



CHOICE IN HACKNEY
(Company Limited by guarantee)

TRUSTEES REPORT
AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2021

COMPANY NO: 03423122
CHARITY NO : 1077287

CHOICE IN HACKNEY
TRUSTEES REPORT
AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2021

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CHOICE IN HACKNEY
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2021

The Trustees present their report and the financial statements for the year ended 31st March 2021.

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Trustees

Sandra Rennie	Chair
Andrew Price	Vice-Chair
Malcolm Aickin	Treasurer
Patricia Charlesworth	
Susan E Childs	
Geoffrey Chilkes	- resigned 16th March 2021
Richard Gray	- resigned 21st May 2021
Mary Julian	
Debra Schiman	
Bharat Siyani	

Advisor Alex Rook

Company Secretary and Executive Director Caroline Nelson

Company reg.no. 03423122

Charity reg.no. 1077287

Registered Office CHOICE IN HACKNEY
Defoe Block, Ground Floor
50 Hoxton Street
London
N1 6LP

Independent Examiner Knox Cropper LLP
65 Leadenhall Street
London
EC3A 2AD

Bankers Barclays Bank PLC
3-5 Kingsland High Street
London
E8 2JT

CHOICE IN HACKNEY
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2021

The trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of the Companies Act) present their combined directors' report and trustees' report, as required by company law, together with the financial statements of Choice in Hackney (the Charity) for the year ended 31 March 2021. The trustees confirm that the trustees' report and financial statements of the Charity comply with the current statutory requirements, the requirements of the Charity's governing document and the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

Administration Details of the Charity, its Trustees and Advisors

Administration details relating to CHOICE are set out under Legal and Administrative Information, on page 1.

Structure, Governance and Management

The Charity is a company limited by guarantee and is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association.

Trustees are recruited from members of the Charity, ex-employees and from the wider community. They are elected and co-opted under the terms of the company's Articles of Association. Users are represented on the Board of Trustees. At the Annual General Meeting, the Board of Trustees is elected by the members of the Charity and serves from the close of that meeting until the close of the succeeding Annual General Meeting. The Board of Trustees consists of not less than 3 members and until otherwise determined by a General Meeting, not more than 12 members.

The Trustees were given an induction to the work of CHOICE by the Executive Director and introduced to all staff members. The formal policies and procedures are reviewed annually. The Management of the Charity is the responsibility of the Board of Trustees. Operational decisions are taken by the Executive Director and staff. Strategic decisions are made by the Board of Trustees in consultation with the Executive Director. The Board of Trustees meets at least 4 times a year and the Executive Director normally attends all meetings.

The Trustees have assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed, and in particular, to those related to its operations and finances of the Charity, and are satisfied that systems and procedures are in place to mitigate exposure to the major risks. A review of the risk assessment was carried out by members of the Board of Trustees and the Executive Director during the year.

Public Benefit

In reviewing the Charity's aims and objectives and in planning future activities, the Trustees refer to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit.

Objectives and Activities

CHOICE has the charitable objects of working with disabled, Greater London residents by providing Independent Living Services such as: Active Lifestyle, Advocacy, Befriending Plus / Volunteering, Disability Hate Crime and Training & Employment.

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The objects of the Charity are:

- a) To relieve disabled persons in Greater London who require assistance to realise their full potential and lead fulfilling lives. In particular, by the provision of a service that assists such persons to obtain their full rights and privileges as citizens.
- b) To advance the education of the general public as to the needs and interests of disabled people. From July 2008, The Charity Commission has allowed CHOICE to operate across Greater London and the company's Memorandum has been changed accordingly.

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Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance:

In the period under review, CHOICE promoted the following services to disabled Greater London residents aged 18 plus and their networks:

- Active Lifestyle
- Advocacy
- Disability Hate Crime
- Befriending Plus / Volunteering
- Training & Employment

We achieved this by providing the following services:

a) **Active Lifestyle:**

This project was able to support more disabled people during the period thanks to short-term COVID-19-focussed funding received from City & Hackney Clinical Commissioning Group (Crisis & Recovery Grant), Wave 3 of the London Community Response Fund COVID-19 Fund and National Lottery Community Response Fund, all of which was shared with its sister project – Befriending Plus / Volunteering.

The Coronavirus pandemic and subsequent lockdown halted any activities being organised from our usual venue of the Salvation Army, Hoxton and face-to-face meetings were also suspended to prevent infection / transmission rates. This meant that our Community Volunteer Officers had to find new platforms to host our weekly Coffee Club, and exercise classes, as they were both very popular activities and during lockdown, became even more important for our service users to engage in some type of social activities for their wellbeing.

Consequently, both services were moved to the online platform, Zoom Video Conferencing. Our Coffee Club became the Online Social Group and 15 sessions were held during the period October 2020 to May 2021. One of the unseen benefits of this group was that it provided a way for service users who would ordinarily have had difficulty travelling to our venue-based Coffee Club sessions, to be able to participate in much needed social interactions from the comfort of their home. It also allowed us to host different activities such as virtual tours which was a new experience for us and really enjoyable for all. 8 online exercise classes were held during the same period, which also allowed us to reach more service users who would not have been able to travel to gyms or parks for exercise and was fully accessible to disabled people who have a range of impairments.

Many of our service users were already isolated before lockdown and faced even greater challenges during the height of the pandemic. Providing opportunities for them to connect with other disabled people was therefore invaluable to their overall health and wellbeing. Below are highlights from the survey carried out during the year:

- 77% of our service users had enjoyed the sessions;
- 75% reported improved wellbeing;
- 82% had renewed confidence; and
- 80% felt less isolated as a result of utilising our services.

**CHOICE IN HACKNEY
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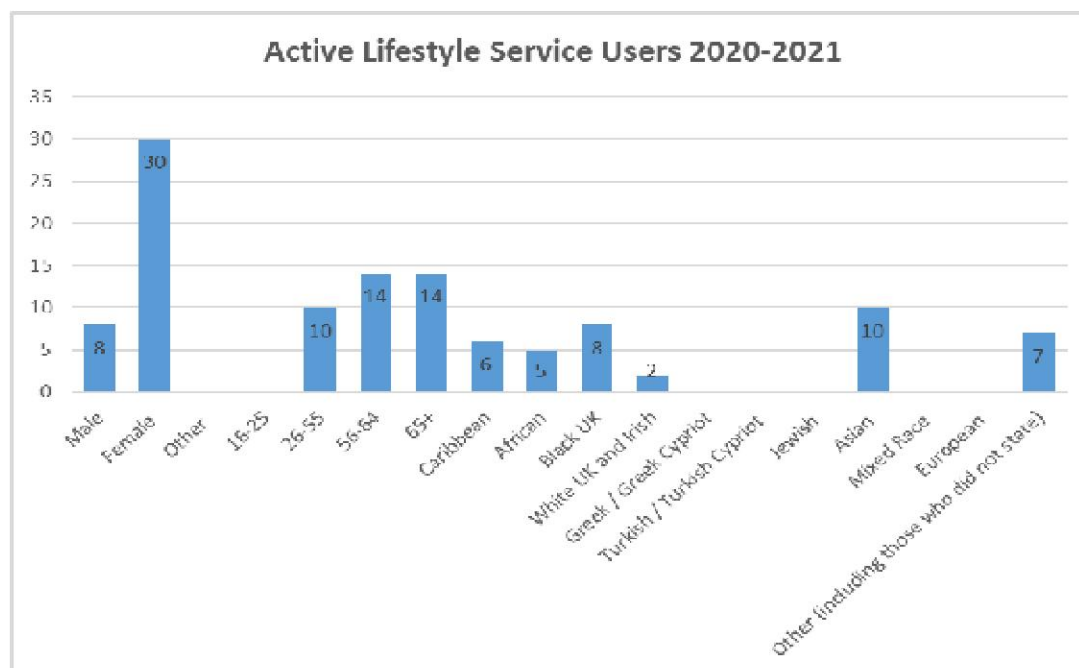
Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance continued:

a) **Active Lifestyle continued:**

The following photographs show Active Lifestyle service users (frames 1 and 2) enjoying one of the project's activities: online seated exercise sessions. They are following the instructor who is shown in frame 3 as she guides them through some gentle, low-impact exercise from the safety of their homes during the COVID-19 lockdown.



38 disabled people (15 in 2019-2020) enjoyed online activities arranged by the project and reported improved physical and mental wellbeing. The following bar chart presents statistical data for the project:



CHOICE IN HACKNEY
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Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance continued:

b) **Advocacy:**

We are pleased to have received continued funding from London Borough of Hackney via the lead provider, The Advocacy Project for our non-statutory and statutory advocacy services. We are now in our third year of these services providing much needed advocacy to disabled Hackney residents. We are also grateful to long-term funder Homerton University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust for supporting us with our health-related advocacy service.

This year has been a challenging one for our Advocacy service. The Coronavirus outbreak, which resulted in a lockdown period of several months, significantly and adversely effected our disabled service users. The impact of the pandemic resulted in an increase in service users' needs and a higher demand for Advocacy services. This was particularly the case for those requiring support around mental health, accessing services, housing and for some of our service users with Learning Disabilities, support with child protection matters.

The majority of our services users developed higher support needs as their issues are very complex. This increased complexity meant we experienced an increase in the number of service users who very quickly, became impatient. It's been difficult to manage the expectations of service users who generally want their situations resolved quickly, which is very often unrealistic. Not only were Advocates managing expectations, but also behaviours as on occasion service users became abusive towards them. It was made clear however, that this practice would not be tolerated and our staff would do everything they could to continue to support them (on the proviso that there was mutual respect).

