIVES FOR THE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM			
Donations and legacies	91,994	-	91,994
Charitable activities			
Refuge based support	755,201	119,428	874,629
Community based support	1,099,480	2,581,000	3,680,480
Modern day slavery	2,724,260	-	2,724,260
Capital projects	-	60,519	60,519
Other trading activities	79,767	-	79,767
Total	<u>4,750,702</u>	<u>2,760,947</u>	<u>7,511,649</u>
EXPENDITURE ON			
Charitable activities			
Refuge based support	792,366	101,268	893,634
Community based support	572,701	2,335,352	2,908,053
Modern day slavery	1,868,179	17,090	1,885,269
Total	<u>3,233,246</u>	<u>2,453,710</u>	<u>5,686,956</u>
NET INCOME	1,517,456	307,237	1,824,693
Transfers between funds	(29,018)	29,018	-
Net movement in funds	<u>1,488,438</u>	<u>336,255</u>	<u>1,824,693</u>
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS			
Total funds brought forward	2,383,152	981,983	3,365,135
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	<u>3,871,590</u>	<u>1,318,238</u>	<u>5,189,828</u>

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023**

12. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Freehold property £	Fixtures and fittings £	Totals £
COST			
At 1 April 2022	1,296,524	138,123	1,434,647
Additions	1,194,942	51,750	1,246,692
Disposals	-	(66,669)	(66,669)
At 31 March 2023	2,491,466	123,204	2,614,670
DEPRECIATION			
At 1 April 2022	99,592	131,032	230,624
Charge for year	32,417	7,091	39,508
Eliminated on disposal	-	(66,669)	(66,669)
At 31 March 2023	132,009	71,454	203,463
NET BOOK VALUE			
At 31 March 2023	2,359,457	51,750	2,411,207
At 31 March 2022	1,196,932	7,091	1,204,023

13. DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2023 £	2022 £
Trade debtors	1,168,560	1,132,321
Rent Receivable	66,802	-
Other debtors	505,866	882,508
Prepayments	97,178	73,247
	1,838,406	2,088,076

14. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2023 £	2022 £
Trade creditors	169,926	41,192
Social security and other taxes	186,448	72,652
Other creditors	47,734	29,935
Deferred income	43,881	18,901
Accrued expenses	39,434	33,663
	487,423	196,343

15. SECURED DEBTS

A charge has been secured on the freehold property known as Karen House on 16 March 2020, in favour of the Heart of England Community Foundation, by way of a legal mortgage.

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023**

16. ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2023 Total funds £	2022 Total funds £
Fixed assets	1,608,476	802,731	2,411,207	1,204,023
Current assets	4,408,097	393,176	4,801,273	4,182,148
Current liabilities	(487,423)	-	(487,423)	(196,343)
	<u>5,529,150</u>	<u>1,195,907</u>	<u>6,725,057</u>	<u>5,189,828</u>

17. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

	At 1.4.22 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 31.3.23 £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	2,000,568	1,659,159	(1,184,339)	2,475,388
Service Continuity Fund	496,022	-	585,325	1,081,347
Strategic Development Fund	175,000	-	189,915	364,915
Property Contingency Fund	100,000	-	135,000	235,000
Redundancy reserve	100,000	-	22,500	122,500
Capital reserve	1,000,000	-	250,000	1,250,000
	<u>3,871,590</u>	<u>1,659,159</u>	<u>(1,599)</u>	<u>5,529,150</u>
Restricted funds				
Refuge Based Support	18,160	(3,012)	-	15,148
Community Based Support	481,757	(103,729)	-	378,028
Heart of England Capital Grant	818,321	(17,189)	1,599	802,731
	<u>1,318,238</u>	<u>(123,930)</u>	<u>1,599</u>	<u>1,195,907</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>5,189,828</u>	<u>1,535,229</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>6,725,057</u>

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	6,323,555	(4,664,396)	1,659,159
Restricted funds			
Refuge Based Support	50,000	(53,012)	(3,012)
Community Based Support	2,226,960	(2,330,689)	(103,729)
Heart of England Capital Grant	-	(17,189)	(17,189)
	<u>2,276,960</u>	<u>(2,400,890)</u>	<u>(123,930)</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>8,600,515</u>	<u>(7,065,286)</u>	<u>1,535,229</u>

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

17. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

Comparatives for movement in funds

	At 1.4.21 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 31.3.22 £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	1,684,134	1,517,456	(1,201,022)	2,000,568
Service Continuity Fund	522,018	-	(25,996)	496,022
Strategic Development Fund	102,000	-	73,000	175,000
Property Contingency Fund	75,000	-	25,000	100,000
Redundancy reserve	-	-	100,000	100,000
Capital reserve	-	-	1,000,000	1,000,000
	<u>2,383,152</u>	<u>1,517,456</u>	<u>(29,018)</u>	<u>3,871,590</u>
Restricted funds				
Refuge Based Support	-	18,160	-	18,160
Community Based Support	238,285	245,648	(2,176)	481,757
Heart of England Capital Grant	743,698	43,429	31,194	818,321
	<u>981,983</u>	<u>307,237</u>	<u>29,018</u>	<u>1,318,238</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>3,365,135</u>	<u>1,824,693</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>5,189,828</u>

Comparative net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	4,750,702	(3,233,246)	1,517,456
Restricted funds			
Refuge Based Support	119,428	(101,268)	18,160
Community Based Support	2,581,000	(2,335,352)	245,648
Heart of England Capital Grant	60,519	(17,090)	43,429
	<u>2,760,947</u>	<u>(2,453,710)</u>	<u>307,237</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>7,511,649</u>	<u>(5,686,956)</u>	<u>1,824,693</u>

The General Fund is to meet the day to day cash flow requirements of the charity.

The Service Continuity Fund provides for the costs of closure as well as 6 months running costs in the event of withdrawal of funding.

The Strategic Development Fund provides for the organisation to undertake research and development to inform future service provision and secure additional funds for long term service delivery.

The Property Contingency Fund provides sufficient funds to maintain the Charity's properties to a high standard and to ensure routine repairs and maintenance are carried out.

The Redundancy Reserve is to cover the potential costs of redundancy over the capped limit to long term employees.

The Capital Reserve comprises funds set aside for the organisation to invest in property in order to meet future demand for its services.

The Refuge Based Support Fund provides welfare and activities for women and children residing in our refuges.

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023**

17. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

Community Based Support provides home based support, including support and counselling to women and children who are victims of sexual violence and a helpline for Asian women. Part of this service was previously treated separately as 'Rape Support Service' but as services have changed over the years, it is now more appropriate to encompass these services under one umbrella.

Heart of England Capital Grant is a restricted fund for a capital project, the balance represents the net book value of the assets relating to that fund.

18. RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

There were no related party transactions for the year ended 31 March 2023.



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Parties involved with this document

Document processed	Party + Fingerprint
Thu, 21st Dec 2023 15:53:23 UTC	Ms Karen Elizabeth Dowman - Signer (a123dc5c4400a8245b22b6e03feca1e3)
Thu, 21st Dec 2023 16:33:41 UTC	Shaun Philpott - Signer (43512730c59f3c65c09d0763512bce25)

Audit history log

Date	Action
Thu, 21st Dec 2023 16:33:42 UTC	Shaun Philpott viewed the envelope (83.97.18.18)
Thu, 21st Dec 2023 16:33:42 UTC	This envelope has been signed by all parties (83.97.18.18)
Thu, 21st Dec 2023 16:33:42 UTC	Shaun Philpott signed the envelope (83.97.18.18)
Thu, 21st Dec 2023 16:32:32 UTC	Shaun Philpott viewed the envelope (83.97.18.18)
Thu, 21st Dec 2023 15:53:24 UTC	Ms Karen Elizabeth Dowman viewed the envelope (81.77.83.235)
Thu, 21st Dec 2023 15:53:23 UTC	Document emailed to party email (18.130.247.121)
Thu, 21st Dec 2023 15:53:23 UTC	Sent the envelope to Shaun Philpott for signing (81.77.83.235)
Thu, 21st Dec 2023 15:53:23 UTC	Ms Karen Elizabeth Dowman signed the envelope (81.77.83.235)
Thu, 21st Dec 2023 15:50:01 UTC	Ms Karen Elizabeth Dowman viewed the envelope (81.77.83.235)
Thu, 21st Dec 2023 15:47:55 UTC	Ms Karen Elizabeth Dowman viewed the envelope (81.77.83.235)
Thu, 21st Dec 2023 14:52:10 UTC	Document emailed to party email (18.132.211.51)
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Thu, 21st Dec 2023 14:51:57 UTC	Shaun Philpott has been assigned to this envelope. (35.178.86.65)
Thu, 21st Dec 2023 14:51:57 UTC	Ms Karen Elizabeth Dowman has been assigned to this envelope. (35.178.86.65)
Thu, 21st Dec 2023 14:51:57 UTC	Envelope generated. (35.178.86.65)
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BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

England & Wales - Charity number 1032298

Accounts

REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER: 02791788
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1032298

**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES AND
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022
FOR
BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID**

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

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BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID
REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

TRUSTEES	Karen Elizabeth Dowman Bozena Benton Melvena Morton Salma Parween Ali Victoria Rebecca Harris
COMPANY SECRETARY	Sara Jane Ward BSc (Hons) PG Dip Hou
REGISTERED OFFICE	Landchard House Victoria Street West Bromwich B70 8HY
REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER	02791788
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER	1032298
AUDITORS	Copia Wealth & Tax Limited Chartered Accountants Statutory Auditors 8 Pendeford Place Pendeford Business Park Wobaston Road Wolverhampton WV9 5HD

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

The trustees who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2022. The trustees have adopted the provisions of Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objectives and aims

Black Country Women's Aid's (BCWA) objectives are:

- i) to relieve the physical and mental distress of women who are homeless and/or have been gravely or persistently mistreated by their husbands, the men with whom they are living, the fathers of their children or any other members of their family; and
- ii) to relieve the physical and mental distress of children affected by the disruption in the home.

Significant activities

The main objectives and activities of the year have continued to focus on the development of quality support services for victims of violence, abuse and exploitation both in and out of refuge. The strategies employed to assist the charity in meeting these objectives included the following:

- Delivery of high quality services that include emergency accommodation as well as community based support for both adult and child victims of violence and abuse including victims of modern slavery
- Sustaining and further development of services to meet victim's needs across the Black Country area and where necessary further afield.
- Identifying and applying for additional funds to sustain existing services and develop new responses to meet victim's needs.
- Developing systems that capture, cope and recover outcomes for victims. This information is used to demonstrate the effectiveness and impact of support services and evidence the need for additional services via commissioning/tendering.
- Responding to the changing and complex needs of victims, making sure there is greater reach to victims and that BCWA create opportunities to engage through increased partnership work and better coordination.

Public benefit

These essential services provide a valuable public benefit to the citizens of the Black Country, West Midlands and throughout the UK.

The trustees have complied with their duty to have due regard to the commission's public benefit guidance when exercising any powers or duties to which the guidance is relevant.

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

Development, Activities and Achievements for 2021/22

BCWA continues to respond to the needs of victims of violence and abuse in a proactive and dynamic way. This is achieved by both the provision of high quality safe accommodation and excellent connectivity within our communities with partners and people.

Legislative changes

The Domestic Abuse Bill passed both Houses of Parliament during 2020/21 and was signed into law on 29 April 2021. BCWA has been working with statutory partners to meet the requirements of the act and has been involved in each local authority strategic needs assessment. This created a welcomed statutory definition of domestic abuse, now including emotional and economic abuse as well as physical violence despite specialist services considering it had not gone far enough. The Bill would place a duty on local authorities to provide vital places in refuges and safe houses to reduce risks associated with domestic abuse. BCWA has been an active participant in the consultation of the Act directly and with local strategic partners and welcome this legislation that enshrines legal duties and funding to secure services and support for victims of violence and abuse. BCWA and Women's Aid's across the UK have been instrumental in the development of the Act and see this as a step forward in combatting and addressing the complex issues of abuse within society. BCWA has also worked with local partners to interpret and apply the Act to local systems to undertake needs assessments and develop strategy.

The Domestic Abuse Act will:

- create a statutory definition of domestic abuse, emphasising that domestic abuse is not just physical violence, but can also be emotional, coercive or controlling, and economic abuse. As part of this definition, children will be explicitly recognised as victims if they see, hear or otherwise experience the effects of abuse;
- create a new offence of non-fatal strangulation;
- extend the controlling or coercive behaviour offence to cover post-separation abuse;
- extend the 'revenge porn' offence to cover the threat to disclose intimate images with the intention to cause distress;
- clarify the law to further deter claims of "rough sex gone wrong" in cases involving death or serious injury;
- create a statutory presumption that victims of domestic abuse are eligible for special measures in the criminal, civil and family courts (for example, to enable them to give evidence via a video link);
- establish in law the Domestic Abuse Commissioner, to stand up for victims and survivors, raise public awareness, monitor the response of local authorities, the justice system and other statutory agencies and hold them to account in tackling domestic abuse;
- place a duty on local authorities in England to provide support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation;
- provide that all eligible homeless victims of domestic abuse automatically have 'priority need' for homelessness assistance;
- place the guidance supporting the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme ("Clare's law") on a statutory footing;
- ensure that when local authorities rehouse victims of domestic abuse, they do not lose a secure lifetime or assured tenancy;
- provide that all eligible homeless victims of domestic abuse automatically have 'priority need' for homelessness assistance;
- stop vexatious family proceedings that can further traumatise victims by clarifying the circumstances in which a court may make a barring order under section 91(14) of the Children Act 1989;
- prohibit GPs and other health professionals from charging a victim of domestic abuse for a letter to support an application for legal aid.

The Act will strengthen measures to tackle perpetrators. This will:

- prohibit perpetrators of abuse from cross-examining their victims in person in family and civil courts in England and Wales; bring the case of R vs Brown into legislation, invalidating any courtroom defence of consent where a victim suffers serious harm or is killed;
- enable domestic abuse offenders to be subject to polygraph testing as a condition of their licence following their release from custody;
- extend the extraterritorial jurisdiction of the criminal courts in England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland to further violent and sexual offences;

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

- provide for a new Domestic Abuse Protection Notice and Domestic Abuse Protection Order, which will prevent perpetrators from contacting their victims, as well as force them to take positive steps to change their behaviour, e.g. seeking mental health support;
- Extend the extraterritorial jurisdiction of the criminal courts in England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland to further violent and sexual offences;
- Introduce a statutory duty on the Secretary of State to publish a domestic abuse perpetrator strategy (to be published as part of a holistic domestic abuse strategy).

Partnerships

Partnerships remain a vital part of our work as it enables systems to connect, strategies to be aligned and for us all to work towards making the victim's experience better. There are significant changes in the way that partnerships work post-COVID with many providing their services or interacting in different ways. BCWA has worked hard to ensure that quality conversations and contributions are made to influence and shape policy and systems. There is no doubt that there are challenges, however, BCWA works hard to overcome them while keeping the victim's experience and voice heard, especially post-COVID..

Nationally, BCWA contributes to discussions with the Human Trafficking Foundation and the Modern Slavery Strategic Integration Group on victim support as well as discussing with colleagues across England and Wales regarding the national modern slavery contract. BCWA is also a member of the National Stalking Consortium, a policy and operational forum to ensure that victims of Stalking have access to quality services.

Regionally, BCWA play an active part in the Office of the Police Crime Commissioner Victims Commission, West Midlands Anti-Slavery Network, Domestic Abuse Board, Rape And Serious Offences Strategic Partnership, Human Trafficking Modern Slavery Strategic Board, MARAC Board, Specialist Domestic Violence and Abuse Consortium, Specialist Rape and Sexual Abuse Consortium, Women and Girls in the Criminal Justice System, Women's Justice Partnership, Survivors Trust Regional group, IDVA/ISVA Forum, BAME Women in the CJS, and Sex Work Forum.

