



**TO FREEDOM FROM
DOMESTIC ABUSE**

THE FIRST STEP LTD

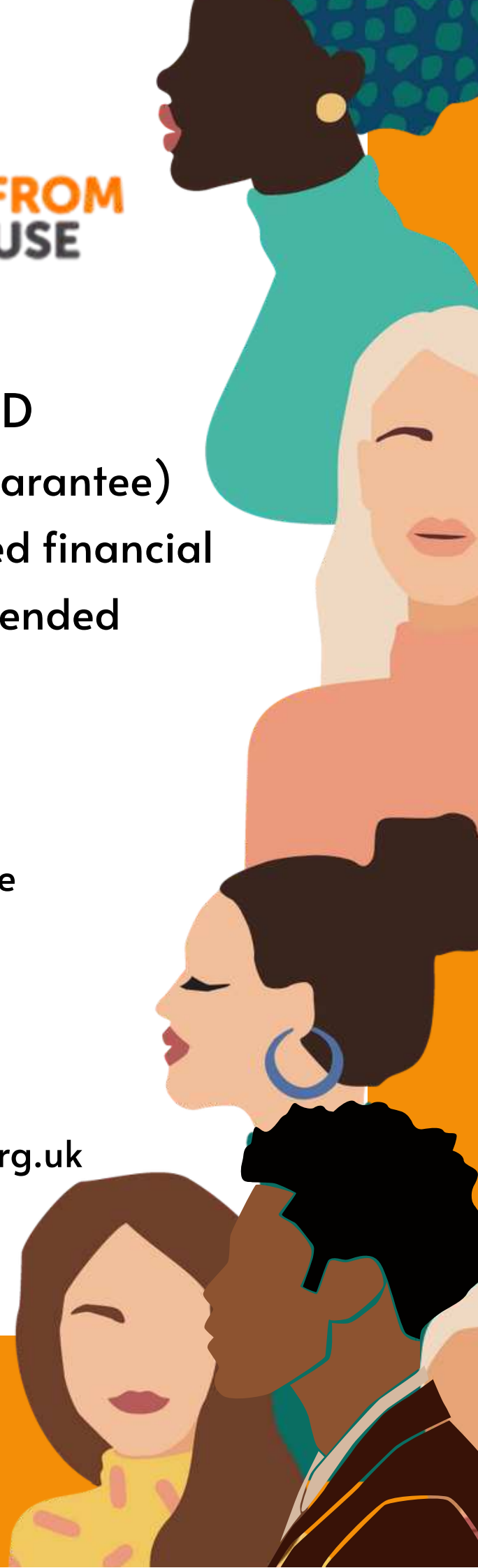
(A company limited by guarantee)

Annual report and unaudited financial
statements for the year ended
31st March 2022

The First Step
The Old School House
St Johns Road
Huyton
L36 0UX

Tel: 0151 548 3333

Web: www.thefirststep.org.uk





Chief Executive Officer:
Angela Cholet

Board of Trustees:
Mary Weston, Kevin Rigby, Jeremy Fagan, Nicola Harris

Secretary
Angela Cholet

Date of incorporation:
**14th of March 1996, with the name change incorporated on the
25th of November 2014**

Registered Charity Number:
1054533

Company Registration Number:
3172572

Registered Office:
Old School House, St John's Road, Huyton, Knowsley, L36 0UX

Independent Examiner
Jean Ellis BA FCA CTA, DSG, Castle Chambers, Liverpool, L2 9TL

Bankers
NatWest Bank, Aintree, Liverpool, L9 0EG

Solicitors
**MSB Solicitors, MSB House, 20-22 Tipton Way, Wavertree
Business Village, Liverpool, L13 1DA.**

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Structure, Governance & Management

The First Step is a company limited by guarantee, incorporated 14th March 1996 and registered as a charity on 11th April 1996. The company was established under a Memorandum & Articles of Association which provide the objects and powers of the charitable company and is governed under its Articles of Association.

The trustees, who are also the directors for the purpose of company law, and who served during the year and up to the date of signature of the financial statements were:

Mr J D Fagan

Mrs M E Weston

Mr K Rigby

Mrs N J Harris

The directors of the company are also charity trustees for the purpose of charity law and under the company's Articles are known as members of the charity. Under the requirements of the Memorandum and Articles of Association at each Annual General Meeting one third of trustees shall retire by rotation. The trustees to retire by rotation shall be those who have been longest serving in office since their last appointment or reappointment.

New Trustees are recruited in accordance with the governing document and by the existing trustees. Trustees appointed during the year must present themselves for re-appointment at the next general meeting.

The Trustees hold quarterly meetings to deal with the routine business, finance and governance of the agency, an annual financial meeting for budget setting and an annual general meeting. Day to day decisions are delegated to the Chief Executive Officer. Strategic developments are put before trustees for discussion, amendment and approval. Draft policies/procedures are circulated to the senior management team and then to trustees for comment and approval. Trustees are involved in annual planning days, development and implementation of the agencies strategic and operational plans.

THE FIRST STEP LTD

(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

The trustees present their report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2022.

The Board of Trustees is satisfied with the performance of The First Step Ltd during the year and the position at 31st March 2022 and consider the agency is in a position to continue its activities during the coming year, and that The First Step assets are adequate to fulfil its obligations.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the charity's Memorandum and Articles of Association, the Companies Act 2006 and "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

The First Step Vision: "To convert Knowsley's domestic violence & abuse challenges into real solutions by creating new ways of working to stop domestic violence & abuse".

The First Step Values

We at The First Step put survivors at the heart of everything we do and our key values are:

- **Non-judgemental**
We are accepting of all differences and choices
- **Empowerment**
We support survivors to make informed choices
- **Trust**
We build honest and open relationships in a safe space
- **High Quality Service**
We are always improving and embracing positive change

A summary of The First Step as set out in its governing document:

The objectives for which The First Step is established are set out in the Memorandum and Articles of Association as summarised below:

- To ensure comprehensive support and protection for people experiencing domestic abuse.
- Promote inter agency co-operation and training and awareness of others active in the field.
- Improve and expand the support and protection services available to sufferers of domestic abuse and where necessary promote the development of new services and facilities.
- Encourage initiatives aimed at the prevention of domestic abuse.
- Provide information about current services available through publicity, leaflets, posters, cards and directories.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the service being provided in relation to the Equal Opportunities Policy.

An explanation of The First Step strategies for achieving its stated objectives

To achieve its objectives a range of services are offered to any resident of the Metropolitan Borough of Knowsley (and surrounding areas for some services), who is or has been in an abusive relationship. The First Step also acts as a resource to other organisations, agencies etc. whose clients have domestic abuse as a presenting or underlying issue.

The First Step provides direct service provision and interventions that break the cycle of domestic abuse to victims/survivors. The direct services are varied and include one to one support, group programmes and refuge provision. We raise awareness of domestic abuse amongst the local communities and organisations.

The trustees have paid due regard to guidance issued by the Charity Commission in deciding what activities the charity should undertake.

Trustee Report

The year covered by this annual report was a turbulent year, with Covid still looming large, as well as significant staffing changes within the agency. It also saw the passage of the landmark Domestic Abuse Bill, which changes the legal landscape around domestic abuse, and should significantly change the support and protection offered to victims and survivors of domestic abuse, especially once all its provisions are fully implemented.

We continue to work in a non-judgemental manner, accepting that everyone is different, and we empower survivors to make their own informed choices, by building trust through honest and open relationships in safe spaces. We are always working to improve our service through embracing positive change, so that everything we do is to the highest possible quality. These are the values of the agency, which remain unchanged, and we believe they offer the best way to support victims and survivors of domestic abuse.

Milestones during the year were the award of further funding from the Big Lottery Fund, and the contract to run Ross House for another two years. Angela Cholet returned as interim CEO, while we recruited for a permanent replacement, and we were delighted to welcome Caroline Grant as our new permanent CEO in the summer of 2022. During the year, Mary Weston was Chair of trustees, but has stood down this year. Mary chaired the board with a quiet wisdom, especially when we had difficult decisions to make, and we are very grateful to her for all that she has done for the agency over the past few years.

As trustees, we continue to be grateful for the incredible work that our staff and volunteers do – day in, day out, week in, week out. We hear the stories of the lives that are changed through the support that is offered, and the dedication that you show in doing this work. We know it can often feel unseen and unrecognised, so thank you for all that you give in your work.

