

FAMILIES INFOCUS (ESSEX)

England & Wales · Charity number 1062311

Details

Other names	INFOCUS (ESSEX), INFOCUS
Status	Registered
Legal form	Charitable company
Company number	03287829
Registered	1997-05-12
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

Address	Families Infocus (Essex) Townfield House 30-33 Townfield Street Chelmsford CM1 1QL
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Website	www.familiesinfocusessex.org.uk

Activities

Objects: TO PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE (AGED 0 TO 25) WITH ANY SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEED OR DISABILITY (SEND) ANYWHERE IN THE GEOGRAPHICAL AREA OF THE COUNTY OF ESSEX, WHICH COMPRISES THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES OF ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL AND THE UNITARY AUTHORITIES OF SOUTHEND ON SEA AND THURROCK, BY ENSURING THAT THEY, THEIR FAMILIES AND CARERS RECEIVE INFORMATION, ADVICE, PRACTICAL AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT. IN PARTICULAR, THROUGH THE PROVISION OF ADVICE, INFORMATION AND SUPPORT TO IMPROVE THE EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF, AND RELIEVE THE POVERTY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SEND, TO ENHANCE THE STABILITY AND QUALITY OF LIFE FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY. A CENTRAL CONSIDERATION WILL BE THE EMOTIONAL NEEDS OF ALL CONCERNED. THE CHARITABLE PURPOSE OF FAMILIES INFOCUS (ESSEX) IS FOR THE PUBLIC BENEFIT AND FALL WITHIN THE DESCRIPTION "THE RELIEF OF THOSE IN NEED, BY REASON OF YOUTH, AGE, ILL-HEALTH, DISABILITY, FINANCIAL HARDSHIP OR OTHER DISADVANTAGE

Activities: To support, strengthen and improve the quality of life for Essex families with children and young people with any special educational need or disability (SEND), requiring quality advice, information, emotional and practical support, especially at the time of diagnosis or varied transition points. Through 'holistic' information, advice and support projects/services and range of family activities.

Classification

- **How:** Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information
- **What:** Education/training, The Advancement Of Health Or Saving Of Lives, Disability, The Prevention Or Relief Of Poverty
- **Who:** Children/young People, People With Disabilities, Other Defined Groups

Geography

- **Area of benefit:** ESSEX
- Essex
- Southend-on-sea
- Thurrock

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£387,444	£326,197	-	-
2024-03-31	£389,070	£440,638	-	-
2023-03-31	£429,790	£440,638	-	-
2022-03-31	£386,029	£355,645	-	-
2021-03-31	£353,650	£324,957	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Clare Boston	Chair	2024-11-19
Katherine Wilkins		2023-09-12
Kathleen Gayton		2025-06-10
MARTIN PETER MERRELL		2013-12-02
Marc Jordan		2021-03-29
Michael Cockerton		2025-04-24
Susan Jane Dewar		2023-01-16

FAMILIES INFOCUS (ESSEX)

England & Wales - Charity number 1062311

Accounts



Families InFocus (Essex)
ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
Year ended 31 March 2025



Registered Charity No. 1062311
Company Limited by Guarantee No. 03287829

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Company information

Company Number	3287829
Charity Number	1062311
Registered office	30 – 33 Townfield House Chelmsford Essex CM1 1QL
Patron	Lord Petre
Trustees	Clare Boston (Chairperson April 2025) Marc Jordan (Vice Chairperson) Martin Merrell Sue Dewar Kathy Wilkins Michael Cockerton (Treasurer, appointed April 2025) Kath Gayton (appointed June 2025) Kirsty Cornell (Chairperson, retired March 2025) Andrew Gothard (retired September 2025) Julie Sarti (retired January 2025) Keri-Ann Sargent (Sept 2024, retired March 2025)
Chief Executive Officer	Russell Pagan
Independent examiner	Alex Stone FCCA Edmund Carr LLP Chartered Accountants 146 New London Road Chelmsford Essex CM2 0AW

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2025

The trustees, who are the directors of the charitable company for Companies Act purposes, are pleased to present their report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025. In this report they are referred to as the Trustees or, collectively, as “the Board”.

Chief Executive’s Introduction

Since I started two years ago, something has become increasingly clear across Essex and beyond: families are not struggling because there is a lack of recognition of need, expertise or legal protection. They are struggling because the systems around them are under extreme strain. Support structures intended to protect children with SEND are now routinely accessed too late, too inconsistently, or only after families have already reached a crisis point. And when we say crisis, we do not only mean in education. We see the wider impact: financial pressure, parents unable to work, challenges with literacy and language, digital exclusion, and the emotional exhaustion that comes from trying to self-advocate without support. The risk is not simply that a child misses out on provision, but that the whole family becomes overwhelmed.

The growth in need is not marginal.

Schools across Essex report that one in five children now requires additional support. Yet the number of professionals available to assess, guide and respond has not grown at the same pace. This creates a predictable pattern: parents are left to advocate alone; systems become adversarial by default; and children wait, often for months or years, for support that the law already entitles them to.

This is the environment in which Families InFocus works. And it is why our role cannot simply be to help parents navigate the system. If our model relied only on navigation, we would remain dependent on the system functioning well. It does not.

So this past year, we made a deliberate shift.

We will always support individual matters, but we are also building trust with parents, developing shared plans, and supporting them to engage confidently with professionals and with one another. We are reshaping our approach so that what we provide is not just expert advice, but also confidence, connection and community capacity.

This is not about doing more with less. It is about doing the right things in the right sequence:

- Early clarity – reducing escalation and preventable crisis
- Shared knowledge – so rights and processes are widely understood
- Community belonging – so no parent feels they are fighting alone
- Targeted support – focusing on those facing the greatest barriers

We continue to hold our ground in the legal and statutory landscape, ensuring education and health entitlements are upheld. But a sustainable future requires something more: a self-supporting SEND community in Essex that does not only react to crisis, but actively builds resilience, connection and hope.

To help bring this work to life, the next page introduces a short infographic summarising what we achieved in 2024/25 — who we reached, how families' needs are changing, and how our approach is widening access, strengthening confidence and improving outcomes.

This sits alongside a summary of the independent evaluation, which provides an external assessment of our progress and confirms that this new direction is both working and needed.

To support this shift, we have developed a visual narrative we call the raindrop. It depicts the journey from childhood to adulthood. It makes clear how our support helps families at each stage, not only when pressures peak, but in building confidence, capability and belonging along the way. It gives families, professionals and our team a shared way to understand the journey and to focus on progress, not just crisis.

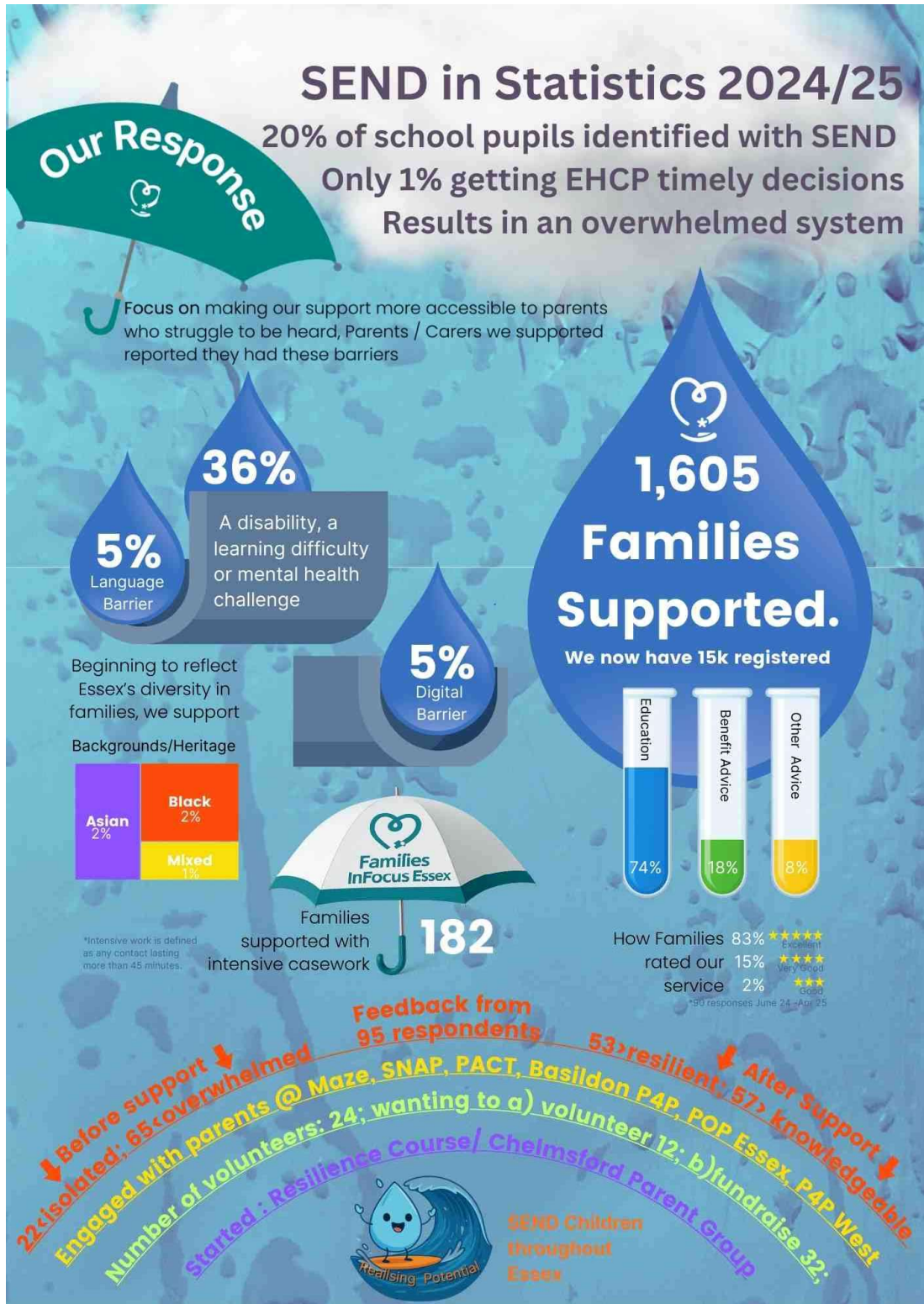
This report reflects that shift. It shows our impact, but more importantly, it sets out our direction: not only a source of advice, but also a catalyst for confidence, community and change.

We invite funders, partners and system leaders to work with us. The scale of the challenge is shared, and so the solution must be shared. With aligned purpose and commitment, we can ensure families are not left to carry this burden unsupported.

Russell Pagan
Chief Executive Officer



Figure 1 – Infographic 2024/25 Impact



Independent Evaluation: What the evidence shows

The independent evaluation completed in 2025 provided a detailed review of our impact, the pressures families face, and the effectiveness of our new delivery model. It highlighted:

Maintaining impact despite reduced capacity

- Staff capacity reduced by roughly half after the restructure
- Despite this, reach decreased by only 13%, reflecting strong efficiency
- The new referral system increased new families by 3% (pages 2–3)

Strengthened IAS delivery

- Families reported improved clarity, reduced overwhelm and better outcomes.
- 93% felt better after support, 80% much better (page 8)
- 86% saw a positive impact across the whole family
- FSAs praised for empathy, knowledge and responsiveness (pages 8–9)

A more inclusive service

Increased engagement from families facing additional barriers including:

- Non-White families (up 50%)
- Parents with learning difficulties, anxiety or mental health needs (36%)
- Families with language/digital barriers (3%)

These align directly with the evaluation's finding that FIF is now reaching communities most at risk of exclusion (pages 12–14)

A stronger organisational foundation

The evaluation recognised:

- A well-structured triage model that prioritises families effectively (pages 3–4, 22–24)
- Improved staff training, leadership and collaboration
- As a consequence of the refocus, it led to a healthier internal culture

This has led to a clear case for our strategic direction, but more importantly it concluded that Families InFocus remains a lifeline for families across Essex.

The Case for Change to our provision

The independent evaluation provided a clear view of both the external environment and our internal transformation. It found that while public systems remain under significant strain, Families InFocus has maintained both quality and reach during a period of considerable change.

- Schools across Essex report that one in five children now requires additional support.
- Education Health and Care Plan applications and waiting times have risen sharply; many families are still waiting more than 20 weeks for an assessment.
- Family stress, digital exclusion and low confidence in navigating the system continue to be defining barriers to early support.
- The reduction in local authority funding for family support services has forced voluntary organisations to become leaner, more collaborative and more data-driven.

This context shaped our decision to refocus our mission – not just to help families survive crisis, but to build the confidence, clarity and community that help them avoid it altogether.

Our Strategic Direction

We no longer describe our work solely in terms of programmes or services. Instead, our approach is organised around three interconnected priorities that together define how change happens for families.

1. **Information Advice and Support – IAS (Trust)**
We provide independent, accurate and timely advice delivered in a way that families can genuinely access and understand. Our aim is to build trust – trust in the information, trust in the process, and trust in themselves.
2. **Fostering Engagement (Confidence)**
We work with parents and carers to help them become confident advocates. This means developing communication skills, resilience and the ability to navigate systems collaboratively rather than adversarially.
3. **Community Participation (Belonging)**
We build the networks and connections that make support sustainable. Through volunteering, listening events and community-led groups, we strengthen families' sense of belonging and their ability to support one another.

These three priorities align directly with our measurement framework and form the structure of how we assess our progress and plan our future work.

Measuring Progress

The independent evaluation confirmed that, despite the reduction in staff capacity following the 2024 restructure, we maintained reach and continued to deliver consistently high-quality support across Essex.

During the year, 1613 families received direct support – a reduction of only 13 per cent compared with the previous year, despite our staff capacity being reduced by around half. This demonstrates the efficiency and adaptability of our new delivery model. At the same time, the introduction of a new referral system led to a 3 per cent increase in new families accessing support for the first time.

Our focus on inclusion has also shifted the profile of families we reach.

Non-White families increased by over 50 per cent compared with the previous year. 35 per cent of new referrals involved parents or carers with a learning difficulty, mental health condition or anxiety. 3 per cent of families reported language or digital barriers.

This growing diversity shows that our IAS service is now engaging the families most likely to be excluded, directly supporting our goal of trust and access equity.

Outcomes Against Our Strategic Priorities

IAS (Trust)

Maintained service reach despite reduced capacity; improved efficiency and widened access to new families and more marginalised groups.

Fostering Engagement (Confidence)

Ran the first couple of resilience workshops in Basildon with 11 parents and published a peer-to-peer learning paper that will inform the integration of peer networks within IAS.

Community Participation (Belonging)

Recruited five new volunteers, launched our partnership with Citizens UK, and delivered our first community-building event in April 2025 after co-designing with partner charities and parents.

Why This Matters

The evaluation evidence shows that we are achieving more equitable impact with fewer resources. We are demonstrating that a locally rooted, parent-led model can maintain service reach while expanding inclusion and enhancing community resilience.

Specific Examples of what we are trying to achieve (Case Studies)

Overcoming Barriers – IAS	
The Family Mum, Dad and 8-year-old son. The family's first language is Hindi. Mum struggles to use email and prefers to communicate by phone or text. The family are socially isolated with few friends and was referred by a local charity	The Need Support is required to secure an appropriate school placement within a special school. Due to the family's language difficulties, they would be unable to navigate the complex appeal process without support.
The Support With parents' permission, we liaised with the school and were able to utilise contacts within the local community to obtain somebody as an interpreter. Through this coordinated approach, we were able to lodge an appeal. The interpreter ensured the family were involved in the process and understood each stage.	
The Impact The son was offered a place at an appropriate special school. Mum was very grateful that the use of the interpreter meant she felt heard and listened to.	
Even better : “ Mum has made links with the community through the interpreter, which will have a positive and long-term impact” .	

Running Courses – Fostering Engagement	
The Families We brought together 10 families for an emotional resilience-building course, which was run in conjunction with two local charities.	The Need Families with children with SEND often report feeling isolated and alone. They struggle to navigate the complex SEND system and often feel that they are not listened to by the professionals involved in their child's needs.
The Support The emotional resilience course ran for four two-hour sessions. It provided parents with the tools to feel more able to cope with challenges they may face throughout their child's SEND journey.	
The Impact One hundred per cent of parents stated they felt more confident on a day-to-day basis; ninety per cent of parents reported an increase in their emotional resilience.	
Even better: “This is the start of a self-supporting SEND group; that will support parents in the community on an ongoing basis”	

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2025

Being There – Community Participation	
The Family Single Mum of five children, four of whom have SEND. Mum first contacted us for support in 2017..	The Need Initially, support was required for her daughter, who has ASD and selective mutism, and who was unable to attend school due to anxiety.
The Support Long-term support to not only ensure the correct educational provision but also to develop Mum’s confidence and resilience to advocate for her daughter. .	
The Impact The daughter was able to return to school, complete her GCSEs, and is now thriving at college. Mum is now able to ensure support for her son without our intense support. Even better: <i>“Mum volunteers for our charity, with a view to going back to the work place and co-chairs a SEND parent group, providing advice and support to other parents on the SEND journey. ”</i>	

Looking Ahead

The coming year will be about consolidation, depth and partnership. Our evaluation confirmed that the new Families InFocus model works – it sustains reach with fewer resources and builds capability among parents, staff and communities. The next stage is to strengthen those foundations and make this impact scalable across the entire county of Essex.

1. **Strengthen IAS Delivery, Staff Training and Access Equity**
We will consolidate the early triage model and invest in staff training, building group facilitation, reflective practice and shared case management skills across the team. By deepening staff capability, we ensure consistent, confident delivery and maintain morale through learning and collaboration.
2. **Embed Peer-to-Peer Support Within IAS**
Following the success of the Basildon workshops, we will train and mentor Parent Champions, embed peer sessions within IAS, and create feedback loops so that lived experience informs professional practice.
3. **Recruit and Embed the Community Engagement Manager**
This role will connect partners, parents and volunteers to grow community capacity, strengthen referral routes, and ensure that families can access support earlier and more locally.
4. **Grow Community Participation and Leadership**
Working with Citizens UK, we will hold listening campaigns, expand community-building events to every district, and amplify families' voices through a shared Essex Family Voice network.
5. **Demonstrate Wider Social Impact**
Our ultimate aim is to show that investment in families' capability and connection can reshape systems themselves. Families who learn, advocate and act together do not just improve their own outcomes – they strengthen social cohesion, creating a fairer Essex for everyone.

Implementation Plan (12–18 Months)

Over the next year and a half, we will integrate these priorities into our practice.

1. We will strengthen IAS delivery and staff capability through structured training and peer learning.
2. We will recruit and induct the Community Engagement Manager to lead cross-sector collaboration.
3. We will fully integrate peer-to-peer support within advice services.
4. We will publish evidence of impact using our Trust, Confidence and Belonging indicators.

These actions will prepare Families InFocus for sustainable growth and demonstrate how small, community-rooted organisations can lead systemic change.

Invitation to Partnership

Families InFocus has always believed that real change happens when people and systems work with families, not to them. Our role is to stand alongside parents, bring clarity when the system feels impenetrable, and nurture the confidence that enables families to move forward.

The evidence from this past year shows that this approach works. We have maintained reach with fewer resources, widened access to families facing the greatest barriers, and built the partnerships that make local systems stronger. What we are creating is not just a service – it is a model of how community resilience can underpin statutory delivery.

Your partnership helps us do more than deliver advice. It builds the peer networks that challenge one of the UK's most pressing social-cohesion issues – the fragmentation of communities. When families who struggle intersectionally come together, they embody the empathy, collaboration and resilience that our society urgently needs.

By investing in this model, you are helping to shape a different kind of system – one rooted in trust, confidence and belonging. Together we can ensure that every family, whatever their background, has the chance not just to cope, but to thrive.

We invite funders, partners and community leaders to join us in this next stage of our journey. With aligned purpose and commitment, we can create a self-supporting SEND community that strengthens Essex today and shapes a more compassionate, cohesive future for all.

Thank you to Funders

We would not be able to do the work we do without the wonderful support of our funders, fundraisers, and volunteers.



Volunteers

Our charity relies on the dedication and commitment of our amazing team of volunteers. They play a crucial role in our work, helping out at our Activity Club, events, helpline, office, and serving as our much-valued Trustees.

Funders

As ever, we are hugely grateful to the trusts, foundations and other grant makers who have made our work possible:

Boshier Hinton	The Marsh Charitable Trust	Essex Community Foundation
Essex County Council	Access to Justice	Chelmsford City Council
National Lottery	Augustine Courtauld	Masonic Charitable Fund
BBC Children In Need	Health Accelerator	Suffolk North East Essex ICB
Active Essex	The Souter Charitable Trust	The Charles S French Charitable Trust

We would also like to thank all the individuals who have made donations, either financially or in kind, provided support or took part in fundraising events during the year. We particularly want to thank Rob Eggleston and Simon Newland who ran the April 2024 London Marathon in aid of Families InFocus

Trustees Annual Report

The trustees, who are the directors of the charitable company for Companies Act purposes, are pleased to present their report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025. In this report they are referred to as the Trustees or, collectively, as “the Board”.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in the notes to the accounts and comply with the charity’s governing document, the Charities Act 2011, the Companies Act 2006 and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Financial 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 March 2015.

Public benefit

We have referred to the Charity Commission’s general guidance on public benefit when reviewing our purpose, aims and objectives, and in planning our future projects and activities. The trustees consider how planned activities will contribute to the overall aims and objectives they have set.

The charitable purpose of Families InFocus (Essex) is for the public benefit and falls within the description “the relief of those in need, by reason of youth, age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage” in the Charities Act 2011.

All our work is targeted to improve outcomes for Essex families with a CYP with SEND, reflecting the family’s needs and aspirations, and placing the child or young person at the heart of all decision-making. This is achieved through supportive services for their parents and carers, particularly at times of change, challenge or crisis. This includes where the child or young person has an enduring behavioural or mental health problem, has been excluded or is at risk of exclusion, is being bullied, is experiencing social exclusion, isolation, educational disadvantage, poverty, poor employment prospects or has problems accessing services – health, education, housing, social services, leisure, transport.

Financial review

The year 31 March 2025 results are set out in the statement of activities on page 23. This has been a more stable year financially, as we adapted to the new cost structure and began working with our new funders. We have also managed to restore our reserves ahead of plan.

The Trustees are pleased to report that Edmund Carr LLP will continue as accountants, for the year ending March 2025, Community 360 handled our payroll (salaries and pension).

Budgets

The budget for the year to 31 March 2025 was for an income of £407,755, against the actual income of £387,444, and a budgeted expenditure of £368,489, against the actual expenditure of £326,413. The planned surplus was £40,266 and the actual result was £61,031 surplus.

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2025

Reserves policy

To ensure the charity's long-term financial resilience, the Trustees maintain a policy of holding unrestricted reserves equivalent to a minimum of three months' operating costs. For the year ended 31 March 2025, this target equated to £84,000.

During 2024/25 the charity delivered a significantly improved financial position, producing a surplus that strengthened our unrestricted reserves to £55,181 as at 31 March 2025. This represents a notable improvement on the previous year and reflects both prudent cost management following the restructure and the stability created by new long-term funding agreements. The Trustees wish to acknowledge that this has been an important year in rebuilding the financial foundations of the organisation.

Although reserves remain below the level set out in our policy, the Board has approved a clear and achievable plan to increase unrestricted reserves by approximately £12,500 per year, with the aim of meeting the full requirement by 31 March 2027. Where possible, the charity will accelerate progress towards this target.

The Trustees are confident in the ongoing viability of Families InFocus due to the multi-year funding now secured for core operations, including substantial support from ILTA, the National Lottery Community Fund, BBC Children in Need, and statutory bodies. This funding provides stability through to at least 2028–29 and enables the charity to use this period to strengthen its delivery model, rebuild capacity and ensure long-term sustainability.

The Board reviews reserves, liabilities and financial forecasts at regular intervals, and will adjust the strategy where necessary to ensure that the charity remains financially secure while continuing to meet the needs of families across Essex.

Fundraising

We have an on-going programme of fundraising to help meet the funding requirements of the organisation. This includes applications to statutory bodies, grant making trusts, businesses (and in kind), as well as individual donations and fundraising events to generate unrestricted income for the organisation.

We are extremely grateful to all of our funders, and in particular the fundraisers who have been imaginative and generous in planning events and raising funds on our behalf. We also want to thank the businesses and individuals who have supported us through this year.

A full list of those we want to thank is on page 13.

Investment policy

Families InFocus (Essex) is committed to ensuring the best use of funds available to charity to carry out its aims and objectives. Where a sum surplus to immediate requirements is identified, the Trustees recognise their duty of care and responsibility to maximise the financial returns to be made by investing funds appropriately. We will seek proper advice when necessary and act prudently and cautiously, taking into account the need to diversify fund holdings, maintain liquidity and ensure adequate reserves are available to meet legislative and other obligations. So as to

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2025

safeguard the assets of Families InFocus (Essex), we will comply with the Charity Commission guidelines and endeavour to seek out low risk options for investment.

Risk management policy

The Trustees recognise that they have a responsibility to identify, assess, review and mitigate the risks which may be present in the operation of the charity. "Risk" relates to the uncertainty surrounding events and their outcomes that may have a significant effect, either enhancing or inhibiting:

- operational performance;
- achievement of aims and objectives;
- meeting expectations of stakeholders.

In undertaking risk management, the Trustees:

- focus on the prevention of disaster and mitigation of risks;
- enable the charity to achieve strategic objectives more effectively;
- improve forward planning.

Responsibility for carrying out risk management rests with the Board of Trustees who will involve staff, volunteers and other stakeholders as appropriate thereby ensuring that the Trustees can make the required statement on risk management with reasonable confidence. The risk management policy has been drawn up by the Trustees in conjunction with staff and other stakeholders. All new trustees, staff and volunteers are appraised of its contents during induction.

Regularly and on an on-going basis, the Trustees will:

- identify risks and controls in place;
- assess risk;
- evaluate what action needs to be taken on risks;
- implement appropriate systems and procedures to mitigate risk;
- undertake periodic monitoring and assessment.

The outcomes of the above will be communicated throughout the organisation as appropriate, including through meetings, individual supervisions and appraisals. The CEO will be responsible for ensuring the Trustees agree a statement on risk for inclusion in their annual report.

Our Risk Management Policy was updated at our Board meeting in March 2025.

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The Trustees (who are also directors of Families InFocus (Essex) for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming

resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for the year. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

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

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

Structure, Governance and Management

Governing Document

Families InFocus (Essex) is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 4 December 1996 and registered as a charity on 12 May 1997 under charity number 1062311. The company was established under a Memorandum of Association which established the objects and powers and is governed under its Articles of Association dated 19 September 1996, and amended by Special Resolutions on 28 June 1999, 19 December 2001, 8 October 2002 and 4 October 2008.

On 15 October 2014, at the Annual General Meeting, agreement was given by Special Resolution, subject to approval by the Charity Commission, to amend the Charity's Objects and extending support for families of children and young people from ages 0 to 19 to ages 0 to 25. Approval was obtained from the Charity Commission on 26 January 2015, and accepted at Companies House on 19 February 2015.

In the event of the company being wound up the members' liability is £1 each. As at 31 March 2025 there were 75 members.

Operational Management

The Trustees work closely with the CEO in the charity's management, including safeguarding, finance and risk management, fundraising, charity and company law, policies, our aims, vision, missions and organisational values, good practice and governance.

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2025

Trustees meet at least 6 times per annum to discuss general charity issues with additional meetings/working groups held to discuss more in-depth matters e.g., strategic plans, risk and finance. Financial risks are reviewed at every meeting.

The CEO, who reports to the Trustees, is responsible for the day to day operations of the charity. Progress reports (at least quarterly) are prepared by the CEO for review by Trustees which include details of casework and statistical information to ensure our work is developing as planned and is making a positive difference to local families.

We have a rolling programme to regularly review policies and procedures. During the year, Trustees have reviewed policies on business continuity, comments compliments and complaints, data protection, equality diversity and inclusion, environment, financial procedures, health and safety, lone working, privacy, record retention, risk management, safeguarding and safer recruitment.

Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for all Staff, Trustees and Volunteers are carried out via the umbrella organisation Maldon and District CVS, and are renewed every three years.

Monitoring and Evaluation

As an organisation led by parents, the majority of our staff are parents of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and our Board of Trustees has a strong representation of individuals who have used our service.

We continuously strive to embed a culture of self-critical evaluation and ongoing improvement, monitoring our impact and measuring successful outcomes through user records, responses to questionnaires, telephone interviews, and satisfaction surveys. Our volunteers are an invaluable feedback loop as the first hand assess how we help the parents.

Every three years we commission independent external research to assess the effectiveness of our services. The last one was commissioned this year and has informed the direction of the charity.

Trustee Recruitment and Appointment

The directors of the company are also charity Trustees for the purposes of charity law and under the company's Articles are known as Board members. The number should not exceed 14 or be less than 7. Trustees are appointed at general meetings by passing an ordinary resolution. Existing Trustees may nominate one or more Trustees.

Currently 7 Trustees sit on the Board comprising of parents of children with disabilities and sympathetic individuals all with a desire to do the best for our families and with a broad range of skills and experience in education, finance, fundraising, procurement, risk management and business. We review the skill set of the Board regularly. All Board members give their time voluntarily and received no material benefits. Any nominal fees or expenses reclaimed from the charity are set out in note 9 to the Accounts.

