

Volunteer Centre Hackney

ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

for the year ended

31 March 2025



	Page
Legal and administrative information	1
Trustees' report	2
Independent audit report	12
Statement of financial activities	15
Balance sheet	16
Statement of cash flows	17
Notes forming part of the financial statements	18

TRUSTEES

Philip Gray (appointed 15 May 2024) - Chair
Jade Tan
Olivia Fuller (appointed 15 May 2024)
Behrouz Bayat (appointed 15 May 2024)
Omar Salih (appointed 10 February 2025)
Jonathan Parr (resigned 15 May 2024)
Adelle Grisaffe (resigned 6 February 2025)
Michelle Lawrence (resigned 10 February 2025)
William Alego (resigned 22 April 2025)
Robert Sugden – Chair (resigned 2 October 2025)
Rachel Linn (resigned 2 October 2025)

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

Xeinadin Audit Limited, Statutory Auditor
8th Floor, Becket House, 36 Old Jewry, London, EC2R 8DD

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 2025. 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 2019).

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

2024-25 was another successful year of delivery, as we continued to expand all our programmes to support Hackney's communities to volunteer and work together on community initiatives.

Building on its success, our patient engagement programme based at GP practices - Together Better - doubled in size, bringing the total numbers of GP practices engaged to 35.

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:

- **1,202** residents registered an interest in volunteering
- **596** people **started volunteering** across the borough
- **151** of those residents had **support needs** – double our annual target
- **73** residents with **mental health issues** were supported to volunteer
- **150 isolated residents** were supported by volunteer befrienders with regular companionship, who provided **over 7,000 hours** of one-to-one support for vulnerable isolated residents
- **203** Community Health Champions were supported to **share vital health messaging** to their communities speaking **43** different languages between them.
- **Over 100** patients - mostly with long term health conditions - **supported to volunteer** at local GP practices, and
- **700 patients** supported to participate in patient-led activities at GP practices.

Volunteer Recruitment and Guidance

We significantly surpassed our targets this year including exceeding our target of volunteer placements by one third, and doubling our target for the number of people with support needs who started to volunteer. This was despite there being a generally reported drop in volunteer numbers both nationally and regionally. And was 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 634 volunteer roles with 300 of these being completely new roles. We engaged with more than 800 community organisations, with 37 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 Oxfam, to smaller local charities, such as Made in Hackney 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 roles at the Hackney Moves Festival, roles requiring a couple of hours whenever the volunteer is available, such as the foodbank role at Storehouse, and others looking for a longer-term commitment, for example volunteering to help adults read at Read Easy which prefers volunteers to commit for at least a year. All volunteering roles provide an opportunity to learn or refresh skills, but some also offer formal training which leads to qualifications as is the case with the National Childbirth Trust which provides volunteers with an OCN accredited qualification in peer support.

Best Practice Guidance

We increased our best practice offer to people supporting volunteers at charities across Hackney, providing bespoke guidance and training to over 30 organisations, through 1:1 meetings, group training sessions and networking events. Topics covered included:

- what should be included in a volunteering advert
- do we need to pay volunteer expenses
- can asylum seekers/refugees volunteer
- are DBS checks needed for specific volunteering roles
- how to diversify the volunteer base
- how to support volunteers with additional needs/requirements
- what volunteer policies need to be in place

"The conversation we had and [VCH's] support in navigating our decision making around whether we are able to recruit and support volunteers with convictions has been very helpful", Hackney Foodbank.

"The networking events have been a great opportunity to share experiences, know-how and to network", AMURT UK's London Feeding Programme.

We have also updated our free online toolkit which comprises a series of information sheets on a variety of topics relevant to the recruitment and management of volunteers.

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.

Individuals of all ages and backgrounds volunteered, and there was a variety of motivations to do so. Some were looking to gain experience to add to their CV, others were retired and wanted to give something back to their local community and/or do something which enabled them to get out and meet people.

