

**NORTH DEVON MENTAL HEALTH
SERVICE USERS FORUM**

UNAUDITED

TRUSTEES' REPORT

AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

**FOR THE PERIOD ENDED
31 DECEMBER 2023**

**CHARITY NUMBER
1055224**

North Devon Mental Health Service Users Forum
Charity Number 1055224

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Report of the trustees
for the period ended 31 December 2023

Message from the Chair of the Board - Dr Richard Holman

Clarity's Mission is simple - to ensure every adult in North Devon can access the mental health care that they need - promptly, professionally and affordably - whatever the challenge.

In a challenging economic climate, increasing numbers of our clients are unable to afford the cost of a private therapist, and unable to secure a suitable or timely service from overstretched NHS services. With a rural population of over 160,000 across some 800 square miles, Northern Devon is one of the most economically disadvantaged and least accessible areas of Devon, served by the most remote acute hospital in mainland UK. The area also boasts some of the highest house prices and lowest salaries, exacerbated by a housing crisis as numerous long-term rentals are converted to holiday accommodation to meet the needs of a thriving tourist industry. The cost-of-living crisis, coupled with a local housing crisis has cut deep into this community, and an increasing number of people struggle with their mental health and emotional wellbeing.

To ensure mental health support is accessible, Clarity launched a new website in 2023 www.claritynorthdevon.org.uk making self-referral easier than ever. Our waiting list has increased as a result, and we have introduced new triage and risk assessment procedures to ensure we can meet this increased demand.

All our counsellors are volunteers, most are fully qualified and widely experienced, though we also offer clinical placements for counselling students in their final year, offering them learning opportunities, peer support line management and clinical supervision. Many of our students stay on to support us as volunteers after they become qualified. However, in line with national trends, we have seen a reduction in the number of people able to volunteer with us this year, as many have to increase their working hours for paid employment to meet rising costs.

Our volunteers are our lifeblood, so to ensure they feel valued for their time, we offer free clinical supervision, travel expenses, and are introducing a new training programme that allows our qualified counsellors to upskill in specific areas of knowledge, while also ensuring we are able to meet the changing needs of our clients. We are grateful to our volunteers for their ongoing commitment, passion and expertise that allowed us to support 164 people with 1,860 counselling hours in 2023.



Dr Richard Holman

North Devon Mental Health Service Users Forum
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Report of the trustees
for the period ended 31 December 2023

The trustees present their report and the financial statements for the period ended 31 December 2023. The trustees who served during the period and up to the date of this report are set out on page 7.

Our Purpose

To provide accessible, timely and affordable counselling and therapeutic group support to those experiencing mental health and emotional issues within the communities of North Devon.

Our Vision

That everyone over the age of 18 in North Devon can receive prompt, professional and high-quality mental health care no matter their income or background.

Our Ethos

We believe in every person's right to have access to therapeutic services that meet their needs and will improve their mental wellbeing.

To provide excellence in the counselling and group work we deliver, we will always promote a culture of sensitivity, trust and respect for those who need our services.

Our Public Benefit

The charity operates for the public benefit by providing mental health support to adults in North Devon by way of counselling and group therapy, using appropriately and professionally trained counsellors. The Trustees confirm that they have referred to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit when reviewing the charity's aims and objectives and in planning future activities.

Our Strategy

Over the next 5 years we remain committed to supporting as many people as possible, with the shortest possible waiting time. In order to achieve this our strategic goals are as follows:

1. To identify and meet the mental health needs of the community by expanding and developing the range of therapies available.
2. To ensure continuing growth and development, by reviewing and providing the appropriate skills and expertise required to support the service and community
3. To continue developing the counselling team and supporting them in their continuing professional development.
4. To provide a welcoming, supportive and safe environment for therapy, and investing in our premises and resources as required to meet this goal.
5. To ensure that Clarity is well known locally for the service it provides, with easy and accessible self-referral for the public, or referral processes for other organisations.
6. In order to meet the strategic aims and needs described, to develop and increase fundraising activities and income generation from both public and private sources.