This was made much worse by the London Borough of Hackney experiencing a severe Cyber-attack in October 2020. The consequences of the attack have continued to be detrimental to service users, severely impacting their quality of life. Core Departments such as Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit, plus the result of service users' assessments and other information have been irrecoverable. The Housing Department have been impacted as they are unable to record residents onto the Housing Register and no-one can bid for properties. Children & Families Department's Child Protection assessments have been "deleted" and social workers haven't been able to retrieve service users' information, nor could reassessments take place.

The home should be a sanctuary for us all particularly as we were all forced to spend so much time there during the lockdown. Unfortunately, there was a significant increase in cases relating to inadequate housing. For example, the lack of properties which were suitable for disabled residence due to inadequate or no adaptations, the landlord not adhering to maintenance issues or responding slowly to complaints. All of these issues resulted in our service users becoming very frustrated. Additionally, we are receiving a very low number of statutory referrals which we attribute, in part, to social workers' not understanding the criteria for when they should refer service users for advocacy support (i.e. within the remit of the Care Act).

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Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance continued:

b) Advocacy continued:

We are acutely aware that during this period, remote working presented significant challenges for some of our service users. Particularly, at the height of the pandemic, when many local services were closed and/or shifted to online delivery methods - it was extremely important to us that our service remained accessible. However, external factors proved more problematic. In particular, many of our service users complained that public health information and government guidance were inaccessible, ambiguous and too detailed for them.

For example, since March 2020 some surgeries moved their face-to-face operations to the online platform - 'Ask My GP'. This requires the user to have Internet access and the ability to complete a contact form, detailing the sensitive information they need the GP's support with. This caused difficulties for many disabled people as they:

- May not be able to read and write English;
- May have Learning Disabilities and have issues communicating their health needs;
- May have a visual impairment making it almost impossible to navigate their way around an online service;
- Don't have access to devices that can connect to the Internet; and
- Even if they have a device, they may not have the technological skills to be able to do this.

There was no equity of access under this scheme for the vulnerable adults we support as the Ask My GP service acted as a barrier to them receiving services and treatments so desperately needed during the pandemic. As a result of our advocacy interventions, we were able to book appointments online for our service users and supported them with any Information Communications Technology as necessary. Everything was fully explained in ways that were accessible and better for them to understand.

We were pleased during the period under review to have received short-term COVID-19 focussed funding from the National Emergencies Trust Disabled People's Organisation COVID-19 Fund. This funding allowed us to focus on emergency responses such as Welfare Benefits, and access to medical and social care as well employment support i.e. negotiating with employers to allow their disabled employees adequate time to shield and negotiating with Access to Work for equipment grants to facilitate home-working. We also supported more disabled people to access benefits as due to the pandemic, they were not able to access mainstream services. We assisted disabled people who were homeless to access support, as well as those who were left without personal care due to a breakdown in their care package.

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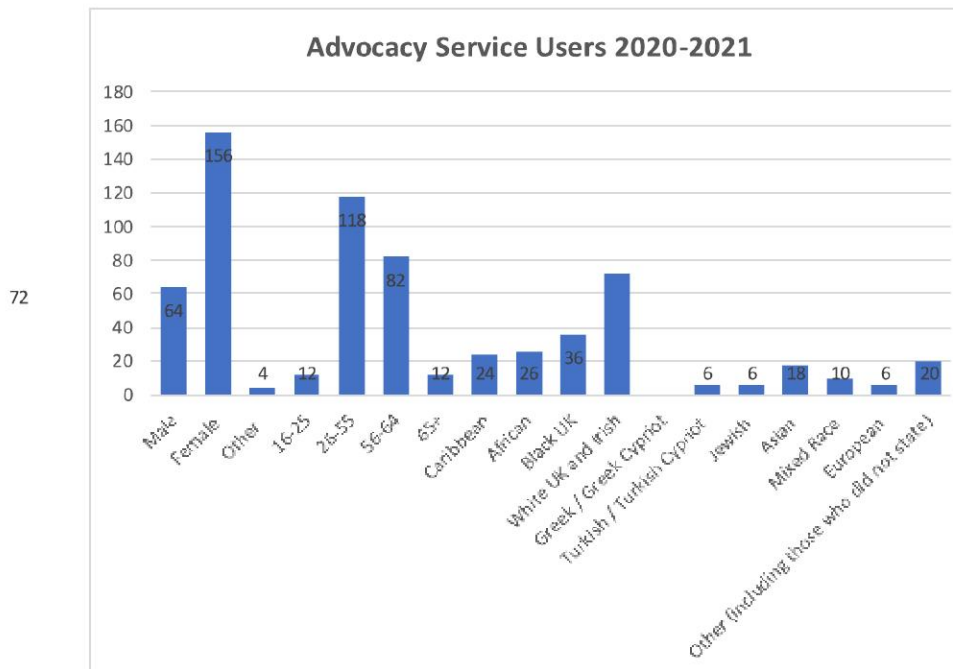
Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance continued:

b) Advocacy continued:

On the whole, we have enjoyed advocating for service users, particularly when we were able to gain positive outcomes for them. Many of them have shown appreciation for the support they've received from the Advocacy team, despite the lengthy time it takes to get a response i.e. from their Landlord and Adult Social Services.

Funding during this period allowed us to support 224 disabled people (306 in 2019-2020) with a range of Advocacy services including: welfare benefits applications, Care Packages, Health-related issues including accessing medical services. Although there is a reduction in the number of disabled people being support during the period, compared to the previous financial year, the nature of the work became much more time intensive and therefore our Advocates were able to dedicate more time to each service user, who often had multiple issues ensuring their needs were met during this very challenging period. For example, for one funder we supported 107 disabled people who had between them 190 separate issues.

The following bar chart presents statistical data for the Advocacy Project:



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Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance continued:

c) **Befriending Plus / Volunteering Project:**

The project has never experienced challenges and opportunities like those posed in the last year during the height of the Coronavirus pandemic. There have been a lot of changes however its core goal of supporting disabled Hackney residents remains the same.

Expanded service:

The Befriending Plus / Volunteering Project was able to greatly expand its size and capability this year as a response to the challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown. This was due to the high number of volunteers who were able to volunteer due to being furloughed and funding shared by its sister project - Active Lifestyle. We are also grateful to have received short-term funding from Hackney Parochial Charities and South Hackney Parochial Charity during the period.

With many services overwhelmed, closed or inaccessible, our voluntary services became invaluable to the community. However, our existing service which had previously consisted of Befriending, Gardening and Administration roles, would need to be adapted to fit this new landscape to include social distancing to reduce infection rates. Each of these volunteering roles had to be made COVID-safe in order to continue to provide our desperately needed services.

Shopping volunteers:

To meet the difficulties that many disabled people faced with obtaining shopping or medication, a Shopping Volunteer role was created. Our newly recruited volunteers would then go on to successfully support disabled people by collecting their shopping and/or medication, which was delivered to the service user's door. Our shopping service continued to be very beneficial, receiving a steady number of referrals throughout the period.

Befriending Plus:

Reducing isolation for disabled people has been the traditional target of the project, and in particular, our Befriending Plus service designed to connect service users with likeminded volunteers. The lockdown created a unique challenge, as it was now unsafe for our volunteers to meet with their service users face-to-face. Popular meeting places (i.e. in the home, restaurants, community centres) were now closed or restricted. To facilitate this change, all new and existing Befriending Plus relationships became remote, taking place via phone calls or with newly implemented online platform - Zoom Video Conferencing.

Walking friends:

A Walking Volunteer role was also developed to address the needs of service users whose usual routines and activities were disrupted due to i.e. the need to accommodate social distancing. This new service gave them a healthy activity and a volunteer to have a friendly chat with whilst also taking in some fresh air.

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Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance continued:

c) Befriending Plus / Volunteering continued:

Walking friends continued:



**A service user
(and her dog)
take in some fresh air in a local park.**

**The volunteer accompanied them
from a safe social distance
(and took this very dramatic picture!)**

Lockdown presented even greater challenges for disabled residents who were already isolated. Providing opportunities for them to connect with volunteers proved invaluable. Many reported improved wellbeing and outlook thanks to the efforts of our extraordinary volunteers, who had also identified risks which helped safeguard our vulnerable clients.

Our Gardening service became even more important, as many service users relied on the outdoor spaces closest to them for recreation and exercise – their back garden. Our gardening volunteers got to work ensuring gardens were accessible with no face-to-face contact between them and the service users to accommodate social distancing: alternative entrances were used to the back garden (avoiding walking through the service user's home) and they wore Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). They excelled themselves and performed extraordinary feats of horticulture, transforming overgrown spaces into gardens of which residents can feel proud.



The picture on the left shows the service user's inaccessible, overgrown and cluttered garden. The picture on the right shows the service user's garden after our volunteer gardener had cleared it of all clutter, removed all the weeds and prepared the soil before laying the lawn, making the outdoor space accessible and a more pleasant and inviting area.

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Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance continued:

c) **Befriending Plus / Volunteering continued:**

Administrative Volunteers:

Our previously office-based Administrative Volunteers also moved to remote working during lockdown. They have provided much needed support with correspondence, research and other tasks required by the shift to working virtually, which was challenging for the staff team and the support our volunteers provided has been essential.

Social Media Volunteers:

The Befriending Plus / Volunteering Project has also continued to shape our social media presence and with the help of our skilled social media volunteers, have greatly expanded our reach online. This will assist with ongoing fundraising efforts, which shall be a priority throughout the next period.

