

Volunteer Centre Hackney

ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

for the year ended

31 March 2024



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TRUSTEES

Robert Sugden - Chair
Rachel Linn
William Alego
Adelle Grisaffe
Michelle Lawrence
Jade Tan
Olivia Fuller (appointed 15 May 2024)
Philip Gray (appointed 15 May 2024)
Behrouz Bayat (appointed 15 May 2024)
Andreas Michaelides (resigned 2 August 2023)
Jonathan Parr (resigned 15 May 2024)

COMPANY REGISTERED NUMBER

3357999

CHARITY REGISTERED NUMBER

1068104

REGISTERED OFFICE

12-13 Springfield House, 5 Tyssen Street, London E8 2LY

KEY MANAGEMENT

Lauren Tobias

AUDITORS

Raffingers LLP, Statutory Auditor
19-20 Bourne Court, Southend Road, Woodford Green, Essex, IG8 8HD

BANKERS

HSBC, 283 Mare Street, London E8 1PJ
CAF Bank, 25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent, ME19 4JQ

The trustees, who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act, submit their annual report and the financial statements of Volunteer Centre Hackney (VCH) for the year ended 31 March 2024. The trustees confirm that the annual report and the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Companies Act 2006, the charity's governing documentation and the provisions of Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015).

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

CONSTITUTION, POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES

The company is registered as a charitable company limited by guarantee and was set up by a Memorandum of Association on 15 April 1997.

VCH is a local development agency governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association. VCH's objects are "to promote the benefit of the community in the London Borough of Hackney by the promotion, support and development of voluntary services in the advancement of education, the protection of health and the relief of poverty, distress and sickness."

The directors, who are listed on page 1, act as trustees for the charitable activities of the company and exercise the powers of the company. The trustees may by power of attorney or otherwise appoint any person to be the agent of the company for such purposes and on such condition as they determine. They also may delegate any of their powers to any committee consisting of one or more trustees or other person.

METHOD OF APPOINTMENT OR ELECTION OF TRUSTEES

The management of the company is the responsibility of the trustees who are elected and co-opted under the terms of the Articles of Association. The number of trustees shall not be subject to any maximum but shall not be less than two. All trustees retire from office at the first Annual General Meeting subsequent to their appointment. One third of trustees is subject to retirement by rotation at the Annual General Meeting. In both instances retiring trustees, presuming they are eligible, will put themselves forward for re-appointment. Additionally, the Board may make appointments from time to time to fill vacancies. The Board usually meets every eight weeks. Additional meetings are held when the need arises.

INDUCTION AND TRAINING OF TRUSTEES

Joiners to the Board are provided with an induction pack which includes background information on the charity including the last set of accounts and the Charity Commission's publication on the legal responsibilities of charity trustees. As a provider of related training to external groups, the charity's trustees have access to a variety of sources of information to ensure that they are kept up to date on the changing regulations surrounding charities and trustees' responsibilities.

MANAGEMENT

The trustees agree the strategic direction of the charity, approve its budget, and receive progress reports in achieving organisational objectives from its Chief Executive Officer.

The charity employs staff, including a Chief Executive Officer, Lauren Tobias, who carries out the day-to-day management of the company's work. There are line management structures linking all staff to the CEO, and through her, to the trustees.

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

2023-24 was a year of transition and growth, as we continued to expand all our programmes to support Hackney's communities to volunteer and work together on community initiatives.

We have hugely increased our focus on supporting residents to work together with neighbours, health partners and the local authority to co-design and deliver services as volunteering takes many forms, partnering successfully with the NHS and Public Health.

Building on its success, our patient engagement programme based at GP practices - Together Better - doubled in size, going onto deliver at eight more surgeries across the borough, bringing the total numbers of GP practices engaged to 16.

We doubled the number of people with support needs placed into volunteering, while our Community Befriending programme grew considerably with over 140 volunteers matched to isolated Hackney residents. We also continued to grow our Community Health Champions, with over 200 residents and service providers coming on board to share vital health messaging with communities.

Over the year we enabled the following:

- **1,066** residents registered an interest in volunteering
- **689** people **started volunteering** across the borough – more than 1.5 times last year's total
- **126** of those residents had **support needs** – **double** the number from last year
- **58** residents with **mental health issues** supported to volunteer
- **150 isolated residents** were supported by volunteer befrienders with regular companionship, who provided **over 6,500 hours** of one-to-one support for vulnerable isolated residents
- **267** Community Health Champions were supported to **share vital health messaging** to their communities speaking **40** different languages between them.
- **121** patients - mostly with long term health conditions - **supported to volunteer** at local GP practices, and
- **over 1000 patients** supported to participate in patient-led activities at GP practices.