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Report of the trustees
for the period ended 31 December 2023

In line with the strategy outlined above, for the period April to December 2023 we set and met the following objectives:

1. Relaunched our programme of psychoeducation therapeutic groups, with themes focussed on needs identified through our assessment process, and through collaboration with other local voluntary sector organisations that support specific groups within our community.
2. Refocussed our strategic oversight and development through recruitment of new trustees with relevant and/or transferrable skills.
3. Implemented a programme of training for volunteer counsellors to support their continuous professional development, and ensure Clarity has the relevant skills and knowledge required by our clients.
4. Improved the client experience with a new website that incorporates an easy self-referral process.
5. Raised awareness of Clarity and the services available by networking with voluntary and statutory organisations across northern Devon, in line with the Community Mental Health framework.
6. Developed a new funding strategy for greater financial sustainability and stability, and secured multi-year funding that gives Clarity a stable foundation to grow from.

Our Objectives For 2024

In line with the strategy outlined above, this coming year we have set the following objectives:

1. To introduce a new programme of therapeutic groups, with specialist focus in areas of need such as addictive behaviours, coping with challenging relationships and parenting through neurodiversity.
2. To increase our volunteer numbers to pre-pandemic levels.
3. To identify and meet client needs by providing a programme of Continuous Professional Development opportunities for our volunteer counsellors.
4. To raise awareness of Clarity services with a new social media campaign to support the launch of the new website in 2023.

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Our Fundraising Activity

We are immensely grateful to all those people and organisations that have supported and raised money for the charity during the year. It is only with this support that we are able to continue to provide our vital mental health support to the people of North Devon.

In 2023 we were also able to secure vital funding from Trusts and Foundations that sustain our activities including Forrester Family Charitable Trust, John's Charity, Barnstaple Town Council, The Trusthouse Charitable Foundation, the Norman Family Charitable Trust, David Gibbons Foundation, Hendy Foundation, Devon Community Foundation and Fullabrook CIC, and corporate support from Turnstyle Designs.

We remain indebted to The National Lottery Reaching Communities Fund for their support over the last five years that has provided the foundation from which we have grown enormously. We are thrilled to have recently secured a further three years of funding to underpin our core costs for 2024, 2025 and 2026. With this solid foundation, we have developed a fundraising strategy that allows us to seek grants from other sources for distinct elements of our service, and maintain our sustainability during a time when many trusts and foundations are overwhelmed by demand.

Our Financial and performance

Trustees took the decision to alter the financial year end to 31 December this year, resulting in a nine-month financial year for 2023. Our total receipts in this nine-month period amounted to £98,333 (2022-23: £113,662) reflecting a 15% increase this period pro rata. Total payments for the period were £107,792 (2022-23: £109,750), resulted in net payments of £9,459 (2021-22: net receipts £3,912).

The 15% pro rata increase in receipts in the nine months to 31st December 2023, compared to the previous year, is as a result of the first grant for National Lottery Hear Together of £17,338 prior to the start of the project in January 2024.

We have also received substantial one-off grants from the Trusthouse Charitable Foundation and from John's Charity in the year.

Reserves Policy

The trustees have set a reserves policy which includes a designated fund to allow a structured closure of the charity should operational reserves deplete to a level at which the charity is no longer sustainable. This designated fund is reviewed annually and currently stands at £13,591 (2023 £40,000). This decrease represents the funding of a significant proportion of the cost of service provision, payroll costs and overheads by long-term restricted funds. The resulting designated fund would cover the cost of long-term leases and the professional fees required to implement closure.

Due to the nature of our service, the trustees have also set an unrestricted reserve policy of a minimum of three months total costs to ensure that the charity is able to support its clients safely through the wind-down period. Based on current expectations, this amounts to approximately £15,000 in addition to those costs represented by designated funds.

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Report of the trustees
for the period ended 31 December 2023

Currently, unrestricted reserves are £30,338 (2022-23: £12,057). Combined with relevant designated funds, this represents 3.65 months of anticipated total costs. The trustees feel that unrestricted funds are sufficient to support the charity in its day-to-day operations in 2024.

The trustees also believe that the designated fund totalling £13,591 is, in current circumstances, sufficient to allow a structured closure of the charity, if necessary, but consider that the charity is sustainable for the immediate future.

Our Organisational Structure

Clarity registered as a charity in May 1996. The charity is managed by a Board of Trustees who are responsible for ensuring financial stability and providing professional and strategic advice on policy and resource management.

The trustees are responsible for the overall management and control of the charity and receive regular reports from the clinical team involved in the day-to-day service delivery, and from the administrative and fundraising team tasked with maintaining, recording and safeguarding the charity's finances and supporting the clinical team. All matters and powers of strategic management and control are vested in the Board. The trustees have assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed in the year and have taken steps to mitigate these risks.