Jeremy (Acting Chair), Nicola and Kevin
Trustees



CEO Report

I am pleased to present my first Annual Report as Chief Executive of The First Step specialist domestic abuse service.

The achievements in this report are a tribute to the outstanding commitment of all staff working for the organisation and their ability to engage with those we support. They listen to, and are led by survivors, collaborating tirelessly with our partners to achieve the best outcomes for survivors of abuse. Their remarkable dedication and arduous work are greatly valued, and I appreciate all they do.

My recent arrival to The First Step has allowed me to review the organisation, see how far it has come, and see how high the hurdles jumped have been to secure its position as a specialist lead provider of domestic abuse support.

The task to deliver complex support work when the need is so high and the means with which to make the difference with support, never truly align.

All too often there are calls for innovation to overcome shortfalls and make less go further. The clearest way to measure success is to see that innovation does not come at the cost of the quality or fundamental aims of an organisation. It became clear in my early evaluation, that those we offer support and advocacy, are at the heart of every aspect of delivery.

The fundamental aims of The First Step, to deliver support that is non-judgemental, empowering and delivered with trust and quality are embedded.

This year has not been without its challenges. The covid pandemic and its fall out continues to this day and was clearly visible throughout 2021-2022. The ability of all our services within The First Step to adapt reminds us that our needs led approach is one of our key strengths.

Because of this, over 1128 individuals have received help from the work delivered throughout 2021-2022. We have supplied new programmes, inspired by survivors of abuse, and embedded a children's service within our Refuge, supporting forty-three children has meant the impact of the support we deliver here extends its reach and is inclusive.

I have a good foundation on which to build. People's experience of our support, as reported through a range of surveys, continues to be high.

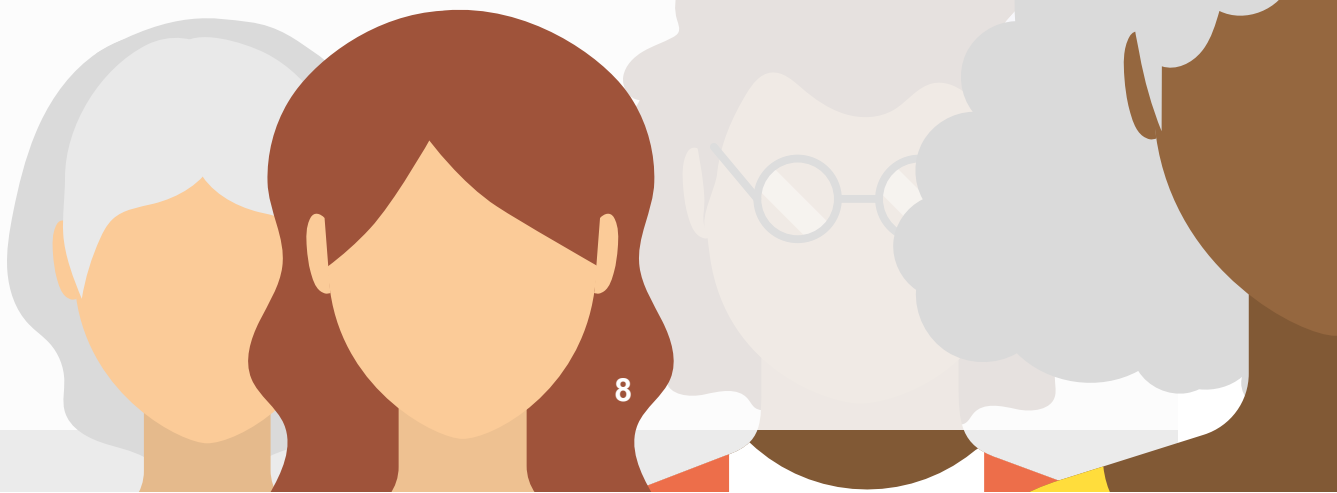
Of course, for reasons that have been well-documented locally and nationally, demand for services has continued to grow. Women's Aid's most recent Routes to Support report found the national struggle to meet demand and called for more investment in community-based specialist services and refuges. We echo that call.

Last year the organisation celebrated 25 years, which was a time for reflection and a celebration of achievements. New in post, I can reflect on the journey still ahead. I have the immeasurable privilege of taking this organisation forward as Chief Executive. I have ideas for improving how we take lived experiences and use this to shape our advocacy and service delivery, as well as our position locally and nationally as a lead provider. I have a determination to build on opportunities and grow the organisation to reflect need and those we support.

The First Step has always been defined by the people who work here, who deliver support driven by those accessing our services. I am immensely proud of the ongoing commitment of staff whose compassion, hard work and advocacy guarantee the delivery of quality interventions and the best of care to the people of Knowsley. I am equally grateful to our dedicated funders who enable us to make such a difference in the lives of those affected by domestic abuse.

This is my first report as Chief Executive and I look forward to many more.

Caroline Grant
Chief Executive





Service User Overview

Across the agency the charity worked with 1,080 people which includes agency referrals, self-referrals and people contacting for information/advice.

The majority of service users identified themselves as white British with 7.48% from other ethnic backgrounds. Ages ranged from pre-birth to 75 years with the majority coming from the 21 to 40 age range at 67.12%.

Our main areas of charitable work are enabling people to be safe and stay safe, to empower and to ensure awareness of the choices available. This is achieved through the work described below:

IDSVA

The IDSVA Service supports female and male victim survivors of domestic abuse aged 16 and above that have been assessed as HIGH risk (GOLD) of significant harm or murder.

During 2021-2022 we continued to be Grant Funded for 2.6 IDSVA's but received additional funding for 2 full-time posts through the MOJ/PCC funding. However, 4.6 IDSVA's, is still below the Safelives recommended staff ratio for the number of referrals received into the service. The IDSVA role is to support victim survivors by providing them with choice and options following their referral into the service. The IDSVA's will complete safety planning based upon the risk assessment and from what the victim survivors tells us and information from other agencies. The support can vary from advice and guidance, to support through Criminal Justice Process/ Civil Courts, housing advice including seeking emergency accommodation, target hardening, advocacy at meetings such as MARAC, safeguarding meetings.

IDSVA's work within a multi-agency framework and will refer out to other services as needed for example, counselling service, solicitors, Police, MFRS.



MARAC

MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference) is a meeting which hears only GOLD (high risk) cases and reviews the risks posed to the named victim, children, and any other household members within that referral. The safety plan is reviewed, and actions are given to agencies at the meeting when further support is needed. The IDSVa role at MARAC is to advocate on behalf of the victim survivor and make sure their voice is recorded. MARAC is a bi-monthly meeting in Knowsley and has been facilitated via Microsoft Teams since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. A recent survey monkey sent out to all MARAC reps found that most agencies would prefer the MARAC to remain as a virtual meeting. The IDSVa Team would like to see more in person MARAC's as it is felt that there is limited opportunity to contribute in the meeting and participation from other agencies would increase, if the meeting was in person again. There was also feedback on the survey monkey sent out in Q1 2022/2023 to MARAC partners, that some MARAC reps preferred online meetings so they could multi-task. This is a concern as full attention and participation in the meeting is essential to ensure quality and obtaining the best response for the victim/survivors. The IDSVa's will continue to advocate on behalf of victim/survivors referred into the service. It has been agreed to have an in-person MARAC meeting at least once a quarter from Q3 in 2022 and this will be reviewed thereafter.

Plans for future periods

The First Step has 3 main objectives it will be working to achieve:

- Robust recruitment process for an agency Chief Executive Officer
- Review the strategic plan in conjunction with ensuring our values are embedded across the agency
- Ongoing funding opportunities remain a major focus of the work in the coming year.



Policies

How our Activities Provide Public Benefit

The charity has referred to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit. The main activities and services have been described in this report including the number and range of people who have benefited from our work. All of the charitable activities focus on the prevention, support and empowerment of any member of the public residing in the area which First Step works whom has been affected by domestic abuse. All the work is undertaken to further the charitable purposes for the public benefit.

Financial Review

Income for the year was £882,180 (2021: £712,747) and expenditure was £855,441 (2021: £700,544). This resulted in a surplus for the year of £26,739 (2021: £12,203).