Referrals:

We now receive referrals from social services, the NHS, and numerous organisations throughout Hackney and the City, all of whom have really appreciated the success we have achieved with the individuals they have referred to us. This demonstrates that the value of our work is being appreciated by people beyond those we are supporting. The pandemic was a real challenge for our organisation and the community, but the strength that we've discovered as a result suggests a bright future for the project.

Feedback:

We are very heartened by the positive feedback received from both our service users and volunteers during the COVID-19 lockdown, which includes the following:

- "I am not sure how I would have gotten through the lockdown without my shopping volunteer";
- "It's been lovely to have help with my garden, and to have some companionship when everything stopped"; and from a volunteer –
- "I really enjoyed the work and look forward to doing more!"

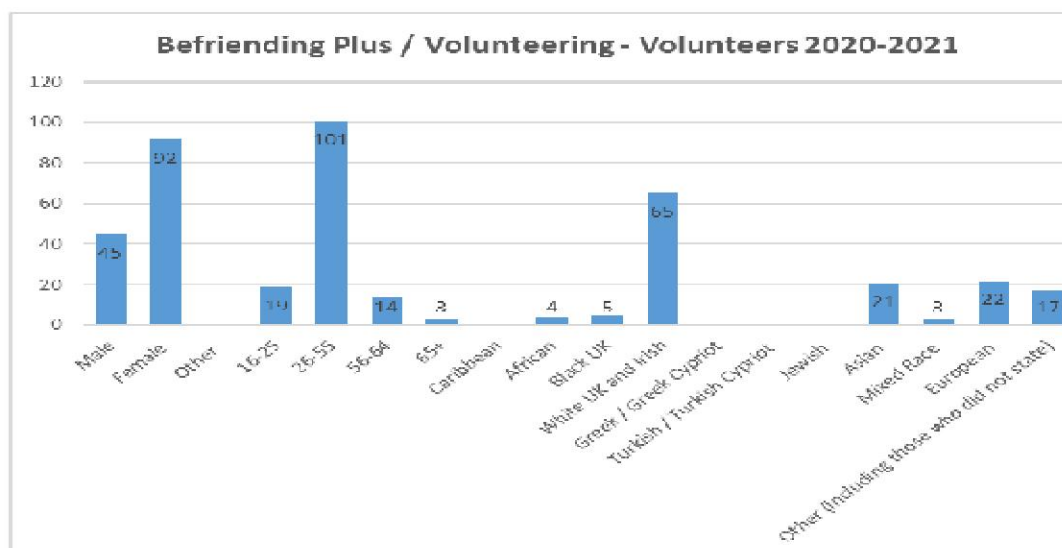
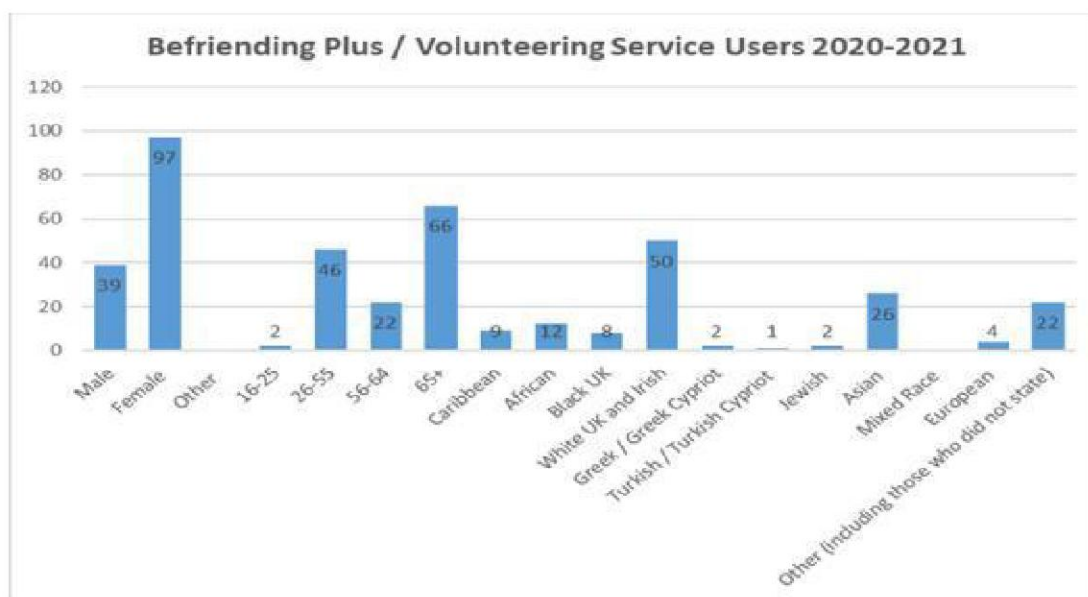
We are grateful for all of the 137 volunteers (45 in 2019-2020) who joined us during the last year to support 136 service users (46 in 2019-2020).

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Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance continued:

c) **Befriending Plus / Volunteering continued:**

The following bar charts presents statistical data for the Befriending Plus / Volunteering Project:



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Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance continued:

d) Disability Hate Crime:

The organisation continues its role within a consortium funded by the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) entitled "Community Alliance To Combat Hate" (CATCH). This advocacy hate crime project is now in its sixth year working in partnership with a network of community organisations specialising in supporting people who have experienced a hate crime due to their: race, faith / religion, sexual orientation (including attacks based on homophobia and transphobia) and/or disability.

CATCH partners work to tackle hate crime, discrimination and abuse within the protected characteristic equality strands. Whilst we all have our own individual specialisms, we often come together to work inter-sectionally or make referrals to network organisations within the partnership. We also work very closely with the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and they have also been the source of many referrals during the period.

Our hate crime advocates will identify the support needs of individuals and enable them to access other services and also:

- Assist with reporting incidents;
- Support individuals through criminal justice processes;
- Deliver outreach to communities impacted by hate crime to promote the service; and
- Share good practice internally within the partnership.

Disability hate crime during the period rose steadily with many of our service users reporting that lockdown increased hostilities – being shouted at to remain inside the home where they belonged, pushed and shoved out of the way during panic buying sessions were just a few of the incidents that we offered support with during the period under review. More worryingly, we also gave support to survivors of hate crime and/or domestic violence where perpetrators are neighbours or within the home (where they were told to remain). We were pleased to be able to bring this service online in order to quickly meet demand.

At the time of writing, we can inform you that our funder, MOPAC and the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) have invited CHOICE IN HACKNEY (as a stakeholder) to engage in a new, independent Hate Crime Stakeholder Reference Group. The group will act as a voice for the hate crime sector and work with MOPAC and MPS governance structures to help shape how they meet the challenge of hate crime in London. These types of engagements have proved very rewarding in the past and we look forward to playing our part in tackling hate crime in London going forward.

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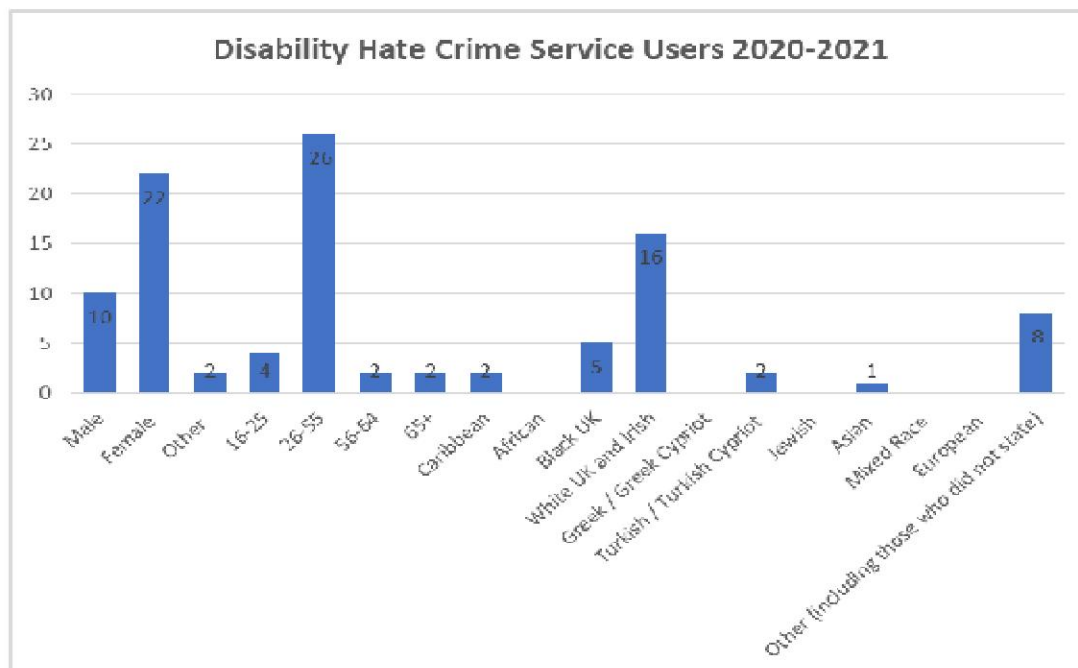
Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance continued:

d) Disability Hate Crime continued:

We are also very pleased to be able to inform you that after a tendering process, our existing partnership has been awarded a new contract with MOPAC for 2-years with the potential for an additional 2-year extension from 1st October 2021. Existing funding allowed us to support 34 disabled people (36 in 2019-2020).