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2025

Training

We provide appropriate training to Staff, Trustees and Volunteers as part of our induction programme and ongoing professional development. This includes safeguarding (child protection & vulnerable adults), health and safety, data protection and role specific training to ensure skills and knowledge are constantly kept up to date.

New Trustees are usually invited to visit the Families InFocus office to speak to the CEO and members of staff. We are developing our trustee induction pack to be a comprehensive guide, containing information about the charity and the role of trustees. All Trustees have received and read 'The Essential Trustee – what you need to know' document.

Our staff have many years' experience (direct knowledge and from personal experience) with specialist skills in disability benefit claims, Disability Discrimination Act, SEND issues, procedures and reforms. Our Family Support Advisors are not qualified legal professionals, but all undertake IPSEA training to level 3.

Our Financial Future

In the course of the last year, we took a strategic decision to use a proportion of our reserves to enable a planned restructure and to position Families InFocus for the future. The long-term funding we have now secured has provided the stability needed to rebuild our operating model and refocus our work around the evolving needs of families and the changing external environment.

We continue to benefit from major multi-year funding from the ILTA, the National Lottery Community Fund and BBC Children in Need, alongside ongoing statutory funding for our independent advice services. This combination gives us a high degree of stability for at least the next three years – a stronger position than we have held for some time.

The support from ILTA in particular has given us both confidence and flexibility: confidence that we can plan beyond the short term, and flexibility to test new approaches, strengthen partnerships with health and education, and ensure our work remains relevant and responsive to local needs.

We are using this period wisely – to consolidate what we do best, to rebuild capacity, and to redefine the charity's proposition for the future. While we remain alert to the wider financial pressures facing the sector, we are confident that our current model, underpinned by long-term investment and sound financial management, gives us the best possible foundation to meet the changing requirements of families and the SEND system.

Chair's concluding remarks

This has been a different kind of year for Families InFocus — one that has given us the space to breathe, to reflect, and to plan. After several challenging years of financial uncertainty, the long-term funding we secured has allowed us to focus less on survival and more on shaping our future.

I took on the role of Chair in April 2025, following in the footsteps of Kirsty, who so ably steered the charity through a period of considerable change. On behalf of the Board, I want to thank her for her steady leadership and commitment to Families InFocus during a particularly demanding time. I would also like to make special mention of Andy Gothard, who retired from the Board this year after more than a decade of dedicated service. His experience, calm insight and practical wisdom have made a lasting contribution to the charity, and we wish him well for the future.

This year has been one of consolidation and renewal. Russell and the Senior Leadership Team have spent time wrestling with the reality of how the charity must evolve to reflect the needs of the families we serve. The independent evaluation, completed earlier in the year, arrived at just the right moment. It gave trustees a clear and independent view of what we are achieving, and the confidence that the direction we are now taking — focusing on confidence, community and belonging — is both right and necessary.

We are deeply proud of our staff and volunteers, who have managed a major transition while continuing to support hundreds of families with professionalism and compassion. They did this quietly and effectively, without broadcasting the difficult choices that had to be made. That humility and focus on families is what defines Families InFocus, and it is what gives trustees confidence in the organisation's continued strength.

We also know that the wider context remains challenging. Devolution, impending reforms to the SEND system and changes in welfare policy will all test how far our model can go and how it can be funded in the long term. The coming year will be about embedding the changes we have begun, continuing to learn, and ensuring our impact remains both visible and valued.

We are fortunate to have a strong and committed Board with a wide range of skills and experience to help guide this journey. As we look to the future, we are keen to strengthen our governance further and increase the diversity of our Board. We believe that the richness of perspective this brings will help us stay rooted in the families and communities we serve.

Families InFocus has never stood still. The work of this year shows that it can continue to adapt and thrive, holding fast to its values while finding new ways to meet changing needs. I am confident that, together, we are building something that will last — an organisation that not only supports families through challenge but helps them build a sense of confidence, connection and hope for the future.

Families InFocus (Essex)

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2025

This report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies entitled to the small companies' exemption.

On behalf of the Trustees,

Clare Boston

Clare Boston,
Chairperson

Date approved: 17 December 2025

Families InFocus (Essex)

Independent Examiner's Report to the trustees of Families InFocus (Essex) ('the Company')

I report to the charitable company Trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Company for the year ended 31 March 2025 which are set out on pages 23 to 37.

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

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

Independent examiner's statement

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

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

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

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

Alex Stone

.....
Alex Stone FCCA
146 New London Road
Chelmsford
Essex
CM2 0AW

Date: 18 December 2025
.....

Families InFocus (Essex)

Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2025 (Including Income and Expenditure Account and Other Comprehensive Income)

	Note	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Income and Endowments from:					
Donations and legacies	3	15,528	184,516	200,044	267,895
Charitable activities	4	101,250	85,209	186,459	119,741
Investment income	5	941	-	941	1,434
Total income		<u>117,719</u>	<u>269,725</u>	<u>387,444</u>	<u>389,070</u>
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds		144	72	216	54
Charitable activities	6	81,911	244,286	326,197	457,990
Total expenditure		<u>82,055</u>	<u>244,358</u>	<u>326,413</u>	<u>458,044</u>
Net income/(expenditure)		<u>35,664</u>	<u>25,367</u>	<u>61,031</u>	<u>(68,974)</u>
Net movement in funds		35,664	25,367	61,031	(68,974)
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward		<u>19,517</u>	<u>12,636</u>	<u>32,153</u>	<u>101,127</u>
Total funds carried forward	17	<u>55,181</u>	<u>38,003</u>	<u>93,184</u>	<u>32,153</u>

All of the charitable company's activities derive from continuing operations during the above two periods.

Families InFocus (Essex)
(Registration number: 03287829)
Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2025

	Note	2025 £	2024 £
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	12	2,399	3,386
Current assets			
Debtors	13	3,035	5,848
Cash at bank and in hand	14	200,170	78,394
		203,205	84,242
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	15	(112,420)	(55,475)
Net current assets		90,785	28,767
Net assets		93,184	32,153
Funds of the charitable company:			
Restricted income funds			
Restricted funds		38,003	12,636
Unrestricted income funds			
Unrestricted funds		55,181	19,517
Total funds	17	93,184	32,153

For the financial year ending 31 March 2025 the charitable company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Directors' responsibilities:

- The members have not required the charitable company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476; and
- The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions relating to companies subject to the small companies regime within Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006.

The financial statements on pages 23 to 37 were approved by the Trustees, and authorised for issue on 17 December 2025 and signed on their behalf by:

Michael Cockerton
 Michael Cockerton
 Trustee

Families InFocus (Essex)

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

1 Charitable company status

The charitable company is limited by guarantee, incorporated in England & Wales, and consequently does not have share capital. Each of the Trustees is liable to contribute an amount not exceeding £1 towards the assets of the charitable company in the event of liquidation.

2 Accounting policies

Summary of significant accounting policies and key accounting estimates

The principal accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all the years presented, unless otherwise stated.

Statement of compliance

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice (applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)) (issued in October 2019) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

Basis of preparation

Families InFocus (Essex) meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy notes.

Going concern

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis as the trustees believe that no material uncertainties exist. The trustees have considered the level of funds held and the expected level of income and expenditure for 12 months from authorising these financial statements. The budgeted income and expenditure is sufficient with the level of reserves for the charity to be able to continue as a going concern.

Exemption from preparing a cash flow statement

The charitable company opted to adopt Bulletin 1 published on 2 February 2016 and have therefore not included a cash flow statement in these financial statements.

Income and endowments

All income is recognised once the charitable company has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount of the income receivable can be measured reliably.

Donations and legacies

Donations are recognised when the charitable company has been notified in writing of both the amount and settlement date. In the event that a donation is subject to conditions that require a level of performance by the charitable company before the charitable company is entitled to the funds, the income is deferred and not recognised until either those conditions are fully met, or the fulfilment of those conditions is wholly within the control of the charitable company and it is probable that these conditions will be fulfilled in the reporting period.

Grants receivable

The charity has received government grants in the reporting period. Performance related grants are only included in the SOFA once the charity has provided the related services to meet the performance related conditions.

Families InFocus (Essex)

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

Deferred income

Deferred income represents amounts received for future periods and is released to incoming resources in the period for which, it has been received. Such income is only deferred when:

- The donor specifies that the grant or donation must only be used in future accounting periods; or
- The donor has imposed conditions which must be met before the charitable company has unconditional entitlement.

Investment income

Interest receivable is included gross.

Expenditure

Resources expended, including irrecoverable VAT, are accounted for on an accruals basis. The majority of costs are directly attributable to specific activities. Expenditure on projects is treated as direct charitable expenditure.

Raising funds

These are costs incurred in raising funds from events and activities.

Charitable activities

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

Support costs

Support costs include the central functions and are allocated to cost categories on the basis of staff time and amount spent on those cost categories. Depreciation is allocated to cost categories on the basis of total direct costs allocated.

Governance costs

Governance costs are associated with the governance arrangements of the charity and relate to the general running of the charity.

Government grants

Government grants are recognised based on the accrual model and are measured at the fair value of the asset received or receivable. Grants are classified as relating either to revenue or to assets. Grants relating to revenue are recognised in income over the period in which the related costs are recognised. Grants relating to assets are recognised over the expected useful life of the asset. Where part of a grant relating to an asset is deferred, it is recognised as deferred income.

Taxation

The charitable company is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 of the Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes. Accordingly, the charitable company is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income or capital gains received within categories covered by Chapter 3 Part 11 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992, to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

Tangible fixed assets

Individual fixed assets costing £1,000 or more are initially recorded at cost.

Families InFocus (Essex)

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

Depreciation and amortisation

Depreciation is provided on tangible fixed assets so as to write off the cost or valuation, less any estimated residual value, over their expected useful economic life as follows:

Asset class	Depreciation method and rate
Fixtures and fittings	25.0% reducing balance
Computer equipment	33.3% reducing balance

Trade debtors

Trade debtors are amounts due for services performed by the charity.

Trade debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due. A provision for the impairment of trade debtors is established when there is objective evidence that the charity will not be able to collect all amounts due according to the original terms of the receivables.

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents comprise cash on hand, bank accounts and bank deposits.

Trade creditors

Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of business from suppliers. Accounts payable are classified as current liabilities if the charity does not have an unconditional right, at the end of the reporting period, to defer settlement of the creditor for at least twelve months after the reporting date. If there is an unconditional right to defer settlement for at least twelve months after the reporting date, they are presented as non-current liabilities.

Trade creditors are recognised at their settlement amount.

Fund structure

Unrestricted income funds are general funds that are available for use at the Trustees discretion in furtherance of the objectives of the charitable company.

Restricted income funds are those donated for use in a particular area or for specific purposes, the use of which is restricted to that area or purpose.

Pensions and other post retirement obligations

The charitable company operates a defined contribution pension scheme which is a pension plan under which fixed contributions are paid into a pension fund and the charitable company has no legal or constructive obligation to pay further contributions even if the fund does not hold sufficient assets to pay all employees the benefits relating to employee service in the current and prior periods.

Contributions to defined contribution plans are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities when they are due. If contribution payments exceed the contribution due for service, the excess is recognised as a prepayment.

Financial instruments

Classification

The Charity has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value.

Families InFocus (Essex)

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

3 Income from donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2025 £
Donations receivable	15,528	-	15,528
Grants receivable	-	184,516	184,516
	<u>15,528</u>	<u>184,516</u>	<u>200,044</u>
	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024 £
Donations receivable	18,015	8,663	26,678
Grants receivable	-	241,217	241,217
	<u>18,015</u>	<u>249,880</u>	<u>267,895</u>

4 Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2025 £
Government contracts and grants	100,000	85,209	185,209
Service income	1,250	-	1,250
	<u>101,250</u>	<u>85,209</u>	<u>186,459</u>
	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024 £
Government contracts and grants	-	108,285	108,285
Service income	11,456	-	11,456
	<u>11,456</u>	<u>108,285</u>	<u>119,741</u>

Families InFocus (Essex)

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

5 Investment income

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2025 £
Interest receivable on bank deposits	941	-	941
	<u>941</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>941</u>
	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024 £
Interest receivable on bank deposits	1,434	-	1,434
	<u>1,434</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,434</u>

6 Expenditure on charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Family Support - Direct costs	67,750	211,052	278,802	408,989
Group Activities - Direct costs	-	-	-	1,000
Support costs	14,161	33,234	47,395	48,001
	<u>81,911</u>	<u>244,286</u>	<u>326,197</u>	<u>457,990</u>

Families InFocus (Essex)

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

7 Analysis of governance and support costs

Support costs allocated to charitable activities

	Governance costs £	Administration costs £	Premises costs	Total 2025 £
Government contracts and grants	8,650	12,170	26,575	47,395

	Governance costs £	Administration costs £	Premises costs £	Total 2024 £
Government contracts and grants	8,539	13,158	26,304	48,001

Governance costs

	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Independent examiner fees		
Examination of the financial statements	850	810
Other fees paid to examiners	2,552	2,430
Bookkeeping and payroll	5,248	5,299
	8,650	8,539

8 Net incoming/outgoing resources

Net incoming/(outgoing) resources for the year include:

	2025 £	2024 £
Operating leases	22,273	21,396
Depreciation of fixed assets	987	1,410

Families InFocus (Essex)

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

9 Trustees remuneration and expenses

No Trustees, nor any persons connected with them, have received any remuneration from the charitable company during the year.

During the year, no Trustees were reimbursed for expenses (2024: NIL).

10 Staff costs

The aggregate payroll costs were as follows:

	2025 £	2024 £
Staff costs during the year were:		
Wages and salaries	213,697	338,928
Social security costs	15,847	22,478
Pension costs	10,516	16,253
	<u>240,060</u>	<u>377,659</u>

The monthly average number of persons (including senior management / leadership team) employed by the charitable company during the year expressed by head count was as follows:

	2025 No	2024 No
Average number of paid employees	<u>10</u>	<u>16</u>

10 (2024 - 8) of the above employees participated in the Defined Contribution Pension Schemes.

Contributions to the employee pension schemes for the year totalled £10,516 (2024 - £16,253).

During the year, the charitable company made redundancy and/or termination payments which totalled £Nil (2024 - £12,384).

No employee received emoluments of more than £60,000 during the year.

The total employee benefits of the key management personnel of the charitable company were £54,388 (2024 - £44,529).

11 Taxation

The charitable company is a registered charity and is therefore exempt from taxation to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

Families InFocus (Essex)

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

12 Tangible fixed assets

	Fixtures, fittings and equipment £	Total £
Cost		
At 1 April 2024	54,010	54,010
Disposals	(14,168)	(14,168)
At 31 March 2025	<u>39,842</u>	<u>39,842</u>
Depreciation		
At 1 April 2024	50,624	50,624
Charge for the year	987	987
Eliminated on disposals	(14,168)	(14,168)
At 31 March 2025	<u>37,443</u>	<u>37,443</u>
Net book value		
At 31 March 2025	<u>2,399</u>	<u>2,399</u>
At 31 March 2024	<u>3,386</u>	<u>3,386</u>

13 Debtors

	2025 £	2024 £
Trade debtors	-	3,000
Prepayments	3,035	1,848
Accrued income	-	1,000
	<u>3,035</u>	<u>5,848</u>

Families InFocus (Essex)

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

14 Cash and cash equivalents

	2025 £	2024 £
Cash on hand	-	100
Cash at bank	200,170	78,294
	<u>200,170</u>	<u>78,394</u>

15 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2025 £	2024 £
Trade creditors	6,628	10,298
Accruals	5,792	6,192
Deferred income	100,000	38,985
	<u>112,420</u>	<u>55,475</u>

Deferred income relates to grants received that are specified for expenditure in a future period and service income invoiced in advance. Deferred income of £38,985 at 31 March 2024 was released in the year ended 31 March 2025.

16 Obligations under leases and hire purchase contracts

Operating lease commitments

Total future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases are as follows:

	2025 £	2024 £
Within one year	22,273	21,396
Between one and five years	31,554	51,707
	<u>53,827</u>	<u>73,103</u>

Families InFocus (Essex)

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

17 Funds

	Balance at 1 April 2024 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2025 £
Unrestricted funds					
Free reserves	5,835	117,719	(82,055)	9,961	51,460
Designated funds					
1) Moody Trust	1,000	-	-	-	1,000
2) Contingency Fund	9,961	-	-	(9,961)	-
3) IT Fund	2,107	-	-	-	2,107
4) Margaret Hutchon Fund	614	-	-	-	614
	<u>13,682</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(9,961)</u>	<u>3,721</u>
Total Unrestricted	<u>19,517</u>	<u>117,719</u>	<u>(82,055)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>55,181</u>
Restricted					
1) National Lottery Community Fund Grant	-	60,016	(60,016)	-	-
2) BBC Children In Need	-	11,000	(10,638)	-	362
3) Essex County Council: Befriending	-	8,717	(8,714)	-	3
4) Access to Justice	-	100,000	(92,474)	-	7,526
5) Essex County Council Carers Community Fund	-	15,000	(11,074)	-	3,926
6) Other restricted grants & donations	9,250	74,992	(60,455)	-	23,787
7) Capital Fund (Fixed Assets)	3,386	-	(987)	-	2,399
	<u>12,636</u>	<u>269,725</u>	<u>(244,358)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>38,003</u>
Total restricted	<u>12,636</u>	<u>269,725</u>	<u>(244,358)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>38,003</u>
Total funds	<u>32,153</u>	<u>387,444</u>	<u>(326,413)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>93,184</u>

The Trustees approved the release of the designated contingency fund following restructuring.

Families InFocus (Essex)

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

	Balance at 1 April 2023 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Balance at 31 March 2024 £
Prior Year:				
Unrestricted funds				
Unrestricted funds				
Free reserves	35,432	30,905	(60,502)	5,835
Designated funds				
1) Moody Trust	1,000	-	-	1,000
2) Contingency Fund	19,961	-	(10,000)	9,961
3) IT Fund	2,107	-	-	2,107
4) Margaret Hutchon Fund	614	-	-	614
5) Family Support Adviser/Projects	24,231	-	(24,231)	-
	<u>47,913</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(34,231)</u>	<u>13,682</u>
Total unrestricted funds	<u>83,345</u>	<u>30,905</u>	<u>(94,733)</u>	<u>19,517</u>
Restricted				
1) National Lottery Community Fund Grant	-	45,044	(45,044)	-
2) BBC Children In Need	-	1,000	(1,000)	-
3) Essex County Council: Befriending	-	47,207	(47,207)	-
6) Other restricted grants & donations	4,557	178,528	(173,835)	9,250
7) Capital Fund (Fixed Assets)	2,046	2,750	(1,410)	3,386
8) Essex County Council - Independent SEND Information, Advice and Support Service	3,330	40,000	(43,330)	-
9) Essex Community Foundation - Realising Ambitions	1,415	7,000	(8,415)	-
10) Essex Community Foundation - Moody Fund	140	-	(140)	-
11) Essex Community Foundation	6,294	10,636	(16,930)	-
12) Essex Community Foundation - Provide Foundation	-	26,000	(26,000)	-
	<u>17,782</u>	<u>358,165</u>	<u>(363,311)</u>	<u>12,636</u>
Total restricted funds	<u>17,782</u>	<u>358,165</u>	<u>(363,311)</u>	<u>12,636</u>
Total funds	<u>101,127</u>	<u>389,070</u>	<u>(458,044)</u>	<u>32,153</u>

Families InFocus (Essex)

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

The specific purposes for which the funds are to be applied are as follows:

Designated funds:

- 1) The Moody Trust funding has been designated to provide respite to parents with children with disabilities who were found to be under extreme pressure.
- 2) The designated contingency fund was established to meet operating shortfalls if required and the charity's statutory obligations, such as redundancy costs, should the need arise.
- 3) The Trustees designated funds for IT investment.
- 4) The Margaret Hutchon Fund has been designated to assist Essex families of children and young people with disabilities and special needs who are most in need of some immediate financial support.
- 5) The Trustees have designated funds to provide for the costs of Family Support advisers and Family Support projects across Essex.

Restricted funds:

- 1) The National Lottery Community Fund Grant (formerly known as the Big Lottery Fund) is towards the Family Support Project across Essex and a contribution to the core costs of the organisation.
- 2) The grant from BBC Children In Need is towards the Saturday Activity Club.
- 3) Essex County Council awarded a grant to set up a peer support service.
- 4) Access to Justice awarded a grant as part of the improving lives through advice programme.
- 5) Essex County Council provided a grant to set up an adult social care service.
- 6) Other restricted grants & donations received and applied for specified purposes.
- 7) The Capital Fund represents the fixed assets of the charity.
- 8) Funding is to provide Independent SEND Information, Advice and Support on educational issues to parents/carers for their children/young people with SEND (aged 0-25 years).
- 9) Essex Community Foundation grant from the Realising Ambitions Funding Programme is towards Family Support for North East Essex families of children/young people with disabilities/special needs.
- 10) Essex Community Foundation grants from The Moody Fund towards therapy sessions for two children with learning/developmental issues.
- 11) Essex Community Foundation provided funds towards the Saturday Activity Club.
- 12) Essex Community Foundation grant from the Provide Foundation is towards Family Support for Chelmsford families of children/young people with disabilities/special needs.

Families InFocus (Essex)

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

18 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds at 31 March 2025 £
Tangible fixed assets	2,399	-	2,399
Current assets	165,202	38,003	203,205
Current liabilities	<u>(112,420)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(112,420)</u>
Total net assets	<u>55,181</u>	<u>38,003</u>	<u>93,184</u>

Prior Year Funds

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds at 31 March 2024 £
Tangible fixed assets	3,386	-	3,386
Current assets	71,606	12,636	84,242
Current liabilities	<u>(55,475)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(55,475)</u>
Total net assets	<u>19,517</u>	<u>12,636</u>	<u>32,153</u>

19 Related party transactions

During the year the charitable company made the following related party transactions:

The Trustees

Some of the Trustees have access to the sibling group, activity club, and family events. The benefit received is not material to the accounts. At the balance sheet date the amount due to/from the Trustees was £Nil (2024 - £Nil).

FAMILIES INFOCUS (ESSEX)

England & Wales - Charity number 1062311

Accounts

Families InFocus (Essex)
ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
Year ended 31 March 2024



Registered Charity No. 1062311
Company Limited by Guarantee No. 03287829

Families InFocus (Essex)

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2024

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Company information

Company Number	3287829
Charity Number	1062311
Registered office	30 – 33 Townfield House Chelmsford Essex CM1 1QL
Patron	Lord Petre
Trustees	Kirsty Cornell (Chairperson) appointed Mar 2024 Sarah Dignasse (retired Chairperson Mar 2024) Marc Jordan, Vice Chairperson Andrew Gothard Martin Merrell David Carruthers (retired December 2023) Julie Sarti (appointed November 2022) Sue Dewar (appointed January 2023) Kathy Wilkins (appointed September 2023)
Chief Executive Officer	Russell Pagan (appointed November 2023) Kirsty Cornell (retired November 2023)
Independent examiner	Edmund Carr LLP Chartered Accountants 146 New London Road Chelmsford Essex CM2 0AW

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2024

The trustees, who are the directors of the charitable company for Companies Act purposes, are pleased to present their report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024. In this report they are referred to as the Trustees or, collectively, as “the Board”.

Chief Executive’s Welcome

Welcome to our review of 2023 to 2024.

I am honoured to present the annual accounts for Families InFocus for the year ending 31st March 2024. This is my first year as CEO, and I want to thank the Board of Trustees for entrusting me with this important role.

My personal connection to the SEND community is deeply rooted. When my son experienced a brain haemorrhage in 2010, I was introduced to the challenges and triumphs faced by SEND families. Witnessing their resilience and determination inspired me to dedicate my career to supporting them.

I want to express my sincere gratitude to my predecessors, particularly Kirsty Cornell, whose exceptional leadership guided Families InFocus through the unprecedented challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and office relocation. Her dedication and strategic vision have been invaluable to the organisation. I am also delighted that she has assumed the role of Chairperson, succeeding Sarah Dignasse, who stepped down after 15 years of dedicated service to pursue other endeavours

The financial year 2023/24 was undoubtedly one of the most difficult in Families InFocus’ history. Despite increased demand for our services and temporary funding boosts, we faced significant financial pressures due to the loss of long-term funding. To address this shortfall, we implemented cost-saving measures and successfully secured new funding sources.

I am pleased to report that we have successfully navigated these challenges and are now well-positioned for continued growth. Our new strategic approach, outlined in the forward-looking statement, will enable us to enhance our services and share our knowledge with as many SEND parents and caregivers as possible to help them build resilience

Finally, I want to express my sincere appreciation to our dedicated staff. Their unwavering commitment and hard work have been instrumental in our ability to provide essential support to SEND families during these challenging times. Together, we are building a stronger and more resilient organisation

Russell Pagan
CEO

Purpose and aims

Families InFocus (Essex) was established in 1996, with the overall aim to support, strengthen and improve the quality of life for Essex Families with children and young people (CYP) with any special educational need or disability (SEND), requiring advice, information, emotional and practical support, especially at the time of diagnosis, varied transition points, where they have poor emotional health, are feeling unheard, isolated or depressed, are living in poor environments, or are lone parents.

We do this by focusing on emotional needs – providing practical help, information, advice and support, alongside a range of activities designed to enhance the stability and quality of life for the whole family.

Our vision is:

A more inclusive society where children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities can realise their potential.

Our mission is:

We support the whole family to achieve the best possible outcomes so that children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities and their families thrive and feel stronger, empowered and confident.

We are proud to be an independent and user-led organisation.

Achievements

Information and advice

Our Family Support Service is a core aspect of our work. Our team of dedicated Family Support Advisors (FSAs) help families with SEND children by providing support with securing the right educational provision. This typically involves:

- Ensuring parents are aware of and understand the support available for their CYP in school or college.
- Requesting an Education and Health Care Needs Assessment (EHCNA) from the Local Authority. This can be complex and requires a high level of supporting documentation and evidence.
- Appeals to the SEND tribunal when the request is refused (in our experience, the requests for EHCNA are almost always refused in Essex), including support through the mediation process before lodging an appeal.
- Supporting families through the appeal process, including support with lodging the appeal, pre-hearing paperwork, and supporting the family throughout the appeal.

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2024

- Supporting the family after the refusal to assess appeal. We are successful in 100% of our appeals that reach the tribunal when the Local Authority has refused to assess for an EHCP, and the Local Authority concedes many appeals before they reach the hearing.
- Where a family disagrees with the contents of the EHCP or feels that their child will receive the most appropriate education in a special school but the Local Authority has named a mainstream school in the EHCP, we support the family in appealing that decision to the SEND tribunal. This complex process requires evidence, witnesses, and the submission of legal arguments.
- Providing advice on the EHCP annual review process, particularly where the parent may be requesting a change of placement, for example, from a mainstream school to a special needs school.

Our Family Support Advisors also help families complete the complex disability benefits application paperwork, either individually or via a monthly online clinic, and give advice on transport, social care, and housing. We also host regular workshops, either online or face-to-face, on a range of SEN topics.

In the year:

- Over 1700 families benefited from our advice.
- 1432 families were supported with education.
- 229 families were supported with benefits.

Families who responded to our survey this year said:

98% felt better informed and supported as a result of our support.

88% said our support had a positive effect on their child or young person.

83% strongly agreed or agreed that the support positively affected their whole family.

98% of families rated our support as excellent or very good.

100% would recommend us.

"Families InFocus is an invaluable and much-needed service within our community. The staff are a wealth of knowledge and are so supportive" Parent/carer 2023

Example case

Ahmet's story:

Ahmet is 11 years old and has a diagnosis of Autism (ASD). A change of placement was requested at Ahmet's annual review as it had been determined that his current school, a school for children with Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs (SEMH), was unable to meet his needs as Ahmet's primary needs are related to his diagnosis of ASD and not SEMH. Being in the wrong provision was detrimental to Ahmet's learning and emotional well-being.

Ahmet's parents found the situation extremely stressful and difficult to navigate, especially as this wasn't the first time a school placement had failed for Ahmet and because English isn't the family's first language. They also didn't know where to start identifying an alternative, more appropriate SEN school. In addition, the longer Ahmet was in his current school setting, the worse his mental health and emotional well-being were being affected.

Our Family Support Adviser supported the family with a school placement appeal for a more appropriate SEN school and attended various meetings with parents, including school meetings and meetings with the Local Authority. As well as appealing the named school, we also supported the family to appeal Sections B and F of Ahmet's EHCP as they did not reflect his current needs.

Following numerous discussions with the Local Authority, we were able to resolve the appeal without the need for a full Hearing, and Ahmet was offered a place at the school we had supported parents to identify. Parents were relieved and delighted. Through the Working Document process, Ahmet's EHCP was updated and amended accordingly to better reflect his current needs and, therefore, be a more appropriate plan.

Ahmet is the not the real name

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2024

Activity Clubs.

Our two activity clubs, in Chelmsford and Colchester, run weekly during term time. They offer SEND children a vital safe space to try various activities, such as trampolining, badminton, table tennis, arts, crafts and Lego in an accepting environment and without fear of judgement. The clubs are warm, welcoming and supporting, allowing children to explore freely. Additionally, they offer parents the chance to connect with other parents who are in a similar position, build friendships and experience a sense of community. Families have shared that the club has significantly boosted their confidence and provided a space that fosters self-acceptance.