Unrestricted reserves as at 31 March 2022 stood at £234,936 (2021: £211,197). The charity had no restricted reserves as at 31 March 2022 (2021: £nil).

Reserves policy

The trustees have given appropriate consideration to The First Step's requirement for reserves having regard to the principal risks to which the charity is exposed. The reserves policy has been reviewed, agreed and adopted and states that general funds, not committed to or invested in tangible fixed assets held by the charity, should equate to a minimum of 6 months' expenditure.

The reserves are needed to meet the working capital requirements and the trustees believe that at this level they would have sufficient resources to continue operating in the event of a significant loss of funding while seeking alternative sources.

Reserves of general and designated funds stand at £234,936. The objective remains to maintain a minimum of 6 months' reserves and to build on this figure when the opportunity arises.

Principal funding sources

Principal funding sources this year were by way of contract and grant agreements with Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council together with grants from the Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government, Ministry of Justice, Henry Smith Charity, Lloyds Bank Foundation, Children In Need and the Ten Percent Foundation. Housing Benefit is claimed for women when they are a resident within Ross House. As an agency we always seek to diversify our income streams, in these difficult fiscal times with constraints on public sector expenditure we continue to seek income from a variety of sources including charitable trusts.

Policies

Investment Policy

Other than the modest amount retained as reserves, almost all the charity's income is intended to be spent within the year of receipt. In consequence, sourcing long term investment vehicles is not an issue for the Trustees. Funds surplus to immediate requirements are invested in deposit accounts. Current rates of return are highly unattractive, but the security of the funds is the primary concern of the Trustees.

Availability and adequacy of each of the funds

The board of trustees is satisfied that The First Step assets in each fund are available and adequate to fulfil its obligations in respect of each fund.

Risk management

The trustees confirm that the major risk to which the agency may be exposed is primarily a decrease in income including contracts, grants and/or donations. Systems have been established and are reviewed to mitigate these risks as far as is reasonably possible, this includes a Business Continuity Plan which identifies vulnerabilities and makes recommendations where appropriate to prevent extended disruption.

Internal control risks are minimised by ensuring the implementation of appropriate policies and procedures. The Trustees have appropriate procedures in place to ensure compliance with Health & Safety requirements which includes an annual review undertaken by an external third party professional.

Working in the field of domestic abuse can be demanding for staff therefore a 24/7 confidential Employee Assistance Programme has been commissioned from an external provider which staff can access at any time for both work related and personal concerns, this service includes up to six 1-1 counselling sessions. In addition, the charity provide monthly on-site face to face practice management from a qualified external provider – during this year due to the pandemic practice management was increased to fortnightly for staff who wanted to access it.



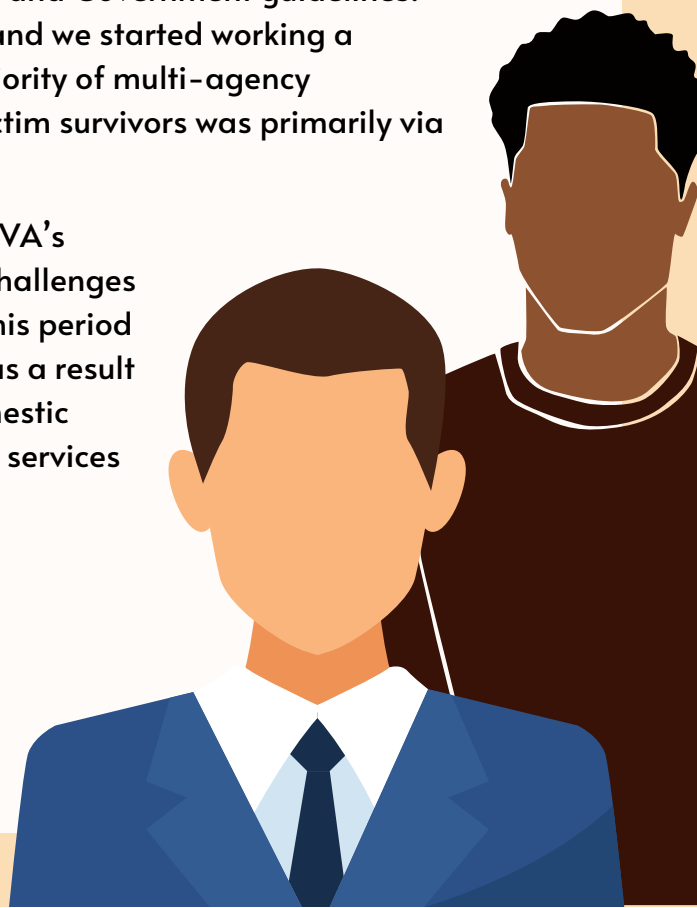
Annual Breakdown of Engagement

Total number of referrals to IDSVA Service	525 in total 519 case managed by IDSVA
Number of referrals able to contact	412
% of referrals contacted	79%
Number of referrals engaging	282
% contacted referrals engaging	54%
% of all referrals engaging	68%

2021-2022

The IDSVA Service, like all services within The First Step, started the year still working from home due to the Covid-19 pandemic and Government guidelines. Gradually throughout the year, restrictions lifted, and we started working a hybrid model of home and office working. The majority of multi-agency meetings remained virtual and contact with the victim survivors was primarily via the phone.

We received additional funding for 2 full-time IDSVA's from the MOJ/PCC funding. However, there were challenges around recruitment and retention of staff during this period due to an increase in funding for domestic abuse as a result of the domestic abuse bill, as well as focus on domestic abuse during the pandemic. This meant that other services were also recruiting for staff at the same time.



Data Analysis

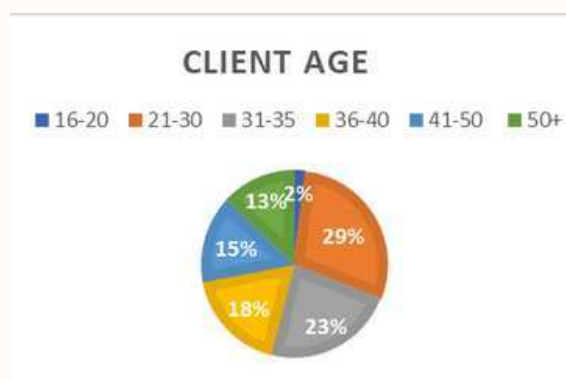
CJS/Civil Court Support	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Number of clients supported through CJS	334	179	235
Number of clients supported through civil/family courts	104	152	169

During the height of the pandemic, we saw a reduction of clients supported through the criminal justice process (CJS). This was due to long delays in cases, and we noticed a reduction of cases resulting in charge. There was also an increase in 'no further action' cases. In 2021-2022 we were able to effectively offer support through the CJS process and a continued increase in clients supported through the civil/family court processes.

The IDSVa service uses the case management system OASIS. Designed by Women's Aid, alongside national services and survivors, the system captures the journey a survivor takes, and produces outcomes that are deemed meaningful.

By entering information about the service user, with their consent, into the system, we can produce detailed and informative reports. These reports can help us look for trends about the abuse or the support that people received from us. This enables us to ensure we are putting resources into the right places and continue to develop the service by looking at the client's journey through the service and being client led.

Client Profile



Female 98% Male 2%

White British 88%

Unemployed and not seeking work 69%

Clients with dual diagnosis (mental health plus alcohol or drug abuse) 5%

Abuse Profile

The average length of abuse experienced is 7.25 years

The average length of a case being supported is 3 months

Type of abuse experienced		
Physical		70%
Emotional		82%
Jealous and controlling behaviour		64%
Financial		28%
Sexual		11%
Surveillance/harassment/stalking		44%

Our clients also experienced the following,

Attempted strangulation/suffocation	12%
Feeling depressed/suicidal	18%
Harm to/loss of an unborn child	1 client
Injury requiring medical assistance	24%
Self-harmed as way of coping	5%
Surveillance/harassment online or through social media	16%
Threats to kill	27%

Client Feedback

"Thank you for your help and support x"

"I cannot thank you enough for everything you have done for me. Thank you so much you don't realise how much you have done for me"

"Thanks so much for your help through it all it means a lot xxx"

"Thank you for everything you've done I'm just so grateful. As long as I know me & the kids are safe that's all that matters"

"Thank you for all the help you have given me. It was just enough to know that you were there if I ever needed it"

"Thanks for everything I couldn't have done it without you"

"Thanks very much for everything you are doing for me. I really appreciate it"

"Thanks so much for your help today means a lot to me xx"



Staff Updates

We successfully recruited two people to the IDSVA Team in June 2021 following receipt of additional funding received for this year. This took the team to 4.6 IDSVA's. Although this was a welcome increase in staffing for the service, it is still short of the Safelives recommended IDSVA's per 100 cases referred. It also does not account for capacity to manage a safe service for clients and staff.

