SUPPORTING PEOPLE ACHIEVING REAL CHOICE

England & Wales · Charity number 1060095

Details

Other names	THE SPECIAL PERSONS ADVICE AND RESEARCH COUNCIL, SPARC
Status	Registered
Legal form	Other
Registered	1997-01-11
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

Address	69 Nicander Road Liverpool L18 1HU
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Website	www.sparccharity.co.uk

Activities

Objects: THE RELIEF OF PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES IN THE AREA DEFINED IN CLAUSE 2 (HEREINAFTER CALLED THE AREA OF BENEFIT). IT SHALL ADVANCE THE EDUCATION OF SUCH PERSONS TO PRESERVE THEIR GOOD HEALTH, RELIEVE THEIR SICKNESS AND POVERTY AND PROVIDE RECREATIONAL FACILITIES IN THE INTERESTS OF SOCIAL WELFARE FOR SUCH PERSONS WITH THE OBJECT OF IMPROVING THEIR QUALITY OF LIFE.

Activities: SPARC is a charity which supports people with learning disabilities.We were first formed in July 1995.Our services in the recent past have been in the area of employment and training in independent travel skills.SPARC's main current areas of activity are concerned with personal safety training and improving the health and welfare of our members.

Classification

- **How:** Provides Human Resources, Provides Advocacy/advice/information
- **What:** Education/training, Disability, Economic/community Development/employment
- **Who:** People With Disabilities

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Geography

- **Area of benefit:** ENGLAND
- Throughout England

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£73,124	£45,864	-	-
2024-03-31	£47,032	£52,510	-	-
2023-03-31	£51,914	£41,615	-	-
2022-03-31	£44,804	£51,261	-	-
2021-03-31	£61,878	£48,824	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
MICHAEL O'GORMAN	Chair	1995-02-24
Kenneth Dobson		2019-02-24
Kevin Buckley		2023-06-19
SARAH MCKEOWN		
Scott McGhee		2023-06-19
Stephen Roberts		2014-01-27

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SUPPORTING PEOPLE ACHIEVING REAL CHOICE

England & Wales - Charity number 1060095

Accounts

SPARC
Supporting People Achieving Real Choice

Registered charity No: 1060095

Annual Report , Accounts & Social Impact Review [SIR] The SPARC charity 2024-2025

Year ending 31st March 2025



" We believe the most valuable resource we have are the ordinary people that use our services. This working ethos is called the "SPARC Way."

This year's Independent Examiner's Report has been kindly undertaken by Adding Value Consultancy Ltd.

Adding Value
Values-led finance

[Final Draft/Dec-2025]

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Introduction

The trustees of SPARC present here the annual report and financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2025. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the accounts and comply with the charity's trust deed, the Charities Act 2011, and the 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 2015). The board of trustees are satisfied with the performance of the charity during the last year and at the position on 31 March 2025 we consider that SPARC is in a strong position to continue its activities during the coming year, and the charity's assets are adequate to fulfill its obligations.



Purpose and activities of the SPARC Charity

The charity's objectives are: The relief of people with learning disabilities in the area defined in clause 2 (hereinafter called the area of benefit). It shall advance the education of such persons to preserve their good health, relieve their sickness and poverty and provide recreational facilities in the interests of social welfare for such persons with the object of improving their quality of life.



Contact details for SPARC

SPARC [Supporting People Achieving Real Choice]

Registration Number 1060095 Date of registration 11 January 1997

Chair of Trustees: Mick O' Gorman

Registered office: 69, Nicander Road, Liverpool, L18 1HU

Mobile: 07792-110-390

Email: mickogorman@blueyonder.co.uk

Website: www.sparccharity.co.uk



Welcome to SPARC's Annual Report & Social Impact Review [SIR].

This year's **Annual Report and Accounts [2024-2025]** also includes our **Social Impact Review [SIR]** to help assess the progress achieved by SPARC to improve the lives of our 296 members who are people with Learning Disabilities. We are pleased to report a great deal of positive work has again been undertaken this year and our small charity is well positioned to make further progress in the future.

During the 30 years of SPARC's existence the lives of most people with intellectual disabilities in the UK has incrementally improved and our small charity has played its part in this positive change. However, the fact remains much more work still needs to be done to challenge the ongoing social exclusion and inequality, poor health , and disability hate crime that far too many of our members continue to experience. Serious health inequalities remain and this results in a much lower life expectancy for people with learning disabilities compared to the general population. Moreover, the appalling mortality rates suffered by people with learning disabilities during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdowns is a national scandal and has subsequently eroded the confidence and trust of many families about accessing local services. This problem is highlighted by the large numbers of vulnerable people, now labelled as **"ghosts"** by the media, who are still **"missing"** since the end of lockdowns and are effectively "off- radar" education and NHS services.

Tackling this widening gap between our members and the local services they need to access is a key area of SPARC's work. **Health inequality** remains one of **four main priorities** alongside **challenging criminal exploitation, improving personal safety and creating more opportunities for open employment.** We are fortunate that the majority of SPARC's elected Trustees, staff and volunteers are family carers or professionals in the field of learning disability and it is these "**people with lived experience** who ensure our services remain **"fit for purpose".**

This year has been particularly challenging and SPARC would like to place on record its thanks to our core staff team and particularly **Catherine Mannion, Phil Haden and Elaine Andrews** who have worked tirelessly during the current cost of living crisis.

This report was approved at SPARC's Annual General Meeting on Monday January 12th 2026 at the Studio venue in Widnes where the members also requested the inclusion of user-friendly easy-read infographics to help improve its accessibility for people with limited literacy skills.

Best Wishes, Mick O' Gorman Chair of Trustees of the SPARC

About SPARC



What's in a name: SPARC ?

SPARC [or "Supporting People Achieving Real Choice"] is a small charity that is mainly based in the borough of Halton and which sits on the banks of the River Mersey. Our charity currently supports **296 people with a Learning Disability aged 16 - 28 years and who live in the Liverpool City Region area.** SPARC was established in July 1995 by a small group of concerned parents, and it became a registered charity in January 1997. Our name describes the aim to provide practical opportunities for people with a learning disability **to make reasoned choices about the aspirations they have in their lives.** To do this ,SPARC provides projects/services which promote social resilience and life-skills to improve the quality of life of our members in four main areas of: health & welfare, employment, personal safety and social inclusion.



A snapshot of the local communities SPARC serves in Halton

Most of SPARC's work takes place in working class communities in Halton which is located next to the river Mersey and falls within the Liverpool City Region. Halton has a population of 129,000 and from the last Indices of Multiple Deprivation: IMD (2025), is ranked 39th out of 317 local authorities, and within the 20% most deprived areas in the country. It is a place where 19.6% of local children live in poverty and in the Riverside and Kingsway wards , where many of our SPARC members live, these communities have experienced historically high levels of deprivation over many decades. The last Joint Strategic Needs Assessment reported that:

- 9.6% residents in Halton are defined as fuel poor
- 29% of school pupils receive free school meals
- 30% of households are in problem debt



How social inequality is exacerbated for people with learning disabilities.

Structural inequalities in terms of employment & income, health & disability, education & skills, crime and barriers to housing and services, are always amplified for the most vulnerable groups in society and particularly for people who have learning disabilities. We know, for example, in terms of health inequality, 58% of SPARC members have health problems like diabetes, obesity and poor mental health but only 13% attended for their GP for an annual NHS health check in the last year.

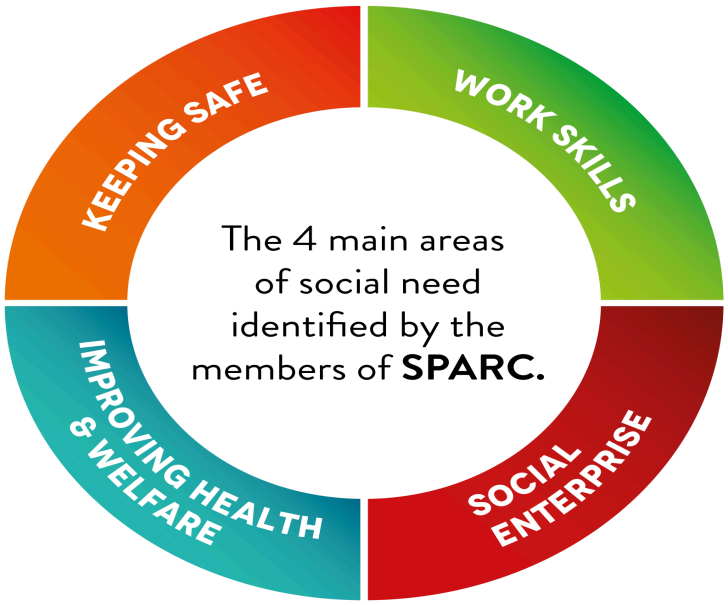
THE FOUR MAIN AREAS OF SOCIAL NEED IDENTIFIED BY SPARC MEMBERS

This infographic identifies the **four main areas of social need** the members of SPARC have identified as their priorities from evidence captured via feedback from three main reporting tools, which are:

1. The "**Ideas Clearing House"** biannual forums for members to share experiences/ concerns.
2. SPARCs annual in-house "**Quality of Life " survey** using a structured questionnaire .
3. External inputs and advice provided by our "**critical friends**" , including the **Lloyds Bank Foundation** and **Constructive Partnerships Ltd.**

The evidence collated then drives the planning and delivery of SPARCs projects and services to meet the four areas of social need that the members have identified:

1. **Improving people's health and welfare by better access to local services**
2. **Keeping people safe in their community from criminal exploitation**
3. **Learning skills for the world of work**
4. **Providing social enterprise opportunities like developing Accessible Information**



How this identified social need impacts on the lives of the members.

People not accessing local services: After a decade of austerity , declining local services and the imposition of ever-stricter eligibility rules by hard-pressed councils, the result is **72% of SPARC members are now effectively out of service & "off the radar" of statutory agencies,** until they experience a crisis in their lives**.** These are the so-called "**ghosts",** as labelled by the media, because they do not use the NHS, Education, Police or Welfare Advice , because of low confidence and diminished expectations since the end of Covid-19. The recent **report by the Children's Commissioner Rachel De Souza["Missing Children"]** identified thousands of vulnerable people still missing from statutory services since the end of lockdowns and has been further compounded by the near **collapse of the SEND special needs system.**



Poor health and welfare: People with a learning disability experience premature death rates on average 18- years less than the general population **[" NHS Digital Report].** SPARCs most recent **Annual Members survey[July/2025]** reported that 58% have associated poor health like diabetes, obesity and poor mental health but only 13% attended for their annual GP health check last year. The ONS reported that during Covid-19 lockdowns mortality rates for people with Learning Disabilities were 6- times higher than the national average and this negative experience has generated low confidence and fatalism amongst many SPARC families about using the NHS.



Crime and the Criminal Justice System: We know that 75% of our members are trapped at home for up to 5 days a week and lead very lonely lives. Consequently, they are also particularly vulnerable to exploitation by criminal gangs, who groom them as "**fake friends**".This is sometimes called **"Mate Crime"** and from SPARC's annual members survey we know that 21% have experienced contact with criminal gangs or have been the victims of hate crime. The Prison Reform Trust report ``**Nobody Knows**" shows that **28% of the prison population in England** have some form of learning disability because inadequate screening by the Police/Courts fails to divert vulnerable people away from the criminal justice system.



Unemployment and Welfare : Only 5% of people with a learning disability have paid employment in the UK although **a job is often the best form of natural social inclusion [BASE: report].** We know that 83% of SPARC members are long term unemployed but 64% have said they would like a paid job but only 7% have ever used a Job Center. The social impact of being forced into life-long unemployment is that 36% of SPARC families now rely upon local food banks and 38% are trapped into using payday loans/loan sharks but only 12% have ever had a professional welfare benefits assessment.



The annual "Quality of Life" survey of SPARC members [July 2025]

Each year SPARC conducts its own internal "**Quality of Life**" survey of its members and families. This year our survey achieved a very good **87% response rate** from families using a structured questionnaire based upon 10 questions which explored key areas like:, access to local services: health and welfare: aspirations for employment and levels of disability hate- crime experienced.



The main findings from the survey :

- ☐ Most SPARC members [72%] are now "**off the radar"** of statutory services until they experience a life crisis like emergency admissions to A&E because of poor health or becoming a victim of crime,etc.
- ☐ Because of the paucity of available statutory services the result is SPARC now provides the only regular weekly day provision for 74% of our members .
- ☐ Four main areas of social need exist: these are, keeping safe: improving health and welfare: learning skills for work: and more opportunities for social enterprise.
- ☐ Most of our members are happy [86%] with the quality of services provided by SPARC.



The July/ 2025 survey reported that:

- 72% of our members do not access council social day-care services since the end of Covid-19 lockdowns
- 43% have lost or had reduced services in the "transition" from children's to adult services.
- 78 % of members have an average reading age of just 7-9 years and therefore cannot engage with most NHS and Public Health platforms based upon the formal written word.
- 83% are long term unemployed although 64% said they would like a paid job but only 7% have ever visited a Job Center.
- 73% cannot use public transport like a local bus or a train independently
- 75% are trapped at home for up to 5 days each week and experience severe loneliness
- 58% have associated poor health like diabetes, obesity and poor mental health but only 13% have seen their GP for an annual NHS health check.
- 65% have experienced disability hate crime but only 3% have reported incidents to the police
- 21% reported attempted grooming /exploitation by criminal gangs and loan sharks
- 36% of our families now rely upon local food banks and live with fuel poverty.
- 38% currently use payday loans or loan sharks but only 12% have ever had a professional welfare benefits assessment.
- 78% of the SPARC's elected Trustees staff and volunteers are parents, family carers or professionals working in the field of learning disability.
- 86% of members said they like the flexible delivery of services combining group work with Zoom workshops and 1;1 fieldwork.
- 74% of members report that SPARC is the only local service they now have regular contact with during the week.

A snapshot of SPARCs work this year 2024 -2025

Numbers of people supported by SPARC: a total of 296 individual members and family carers have been supported this year .

Projects/Services provided: SPARC currently provides a suite of 7 p/t projects/services , supported by a mix of grants , volunteers or are self-funded by SPARC itself.

Flexible delivery of services: many SPARC members are still isolating following the Covid-19 lockdowns, and to engage with people SPARC provides a flexible delivery of services including face-to-face group work, 1:1 fieldwork and online learning sessions.



Improving health, personal safety and independent living: our projects have led to a 12 % increase in the numbers of SPARC members attending the group sessions with inputs by external professionals from the Police and NHS,etc to help build rapport with the members..



Developing Ideas and aspirations for the future: the members have invested a lot of time sharing their ideas for new social enterprises like developing the Real Comics media as user-friendly Accessible Information for vulnerable communities will limited literacy skills

Improving financial health:: SPARC's income has continued to improve incrementally with new funding from the Lloyds Bank Foundation, People's Health Trust and Postcode Lottery alongside increased unrestricted income streams from our work with direct payments.

Positive Feedback: our recent in-house members survey reported that 86% are happy with the quality of services provided and 74% said that SPARC is the only local service they have regular contact with during the week.

External reports and consultancy to improve quality and governance: External reports kindly provided by "critical friends" like Constructive Partnerships Ltd and the Lloyds Bank Foundation consultants are helping to improve the resilience, governance and the quality of SPARCs business planning.



SPARC's projects and services: 2024 -2025

SPARC currently provides a suite of p/t projects , which are supported by a combination of grants , our wonderful volunteers or are self-funded by SPARC itself.



The Always Here 4 U project: now self-funded by SPARC and provides support and training for isolated members to learn how to stay safe and deal with disability hate crime.



The Enhance programme: funded by the Lloyds Bank Foundation to help build the long-term resilience of SPARC.



The Real Comics project: this is our in-house Digital Publishing House and is self-funded by SPARC: it enables SPARC members to design their own bespoke accessible information for non-readers using "pictures rather than words" based on the Real Comics.



The Filthy Fingers project: supported by the Postcode Lottery and the Baily Thomas Trust and is a social prescribing project to help people learn how to grow food from "pot to plate" .



The Ventures Club: Direct Payments funded and aims to engage with people isolated in the community to meet together and make new friends.



The Mind The Gap project: Supported initially by Awards For All and aims to support people to better access local services and is now self-funded by SPARC itself



The new "Life" online members club: a proposed new project that SPARC is currently developing as a social enterprise and a potential subscription platform. The idea is for people with learning disabilities to share their own ideas, experiences through short films and podcasts.

A Roadmap: how members access SPARC

1. Referral routes:

Most of our members have either **self-referred themselves or by a close family carer**, although recently there has also been an increase of referrals from "other "external professional agencies. These include social services and the police regarding individuals they have identified as at potential risk. Most members of SPARC are young people aged 18 to 25 with a diagnosed **Moderate Learning Disability [MLD] and currently make up 72% of our membership.** This cohort is unable to access other council social care services because of the application of strict eligibility rules. **The remaining members [28%] of SPARC have more complex and profound learning disabilities.**

2. Entry and Induction:

At the point of entry and induction a new member is invited to a **4 week "taster"** to allow them to acclimatize and choose which of the services best serve their needs and interests. In this Induction phase SPARC will also begin its screening and assessment profiles to help identify base line needs and measure subsequent progress by the member. These will include the **Personal Information Profile [PIP],** checking **ECHP plans** and **ASDAN to assess literacy skills.**



3. Participation and Attendance :

Most of our members stay involved with SPARC for an **average of 3.-4 years** and are able to roll on/roll off projects as appropriate to meet their needs Our attendance records shows that **84% of the membership has regular contact** with SPARC services each month whilst the rest have intermittent contact of at least 6 attendances in an average year.



4. Quality controls

Our annual **Quality of Life survey** reports that **86% of our members are happy with the quality of their experiences** and particularly the attention given to 1: 1 support. A number of assessment tools are used like the, **ASDAN Everyday Living Functional Skills: and the HASI and LDSQ profiles** to track individual progress. SPARC holds monthly feedback forums with the members and most importantly the **"Ideas Clearing House"** events capture direct feedback from members and families to assess the impact of our services. SPARC also invites external **"critical friends"** like Constructive Partnerships Ltd to assess the quality of our services & the performance of the Board.



5. Planned exit and outcomes:

SPARC works hard to provide and improve the range of opportunities available for our members when they finally leave. We recognise, however, that serious inequalities still exist when they move on in their lives like the 83% who are trapped in long-term unemployment and the 58% of members reporting poor health. We are however making progress with **9% of members getting paid employment** compared to the 4.5% nationally for people with learning disabilities. SPARC has successfully supported its members into f/t jobs with large employers like ASDA, Tesco's and Matalan whilst the introduction of the **HASI and LDSQ screening tools has seen a reduction of 11% of members** at risk from involvement in the criminal justice system.

Final evaluation and feedback :

The experiences and feedback from our graduate leavers are integral to our working ethos, which is called the SPARC Way. We ask for honest feedback and any practical suggestions for change to make our provision better. Some of this data is captured in the **Summative Evaluation Assessment** and all members are encouraged to participate in the annual **Ideas Clearing House** away days held each year to plan new services. This is the key driver for the members to identify their main areas of social need and the services SPARC will provide to meet this need. All members leaving SPARC take with them a **Testimonial and References** for potential employment and any further training opportunities.



Assessment & Tracking the individual progress of SPARC members

When a new member joins SPARC , a range of assessment and tracking tools are used to measure the starting point and then their route-map through the provision.



Entry/Induction into SPARC:

- At the point of entry and Induction , the **Personal Information Profile [PIP]** is introduced as a **confidential file** about the individuals needs to include: medical information, family contacts and emergency Tel numbers. It includes an initial assessment to measure baseline literacy, numeracy and social skills and a Risk Assessment which is shared with the appropriate staff and volunteers on a strict "***need to know***" basis. Reference is also made to any available **Statements of Special Needs** or **Education Health & Care Plans [EHCP].**



Participation in projects/services:

- **Literacy, Numeracy and Social Skills** are screened and then subject to ongoing assessment using the **ASDAN "Every day Living"** profiles. These are user-friendly assessments are **not "tests",** and incrementally build targets by breaking skills into small steps. For example, on money and finance: managing a weekly budget: what is good/bad credit: problem debt,etc
- **The HASI profile: [Hayes Ability Screening Index:]** when a member moves past the induction point the HASI will be used to provide a quick numerical score for personal and social needs. It is very important to stress that the HASI is also **not an IQ test** as such but simply a means to score a range of abilities to include problem solving skills like **managing risk around substance abuse and potential exploitation.**
- **The LDSQ profile [Learning Disability Screening Questionnaire]** is particularly helpful in assessing young people at potential risk and to help divert vulnerable people away from the Criminal Justice System [CJS].



On leaving SPARC :

- **The summative assessment :** provides a final profile for each member when they leave. This is a detailed breakdown of experiences and achievements.
- **Testimonials and References** provided by SPARC for the person leaving and perhaps applying for employment or other training opportunities elsewhere.
- **The Drop - In Club :** Many former members come back to visit SPARC for a chat, catch up or for advice or signposting to services they might need to access.



Having a learning disability and its social impact?

Approximately 78% of SPARCs current membership profile are people aged 18 -28 years with a **Moderate Learning Disability [MLD]** whilst 22% have more **Profound and Complex Learning Disabilities [PMLD]** .

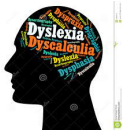
It is important to note that although the individual clinical profiles of the members may exhibit different types of specific learning disability, like MLD or PMLD , in reality it is the **social impact of having a learning disability** which is the main focus of SPARCs work. This social impact is often **multifaceted** and can include:

- Having limited skills in reading, writing and numeracy
- Poor problem solving skills and inability to generalize learning.
- Limited auditory/visual memory and speech and a language delay.
- Emotional and behavioral difficulties.
- Lack of understanding to manage potential risk and exploitation.



On literacy skills, for example, the average **reading age of a SPARC member is approx. 7-9 years** and individuals finding difficulty in::

- Completing an online job application form
- Booking an appointment for a health check with a GP
- Reading instructions for a medical prescription
- Understanding their rights in court when trying to navigate the criminal justice system.
- Difficulty in understanding public health information about how to stay safe from Covid-19.



Having a learning disability can also **"mask and disguise"** other underlying medical conditions like poor mental health or Type 2 Diabetes. This problem of **"dual diagnoses"** and additional undetected health problems affects 58% of our SPARC members and is a key factor in the health inequalities and early death rates for people with a learning disability.



Many of our members **lead very lonely lives** and are **vulnerable to exploitation by loan sharks and criminal gangs ..** Our annual survey reported that 38% of our families now use illegal loan sharks or payday loans and are then trapped in problem debt . This is used as leverage by gangs to pressurize vulnerable people to become involved in criminal drug networks.

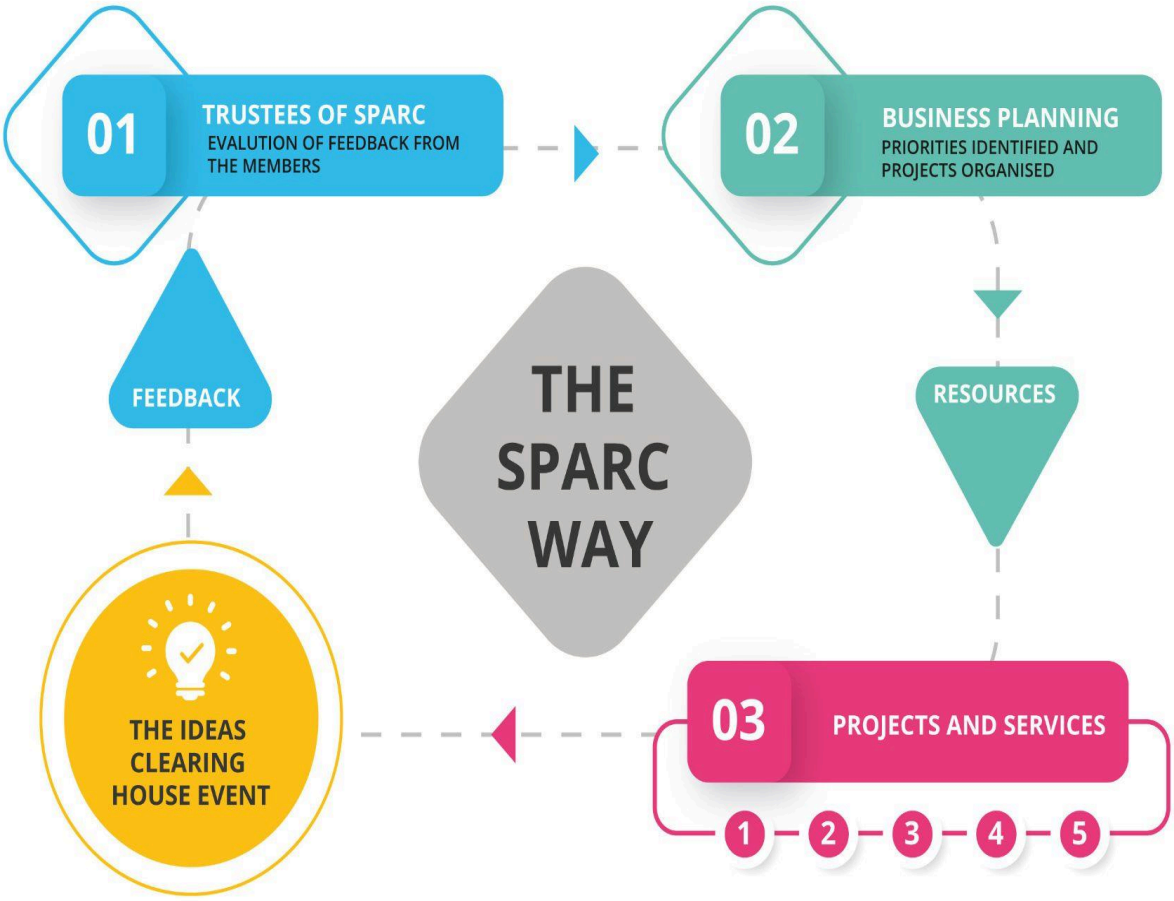
The "SPARC Way": Our values and how SPARC works: .