"Thank you for all that you do to provide a safe space for my child. He loves attending every week" (Parent/Carer quote)

"It's nice to meet other parents who are in similar situations to us and talk to them too" (Parent/Carer quote)

In the last year:

- We have run 75 activity club sessions
- Over 1110 children have attended the club

Peer support

The Peer Support Project (Side by Side) we initiated in 2022 concluded in 2024. After its conclusion, we focused on reflecting on the lessons learned and tackling the challenges we encountered in establishing a standalone support service. Although peer support didn't fully evolve into an independent entity i.e. Side by Side, it became clear that for charities like ours, which provide targeted advice and support on specific issues, peer support is an essential service for parents in need of ongoing assistance, whether through one-on-one interactions or group settings.

However, despite recognizing this need, we encountered challenges implementing the necessary processes to effectively match individuals with peer supporters. Discussions with other charities revealed that they, too, were facing similar hurdles. There was a recognized need for peer support, but we collectively struggled to manage it effectively in our daily operations.

In response, we formed partnerships with several local charities within our sector to develop a toolkit that outlines best practices, ensuring a more effective approach to peer support in the future. The toolkit was published in June 2023 for all charities to use. We are planning to implement the process over the next 12 months.

Our Plans for the Future

It is becoming increasingly difficult for parents to navigate the available support systems when their children require additional help. This challenge is partly due to growing awareness—thanks to the likes of Families InFocus' efforts over the past 20+ years—among parents, educators, and healthcare professionals about the range of conditions that need extra attention. There is a growing recognition of mental health issues like anxiety and emotional difficulties.

As a result, there has been a surge in demand from parents, who are understandably anxious about securing the right support for their children. Parents have reported that social media pressures have only added to this anxiety.

For example, the percentage of children identified as having SEND in education increased by over 20% in 2023, making up 17% of all children. In 2024, many schools reported this number rising to 20%. This growing demand has overwhelmed educational, health, and social services, which struggle to fulfil their statutory responsibilities. In Essex, for instance, only 1% of SEND assessments are completed within the required 20-week timeframe.

Over the past few years, Families InFocus has shifted its focus from helping families navigate the SEND system to empowering parents and caregivers to better support their children in the long term. Our goal is to ensure the best possible outcomes for the children.

Our Focus Areas:

1. **Providing up-to-date advice** to families.
2. **Engaging with and sharing knowledge** with as many SEND parents and caregivers as possible to help them build resilience.
3. **Prioritizing support for marginalized parents** who may struggle to access services.
4. **Expanding our team of volunteers** to strengthen our capacity to help families.

Thank you to Funders



We would not be able to do the work we do without the wonderful support of our funders, fundraisers, and volunteers.

Volunteers

Our charity relies on the dedication and commitment of our amazing team of volunteers. They play a crucial role in our work, helping out at our Activity Club, events, helpline, office, and serving as our much-valued Trustees.

Funders

As ever, we are hugely grateful to the trusts, foundations and other grant makers who have made our work possible:

Boshier Hinton	The Marsh Charitable Trust	Health Accelerator
Braintree District and Eastlight	Hiscox	Chelmsford City Council
Essex County Council	Tudwick Foundation	Garfield Weston
The C S French Charitable Trust	Braintree Golf Club	Peoples Postcode Lottery
The Edward Gostling Foundation	Augustine Courtauld	Masonic Charitable Fund
National Lottery	Essex Community Foundation	Suffolk North East Essex ICB
Provide	The Souter Charitable Trust	BBC Children In Need
Realising Ambitions	Active Essex	

We would also like to thank all the individuals who have made donations, either financially or in kind, provided support or took part in fundraising events during the year. We particularly want to thank Jamie Hilton and Thomas Newman of JH Services who took on the 3 peaks challenge in June 2023 in aid of Families InFocus

Trustees Annual Report

The trustees, who are the directors of the charitable company for Companies Act purposes, are pleased to present their report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024. In this report they are referred to as the Trustees or, collectively, as “the Board”.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in the notes to the accounts and comply with the charity’s governing document, the Charities Act 2011, the Companies Act 2006 and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Financial 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 March 2015.

Public benefit

We have referred to the Charity Commission’s general guidance on public benefit when reviewing our purpose, aims and objectives, and in planning our future projects and activities. The trustees consider how planned activities will contribute to the overall aims and objectives they have set.

The charitable purpose of Families InFocus (Essex) is for the public benefit and falls within the description “the relief of those in need, by reason of youth, age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage” in the Charities Act 2011.

All our work is targeted to improve outcomes for Essex families with a CYP with SEND, reflecting the family’s needs and aspirations, and placing the child or young person at the heart of all decision making. This is achieved through supportive services for their parents and carers, particularly at times of change, challenge or crisis. This includes where the child or young person has an enduring behavioural or mental health problem, has been excluded or is at risk of exclusion, is being bullied, is experiencing social exclusion, isolation, educational disadvantage, poverty, poor employment prospects or has problems accessing services – health, education, housing, social services, leisure, transport.

Financial review

The year 31 March 2024 results are set out in the statement of financial activities on page 17. This has been a challenging year financially due to reductions in funding, and as a result, the charity had to make some significant changes to our staffing structure to work within our new budget. The trustees are pleased to report that we have now been able to access new funders and redesign our processes to ensure we can continue delivering our much-needed work to families. Restoring our reserves will be a significant area of focus for the coming years.

The Trustees are pleased to report that Edmund Carr LLP will continue as accountants. For the year ending March 2024, Community 360 handled our payroll (salaries and pension).

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2024

Budgets

The budget for the year to 31 March 2024 was for an income of £470,715 against the actual income of £389,070 and a budgeted expenditure of £465,841 against the actual expenditure of £458,044. The planned surplus was £4,874, and the actual result was £68,974 deficit. For the current financial year, ending 31 March 2025, we have a budgeted income of £407,756 and a budgeted expenditure of £370,477.

Reserves policy

To ensure the charity's financial resilience, we have an established reserves policy of holding a minimum of three months' worth of running costs as unrestricted reserves. This currently amounts to £84,000, and our unrestricted reserves as at 31st March 2024 stood at £19,517. The Trustees have reviewed this position and have developed a robust and achievable plan to increase the level of reserves by £12,500 each year, bringing us into line with our policy by the 31st March 2029. We will of course move at a faster pace towards our target where possible.

In the interim, whilst we do not have the full unrestricted reserves as set out in our policy, trustees are confident in the ongoing viability of the charity, as we have secured funding for core operations for the next three years; with some core funding extending through to 2029.

The trustees monitor progress toward the reserves target, review our current liabilities and assess our funding positions every two months so they are able to adjust our strategy as needed to ensure our ongoing financial stability

Fundraising

We have an on-going programme of fundraising to help meet the funding requirements of the organisation. This includes applications to statutory bodies, grant making trusts, businesses (and in kind), as well as individual donations and fundraising events to generate unrestricted income for the organisation.

We are extremely grateful to all of our funders, and in particular the fundraisers who have been imaginative and generous in planning events and raising funds on our behalf. We also want to thank the businesses and individuals who have supported us through this year.

A full list of those we want to thank is on page 9

Investment policy

Families InFocus (Essex) is committed to ensuring the best use of funds available to charity to carry out its aims and objectives. Where a sum surplus to immediate requirements is identified, the Trustees recognise their duty of care and responsibility to maximise the financial returns to be made by investing funds appropriately. We will seek proper advice when necessary and act prudently and cautiously, taking into account the need to diversify fund holdings, maintain liquidity and ensure adequate reserves are available to meet legislative and other obligations. So as to safeguard the assets of Families InFocus (Essex), we will comply with the Charity Commission guidelines and endeavour to seek out low risk options for investment.

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2024

Risk management policy

The Trustees recognise that they have a responsibility to identify, assess, review and mitigate the risks which may be present in the operation of the charity. "Risk" relates to the uncertainty surrounding events and their outcomes that may have a significant effect, either enhancing or inhibiting:

- operational performance;
- achievement of aims and objectives;
- meeting expectations of stakeholders.

In undertaking risk management, the Trustees:

- focus on the prevention of disaster and mitigation of risks;
- enable the charity to achieve strategic objectives more effectively;
- improve forward planning.

Responsibility for carrying out risk management rests with the Board of Trustees who will involve staff, volunteers and other stakeholders as appropriate thereby ensuring that the Trustees can make the required statement on risk management with reasonable confidence. The risk management policy has been drawn up by the Trustees in conjunction with staff and other stakeholders. All new trustees, staff and volunteers are appraised of its contents during induction.

Regularly and on an on-going basis, the Trustees will:

- identify risks and controls in place;
- assess risk;
- evaluate what action needs to be taken on risks;
- implement appropriate systems and procedures to mitigate risk;
- undertake periodic monitoring and assessment.

The outcomes of the above will be communicated throughout the organisation as appropriate including through meetings, individual supervisions and appraisals. The CEO will be responsible for ensuring the Trustees agree a statement on risk for inclusion in their annual report.

Our Risk Management Policy was updated at our Board meeting on 28th November 2023 and reviewed at the last board meeting 17th September 2024.

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The Trustees (who are also directors of Families InFocus (Essex) for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2024

resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for the year. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

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

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

Structure, Governance and Management

Governing Document

Families InFocus (Essex) is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 4 December 1996 and registered as a charity on 12 May 1997 under charity number 1062311. The company was established under a Memorandum of Association which established the objects and powers and is governed under its Articles of Association dated 19 September 1996, and amended by Special Resolutions on 28 June 1999, 19 December 2001, 8 October 2002 and 4 October 2008.

On 15 October 2014, at the Annual General Meeting, agreement was given by Special Resolution, subject to approval by the Charity Commission, to amend the Charity's Objects and extending support for families of children and young people from ages 0 to 19 to ages 0 to 25. Approval was obtained from the Charity Commission on 26 January 2015, and accepted at Companies House on 19 February 2015.

In the event of the company being wound up the members' liability is £1 each. As at 31 March 2024 there were 75 members.

Operational Management

The Trustees work closely with the CEO in the charity's management, including safeguarding, finance and risk management, fundraising, charity and company law, policies, our aims, vision, missions and organisational values, good practice and governance.

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2024

Trustees meet at least 6 times per annum to discuss general charity issues with additional meetings/working groups held to discuss more in-depth matters e.g., strategic plans, risk and finance. Financial risks are reviewed at every meeting,

The CEO, who reports to the Trustees, is responsible for the day to day operations of the charity. Progress reports (at least quarterly) are prepared by the CEO for review by Trustees which include details of casework and statistical information to ensure our work is developing as planned and is making a positive difference to local families.

We have a rolling programme to regularly review policies and procedures. During the year, Trustees have reviewed policies on business continuity, comments compliments and complaints, data protection, equality diversity and inclusion, environment, financial procedures, health and safety, lone working, privacy, record retention, risk management, safeguarding and safer recruitment.

Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for all Staff, Trustees and Volunteers are carried out via the umbrella organisation Maldon and District CVS, and are renewed every three years.

Monitoring and Evaluation

As an organisation led by parents, the majority of our staff are parents of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and our Board of Trustees has a strong representation of individuals who have used our service.

We continuously strive to embed a culture of self-critical evaluation and ongoing improvement, monitoring our impact and measuring successful outcomes through user records, responses to questionnaires, telephone interviews, and satisfaction surveys. Our volunteers are an invaluable feedback loop as the first hand assess how we help the parents.

Every three years we commission independent external research to assess the effectiveness of our services. The last one was commissioned in 2022.

Trustee Recruitment and Appointment

The directors of the company are also charity Trustees for the purposes of charity law and under the company's Articles are known as Board members. The number should not exceed 14 or be less than 7. Trustees are appointed at general meetings by passing an ordinary resolution. Existing Trustees may nominate one or more Trustees.

Currently 7 Trustees sit on the Board comprising of parents of children with disabilities and sympathetic individuals all with a desire to do the best for our families and with a broad range of skills and experience in education, finance, fundraising, procurement, risk management and business. We review the skill set of the Board regularly. All Board members give their time voluntarily and received no material benefits. Any nominal fees or expenses reclaimed from the charity are set out in note 10 to the Accounts.

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2024

Training

We provide appropriate training to Staff, Trustees and Volunteers as part of our induction programme and ongoing professional development. This includes safeguarding (child protection & vulnerable adults), health and safety, data protection and role specific training to ensure skills and knowledge are constantly kept up to date.

New Trustees are usually invited to visit the Families InFocus office to speak to the CEO and members of staff. We are developing our trustee induction pack to be a comprehensive guide, containing information about the charity and the role of trustees. All Trustees have received and read 'The Essential Trustee – what you need to know' document.

Our staff have many years' experience (direct knowledge and from personal experience) with specialist skills in disability benefit claims, Disability Discrimination Act, SEND issues, procedures and reforms. Our Family Support Advisors are not qualified legal professionals, but all undertake IPSEA training to level 3.

Our Financial Future

In the course of the last year, we decided to use a large proportion of our reserves, whilst taking decisive action to ensure the ongoing operations of our charity. Despite this, our financial future is looking positive – we have diversified our income and have received new, long-term grants from new funders (most notably the ILTA, who have awarded us £500,000 over five years). This, alongside other longer term grant agreements from the National Lottery and BBC Children in Need, means that we have a relatively high degree of financial stability for at least the next three years – a more positive position than we have been in for the last few years.

The new funding from the ILTA also allows us a degree of flexibility to work in new ways, and in conjunction with statutory bodies such as health and education (who both continue to fund the independent advice services that we provide).

Although we have made cost reductions over the last year, which has seen us reduce our staff team, we remain confident in our ability to deliver impactful results. However, we are continually assessing this and looking for new funding to see how we can help more families in new ways.

Chair's concluding remarks

After just over three very enjoyable years as the CEO at Families InFocus, I stepped down in November 2023 to pursue a new career. I was really pleased to be asked to stay on as a trustee, and then, following the resignation of Sarah Dignasse, to move into the role of Chair of the Families InFocus Board. Sarah was a Trustee at Families InFocus for over 14 years and I owe her a huge thank you – both for her leadership of such a talented and committed group of trustees, and also for her support and kindness during my time as CEO.

The Board were delighted to appoint Russell in November 2023. Whilst not coming from the Charity sector originally, he brings skills and experience that have been hugely beneficial for us over the last year.

As Russell outlined in his report, this year has been a challenging one financially. It has required us to review how we work, and to reduce our staff team to meet our new income. The team, and particularly Russell, have worked tirelessly through this transition to make sure we are continuing to deliver high quality support to families. I want to thank all of the staff, and the volunteers, for their continuing commitment to Families InFocus over the last year. Families InFocus is hugely respected in the SEND community, and it is largely down to the excellent work of our staff and volunteers.

The new ways of working, alongside the new funding we have received this year, mean that we can now look forward and consider what we are best placed to deliver to SEND families in the future. As ever we want to engage with the SEND communities we support to make sure that we are delivering the right support, that empowers families with skills and knowledge, and that continues to be so highly valued by families.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies entitled to the small companies' exemption.

On behalf of the Trustees,

Kirsty Cornell

Kirsty Cornell, Chairperson

Date approved: 17 December 2024

Families InFocus (Essex)

Independent Examiner's Report to the trustees of Families InFocus (Essex) ('the Company')

I report to the charitable company Trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Company for the year ended 31 March 2024 which are set out on pages 18 to 33.

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

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

Independent examiner's statement

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

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

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

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

Sandra Morrell

.....
Sandra Morrell FCCA
146 New London Road
Chelmsford
Essex
CM2 0AW

Date: 18 December 2024

Families InFocus (Essex)

Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 (Including Income and Expenditure Account and Other Comprehensive Income)

	Note	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Income and Endowments from:					
Donations and legacies	3	18,015	8,663	26,678	33,546
Charitable activities	4	11,456	349,502	360,958	395,584
Investment income	5	1,434	-	1,434	660
Total income		30,905	358,165	389,070	429,790
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds		-	54	54	506
Charitable activities	6	94,733	363,257	457,990	440,132
Total expenditure		94,733	363,311	458,044	440,638
Net expenditure		(63,828)	(5,146)	(68,974)	(10,848)
Net movement in funds		(63,828)	(5,146)	(68,974)	(10,848)
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward		83,345	17,782	101,127	111,975
Total funds carried forward	16	19,517	12,636	32,153	101,127

All of the charitable company's activities derive from continuing operations during the above two periods.

Families InFocus (Essex)
(Registration number: 03287829)
Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2024

	Note	2024 £	2023 £
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	12	3,386	2,046
Current assets			
Debtors	13	5,848	1,000
Cash at bank and in hand	14	<u>78,394</u>	<u>224,084</u>
		84,242	225,084
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	15	<u>(55,475)</u>	<u>(126,003)</u>
Net current assets		<u>28,767</u>	<u>99,081</u>
Net assets		<u>32,153</u>	<u>101,127</u>
Funds of the charitable company:			
Restricted income funds			
Restricted funds		12,636	17,782
Unrestricted income funds			
Unrestricted funds		<u>19,517</u>	<u>83,345</u>
Total funds	16	<u>32,153</u>	<u>101,127</u>

For the financial year ending 31 March 2024 the charitable company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Directors' responsibilities:

- The members have not required the charitable company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476; and
- The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions relating to companies subject to the small companies regime within Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006.

The financial statements on pages 18 to 33 were approved by the Trustees, and authorised for issue on 17 December 2024 and signed on their behalf by:

Katherine Wilkins

 Katherine Wilkins
 Trustee

Families InFocus (Essex)

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

1 Charitable company status

The charitable company is limited by guarantee, incorporated in England & Wales, and consequently does not have share capital. Each of the Trustees is liable to contribute an amount not exceeding £1 towards the assets of the charitable company in the event of liquidation.

2 Accounting policies

Summary of significant accounting policies and key accounting estimates

The principal accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all the years presented, unless otherwise stated.

Statement of compliance

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice (applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)) (issued in October 2019) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

Basis of preparation

Families InFocus (Essex) meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy notes.

Going concern

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis as the trustees believe that no material uncertainties exist. The trustees have considered the level of funds held and the expected level of income and expenditure for 12 months from authorising these financial statements. The budgeted income and expenditure is sufficient with the level of reserves for the charity to be able to continue as a going concern.

Exemption from preparing a cash flow statement

The charitable company opted to adopt Bulletin 1 published on 2 February 2016 and have therefore not included a cash flow statement in these financial statements.

Income and endowments

All income is recognised once the charitable company has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount of the income receivable can be measured reliably.

Donations and legacies

Donations are recognised when the charitable company has been notified in writing of both the amount and settlement date. In the event that a donation is subject to conditions that require a level of performance by the charitable company before the charitable company is entitled to the funds, the income is deferred and not recognised until either those conditions are fully met, or the fulfilment of those conditions is wholly within the control of the charitable company and it is probable that these conditions will be fulfilled in the reporting period.

Grants receivable

The charity has received government grants in the reporting period. Performance related grants are only included in the SOFA once the charity has provided the related services to meet the performance related conditions.

Families InFocus (Essex)

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

Deferred income

Deferred income represents amounts received for future periods and is released to incoming resources in the period for which, it has been received. Such income is only deferred when:

- The donor specifies that the grant or donation must only be used in future accounting periods; or
- The donor has imposed conditions which must be met before the charitable company has unconditional entitlement.

Investment income

Interest receivable is included gross.

Expenditure

Resources expended, including irrecoverable VAT, are accounted for on an accruals basis. The majority of costs are directly attributable to specific activities. Expenditure on projects is treated as direct charitable expenditure.

Raising funds

These are costs incurred in raising funds from events and activities.

Charitable activities

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

Support costs

Support costs include the central functions and are allocated to cost categories on the basis of staff time and amount spent on those cost categories. Depreciation is allocated to cost categories on the basis of total direct costs allocated.

Governance costs

Governance costs are associated with the governance arrangements of the charity and relate to the general running of the charity.

Taxation

The charitable company is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 of the Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes. Accordingly, the charitable company is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income or capital gains received within categories covered by Chapter 3 Part 11 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992, to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

Tangible fixed assets

Individual fixed assets costing £1,000 or more are initially recorded at cost.

Depreciation and amortisation

Depreciation is provided on tangible fixed assets so as to write off the cost or valuation, less any estimated residual value, over their expected useful economic life as follows:

Families InFocus (Essex)

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

Asset class	Depreciation method and rate
Fixtures and fittings	25.0% reducing balance
Computer equipment	33.3% reducing balance

Trade debtors

Trade debtors are amounts due for services performed by the charity.

Trade debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due. A provision for the impairment of trade debtors is established when there is objective evidence that the charity will not be able to collect all amounts due according to the original terms of the receivables.

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents comprise cash on hand, bank accounts and bank deposits.

Trade creditors

Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of business from suppliers. Accounts payable are classified as current liabilities if the charity does not have an unconditional right, at the end of the reporting period, to defer settlement of the creditor for at least twelve months after the reporting date. If there is an unconditional right to defer settlement for at least twelve months after the reporting date, they are presented as non-current liabilities.

Trade creditors are recognised at their settlement amount.

Fund structure

Unrestricted income funds are general funds that are available for use at the Trustees discretion in furtherance of the objectives of the charitable company.

Restricted income funds are those donated for use in a particular area or for specific purposes, the use of which is restricted to that area or purpose.

Pensions and other post retirement obligations

The charitable company operates a defined contribution pension scheme which is a pension plan under which fixed contributions are paid into a pension fund and the charitable company has no legal or constructive obligation to pay further contributions even if the fund does not hold sufficient assets to pay all employees the benefits relating to employee service in the current and prior periods.

Contributions to defined contribution plans are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities when they are due. If contribution payments exceed the contribution due for service, the excess is recognised as a prepayment.

Financial instruments

Classification

The Charity has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value.

Families InFocus (Essex)

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

3 Income from donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024 £
Donations receivable	18,015	8,663	26,678
	<u>18,015</u>	<u>8,663</u>	<u>26,678</u>
	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2023 £
Donations receivable	26,331	7,215	33,546
	<u>26,331</u>	<u>7,215</u>	<u>33,546</u>

4 Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024 £
Grants receivable	-	349,502	349,502
Service income	11,456	-	11,456
	<u>11,456</u>	<u>349,502</u>	<u>360,958</u>
	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2023 £
Grants receivable	-	395,584	395,584

Families InFocus (Essex)

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

5 Investment income

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024 £
Interest receivable on bank deposits	1,434	-	1,434
	<u>1,434</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,434</u>

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2023 £
Interest receivable on bank deposits	660	-	660
	<u>660</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>660</u>

6 Expenditure on charitable activities

	Activity undertaken directly £	Activity support costs £	Total expenditure £
Family Support	408,989	48,001	456,990
Group Activities	1,000	-	1,000
Total for 2024	<u>409,989</u>	<u>48,001</u>	<u>457,990</u>
Total for 2023	<u>378,325</u>	<u>61,807</u>	<u>440,132</u>

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024 £
Family Support - Direct costs	87,044	321,945	408,989
Group Activities - Direct costs	-	1,000	1,000
Support costs	7,689	40,312	48,001
	<u>94,733</u>	<u>363,257</u>	<u>457,990</u>

Families InFocus (Essex)

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

7 Analysis of governance and support costs

Support costs allocated to charitable activities

	Basis of allocation	Governance costs £	Administration costs £	Premises costs including depreciation £	Total 2024 £
Family Support	A	8,539	4,618	26,304	39,461

Basis of allocation

Reference	Method of allocation
A	Apportioned based on usage in relation to directly attributable costs. Depreciation is apportioned based on the apportionment of total direct costs between activities.

Governance costs

	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Independent examiner fees		
Examination of the financial statements	810	832
Other fees paid to examiners	2,430	2,450
Bookkeeping and payroll	5,299	3,208
	8,539	6,490

8 Net incoming/outgoing resources

Net outgoing resources for the year include:

	2024 £	2023 £
Operating leases	21,396	12,481
Depreciation of fixed assets	1,410	548

Families InFocus (Essex)

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

9 Trustees remuneration and expenses

No Trustees, nor any persons connected with them, have received any remuneration from the charitable company during the year.

During the year, no Trustees were reimbursed for expenses (2023: NIL).

10 Staff costs

The aggregate payroll costs were as follows:

	2024 £	2023 £
Staff costs during the year were:		
Wages and salaries	338,928	299,239
Social security costs	22,478	21,471
Pension costs	16,253	13,189
	<u>377,659</u>	<u>333,899</u>

The monthly average number of persons (including senior management / leadership team) employed by the charitable company during the year expressed by head count was as follows:

	2024 No	2023 No
Average number of paid employees	<u>16</u>	<u>14</u>

8 (2023 - 7) of the above employees participated in the Defined Contribution Pension Schemes.

Contributions to the employee pension schemes for the year totalled £16,253 (2023 - £13,189).

During the year, the charitable company made redundancy and/or termination payments which totalled £12,384 (2023 - £Nil).

No employee received emoluments of more than £60,000 during the year.

The total employee benefits of the key management personnel of the charitable company were £44,529 (2023 - £49,709).

11 Taxation

The charitable company is a registered charity and is therefore exempt from taxation to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

Families InFocus (Essex)

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

12 Tangible fixed assets

	Fixtures, fittings and equipment £	Total £
Cost		
At 1 April 2023	51,260	51,260
Additions	2,750	2,750
	<u>54,010</u>	<u>54,010</u>
At 31 March 2024	<u>54,010</u>	<u>54,010</u>
Depreciation		
At 1 April 2023	49,214	49,214
Charge for the year	1,410	1,410
	<u>50,624</u>	<u>50,624</u>
At 31 March 2024	<u>50,624</u>	<u>50,624</u>
Net book value		
At 31 March 2024	<u>3,386</u>	<u>3,386</u>
At 31 March 2023	<u>2,046</u>	<u>2,046</u>

13 Debtors

	2024 £	2023 £
Trade debtors	3,000	-
Prepayments	1,848	1,000
Accrued income	1,000	-
	<u>5,848</u>	<u>1,000</u>
	<u>5,848</u>	<u>1,000</u>

14 Cash and cash equivalents

	2024 £	2023 £
Cash on hand	100	300
Cash at bank	78,294	223,784
	<u>78,394</u>	<u>224,084</u>
	<u>78,394</u>	<u>224,084</u>

Families InFocus (Essex)

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

15 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2024 £	2023 £
Trade creditors	10,298	2,771
Accruals	6,192	3,090
Deferred income	<u>38,985</u>	<u>120,142</u>
	<u>55,475</u>	<u>126,003</u>

Deferred income relates to grants received that are specified for expenditure in a future period and service income invoiced in advance. Deferred income of £84,157 at 31 March 2023 was released in the year ended 31 March 2024.