BCWA makes a significant contribution to the partnerships across the four Black Country authorities (Sandwell, Dudley, Walsall and Wolverhampton) influencing strategic and operational development. These include vital partnerships such as the Sandwell Crime Reduction Partnership/ Safer Sandwell Partnership, Sandwell Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnership (DASP), Dudley Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnership and Forum (DDAF) and Dudley Safe and Sound, Walsall Domestic Abuse Strategic Group (DASG), Sandwell Domestic Homicide Standing Panel, Sandwell MARAC Governance group, Sandwell and Dudley MASH strategic groups, Sandwell Sexual health forum, Walsall Rape and Sexual Violence Group, Sandwell Homeless Strategic Partnership, Sandwell and Wolverhampton Anti-slavery partnerships, Reducing Reoffending Strategic Group including specialisms for women and girls and Sandwell FGM Working group.

BCWA also recognises the vital partnerships within the community and voluntary sector and takes an active part shaping and influencing the sector.

BCWA continues to expand its partnerships to secure regional commissions. During the year, through the partnership with Changing Lives, BCWA is a delivery partner in the commissioned Ministry of Justice HMPPS Probation Services female offender support service.

Sustaining Services

BCWA works hard to secure funding contracts, identify new areas of funding and work in collaboration with partners to secure regional funds. Services continue to be available through open tender processes however, they are tendered with reduced budgets and often demanding specifications.

Despite this ongoing pressure, BCWA continues to experience success via tendering opportunities, joint bids with partners and funding applications to a variety of sources. We have a good knowledge of external funders' interests and priorities. Funders' commissioners continue to express high levels of satisfaction with the standards of service delivery and, performance. At all times BCWA maintain a meaningful dialogue with clients across all services, ensuring that they remain central to the core values and influence the response.

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

Since becoming a sub-regional service BCWA has been embraced by the community. The community are viewed as a vital extension of the organisation who demonstrate not only a financial commitment but also share the responsibility to end violence and abuse. We have always known that this challenge cannot be achieved by us alone. The Black Country community has a big and generous heart. Our supporters' generosity comes in both financial support as well as essential items such as clothing, toiletries, start-up kits for new mothers and any call outs for help when someone we support has very little on arrival into refuge.

BCWA has embraced all new ways to communicate maximising opportunities in social media to ensure wide reach. Ways to connect and communicate with victims were strengthened during COVID with many of them being retained once lockdown eased. Working within all Black Country strategic partnerships, we have worked together to provide a unified approach to promoting services, condoning violence and challenging perpetrators.

BCWA is committed to the delivery of high quality services that assure funders of the standards that BCWA adopt across all services and demonstrates value for money. Regular internal strategic and operational reviews enable all services to remain relevant, victim focused and of high quality. Internal and external performance management and reviews ensure that services are delivered in accordance with contract or funder requirements maximising the resources available. BCWA continues to work within the ISO 9001 for Quality systems with regular external audits providing assurance that high standards are maintained. During the year, BCWA achieved additional certification in cyber security by being awarded the Government backed Cyber Essentials and Cyber Essentials Plus. CE plus is a more in-depth assessment where an independent external certified body scrutinises and assesses the IT/ digital infrastructure.

BCWA had 13,150 cases opened in 2021/22.

This is further broken down into:

- 8640 victims of domestic abuse living within the community (+29%)
- 361 women and their children needing refuge accommodation (+20%)
- 606 victims of stalking (=)
- 346 victims of modern day slavery and international human trafficking (+8%)
- 891 children and young people affected by abuse including domestic abuse, rape and sexual violence and exploitation (+20%)
- 1075 victims of rape and childhood rape and sexual abuse (+33%)
- 518 women who were in the criminal justice system for offences; many who presented with complex needs such as substance misuse, mental health, homelessness and involved in sex work. (+15%)
- Ask MARC 183 men (new data)

Community Services - Domestic Abuse

BCWA remains the commissioned services for Sandwell, Dudley and Walsall local authorities and continues to provide domestic abuse support services to all levels of risk. High risk victims continue to be supported by an Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) who provides immediate support and minimise risk linking with the local MARAC. Other victims are supported by a team of community-based Domestic Abuse Advocates (DAA's) who work within local multidisciplinary teams. BCWA has worked closely with Walsall Children's Services and partners on the delivery of the Strengthening Family Safeguarding model, an evidence based multiagency model focusing on a coordinated support to families presenting with serious child protection concerns. BCWA also worked with all local authorities in the Black Country to develop Family Drug and Alcohol Courts providing a coordinated approach to support families at risk of losing their children.

COVID presented many challenges and increased risk and vulnerability of victims. The COVID legacy has resulted in risk for victims of domestic abuse remaining high.

BCWA is now embedded in local operational spaces. This has enabled victims to access services easily and works with partners to advise on identification and referral to our services. BCWA is co-located in:

- Multi agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH) - this remains at a high volume referral rate as partners share information, jointly risk assess and provide a multi-agency response.
- GP Practices - delivering the national Identification and Referral to Improve Safety (IRIS) programme; a GP practice based model that provides training and education, clinical enquiry, care pathways and an enhanced referral pathway to specialist domestic violence services.

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

- Accident and Emergency Departments - based within Russell's Hall Hospital Trust providing specialist advocates who identify victims presenting with multiple injuries as a result of domestic abuse. BCWA continues to triangulate support for victims in both primary and acute services to reduce risk and increase safety

- Substance misuse commissioned services - working particularly within the Sandwell Blue Light Project, BCWA is part of the multi-agency operational group to ensure a joint identification and ownership of the highest impact clients both as victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse.

- Early help hubs - working at a local level with a range of professionals supporting victims and working to keep them safe.

- Schools where children have been identified through police notifications - BCWA has worked with West Midlands Police, Walsall MBC and the Home Office to secure funds to support children and young people.

- Drive & DVPP Drive (Sandwell) and DVPP (Sandwell, Dudley and Walsall) - two projects in which we provide parallel support to victims and children, where the offender is engaging in a perpetrator programme. Our support helps to ensure safeguarding is central, the voices of victims and children are heard, and they receive the emotional and practical support they need.

BCWA's stalking service continues to promote services. Stalking is an extremely complex area, requiring an in-depth understanding of a perpetrator's behaviour patterns and motivations to make clear the risk victims face. Our team are trained to use a number of specialist tools, including the SRP (Stalking Risk Profile), SASH (Screening Assessment for Stalking and Harassment) and Dr Jane Monckton-Smith's Homicide Timeline to profile perpetrators. This expertise is invaluable in our advocacy with agencies such as police and probation, to help them manage offenders, address stalking behaviour directly and safeguard victims. This service continues to be supported by the Office of the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner. The rejected stalker remains the typology most dominant in cases referred into the service (89%). It is vital that both the Stalking Advocate and the Domestic Abuse Advocate work together to assess risk to ensure the safety of the victim.

During the year, BCWA partnered with West Midlands Police in a successful application to manage perpetrators. The EASI project launched in 2020/21, where specialist stalking advocates offered parallel support to victims whose perpetrator has been identified by the police. The advocate uses specialist tools to assess/monitor risk, including the SASH (Screening Assessment for Stalking and Harassment) and SRP (Stalking Risk Profile), and offers safety planning at home, school or work. This work is integrated into BCWA's robust adult and child safeguarding procedures. BCWA has existing strong pathways/integration with MASH (with embedded workers), MARAC and ODOC to escalate safeguarding issues and promote the safety of victims and children. The service strengthened the training offer by developing training to West Midlands Police Offender Domestic Abuse Managers as part of their continuing professional development. This training focused on high risk rejected stalkers, the Homicide timeline and the impact on victims.

Support for children continued to be funded via the Home Office Children Affected by Domestic Abuse funds (CADA). This continued to benefit children within the school environment. The service was remodelled during COVID and, post-lockdown, meant a steady return back into schools. Schools reported the service had positive impacts on the lives of children and young people coping with the challenges of COVID and apprehension about a return to school. For many the service provided a necessary bridge to children and young people living within domestic abuse households.

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

Community Services: Rape, Sexual Violence and Exploitation Services

ISVAs play a key role in helping survivors to access and engage with the criminal justice system. Police investigations and case progression can be lengthy. COVID has impacted on cases going to court, court space, and lack of judges to sit and hear cases. This increased pressure on victims and the service has resulted in clients remaining in the service longer than they have previously, in addition to more victims accessing the service. ISVAs ensure that clients are updated on developments, supported with investigation requirements, feel emotionally supported and prepared through pre-court visits for giving evidence. BCWA meets regularly with West Midlands Police to discuss issues affecting survivors, strengthen referral pathways, and gain clarity on police processes to keep survivors informed. Clients who are better informed are less likely to feel helpless or disengage from the criminal justice system. BCWA has a team of ISVAs (Independent Sexual Violence Advisers) who support both male and female survivors of rape and sexual abuse across the Black Country (Sandwell, Dudley, Wolverhampton and Walsall). The service includes specialist advocates who support child and adult victims of childhood sexual abuse. BCWA continues to provide links from the regional Sexual Assault Referrals Centres (SARC) into local services and provides specialist therapeutic interventions. The service welcomes the convening of a Specialist Rape Court, in Wolverhampton in August 2021 where they exclusively heard rape and sexual offence cases. It is vital that victims of rape and sexual offences seek justice. The ISVA continues to support at court and complete the Criminal Injuries Compensation documents with the victim.

BCWA has been working with partners to develop local strategies in line with the NHS Sexual Abuse and Assault Strategy. BCWA continue to strengthen partnership work with the Crown Prosecution Service to further improve victim outcomes. BCWA is represented at a strategic level in Multi-Agency Strategic and Scrutiny Groups implemented by the Regional Crime Commissioners Group. BCWA co-chairs the ISVA Framework Implementation Group (IFIG) CPS and Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO) Unit.

BCWA is a partner on the ROSA Project for the development and implementation of a Sexual Harassment in the Work Place Training programme for West Midlands Police in partnership with West Midlands Police. This will continue into 2022/23.

Specialist Children's ISVAs (CHISVA) continue to support young people who have experienced rape and sexual violence, child sexual exploitation (CSE) and domestic violence. This area of work continues to increase as partnerships gain a greater understanding of the impact of abuse on children. Working with both adult and child will strengthen relationships and develop resilience and confidence in young people as they progress into adulthood.

In 2021, BCWA worked with West Midlands Police to develop a pilot called Dispatch Car. The pilot aimed to improve victim confidence through the early engagement of a specialist investigator and, therefore, reduce victim attrition. A BCWA ISVA was located at a local Police station working with Specialist Officers responding to calls of rape and sexual assault and abuse. The ISVA would attend reported incidence of rape at the earliest opportunity (the next day) with a police officer. The evaluation will take place during 2022/23.

The service started the preparation for accreditation under Lime Culture standards and will progress this submission during 2022/23.

In November 2021, BCWA launched a specific service targeted at male victims of rape, sexual abuse and other forms of abuse. Ask MARC was a welcome addition to the service offer. Ask MARC has integrated into MARAC, MASH and police referrals. The team deliver briefings to both professionals and organisations with around 1200 participants benefitting from the awareness and training. Ask Marc has established effective support through the domestic abuse team, sexual violence service, stalking team, counselling and wider community development.

Community Services: Women's Justice

BCWA continues to provide the Ministry of Justice HMPPS Probation Services female offender support service called Mariposa. This is a holistic, person centred support to women involved with the criminal justice system and those with complex needs in the Black Country and Birmingham. BCWA offers one to one support as well as an enhanced programme and access to specialist support also provided within BCWA such as IDVAs and ISVAs.

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

BCWA, working with Probation colleagues, have developed the Women's Trauma Informed Healthcare Pilot, funded by HMPPS innovation funds. This pilot enabled a specialist sexual health practitioner to be co-located within the women's centre offering treatment, advice and guidance to all BCWA women. The aim of this is to challenge the barriers that prevent women from accessing health care and for the service to be provided in a setting that is more supportive. Early results are positive and allows scope to develop more health-related services in the future.

BCWA continued to work with the Office of the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner providing diversionary services for women who have committed an early offence. New Chance provides a service following arrest. Women are referred by police and practical and emotional support is provided. The support is aimed at helping women to move forward in their lives and avoid future offending.

The service has been seen as a model of good practice with many site visits from local and national partners. BCWA is working with the OPCC to explore opportunities around problem solving courts where women experience a revolving door of support and intervention without making sufficient impact. BCWA looks forward to the progress of this court.

Accommodation and Outreach Service

Sandwell MBC continues to commission BCWA to provide a safe house where women and children who are experiencing domestic abuse can stay free from fear. Refuge services remain at the heart of BCWA. Over the years, BCWA has developed a diverse range of accommodation, which enables us to meet individual needs.

During the year, additional properties were added as demand increased. COVID had a significant impact on victims and demand increased as lockdown eased. Managing domestic abuse during COVID was extremely challenging for victims and their children. The Sandwell Strategic Needs Assessment identified that the service BCWA provided were both comprehensive and dynamic. The needs assessment identified gaps and as a result Sandwell MBC allocated additional funds to meet the needs identified. In addition, funds for counselling and therapeutic services were received to provide therapeutic support within refuge for children and young people. Whilst refuge offers a space of peace, respite and safety, this can be a challenging time. Children may struggle with grief and loss at leaving schools and/or family and friends; trauma from living with abuse; stress and anxiety from upheaval/change; complex family dynamics including parental alienation by the abuser against the victim-parent; anger or victim-blaming at their mother for either exposing them to abuse or uprooting them from home. Many children are unable to verbalize emotional states, particularly in the face of trauma or abuse, so a range of creative techniques are being used such as:

- Parent-Child Art Therapy Sessions. This is reparative work for adult and child together, to build relationships to increase family resilience and protective factors for children.
- Therapy Dog Sessions. These are children only sessions, providing a safe space to work through feelings building children's confidence and communication. Children can speak to a counsellor 'through' the dog, or project their feelings onto the dog to talk about them safely. Early indications show a positive and welcome addition to the refuge services as families are rebuilt through BCWA support.

BCWA awaits the details of the future tendering of the refuge service expected in 2022.

Modern Slavery Support Services

The new Modern Slavery Victim Care Contract (MSVCC) with the Salvation Army started on the 4th January 2021. Although this is an adult contract, where the child is a dependent of an adult victim, the service supports the whole family working with statutory services, where required, to ensure the child is appropriately supported and safeguarded. BCWA continues to provide units of accommodation and outreach services spanning the West Midlands for victims of Modern Day Slavery (MDS) in partnership with the Salvation Army who holds the national contract with the Home Office. Volumes increase year on year as BCWA continues to support potential victims of MSHT (modern slavery/human trafficking) with a positive RG (reasonable grounds) decision. Clients are supported through the recovery and reflection period and, upon receipt of a positive CG (Conclusive grounds) decision, clients enter the move on stage. This is when a RNA (Risk and Needs Assessment) is completed looking at outstanding needs. Further support is then provided dependent on need. After the RNA process has ended, clients are exited but can return via the new Reach-in Service. Risks remain high for the victims as often the traffickers will make significant attempts to find them. Therefore, security needs to be high for both victims and staff providing this vital service.

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

BCWA needed to remain vigilant to control the spread of COVID and, therefore, implemented strict safety measures before conducting face to face visits for all clients in the outreach service by ensuring additional risk assessments are completed. Regular reporting to BCWA, The Salvation Army and the Home Office gave details of COVID within the service.

Reach-In is a new aspect of this contract where victims who have left the service can re- access for help and support, when needed, reducing the risk of re-trafficking. Reach-In provides a smooth transition for the client into independent living outside of the Service. This offer gives the client the reassurance that they can still access a specialist advocate for advice, information and support, if required.

The service takes part in national policy discussions such as the proposed Financial Support Policy, changing the way that clients receive financial subsidy to assist their independent living. We have continued to be part of sub groups meetings with the Human Trafficking Foundation and have advocated for concerns about, and amendments to, the Nationality and Borders Act in relation to Part 5 on Modern Slavery that affect victims of modern slavery.

The MSVCC intensive reporting framework monitors the standards and volumes of this work. BCWA is strengthening its wider engagement with partners across the contract area to ensure synergy between this national work and local service provision. The service was externally assessed by The Care Quality Commission and highly rated.

The service works with the media highlighting the plight of victims and works with victims in a safe way to tell their story to enable greater understanding and insight into this appalling crime. Disappointingly, but unsurprisingly, criminal convictions remain low in comparison to the number of people identified as victims of modern slavery. The service will continue to work with criminal justice partners to ensure that victims, where possible, get justice.