Volunteer Recruitment and Guidance

We hugely surpassed our targets this year, due to a range of factors - more focussed outreach, more diverse outreach, improved communications, more 1:1 appointments with individuals interested in volunteering as well as better data collection and recording.

During the last year, we advertised 535 volunteer roles with 275 of these being completely new roles. We engaged with more than 800 community organisations, with 58 of those being new to VCH, via our brokerage service, regular newsletters and 1:1 support on a range of issues. Organisations supported vary from large well-known national charities with local branches, for example British Heart Foundation, to small local charities, for example Carib Eats, and other non-profit entities such as the NHS.

What kinds of volunteering?

Volunteer Centre Hackney provides the opportunity for volunteers to find roles that meet their requirements in terms of the timing of the volunteering, location, its nature i.e., physical, outdoors, indoors, craft related, who it helps, demonstrating the flexible nature of volunteering. There were one-off opportunities, such as the Christmas day driving role for The Food Chain, roles requiring just one hour a week, such as Befriending, and others needing more commitment such as the Administration and Reception role at Hoxton Health. Many roles provide an opportunity to learn or refresh skills, with in-house training like the Made in Hackney Cookery Class Assistant which includes training in Safeguarding and a Level 2 Food Safety in Catering and Plant Based Nutrition.

Best Practice Guidance

We provided bespoke volunteer management support to 19 organisations including Storehouse Foodbank/Soup Kitchen, Care4Calais, Hackney Doorways (Night Shelter) and Oxfam. We advised on the recruitment, retention and management of volunteers, assisted with the drafting of volunteer role descriptions, advised on strategies to diversify their volunteering base, and how to acknowledge and reward volunteers. We hosted a number of networking events when organisations across Hackney could meet others, but also seek advice and support from Volunteer Centre Hackney regarding any issue concerning volunteering. KEEN London, Contact and Family Action Social Prescribing were among the organisations that attended.

"VCH really helps the community who are struggling with mental and physical health and is a great starting point for volunteering and the staff are absolutely excellent!"

"The service was so quick, friendly and overall helpful. Within the same day I found a perfect volunteering opportunity for me based on my personality and preferences".

Who volunteered and why?

Volunteering allows existing skills to be used, new skills to be acquired and, in each case, the sharing of those skills. Volunteering connects people with each other and with their local community, builds confidence and wellbeing, and leads to greater resilience. Organisations that rely on volunteers gain a much-needed resource to help deliver their services. The result is stronger and more cohesive local communities based on mutual support, with programmes that meet community needs, and so are "a part of the solution".

78.43% of volunteers surveyed reported that they had learned new skills from volunteering, including communication/listening skills, organisation skills, administrative and IT skills, and developing an understanding of how certain organisations operate, including foodbanks and theatres. One individual said that volunteering had enabled them to "improve the skill of adapting to a new social/working situation. Many respondents stated they had gained employability skills whilst volunteering.

"I have learned retail skills such as customer service and operating the till. Also, I have learned kitchen skills and barista skills."

A vital aspect of our mission is to ensure we are building stronger communities through bringing individuals together. Almost 90% - 88.24% - of individuals strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that "volunteering has helped me to meet people/feel part of my community".

"It has simply been a wonderful experience and provided me with a new friend".

71% of individuals agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that 'volunteering has improved my wellbeing/mental health', with 33 % of people agreeing that volunteering has helped improve their physical health'. One key aspect to wellbeing is an individual's level of confidence and 73% agreed or strongly agreed that "volunteering has helped me to feel more confident".

"Due to volunteering my confidence has improved and makes me feel that I'm worth something".

Community Befriending

Volunteers continued to be a lifeline for residents who are identified as socially isolated. On average, three new referrals are made by health professionals every week and **over 150 matches** were supported this year, with volunteers delivering **over 6,500** hours of one-to-one companionship and support. **96%** of people referred over the year were for people living with mental health challenges including suicidal ideation, depression or anxiety – an increase on last year. This was often alongside two or more co-morbidities that reduce mobility or social contact such as COPD or hearing or sight impairment.

Our service users ranging in age from 23 to 102, may not have gone out of their home for several months, and may have no one other than clinicians for social support. We saw a 50% increase in referrals for people living with dementia or with memory issues, while 30% of referrals did not have English as their first language, requiring recruitment of volunteers who speak multiple languages.

Volunteers either make twice-weekly phone calls or meet face-to-face, taking people to community activities or for a walk, coffee or shopping. They become aware of when there are subtle changes in someone's health condition, and alert us to when there are practical issues, for which we can provide support. This can include obtaining support with a Personal Independence Payment, preventing someone's eviction through housing advice, contacting the community mental health team when someone is not taking their medication and have even helped contact crisis teams, when someone is undergoing an acute crisis including suicidal thoughts.