87.36% of volunteers surveyed reported that they had learned new skills from volunteering, including communication/listening skills, organisation skills, administrative and IT skills. Many respondents stated they had gained employability skills whilst volunteering.

"This experience has progressed my skills in communication, empathy, and the ability to create a supportive and positive environment for individuals from diverse backgrounds. These responsibilities have not only strengthened my ability to provide practical support but also the importance of listening, understanding, and addressing the unique needs of each individual."

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

"Volunteering is one of the most worthwhile things to do, not only on a personal level, but in feeling connected to your community. You will meet new people, gain experience and make a difference in people's lives."

86.05% of individuals agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that "volunteering has improved my wellbeing/mental health", a significant increase on the 71% from last year. One key aspect to wellbeing is an individual's level of confidence and 80.46% agreed or strongly agreed that "volunteering has helped me to feel more confident", again an increase on the 73% from last year.

"Definitely get involved, the value of being able to spend time with other people in my community has brought me so much joy!"

Diversity and Inclusion

We worked hard this year to address the issue of diversity across VCH, through multiple approaches – both internally and externally. We recruited many volunteers who speak different languages including Farsi, Gaelic, Spanish, Polish, Italian, Urdu, Mandarin, Cantonese, Afrikaans, Hindi, BSL, Ghari, Arabic and Catalan.

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 refugees and asylum seekers in particular those living in the migrant hotels, older people, people with learning disabilities and people learning English – working closer with community-based organisations, attending Job Fairs, libraries, New City College, 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.

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 continuing our recruitment process to offer guaranteed interviews to anyone from a Global Majority background or with a disability.

Looking at our data, we can see that from those that chose to disclose their ethnicity that 48.32% of our service users and 46.21% of VCH's volunteers are from black and global majority backgrounds. These figures are close to the 2022 census data for Hackney which states "around 47% of the population come from Black and Global Majority groups". Our data for service users who identify as 'Asian or Asian British' is 15.63% which is greater than the average for Hackney (10.4%), and the same can be said for those who identify as 'Mixed Background' with 14.1% of our service users selecting this category compared to the Hackney census data of 6.7%.

We are also close to or above the 2021 Census data for service users and volunteers with regards to those who consider themselves disabled. The Census reported that "Almost a fifth of the population of Hackney (19.1%) are disabled under the Equality Act 2010" and our data shows that 23.38% of service users and 18.29% of volunteers consider themselves disabled.

Community Befriending

Volunteers continued to be a lifeline for residents who are identified as socially isolated. Our service users who range in age from 21 to 103, may not have gone out of their home for several months, and may have no one other than clinicians for social support. **Over 150 matches** were supported this year, with our volunteers delivering **over 7,000** hours of one-to-one companionship and support.

On average, six new referrals were made by health professionals and Adult Social Care every week. **96%** of people referred over the year were for people living with mental health challenges including suicidal ideation, depression and/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, hearing or sight impairment.

Over 30% of referrals did not have English as their first language, requiring recruitment of volunteers who speak multiple community languages such as Bengali, Sylheti, Polish and Turkish.

We saw an increase in referrals for people living with dementia or with memory issues, so we now train our volunteers in Dementia Awareness and Reminisce therapies to help them engage. Carers were also a focus for us this year so they could get some time to themselves, with us partnering with City and Hackney Carers Centre for cross-referrals.

Our volunteers deliver a personalised service making regular phone calls and/or meeting face-to-face, in the home, which is vital for the housebound, or taking people to community activities or for a walk, chatting over a coffee or light shopping trips. Forming a trusted bond, VCH Community Befrienders 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 or signpost to appropriate services. 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 while we have even helped contact crisis teams, when someone is undergoing an acute crisis including suicidal thoughts.

*"There's nobody like her.
She's brought sunshine back into my life."*

98% of people supported said that having a VCH Community Befriender had a **positive impact** on their physical and mental wellbeing, and **92%** have said that they now feel less isolated and lonely and more connected to the community they live in.