Meeting quarterly, the Trustee Board bring a range of skills to the charity's governance including a retired GP Partner as Chairman and a retired project manager for a major pharmaceutical company as Secretary. Other Trustees bring experience and expertise in marketing, communications, digital marketing and finance. Trustees also bring lived experience of mental health concerns either through the experience of close family members, or their own personal journey. Two are past service users who were ineligible for statutory support following a life-changing experience. For them, joining the Board of Clarity is an opportunity to give back by bringing expertise in website and optimisation, project management and marketing and charity governance. All give their time freely.

New trustees are appointed by existing trustees, who actively recruit based on experience and skills, and three new Trustees with relevant and transferrable skills joined the Board in early 2024.

Clarity is traditionally a volunteer led charity, which has grown to include a small staff team at the helm as the charity grows to meet demand. The trustees would like to acknowledge and thank the commitment and care that has been given by staff, counsellors, students and volunteers during the year.

Report of the trustees
for the period ended 31 December 2023

Statement of trustees' responsibilities

The trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial period which give a true and fair view of charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period. 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 proper accounting records which 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 Charities Act 2011 and the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008. 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.

On behalf of the board



Dr Christopher Arber
Trustee

North Devon Mental Health Service Users Forum
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Legal and administrative information

Status

North Devon Mental Health Service Users Forum (also known as Clarity) is an unincorporated charity governed by a formal constitution adopted 9 May 1996.

Charity number 1055224

Business address 104A Boutport Street
Barnstaple
Devon
EX31 1SW

Trustees	Dr Alison Judith Ayers	(Resigned 29 September 2023)
	James Craigie	(Appointed 24 January 2024)
	Matthew Jones	(Appointed 24 January 2024)
	Dr Christopher Arber	
	Dr Richard Holman	
	Frank Biederman	(Appointed 9 January 2024)
	Christopher McDonald	
	Bryony McDonald	

Accountants Westcotts
47 Boutport Street
Barnstaple
Devon
EX31 1SQ

Independent examiner's report to the trustees on the unaudited financial statements of North Devon Mental Health Service Users Forum.

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of North Devon Mental Health Service Users Forum.

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of North Devon Mental Health Service Users Forum for the period ended 31 December 2023.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees of North Devon Mental Health Service Users Forum you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the act').,

I report in respect of my examination of North Devon Mental Health Service Users Forum accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material 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 North Devon Mental Health Users Forum as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

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



Catherine Williams FCA DChA

Independent Examiner

Westcotts (SW) LLP

47 Boutport Street

Barnstaple

Devon

EX31 1SQ

Dated: 3rd July 2024

North Devon Mental Health Service Users Forum
Charity Number 1055224

Receipts and Payments Account

For the period ended 31 December 2023

		Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Period ended 31/12/23 Total	Year ended 5/4/23 Total
	Notes	£	£	£	£
Receipts					
Incoming resources from generating funds:					
Donations and grants	2	24,657	71,059	95,716	108,552
Investment income	3	1,073	-	1,073	201
Incoming resources from charitable activities	4	1,544	-	1,544	4,909
Total receipts		<u>27,274</u>	<u>71,059</u>	<u>98,333</u>	<u>113,662</u>
Payments					
Employment costs	5	7,940	10,906	18,846	36,518
Other Staff costs		-	111	111	933
Self Employed costs		2,340	23,532	25,872	42,573
Establishment costs		-	8,782	8,782	3,634
Travel costs		449	4,498	4,947	5,258
Legal and Professional Fees		270	223	493	1,346
Accountancy fees		3,470	-	3,470	3,550
Telephone and IT costs		-	6,482	6,482	3,610
Office Costs		-	4,341	4,341	1,709
Management costs		11,181	12,540	23,721	-
Subscriptions		-	-	-	240
Sundry expenses		250	945	1,195	1,886
Fundraising costs		9,502	30	9,532	8,493
Total payments		<u>35,402</u>	<u>72,390</u>	<u>107,792</u>	<u>109,750</u>
Net of receipts/(payments)		(8,128)	(1,331)	(9,459)	3,912
Cash funds brought forward		52,057	51,635	103,692	99,780
Cash funds carried forward		<u>43,929</u>	<u>50,304</u>	<u>94,233</u>	<u>103,692</u>

All of the above amounts relate to continuing activities.