Families InFocus (Essex)

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

16 Funds

	Balance at 1 April 2023 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Balance at 31 March 2024 £
Unrestricted funds				
Free reserves	35,432	30,905	(60,502)	5,835
Designated funds				
1) Moody Trust	1,000	-	-	1,000
4) Margaret Hutchon Fund	614	-	-	614
2) Contingency Fund	19,961	-	(10,000)	9,961
3) IT Fund	2,107	-	-	2,107
5) Family Support Adviser/Projects	24,231	-	(24,231)	-
	<u>47,913</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(34,231)</u>	<u>13,682</u>
Total Unrestricted	<u>83,345</u>	<u>30,905</u>	<u>(94,733)</u>	<u>19,517</u>
Restricted				
1) Essex County Council - Independent SEND Information, Advice and Support Service	3,330	40,000	(43,330)	-
2) Chelmsford City Council	-	6,077	(6,077)	-
3) Braintree District & Greenfields Community Fund	707	9,950	(10,657)	-
4) National Lottery Community Fund Grant	-	45,044	(45,044)	-
6) Garfield Weston Foundation	-	30,000	(30,000)	-
8) Essex Community Foundation - Provide Foundation	-	26,000	(26,000)	-
12) BBC Children In Need	-	1,000	(1,000)	-
15) NHS North East Essex Clinical Commissioning Group	3,237	55,001	(58,238)	-
10) Essex Community Foundation - Realising Ambitions	1,415	7,000	(8,415)	-
18) Essex Community Foundation - Moody Fund	140	-	(140)	-
19) Capital Fund (Fixed Assets)	2,046	2,750	(1,410)	3,386
22) Essex Community Foundation	6,294	10,636	(16,930)	-
23) Souter Charitable Trust	-	3,000	(3,000)	-
24) Edward Gostling Foundation	-	10,000	(10,000)	-
25) Sir Jules Thorne Charitable Trust	-	3,000	(3,000)	-
20) Other restricted donations	113	10,500	(7,613)	3,000
26) Essex County Council: Befriending	-	47,207	(47,207)	-
27) Tesco	500	-	(500)	-
29) Active Essex	-	3,000	(3,000)	-
30) Health Inequalities Fund BBWCVS	-	12,500	(6,250)	6,250
31) Hiscox Foundation	-	7,500	(7,500)	-
32) Postcode Places	-	25,000	(25,000)	-

Families InFocus (Essex)

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

	Balance at 1 April 2023 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Balance at 31 March 2024 £
33) Tudwick Foundation	-	3,000	(3,000)	-
Total restricted	<u>17,782</u>	<u>358,165</u>	<u>(363,311)</u>	<u>12,636</u>
Total funds	<u>101,127</u>	<u>389,070</u>	<u>(458,044)</u>	<u>32,153</u>

	Balance at 1 April 2022 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2023 £
Prior Year:					
Unrestricted funds					
Unrestricted funds					
Free reserves	23,109	26,991	(12,899)	(1,769)	35,432
Designated funds					
1) Moody Trust	1,000	-	-	-	1,000
4) Margaret Hutchon Fund	614	-	-	-	614
2) Contingency Fund	19,961	-	-	-	19,961
3) IT Fund	2,107	-	-	-	2,107
5) Family Support Adviser/Projects	24,231	-	-	-	24,231
	<u>47,913</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>47,913</u>
Total unrestricted funds	<u>71,022</u>	<u>26,991</u>	<u>(12,899)</u>	<u>(1,769)</u>	<u>83,345</u>
Restricted					
1) Essex County Council - Independent SEND Information, Advice and Support Service	9,994	-	(6,664)	-	3,330
2) Chelmsford City Council	-	7,000	(7,000)	-	-
3) Braintree District & Greenfields Community Fund	4,057	10,898	(14,248)	-	707
4) National Lottery Community Fund Grant	-	138,828	(138,828)	-	-
5) The Henry Smith Charity	4,831	33,956	(38,787)	-	-
6) Garfield Weston Foundation	-	31,746	(31,746)	-	-
8) Essex Community Foundation - Provide Foundation	-	5,000	(5,000)	-	-
12) BBC Children In Need	2,126	2,456	(4,582)	-	-
11) Walter Farthing Trust	-	5,000	(5,000)	-	-
9) FSJ Charities	-	2,000	(2,000)	-	-
13) Essex Community Foundation - Website	7,500	-	(7,500)	-	-

Families InFocus (Essex)

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

	Balance at 1 April 2022 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2023 £
<i>Prior Year:</i>					
14) Action for Children Essex Short Breaks	-	2,500	(2,500)	-	-
15) NHS North East Essex Clinical Commissioning Group	1,900	61,660	(60,323)	-	3,237
10) Essex Community Foundation - Realising Ambitions	4,295	21,000	(23,880)	-	1,415
18) Essex Community Foundation - Moody Fund	140	140	(140)	-	140
21) National Lottery Cost of Living	-	33,989	(33,989)	-	-
19) Capital Fund (Fixed Assets)	825	-	(548)	1,769	2,046
22) Essex Community Foundation	-	7,500	(1,206)	-	6,294
23) Souter Charitable Trust	-	3,000	(3,000)	-	-
24) Edward Gostling Foundation	-	10,000	(10,000)	-	-
25) Sir Jules Thorne Charitable Trust	-	2,500	(2,500)	-	-
20) Other restricted donations	5,285	7,434	(12,606)	-	113
26) Essex County Council: Befriending	-	13,692	(13,692)	-	-
27) Tesco	-	500	-	-	500
28) Boshier Hinton	-	2,000	(2,000)	-	-
Total restricted funds	<u>40,953</u>	<u>402,799</u>	<u>(427,739)</u>	<u>1,769</u>	<u>17,782</u>
Total funds	<u><u>111,975</u></u>	<u><u>429,790</u></u>	<u><u>(440,638)</u></u>	<u><u>-</u></u>	<u><u>101,127</u></u>

Families InFocus (Essex)

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

The specific purposes for which the funds are to be applied are as follows:

Designated funds:

- 1) The Moody Trust funding has been designated to provide respite to parents with children with disabilities who were found to be under extreme pressure.
- 2) The designated contingency fund was established to meet operating shortfalls if required and the charity's statutory obligations, such as redundancy costs, should the need arise.
- 3) The Trustees have designated funds for IT investment.
- 4) The Margaret Hutchon Fund has been designated to assist Essex families of children and young people with disabilities and special needs who are most in need of some immediate financial support.
- 5) The Trustees have designated funds to provide for the costs of Family Support advisers and Family Support projects across Essex.

Restricted funds:

- 1) Funding is to provide Independent SEND Information, Advice and Support on educational issues to parents/carers for their children/young people with SEND (aged 0-25 years).
- 2) The grant from Chelmsford City Council is towards Family Support for the families with children with disabilities from within Chelmsford City.
- 3) The grant from Braintree District & Greenfields Community Fund is towards Family Support for the families with children and young people with disabilities/ special needs from within Braintree District.
- 4) The National Lottery Community Fund Grant (formerly known as the Big Lottery Fund) is towards the Family Support Project across Essex and a contribution to the core costs of the organisation.
- 5) The grant from the Henry Smith Charity is towards the costs of the Family Support Adviser project across Essex for families of children/young people with disabilities/special needs (aged 0-25).
- 6) The grant from the Garfield Weston Foundation is towards the costs of the Family Support Adviser project across Essex for families of children/young people with disabilities/special needs.
- 7) The grant from Mrs Smith & Mount Trust is towards the cost of the Family Support Project.
- 8) Essex Community Foundation grant from the Provide Foundation is towards Family Support for Chelmsford families of children/young people with disabilities/special needs.
- 9) The grant from FSJ Charities is towards Family Support for Essex families of children/young people with disabilities/special needs.
- 10) Essex Community Foundation grant from the Realising Ambitions Funding Programme is towards Family Support for North East Essex families of children/young people with disabilities/special needs.
- 11) The grant from Walter Farthing Trust is towards Family Support for Mid Essex families of children/young people with disabilities/special needs.
- 12) The grant from BBC Children In Need is towards the Saturday Activity Club.
- 13) Essex Community Foundation grant from pooled funds (Arthur J Gallagher Community Fund £2,670, W G Stacey Family Fund £2,133, FW Charitable Fund £1,937 and Crix Charitable Fund £1,500) is to fund the 'Kidzspace' Support Project for young carers of siblings with SEND.
- 14) The grant from Action for Children is towards the Family Saturday Activity Club for children with SEND and their families.
- 15) The grant from Anton Jurgens Charitable Trust is towards the Saturday Activity Club.
- 16) The grant from the Barbara Ward Children's Foundation is towards the Family Saturday Activity SEND Club.
- 17) The grant from Woodroffe Benton Foundation is towards the core costs of the organisation.
- 18) Essex Community Foundation grants from The Moody Fund towards therapy sessions for two children with learning/developmental issues.
- 19) The Capital Fund represents the fixed assets of the charity.
- 20) Other restricted donations received and applied for specified purposes.

Families InFocus (Essex)

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

- 21) The National Lottery awarded additional funds as an uplift to their main grant to help with increases in costs.
 22) Essex Community Foundation provided funds towards the activity club.
 23) The Souter Charitable Trust provided funds for family support.
 24) The Edward Gostling Foundation provided funds for family support.
 25) Sir Jules Thorne Charitable Trust provided funds for family support.
 25) Essex County Council awarded a grant to set up a peer support service.
 27) Tesco provided funding for activity club equipment.
 28) Boshier Hinton provided funds for the activity club.
 29) Active Essex provided funds for the activity club.
 30) Health Inequalities Fund provided funds for the Family Support Service (Family Support Advisers).
 31) Hiscox Foundation provided funds for the Family Support Service (Family Support Advisers).
 32) Postcode Places provided funds for the Family Support Service (Family Support Advisers).
 33) Tudwick Foundation provided funds for the Family Support Service (Family Support Advisers).

17 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds at 31 March 2024 £
Tangible fixed assets	3,386	-	3,386
Current assets	71,606	12,636	84,242
Current liabilities	(55,475)	-	(55,475)
Total net assets	<u>19,517</u>	<u>12,636</u>	<u>32,153</u>

Prior Year Funds

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds at 31 March 2023 £
Tangible fixed assets	1,769	277	2,046
Current assets	207,579	17,505	225,084
Current liabilities	(126,003)	-	(126,003)
Total net assets	<u>83,345</u>	<u>17,782</u>	<u>101,127</u>

18 Related party transactions

During the year the charitable company made the following related party transactions:

The Trustees

Some of the Trustees have access to the sibling group, activity club, and family events. The benefit received is not material to the accounts. At the balance sheet date the amount due to/from the Trustees was £Nil (2023 - £Nil).

FAMILIES INFOCUS (ESSEX)

England & Wales - Charity number 1062311

Accounts



Families InFocus (Essex)
ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
Year ended 31 March 2023



Registered Charity No. 1062311
Company Limited by Guarantee No. 03287829

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Families InFocus (Essex)

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2023

Company information

Company Number	3287829
Charity Number	1062311
Registered office	30 – 33 Townfield House Chelmsford Essex CM1 1QL
Patron	Lord Petre
Trustees	Sarah Dignasse, Chairperson Marc Jordan, Vice Chairperson Karen Saye Andrew Gothard Martin Merrell David Carruthers Colin Leahey (retired July 2022) Julie Sarti (appointed November 2022) Sue Dewar (appointed January 2023)
Chief Executive Officer	Kirsty Cornell
Independent examiner	Raymond Crace FCA Edmund Carr LLP Chartered Accountants 146 New London Road Chelmsford Essex CM2 0AW

Families InFocus (Essex)

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2023

The trustees, who are the directors of the charitable company for Companies Act purposes, are pleased to present their report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023. In this report they are referred to as the Trustees or, collectively, as “the Board”.

Chief Executive's Welcome

Welcome to our review of 2022 to 2023.

2022 – 2023 was a year of optimism for Families InFocus. We were all relieved to see our services return to normal after a series of interruptions and constraints arising from the pandemic, we have been able to grow our services with the launch of a new peer support service for families, and we have launched our new strategy – combining a realistic view of the outside world alongside some ambitious plans for our future.

This year our fantastic team of staff and volunteers have supported over 1,800 families, helped raise over £600,000 in disability benefits for families, and run a growing programme of workshops and events. We were all thrilled in January 2023 to launch our new website (with funding from the Essex Community Foundation), which has allowed us to share a wide range of information resources with families.

After a long period of reflection, talking to partners, staff, trustees, volunteers, and most importantly families, and with help from the wonderful team at Pilotlight, we were thrilled to launch our new strategy for 2022 to 2025. In developing our plans we are coming from a place of success – Families InFocus is a well-respected, well-known and valued organisation- we have been supporting families who have a child or a young person with any form of Special Educational Need or Disability (SEND) across Essex for over 25 years. We are appreciated and supported by the families we work with. It is important to us that we continue the things that are working well, but that we are also ready to meet future challenges – including the cost-of-living crisis, increasing demands on our services, pressures on the local SEND system, and the national SEND review.

Our strategy focuses on 4 core areas:

- Education support – securing better outcomes for individual children and young people.
- Help with financial wellbeing – improving family finances.
- Bringing people together – supporting the emotional and wellbeing needs of families.
- Resources – empowering families with information.

More detail on our future plans sits on page 10.

In order to do all of the things we want to in the coming years, we need to be sustainable long term. Alongside the strategy sits a fundraising plan, setting out how we will raise income from a diverse range of sources to enable us to deliver our services. This is going to be incredibly important as we face some significant funding uncertainties over the coming years – income generation will be both time consuming and challenging, and we are looking at different forms of raising funds, including asking some families for a contribution to the cost of services where appropriate.

Families InFocus (Essex)

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2023

Demand for our services is increasing, we are seeing an increase in children and young people with poor mental health, the cost of living crisis is hitting SEND families the hardest, and the national SEND system is in urgent need of reform. It is a difficult time for a child or young person with SEND, and their families, but I am confident that Families InFocus, with our hardworking team and local support, will see us move into the future stronger, more resilient and still delivering the excellent services that we are known for today.

K J Cornell

Kirsty Cornell, Chief Executive

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2023

Achievements

For over 25 years, Families InFocus has been providing a range of services for SEND families in Essex, including information and advice, play and social activities, and peer support.

Information and advice

Our Family Support Service is a core aspect of our work. Our team of dedicated Family Support Advisors (FSAs) help families with SEND children by providing support with securing the right education provision. This typically involves:

- Requesting an Education and Health Care Needs Assessment (EHCNA) from the Local Authority. This can be complex and requires a high level of supporting documentation and evidence.
- Appeals to the SEND tribunal when the request is refused (in our experience the requests for EHCNA are almost always refused in Essex), including support through the mediation process before lodging an appeal.
- Supporting families through the appeal process, including lodging the appeal, dealing with pre-hearing paperwork and representing the family at the tribunal hearing.
- Supporting the family after the refusal to assess appeal. We have been successful in 100% of our appeals that reach the tribunal when the Local Authority has refused to assess for an EHCP, and many appeals are conceded by the Local Authority before they reach the hearing.
- Where a family disagrees with the contents of the EHCP, or they feel that their child will receive the most appropriate education in a special school but the Local Authority have named a mainstream school in the EHCP, we support the family to appeal that decision to the SEND tribunal. This is a complex process requiring evidence, witnesses and the submission of legal arguments. We are successful with over 98% of our appeals to the SEND tribunal relating to the contents of the plan or the named school.

Our Family Support Advisors also support families in helping to complete the complex disability benefits applications paperwork, and give advice on transport, social care and housing.

In the year:

- 1,805 families benefited from our advice.
- 1,426 people contacted our helpline.
- 1,472 families were supported with education.
- 483 families were supported with benefits.
- We made almost 11,000 separate contacts with families.
- We've launched a new website with a range of information resources.
- We've made a series of SEND videos, working in partnership with the MAZE group.

Families InFocus (Essex)

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2023

Families who responded to our survey this year said:

95% felt better informed and supported as a result of our support.

85% said our support had a positive effect on their child's education.

82% of families we helped with benefits reported improved wellbeing.

90% strongly agreed or agreed that the support had a positive effect on their whole family.

98% of families rated our support as excellent or very good.

100% would recommend us.

"It has been the most on point and appropriate support that we have received. It is the first assistance that we have been offered that has completely fulfilled what it said it would and I honestly cannot thank them enough." Parent, 2022

Lynn's story:

Lynn is originally from Ghana and is a single mum to three girls. Her eldest daughter, J, is 14 and has an autism spectrum disorder, associated language difficulties and a learning disability. J wasn't happy at her mainstream school, and Lynn was frequently asked to collect her early due to her behaviour. Lynn was concerned about the possible withdrawal of her own benefits due to confusion about her immigration status.

In December 2022, Lynn was without benefits, unable to work, facing eviction and very worried for her family. She became depressed. Our Advisor, Karen, sought Lynn's permission to contact the school, and other agencies for support, including the Local Authority, the local food bank, the salvation army, citizens advice, the Ghanaian society, and Harlow's community hub.

Karen supported Lynn to apply for disability living allowance for J, which was successful. We also supported Lynn to apply for carer's allowance. Karen and Lynn asked the Local Authority for a change of school for J, which was refused, so Karen worked with Lynn to submit an appeal to the SEND tribunal. In discussions with the Local Authority Karen was able to resolve the case before the hearing, and J was awarded a place at a special school.

Through the referral we made to the Harlow community hub, Lynn was allocated a case worker to help her with her immigration, housing and her benefits. The salvation army and food bank provided food vouchers and clothing for Lynn and her family, and Lynn also got support from the Ghanaian society.

Lynn's benefits were reinstated, she is paying off her rent arrears and no longer faces eviction. J is at a more appropriate school, and is much happier. Lynn is feeling much more positive and has started to look for work.

Families InFocus (Essex)

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2023

In the summer of 2022, we commissioned an independent, external evaluation of the impact of our information and advice – our Family Support Service. The evaluation included conversations with over 30 Families InFocus stakeholders, including families we support, staff and trustees, and external professionals from the Local Authority, health, education and the voluntary sector.

Stakeholders were asked to describe how we achieve positive impact for SEND families and the evaluation found we create a broad impact for families, by:

- Helping with EHCPs and other important documents.
- Supporting families to access financial benefit entitlements.
- Attending important meetings such as appeals and tribunals.
- Providing emotional support when things get tough.
- Sharing a broad range of useful information.
- Being a reliable and trustworthy source of advice through its independent status.
- Working locally, with a good knowledge of local schools and services.
- Empowering families to make the best decisions for themselves.
- Offering support in a way that is person-centred, recognising that every family is unique.
- Working in co-production to gather, share and act on the feedback of families.

Stakeholders said that this combination of support could not be found in any other service, making FIF's service unique.

“As a parent, you’re emotionally attached. You need that calm voice. Someone who’s fully on your side who can take over when you’re struggling, who, in meetings, can step in when you feel too emotional. It’s priceless.” (Family member)

“She remembers him and his schedule. She contacts us when she knows something is happening for him. He starts school in September, so she rang to check everything was ok.” (Family member)

The evaluation also found that our Family Support Service adds value to surrounding systems in the local authority, education, health and voluntary sectors. Professionals from these services said Families InFocus alleviated pressure on existing systems by:

- Demonstrating good value for money to its commissioners.
- Offering cost-savings by resolving issues for families before they escalate.
- Sharing skills and information with professionals to improve the efficacy of their work.
- Working effectively in partnership with other charities to increase the number of families in the county who receive support.

The Evaluation concluded that the work of Families InFocus there would be negative consequences not only for the families the charity supports, but the wider systems designed to support families in Essex.

Families InFocus (Essex)

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2023

Play and social activities.

Our two activity clubs, in Chelmsford and Colchester, run weekly in term time. They give SEND children a much-needed safe space for children to try a wide range of activities, such as trampolining, badminton, table tennis, arts, crafts and Lego, in a safe, creative and stimulating environment. They are a welcoming, friendly, supportive place where children can explore freely.

Funding for our clubs is a mix of health funding (the Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated care System), and local funders.

The opportunity to play and have fun is incredibly important for all children, and particularly SEND children who may not have those opportunities as easily elsewhere. But our activity clubs are so much more than that – they are often one of the few consistencies in a SEND child's life, and a place where families can meet for mutual support.

In the last year:

- Over 75 activity club sessions
- 652 attendances at the clubs by children

In August we ran a summer festival for SEND children and their families, in conjunction with the fabulous Flying Seagull Project. Over the course of the two-day festival we welcomed 48 families and 92 children to join in with circus skills, comedy and circus shows, and activities including tight-rope walking, the trapeze, unicycles, hula hoops, stilt walking, juggling and plate spinning.



Families InFocus (Essex)

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2023

Peer support

Befriending has always been at the heart of Families InFocus Essex – it was one of the first services we offered to families over 26 years ago. We know that informal, peer support from people who have similar shared experience is vital for families.

We were therefore really pleased last year to have been awarded funding from Essex County Council to set up and pilot a Peer Support Service for families who have an over 18 with autism or a learning disability. The service looks to support the parents and carers with all the issues they and their family may face, such as periods of transition, change or uncertainty, and where informal support would be appropriate. The new service, Side by Side got underway in April 2023. Since then, the new service manager has worked hard to develop and evolve the policies and procedures for the project, along with additional branding and promotion. This led to the service having a soft launch on the 10th May, initially promoted via social media, but later through contacting various charities and organisations directly to share details of the service. Whilst promoting the service, we simultaneously put out an appeal for peer supporters, which we have had a positive response to.

We are thrilled with the way the project is progressing, and we are looking to expand our Peer Support offer to families of children and young people, and to other user groups and cohorts.



Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2023

Our strategic plan

Our new strategy marks the start of a new phase for Families InFocus. It is rooted firmly in what SEND families have told us they wanted – the strategy was developed on the back of first – hand and in-depth research with families.

In preparing for our new strategy, the Board, staff and wider team worked closely to develop a renewed vision and mission statement:

Our vision:

A more inclusive society where children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities can realise their potential.

Our mission:

We support the whole family to achieve the best possible outcomes so that children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities and their families thrive and feel stronger, empowered and confident.

Our plan

Education support – securing better outcomes for individual children and young people

Our approach to education support is collaborative. We work together, with parents, the Local Authority and schools, to support the family and child to find solutions which will bring about the best and most appropriate education for the child or young person with SEND.

There is huge demand for our education support, and we know we could double in size and not meet the demand that is out there. Any growth to our Family Support team needs to be fully funded – a challenging proposition in the current economic climate.

We want to increase our work in schools, to share the knowledge we have and to improve the way schools work with parents – improving the experience that SEND families have with their child's school.

We will make greater use of the Family Forums' graffiti wall to feed back what families have told us, and we will run workshops on a range of education topics.

Help with financial wellbeing – improving family finances

Families have told us that one of their concerns is how to plan for the future – what do they need to have in place for when their young person with SEND transitions to adulthood, and also how they plan for the time when they will no longer be around to care for their young person.

Of huge importance to families now is the cost of living, and how they will manage the increase in basic living costs, which are further compounded by the additional costs of raising a SEND child.

We will build our knowledge around transitions to adulthood and preparing for adulthood, and we will have in place a robust list of where we can signpost people to for support with finance and benefits.

We will produce a video resource for families on how to complete the DLA form, and towards the end of our three year plan we will make a successful bid for a benefits and finance worker.

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2023

Bringing people together – supporting the emotional and wellbeing needs of families

Another clear request from families in the research was more opportunities to come together – to meet other families who also have a child with SEND, and to be able to get support from each other.

To do this, we will set up coffee mornings in the areas of the county that we don't do them at the moment. We will also start a peer to peer or befriending service.

We will have a more regular FSA presence at our activity clubs, so families can get some informal support and advice whilst they are there.

We will also hold some respite events for parents, where parents can come without their children, to meet other parents and have some space to talk.

We have made the difficult decision to stop running Kidzspace, our siblings group. Kidzspace was paused during the pandemic, and after reviewing how and whether to restart the group, we have acknowledged that most of our Kidzspace users have grown up and moved on, and we are also aware that other local charities provide much more wide-ranging programmes and activities. We are therefore focussing on the other areas of our work.

Resources – empowering families with access to information

We know that high quality, trusted support and information can be hard to find. Our goal is to provide support and information in a range of ways that are accessible to as many people as possible. We want people to be able to access information and empower themselves with knowledge – the main way we will do that is through our new website.

Our website will contain a range of factsheets, videos and other information – on education and benefits. Our new website will go live in January 2023 (we are very grateful to the support of the Essex Community Foundation for funding the website).



Families InFocus (Essex)

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2023

Thank you

We would not be able to do any of the work we do without the wonderful support of our funders, fundraisers and volunteers.

Volunteers

Our charity could not function without the commitment and dedication of our wonderful team of volunteers. They are crucial to our work and help us in so many different ways – helping at our Saturday Activity Club, Family and Fundraising events, on our helpline, in our office, and of course our much-valued Trustees.

Funders

As ever, we are hugely grateful to the trusts, foundations and other grant makers who have made our work possible:

Braintree District and Eastlight	Chelmsford City Council
Essex County Council	Henry Smith
The C S French Charitable Trust	Garfield Weston
The Edward Gostling Foundation	Masonic Charitable Trust
National Lottery	The North East Essex CCG
Realising Ambitions	Schroeder Charitable Trust
The Souter Charitable Trust	Sir Jules Thorne Charitable Trust
Walter Farthing	



We would also like to thank all the individuals who have made donations, either financial or in kind, provided support or took part in fundraising events during the year. **We particularly want to thank Cara Elliot, who ran the London Marathon for Families InFocus!**

Families InFocus (Essex)

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2023

Public benefit

We have referred to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing our purpose, aims and objectives, and in planning our future projects and activities. The trustees consider how planned activities will contribute to the overall aims and objectives they have set.

The charitable purpose of Families InFocus (Essex) is for the public benefit and falls within the description "the relief of those in need, by reason of youth, age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage" in the Charities Act 2011.

All our work is targeted to improve outcomes for Essex families with a CYP with SEND, reflecting the family's needs and aspirations, and placing the child or young person at the heart of all decision making. This is achieved through supportive services for their parents and carers, particularly at times of change, challenge or crisis. This includes where the child or young person has an enduring behavioural or mental health problem, has been excluded or is at risk of exclusion, is being bullied, is experiencing social exclusion, isolation, educational disadvantage, poverty, poor employment prospects or has problems accessing services – health, education, housing, social services, leisure, transport.

Financial review

The results for the year to 31 March 2023 are set out in the statement of activities on page 21. The trustees are pleased to report that in the ongoing difficult economic climate, we have been able to increase our unrestricted reserves – partly from having a cushion from prior year's restricted income that was carried forward to this year, and from funders releasing additional funds to support with the cost of living increases. Trustees know that future years will be challenging however as funding from trusts and foundations becomes more competitive and our costs increase. We are positioning ourselves well to secure additional revenue, submitting quality bids and with tight control of expenditure. Now that our reserves level has dropped, in line with plans, future expenditure will need to remain within our income.

The Trustees are pleased to report that Edmund Carr LLP will continue as accountants. For the year ending March 2023 Community 360 handled our payroll (salaries and pension).

Budgets

The budget for the year to 31 March 2023 was for income of £421,628 against actual income of £429,790 and a budgeted expenditure of £416,180 against actual expenditure of £440,638. The planned surplus was £5,448, and the actual result was a deficit of £10,848. Additional expenditure was funded from restricted reserves brought forward.

For the current financial year, ending 31 March 2024, we have a budgeted income of £470,715 and a budgeted expenditure of £465,841. Our funding gap, as at June 2023, is around £82,000. The trustees and staff team are working to close the gap and have submitted a number of high value

Families InFocus (Essex)

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2023

funding bids, looking to end the year without entering into a deficit, in recognition of our reduced reserves level and the need to keep expenditure within income each year.

Our financial position, going into 2022, was relatively healthy, with ongoing multi-year funding from the National Lottery, Henry Smith Charity and the Garfield Weston Foundation. These funds have been critical to our ongoing sustainability, but all three funds finished at the end of the 22 / 23 financial year, and our position coming into the new financial year starting 1st April 2023 was looking more challenging. The picture now is quite mixed – we are now required to have a three year break from Henry Smith funding, we have reapplied to Garfield Weston and are awaiting the outcome, and we were thrilled to have received 5 years of continuation funding from the National Lottery Community Fund.

We believe we will meet our funding requirement for this year, but we have had to think strategically about how we will generate income on the future. We are working on an ongoing basis to bring in new funding streams, in the knowledge that we can no longer use any of our reserves to fund ongoing costs, as we have in previous years. One area that we have recently decided to implement is asking families for a contribution towards the cost of our work with them. The contribution families are asked for is differentiated based on household income, so that we are not asking families to contribute more than they can afford.

Reserves policy

In July 2021, the trustees reviewed the reserves policy, and set the reserves requirement at three months of expenditure, having taken account of the current operating environment and the charity's assets and potential liabilities. This reserves policy was reviewed and retained in July 2022.

In 2013, the Trustees “designated” £75,000 of unrestricted reserves towards the on-going costs of the Family Support Advisors and Family Support projects across Essex, as it was recognised that we had challenging times ahead. This had been reduced to £24,231 by 1 April 2022 and remains at £24,231 as at 31 March 2023. Total unrestricted reserves at 31 March 2023 stood at £83,345, which represents around 2.1 months of expected expenditure.

The Finance Committee meet three times a year, and are responsible for the developing and implementing robust and achievable plans to restore unrestricted reserves to the equivalent of three months running costs.

Fundraising

We have an on-going programme of fundraising to help meet the funding requirements of the organisation. This includes applications to statutory bodies, grant making trusts, businesses (and in kind), as well as individual donations and fundraising events to generate unrestricted income for the organisation.

Families InFocus (Essex)

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2023

We are extremely grateful to all of our funders, and in particular the fundraisers who have been imaginative and generous in planning events and raising funds on our behalf. We also want to thank the businesses and individuals who have supported us through this year. A full list of those we want to thank is on page 12.

Investment policy

Families InFocus (Essex) is committed to ensuring the best use of funds available to charity to carry out its aims and objectives. Where a sum surplus to immediate requirements is identified, the Trustees recognise their duty of care and responsibility to maximise the financial returns to be made by investing funds appropriately. They will seek proper advice when necessary and act prudently and cautiously, taking into account the need to diversify fund holdings, maintain liquidity and ensure adequate reserves are available to meet legislative and other obligations. So as to safeguard the assets of Families InFocus (Essex), they will comply with the Charity Commission guidelines and endeavour to seek out low risk options for investment.

Risk management policy

The Trustees recognise that they have a responsibility to identify, assess, review and mitigate the risks which may be present in the operation of the charity. "Risk" relates to the uncertainty surrounding events and their outcomes that may have a significant effect, either enhancing or inhibiting:

- operational performance;
- achievement of aims and objectives;
- meeting expectations of stakeholders.

In undertaking risk management, the Trustees:

- focus on the prevention of disaster and mitigation of risks;
- enable the charity to achieve strategic objectives more effectively;
- improve forward planning.

Responsibility for carrying out risk management rests with the Board of Trustees who will involve staff, volunteers and other stakeholders as appropriate thereby ensuring that the Trustees can make the required statement on risk management with reasonable confidence. The risk management policy has been drawn up by the Trustees in conjunction with staff and other stakeholders. All new trustees, staff and volunteers are appraised of its contents during induction.

Regularly and on an on-going basis, the Trustees will:

- identify risks and controls in place;
- assess risk;
- evaluate what action needs to be taken on risks;
- implement appropriate systems and procedures to mitigate risk;
- undertake periodic monitoring and assessment.

Families InFocus (Essex)

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2023

The outcomes of the above will be communicated throughout the organisation as appropriate including through meetings, individual supervisions and appraisals. The Company Secretary will be responsible for ensuring the Trustees agree a statement on risk for inclusion in their annual report.