BCWA is working within local strategic partnerships as they increase their awareness of modern slavery and acknowledge the vital role that they play in identifying and coordinating rescue. BCWA received tremendous support for the capital project to provide a dedicated space for women, once rescued. This trauma informed space was built during 2020/21, despite the challenges of COVID and officially opened at the end of the year with our community partners, The Heart of England Community Trust. This will be a welcome addition to the safe house providing space to learn, develop and feel safe.

BCWA continues to work with strategic partners nationally and locally developing intelligence and profiles of potential victims. Work with the National Crime Agency and the West Midlands Police Specialist team is positive with the BCWA service focusing on the support to victims.

Counselling and Therapeutic Services

Counselling and specialist therapeutic interventions underpin the support services and are an essential component of a holistic approach to addressing trauma. The service works with sessional counsellors with a range of specialisms and therapeutic approaches appropriate to the client's needs. The funding for the counselling is from a variety of sources and the service is reliant upon volunteer/placement counsellors. The Ministry of Justice and the Office of the Police Crime Commission has supported this area of service during the year making available funds for therapeutic intervention as an essential part of the victim's journey to cope and recover.

Business development and finance

Strategic and partnership working remains a vital part of our work. The corporate centre continues to strengthen following investment into key positions in finance, human resources, business development and communications. BCWA produces regular newsletters, uses social media, and articles in national press on related issues, to highlight the plight of victims of abuse and the impact of national policy on victim's lives.

Quality, Learning and Enterprise

BCWA has robust internal audit functions auditing the standards and quality of service against national standards. Reports, analysis and trends to strategic partnerships, funders and commissioners are available on a regular basis, outlining the performance of the service against specification/commission. Training and development of employees have all increased in the last 12 months and employees recognise the impact of training on their practice. BCWA continues to improve links with the universities resulting in an increase of student placements across the service, however, COVID challenged the spaces that BCWA could offer.

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

Employees are developed through an organisational training plan and encouraged to pursue external qualifications as part of their Professional Development Plan (PDP). The organisation continues to support the Home Office standards in Independent domestic violence and sexual violence advocacy service as defined by SafeLives, Lime Culture and BCWA will deliver services against these standards. BCWA is further strengthening its workforce by the development of a competency framework that ensures high standards of knowledge and application is evidenced. BCWA will advance its training provision with the development of e-learning packages as it works to introduce improved communications mechanisms. Towards the end of this year, BCWA introduced the Intranet encouraging employees to participate in communicating with all staff as well as making available all up to date documentation, policies and procedures. This will be further developed in 2022/23.

BCWA remains an organisation recognised for its expertise in both policy and practice. The senior management team has been involved in the development of national policy, national accredited training courses and the continuing professional development of health and other professionals. During 2020/21 BCWA was identified as lead trainer within the Local strategic partnership.

BCWA continues to work within the National Women's Aid England and Wales Standards and the Cyber Essentials certification. BCWA is working within the quality standards ISO 9001 and will seek accreditation from Lime Culture for Rape and Sexual Assault Services. BCWA will also work with national leads within Respect to ensure that services for male victims meets required standards.

The organisation continues to receive gifts in kind, including toys, food and toiletries from a variety of women's organisations, religious groups, and individuals and other organisations, as well as hours of volunteer time amounting to over 850 hours.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Our income increased from £6,207,209 to £7,511,649, an increase of 21%, whilst expenditure rose from £5,135,979 to £5,686,956. The increased income is a reflection of the increase in funds to support the direct service delivery. The organisation continues to realise its longer-term plan to diversify funds away from the statutory funding and has been able to attract new funding streams to support existing services and take on new projects.

Expenses and overheads have been tightly controlled and new contracts reflect the savings shown. The increase in expenditure is due to a response to service increase, where new office premises were obtained and staff costs increased in line with our provision of extra services.

The Statement of Financial Activities shows an increase in funds of £1,824,693. Our reserves now stand at £5,189,828 of which £1,318,238 is restricted and £3,871,590 is unrestricted. The balance of unrestricted reserves includes £1,871,022 which is designated to meet future commitments. Therefore, the balance of free reserves is £2,000,568.

Reserves Policy

The Board of Trustees has examined the charity's requirements for reserves in light of the main risks to the organisation.

The Board of Trustees has agreed to support a 3-year strategy that includes:

- Strategic Development Fund - where the organisation undertakes research and development to inform future service provision and secure additional funds for longer term service delivery costs of £175,000.
- Service Continuity Fund - where the organisation maintains costs for closure as well as 6 months' running costs of £496,022.
- Property Contingency Fund - where the organisation has to ensure sufficient funds to maintain the properties to a high standard, ensure routine repairs and maintenance and be prepared in the event of major structural damage - £100,000.
- Redundancy Reserve - where the organisation will pay the redundancy over the capped limit to long term employees - £100,000.
- Capital Reserve - where the organisation will invest in property to meet the demand of the services - £1,000,000.

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

FUTURE PLANS

Future plans include:

1. Development of regional working opportunities for joint working and tender opportunities.
2. Implementation of new policies ensuring that the systems are fit for purpose.
3. Securing work currently provided via tendering and commissioning.
4. Improving integration across all services addressing the increasing complexities of victims presenting into service.
5. Identifying new opportunities for funding to sustain and continue essential work.
6. Contributing to strategic and operational plans with a range of partners to create a "whole systems approach" to supporting victims wherever they present ensuring that victims remain supported, risks identified and protected.
7. Continuing to influence strategy at a local, regional and national level.
8. Ensuring consistency and quality of services for victims.
9. Reviewing services; evaluating cost effectiveness, efficiency and operational delivery. Reviewing governance arrangements and strengthening corporate services meeting the needs of a growing organisation.
10. Further development of the training and educational programmes and developments working within local educational partnerships and academic institutions.
11. Establishing improved solutions to victims of violence and abuse that have little or no access to public funds and ensure that this issue remains high on the strategic agenda.
12. Ensuring that all services meet nationally recognised quality standards.
13. Creating different and new strategic partnerships and joint working to meet the needs of vulnerable people with complex and diverse issues.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

This is a company limited by guarantee and its operations include:

- The provision of supported accommodation for individuals leaving violence, abuse and exploitation.
- Outreach and resettlement support services for children, young people and adult victims living in the community.
- The provision of a community-based support and advocacy service for victims of abuse in and out of the criminal justice system.
- Community engagement/involvement and peer support for victims of violence and abuse.
- Delivery of training and awareness raising to both statutory and non-statutory agencies, work with schools, colleges and other educational establishments outlining the effects/ impact of abuse explaining models of interventions.
- Working in partnership both at a strategic and operational level with the statutory and voluntary sector to develop a co-ordinated response to tackling domestic abuse.

Governing Document

The organisation is a charitable company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales, incorporated in 1993 and registered as a charity in 1994. The company was established under a Memorandum of Association which established the objectives and powers of the charitable company and is governed under its Articles of Association. In the event of the company being wound up members are required to contribute an amount not exceeding £1.00.

Recruitment and Appointment of Management Committee

The Directors of the Company are also Charity Trustees for the purpose of charity law and under the Articles are known as the members of the Management Committee. Under the requirements of the Memorandum and Articles of Association, the members of the management committee must be re-elected each year.

The Management Committee, where possible, seeks to ensure that the needs of victims of abuse whether adults, children or young people are appropriately reflected through the diversity of the Trustee body. To enhance the potential pool of Trustees, promotions take place to attract skilled individuals from all sectors to contribute their skill, knowledge and commitment. This is regularly discussed at Board meetings to ensure good representation.

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

Trustee Induction and training

Trustees are familiar with the operational work of the charity and are supported by the CEO through a Trustee information pack and the opportunity to visit the various services, as part of an optional induction.

Risk management

The management committee has conducted a review of the major risks to which the charity is exposed and this is outlined in its Strategic Plan. A risk register has been developed and will be updated annually to assess the risks to services and funds and any other changes that the charity faces.

Financial procedures are adhered to and regularly reviewed with regard to authorisation of transactions for all project expenditure.

All contracted services work within relevant contractual timescales, quality standards and are monitored externally on a quarterly basis and internally on a monthly basis, in accordance with the organisation's performance framework. This ensures a consistent quality of service for all operational aspects of services.

All Service Level Agreements (SLAs) have agreed targets and outcomes and are performance monitored on a quarterly basis. Services aim to work within nationally recognised standards of practice and seek external accreditation, e.g. Women's Aid Federation of England and Wales, Safe Lives, The Survivors Trust, Rape Crisis England and Wales and the British Association of Counsellors and Psychotherapists (BACP).

All grants/funds/contracts awarded are for specific time periods and have project plans and milestones to ensure work is monitored and meeting required standards. Regular contact with commissioners ensures that the work is on target and achieving its expected outcomes.

Board meetings take place every 8 weeks as part of an annual plan supported by a subcommittee structure that enables ongoing reporting and risk management across the organisation.

Organisational Structure

Black Country Women's Aid has a Management Committee/Board of 6 members who meet as a full Board every 8 weeks. The meeting dates are set as part of an annual calendar agreed at the start of each new reporting year.

In addition, there is a sub-committee structure that enables detailed operational and strategic reports to be presented and discussed. Each committee has its own Terms of Reference and an agreed work plan and assigned policies and procedures to ensure regular review and relevance. Meetings are scheduled to take place in between Board meetings to ensure necessary discussion and ratification. All minutes and decision making is circulated and presented to the full board for recommendation, further discussion and final approval. These include:

- Finance subcommittee that reports specifically around the finances and budgets and infrastructure assets of the organisation.
- Facilities Management sub committee that oversees property management and health and safety.
- Quality sub committee that reports on standards and quality of services.
- Workforce Development subcommittee that focuses on human resource standards and practice and employee development.

Legal personnel advice is outsourced to Peninsula Business services and available for managers 24 hours a day. All personnel matters are reported to the Board and, where necessary, a special committee is called.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) holds regular meetings with the senior management team consisting of all corporate and operational managers. This enables connectivity with the Trustees and throughout the organisation. Information is cascaded to employees to ensure they are kept up to date. The CEO also produces regular bulletins for all staff outlining key organisational messages. This was vital during COVID and enabled direct communication channels with staff.

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

Where necessary, E-reports are provided and extraordinary meetings are called. Papers are reported to the next Board meeting for full ratification.

Members come from a variety of related professional backgrounds and are responsible for the strategic direction and policy of the Charity. A skills audit takes place of Board members to ensure that the organisation is equipped with the right skills to reach its full potential. Where practicable, the Trustees undertake an annual business planning event to discuss organisational progress, strategic direction and agree future projections.

The Trustees delegate responsibility to the CEO who also acts as Company Secretary. In addition, the CEO holds the lead responsibility for policy and performance, financial management, employee recruitment and management, as well as operational service delivery. The CEO delegates tasks to lead personnel - Deputy Chief Executive/ Director of Finance on all financial matters and the appointed service leads on operational matters who report back on a regular basis.

The CEO, working with her team of Heads of Service, managers and corporate colleagues, takes the lead for developing employees, apprentices and volunteers ensuring that their learning experience is translated into operational practice in line with good practice.

Senior Management Structure

BCWA is led by a senior management structure comprising of the Chief Executive Officer, Deputy Chief Executive/ Director of Finance, Regional Head of Domestic Abuse Community Services, Head of Refuge Accommodation, Head of Rape and Sexual Violence and Abuse support services incorporating Therapeutic services, Head of Modern Slavery (x2), Head of Workforce Development and the Executive Officer. The total salaries of the Senior Management team were £387,003, (2020/21 £346,314). This represents 11% of the total salary cost to the organisation.

The senior management remuneration approach is to adopt the following principles:

- Internal job evaluation taking into account the distinct elements of the role
- Internal job evaluation against comparative positions within the organisation
- External benchmarking based on market factors

Related Parties

The work of the organisation sits within a number of strategic frameworks both locally, regionally and nationally. The CEO and managers play a significant role across all areas of business including developing and influencing strategy, continuous improvement of services and developing new opportunities to support victims, ensuring financial plans are sustainable and guaranteeing that the victim's voice remains at the centre of all decision making.

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The trustees (who are also the directors of Black Country Women's Aid for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Report of the Trustees and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charity SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES - continued

In so far as the trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditors are unaware; and
- the trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditors are aware of that information.

AUDITORS

The auditors, Copia Wealth & Tax Limited, will be proposed for re-appointment at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Approved by order of the board of trustees on 13 December 2022 and signed on its behalf by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karen Elizabeth Dowman', written in a cursive style.

Karen Elizabeth Dowman - Trustee

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT AUDITORS TO THE MEMBERS OF BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Black Country Women's Aid (the 'charitable company') for the year ended 31 March 2022 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2022 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report, other than the financial statements and our Report of the Independent Auditors thereon.

Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, 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 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.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

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

- the information given in the Report of the Trustees for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Report of the Trustees has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT AUDITORS TO THE MEMBERS OF BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Report of the Trustees.

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

- adequate accounting records have not been kept or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- the trustees were not entitled to take advantage of the small companies exemption from the requirement to prepare a Strategic Report or in preparing the Report of the Trustees.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Our 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 a Report of the Independent Auditors 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:

- We gained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks within which the charitable company is required to operate and focussed on those that have a direct effect on the determination of material amounts and disclosures within the financial statements - primarily these were the Companies Act 2006, the Charities Act 2011 and the Charities SORP (FRS102). We assessed compliance with these laws and regulations as part of our audit procedures in respect of related items within the financial statements. Our audit procedures in this regard were limited to enquiry of Trustees and other management and inspection of any regulatory and legal correspondence, if any.
- We identified items within the financial statements at greatest risk of a material impact from irregularities, including fraud, which were considered to be the recognition of grant income and overriding of controls by management. We undertook audit procedures to respond to these risks, including enquiries of management, sample testing on the posting of journals, review of the basis of accounting estimates and a review of the timing of recognition of grant income.
- Due to the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we may not have detected some material misstatements within the financial statements despite properly planning and performing our audit in line with auditing standards. This could be due to a number of factors such as collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations or the over-ride of controls. We point out that we are not responsible for preventing non-compliance and cannot be expected to detect non-compliance with all laws and regulations.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our Report of the Independent Auditors.

**REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT AUDITORS TO THE MEMBERS OF
BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID**

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditors' 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 charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



Shaun Philpott (Senior Statutory Auditor)
for and on behalf of Copia Wealth & Tax Limited
Chartered Accountants
Statutory Auditors
8 Pendeford Place
Pendeford Business Park
Wobaston Road
Wolverhampton
WV9 5HD

13 December 2022

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCORPORATING AN INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2022 Total funds £	2021 Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM					
Donations and legacies	2	91,994	-	91,994	107,115
Charitable activities					
Refuge based support		755,201	119,428	874,629	891,031
Community based support		1,099,480	2,581,000	3,680,480	3,569,581
Modern day slavery		2,724,260	-	2,724,260	1,292,703
Capital projects		-	60,519	60,519	284,255
Other trading activities	3	79,767	-	79,767	34,672
Other income	5	-	-	-	27,852
Total		4,750,702	2,760,947	7,511,649	6,207,209
EXPENDITURE ON					
Raising funds	6	-	-	-	438
Charitable activities	7				
Refuge based support		792,366	101,268	893,634	991,307
Community based support		572,701	2,335,352	2,908,053	3,197,779
Modern day slavery		1,868,179	17,090	1,885,269	946,455
Total		3,233,246	2,453,710	5,686,956	5,135,979
NET INCOME		1,517,456	307,237	1,824,693	1,071,230
Transfers between funds	19	(29,018)	29,018	-	-
Net movement in funds		1,488,438	336,255	1,824,693	1,071,230
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		2,383,152	981,983	3,365,135	2,293,905
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		3,871,590	1,318,238	5,189,828	3,365,135

The notes form part of these financial statements

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

BALANCE SHEET 31 MARCH 2022

	Notes	2022 £	2021 £
FIXED ASSETS			
Tangible assets	14	1,204,023	1,145,331
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors	15	2,088,076	1,367,719
Cash at bank and in hand		2,094,072	1,466,839
		<u>4,182,148</u>	<u>2,834,558</u>
CREDITORS			
Amounts falling due within one year	16	(196,343)	(614,754)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		<u>3,985,805</u>	<u>2,219,804</u>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>5,189,828</u>	<u>3,365,135</u>
NET ASSETS		<u>5,189,828</u>	<u>3,365,135</u>
FUNDS	19		
Unrestricted funds		3,871,590	2,383,152
Restricted funds		1,318,238	981,983
TOTAL FUNDS		<u>5,189,828</u>	<u>3,365,135</u>

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to charitable companies subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on 13 December 2022 and were signed on its behalf by:



Karen Elizabeth Dowman - Trustee

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID
CASH FLOW STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

	Notes	2022 £	2021 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Cash generated from operations	1	<u>718,945</u>	<u>1,075,262</u>
Net cash provided by operating activities		<u>718,945</u>	<u>1,075,262</u>
 Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		<u>(91,712)</u>	<u>(306,379)</u>
Net cash used in investing activities		<u>(91,712)</u>	<u>(306,379)</u>
 Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period		<u>627,233</u>	<u>768,883</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		<u>1,466,839</u>	<u>697,956</u>
 Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period		<u><u>2,094,072</u></u>	<u><u>1,466,839</u></u>

The notes form part of these financial statements

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

NOTES TO THE CASH FLOW STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

1. RECONCILIATION OF NET INCOME TO NET CASH FLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES

	2022 £	2021 £
Net income for the reporting period (as per the Statement of Financial Activities)	1,824,693	1,071,230
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation charges	33,020	36,141
Loss on disposal of fixed assets	-	530
Increase in debtors	(720,357)	(371,689)
(Decrease)/increase in creditors	(418,411)	339,050
Net cash provided by operations	<u>718,945</u>	<u>1,075,262</u>

2. ANALYSIS OF CHANGES IN NET FUNDS

	At 1.4.21 £	Cash flow £	At 31.3.22 £
Net cash			
Cash at bank and in hand	<u>1,466,839</u>	<u>627,233</u>	<u>2,094,072</u>
	<u>1,466,839</u>	<u>627,233</u>	<u>2,094,072</u>
Total	<u>1,466,839</u>	<u>627,233</u>	<u>2,094,072</u>

The notes form part of these financial statements

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of preparing the financial statements

The financial statements of the charitable company, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019)', Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Companies Act 2006. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

Income

All income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities once the charity has entitlement to the funds, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Charitable activities

Charitable activities are as follows:

Refuge based support
Community based support
Modern slavery
Equipment grants

Resources expended

Staff costs and overhead expenses are allocated to activities on the basis of staff time spent on those activities.

Value added tax is not recoverable by the charity and as such is included in the relevant costs in the Statement of Financial Activities.

Charitable activities comprises of those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them.

Governance costs include those costs associated with meeting the constitutional and statutory requirements of the charity and include the audit fees and costs linked to the strategic management of the charity.

Tangible fixed assets

Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life.

Freehold property	- 2% on cost
Fixtures and fittings	- 33% on cost

Taxation

As a charity, Black Country Women's Aid is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within section 466 to 493 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 to the extent that these are applicable to its charitable objects. No tax charges have arisen in the charity.

Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are donations and other income received or generated for the objects of the charity without specified purposes and are available as general funds.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

Expenditure which meets these criteria is identified to the fund, together with a fair allocation of management and support costs.

Designated funds are unrestricted funds earmarked by the Trustees for particular purposes.

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES - continued

Fund accounting

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

Donated goods and services

Donated goods and services are included at the value to the charity where this can be quantified. The value of services provided by general volunteers has not been included in these accounts.

Pension costs and other post-retirement benefits

The charitable company operates a defined contribution pension scheme. Contributions payable to the charitable company's pension scheme are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities in the period to which they relate.

Hire purchase and leasing commitments

Assets obtained under hire purchase contracts or finance leases are capitalised in the balance sheet. Those held under hire purchase contracts are depreciated over their estimated useful lives. Those held under finance leases are depreciated over their estimated useful lives or the lease term whichever is shorter.

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the statement of financial activity on a straight line basis over the period of the lease.

2. DONATIONS AND LEGACIES

	2022	2021
	£	£
Donations	91,994	107,115

3. OTHER TRADING ACTIVITIES

	2022	2021
	£	£
Management and training fees	79,767	34,672

4. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	Activity	2022	2021
		£	£
Grants and contracts	Refuge based support	425,407	471,967
Accommodation charges	Refuge based support	449,222	419,064
Grants and contracts	Community based support	3,680,480	3,569,581
Grants and contracts	Modern day slavery	2,724,260	1,292,703
Grants and contracts	Capital projects	60,519	284,255
		7,339,888	6,037,570

Grants received, included in the above, are as follows:

	2022	2021
	£	£
Refuge: Sandwell MBC - Supporting People	305,979	305,979
Refuge: Sandwell MBC - DCLG	119,428	59,378
Refuge: MHCLG COVID-19	-	106,610
Community: Sandwell MBC - Specialist DV and SV Support	328,143	321,297
Community: Sandwell MBC - Safer Sandwell Partnership	40,000	40,000
Carried forward	793,550	833,264

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

4. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES - continued

	2022	2021
	£	£
Brought forward	793,550	833,264
Community: Dudley MBC - DA Support Service	123,424	123,424
Community: Dudley MBC - ED Advocacy Project	57,135	58,848
Community: Walsall MBC - DV/ Children	359,957	335,403
Community: West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner	1,391,652	863,075
Community: West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner - DVPP	-	108,455
Community: West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner - New Chance	44,109	45,000
Community: West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner - COVID	-	240,095
Community: West Midlands Police - VRU	6,915	12,664
Community: West Midlands Police - Secondment	-	33,520
Community: SWM Probation Trust - Female Service Users	73,902	291,657
Community: Changing Lives - Female Service Users	170,792	-
Community: Home Office - CSE and Our Future	363,055	358,183
Community: Ministry of Justice - Rape and SA Support Fund	385,542	226,486
Community: Ministry of Justice - COVID	-	46,228
Community: NHS Sandwell and West Birmingham - ED Advocacy Project	19,156	88,622
Community: NHS Sandwell and West Birmingham CCG - IRIS	-	73,843
Community: NHS Dudley CCG - IRIS	-	76,113
Community: NHS Walsall CCG - IRIS	-	76,113
Community: Change, Grow, Live (CGL) - Early Help Service	-	40,516
Community: Children in Need - Young People's Advocate	11,123	30,757
Community: Homeless Link	24,761	74,282
Community: SCVO	50,881	5,000
Community: RSVP	3,262	-
Community: Eveson Charitable Trust	29,000	-
Modern Day Slavery: Salvation Army	2,724,260	1,292,703
Modern Day Slavery: Capital Projects: Heart of England - Building Better Lives	60,519	284,255
Community: NHS IRIS Combined Authority	197,671	-
	<u>6,890,666</u>	<u>5,618,506</u>

5. OTHER INCOME

	2022	2021
	£	£
Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme	-	27,852

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

6. RAISING FUNDS

Raising donations and legacies

	2022	2021
	£	£
Fundraising	-	438

7. CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES COSTS

	Direct Costs (see note 8) £	Support costs (see note 9) £	Totals £
Refuge based support	828,533	65,101	893,634
Community based support	2,484,887	423,166	2,908,053
Modern day slavery	1,705,422	179,847	1,885,269
	<u>5,018,842</u>	<u>668,114</u>	<u>5,686,956</u>

8. DIRECT COSTS OF CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	2022	2021
	£	£
Staff costs	4,035,041	3,462,063
Activity costs	180,526	206,517
Office costs	157,315	246,183
Property costs	645,960	549,029
	<u>5,018,842</u>	<u>4,463,792</u>

9. SUPPORT COSTS

	Depreciation £	Office costs £	Property costs £
Refuge based support	-	25,484	15,432
Community based support	-	165,647	100,313
Modern day slavery	17,090	63,711	38,582
	<u>17,090</u>	<u>254,842</u>	<u>154,327</u>
	Staff costs, travel etc £	Governance costs £	Totals £
Refuge based support	23,189	996	65,101
Community based support	150,732	6,474	423,166
Modern day slavery	57,974	2,490	179,847
	<u>231,895</u>	<u>9,960</u>	<u>668,114</u>

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

9. SUPPORT COSTS - continued

Activity	Basis of allocation
Depreciation	Usage
Office costs	Usage
Property costs	Usage
Staff costs, travel etc	Usage
Governance costs	Usage

Support costs, included in the above, are as follows:

				2022	2021
	Refuge based support £	Community based support £	Modern day slavery £	Total activities £	Total activities £
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	-	-	17,090	17,090	36,671
Office costs	25,484	165,647	63,711	254,842	209,085
Property costs	15,432	100,313	38,582	154,327	65,920
Staff costs & travel etc	23,189	150,732	57,974	231,895	349,313
Auditors' remuneration	996	6,474	2,490	9,960	10,760
	<u>65,101</u>	<u>423,166</u>	<u>179,847</u>	<u>668,114</u>	<u>671,749</u>

10. NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)

Net income/(expenditure) is stated after charging/(crediting):

	2022 £	2021 £
Auditors' remuneration	9,960	10,760
Depreciation - owned assets	<u>33,020</u>	<u>36,142</u>

11. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 31 March 2022 nor for the year ended 31 March 2021.

Trustees' expenses

There were no trustees' expenses paid for the year ended 31 March 2022 nor for the year ended 31 March 2021.

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

12. STAFF COSTS

	2021	2020
	£	£
Wages and salaries	3,178,022	2,853,015
Social security	270,630	239,654
Pension	124,527	103,682
	<u>3,573,179</u>	<u>3,196,351</u>

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	2022	2021
Direct charitable work	141	135
Administration	18	17
	<u>159</u>	<u>152</u>

The number of employees whose employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) exceeded £60,000 was:

	2022	2021
£80,001 - £90,000	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>

Black Country Women's Aid considers its key management personnel to be the Chief Executive Officer. The total employment benefits including employer pension contributions of the key management personnel were £84,181 (2021: £84,389).

The company operates a Group Personal Pension Plan to which the charitable company contributes 5% and employees contribute 3%.

13. COMPARATIVES FOR THE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM			
Donations and legacies	107,115	-	107,115
Charitable activities			
Refuge based support	772,697	118,334	891,031
Community based support	1,145,301	2,424,280	3,569,581
Modern day slavery	1,292,703	-	1,292,703
Capital projects	-	284,255	284,255
Other trading activities	34,673	(1)	34,672
Other income	27,852	-	27,852
Total	<u>3,380,341</u>	<u>2,826,868</u>	<u>6,207,209</u>
EXPENDITURE ON			
Raising funds	438	-	438
Charitable activities			
Refuge based support	870,712	120,595	991,307
Community based support	866,318	2,331,461	3,197,779

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022**

13. COMPARATIVES FOR THE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES - continued

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
Modern day slavery	936,901	9,554	946,455
Total	2,674,369	2,461,610	5,135,979
NET INCOME	705,972	365,258	1,071,230
Transfers between funds	42,070	(42,070)	-
Net movement in funds	748,042	323,188	1,071,230
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS			
Total funds brought forward	1,635,110	658,795	2,293,905
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	2,383,152	981,983	3,365,135

14. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Freehold property £	Fixtures and fittings £	Totals £
COST			
At 1 April 2021	1,204,812	138,123	1,342,935
Additions	91,712	-	91,712
At 31 March 2022	1,296,524	138,123	1,434,647
DEPRECIATION			
At 1 April 2021	73,663	123,941	197,604
Charge for year	25,929	7,091	33,020
At 31 March 2022	99,592	131,032	230,624
NET BOOK VALUE			
At 31 March 2022	1,196,932	7,091	1,204,023
At 31 March 2021	1,131,149	14,182	1,145,331

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

15. DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2022	2021
	£	£
Trade debtors	1,132,321	901,266
Rent Receivable	-	18,211
Other debtors	882,508	356,409
Prepayments	73,247	91,833
	<u>2,088,076</u>	<u>1,367,719</u>

16. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2022	2021
	£	£
Trade creditors	41,192	261,677
Social security and other taxes	72,652	156,518
Other creditors	29,935	-
Deferred income	18,901	160,011
Accrued expenses	33,663	36,548
	<u>196,343</u>	<u>614,754</u>

17. SECURED DEBTS

A charge has been secured on the freehold property known as Karen House on 16 March 2020, in favour of the Heart of England Community Foundation, by way of a legal mortgage.

18. ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	2022 Total funds	2021 Total funds
	£	£	£	£
Fixed assets	385,702	818,321	1,204,023	1,145,331
Current assets	3,682,231	499,917	4,182,148	2,834,558
Current liabilities	(196,343)	-	(196,343)	(614,754)
	<u>3,871,590</u>	<u>1,318,238</u>	<u>5,189,828</u>	<u>3,365,135</u>

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022**

19. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

	At 1.4.21 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 31.3.22 £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	1,684,134	1,517,456	(1,201,022)	2,000,568
Service Continuity Fund	522,018	-	(25,996)	496,022
Strategic Development Fund	102,000	-	73,000	175,000
Property Contingency Fund	75,000	-	25,000	100,000
Redundancy reserve	-	-	100,000	100,000
Capital reserve	-	-	1,000,000	1,000,000
	<u>2,383,152</u>	<u>1,517,456</u>	<u>(29,018)</u>	<u>3,871,590</u>
Restricted funds				
Refuge Based Support	-	18,160	-	18,160
Community Based Support	238,285	245,648	(2,176)	481,757
Heart of England Capital Grant	743,698	43,429	31,194	818,321
	<u>981,983</u>	<u>307,237</u>	<u>29,018</u>	<u>1,318,238</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>3,365,135</u>	<u>1,824,693</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>5,189,828</u>

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	4,750,702	(3,233,246)	1,517,456
Restricted funds			
Refuge Based Support	119,428	(101,268)	18,160
Community Based Support	2,581,000	(2,335,352)	245,648
Heart of England Capital Grant	60,519	(17,090)	43,429
	<u>2,760,947</u>	<u>(2,453,710)</u>	<u>307,237</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>7,511,649</u>	<u>(5,686,956)</u>	<u>1,824,693</u>

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

19. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

Comparatives for movement in funds

	At 1.4.20 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 31.3.21 £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	1,004,088	705,972	(25,926)	1,684,134
Service Continuity Fund	493,022	-	28,996	522,018
Strategic Development Fund	88,000	-	14,000	102,000
Property Contingency Fund	50,000	-	25,000	75,000
	<u>1,635,110</u>	<u>705,972</u>	<u>42,070</u>	<u>2,383,152</u>
Restricted funds				
Refuge Based Support	1,742	(2,261)	519	-
Community Based Support	179,351	92,819	(33,885)	238,285
Heart of England Capital Grant	477,702	274,700	(8,704)	743,698
	<u>658,795</u>	<u>365,258</u>	<u>(42,070)</u>	<u>981,983</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>2,293,905</u>	<u>1,071,230</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>3,365,135</u>

Comparative net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	3,380,341	(2,674,369)	705,972
Restricted funds			
Refuge Based Support	118,334	(120,595)	(2,261)
Community Based Support	2,424,280	(2,331,461)	92,819
Heart of England Capital Grant	284,254	(9,554)	274,700
	<u>2,826,868</u>	<u>(2,461,610)</u>	<u>365,258</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>6,207,209</u>	<u>(5,135,979)</u>	<u>1,071,230</u>

The General Fund is to meet the day to day cash flow requirements of the charity.

The Service Continuity Fund provides for the costs of closure as well as 6 months running costs in the event of withdrawal of funding.

The Strategic Development Fund provides for the organisation to undertake research and development to inform future service provision and secure additional funds for long term service delivery.

The Property Contingency Fund provides sufficient funds to maintain the Charity's properties to a high standard and to ensure routine repairs and maintenance are carried out.

The Redundancy Reserve is to cover the potential costs of redundancy over the capped limit to long term employees.

The Capital Reserve comprises funds set aside for the organisation to invest in property in order to meet future demand for its services.

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022**

19. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

The Refuge Based Support Fund provides welfare and activities for women and children residing in our refuges.

Community Based Support provides home based support, including support and counselling to women and children who are victims of sexual violence and a helpline for Asian women. Part of this service was previously treated separately as 'Rape Support Service' but as services have changed over the years, it is now more appropriate to encompass these services under one umbrella.