The notes on pages 11 to 17 form an integral part of these financial statements.

North Devon Mental Health Service Users Forum
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Statement of Assets and Liabilities

As At 31 December 2023

	Notes	31/12/23		05/04/23	
		£	£	£	£
Cash funds					
Bank and cash		94,233		103,692	
		<u>94,233</u>		<u>103,692</u>	
Assets and liabilities			<u>94,233</u>		<u>103,692</u>
Funds					
Restricted income funds	8		50,304		51,635
Unrestricted income funds	7		30,338		12,057
Unrestricted designated funds	7		13,591		40,000
Total funds			<u>94,233</u>		<u>103,692</u>

The financial statements were approved by the trustees on 9th April/24 and signed on its behalf by



Dr Christopher Arber
Trustee

The notes on pages 11 to 17 form an integral part of these financial statements.

Notes to the financial statements
for the period ended 31 December 2023

1. Accounting policies

The principal accounting policies are summarised below. The accounting policies have been applied consistently throughout the period and the preceding year.

1.1. Basis of accounting

The financial statements are prepared under the receipts and payments basis and in accordance with FRS102, the Charities SORP (FRS102) and the requirement of Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS102) and the Charities Act 2011.

1.2. Cashflow

The charity has taken advantage of the exemption in FRS102 from the requirement to produce a cashflow statement as it is classed as a small charity.

1.3. Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are donations and other incoming resources received or generated for the objects of the charity without further specific purpose and which the charity may use for its purpose at its discretion.

Restricted funds are subjected to restrictions on their expenditure imposed by the donor or through the terms of an appeal.

1.4. Incoming resources

All incoming resources are included in the Receipts and Payments when the charity receives the income. The following specific policies are applied to particular categories of income:

Donations are received by way of grants, donations and gifts and is included in full in the Receipts and Payments when received.

The value of services provided by volunteers has not been included.

Fees are included in full in the Receipts and Payments when received. All other incoming resources are also included in full in the Receipts and Payments when received.

Grants, including grants for the purchase of fixed assets, are recognised in full in the Receipts and Payments in the year in which they are received.

1.5. Resources expended

Expenditure is recognised on a payments basis. Expenditure includes any VAT which cannot be fully recovered, and is reported as part of the expenditure to which it relates.

Notes to the financial statements
for the period ended 31 December 2023

2. Donations and grants

			Period ended 31/12/23	Year ended 5/4/23
	Unrestricted	Restricted		
	£	£	£	£
Donations > £100	8,500	1,500	10,000	7,666
Donations < £100	1,103	-	1,103	1,819
Counselling Donations	7,801	-	7,801	9,076
Grants Received	6,500	29,140	35,640	83,458
Regular giving	753	-	753	1,175
Government grants	-	40,419	40,419	2,675
Fundraising Income	-	-	-	2,683
	<u>24,657</u>	<u>71,059</u>	<u>95,716</u>	<u>108,552</u>

Funders

Turnstyle Designs - are a Barnstaple based company delivering luxury door hardware for high-end residential, commercial and yacht projects. The company strives wherever possible to support local causes and give back to the community, and Clarity is grateful for their continued support in the form of unrestricted donations (included above)

<https://www.turnstyledesigns.com/sustainability/>

We are also grateful to the following funders for making unrestricted grants that make our work possible:

Norman Family Charitable Trust
Barnstaple Town Council

3. Investment income

		Period ended 31/12/23	Year ended 5/4/23
	Unrestricted funds	Total	Total
	£	£	£
Bank interest received	1,073	1,073	201
	<u>1,073</u>	<u>1,073</u>	<u>201</u>

Notes to the financial statements
for the period ended 31 December 2023

4. Incoming resources from charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds	Period ended 31/12/23 Total	Year ended 5/4/23 Total
	£	£	£
Counselling	1,350	1,350	4,170
Travel Costs	194	194	679
Counselling fees	-	-	60
	<u>1,544</u>	<u>1,544</u>	<u>4,909</u>

5. Employees

Employment costs

	Period ended 31/12/23 £	Year ended 5/4/23 £
Wages and salaries	18,525	35,926
Pension costs	321	592
	<u>18,846</u>	<u>36,518</u>

No employee received emoluments of more than £60,000 (5/4/23 : None).