94% of people supported, said that having a volunteer befriender had a **positive impact** on their physical and mental wellbeing, and **89%** have said that they now feel less isolated and lonely and more connected.

"Talking to her has benefitted me in so many ways; as well as company I feel so much more understood and supported."

The programme also supports people described as frequent users of emergency services, which they are contacting repeatedly for non-clinical reasons. One volunteer was matched to someone who, after three months of regular contact, no longer called A&E at all.

"A really wonderful service – my Befriender is lovely and after losing so many friends it's been nice to find a new one."

Support Needs – Mental Health, Physical Disabilities, Learning Disabilities

All our services help to support with both alleviating loneliness and reducing anxiety as our model is person-centred, with support provided through building trusted long-term relationships. Working in partnership with all the mental health services in Hackney, GP practices, Social Prescribers, Wellbeing Practitioners and Adult Social Care, we support people's recovery to help them identify their skills and take small steps towards personal goals. **126 people with support needs were supported to volunteer** this year, more than double the number we supported last year, including **83 with mental health conditions**, of whom **21 were supported into paid employment**. They were placed with a variety of organisations including Crisis charity shops, St Joseph's Hospice, Round Chapel, Peter Bedford Housing Association and the Canal & River Trust, all of whom have been able to provide the additional support that is required.

To help people re-engage with others, we also hosted multiple sessions in life coaching, wellbeing and self-confidence and monthly group volunteering taster sessions. These monthly sessions have been hosted by local organisations including the Hackney Night Shelter, Hackney Playbus and Edible Landscapes Community Garden. We also started a weekly Job Club providing two hours of computer access and staff and peer support. Additionally, we launched a new initiative supporting the North East London Forensics Service, specifically the John Howard Centre and Wolfson House low-medium secure units. We have supported 14 individuals, all convicted of an offence and with complex mental health needs, into volunteering, training and paid work.

L is a gentleman of 57 who recognised his mental health would benefit from keeping busy. He has a learning disability, lives in supported accommodation, and is unable to read or write. He does not use a mobile phone. L's mood was low due to being unoccupied and dissatisfaction with his housing situation and was spending his day travelling on the buses to keep occupied. Through one-to-one support, a group volunteering taster session, help with applications, interviews and accompanying him on initial shifts, he is now volunteering 4 days/week at Second Chance Café, St Mary's Living and Giving Shop, and two weekly lunch clubs.

"Step Up has been supportive and understanding of my current position. I have my confidence back which has helped my mental health. I have gained so much from Step Up. I achieved my goal of finding a new job by the end of year. I am proud of the challenges I have overcome to apply for jobs and attend interviews. I am so glad to be part of the Step Up project".

Community Development/ Social Action

Our Place and Together Better - we continued to support local residents to share their skills and start up their own activities and projects through our two place-based social action projects. Both are aimed at engaging local residents to come together and deliver their own solutions to issues they identify, to improve their local area and help local people. We help people recognise their strengths, build confidence, make connections, and help them to address challenges together.

A huge majority of residents present with mental health issues as well as social isolation and difficult life circumstances. Through forming connections and being given the support and encouragement to recognise and then realise their skills, people's confidence, resilience and social networks increase. We also support residents to link to appropriate statutory services including debt guidance, financial support, housing advice, food provision and social care, while the activities they deliver provide an increased range of activities for residents to enjoy.

Our Place is based at community venues on the New Kingshold and Stamford Hill estates, with support from Southern Housing Group and National Lottery. We have held many community events over the past year including:

- a teddy bears' picnic
- tabletop residents' sale (at both hubs)
- Christmas parties
- and a summer tea party.

Across the two locations, we saw around 150 residents attending the programme, of whom 35 became volunteers, delivering over 60 free activities each month, starting 25 new activities throughout the year. Activities delivered include: a children's martial arts and football club led by local dads; a Food Bank, football club, kids' cooking club, a winter coat swap, a stay and play group for children with SEN, and a walking group.

Single mother aged 34yrs with four children, B is neurodivergent and has a number of health issues. B was attending the coffee morning, and expressed how she wanted to do more with herself now her youngest of her children had started full-time nursery. As a result, B was recruited as a volunteer with the Hackney Community Food Bank at Alpine Grove. "It's so nice to be giving back to the community. I am so happy the foodbank is at Alpine Grove because it's close to my house and it helps me to use my time constructively".

"The best thing that happened to me was this place. I never thought I had anything to contribute to anyone. Thank you for allowing me to volunteer and feel good about myself".