SPARC is a family led organization where 78% of our elected Trustees are either family carers, parents or service users. It is their lived experience and voice that ensures our services are focussed on meeting the practical needs of people with learning disabilities.

Our working ethos is called the **"SPARC Way"** and states :

"We believe our most valuable resource are the people that use our services. This is the foundation of the SPARC Way."

The "SPARC Way" & the annual" ideas Clearing House" event:



A Financial health check: our controls, progress and challenges ahead

A preliminary analysis of our accounts shows that SPARC has made steady progress financially since the very difficult years between 2015- 2019. In this period, most of SPARCs main grant funding had finished and we were then forced to use up our small reserves to try and maintain a minimum level of service to the members. We are confident that SPARC has now turned a corner and is becoming more financially stable going into the future. We are grateful to Ken Dobson for taking charge of SPARCs internal financial controls and the cashbook throughout the year.

Annual Accounts: SPARCs annual accounts are independently examined by **Adding Value Consultancy Ltd.** SPARC would like to acknowledge the advice and professional support by Matthew Brown and Bradley Eastham and the rest of the team at Adding Value.



Income streams: Our most recent cash book shows that both our **Restricted Income** from funders and **Unrestricted Income** from Direct Payments and the Ventures Club have increased . Our intention is to build our Unrestricted income stream via commissions for the Real Comics media and the new "Life" project and develop these into online subscription platforms and strengthen SPARCs financial sustainability.



A big "Thank You" to all of our funders:

During the last year SPARC has secured successful grant applications from the **Lloyds Bank Foundation, Peoples Health Trust, Awards For All , Postcode Lottery and Bailey Thomas Trust .** Over the last 30 years, SPARC has built a good track record of managing successful projects with funding from a wide range of sponsors and trusts . All of our end of grant reports submitted to our sponsors have been positive, including the following :

- The Lloyds Bank Foundation
- Awards For All
- The Big Lottery
- Peoples Health Trust,
- Morgan Foundation,
- NHS Halton CCG
- NHS Liverpool CCG
- Bailey Thomas Trust
- The Postcode Lottery



The future of SPARC : the role of our "Critical Friends".

With the recent professional support by our external "**critical friends"** like **Constructive Partnerships Ltd and the Lloyds Bank Foundation ,** the Trustees have agreed six key objectives for the future. These relate to the following organizational objectives:

1. Appointing a full-time Project Manager and establishing a permanent office to take overall responsibility for SPARC's services and drive its business planning.
2. Explore relevant quality kite marks for improving governance and the quality of services .
2. Examine the possibility of SPARC becoming a Charitable Incorporated Organization [CIO].
4. Further develop flexible services combining 1:1 case work, group work and online sessions which will meet the x 4 main areas of social need identified by our members.
5. Increase income streams into SPARC with more grant applications but also developing new business and unrestricted income streams like Direct Payments and potential trading activities like subscription online content like the "Life" social enterprise.
6. Develop the skills set of our Board of Trustees via a skills audit to be undertaken by Constructive Partnerships Ltd.



Quality controls for services and improving governance

The recent external audit kindly conducted by Constructive Partnerships Ltd, acting as an external "critical friend" , assessed the quality of our board leadership & has now led to an agreed action plan.SPARC will now build on its existing framework and also examine appropriate quality kite marks in both its governance as well the delivery of its services for people with learning disabilities. We will help measure progress achieved by building upon the following steps:

- ☐ **Build on the recognised screening/assessment tools like the HASI, LDSQ and ASDAN for improving the quality of its projects and services.**
- ☐ **Introduce "Trustees Indemnity Insurance" from BIHB Ltd to underpin our Risk Management policy for the Board.**
- ☐ **A rolling annual audit each year of 25% of all key policies and procedures like Safeguarding, etc , to ensure their continued fitness for purpose.**
- ☐ **The "Good Governance Code" for small charities has been adopted and includes regular in-service training for the Board by Constructive Partnerships.**



Our Board of Trustees of SPARC , staff team and volunteers

Our Trustees meet together as the Board and they are responsible for leading the SPARC charity. They are elected annually and SPARC currently has six trustees who meet bi-monthly. Most of our current Trustees are family carers of people with learning disabilities, or are service users or work professionally in the field of learning disabilities. Our trustees provide personal "**lived experience"** and a **range of professional skills** like running small businesses, banking and educational and social care settings.

Our current six elected trustees are:

1. **Mick O' Gorman: [Chair of Trustees]:** Mick is an original founding trustee who first helped to establish the charity back in 1995 with parents and family carers. His professional background is in teaching students with learning disabilities..
2. **Ken Dobson: [Treasurer]** Ken has worked in commercial banks for over 20 years and then became a NHS Practice Manager for a large inner city GP surgery in Liverpool.
3. **Sarah McKeown:** is a f/t support worker for people with learning disabilities.
4. **Scott McGhee :** is an elected family carer.
5. **Kevin Buckley :** is an elected member of SPARC.
6. **Stephen Roberts:** provides the IT support for SPARC and works for Riverside College.

*** NB**: SPARC also co-opts additional members to the Board to help deal with specific issues. During this last year Phil Shackell from Constructive Partnerships Ltd and Joe Tottey, a consultant graphic designer, have supported SPARC with governance matters and developing accessible information.



Our p/t staff team : Thank You .

Since the last of SPARCs significant grants came to an end in 2015-2016 we have been largely dependent upon a team of x 9 p/t sessional staff. They mostly work on a casual/sessional and hourly basis when our projects/services require inputs and funds allow. The staff and volunteers are led by a very hardworking **p/t Team Leader, Catherine Mannion**, who reports directly to the Chair of Trustees . Catherine is supported by a core staff team of **Phil Haden and Elaine Andrews.**



Our wonderful Volunteers: ThankYou.

Our 12 wonderful volunteers each offer at least x 3 hrs of support per week and most of them provide in excess of 6 hours to SPARC. The majority of our volunteers have either lived experience of supporting people with a learning disability or have training in the field. They have been genuinely invaluable to the charity and particularly during the Covid-19 emergency and the current cost of living crisis. The Trustees would like to put on record their gratitude and genuine thanks to all of our volunteers for their fantastic support.



The “good governance” audit by Constructive Partnerships Ltd

From the recent audit led by Phil Shackell and Constructive Partnerships Ltd , SPARC is confident that it now has a clear and coherent strategy in its drive towards achieving good governance for the charity. The Trustees have now agreed on an **on-going development plan for “good governance”** to help maintain the trust and confidence of our members, the public, commissioners and potential funders. Our plans will prioritize : Organizational purpose, Board Leadership, Integrity and Decision making, Risk management, Diversity and Openness and Accountability.



Annual Review of SPARCs Policies and Procedures: the 25% annual audit

SPARCs aspirations to build good governance will involve an annual check of 25% of all key current policies and procedures to ensure their continued fitness for purpose.



Structure, Governance and Management of SPARC

The SPARC charity is a registered unincorporated charity governed by a constitution. Trustees are appointed by the existing board through an annual vote by the members of SPARC. The Trustees consider the future need of the charity when looking to add to the board and have regard to the particular skills required at each stage of the charity’s development. New Trustees are given a period of induction and continuing training opportunities are made available to all Trustees. The day-to-day operations of the charity are governed by Trustees who are directly engaged in the activity of the charity. The Chair of Trustees provides the main point with the employed staff, volunteers and members of SPARC whilst operational decisions are made by the Trustees at their regular bi-monthly meetings.



The Independent Examiner for the SPARC charity.

Adding Value Consultancy Ltd
Studio 21, Bluecoat Chambers, School Lane,
Liverpool, L1 3BX



Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities:

The charity trustees are responsible for preparing a trustees' annual report and financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities requires the charity trustees to prepare financial statements for each year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable group for that period.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are required to:

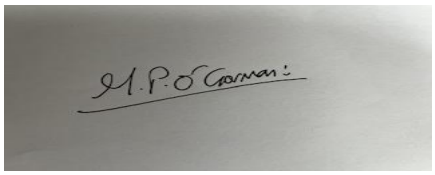
- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP:
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- state whether applicable UK accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the applicable Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations, and the provisions of the Trust deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the charity and financial information included on the charity's website in accordance with legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements.

This report was approved by the board of Trustees.

Signed: Mr. Mick O" Gorman



Chair of Trustees of the SPARC charity



Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of the Charity

Supporting People Achieving Real Choice (SPARC)
Report of the Independent Examiners to the Trustees on the account of the Charity for the year ended 31 March 2025

I report on the financial statement of the charitable company for the year ended 31 March 2025. This report is made solely to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Section 145 of the Charities Act 2011. My examination has been undertaken so that I might state to the charity's trustees those matters I am required to state to them in an Independent Examiner's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, I do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and charity's trustees as a body, for my examination, for this report, or for the opinions I have formed.

Respective responsibilities of the Trustees and Examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Charities Act") and that an independent examination is needed. It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act, and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of opinion and scope of work undertaken

My examination was carried out in accordance with general directions given by the charity commission. An examination includes a review of accounting records, kept by the charity and a comparison of accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items of disclosures in the accounts and seeks explanations from the Trustees concerning any such matters. The procedure undertaken does not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit. Consequently, no opinion is given to whether the accounts present a true and fair view and report is limited to the matters set out in the statement below.

Independent Examiner's Statement

- In connection with the examination, no matters have come to my attention.
- Which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements; to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act.
- And to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act have not been met; or
- To which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Matthew Brown
Adding Value Consultancy Ltd
Studio 21, Bluecoat Chambers, School Lane, Liverpool, L1 3BX



Supporting People Achieving Real Choice (SPARC)
Statement of Financial Activities
For the year ended 31 March 2025

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds 2025 £	Restricted Funds 2025 £	Total Funds 2025 £	Last Year Total Funds 2024 £
Income					
Donations and legacies	2	29,862	-	29,862	26,326
Income from charitable activities	3	14,456	28,806	43,262	20,706
Total Income		**44,318**	**28,806**	**73,124**	**47,032**
Expenditure					
Expenditure on charitable activities	4	28,071	16,893	44,964	51,484
Governance	5	900	-	900	1,026
Total expenditure		**28,971**	**16,893**	**45,864**	**52,510**
Net income/(expenditure) for the year		**15,347**	**11,913**	**27,260**	**(5,478)**
Gross transfer between funds		**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Net movement in funds		**15,347**	**11,913**	**27,260**	**(5,478)**
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward		**14,105**	**6,692**	**20,797**	**26,275**
Total funds carried forward		**29,452**	**18,605**	**48,057**	**20,797**

The net movement in funds to above in the net incoming resources as defined in the Statement of Recommendation Practice for Accounting and reporting issued by the Charity Commission for England and Wales and is reconciled to the total funds as shown in the Balance Sheet on page 24 as required by the said statement.

All activities derive from continuing operation.

The notes on page 25 to 29 form an integral part of these accounts



Supporting People Achieving Real Choice (SPARC)
Statement of Financial Activities
Analysis of prior year total funds as required by paragraph 4.2 of Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP)

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds 2024 £	Restricted Funds 2024 £	Total Funds 2024 £
Income				
Donations and legacies	2	26,326	-	26,326
Income from charitable activities	3	-	20,706	20,706
Total Income		**26,326**	**20,706**	**47,032**
Expenditure				
Expenditure on charitable activities	4	14,648	36,836	51,484
Governance	5	1,026	-	1,026
Total expenditure		**15,674**	**36,836**	**52,510**
Net income/(expenditure) for the year		**10,652**	**(16,130)**	**(5,478)**
Gross transfer between funds		**-**	**-**	**-**
Net movement in funds		**10,652**	**(16,130)**	**(5,478)**
Reconciliation of funds:				
Total funds brought forward		**3,453**	**22,822**	**26,275**
Total funds carried forward		**14,105**	**6,692**	**20,797**

All activities derive from continuing operation

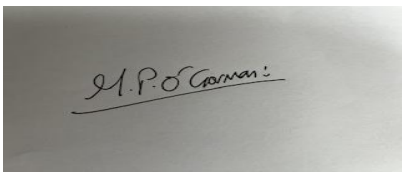
The notes on page 25 to 29 form an integral part of these accounts



Supporting People Achieving Real Choice (SPARC)
Balance Sheet
As at 31 March 2025

	Notes	2025 £	2025 £	2024 £	2024 £
Current Assets					
Cash at the bank and in hand		48,957		22,197	
Total current assets		**48,957**		**22,197**	
Creditors: -					
Amount due within one year	9	(900)		(1,400)	
Net current assets			48,057		20,797
Net assets			**48,057**		**20,797**
The funds of the charity					
Restricted income funds					
Restricted funds			18,605		6,692
Unrestricted income funds					
Unrestricted revenue accumulated funds			29,452		14,105
Total charity funds			**48,057**		**20,797**

Approved by the board of Trustees on January 12th 2026 and signed on their behalf by:



M. O'Gorman
Chairman/Trustee

The notes on page 25 to 29 form an integral part of these accounts



Supporting People Achieving Real Choice (SPARC)
Notes to the Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025

1. Accounting policies

The principal accounting policies adopted, judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty in the preparation of the financial statements are as follows:

a) Basis of preparation

The accounts (financial statements) have been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant notes to these accounts. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) issued on 16 July 2014 and the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011.
The trust constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102.

b) Preparation of the accounts on a going concern basis

The financial statements are prepared on a going concern. The Charity is entirely dependent on continuing grant and donation support and as a consequence the going concern basis is also dependent on that continuing financial support.

c) Income

Income is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the item(s) of income have been met, it is probable that the income will be received, and the amount can be measured reliably.
Income from government and other grants, whether 'capital' grants or 'revenue' grants, is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the grants have been met, it is probable that the income will be received, and the amount can be measured reliably and is not deferred.
Income received in advance of the provision of specified services is deferred until the criteria for income recognition are met.

d) Donated services and facilities

Donated professional services and donated facilities are recognised as income when the charity has control over the item, any conditions associated with the donated item have been met, the receipt of economic benefit from the use by the charity of the item is probable and that economic benefit can be measured reliably. In accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102), the general volunteer time is not recognised and refer to the trustees' annual report for more information about their contribution. On receipt, donated professional services and donated facilities are recognised on the basis of the value of the gift to the charity which is the amount the charity would have been willing to pay to obtain services or facilities of equivalent economic benefit on the open market; a corresponding amount is then recognised in expenditure in the period of receipt.

e) Interest receivable

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the bank.

f) Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are available to spend on activities that further any of the purposes of the charity.

g) Expenditure and irrecoverable VAT

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required, and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is classified under the following activity headings:

- Costs of raising funds consist of commercial trading.
- Expenditure on charitable activities includes the costs of activities undertaken to further the purposes of the charity and their associated support costs.
- Other expenditure represents those items not falling into any other heading.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

h) Allocation of support costs

Support costs are those functions that assist the work of the charity but do not directly undertake charitable activities. Support costs include back office costs, finance, personnel, payroll and governance costs which support the charitable activities. These costs have been allocated between costs of raising funds and expenditure on charitable activities. The bases on which support costs have been allocated are set out in note1.

i) Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

j) Creditors and provisions

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

k) Financial instruments

The charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are recognised at transaction value.

2 Income from donations and legacies

Donations	2025 £	2024 £
Direct payments - individuals	29,862	26,327
	29,862	**26,327**

The Trust benefits from the involvement and enthusiastic support of its many volunteers, details of which are given in our annual report. In accordance with FRS 102 and the Charities SORP (FRS 102), the economic contribution of general volunteers is not recognised in the accounts.

3 Income from charitable activities

	Funds 2025 £	Funds 2024 £
Income		
Grants from charitable organizations	43,262	20,706
Total income from charitable activities	**43,262**	**20,706**

4 Analysis of expenditure on charitable activities

	2025 £	2024 £
Wages	26,870	38,256
Trustee remuneration	3,614	-
Staff welfare	1,300	-
Venue hires	4,700	6,450
Travel	1,240	3,085
Insurance	333	312
General admin expenses (Note 5)	7,807	4,397
Total expenditure on charitable activities	**45,864**	**52,510**



5 Analysis of governance and support costs

The charity initially identifies the costs of its support functions. It then identifies those costs which relate to the governance function. Having identified its governance cost, the remaining support costs together with the governance costs are allocated to charitable activities undertaken (see note 4) in the year. Refer to the table below for the basis for apportionment and the analysis of support and governance costs:

Analysis of support and governance costs

	General support £	Governance Function £	Total £	Basis of apportionment
General support	6,907	-	6,907	Time based
Independent Examiner	-	900	900	Governance
Total	**6,907**	**900**	**7,807**	

6 Sessional staff costs, trustee remuneration and expenses

The majority of charitable services were provided on a sessional basis.
The charity trustees were not paid or received any other benefits from employment with charity as trustees in the year (2024: £nil) neither were they reimbursed expenses during the year (2024: £nil). Ken Dobson received £2,204 for work undertaken on behalf of the charity and Sarah McKeown received £1,410 for work undertaken on behalf of the charity. No other Trustees received payment for professional or other services supplied to the charity (2024: £nil).
There were no transactions with connected persons in the year.

7 Staff costs and numbers

The charity had two employees in this year and in 2024.
Total remuneration paid in the year to 31 March 2025 was £26,870.

8 Taxation

The charity is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within section 505 of the Taxes Act 1988 or section 252 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that these are applied to its charitable objects.

9 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2025 £	2024 £
Accrued expenses	900	900
Other creditors	-	500
	900	**1,400**



10 Contingent assets – legacy income

As at 31 March 2025 the charity had not been notified of any legacy income or prospective legacy income.

11 Analysis of charitable funds

Analysis of movements in unrestricted funds

The charity has only one unrestricted general fund. The movements in that fund are shown in the Statement of Financial Activities.

All of the net assets apply to the one unrestricted general fund except for the share of cash which is held for the benefit of the restricted fund.

The charity has one restricted fund which is covered by cash in the Restricted Fund bank account at the end of the year.

SUPPORTING PEOPLE ACHIEVING REAL CHOICE

England & Wales - Charity number 1060095

Accounts

SPARC
Supporting People Achieving Real Choice

Registered charity No: 1060095

SPARC Annual Report & Accounts and Social Impact Review [SIR]
2023-2024

Year ending 31 March 2024

Agreed by the members Annual General Meeting [AGM] on Monday September 30th 2024.
Report published on October 14th 2024.



" We believe the most valuable resource we have are the ordinary people that use our services. This working ethos is called the "SPARC Way."

elpizo
Chartered Accountants

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Introduction

The trustees of SPARC present their annual report and financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2024. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the accounts and comply with the charity's trust deed, the Charities Act 2011, and the 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 2015). The board of trustees are satisfied with the performance of the charity during the year and the position at 31 March 2024 and consider that the charity is in a strong position to continue its activities during the coming year, and the charity's assets are adequate to fulfill its obligations.



Purpose and activities of the SPARC Charity

The charity's objectives are: The relief of people with learning disabilities in the area defined in clause 2 (hereinafter called the area of benefit). It shall advance the education of such persons to preserve their good health, relieve their sickness and poverty and provide recreational facilities in the interests of social welfare for such persons with the object of improving their quality of life.



Contact details for SPARC

SPARC [Supporting People Achieving Real Choice]

Registration Number 1060095

Date of registration 11 January 1997

Chair of Trustees: Mick O' Gorman

Registered office: 69, Nicander Road, Liverpool, L18 1HU

Mobile: 07792-110-390

Email: mickogorman@blueyonder.co.uk

Website: www.sparccharity.co.uk



Welcome to SPARC's Annual Report & Social Impact Review [SIR]

This year's **Annual Report and Accounts[2023-2024]** also includes our **Social Impact Review [SIR]** to help assess the progress SPARC has made to improve the quality of life of its members who are people with Learning Disabilities. We are pleased to report that a great deal of positive work has been undertaken during this last year.

In the 30 years of SPARC's existence the lives of most people with learning disabilities in the UK has improved incrementally and our small charity has played its part in this positive change . However , a great deal more work needs to be done to challenge the ongoing national picture of discrimination, inequality, social exclusion, poor health , and disability hate crime which many of our members still experience. Serious health inequalities remain and life expectancy is still much lower for people with learning disabilities. The appalling mortality rates suffered by people with learning disabilities during the Covid-19 pandemic is a national scandal and this negative experience has since eroded confidence and trust by many families towards local services. **This problem is highlighted by the large numbers of people , labelled by the media as so-called "ghosts" , who are still missing and "off-the- radar" of services since the end of lockdowns** .

Health inequality therfore remains one of **SPARCs four key priorities** along with challenging criminal exploitation, improving personal safety and creating more opportunities for open employment for our members.

The fact that the majority of SPARC's elected Trustees, staff and volunteers are either service users, family carers or professionals working in the field of learning disability, provides the energy for SPARC's work. It is these **people with lived experience** who drive SPARC's services to ensure they remain **"fit for purpose" for our 296 members.** This last year has once again been challenging and SPARC would like to thank its staff and volunteers and in particular, C**atherine Mannion and Phil Haden.** who have worked tirelessly during the current cost of living crisis.

The members of SPARC approved this report at their Annual General Meeting held on **Monday September 30th 2024** and along with the **Social Impact Review [SIR]** includes user-friendly infographics and images to help improve its accessibility to our members.

Thank you.

Mick O' Gorman Chair of Trustees of the SPARC charity [October 14th 2024] .

About SPARC



What's in a name?

SPARC ["Supporting People Achieving Real Choice"] is a small charity based in the borough of Halton and which sits on the banks of the River Mersey. Our charity currently supports **296 people with a Learning Disability aged 16 - 28 years.** SPARC was first established in July 1995 by a small group of concerned parents, and became a registered charity in January 1997. Our name describes the aim to provide practical opportunities for people with a learning disability **to make reasoned choices about the aspirations they have in their lives.** To help do this , SPARC provides a portfolio of projects which share a common thread of promoting life-skills in health and welfare, employment, personal safety and improving social inclusion.



A snapshot of the local communities SPARC serves

Most of SPARC's work takes place in working class communities in Halton which is geographically located within the Liverpool City Region. The borough of Halton has a population of 129,000 and from the last Indices of Multiple Deprivation: IMD (Dec: 2019), is ranked within the 10% most deprived local authorities in England . It is a place where 19.6% of local children live in poverty and in the Riverside and Kingsway wards , where many of our SPARC members live, these are communities which have experienced historically high levels of deprivation over many decades.

The last Joint Strategic Needs Assessment reported that:

- 9.6% residents in Halton are defined as fuel poor
- 29% of school pupils receive free school meals
- 30% of households are in problem debt



Intergenerational social inequality for people with learning disabilities: structural inequalities in terms of employment & income, health & disability, education & skills, crime and barriers to housing and services, is **always exacerbated for the most vulnerable groups in society including the members of SPARC who have learning disabilities.**

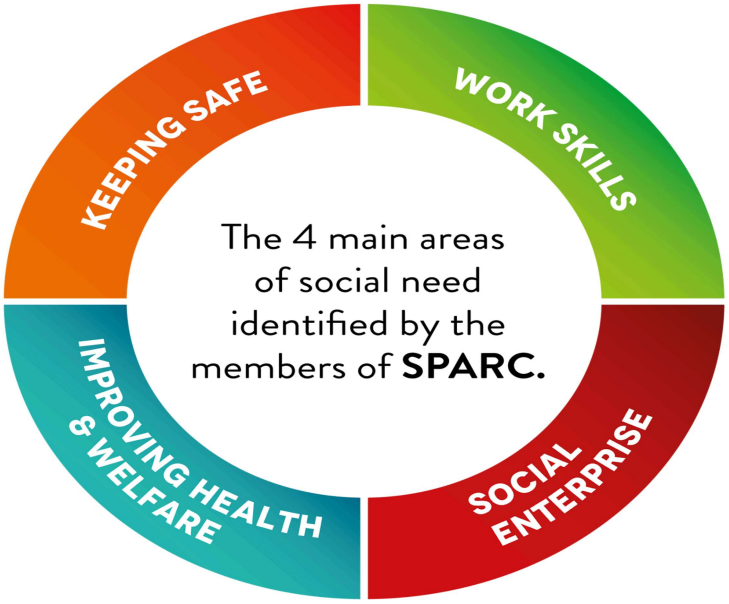
THE FOUR MAIN AREAS OF SOCIAL NEED IDENTIFIED BY OUR MEMBERS

The following infographic identifies the **four main areas of social need** the members of SPARC have identified as their priorities from feedback captured from our reporting tools, as follows:

- The "**Ideas Clearing House"** forums for the members to share experiences/ concerns.
- SPARCs annual in-house "**Quality of Life " survey** of its members.
- External Inputs and advice by our "**critical friends**" , including the **Lloyds Bank Foundation** and **Constructive Partnerships Ltd.**

This evidence provides the drivers for SPARCs projects and services which are designed to meet the four areas of social need::

1. **Improving people's health and welfare by better access to local services**
2. **Keeping people safe in their community**
3. **Learning skills for the world of work**
4. **Providing more opportunities for creative social enterprise**



How this social need impacts on the lives of the members of SPARC

Declining access to local services: After a decade of austerity and ever-stricter eligibility rules imposed by hard-pressed councils, we know that **72% of SPARC members are now effectively out of service and "off the radar" of statutory agencies, until they experience a crisis in their lives.** These are people who are now so-called "**ghosts"** by the media because they do not use local services like the NHS, Public Health, Education, and Welfare Rights because of low confidence and diminished expectations since Covid-19. The recent **report by the Children's Commissioner Rachel De Souza["Missing Children": Sept/2024]** has identified thousands of vulnerable people still missing from education and local services since the health pandemic.