Our Risk Management Policy was reviewed and updated at our Board meeting on 13th March 2023.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in the notes to the accounts and comply with the charity's governing document, the Charities Act 2011, the Companies Act 2006 and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Financial Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The Trustees (who are also directors of Families InFocus (Essex) for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

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

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

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

Structure, Governance and Management

Governing Document

Families InFocus (Essex) is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 4 December 1996 and registered as a charity on 12 May 1997 under charity number 1062311. The company was established under a Memorandum of Association which established the objects

Families InFocus (Essex)

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2023

and powers and is governed under its Articles of Association dated 19 September 1996, and amended by Special Resolutions on 28 June 1999, 19 December 2001, 8 October 2002 and 4 October 2008.

On 15 October 2014, at the Annual General Meeting, agreement was given by Special Resolution, subject to approval by the Charity Commission, to amend the Charity's Objects and extending support for families of children and young people from ages 0 to 19 to ages 0 to 25. Approval was obtained from the Charity Commission on 26 January 2015, and accepted at Companies House on 19 February 2015.

In the event of the company being wound up the members' liability is £1 each. As at 31 March 2023 there were 75 members.

Operational Management

The Trustees work closely with the CEO in the charity's management, including safeguarding, finance and risk management, fundraising, charity and company law, policies, our aims, vision, missions and organisational values, good practice and governance.

Trustees meet at least 6 times per annum to discuss general charity issues with additional meetings/working groups held to discuss more in-depth matters e.g., strategic plans, risk and finance. Financial risks are reviewed at every meeting, given the continuing concern for finding adequate funding to resource activities. In the last 6 months of the year, trustees met monthly to review the financial position for the year starting 1st April 2023.

The CEO, who reports to the Trustees, is responsible for the day to day operations of the charity. Progress reports (at least quarterly) are prepared by the CEO for review by Trustees which include details of casework and statistical information to ensure our work is developing as planned and is making a positive difference to local families.

We have a rolling programme to regularly review policies and procedures. During the year, Trustees have reviewed policies on business continuity, comments compliments and complaints, data protection, equality diversity and inclusion, environment, financial procedures, health and safety, lone working, privacy, record retention, risk management, safeguarding and safer recruitment.

Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for all Staff, Trustees and Volunteers are carried out via the umbrella organisation Maldon and District CVS, and are renewed every three years.

Monitoring and Evaluation

As we are a parent led organisation, the majority of our board of Trustees and staff team are, or have been, users of our service.

Families InFocus (Essex)

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2023

We continue to embed a culture of self-critical evaluation and continuous improvement, monitoring our impact and measuring successful outcomes via user records and responses to questionnaires, telephone interviews and satisfaction surveys.

In the summer of 2022, we commissioned an independent external evaluation of the Family Support service and delivery against our own and funders' aims and objectives. The report author spoke to other charities, to parents, staff and to statutory bodies. The report evidenced clearly the need for the work that Families InFocus does, and the high standard to which we do it. Areas identified for improvement related predominantly to the need to be able to adapt to and embrace new funding models.

Trustee Recruitment and Appointment

The directors of the company are also charity Trustees for the purposes of charity law and under the company's Articles are known as Board members. The number should not exceed 14 or be less than 7. Trustees are appointed at general meetings by passing an ordinary resolution. Existing Trustees may nominate one or more Trustees.

Currently 8 Trustees sit on the Board comprising of parents of children with disabilities and sympathetic individuals all with a desire to do the best for our families and with a broad range of skills and experience in education, finance, fundraising, procurement, risk management and business. We review the skill set of the Board regularly. All Board members give their time voluntarily and received no material benefits. Any nominal fees or expenses reclaimed from the charity are set out in note 10 to the Accounts.

Training

We provide appropriate training to Staff, Trustees and Volunteers as part of our induction programme and ongoing professional development. This includes safeguarding (child protection & vulnerable adults), health and safety, data protection and role specific training to ensure skills and knowledge are constantly kept up to date.

New Trustees are usually invited to visit the Families InFocus office to speak to the CEO and members of staff. We are developing our trustee induction pack to be a comprehensive guide, containing information about the charity and the role of trustees.

Our staff have many years' experience (direct knowledge and from personal experience) with specialist skills in disability benefit claims, Disability Discrimination Act, SEND issues, procedures and reforms. Our Family Support Advisors are not qualified legal professionals, but all undertake IPSEA training to level 3.

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2023

Chair's concluding remarks

We can reflect on another very positive year for the charity with the quality of support we offer continuing to be highly praised by our families and the partners with whom we work.

The demand for our services and activities remains high and the members of our dedicated, skilled and compassionate staff team demonstrate a level of professional expertise that has a hugely positive impact on our families, giving them somewhere to turn for the help that they need.

Like the majority of charities, we face the constant challenge of securing funding for the continuation of our services and, to date, we have benefitted from the generous support of our funders who can see that their support provides tangible outcomes and makes a real difference for the families of young people with SEND.

Our new strategic plan has given us a renewed sense of direction and has strengthened the commitment of all involved in Families InFocus to understand the challenges that families face and the strategies we can adopt to ensure the most appropriate support is in place to help them.

We are also extremely fortunate to have a fantastic group of people who support the charity through their work as volunteers or through their fundraising, sponsorship and donations, for which we are, as ever, very grateful.

Strong leadership from our Chief Executive, supported by a dedicated team of Trustees, ensures that we operate effectively with sound financial controls and strong governance. As a team we work hard to ensure that our vital work continues.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies entitled to the small companies' exemption.

On behalf of the Trustees,

Sarah Dignasse

Sarah Dignasse, Chairperson

Date approved: 6 November 2023

Families InFocus (Essex)

Independent Examiner's Report to the trustees of Families InFocus (Essex) ('the Company')

I report to the charitable company Trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Company for the year ended 31 March 2023 which are set out on pages 21 to 36.

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

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

Independent examiner's statement

Since the Company's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of The Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, which is one of the listed bodies.

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

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

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

Raymond Crace

.....
Raymond Crace FCA
146 New London Road
Chelmsford
Essex
CM2 0AW

Date: 13 November 2023

Families InFocus (Essex)

Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2023 (Including Income and Expenditure Account and Other Comprehensive Income)

	Note	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Income and Endowments from:					
Donations and legacies	3	26,331	7,215	33,546	9,224
Charitable activities	4	-	395,584	395,584	376,475
Investment income	5	660	-	660	330
Total income		26,991	402,799	429,790	386,029
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds		136	370	506	432
Charitable activities	6	12,763	427,369	440,132	355,213
Total expenditure		12,899	427,739	440,638	355,645
Net income/(expenditure)		14,092	(24,940)	(10,848)	30,384
Transfers between funds		(1,769)	1,769	-	-
Net movement in funds		12,323	(23,171)	(10,848)	30,384
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward		71,022	40,953	111,975	81,591
Total funds carried forward	16	83,345	17,782	101,127	111,975

All of the charitable company's activities derive from continuing operations during the above two periods.

Families InFocus (Essex)
(Registration number: 03287829)
Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2023

	Note	2023 £	2022 £
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	12	2,046	825
Current assets			
Debtors	13	1,000	-
Cash at bank and in hand	14	<u>224,084</u>	<u>181,641</u>
		225,084	181,641
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	15	<u>(126,003)</u>	<u>(70,491)</u>
Net current assets		<u>99,081</u>	<u>111,150</u>
Net assets		<u>101,127</u>	<u>111,975</u>
Funds of the charitable company:			
Restricted income funds			
Restricted funds		17,782	40,953
Unrestricted income funds			
Unrestricted funds		<u>83,345</u>	<u>71,022</u>
Total funds	16	<u>101,127</u>	<u>111,975</u>

For the financial year ending 31 March 2023 the charitable company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Directors' responsibilities:

- The members have not required the charitable company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476; and
- The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions relating to companies subject to the small companies regime within Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006.

The financial statements on pages 21 to 36 were approved by the Trustees, and authorised for issue on 6 Nov 2023... and signed on their behalf by:

Andrew Gothard

 Andrew Gothard
 Trustee

Families InFocus (Essex)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

1 Charitable company status

The charitable company is limited by guarantee, incorporated in England & Wales, and consequently does not have share capital. Each of the Trustees is liable to contribute an amount not exceeding £1 towards the assets of the charitable company in the event of liquidation.

2 Accounting policies

Summary of significant accounting policies and key accounting estimates

The principal accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all the years presented, unless otherwise stated.

Statement of compliance

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice (applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)) (issued in October 2019) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

Basis of preparation

Families InFocus (Essex) meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy notes.

Going concern

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis as the trustees believe that no material uncertainties exist. The trustees have considered the level of funds held and the expected level of income and expenditure for 12 months from authorising these financial statements. The budgeted income and expenditure is sufficient with the level of reserves for the charity to be able to continue as a going concern.

Exemption from preparing a cash flow statement

The charitable company opted to adopt Bulletin 1 published on 2 February 2016 and have therefore not included a cash flow statement in these financial statements.

Income and endowments

All income is recognised once the charitable company has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount of the income receivable can be measured reliably.

Donations and legacies

Donations are recognised when the charitable company has been notified in writing of both the amount and settlement date. In the event that a donation is subject to conditions that require a level of performance by the charitable company before the charitable company is entitled to the funds, the income is deferred and not recognised until either those conditions are fully met, or the fulfilment of those conditions is wholly within the control of the charitable company and it is probable that these conditions will be fulfilled in the reporting period.

Grants receivable

The charity has received government grants in the reporting period. Performance related grants are only included in the SOFA once the charity has provided the related services to meet the performance related conditions.

Families InFocus (Essex)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

Deferred income

Deferred income represents amounts received for future periods and is released to incoming resources in the period for which, it has been received. Such income is only deferred when:

- The donor specifies that the grant or donation must only be used in future accounting periods; or
- The donor has imposed conditions which must be met before the charitable company has unconditional entitlement.

Investment income

Interest receivable is included gross.

Expenditure

Resources expended, including irrecoverable VAT, are accounted for on an accruals basis. The majority of costs are directly attributable to specific activities. Expenditure on projects is treated as direct charitable expenditure.

Raising funds

These are costs incurred in raising funds from events and activities.

Charitable activities

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

Support costs

Support costs include the central functions and are allocated to cost categories on the basis of staff time and amount spent on those cost categories. Depreciation is allocated to cost categories on the basis of total direct costs allocated.

Governance costs

Governance costs are associated with the governance arrangements of the charity and relate to the general running of the charity.

Taxation

The charitable company is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 of the Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes. Accordingly, the charitable company is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income or capital gains received within categories covered by Chapter 3 Part 11 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992, to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

Tangible fixed assets

Individual fixed assets costing £1,000 or more are initially recorded at cost.

Depreciation and amortisation

Depreciation is provided on tangible fixed assets so as to write off the cost or valuation, less any estimated residual value, over their expected useful economic life as follows:

Families InFocus (Essex)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

Asset class	Depreciation method and rate
Fixtures and fittings	25.0% reducing balance
Computer equipment	33.3% reducing balance

Trade debtors

Trade debtors are amounts due for services performed by the charity.

Trade debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due. A provision for the impairment of trade debtors is established when there is objective evidence that the charity will not be able to collect all amounts due according to the original terms of the receivables.

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents comprise cash on hand, bank accounts and bank deposits.

Trade creditors

Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of business from suppliers. Accounts payable are classified as current liabilities if the charity does not have an unconditional right, at the end of the reporting period, to defer settlement of the creditor for at least twelve months after the reporting date. If there is an unconditional right to defer settlement for at least twelve months after the reporting date, they are presented as non-current liabilities.

Trade creditors are recognised at their settlement amount.

Fund structure

Unrestricted income funds are general funds that are available for use at the Trustees discretion in furtherance of the objectives of the charitable company.

Restricted income funds are those donated for use in a particular area or for specific purposes, the use of which is restricted to that area or purpose.

Pensions and other post retirement obligations

The charitable company operates a defined contribution pension scheme which is a pension plan under which fixed contributions are paid into a pension fund and the charitable company has no legal or constructive obligation to pay further contributions even if the fund does not hold sufficient assets to pay all employees the benefits relating to employee service in the current and prior periods.

Contributions to defined contribution plans are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities when they are due. If contribution payments exceed the contribution due for service, the excess is recognised as a prepayment.

Financial instruments

Classification

The Charity has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value.

Families InFocus (Essex)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

3 Income from donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2023 £
Donations receivable	26,331	7,215	33,546
	<u>26,331</u>	<u>7,215</u>	<u>33,546</u>
	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2022 £
Donations receivable	9,224	-	9,224
	<u>9,224</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>9,224</u>

4 Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2023 £
Grants receivable	-	395,584	395,584
	<u>-</u>	<u>395,584</u>	<u>395,584</u>
	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2022 £
Grants receivable	-	376,475	376,475
	<u>-</u>	<u>376,475</u>	<u>376,475</u>

Families InFocus (Essex)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

5 Investment income

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2023 £
Interest receivable on bank deposits	660	-	660
	<u>660</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>660</u>

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2022 £
Interest receivable on bank deposits	330	-	330
	<u>330</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>330</u>

6 Expenditure on charitable activities

	Activity undertaken directly £	Activity support costs £	Total expenditure £
Family Support	371,463	61,587	433,050
Group Activities	6,862	220	7,082
Total for 2023	<u>378,325</u>	<u>61,807</u>	<u>440,132</u>
Total for 2022	<u>306,947</u>	<u>48,266</u>	<u>355,213</u>

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2023 £
Family Support - Direct costs	10,183	361,280	371,463
Group Activities - Direct costs	-	6,862	6,862
Support costs	2,580	59,227	61,807
	<u>12,763</u>	<u>427,369</u>	<u>440,132</u>

Families InFocus (Essex)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

7 Analysis of governance and support costs

Support costs allocated to charitable activities

	Basis of allocation	Governance costs £	Administration costs £	Premises costs including depreciation £	Total 2023 £
Family Support	A	6,490	28,006	27,090	61,586
Group Activities	A	-	150	71	221
		<u>6,490</u>	<u>28,156</u>	<u>27,161</u>	<u>61,807</u>

Basis of allocation

Reference	Method of allocation
A	Apportioned based on usage in relation to directly attributable costs. Depreciation is apportioned based on the apportionment of total direct costs between activities.

Governance costs

	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Independent examiner fees		
Examination of the financial statements	832	735
Other fees paid to examiners	2,450	2,205
Bookkeeping and payroll	<u>3,208</u>	<u>4,101</u>
	<u>6,490</u>	<u>7,041</u>

8 Net incoming/outgoing resources

Net (outgoing)/incoming resources for the year include:

	2023 £	2022 £
Depreciation of fixed assets	<u>548</u>	<u>367</u>

Families InFocus (Essex)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

9 Trustees remuneration and expenses

No Trustees, nor any persons connected with them, have received any remuneration from the charitable company during the year.

During the year, no Trustees were reimbursed for expenses (2022: NIL).

10 Staff costs

The aggregate payroll costs were as follows:

	2023 £	2022 £
Staff costs during the year were:		
Wages and salaries	299,239	257,733
Social security costs	21,471	18,570
Pension costs	13,189	8,252
	<u>333,899</u>	<u>284,555</u>

The monthly average number of persons (including senior management / leadership team) employed by the charitable company during the year expressed by head count was as follows:

	2023 No	2022 No
Average number of paid employees	<u>14</u>	<u>12</u>

7 (2022 - 7) of the above employees participated in the Defined Contribution Pension Schemes.

Contributions to the employee pension schemes for the year totalled £13,189 (2022 - £8,252).

No employee received emoluments of more than £60,000 during the year.

The total employee benefits of the key management personnel of the charitable company were £49,709 (2022 - £40,372).

11 Taxation

The charitable company is a registered charity and is therefore exempt from taxation to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

Families InFocus (Essex)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

12 Tangible fixed assets

	Fixtures, fittings and equipment £	Total £
Cost		
At 1 April 2022	49,491	49,491
Additions	1,769	1,769
At 31 March 2023	<u>51,260</u>	<u>51,260</u>
Depreciation		
At 1 April 2022	48,665	48,665
Charge for the year	549	549
At 31 March 2023	<u>49,214</u>	<u>49,214</u>
Net book value		
At 31 March 2023	<u>2,046</u>	<u>2,046</u>
At 31 March 2022	<u>826</u>	<u>826</u>

13 Debtors

	2023 £	2022 £
Prepayments	<u>1,000</u>	<u>-</u>

14 Cash and cash equivalents

	2023 £	2022 £
Cash on hand	300	300
Cash at bank	<u>223,784</u>	<u>181,341</u>
	<u>224,084</u>	<u>181,641</u>

Families InFocus (Essex)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

15 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2023 £	2022 £
Trade creditors	2,771	2,173
Other taxation and social security	-	5,928
Accruals	3,090	3,381
Deferred income	120,142	59,009
	<u>126,003</u>	<u>70,491</u>

Deferred income relates to grants received that are specified for expenditure in a future period. Deferred income of £52,009 at 31 March 2022 was released in the year ended 31 March 2023. Total grants of £113,142 received in the year ended 31 March 2023 were deferred at 31 March 2023.

Families InFocus (Essex)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

16 Funds

	Balance at 1 April 2022 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2023 £
Unrestricted funds					
Free reserves	23,109	26,991	(12,899)	(1,769)	35,432
Designated funds					
1) Moody Trust	1,000	-	-	-	1,000
2) Contingency Fund	19,961	-	-	-	19,961
4) Margaret Hutchon Fund	614	-	-	-	614
3) IT Fund	2,107	-	-	-	2,107
5) Family Support Adviser/Projects	24,231	-	-	-	24,231
	<u>47,913</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>47,913</u>
Total Unrestricted	<u>71,022</u>	<u>26,991</u>	<u>(12,899)</u>	<u>(1,769)</u>	<u>83,345</u>
Restricted					
1) Essex County Council - Independent SEND Information, Advice and Support Service	9,994	-	(6,664)	-	3,330
2) Chelmsford City Council	-	7,000	(7,000)	-	-
3) Braintree District & Greenfields Community Fund	4,057	10,898	(14,248)	-	707
4) National Lottery Community Fund Grant	-	138,828	(138,828)	-	-
5) The Henry Smith Charity	4,831	33,956	(38,787)	-	-
6) Garfield Weston Foundation	-	31,746	(31,746)	-	-
8) Essex Community Foundation - Provide Foundation	-	5,000	(5,000)	-	-
12) BBC Children In Need	2,126	2,456	(4,582)	-	-
11) Walter Farthing Trust	-	5,000	(5,000)	-	-
9) FSJ Charities	-	2,000	(2,000)	-	-
13) Essex Community Foundation - Website	7,500	-	(7,500)	-	-
14) Action for Children Essex Short Breaks	-	2,500	(2,500)	-	-
15) NHS North East Essex Clinical Commissioning Group	1,900	61,660	(60,323)	-	3,237
10) Essex Community Foundation - Realising Ambitions	4,295	21,000	(23,880)	-	1,415

Families InFocus (Essex)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

	Balance at 1 April 2022 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2023 £
18) Essex Community Foundation - Moody Fund	140	140	(140)	-	140
19) Capital Fund (Fixed Assets)	825	-	(548)	1,769	2,046
20) Other restricted donations	5,285	7,434	(12,606)	-	113
21) National Lottery Cost of Living	-	33,989	(33,989)	-	-
22) Essex Community Foundation	-	7,500	(1,206)	-	6,294
23) Souter Charitable Trust	-	3,000	(3,000)	-	-
24) Edward Gostling Foundation	-	10,000	(10,000)	-	-
25) Sir Jules Thorne Charitable Trust	-	2,500	(2,500)	-	-
26) Essex County Council: Befriending	-	13,692	(13,692)	-	-
27) Tesco	-	500	-	-	500
28) Boshier Hinton	-	2,000	(2,000)	-	-
Total restricted	40,953	402,799	(427,739)	1,769	17,782
Total funds	111,975	429,790	(440,638)	-	101,127

	Balance at 1 April 2021 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Balance at 31 March 2022 £
Prior Year:				
Unrestricted funds				
Unrestricted funds				
Free reserves	19,472	9,554	(5,917)	23,109
Designated funds				
1) Moody Trust	1,000	-	-	1,000
2) Contingency Fund	19,961	-	-	19,961
4) Margaret Hutchon Fund	614	-	-	614
3) IT Fund	2,107	-	-	2,107
5) Family Support Adviser/Projects	24,231	-	-	24,231
	47,913	-	-	47,913
Total unrestricted funds	67,385	9,554	(5,917)	71,022
Restricted				
1) Essex County Council - Independent SEND Information, Advice and Support Service	-	30,000	(20,006)	9,994

Families InFocus (Essex)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

	Balance at 1 April 2021 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Balance at 31 March 2022 £
Prior Year:				
2) Chelmsford City Council	-	10,000	(10,000)	-
3) Braintree District & Greenfields Community Fund	848	11,300	(8,091)	4,057
4) National Lottery Community Fund Grant	-	134,263	(134,263)	-
5) The Henry Smith Charity	4,732	43,375	(43,276)	4,831
6) Garfield Weston Foundation	1,696	11,669	(13,365)	-
7) Anglian Water	-	6,500	(6,500)	-
8) Essex Community Foundation - Provide Foundation	-	5,500	(5,500)	-
12) BBC Children In Need	2,457	2,457	(2,788)	2,126
11) Walter Farthing Trust	-	3,000	(3,000)	-
9) FSJ Charities	-	5,000	(5,000)	-
13) Essex Community Foundation - Website	-	7,500	-	7,500
14) Action for Children Essex Short Breaks	2,500	-	(2,500)	-
15) NHS North East Essex Clinical Commissioning Group	-	29,134	(27,234)	1,900
10) Essex Community Foundation - Realising Ambitions	-	14,000	(9,705)	4,295
17) Essex Community Foundation - Covid	-	50,000	(50,000)	-
18) Essex Community Foundation - Moody Fund	140	-	-	140
19) Capital Fund (Fixed Assets)	1,193	-	(368)	825
20) Other restricted donations	640	12,777	(8,132)	5,285
Total restricted funds	14,206	376,475	(349,728)	40,953
Total funds	81,591	386,029	(355,645)	111,975

Families InFocus (Essex)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

The specific purposes for which the funds are to be applied are as follows:

Designated funds:

- 1) The Moody Trust funding has been designated to provide respite to parents with children with disabilities who were found to be under extreme pressure.
- 2) The designated contingency fund was established to meet operating shortfalls if required and the charity's statutory obligations, such as redundancy costs, should the need arise.
- 3) The Trustees have designated funds for IT investment.
- 4) The Margaret Hutchon Fund has been designated to assist Essex families of children and young people with disabilities and special needs who are most in need of some immediate financial support.
- 5) The Trustees have designated funds to provide for the costs of Family Support advisers and Family Support projects across Essex.

Restricted funds:

- 1) Funding is to provide Independent SEND Information, Advice and Support on educational issues to parents/carers for their children/young people with SEND (aged 0-25 years).
- 2) The grant from Chelmsford City Council is towards Family Support for the families with children with disabilities from within Chelmsford City.
- 3) The grant from Braintree District & Greenfields Community Fund is towards Family Support for the families with children and young people with disabilities/ special needs from within Braintree District.
- 4) The National Lottery Community Fund Grant (formerly known as the Big Lottery Fund) is towards the Family Support Project across Essex and a contribution to the core costs of the organisation.
- 5) The grant from the Henry Smith Charity is towards the costs of the Family Support Adviser project across Essex for families of children/young people with disabilities/special needs (aged 0-25).
- 6) The grant from the Garfield Weston Foundation is towards the costs of the Family Support Adviser project across Essex for families of children/young people with disabilities/special needs.
- 7) The grant from Mrs Smith & Mount Trust is towards the cost of the Family Support Project.
- 8) Essex Community Foundation grant from the Provide Foundation is towards Family Support for Chelmsford families of children/young people with disabilities/special needs.
- 9) The grant from FSJ Charities is towards Family Support for Essex families of children/young people with disabilities/special needs.
- 10) Essex Community Foundation grant from the Realising Ambitions Funding Programme is towards Family Support for North East Essex families of children/young people with disabilities/special needs.
- 11) The grant from Walter Farthing Trust is towards Family Support for Mid Essex families of children/young people with disabilities/special needs.
- 12) The grant from BBC Children In Need is towards the Saturday Activity Club.
- 13) Essex Community Foundation grant from pooled funds (Arthur J Gallagher Community Fund £2,670, W G Stacey Family Fund £2,133, FW Charitable Fund £1,937 and Crix Charitable Fund £1,500) is to fund the 'Kidzspace' Support Project for young carers of siblings with SEND.
- 14) The grant from Action for Children is towards the Family Saturday Activity Club for children with SEND and their families.
- 15) The grant from Anton Jurgens Charitable Trust is towards the Saturday Activity Club.
- 16) The grant from the Barbara Ward Children's Foundation is towards the Family Saturday Activity SEND Club.
- 17) The grant from Woodroffe Benton Foundation is towards the core costs of the organisation.
- 18) Essex Community Foundation grants from The Moody Fund towards therapy sessions for two children with learning/developmental issues.
- 19) The Capital Fund represents the fixed assets of the charity.
- 20) Other restricted donations received and applied for specified purposes.

Families InFocus (Essex)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

- 21) The National Lottery awarded additional funds as an uplift to their main grant to help with increases in costs.
 22) Essex Community Foundation provided funds towards the activity club.
 23) The Souter Charitable Trust provided funds for family support.
 24) The Edward Gostling Foundation provided funds for family support.
 25) Sir Jules Thorne Charitable Trust provided funds for family support.
 25) Essex County Council awarded a grant to set up a peer support service.
 27) Tesco provided funding for activity club equipment.
 28) Boshier Hinton provided funds for the activity club.

17 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds at 31 March 2023 £
Tangible fixed assets	1,769	277	2,046
Current assets	207,579	17,505	225,084
Current liabilities	(126,003)	-	(126,003)
Total net assets	<u>83,345</u>	<u>17,782</u>	<u>101,127</u>

Prior Year Funds

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds at 31 March 2022 £
Tangible fixed assets	-	825	825
Current assets	141,513	40,128	181,641
Current liabilities	(70,491)	-	(70,491)
Total net assets	<u>71,022</u>	<u>40,953</u>	<u>111,975</u>

18 Related party transactions

During the year the charitable company made the following related party transactions:

The Trustees

Some of the Trustees have access to the sibling group, activity club, and family events. The benefit received is not material to the accounts. At the balance sheet date the amount due to/from the Trustees was £Nil (2022 - £Nil).

FAMILIES INFOCUS (ESSEX)

England & Wales - Charity number 1062311

Accounts



Families InFocus (Essex)
ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
Year ended 31 March 2022



Registered Charity No. 1062311
Company Limited by Guarantee No. 03287829

Families InFocus (Essex)

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2022

Families InFocus (Essex)

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Families InFocus (Essex)

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2022

Company information

Company Number	3287829
Charity Number	1062311
Registered office	Moulsham Mill Parkway Chelmsford Essex CM2 7PX
Patron	Lord Petre
Trustees	Sarah Dignasse, Chairperson Karen Saye, Vice Chairperson John Knott, Treasurer (retired November 2021) Andrew Gothard Martin Merrell David Carruthers Marallee Bernard (retired November 2021) Colin Leahey Marc Jordan
Chief Executive Officer	Kirsty Cornell
Independent examiner	Edmund Carr LLP Chartered Accountants 146 New London Road Chelmsford Essex CM2 0AW

Families InFocus (Essex)

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2022

The trustees, who are the directors of the charitable company for Companies Act purposes, are pleased to present their report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2022. In this report they are referred to as the Trustees or, collectively, as “the Board”.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in the notes to the accounts and comply with the charity’s governing document, the Charities Act 2011, the Companies Act 2006 and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Financial 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 March 2015.

Purpose and aims

Families InFocus (Essex) was established in 1996, with the overall aim to support, strengthen and improve the quality of life for Essex Families with children and young people (CYP) with any special educational need or disability (**SEND**), requiring advice, information, emotional and practical support, especially at the time of diagnosis, varied transition points, where they have poor emotional health, are feeling unheard, isolated or depressed, are living in poor environments, or are lone parents.

We do this by focussing on emotional needs – providing practical help, information, advice and support, alongside a range of activities designed to enhance the stability and quality of life for the whole family.

This year the staff and trustees have refreshed our vision and mission statements, which now are:

Our vision is:

A more inclusive society where children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities can realise their potential.

Our mission is:

We support the whole family to achieve the best possible outcomes so that children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities and their families thrive and feel stronger, empowered and confident.

We are proud to be an independent and user-led organisation.

Public benefit

We have referred to the Charity Commission’s general guidance on public benefit when reviewing our purpose, aims and objectives, and in planning our future projects and activities. The trustees consider how planned activities will contribute to the overall aims and objectives they have set.

The charitable purpose of Families InFocus (Essex) is for the public benefit and falls within the description “the relief of those in need, by reason of youth, age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage” in the Charities Act 2011.

Families InFocus (Essex)

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2022

All our work is targeted to improve outcomes for Essex families with a CYP with SEND, reflecting the family's needs and aspirations, and placing the child or young person at the heart of all decision making. This is achieved through supportive services for their parents and carers, particularly at times of change, challenge or crisis. This includes where the child or young person has an enduring behavioural or mental health problem, has been excluded or is at risk of exclusion, is being bullied, is experiencing social exclusion, isolation, educational disadvantage, poverty, poor employment prospects or has problems accessing services – health, education, housing, social services, leisure, transport.