The programme also supports people described as frequent users of emergency services, which they are contacting repeatedly for non-clinical reasons. The majority of these frequent users once matched, and after a few weeks of regular contact, no longer called or visited A&E at all, and the rest have begun to use the service more appropriately.

"My service user is more like family now – we clicked as soon as we met and I'm so glad to have her in my life."

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. **151 people with support needs were supported to volunteer** this year, more than double our target, including **73 with mental health conditions**, of whom **21 were supported into paid employment**. They were placed with a variety of organisations including Crisis charity shops, Hackney Food Bank, Round Chapel, Tree Musketeers 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 Stepney City Farm, Tower Theatre and Hackney Food Bank. We also sustained our 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 supported **21 individuals, all convicted of an offence and with complex mental health needs**, into volunteering, training and paid work.

*"Excellent support and confidence at a time when I most needed it. I'm now in two voluntary roles, loving both, doing well and progressing", **Step Up member***

*"Step Up has proven to be an essential resource in supporting service users at various stages of their recovery and discharge. Through personalised coaching, skills development, and integration into the community, Step Up has empowered service users to regain confidence, build meaningful connections, access paid employment and prepare for a successful transition into independent living", **Sidrah Babar, Deputy Head Occupational Therapist***

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 was based at community venues on the New Kingshold and Stamford Hill estates, as well as for a 6-month trial period at Hindle House in Dalston, and was supported by Southern Housing Group and the National Lottery, with SHG generously allowing us use of one of their residential properties for the programme for the 9th year running, free of charge.

Over the three venues, we hosted 19 different activities throughout the year. Of these, 13 were led independently by residents, while the other six were activities we delivered to engage residents who needed one-to-one support as they weren't quite ready to lead.

The people we work with face a wide range of challenges, including mental health issues, disabilities, long-term health conditions, isolation, loneliness, and other life difficulties such as poverty and housing problems. Despite these challenges, the community came together to deliver 242 sessions this year—an average of five activities per week. These sessions reached over 140 community members and have been supported by 24 volunteers.

The activities were diverse, ranging from coffee mornings and walking groups to Chi Gong and Pilates, arts and crafts, women's mindfulness, sound meditation, sewing, jewellery making, food pantries, a singing group, book club and parchment making – all led by residents from many different backgrounds.

The Women's Mindfulness group was particularly successful, with more than 20 women attending each week, and the women leading the group have now registered it as a Community Interest Company (CIC).

We also saw a significant impact from the relocation of the food pantry to its permanent home, during summer 2024. This move inspired a new initiative: the creation of a food co-op, which residents set up in partnership with Cooperation Town and The Felix Project. This gives residents more choice about the food they obtain rather than relying on surplus items from food banks.

"I am very much a loner. I challenged myself to be around a large group of people but that has changed since I started coming to the coffee morning. I have met so many residents now, I look forward to coming every Friday".

"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 don't know what I would do, if not for Verona encouraging me to come to these coffee mornings. All I would be doing is sitting on the couch eating biscuits all day and picking up my son from school. Coming to the coffee morning has given me a reason to get out, meet lovely people and make my mental health not feel so bad. Yeah! I am looking to do things again especially with a family walking group".

Together Better continued to grow and thrive, more than doubling to cover 38 GP surgeries across all 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.

Each month, we support around 700 patients, primarily those living with long-term health conditions, who also experience isolation and/or difficult living circumstances, to connect with others through participating in and leading hugely varied co-designed activities.

Our work is hyper-local and deeply relational and embeds values of cultural expression, mutual care and resilience. We build long-term, trusting relationships with patients starting with open conversations at coffee mornings and local walks. These relationships are crucial to identifying needs, overcoming barriers to participation and encouraging continued involvement.

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 92% of patients said they had made new connections since taking part.

"We are like a little family and always reach out to each other whether happy or sad. We have a good relationship and support team."

"Sharing stories & experiences has been such a learning journey & the support I have offered & received has made such an impact in my own life. Seeing the growth of others attending has been a joy to see!"