Although this figure is lower than the previous year, there was more time spent on multiple service users issues during the pandemic, which was partly due to the service being moved online and additional support being provided to accommodate service users impairments in relation to ensuring their access needs were also met. Our catchment area was extended to include working with disabled people in Hillingdon and Surrey to name but a few locations. As these areas are very far from our base in Hackney, substantial travel time was also a contributing factor to the reduced numbers. There is also a waiting list for this service. At the time of writing, we successfully applied for funding from London Community Response Fund – Wave 5, which will support us to recruit an additional part-time hate crime worker to meet demand.

The following bar chart presents statistical data for the Hate Crime Project:



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Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance continued:

e) **Training & Employment Department:**

The Training & Employment Dept (TED) has grown considerably this year in spite of the uniquely difficult circumstances that the Coronavirus pandemic brought with it. Thanks to three-year's funding (July 2019 – June 2022) from the Henry Smith Charity, the core project, Choices into Work (formerly known as the Advocacy Training & Employment course), has not only grown in capacity and capability, but is now supplemented with new training courses and programmes due to an additional one-year's COVID-19-related funding received from the Henry Smith Charity – Community Match Challenge. We are better suited than ever to support disabled people into meaningful work.

Choices into Work programme:

The pandemic and resulting lockdown completely changed the training course. We were no longer able to host trainees in a training venue, nor facilitate physical placements from the CHOICE office. This had the potential to end all of our activities. Instead, we successfully transitioned the project to a digital platform and in so doing made the course accessible to a wide range of trainees from around the United Kingdom. This includes those who would have been unable to travel to a venue (particularly one located in London). We've also been able to accommodate more placements virtually at CHOICE, ensuring none of our trainees missed out on the full experience of the Choices into Work course.

The solution is not perfect however, and we have experienced new issues around accessibility such as the provision of training materials being delivered online. We are able to accommodate these access issues by providing printed material (slides etc) to those trainees who require them.

Despite the challenges of the Coronavirus pandemic, we are pleased to report that the course has once again exceeded its targets and supported another 32 disabled people on their journey into work, 11 of whom have now gained employment. The continued popularity of the course and its enduring success demonstrates the great need for it amongst disabled people. At the time of writing, restrictions are being lifted, and it is hoped that we shall be able to adopt a blended approach to training that will allow us to deliver the training via both face-to-face and virtual methods - reaching more disabled people than ever.

We have also successfully gained accreditation at Level 4 of the National Qualifications Framework, from our accreditors, Open College Network Credit4Learning. This involved us in designing new modules, units, and assessment frameworks. This allows us to award qualifying trainees with a new standard of certificate – Diploma level, which reflects their capabilities. Level 4 candidates represent the most accomplished of our trainees and the certificate shall assist them to find work.

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Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance continued:

e) Training & Employment Dept continued:

The coaching programme continued with our Work Experience Coach providing invaluable coaching to our trainees and beneficiaries and the Advocacy Training & Employment Coordinator, engaged some trainees in Confidence Building sessions. We are very pleased to be able to continue to offer these services to those trainees most in need of them as we have seen the way the coaching service transforms lives with the application of patience, understanding and encouragement.

Another great success of the last year has been the start of the Job Club – held three times a month, with several sessions held throughout each month. Some of the topics of these sessions have focussed on practical advice on disability employment issues. We've covered everything from finding and applying for work to challenging discrimination in the workplace and supporting clients with challenging behaviour. We now have over 20 presentations on numerous topics that can be utilised for future training.

In the next year we plan to deliver our 40th Choices into Work course. It's been an eventful and challenging year, but the project has grown considerably and is now better placed than ever to tackle the complex issues that prevent disabled people from finding meaningful employment. We are in the process of becoming a One Stop Shop for the employment needs of disabled people in London and beyond.

We are pleased to report the following achievements of former trainees over the period:

- 11 trainees gained employment / self-employment;
- 11 trainees are undertaking Volunteering / Placement roles;
- 5 withdrew due to health issues;
- 3 trainees have gone on to further education; and
- 2 trainees are exploring their options.

The following highlights the survey results undertaken in the year:

- 27 trainees confirmed they had increased confidence;
- 26 had gained the ability to look for work;
- 30 trainees gained new skills;
- 30 trainees had improved their awareness of disability; and
- 26 had improved their welling.

Some of the positive feedback we received from trainees during the period includes:

- "This course has been fascinating and I am so grateful it has given me focus";
- *"Following the training, I am ready to get into the professional experience with their Coaching, weekly Job Club and Mentoring schemes"*

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Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance continued:

e) Training & Employment Dept continued:

Job Coaching:

Thanks to additional one-year's COVID-19-related funding received from the Henry Smith Charity – Community Match Challenge we were able to expand our training offer to include coaching sessions with our Work Experience Coach. These sessions included providing disabled people with employability coaching, combined with wellbeing sessions which resulted in a holistic approach to job-hunting that would enhance their perspective of themselves. It also challenged them both professionally and personally: empowering them to make adjustments in their lives to meet their goals. This dynamic approach had a very positive impact on attendees and some of their positive feedback can be found later on in this report.

Our current coaching system offers 6 one-to-one sessions for every individual in need of employability coaching. Sessions include: job search, interview preparation, confidence building, job retention, self-employment, wellbeing and general career development. Each session includes components such as time management, how to cultivate existing skills, goal setting and changing mindsets to progress on the employability ladder. Due to the lockdown, these sessions were held via the phone, email and for the most part on Zoom Video Conferencing.

The overall aim for job coaching is to find employment, which is the best outcome. The most satisfying outcomes are witnessing improvements in attendees productivity and being motivated to adapt a new mindset that will make their employability journey less stressful and more enjoyable. Part of job seeker coaching also requires, CV update sessions and confidence building, which every attendee received during the period.

Due to the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic and the UK-wide lockdown, a decision was made to merge wellbeing with employability sessions because some trainees were experiencing mental health issues due to being isolated. These wellbeing sessions proved very popular as it allowed attendees to identify their needs, prioritise their mental health, and make positive decisions about their lifestyle. During the 6 sessions, 3 attendees were advised to seek counselling and access support within their employment to help them feel valued and appreciated.

Feedback:

We are very proud to have received the following feedback:

- *"I am willing to work with your Work Experience Coach, after her presentation during the Choices into Work course"*
- *"She did a great job with me!"*
- *"She helped me to implement positive changes and she motivates me"*
- *"I have a new business plan to refer to and I have learned how to set up a timeline with steps and actions to follow through"*
- *"I have got a new job and start in November – I couldn't have done it without you and our chats – you have been brilliant!"*

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Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance continued:

e) Training & Employment Dept continued:

Job Club:

Thanks to funding that arrived late in the year (December 2020), we were able to support an additional 15 disabled people with a Job Club. These sessions provided an arena for disabled people to engage in facilitated group sessions, which had an emphasis on safety, confidentiality and respect.

Sessions were held at least 3 times a month and improved opportunities for those being coached to meet each other, network, share resources and learn from each other to awaken dormant skills and knowledge. Popular sessions have been on topics such as: Professional development; Managing wellbeing within the workplace; Working in the third sector; and How to get the most out of volunteering. The sessions feature seminars, activities, guided discussions, role-plays, and guest speakers and are fully customised to suit the attendees needs.

We have also been able to offer one-to-one coaching from our Job Coach and/or Advocacy Training & Employment Co-ordinator. These sessions benefited 11 people who received support with setting job goals, discussing and overcoming barriers into work, and visualising the changes they want to make in their lives.

Mentoring:

We have also provided 26 mentoring sessions to disabled people which has engaged 17 trainees in the funded period. One of our highly experienced Disability Rights Advocates has provided them with valuable experience and skills in disability advocacy. Lockdown had caused former host organisations to stop taking on our trainees as they were closed or had furloughed their staff. This meant that CHOICE became the primary (and sole) host for trainees who had completed the virtual classroom-based element of the Choices into Work course. Trainees were engaged in delivering a high quality advocacy service by taking on light casework before progressing to more complex ones. Between them they supported 32 service users to i.e. obtain benefits and services needed to help them live independently.

Equipment:

We were pleased to be able to use part of our funding from Henry Smith Charity – Community Match Challenge to purchase laptops, tablets and mobile phones for trainees who were being coached and mentored. This allowed them to engage with our services, service users and take the first steps towards creating a new business or begin a career – all from the comfort of their home.