Strategic report

We have been working over the last year to develop our new 3-year strategy, which will take us onwards from May 2022. In doing that we have been fortunate to have the support from:

1. Santander, who via the University of Essex, funded a research intern. The intern undertook quality, first-hand research with families to look at what services and support they need, via an online survey, follow up calls and focus groups. The research has given us a useful understanding of what families want and need from services like ours.
2. Pilotlight – we have been matched with a team of Pilotlighters – senior business leaders, who have coached and mentored us for 10 months, and supported the development of our new strategy. Their insight, ideas and most of all support has been invaluable.
3. Statisticians for society – via the Royal Society of Statisticians we have been paired with a volunteer statistician who has helped us analyse our data and make improvements to how we measure our performance.

We have continued to embed our new branding, and have produced new leaflets and promotional materials. We were extremely pleased last year to have won funding via the Essex Community Foundation for a new website, and work is underway to develop the new site.

We were delighted to win a contract with the North Essex CCG, which started in October 2021. We are working with MAZE and Autism Anglia as a group of early support providers, supporting families who have a child with any Neurodevelopmental Condition in North East Essex. We are providing family support, and are currently setting up a second weekend activity club which will run in Colchester.

We were also really pleased to have been awarded funding as part of a partnership between Families InFocus, PACT for Autism and the Essex Carers Network to set up a peer to peer befriending service for families who have a young person or adult with learning disabilities or autism. We have been awarded two-year funding for the service, starting on the 1st April 2022.

Achievements and performance

Family Support. The first point of call for most new families accessing our services is via our helpline – often at the time of diagnosis or after a referral from their GP or health visitor. Parents and carers are often distressed or anxious, and our helpline offers a tailor-made response to their enquiries, signposting families where appropriate and opening the door to the more in-depth support our Family Support Advisors provide.

Families InFocus (Essex)

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2022

Our one-to-one family support services is provided by our team of highly trained and experienced Family Support Advisors, many who have lived experience of being a parent or carer of a CYP with SEND. Each FSA covers a defined area of the county, building relationships with families and professionals in the area. Parents can access FSA support to help with a whole range of issues, including post diagnosis support, help completing complex benefit claims forms, help with educational issues, or help with transition, transport, social care.

Families report that as a consequence of our support:

- Families are better able to cope with day to day issues – they are more positive and empowered and more able to take control and tackle issues themselves;
- CYP with SEND have improved self-esteem, improved health and wellbeing and increased confidence and independence;
- Families we have supported with benefits claims report they have reduced anxiety and stress, leading to improvements in their health and wellbeing.



I felt overwhelmed with everything and anxious. I felt understood, listened to and respected by staff who helped me so much. I am so grateful.

Covid 19. Over the year we have worked both remotely and in person, depending on the Covid restrictions in place at the time. Like many organisations we have not returned to working as we did before, and have adapted a hybrid working model where staff work partly in the office and partly at home, and we are attending meetings both online and in person to help us make the best use of our limited time.

The impact of Covid on the families we support has been devastating. The fall-out from Covid is still being felt for CYP with SEND, with long-term impacts academically, physically and emotionally. We have seen an even greater demand for our services, with more and more families contacting us with very complex issues they need support with. The vital work we do with some of the most vulnerable families in society has been even more important this year than ever.

In the year, our Family Support Advisors:

- Supported over 2000 families.
- Helped 331 families with complex benefits applications, bringing in over £1.426m in benefits income.
- Supported 1,521 families with education issues.
- Advised on 108 early support issues, and 135 social care queries.

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2022

One of our key strengths is our ability to facilitate communication between parents and carers and professionals within the statutory agencies, specifically social care and education. Our approach often helps resolve areas of difficulty, including avoiding costly tribunals. We promote and enable good partnership working between professionals and parents to improve outcomes for CYP.



It has been the most on point and appropriate support that we have received. It is the first assistance that we have been offered that has completely fulfilled what it said it would and I honestly cannot thank them enough

Our brand and communications. We were fortunate to receive some funding specifically to develop a new brand for Families InFocus (Essex), including a new logo, new information leaflets, and new social media templates, and we were pleased to launch our new branding in the autumn of 2021. We are very grateful to Essex Community Foundation for funding towards our new website. Via the website we want to share information factsheets, videos and other information resources and content with families.

Activities and events

Activity club – our Saturday activity club for CYP with SEND and their siblings provides children with a range of activities, including trampolining, badminton, table tennis, arts and crafts, trikes and soft play. It is an essential outlet for families, providing recreational free play as well as coached activities. It gives children a chance to let off steam, often displaying their extra need traits without judgement, and it is a chance for children to make friends, learn new skills, raise their self-esteem and enhance their personal and social skills. The wide range of activities allows children to choose how they spend their time. Many of the children who come along have limited other opportunities to take part in recreational activities elsewhere and they often find it difficult to participate in mainstream sports and leisure facilities.

Our sessions have been reduced due to changes in Covid restrictions – however we were able to run 38 sessions across the year. 586 children attended across the year.

Kidzspace. We made the difficult decision this year to discontinue our siblings support group, Kidzspace. The club offered respite for siblings over the age of 8 of CYP with SEND. A very sad consequence of Covid was that we had not been able to run Kidzspace for some months, and the trustees now feel that our efforts are better placed in other services, especially as we know other local charities provide such excellent siblings support.

Families InFocus (Essex)

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2022

Working in partnership

We continue to add value through working in partnership with professionals across health, education and social care, and other voluntary agencies.

- Since 2015 we have working in partnership with SNAP in Brentwood, where, when Covid restrictions have allowed, we run fortnightly surgeries during term time, providing specialist education information, advice and support.
- Through funding from the CCG, Families InFocus, MAZE and Autism Anglia are all working together to deliver early support to families who have a child with a neurodevelopmental condition.
- We are starting a new befriending service for families who have a young person or adult with autism or LD, in partnership with PACT for Autism and the Essex Carers Network.
- We have a clear and impactful presence within the overall SEND framework in Essex, working with Essex County Council on a number of reviews, including how best to reduce education appeals. We are part of the SENDIASS steering group, and the SEND Navigation parent support drop in.

During the year we have been active members of the Essex CEO network, ECVYS, the Essex family forum, and we are members of various local Councils' for Voluntary Service across Essex.

Working in the community

It has been much more difficult to provide our regular community sessions throughout the whole year, because of Covid. Our regular Braintree drop-in sessions, providing advice, information and support for families did however restart in September 2021.

We have been very active in the North of the county, working in partnership with Maze to attend various coffee mornings or evenings. We have also provided online sessions in conjunction with Family Solutions, and PACT parent support group in the west of the county.

Service user involvement

We very much welcome and value the involvement, feedback and contribution of the people who use our services into our ongoing development and future plans. This year, we were fortunate to have a Santander funded intern through the University of Essex, who undertook first-hand research with families, giving us insight into what support and services families need.

We have also continued our online survey and this too has given us valuable insight into how families want to see our services develop.

Financial review

The results for the year to 31 March 2022 are set out in the statement of activities on page 17. The trustees are pleased to report that in the ongoing difficult economic climate, this year has been better than forecast, partly due to grants and foundations releasing additional funding to support Covid related work. The trustees know that future years will be challenging however as Covid specific funding reduces, and general funding from trusts and foundations becomes more competitive. We

Families InFocus (Essex)

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2022

are positioning ourselves well to secure additional revenue, submitting quality bids and with tight control of expenditure. Now that our reserves level has dropped, in line with plans, future expenditure will need to remain within our income.

The Trustees are pleased to report that Edmund Carr LLP will continue as accountants. For the year ending March 2022 Rickard Luckin handled our payroll (salaries and pension), from 1st April 2022 this has moved to Community 360.

Budgets

The budget for the year to 31 March 2022 was for income of £367,922 against actual income of £386,029 and a budgeted expenditure of £359,292 against actual expenditure of £355,645. The planned surplus was £8,630, and the actual result was a £30,384 surplus.

For the current financial year, ending 31 March 2023, we have a budgeted income of £421,628 and a budgeted expenditure of £416,180. Our funding gap, as at June 2022, is around £62,000. The trustees and staff team are working to close the gap and have submitted a number of high value funding bids, looking to end the year without entering into a deficit, in recognition of our reduced reserves level and the need to keep expenditure within income each year.

Reserves policy

At a meeting of the Trustees in July 2021, the trustees decided to reduce the reserves requirement to three months of expenditure, having taken account of the current operating environment and the charity's assets and potential liabilities.

In 2013, the Trustees "designated" £75,000 of unrestricted reserves towards the on-going costs of the Family Support Advisors and Family Support projects across Essex, as it was recognised that we had challenging times ahead. £50,769 has now been used for financial periods from 2014 to 2022, so the designated fund now stands at £24,231. As at 31 March 2022 total unrestricted reserves stood at £71,022, which represents around 2 months of expected expenditure.

This year the trustees set up a Finance Committee, whose first meeting was September 2021. One of their first tasks was to develop robust and achievable plans in order to increase our reserves to the equivalent of three months running costs. Considerable progress has been made towards this target this year.

Fundraising

We have an on-going programme of fundraising to help meet the funding requirements of the organisation. This includes applications to statutory bodies, grant making trusts, businesses (and in kind), as well as individual donations and fundraising events to generate unrestricted income for the organisation.

We are extremely grateful to all of our funders, and in particular the fundraisers who have been imaginative and generous in planning events and raising funds on our behalf. We also want to thank the businesses and individuals who have supported us through this year.

Families InFocus (Essex)

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2022

A full list of those we want to thank is on page 15.

Investment policy

Families InFocus (Essex) is committed to ensuring the best use of funds available to charity to carry out its aims and objectives. Where a sum surplus to immediate requirements is identified, the Trustees recognise their duty of care and responsibility to maximise the financial returns to be made by investing funds appropriately. They will seek proper advice when necessary and act prudently and cautiously, taking into account the need to diversify fund holdings, maintain liquidity and ensure adequate reserves are available to meet legislative and other obligations. So as to safeguard the assets of Families InFocus (Essex), they will comply with the Charity Commission guidelines and endeavour to seek out low risk options for investment.

Risk management policy

The Trustees recognise that they have a responsibility to identify, assess, review and mitigate the risks which may be present in the operation of the charity. "Risk" relates to the uncertainty surrounding events and their outcomes that may have a significant effect, either enhancing or inhibiting:

- operational performance;
- achievement of aims and objectives;
- meeting expectations of stakeholders.

In undertaking risk management, the Trustees:

- focus on the prevention of disaster and mitigation of risks;
- enable the charity to achieve strategic objectives more effectively;
- improve forward planning.

Responsibility for carrying out risk management rests with the Board of Trustees who will involve staff, volunteers and other stakeholders as appropriate thereby ensuring that the Trustees can make the required statement on risk management with reasonable confidence. The risk management policy has been drawn up by the Trustees in conjunction with staff and other stakeholders. All new trustees, staff and volunteers are appraised of its contents during induction.

Regularly and on an on-going basis, the Trustees will:

- identify risks and controls in place;
- assess risk;
- evaluate what action needs to be taken on risks;
- implement appropriate systems and procedures to mitigate risk;
- undertake periodic monitoring and assessment.

The outcomes of the above will be communicated throughout the organisation as appropriate including through meetings, individual supervisions and appraisals. The Company Secretary will be responsible for ensuring the Trustees agree a statement on risk for inclusion in their annual report.

Our Risk Management Policy was reviewed and updated at our Board meeting on 24th March 2022.

Families InFocus (Essex)

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2022

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The Trustees (who are also directors of Families InFocus (Essex) for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

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

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

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

Structure, Governance and Management

Governing Document

Families InFocus (Essex) is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 4 December 1996 and registered as a charity on 12 May 1997 under charity number 1062311. The company was established under a Memorandum of Association which established the objects and powers and is governed under its Articles of Association dated 19 September 1996, and amended by Special Resolutions on 28 June 1999, 19 December 2001, 8 October 2002 and 4 October 2008.

On 15 October 2014, at the Annual General Meeting, agreement was given by Special Resolution, subject to approval by the Charity Commission, to amend the Charity's Objects and extending support for families of children and young people from ages 0 to 19 to ages 0 to 25. Approval was obtained from the Charity Commission on 26 January 2015, and accepted at Companies House on 19 February 2015.

In the event of the company being wound up the members' liability is £1 each. As at 31 March 2022 there were 73 members.

Operational Management

Families InFocus (Essex)

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2022

The Trustees work closely with the CEO in the charity's management, including safeguarding, finance and risk management, fundraising, charity and company law, policies, our aims, vision, missions and organisational values, good practice and governance.

Trustees meet at least 6 times per annum to discuss general charity issues with additional meetings/working groups held to discuss more in-depth matters e.g., strategic plans, risk and finance. Financial risks are reviewed at every meeting, given the continuing concern for finding adequate funding to resource activities.

The CEO, who reports to the Trustees, is responsible for the day to day operations of the charity. Progress reports (at least quarterly) are prepared by the CEO for review by Trustees which include details of casework and statistical information to ensure our work is developing as planned and is making a positive difference to local families.

We have a rolling programme to regularly review policies and procedures. During the year, Trustees have reviewed policies on business continuity, confidentiality, internet and email, investment, safeguarding, supervision and support, and whistleblowing.

The Trustees decided not to seek renewal of our PQASSO accreditation (now called Trusted Charity) once the accreditation lapsed in January 2021, because of NCVO's decision to stop providing the accreditation, and the subsequent uncertainty over the future of the accreditation. This will be kept under review by trustees.

Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for all Staff, Trustees and Volunteers are carried out via the umbrella organisation Maldon and District CVS, and are renewed every three years.

Monitoring and Evaluation

As we are a parent led organisation, the majority of our board of Trustees and staff team are, or have been, users of our service.

We continue to embed a culture of self-critical evaluation and continuous improvement, monitoring our impact and measuring successful outcomes via user records and responses to questionnaires, telephone interviews and satisfaction surveys.

In May 2019, we commissioned an independent external evaluation of the Family Support service and delivery against our own and funders' aims and objectives. The report was overwhelmingly positive providing a 360 degree perspective of how the service is perceived from the viewpoint of families of CYP with SEND, partner organisations, stakeholders and funders. Areas identified for improvement relate to improving and varying lines of communication, raising awareness and extending reach, all of which we are taking on board.

'Outcomes for families are excellent and the service engenders trust and confidence within families and partner organisations. It is quite unique in the services it offers, covering a wide area and

Families InFocus (Essex)

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2022

supporting financial, physical and emotional health and wellbeing for some of the most challenged families’ - Charlotte Fitzgerald Consultancy Ltd, July 2019.

We are about to start the process of commissioning our next independent, external evaluation.

Trustee Recruitment and Appointment

The directors of the company are also charity Trustees for the purposes of charity law and under the company’s Articles are known as Board members. The number should not exceed 14 or be less than 7. Trustees are appointed at general meetings by passing an ordinary resolution. Existing Trustees may nominate one or more Trustees.

Currently seven Trustees sit on the Board comprising of parents of children with disabilities and sympathetic individuals all with a desire to do the best for our families and with a broad range of skills and experience in education, finance, fundraising, procurement, risk management and business. We review the skill set of the Board regularly. All Board members give their time voluntarily and received no material benefits. Any nominal fees or expenses reclaimed from the charity are set out in note 10 to the Accounts.

Training

We provide appropriate training to Staff, Trustees and Volunteers as part of our induction programme and ongoing professional development. This includes safeguarding (child protection & vulnerable adults), health and safety, data protection and role specific training to ensure skills and knowledge are constantly kept up to date.

New Trustees are usually invited to visit the Families InFocus office to speak to the CEO and members of staff. We are developing our trustee induction pack to be a comprehensive guide, containing information about the charity and the role of trustees. All Trustees have received and read ‘The Essential Trustee – what you need to know’ document.

Our staff have many years’ experience (direct knowledge and from personal experience) with specialist skills in disability benefit claims, Disability Discrimination Act, SEND issues, procedures and reforms. Our Family Support Advisors are not qualified legal professionals, but all undertake IPSEA training to level 3.

Our financial future

Our financial position, going into 2022, was relatively healthy, with ongoing multi-year funding from the National Lottery, Henry Smith Charity and the Garfield Weston Foundation. These funds have been critical to our ongoing sustainability, but as they come to an end over the coming years, we must look to new funding sources to raise a significant proportion of our expenditure.

Our income generation has been affected, like most other organisations, during this challenging and unprecedented time. Specifically, the loss of income through the pausing of grant funding programmes, cancellation of planned fundraising events (our own and others), and a reduction in regular donation giving has impacted on us. The current squeeze on cost of living is likely to impact further on individual donations.

Families InFocus (Essex)

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2022

We are working on an ongoing basis to bring in new funding streams, in the knowledge that we can no longer use any of our reserves to fund ongoing costs, as we have in previous years. If we are not able to continue to bring in funds at the level required, we run the risk of having to critically reduce support offered to vulnerable families, at a time when we expect to see even greater demand. So, it is vital that we continue to provide evidence of the value and impact of our work to inform future bids and attract funding.

Our plans for the future

We seem to be coming to the end of what has been a truly remarkable time, with unexpected and unprecedented challenges for all charities brought about by the Covid pandemic. As we write this report in the summer of 2022, we are looking forward to implementing our new strategy for the future.

We have been fortunate to have had support from our private sector experts (“Pilotlighters”), through the charity Pilotlight, as well as from Statisticians for Society and our Santander funded research intern, via the University of Essex, to develop our plans. Through this work, we have come to the following four main areas of focus for our next three years development:

- a) Education support – helping families to navigate the education system.
- b) Help with financial wellbeing and inclusion – including accessing benefits and other support.
- c) Bringing people together – people want opportunities to come together online and in person for parents, carers, families, CYP with SEND and their siblings.
- d) Resources – providing information and helping people to know where to go for the right support. As part of this, we are working on a new website.

Families InFocus (Essex)

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2022

Chair's concluding remarks

As we continue to navigate through what we hope is the end of the Covid pandemic, we can reflect on another very positive year for the charity; successfully delivering against our strategic and operational plans, we continue to address the ever-growing demand for our services and activities.

High levels of satisfaction in the quality of support received by our families and excellent feedback from our partners has confirmed the positive impact of our work to ensure that families have somewhere to turn for the help that they need.

Our refreshed vision and mission reflect the challenges that our families face and our drive and determination to support them in facing and overcoming these challenges.

Our team of staff is a very special one and it is their dedication, professional expertise, skills and compassion that ensures that the needs of families are met and the best possible outcomes are achieved. We are also extremely fortunate to have a fantastic group of people who support the charity through their work as volunteers or through their fundraising, sponsorship and donations.

Strong leadership from our Chief Executive, supported by a dedicated team of Trustees, ensures that we operate effectively; with sound financial controls, strong governance, together with concerted efforts to secure funds in an increasingly difficult funding environment, we work hard to ensure that our vital work continues.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies entitled to the small companies' exemption.

On behalf of the Trustees,

Sarah Dignasse

Sarah Dignasse, Chairperson

Date approved: 29 September 2022

Families InFocus (Essex)

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2022

THANK YOU

TO OUR TRUSTEES AND VOLUNTEERS

Our charity could not function without the commitment and dedication of our wonderful team of volunteers. They are crucial to our work and help us in so many different ways – helping at our Saturday Activity Club, Family and Fundraising events, on our helpline, in our office, and of course our much-valued Trustees.

Kerry Ayre	Leah Bannister	Jackie Brown
David Carruthers	Sarah Dignasse	Andrew Gothard
Michael Hewitt	Karen Holmes	Marc Jordan
John Knott	Jack Labdon	Colin Leahey
Martin Merrell	Abigail Nash	Karen Saye
Pippa Schumann	Michael Smith	Toby Turner
	Wendy Windsor	

TO OUR SUPPORTERS

We wish to express our gratitude to the following businesses, charitable trusts, clubs and statutory funders for the support they have given us, either financial or in kind, during the year.

Action for Children Essex Short Breaks	Alastair and Patricia Stewart Charitable Fund
Anglian Water	Baily Thomas
BBC Children in Need	Braintree District & Greenfields Community Fund
Braintree United Charities	Charities Trust
Chelmsford City Council	CS French Charitable Trust
Ecclesiastical	Essex Community Foundation Covid support
Essex County Council	Essex Lottery
FSJ Charities	Garfield Weston Foundation
Henry Smith Charity	Lions Club of Chelmsford
The Masonic Charitable Foundation	Moody Fund
Moulsham Lodge choir	National Lottery Community Fund
National Lottery - Coronavirus Community Support Fund	Nisa Castle Stores
The North East Essex CCG	Paypal Giving Fund
Pilotlight	Provide Foundation
Realising Ambitions	Rotary Club of Chelmsford
The Schroder Charitable Trust	Statisticians for Society
University of Essex	Walter Farthing (Trust) Ltd

We would also like to thank all the individuals who have made donations, either financial or in kind, provided support or took part in fundraising events during the year. **We particularly want to thank Maddox, who raised over £1,500 by running 100 miles for Families InFocus!**

THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR GENEROSITY

Families InFocus (Essex)

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Families InFocus (Essex) ("the Company")

I report to the charitable company Trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Company for the year ended 31 March 2022 which are set out on pages 17 to 31.

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

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

Independent examiner's statement

Since the Company's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of The Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, which is one of the listed bodies.

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

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

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

Raymond Crace

.....
Raymond Crace FCA
146 New London Road
Chelmsford
Essex
CM2 0AW

Date: 11 October 2022..

Families InFocus (Essex)

Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2022 (Including Income and Expenditure Account and Other Comprehensive Income)

	Note	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
Income and Endowments from:					
Donations and legacies	3	9,224	-	9,224	16,523
Charitable activities	4	-	376,475	376,475	336,502
Investment income	5	330	-	330	625
Total income		<u>9,554</u>	<u>376,475</u>	<u>386,029</u>	<u>353,650</u>
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds		-	432	432	312
Charitable activities	6	<u>5,917</u>	<u>349,296</u>	<u>355,213</u>	<u>324,645</u>
Total expenditure		<u>5,917</u>	<u>349,728</u>	<u>355,645</u>	<u>324,957</u>
Net income		<u>3,637</u>	<u>26,747</u>	<u>30,384</u>	<u>28,693</u>
Net movement in funds		3,637	26,747	30,384	28,693
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward		<u>67,385</u>	<u>14,206</u>	<u>81,591</u>	<u>52,898</u>
Total funds carried forward	15	<u>71,022</u>	<u>40,953</u>	<u>111,975</u>	<u>81,591</u>

All of the charitable company's activities derive from continuing operations during the above two periods.

Families InFocus (Essex)
(Registration number: 03287829)
Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2022

	Note	2022 £	2021 £
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	12	825	1,192
Current assets			
Cash at bank and in hand	13	181,641	138,462
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	14	<u>(70,491)</u>	<u>(58,063)</u>
Net current assets		<u>111,150</u>	<u>80,399</u>
Net assets		<u>111,975</u>	<u>81,591</u>
Funds of the charitable company:			
Restricted income funds			
Restricted funds		40,953	14,206
Unrestricted income funds			
Unrestricted funds		<u>71,022</u>	<u>67,385</u>
Total funds	15	<u>111,975</u>	<u>81,591</u>

For the financial year ending 31 March 2022 the charitable company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Directors' responsibilities:

- The members have not required the charitable company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476; and
- The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

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

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions relating to companies subject to the small companies regime within Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006.

The financial statements on pages 17 to 31 were approved by the Trustees, and authorised for issue on 29 Sept. 2022 and signed on their behalf by:

Andrew Gothard

 Andrew Gothard
 Trustee

Families InFocus (Essex)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

1 Charitable company status

The charitable company is limited by guarantee, incorporated in England & Wales, and consequently does not have share capital. Each of the Trustees is liable to contribute an amount not exceeding £1 towards the assets of the charitable company in the event of liquidation.

2 Accounting policies

Summary of significant accounting policies and key accounting estimates

The principal accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all the years presented, unless otherwise stated.

Statement of compliance

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice (applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)) (issued in October 2019) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

Basis of preparation

Families InFocus (Essex) meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy notes.

Going concern

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis as the trustees believe that no material uncertainties exist. The trustees have considered the level of funds held and the expected level of income and expenditure for 12 months from authorising these financial statements. The budgeted income and expenditure is sufficient with the level of reserves for the charity to be able to continue as a going concern.

Exemption from preparing a cash flow statement

The charitable company opted to adopt Bulletin 1 published on 2 February 2016 and have therefore not included a cash flow statement in these financial statements.

Income and endowments

All income is recognised once the charitable company has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount of the income receivable can be measured reliably.

Donations and legacies

Donations are recognised when the charitable company has been notified in writing of both the amount and settlement date. In the event that a donation is subject to conditions that require a level of performance by the charitable company before the charitable company is entitled to the funds, the income is deferred and not recognised until either those conditions are fully met, or the fulfilment of those conditions is wholly within the control of the charitable company and it is probable that these conditions will be fulfilled in the reporting period.

Grants receivable

The charity has received government grants in the reporting period. Performance related grants are only included in the SOFA once the charity has provided the related services to meet the performance related conditions.

Families InFocus (Essex)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

Deferred income

Deferred income represents amounts received for future periods and is released to incoming resources in the period for which, it has been received. Such income is only deferred when:

- The donor specifies that the grant or donation must only be used in future accounting periods; or
- The donor has imposed conditions which must be met before the charitable company has unconditional entitlement.

Investment income

Interest receivable is included gross.

Expenditure

Resources expended, including irrecoverable VAT, are accounted for on an accruals basis. The majority of costs are directly attributable to specific activities. Expenditure on projects is treated as direct charitable expenditure.

Raising funds

These are costs incurred in raising funds from events and activities.

Charitable activities

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

Support costs

Support costs include the central functions and are allocated to cost categories on the basis of staff time and amount spent on those cost categories. Depreciation is allocated to cost categories on the basis of total direct costs allocated.

Governance costs

Governance costs are associated with the governance arrangements of the charity and relate to the general running of the charity.

Taxation

The charitable company is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 of the Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes. Accordingly, the charitable company is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income or capital gains received within categories covered by Chapter 3 Part 11 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992, to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

Tangible fixed assets

Individual fixed assets costing £1,000 or more are initially recorded at cost.

Depreciation and amortisation

Depreciation is provided on tangible fixed assets so as to write off the cost or valuation, less any estimated residual value, over their expected useful economic life as follows:

Families InFocus (Essex)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

Asset class

Fixtures and fittings

Computer equipment

Depreciation method and rate

25.0% reducing balance

33.3% reducing balance

Trade debtors

Trade debtors are amounts due for services performed by the charity.

Trade debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due. A provision for the impairment of trade debtors is established when there is objective evidence that the charity will not be able to collect all amounts due according to the original terms of the receivables.

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents comprise cash on hand, bank accounts and bank deposits.

Trade creditors

Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of business from suppliers. Accounts payable are classified as current liabilities if the charity does not have an unconditional right, at the end of the reporting period, to defer settlement of the creditor for at least twelve months after the reporting date. If there is an unconditional right to defer settlement for at least twelve months after the reporting date, they are presented as non-current liabilities.

Trade creditors are recognised at their settlement amount.

Fund structure

Unrestricted income funds are general funds that are available for use at the Trustees discretion in furtherance of the objectives of the charitable company.

Restricted income funds are those donated for use in a particular area or for specific purposes, the use of which is restricted to that area or purpose.

Pensions and other post retirement obligations

The charitable company operates a defined contribution pension scheme which is a pension plan under which fixed contributions are paid into a pension fund and the charitable company has no legal or constructive obligation to pay further contributions even if the fund does not hold sufficient assets to pay all employees the benefits relating to employee service in the current and prior periods.

Contributions to defined contribution plans are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities when they are due. If contribution payments exceed the contribution due for service, the excess is recognised as a prepayment.

Financial instruments**Classification**

The Charity has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value.

Families InFocus (Essex)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

3 Income from donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2022 £
Donations receivable	9,224	-	9,224
	<u>9,224</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>9,224</u>
	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2021 £
Donations receivable	15,773	-	15,773
Grants receivable	750	-	750
	<u>16,523</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>16,523</u>

4 Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2022 £
Grants receivable	-	376,475	376,475
	<u>-</u>	<u>376,475</u>	<u>376,475</u>
	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2021 £
Grants receivable	-	336,502	336,502
	<u>-</u>	<u>336,502</u>	<u>336,502</u>

5 Investment income

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2022 £
Interest receivable on bank deposits	330	-	330
	<u>330</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>330</u>
	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2021 £
Interest receivable on bank deposits	625	-	625
	<u>625</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>625</u>

Families InFocus (Essex)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

6 Expenditure on charitable activities

	Activity undertaken directly £	Activity support costs £	Total expenditure £
Family Support	301,658	48,219	349,877
Group Activities	5,289	47	5,336
Total for 2022	306,947	48,266	355,213
Total for 2021	289,595	35,050	324,645

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2022 £
Family Support - Direct costs	-	301,658	301,658
Group Activities - Direct costs	-	5,289	5,289
Support costs	5,917	42,349	48,266
	5,917	349,296	355,213

Families InFocus (Essex)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

7 Analysis of governance and support costs

Support costs allocated to charitable activities

	Basis of allocation	Governance costs £	Administration costs £	Premises costs including depreciation £	Total 2022 £
Family Support	A	7,161	20,517	20,541	48,219
Group Activities	A	-	-	47	47
		<u>7,161</u>	<u>20,517</u>	<u>20,588</u>	<u>48,266</u>

Basis of allocation

Reference	Method of allocation
A	Apportioned based on usage in relation to directly attributable costs. Depreciation is apportioned based on the apportionment of total direct costs between activities.