The work VCH is doing is tackling loneliness, poverty, and anti-social behaviour. They're giving the community a spirit and the volunteers a purpose in their communities.'

"I loved it! I enjoyed doing the STEM art with the children. I learned a lot about myself, and I think I would like to volunteer again".

Together Better continued to grow and thrive, doubling to 16 GP surgeries across eight Hackney Neighbourhoods with staff working together with GP practices to support patients to volunteer. This is an innovative project launched together with the local NHS to establish communities at local surgeries, to empower patients to be more in control of their own health and wellbeing. This is enabled through supporting patients to recognise their skills, and to utilise these through volunteering at the practice. This could be helping patients to register online, to make reminder phone calls about appointments, or to set up their own projects such as a walking group, art club or a gardening project.

Over the year, we have engaged almost 500 patients every month, of whom over 100 residents are regular volunteers. Most have mental health issues and long-term physical health conditions - to enjoy activities including yoga, walking, gardening, arts and crafts, box fitness, swing dance, a mother and baby stay and play, martial arts and mental health peer support groups - all led by patients themselves.

GPs refer patients who may be isolated, or suffering from anxiety or depression and, by attending our activities, they meet new friends, make supportive connections and have a reason to leave their homes. 80% patients surveyed said their health and wellbeing had improved through attending, while over 90% of patients said they feel less isolated since taking part.

"I've made friends with lovely people. I would be stuck indoors otherwise and feeling trapped, but when I come here, I feel free like a weight's been lifted off me, a feeling of relief".

"I attended the coffee morning at Somerford Grove a few times and I really enjoyed it. I came to the Christmas party and I cooked a curry for everyone. Being able to provide food for others makes me really happy. I'm excited for the spring as Somerford Grove are starting to grow vegetables at their new gardening club. I'm hoping to use some of the produce in my cooking to then share with the group. I feel like I've met lots of lovely new people and I now feel more settled in Hackney".

Many volunteers say that they have gained in confidence and learned new skills, and now feel more empowered to follow their goals. They have gained in confidence to address their health, and with additional support from the programme, have been connected to other advice services to address financial and housing matters.

"It's made me much more aware of my own capabilities, given me confidence and created a path of realising that I am responsible for my own health with support".

"I enjoy spending time with local people. I have learned new skills by teaching others, and learned new skills from them. I have also learned things from meeting people with diverse heritages".

GPs and other medical staff said that they found that the programme has been beneficial for patients' health, reducing complaints and improving the atmosphere at the practice.

"You have really helped the whole practice. We have many positive patients talk about your service. Our practice manager and all of us are really happy with Together Better".

"I feel a broader community spirit and pride begin part of a special volunteering service which gives people a second chance in life, like myself, to rebuild my life skills and fulfil my potential".

Community Health Champions

56 more Community Champions were on-boarded this year, bringing our total number of Champions to **267** involved in the programme. Champions are hosted by **90 voluntary and community** organisations representative of diverse communities across Hackney, speaking **40** different languages between them.

This is a partnership with Public Health and funded by national government to recruit, train and support people connected to communities across the borough to share key public health messaging via translated and accessible media in ways that are likely to engage residents. Topics covered include **mental health and wellbeing, bowel/breast cancer awareness & screening, MMR, cardiovascular health, polio, heatwave, health literacy, physical activity, healthy eating, childhood obesity, sexual health, smoking/vaping cessation**. Through monthly forums, fortnightly peer support groups and regular co-produced training sessions, Champions are supported to share valuable insights with health partners on community health barriers and methods of increasing health prevention leading to more bespoke, relevant service provision for City & Hackney's diverse communities.

Peer Research (City of London)

During 2023, we completed our delivery of our first City of London programme, engaging residents on behalf of Public Health, to co-produce their Health and Wellbeing Strategy, by recruiting and training residents to conduct surveys with their peers. Residents covered a wide range of demographics and communities, while we worked closely with a range of community groups across the City such as Portsoken Community Centre, Age UK, East London Mosque and Golden Lanes Community Centre. With training and support, residents managed to complete surveys with over 180 neighbours, friends and peers, to identify health and wellbeing priorities. Some volunteers went onto to help co-produce the actual strategy and action plans as well as tailoring the survey wording to be more appropriate to residents.

This was another example of how we worked closely with residents in partnership with statutory services to establish what the issues are facing local communities and what solutions are best to tackle these.