Number of employees

The average monthly numbers of employees during the period was as follows:

	Period ended 31/12/23 Number	Year ended 5/4/23 Number
Employees	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>

Notes to the financial statements
for the period ended 31 December 2023

6. Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
Fund balances at 31 December 2023 as represented by:			
Current assets	43,929	50,304	94,233
	<u>43,929</u>	<u>50,304</u>	<u>94,233</u>

7. Unrestricted funds	At 6 April 2023 £	Incoming resources £	Outgoing resources £	Transfers 31 December 2023 £	At 31 December 2023 £
Unrestricted funds	12,057	27,274	(35,402)	26,409	30,338
Designated fund	40,000	-	-	(26,409)	13,591
	<u>52,057</u>	<u>27,274</u>	<u>(35,402)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>43,929</u>

Purposes of unrestricted funds

Unrestricted funds are used to further the objects of the charity, but are subject to no restrictions on their use within those objects.

Designated funds are used to cover potential costs if the charity finds that it is unable to continue to operate.

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Notes to the financial statements
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8. Restricted funds	At 6 April 2023 £	Incoming resources £	Outgoing resources £	At 31 December 2023 £
Break the Cycle	1,478	-	(1,182)	296
Danny's Line	14,030	1,500	-	15,530
Devon Community Foundation	-	2,000	(2,000)	-
Fullabrook CIC	-	5,000	-	5,000
John's Charity	11,002	7,200	(11,002)	7,200
National Lottery - Hear Together	-	17,338	-	17,338
National Lottery - Reaching Communities	25,125	23,081	(48,206)	-
David Gibbons Trust	-	2,000	-	2,000
Trusthouse Charitable Foundation	-	10,000	(10,000)	-
Hendy Foundation	-	2,940	-	2,940
	<u>51,635</u>	<u>71,059</u>	<u>(72,390)</u>	<u>50,304</u>

Notes to the financial statements
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Purposes of restricted funds

Break the Cycle - is an initiative funded by North Devon Police to provide counselling to reduce the repetitive behaviour of individuals that results in police attendance to incidents. In addition to supporting the individuals concerned, this intervention frees up police time, reduces the need for other emergency services and reduces the impact on the wider community.

Dannys Line - is an ongoing fundraising initiative to provide a telephone support service, staffed by experienced counsellors, to help individuals experiencing suicidal thoughts and intention.

Devon Community Foundation kindly provided a community grant towards our core expenditure, funding such essential costs as insurance, professional fees, premises and office costs.

Fullabrook CIC - following earlier funding towards the charity's running costs, this year's grant generously provides additional funding of volunteer support costs, whether that is covering their travel costs, providing free clinical supervision and support, or opportunities for training.



John's Charity - this funding in 2022/23 was to cover various capital improvements to the charity's office environment and technology. This has improved the experience of clients engaging with our service, by improving comfort and security as well as increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of staff. Funding has been used for new phones, IT equipment, door entry system, furniture, internal redecoration, and a new website to improve our branding and increase awareness of the charity.

In 2023 we were fortunate to receive additional funding identified to cover the significant travel costs of the charity's team of volunteer counsellors in 2024. The grant will be used for mileage and parking costs incurred, ensuring that these crucial volunteers are not financially impacted by their generous support to the charity.

The National Lottery – Hear Together grant commences in 2024 for a period of three years covering the costs of key personnel, the charity's premises costs and also its core business professional support costs. The support of the National Lottery continues to be the cornerstone of funding for the charity in the absence of any financial support from the government.



The National Lottery - Reaching Communities funding was provided over a five year period to help the charity finance its service delivery, both directly for counsellors' fees and travel, and in respect of administrative costs such as payroll, office costs and insurance.

David Gibbons Trust - have kindly given funding to support our team of volunteer counsellors in their essential work. We provide them with free clinical supervision and also regular line management, peer support, CPD training opportunities and travelling expenses.

Trusthouse Charitable Foundation generously provided funding towards the costs of the post of charity manager in 2023. This role is crucial to the effective running of the charity, pulling all the diverse functions of the charity together cohesively and providing both clinical and administrative support and guidance.

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Hendy Foundation is specifically meeting the costs of running one of the charity's twelve-week groups in 2024. Groups involve a wide variety of direct and indirect costs including group facilitators, group development and administration, clinical lead input, clinical supervision of facilitators, monitoring and evaluation, as well as venue costs.