Heart of England Capital Grant is a restricted fund for a capital project, the balance represents the net book value of the assets relating to that fund.

20. RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

There were no related party transactions for the year ended 31 March 2022.

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

England & Wales - Charity number 1032298

Accounts

REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER: 02791788
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1032298

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES AND
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021
FOR
BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

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FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021**

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BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID
REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

TRUSTEES	Karen Elizabeth Dowman Bozena Benton Melvena Morton Salma Parween Ali Victoria Rebecca Harris
COMPANY SECRETARY	Sara Jane Ward BSc (Hons) PG Dip Hou
REGISTERED OFFICE	Landchard House Victoria Street West Bromwich B70 8HY
REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER	02791788
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER	1032298
AUDITORS	Copia Wealth & Tax Limited Chartered Accountants Statutory Auditors 8 Pendeford Place Pendeford Business Park Wobaston Road Wolverhampton WV9 5HD

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

The trustees who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2021. The trustees have adopted the provisions of Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objectives and aims

Black Country Women's Aid's (BCWA) objectives are:

- i) to relieve the physical and mental distress of women who are homeless and/or have been gravely or persistently mistreated by their husbands, the men with whom they are living, the fathers of their children or any other members of their family; and
- ii) to relieve the physical and mental distress of children affected by the disruption in the home.

Significant activities

The main objectives and activities of the year have continued to focus on the development of quality support services for victims of violence, abuse and exploitation both in and out of refuge. The strategies employed to assist the charity in meeting these objectives included the following:

- Delivery of high quality services that include emergency accommodation as well as community based support for both adult and child victims of violence and abuse including victims of modern slavery
- Sustaining and further development of services to meet victim's needs across the Black Country area and where necessary further afield.
- Identifying and applying for additional funds to sustain existing services and develop new responses to meet victim's needs.
- Developing systems that capture, cope and recover outcomes for victims. This information is used to demonstrate the effectiveness and impact of support services and evidence the need for additional services via commissioning/tendering.
- Responding to the changing and complex needs of victims, making sure there is greater reach to victims and that BCWA create opportunities to engage through increased partnership work and better coordination.

Public benefit

These essential services provide a valuable public benefit to the citizens of the Black Country, West Midlands and throughout the UK.

The trustees have complied with their duty to have due regard to the commission's public benefit guidance when exercising any powers or duties to which the guidance is relevant.

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

Development, Activities and Achievements for 2020/21

This report cannot be written without acknowledging the impact the Coronavirus Pandemic had on the experiences of victim's services and operations of Black Country Women's Aid. This announcement altered the course of the year as all services had to immediately respond to the pandemic and strategic plans were reworked.

On 23 March 2020, the Government announced measures requiring people to stay at home to reduce the spread of Covid-19. The domestic abuse charity Refuge has warned that although the lockdown itself "does not cause domestic abuse", the measures can "aggravate pre-existing behaviours in an abusive partner".

In April 2020, the Government published guidance on support for victims of domestic abuse during the Covid-19 pandemic. The guidance stated that for anyone at risk, the household isolation instruction "does not apply" if they need to leave their home to escape abuse. It also provided information on support services for those being abused or worried that they may commit abuse.

On 27 May 2020, the national domestic abuse charities were reporting an increase of calls and access to websites to the national helpline as many victims were confined to their home

In addition, data gathered by the organisation Counting Dead Women suggests that the number of domestic abuse killings has increased during lockdown. It found that in the first three weeks of lockdown (23 March to 12 April 2020), the number of women killed by men was 14. This is the highest rate for at least eleven years and "double that of a hypothetical average 21 days over the last 10 years".

The Child Poverty Action Group in their briefing paper Domestic Abuse is an economic issue - for its victims and society (December 2019) highlight:

- Gender norms, inadequate public services, the gender pay gap and downright discrimination all contribute to women's disadvantaged position in the economy. Women do more unpaid work around the house and by taking care of children and frail adults. This means they earn less, own less and are more likely to be poor.
- Women are therefore more likely to be financially dependent on someone else or on the state. The erosion of the state's welfare safety net and increasingly stringent access rules have a disproportionate impact on women. Women are placed in a precarious economic position that has a knock-on effect on their safety.
- Poverty is associated with domestic abuse as both a cause and a consequence. It prolongs women's exposure to abuse by reducing their ability to leave and it makes women poorer on leaving the relationship.
- Poorer households show higher rates of domestic abuse. Women in households with low incomes are 3.5 times more likely to experience domestic violence than women in slightly better-off households. The links are complex but one thing is certain: poverty exacerbates the abuse because it increases or prolongs women's exposure to it as it reduces their capacity to leave.
- Women have less opportunity to seek help and "just leave" where there is abuse within the home. For the vast majority of women, economic abuse happens alongside other forms of domestic abuse. This may include coercive control of finances (97% of domestic abuse victims), sabotage - such as the abuser showing up at the woman's workplace or making her late to undermine her job - (89%), and financial exploitation (87%). There are many reasons why women do not leave violent relationships, and fear for their safety and their children's is one of the biggest. But financial insecurity also looms large in women's decision-making.
- Even when a women attempts to leave her economic situation is still poor and often gets worse. She may need to leave the area and therefore lose her job. If she was on working-age benefits or housing benefit, she will need to make a new claim and will be transferred to universal credit, which takes five weeks to process before she receives payment. How can she support herself and her children in the meantime?

Issues may be compounded for certain groups of women. Disabled women have even fewer resources due to their lower rates of employment and wider gender pay gaps compared to disabled and non-disabled men. Cuts to benefits since 2010 and stringent eligibility criteria, including sanctions, have made it harder for disabled women (and men) to have a liveable income. Disabled women will face additional barriers to leave due to inaccessible services, transport and available adapted homes, but also because their abusive partner is often their carer.

Many migrant women have what's called 'no recourse to public funds'. This means they cannot use the social security, housing or women's refuge services available to other women. Women with no recourse to public funds by virtue of their migration status are a group that is economically very vulnerable to domestic abuse. Their options on leaving are even worse than for other women, as they cannot access benefits and only a reduced number of refuges and shelters can accommodate them.

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

The impact of domestic abuse on women's - and children's - lives is devastating and should be addressed on that basis alone, on the violation of women's human rights that it is. By the government's own admission, domestic violence also has an alarming negative impact on society as whole: domestic violence costs England and Wales £66bn every year through things like lost productivity, health and criminal justice costs, and harm to victims.

The Institute of Fiscal Studies in their Briefing paper (June 2020) COVID 19: the Impact of the pandemic on inequality, set out some key findings that may relate to victims of violence and abuse include:

- The specific nature of the economic shock associated with COVID-19 has interacted with many old and deep inequalities. Excluding key workers, most people in the bottom tenth of the earnings distribution are in sectors that have been forced to shut down, and 80% are either in a shut-down sector or are unlikely to be able to do their job from home - compared with only a quarter of the highest-earning tenth. Young people and those of Pakistani, Bangladeshi or black ethnicity are also more affected than others in these respects. Londoners are the most likely people in the country to be able to do their jobs from home.
- About 30% of low-income households (many households living with domestic abuse) pre-crisis said that they could not manage a month if they were to lose their main source of household income. They spend a high fraction of their budgets on necessities that are hard to scale back.
- Pre-COVID, female employment was at record highs, but school and nursery closures removed the childcare provision that had made much of that possible. The additional childcare and housework has fallen far more on mothers than fathers, especially among working parents. There must be a risk that this inhibits work and career progression for mothers, when progress in closing the gender wage gap had already stalled.
- School shutdowns are likely to accentuate the socio-economic divide in educational attainment. The schools that children from better-off families attend are more likely to provide learning activities that involve active engagement between teachers and students than the schools attended by children from the most deprived families. These activities are not only expected to be best suited for supporting home learning; they are also less reliant on parental time and ability to be completed. Many families without the facilities to undertake home learning experienced delays in getting equipment to recommence their education. Many victims shared that the home environment was not conducive to home learning as tensions were heightened with some mothers living within abusive relationships. Home-schooling whilst in their car or at the supermarkets, was considered to be their only respite.

No one could have estimated the devastating impact that it would have on victims/ survivors of violence and abuse as they were forced into lockdown and further inequality as this unfolded throughout the year. With early indication that victims living within households that experienced violence and abuse felt trapped and lockdown, for many, became a harsh sentence on the movement, freedom and access to support for survivors of domestic and intimate partner violence; it was vital that BCWA responded making sure victims and stakeholders knew where to get help.

The policy of lockdown did not realise the detrimental outcomes for victims/ survivors of domestic abuse. The imposition of stay-at-home orders confined them to precarious, violent private spaces for the sake of public safety. This has made it very difficult for victims/survivors to get the care they need. Those that perpetrate violence and abuse were able to weaponise these restrictive measures to further subordinate, control and overpower women and survivors who have been isolated and are unable to seek help during the lockdown. The rationing of medical care and the risk of acquiring COVID-19 through outside exposure may have prevented survivors from pursuing medical assistance. Further, the lockdown and stay-at-home orders may have enabled abusers to engage in more psychological violence based on power, control and denigration of the victim while utilising the virus as leverage. All of these factors coincide to create a dire situation for victims/survivors in these conditions.

It was vital that BCWA remained highly visible and responsive to victims.

During the year BCWA received 12018 referrals into all services an overall 21% increase on last year. This includes;

Domestic Abuse	8043
Refuge	388
Rape and Sexual Abuse (Adults)	657
Rape and Sexual Abuse (Children)	104
Stalking	709
Women's Justice	483
Children affected by domestic abuse	798
Modern Slavery (outreach and accommodation)	299
Counselling	537

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BCWA swiftly developed a new model of service delivery to ensure that no one was left alone, no one was unsafe and all victims knew where to get help. BCWA doors were not closed to any victim of abuse.

Trustees, senior management and all staff worked together to devise operational plans. These plans included;

Maintaining a contact centre - it was vital that victims of violence knew that we were still here and providing services in ways that connected with victims including and especially where risk escalated. For many victims we were their single point of contact, they shared their experiences with skilled support staff and shared any plans to challenge or leave. BCWA knows that a victim making the choice to leave is at significant risk of serious hurt and harm at the point of leaving so connecting the contact centre and access to safe accommodation was vital. BCWA worked with local councils, strategic partnerships and the business community to promote the service, this included connecting with supermarkets, pharmacies and places where the general public could access. All the usual spaces to get help and support such as schools, children centres, community venues etc. were now closed. It was vital that the message went out that we were still here. BCWA became a regular feature on local radio and maintained a high social media presence for greater reach. Support staff worked on and offsite maintaining high levels of communication with victims/ survivors, assessing risk and safety at all times. All our support offices were deep cleaned and sanitized to minimise spread of the virus whilst connecting with victims.

Strengthening the IT infrastructure to remote work - The Home Office made available COVID infrastructure funds that enabled BCWA to remodel and strengthen the IT infrastructure to manage on and offsite model of working. Upgrading the existing server, purchase of equipment (laptops etc.) as well as assessing the home as a safe and confidential space to work from meeting health and safety requirements was undertaken. BCWA experienced minor supply chain issues as all businesses increased demand on technology for business continuity. This work has continued to progress as BCWA work towards standards such as Cyber Essentials and Cyber Essentials Plus that we will continue to work toward in 2021/22. Plans were realised and regularly reviewed with little disruption to service delivery plans and regular review enabled all support staff to undertake their essential function.

Mobilising the support staff - New operational models were devised and all staff were fully trained and briefed to enable them to safely work from home without compromising support to victims. Health and Safety risk assessments were undertaken to ensure homes were safe and confidential spaces to deliver our specialist service. In line with government guidance, the teams worked in "bubbles" and responded well to the new technology. A vital part of mobilising the staff was ensuring that this "new way" of working maintained high levels of support whilst understanding the impact of COVID on their home and family life. Regular review and impact assessment took place to ensure that issues were immediately addressed.

Making sure we responded to victims and their children - the operational models guaranteed victims support in whichever way they felt would assist them. BCWA introduced email, chat functions, text and mobile support to ensure those that had minimal access to the phone or private spaces could still communicate. Feedback from victims/ survivors was extremely positive and many commented on the positive engagement they were able to maintain with their support worker. Throughout the year BCWA undertook surveys with those accessing the service and summary conclusions indicated that 97% would recommend BCWA to others and 97% were satisfied with BCWA support. In relation to support outcomes 98% felt confident with knowing what to do if another incident occurred and 81% saw an improvement in safety at home/work. We will continue to seek victim/ survivor views as we return to "normal" and review pre COVID ways of working.

BCWA continued with support from the Home Office Children Affected by Domestic Abuse fund (CADA) to deliver Our Future. This service supports children identified via reporting to West Midlands Police (WMP) and school safeguarding teams. The service was redesigned as schools closed and children were sent home. The strengthened IT infrastructure enabled the team to use technology to connect with children and young people as they developed online packages to assess safety and risk. This was considered an essential lifeline for children and young people and supported the school in their safeguarding responsibilities. Working together was highly effective and dynamic as circumstances changed. Despite the end of lockdown the schools continued to promote the online support as they struggled to maintain COVID levels within their school. BCWA offered continuity of support and assistance throughout. The impact of COVID on young people's wellbeing as well as educational attainment will be felt for many years. It will be vital moving forward for strategies to be developed that recognises this inequality and impact on child development.

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Supporting victims when legal proceedings were delayed and suspended - The Covid-19 pandemic has had a major impact on the operation of the criminal justice system and the support available to victims. Many victims in BCWA services supported by Independent Domestic Advisers (IDVA's) and Independent Sexual Violence Advisers (ISVA's) that were preparing for court proceedings to commence were devastated when notified of delays and suspensions preventing them from moving forward and/or recovering and seeking justice. For the services this has meant that many have felt re-traumatised by such decisions and have needed further support and counselling as a result. For BCWA support staff, this has meant that victims are within the service longer than previously recorded, trauma levels higher and an increasing volume of new referrals into the service to support, creating genuine pressure points in the service. Despite other statutory services increasing their use of technology this did not provide solutions to enable trials to go ahead both in the magistrates' courts and Crown Court at anything close to normal levels. The number of outstanding cases may be leading to crisis in the criminal justice system where victims/ survivors will have to wait longer to know whether they will get justice. BCWA are concerned that this will impact upon victim confidence to seek justice. Locally BCWA were already facing challenging with the closure of a local courts and scheduling of cases at court. There is no doubt that this will have a lasting impact on victims and will challenge resources into the next financial year.

Maintaining positive partnerships - the strength of the partnerships established with BCWA were evident when all partners developed responses to the pandemic. Whilst BCWA mobilised its own response, this was not without working with strategic and community partners to connect and support each other. It was everyone's immediate priority to respond to individuals in the community. Together we identified vulnerable people and responded by connecting and supporting in emotional and practical ways. Partnership media campaigns using all platforms available to reach people are used and make a significant impact on communities wanting to help support this vital work. The Community Fundraising team was expanded during the year to work with the many committed people and organisations who support the work. Our supporter's generosity comes in both financial support as well as essential items such as clothing, toiletries, start-up kits for new mothers and any call outs for help when someone we support has very little on arrival into refuge. Our links with local foodbanks, other charities and the community voluntary organisations enabled food, clothing and essential for distribution as families told us how they were struggling to survive during this time. Our excellent fundraising team linked with local businesses to raise funds, source essential items, educational materials, and equipment to support the family working and learning. Weekly meetings, data collection and impact reporting meant that there was a shared understanding of the vulnerabilities and needs of the victims/ survivors we were supporting.