Diversity and Inclusion

We worked hard this year to address the issue of diversity across VCH, through multiple approaches – both internally and externally. To increase the diversity of residents engaged in volunteering, we continued with our equalities focused series of communication campaigns across the year, such as Mental Health Awareness Week, Pride Month, Black History Month, and Trans Awareness Day. For all these campaigns, we support residents to run activities relating to these themes such as during Black History Month, when residents held African and Caribbean themed bring and share community meals. We expanded our outreach activities to target people from specific demographics, including older people, people with learning disabilities and people from Turkish and South Asian communities – working closer with community-based organisations, attending Job Fairs, libraries, New City College, the Hackney Moves Festival, Health and Wellbeing Events, giving presentations to groups including SEN and ESOL students; and working closer with organisations who can provide more support to volunteers with support needs such as Hackney Foodbank, Xenia and Hackney Doorways. We also completely rebuilt and rebranded our website, to ensure it is more engaging, as well as following guidelines for people who are visually impaired and who have dyslexia. Internally, staff continued to commit to our Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Working Group, taking time to examine our working practices, and to make recommendations where we could improve. This led to us delivering more bespoke training and expanding our recruitment process to offer guaranteed interviews to anyone from a Global Majority background or with a disability.

Thank you to all the volunteers who gave their time over the year, to all our funders and to all those who continue to support our work.

Funders who supported us during 2023-24: Hackney Council, Public Health, Department of Culture, Media and Sport, National Lottery Community Fund, Southern Housing Group, City of London Corporation, NEL ICB (NHS), Office of the Primary Care Networks (City and Hackney), and our business partner The Depository Trust & Clearing Corporation.

The trustees would also like to go on record in thanking all the staff at VCH for their tremendous efforts over the past year. Their passion for the work of VCH continues to inspire, as highlighted by the impressive growth in our volunteering numbers and collaborations over the past 12 months.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The programmes and activities outlined above resulted in an increase in income **from £927k to £1,136k** with a corresponding increase in expenses from **£848k to £1,106k**. The charity achieved a surplus of **£30k** for the year.

RESERVES POLICY

The trustees review the amount of funds VCH requires to ensure that they are adequate to fulfil our continuing obligations on a regular basis. VCH takes a cautious approach towards investment, adopting a short-term low-risk policy. The Board has agreed that while it will maintain reserves at a minimum of 15% of annual costs, it will work towards increasing this to 25% (three months' operating costs) going forward.

This figure has been arrived at considering:

- the risks associated with individual streams of income and expenditure differing from budget;
- the additional risks associated with the dependence of VCH on a small number of donors;
- planned activity levels and the major risk to organisational delivery of reducing spending further at this stage; and
- organisational commitments.

RISK MANAGEMENT

VCH's Board of Trustees has identified the major risks to which VCH is exposed and these have been reviewed and systems established to manage those risks. The Board takes a proactive approach to risk identification, reduction and mitigation, and reviews this regularly with senior staff. VCH's current cash flow situation is sound and a new Business Plan has been adopted for the future.

ACCOUNTING AND REPORTING RESPONSIBILITIES

The trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the trustees have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). Under company law the trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the profit or loss of the charitable company for that year. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

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

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charitable company's transactions and 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.

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The trustees acknowledge the duty in Section 4 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the Charity Commission's published general and relevant sub-sector guidance on public benefit.

All activities undertaken by VCH are for the public benefit. With a focus on providing volunteering services, the organisation's operation is very much geared to providing benefit to the local community as is highlighted by the activities reported herein. This will also continue to be central to its future plans.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime and was approved by the trustees on 27th November 2024 and signed on their behalf.



Chair, Robert Sugden



Chief Executive Officer, Lauren Tobias

**REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT AUDITORS TO THE MEMBERS OF
VOLUNTEER CENTRE HACKNEY**

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Volunteer Centre Hackney (the 'charitable company') for the year ended 31 March 2024 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2024 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report, other than the financial statements and our Report of the Independent Auditors thereon.

Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Report of the Trustees for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Report of the Trustees has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Other matter

In the previous accounting period, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) of the charity took advantage of audit exemption under s477 of the Companies Act. Therefore, the prior period financial statements were not subject to audit.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Report of the Trustees.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- the trustees were not entitled to take advantage of the small companies exemption from the requirement to prepare a Strategic Report or in preparing the Report of the Trustees.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue a Report of the Independent Auditors that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

Our approach to identifying and assessing the risks of material misstatement in respect of irregularities, including fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations, was as follows:

- the engagement partner ensured that the engagement team collectively had the appropriate competence, capabilities and skills to identify or recognise non-compliance with applicable laws and regulations;
- we identified the laws and regulations applicable to the group through discussions with trustees and other management, and from our commercial knowledge and experience of the charity sector;
- we focused on specific laws and regulations which we considered may have a direct material effect on the accounts or the activities of the group. These included but were not limited to the Charities Act

2011; Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable to the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019); Companies Act 2006, Employment Law; Data Protection Legislation; The Code of Fundraising Practice; and Safeguarding Regulations as they affect the direct charitable activities of the group;

- we assessed the extent of compliance with the laws and regulations identified above through making enquiries of management and inspecting legal correspondence where necessary.