Poor health and welfare: People with a learning disability still experience premature death rates on average 18 years less than the general population **[" NHS Digital Report 2019l].** SPARCs annual members survey[Oct/2024] has reported that 58% have associated poor health like diabetes, obesity and poor mental health but only 13% have seen their GP for an annual NHS health check. The ONS has also reported that during Covid-19 the mortality rates for people with Learning Disabilities were 6 times higher than the national average during lockdowns .**[ONS/2019].**



Crime and the Criminal Justice System: The members of SPARC are particularly vulnerable to exploitation by criminal gangs, who attempt to groom them as "**fake friends**".This is sometimes called **"Mate Crime"** and from SPARC's annual members survey we know that 21% of our members have experienced contact with criminal gangs or they have been the victims of hate crime. The Prison Reform Trust report ``**Nobody Knows**" shows that **28% of the prison population in England** have a learning disability due to inadequate screening procedures by the Police and Courts to divert vulnerable people away from the criminal justice system.



Unemployment : Only 5% of people with a learning disability have paid employment in the UK although it is recognized that a job is often the best form of natural social inclusion **[BASE: report 2019].** We know that 83% of SPARC members are long term unemployed but 64% would like a paid job and yet only 7% have ever used a Job Center due to diminished confidence.



Loneliness and social exclusion: Many SPARC members lead extremely lonely lives and 75% are trapped at home for up to 5 days each week. The fear of hate crime and limited social opportunities for meeting other people often results in grinding isolation and poor physical and mental health that erodes aspirations and exacerbates a culture of fatalism.



The annual "Quality of Life" survey of SPARC members [October 2024]

Each year SPARC conducts its annual "**Quality of Life**" survey of its members and families. This year we achieved a very good **87% response rate** from the membership using a structured questionnaire with 10 questions that explored : access to local services: health and welfare: aspirations for employment and the levels of disability hate- crime experienced.



The main findings from the survey :

- ☐ Most SPARC members [72%] are "off the radar" of statutory services until they experience a life crisis like poor health or become victims of crime.
- ☐ SPARC now provides the only regular provision for 74% of our 296 members .
- ☐ Four main areas of social need have been identified: keeping safe: improving health and welfare: learning skills for work: and more opportunities for social enterprise.
- ☐ Most of our members are happy [86%] with the quality of services provided by SPARC.



The Oct/24 survey reported that:

- 72% of our members do not access council social day-care services.
- 43% have lost or had reduced services in the "transition" from childrens to adult services.
- 78 % of members have an average reading age of just 7-9 years and therefore cannot engage with most NHS and Public Health platforms based upon the formal written word.
- 83% are long term unemployed although 64% said they would like a paid job but only 7% have ever visited a Job Center.
- 73% cannot use public transport like a local bus or a train independently
- 75% are trapped at home for up to 5 days each week and experience severe loneliness
- 58% have associated poor health like diabetes, obesity and poor mental health but only 13% have seen their GP for an annual NHS health check.
- 65% have experienced disability hate crime but only 3% have reported incidents to the police
- 21% reported attempted grooming /exploitation by criminal gangs and loan sharks
- 36% of our families now rely upon local food banks
- 38% currently use payday loans or loan sharks but only 12% have ever had a professional welfare benefits assessment.
- 78% of the SPARC's elected Trustees staff and volunteers are parents, family carers or professionals working in the field of learning disability.
- 86% of members said they like the flexible delivery of services combining group work with Zoom workshops and 1;1 fieldwork.
- 74% of members report that SPARC is the only local service they now have regular contact with during the week.

A snapshot of SPARCs work this year

Numbers supported: a total of 296 individual members and carers supported this year .



Projects/Services provided: SPARC currently provides a suite of 7 p/t projects/services , supported by a mix of grants , with volunteers or are self-funded by SPARC itself.

Flexible delivery of services: many SPARC members are still isolating following the Covid-19 lockdowns, and so we have provided a flexible delivery of services including face-to-face group work, fieldwork and online learning sessions.



Improving health and independent living: our projects have promoted healthier lifestyles and this has led to a 12 % increase in the numbers of SPARC members attending for annual GP/NHS health checks.



Developing Ideas and aspirations for the future: the members have invested a lot of time sharing their ideas for new social enterprises like their exciting new "Life" on-line project.

Improving financial health:: SPARC's income has continued to improve incrementally with new funding from the Lloyds Bank Foundation, People's Health Trust and Postcode Lottery alongside increased unrestricted income from our work with direct payments.

Positive Feedback: our recent in-house members survey **[Oct/2024]** reported that 86% are happy with the quality of services provided and 74% said that SPARC is the only local service they have regular contact with during the week.

External reports and consultancy to improve quality and governance: External reports kindly provided by "critical friends" like Constructive Partnerships Ltd and the Lloyds Bank Foundation consultants are helping to improve the resilience, governance and the quality of SPARCs business planning.



SPARC's projects and services

SPARC currently provides a suite of p/t projects , which are supported by a combination of grants , our wonderful volunteers or are self-funded by SPARC itself.



The Always Here 4 U project: now self-funded by SPARC and provides support and training for isolated members to learn how to stay safe and deal with disability hate crime.



The Enhance programme: funded by the Lloyds Bank Foundation to help build the long-term resilience of SPARC.



The U-Choose project: this is our in-house Digital Publishing House and is self-funded by SPARC: it enables SPARC members to design their own bespoke accessible information for non-readers using "pictures rather than words".



The Filthy Fingers project: supported by the Postcode Lottery and the Baily Thomas Trust and is a social prescribing project to help people learn how to grow food from "pot to plate" .



The Ventures Club: Direct Payments funded and aims to engage with people isolated in the community to meet together and make new friends.



The Mind The Gap project: Supported by Awards For All and aims to support people to better access local services..



The new "Life" online members club: a proposed new project that SPARC is currently developing as a social enterprise and a potential subscription platform. The idea is for people with learning disabilities to share their own ideas, experiences through short films and podcasts.

EXAMPLE

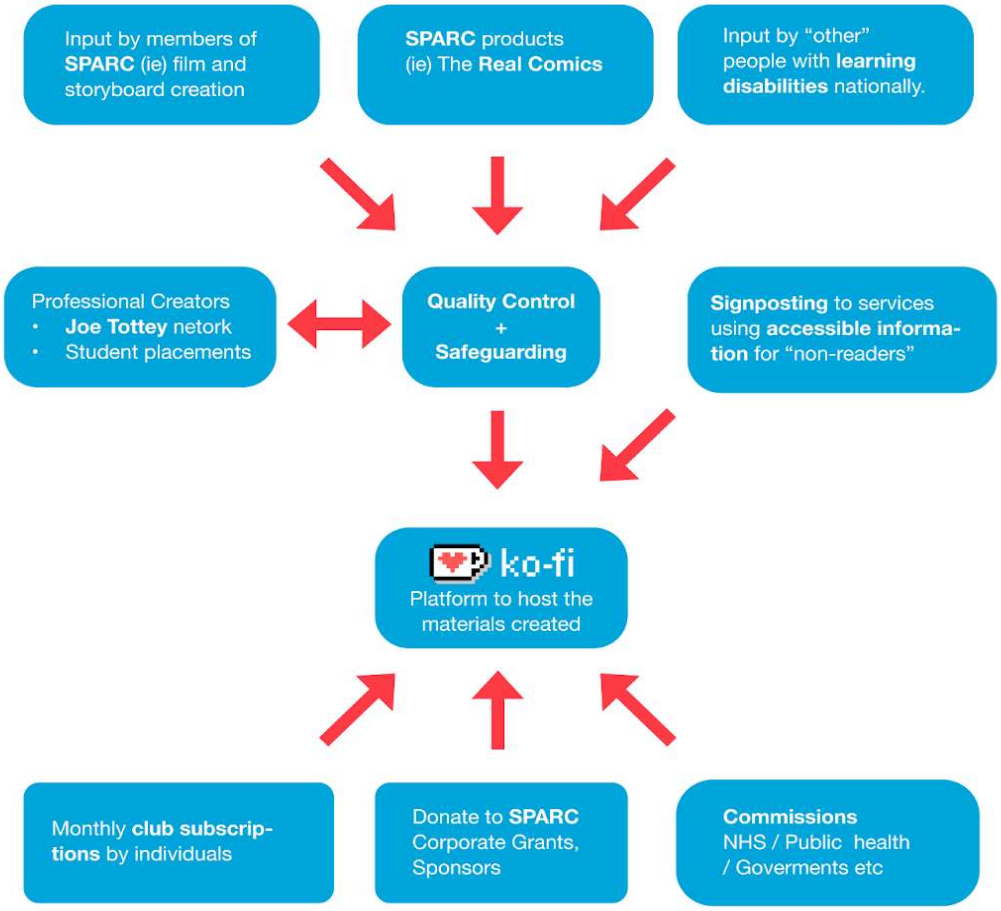
An Example of SPARC's creative work: the proposed new "Life" project.

SPARC
Supporting People Achieving Real Choice

Registered charity No: 1060095

The Life project: an infographic

Preamble
The members of the **SPARC charity** would like to explore the portential of their **LIFE project**. This is an online forum to enable people with Learning Disabilities to share their life experiances and aspiratations: promote social inclusion and normalisation: and develop social enterprise.



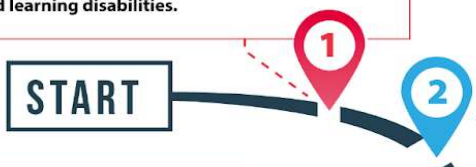
A Roadmap for the members of SPARC

1. Referral routes:

Most of our members have either **self-referred themselves or by a close family carer**, although recently there has also been an increase of referrals from "other "external professional agencies. These include social services and the police regarding individuals they have identified as at potential risk. Most members of SPARC are young people aged 18 to 25 with a diagnosed **Moderate Learning Disability [MLD] and currently make up 72% of our membership.** This cohort is unable to access other council social care services because of the application of strict eligibility rules. **The remaining members [28%] of SPARC have more complex and profound learning disabilities.**

2. Entry and Induction:

At the point of entry and induction a new member is invited to a **4 week "taster"** to allow them to acclimatize and choose which of the services best serve their needs and interests. In this Induction phase SPARC will also begin its screening and assessment profiles to help identify base line needs and measure subsequent progress by the member. These will include the **Personal Information Profile [PIP],** checking **ECHP plans** and **ASDAN to assess literacy skills.**



3. Participation and Attendance :

Most of our members stay involved with SPARC for an **average of 3.-4 years** and are able to roll on/roll off projects as appropriate to meet their needs Our attendance records shows that **84% of the membership has regular contact** with SPARC services each month whilst the rest have intermittent contact of at least 6 attendances in an average year.

4. Quality controls

Our annual **Quality of Life survey** reports that **86% of our members are happy with the quality of their experiences** and particularly the attention given to 1: 1 support. A number of assessment tools are used like the, **ASDAN Everyday Living Functional Skills: and the HASI and LDSQ profiles** to track individual progress. SPARC holds monthly feedback forums with the members and most importantly the **"Ideas Clearing House"** events capture direct feedback from members and families to assess the impact of our services. SPARC also invites external **"critical friends"** like Constructive Partnerships Ltd to assess the quality of our services & the performance of the Board.



5. Planned exit and outcomes:

SPARC works hard to provide and improve the range of opportunities available for our members when they finally leave. We recognise, however, that serious inequalities still exist when they move on in their lives like the 83% who are trapped in long-term unemployment and the 58% of members reporting poor health. We are however making progress with **9% of members getting paid employment** compared to the 4.5% nationally for people with learning disabilities. SPARC has successfully supported its members into f/t jobs with large employers like ASDA, Tesco's and Matalan whilst the introduction of the **HASI and LDSQ screening tools has seen a reduction of 11% of members** at risk from involvement in the criminal justice system.

Final evaluation and feedback :

The experiences and feedback from our graduate leavers are integral to our working ethos, which is called the SPARC Way. We ask for honest feedback and any practical suggestions for change to make our provision better. Some of this data is captured in the **Summative Evaluation Assessment** and all members are encouraged to participate in the annual **Ideas Clearing House** away days held each year to plan new services. This is the key driver for the members to identify their main areas of social need and the services SPARC will provide to meet this need. All members leaving SPARC take with them a **Testimonial and References** for potential employment and any further training opportunities.



Assessment & Tracking the individual progress of SPARC members

When a new member joins SPARC , a range of assessment and tracking tools are used to help measure an individual's progress.



Entry/Induction into SPARC:

- At the point of entry and Induction , the **Personal Information Profile [PIP]** is introduced as a **confidential file** about the individuals needs to include: medical information, family contacts and emergency Tel numbers. It includes an initial assessment to measure baseline literacy, numeracy and social skills and a Risk Assessment which is shared with the appropriate staff and volunteers on a strict "***need to know***" basis. Reference is also made to any available **Statements of Special Needs** or **Education Health & Care Plans [EHCP].**



Participation in projects/services:

- **Literacy, Numeracy and Social Skills** are screened and then subject to ongoing assessment using the **ASDAN "Every day Living"** profiles. These are user-friendly assessments are **not "tests",** and incrementally build targets by breaking skills into small steps. For example, on money and finance: managing a weekly budget: what is good/bad credit: problem debt,etc
- **The HASI profile: [Hayes Ability Screening Index:]** when a member moves past the induction point the HASI will be used to provide a quick numerical score for personal and social needs. It is very important to stress that the HASI is also **not an IQ test** as such but simply a means to score a range of abilities to include problem solving skills like **managing risk around substance abuse and potential exploitation.**
- **The LDSQ profile [Learning Disability Screening Questionnaire]** is particularly helpful in assessing young people at potential risk and to help divert vulnerable people away from the Criminal Justice System [CJS].



On leaving SPARC :

- **The summative assessment :** provides a final profile for each member when they leave. This is a detailed breakdown of experiences and achievements.
- **Testimonials and References** provided by SPARC for the person leaving and perhaps applying for employment or other training opportunities elsewhere.
- **The Drop - In Club :** Many former members come back to visit SPARC for a chat, catch up or for advice or signposting to services they might need to access.



Having a learning disability and its social impact?

Approximately 78% of SPARCs current membership profile are people aged 18 -28 years with a **Moderate Learning Disability [MLD]** whilst 22% have more **Profound and Complex Learning Disabilities [PMLD]** .

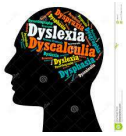
It is important to note that although the individual clinical profiles of the members may exhibit different types of specific learning disability, like MLD or PMLD , in reality it is the **social impact of having a learning disability** which is the main focus of SPARCs work. This impact is often **multifaceted** and can include:

- Having limited skills in reading, writing and numeracy
- Poor problem solving skills and inability to generalize learning.
- Limited auditory/visual memory and speech and a language delay.
- Emotional and behavioral difficulties.
- Lack of understanding to manage potential risk and exploitation.



On literacy skills, for example, the average **reading age of a SPARC member is approx. 7-9 years** and the **social impact** of this on individuals means finding it difficult to:

- Complete an online job application form
- Book an appointment for a health check with a GP
- Read instructions for a medical prescription
- Understand their rights in court when trying to navigate the criminal justice system.
- Difficulty in understanding public health information about how to stay safe from Covid-19.



Having a learning disability can also **"cloak and disguise"** other underlying medical conditions like poor mental health or Type 2 Diabetes. This problem of **"dual diagnoses"** and additional undetected health problems affects 58% of our SPARC members and is a key factor in the health inequalities and early death rates for people with a learning disability.



Many of our members **lead very lonely lives** and are vulnerable to exploitation by loan sharks and criminal gangs .. Our annual survey reported that 38% of our families now use illegal loan sharks or payday loans and are then trapped in problem debt . This is then often used as leverage by gangs to pressurize vulnerable people to become involved in criminal drug networks.

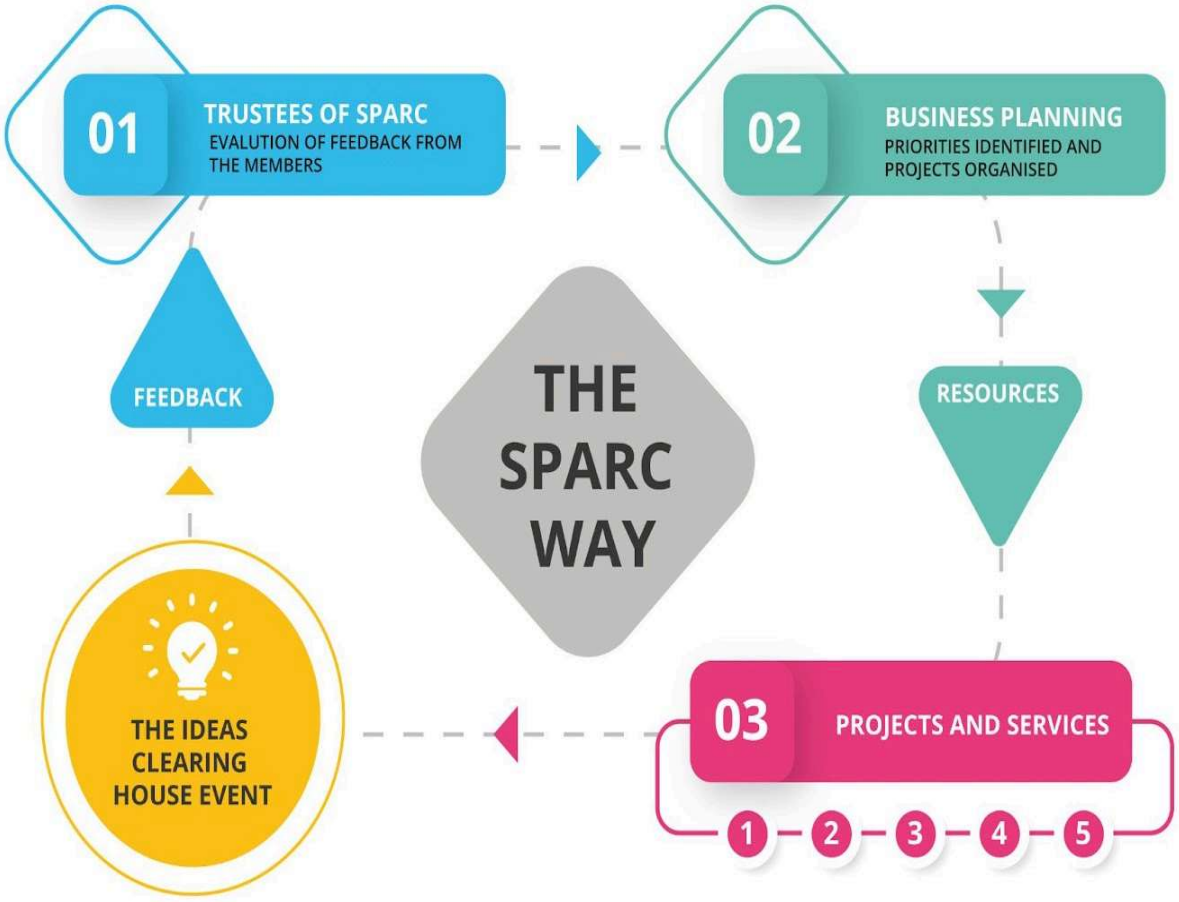
The "SPARC Way": Our values and how SPARC works: .

SPARC is a family led organization where 78% of our elected Trustees are either family carers, parents or service users. It is their lived experience and voice that ensures our services are focussed on meeting the practical needs of people with learning disabilities.

Our working ethos is called the **"SPARC Way"** and this states :

"We believe our most valuable resource are the people that use our services. This is the SPARC Way."

The "SPARC Way" & the annual" ideas Clearing House" event:



A Financial health check: our controls, progress and challenges ahead

A preliminary analysis of our accounts shows that SPARC has made steady progress financially since the very difficult years between 2015- 2019. In this period, most of SPARCs main grant funding had finished and we were then forced to use up our small reserves to try and maintain a minimum level of service to the members. We are confident that SPARC has now turned a corner and is becoming more financially stable going into the future. We are grateful to Ken Dobson for taking charge of SPARCs internal financial controls and to Mal Wright at Elpizo Lts for his ongoing advice and support.

Annual Accounts: SPARCs most recent annual accounts are independently examined by our chartered accountants **Elpizo Ltd** and these will then be submitted to the Charity Commission. SPARC would like to acknowledge the value of the advice and professional support that Mal Wright at Elpizo Chartered Accountants have provided to our charity. Thank You Mal.



Income streams: Our most recent cash book shows that both our **Restricted Income** from funders and **Unrestricted Income** from Direct Payments and the Ventures Club have increased . Our intention is to build our Unrestricted income stream via commissions for the Real Comics media and the new "Life" project and develop these into online subscription platforms and strengthen SPARCs financial sustainability.



A big "Thank You" to all of our funders:

During the last year SPARC has secured successful grant applications from the **Lloyds Bank Foundation, Peoples Health Trust, Awards For All and the Postcode Lottery .** Over the last 26 years, SPARC has built a good track record of managing successful projects with funding from a wide range of sponsors and trusts . All of our end of grant reports submitted to our sponsors have been positive, including the following :

- The Lloyds Bank Foundation
- Awards For All
- The Big Lottery
- Peoples Health Trust,
- Morgan Foundation,
- NHS Halton CCG
- NHS Liverpool CCG
- Bailey Thomas Trust
- The Postcode Lottery



The future of SPARC : the role of our "Critical Friends".

With the recent professional support by our external "**critical friends"** like **Constructive Partnerships Ltd and the Lloyds Bank Foundation ,** the Trustees have agreed six key objectives for the future. These relate to the following organizational objectives:

1. Appointing a full-time Project Manager and establishing a permanent office to take overall responsibility for SPARC's services and drive its business planning.
2. Explore relevant quality kite marks for improving governance and the quality of services .
2. Examine the possibility of SPARC becoming a Charitable Incorporated Organization [CIO].
4. Further develop flexible services combining 1:1 case work, group work and online sessions which will meet the x 4 main areas of social need identified by our members.
5. Increase income streams into SPARC with more grant applications but also developing new business and unrestricted income streams like Direct Payments and potential trading activities like subscription online content like the "Life" social enterprise.
6. Develop the skills set of our Board of Trustees via a skills audit to be undertaken by Constructive Partnerships Ltd.



Quality controls for services and improving governance

The recent external audit kindly conducted by Constructive Partnerships Ltd, acting as an external "critical friend" , assessed the quality of our board leadership & has now led to an agreed action plan.SPARC will now build on its existing framework and also examine appropriate quality kite marks in both its governance as well the delivery of its services for people with learning disabilities. We will help measure progress achieved by building upon the following steps:

- ☐ **Build on the recognised screening/assessment tools like the HASI, LDSQ and ASDAN for improving the quality of its projects and services.**
- ☐ **Introduce "Trustees Indemnity Insurance" from BIHB Ltd to underpin our Risk Management policy for the Board.**
- ☐ **A rolling annual audit each year of 25% of all key policies and procedures like Safeguarding, etc , to ensure their continued fitness for purpose.**
- ☐ **The "Good Governance Code" for small charities has been adopted and includes regular in-service training for the Board by Constructive Partnerships.**

Our Board of Trustees of SPARC , staff team and volunteers

Our Trustees meet together as Board Management Committee, and they are responsible for leading the SPARC charity. They are elected annually and SPARC currently has 10 trustees who meet bi-monthly. **Most of our current Trustees are family carers of people with learning disabilities**, or are **service users** or **they work professionally in the field of learning disabilities.** Our trustees provide not only personal "**lived experience"** but also offer a **range of professional skills** like running a small business, banking and work in educational and social care settings.