"I have built up my confidence and feel like I am part of something. I am also happier."

"Offers me a safe, welcoming space to be."

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 77% of participants said that with additional support from the programme, they had been connected to other advice services to address other concerns such as financial and housing matters.

"Made me feel healthier and educated about the healthier foods we cook together. I have learned a new craft (crochet) and enjoyed yoga and chair exercises, along with meeting new people".

GPs and other medical staff said that they have found that the programme has been beneficial for patients' health, with over 60% saying they believe that they have seen patients book fewer GP appointments as a result; while others say that they have noticed an improved atmosphere at the surgeries.

"An incredible impact! My reason for referral is usually always to better their mental health which is very effective. It helps with socialisation, preventing isolation and developing skills." **Zoe Graham – Mental Health Nurse Practitioner**

"We have lots of feedback from the patients telling receptionists and the GPs that the classes really help them and improve their mental and physical health." **Hannah – Senior Administrator, Richmond Road**

Together Better has transformed our surgery. We are moving towards a place where local residents feel they are part of the practice rather than the practice just providing a service. It brings staff and patients closer together in a really positive way." **Kirsten Brown – Spring Hill GP**

Community Health Champions

44 more Community Champions were on-boarded this year, bringing our total number of Champions to **203** involved in the programme.

This is a partnership with City & Hackney Public Health and funded by national government to recruit, train and support people connected to and trusted by communities across the borough to share key public health messaging via translated and accessible media in ways that are likely to engage residents.

Champions are hosted by **90 voluntary and community organisations** representative of diverse communities across City & Hackney, speaking **43 different languages** between them.

This year, there was increased focus on building and maintaining a programme infrastructure for supporting "resident Champions" (i.e. those not hosted by voluntary and community organisations). Outreach activity to recruit more diverse Champions increased focus on specific under-represented demographics across the borough and those linked to chosen health priorities. These included Global Majority communities such as Black African, Black Caribbean, South & South East Asian, Charedi, Turkish, Kurdish & Cypriot people, as well as older people, and residents from the City of London.

Health topics covered included **mental health and wellbeing, bowel/breast/cervical cancer awareness and screening, cardiovascular health/blood pressure testing, physical activity, diet, nutrition and food poverty, vaccinations and immunisations and wider determinants of health, e.g. cost of living barriers and enablers**. Through monthly forums and peer support groups, Champions are enabled to share vital health messaging with their communities, and in turn, report back to health partners on barriers to engaging with health services leading to more bespoke, relevant service provision for City & Hackney's diverse communities.

Co-Production/Sharing Resident Insight

All our programmes are founded on actively supporting residents to co-produce their own personal journey, dependant on what they would like to achieve, while we facilitate the sharing of insight on their experiences with statutory services.

However, we were also funded during 24-25 to partner with City and Hackney Public Health team and the NHS to support residents to be able to share their experiences of health services and their ideas on how they could be improved. This included maternity services, cardiovascular support, weight management and also mental health support for young people. Residents were supported to join professional panels, to shape the design of new projects, and to attend and actively participate in neighbourhood forums and workshops.

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 2024-25: Hackney Council, Public Health, Southern Housing Group, National Lottery, Greater London Authority, Bailey Thomas Charitable Fund, North London Forensic Collective, NEL ICB (NHS), Integrated Primary Care Networks (City and Hackney), individual GP practices, our business partner The Depository Trust & Clearing Corporation, as well as other large corporate firms who kindly donated staff time and funds.

The trustees would also like to go on record in thanking all the staff at VCH for their tremendous efforts throughout the year. As always, their energy and efforts throughout were remarkable and led to many across the borough receiving vital support and connection.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The programmes and activities outlined above resulted in an increase in income from £1,136k to £1,197k. However, due to the challenges of rising costs, expenses increased from £1,106k to £1,224k resulting in a deficit of £27k (2024: surplus of £30k) for the year.