We assessed the susceptibility of the group's financial statements to material misstatement, including obtaining an understanding of how fraud might occur, by:

- making enquiries of management as to where they considered there was susceptibility to fraud, their knowledge of actual, suspected and alleged fraud; and
- considering the internal controls in place to mitigate risks of fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations.

To address the risk of fraud through management bias and override of controls, we:

- performed analytical procedures to identify any unusual or unexpected transactions;
- tested the appropriateness of journal entries;
- assessed whether judgements and assumptions made in determining the accounting estimates were indicative of potential bias; and
- investigated the rationale behind significant or unusual transactions.

In response to the risk of irregularities and non-compliance with laws and regulations, we designed procedures which included, but were not limited to:

- agreeing financial statement disclosures to underlying supporting documentation;
- reading the minutes of meetings of those charged with governance;
- enquiring of management as to actual and potential litigation and claims.

Under ISA 240 (UK) there is a presumed risk that revenue may be misstated due to the improper recognition of revenue. To address this risk, we obtained an understanding of the company's revenue recognition policies and compared these to the accounting standard, performed a walkthrough to confirm our understanding of the processes and controls through which the business initiates, records, processes and reports revenue transactions. We tested a sample of revenue transactions to supporting evidence and tested, on a sample basis, revenue related balances in the balance sheet.

There are inherent limitations in our audit procedures described above. The more removed that laws and regulations are from financial transactions, the less likely it is that we would become aware of non-compliance. Auditing standards also limit the audit procedures required to identify non-compliance with laws and regulations to enquiry of the trustees and other management and the inspection of regulatory and legal correspondence, if any.

Material misstatements that arise due to fraud can be harder to detect than those that arise from error.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our Report of the Independent Auditors.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditors' report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Raffingers LLP

Raffingers LLP, Statutory Auditor
Chartered Certified Accountants
19-20 Bourne Court
Southend Road
Woodford Green
Essex
IG8 8HD

27th November 2024

Volunteer Centre Hackney
Statement of Financial Activities
for the year ended 31 March 2024

Company No 3357999

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Income					
Incoming resources from charitable activities:					
Grants receivable	2	-	1,113,460	1,113,460	905,238
Other income	2	23,169	-	23,169	21,693
Total income		23,169	1,113,460	1,136,629	926,931
Expenditure					
Charitable activities					
		6,439	1,099,905	1,106,344	848,204
Total expenditure	3	6,439	1,099,905	1,106,344	848,204
Net movement in funds		16,730	13,555	30,285	78,727
Total funds brought forward		97,039	128,923	225,962	89,342
Total funds carried forward	10	113,769	142,478	256,247	225,962

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

The net incoming resources for the year arise from the Charity's continuing operations.

Volunteer Centre Hackney

Balance Sheet
at 31 March 2024

Company No 3357999

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Current Assets					
Debtors	7		142,254	142,254	51,777
Cash at bank and in hand		120,369	160,737	281,106	606,919
		120,369	302,991	423,360	658,696
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year					
	8	(6,600)	(160,513)	(167,113)	(432,734)
Net Current Assets		113,769	142,478	256,247	225,962
Total Net Assets	10	113,769	142,478	256,247	225,962
Funds					
Unrestricted funds	9			113,769	97,039
Restricted funds	9			142,478	128,923
Total Funds				256,247	225,962

The financial statements were approved by the trustees and authorised for issue on 27th November 2024.



Chair, Robert Sugden

The notes on pages 18 to 24 form part of these financial statements.

Volunteer Centre Hackney

Statement of Cash Flows
at 31 March 2024

Company No 3357999

	2024 £	2023 £
Cash flows from operating activities:		
Net increasing resources	30,285	78,727
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	(90,477)	101,805
(Decrease)/increase in creditors	<u>(265,621)</u>	<u>36,638</u>
Net cash provided by operating activities	(325,813)	217,170
 Cash at beginning of the year	 606,919	 389,749
 Cash at the end of the year	 <u><u>281,106</u></u>	 <u><u>606,919</u></u>

1 ACCOUNTING POLICIES

1.1 BASIS OF COMPLIANCE

These financial statements have been prepared in compliance with FRS 102, 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and the Republic of Ireland', the Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (Charities SORP (FRS 102)) and the Companies Act 2006.