Our current trustees are:

1. **Mick O' Gorman: [Chair of Trustees]:** Mick is an original founding trustee who first helped to establish the charity back in 1995 with parents and family carers. His professional background is in teaching students with learning disabilities..
2. **Ken Dobson: [Treasurer]** Ken has worked in commercial banks for over 20 years before he became a NHS Practice Manager for a large inner city GP surgery in Liverpool.
3. **Joe Tottey: [Secretary]** Joe is a professional designer and runs a business in Liverpool.
4. **Phil Haden:** is a lecturer at Riverside College for students with learning disabilities..
5. **Sarah McKeown:** is a f/t support worker for people with learning disabilities.
6. **Scott McGhee :** is an elected representative of our members
7. **Kevin Buckley :** is an elected representative.
8. **Tanya Houghton:** is an elected representative member.
9. **Patrick Murley :** is an elected representative member..
10. **Stephen Roberts:** provides the IT support for our charity.

Our p/t staff team : Thank You .

Since the last of SPARCs significant grants came to an end in 2015-2016 we have been largely dependent upon a team of x 9 p/t sessional staff. They mostly work on a casual/sessional and hourly basis when our projects/services require inputs and funds allow. The staff and volunteers are currently led by a very hardworking **p/t Team Leader, Catherine Mannion**, who reports directly to the Chair of Trustees..

Our wonderful Volunteers: ThankYou.

Our 12 wonderful volunteers each offer at least x 3 hrs of support per week and most of them provide in excess of 6 hours to SPARC. The majority of our volunteers have either lived experience of supporting people with a learning disability or have training in the field. They have been genuinely invaluable to the charity and particularly during the Covid-19 emergency and the current cost of living crisis. The Trustees would like to put on record their gratitude and genuine thanks to all of our volunteers for their fantastic support.



The “good governance” audit by Constructive Partnerships Ltd

From the recent audit led by Phil Shackell and Constructive Partnerships Ltd , SPARC is confident that it now has a clear and coherent strategy in its drive towards achieving good governance for the charity. The Trustees have now agreed on an **on-going development plan for “good governance”** to help maintain the trust and confidence of our members, the public, commissioners and potential funders. Our plans will prioritize : Organizational purpose, Board Leadership, Integrity and Decision making, Risk management, Diversity and Openness and Accountability.



Annual Review of SPARCs Policies and Procedures: the 25% annual audit

SPARCs aspirations to build good governance will involve an annual check of 25% of all key current policies and procedures to ensure their continued fitness for purpose.



Structure, Governance and Management of SPARC

The SPARC charity is a registered unincorporated charity governed by a constitution. Trustees are appointed by the existing board through an annual vote by the members of SPARC. The Trustees consider the future need of the charity when looking to add to the board and have regard to the particular skills required at each stage of the charity’s development. New Trustees are given a period of induction and continuing training opportunities are made available to all Trustees. The day-to-day operations of the charity are governed by Trustees who are directly engaged in the activity of the charity. The Chair of Trustees provides the main point with the employed staff, volunteers and members of SPARC whilst operational decisions are made by the Trustees at their regular bi-monthly meetings.



Independent Examiner

Malcolm Wright, Elpizo Limited, Chartered Accountants, 13 Village Road, Higher Bebington Wirral, CH63 8PP .



Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities:

The charity trustees are responsible for preparing a trustees' annual report and financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities requires the charity trustees to prepare financial statements for each year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable group for that period.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are required to:

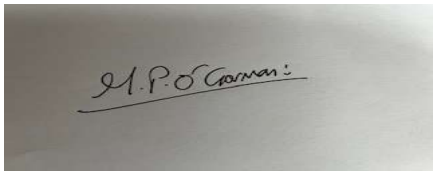
- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP:
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- state whether applicable UK accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the applicable Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations, and the provisions of the Trust deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the charity and financial information included on the charity's website in accordance with legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements.

This report was approved by the board of Trustees on **Monday October 14th 2024.**

Signed: Mr. Mick O" Gorman



Chair of Trustees of the SPARC charity



Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of the Charity

Supporting People Achieving Real Choice (SPARC)
Report of the Independent Examiners to the Trustees on the account of the Charity for the year ended 31 March 2024

I report on the financial statement of the charitable company on page 22 to 29 for the year ended 31 March 2024. This report is made solely to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Section 145 of the Charities Act 2011. My examination has been undertaken so that I might state to the charity's trustees those matters I am required to state to them in an Independent Examiner's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, I do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and charity's trustees as a body, for my examination, for this report, or for the opinions I have formed.

Respective responsibilities of the Trustees and Examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Charities Act") and that an independent examination is needed. It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act, and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of opinion and scope of work undertaken

My examination was carried out in accordance with general directions given by the charity commission. An examination includes a review of accounting records, kept by the charity and a comparison of accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items of disclosures in the accounts and seeks explanations from the Trustees concerning any such matters. The procedure undertaken does not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit. Consequently, no opinion is given to whether the accounts present a true and fair view and report is limited to the matters set out in the statement below.

Independent Examiner's Statement

- In connection with the examination, no matters have come to my attention.
- Which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements; to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act.
- And to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act have not been met; or
- To which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Malcolm Wright - Chartered Accountant:
Elpizo Limited, 13 Village Road, Higher Bebington, Wirral CH63 8PP.
The date upon which my opinion is expressed is 7 January 2025



Supporting People Achieving Real Choice (SPARC)
Statement of Financial Activities
For the year ended 31 March 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds 2024 £	Restricted Funds 2024 £	Total Funds 2024 £	Last Year Total Funds 2023 £
Income					
Donations and legacies	2	26,326	-	26,326	24,664
Income from charitable activities	3	-	20,706	20,706	27,250
Total Income		**26,326**	**20,706**	**47,032**	**51,914**
Expenditure					
Expenditure on charitable activities	4	14,648	36,836	51,484	40,283
Governance	5	1,026	-	1,026	1,332
Total expenditure		**15,674**	**36,836**	**52,510**	**41,615**
Net income/(expenditure) for the year		**10,652**	**(16,130)**	**(5,478)**	**10,299**
Gross transfer between funds		**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Net movement in funds		**10,652**	**(16,130)**	**(5,478)**	**10,299**
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward		**3,453**	**22,822**	**26,275**	**15,976**
Total funds carried forward		**14,105**	**6,692**	**20,797**	**26,275**

The net movement in funds to above in the net incoming resources as defined in the Statement of Recommendation Practice for Accounting and reporting issued by the Charity Commission for England and Wales and is reconciled to the total funds as shown in the Balance Sheet on page 24 as required by the said statement.

All activities derive from continuing operation.
The notes on page 25 to 29 form an integral part of these accounts



Supporting People Achieving Real Choice (SPARC)
Statement of Financial Activities
Analysis of prior year total funds as required by paragraph 4.2 of Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP)

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds 2023 £	Restricted Funds 2023 £	Total Funds 2023 £
Income				
Donations and legacies	2	24,664	-	24,664
Income from charitable activities	3	-	27,,250	22,750
Total Income		**24,664**	**27,250**	**44,804**
Expenditure				
Expenditure on charitable activities	4	20,823	19,460	40,283
Governance	5	1,332	-	1,332
Total expenditure		**22,155**	**19,460**	**41,615**
Net income/(expenditure) for the year		**2,509**	**7,790**	**10,299**
Gross transfer between funds		**(5,498)**	**5.498**	**-**
Net movement in funds		**(2,989)**	**13,288**	**10,299**
Reconciliation of funds:				
Total funds brought forward		**6,442**	**9,534**	**15,976**
Total funds carried forward		**3,453**	**22,822**	**26,275**

All activities derive from continuing operation

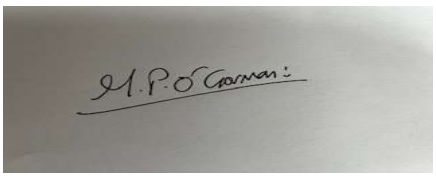
The notes on page 25 to 29 form an integral part of these accounts



Supporting People Achieving Real Choice (SPARC)
Balance Sheet
As at 31 March 2024

	Notes	2024 £	2024 £	2023 £	2023 £
Current Assets					
Cash at the bank and in hand		22,197		28,575	
Total current assets		**22,197**		**28,575**	
Creditors: -					
Amount due within one year	9	(1,400)		(2,300)	
Net current assets			20,797		26,275
Net assets			**20,797**		**26,275**
The funds of the charity					
Restricted income funds					
Restricted funds			6,692		22,822
Unrestricted income funds					
Unrestricted revenue accumulated funds			14,105		3,453
Total charity funds			**20,797**		**26,275**

Approved by the board of Trustees on 14 October 2024 and signed on their behalf by:



M. O'Gorman
Chairman/Trustee

The notes on page 25 to 29 form an integral part of these accounts



1. Accounting policies

The principal accounting policies adopted, judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty in the preparation of the financial statements are as follows:

a) Basis of preparation

The accounts (financial statements) have been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant notes to these accounts. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) issued on 16 July 2014 and the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011.
The trust constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102.

b) Preparation of the accounts on a going concern basis

The financial statements are prepared on a going concern. The Charity is entirely dependent on continuing grant and donation support and as a consequence the going concern basis is also dependent on that continuing financial support.

c) Income

Income is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the item(s) of income have been met, it is probable that the income will be received, and the amount can be measured reliably.
Income from government and other grants, whether 'capital' grants or 'revenue' grants, is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the grants have been met, it is probable that the income will be received, and the amount can be measured reliably and is not deferred.
Income received in advance of the provision of specified services is deferred until the criteria for income recognition are met.

d) Donated services and facilities

Donated professional services and donated facilities are recognised as income when the charity has control over the item, any conditions associated with the donated item have been met, the receipt of economic benefit from the use by the charity of the item is probable and that economic benefit can be measured reliably. In accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102), the general volunteer time is not recognised and refer to the trustees' annual report for more information about their contribution. On receipt, donated professional services and donated facilities are recognised on the basis of the value of the gift to the charity which is the amount the charity would have been willing to pay to obtain services or facilities of equivalent economic benefit on the open market; a corresponding amount is then recognised in expenditure in the period of receipt.

e) Interest receivable

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the bank.

f) Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are available to spend on activities that further any of the purposes of the charity.

g) Expenditure and irrecoverable VAT

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required, and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is classified under the following activity headings:

- Costs of raising funds consist of commercial trading.
- Expenditure on charitable activities includes the costs of activities undertaken to further the purposes of the charity and their associated support costs.
- Other expenditure represents those items not falling into any other heading.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

h) Allocation of support costs

Support costs are those functions that assist the work of the charity but do not directly undertake charitable activities. Support costs include back office costs, finance, personnel, payroll and governance costs which support the charitable activities. These costs have been allocated between costs of raising funds and expenditure on charitable activities. The bases on which support costs have been allocated are set out in note1.

i) Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

j) Creditors and provisions

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

k) Financial instruments

The charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are recognised at transaction value.

2 Income from donations and legacies

Donations	2024 £	2023 £
Direct payments - individuals	26,327	24,664
	26,327	**24,664**

The Trust benefits from the involvement and enthusiastic support of its many volunteers, details of which are given in our annual report. In accordance with FRS 102 and the Charities SORP (FRS 102), the economic contribution of general volunteers is not recognised in the accounts.

3 Income from charitable activities

	Funds 2024 £	Funds 2023 £
Income		
Grants from charitable organizations	20,706	27,250
Total income from charitable activities	**20,706**	**27,250**

4 Analysis of expenditure on charitable activities

	2024 £	2023 £
Wages	38,256	28,308
Training	-	1,026
Venue hires	6,450	2,500
Travel	3,085	4,746
Insurance	312	1,313
General admin expenses (Note 5)	4,397	2,390
Total expenditure on charitable activities	**52,510**	**40,283**

5 Analysis of governance and support costs

The charity initially identifies the costs of its support functions. It then identifies those costs which relate to the governance function. Having identified its governance cost, the remaining support costs together with the governance costs are allocated to charitable activities undertaken (see note 4) in the year. Refer to the table below for the basis for apportionment and the analysis of support and governance costs:

Analysis of support and governance costs

	General support	Governance Function	Total	Basis of apportionment
	£	£	£	
General support	3,571	-	3,571	Time based
Independent Examiner	-	1,026	1,026	Governance
Total	**3,571**	**1,026**	**4,397**	

6 Sessional staff costs, trustee remuneration and expenses

The majority of charitable services were provided on a sessional basis.
The charity trustees were not paid or received any other benefits from employment with charity as trustees in the year (2023: £nil) neither were they reimbursed expenses during the year (2023: £nil). No charity trustees received payment for professional or other services supplied to the charity (2023: £nil).
There were no transactions with connected persons in the year.

7 Staff costs and numbers

The charity had two employees in this year and in 2023.
Total remuneration paid in the year to 31 March 2024 was £38,266.

8 Taxation

The charity is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within section 505 of the Taxes Act 1988 or section 252 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that these are applied to its charitable objects.

9 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2024	2023
	£	£
Accrued expenses	900	900
PAYE	-	900
Other creditors	500	500
	1,400	**2,300**



10 Contingent assets – legacy income

As at 31 March 2024 the charity had not been notified of any legacy income or prospective legacy income.

11 Analysis of charitable funds

Analysis of movements in unrestricted funds

The charity has only one unrestricted general fund. The movements in that fund are shown in the Statement of Financial Activities.

All of the net assets apply to the one unrestricted general fund except for the share of cash which is held for the benefit of the restricted fund.

The charity has one restricted fund which is covered by cash in the Restricted Fund bank account at the end of the year.

SUPPORTING PEOPLE ACHIEVING REAL CHOICE

England & Wales - Charity number 1060095

Accounts

SPARC
Supporting People Achieving Real Choice

Registered charity No: 1060095

SPARC Trustees Annual Report & Accounts & Social Impact Review [SIR].
2022-2023

Year ending 31 March 2023

Agreed by the members of SPARC
at their Annual General Meeting [AGM] held on
Monday 12th June 2023 .
Location: The Studio in Lacey Street, Widnes.
Report published on Monday June 19th 2023.



" We believe the most valuable resource we have are the ordinary people that use our services. This working ethos is called the "SPARC Way."

elpizo
Chartered Accountants

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Introduction

The trustees of SPARC present their annual report and financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2023. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the accounts and comply with the charity's trust deed, the Charities Act 2011, and the 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 2015). The board of trustees are satisfied with the performance of the charity during the year and the position at 31 March 2023 and consider that the charity is in a strong position to continue its activities during the coming year, and the charity's assets are adequate to fulfill its obligations.



Purpose and Activities of the SPARC Charity

The charity's objectives are: The relief of people with learning disabilities in the area defined in clause 2 (hereinafter called the area of benefit). It shall advance the education of such persons to preserve their good health, relieve their sickness and poverty and provide recreational facilities in the interests of social welfare for such persons with the object of improving their quality of life.



Contact details for SPARC

SPARC [Supporting People Achieving Real Choice]

Registration Number 1060095 Date of registration 11 January 1997
Chair of Trustees: Mick O' Gorman

Registered office: 69, Nicander Road, Liverpool, L18 1HU
Mobile: 07792-110-390

Email: mickogorman@blueyonder.co.uk

www.sparccharity.co.uk



Hello and Welcome .

Dear Members, Families & Carers , Friends, and Funders of the SPARC charity

Welcome to SPARC's **Annual Report and Accounts,** and which for the very first time also includes our **Social Impact Review [SIR].** The latter is designed to help measure the progress we have made towards the **four main areas of social need** identified by our members. This work is greatly helped by the fact **78% of our elected Trustees, staff and volunteers are either parents, family carers or professionals working in the field of learning disability** and it is their voice and lived experience that keeps SPARC focussed on supporting its members.

Since SPARC was first established in 1995 , a great deal has undoubtedly improved for people with learning disabilities living in the UK and our small charity has played its own part in this positive change. However, as this annual report identifies, there is still a great deal more work that needs to be done to **improve the quality of life of our 296 members and their families.** The national picture shows far too many people with a learning disability continue to experience discrimination, social exclusion, poor health , disability crime or still locked away in so-called "secure settings" due to a lack of community-based accommodation. Serious health inequalities persist and their life expectancy remains much lower for people with learning disabilities. The appalling mortality rate suffered by this group during Covid-19 is a national scandal and health inequality remains one of SPARCs four key priorities along with challenging disability hate crime, improving personal safety and providing more opportunities for social enterprise and employment.

The members of SPARC and their families contributed to this annual report at their AGM hosted at the Studio venue in Widnes on **Monday June 12th 2023** and also through the online "Ideas Clearing House" workshops hosted for people who are still shielding at home. A final draft was agreed by the Trustees of SPARC on **Monday June 19th 2023.**

We would like to thank our staff and volunteers who have worked tirelessly throughout the Covid-19 health emergency and are now supporting people during this current cost of living crisis. This year's Annual Report & Accounts includes a Social Impact Review[SIR] with more infographics and images to help improve its accessibility for our members and we would welcome your feedback on these changes .

Thank you.

Mick O' Gorman [Chair of Trustees of the SPARC charity]



About SPARC and what we do.



What's in a name?

SPARC ["Supporting People Achieving Real Choice"] is a small charity based in the borough of Halton in Merseyside and supports **young people aged 16 - 26 yrs with a Learning Disability.** Established in July 1995 by a small group of concerned parents, SPARC became a registered charity in January 1997. Our name describes the aim to provide practical opportunities for people with a learning disability **to make reasoned and achievable choices about the direction and aspirations** in their lives. To do this SPARC provides a portfolio of projects which all share a common thread of promoting life skills to improve health and welfare, employment, personal safety and social inclusion.



The communities SPARC serves in Merseyside .

SPARC operates in working class communities in Merseyside and has a main base in the borough of Halton which sits on the banks of the River Mersey. Halton has a population of 129,000 and the last Indices of Multiple Deprivation: IMD (Dec: 2019), ranked this borough amongst the 10% most deprived local authorities in England .

Halton is a place where 19.6% of local children live in poverty and in the Riverside and Kingsway wards , where many of SPARC members live, these communities have experienced historically high levels of deprivation over many decades.

The last Joint Strategic Needs Assessment reported that:

- 9.6% residents in Halton are defined as fuel poor
- 29% of school pupils receive free school meals
- 30% of households are in problem debt

Intergenerational social inequality like this in terms of employment & income, health & disability, education & skills, crime and barriers to housing and services, is ***always exacerbated for the most vulnerable groups in the community and particularly for people with learning disabilities.***

This provides a brief snapshot of the social and economic environment where SPARC works to help improve the quality of life of its 296 members and their families .

THE FOUR MAIN AREAS OF SOCIAL NEED OF OUR MEMBERS

This infographic identifies the **four main areas of social need** that the members of SPARC have identified as their priorities. Their feedback is captured via a range of reporting tools including::

- The "**Ideas Clearing House"** forums for families to share experiences and concerns.
- SPARCs annual in-house "**Quality of Life " survey** of its members.
- External Inputs and advice by our "**critical friends**" like the Lloyds Bank Foundation and Constructive Partnerships Ltd.

This evidence provides the main driver for SPARCs projects and services which are designed to meet the four areas of social need our members and families have identified as their priorities .

These four areas , are as follows:

1. **Improving health and welfare via better access to local services**
2. **Keeping people safe in the community**
3. **Skills for the world of work**
4. **More opportunities for social enterprise and employment**





How this social need impacts on people's lives

Poor access to local services: After a decade of austerity and cuts and the imposition of ever-stricter eligibility rules by hard-pressed councils, the result is **72% of SPARC members are out of service and "off the radar" of statutory agencies until they experience a crisis in their lives.** This is compounded by their difficulty even accessing local walk-in services like the NHS, Public Health, Education, and Welfare Rights due to low confidence, diminished expectations and crucially **a lack of user-friendly accessible information** for people who are often non-readers.

Poor health and welfare: People with a learning disability experience premature death rates on average 18 years sooner than the general population **[" NHS Digital Report 2019l].** SPARCs annual members survey [Oct/2022] reported that 58% have associated poor health like diabetes, obesity and poor mental health but only 13% have seen their GP for an annual NHS health check. Recent official ONS data on Covid-19 death rates for people with Learning Disabilities shows mortality rates were 6 times higher than the national average .**[ONS data].**



Crime and the Criminal Justice System: Our members are particularly vulnerable to exploitation by criminal gangs, who groom them as **"Fake Friends' '** , and sometimes called **"Mate Crime "** . Our annual members survey reported that 21% have experienced contact with organized gangs whilst the Prison Reform Trust ``**Nobody Knows**" report shows that **28% of the prison population in England** has a learning disability due to inadequate screening procedures.



Unemployment : Only 5% of people with a learning disability have paid employment in the UK although it is recognized having a job is the best form of natural social inclusion **[BASE: report 2019].** We know that 83% of SPARC members are long term unemployed and 64% would like a paid job but only 7% have ever used a Job Center due to their diminished levels of confidence.



Loneliness and social exclusion: Many SPARC members lead extremely lonely lives .Our annual survey reports that 23% cannot use public transport like a local bus or a train independently and 75% are trapped at home for up to 5 days each week because of their fear of hate crime and the limited social opportunities. This grinding isolation exacerbates their poor physical and mental health and further erodes any aspirations for potential change.



The annual "Quality of Life" survey of SPARC members [Oct/2022]

Each year SPARC conducts its annual in-house "**Quality of Life**" survey of its members and their families. This year we achieved a very good **87% response rate** and has helped to identify the members' priorities in four key areas. SPARC used a structured questionnaire with 10 questions that measured people's lives around concerns like: access to local services, aspirations for employment and the levels of disability hate- crime experienced.



The main findings from the survey :

- ☐ Most SPARC members [72%] are "off the radar" of statutory services until they experience a life crisis like poor health or as a victim of crime.
- ☐ SPARC provides the only regular service available for the majority [74%] of our members .
- ☐ Four main areas of social need have been identified:: keeping safe: improving health and welfare: learning skills for work: and more opportunities for social enterprise.
- ☐ Most of our members are happy [86%] with the quality of services provided by SPARC.



The survey reported that:

- 72% of our members are not any council learning disability register and therefore cannot access council social day-care services
- 27% of our families are hesitant or have rejected Covid-19 vaccines
- 63% of families get all their "information and news" from social media platforms
- 78 % of our members have an average reading age of just 7-9 years and therefore cannot engage with most NHS and Public Health platforms based upon the formal written word.
- 83% of our members are long term unemployed although 64% said they would like a paid job but only 7% have ever visited a Job Center.
- 23% cannot use public transport like a local bus or a train independently
- 75% are trapped at home for up to 5 days each week and experience severe loneliness
- 58% have associated poor health like diabetes, obesity and poor mental health but only 13% have seen their GP for an annual NHS health check.
- 65% have experienced disability hate crime but only 3% have reported incidents to the police
- 21% have reported attempted grooming and exploitation by criminal gangs and loan sharks
- 36% of our families now rely upon local food banks
- 38% currently use payday loans or loan sharks but only 12% have ever had a professional welfare benefits assessment.
- 78% of the current elected Trustees, employed staff and volunteers of SPARC are either parents, family carers or professionals working in the field of learning disability.
- 86% of members said they like the flexible delivery of services combining group work with Zoom workshops and 1;1 fieldwork.
- 74% of members said that SPARC is the only local service they have regular contact with during the week.

A snapshot of SPARCs work this year

This is a snapshot of our work and the difference it has made to people during this year:

Numbers of people supported: we have supported a total of 296 individual members and their parents/ family carers during this year .

Projects/Services provided: SPARC currently provides a suite of 7 p/t projects/services , supported by a mix of grants , volunteers or self-funded provision by SPARC itself.

Flexible delivery of services:because many members are still isolated following the Covid-19 lockdowns, we have provided a flexible delivery of services including face-to-face group work, fieldwork and online learning sessions.



Improving health and promoting independent living: our projects have promoted healthier lifestyles and has led to a 12 % increase in the numbers of SPARC members attending for annual GP/NHS health checks.



Developing Ideas and aspirations for the future: the members have invested a lot of time sharing their ideas for new social enterprises like their exciting **"Life"** on-line project.

Improving financial health and increased funding: SPARC's income has continued to improve incrementally with new funding from the Llloyds Bank Foundation and People's Health Trust as well as increasing unrestricted income through direct payments and the Ventures Club**.**

Feedback: from our recent in-house members survey [Oct/2022] 86% are happy with the quality of services provided and 74% said that SPARC is the only local service they have regular contact with during the week.

External reports and consultancy to improve quality and governance: External reports kindly provided by "critical friends" like Constructive Partnerships Ltd and Lloyds Bank Foundation and its Enhance specialists are helping to improve resilience, governance and the quality of business planning by SPARC.



SPARC's projects and services

SPARC currently provides a suite of 7 p/t projects , which are supported by a combination of grants , volunteers or self-funded by SPARC itself.



The Always Here 4 U project : recently funded by Awards For All: and now self-funded by SPARC : it provides support and training for isolated members to learn to stay safe and healthy.



The Enhance programme: funded by the Lloyds Bank Foundation: to help build the long-term resilience of SPARC.



The Real Comics and Films project: this is our in-house Digital Publishing House and is self-funded by SPARC: it enables SPARC members to design their own bespoke accessible information for non-readers using animated comics with "moving pictures" .



The Filthy Fingers project: previously supported by the Postcode Lottery and the Baily Thomas Trust: Provides : a social prescribing support for people to grow food from "pot to plate" and improve healthy diets..