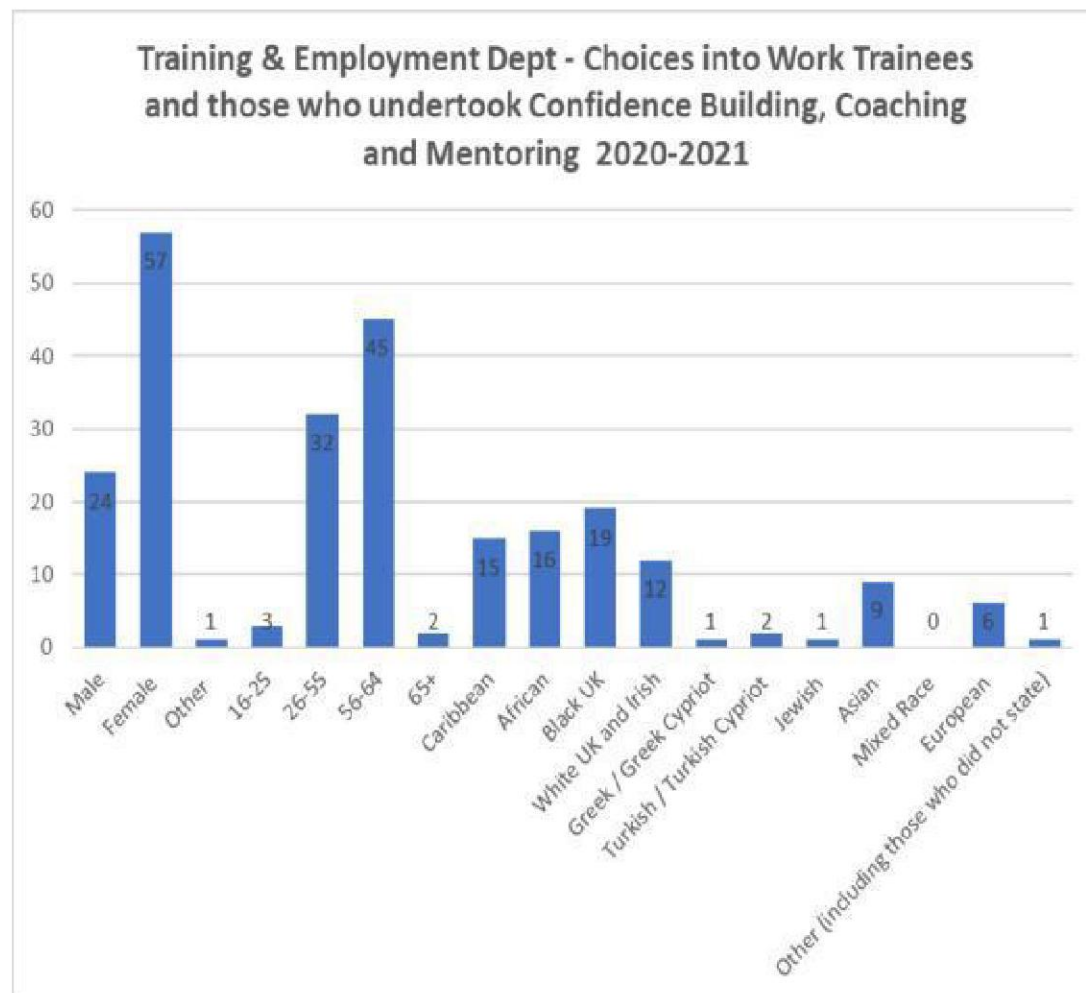
CHOICE IN HACKNEY
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2021

Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance continued:

e) Training & Employment Dept continued:

During the period under review, 3 Choices into Work training programmes were carried out for 32 disabled people (34 in 2019-2020). Overall, there were 82 beneficiaries of the services available with the Training & Employment Dept including: Confidence Building, Coaching and Mentoring sessions.

The following bar chart presents statistical data for the Choices into Work Project:



CHOICE IN HACKNEY
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2021

Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance continued:

e) **Training & Employment Dept continued:**

Specialist Training Programmes – Domestic Violence and Hate Crime:

We are grateful to Lloyds Bank Foundation for England & Wales for providing 3-years part-time funding towards our specialist training programmes of Domestic Violence and Hate Crime.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the UK-wide lockdown significantly impacted the recruitment processes and start dates for both of these specialist training programmes. Despite a thorough recruitment process, we were only able to recruit one Domestic Violence Trainer and are having to again restart the process to recruit a Hate Crime Trainer.

Domestic Violence programme:

From experience, we know that online training delivery methods (as opposed to our traditional face-to-face methods) take longer and more time was needed to prepare a syllabus that met the accrediting bodies standards. The trainer then prepared and delivered accessible training sessions within the continuing lockdown situation. Consequently, we consider it prudent to plan for up to 3 sessions in Year 2 to make up for this year's shortfall.

The main successes of the work funded by the grant over the last year are as follows:

Specialist Trainer Recruitment:

We were able to recruit a highly skilled, disabled trainer who has many years' paid work experience of domestic violence advocacy and who is also a fully qualified Home Office accredited Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy (IDVA) Advisor.

The Domestic Violence Trainer quickly planned the syllabus, delivered and co-ordinated 1 rolling programme of specialist domestic violence training, ensuring it met the requirements of the accrediting body: Open College Network Credit4Learning (OCN).

The trainer then went on to:

Recruit and enrol trainees:

10 disabled people with a range of impairments were recruited onto the initial training session with the aim of developing their knowledge and skills and halving the number of high-risk victims of domestic abuse and the amount of time it takes for victims to get effective help. These trainees studied a wide scope of training topics and have broadened their employment opportunities.

We were surprised and pleased by the response to our training publicity but realised the training was addressing a need that was very much in demand throughout the UK-wide lockdown.

CHOICE IN HACKNEY
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2021

Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance continued:

e) Training & Employment Dept continued:

Successful completion of course:

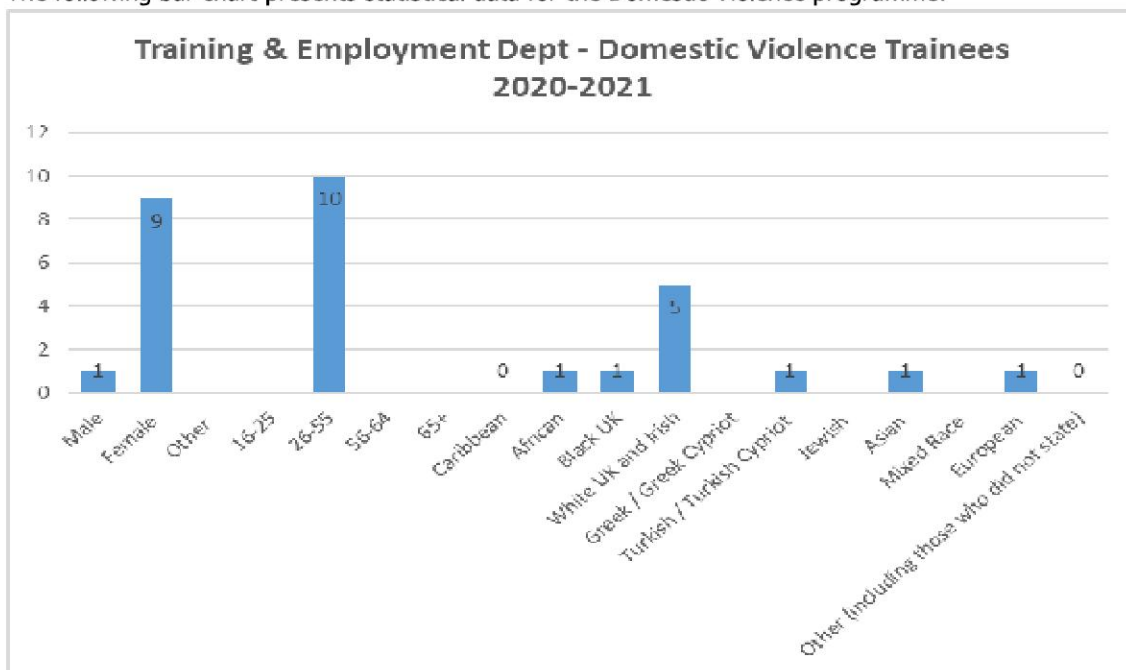
8 trainees successfully completed the course, and 6 are about to undertake their work placements.

As the subject matter (domestic abuse) is very sensitive and trainees (including some who may be survivors of domestic violence themselves) would be expected to undertake the training in the home still shared with the perpetrator of abuse, we were concerned that the number of trainees who went on to complete the course or undertake their work placements would be low. However, we consider 8 (of the initial 10 trainees enrolled) to have completed the training and 6 (out of 8 trainees) who are about to undertake their work placements as a success in what are very uncertain and challenging times for everybody.

Hate crime training programme:

In relation to the hate crime training as we are an established training academy for OCN and have experience of compiling other accredited programmes, we are hopeful that the Level 4 Diploma will be achieved within a limited time period. During the period under review, the specialist Domestic Violence programme engaged 10 disabled people.

The following bar chart presents statistical data for the Domestic Violence programme:



CHOICE IN HACKNEY
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2021

Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance continued:

f) Partnership working:

Partnership working allows us to reach out to more disabled people. We aim to raise awareness of the services that we provide within an expanded community. This will secure the rights of disabled people as full citizens, improve their quality of life and promote an inclusive society where disabled people can participate fully and equally. We are pleased to continually expand and strengthen our network of organisations who are open to reciprocal working, which encourages sharing a lived experience of disability, knowledge, training opportunities, services, a loyal customer base as well as joining together to strengthen consortium-based funding applications.

Our network of organisations includes (but is not limited to):

- i) Department for Work & Pensions – who continue to provide our Choices into Work project with guest speakers during the classroom-based element of the course on topics such as Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payments. The benefit of this is that trainees receive up to date information direct from the source on benefit entitlements for themselves and also for the disabled people who they will be advocating for;
- ii) Disability Action in Islington and Hackney Employment Hub – these two organisations have provided us with both accessible training venues in the past for the classroom-based element of the Choices into Work project and trainees wanting to upskill and improve their employment prospects by undertaking the course;
- iii) Alliance for Inclusive Education (ALLFIE) – have provided us with co-training opportunities to schools on the needs of children and young adults who attend special educational needs (SEND) establishments;
- iv) Community Alliance to Combat Hate (CATCH) – this consortium led by the Gay London Police Monitoring Group (Galop) regularly make referrals into our disability hate crime service. We also carry out joint-working with partner organisations Stay Safe East and Real Tower Hamlets.
- v) Salvation Army, Hoxton – as well as providing an accessible venue for our Active Lifestyle Project's weekly Coffee Club sessions, we also share service users who engage in seated exercise sessions to improve health and wellbeing of disabled people.
- vi) The Advocacy Project (TAP) – as the lead organisation for both statutory and non-statutory advocacy, which is funded by London Borough of Hackney, TAP regularly make referrals into the service and offer our advocates training opportunities throughout the year.