1.2 BASIS OF PREPARATION

The financial statements have been prepared on the historical cost basis.
The presentation currency of the financial statements is the Pound Sterling (£).
The charity meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

1.3 ASSESSMENT OF GOING CONCERN

The trustees, having made appropriate enquiries, consider that adequate resources exist for the charity to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future and that, therefore, it is appropriate to adopt going concern basis in preparing the financial statements as at and for the period ended 31 March 2024. The trustees have made this assessment in respect to a period of one year from the date of approval of these accounts.

The trustees have concluded that there are no material uncertainties related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the ability of the charity to continue as a going concern. The trustees are of the opinion that the charity will have sufficient resources to meet the liabilities as they fall due.

1.4 COMPANY STATUS

The company is a company limited by guarantee. The members of the company are the trustees named on page 1. In the event of the company being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per member of the company.

1.5 MATERIAL PRIOR YEAR ERRORS

No material prior year errors have been identified in the reporting period.

1.6 FUND ACCOUNTING

General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the company and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors which have been raised by the company for particular purposes. The cost of raising and administering such funds are charged against the specific fund.

Investment income, gains and losses are allocated to the appropriate fund.

1.7 INCOME

All income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities once the charity has entitlement to the funds, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Where income has related expenditure (as with fundraising or contract income), the income and related expenditure are reported gross in the Statement of Financial Activities.

Donations, grants and gifts are recognised when receivable. In the event that a donation is subject to fulfilling performance conditions before the charity is entitled to the funds, the income is deferred and not recognised until it is probable that those conditions will be fulfilled in the reporting period. Income from Gift Aid tax reclaims is recognised for any donations with relevant Gift Aid certificates recognised in income for the year. Any amounts of Gift Aid not received by the year-end are accounted for in income and accrued income in debtors.

For legacies, entitlement is taken on a case-by-case basis as the earlier of the date on which: the charity is aware that probate has been granted, the estate has been finalised and notification has been made by the executor(s) to the charity that a distribution will be made, or when a distribution is received from the estate.

Receipt of a legacy, in whole or in part, is only considered probable when the amount can be measured reliably and the charity has been notified of the executor's intention to make a distribution. If the legacy is in the form of an asset other than cash or an asset listed on a recognised stock exchange, recognition is subject to the value of the asset being able to be reliably measured and title to the asset has passed to the charity. Where legacies have been notified to the or the charity is aware of the granting of probate, and the criteria for income recognition have not been met, then the legacy is treated as a contingent asset and disclosed if material.

Income received in advance for a future fundraising event or for a grant received relating to the following year are deferred until the criteria for income recognition are met.

1.8 DONATED GOODS AND SERVICES

Donated services or facilities are recognised when the charity has control over the item, any conditions associated with the donated item have been met, the receipt of economic benefit from the use of the item is probable and that economic benefit can be measured reliably.

Donated professional services and facilities are included in income at the estimated value of the gift to the charity when received, based on the amount that the charity would have been prepared to pay for these services or facilities had it been required to purchase them, with a corresponding entry in the appropriate expenditure heading for the same amount. Donated fixed assets are similarly taken to income at the value to the charity with the other entry being capitalised in fixed assets.

1.9 EXPENDITURE

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been included under expense categories that aggregate all costs for allocation to activities. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular activities, they have been allocated on a basis consistent with the use of the resources.

1.10 TAXATION

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

1.11 DEBTORS

Debtors are recognised at their settlement amount, less any provision for non-recoverability. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid. Debtors more than one year are included in the accounts at their carrying value.

1.12 CASH AT BANK AND IN HAND

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

1.13 CREDITORS AND PROVISION

Creditors are recognised when there is an obligation at the balance sheet date as a result of a past event, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefit will be required in settlement, and the amount of settlement can be estimated reliably.

1.14 PENSION COSTS AND OTHER POST-RETIREMENT BENEFITS

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme. Contributions payable to the company's pension scheme are charged to profit or loss in the period to which they relate.

1.15 FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

The charity only 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 except for bank loans which are subsequently measured at the carrying value plus accrued interest less repayments. The financing charge to expenditure is at a constant rate calculated using the effective interest method.

1.16 OPERATING LEASES

Rentals applicable to operating leases where substantially all of the benefits and risks of ownership remain with the lessor are charged against profits on a straight-line basis over the lease term.

1.17 VOLUNTEER HELP

The value of any volunteer help received is not included in the accounts but is described in the trustees' report.

Volunteer Centre Hackney
Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 31 March 2024

Company No 3357999

2 INCOME

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Grants	-	1,113,460	1,113,460	905,238
Donations	78	-	78	1,139
Interest income	10,021	-	10,021	
Other	13,070	-	13,070	20,554
	23,169	1,113,460	1,136,629	926,931

Of the £926,931 income in 2023, £905,238 was restricted funds and £21,693 unrestricted funds.