The Ventures Club: Direct Payments funded. For people isolated in the community to meet together and meet new friends and become involved in fun projects.



The Rock The Mock project: previously funded by the Peoples Health Trust: Provides a mobile dry bar to serve mock -tails and live music roadshow events as a fun alternative to binge drinking by young people on the street.



The new "Life" online members club: a proposed new project that SPARC is currently developing as a social enterprise and a subscription platform. The idea is for people to share their lives and common experiences by creating their own films and podcasts.

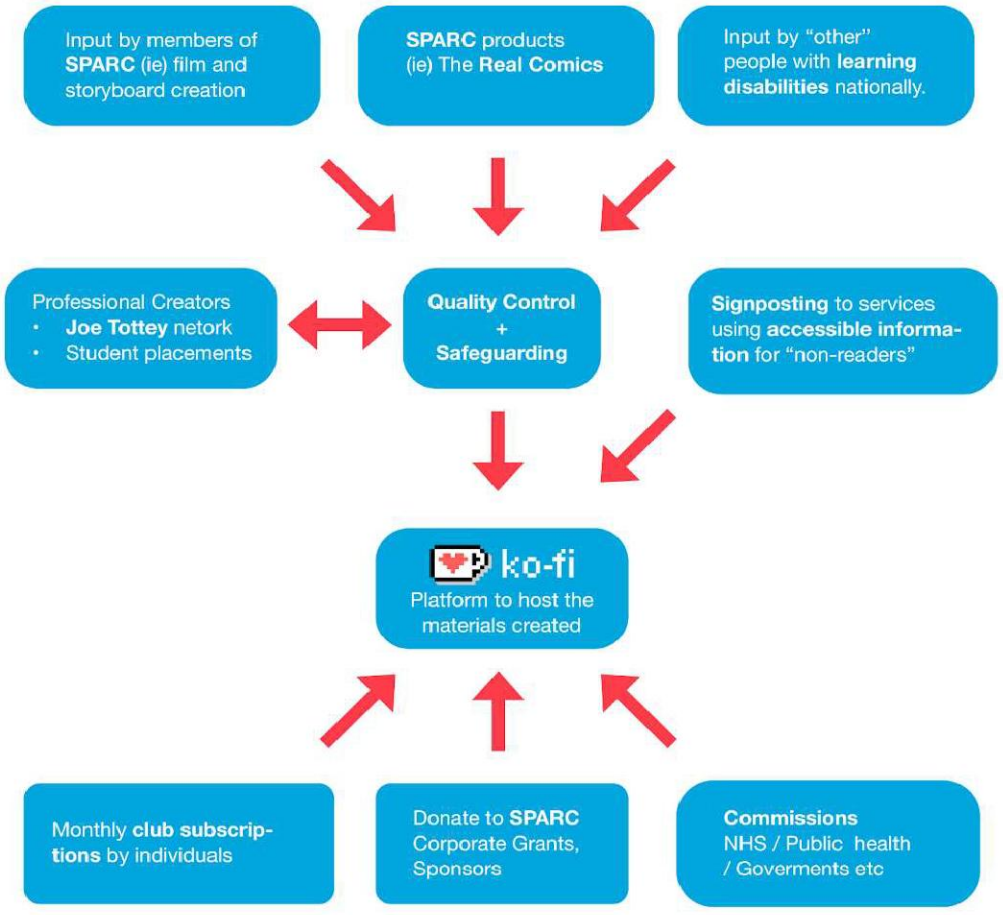
An example of SPARC's creative work: the new "Life" project.

SPARC
Supporting People Achieving Real Choice

Registered charity No: 1060095

The Life project: an infographic

Preamble
The members of the **SPARC charity** would like to explore the portential of their **LIFE project.** This is an online forum to enable people with Learning Disabilities to share their life experiances and aspiratations: promote social inclusion and normalisation: and develop social enterprise.





A Roadmap for a member of SPARC

1. Referral routes:

Most of our members have either **self-referred themselves or by a close family carer**, although recently there has also been an increase of referrals from "other "external professional agencies. These include social services and the police regarding individuals they have identified as at potential risk. Most members of SPARC are young people aged 18 to 25 with a diagnosed **Moderate Learning Disability [MLD] and currently make up 72% of our membership.** This cohort is unable to access other council social care services because of the application of strict eligibility rules. **The remaining members [28%] of SPARC have more complex and profound learning disabilities.**

2. Entry and Induction:

At the point of entry and induction a new member is invited to a **4 week "taster"** to allow them to acclimatize and choose which of the services best serve their needs and interests. In this Induction phase SPARC will also begin its screening and assessment profiles to help identify base line needs and measure subsequent progress by the member. These will include the **Personal Information Profile [PIP],** checking **ECHP plans** and **ASDAN to assess literacy skills.**

START

1

2

3

4

5

6

FINISH

3. Participation and Attendance :

Most of our members stay involved with SPARC for an **average of 3.-4 years** and are able to roll on/roll off projects as appropriate to meet their needs Our attendance records shows that **84% of the membership has regular contact** with SPARC services each month whilst the rest have intermittent contact of at least 6 attendances in an average year.

4. Quality controls

Our annual **Quality of Life survey** reports that **86% of our members are happy with the quality of their experiences** and particularly the attention given to 1: 1 support. A number of assessment tools are used like the, **ASDAN Everyday Living Functional Skills: and the HASI and LDSQ profiles** to track individual progress. SPARC holds monthly feedback forums with the members and most importantly the **"Ideas Clearing House"** events capture direct feedback from members and families to assess the impact of our services. SPARC also invites external **"critical friends"** like Constructive Partnerships Ltd to assess the quality of our services & the performance of the Board.

5. Planned exit and outcomes:

SPARC works hard to provide and improve the range of opportunities available for our members when they finally leave. We recognise, however, that serious inequalities still exist when they move on in their lives like the 83% who are trapped in long-term unemployment and the 58% of members reporting poor health. We are however making progress with **9% of members getting paid employment** compared to the 4.5% nationally for people with learning disabilities. SPARC has successfully supported its members into f/t jobs with large employers like ASDA, Tesco's and Matalan whilst the introduction of the **HASI and LDSQ screening tools has seen a reduction of 11% of members** at risk from involvement in the criminal justice system.

Final evaluation and feedback :

The experiences and feedback from our graduate leavers are integral to our working ethos, which is called the SPARC Way. We ask for honest feedback and any practical suggestions for change to make our provision better. Some of this data is captured in the **Summative Evaluation Assessment** and all members are encouraged to participate in the annual **Ideas Clearing House** away days held each year to plan new services. This is the key driver for the members to identify their main areas of social need and the services SPARC will provide to meet this need. All members leaving SPARC take with them a **Testimonial and References** for potential employment and any further training opportunities.



Tracking the individual progress of our members

When a new member joins SPARC , we use a range of assessment and tracking tools to help measure individual progress.



Entry/Induction into SPARC:

- At the point of entry and during the Induction phase, the **Personal Information Profile [PIP]** is introduced as a **confidential file** about the individuals needs to include: medical information, family contacts and emergency Tel numbers. It includes an initial assessment to measure baseline literacy, numeracy and social skills and a Risk Assessment which is shared with the appropriate staff and volunteers on a strict "***need to know***" basis. Reference is also made to any available **Statements of Special Needs** or **Education Health & Care Plans [EHCP].**



Participation in projects/services:

- **Literacy, Numeracy and Social Skills** are screened and then subject to ongoing assessment using the **ASDAN "Every day Living"** profiles. These are user-friendly assessments are **not "tests",** and incrementally build targets by breaking skills into small steps. For example, on money and finance: managing a weekly budget: what is good/bad credit: problem debt,etc
- **The HASI profile: [Hayes Ability Screening Index:]** when a member moves past the induction point the HASI will be used to provide a quick numerical score for personal and social needs. It is very important to stress that the HASI is also **not an IQ test** as such but simply a means to score a range of abilities to include problem solving skills like managing risk and potential exploitation.
- **The LDSQ profile [Learning Disability Screening Questionnaire]** is particularly helpful in assessing young people at potential risk of becoming groomed by criminal gangs.. The aim of the LDSQ profile is to divert vulnerable people away from contact with the Police and Criminal Justice System [CJS].



On leaving SPARC :

- **The summative assessment :** provides a final profile for each member when they leave. This is a detailed breakdown of experiences and achievements collated from the tracking and screening tools used previously.
- **Testimonials and References** are provided by SPARC for the person leaving and perhaps applying for employment or other training opportunities elsewhere.



What does it mean to have a learning disability?

Approximately 78% of SPARCs current membership are people aged 17 -26 years with a **Moderate Learning Disability [MLD]** whilst 22% have more **Profound and Complex Learning Disabilities [PMLD]** . It is important to note that although the individual profiles of the members may exhibit different types of specific learning disability, like a diagnosed MLD or PMLD , in reality it is the **social impact of having a learning disability** which is the main focus of SPARCs work..



Having a learning disability means people have a greater difficulty acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills . They may also have associated speech and language delay, low self-esteem, low levels of concentration and underdeveloped social skills. The consequences of having a learning disability are therfore **multifaceted** and can include:

- Have limited skills in reading, writing and numeracy
- Limited problem solving skills and inability to generalize learning.
- Poor auditory/visual memory and speech and language delay.
- Emotional and behavioral difficulties.
- Lack of understanding to manage potential risk and exploitation.



If we take, for example, the issue of literacy skills, the average **reading age of a SPARC member is approx. 7-9 years** and they will consequently find it difficult to:

- Complete an online job application form
- Book an appointment for a health check with a GP
- Read instructions for a medical prescription
- Understand their rights in court when trying to navigate the criminal justice system.
- Difficulty in understanding public health information about how to stay safe from Covid-19.



Having a learning disability can also **"cloak and disguise"** other underlying medical conditions like poor mental health or Type 2 Diabetes. This problem of **"dual diagnoses"** and additional and often undetected health problems affects 58% of our SPARC members and is a key factor in the health inequalities and early death rates for people with a learning disability .



Many SPARC members lead very lonely lives and are vulnerable to exploitation by criminal gangs who groom them for involvement in drug networks. Our last survey reported that 38% of our families use illegal loan sharks or payday loans and are trapped in problem debt.

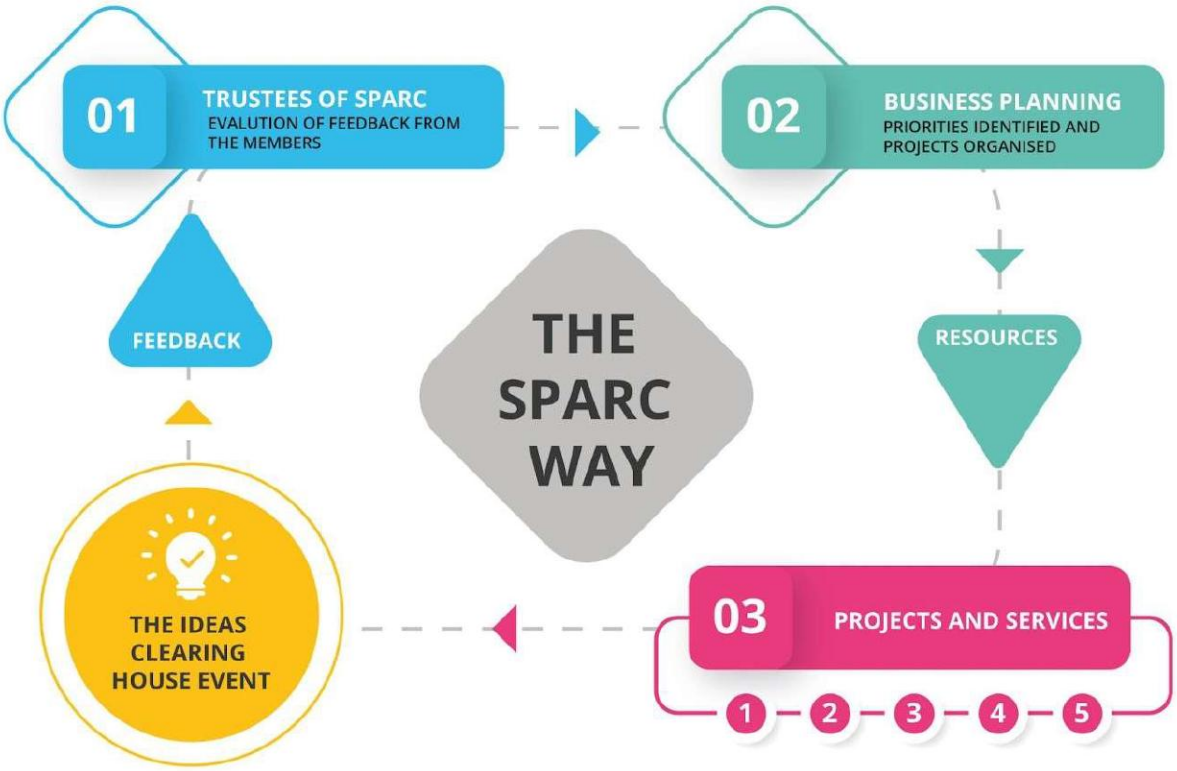
The "SPARC Way": how our charity works .

SPARC is a family led organization with 78% of our serving Trustees family carers, parents or service users. It is their voice that ensures our services are focussed on meeting the practical needs of people with learning disabilities.

This working ethos is called the **"SPARC Way"** and states :

"We believe our most valuable resource are the people that use our services. This is the SPARC Way."

The "SPARC Way" & the annual" ideas Clearing House" event:



A Financial health check: progress, challenges and opportunities .

A preliminary analysis of our accounts shows that SPARC has made steady progress financially since the very difficult years between 2015- 2019. In this period, most of SPARCs main grant funding had finished and we were then forced to use up our small reserves to try and maintain a minimum level of service to the members. We are confident that SPARC has now turned a corner and is gradually becoming more financially stable going into the future.

Annual Accounts: SPARCs most recent annual accounts for 2022-2023 are now being processed by our chartered accountants **Elpizo Ltd** and these will then be submitted to the Charity Commission. SPARC would like to acknowledge the immense value of the advice and professional support that Mal and Jonathan Wright at Elpizo Chartered Accountants have provided to our charity.



Income streams: Our most recent cash book shows that both our **Restricted Income** from funders and **Unrestricted Income** from Direct Payments and the Ventures Club have increased . Our intention is to continue to try and build our Unrestricted income stream via commissions for the Real Comics media and the new "Life" project to develop this into an online subscription platform and secure SPARCs financial sustainability.



A "Thank You" to all of our funders:

During the last year SPARC has secured successful grant applications from the **Lloyds Bank Foundation** under its Enhance programme and the **Peoples Health Trust .** Over the last 26 years, SPARC has built a good track record of managing successful projects with funding from a wide range of sponsors and trusts . All of our end of grant reports submitted to our sponsors have been positive, including the following :

- The Lloyds Bank Foundation
- Awards For All
- The Big Lottery
- Peoples Health Trust,
- Morgan Foundation,
- NHS Halton CCG
- NHS Liverpool CCG
- Bailey Thomas Trust
- The Postcode Lottery



The future of SPARC : the role of our "Critical Friends".

With the recent professional support by our "**critical friends"** like **Constructive Partnerships Ltd and the Lloyds Bank Foundation ,** the members & Trustees have agreed six key objectives for 2023-2024:These relate to the following organizational objectives:

1. Explore relevant quality kite marks for improving governance and the quality of services .
2. Examine the possibility of SPARC becoming a Charitable Incorporated Organization [CIO].
3. Further develop flexible services combining 1:1 case work, group work and online sessions which will meet the x 4 main areas of social need identified by our members.
4. Appoint a full-time Project Manager and establish a permanent office to take overall responsibility for services and drive business planning.
5. Increase income streams into SPARC with more grant applications but also developing new business and unrestricted income streams like Direct Payments and potential trading activities like subscription online content like the "Life" social enterprise.
6. Develop the skills set of our Board of Trustees via a skills audit to be undertaken by Constructive Partnerships Ltd.



Quality controls for our services and improving governance

The recent external audit kindly conducted by Constructive Partnerships Ltd, acting as an external "critical friend" , assessed the quality of our board leadership & has now led to an agreed action plan.SPARC will now build on its existing framework and also examine appropriate quality kite marks in both its governance as well the delivery of its services for people with learning disabilities. We will help measure progress achieved by building upon the following steps:

- ☐ **Build on the recognised screening/assessment tools like the HASI, LDSQ and ASDAN for improving the quality of its projects and services.**
- ☐ **Introduce "Trustees Indemnity Insurance" from BIHB Ltd to underpin our Risk Management policy for the Board.**
- ☐ **A rolling annual audit each year of 25% of all key policies and procedures like Safeguarding, etc , to ensure their fitness for purpose.**
- ☐ **The "Good Governance Code" for small charities has been adopted and includes regular in-service training for the Board by Constructive Partnerships.**



Our Board of Trustees of SPARC , our staff team and volunteers

Our Trustees are part of a Board or Management Committee, and they are responsible for leading the SPARC charity. They are elected annually and SPARC currently has 10 trustees who meet bi-monthly. **Of our Trustees, the majority are either family carers of people with learning disabilities, service users or work professionally in the field of learning disabilities.** SPARC is fortunate to have hardworking trustees who provide not only a wealth of practical and personal experience but also offer a **range of professional and employment skills** like managing small businesses, the banking sector as well educational and social care settings.

Our current trustees are:

1. **Mick O' Gorman: [Chair of Trustees]:** Mick is an original founding trustee who first helped to establish the charity back in 1995 with parents and family carers. His professional background is teaching students with learning disabilities..
2. **Ken Dobson: [Treasurer]** Ken has worked in commercial banks for over 20 years before he became a NHS Practice Manager for a large inner city GP surgery in Liverpool.
3. **Joe Tottey: [Secretary]** Joe is a professional designer and runs a business in Liverpool.
4. **Phil Haden:** is a lecturer at Riverside College for students with learning disabilities..
5. **Sarah McKeown:** is a f/t support worker for people with learning disabilities.
6. **Scott McGhee :** is an elected representative of our members
7. **Kevin Buckley :** is an elected representative.
8. **Tanya Houghton:** is an elected representative member.
9. **Patrick Murley :** is an elected representative member..
10. **Stephen Roberts:** is a trustee who provides most of the IT support for our charity.



Our p/t staff team :

Since the last of SPARCs significant grants came to an end in 2015-2016 we have been largely dependent upon a team of x 9 p/t sessional staff. Our staff work on a casual/sessional and hourly basis when our projects/services require inputs and the funds allow. The staff and volunteers are currently led by a very hardworking p/t Team Leader, Catherine Mannion, who reports directly to the Chair of Trustees. All of the employed staff have either personal family experience of supporting people with a learning disability or come from professional backgrounds in this field like teaching, social care and health services.



Our wonderful Volunteers:

Our 17 wonderful volunteers each offer at least x 3 hrs of support per week and most of them provide in excess of 6 hours to SPARC. The majority of our volunteers have either lived experience of supporting people with a learning disability or have training in the field. They have been genuinely invaluable to the charity and particularly during the Covid-19 emergency. The Trustees would like to put on record their gratitude and genuine thanks to our volunteers for their fantastic support.



The "good governance" audit by Constructive Partnerships Ltd

From the recent audit led by Phil Shackell and Constructive Partnerships Ltd , SPARC is confident that it now has a clear and coherent strategy in its drive towards achieving good governance for the charity. The Trustees and Members of SPARC have now agreed on an **on-going development plan for "good governance"** to help maintain the trust and confidence of our members, the public, commissioners and potential funders. Our plans for 2023-2024 will prioritize areas like: Organizational purpose, Board effectiveness and Leadership, Integrity and Decision making, Risk management, Diversity and Openness and Accountability.



Annual Review of SPARCs Policies and Procedures: 25% annual target set

SPARCs aspirations to build good governance will involve an annual check of 25% of all key current policies and procedures to ensure their continued fitness for purpose.



Structure, Governance and Management of SPARC

The SPARC charity is a registered unincorporated charity governed by a constitution. Trustees are appointed by the existing board through an annual vote by the members of SPARC. The Trustees consider the future need of the charity when looking to add to the board and have regard to the particular skills required at each stage of the charity's development. New Trustees are given a period of induction and continuing training opportunities are made available to all Trustees. The day-to-day operations of the charity are governed by Trustees who are directly engaged in the activity of the charity. The Chair of Trustees provides the main point with the employed staff, volunteers and members of SPARC whilst operational decisions are made by the Trustees at their regular bi-monthly meetings.



Independent Examiner

Malcolm Wright, Elpizo Limited, Chartered Accountants, 13 Village Road, Higher Bebington Wirral, CH63 8PP .



Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The charity trustees are responsible for preparing a trustees' annual report and financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities requires the charity trustees to prepare financial statements for each year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable group for that period.

In preparing the 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
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the applicable Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations, and the provisions of the Trust deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the charity and financial information included on the charity's website in accordance with legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements.

This report was approved by the board of Trustees on 13 July 2023

Signed:

Mr. Mick O" Gorman

Chair of Trustees of the SPARC charity



Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of the Charity

Supporting People Achieving Real Choice (SPARC)
Report of the Independent Examiners to the Trustees on the account of the Charity for the year ended 31 March 2023

I report on the financial statement of the charitable company on page 22 to 29 for the year ended 31 March 2023. This report is made solely to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Section 145 of the Charities Act 2011. My examination has been undertaken so that I might state to the charity's trustees those matters I am required to state to them in an Independent Examiner's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, I do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and charity's trustees as a body, for my examination, for this report, or for the opinions I have formed.

Respective responsibilities of the Trustees and Examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Charities Act") and that an independent examination is needed. It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act, and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of opinion and scope of work undertaken

My examination was carried out in accordance with general directions given by the charity commission. An examination includes a review of accounting records, kept by the charity and a comparison of accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items of disclosures in the accounts and seeks explanations from the Trustees concerning any such matters. The procedure undertaken does not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit. Consequently, no opinion is given to whether the accounts present a true and fair view and report is limited to the matters set out in the statement below.

Independent Examiner's Statement

- In connection with the examination, no matters have come to my attention.

- Which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements; to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act.
- And to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act have not been met; or

- To which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Malcolm Wright - Chartered Accountant:
Elpizo Limited, 13 Village Road, Higher Bebington, Wirral CH63 8PP.
The date upon which my opinion is expressed is 13 July 2023



Supporting People Achieving Real Choice (SPARC)
Statement of Financial Activities
For the year ended 31 March 2023

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds 2023 £	Restricted Funds 2023 £	Total Funds 2023 £	Last Year Total Funds 2022 £
Income					
Donations and legacies	2	24,664	-	24,664	19,704
Income from charitable activities	3	-	27,250	27,250	25,100
Total Income		**24,664**	**27,250**	**51,914**	**44,804**
Expenditure					
Expenditure on charitable activities	4	20,823	19,460	40,283	48,231
Governance	5	1,332	-	1,332	3,030
Total expenditure		**22,155**	**19,460**	**41,615**	**51,261**
Net income/(expenditure) for the year		**2,509**	**7,790**	**10,299**	**(6,457)**
Gross transfer between funds		**(5,498)**	**5,498**	**-**	**-**
Net movement in funds		**(2,989)**	**13,288**	**10,299**	**(6,457)**
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward		**6,442**	**9,534**	**15,976**	**22,433**
Total funds carried forward		**3,453**	**22,822**	**26,275**	**15,976**

The net movement in funds to above in the net incoming resources as defined in the Statement of Recommendation Practice for Accounting and reporting issued by the Charity Commission for England and Wales and is reconciled to the total funds as shown in the Balance Sheet on page 24 as required by the said statement.