One person left the service in August 2021 to start employment in a different role. It was around this time, that recruitment was a challenge and meant the capacity of the team was stretched. In January 2022, one person started with the team. This was the first settled period with the additional staff in place we had seen since June 2021, and this was reflected in our quarter 4 stats as we saw an increase in clients contacted and engaging with the service. All of the staff worked extremely hard during the last financial year, navigating challenges in capacity, as well as the hybrid working model post lockdowns and Government restrictions. As a result, there was minimal disruption to service delivery, and we continued to provide a high-quality support to our clients.

Looking forward

We are looking forward to seeing how the implementation of the Domestic Abuse Bill and the Knowsley Strategy for domestic abuse takes effect in 2022-23. There will be a big focus on training for staff in 2022-2023 partly because of the recruitment of new staff to the IDSVA team but also due to the workforce development and tier 3 training that is being delivered in Knowsley.

There have been challenges over the past 12 months but many positives such as working more flexibly, being more creative in how we engage with our clients and using technology to enhance the work we do in the growing digital world we live in.

We are part way through the year for 2022-2023 and I am delighted to say that we secured funding to keep the staffing levels at 4.6 IDSVA's for the next financial year. We are excited about the next 12 months and with the expansion of the team, have lots of ideas about developing the service, partnership working and supporting our clients on a small part of their journey whilst they are engaged with The First Step.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues and partner agencies for your continued support and look forward to continuing our work together into 2022/23. It is a privilege to do the job we do for our clients and to manage an incredible service and team.



The First Step Project's mission is to help people change their lives; to grow, flourish and reach their full potential and to live a life free from Domestic Abuse. We do this by incorporating trauma informed practise at the heart of all we do; providing a safe compassionate space for people to help them feel heard, validated, to assist them to recognise what they need. With this foundation we can then support them to move forward, allowing them to have choice in their journey of healing and recovery after the devastating and traumatising effects of Domestic Abuse. We aim to reignite hope, self-belief and a sense of belonging. Through our inclusive coffee mornings and bespoke sessions, we support people to re-identify with themselves, find out who they are again, and give them the tools to recognise what they want and need, so they can begin to feel empowered and rebuild their lives to make lifelong, lasting, sustained change.

We are the only Domestic Abuse service in Knowsley that accept self-referrals, this year alone we have received 160 self-referrals, 18 of which were identified as high risk.

Where would these victims have turned without The First Step Project?

Our aim is to tackle and prevent Domestic Abuse in all its forms. At the front and centre of our work is a client-first, trauma informed, recovery-focused approach - led by the beneficiary. We deliver trauma informed support to people in a way that meets both their immediate and changing needs. We collaborate with the local community and partner agencies to ensure holistic wrap-around support for people. We enable and provide a safe and compassionate environment for people, with trauma informed interventions for every step of their journey, from crisis intervention to recovery and empowered lives, free from abuse.

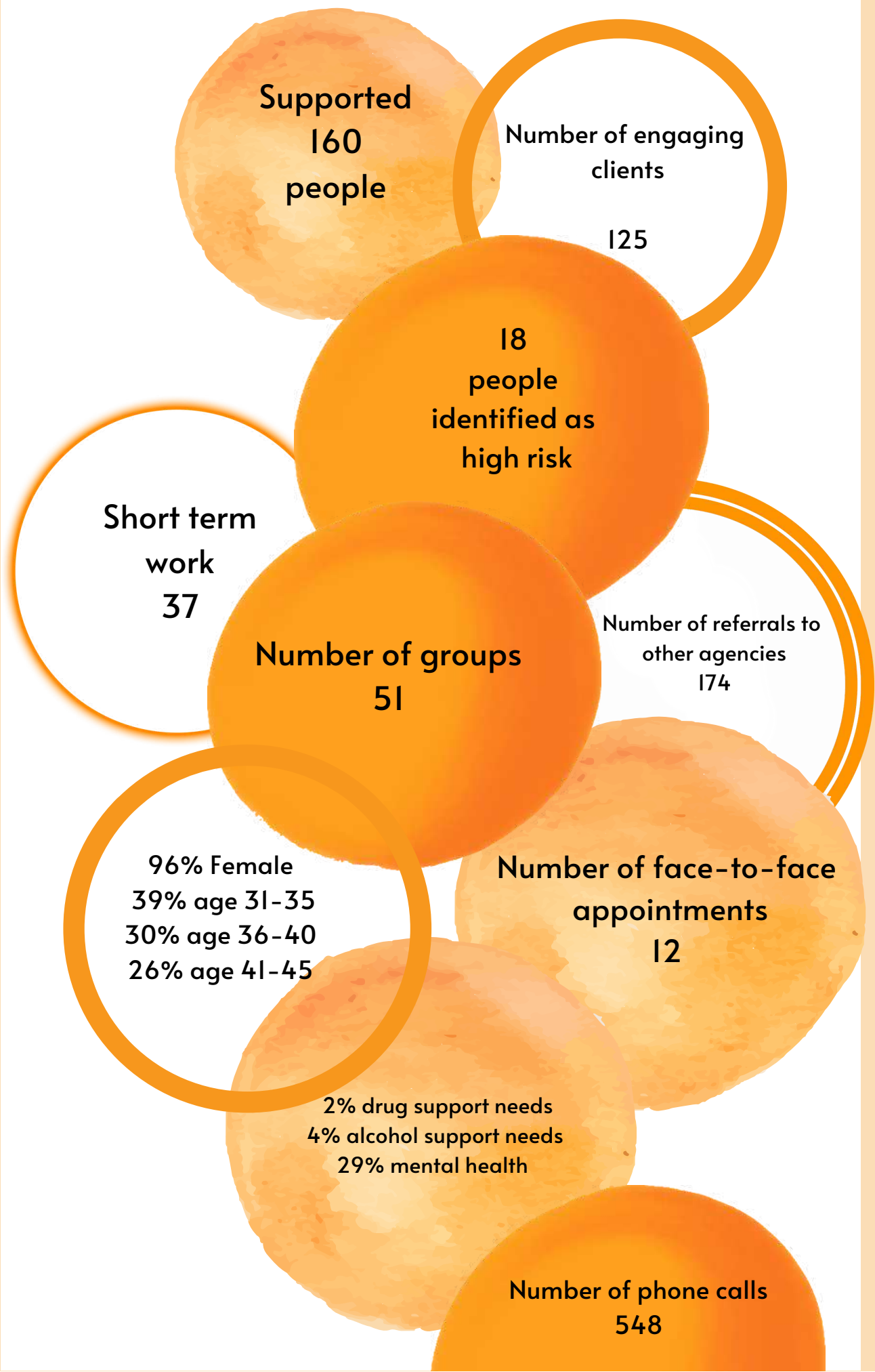
Here at The First Step, we not only provide trauma informed responses to domestic abuse, which increases not only physical safety for victims/survivors, but emotional safety. This is paramount in peoples longer term recovery. We aim to re-ignite peoples hope and self-belief, to build on their resilience and to create life long lasting change, not only to reduce risk but to support people to re-build their lives to enable them to thrive and not just survive. The beneficiaries are at the heart of what we do, we ensure their voices are heard - often for the first time. We empower people who access our support through strength and solution-focused, trauma informed practise. We are committed to providing the best level of support, developed with the beneficiaries, to ensure their needs are being met, and their voices heard in the development of service delivery. This has led to new ways of working and new innovative sessions, giving the beneficiaries the tools to make life long lasting sustained change. At every stage we advocate the importance of collaborative working to ensure the best outcome for beneficiaries.

The First Step Project supports males and female victims / survivors of Domestic Abuse aged 16 and above.