Governance costs

	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
Independent examiner fees		
Examination of the financial statements	735	695
Other fees paid to examiners	2,205	2,147
Bookkeeping and payroll	4,190	1,852
Other governance costs	31	253
	<u>7,161</u>	<u>4,947</u>

8 Net incoming/outgoing resources

Net incoming resources for the year include:

	2022 £	2021 £
Depreciation of fixed assets	<u>367</u>	<u>564</u>

Families InFocus (Essex)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

9 Trustees remuneration and expenses

No Trustees, nor any persons connected with them, have received any remuneration from the charitable company during the year.

During the year, no Trustees were reimbursed for expenses (2021: NIL).

10 Staff costs

The aggregate payroll costs were as follows:

	2022 £	2021 £
Staff costs during the year were:		
Wages and salaries	257,733	256,232
Social security costs	18,570	18,084
Pension costs	8,252	5,889
Other staff costs	1,065	-
	<u>285,620</u>	<u>280,205</u>

The monthly average number of persons (including senior management / leadership team) employed by the charitable company during the year expressed by head count was as follows:

	2022 No	2021 No
Average number of paid employees	<u>12</u>	<u>12</u>

7 (2021 - 5) of the above employees participated in the Defined Contribution Pension Schemes.

Contributions to the employee pension schemes for the year totalled £8,252 (2021 - £5,888).

No employee received emoluments of more than £60,000 during the year.

The total employee benefits of the key management personnel of the charitable company were £40,372 (2021 - £44,355).

11 Taxation

The charitable company is a registered charity and is therefore exempt from taxation.

Families InFocus (Essex)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

12 Tangible fixed assets

	Fixtures, fittings and equipment £	Total £
Cost		
At 1 April 2021	35,323	35,323
At 31 March 2022	35,323	35,323
Depreciation		
At 1 April 2021	34,131	34,131
Charge for the year	367	367
At 31 March 2022	34,498	34,498
Net book value		
At 31 March 2022	825	825
At 31 March 2021	1,192	1,192

13 Cash and cash equivalents

	2022 £	2021 £
Cash on hand	300	300
Cash at bank	181,341	138,162
	181,641	138,462

14 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2022 £	2021 £
Trade creditors	2,173	1,177
Other taxation and social security	5,928	10,952
Accruals	3,381	2,802
Deferred income	59,009	43,132
	70,491	58,063

Deferred income relates to grants received that are specified for expenditure in a future period. All income deferred at 31 March 2021 was released in the year ended 31 March 2022.

Families InFocus (Essex)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

15 Funds

	Balance at 1 April 2021 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Balance at 31 March 2022 £
Unrestricted funds				
Free reserves	19,472	9,554	(5,917)	23,109
Designated funds				
1) Moody Trust	1,000	-	-	1,000
4) Margaret Hutchon Fund	614	-	-	614
3) IT Fund	2,107	-	-	2,107
5) Family Support Adviser/Projects	24,231	-	-	24,231
2) Contingency Fund	19,961	-	-	19,961
	<u>47,913</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>47,913</u>
Total Unrestricted	<u>67,385</u>	<u>9,554</u>	<u>(5,917)</u>	<u>71,022</u>
Restricted				
1) Essex County Council - Independent SEND Information, Advice and Support Service	-	30,000	(20,006)	9,994
2) Chelmsford City Council	-	10,000	(10,000)	-
3) Braintree District & Greenfields Community Fund	848	11,300	(8,091)	4,057
4) National Lottery Community Fund Grant	-	134,263	(134,263)	-
5) The Henry Smith Charity	4,732	43,375	(43,276)	4,831
6) Garfield Weston Foundation	1,696	11,669	(13,365)	-
7) Anglian Water	-	6,500	(6,500)	-
8) Essex Community Foundation - Provide Foundation	-	5,500	(5,500)	-
12) BBC Children In Need	2,457	2,457	(2,788)	2,126
11) Walter Farthing Trust	-	3,000	(3,000)	-
9) FSJ Charities	-	5,000	(5,000)	-
13) Essex Community Foundation - Website	-	7,500	-	7,500
14) Action for Children Essex Short Breaks	2,500	-	(2,500)	-
15) NHS North East Essex Clinical Comissioning Group	-	29,134	(27,234)	1,900
10) Essex Community Foundation - Realising Ambitions	-	14,000	(9,705)	4,295
17) Essex Community Foundation - Covid	-	50,000	(50,000)	-
18) Essex Community Foundation - Moody Fund	140	-	-	140
19) Capital Fund (Fixed Assets)	1,193	-	(368)	825
20) Other restricted donations	640	12,777	(8,132)	5,285
	<u>14,206</u>	<u>376,475</u>	<u>(349,728)</u>	<u>40,953</u>
Total restricted	<u>14,206</u>	<u>376,475</u>	<u>(349,728)</u>	<u>40,953</u>

Families InFocus (Essex)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

	Balance at 1 April 2021 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Balance at 31 March 2022 £
Total funds	<u>81,591</u>	<u>386,029</u>	<u>(355,645)</u>	<u>111,975</u>
Prior Year:				
	Balance at 1 April 2020 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Balance at 31 March 2021 £
Unrestricted funds				
Unrestricted funds				
Free reserves	3,089	17,148	(765)	19,472
Designated funds				
1) Moody Trust	1,000	-	-	1,000
4) Margaret Hutchon Fund	614	-	-	614
3) IT Fund	2,107	-	-	2,107
5) Family Support Adviser/Projects	24,231	-	-	24,231
2) Contingency Fund	<u>19,961</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>19,961</u>
	<u>47,913</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>47,913</u>
Total unrestricted funds	<u>51,002</u>	<u>17,148</u>	<u>(765)</u>	<u>67,385</u>
Restricted				
1) Essex County Council - Independent SEND Information, Advice and Support Service	-	45,000	(45,000)	-
2) Chelmsford City Council	-	7,500	(7,500)	-
3) Braintree District & Greenfields Community Fund	-	10,315	(9,467)	848
4) National Lottery Community Fund Grant	-	157,679	(157,679)	-
5) The Henry Smith Charity	-	42,780	(38,048)	4,732
6) Garfield Weston Foundation	-	20,000	(18,304)	1,696
8) Essex Community Foundation - Provide Foundation	-	5,000	(5,000)	-
12) BBC Children In Need	-	2,457	-	2,457
13) Essex Community Foundation - Website	-	750	(750)	-
14) Action for Children Essex Short Breaks	-	5,499	(2,999)	2,500
10) Essex Community Foundation - Realising Ambitions	-	5,000	(5,000)	-
18) Essex Community Foundation - Moody Fund	140	-	-	140
19) Capital Fund (Fixed Assets)	1,756	-	(563)	1,193
20) Other restricted donations	<u>-</u>	<u>34,522</u>	<u>(33,882)</u>	<u>640</u>
Total restricted funds	<u>1,896</u>	<u>336,502</u>	<u>(324,192)</u>	<u>14,206</u>

Families InFocus (Essex)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

	Balance at 1 April 2020 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Balance at 31 March 2021 £
<i>Prior Year:</i>				
Total funds	<u>52,898</u>	<u>353,650</u>	<u>(324,957)</u>	<u>81,591</u>

Families InFocus (Essex)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

The specific purposes for which the funds are to be applied are as follows:

Designated funds:

- 1) The Moody Trust funding has been designated to provide respite to parents with children with disabilities who were found to be under extreme pressure.
- 2) The designated contingency fund was established to meet operating shortfalls if required and the charity's statutory obligations, such as redundancy costs, should the need arise.
- 3) The Trustees have designated funds for IT investment.
- 4) The Margaret Hutchon Fund has been designated to assist Essex families of children and young people with disabilities and special needs who are most in need of some immediate financial support.
- 5) The Trustees have designated funds to provide for the costs of Family Support advisers and Family Support projects across Essex.

Restricted funds:

- 1) Funding is to provide Independent SEND Information, Advice and Support on educational issues to parents/carers for their children/young people with SEND (aged 0-25 years).
- 2) The grant from Chelmsford City Council is towards Family Support for the families with children with disabilities from within Chelmsford City.
- 3) The grant from Braintree District & Greenfields Community Fund is towards Family Support for the families with children and young people with disabilities/ special needs from within Braintree District.
- 4) The National Lottery Community Fund Grant (formerly known as the Big Lottery Fund) is towards the Family Support Project across Essex and a contribution to the core costs of the organisation.
- 5) The grant from the Henry Smith Charity is towards the costs of the Family Support Adviser project across Essex for families of children/young people with disabilities/special needs (aged 0-25).
- 6) The grant from the Garfield Weston Foundation is towards the costs of the Family Support Adviser project across Essex for families of children/young people with disabilities/special needs.
- 7) The grant from Mrs Smith & Mount Trust is towards the cost of the Family Support Project.
- 8) Essex Community Foundation grant from the Provide Foundation is towards Family Support for Chelmsford families of children/young people with disabilities/special needs.
- 9) The grant from FSJ Charities is towards Family Support for Essex families of children/young people with disabilities/special needs.
- 10) Essex Community Foundation grant from the Realising Ambitions Funding Programme is towards Family Support for North East Essex families of children/young people with disabilities/special needs.
- 11) The grant from Walter Farthing Trust is towards Family Support for Mid Essex families of children/young people with disabilities/special needs.
- 12) The grant from BBC Children In Need is towards the Saturday Activity Club.
- 13) Essex Community Foundation grant from pooled funds (Arthur J Gallagher Community Fund £2,670, W G Stacey Family Fund £2,133, FW Charitable Fund £1,937 and Crix Charitable Fund £1,500) is to fund the 'Kidzspace' Support Project for young carers of siblings with SEND.
- 14) The grant from Action for Children is towards the Family Saturday Activity Club for children with SEND and their families.
- 15) The grant from Anton Jurgens Charitable Trust is towards the Saturday Activity Club.
- 16) The grant from the Barbara Ward Children's Foundation is towards the Family Saturday Activity SEND Club.
- 17) The grant from Woodroffe Benton Foundation is towards the core costs of the organisation.
- 18) Essex Community Foundation grants from The Moody Fund towards therapy sessions for two children with learning/developmental issues.
- 19) The Capital Fund represents the fixed assets of the charity.
- 20) Other restricted donations received and applied for specified purposes.

Families InFocus (Essex)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

16 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds at 31 March 2022 £
Tangible fixed assets	-	825	825
Current assets	141,513	40,128	181,641
Current liabilities	<u>(70,491)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(70,491)</u>
Total net assets	<u>71,022</u>	<u>40,953</u>	<u>111,975</u>

Prior Year Funds

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds at 31 March 2021 £
Tangible fixed assets	-	1,192	1,192
Current assets	125,448	13,014	138,462
Current liabilities	<u>(58,063)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(58,063)</u>
Total net assets	<u>67,385</u>	<u>14,206</u>	<u>81,591</u>

17 Related party transactions

During the year the charitable company made the following related party transactions:

The Trustees

Some of the Trustees have access to the sibling group, activity club, and family events. The benefit received is not material to the accounts. At the balance sheet date the amount due to/from the Trustees was £Nil (2021 - £Nil).

FAMILIES INFOCUS (ESSEX)

England & Wales - Charity number 1062311

Accounts



Families InFocus (Essex)
ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
Year ended 31 March 2021



Registered Charity No. 1062311
Company Limited by Guarantee No. 03287829

Families InFocus (Essex)

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Families InFocus (Essex)

Company information

Company Number	3287829
Charity Number	1062311
Registered office	Moulsham Mill Parkway Chelmsford Essex CM2 7PX
Patron	Lord Petre
Trustees	Sarah Dignasse, Chairperson Karen Saye, Vice Chairperson John Knott, Treasurer Andrew Gothard Martin Merrell David Carruthers Marallee Bernard Colin Leahey (appointed November 2020) Marc Jordan (appointed February 2021)
Chief Executive Officer	Rachel Ellis (retired September 2020) Kirsty Cornell (appointed September 2020)
Independent examiner	Edmund Carr LLP Chartered Accountants 146 New London Road Chelmsford Essex CM2 0AW

Families InFocus (Essex)

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2021

The trustees, who are the directors of the charitable company for Companies Act purposes, are pleased to present their report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2021. In this report they are referred to as the Trustees or, collectively, as “the Board”.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in the notes to the accounts and comply with the charity’s governing document, the Charities Act 2011, the Companies Act 2006 and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Financial Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) effective 1 January 2019.

Purpose and aims

Families InFocus (Essex) was established in 1996, with the overall aim to support, strengthen and improve the quality of life for Essex Families with children and young people (CYP) with any special educational need or disability (**SEND**), requiring advice, information, emotional and practical support, especially at the time of diagnosis, varied transition points, where they have poor emotional health, are feeling unheard, isolated or depressed, are living in poor environments, or are lone parents.

We do this by focussing on emotional needs – providing practical help, information, advice and support, alongside a range of activities designed to enhance the stability and quality of life for the whole family.

Our vision is:

Improved quality of life for all Essex families with children and young people with any special educational need or disability.

Our mission is:

To provide support for children and young people (aged 0 – 25) with any special educational need or disability (SEND) ensuring that they, their families, and carers receive quality information, advice, practical and emotional support. In particular, through the development of advice, information and support to improve the education and development of and relieve the poverty for children and young people with SEND, to enhance the stability and quality of life for the whole family. A central consideration will be the emotional needs of all concerned.

We are proud to be an independent and user-led organisation.

Public benefit

We have referred to the Charity Commission’s general guidance on public benefit when reviewing our purpose, aims and objectives, and in planning our future projects and activities. The trustees consider how planned activities will contribute to the overall aims and objectives they have set.

The charitable purpose of Families InFocus (Essex) is for the public benefit and falls within the description “the relief of those in need, by reason of youth, age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage” in the Charities Act 2011.

Families InFocus (Essex)

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2021

All of our work is targeted to improve outcomes for Essex families with a CYP with SEND, reflecting the family's needs and aspirations, and placing the child or young person at the heart of all decision making. This is achieved through supportive services for their parents and carers, particularly at times of change, challenge or crisis. This includes where the child or young person has an enduring behavioural or mental health problem; has been excluded or is at risk of exclusion; is being bullied; is experiencing social exclusion, isolation, educational disadvantage, poverty, poor employment prospects; or has problems accessing services – health, education, housing, social services, leisure, transport.

Strategic report

In October 2020 we launched our interim strategy, setting out our plans to March 2022. The Board decided to develop a short-term strategy to see the organisation through the period of uncertainty brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic, recognising that longer term plans were difficult to make at a time of such turbulence and increasing demand on our services.

The strategy had three main aims:

1. To continue our excellent service provided by **Family Support Advisors** – providing tailored support to families, through a helpline and 121 work.
2. Review our **brand and communications**, so we can provide high quality information to families through our website, e-bulletins and social media.
3. Grow our programme of **activities and events**, which we know are really valued by the families we support and provide them more widely across the county.

Achievements and performance

Family Support. The first point of call for most new families accessing our services is via our helpline – often at the time of diagnosis or after a referral from their GP or health visitor. Parents and carers are often distressed, anxious, and our helpline offers a tailor-made response to their enquiries, signposting families where appropriate and opening the door to the more in-depth support our Family Support Advisors provide.

Our one-to-one family support services are provided by our team of highly trained and experienced Family Support Advisors, many who have lived experience of being a parent or carer of a CYP with SEND. Each FSA covers a defined area of the county, building relationships with families and professionals in the area. Parents can access FSA support to help with a whole range of issues, including post diagnosis support, help completing complex benefit claims forms, help with educational issues, or help with transition, transport, social care.

Families report that as a consequence of our support:

- Families are better able to cope with day-to-day issues – they are more positive and empowered and more able to take control and tackle issues themselves;
- CYP with SEND have improved self-esteem, improved health and wellbeing and increased confidence and independence.

Families InFocus (Essex)

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2021

- Families we have supported with benefits claims report they have reduced anxiety and stress, leading to improvements in their health and wellbeing.
- Parents report a reduction in isolation for the whole family.

“Can only thank Families InFocus for the support and help in resolving some very complex problems in accessing education”

Covid 19. At the start of the year, all our family support services were moved online, and face to face meetings were suspended. Other than a short time during the late summer, all our Family Support services continued to be delivered remotely online for the remainder of the financial year.

The impact of Covid on the families we support has been devastating. Families have struggled with home schooling children with SEND, some whilst also working from home- and home-schooling siblings. Many support services (including therapist services) were closed, and families did not have access to formal and informal support structures. Families have a myriad of concerns, relating to work, money, infection control, returning to school, provision for their child in school, and mental and physical health issues.

Our Family Support Advisors took a pro-active approach and reached out to vulnerable families and those considered to be higher risk, to reassure them that we were still available for advice and support.

The fall-out from Covid will be felt for many months to come for CYP with SEND, with long-term impacts academically, physically, and emotionally. We envisage an even greater demand for our services, and the vital work we do with some of the most vulnerable families in society will be even more important in the coming months than potentially ever before.

In the year, our Family Support Advisors:

- Helped 745 families with complex benefits applications, bringing in over £1.3m in benefits income.
- Supported 1,128 families with education issues.
- Advised on 72 early support issues, and 60 social care queries.
- And made pro-active calls and provided support to 375 families specifically related to support during the pandemic.

“This is such a fantastic service and takes the stress out of dealing with such things alone. Can’t recommend enough.”

Families InFocus (Essex)

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2021

One of our key strengths is our ability to facilitate communication between parents and carers and professionals within the statutory agencies, specifically social care, and education. Our approach often helps resolve areas of difficulty, including avoiding costly tribunals. We promote and enable good partnership working between professionals and parents to improve outcomes for CYP.

“Absolutely excellent. The service I had was supportive, well organised, and extremely effective. LH was very helpful and had excellent knowledge of how the EHCP process works. I had good working relationships with the professionals I needed to talk to and was extremely thorough with her advice.”

Our brand and communications. We were fortunate to receive some funding specifically to develop a new brand for Families InFocus (Essex), including a new logo, new information leaflets, and new social media templates. This work has been ongoing since January 2021, and we are pleased to be able to launch our new branding in the autumn of 2021. From this, we will be developing new e-bulletins, sent via Mail chimp, and we will update our social media with our new branding. We have continued to use Facebook effectively to communicate with families, and we will be looking at other social media channels, such as Instagram and Twitter.

Our next aim is to update our website, so that we can better share information factsheets, videos and other content with families. We are currently seeking funding to enable us to develop the new website.

Activities and events

Activity club – our Saturday activity club for CYP with SEND and their siblings provides children with a range of activities, including trampolining, badminton, table tennis, arts and crafts, trikes and soft play. It is an essential outlet for families, providing recreational free play as well as coached activities. It gives children a chance to let off steam, often displaying their extra need traits without judgement, and it is a chance for children to make friends, learn new skills, raise their self- esteem, and enhance their personal and social skills. The wide range of activities allows children to choose how they spend their time. Many of the children who come along have limited other opportunities to take part in recreational activities elsewhere and they often find it difficult to participate in mainstream sports and leisure facilities.

Obviously Covid had a huge impact on our ability to provide our activity club this year. We did not run the club at all between April 2020 and March 2021, but we did run three outdoor sessions for families, when Covid restrictions allowed. Before restarting the club we put in place strict Covid precautions, including reducing the number of families who could attend the session.

Families InFocus (Essex)

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2021

Kidzspace is our siblings support group, for siblings over the age of 8 of CYP with SEND. Kidzspace provides respite from the stresses and demands siblings may find in the family home, and a chance to meet others in the same position, sharing ideas and developing peer support networks. In normal years, the club provides a range of activities such as bowling, pony trekking, ice skating and trips to the theatre. It has been a very sad consequence of Covid that we have not been able to run Kidzspace this year, and we are very much looking forward to it restarting in the autumn of 2021.

Working in partnership

We continue to add value through working in partnership with professionals across health, education and social care, and other voluntary agencies.

- Since 2015 we have working in partnership with SNAP in Brentwood, where, when Covid restrictions have allowed, we run fortnightly surgeries during term time, providing specialist education information, advice, and support.
- Since June 2018 we have worked with Virgin Care / Barnardo's Chelmsford Child and Family Well-being service, delivering a monthly clinic for Chelmsford families of CYP with SEND. We hope to re-start this post Covid and extend the service to other parts of the county.
- We have a clear and impactful presence within the overall SEND framework in Essex, working with Essex County Council on a number of reviews, including how best to reduce education appeals. We are part of the SENDIASS steering group, and the SEND Navigation parent support drop in.

During the year we have been active members of the Essex CEO network, ECVYS, the Essex family forum, and we are members of various local Council's for Voluntary Service across Essex.

Working in the community

It has been much more difficult to provide our regular community sessions during the year, because of Covid. Our regular Braintree drop-in sessions, providing advice, information and support for families have been on hold, but are due to re-start in September 2021.

We have been very active in the North of the county, working in partnership with Maze to attend 12 online coffee mornings or evenings. We have also provided online sessions in conjunction with Family solutions, PACT parent support group in the west of the county, and the EWMHS ASD support group.

Service user involvement

We very much welcome and value the involvement, feedback and contribution of the people who use our services into our ongoing development and future plans. This has all been done online and remotely this year, through general feedback during our 121 works, and through the online survey we ask all families to complete once we have finished a piece of work with them. As well as giving us valuable insight into the outcomes from those families, the survey asks families to tell us how they would like to see us develop our support and services. This insight is fed into our plans for the future.

Families InFocus (Essex)

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2021

In developing our new strategy for 2022 onwards, we are also commissioning some first-hand research with families, undertaken by a Santander funded intern through the University of Essex, which will ask families for specific information on what support and services they need.

Financial review

The results for the year to 31 March 2021 are set out in the statement of activities on page 17. The trustees report that in the ongoing difficult economic climate, with statutory cuts meaning fewer statutory funding opportunities, they had budgeted to use reserves, built up for times of funding challenges. This year has been better than forecast, partly due to grants and foundations releasing additional funding to support Covid related work. Future years will be challenging however as Covid specific funding reduces, and general funding from trusts and foundations becomes more competitive. We are positioning ourselves well to secure additional revenue, submitting quality bids and with tight control of expenditure. Now that our reserves level has dropped, in line with plans, future expenditure will need to remain within our income.

The Trustees are pleased to report that Edmund Carr LLP will continue as accountants, and Rickard Luckin are currently handling our payroll (salaries and pension).

Budgets

The budget for the year to 31 March 2021 was for income of £320,000 against actual income of £353,650 and a budgeted expenditure of £346,000 against actual expenditure of £324,957. The planned deficit was £26,000, and the actual result was a £28,693 surplus.

For the current financial year, ending 31 March 2022, we have a budgeted income of £311,000 and a budgeted expenditure of £353,000 leaving a mid-year funding gap of £42,000. The trustees and staff team are working to close the gap, looking to end the year without entering into a deficit, in recognition of our reduced reserves level and the need to keep expenditure within income each year.

Reserves policy

The general policy of the charity on reserves has been as follows:

“In order to meet company legislation requirements ensuring that Families InFocus (Essex) is a going concern, and as recommended, the Trustees agree that we aim to hold total unrestricted reserves of at least six months’ expenditure.”

In 2013, the Trustees “designated” £75,000 of unrestricted reserves towards the on-going costs of the Family Support Advisors and Family Support projects across Essex, as it was recognised that we had challenging times ahead. £50,769 has now been used for financial periods from 2014 to 2021, so the designated fund now stands at £24,231. As at 31 March 2021 total unrestricted reserves stood at £67,385, which represents around 2.3 months of expected expenditure.

At a meeting of the Trustees in July 2021, the trustees decided to reduce the reserves requirement to three months of expenditure, having taken account of the current operating environment and the charity’s assets and potential liabilities.

Families InFocus (Essex)

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2021

The trustees have agreed to set up a Finance Committee, whose first meeting will be September 2021. One of their first tasks will be to develop robust and achievable plans in order to increase our reserves to the equivalent of three months running costs.

Fundraising

We have an on-going programme of fundraising to help meet the funding requirements of the organisation. This includes applications to statutory bodies, grant making trusts, businesses (and in kind), as well as individual donations and fundraising events to generate unrestricted income for the organisation.

We are extremely grateful to all our funders, and in particular the fundraisers who have been imaginative and generous in planning events and raising funds on our behalf. We also want to thank the business and individuals who have supported us through this year.

A full list of those we want to thank is on page 15.

Investment policy

Families InFocus (Essex) is committed to ensure the best use of funds available to the charity to carry out its aims and objectives. Where a sum surplus to immediate requirements is identified, the Trustees recognise their duty of care and responsibility to maximise the financial returns to be made by investing funds appropriately. They will seek proper advice when necessary and act prudently and cautiously, taking into account the need to diversify fund holdings, maintain liquidity and ensure adequate reserves are available to meet legislative and other obligations. So as to safeguard the assets of Families InFocus (Essex), they will comply with the Charity Commission guidelines and endeavour to seek out low risk options for investment.

Risk management policy

The Trustees recognise that they have a responsibility to identify, assess, review, and mitigate the risks which may be present in the operation of the charity. "Risk" relates to the uncertainty surrounding events and their outcomes that may have a significant effect, either enhancing or inhibiting:

- operational performance.
- achievement of aims and objectives; or
- meeting expectations of stakeholders.
- In undertaking risk management, the Trustees:
 - focus on the prevention of disaster and mitigation of risks.
 - enable the charity to achieve strategic objectives more effectively and.
 - improve forward planning.

Responsibility for carrying out risk management rests with the Board of Trustees who will involve staff, volunteers, and other stakeholders as appropriate thereby ensuring that the Trustees can make the required statement on risk management with reasonable confidence. The risk management policy has been drawn up by the Trustees in conjunction with staff and other stakeholders. All new trustees, staff and volunteers are to be apprised of its contents during induction.

Families InFocus (Essex)

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2021

Regularly and on an on-going basis, the Trustees will:

- identify risks and controls in place.
- assess risk.
- evaluate what action needs to be taken on risks.
- implement appropriate systems and procedures to mitigate risk and,
- undertake periodic monitoring and assessment.

The outcomes of the above will be communicated throughout the organisation as appropriate including through meetings, individual supervisions, and appraisals. The Company Secretary will be responsible for ensuring the Trustees agree a statement on risk for inclusion in their annual report.

Our Risk Management Policy was reviewed and updated at our Board meeting on 30 March 2021 and included risks associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. A Covid Risk assessment has been carried out to ensure compliance with UK government advice and control measures. Regular internal and external communications have been made to highlight and address changes as they are imposed.

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The Trustees (who are also directors of Families InFocus (Essex) for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

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

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

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

Structure, Governance and Management

Governing Document

Families InFocus (Essex) is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 4 December 1996 and registered as a charity on 12 May 1997 under charity number 1062311. The company was established under a Memorandum of Association which established the objects and powers and is

Families InFocus (Essex)

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2021

governed under its Articles of Association dated 19 September 1996, and amended by Special Resolutions on 28 June 1999, 19 December 2001, 8 October 2002, and 4 October 2008.

On 15 October 2014, at the Annual General Meeting, agreement was given by Special Resolution, subject to approval by the Charity Commission, to amend the Charity's Objects and extending support for families of children and young people from ages 0 to 19 to ages 0 to 25. Approval was obtained from the Charity Commission on 26 January 2015 and accepted at Companies House on 19 February 2015.

In the event of the company being wound up the members' liability is £1 each. As at 31 March 2021 there were 73 members.

Operational Management

The Trustees work closely with the CEO in the charity's management, including safeguarding, finance and risk management, fundraising, charity and company law, policies, our aims, vision, missions and organisational values, good practice, and governance.

Trustees meet at least 6 times per annum to discuss general charity issues with additional meetings/working groups held to discuss more in-depth matters e.g., strategic plans, risk and finance. Financial risks are reviewed at every meeting, given the continuing concern for finding adequate funding to resource activities.

The CEO, who reports to the Trustees, is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the charity. In the year there was a change of CEO for Families InFocus (Essex). Rachel Ellis, who have been with us for over 15 years retired at the end of September 2020, and Kirsty Cornell joined us as the new CEO. Kirsty brings over 18 years' experience in the charity sector, including roles at large national charities and previous CEO roles. The Trustees want to pass on their utmost thanks to Rachel for her successful management of the charity for so many years.

Progress reports (at least quarterly) are prepared by the CEO for review by Trustees which include details of casework and statistical information to ensure our work is developing as planned and is making a positive difference to local families.

We have a rolling programme to regularly review policies and procedures. During the year, Trustees have reviewed policies on the arrival and collection of children; bullying and harassment; the business continuity plan; comments, compliments, and complaints procedure; data protection, disclosure and barring; diversity and equal opportunity; environmental; policy; financial procedures; health and safety; retention of records; safeguarding children and adults; and social media.

The Trustees decided not to seek renewal of our PQASSO accreditation (now called Trusted Charity) once the accreditation lapsed in January 2021, because of NCVO's decision to stop providing the accreditation, and the subsequent uncertainty over the future of the accreditation. This will be kept under review by trustees.