All activities derive from continuing operation.
The notes on page 25 to 29 form an integral part of these accounts



Supporting People Achieving Real Choice (SPARC)
Statement of Financial Activities
Analysis of prior year total funds as required by paragraph 4.2 of Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP)

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds 2022 £	Restricted Funds 2022 £	Total Funds 2022 £
Income				
Donations and legacies	2	19,704	-	19,704
Income from charitable activities	3	-	25,,100	25,100
Total Income		**19,704**	**25,100**	**44,804**
Expenditure				
Expenditure on charitable activities	4	15,035	33,196	48,231
Governance	5	3,030	-	3,030
Total expenditure		**18,065**	**33,196**	**51,261**
Net income/(expenditure) for the year		**1,639**	**(8,096)**	**(6,457)**
Gross transfer between funds		**-**	**-**	**-**
Net movement in funds		**1,639**	**(8,096)**	**(6,457)**
Reconciliation of funds:				
Total funds brought forward		**4,803**	**17,630**	**22,433**
Total funds carried forward		**6,442**	**9,534**	**15,976**

All activities derive from continuing operation

The notes on page 25 to 29 form an integral part of these accounts



Supporting People Achieving Real Choice (SPARC)
Balance Sheet
As at 31 March 2023

	Notes	2023 £	2023 £	2022 £	2022 £
Current Assets					
Cash at the bank and in hand		28,575		19,998	
Total current assets		**28,575**		**19,998**	
Creditors: -					
Amount due within one year	9	(2,300)		(4,022)	
Net current assets			26,275		15,976
Net assets			**26,275**		**15,976**
The funds of the charity					
Restricted income funds					
Restricted funds			22,822		6,442
Unrestricted income funds					
Unrestricted revenue accumulated funds			3,453		9,534
Total charity funds			**26,275**		**15,976**

Approved by the board of Trustees on 13 July 2023 and signed on their behalf by:

M. O'Gorman
Chairman/Trustee

The notes on page 25 to 29 form an integral part of these accounts



1. Accounting policies

The principal accounting policies adopted, judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty in the preparation of the financial statements are as follows:

a) Basis of preparation

The accounts (financial statements) have been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant notes to these accounts. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) issued on 16 July 2014 and the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011.
The trust constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102.

b) Preparation of the accounts on a going concern basis

The financial statements are prepared on a going concern. The Charity is entirely dependent on continuing grant and donation support and as a consequence the going concern basis is also dependent on that continuing financial support.

c) Income

Income is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the item(s) of income have been met, it is probable that the income will be received, and the amount can be measured reliably.
Income from government and other grants, whether 'capital' grants or 'revenue' grants, is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the grants have been met, it is probable that the income will be received, and the amount can be measured reliably and is not deferred.
Income received in advance of the provision of specified services is deferred until the criteria for income recognition are met.

d) Donated services and facilities

Donated professional services and donated facilities are recognised as income when the charity has control over the item, any conditions associated with the donated item have been met, the receipt of economic benefit from the use by the charity of the item is probable and that economic benefit can be measured reliably. In accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102), the general volunteer time is not recognised and refer to the trustees' annual report for more information about their contribution. On receipt, donated professional services and donated facilities are recognised on the basis of the value of the gift to the charity which is the amount the charity would have been willing to pay to obtain services or facilities of equivalent economic benefit on the open market; a corresponding amount is then recognised in expenditure in the period of receipt.

e) Interest receivable

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the bank.

f) Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are available to spend on activities that further any of the purposes of the charity.

g) Expenditure and irrecoverable VAT

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required, and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is classified under the following activity headings:

- Costs of raising funds comprise the consists of commercial trading.
- Expenditure on charitable activities includes the costs of activities undertaken to further the purposes of the charity and their associated support costs.
- Other expenditure represents those items not falling into any other heading.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

h) Allocation of support costs

Support costs are those functions that assist the work of the charity but do not directly undertake charitable activities. Support costs include back office costs, finance, personnel, payroll and governance costs which support the charitable activities. These costs have been allocated between costs of raising funds and expenditure on charitable activities. The bases on which support costs have been allocated are set out in note1.

i) Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

j) Creditors and provisions

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimating reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

k) Financial instruments

The charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are recognised at transaction value.

2 Income from donations and legacies

Donations	2023 £	2022 £
Direct payments - individuals	24,664	19,704
	24,664	**19,704**

The Trust benefits from the involvement and enthusiastic support of its many volunteers, details of which are given in our annual report. In accordance with FRS 102 and the Charities SORP (FRS 102), the economic contribution of general volunteers is not recognised in the accounts.

3 Income from charitable activities

	Funds 2023 £	Funds 2022 £
Income		
Grants from charitable organisations	27,250	25,100
Total income from charitable activities	**27,250**	**25,100**

4 Analysis of expenditure on charitable activities

	2023 £	2022 £
Wages	28,308	25,949
Sessional staff	-	7,247
Training	1,026	1,848
Venue hires	2,500	5,802
Travel	4,746	1,100
Insurance	1,313	656
General admin expenses (Note 5)	2,390	5,629
Total expenditure on charitable activities	**40,283**	**48,231**

5 Analysis of governance and support costs

The charity initially identifies the costs of its support functions. It then identifies those costs which relate to the governance function. Having identified its governance cost, the remaining support costs together with the governance costs are allocated to charitable activities undertaken (see note 4) in the year. Refer to the table below for the basis for apportionment and the analysis of support and governance costs:

Analysis of support and governance costs

	General support £	Governance Function £	Total £	Basis of apportionment
Independent Examiner	-	1,332	1,332	Governance
Total	-	**1,332**	**1,332**	

6 Sessional staff costs, trustee remuneration and expenses

The majority of charitable services were provided on a sessional basis.
The charity trustees were not paid or received any other benefits from employment with charity as trustees in the year (2022: £nil) neither were they reimbursed expenses during the year (2022: £nil). No charity trustees received payment for professional or other services supplied to the charity (2022: £nil).
There were no transactions with connected persons in the year.

7 Staff costs and numbers

The charity had two employees in this year and in 2021.
Total remuneration paid in the year to 31 March 2023 was £28,308

8 Taxation

The charity is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within section 505 of the Taxes Act 1988 or section 252 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that these are applied to its charitable objects.

9 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2023 £	2022 £
Accrued expenses	900	660
PAYE	900	2,862
Other creditors	500	500
	2,300	**4,022**



10 Contingent assets – legacy income

As at 31 March 2023 the charity had not been notified of any legacy income or prospective legacy income.

11 Analysis of charitable funds

Analysis of movements in unrestricted funds

The charity has only one unrestricted general fund. The movements in that fund are shown in the Statement of Financial Activities.

All of the net assets apply to the one unrestricted general fund except for the share of cash which is held for the benefit of the restricted fund.

The charity has one restricted fund which is covered by cash in the bank at the end of the year.

SUPPORTING PEOPLE ACHIEVING REAL CHOICE

England & Wales - Charity number 1060095

Accounts

Registered Charity Number 1060095

SUPPORTING PEOPLE ACHIEVING REAL CHOICE

REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED

31 MARCH 2022

elpizo
Chartered Accountants
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Supporting People Achieving Real Choice
Reports and accounts

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Supporting People Achieving Real Choice
The report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2022

Introduction
The trustees present their annual report and financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2022. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the accounts and comply with the charity's trust deed, the Charities Act 2011, and the 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 2015).
The board of trustees are satisfied with the performance of the charity during the year and the position at 31 March 2022 and consider that the charity is in a strong position to continue its activities during the coming year, and the charity's assets are adequate to fulfil its obligations.

Purpose and Activities of the Charity
The charity's objectives are:
The relief of people with learning disabilities in the area defined in clause 2 (hereinafter called the area of benefit). It shall advance the education of such persons to preserve their good health, relieve their sickness and poverty and provide recreational facilities in the interests of social welfare for such persons with the object of improving their quality of life.

Activities
SPARC: a pen picture of its history, aims and its work.

SPARC ["Supporting People Achieving Real Choice"] aims to meet the needs of young people aged 16 - 25 who have a Moderate Learning Disability [MLD] . This is our main [but not exclusive] group of service users and the reason for this particular focus is that people with Moderate Learning Disabilities [MLD] are often "off the radar" of local services.

Most of our 336 members have great difficulty accessing services like the NHS, Public Health, Education, Welfare Rights, and are consequently vulnerable to poor health and welfare, poverty and are also at higher risk of potential criminal exploitation by gangs.

Addressing the social need of this vulnerable group was the reason for the original establishment of SPARC in July 1995, when a small group of concerned parents and teachers first came together. SPARC became a registered charity on January 1st, 1997, and whilst our full name, "Supporting People Achieving Real Choice" [SPARC], is perhaps a little wordy, it accurately describes how our small charity aims to provide practical opportunities for people with a learning disability to make **reasoned and achievable choices about the direction and aspirations** in their lives.

Our members, their communities and life experiences
SPARC is mainly based in the borough of Halton which sits on the banks of the River Mersey. Our charity operates in working class communities that fall within the IMD defined most deprived areas nationally. Halton has a population of 127,000 and the latest Indices of Multiple Deprivation: IMD (Dec: 2019), has ranked the borough 13th within the 10% most deprived local authorities in England. In Halton, 26.4 % of local children live in poverty and in the Riverside and Kingsway wards, where most of our SPARC members live, these communities have experienced historically high levels of deprivation over many decades. This is the context and life experience of many of our members. Moreover, the impact of

intergenerational social inequality in terms of employment & income, health & disability, education & skills, crime and barriers to housing and services, **is always exacerbated for the most vulnerable groups in the community, like people with learning disabilities.** This inequality was sharply exposed by Covid-19 and the much higher mortality rates experienced by people with learning disabilities in the UK and has been further compounded by ever stricter eligibility/threshold rules applied by hard pressed councils. The result is most SPARC members do not access local social day-care services and during the last 26 years, **much of SPARC's work has been concerned with trying to fill this gap in services for its members.**

Achievements

The priorities and aspirations of SPARC:
SPARC has reached a key stage in its development and has identified the following aspirations:

- **Improving our members health and welfare by better access to local services like the NHS, Public Health, Education and Welfare Rights.**
- **Reducing the loneliness and criminal exploitation of vulnerable families.**
- **Supporting our families, who already experience high levels of food / fuel poverty and problem debt, through the current cost of living crisis**
- **Providing realistic opportunities for paid employment and social enterprise because SPARC believes getting a paid job is the best form of social inclusion for our members.**

All of these priorities are achievable, but it will depend upon securing new funding within a very difficult economic climate for small charities like SPARC.

The infographic below identifies the **four areas of social need and aspiration** that the members have identified and form the focus of SPARCs projects and services. The four areas are:

1. **Improving the members health and welfare by better access to local services**
2. **Keeping people safe in their community**
3. **Learning skills for the world of work**
4. **Exploring opportunities for creative social enterprise**

The feedback tools used to identify the four areas of social need and aspirations.
SPARC used a range of feedback tools to collect evidence of social need from its members and their families, including the following:

- **SPARCs annual in-house "Quality of life" survey of the members and the most recent was conducted in October 2021.**
- **SPARCs three " Ideas Clearing House" events held between Nov/2221 - March/2022 which discussed potential new projects and services.**
- **A Feasibility Study [FS] conducted by Helen Middleton and sponsored by the Lloyds Bank Foundation & looking at the Real Comics media as a potential social enterprise.**
- **A further linked consultancy again kindly sponsored by the Lloyds Bank Foundation with Jonathan Gilbert and the Social Media Group 4G researching online content for people with a learning disability as a potential social enterprise.**

● The "Good Governance" audit by Phil Shackell and Constructive Partnerships Ltd to improve quality in governance and the delivery of our services.
● A range of in-house tracking & screening tools used by SPARC including: : the HASI profile: the LDSQ assessment tool: Personal Information Profile [PIP]: the Everyday Living & Functional skills assessment [EFS] and the ASDAN profile to assess progress made by our members.

Other relevant national research about social inequality and learning disability

● **Covid-19 and mortality rates for people with Learning Disabilities**: Recent ONS data on the impact of Covid-19 on people with learning disabilities shows mortality rates 6 times higher than the national average. **[ONS data: March 2021].**
● **Health Inequalities and Early Death rates**: People with a learning disability in the UK experience premature deaths on average 18 years earlier than the general population and these are caused by poor health and welfare. ["NHS Digital Report 2019l
● **Criminal Justice System [CJS] and Prisons:** The Prison Reform Trust "Nobody Knows" report shows that 28% of the prison population in England has some form of a learning disability. This vulnerable group is not being screened properly at the point of arrest and are consequently trapped in the prison system via a "revolving door".
● **Employment**: Only 5% of people with a learning disability in England [a population of at 2 million] have paid employment although it is recognized having a job is the best form of 'natural" social inclusion for this group **[BASE: report in 2019]**

SPARCs annual in-house "Quality of Life" survey of its members [October 2021]
Each year SPARC conducts its annual in-house "Quality of Life" survey of all of its members and their families. The response rate for this year's survey **conducted in October/2021** was an impressive 86% and has helped to identify the four areas of social need and priorities of our members.
SPARC used a structured questionnaire with 10 questions that measured experiences in people's lives like: for example, their access to local services, aspirations for employment, the levels of disability hate crime they may have experienced and food and fuel poverty, etc. Beyond the immediate impact of Covid-19 our members have also lived through the last decade of economic austerity and cuts to local services. The rationing of statutory services and the application of much stricter threshold rules for eligibility by hard pressed councils, means that 72% of SPARC members are effectively **"off the radar"** to statutory services. This means they are not only at increased risk of higher levels of poverty, loneliness, and poor physical and mental health but in recent years have also been targeted by criminal gangs and grooming in a process called **"Mate Crime" or "Fake Mates".**

The findings from this year's survey reported that:

- 78% of SPARCs current membership are people aged 18 -25 years with a **Moderate Learning Disability [MLD] whilst 22% have more Profound and Complex Learning Disabilities [PMLD].**
- 72% of our members aged over 21 years are not on local council learning disability registers and are unable to access statutory day- care services
- 74% said that SPARC provides the only regular service they have contact with
- 86% say they are happy with the quality of the SPARC projects they use but say would like more provision if this was available

- 83% of our members have regular contact with our services at least once each month.
- 86% said they liked the flexible delivery of services by SPARC combining group work and Zoom workshops.
- 27% of our families are hesitant or have rejected Covid-19 vaccines
- 63% of families now get all their "information and news" from social media platforms and are therefore particularly vulnerable to the problem of "fake news".
- 78 % of our members have an average reading age of just 7-9 years and therefore cannot engage with most NHS and Public Health platforms based upon the formal written word.
- 83% of our members are long term unemployed although 64% said they would like a paid job but only 7% have ever visited a Jobcentre Plus office
- 23% cannot use public transport like a local bus or a train independently
- 75% are trapped at home for up to 5 days each week and experience poor mental health and severe loneliness
- 58% have associated poor health like diabetes, obesity and poor mental health but only 13% have seen their GP for an annual NHS health check.
- 65% have experienced disability hate crime but only 3% have reported incidents to the police
- 21% have reported attempted grooming and exploitation by criminal gangs and loan sharks
- 36% of our families now rely upon local food banks
- 38% currently use payday loans or loan sharks but only 2% have ever had a professional welfare benefits assessment.

SPARCs current portfolio of projects and services

SPARC currently provides a suite of 6 p/t projects that are supported by a mix of **grants, volunteers or are self-funded by SPARC.**
When external grant funding ends from an external sponsor, SPARC has a policy of trying to sustain some degree of the service with the support from our volunteers or funds from our own small reserves.
We are pleased to report that despite the pressures of working under the difficult conditions that have prevailed under the Covid-19 health emergency, **only one of SPARCs projects/servicers was mothballed during the lockdowns.** This was the "Rock The Mock" project and which we hope to reintroduce again in the summer of 2022 if we secure new funding.

Our charity has also learned a great deal from the experience of having to reconfigure our services under Covid-19. SPARC has now embraced a new and flexible model to deliver services based on: face to face group work when this is possible coupled with online Zoom sessions and 1:1 individual case work in the field to engage with many isolated members in the community.

Our current projects/services:
1. **The Always Here 4 U [AH4U] project***: originally funded by Awards For All and the government's emergency Covid fund: During the Covid-19 lockdowns this project has provided crucial emergency support for our members with online sessions, training in how to*

stay safe and the delivery of food parcels. This supported 178 people during the last year. The current funding finished in Jan/2021 and SPARC is now seeking a new grant to further develop this important project.

2. The Lloyds Bank Foundation Enhance programme: SPARC has been kindly funded under the Enhance programme to help build the resilience and sustainability of the charity.

3. The Real Comics and Films project: a Digital Publishing House: this is self-funded by SPARC: This exciting project designs accessible information for hard-to-reach groups using animated comics with "moving pictures". SPARC is seeking a grant to help develop this project.

4. The Filthy Fingers project: previously supported by the Postcode Lottery and the Baily Thomas Trust: Provides social prescribing support for people to grow food from "pot to plate" at home and promote good nutrition and a healthy diet. SPARC is seeking a new grant to develop this project.

5. The Ventures Club: Direct Payments funded. For people who are isolated in the community to meet new friends and get involved in fun projects like gardening and keep fit.

6. The Rock The Mock project: previously funded by the Peoples Health Trust. Provides a mobile dry bar to serve mock -tails and live music roadshow events as a fun alternative to binge drinking by young people on the street. SPARC is seeking a new grant to help develop this project.

Samples of SPARC projects impacting upon the members four main social needs
● **Keeping people safe: [The Always Here 4 U project]** During Covid-19 lockdowns SPARC organized 83 weekly food parcel deliveries: Provided weekly online zoom sessions: Established the "Check –In" emergency contact: Liaised with Test & Trace for isolated families: Countered the criminal exploitation of members by gangs & loan sharks:
● **Employment and Work Skills: [The Real Comics and Films project**] In 2022, SPARC celebrated the 20 year anniversary of its first supported employment service for our members with a visit to the Tesco superstore in Warrington to see our old members, Naveen, Jenny and Shelley. These past members are living proof that getting a paid job is the best form of social inclusion.
● **Health and Welfare**: **[The Ventures Club]** Following up from recent community events like "Rock The Mock" and ``Feel The LOVE" the forthcoming "SPARC Fest" in June 2022 will bring lots of people together with fun activities on how to keep healthy in mind, body and spirit.
● **Exploring Social Enterprise: [The Real Comics and Films project]** The recent consultancy by Helen Middleton from the Lloyds Bank Foundation and Enhance programme has signposted new opportunities for paid work for our members via marketing its Real Comics media for potential commissioning by councils and NHS.

The social impact of having a learning disability.

Approximately 78% of SPARCs current membership are people aged 18 -25 years with a **Moderate Learning Disability [MLD**], and 22% have more **Profound and Complex Learning Disabilities [PMLD]**.

It is important to note that although the individual profiles of the members of SPARC may exhibit different types of specific clinical learning disability, like, a diagnosed MLD or PMLD, it is the **social impact of having a learning disability which is the main focus of SPARCs work to improve the quality-of-life choices for our members**.

Having a learning disability means people have a greater difficulty acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills. They may also have associated speech and language delay, low self-esteem, low levels of concentration and underdeveloped social skills.

Thus, the consequences of having a learning disability are often **multifaceted** and can include:

● Have limited skills in reading, writing and numeracy
● Limited problem-solving skills and inability to generalize learning.
● Poor auditory/visual memory and speech and language delay.
● Emotional and behavioural difficulties.
● Lack of understanding to manage potential risk and exploitation. If we take, for example, the issue of literacy skills, the average **reading age of a SPARC member is approx. 7-9 years** and they will consequently find it difficult to:

● Complete an online job application form
● Book an appointment for a health check with a GP
● Read instructions for a medical prescription
● Understand their rights in court when trying to navigate the criminal justice system.
● Difficulty in understanding public health information about how to stay safe from Covid-19.

Having a learning disability can also **"cloak and disguise"** other underlying medical conditions like poor mental health or Type 2 Diabetes. This problem of **"dual diagnoses"** and additional but undetected health problems affects **58% of our SPARC members and is a key factor in the health inequalities and early death rates for people with a learning disability in the UK.**

Many of our members also lead lonely lives and are vulnerable to exploitation by criminal gangs, who groom them as **"Fake Friends"** or **"Mate Crime "**and involvement in drug networks. Our last survey of members reports that 21% have experience of contact with organized gangs whilst 38% of our families use illegal loan sharks or payday loans. This leaves them trapped with problem debt and food poverty, where 36% of our families now rely upon food banks.

The "SPARC Way": how our "family led" organisation works

SPARC is a **family led organization** where 60% of our serving Trustees are carers. It is this constituency of people that ensures our services are focussed on meeting the practical needs of people with learning disabilities.

Our working ethos is called the **"SPARC Way"** and these states:

"We believe our most valuable resource are the ordinary people that use our services. Our members are at the heart SPARC Way."

The SPARC model: "Re-Skilling" people in Social Resilience [or "Mental Toughness" training].

As a result of its experience accrued over the last 26 years, SPARC has concluded the most effective intervention we can provide to help improve the quality of life of our members is by embracing **a skills model** based upon **Social Resilience** training and sometimes called **"mental toughness"** skills.

We know that skills are a commodity which is valued by society and is therefore a very useful currency to help improve the life- chances of individuals. These include the skills, knowledge and confidence needed to manage the **normal "gritty" life challenges and transactions** of living in communities which are already under social stress.

Most of our members have been inadvertently **"De-Skilled"** by a previous lack of opportunities to learn basic life skills, for example: managing personal safety, using public transport and how to access local services like the NHS and Welfare Rights.

This **deficit in skills** means it is difficult to achieve any meaningful level of social inclusion for our members who need to feel confident enough to manage personal risk on the street or book an appointment with your local GP to get an annual health check.

These life skills are the basis of all of SPARC's services and are influenced by a number of key writers and research.

The key influences in SPARCs model of social resilience training:

• **Dr. Wolf Wolfensberge**r: pioneered the model of **"Normalization"** which says that people with disabilities are devalued by denying them ordinary life conditions and social relationships.

• **Marc Gold**: pioneered the model of **"Try another Way"** where individuals with the most severe disabilities have the potential to learn new skills when these are broken down into smaller steps.

• **Dr. Peter Clough**: acknowledged as an authority on the model of **mental toughness** and particularly the four key components of **Control, Challenge, Commitment and Confidence**.

• **Daniel Goleman**: popularized the model of emotional intelligence which has highlighted the "other" social skills which largely determine the success of people in life other than just the crude measurement of "I.Q". For example, the ability to manage social relationships, etc.

• **Dr. David Shenk**: We all have **"capacity",** but we need to have the opportunity to learn new skills and knowledge within a structured environment **for this learning potential to be realized.**

• **Yvonne Roberts and the Young Foundation**: researched **"Social Grit"** skills needed to deal with challenges and adversity encountered in life. Identified the four [4] SEED competencies which are: S = social skills: E= emotional resilience to be able to cope with rebuffs: E = for enterprise and creativity: and D = for discipline.

Our annual "Good Friend of SPARC" recognition awards: the nominations

Every year our charity recognises those individuals who have made the difference to SPARC with their work and passion. These awards are a simple way to honour people who have made their own different contributions to our charity.

This could be a: : Member of SPARC: or a Trustee,: or outstanding Volunteer: staff member : or an external professional providing advice to SPARC . In this year of Covid-19 there are far too many people to mention everybody, but the following individuals have been recognised for being **"A Good Friend of SPARC".**

The nominations this year are:

- **Catherine Mannion: for being an outstanding member of staff**
- **Mike Roberts: for his role as a hardworking volunteer**
- **Ella Sips: for ongoing external professional support from the Lloyds Bank Foundation**
- **Tanya Houghton: for being an active member of SPARC**
- **George Thornton: who sadly died recently & was a longstanding Trustee**
- **Amanda and Richard Murley: parents and brilliant fundraisers for SPARC.**

Financial Review

Policies on reserves

Adequate reserves are maintained to fund the charity's activities for at least six months forward.

Availability and adequacy of assets of the funds

The board of Trustee is satisfied that the charity assets in each fund are available and adequate to fulfil its obligations in respect of each fund.

During the last year SPARC secured a key grant application into its **Restricted Income** from the **Lloyds Bank Foundation** under its Enhance programme to support SPARC to become more resilient in the future.

SPARC has also increased its **Unrestricted income** via its new Ventures Club, funded via Direct Payments and some recent commissions for the Real Comics media and our intention is to develop the Real Comics media as a potential new income stream to increase SPARCs financial sustainability going into the future.

We are therefore now more confident that SPARC has turned a corner and is becoming more financially stable going into the future.

Our funders: past and present: SPARC has a good record of managing its grants

Over the last 26 years, SPARC has achieved a good track record of managing successful projects and with funding from a wide range of sponsors and trusts. All our end of grant reports submitted to our sponsors have been positive, including:

- The Lloyds Bank Foundation
- Awards For All
- Big Lottery
- Peoples Health Trust,
- Morgan Foundation,
- NHS Halton CCG
- NHS Liverpool CCG
- Bailey Thomas Trust
- The Postcode Lottery

SPARC will continue in 2022-2023 to apply for funding from other large trusts but it will also seek to increase its unrestricted income from developing potential new social enterprise opportunities like developing its Real Comics media.

Transactions and Financial position

The charity's income in the year was £44,804 (2021: £61,878) after expenditure of £51,261 (2021: £48,824) a deficit of £6,457 (Surplus of 2021: £13,054) is reported. General reserves carried forward amounted to £15,976 (2021: £22,433).

Risk Management

The Trustees have assessed the potential risks to which the charity may be exposed and in particular those related to the operations and financing of SPARC.
It is satisfied that by reviewing its agreed plan it has mitigated its exposure to any potential risk.

Plans for future periods

The future of SPARC: the role of our "Critical Friends".

With the recent professional support by our **"critical friends"** like **Constructive Partnerships Ltd and the Lloyds Bank Foundation**, the members & Trustees have agreed six key objectives for 2022-2023:

These relate to the following organizational objectives identified in SPARC's business planning, to:

1. **Explore the possibility of SPARC becoming a Charitable Incorporated Organization [CIO]. Any final decision on this question will be subject to a formal vote by all the members.**
2. **Develop its Real Comics and Online Content media as a social enterprise & secure new income stream and provide employment opportunities for its members**
3. **Develop further flexible services combining 1:1 case work, group work and online sessions which will meet the x 4 main areas of social need identified by our members.**
4. **Appoint a full-time Project Manager and establish a permanent office to take overall responsibility for services and drive business planning.**

Quality controls and improving governance

The recent external audit kindly conducted by Constructive Partnerships Ltd, assessed the quality of our board leadership & has now led to an agreed action plan.
SPARC will now build on its existing framework and also adopt appropriate quality kite marks in both its governance as well the delivery of its services for people with learning disabilities.
We will measure progress achieved by using the following milestones:

- **SPARC already has in place recognised internal screening/assessment tools like the HASI, LDSQ and ASDAN profiles for quality control over services but will also consider benchmarking with other national accreditation.**
- **SPARC has put in place additional "Trustees Indemnity Insurance" from BIHB Ltd to underpin our Risk Management policy for the Board.**
- **We have in place a rolling annual audit each year of 25% of all key policies and procedures like Safeguarding, etc, to ensure their fitness for purpose.**
- **The "Good Governance Code" for small charities has been adopted and includes regular in-service training for the Board by Constructive Partnerships.**

• SPARC is awaiting further national developments regarding kite marks for standards in good governance.

