

**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.

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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%).

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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

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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', 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 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

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2023 Total funds £	2022 Total funds £
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
	7,803,909	6,890,666

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
	5,970,915	1,094,371	7,065,286

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
	5,970,915	5,018,842

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
	17,121	523,588	170,459
	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
	372,823	10,380	1,094,371

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

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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)
Thu, 21st Dec 2023 14:51:57 UTC	Sent the envelope to Ms Karen Elizabeth Dowman for signing. (35.178.86.65)
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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Thu, 21st Dec 2023 14:51:57 UTC	Document generated with fingerprint 83b69590b94b3c160cac7945b9cd384f. (35.178.86.65)

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