Families InFocus (Essex)

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2021

Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for all Staff, Trustees and Volunteers are carried out via the umbrella organisation Maldon and District CVS and are renewed every three years.

Monitoring and Evaluation

As we are a parent led organisation, the majority of our board of Trustees and staff team are, or have been, users of our service.

We continue to embed a culture of self-critical evaluation and continuous improvement, monitoring our impact and measuring successful outcomes via user records and responses to questionnaires, telephone interviews and satisfaction surveys.

In May 2019, we commissioned an independent external evaluation of the Family Support service and delivery against our own and funders' aims and objectives. The report was overwhelmingly positive providing a 360-degree perspective of how the service is perceived from the viewpoint of families of CYP with SEND, partner organisations, stakeholders and funders. Areas identified for improvement relate to improving and varying lines of communication, raising awareness and extending reach, all of which we are taking on board.

'Outcomes for families are excellent and the service engenders trust and confidence within families and partner organisations. It is quite unique in the services it offers, covering a wide area and supporting financial, physical and emotional health and wellbeing for some of the most challenged families' - Charlotte Fitzgerald Consultancy Ltd, July 2019.

Trustee Recruitment and Appointment

The directors of the company are also charity Trustees for the purposes of charity law and under the company's Articles are known as Board members. The number should not exceed 14 or be less than 7. Trustees are appointed at general meetings by passing an ordinary resolution. Existing Trustees may nominate one or more Trustees.

Currently nine Trustees sit on the Board comprising of parents of children with disabilities and sympathetic individuals all with a desire to do the best for our families and with a broad range of skills and experience in education, finance, fundraising, procurement, risk management and business. We review the skill set of the Board regularly. All Board members give their time voluntarily and received no material benefits. Any nominal fees or expenses reclaimed from the charity are set out in note 10 to the Accounts.

Training

We provide appropriate training to Staff, Trustees and Volunteers as part of our induction programme and ongoing professional development. This includes safeguarding/child protection & vulnerable adults, health and safety, and role specific training to ensure skills and knowledge are constantly kept up to date.

Families InFocus (Essex)

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2021

New Trustees are usually invited to visit the Families InFocus office to speak to the CEO and members of staff (we did this online during Covid lockdowns). We are developing our trustee induction pack to be a comprehensive guide, containing information about the charity and the role of trustees. All Trustees have received and read 'The Essential Trustee – what you need to know' document and new Trustees are invited to attend short, accredited courses 'Trustee Essentials' or 'Effective Governance' run by Community 360.

Our staff have many years' experience (direct knowledge and from personal experience) with specialist skills in disability benefit claims; Disability Discrimination Act; SEND issues, procedures, and reforms. Our Family Support Advisors are not qualified legal professionals, but all undertake IPSEA training to level 3.

Our financial future

Our financial position, going into 2021, was relatively healthy, with ongoing multi-year funding from the National Lottery, Henry Smith Charity, and the Garfield Weston Foundation. These funds have been critical to our ongoing sustainability, but as they come to an end over the coming years, we must look to new funding sources to raise a significant proportion of our expenditure.

Our income generation has been affected, like most other organisations, during this challenging and unprecedented time. Specifically, the loss of income through the pausing of grant funding programmes, cancellation of planned fundraising events (our own and others), and a reduction in regular donation giving has impacted on us.

We are working on an ongoing basis to bring in new funding streams, in the knowledge that we can no longer use any of our reserves to fund ongoing costs, as we have in previous years. If we are not able to continue to bring in funds at the level required, we run the risk of having to critically reduce support offered to vulnerable families, at a time when we expect to see even greater demand. So, it is vital that we continue to provide evidence of the value and impact of our work to inform future bids and attract funding.

Our plans for the future

We are hopefully coming to the end of what has been a truly remarkable time, with unexpected and unprecedented challenges for all charities, brought about by the severe and ongoing ramifications of the Covid pandemic. As we write this report in the summer of 2021, we are looking forward to developing our new strategy for the future, and we are grateful to have support from the charity Pilotlight, who have teamed us up with a group of experienced private sector experts ("Pilotlighters") who are helping us through the challenges of developing our new plans.

We know that in order to stay relevant, and to continue to provide excellent and accessible services to families, we need to look at continuing to work online, developing group sessions where we can enable us to grow our reach. We will need to redevelop our website to make it fit for purpose in sharing information for families in a range of formats. And we want to make sure users are at the centre of how we develop and deliver our services, and that we continue to empower families so that they can help themselves after our support has ended.

Families InFocus (Essex)

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2021

Concluding remarks

I suspect that we will look back on the last year as one of the most challenging in our history. It has certainly been extremely difficult for our families who faced the consequences of school closures and other limitations to services as a result of the Covid pandemic.

Throughout this time, the dedicated team of staff and volunteers at Families InFocus has continued to provide extensive support and has adapted the ways in which the charity works in order to make sure that this support can be in place. All of this is being managed in the context of the changing priorities of Funders, many of whom who are, understandably, directing financial support towards Covid recovery.

At the same time, this year has also been one of new opportunities for Families InFocus. Under the leadership of our new CEO, we have had the chance to consider and refresh our strategy and to consider new ways of working in order to maximise the impact we can have with our families. New technologies offer possibilities of different ways of working and we are determined to ensure that we use these to provide highly effective and targeted support as we try our best to meet the ever-growing demand for support from families.

The trustees are particularly grateful to our wonderful team of staff and volunteers for their commitment and hard work during this very challenging year.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies entitled to the small companies' exemption.

On behalf of the Trustees,

Sarah Dignasse

Sarah Dignasse, Chairperson

Date approved: 20 September 2021

THANK YOU

TO OUR TRUSTEES AND VOLUNTEERS

Our charity could not function without the commitment and dedication of our wonderful team of volunteers, many of whom are parents who have received support from Families InFocus and wanted to help others. They are crucial to our work and help us in so many different ways – helping at our Saturday Activity Club, Siblings Support Group, Family and Fundraising events, as befrienders, helping at our drop-ins or in the office and of course our much valued Trustees.

Kerry Ayre	Leah Bannister	Marallee Bernard
Matt Bowen	David Carruthers	Josh Clare
Hazel Dexter-Clarke	Sarah Dignasse	Joanna Ellis
Andrew Gothard	Karen Holmes	Gemma Inci
Marc Jordan	John Knott	Jack Labdon
Holly Lazell	Colin Leahey	Martin Merrell
Abigail Nash	Karen Saye	Pippa Schumann
Michael Smith	Toby Turner	Wendy Windsor

TO OUR SUPPORTERS

We wish to express our gratitude to the following businesses, charitable trusts, clubs, and statutory funders for the support they have given us, either financial or in kind, during the year.

Action for Children Essex Short Breaks	Alastair and Patricia Stewart Charitable Fund
BBC Children in Need	Braintree District & Greenfields Community Fund
Chelmsford City Council	Chelmsford Sport & Athletics Centre
Edmund Carr Chartered Accountants	Essex Community Foundation (Various Funds)
Essex County Council	Essex Lottery
FSJ Charities	Garfield Weston Foundation
Henry Smith Charity	International Lions Club of Chelmsford
Marconi (Chelmsford) Employees' Fund	Moody Fund
National Lottery Community Fund	National Lottery - Coronavirus Community Support Fund
Nisa Castle Stores	Paypal Giving Fund
Provide Foundation	Rickard Luckin Accountants
Rotary Club of Chelmsford	SEIB Insurance Brokers
Stebbing Day Nursery	Walter Farthing (Trust) Ltd

We would also like to thank all the individuals who have made donations, either financial or in kind, provided support or took part in fundraising events during the year. We particularly want to thank:

Rachel Childs	Stuart Harris
Gemma Inci	Anne Keatley- Clarke
Jill Lloyd	Jake the Postman
Louise and Jack Ryan	N Winton

THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR GENEROSITY

Families InFocus (Essex)

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Families InFocus (Essex) ("the Company")

I report to the charity Trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Company for the year ended 31 March 2021 which are set out on pages 17 to 34.

Respective responsibilities of Trustees and examiner

As the charity's Trustees of the Company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

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

Independent examiner's statement

Since the Company's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of The Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, which is one of the listed bodies.

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

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

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

Raymond Crace

.....
Raymond Crace FCA
146 New London Road
Chelmsford
Essex
CM2 0AW

6 December 2021

Families InFocus (Essex)

Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2021 (Including Income and Expenditure Account and Other Comprehensive Income)

	Note	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £
Income and Endowments from:					
Donations and legacies	3	16,523	-	16,523	21,436
Charitable activities	4	-	336,502	336,502	273,118
Other trading activities	5	-	-	-	910
Investment income	6	625	-	625	972
Total income		<u>17,148</u>	<u>336,502</u>	<u>353,650</u>	<u>296,436</u>
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds		-	312	312	312
Charitable activities	7	<u>765</u>	<u>323,880</u>	<u>324,645</u>	<u>314,120</u>
Total expenditure		<u>765</u>	<u>324,192</u>	<u>324,957</u>	<u>314,432</u>
Net income/(expenditure)		<u>16,383</u>	<u>12,310</u>	<u>28,693</u>	<u>(17,996)</u>
Net movement in funds		16,383	12,310	28,693	(17,996)
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward		<u>51,002</u>	<u>1,896</u>	<u>52,898</u>	<u>70,894</u>
Total funds carried forward	16	<u><u>67,385</u></u>	<u><u>14,206</u></u>	<u><u>81,591</u></u>	<u><u>52,898</u></u>

All of the charity's activities derive from continuing operations during the above two periods.

Families InFocus (Essex)
(Registration number: 03287829)
Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2021

	Note	2021 £	2020 £
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	13	1,192	1,756
Current assets			
Cash at bank and in hand	14	138,462	118,147
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	15	<u>(58,063)</u>	<u>(67,005)</u>
Net current assets		<u>80,399</u>	<u>51,142</u>
Net assets		<u>81,591</u>	<u>52,898</u>
Funds of the charity:			
Restricted income funds			
Restricted funds	16	14,206	1,896
Unrestricted income funds			
Unrestricted funds		<u>67,385</u>	<u>51,002</u>
Total funds	16	<u>81,591</u>	<u>52,898</u>

For the financial year ending 31 March 2021 the charity was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Directors' responsibilities:

- The members have not required the charity to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476; and
- The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

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

The financial statements on pages 17 to 34 were approved by the Trustees, and authorised for issue on 20 September 2021 and signed on their behalf by:

Sarah Dignasse

.....
Sarah Dignasse
Trustee

John Knott

.....
John Knott
Trustee

Families InFocus (Essex)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2021

1 Charity status

The charity is limited by guarantee, incorporated in England & Wales, and consequently does not have share capital. Each of the Trustees is liable to contribute an amount not exceeding £1 towards the assets of the charity in the event of liquidation.

2 Accounting policies

Summary of significant accounting policies and key accounting estimates

The principal accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all the years presented, unless otherwise stated.

Statement of compliance

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102). They also comply with the Companies Act 2006 and Charities Act 2011.

Basis of preparation

Families InFocus (Essex) meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy notes.

Going concern

The directors have considered the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in their assessment of the charity's ability to prepare accounts as a going concern. Because of the uncertainties surrounding the effects of the economic slowdown it is difficult to predict the impact on the charities and its funders, but having taken all the factors into account, the directors are of the opinion that the charity has sufficient resources to continue trading for the next 12 months from the date of signing these accounts.

Exemption from preparing a cash flow statement

The charity opted to adopt Bulletin 1 published on 2 February 2016 and have therefore not included a cash flow statement in these financial statements.

Income and endowments

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

Donations and legacies

Donations are recognised when the charity has been notified in writing of both the amount and settlement date. In the event that a donation is subject to conditions that require a level of performance by the charity before the charity is entitled to the funds, the income is deferred and not recognised until either those conditions are fully met, or the fulfilment of those conditions is wholly within the control of the charity and it is probable that these conditions will be fulfilled in the reporting period.

Families InFocus (Essex)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2021

Grants receivable

The charity has received government grants in the reporting period. Performance related grants are only included in the SOFA once the charity has provided the related services to meet the performance related conditions.

Deferred income

Deferred income represents amounts received for future periods and is released to incoming resources in the period for which, it has been received. Such income is only deferred when:

- The donor specifies that the grant or donation must only be used in future accounting periods; or
- The donor has imposed conditions which must be met before the charity has unconditional entitlement.

Investment income

Interest receivable is included gross.

Expenditure

Resources expended, including irrecoverable VAT, are accounted for on an accruals basis. The majority of costs are directly attributable to specific activities. Expenditure on projects is treated as direct charitable expenditure.

Raising funds

These are costs incurred in raising funds from events and activities.

Charitable activities

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

Support costs

Support costs include the central functions and are allocated to cost categories on the basis of staff time and amount spent on those cost categories. Depreciation is allocated to cost categories on the basis of total direct costs allocated.

Governance costs

Governance costs are associated with the governance arrangements of the charity and relate to the general running of the charity.

Taxation

The charity is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 of the Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes. Accordingly, the charity is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income or capital gains received within categories covered by Chapter 3 Part 11 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992, to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

Tangible fixed assets

Individual fixed assets costing £500 or more are initially recorded at cost.

Families InFocus (Essex)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2021

Depreciation and amortisation

Depreciation is provided on tangible fixed assets so as to write off the cost or valuation, less any estimated residual value, over their expected useful economic life as follows:

Asset class	Depreciation method and rate
Fixtures and fittings	25.0% reducing balance
Computer equipment	33.3% reducing balance

Trade debtors

Trade debtors are amounts due for services performed by the charity.

Trade debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due. A provision for the impairment of trade debtors is established when there is objective evidence that the charity will not be able to collect all amounts due according to the original terms of the receivables.

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents comprise cash on hand, bank accounts and bank deposits.

Trade creditors

Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of business from suppliers. Accounts payable are classified as current liabilities if the charity does not have an unconditional right, at the end of the reporting period, to defer settlement of the creditor for at least twelve months after the reporting date. If there is an unconditional right to defer settlement for at least twelve months after the reporting date, they are presented as non-current liabilities.

Trade creditors are recognised at their settlement amount.

Fund structure

Unrestricted income funds are general funds that are available for use at the Trustees's discretion in furtherance of the objectives of the charity.

Restricted income funds are those donated for use in a particular area or for specific purposes, the use of which is restricted to that area or purpose.

Pensions and other post retirement obligations

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme which is a pension plan under which fixed contributions are paid into a pension fund and the charity has no legal or constructive obligation to pay further contributions even if the fund does not hold sufficient assets to pay all employees the benefits relating to employee service in the current and prior periods.

Contributions to defined contribution plans are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities when they are due. If contribution payments exceed the contribution due for service, the excess is recognised as a prepayment.

Families InFocus (Essex)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2021

Financial instruments

Classification

The Charity has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value.

Families InFocus (Essex)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2021

3 Income from donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2021 £
Donations receivable	15,773	-	15,773
Grants receivable	750	-	750
	<u>16,523</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>16,523</u>
	<u>16,523</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>16,523</u>
	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2020 £
Donations receivable	15,269	6,167	21,436
	<u>15,269</u>	<u>6,167</u>	<u>21,436</u>
	<u>15,269</u>	<u>6,167</u>	<u>21,436</u>

4 Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2021 £
Grants receivable	-	336,502	336,502
	<u>-</u>	<u>336,502</u>	<u>336,502</u>
	<u>-</u>	<u>336,502</u>	<u>336,502</u>
	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2020 £
Grants receivable	-	273,118	273,118
	<u>-</u>	<u>273,118</u>	<u>273,118</u>
	<u>-</u>	<u>273,118</u>	<u>273,118</u>

Families InFocus (Essex)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2021

5 Income from other trading activities

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2021 £
	-	-	-
	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2020 £
Fundraising income	910	-	910
	910	-	910

6 Investment income

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2021 £
Interest receivable on bank deposits	625	-	625
	625	-	625
	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2020 £
Interest receivable on bank deposits	972	-	972
	972	-	972

Families InFocus (Essex)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2021

7 Expenditure on charitable activities

	Activity undertaken directly £	Activity support costs £	Total expenditure £
Family Support	286,760	34,830	321,590
Group Activities	2,835	220	3,055
Total for 2021	<u>289,595</u>	<u>35,050</u>	<u>324,645</u>
Total for 2020	<u>284,059</u>	<u>30,061</u>	<u>314,120</u>

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
Family Support - Direct costs	-	286,760	286,760
Group Activities - Direct costs	-	2,836	2,836
Support costs	765	34,284	35,049
Total for 2021	<u>765</u>	<u>323,880</u>	<u>324,645</u>
Total for 2020	<u>30,392</u>	<u>283,728</u>	<u>314,120</u>

Families InFocus (Essex)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2021

8 Analysis of governance and support costs

Support costs allocated to charitable activities

	Basis of allocation	Governance costs £	Administration costs £	Premises costs including depreciation £	Total funds £
Family Support	A	4,937	10,906	18,987	34,830
Group Activities	A	10	10	200	220
Total for 2021		<u>4,947</u>	<u>10,916</u>	<u>19,187</u>	<u>35,050</u>
Total for 2020		<u>5,335</u>	<u>10,893</u>	<u>13,833</u>	<u>30,061</u>

Basis of allocation

Reference	Method of allocation
A	Apportioned based on usage in relation to directly attributable costs. Depreciation is apportioned based on the apportionment of total direct costs between activities.

Governance costs

	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £
Independent examiner fees		
Examination of the financial statements	695	680
Other fees paid to examiners	2,147	1,950
Bookkeeping and payroll	1,852	2,184
Other governance costs	253	521
	<u>4,947</u>	<u>5,335</u>

9 Net incoming/outgoing resources

Net incoming/(outgoing) resources for the year include:

	2021 £	2020 £
Depreciation of fixed assets	<u>564</u>	<u>832</u>

Families InFocus (Essex)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2021

10 Trustees remuneration and expenses

No Trustees, nor any persons connected with them, have received any remuneration from the charity during the year. During the year, no Trustees were reimbursed for expenses (2020: NIL).

11 Staff costs

The aggregate payroll costs were as follows:

	2021 £	2020 £
Staff costs during the year were:		
Wages and salaries	256,232	221,111
Social security costs	18,084	15,931
Pension costs	5,889	1,979
	<u>280,205</u>	<u>239,021</u>

The monthly average number of persons (including senior management team) employed by the charity during the year expressed as full time equivalents was as follows:

	2021 No	2020 No
Average number of paid employees	<u>12</u>	<u>11</u>

5 (2020 - 1) of the above employees participated in the Defined Contribution Pension Schemes.

Contributions to the employee pension schemes for the year totalled £5,888 (2020 - £1,979).

No employee received emoluments of more than £60,000 during the year.

The total employee benefits of the key management personnel of the charity were £44,355 (2020 - £42,876).

12 Taxation

The charity is a registered charity and is therefore exempt from taxation.

Families InFocus (Essex)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2021

13 Tangible fixed assets

	Fixtures, fittings and equipment £	Total £
Cost		
At 1 April 2020	35,323	35,323
At 31 March 2021	35,323	35,323
Depreciation		
At 1 April 2020	33,567	33,567
Charge for the year	564	564
At 31 March 2021	34,131	34,131
Net book value		
At 31 March 2021	1,192	1,192
At 31 March 2020	1,756	1,756

14 Cash and cash equivalents

	2021 £	2020 £
Cash on hand	300	300
Cash at bank	138,162	117,847
	138,462	118,147

15 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2021 £	2020 £
Trade creditors	12,129	1,666
Accruals	2,802	2,669
Deferred income	43,132	62,670
	58,063	67,005

Deferred income relates to grants received that are specified for expenditure in a future period. All income deferred at 31 March 2020 was released in the year ended 31 March 2021.

Families InFocus (Essex)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2021

16 Funds

	Balance at 1 April 2020 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Balance at 31 March 2021 £
Unrestricted				
Free reserves	3,089	17,148	(765)	19,472
Designated funds				
1) Moody Trust	1,000	-	-	1,000
4) Margaret Hutchon Fund	614	-	-	614
3) IT Fund	2,107	-	-	2,107
5) Family Support Adviser/Projects	24,231	-	-	24,231
2) Contingency Fund	19,961	-	-	19,961
Total Unrestricted	<u>51,002</u>	<u>17,148</u>	<u>(765)</u>	<u>67,385</u>
Restricted				
1) Essex County Council - Independent SEND Information, Advice and Support Service	-	45,000	(45,000)	-
2) Chelmsford City Council	-	7,500	(7,500)	-
3) Braintree District & Greenfields Community Fund	-	10,315	(9,467)	848
4) National Lottery Community Fund Grant	-	157,679	(157,679)	-
5) The Henry Smith Charity	-	42,780	(38,048)	4,732
6) Garfield Weston Foundation	-	20,000	(18,304)	1,696
8) Essex Community Foundation - Provide Foundation	-	5,000	(5,000)	-
12) BBC Children In Need	-	2,457	-	2,457
13) Essex Community Foundation - various funds	-	750	(750)	-
14) Action for Children Essex Short Breaks	-	5,499	(2,999)	2,500
10) Essex Community Foundation - Realising Ambitions	-	5,000	(5,000)	-
18) Essex Community Foundation - Moody Fund	140	-	-	140
19) Capital Fund (Fixed Assets)	1,756	-	(563)	1,193
20) Other restricted donations	-	34,522	(33,882)	640
Total restricted	<u>1,896</u>	<u>336,502</u>	<u>(324,192)</u>	<u>14,206</u>
Total funds	<u><u>52,898</u></u>	<u><u>353,650</u></u>	<u><u>(324,957)</u></u>	<u><u>81,591</u></u>

Families InFocus (Essex)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2021

Prior Year Funds Note

	Balance at 1 April 2019 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Balance at 31 March 2020 £
Unrestricted funds				
Free reserves	3,089	17,151	(17,151)	3,089
Designated funds				
1) Moody Trust	1,275	-	(275)	1,000
4) Margaret Hutcheon Fund	614	-	-	614
3) IT Fund	3,772	-	(1,665)	2,107
5) Family Support Adviser/Projects	30,000	-	(5,769)	24,231
2) Contingency Fund	25,805	-	(5,844)	19,961
	<u>61,466</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(13,553)</u>	<u>47,913</u>
Total unrestricted	<u>64,555</u>	<u>17,151</u>	<u>(30,704)</u>	<u>51,002</u>
Restricted				
1) Essex County Council - Independent SEND Information, Advice and Support Service	-	40,000	(40,000)	-
2) Chelmsford City Council	-	6,000	(6,000)	-
3) Braintree District & Greenfields Community Fund	-	7,930	(7,930)	-
4) National Lottery Community Fund Grant	3,750	122,125	(125,875)	-
5) The Henry Smith Charity	-	38,170	(38,170)	-
6) Garfield Weston Foundation	-	6,665	(6,665)	-
7) Mrs Smith & Mount Trust	-	5,000	(5,000)	-
8) Essex Community Foundation - Provide Foundation	-	5,000	(5,000)	-
12) BBC Children In Need	-	9,762	(9,762)	-
16) The Barbara Ward Children's Foundation	-	2,250	(2,250)	-
11) Walter Farthing Trust	-	3,000	(3,000)	-
9) FSJ Charities	-	5,000	(5,000)	-
13) Essex Community Foundation - various funds	-	8,240	(8,240)	-
14) Action for Children Essex Short Breaks	-	3,666	(3,666)	-
15) Anton Jurgens Charitable Trust	-	2,750	(2,750)	-
10) Essex Community Foundation - Realising Ambitions	-	5,000	(5,000)	-
17) Woodroffe Benton Foundation	-	500	(500)	-
18) Essex Community Foundation - Moody Fund	-	2,060	(1,920)	140
19) Capital Fund (Fixed Assets)	2,589	-	(833)	1,756
20) Other restricted donations	<u>-</u>	<u>6,167</u>	<u>(6,167)</u>	<u>-</u>

Families InFocus (Essex)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2021

	Balance at 1 April 2019 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Balance at 31 March 2020 £
Total restricted	<u>6,339</u>	<u>279,285</u>	<u>(283,728)</u>	<u>1,896</u>
Total funds	<u><u>70,894</u></u>	<u><u>296,436</u></u>	<u><u>(314,432)</u></u>	<u><u>52,898</u></u>

Families InFocus (Essex)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2021

The specific purposes for which the funds are to be applied are as follows:

Designated funds:

- 1) The Moody Trust funding has been designated to provide respite to parents with children with disabilities who were found to be under extreme pressure.
- 2) The designated contingency fund was established to meet operating shortfalls if required and the charity's statutory obligations, such as redundancy costs, should the need arise.
- 3) The Trustees have designated funds for IT investment.
- 4) The Margaret Hutchon Fund has been designated to assist Essex families of children and young people with disabilities and special needs who are most in need of some immediate financial support.
- 5) The Trustees have designated funds to provide for the costs of Family Support advisers and Family Support projects across Essex.

Restricted funds:

- 1) Funding is to provide Independent SEND Information, Advice and Support on educational issues to parents/carers for their children/young people with SEND (aged 0-25 years).
- 2) The grant from Chelmsford City Council is towards Family Support for the families with children with disabilities from within Chelmsford City.
- 3) The grant from Braintree District & Greenfields Community Fund is towards Family Support for the families with children and young people with disabilities/ special needs from within Braintree District.
- 4) The National Lottery Community Fund Grant (formerly known as the Big Lottery Fund) is towards the Family Support Project across Essex and a contribution to the core costs of the organisation.
- 5) The grant from the Henry Smith Charity is towards the costs of the Family Support Adviser project across Essex for families of children/young people with disabilities/special needs (aged 0-25).
- 6) The grant from the Garfield Weston Foundation is towards the costs of the Family Support Adviser project across Essex for families of children/young people with disabilities/special needs.
- 7) The grant from Mrs Smith & Mount Trust is towards the cost of the Family Support Project.
- 8) Essex Community Foundation grant from the Provide Foundation is towards Family Support for Chelmsford families of children/young people with disabilities/special needs.
- 9) The grant from FSJ Charities is towards Family Support for Essex families of children/young people with disabilities/special needs.
- 10) Essex Community Foundation grant from the Realising Ambitions Funding Programme is towards Family Support for North East Essex families of children/young people with disabilities/special needs.
- 11) The grant from Walter Farthing Trust is towards Family Support for Mid Essex families of children/young people with disabilities/special needs.
- 12) The grant from BBC Children In Need is towards the Saturday Activity Club.
- 13) Essex Community Foundation grant from pooled funds (Arthur J Gallagher Community Fund £2,670, W G Stacey Family Fund £2,133, FW Charitable Fund £1,937 and Crix Charitable Fund £1,500) is to fund the 'Kidzspace' Support Project for young carers of siblings with SEND.
- 14) The grant from Action for Children is towards the Family Saturday Activity Club for children with SEND and their families.
- 15) The grant from Anton Jurgens Charitable Trust is towards the Saturday Activity Club.
- 16) The grant from the Barbara Ward Children's Foundation is towards the Family Saturday Activity SEND Club.
- 17) The grant from Woodroffe Benton Foundation is towards the core costs of the organisation.
- 18) Essex Community Foundation grants from The Moody Fund towards therapy sessions for two children with learning/developmental issues.
- 19) The Capital Fund represents the fixed assets of the charity.
- 20) Other restricted donations received and applied for specified purposes.

Families InFocus (Essex)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2021

17 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds at 31 March 2021 £
Tangible fixed assets	-	1,192	1,192
Current assets	125,448	13,014	138,462
Current liabilities	(58,063)	-	(58,063)
Total net assets	<u>67,385</u>	<u>14,206</u>	<u>81,591</u>

Prior Year Funds	Unrestricted funds £	Unrestricted Designated funds £	Restricted £	Total funds at 31 March 2020 £
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	1,756	1,756
Current assets	70,094	47,913	140	118,147
Current liabilities	(67,005)	-	-	(67,005)
Total net assets	<u>3,089</u>	<u>47,913</u>	<u>1,896</u>	<u>52,898</u>

18 Related party transactions

During the year the charity made the following related party transactions:

The Trustees

Some of the Trustees have access to the sibling group, activity club, and family events. The benefit received is not material to the accounts. At the balance sheet date the amount due to/from the Trustees was £Nil (2020 - £Nil).

Families InFocus (Essex)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2021

19 Prior year Statement of Financial Activities

	Note	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2020 £
Income and Endowments from:				
Donations and legacies	3	15,269	6,167	21,436
Charitable activities	4	-	273,118	273,118
Other trading activities	5	910	-	910
Investment income	6	972	-	972
Total income		<u>17,151</u>	<u>279,285</u>	<u>296,436</u>
Expenditure on:				
Raising funds		312	-	312
Charitable activities	7	<u>30,392</u>	<u>283,728</u>	<u>314,120</u>
Total expenditure		<u>30,704</u>	<u>283,728</u>	<u>314,432</u>
Net expenditure		<u>(13,553)</u>	<u>(4,443)</u>	<u>(17,996)</u>
Net movement in funds		(13,553)	(4,443)	(17,996)
Reconciliation of funds				
Total funds brought forward		<u>64,555</u>	<u>6,339</u>	<u>70,894</u>
Total funds carried forward	16	<u><u>51,002</u></u>	<u><u>1,896</u></u>	<u><u>52,898</u></u>