The "good governance" audit by Phil Shackell and Constructive Partnerships Ltd.
From the recent audit led by Phil Shackell and Constructive Partnerships Ltd, SPARC is confident that it now has a clear and coherent strategy in its drive towards achieving good governance for the charity.
The Trustees and Members of SPARC have now agreed on an **on-going development plan for "good governance"** to help maintain the trust and confidence of our members, the public, commissioners and potential funders.

Our plans for 2022-2023 will prioritize areas like: Organizational purpose, Board effectiveness and Leadership, Integrity and Decision making, Risk management, Diversity and Openness and Accountability.
SPARC will feedback on its work to Phil Shackell and Constructive Partnerships at the end of 2022 to assess the progress achieved by our charity, including:

Review of SPARCs Policies and Procedures
SPARCs aspiration for good governance will entail changing from the current 3 year review to an annual check of 25% of all key current policies and procedures to ensure fitness for purpose.

This annual audit will include examination of the following policies and procedures:

- **Safeguarding vulnerable people**
- **Privacy Policy**
- **Data Protection and GDPR**
- **Equality and Diversity**
- **Risk Management and Covid-19**
- **Financial Controls**
- **Expenses policy**
- **Trustee Code of Conduct and Training.**

Reference and administrative details
Date of registration 11 January 1997
The Registered office is CRMZ Rooms, Kingsway, Widnes, Cheshire.WA8 7QE
Charity Registration Number 1060095
Contact details for the SPARC charity: SPARC [Supporting People Achieving Real Choice]
www.sparcproject.tumblr.com
Chair of Trustees: Mick O' Gorman
Mobile: 07792-110-390
Chair of trustees personal Email: mickogorman@blueyonder.co.uk

Our Trustees: backgrounds and skills
Our Trustees are organized into a Management Committee [or Board] and are responsible for leading the SPARC charity. They are elected annually, and SPARC currently has 11 trustees who meet bi-monthly.

Over 60% of these are people with direct and personal experience of caring for people with learning disabilities. SPARC is also fortunate to have a group of hardworking trustees who provide not only a wealth of practical and personal experience but also offer a range of professional and employment skills like managing small businesses, the banking sector as well educational and social care settings**.**

Our current trustees are:

1. **Mick O' Gorman: [Chair of Trustees]**: Mick is an original founding trustee who first helped to establish the charity back in 1995 with some parents and family carers.
2. **Ken Dobson: [Treasurer**] Ken has worked in commercial banks for over 20 years before he became a NHS Practice Manager for a large inner city GP surgery in Liverpool.
3. **Joe Tottey: [Secretary]** Joe is a professional designer who runs a business in Liverpool.
4. **Phil Haden**: is a lecturer at Riverside College with students with learning disabilities..
5. **Sarah McKeown**: is a f/t support worker for people with learning disabilities.
6. **Kyle Benson**: is an elected representative for our members
7. **Daniel Moore**: is a family carer with a wealth of practical experience in retail.
8. **Tanya Houghton**: is an elected representative for our members
9. **Scott McGhee**: a family carer who Joined the management committee in 2016.
10. **John Campbell**: has been a trustee since 2014 and works as a support worker.
11. **Stephen Roberts**: provides most of the IT support for our charity.

Our employed p/t staff:

● Since the last of SPARCs significant grants came to an end in 2015-2016, we have been largely dependent upon a team of x 9 p/t sessional staff. These p/t staff work on a casual/sessional and hourly basis as and when our projects/services require inputs and available funds allow.
● The staff and volunteers are currently supervised by a hardworking p/t Team Leader, Catherine Mannion, who reports directly to the Chair of Trustees.
● The lack of f/t staff has been a serious drawback to SPARC as a small organization and has hindered our capacity to plan strategically and engage with potential new contracts, commissioners and grant funders. This is a key point to be addressed in the coming year.

Our Volunteers:

● Our 17 wonderful volunteers each offer at least x 3 hrs. per week and most of them provide in excess of 6 hours to SPARC.
● They have been genuinely invaluable to the charity and particularly during the Covid-19 emergency.
● The Trustees would like to put on the official record their gratitude and genuine thanks to our volunteers for their fantastic support provided to the members during the last 12 months.

Structure, Governance and Management

Nature of the Governing Documents and Constitution of the Charity
The SPARC is a registered unincorporated charity governed by a constitution. Trustees are appointed by the existing trustee board through a vote which staff and member

The Trustees also consider the future need of the charity when looking to add the group of Trustees. Having regard to the particular skills required at each stage of the charity's development. New Trustees are given a period of induction and continues training opportunities are made available to all Trustees.
The day-to-day operations of the charity are governed by Trustees who are directly engaged in the activity of the charity. Operational and tactical decisions are made by this group.
The direction and strategy are discussed at a regular Trustees meeting.

Independent Examiner
Malcolm Wright, Elpizo Limited, Chartered Accountants, 13 Village Road, Higher Bebington Wirral, CH63 8PP

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities
The charity trustees are responsible for preparing a trustees' annual report and financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).
The law applicable to charities requires the charity trustees to prepare financial statements for each year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable group for that period. In preparing the 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
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the applicable Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations, and the provisions of the Trust deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.
The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the charity and financial information included on the charity's website in accordance with legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements.

This report was approved by the board of Trustees on 13 July 2022

Signed:

M. O'Gorman
Chairman/Trustee

Supporting People Achieving Real Choice
Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of the Charity
Report of the Independent Examiners to the Trustees on the account of the Charity for the year ended 31 March 2022

I report on the financial statement of the charitable company on page 16 to 23 for the year ended 31 March 2022.
This report is made solely to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Section 145 of the Charities Act 2011. My examination has been undertaken so that I might state to the charity's trustees those matters I am required to state to them in an Independent Examiner's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, I do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and charity's trustees as a body, for my examination, for this report, or for the opinions I have formed.

Respective responsibilities of the Trustees and Examiner
The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Charities Act") and that an independent examination is needed.
It is my responsibility to:
• examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
• to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act, and
• to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of opinion and scope of work undertaken
My examination was carried out in accordance to general directions given by the charity commission. An examination includes a review of accounting records, kept by the charity and a comparison of accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items of disclosures in the accounts and seeks explanations from the Trustees concerning any such matters. The procedure undertaken does not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit. Consequently, no opinion is given to whether the accounts present a true and fair view and report is limited to the matters set out in the statement below.

Independent Examiner's Statement
In connection with examination, no matters have come to my attention.

1. Which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements;
   • to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
   • to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act have not been met; or
2. To which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Malcolm Wright - Chartered Accountant
Elpizo Limited, 13 Village Road, Higher Bebington, Wirral CH63 8PP

The date upon which my opinion is expressed is: 13 July 2022

Supporting People Achieving Real Choice
Statement of Financial Activities
For the year ended 31 March 2022

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds 2022 £	Restricted Funds 2022 £	Total Funds 2022 £	Last Year Total Funds 2021 £
Income					
Donations and legacies	2	19,704	-	19,704	19,012
Income from charitable activities	3	-	25,100	25,100	42,866
Total Income		**19,704**	**25,100**	**44,804**	**61,878**
Expenditure					
Expenditure on charitable activities	4	15,035	33,196	48,231	48,224
Governance	5	3,030	-	3,030	600
Total expenditure		**18,065**	**33,196**	**51,261**	**48,824**
Net income/(expenditure) for the year		**1,639**	**(8,096)**	**(6,457)**	**13,054**
Gross transfer between funds		**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Net movement in funds		**1,639**	**(8,096)**	**(6,457)**	**13,054**
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward		**4,803**	**17,630**	**22,433**	**9,379**
Total funds carried forward		**6,442**	**9,534**	**15,976**	**22,433**

The net movement in funds to above in the net incoming resources as defined in the Statement of Recommendation Practice for Accounting and reporting issued by the Charity Commission for England and Wales and is reconciled to the total funds as shown in the Balance Sheet on page 18 as required by the said statement.

All activities derive from continuing operation

The notes on page 19 to 23 form an integral part of these accounts

Supporting People Achieving Real Choice
Statement of Financial Activities
Analysis of prior year total funds as required by paragraph 4.2 of Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP)

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds 2021 £	Restricted Funds 2021 £	Total Funds 2021 £
Income				
Donations and legacies	2	19,012	-	19,012
Income from charitable activities	3	-	42,866	42,866
Total Income		**19,012**	**42,866**	**61,878**
Expenditure				
Expenditure on charitable activities	4	18,382	29842	48,224
Governance	5	600	-	600
Total expenditure		**18,982**	**29,842**	**48,824**
Net income/(expenditure) for the year		**30**	**13,024**	**13,054**
Gross transfer between funds		**-**	**-**	**-**
Net movement in funds		**30**	**13,024**	**13,054**
Reconciliation of funds:				
Total funds brought forward		**4,773**	**4,606**	**9,379**
Total funds carried forward		**4,803**	**17,630**	**22,433**

All activities derive from continuing operation

The notes on page 19 to 23 form an integral part of these accounts

Supporting People Achieving Real Choice
Balance Sheet
As at 31 March 2022

	Notes	2022 £	2022 £	2021 £	2021 £
Current Assets					
Cash at the bank and in hand		19,998		24,609	
Total current assets		**19,998**		**24,609**	
Creditors: -					
Amount due within one year	9	(4,022)		(2,176)	
Net current assets			**15,976**		22,433
Net assets			**15,976**		**22,433**
The funds of the charity					
Restricted income funds					
Restricted funds			6,442		4,803
Unrestricted income funds					
Unrestricted revenue accumulated funds			9,534		17,630
Total charity funds			**15,976**		**22,433**

Approved by the board of Trustees on 13 July 2022 and signed on their behalf by:

M. O'Gorman
Chairman/Trustee

The notes on page 19 to 23 form an integral part of these accounts

1. Accounting policies

The principal accounting policies adopted, judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty in the preparation of the financial statements are as follows:

a) Basis of preparation

The accounts (financial statements) have been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant note(s) to these accounts. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) issued on 16 July 2014 and the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011.
The trust constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102.

b) Preparation of the accounts on a going concern basis

The financial statements are prepared on a going concern. The Charity is entirely dependent on continuing grant and donation support and as a consequence the going concern basis is also dependent on that continuing financial support.

c) Income

Income is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the item(s) of income have been met, it is probable that the income will be received, and the amount can be measured reliably.
Income from government and other grants, whether 'capital' grants or 'revenue' grants, is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the grants have been met, it is probable that the income will be received, and the amount can be measured reliably and is not deferred.
Income received in advance of the provision of specified services is deferred until the criteria for income recognition are met.

d) Donated services and facilities

Donated professional services and donated facilities are recognised as income when the charity has control over the item, any conditions associated with the donated item have been met, the receipt of economic benefit from the use by the charity of the item is probable and that economic benefit can be measured reliably. In accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102), the general volunteer time is not recognised and refer to the trustees' annual report for more information about their contribution.

On receipt, donated professional services and donated facilities are recognised on the basis of the value of the gift to the charity which is the amount the charity would have been willing to pay to obtain services or facilities of equivalent economic benefit on the open market; a corresponding amount is then recognised in expenditure in the period of receipt.

e) Interest receivable

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the bank.

f) Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are available to spend on activities that further any of the purposes of the charity.

g) Expenditure and irrecoverable VAT

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required, and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is classified under the following activity headings:

- Costs of raising funds comprise the consists of commercial trading.
- Expenditure on charitable activities includes the costs of activities undertaken to further the purposes of the charity and their associated support costs
- Other expenditure represents those items not falling into any other heading.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

h) Allocation of support costs

Support costs are those functions that assist the work of the charity but do not directly undertake charitable activities. Support costs include back office costs, finance, personnel, payroll and governance costs which support the charitable activities. These costs have been allocated between costs of raising funds and expenditure on charitable activities. The bases on which support costs have been allocated are set out in note1.

i) Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

j) Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

k) Creditors and provisions

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimating reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

l) Financial instruments

The charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are recognised at transaction value.

2 Income from donations and legacies

Donations	**2022 £**	**2021 £**
Direct payments - individuals	19,704	19,012
	19,704	**19,012**

The Trust benefits from the involvement and enthusiastic support of its many volunteers, details of which are given in our annual report. In accordance with FRS 102 and the Charities SORP (FRS 102), the economic contribution of general volunteers is not recognised in the accounts.

3 Income from charitable activities

	Funds 2022 £	**Funds 2021 £**
Income		
Grants from charitable organisations	25,100	42,866
Total income from charitable activities	**25,100**	**42,866**

4 Analysis of expenditure on charitable activities

	2022 £	**2021 £**
Wages	25,949	16,513
Sessional staff	7,247	22,804
Training	1,848	1,765
Venue hires	5,802	1,110
Donation	-	250
Equipment expensed	-	800
Travel	1,100	100
Insurance	656	250
Volunteer exp.	-	600
General admin expenses (Note 5)	5,629	4,033
Total expenditure on charitable activities	**48,231**	**48,224**

5 Analysis of governance and support costs

The charity initially identifies the costs of its support functions. It then identifies those costs which relate to the governance function. Having identified its governance cost, the remaining support costs together with the governance costs are allocated to charitable activities undertaken (see note 4) in the year. Refer to the table below for the basis for apportionment and the analysis of support and governance costs:

Analysis of support and governance costs

	General support	Governance Function	Total	Basis of apportionment
	£	£	£	
General office	5,629	-	5,629	Pro rata to staff full-time equivalents
Administration services	-	2,370	2,370	Governance
Independent Examiner	-	660	660	Governance
Total	**5,629**	**3,030**	**8,659**	

6 Sessional staff costs, trustee remuneration and expenses

The majority of charitable services were provided on a sessional basis.
The charity trustees were not paid or received any other benefits from employment with charity as trustees in the year (20201: £nil) neither were they reimbursed expenses during the year (2021: £nil). No charity trustees received payment for professional or other services supplied to the charity (2021: £nil).
There were no transactions with connected persons in the year.

7 Staff costs and numbers

The charity had two employees in this year and in 2021.
Total remuneration paid in the year to 31 March 2022 was £25,949

8 Taxation

The charity is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within section 505 of the Taxes Act 1988 or section 252 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that these are applied to its charitable objects.

9 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2022	2021
	£	£
Accrued expenses	660	600
PAYE	2,862	1,076
Other creditors	500	500
	4,022	**2,176**

10 Contingent assets – legacy income

As at 31 March 2022 the charity had not been notified of any legacy income or prospective legacy income.

11 Analysis of charitable funds

Analysis of movements in unrestricted funds

The charity has only one unrestricted general fund. The movements in that fund are shown in the Statement of Financial Activities.

All of the net assets apply to the one unrestricted general fund except for the share of cash which is held for the benefit of the restricted fund.

The charity has one restricted fund which covered by cash in the bank at the end of the year.

SUPPORTING PEOPLE ACHIEVING REAL CHOICE

England & Wales - Charity number 1060095

Accounts

Registered Charity Number 1060095

SUPPORTING PEOPLE ACHIEVING REAL CHOICE

REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED

31 MARCH 2021

elpizo
Chartered Accountants
elpizoaccountancy.co.uk

Supporting People Achieving Real Choice
Reports and accounts

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Supporting People Achieving Real Choice
The report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2021

Introduction
The trustees present their annual report and financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2021. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the accounts and comply with the charity's trust deed, the Charities Act 2011, and the 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 2015).
The board of trustees are satisfied with the performance of the charity during the year and the position at 31 March 2021 and consider that the charity is in a strong position to continue its activities during the coming year, and the charity's assets are adequate to fulfil its obligations.

Purpose and Activities of the Charity
The charity's objectives are:
The relief of people with learning disabilities in the area defined in clause 2 (hereinafter called the area of benefit). It shall advance the education of such persons to preserve their good health, relieve their sickness and poverty and provide recreational facilities in the interests of social welfare for such persons with the object of improving their quality of life.

Activities
Background to SPARC
SPARC ["Supporting People Achieving Real Choice"] aims to meet the needs of young people with a learning disability. The charity was first established as an informal group in July 1995 by a small group of parents and SPARC became a registered charity on January 1st, 1997.

Our name, "Supporting People Achieving Real Choice" [SPARC], describes how our small charity aims to provide practical opportunities for people with a learning disability to make **reasoned and achievable choices about the direction and aspirations** they may have in their lives. Our charitable activities states:
"SPARC is a charity which supports people with learning disabilities. Our services in the recent past have been in the area of employment and training in independent travel skills. Our main areas of current activity are concerned with personal safety training and improving the health and welfare of our members"
The social context of SPARC: our members and the communities where they live
Supporting People Achieving Real Choice" (SPARC) is based in the borough of Halton which sits on the banks of the River Mersey. Our charity operates in working class communities that fall within the IMD defined most deprived areas nationally. Halton has a population of 127,000 and the latest Indices of Multiple Deprivation: IMD (Dec: 2019), has ranked the borough 13th within the 10% most deprived local authorities in England. In Halton, 26.4 % of local children live in poverty and in the Riverside and Kingsway wards, where most of our SPARC members live, these communities have experienced historically high levels of deprivation over many decades. The last Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Halton reported that:

- 9.6% residents are defined as fuel poor
- 29% of pupils receive free school meals
- 30% of households are in debt

The impact of this intergenerational social inequality in terms of employment & income, health & disability, education & skills, crime and barriers to housing and services**, is always exacerbated for the most vulnerable groups in the community, like people with learning disabilities**. Halton has lost £64 million in government funding since 2010 and the application of stricter eligibility rules by hard pressed councils means it has become increasingly difficult for most of SPARCs members to access local social care services. From SPARCs last in-house survey of its families conducted in March 2021, we know that **72% of our members are currently not on any official council registers and are therefore effectively "out of service"** and without any access to statutory provision.

Achievements

Over the last 26 years of its existence, **SPARC has worked hard to fill this gap in services** and improve the quality of life of its 336 members. As our charity enters 2021- 2022, it has now reached a key stage in its development if it wants to increase its capacity to deliver much more for its members. These are the central points examined in this year's annual report and will form the focus of our business planning during the next year.
With its limited available resources SPARC has always operated a "lean and light" model of delivering services which are fit for purpose and can meet the practical needs of its members.
The following infographic identifies the **four areas of social need** that the members have identified as their priorities and sets the focus for SPARCs projects and services.

The four areas are:

1. Skills to keep people safe in the community
2. Improving their health and welfare by better access to local services
3. Learning skills for the world of work
4. Exploring social enterprise

To identify the four areas of social need, SPARC used a range of feedback tools to collect evidence from its members and their families, including the following:

- **SPARCs annual in-house "Quality of life" survey of the members in March 2021**
- **SPARCs "Ideas Clearing House" online event held on January 11th, 2021**
- **A Feasibility Study [FS] conducted by Helen Middleton and sponsored by the Lloyds Bank Foundation & looking at the Real Comics media as a potential social enterprise.**
- **The "Good Governance" audit by Phil Shackell and Constructive Partnerships Ltd to examine possible relevant quality kite marks to be adopted by SPARC to improve governance and the delivery of our services.**
- **A range of in-house tracking & screening tools used by SPARC including: : the HASI profile: the LDSQ assessment tool: Personal Information Profile [PIP]: the Everyday Living & Functional skills assessment [EFS] and the ASDAN profile to assess progress made by our members.**

Other recent national research about social inequality and learning disability

- **Covid and mortality rates for people with Learning Disabilities:** Recent ONS data on the impact of Covid-19 on people with learning disabilities showing mortality rates 6 times higher than the national average population. .[ONS data: March 2021].

- **Early Death rates**: People with a learning disability experience premature deaths which are on average 18 years earlier than the general population ["The NHS Digital 2019l].

- **Prisons**: The Prison Reform Trust **"Nobody Knows"** report shows that **28% of the prison population in England** have a learning disability because vulnerable people are not being screened properly at the point of arrest are trapped in the Criminal Justice System [CJS].

- **Employment**: Only 5% of people with a learning disability in England [a population of at least 1.8 million] have paid employment although it is recognized having a job is the best form of 'natural" social inclusion for this group [BASE: report in 2019]

The social impact of having a learning disability.
Approximately 78% of SPARCs current membership are people aged 18 -25 years with a Moderate Learning Disability [MLD] , and 22% have more Profound and Complex Learning Disabilities [PMLD] .

It is important to note that although the individual profiles of the members of SPARC may well exhibit different types of specific learning disability, [like for example, a person having a diagnosed MLD or PMLD], in reality it is the social impact of having a learning disability which is the main focus of SPARCs work.
For example, for our members who have a Moderate Learning Disabilities [MLD] the majority are not currently able to access council social care services. This is a direct result of the last decade of austerity and the rationing of services by councils. The application of stricter rules of eligibility for accessing services means that **72% of SPARCs members are effectively out of service and "off the radar" of the statutory agencies until they experience a crisis in their lives.**

Having a learning disability means people have a greater difficulty acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills. They may also have associated speech and language delay, low self-esteem, low levels of concentration and underdeveloped social skills. Thus, the consequences of having a learning disability are often **multifaceted** and can include:

- Have limited skills in reading, writing and numeracy
- Limited problem-solving skills and inability to generalize learning.
- Poor auditory/visual memory and speech and language delay.
- Emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- Lack of understanding to manage potential risk and exploitation.

If we take, for example, the issue of literacy skills, the average **reading age of a SPARC member is approx. 7-9 years,** and they will consequently find it difficult to:

- Complete an online job application form
- Book an appointment for a health check with a GP

- Read instructions for a medical prescription
- Understand their rights in court when trying to navigate the criminal justice system.
- Difficulty in understanding public health information about how to stay safe from Covid-19

Having a learning disability can also **"cloak and disguise"** other underlying medical conditions like poor mental health or Type 2 Diabetes. This problem of **"dual diagnoses"** and additional but undetected health problems affects **58% of our SPARC members and is a key factor in the health inequalities and early death rates for people with a learning disability in the UK.**

Many of our members lead lonely lives and are vulnerable to being exploited by criminal gangs, who groom them as **"Fake Friends"** [called **"Mate Crime "**] for involvement in drug networks. Our last survey of members reports that 21% have experience of contact with organised gangs whilst 38% of our families use illegal loan sharks or payday loans. This leaves them trapped with problem debt and food poverty, where 36% of our families now rely upon food banks.

SPARCs annual in-house "Quality of Life" survey of its members [March/2021]
Each year SPARC conducts its annual in-house "Quality of Life" survey of all of its members and their families. The response rate from people for this year's survey **[March 2021**] was an impressive **86%** and has helped to identify the social need and priorities of our 336 members. SPARC used a structured questionnaire with 10 questions that measured experiences in people's lives like: for example, their access to local services, aspirations for employment and the levels of disability hate crime they may have experienced.

Beyond the immediate impact of Covid-19 our members have also experienced the difficulties of living through the last decade of economic austerity. The rationing of statutory services and the application of much stricter rules for eligibility by hard pressed councils, means that 72% of SPARC members are effectively **"off the radar" to statutory services.** They are not only at increased risk of higher levels of poverty, loneliness, and poor physical and mental health but in recent years have also been targeted by criminal gangs for grooming and exploitation.

From this survey and the feedback from the Ideas Clearing House events, the members have identified their 4 main areas of social need are:

1. **Keeping people safe in the community**
2. **Improving their health and welfare by better access to local services**
3. **Learning skills for the world of work**
4. **Exploring social enterprise**

The findings from this year's survey reported that:

- 72% of our members are not any council learning disability register and therefore cannot access social care services
- 27% of our families are hesitant or have rejected Covid-19 vaccines

- 76 % of our members have an average reading age of just 7-9 years and therefore cannot engage with most NHS and Public Health platforms based upon the formal written word.
- 63% of families now get all their "information and news" from social media platforms
- 83% of our members are long term unemployed although 64% said they would like a paid job but only 7% have ever visited a Job Centre.
- 23% cannot use public transport like a local bus or a train independently
- 75% are trapped at home for up to 5 days each week and experience severe loneliness
- 58% have associated poor health like diabetes, obesity and poor mental health but only 13% have seen their GP for an annual NHS health check.
- 65% have experienced disability hate crime but only 3% have reported incidents to the police
- 21% have reported attempted grooming and exploitation by criminal gangs and loan sharks
- 36% of our families now rely upon local food banks
- 38% currently use payday loans or loan sharks but only 12% have ever had a professional welfare benefits assessment.
- 84% of our members had regular contact with SPARCs services during the lockdowns.
- 86% said they liked the new flexible delivery of services by SPARC during the lockdowns

The "SPARC Way": how our organisation works

SPARC is a family led organisation where 60% of its serving Trustees are carers and it is this constituency that ensures our services are focussed on meeting the practical needs of people with learning disabilities. Our working ethos is called the **"SPARC Way"** and these states:

"We believe our most valuable resource are the ordinary people that use our services. The is the SPARC Way."