RESERVES POLICY

Reserves at the year end totalled £229,476 of which £127,310 were unrestricted funds. 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. The Board has agreed to take a measured response to local funding scarcity and rising service delivery costs while VCH cultivates a strategic plan to diversify income streams and reduce costs.

This figure has been arrived at considering:

- the risks associated with individual streams of income and expenditure differing from budget;
- 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.

FUNDRAISING

The trustees do not engage professional fundraisers, nor do they undertake public collections or cold calls. The charity is committed to the principals set out by the Fundraising Regulator in its Code of Fundraising Practice. When donors are approached, this is done with sensitivity and respect and with regard to their circumstances. The trustees are pleased to report that no complaints were received in the past twelve months in relation to its fundraising activities.

ACCOUNTING AND REPORTING RESPONSIBILITIES

The trustees (who are also the directors of the company 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. 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;
- observe the methods and principals in the Charity SORP;
- 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.

In so far as the trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditors are unaware, and
- the trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditors are aware of this information.

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 15 December 2025 and signed on their behalf.



Chair, Philip Gray



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 2025 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 2025 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.

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.

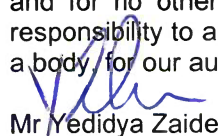
There are inherent limitations in our audit procedures described above. The more removed that laws and regulations are from financial transactions, the less likely it is that we would become aware of non-compliance. Auditing standards also limit the audit procedures required to identify non-compliance 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.


Mr Yedidya Zaiden FCCA (Senior Statutory Auditor)

For and on behalf of
Xeinadin Audit Limited
8th Floor Becket House
36 Old Jewry
London
EC2R 8DD

 2025

Volunteer Centre Hackney

Company No 3357999

Statement of Financial Activities (including the Income and Expenditure Account) for the year ended 31 March 2025

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Income					
Incoming resources from charitable activities:					
Grants receivable	2	-	1,179,726	1,179,726	1,113,460
Other income	2	17,886	-	17,886	23,169
Total income		17,886	1,179,726	1,197,612	1,136,629
Expenditure					
Charitable activities					
		4,345	1,220,038	1,224,383	1,106,344
Total expenditure	3	4,345	1,220,038	1,224,383	1,106,344
Net movement in funds		13,541	(40,312)	(26,771)	30,285
Total funds brought forward		113,769	142,478	256,247	225,962
Total funds carried forward	10	127,310	102,166	229,476	256,247

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

Company No 3357999

Balance Sheet at 31 March 2025

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Current Assets					
Debtors	7	-	115,249	115,249	142,254
Cash at bank and in hand		133,910	114,271	248,181	281,106
		<u>133,910</u>	<u>229,520</u>	<u>363,430</u>	<u>423,360</u>
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	8	(6,600)	(127,354)	(133,954)	(167,113)
		<u>127,310</u>	<u>102,166</u>	<u>229,476</u>	<u>256,247</u>
Net Current Assets					
		<u>127,310</u>	<u>102,166</u>	<u>229,476</u>	<u>256,247</u>
Total Net Assets	10	<u>127,310</u>	<u>102,166</u>	<u>229,476</u>	<u>256,247</u>
Funds					
Unrestricted funds	9			127,310	113,769
Restricted funds	9			102,166	142,478
				<u>229,476</u>	<u>256,247</u>
Total Funds				<u>229,476</u>	<u>256,247</u>

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

The financial statements were approved by the trustees and authorised for issue on 15 December 2025.



Chair, Philip Gray

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

Volunteer Centre Hackney
Statement of Cash Flows
at 31 March 2025

Company No 3357999

	2025 £	2024 £
Cash flows from operating activities:		
Net (decreasing)/increasing resources	(26,771)	30,285
Decrease/(increase) in debtors	27,005	(90,477)
Decrease in creditors	<u>(33,159)</u>	<u>(265,621)</u>
Net cash provided by operating activities	(32,925)	(325,813)
 Cash at beginning of the year	 281,106	 606,919
 Cash at the end of the year	 <u><u>248,181</u></u>	 <u><u>281,106</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 2025. 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 2025

Company No 3357999

2 INCOME

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Grants	-	1,179,726	1,179,726	1,113,460
Donations	1,363	-	1,363	78
Interest income	8,169	-	8,169	10,021
Other	8,354	-	8,354	13,070
	17,886	1,179,726	1,197,612	1,136,629

Of the £1,136,629 income in 2024, £1,113,460 was restricted funds and £23,169 unrestricted funds.