- We take self-referrals from the Knowsley area but also calls from people not within the area to ensure that they get the right support they need within their area
- Initial risk assessment to ascertain risk and appropriate referrals made, if ascertained as 'high risk' a referral will be made into the IDSVa service
- Initial individualised practical and emotional safety plans to reduce risk
- Referrals into Refuge if required
- Support to link in with Housing Solutions to ensure that they can access safe accommodation if required
- Referral for Sanctuary and fire safety assessment if required
- Advice and support regarding civil injunctions and the criminal process
- Support through the civil and criminal process. Support to complete injunctions if they do not meet the threshold for legal aid
- Referrals to safeguarding
- Referrals to a host of other agencies to ensure a holistic package of support is being provided
- Domestic Abuse Workers will offer trauma informed therapeutic sessions tailored to the person and led by them
- The First Step Project also provides immediate access to our weekly coffee mornings
- We run a Domestic Abuse Programme
- We also develop and run innovative bespoke sessions to meet the needs of every person through their journey
- We discuss all options with people to ensure that they know they have choices
- We also run a victim survivors forum to ensure that service delivery is led by the beneficiaries ensuring that their voices are heard regarding what's working. what isn't. and what needs to change, not only within our service but partner agencies and the wider community

How many people have we helped?

Despite the impact of the pandemic, lock downs, and changes in personnel, we have,



What We Did

Despite the impact of the global pandemic, the service continued to facilitate group work; The Freedom Programme ran 3 times, as did Hope to Recovery. We also continued with our coffee mornings, which took place 41 times via Microsoft Teams. Thanks to several innovative approaches, including the use of technology, we kept people connected and reduced isolation. The service also linked in with partner agencies and dropped off leaflets and posters to GP surgeries and local community centres.

Events

The First Step held a Macmillan coffee morning, which raised £1700 for both The First Step and Macmillan. On the day, there were face painters, a raffle, biscuit decorating and two of our service beneficiaries had their heads shaved to raise money. Raffle prizes for the event were kindly donated by B&M, Lush, and local charity Flourish and Succeed. Cakes were kindly donated by Tesco Prescott, and The Big Help.



In November, we took part in the International White Ribbon event, calling for the end of violence to women and girls, by delivering information to key partners across the Borough.

For Christmas, Kirkby Ladies Running Club donated 83 gift bags (filled with pyjamas, books and games) for children and young people of all ages, from birth to 17. While Stockings from Santa delivered 77 stockings filled with toys and sweets. Feedback from recipients included,



'Restores faith in the world when you see so much kindness from people who just want to help out, thank you all!'

'Was so overwhelmed by how good the gift bags were. We have had so much fun with the games and activities that was in them, thanks so much'

'Thanks for the bag of lovely gifts, my children loved them, it was so nice to spend time together playing the games and reading a book together, they were made up'

'The gift bags were absolutely wonderful. They made such a difference to our Christmas! I hadn't managed to get to the shops to buy Christmas PJ's or anything, so they were really appreciated! Daughter was very happy with the toys, and it really helped bulk out my rather sorry looking present pile much appreciated. Thank you so much'

The service and our events could not have been facilitated without the funding from the National Lottery and the Henry Smith Foundation. We would like to say a big thank you!

Key Stakeholder Feedback

The service received positive feedback from the National Lottery after we submitted our recent monitoring report. The National Lottery identified the positive work that the project is delivering,

'I Managed to find some time today that was unexpected and allowed me to look at your report. I am glad I did. I wish all our grant holders could produce what you have. A pleasure to read. The report is really well presented, and you have obviously taken a lot of care in pulling it all together. I am sure this reflects the approach to the whole project. It is great to see the progress and dynamic attention to detail and getting the best for the beneficiaries with such drive to include and further develop what you can offer.

Thank you for the breakdown in stats about your impact which really describes the benefits the project makes. It is great to see the links and training you have with other agencies and that you can evidence early intervention. The laptop and related QA/ Participation structures and opportunities created through the service user forum, group sessions, coffee mornings really enhance what you are doing.

I know you know all of this, but I wanted to make sure you realise that you have presented it so well and made it clear to me, which is a big help in recording your impact.

All so succinct as well!

Service Beneficiary Feedback

'I was given your phone number yesterday. I can say calling you was the best thing I have done in the last 3 years since I left the relationship. It is the first time I have felt heard and understood. I was not passed on I was offered support for myself.'

'The First Step has saved my life if I hadn't received the on-going support I would not be here today as I would of took my life.'

'I feel I have a rock on the end of the phone, while I have been going throw hell you have been calming and supportive which has enabled me to carry on.'

'I have felt listened to and supported by the service, I have not shared before and I have been able to feel safe and comfortable to share.'

'The service has enabled me to start to rebuild and focus on my future.'

'I attended the session this morning and I honestly can't thank you all enough, everything you explained & how it was explained just clicked, I think I had about 20 light bulb moments were as before today everything has been so jumbled up in my head, it was so refreshing being in a safe space to understand everything & learn so much. I cried the whole time but came out feeling empowered with things I'm going to work on - for myself. Thank you all again'

Moving forward

We cover all seven areas of Knowsley, and our aim is to embed our services within each of those places. By ensuring that all areas are aware of The First Step, through increased community presence and regular collaborative work, we will ensure easy, equitable, access for all survivors of domestic abuse.

Professionals from partner agencies have already feedback saying that they feel more equipped to deal with disclosures and that they can respond to people more confidently, in the right way. This means improved outcomes for survivors of abuse and a reduction in barriers to support.

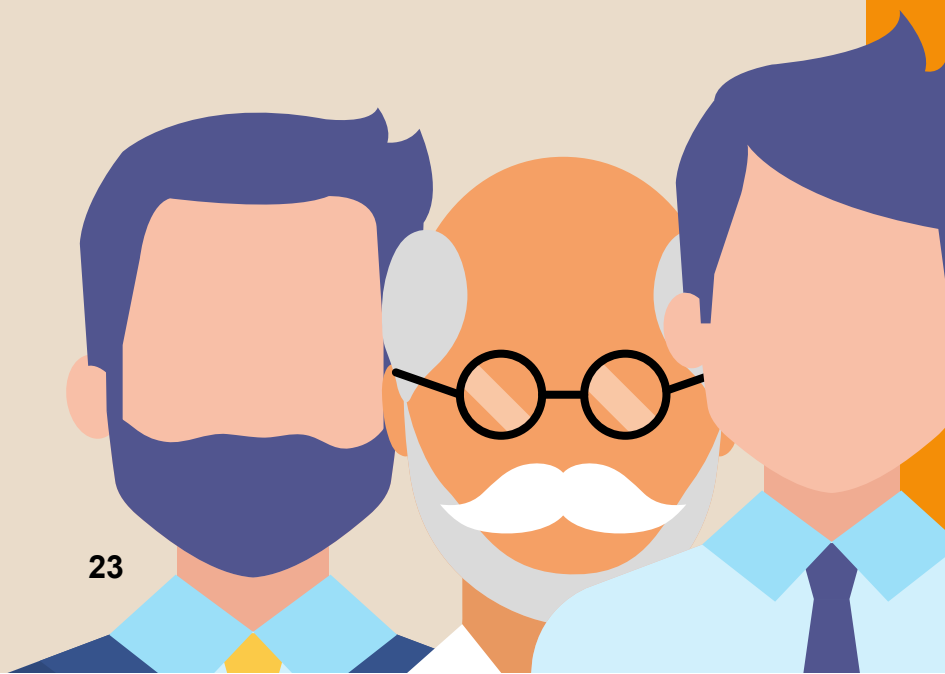
We intend to build on this over the coming twelve months, with plans that are based on what we have learned and include,

- Expanding our reach into communities and developing a wider network of partners to continue improving access for survivors and our collaborative outcomes
- Continuing to attend relevant meetings, and service forum groups. This will enable the community/partner agencies to be aware of our service and what we do, so more people are able to access our specialist support
- Continuing to ensure the voices of our beneficiaries are being heard so that delivery across the service is directed by their experiences
- Recruiting more volunteers and student placements

I'd like to finish with a huge thank you to the team for their continued support, passion and determination in the delivery of the service for the beneficiaries.

Thank you also to our community and partner agencies for all your support over the year and we look forward to working together in the coming year for the beneficiaries we support.

FSP Manager





The last twelve months have been extremely busy, but in the most positive way. With the lifting of most restrictions over the course of the year, we have noticed a more positive outlook for the women and families with the introduction year.