The SPARC model: "Re-Skilling" people in Social Resilience [or "Mental Toughness" training].
As a result of its experience accrued over the last 26 years, SPARC has concluded the most effective intervention we can provide to help improve the quality of life of our members is by embracing a **skills model** and **Social Resilience** training [sometimes called **"mental toughness"** skills].

We know that skills are a commodity which is valued by society and is therefore a very useful currency to help improve the life- chances of individuals. These include the skills, knowledge and confidence needed to manage the **normal "gritty" life challenges and transactions** of living in a poor community already under social stress.

Most of our new members have been inadvertently **"De-Skilled"** by a previous lack of opportunities to learn these basic life skills, for example: managing personal safety, using public transport and how to access local services like the NHS and Welfare Rights.
This deficit in skills is critical, because it is difficult to envisage any meaningful level of social inclusion for our members without possession of these tools for life. Possessing appropriate life skills means our members can, for example, manage personal risk on the street and feel confident enough to book an appointment with your local GP to get an annual health check.

These life skills are the basis of all of SPARC's services which are influenced by a number of key writers and research.

The key influences in SPARCs model of social resilience training:

• **Dr. Wolf Wolfensberger**: pioneered the model of "Normalization" which says that people with
disabilities are devalued by denying them ordinary life conditions and social relationships.

• **Marc Gold:** pioneered the model of "Try another Way" where individuals with the most severe disabilities have the potential to learn new skills when these are broken down into smaller steps.

• **Dr. Peter Clough**: acknowledged as an authority on the model of mental toughness and particularly the four key components of Control, Challenge, Commitment and Confidence.

• **Daniel Goleman:** popularized the model of emotional intelligence which has highlighted the "other" social skills which largely determine the success of people in life other than just the crude measurement of "I.Q". For example, the ability to manage social relationships, etc.

• **Dr. David Shenk:** the ideal that we all have the "capacity for genius" within us but we all need to have the opportunity to learn new skills and knowledge within a structured environment for this learning potential to be realized.

• **Yvonne Roberts and the Young Foundation:** researched "Social Grit" skills needed to deal with challenges and adversity encountered in life. Identified the four [4] SEED competencies which are: S = social skills: E= emotional resilience to be able to cope with rebuffs: E = for enterprise and creativity: and D = for discipline.

SPARCs current portfolio of projects and responding to Covid-19
SPARC currently provides a **suite of x 7 p/t projects**, supported by a mix of **grants, volunteers and self-funded provision by SPARC itself.** When external grant funding ends from a sponsor, SPARC has a policy of trying to sustain some degree of service with the support from our volunteers and/or funds from its small reserves.

We are pleased to report that despite the pressures of working under the difficult conditions that have prevailed under the Covid-19 health emergency, **only one of SPARCs**

seven projects/servicers was mothballed during the lockdowns. This was the "Rock The Mock" project which we hope to reintroduce again in the summer of 2021 when we hope most social distancing rules will be finally relaxed.

Moreover, it is evident that our charity has also learned a great deal from the experience of having to reconfigure our services under Covid-19. SPARC has now embraced a new and flexible model to deliver services based on face-to-face group work when this is possible coupled with online Zoom sessions when lockdowns prevail and 1:1 individual case work in the field with isolated members in the community.

Our current portfolio of part-time projects/services, are as follows:

1. The Always Here 4 U project: recently funded by Awards For All and the government's emergency Covid fund: During the Covid-19 lockdowns this project has provided crucial emergency support for our members with online sessions, training in how to stay safe and the delivery of food parcels. This has supported 278 people during the last year. The current funding finished in Jan/2021 and SPARC is now seeking a new grant to develop this important project.

2. The Enhance programme: funded by the Lloyds Bank Foundation: SPARC has been kindly funded for a 1- year grant from 2020-21 under the Enhance programme to help build the resilience and sustainability of the charity. SPARC is currently in the process of re-applying for further funding under this same programme.

3. The Rock The Mock project: funded by the Peoples Health Trust: Provides a mobile dry bar to serve mock -tails and live music roadshow events as a fun alternative to binge drinking by young people on the street.

4. The Ventures Club: Direct Payments funded. A new activity for people who are isolated in the community and to meet new friends and get involved in fun projects like gardening and keep fit.

5. The Work LINK project: self-funded by SPARC Provides employment opportunities and training in skills for work.

6. The Real Comics and Films project: self-funded by SPARC: This exciting project designs accessible information for hard-to-reach groups using animated comics with "moving pictures".

7. The Filthy Fingers project: supported by the Postcode Lottery and the Baily Thomas Trust: Provides social prescribing support for people to grow food from "pot to plate" at home and promote good nutrition and diet.

A review of Covid-19: a year of challenges and a steep learning curve for SPARC

It should be acknowledged that at the time of the first national lockdown in March 2020, SPARC was initially paralyzed by the suddenness and severe risks that Covid-19 posed to our vulnerable members. At the time and like most other organisations SPARC did not have an "off the shelf " risk management plan to deal with this sort of national health emergency.

Instead, SPARC had to design its response as it moved into a new world of lockdowns and learn new ways to support our members. As we now reflect back on this period it is fair to say that our charity has done remarkably well in meeting the challenge. We are now more resilient from this experience and SPARC has certainly learned many new skills along the way.

During the pandemic people with learning disabilities across the UK have been shown to be particularly vulnerable to the coronavirus. This is verified by not only SPARCs own in-house data but also national research by Public Health England and ONS data showing infection and mortality rates running at least 6 times higher than the general population.

It was with the two new staff appointments kindly funded by the Enhance grant from the Lloyds Bank Foundation that SPARC was really able to stabilize its response to the pandemic. In SPARCs very first Covid message posted on our charity website at www.sparccharity.co.ok we told our members that:

"SPARC wants to reassure YOU that WE are ALL in this together and will be stronger by staying together. This is the SPARC Way. SPARC will continue to support its members and their families in these very difficult circumstances until we all come out of this at the other end."

A snapshot of the support provided by SPARC to its members during the pandemic includes the following services:

- Organised 83 weekly food parcel deliveries:
- Provided weekly online zoom sessions:
- Established the "Check –In" emergency contact
- Supported families through bereavement and funerals:
- Liaised with Test & Trace for isolated families
- Countered the criminal exploitation of members by gangs & loan sharks:
- Developed the digital Real Comics media to help our members to understand how to stay safe during lockdowns.

The Real Comics media has undoubtedly helped to save lives by providing accessible information which is user friendly to the 76 % of our members with an average reading age of just 7-9 years and who cannot engage with mainstream public health information that is still largely based upon the formal written word.

Our annual "A Good Friend of SPARC" recognition awards: the nominations

Every year our charity recognises those individuals who have made the difference to SPARC with their work and passion. These awards are a simple way to honour people who have made their own different contributions to our charity.

This could be a: Member of SPARC: or a Trustee, or outstanding Volunteer: staff member : or an external professional providing advice to SPARC . In this year of Covid-19 there are far too many people to mention everybody but the following individuals have been recognised for being **" A Good Friend of SPARC".**

The nominations this year are:

- Catherine Mannion: for being an outstanding member of staff
- Mike Roberts: for his role as a hardworking volunteer
- Ella Sips: for ongoing external professional support from the Lloyds Bank Foundation
- Tanya Houghton: for being an active member of SPARC
- George Thornton: who sadly died recently & was a longstanding Trustee

Financial Review

Policies on reserves

Adequate reserves are maintained to fund the charity's activities for at least six months forward.

Availability and adequacy of assets of the funds

The board of Trustee is satisfied that the charity assets in each fund are available and adequate to fulfil its obligations in respect of each fund.

During the last year SPARC secured a number of successful grant applications into its Restricted Income from the People's Health Trust, Awards For All, Bailey Thomas, Postcode Lottery and most significantly from the Lloyds Bank Foundation that kindly awarded a grant of £33K under its Enhance programme to support SPARC to become more resilient in the future.

SPARC has also increased its Unrestricted income via its new Ventures Club, funded via Direct Payments and some recent commissions for the Real Comics media.

We are therefore now more confident that SPARC has turned a corner and is more financially stable going into the future.

Our funders: past and present: SPARC has a good record of managing its grants

Over the last 26 years, SPARC has achieved a good track record of managing successful projects and with funding from a wide range of sponsors and trusts. All our end of grant reports submitted to our sponsors have been positive, including:

- The Lloyds Bank Foundation
- Awards For All
- Big Lottery
- Peoples Health Trust,
- Morgan Foundation,
- NHS Halton CCG
- NHS Liverpool CCG
- Bailey Thomas Trust
- The Postcode Lottery

SPARC will continue in 2021-2022 to apply for funding from other large trusts but it will also seek to increase its unrestricted income from developing potential new social enterprise opportunities like developing its Real Comics media.

Transactions and Financial position

The charity's income in the year was £61,878 (2020: £50,136) after expenditure of £48,824 (2020: £49,361) a surplus of £13,054 (2020: £774) is reported. General reserves carried forward amounted to £22,433 (2020: £9,379).

Risk Management

The Trustees have assessed the potential risks to which the charity may be exposed and in particular those related to the operations and financing of SPARC.
It is satisfied that by reviewing its agreed plan it has mitigated its exposure to any potential risk.

Plans for future periods

The future of SPARC: the role of our "Critical Friends".

With the recent professional support by our **"critical friends"** like **Constructive Partnerships Ltd and the Lloyds Bank Foundation**, the members & Trustees have agreed six key objectives for 2021-2022:

These relate to the following organizational objectives identified in SPARC's business planning, to:

1. Adopt relevant quality kite marks for improving governance and the quality of its services.
2. Move SPARC as a registered charity into a Charitable Incorporated Organisation [CIO].
3. Develop its Real Comics media as a social enterprise & secure new income streams and provide employment opportunities for its members
4. Improve marketing skills and online influencing for SPARCs products and services
5. Develop further flexible services combining 1:1 case work, group work and online sessions.
6. Appoint a full-time Project Manager to take overall responsibility for its services, drive business planning and establish a permanent office.

Quality controls and improving governance

Although keeping our members safe during Covid-19 has clearly been SPARCs top priority , significant progress has also been made in our aspirations for "good governance" .The recent external audit kindly conducted in March/2021 by Constructive Partnerships Ltd, as an external "critical friend" , assessed the quality of our board leadership & has led to an agreed action plan.

SPARC will now build on its existing framework and also adopt appropriate quality kite marks in both its governance as well the delivery of its services for people with learning disabilities. We will measure progress achieved by using the following milestones:

- **SPARC already has in place recognised internal screening/assessment tools like the HASI, LDSQ and ASDAN profiles for quality control over services but will also consider benchmarking with NICE accreditation.**
- **In April 2021 SPARC purchased additional "Trustees Indemnity Insurance" from BIHB Ltd to underpin our Risk Management policy for the Board.**

• SPARC will move towards becoming "incorporated" as a CIO in 2021-2022.
• There is a rolling annual audit each year of 25% of all key policies and procedures like Safeguarding, etc, to ensure fitness for purpose.
• The "Good Governance Code" for small charities has been adopted and includes regular in-service training for the Board.
• SPARC is awaiting the national developments regarding PQASSO and the Trusted Charity kite mark for standards in good governance.

Reference and administrative details

Date of registration	11 January 1997
The Registered office is	CRMZ Rooms, Kingsway, Widnes, Cheshire.WA8 7QE
Charity Registration Number	1060095

Contact details for the SPARC charity: SPARC [Supporting People Achieving Real Choice]
www.sparcproject.tumblr.com
Chair of Trustees: Mick O' Gorman
Mobile: 07792-110-390
Chair of trustees personal Email: mickogorman@blueyonder.co.uk

Our Trustees:
Our Trustees are organised into a Management Committee [or Board] and are responsible for leading the SPARC charity. They are elected annually, and SPARC currently has 11 trustees who meet bi-monthly. Over 60% of these are people with direct and personal experience of caring for people with learning disabilities. SPARC is fortunate to have a group of hardworking trustees who provide not only a wealth of practical and personal experience but also offer a range of professional and employment skills like managing small businesses, the banking sector as well educational and social care settings. Our current trustees are:

Mick O'Gorman – Chair
Ken Dobson – Business & Financial Planning
Joe Tottey - Treasurer
Phil Haden – elected member
John Campbell-elected member
Kyle Benson – membership
Daniel Moore – Family liaison
Tanya Houghton– elected member
Scott McGhee – elected member
Sarah McKeon - Secretary
Stephen Roberts-elected member

The Board of trustees held regular meetings across the year. Minutes from these meetings can be provided on application.

Our employed p/t staff:
● Since the last of SPARCs significant grants from the Big Lottery came to an end in 2015, we have been largely dependent upon a team of x 9 p/t sessional staff. The p/t staff work on a casual/sessional and hourly basis as and when our projects/services require inputs.
● The staff and volunteers are currently supervised by a hardworking p/t Team Leader who reports directly to the Chair of Trustees.

● The lack of f/t staff has been a serious drawback to SPARC as a small organisation and has hindered our capacity to plan strategically and engage with potential new contracts, commissioners and grant funders. This is key point to be addressed in the coming year.

Our Volunteers:

● Our 17 wonderful volunteers each offer at least x 3 hrs. per week and most of them provide in excess of 6 hours to SPARC.
● They have been genuinely invaluable to the charity during the Covid-19 emergency.
● The Trustees would like to put on the official record their gratitude and genuine thanks to our volunteers for their fantastic support provided to the members during the last 12 months.

The "good governance" audit by Phil Shackell and Constructive Partnerships Ltd

From the recent audit led by Phil Shackell and Constructive Partnerships Ltd , SPARC is confident that it now has a clear and coherent strategy in its drive towards achieving good governance for the charity. The Trustees and Members of SPARC have now agreed on an on-going development plan for "good governance" to help maintain the trust and confidence of our members, the public, commissioners and potential funders.

Our plans for 2021-2022 will prioritise areas like: Organisational purpose, Board effectiveness and Leadership, Integrity and Decision making, Risk management, Diversity and Openness and Accountability.
SPARC will feedback on its work to Phil Shackell and Constructive Partnerships at the end of 2022 to assess the progress achieved by our charity, including:
1. SPARC becoming "incorporated" as a CIO in 2021-2022.
2. Action planning the key steps regarding the "Good Governance Code" for small charities.
3. Decisions on the PQASSO and the Trusted Charity kite mark for standards in good governance.

Review of SPARCs Policies and Procedures

SPARCs aspiration for good governance will entail changing from the current 3 year review to an annual check of 25% of all key current policies and procedures to ensure fitness for purpose.
This annual audit will include examination of the following policies and procedures:

● Safeguarding vulnerable people
● Privacy Policy
● Data Protection and GDPR
● Equality and Diversity
● Risk Management and Covid-19
● Financial Controls
● Expenses policy
● Trustee Code of Conduct and Training

Structure, Governance and Management

Nature of the Governing Documents and Constitution of the Charity

The SPARC is a registered unincorporated charity governed by a constitution. Trustees are appointed by the existing trustee board through a vote which staff and member

The Trustees also consider the future need of the charity when looking to add the group of Trustees. Having regard to the particular skills required at each stage of the charity's development. New Trustees are given a period of induction and continues training opportunities are made available to all Trustees.

The day-to-day operations of the charity are governed by Trustees who are directly engaged in the activity of the charity. Operational and tactical decisions are made by this group.

The direction and strategy are discussed at a regular Trustees meeting.

Independent Examiner

Malcolm Wright, Elpizo Limited, Chartered Accountants, 13 Village Road, Higher Bebington Wirral, CH63 8PP

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The charity trustees are responsible for preparing a trustees' annual report and financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities requires the charity trustees to prepare financial statements for each year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable group for that period. In preparing the 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
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

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

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the applicable Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations, and the provisions of the Trust deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the charity and financial information included on the charity's website in accordance with legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements.

This report was approved by the board of Trustees on 9 July 2021

Signed:

M. O'Gorman
Chairman/Trustee

Supporting People Achieving Real Choice
Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of the Charity
Report of the Independent Examiners to the Trustees on the account of the Charity for the year ended 31 March 2021

I report on the financial statement of the charitable company on page 18 to 25 for the year ended 31 March 2021.
This report is made solely to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Section 145 of the Charities Act 2011. My examination has been undertaken so that I might state to the charity's trustees those matters I am required to state to them in an Independent Examiner's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, I do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and charity's trustees as a body, for my examination, for this report, or for the opinions I have formed.

Respective responsibilities of the Trustees and Examiner
The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Charities Act") and that an independent examination is needed.
It is my responsibility to:
• examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
• to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act, and
• to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of opinion and scope of work undertaken
My examination was carried out in accordance to general directions given by the charity commission. An examination includes a review of accounting records, kept by the charity and a comparison of accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items of disclosures in the accounts and seeks explanations from the Trustees concerning any such matters. The procedure undertaken does not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit. Consequently, no opinion is given to whether the accounts present a true and fair view and report is limited to the matters set out in the statement below.

Independent Examiner's Statement
In connection with examination, no matters have come to my attention.

1. Which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements;
   • to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
   • to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act have not been met; or
2. To which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Malcolm Wright - Chartered Accountant
Elpizo Limited, 13 Village Road, Higher Bebington, Wirral CH63 8PP

The date upon which my opinion is expressed is: 9 July 2021

Supporting People Achieving Real Choice
Statement of Financial Activities
For the year ended 31 March 2021

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds 2021 £	Restricted Funds 2021 £	Total Funds 2021 £	Last Year Total Funds 2020 £
Income					
Donations and legacies	2	19,012	-	19,012	11,713
Income from charitable activities	3	-	42,866	42,866	38,423
Total Income		**19,012**	**42,866**	**61,878**	**50,136**
Expenditure					
Expenditure on charitable activities	4	18,382	29842	48,224	48,862
Governance	5	600	-	600	500
Total expenditure		**18,982**	**29,842**	**48,824**	**49,362**
Net income/(expenditure) for the year		**30**	**13,024**	**13,054**	**774**
Gross transfer between funds		**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Net movement in funds		**30**	**13,024**	**13,054**	**774**
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward		**4,773**	**4,606**	**9,379**	**8,605**
Total funds carried forward		**4,803**	**17,630**	**22,433**	**9,379**

The net movement in funds to above in the net incoming resources as defined in the Statement of Recommendation Practice for Accounting and reporting issued by the Charity Commission for England and Wales and is reconciled to the total funds as shown in the Balance Sheet on page 19 as required by the said statement.

All activities derive from continuing operation

The notes on page 21 to 25 form an integral part of these accounts

Supporting People Achieving Real Choice
Balance Sheet
As at 31 March 2021

	Notes	2021 £	£	2020 £	£
Current Assets					
Cash at the bank and in hand		24,609		10,379	
Total current assets		**24,609**		**10,379**	
Creditors: -					
Amount due within one year	9	(2,176)		(1,000)	
Net current assets			**22,433**		9,379
Net assets			**22,433**		**9,379**
The funds of the charity					
Restricted income funds					
Restricted funds			4,803		4,773
Unrestricted income funds					
Unrestricted revenue accumulated funds			17,630		4,606
Total charity funds			**22,433**		**9,379**

Approved by the board of Trustees on 9 July 2021 and signed on their behalf by:

M. O'Gorman
Chairman/Trustee

The notes on page 21 to 25 form an integral part of these accounts

Supporting People Achieving Real Choice
Statement of Cash Flows
For the year ended 31 March 2021

	Notes	2021 £	2020 £
Cash used in operating activities	12	14,230	774
Increase in cash and cash equivalents in the year		**14,230**	**774**
Cash and cash equivalent at the beginning of the year		10,379	9,605
Total cash and cash equivalent at the end of the year		**24,609**	**10,379**

1. Accounting policies

The principal accounting policies adopted, judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty in the preparation of the financial statements are as follows:

a) Basis of preparation

The accounts (financial statements) have been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant note(s) to these accounts. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) issued on 16 July 2014 and the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011.
The trust constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102.

b) Preparation of the accounts on a going concern basis

The financial statements are prepared on a going concern. The Charity is entirely dependent on continuing grant and donation support and as a consequence the going concern basis is also dependent on that continuing financial support.

c) Income

Income is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the item(s) of income have been met, it is probable that the income will be received, and the amount can be measured reliably.
Income from government and other grants, whether 'capital' grants or 'revenue' grants, is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the grants have been met, it is probable that the income will be received, and the amount can be measured reliably and is not deferred.
Income received in advance of the provision of specified services is deferred until the criteria for income recognition are met.

d) Donated services and facilities

Donated professional services and donated facilities are recognised as income when the charity has control over the item, any conditions associated with the donated item have been met, the receipt of economic benefit from the use by the charity of the item is probable and that economic benefit can be measured reliably. In accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102), the general volunteer time is not recognised and refer to the trustees' annual report for more information about their contribution.

On receipt, donated professional services and donated facilities are recognised on the basis of the value of the gift to the charity which is the amount the charity would have been willing to pay to obtain services or facilities of equivalent economic benefit on the open market; a corresponding amount is then recognised in expenditure in the period of receipt.

e) Interest receivable

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the bank.

f) Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are available to spend on activities that further any of the purposes of the charity.

g) Expenditure and irrecoverable VAT

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required, and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is classified under the following activity headings:

- Costs of raising funds comprise the consists of commercial trading.
- Expenditure on charitable activities includes the costs of activities undertaken to further the purposes of the charity and their associated support costs
- Other expenditure represents those items not falling into any other heading.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

h) Allocation of support costs

Support costs are those functions that assist the work of the charity but do not directly undertake charitable activities. Support costs include back office costs, finance, personnel, payroll and governance costs which support the charitable activities. These costs have been allocated between costs of raising funds and expenditure on charitable activities. The bases on which support costs have been allocated are set out in note1.

i) Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

j) Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

k) Creditors and provisions

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimating reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

l) Financial instruments

The charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are recognised at transaction value.

2 Income from donations and legacies

Donations	**2021 £**	**2020 £**
Direct payments - individuals	19,012	11,713
	19,012	**11,713**

The Trust benefits from the involvement and enthusiastic support of its many volunteers, details of which are given in our annual report. In accordance with FRS 102 and the Charities SORP (FRS 102), the economic contribution of general volunteers is not recognised in the accounts.

3 Income from charitable activities

	Funds 2021 £	**Funds 2020 £**
Income		
Grants received	42,866	38,423
Total income from charitable activities	**42,866**	**38,423**

4 Analysis of expenditure on charitable activities

	2021 £	**2020 £**
Wages	16,513	-
Sessional staff	22,804	30,627
Training	1,765	9,146
Venue hires	1,110	1,035
Donation	250	-
Equipment expensed	800	1,800
Travel	100	2,000
Insurance	250	250
Volunteer exp.	600	1,455
General admin expenses (Note 5)	4,033	2,549
Total expenditure on charitable activities	**48,224**	**48,862**

5 Analysis of governance and support costs

The charity initially identifies the costs of its support functions. It then identifies those costs which relate to the governance function. Having identified its governance cost, the remaining support costs together with the governance costs are allocated to charitable activities undertaken (see note 4) in the year. Refer to the table below for the basis for apportionment and the analysis of support and governance costs:

Analysis of support and governance costs

	General support	Governance Function	Total	Basis of apportionment
	£	£	£	
General office	4,033	-	4,033	Pro rata to staff full-time equivalents
Independent Examiner	-	600	600	Governance
Total	**4,033**	**600**	**4,633**	

6 Analysis of staff costs, trustee remuneration and expenses, and the cost of key management personnel.

The charity had no full-time permanent employees in the year or the previous year – all services were provided on a sessional basis.

The charity trustees were not paid or received any other benefits from employment with charity as trustees in the year (2020: £nil) neither were they reimbursed expenses during the year (2020: £nil). No charity trustees received payment for professional or other services supplied to the charity (2020: £nil).

There were no transactions with connected persons in the year.

7 Staff Numbers

The charity had two employees in this year and no employees in the previous year. Total remuneration paid in the year to 31 March 2021 was £16,513.

8 Taxation

The charity is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within section 505 of the Taxes Act 1988 or section 252 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that these are applied to its charitable objects.

9 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2021	2020
	£	£
Accrued expenses	600	500
Other creditors	1,576	500
	2,176	**1,000**

10 Contingent assets – legacy income

As at 31 March 2021 the charity had not been notified of any legacy income or prospective legacy income.

11 Analysis of charitable funds

Analysis of movements in unrestricted funds

The charity has only one unrestricted general fund. The movements in that fund are shown in the Statement of Financial Activities.

All of the net assets apply to the one unrestricted general fund except for the share of cash which is held for the benefit of the restricted fund.

The charity has one restricted fund which covered by cash in the bank at the end of the year.

12 Reconciliation of net movement in funds to net cash flow from operating activities

	2021 £	2020 £
Net movement in funds	13,054	8,604
Increase in creditors	1,176	1,000
Net cash provided by operating activities	**14,230**	**9,604**