3 EXPENDITURE

	2025 £	2024 £
Salaries & wages	981,899	903,029
Other staff and project costs	101,552	61,008
Staff training & travel	8,413	6,702
Occupancy costs	42,911	47,630
Insurance	1,855	1,773
Office costs including PPS	5,162	6,077
Telephone	1,503	3,763
Accounting and Payroll	33,568	30,403
Audit/independent Review	6,600	6,600
IT	18,934	16,976
Database	7,160	2,160
Website costs	3,588	10,795
Miscellaneous	11,238	9,428
	1,224,383	1,106,344

Of the total expenditure in the year, £1,220,038 (2024: £1,099,905) was charged to restricted funds and £4,345 (2024: £6,439) to unrestricted funds.

4 NET EXPENDITURE

	2025 £	2024 £
This is stated after charging:		
Audit fee	6,600	6,600
Operating lease rentals - land and buildings	33,585	33,000
Operating lease rentals - other	-	2,309

5 TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION

During the year, no Trustee received any remuneration (2024: £Nil).
During the year, no Trustee received any benefits in kind (2024: £Nil).
During the year, no Trustee received any reimbursement of expenses (2024: £Nil).

6 STAFF COSTS

	2025 £	2024 £
Wages and salaries	849,116	789,453
Social security costs	72,170	64,086
Pension costs	60,613	49,490
	981,899	903,029

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

	2025 No	2024 No
Charitable Activities	23	23

One employee received employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) amounting to between £70,000 and £75,000 (2024: one between £60,000 and £65,000).

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 £73,232 (2024: £64,749).

7 DEBTORS

	2025 £	2024 £
Trade debtors	89,928	96,443
Prepayments	9,240	9,729
Accrued income	10,549	30,042
Other debtors	5,532	6,040
	115,249	142,254

8 CREDITORS: Amounts falling due within one year

	2025 £	2024 £
Trade creditors	4,969	6,929
Social security and other taxes	17,085	23,446
Other creditors	330	330
Accruals and deferred income	111,570	136,408
	<u>133,954</u>	<u>167,113</u>

9 STATEMENT OF FUNDS

	At 1 April 2024 £	Income £	Expend- iture £	At 31 March 2025 £
Unrestricted Funds:				
General funds	113,769	17,886	4,345	127,310
Total Unrestricted Funds	<u>113,769</u>	<u>17,886</u>	<u>4,345</u>	<u>127,310</u>
Restricted Funds:				
Grants and sponsorships to promote, support, and encourage the use and involvement of volunteers in the London Borough of Hackney	142,478	1,179,726	1,220,038	102,166
Total Restricted Funds	<u>142,478</u>	<u>1,179,726</u>	<u>1,220,038</u>	<u>102,166</u>
Total Funds	<u>256,247</u>	<u>1,197,612</u>	<u>1,224,383</u>	<u>229,476</u>

10 ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Current assets	133,910	229,520	363,430	423,360
Creditors	(6,600)	(127,354)	(133,954)	(167,113)
	<u>127,310</u>	<u>102,166</u>	<u>229,476</u>	<u>256,247</u>

11	COMMITMENTS UNDER OPERATING LEASES	2025		2024	
		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	-
	Later than one year and not later than 5 years	-	-	-	-
		-	-	28,390	-

12 CAPITAL COMMITMENTS

Amounts contracted for, but not provided in the accounts, amount to £nil (2024: £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 £60,613 (2024: £49,490).

14 RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

There were no related party transactions or balances during the year to 31 March 2025.