BCWA continues to make a significant contribution to the partnerships across the 4 Black Country authorities (Sandwell, Dudley, Walsall and Wolverhampton) influencing strategic and operational development. These include vital partnerships such as the Sandwell Crime Reduction Partnership/ Safer Sandwell, Sandwell Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnership (DASP) Dudley Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnership and Forum (DDAF) and Dudley Safe and Sound, Walsall Domestic Abuse Strategic Group (DASG) and Violent Leads Group as well as operation groups focusing on young people at risk of exploitation, Local Safeguarding Children's and Adults Board, West Midlands Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO) Board, Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) Board and local Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferencing (MARAC) and Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH) as well as taking thematic leads on domestic abuse, modern slavery and stalking at the Office of the Police Crime Commissioner's Victim's Commission. The Victims Commission is the PCC's advisory body on the provision of specialist services. The role of the Victim's Commission is to ensure that services have a positive impact on victims, improving the circumstances of individuals affected by crime, to cope with the effects of their experiences and recover from the harm they have experienced. In addition, the Victim's Commission has succeeded in building a culture of collaboration and ownership for victim care through the voluntary and community sector so that victims experience quality support from the first point of contact. This approach enables the voice of the victims to be represented in all strategic spaces and develop new opportunities for victims of violence and abuse to access services. Much of the year the BCWA Chief Executive worked hard to ensure that services across the Black Country were represented and funding secured. This approach remains integral to the future of specialist services as we continue to face challenges.

BCWA continued to work with other specialist services across the region to ensure that services are coordinated and meet the highest standards. The organisation has continued its partnerships work with other specialist providers and is now integral to the following consortia: National Stalking, Specialist Domestic Violence and Abuse, Rape and Sexual Violence Consortium, The Women's Justice Partnership and other voluntary sector partnerships supporting vulnerable people. This approach continues to demonstrate that agencies cannot work in isolation but are always stronger together.

BCWA listens and hears the voices of those that we provide services to. This is done in ways that enable a dialogue, feedback and impact; their voice is vital to the future direction of services. Where gaps in service are identified BCWA aim to respond. The integrated abuse support vision aims to offer help and support to anyone who has experienced abuse and for that service to be under one roof and easily accessible.

BCWA continues to be proactive in the implementation of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and is supporting partners implement their statutory responsibilities. Much of this work will commence in 2021/22. The Act will;

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- create a statutory definition of domestic abuse, emphasising that domestic abuse is not just physical violence, but can also be emotional, controlling or coercive, and economic abuse
- establish in law the office of Domestic Abuse Commissioner and set out the Commissioner's functions and powers
- provide for a new Domestic Abuse Protection Notice and Domestic Abuse Protection Order
- place a duty on local authorities in England to provide accommodation- based support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation
- prohibit perpetrators of abuse from cross-examining their victims in person in the civil and family courts in England and Wales
- create a statutory presumption that victims of domestic abuse are eligible for special measures in the criminal, civil and family courts
- clarify the circumstances in which a court may make a barring order under section 91(14) of the Children Act 1989 to prevent family proceedings that can further traumatise victims
- extend the controlling or coercive behaviour offence to cover post-separation abuse
- extend the offence of disclosing private sexual photographs and films with intent to cause distress (known as the "revenge porn" offence) to cover threats to disclose such material
- create a new offence of non-fatal strangulation or suffocation of another person
- clarify, by restating in statute law, the general proposition that a person may not consent to the infliction of serious harm and, by extension, is unable to consent to their own death
- extend the extraterritorial jurisdiction of the criminal courts in England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland to further violent and sexual offences
- provide for a statutory domestic abuse perpetrator strategy
- enable domestic abuse offenders to be subject to polygraph testing as a condition of their licence following their release from custody
- place the guidance supporting the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme ("Clare's law") on a statutory footing
- provide that all eligible homeless victims of domestic abuse automatically have 'priority need' for homelessness assistance
- ensure that, where a local authority, for reasons connected with domestic abuse, grants a new secure tenancy to a social tenant who had or has a secure lifetime or assured tenancy (other than an assured short hold tenancy), this must be a secure lifetime tenancy
- prohibit GPs and other health professionals in general practice from charging a victim of domestic abuse for a letter to support an application for legal aid
- provide for a statutory code of practice relating to the processing of domestic abuse data for immigration purposes.

BCWA continues to work with the Salvation Army and the England and Wales delivery partners on challenging local responses, improving systems and services for victims of modern slavery within the National Referral Mechanism.

Sustaining Services

BCWA have worked hard to secure contracts, identify new areas of funding and work in collaboration with partners to secure regional funds. Services continue to be available through open tender processes however they are tendered with reduced budgets and often demanding specifications.

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Despite this ongoing pressure, BCWA continues to experience success via tendering opportunities, joint bids with partners, funding applications to a variety of sources and maintains a good knowledge of external funders' interests and priorities. Funders/ commissioners continue to express satisfaction with the standards of service delivery, performance as well as BCWA's ability to be responsive, innovative and dynamic in its solutions for victims. At all times BCWA maintain a meaningful dialogue with clients across all services ensuring that they remain central to the core values and influence the response. During the year, BCWA received additional support from the Home Office and Ministry of Justice to manage during COVID as well as additional support from local authorities.

BCWA were faced with a challenge during the year to realise the capital bid awarded in the previous year by the Heart of England Community Trust; these challenges were due to the construction industry ceasing trading/operating during COVID with limited supply chains and significant price increases in building materials. With a target of completion for the end of the financial year (March 2021) BCWA worked with project managers E3Cubed to tender for the work against a tight budget and timescales. BCWA were pleased that the scheme was purchased and the additional build and refurbishment was completed on time. The "official opening "is scheduled during 2021/22 and will be shared with all the partners that made it possible. This valuable resource will help many female victims of exploitation receive the care and support they need after being rescued.

BCWA remains committed to the delivery of high quality services that assure funders of the standards that BCWA adopt across all services and demonstrates value for money. Regular internal strategic and operational review enables all services to remain relevant, victim focused and of high quality. Internal and external performance management and review ensure that services are delivered in accordance with contract or funder requirements maximising the resources available. BCWA will be moving towards working within the framework of ISO 9001 for Quality systems, an external standard that ensures that BCWA utilises all systems and funds as effectively and efficiently as possible.

Community Services - Domestic Abuse

Whilst operationally the service faced challenges, BCWA continues to provide commissioned services for Sandwell, Dudley and Walsall local strategic partnerships and continue to provide domestic abuse support services. High risk victims continue to be supported by an Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) who provide immediate support and minimise risk linking with local Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC). BCWA is integral to the Walsall Strengthening Families model and the Black Country Family Drug and Alcohol Court (FDAC) where highly vulnerable children are identified and support around the family is provided. Both specialist areas will be independently evaluated.

High risk victims continue to be supported by an independent domestic abuse adviser (IDVA). Volumes are increasing and further support has been made available by the West Midlands Office of the Police Crime Commissioner (OPCC) to support this increase and strengthen the regional Multiagency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) that take place across the Black Country.

BCWA is now embedded in local operational spaces. This has enabled victims to access services easily and works with partners to advise on identification and referral to our services. BCWA continued with operate within the following structures during COVID albeit via IT platforms:

- Multi agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH) - many referrals are received through this route as partners share information, jointly risk assess and provide a multi-agency response.
- GP Practices - delivering the national Identification and Referral to Improve Safety (IRIS) programme; a GP practice based model that provides training and education, clinical enquiry, care pathways and an enhanced referral pathway to specialist domestic violence services.
- Accident and Emergency Departments -- Based within Russell's Hall Hospital Trust, specialist advocates identify victims presenting with multiple injuries as a result of abuse. BCWA continue to triangulate support for victims in both primary and acute services to reduce risk and increase safety
- Substance misuse commissioned services. Working particularly within the Sandwell Blue Light Project BCWA is part of the multi-agency operational group to ensure a joint identification and ownership of the highest impact clients both as victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse.
- Early help hubs. Working at a local level with a range of professional's supporting victims and working to keep them safe.
- Schools where children have been identified through police notifications. BCWA has worked with West Midlands Police, Walsall MBC and the Home Office to secure funds to support children and young people.
- Drive & DVPP Drive (Sandwell) and DVPP (Sandwell and Dudley) are two projects in which we provide parallel support to victims and children where the offender is engaging in a perpetrator programme. Our support helps to ensure safeguarding is central, the voices of victims and children are heard, and they receive the emotional and practical support they need

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BCWA continues to develop its Stalking service. Stalking is an extremely complex, area, requiring an in-depth understanding of a perpetrator's behaviour patterns and motivations to make clear the risk victims face. Our team are trained to use a number of specialist tools, including the SRP (Stalking Risk Profile), SASH (Screening Assessment for Stalking and Harassment) and Dr Jane Monckton-Smith's Homicide Timeline to profile perpetrators. This expertise is invaluable in our advocacy with agencies such as police and probation, to help them manage offenders, address stalking behaviour directly and safeguard victims. This service continues to be supported by the Office of the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner.

Community Services: Rape, Sexual Violence and Exploitation Services

ISVAs play a key role in helping survivors to access and engage with the criminal justice system. Police investigations and case progression have been significantly affected during COVID. Our service managers meet regularly with West Midlands Police to discuss issues affecting survivors, strengthen referral pathways, and gain clarity on police processes to keep survivors informed. Clients who are better informed are less likely to feel helpless or disengage from the criminal justice system. BCWA has a team of ISVAs (independent sexual violence advisers) who support both male and female survivors of rape and sexual abuse across the Black Country; in Sandwell, Dudley, Wolverhampton and Walsall. The service includes specialist advocates who support child and adult victims of childhood sexual abuse. BCWA continue to provide links from the regional Sexual Assault Referrals Centres (SARC) into local services and provides specialist therapeutic interventions. The ISVA continues to support at court and complete the Criminal Injuries Compensation administration with the victim. Where necessary the ISVA provides advice and guidance to colleagues within the criminal justice arena.

Since the male pilot supporting survivors of sexual abuse in 2019, we have been working with national leads to develop a service offer to male victims, however, COVID has hindered progress. Work will commence as soon as we can but this is likely to be in the next financial year.

Specialist Children's ISVA's (CHISVA) continue to support young people who have experienced rape and sexual violence. Our specialist children and young people's services support young victims of rape, sexual assault, child sexual exploitation (CSE) and domestic violence. This area of work continues to work as partnerships gain a greater understanding of the impact of abuse on children. Working with both adult and child will strengthen relationships and develop resilience and confidence in young people as they progress into adulthood.

Community Services: Women's Justice

During the year BCWA worked with Women's Justice Partners to develop the future shape of women's services in light of the renationalisation of the National Probation Services. As a provider in the Community rehabilitation Companies (CRC), BCWA supported lead partner Changing Lives (National Charity) to deliver the regional women's offer under the new probation arrangements. Existing contracts via the CRC were extended to ensure smooth transition from the CRC contracting arrangement to the new one. BCWA continues to provide a specialist early-intervention project, commissioned by the Office of the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner, which provides diversion from custody for women in Sandwell and Dudley, called New Chance. Women access this service following arrest; they are referred by police to our service, which offers practical and emotional support aimed at helping them to move forward in their lives and avoid future offending. Changes to the model of working meant that the operating models of on and offsite working were adopted and client contact was made via phone or IT. The partnership will be notified during 2021/22 of its application.

BCWA were keen to retain the women's homelessness projects during COVID, realising the additional pressure on women.. Whilst the original funding source had ceased, BCWA were successful in obtaining funds via The Eveson Trust to continue. The work proved to be extremely challenging during COVID as many of the usual community links to identify had ceased during Lockdown. The team relied upon the wider partnership to respond. They were considered an essential lifeline for many women forced onto the streets or into prostitution during this time. Many felt unsafe, as the usual support networks were not around. BCWA is working with statutory partners to share this service and connect homeless women with services to ensure continuity of help and support.

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Accommodation and Outreach Service

Sandwell MBC continue to commission BCWA to provide a safe house where women and children who are experiencing domestic abuse can stay free from fear. Refuge services remained open and available throughout COVID. With high levels of occupancy the setting had to reorganise to reduce the risk of infection. Much of the "in refuge" community activity ended, however, the team were inventive and creative to ensure that families did not feel confined. The use of IT and the plentiful donations of food and equipment was generously shared amongst the children and families in refuge. Additional accommodation was sourced to manage an increase in demand funded by the Department of Housing and Local Communities. We await the impact of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, as the current contract comes to an end during the next financial year and a significant part of it focuses on the refuge provision and its commissioning arrangements.

BCWA continue to provide units of accommodation and outreach services spanning the West Midlands for victims of Modern Day Slavery (MDS) in partnership with the Salvation Army who hold the national contract with the Home Office. Each year sees an increase in victims accessing the service, demonstrating greater awareness and understanding of modern slavery and the extent of it within our communities. Risks are very high for the victims, as often the traffickers will make significant attempts to find them. Therefore, security needs to be high for both victims and staff providing this vital service.

The service works with a range of stakeholders to gather intelligence on locations and vulnerabilities where exploitation operates and takes an active part in the media highlighting the plight of victims. BCWA also contributes to national discussions, legislative changes and acts as expert consultants to the West Midlands Modern Slavery Strategy and West Midlands Police Multi Agency Policy and Procedures. We represent survivors on the West Midlands Anti-Slavery Network, Human Trafficking Advisory Foundation Forum, and PAN West Midlands Multi-Agency Group.

BCWA continues to work within local strategic partnerships as they increase their awareness of modern slavery and acknowledge the vital role that they play in identifying and coordinating rescue. The COVID crisis amplified some of the major drivers of modern slavery, such as poverty and financial crisis.

The UN Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery recently warned that growing informalisation and casualisation of the labour force would heighten modern slavery risks. That risk has now been magnified hugely. The International Labour Organisation reports that the economic and labour crisis, created by COVID-19, may see global unemployment increase by almost 25 million. Working poverty rates will increase significantly, with a prediction that there will be between 20.1 million and 25 million more people in working poverty than in the pre COVID-19 estimate. As governments order non-essential business to close, millions of people employed in the gig economy—who for the most part are on precarious contracts, with little or low access to paid sick leave and no health insurance—are put in vulnerable situations and may turn to risky or exploitative employment.

COVID-19 also poses serious health risks. Healthcare crises are known to push people towards risky labour market decisions that can make them vulnerable to modern slavery because they lose their job as a result of the crisis. This can heighten risks of enslavement.

Legal restrictions on economic activity may be increasing risks of exploitation in other contexts. Concerns have been raised for sex workers as nightclubs shut, and sex work is pushed underground, making workers increasingly vulnerable to trafficking.

Counselling and Therapeutic Services

Counselling and specialist therapeutic interventions underpin the support services and are an essential component of a holistic approach to addressing trauma. During the year, the counsellors remodelled to deliver sessions via platforms such as Teams and Zoom. Whilst this suited some victims it didn't suit others and a growing waiting list emerged. Support remained with the ISVA however with increasing numbers and increasing trauma this has caused many to remain highly vulnerable and look towards other coping mechanisms. BCWA were swift to open its doors to counselling, having redesigned counselling facilities to ensure they were fully COVID risk assessment compliant. Funding for this additional need has been sourced via the Ministry of Justice who identify with the impact of COVID and victims/survivors seeking justice.

Business development and finance

Strategic and partnership working remains a vital part of our work. The corporate centre continues to strengthen following investment into key positions in finance, human resources, business and operational development and communications. BCWA produce regular newsletters, use social media, and articles in national press on related issues to highlight the plight of victims of abuse and the impact of national policy on victim's lives.

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Quality, Learning and Enterprise

BCWA have robust internal audit functions auditing the standards and quality of service against national standards. Reports, analysis and trends to strategic partnerships, funders and commissioners are available on a regular basis outlining the performance of the service against specification/commission. Training and development of employees, all increased in the last 12 months and employees recognise the impact of training on their practice. Regrettably during COVID, BCWA were unable to host student placements and or take on any additional volunteers as it prioritised the employed workforce onsite.

BCWA during COVID explored many online learning opportunities and has since developed a Workforce development team to focus on the continual professional development of all its workforce, matching the national standards against practice. Managers and teams worked hard during COVID to further develop their operating procedures and review the case management systems to ensure that standards of good practice were delivered within services. The appointment of 2 Project Officers located within the Executive team has enabled BCWA to pursue an internal audit function to assess standards and quality. BCWA will strength this function in the next financial year as it looks towards specialist roles focused on contract/ standard compliance, data management and quality management.

Employees are developed through an organisational training plan and encouraged to pursue external qualifications as part of their Professional Development Plan (PDP). This will be further strengthened as we move towards Employment Competency Frameworks to further develop our employee skills and talents. The organisation continues to support the Home Office standards for Independent domestic violence and sexual violence advocacy services as defined by SafeLives, Lime Culture, Women's Aid Federation of England and Wales and Respect. In addition BCWA is working within the ISO frameworks for IT Security, Quality, and Environmental and will work to achieve industry standards in cyber security.