A total of 28 referrals were accepted into refuge, a significant decrease on the 49 of the previous year, which shows the ongoing effect and impact of COVID on housing associations and other accommodation providers. This also means less opportunity for survivors to move on. There are a few reasons for COVID still having such an impact, one being the pressure of rehousing homeless men, women and families who are given higher priority from other temporary accommodation such as B&B's and hotels adapted for this purpose. However, a positive outcome of the lifting of the restrictions has been that we are now able offer numerous activities and interactive sessions, which will be discussed below.

Referral Sources into Ross House			
Housing options and homelessness	27%	Refuge/Domestic abuse services	28%
Other sources	40%	Self-referrals	5%
Other sources include – hospitals, social care, police, drug/alcohol services and health care professionals.			

This highlights the varied sources with the majority being domestic abuse agencies, and secondly housing options services. Within the housing options referrals, 17% were from the Liverpool Housing Options team, outlining our ongoing positive relationship with the team. However there was only 1% between housing options teams and other refuge and domestic abuse services, highlighting the mutual benefits of access to the routes to support system and being part of the women's aid organisation. The relationship with all agencies is imperative to refuge and leads to positive outcomes for the women and families, due to the mutual working relationships between services.

Reason for Leaving	
Went to family home	4
Long/short term accomadation	3
Registered social landlord accommodation	17
Family and friends	2
Unplanned - eviction/abandonment	1

The highest reason for refusal was refuge being at full capacity which equated to 83% of the refusal reasons, the second most common reason was substance misuse at a rate of 10%. The fact that we have to inform the women, families and referring agencies who call that we are full is a really difficult part of the process, the high demand always exceeds supply. Although the refuge accepts and welcomes women in with complex needs, the dynamics and family situations of those already in refuge has to be taken into consideration. Refuge is obviously a place of safety, and the robustness of the decision-making process always takes this into account. Accepting high numbers of people with a high level of need is therefore not possible.

The successful move on in to new registered social landlord (RSL) accommodation rose to seventeen women and families, with the previous year being only eleven move ons in to this kind of accommodation. With the lifting of restrictions and landlords completing repairs again, alongside the positive relationship built with Your Housing Group, the rise in moves in to RSL accommodation within the Knowsley borough and outside is a great achievement, and one which could be further reinforced by the implementation of a resettlement worker, who is solely dedicated to supporting the women and families to move on, into the area of their choice.



Ross House Developments

The refuge has been able to provide two new team positions; a complex need's caseworker and a resettlement worker, both funded by the 'burdens' funding. This is funding from central government to all local authorities to meet their new statutory obligations for those made homeless by domestic abuse.

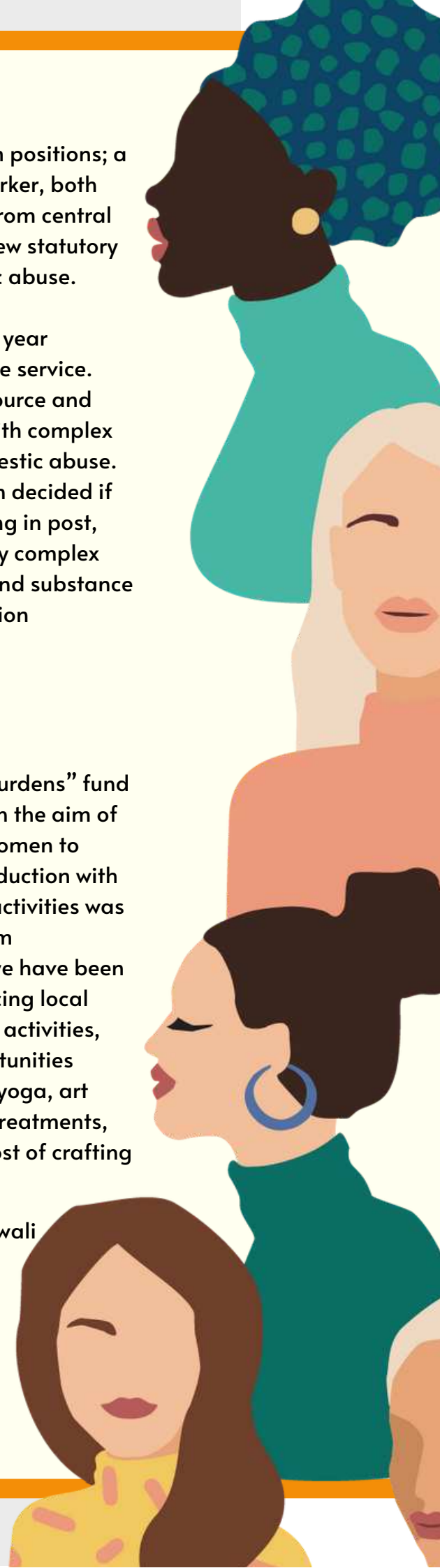
We successfully recruited for both roles during the year 2020/2021 and they have both added value to the service.

The complex needs worker is a much-needed resource and provides intensive support to those who present with complex issues as well as suffering from the effects of domestic abuse. Each case is assessed based on its merits; it is then decided if input from the caseworker is necessary. Since being in post, the caseworker has supported those with extremely complex immigration issues, others with mental ill health and substance misuse, and those who are subject to child protection procedures.

Ross House Activities

Ross House was lucky enough to benefit from a "burdens" fund in the form of a grant from the local authority, with the aim of offering a range of therapeutic activities for the women to participate in. Following consultation and co-production with the team and the women living in refuge a list of activities was suggested, ranging from beauty treatments to gym memberships. Due to the fund being significant we have been able to meet most of the demands. I began sourcing local providers to become involved with the therapeutic activities, going out into the local area to discover the opportunities available. Eventually we have been able to offer, yoga, art therapy, dramatic recovery, mindfulness, beauty treatments, gym memberships, pamper nights and a whole host of crafting activities facilitated by the refuge team.

These have included jewellery making, crafting Diwali festival of light decorations, making Christmas advent calendars all aimed at promoting mindfulness and self-belief. The team have been amazing at being involved and offer a weekly timetable of activities so that the women have something to do on a regular basis.



Case Study

Jane moved in to refuge with her three-year-old daughter in November 2021. The referral to refuge came from Jane's probation officer, following a disclosure by Jane of an alleged serious incident, whereby Jane was held hostage by her perpetrator for many hours, and suffered physical and emotional harm, all witnessed by her daughter.

On arrival in to refuge it was clear that the family had been through a very harrowing experience and presented with quite significant and complex needs.

Both Jane and her daughter were offered immediate support from the complex needs caseworker and the Children's Service, with the practical and emotional needs identified. Jane was a care leaver and presented with a lot of trauma, alongside ADHD, and PTSD. Jane's daughter was a very outspoken and confident little girl, whose bond with her Mum was evident, but also slightly damaged due to their shared experience and the trauma of the events they had both been through. The complex caseworker dedicated a lot of her time to supporting Jane and was always there when she needed the most support. But was also there to be honest and open about how Jane's reactions to certain situations could have a damaging impact upon her daughter, which helped somewhat Jane progress with her parenting. The complex caseworker alongside the refuge team supported Jane through the children's social care process, attending core group meetings, strategy meetings and ultimately court appearances when the plan was stepped up to pre-court proceedings.

Whilst at refuge Jane did initially refuse to be involved with any activities on offer, due to how low her confidence was in these kinds of situations. However, with gentle persuasion and the activities also being offered on a one to one basis Jane really started to get involved with the activities and played a large part in the art project in the children's service and the garden project.

Unfortunately, due to an incident a notice was issued to Jane for her to leave the refuge, which is never how we want a family's journey to end. However, the notice was extended to ensure Jane and her daughter could leave in a positive way. The complex caseworker and the guardian fought for a mother and baby placement with the support and blessing of the court, ensuring children's social care delivered on their support for the family. Eventually after an emotional couple of weeks the family were moved to a more suitable placement, which was the ending everybody wanted. So, although there were negatives at times, the end result was the family staying together and the refuge team all having done their best to support the family during their stay at refuge.



Ross House Children's Service

The Children's Service has blossomed during the last twelve months, we did lose two members of staff during the early part of the year as they moved to new roles elsewhere, but we successfully recruited a children's worker in September, who was joined by the senior worker in November. Both have embraced their roles with a huge amount of commitment and positivity.