CHOICE IN HACKNEY
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2021

Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance continued:

f) **Partnership working continued:**

- vii) Inclusion London – this pan-London disability-related organisation provided us with a range of training programmes to build our skills, knowledge and sustainability throughout the year.

g) **Quality marks:**

i) **Trusted Charity:**

At the time of writing, we can confirm that the organisation successfully completed its reassessment process and therefore continues to be recognised as a “Trusted Charity” giving us real credibility and recognition as a small third-sector charity. This award was quality assessed by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) in the summer of 2021.



ii) **Open College Network Credit4Learning (OCN):**

We are pleased to confirm that following negotiations with the Open College Network Credit4Learning (OCN), they have agreed to accredit two programmes within the Training & Employment Dept. This means that all of our hard work in outlining and then providing OCN with detailed course modules for the Disability and Domestic Violence plus the Hate Crime components of the Training & Employment Dept have now been awarded a Level 4 Diploma. Our trainees undertaking the two modules will be able to receive an accredited certificate from OCN, which displays their logo.



h) **Impact of COVID-19 on the organisation:**

The Coronavirus pandemic and the resulting UK-wide lockdown had caused a great deal of disruption to many disabled people and the organisations they rely on to support them. No amount of planning could have prepared us for what was a very challenging situation since our organisational and business plans do not include a section on “What to do in the event of a pandemic!”

The Trustees however, did quickly introduce a stand-alone COVID-19 Risk Assessment during the year, which includes robust procedures and processes that our team followed to mitigate against i.e. infection risks. The document forms part of an arsenal of strategic planning that contribute towards making CHOICE IN HACKNEY (CHOICE) a stronger organisation, capable of tackling such issues head on.

CHOICE is well-known amongst disabled people and during the pandemic, they were disproportionately impacted when threats of social isolation and reduced physical and mental wellbeing were exacerbated. Challenges of disruption to daily routines caused greater anxiety and was linked to collapsing support networks and the strain on local services (particularly in Hackney, which had also undergone a Cyber-attack in the year).

CHOICE IN HACKNEY
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2021

Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance continued:

h) Impact of COVID-19 on the organisation continued:

We are very pleased to have been able to quickly move our services from face-to-face to online delivery methods, and successfully applied for short-term COVID-19 emergency funding. This allowed us to expand our existing services particularly those that had limited eligibility i.e. Advocacy. For example, we were able to meet some of the shortfall by advocating during telephone or online welfare benefit reassessments and/or requesting a review or appeal with greater success rates. Our Active Lifestyle / Volunteering Projects were also adapted to include a food and medication drop-off service, online exercise and group sessions and socially distanced gardening and a walking friends services. All of which reinstated order and social inclusion into the lives of disabled people who were previously left isolated and afraid without adequate support.

The Training & Employment Dept moved online with CHOICE becoming the sole host for many of its trainees undertaking their work placements. Additional confidence building, mentoring and coaching kept disabled people motivated and focussed on goals with equipment (i.e. laptops, tablets) being loaned to trainees as necessary. Our Disability Hate Crime service users reported lockdown increased hostilities particularly, for survivors of hate crime and/or domestic violence where perpetrators are neighbours or within the home (where they were told to remain). This service was brought online and advertised internally to ensure greater take up.

These adaptations accommodated the changing needs of disabled people amidst the pandemic and (subject to funding) will continue beyond 2022 particularly as the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment of Hackney states: "the number of people with disabilities is going to increase by 36% in Hackney by 2035". Also, "national evidence suggests people with physical disabilities experience significantly higher unmet need accessing healthcare". (Estimated to be 7,000 disabled adults in Hackney)¹.

Whilst these figures were pre-pandemic (in 2019), we expect take-up of our services to at least quadruple over the coming years as many more people will experience the disabling effects of long-COVID. At the time of writing, we are in the process of a vigorous fundraising procedure to ensure that we are able to meet the growing needs of disabled people now and into the future.

We are grateful to our Trustees who worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic – often going above and beyond what was expected of them to ensure their strategic responsibilities were met. Meetings continued to be delivered online via Zoom Video Conferencing and were well attended as a result. Throughout the year 10 meetings (as opposed to the usual 6) were held – a demonstration of the Trustees' commitment to ensuring the organisation was able to continue its services to a high standard throughout the pandemic.

¹ <https://hackneyjsna.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Physical-disability.pdf>

CHOICE IN HACKNEY
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2021

i) **Funders:**

In the year under review, CHOICE IN HACKNEY received funding from:

1. Homerton University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust – to provide health advocacy to disabled residents of Hackney and the City of London aged 18 plus.
2. London Borough of Hackney via The Advocacy Project (TAP) to provide a:
 - i) non-statutory advocacy service to disabled and vulnerable Hackney adults who are known to Adult Social Care teams, un-befriended, unable to speak up for themselves and require support with a specific advocacy issue; and
 - ii) statutory advocacy service to disabled Hackney residents who have care/support needs, substantial difficulty in being involved in the relevant processes and have no appropriate unpaid individual to support them.
3. Henry Smith Charity – funding towards the Choices into Work project (part of the Training & Employment Dept), which provides classroom-based advocacy training, work placements and job search skills. Additional coaching and mentoring support are also funded.
4. Henry Smith Charity Community Match Challenge – to provide a Job-Club, which includes mentoring and coaching support to disabled people wanting to find work.
5. Lloyds Bank Foundation for England & Wales - to provide specialist accredited training in hate crime and/or domestic violence with extended work placements allowing trainees to gain in-depth knowledge of their chosen specialism.
6. Lloyds Bank Foundation for England & Wales COVID-19 REACT fund – funding towards the Choices into Work Project for additional mentoring work placements to support us in our sole role as host organisation for trainees during the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown.
7. Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime – to provide disability hate crime advocacy to disabled people who live or work in Hackney and surrounding boroughs.
8. Hackney Parochial Charities – to provide a Befriending Plus / Volunteering service in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
9. City & Hackney Clinical Commissioning Group – to provide crisis and recovery support to disabled residents of Hackney and the City of London who engage in our Active Lifestyle Project.

**CHOICE IN HACKNEY
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2021**

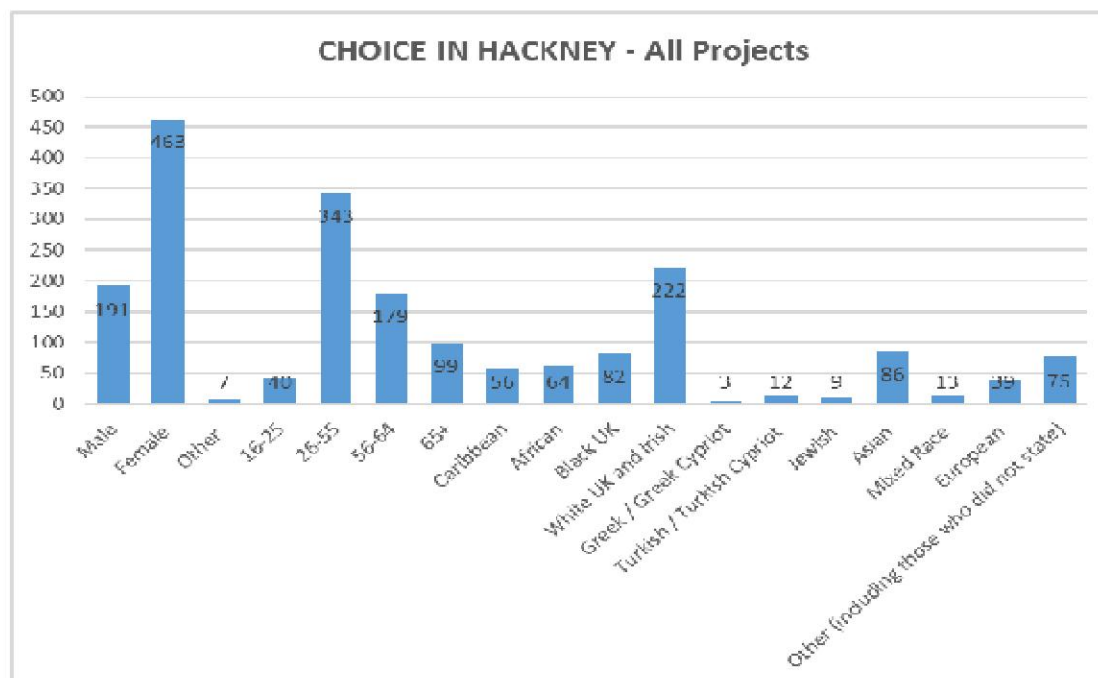
Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance continued:

i) **Funders continued:**

10. London Community Response Fund – COVID-19 Response Fund (Wave 3) – part-funding towards our virtual Active Lifestyle / Befriending Plus service.
11. National Emergencies Trust – DPO COVID-19 Fund - to provide supplementary Advocacy services to disabled people during the pandemic.
12. National Lottery – Community Response Fund - to provide support to disabled people within our Active Lifestyle / Befriending Plus service.
13. South Hackney Parochial Charity – to provide a remote Befriending Plus service during the pandemic.