BCWA remains an organisation recognised for its expertise in both policy and practice. The senior management team have been involved in the development of national policy, national accredited training courses and the continuing professional development of health and other professionals. During 2020/21, BCWA remained lead trainers within the Local Safeguarding Children's, Adult Safeguarding Board and other strategic forums providing expertise on interpersonal violence, abuse and exploitation.

BCWA has also registered with the Open College Network to develop and provide accredited courses covering a range of specialist areas. BCWA has developed its first accredited course and will look to expand the college and provide a whole range of accredited courses for agencies and professionals.

The organisation continues to receive gifts in kind, including toys, food and toiletries from a variety of women's organisations, religious groups, and individuals and other organisations, as well as hours of volunteer time amounting to over 250 hours.

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FINANCIAL REVIEW

Our income increased from £5,433,287 to £6,207,209 an increase of 14% whilst expenditure rose from £4,468,787 to £5,135,979. The increased income is a reflection of the increase in funds to support the direct service delivery. The organisation continues to realise its longer term plan to diversify funds away from the statutory funding and has been able to attract new funding streams to support existing services and take on new projects.

Expenses and overheads have been tightly controlled and new contracts reflect the savings shown. The increase in expenditure is due to a response to service increase where new office premises were obtained and staff costs increased in line with our provision of extra services.

The Statement of Financial activities shows an increase in funds of £1,071,230. Our reserves now stand at £3,365,135 of which £981,983 is restricted and £2,383,152 is unrestricted. The balance of unrestricted reserves includes £401,632 related to fixed assets and £699,018 is designated to meet the future commitments. Therefore the balance of free reserves is £1,282,502.

Reserves Policy

The Board of Trustees has examined the charity's requirements for reserves in light of the main risks to the organisation.

The Board of Trustees has agreed to support a 3-year strategy that includes:

- Strategic Development Fund - where the organisation undertakes research and development to inform future service provision and secure additional funds for longer term service delivery costs of £102,000.
- Service Continuity Fund - where the organisation maintains costs for closure as well as 6 months' running costs of £522,018.
- Property Contingency Fund- where the organisation has to ensure sufficient funds to maintain the properties to a high standard, ensure routine repairs and maintenance and be prepared in the event of major structural damage - £75,000.

FUTURE PLANS

Future plans include:

1. Development of regional working opportunities for joint working and tender opportunities.
2. Implementation of new policies ensuring that the systems are fit for purpose.
3. Securing work currently provided via tendering and commissioning.
4. Improving integration across all services addressing the increasing complexities of victims presenting into service.
5. Identifying new opportunities for funding to sustain and continue essential work.
6. Contributing to strategic and operational plans with a range of partners to create a "whole systems approach" to supporting victims wherever they present ensuring that victims remain supported, risks identified and protected.
7. Continuing to influence strategy at a local, regional and national level.
8. Ensuring consistency and quality of services for victims.
9. Reviewing services; evaluating cost effectiveness, efficiency and operational delivery. Reviewing governance arrangements and strengthening corporate services meeting the need of a growing organisation.
10. Further development of the training and educational programmes and developments working within local educational partnerships and academic institutions and continuing to explore formal accreditation such as Open College Network.
11. Establishing improved solutions to victims of violence and abuse that have little or no access to public funds and ensure that this issue remains high on the strategic agenda.
12. Ensuring that all services meet nationally recognised quality standards.
13. Creating different and new strategic partnerships and joint working to meet the needs of vulnerable people with complex and diverse issues.
14. Increasing the property portfolio by purchase and other legal arrangements.
15. Developing a "Women's Centre" approach, widening the opportunities for women.
16. Exploring the implementation of gendered spaces in line with national standards

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

This is a company limited by guarantee and its operations include:

- The provision of supported accommodation for individuals leaving violence, abuse and exploitation.
- Outreach and resettlement support services for children, young people and women moving back into the community after leaving refuge and/or within a safe home.
- The provision of a community based support and advocacy service for victims of abuse in and out of the criminal justice system.
- Community engagement/involvement and peer support for victims of violence and abuse.
- Delivery of training and awareness raising to both statutory and non-statutory agencies, work with schools, colleges and other educational establishments outlining the effects/ impact of abuse explaining models of interventions.
- Working in partnership both at a strategic and operational level with the statutory and voluntary sector to develop a co-ordinated response to tackling domestic abuse.

Governing Document

The organisation is a charitable company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales, incorporated in 1993 and registered as a charity in 1994. The company was established under a Memorandum of Association which established the objectives and powers of the charitable company and is governed under its Articles of Association. In the event of the company being wound up members are required to contribute an amount not exceeding £1.00

Recruitment and Appointment of Management Committee

The Directors of the Company are also Charity Trustees for the purpose of charity law and under the Articles are known as the members of the Management Committee. Under the requirements of the Memorandum and Articles of Association the members of the management committee must be re-elected each year.

Co-opted members are also elected representing key funders or partner agencies, for example Sandwell MBC.

The Management Committee where possible seek to ensure that the needs of victims of abuse both adults, children and young people are appropriately reflected through the diversity of the Trustee body. To enhance the potential pool of Trustees promotions take place to attract skilled individuals from all sectors to contribute their skill, knowledge and commitment. This is regularly discussed at Board meetings to ensure good representation.

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Trustee Induction and training

Trustees are familiar with the operational work of the charity and are supported by the Executive Director through a Trustee information pack and the opportunity to visit the various services, as part of an optional induction.

Strategic Structure

Black Country Women's Aid has a Management Committee/Board of 5 members who meet as a full Board every 8 weeks. The meeting dates are set as part of an annual calendar and the Annual General Meeting scheduled in advance.

In addition there are sub-committees:

- Finance Sub Committee
- Quality Sub Committee
- Workforce Development Sub Committee
- Facilities management Sub Committee

Each Committee has its own Terms of Reference and all work to achieve the main objectives of the organisation. Each meeting is organised to discuss new policies, procedures, issues identified and quality standards. Each subcommittee feeds into the main board for final discussion and ratification. During the year many of the meetings have been held via the Teams platform. This has proven an effective ways to hold business meetings and as the organisation works toward new models of working such as hybrid working, will look towards this being included in its planning. All minutes and decision making is circulated and presented to the full board for recommendation, further discussion and final approval.

Where necessary E-reports and extraordinary meetings are called and reported to the next Board meeting for full ratification.

Members come from a variety of related professional backgrounds and are responsible for the strategic direction and policy of the Charity. A skills audit takes place of Board members to ensure that the organisation is equipped with the right skills to reach its full potential. Where practicable the Trustees undertake an annual business planning event to discuss organisational progress, strategic direction and agree future projections. Co-opted members have no voting rights but are considered an important part of the discussion and debate.

The Trustees delegate responsibility to the Chief Executive who also acts as Company Secretary. In addition, the Chief Executive holds the lead responsibility for policy and performance, financial management, employee recruitment and management as well as operational service delivery. The Chief Executive delegates tasks to appointed Heads of Service who report back on a regular basis.

The Chief Executive, working with her team of Heads of Service, managers and corporate colleagues take the lead for developing employees, apprentices and volunteers ensuring that their learning experience is translated into operational practice in line with good practice.

Senior Management Structure

BCWA is led by a senior management structure comprising of the Chief Executive Officer, Deputy Chief Executive/ Director of Finance, Regional Head of Domestic Abuse Community Services, Head of Refuge Accommodation, Head of Rape and Sexual Violence and Abuse support services incorporating Therapeutic services, Head of Modern Slavery (x2), Head of Workforce Development and the Executive Officer. The total salaries of the Senior Management team were £346,314, (2019/20 337,642). This represents 10% of the total salary cost to the organisation.

The senior management remuneration approach is generally adopts the following principles:

- Internal job evaluation taking into account the distinct elements of the role
- Internal job evaluation against comparative positions within the organisation
- External benchmarking based on market factors

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Risk management

The management committee has conducted a review of the major risks to which the charity is exposed and this is outlined in its Strategic Plan. A risk register has been developed and will be updated annually to assess the risks to services and funds and any other changes that the charity faces.

BCWA has assessed the impact of BREXIT, however, the COVID pandemic superseded any risks identified and risks reassessed. Funders assured BCWA that funding agreed for 2020/21 would not be affected as we discussed alternative arrangements to deliver services. At the time of discussions it was not known how long the organisation and the areas that we work within would experience the disruption. It was agreed that weekly data and risk assessments would be shared with commissioners and the wider partnership to ensure services maximised funding available. Discussions predicted an increase in the volume of victims and BCWA were required to prepare for this increase BCWA swiftly responded to the risks to its service model by redesigning and reorganising the way it delivered services.

Changes to legislation e.g. Domestic Abuse Act 2021 is likely to have an impact on BCWA however as statutory partnerships emerge and detailed needs assessment emerge, BCWA is likely to see a clearer picture of the strategic response. BCWA are however considered an essential and vital partner in the implementation of the Act.

The Immigration and Borders Bill may have an impact on the legal status of people in need of help and support, however, the senior management team is already linking in to discussions at a national level to share the impact and concerns.

Financial procedures are adhered to and regularly reviewed with regard to authorisation of transactions for all project expenditure.

BCWA are scoping its Environmental Policy with partners and will look to further development and implementation during 2021/22.

All contracted services work within relevant contractual timescales, quality standards and are monitored externally on a quarterly basis and internally on a monthly basis, in accordance with the organisation's performance framework. This ensures a consistent quality of service for all operational aspects of services.

All Service Level Agreements (SLA's) have agreed targets and outcomes and are performance monitored on a quarterly basis. Services aim to work within nationally recognised standards of practice and seek external accreditation e.g. Women's Aid Federation of England and Wales, Safe Lives, The Survivors Trust, Rape Crisis England and Wales and the British Association of Counsellors and Psychotherapists (BACP).

All grants/funds/contracts awarded are for specific time periods and have project plans and milestones to ensure work is monitored and meeting required standards. Regular contact with commissioners ensures that the work is on target and achieving its expected outcomes.

Board meetings take place every 8 weeks as part of an annual plan and a subcommittee structure that enables ongoing reporting and risk management across the organisation.

Related Parties

The work of the organisation sits within a number of strategic frameworks both locally, regionally and nationally. The Chief Executive and relevant Heads of Service play a significant role across all areas of business including developing and influencing strategy, continuous improvement of services and developing new opportunities to support victims, ensuring financial plans are sustainable and guaranteeing that the victims voice remains at the centre of all decision making.

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The trustees (who are also the directors of Black Country Women's Aid for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Report of the Trustees and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES - continued

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charity SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In so far as the trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditors are unaware; and
- the trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditors are aware of that information.

AUDITORS

The auditors, Copia Wealth & Tax Limited, will be proposed for re-appointment at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Approved by order of the board of trustees on 15 December 2021 and signed on its behalf by:



Karen Elizabeth Dowman - Trustee

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT AUDITORS TO THE MEMBERS OF BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Black Country Women's Aid (the 'charitable company') for the year ended 31 March 2021 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2021 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report, other than the financial statements and our Report of the Independent Auditors thereon.

Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, 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 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.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

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

- the information given in the Report of the Trustees for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Report of the Trustees has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT AUDITORS TO THE MEMBERS OF BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Report of the Trustees.

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

- adequate accounting records have not been kept or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- the trustees were not entitled to take advantage of the small companies exemption from the requirement to prepare a Strategic Report or in preparing the Report of the Trustees.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Our 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 a Report of the Independent Auditors 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:

- We gained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks within which the charitable company is required to operate and focussed on those that have a direct effect on the determination of material amounts and disclosures within the financial statements - primarily these were the Companies Act 2006, the Charities Act 2011 and the Charities SORP (FRS102). We assessed compliance with these laws and regulations as part of our audit procedures in respect of related items within the financial statements. Our audit procedures in this regard were limited to enquiry of Trustees and other management and inspection of any regulatory and legal correspondence, if any.
- We identified items within the financial statements at greatest risk of a material impact from irregularities, including fraud, which were considered to be the recognition of grant income and overriding of controls by management. We undertook audit procedures to respond to these risks, including enquiries of management, sample testing on the posting of journals, review of the basis of accounting estimates and a review of the timing of recognition of grant income.
- Due to the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we may not have detected some material misstatements within the financial statements despite properly planning and performing our audit in line with auditing standards. This could be due to a number of factors such as collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations or the over-ride of controls. We point out that we are not responsible for preventing non-compliance and cannot be expected to detect non-compliance with all laws and regulations.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our Report of the Independent Auditors.

**REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT AUDITORS TO THE MEMBERS OF
BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID**

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditors' 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 charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

S D Philpott

Shaun Philpott (Senior Statutory Auditor)
for and on behalf of Copia Wealth & Tax Limited
Chartered Accountants
Statutory Auditors
8 Pendeford Place
Pendeford Business Park
Wobaston Road
Wolverhampton
WV9 5HD

15 December 2021

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
(INCORPORATING AN INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021**

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2021 Total funds £	2020 Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM					
Donations and legacies	2	107,115	-	107,115	96,649
Charitable activities	4				
Refuge based support		772,697	118,334	891,031	774,807
Community based support		1,145,301	2,424,280	3,569,581	3,017,626
Modern day slavery		1,292,703	-	1,292,703	1,021,361
Capital projects		-	284,255	284,255	477,702
Other trading activities	3	34,673	(1)	34,672	45,142
Other income	5	27,852	-	27,852	-
Total		3,380,341	2,826,868	6,207,209	5,433,287
EXPENDITURE ON					
Raising funds	6	438	-	438	540
Charitable activities	7				
Refuge based support		870,712	120,595	991,307	753,473
Community based support		866,318	2,331,461	3,197,779	2,827,886
Modern day slavery		936,901	9,554	946,455	886,888
Total		2,674,369	2,461,610	5,135,979	4,468,787
NET INCOME		705,972	365,258	1,071,230	964,500
Transfers between funds	19	42,070	(42,070)	-	-
Net movement in funds		748,042	323,188	1,071,230	964,500
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		1,635,110	658,795	2,293,905	1,329,405
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		2,383,152	981,983	3,365,135	2,293,905

The notes form part of these financial statements

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

**BALANCE SHEET
31 MARCH 2021**

	Notes	2021 £	2020 £
FIXED ASSETS			
Tangible assets	14	1,145,331	875,624
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors	15	1,367,719	996,030
Cash at bank and in hand		1,466,839	697,956
		2,834,558	1,693,986
CREDITORS			
Amounts falling due within one year	16	(614,754)	(275,705)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		2,219,804	1,418,281
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		3,365,135	2,293,905
NET ASSETS		3,365,135	2,293,905
FUNDS	19		
Unrestricted funds		2,383,152	1,635,110
Restricted funds		981,983	658,795
TOTAL FUNDS		3,365,135	2,293,905

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to charitable companies subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on 15 December 2021 and were signed on its behalf by:



Karen Elizabeth Dowman - Trustee

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

CASH FLOW STATEMENT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

	Notes	2021 £	2020 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Cash generated from operations	1	<u>1,075,262</u>	<u>835,360</u>
Net cash provided by operating activities		<u>1,075,262</u>	<u>835,360</u>
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		<u>(306,379)</u>	<u>(477,702)</u>
Net cash used in investing activities		<u>(306,379)</u>	<u>(477,702)</u>
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period		<u>768,883</u>	<u>357,658</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		<u>697,956</u>	<u>340,298</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period		<u><u>1,466,839</u></u>	<u><u>697,956</u></u>

The notes form part of these financial statements

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

**NOTES TO THE CASH FLOW STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021**

1. RECONCILIATION OF NET INCOME TO NET CASH FLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES

	2021	2020
	£	£
Net income for the reporting period (as per the Statement of Financial Activities)	1,071,230	964,500
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation charges	36,141	30,386
Loss on disposal of fixed assets	530	-
Increase in debtors	(371,689)	(233,420)
Increase in creditors	339,050	73,894
Net cash provided by operations	1,075,262	835,360

2. ANALYSIS OF CHANGES IN NET FUNDS

	At 1.4.20	Cash flow	At 31.3.21
	£	£	£
Net cash			
Cash at bank and in hand	697,956	768,883	1,466,839
	697,956	768,883	1,466,839
Total	697,956	768,883	1,466,839

The notes form part of these financial statements

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of preparing the financial statements

The financial statements of the charitable company, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019)', Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Companies Act 2006. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

Income

All income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities once the charity has entitlement to the funds, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Charitable activities

Charitable activities are as follows:

Refuge based support
Community based support
Modern slavery
Equipment grants

Resources expended

Staff costs and overhead expenses are allocated to activities on the basis of staff time spent on those activities.