The Children's Service has supported 43 children since March 2021, providing a huge variety of activities suited to their individual needs and demands.

Not only are the children's workers imperative in supporting the children, but they also have major involvement when Children's Social Care are involved with the families. They provide insight and support in relation the child and they work with the children and families as a whole.

Both workers are trained to facilitate the You, Me and Mum programme and will shortly be rolling this out to the families whose Mothers have completed the Gateway Program.

The year has been full of new developments, including the sensory room, teenzone room and the nearly completed garden project, which are adding value to an already thriving service.

Activities and trips have also increased and have included recent trips to Chester Zoo, Knowsley Safari Park, Spaceworld Play Centre, Acorn Farm and the cinema. There is also an exciting overnight trip planned to stay in a star gazing pod at Alton Towers for all of the families in refuge, which will be incredible. The Christmas party was a massive hit with all as always, the animals were loved by everybody who attended and of course the singalong was there for all.

Refuge Manager



One of the families working hard on the garden project, which is looking fantastic.



Trustees Responsibilities

The trustees, who are also the directors of The First Step Ltd for the purpose of company law, are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report 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 charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that year.

In preparing these 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;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

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

Independent Examiners Report

I report to the trustees on my examination of the financial statements of The First Step Ltd (the charity) for the year ended 31 March 2022.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the charity (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 (the 2006 Act).

Having satisfied myself that the financial statements of the charity are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of the charity's financial statements carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act). In carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

Since the charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of ICAEW, which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- 1 accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
- 2 the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
- 3 the financial statements do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
- 4 the financial statements have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the financial statements to be reached.

Jean Ellis BA FCA CTA
DSG

Castle Chambers
43 Castle Street
Liverpool L2 9TL

Dated: 6 December 2022

THE FIRST STEP LTD
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

How our activities provide public benefit

The charity has referred to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit. The main activities and services have been described in this report including the number and range of people who have benefited from our work. All of the charitable activities focus on the prevention, support and empowerment of any member of the public residing in the area which First Step works whom has been affected by domestic abuse. All the work is undertaken to further the charitable purposes for the public benefit.

Financial review

Income for the year was £882,180 (2021: £712,747) and expenditure was £855,441 (2021: £700,544). This resulted in a surplus for the year of £26,739 (2021: £12,203).

Unrestricted reserves as at 31 March 2022 stood at £234,936 (2021: £208,197). The charity had no restricted reserves as at 31 March 2022 (2021: £nil).

Reserves policy

The trustees have given appropriate consideration to The First Step's requirement for reserves having regard to the principal risks to which the charity is exposed. The reserves policy has been reviewed, agreed and adopted and states that general funds, not committed to or invested in tangible fixed assets held by the charity, should equate to a minimum of 3 months' expenditure.

The reserves are needed to meet the working capital requirements and the trustees believe that at this level they would have sufficient resources to continue operating in the event of a significant loss of funding while seeking alternative sources.

Reserves of general and designated funds stand at £234,936. The objective remains to maintain a minimum of 3 months' reserves and to build on this figure when the opportunity arises.

Principal funding sources

Principal funding sources this year were by way of contract and grant agreements with Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council together with grants from the Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government, Ministry of Justice, Henry Smith Charity, Lloyds Bank Foundation, Children In Need and the Ten Percent Foundation. Housing Benefit is claimed for women when they are a resident within Ross House. As an agency we always seek to diversify our income streams, in these difficult fiscal times with constraints on public sector expenditure we continue to seek income from a variety of sources including charitable trusts.

Investment policy

Other than the modest amount retained as reserves, almost all the charity's income is intended to be spent within the year of receipt. In consequence, sourcing long term investment vehicles is not an issue for the Trustees. Funds surplus to immediate requirements are invested in deposit accounts. Current rates of return are highly unattractive, but the security of the funds is the primary concern of the Trustees.

Availability and adequacy of each of the funds

The board of trustees is satisfied that The First Step assets in each fund are available and adequate to fulfil its obligations in respect of each fund.

THE FIRST STEP LTD
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

Risk management

The trustees confirm that the major risk to which the agency may be exposed is primarily a decrease in income including contracts, grants and/or donations. Systems have been established and are reviewed to mitigate these risks as far as is reasonably possible, this includes a Business Continuity Plan which identifies vulnerabilities and makes recommendations where appropriate to prevent extended disruption.

Internal control risks are minimised by ensuring the implementation of appropriate policies and procedures. The Trustees have appropriate procedures in place to ensure compliance with Health & Safety requirements which includes an annual review undertaken by an external third party professional.

Working in the field of domestic abuse can be demanding for staff therefore a 24/7 confidential Employee Assistance Programme has been commissioned from an external provider which staff can access at any time for both work related and personal concerns, this service includes up to six 1-1 counselling sessions. In addition, the charity provide monthly on-site face to face practice management from a qualified external provider – during this year due to the pandemic practice management was increased to fortnightly for staff who wanted to access it.

Plans for future periods

The First Step has 3 main objectives it will be working to achieve:

- Robust recruitment process for an agency Chief Executive Officer
- Review the strategic plan in conjunction with ensuring our values are embedded across the agency
- Ongoing funding opportunities remain a major focus of the work in the coming year.

Structure, governance and management

The First Step is a company limited by guarantee, incorporated 14th March 1996 and registered as a charity on 11th April 1996. The company was established under a Memorandum & Articles of Association which provide the objects and powers of the charitable company and is governed under its Articles of Association.

The trustees, who are also the directors for the purpose of company law, and who served during the year and up to the date of signature of the financial statements were:

Mr J D Fagan

Mrs M E Weston

Mr K Rigby

Mrs N J Harris

The directors of the company are also charity trustees for the purpose of charity law and under the company's Articles are known as members of the charity. Under the requirements of the Memorandum and Articles of Association at each Annual General Meeting one third of trustees shall retire by rotation. The trustees to retire by rotation shall be those who have been longest serving in office since their last appointment or reappointment.

New Trustees are recruited in accordance with the governing document and by the existing trustees. Trustees appointed during the year must present themselves for re-appointment at the next general meeting.

The Trustees hold quarterly meetings to deal with the routine business, finance and governance of the agency, an annual financial meeting for budget setting and an annual general meeting. Day to day decisions are delegated to the Chief Executive Officer. Strategic developments are put before trustees for discussion, amendment and approval. Draft policies/procedures are circulated to the senior management team and then to trustees for comment and approval. Trustees are involved in annual planning days, development and implementation of the agencies strategic and operational plans.

THE FIRST STEP LTD
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

		Unrestricted funds 2022 £	Restricted funds 2022 £	Total 2022 £	Unrestricted funds 2021 £	Restricted funds 2021 £	Total 2021 £
	Notes						
Income from:							
Donations and legacies	3	11,265	-	11,265	4,670	-	4,670
Charitable activities	4	507,087	363,828	870,915	527,270	180,807	708,077
Total income		518,352	363,828	882,180	531,940	180,807	712,747
Expenditure on:							
Charitable activities	5	491,613	363,828	855,441	519,737	180,807	700,544
Net income for the year/ Net movement in funds		26,739	-	26,739	12,203	-	12,203
Fund balances at 1 April 2021		208,197	-	208,197	195,994	-	195,994
Fund balances at 31 March 2022		234,936	-	234,936	208,197	-	208,197

The statement of financial activities also complies with the requirements for an income and expenditure account under the Companies Act 2006.

THE FIRST STEP LTD
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 MARCH 2022

	Notes	2022 £	£	2021 £	£
Current assets					
Debtors	9	53,976		357	
Cash at bank and in hand		509,966		277,713	
		<u>563,942</u>		<u>278,070</u>	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	10	(329,006)		(69,873)	
Net current assets			234,936		208,197
Income funds					
<u>Unrestricted funds</u>					
Designated funds	12	10,182		5,121	
General unrestricted funds		<u>224,754</u>		<u>203,076</u>	
			234,936		208,197
			<u>234,936</u>		<u>208,197</u>

The company is entitled to the exemption from the audit requirement contained in section 477 of the Companies Act 2006, for the year ended 31 March 2022.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 with respect to accounting records and the preparation of financial statements.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year in question in accordance with section 476.