The level of funding in the year allowed CHOICE IN HACKNEY to support a total of 661 disabled people (482 in 2019-2020). This figure does not include people who indirectly utilised our services, which includes professionals, friends, family and the general public. Were these groups of people to be included, this figure of 661 would have tripled.

The breakdown of service users supported for all projects is as follows:



CHOICE IN HACKNEY
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2021

Financial Review:

The total results of the year's operations are set out in the attached financial statements. Total incoming resources amounted to £301,958 (2020: £201,715) (2019: £170,725) and total resources expended amounted to £255,255 (2020: £213,939) (2019: £187,504). The net inflow of funds for the year amounted to £46,703 (2020: net outflow £12,224) (2019: net outflow of £16,779).

The company made an unrestricted fund surplus for the year of £20,132 (2020: deficit £8,805) (2019: deficit £13,244) and made a restricted funds surplus for the year of £26,571 (2020: deficit £3,419) (2019: surplus £3,535). Please see note 11 of the financial statements for further information on the restricted funds carried forward.

Risk:

It has become clear during the pandemic that the most significant risk faced by the Charity lies in its reliance on the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for both administration and management of service delivery. The Board of Trustees are therefore reviewing the organisational structure to provide greater administrative support for the CEO and increase the capacity for organisational and service growth so that the charity can maintain sufficient funding to provide for the needs of its service users.

CHOICE remains committed to the ideals of a Disability User Led Organisation. This too presents its own risks in a period of financial austerity. In particular, that the costs of Reasonable Adjustments are no longer fully covered by Access to Work. This would raise unit costs of services and potentially make CHOICE less competitive than other providers. As a result, our business models and funding bids need to articulate the added value created by employment of disabled staff. We will work with others such as Inclusion London, to campaign for Access to Work to cover full costs.

COVID-19 Pandemic:

COVID-19 had direct impact on the Charity's Activities. This created challenges. Some cases dealt with in the Advocacy and Hate Crime projects became more complicated and difficult, this was exacerbated by the precautions of remote working to keep our staff, volunteers and service users safe. In consequence, little use was made of our office space within New City College (NCC) Hackney Campus and, as reported last year, we did not meet our targets for Advocacy work. Income was below budget and there was a danger that we would be unable to meet the full rent for the office space in NCC. Fortunately, we were able to raise specific funding from the Mayor of London's Community Spaces at Risk to cover these costs.

However, the deleterious effect COVID-19 had on our service users also created opportunities for new funding and areas of work. We raised funding for new activities to address some of these COVID-related needs. We were also able to explore new means of service delivery, our recent Trusted Charity Mark assessment referred to the unusual, innovative and effective use of technology such as: Face Time, Skype, Teams, WhatsApp, and Zoom Video Conferencing to provide for service users' needs.

CHOICE IN HACKNEY
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2021

COVID-19 Pandemic continued:

Our Training & Employment Dept's Choices into Work programme, successfully delivered its whole course through distance learning online. Not only were excellent results delivered but also online delivery attracted participants from a much wider catchment area. As a result, CHOICE closed the year not only in stronger shape financially, as the Financial Review demonstrates, but as a charity with a wider range of activities and skills.

Reserves Policy:

The Charity sets aside funds, as unrestricted reserves, to meet future anticipated or contingent expenditure, in particular to cover staffing costs such as sickness, redundancy, to develop new activities and to ensure the continuity of services through difficult financial periods. The Board of Trustees, after review, decided that the Charity should aim for a level of the "free reserves", of between 3 and 9 months recurrent expenditure, which equates to approximately £50,000 - £150,000.

As in previous years we have made use of Reserves to maintain existing and to develop new services. Not only have we been able to develop new services, as described above, through the pandemic, but also to attract new funding to support these activities. As a result, the tangible assets ("free reserves") have increased and at the year-end amounted to £40,440 (2020: £20,308) (2019 : £29,113). While this is below the desired level, the Trustees realise the success of the hard work and innovation the Charity has achieved through the difficult circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic.

CHOICE IN HACKNEY
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2021

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The trustees (who are also the directors of Choice in Hackney for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Report of the Trustees and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), including Financial Reporting Standard 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland".

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

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- observe the methods and principles in the Charity SORP
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the 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 information of which the charitable company's examiners are unaware; and
- the trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant information and to establish that the examiners are aware of that information.

The independent examiner, Knox Cropper, will be proposed for re-appointment at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

APPROVAL

This report was approved by the Board of Directors and Trustees on 2 December 2021 and signed on their behalf by:

.....
 Sandra Rennie (Chair)



INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT
TO THE MEMBERS OF CHOICE IN HACKNEY

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Choice in Hackney for the period ended 31 March 2021.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the charitable company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act'). You are satisfied that the accounts of the Company are not required by charity or company law to be audited and have chosen instead to have an independent examination.

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

Independent examiner's statement

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

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

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

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



Kevin Lally
Knox Cropper LLP
Chartered Accountants
65-68 Leadenhall Street, London, EC3A 2AD

Date: 2 December 2021

CHOICE IN HACKNEY

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
(INCORPORATING THE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2021

	Notes	Restricted Funds £	Unrestricted Funds £	Total 2021 £	Restricted Funds £	Unrestricted Funds £	Total 2020 £
INCOME FROM:							
Grants and donations	2(a)	180,096	39,236	219,332	81,130	24,895	106,025
Charitable activities	2(b)	1,250	80,997	82,247	-	95,599	95,599
Other trading activities		-	-	-	-	-	-
Investments		-	12	12	-	91	91
Other income		-	367	367	-	-	-
Total		181,346	120,612	301,958	81,130	120,585	201,715
EXPENDITURE ON:							
Raising funds	3	-	7,717	7,717	-	9,940	9,940
Charitable activities	3	154,775	92,763	247,538	84,549	119,450	203,999
Total		154,775	100,480	255,255	84,549	129,390	213,939
Net income/(expenditure)		26,571	20,132	46,703	(3,419)	(8,805)	(12,224)
Transfers between funds		-	-	-	-	-	-
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		26,571	20,132	46,703	(3,419)	(8,805)	(12,224)
Balances brought forward at 1 April		14,079	20,308	34,387	17,498	29,113	46,611
BALANCES CARRIED FORWARD		40,650	40,440	81,090	14,079	20,308	34,387
AT 31 MARCH							

All income and expenditure has arisen from continuing activities.

CHOICE IN HACKNEY**BALANCE SHEET****AS AT 31st MARCH 2021**

	Notes	2021	2020
		£	£
FIXED ASSETS	7	-	-
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors	8	49,147	29,532
Cash at Bank and in hand		61,044	20,342
		<u>110,191</u>	<u>49,874</u>
CREDITORS: Amounts falling due within one year	9	<u>(29,101)</u>	<u>(15,487)</u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS		81,090	34,387
NET ASSETS		<u>81,090</u>	<u>34,387</u>
FUNDS			
Restricted Funds	11	40,650	14,079
Unrestricted Funds			
Designated Funds		-	-
General Fund	10	40,440	20,308
		<u>81,090</u>	<u>34,387</u>

The Company is exempt from the requirements relating to preparing audited accounts in accordance with Section 477 of the Companies Act 2006. The members have not required the Company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for:

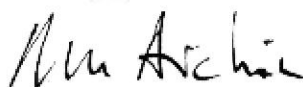
- ensuring that the company keeps accounting records which comply with sections 386 and 387 of the Companies Act 2006 and;
- preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company as at the end of each financial year and of its profit or loss for each financial year in accordance with the requirements of sections 394 and 395 and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the company.

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees on 2 December 2021 and signed on behalf of the board

Chair: Sandra Rennie



Treasurer: Malcolm Aickin



Registered Company Number: 03423122

Registered Charity Number: 1077287

CHOICE IN HACKNEY**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS****FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2021****1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES****a. Basis of Preparation of Accounts**

The financial statements of the charitable company, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) '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), Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Companies Act 2006. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

b. Company Status

CHOICE IN HACKNEY is a company limited by guarantee. In the event of the Charity being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per member of the Charity.

c. Fund Accounting

General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the objects of the Charity 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 Charity for particular purposes. The aim and use of each restricted fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements. Statutory grants which are given as contributions towards the Charity's core services are treated as unrestricted.

d. Incoming resources

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.

e. Resources expended

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been included under expenses categories that aggregate all costs for allocation to activities. Governance costs include the costs of servicing meetings of the Board of Trustees, independent examination and strategic planning.

f. Tangible Fixed Assets and Depreciation

All assets costing more than £1,000 are capitalised.

Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost less depreciation. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the costs of fixed assets, less their estimated residual value, over their expected useful lives on:

Furniture/Fittings: 25% straight line basis

Office Equipment: 25% straight line basis

CHOICE IN HACKNEY
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (Continued)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2021

g. **Allocation of Overhead and Support Costs**

Overhead and support costs have been allocated between charitable activities and other expenditure on the basis of staff time. The allocation of overhead and support costs is analysed in note 3.

h. **Operating Leases**

Rentals payable under operating leases are charged to the statement of financial activities as they fall due over the term of the lease.