Value added tax is not recoverable by the charity and as such is included in the relevant costs in the Statement of Financial Activities.

Charitable activities comprises of those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them.

Governance costs include those costs associated with meeting the constitutional and statutory requirements of the charity and include the audit fees and costs linked to the strategic management of the charity.

Tangible fixed assets

Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life.

Freehold property	- 2% on cost
Fixtures and fittings	- 33% on cost

Taxation

As a charity, Black Country Women's Aid is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within section 466 to 493 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 to the extent that these are applicable to its charitable objects. No tax charges have arisen in the charity.

Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are donations and other income received or generated for the objects of the charity without specified purposes and are available as general funds.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

Expenditure which meets these criteria is identified to the fund, together with a fair allocation of management and support costs.

Designated funds are unrestricted funds earmarked by the Trustees for particular purposes.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES - continued

Donated goods and services

Donated goods and services are included at the value to the charity where this can be quantified. The value of services provided by general volunteers has not been included in these accounts.

Pension costs and other post-retirement benefits

The charitable company operates a defined contribution pension scheme. Contributions payable to the charitable company's pension scheme are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities in the period to which they relate.

Hire purchase and leasing commitments

Assets obtained under hire purchase contracts or finance leases are capitalised in the balance sheet. Those held under hire purchase contracts are depreciated over their estimated useful lives. Those held under finance leases are depreciated over their estimated useful lives or the lease term whichever is shorter.

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the statement of financial activity on a straight line basis over the period of the lease.

2. DONATIONS AND LEGACIES

	2021 £	2020 £
Donations	107,115	96,649

3. OTHER TRADING ACTIVITIES

	2021 £	2020 £
Management and training fees	34,672	45,142

4. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	Activity	2021 £	2020 £
Grants and contracts	Refuge based support	471,967	362,176
Accommodation charges	Refuge based support	419,064	412,631
Grants and contracts	Community based support	3,569,581	3,017,626
Grants and contracts	Modern day slavery	1,292,703	1,021,361
Grants and contracts	Capital projects	284,255	477,702
		6,037,570	5,291,496

Grants received, included in the above, are as follows:

	2021 £	2020 £
Refuge: Sandwell MBC - Supporting People	305,979	305,978
Refuge: Sandwell MBC - DCLG	59,378	54,463
Refuge: Sandwell MBC - Play Scheme Grant	-	1,733
Refuge: MHCLG COVID-19	106,610	-
Community: Sandwell MBC - Specialist DV and SV Support	321,297	286,188
Community: Sandwell MBC - Safer Sandwell Partnership	40,000	40,000
Community: Dudley MBC - DA Support Service	123,424	123,424
Community: Dudley MBC - ED Advocacy Project	58,848	30,583
Carried forward	1,015,536	842,369

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021**

4. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES - continued

	2021	2020
	£	£
Brought forward	1,015,536	842,369
Community: Walsall MBC - DV/ Children	335,403	259,577
Community: West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner	863,075	704,314
Community: West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner - DVPP	108,455	100,000
Community: West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner - New Chance	45,000	35,000
Community: West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner - COVID	240,095	-
Community: West Midlands Police - VRU	12,664	7,573
Community: West Midlands Police - Secondment	33,520	27,411
Community: SWM Probation Trust - Female Service Users	291,657	270,507
Community: Home Office - CSE and Our Future	358,183	459,630
Community: Ministry of Justice - Rape and SA Support Fund	226,486	118,545
Community: Ministry of Justice - COVID	46,228	-
Community: Department for Culture Media and Sport - Tampon Tax	-	114,250
Community: NHS Sandwell and West Birmingham - ED Advocacy Project	88,622	88,623
Community: NHS Sandwell and West Birmingham CCG - IRIS	73,843	96,256
Community: NHS Dudley CCG - IRIS	76,113	58,000
Community: NHS Walsall CCG - IRIS	76,113	75,360
Community: Birmingham & Solihull Mental Health and NHS Trust - Assist	-	37,907
Community: Change, Grow, Live (CGL) - Early Help Service	40,516	40,516
Community: Children in Need - Young People's Advocate	30,757	31,551
Community: Comic Relief	-	12,413
Community: Homeless Link	74,282	-
Community: SCVO	5,000	-
Modern Day Slavery: Salvation Army	1,292,703	1,021,361
Modern Day Slavery: Capital Projects: Heart of England - Building Better Lives	284,255	477,702
	<u>5,618,506</u>	<u>4,878,865</u>

5. OTHER INCOME

	2021	2020
	£	£
Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme	<u>27,852</u>	<u>-</u>

6. RAISING FUNDS

Raising donations and legacies

	2021	2020
	£	£
Fundraising	<u>438</u>	<u>540</u>

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021**

7. CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES COSTS

	Direct Costs (see note 8) £	Support costs (see note 9) £	Totals £
Refuge based support	902,706	88,601	991,307
Community based support	2,751,392	446,387	3,197,779
Modern day slavery	809,694	136,761	946,455
	4,463,792	671,749	5,135,541

8. DIRECT COSTS OF CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	2021 £	2020 £
Staff costs	3,462,063	3,361,627
Activity costs	206,517	167,587
Office costs	246,183	122,070
Property costs	549,029	446,489
	4,463,792	4,097,773

9. SUPPORT COSTS

	Depreciation £	Office costs £	Property costs £
Refuge based support	3,628	27,975	8,820
Community based support	18,280	140,945	44,437
Modern day slavery	14,763	40,165	12,663
	36,671	209,085	65,920
	Staff costs, travel etc £	Governance costs £	Totals £
Refuge based support	46,738	1,440	88,601
Community based support	235,472	7,253	446,387
Modern day slavery	67,103	2,067	136,761
	349,313	10,760	671,749

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021**

9. SUPPORT COSTS - continued

Activity	Basis of allocation
Depreciation	Usage
Office costs	Usage
Property costs	Usage
Staff costs, travel etc	Usage
Governance costs	Usage

Support costs, included in the above, are as follows:

				2021	2020
	Refuge based support £	Community based support £	Modern day slavery £	Total activities £	Total activities £
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	3,628	18,280	14,763	36,671	30,386
Office costs	27,975	140,945	40,165	209,085	134,189
Property costs	8,820	44,437	12,663	65,920	69,813
Staff costs & travel etc	46,738	235,472	67,103	349,313	127,086
Auditors' remuneration	1,440	7,253	2,067	10,760	9,000
	88,601	446,387	136,761	671,749	370,474

10. NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)

Net income/(expenditure) is stated after charging/(crediting):

	2021	2020
	£	£
Auditors' remuneration	10,760	9,000
Depreciation - owned assets	36,142	30,386

11. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 31 March 2021 nor for the year ended 31 March 2020.

Trustees' expenses

There were no trustees' expenses paid for the year ended 31 March 2021 nor for the year ended 31 March 2020.

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021**

12. STAFF COSTS

	2021	2020
	£	£
Wages and salaries	3,178,022	2,853,015
Social security	270,630	239,654
Pension	124,527	103,682
	3,573,179	3,196,351

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	2021	2020
Direct charitable work	135	121
Administration	17	15
	152	136

The number of employees whose employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) exceeded £60,000 was:

	2021	2020
£70,001 - £80,000	-	1
£80,001 - £90,000	1	-
	1	1

Black Country Women's Aid considers its key management personnel to be the Executive Director . The total employment benefits including employer pension contributions of the key management personnel were £84,389 (2020: £78,280).

The company operates a Group Personal Pension Plan to which the charitable company contributes 5% and employees contribute 3%.

13. COMPARATIVES FOR THE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM			
Donations and legacies	96,649	-	96,649
Charitable activities			
Refuge based support	718,610	56,197	774,807
Community based support	653,508	2,364,118	3,017,626
Modern day slavery	1,021,361	-	1,021,361
Capital projects	-	477,702	477,702
Other trading activities	45,142	-	45,142
Total	2,535,270	2,898,017	5,433,287
EXPENDITURE ON			
Raising funds	540	-	540
Charitable activities			
Refuge based support	694,932	58,541	753,473

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021**

13. COMPARATIVES FOR THE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES - continued

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
Community based support	601,355	2,226,531	2,827,886
Modern day slavery	886,372	516	886,888
Total	2,183,199	2,285,588	4,468,787
NET INCOME	352,071	612,429	964,500
Transfers between funds	97,362	(97,362)	-
Net movement in funds	449,433	515,067	964,500
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS			
Total funds brought forward	1,185,677	143,728	1,329,405
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	1,635,110	658,795	2,293,905

14. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Freehold property £	Fixtures and fittings £	Motor vehicles £	Totals £
COST				
At 1 April 2020	919,707	151,547	1,060	1,072,314
Additions	285,105	21,274	-	306,379
Disposals	-	(34,698)	(1,060)	(35,758)
At 31 March 2021	1,204,812	138,123	-	1,342,935
DEPRECIATION				
At 1 April 2020	55,270	140,890	530	196,690
Charge for year	18,393	17,749	-	36,142
Eliminated on disposal	-	(34,698)	(530)	(35,228)
At 31 March 2021	73,663	123,941	-	197,604
NET BOOK VALUE				
At 31 March 2021	1,131,149	14,182	-	1,145,331
At 31 March 2020	864,437	10,657	530	875,624

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021**

15. DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2021	2020
	£	£
Trade debtors	901,266	481,715
Rent Receivable	18,211	6,847
Other debtors	356,409	464,743
Prepayments	91,833	42,725
	1,367,719	996,030

16. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2021	2020
	£	£
Trade creditors	261,677	92,581
Social security and other taxes	156,518	111,093
Deferred income	160,011	56,907
Accrued expenses	36,548	15,124
	614,754	275,705

17. SECURED DEBTS

A charge has been secured on the freehold property known as Karen House on 16 March 2020, in favour of the Heart of England Community Foundation, by way of a legal mortgage.

18. ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

	Unrestricted	Restricted	2021	2020
	funds	funds	Total	Total
	£	£	funds	funds
	£	£	£	£
Fixed assets	401,632	743,699	1,145,331	875,624
Current assets	2,596,274	238,284	2,834,558	1,693,986
Current liabilities	(614,754)	-	(614,754)	(275,705)
	2,383,152	981,983	3,365,135	2,293,905

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

19. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

	At 1.4.20 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 31.3.21 £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	1,004,088	705,972	(25,926)	1,684,134
Service Continuity Fund	493,022	-	28,996	522,018
Strategic Development Fund	88,000	-	14,000	102,000
Property Contingency Fund	50,000	-	25,000	75,000
	<u>1,635,110</u>	<u>705,972</u>	<u>42,070</u>	<u>2,383,152</u>
Restricted funds				
Refuge Based Support	1,742	(2,261)	519	-
Community Based Support	179,351	92,819	(33,885)	238,285
Heart of England Capital Grant	477,702	274,700	(8,704)	743,698
	<u>658,795</u>	<u>365,258</u>	<u>(42,070)</u>	<u>981,983</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>2,293,905</u>	<u>1,071,230</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>3,365,135</u>

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	3,380,341	(2,674,369)	705,972
Restricted funds			
Refuge Based Support	118,334	(120,595)	(2,261)
Community Based Support	2,424,280	(2,331,461)	92,819
Heart of England Capital Grant	284,254	(9,554)	274,700
	<u>2,826,868</u>	<u>(2,461,610)</u>	<u>365,258</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>6,207,209</u>	<u>(5,135,979)</u>	<u>1,071,230</u>

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021**

19. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

Comparatives for movement in funds

	At 1.4.19 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 31.3.20 £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	622,587	352,071	29,430	1,004,088
Service Continuity Fund	427,245	-	65,777	493,022
Strategic Development Fund	85,845	-	2,155	88,000
Property Contingency Fund	50,000	-	-	50,000
	<u>1,185,677</u>	<u>352,071</u>	<u>97,362</u>	<u>1,635,110</u>
Restricted funds				
Refuge Based Support	4,087	(2,345)	-	1,742
Community Based Support	139,125	137,588	(97,362)	179,351
Heart of England Capital Grant	516	477,186	-	477,702
	<u>143,728</u>	<u>612,429</u>	<u>(97,362)</u>	<u>658,795</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>1,329,405</u>	<u>964,500</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,293,905</u>

Comparative net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	2,535,270	(2,183,199)	352,071
Restricted funds			
Refuge Based Support	56,196	(58,541)	(2,345)
Community Based Support	2,364,119	(2,226,531)	137,588
Heart of England Capital Grant	477,702	(516)	477,186
	<u>2,898,017</u>	<u>(2,285,588)</u>	<u>612,429</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>5,433,287</u>	<u>(4,468,787)</u>	<u>964,500</u>

The general fund is to meet the day to day cash flow requirements of the charity.

The Service Continuity Fund provides for the costs of closure as well as 6 months running costs in the event of withdrawal of funding.

The Strategic Development Fund provides for the organisation to undertake research and development to inform future service provision and secure additional funds for long term service delivery.

The Refuge Based Support Fund provides welfare and activities for women and children residing in our refuges.

The Property Contingency Fund provides sufficient funds to maintain the Charity's properties to a high standard and to ensure routine repairs and maintenance are carried out.

BLACK COUNTRY WOMEN'S AID

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - continued
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021**

19. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

Community Based Support provides home based support, including support and counselling to women and children who are victims of sexual violence and a helpline for Asian women. Part of this service was previously treated separately as 'Rape Support Service' but as services have changed over the years, it is now more appropriate to encompass these services under one umbrella.

Heart of England Capital Grant is a restricted fund for a capital project, the balance represents the net book value of the assets relating to that fund.

20. RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

There were no related party transactions for the year ended 31 March 2021.



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Parties involved with this document

Document processed	Party + Fingerprint
Wed, 22nd Dec 2021 18:32:31 UTC	Ms Karen Elizabeth Dowman - Signer (946c4cf248bda3c2c2ef92fb5791a97a)
Wed, 22nd Dec 2021 19:07:29 UTC	Shaun Philpott - Signer (07b1fab14dd7d70236c522ade469ef3b)
Wed, 22nd Dec 2021 19:07:29 UTC	Mrs Victoria Rebecca Harris - Copied In (6bf7c38885b1c37d6eaaeea1c6e21f98)

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Date	Action
Wed, 22nd Dec 2021 19:07:29 UTC	The envelope has been signed by all parties. (109.73.121.1)
Wed, 22nd Dec 2021 19:07:29 UTC	Sent a copy of the envelope to Mrs Victoria Rebecca Harris . (109.73.121.1)
Wed, 22nd Dec 2021 19:07:29 UTC	Shaun Philpott signed the envelope. (109.73.121.1)
Wed, 22nd Dec 2021 19:05:41 UTC	Shaun Philpott viewed the envelope. (109.73.121.1)
Wed, 22nd Dec 2021 18:32:32 UTC	Document emailed to party email (13.40.51.30)
Wed, 22nd Dec 2021 18:32:31 UTC	Sent the envelope to Shaun Philpott for signing. (86.168.15.232)
Wed, 22nd Dec 2021 18:32:31 UTC	Ms Karen Elizabeth Dowman signed the envelope. (86.168.15.232)
Wed, 22nd Dec 2021 18:28:24 UTC	Ms Karen Elizabeth Dowman viewed the envelope. (86.168.15.232)
Wed, 22nd Dec 2021 14:06:46 UTC	Document emailed to party email (18.135.13.92)
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Wed, 22nd Dec 2021 14:06:32 UTC	Ms Karen Elizabeth Dowman has been assigned to this envelope. (3.8.177.85)
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Wed, 22nd Dec 2021 14:06:28 UTC	Envelope generated with fingerprint 7f00537d86d7132e30cadf21bbbb2463 (18.133.63.166)