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

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees on 6 December 2022

Mr J D Fagan
Trustee

Company registration number 03172572

THE FIRST STEP LTD
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

	Notes	2022 £	£	2021 £	£
Cash flows from operating activities					
Cash generated from operations	16	232,253		38,987	
Net cash used in investing activities		-		-	
Net cash used in financing activities		-		-	
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents		232,253		38,987	
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year		277,713		238,726	
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year		509,966		277,713	

THE FIRST STEP LTD
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

1 Accounting policies

Charity information

The First Step Ltd is a private company limited by guarantee incorporated in England and Wales. The registered office is The Old Schoolhouse, St John's Road, Huyton, Merseyside, L36 0UX.

1.1 Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the charity's Memorandum and Articles of Association, the Companies Act 2006 and "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)". The charity is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

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

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

1.2 Going concern

The Trustees have reviewed the immediate impact of the Coronavirus pandemic which has had an impact on fundraising streams and the costs of delivering services.

At the time of approving the accounts the Trustees consider that the charity has adequate reserves and diverse revenue streams to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future taking account of economic uncertainties caused by the pandemic. Thus, the Trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the accounts.

1.3 Charitable funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of their charitable objectives.

Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors as to how they may be used. The purposes and uses of the restricted funds are set out in the notes to the financial statements.

1.4 Income

Income is recognised when the charity is legally entitled to it after any performance conditions have been met, the amounts can be measured reliably, and it is probable that income will be received.

Cash donations are recognised on receipt. Other donations are recognised once the charity has been notified of the donation, unless performance conditions require deferral of the amount. Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant is recognised at the time of the donation.

1.5 Expenditure

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

Governance costs relate to the governance of the charitable company and are primarily associated with constitutional, statutory and legal in nature.

All resources expended are classified under activity headings that aggregate all costs related to that category. Irrecoverable VAT is charged against the category of resources expended for which it was incurred.

THE FIRST STEP LTD
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

1.6 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities.

1.7 Financial instruments

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

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

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

Basic financial assets

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

Basic financial liabilities

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

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

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

Derecognition of financial liabilities

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

1.8 Employee benefits

The cost of any unused holiday entitlement is recognised in the period in which the employee's services are received.

Termination benefits are recognised immediately as an expense when the charity is demonstrably committed to terminate the employment of an employee or to provide termination benefits.

1.9 Retirement benefits

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

THE FIRST STEP LTD
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

2 Critical accounting estimates and judgements

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

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

3 Donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds 2022 £	Unrestricted funds 2021 £
Donations and gifts	11,265	4,670
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

4 Charitable activities

	2022 £	2021 £
Performance related grants	632,836	350,545
Charitable rental income	238,079	357,532
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	870,915	708,077
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Analysis by fund		
Unrestricted funds	507,087	527,270
Restricted funds	363,828	180,807
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	870,915	708,077
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

THE FIRST STEP LTD
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

5 Charitable activities

	2022	2021
	£	£
Staff costs	567,569	424,362
Building costs	121,410	72,227
Insurance	4,971	4,713
Office costs	32,284	29,714
Repairs and renewals	1,509	499
Cleaning	4,772	4,744
Service user costs	22,114	20,929
Miscellaneous expenses	11,548	3,015
Furniture and white goods	15,400	5,153
Bank charges	369	411
Professional fees	70,427	23,937
Exceptional Covid expenditure	650	108,440
	<u>853,023</u>	<u>698,144</u>
Share of governance costs (see note 6)	2,418	2,400
	<u>855,441</u>	<u>700,544</u>
Analysis by fund		
Unrestricted funds	491,613	519,737
Restricted funds	363,828	180,807
	<u>855,441</u>	<u>700,544</u>

6 Support costs

	Support costs	Governance costs	2022 Support costs	Governance costs	2021
	£	£	£	£	£
Independent examination	-	2,418	2,418	-	2,400
	<u>-</u>	<u>2,418</u>	<u>2,418</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,400</u>
Analysed between					
Charitable activities	-	2,418	2,418	-	2,400
	<u>-</u>	<u>2,418</u>	<u>2,418</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,400</u>

Governance costs includes payments to the independent examiners of £2,400 (2021: £2,400) for independent examination fees.

7 Trustees

None of the trustees (or any persons connected with them) received any remuneration or benefits from the charity during the year.

THE FIRST STEP LTD
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

7 Trustees **(Continued)**

During the year, the trustees received a total of £nil (2021: £nil) in expenses from the charity.

8 Employees

Number of employees

The average monthly number employees during the year was:

	2022	2021
	Number	Number
Management and administration	4	4
Projects, activities and sessions	17	13
	<u>21</u>	<u>17</u>

Employment costs

	2022	2021
	£	£
Wages and salaries	503,752	374,013
Social security costs	39,737	30,873
Other pension costs	24,080	19,476
	<u>567,569</u>	<u>424,362</u>

There were no employees whose annual remuneration was £60,000 or more.

9 Debtors

	2022	2021
	£	£
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Other debtors	357	357
Prepayments and accrued income	53,619	-
	<u>53,976</u>	<u>357</u>

10 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2022	2021
	£	£
Other taxation and social security	20,391	-
Deferred income	193,569	34,350
Trade creditors	86,597	30,236
Other creditors	1,049	2,887
Accruals and deferred income	27,400	2,400
	<u>329,006</u>	<u>69,873</u>

THE FIRST STEP LTD
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

11 Restricted funds

The income funds of the charity include restricted funds comprising the following unexpended balances of donations and grants held on trust for specific purposes:

	Movement in funds			Movement in funds		
	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Balance at 1 April 2021	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Balance at 31 March 2022
	£	£	£	£	£	£
BBC Children in Need	36,457	(36,457)	-	21,127	(21,127)	-
Big Lottery Reaching Communities Fund	-	-	-	91,230	(91,230)	-
Knowsley MBC - IDSVA	95,000	(95,000)	-	154,955	(154,955)	-
The Henry Smith Charity	24,350	(24,350)	-	73,600	(73,600)	-
Lloyds Bank Foundation	25,000	(25,000)	-	22,916	(22,916)	-
	<u>180,807</u>	<u>(180,807)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>363,828</u>	<u>(363,828)</u>	<u>-</u>

BBC Children in Need

A grant from BBC Children in Need to provide a Children & Young People's service within the refuge.

Knowsley MBC - IDSVA Fund

This fund supports the salary costs of specialist Independent Domestic & Sexual Violence Advocates.

The Henry Smith Charity

This fund provides the salary cost of the Senior Domestic Abuse Worker plus contribution to programme delivery costs.

Lloyds Bank Foundation

This fund contributes to the CEO salary costs.

THE FIRST STEP LTD
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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

12 Designated funds

The income funds of the charity include the following designated funds which have been set aside out of unrestricted funds by the trustees for specific purposes:

	Movement in funds		Movement in funds			
	Balance at 1 April 2020	Incoming resources	Balance at 1 April 2021	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Balance at 31 March 2022
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Service user fund	5,121	-	5,121	10,820	(5,759)	10,182
	<u>5,121</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>5,121</u>	<u>10,820</u>	<u>(5,759)</u>	<u>10,182</u>
	<u>5,121</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>5,121</u>	<u>10,820</u>	<u>(5,759)</u>	<u>10,182</u>

Service users fund

The trustees have identified £10,182 (2021: £5,121) of funds that have been allocated to spend on supporting service users in future periods.

THE FIRST STEP LTD
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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

13 Members' liability

The company is limited by guarantee and, in the event of the winding up of the company, the liability of each member (including those members who have served during the previous twelve months) is limited to a contribution of £1 towards the cost of dissolution and the liabilities incurred by the charity while the contributor was a member.

14 Related party transactions

There were no disclosable related party transactions during the year (2021 - none).

15 Controlling party

The charity is controlled by its Board of Trustees.

16 Cash generated from operations	2022	2021
	£	£
Surplus for the year	26,739	12,203
Movements in working capital:		
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	(53,619)	500
Increase in creditors	99,914	26,284
Increase in deferred income	159,219	-
Cash generated from operations	232,253	38,987

In 2021/22 The First Step received funding and support from:



And all of our generous community donators

And achieved:



For further information about The First Step, contact us on:



Telephone: 0151 548 3333

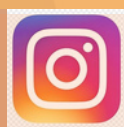


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