2(a). **INCOMING RESOURCES FROM GENERATED FUNDS**

- **Grants received**

	Restricted Funds	2021 Un- Restricted Funds	Total	2020 Total
	£	£	£	£
The Henry Smith Charity	93,300	-	93,300	29,000
Lloyds Bank Foundation	7,545	-	7,545	24,800
CATCH Mobilisation	22,204	-	22,204	17,083
South Hackney Parochial	2,500	-	2,500	-
Hackney Parochial Charities	2,500	-	2,500	-
Access to Work	-	18,998	18,998	22,950
London Community Response Fund	19,703	-	19,703	-
National Lottery	19,464	-	19,464	-
City & Hackney Clinical Commissioning Group	12,880	-	12,880	-
National Emergency Fund	-	5,990	5,990	-
The Mayor's Community Spaces	-	13,600	13,600	-
Beneficiaries income	-	431	431	1,308
Other income and Donations	-	217	217	967
Allen & Overy Foundation	-	-	-	9,917
	<u>180,096</u>	<u>39,236</u>	<u>219,332</u>	<u>106,025</u>

2(b). **INCOMING RESOURCES FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES**

- **Contracts for services and performance related grants**

	Restricted Funds	2021 Un- Restricted Funds	Total	2020 Total
	£	£	£	£
Homerton University Hospital – Advocacy	-	45,802	45,802	45,802
The Advocacy Project – Advocacy	-	33,515	33,515	46,588
LB of Waltham Forest	-	1,680	1,680	-
APDA - Advocacy	1,250	-	1,250	-
London Council - Advocacy	-	-	-	3,209
	<u>1,250</u>	<u>80,997</u>	<u>82,247</u>	<u>95,599</u>

CHOICE IN HACKNEY**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (Continued)****FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2021****3. ANALYSIS OF RESOURCES EXPENDED**

	Raising Funds	Charitable Activities	Total 2021	Total 2020
<u>Unrestricted</u>	£	£	£	£
Staff costs	7,717	69,453	77,170	99,403
Staff training	-	20	20	340
Accountancy	-	350	350	828
Independent examination fee	-	300	300	1,320
Rent	-	13,600	13,600	6,772
Other Costs	-	8,618	8,618	18,944
Legal & Professional Fees	-	422	422	1,783
	-	-	-	-
	<u>7,717</u>	<u>92,763</u>	<u>100,480</u>	<u>129,390</u>
<u>Restricted</u>				
Staff costs	-	104,968	104,968	59,370
Staff training	-	100	100	300
Accountancy	-	1,950	1,950	1,652
Independent examination fee	-	2,670	2,670	2,640
Rent	-	8,089	8,089	13,328
Other Costs	-	31,664	31,664	3,693
Legal & Professional Fees	-	5,334	5,334	3,566
	-	-	-	-
	<u>-</u>	<u>154,775</u>	<u>154,775</u>	<u>84,549</u>
	<u>7,717</u>	<u>247,538</u>	<u>255,255</u>	<u>213,939</u>

Staff costs have been allocated to the above expenditure heads on the basis of estimated staff time spent on the activities. Support costs and governance costs are included in the above analysis. Governance costs amounted to £16,555 (2020: £15,845).

4. STAFF NUMBERS AND COSTS

	2021	2020
	£	£
Salaries	170,577	148,211
Social security costs	8,330	7,975
Employer pension	3,231	2,587
Redundancy costs	-	-
	<u>182,138</u>	<u>158,773</u>

The average number of employees during the year was 10 (2020:9).

No employee earned more than £60,000 during the year under review (2020: none).

The remuneration of senior management amounted to £47,656 (2020: £46,605).

CHOICE IN HACKNEY**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (Continued)****FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2021****5. TRUSTEES REMUNERATION**

During the year, Trustees received reimbursement of expenses amounting to NIL (2020: £452).

No trustee received any remuneration other than disclosed in these accounts.

6. TAXATION

CHOICE is a registered charity and is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income and capital gains received to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

7. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Furniture £	Office Equipment £	Total £
Cost			
At 1 st April 2020	2,316	23,964	26,280
Additions	-	-	-
Disposals	-	-	-
At 31 st March 2021	<u>2,316</u>	<u>23,964</u>	<u>26,280</u>
Depreciation			
At 1 st April 2020	2,316	23,964	26,280
Charged for the year	-	-	-
Disposals	-	-	-
At 31 st March 2021	<u>2,316</u>	<u>23,964</u>	<u>26,280</u>
Net Book Value			
At 31 st March 2021	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
At 31 st March 2020	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>

8. DEBTORS

	2021 £	2020 £
Grant debtors	46,261	27,397
Prepayments and other debtors	<u>2,886</u>	<u>2,135</u>
	<u>49,147</u>	<u>29,532</u>

9. CREDITORS: Amounts falling due within this year

PAYE	3,860	3,662
Deferred income	-	-
Accruals and other creditors	<u>25,241</u>	<u>11,825</u>
	<u>29,101</u>	<u>15,487</u>

CHOICE IN HACKNEY**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (Continued)****FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2021****10. UNRESTRICTED FUNDS**

	Brought Forward £	Incoming Resources £	Resources Expended £	Transfers £	Carried Forward £
General Fund	20,308	120,612	(100,480)	-	40,440
Total Unrestricted Funds	20,308	120,612	(100,480)	-	40,440

PRIOR YEAR

	Brought Forward £	Incoming Resources £	Resources Expended £	Transfers £	Carried Forward £
General Fund	29,113	120,585	(129,390)	-	20,308
Total Unrestricted Funds	29,113	120,585	(129,390)	-	20,308

11. RESTRICTED FUNDS

	Brought Forward £	Incoming Resources £	Resources Expended £	Transfers £	Carried Forward £
Disability LIB	499	-	-	-	499
Advocacy, Training and Employment	13,580	102,095	(75,524)	-	40,151
Disability Hate Crime Project (MOPAC)	-	22,204	(22,204)	-	-
Volunteering	-	5,000	(5,000)	-	-
Active Lifestyle	-	52,047	(52,047)	-	-
Total Restricted Funds	14,079	181,346	(154,775)	-	40,650

PRIOR YEAR

	Brought Forward £	Incoming Resources £	Resources Expended £	Transfers £	Carried Forward £
Disability LIB	999	-	(500)	-	499
Advocacy, Training and Employment	15,324	64,047	(65,791)	-	13,580
Disability Hate Crime Project (MOPAC)	-	17,083	(17,083)	-	-
Volunteering	1,175	-	(1,175)	-	-
Total Restricted Funds	17,498	81,130	(84,549)	-	14,079

CHOICE IN HACKNEY**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (Continued)****FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2021****11. RESTRICTED FUNDS (continued)**

Restricted funds carried forward relate to on-going projects and are available to be expended in 2021/22.

Disability LIB – this was a one-off grant from Disability LIB towards disabled people's communication support, such as translation and interpretation costs.

Advocacy, Training and Employment (now known as the Choices into Work) - this represents amounts received towards the Choices into Work Project to train disabled people to enable them to find meaningful employment in advocacy or other related fields. This project also offers coaching, confidence building and mentoring.

Disability Hate Crime Project – this represents funding received from the Mayor's Office for Policing & Crime (MOPAC). CHOICE operates within the "Community Alliance To Combat Hate" (CATCH) consortium to support disabled survivors of hate crime that take place within London and surrounding boroughs.

Volunteering – this represents amounts received towards the newly expanded Befriending Plus / Volunteering Project. In addition to its staple of reducing disabled people's feelings of social isolation by connecting service users with likeminded volunteers for Befriending, this service also offered socially distanced gardening, shopping / medication drop-off and walking friends services as well as providing remote volunteering opportunities for disabled and non-disabled people to develop their administrative skills.

Active Lifestyle – this is funding towards our Active Lifestyle project, which included low-impact exercise sessions as well as group activities all taken out online from the comfort of the service users homes via Zoom Video Conferencing to improve health and wellbeing.

12. FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS

At the 31st March 2021 the Charity had commitments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:

	2021	2020
	£	£
Amounts payable:		
Within one year	1,264	1,264
Between two and five years	948	2,212
After five years	-	-
	<u>2,212</u>	<u>3,476</u>

In addition to the above, the Charity has a licence agreement for its office premises that started in October 2017, subject to 2 months' notice period. The total annual commitments at the year end amounts to £22,896.

CHOICE IN HACKNEY
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (Continued)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2021

13. CAPITAL COMMITMENTS

There were no capital commitments at 31st March 2021 (2020: Nil).

14. CONTINGENT LIABILITIES

There were no contingent liabilities at 31st March 2021 (2020: Nil).

15. NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

	Fixed Assets £	Cash at Bank and in Hand £	Debtors £	Current Liabilities £	Total £
Unrestricted	-	30,315	39,226	(29,101)	40,440
Restricted	-	30,729	9,921	-	40,650
Total	-	61,044	49,147	(29,101)	81,090
PRIOR YEAR	Fixed Assets £	Cash at Bank and in Hand £	Debtors £	Current Liabilities £	Total £
Unrestricted	-	17,713	18,082	(15,487)	20,308
Restricted	-	2,629	11,450	-	14,079
Total	-	20,342	29,532	(15,487)	34,387

16. GOING CONCERN

In common with many smaller charities, CHOICE is dependent upon securing income to ensure it can continue to further its charitable objectives as a going concern into the future. The Trustees actively foster relations with existing funders and seek additional funding. While the COVID-19 pandemic made operations more difficult, it also provided opportunities to expand our work and develop new sources of funding. Given the increased level of reserves that has arisen as a result of this approach and the value for money in terms of historic costs per service user outcome, the Trustees are of the opinion that the Charity will be able to continue as a going concern once COVID-19 restrictions are lifted through 2022 and beyond.

17. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

There were no related party transaction during the year.