3 EXPENDITURE

	2024 £	2023 £
Salaries & wages	903,029	640,587
Other staff and project costs	61,008	101,690
Staff training & travel	6,702	6,130
Occupancy costs	47,630	40,852
Insurance	1,773	1,612
Office costs including PPS	6,077	5,574
Telephone	3,763	3,537
Accounting and Payroll	30,403	27,531
Audit/independent Review	6,600	1,020
IT	16,976	10,893
Database	2,160	2,160
Website costs	10,795	-
Miscellaneous	9,428	6,618
	1,106,344	848,204

Of the total expenditure in the year, £1,099,905 (2023: £837,237) was charged to restricted funds and £6,439 (2023: £10,967) to unrestricted funds.

4 NET EXPENDITURE

	2024 £	2023 £
This is stated after charging:		
Audit fee/Independent examiner's fee	6,600	1,020
Operating lease rentals - land and buildings	33,000	33,000
Operating lease rentals - other	2,309	2,261

5 TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION

During the year, no Trustee received any remuneration (2023: £Nil).
During the year, no Trustee received any benefits in kind (2023: £Nil).
During the year, no Trustee received any reimbursement of expenses (2023: £Nil).

6 STAFF COSTS

	2024 £	2023 £
Wages and salaries	789,453	558,399
Social security costs	64,086	44,961
Pension costs	49,490	37,227
	<u>903,029</u>	<u>640,587</u>

The average monthly number of full-time equivalent employees was:

	2024 No	2023 No
Charitable Activities	23	19

One employee received employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) amounting to between £60,000 and £65,000 (2023: one).

The charity considers its key personnel comprise the trustees and the Chief Executive Officer. The total employment benefits (including social security costs) paid to the key management personnel were £64,749 (2023: £62,452).

7 DEBTORS

	2024 £	2023 £
Trade debtors	96,443	5,035
Prepayments	9,729	12,873
Accrued income	30,042	24,333
Other debtors	6,040	9,536
	<u>142,254</u>	<u>51,777</u>

Volunteer Centre Hackney
Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 31 March 2024

Company No 3357999

8 CREDITORS: Amounts falling due within one year

	2024 £	2023 £
Trade creditors	6,929	8,084
Social security and other taxes	23,446	13,005
Other creditors	330	320
Accruals and deferred income	136,408	411,325
	<u>167,113</u>	<u>432,734</u>

9 STATEMENT OF FUNDS

	At 1 April 2023 £	Income £	Expend- iture £	At 31 March 2024 £
Unrestricted Funds:				
General funds	97,039	23,169	6,439	113,769
Total Unrestricted Funds	<u>97,039</u>	<u>23,169</u>	<u>6,439</u>	<u>113,769</u>
Restricted Funds:				
Grants and sponsorships to promote, support, and encourage the use and involvement of volunteers in the London Borough of Hackney	128,923	1,113,460	1,099,905	142,478
Total Restricted Funds	<u>128,923</u>	<u>1,113,460</u>	<u>1,099,905</u>	<u>142,478</u>
Total Funds	<u>225,962</u>	<u>1,136,629</u>	<u>1,106,344</u>	<u>256,247</u>

10 ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Current assets	120,369	302,991	423,360	658,696
Creditors	(6,600)	(160,513)	(167,113)	(432,734)
	<u>113,769</u>	<u>142,478</u>	<u>256,247</u>	<u>225,962</u>

11	COMMITMENTS UNDER OPERATING LEASES	2024		2023	
		Land & Buildings £	Other £	Land & Buildings £	Other £
	At 31 March the charity was committed to total future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases for each of the following periods:				
	Not later than one year	28,390	-	33,000	1,696
	Later than one year and not later than 5 years	-	-	28,390	-
		28,390	-	61,390	1,696

12 CAPITAL COMMITMENTS

Amounts contracted for, but not provided in the accounts, amount to £nil (2023: £nil).

13 PENSION COMMITMENTS

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme for all qualifying employees. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the charity in an independently administered fund. Payments during the year, amounted to £49,490 (2023: £37,227).

14 RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

There was no related party transactions or balances during the year to 31 March 2024.

15 AUDITOR LIABILITY LIMITATION AGREEMENT

The charity has entered into a liability limitation agreement with Raffingers, the statutory auditor, in respect of the statutory audit for the year ended 31 March 2024. The proportionate liability agreement follows the standard terms in Appendix B to the Financial Reporting Council's June 2008 Guidance on Auditor Liability Agreements and was signed by the trustees on 25 April 2023.