



CHOICE IN HACKNEY
(Company Limited by guarantee)

TRUSTEES REPORT
AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2025

COMPANY NO: 03423122
CHARITY NO : 1077287

CHOICE IN HACKNEY
TRUSTEES REPORT
AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2025

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CHOICE IN HACKNEY
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
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The Trustees present their report and the financial statement for the year ended 31st March 2025.

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Trustees

Malcolm Aickin	Chair (Deceased, Dec 2024)
Andrew Price	Vice-Chair
Matthew Baxter	Treasurer
Thomas Brayford	
Mary Julian	
Debra Schiman	
Bharat Siyani	
Kay McMahon	(appointed 27 th Mar 2025)

**Company Secretary and
Executive Director**

Caroline Nelson

Company reg. no.

03423122

Charity reg. no.

1077287

Registered Office

CHOICE IN HACKNEY
Ground Floor
Marie Lloyd Centre
329 Queensbridge Road
London
E8 3LA

Independent Examiner

Richard Billinghamurst
Knox Cropper LLP
65 Leadenhall Street
London
EC3A 2AD

Bankers

Barclays Bank PLC
Leicester LE87 2BB

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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 ("CHOICE" or "the Charity") for the year ended 31st March 2025. The Trustees confirm that the trustees report and the financial statements of the Charity comply with 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 serve 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.

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 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 objectives of working with disabled, Greater London residents by providing Independent Living Services including, but not limited to: Active Lifestyle, Advocacy, Befriending Plus / Volunteering, Disability Hate Crime and Training & Employment.

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The objectives 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 services 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.

The Charity Commission granted CHOICE permission to operate across Greater London, which is reflected in CHOICE's Memorandum.

Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance:

In the period under review, CHOICE promoted the following services to disabled Greater London residents aged 16 plus and their networks:

- a) Advocacy;
- b) Disability Hate Crime;
- c) Information & Guidance;
- d) Community Care & Housing;
- e) Training & Employment (which includes Choices into Work training, specialist Disability Hate Crime and/or Disability & Domestic Violence training, supplementary coaching, Job Club plus a Mentoring scheme);
- f) Befriending Plus / Volunteering; and
- g) Active Lifestyle.

a) **ADVOCACY:**

CHOICE Advocates support our disabled service users to obtain the services needed to live an independent and dignified lifestyle in the community. The Advocate works in partnership with the disabled user to obtain his/her rights.

Community advocacy service:

CHOICE's community advocacy service is in two parts:

- Non-statutory advocacy - CHOICE supports disabled people with issue-based matters that fall outside of statutory advocacy. This includes support to obtain accessible housing, making complaints, carrying out assessments, meeting educational needs and child protection matters for disabled parents.
- Statutory advocacy – provided when a disabled person is legally entitled to access the support of an advocate under a particular area of legislation for example the Independent Care Act 2014. This includes undertaking Care Act assessments, Care & Support planning, Reviews and Safeguarding issues.

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Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance continued:

a) **ADVOCACY continued:**

Community advocacy service continued:

CHOICE has been sub-contracted by Rethink Advocacy - a separate operating part of the national organisation: Rethink Mental Illness (Rethink) to provide community-based Advocacy since July 2023. This service is part of a consortium, which is funded by Hackney Council and led by Rethink. The initial one-year contract was extended for a further year with potential for a further extension should the Council extend the term of the Head Contract.

The organisation considers advocacy a much-needed, valuable resource for the disabled Hackney residents it supports. This has been clearly demonstrated through the Charity's monitoring reports, which have consistently met or exceeded contracted targets since Jul 2023 thanks to the many service users who benefit from it. This area of CHOICE's work is going well and there is regular feedback and engagement between CHOICE and Rethink.

Statutory advocacy:

CHOICE's two Disability Rights Advocates are in the process of undertaking a National Advocacy Qualification to enable them to commence statutory advocacy casework.

This is a Level 4 award in Independent Advocacy Practice (IAP) Qualification with the accredited provider, Handa. As part of the package, Rethink will provide access to development, coordination, and leadership to deliver both statutory and non-statutory advocacy to members of the disabled community CHOICE supports. The aim is to ensure disabled Hackney residents are provided with advocacy support from a service they trust and that understands their needs and cultural heritage. This in turn will ensure service users have equitable access to more of the support they need. This is of particular importance to people with mental health issues; those with learning disabilities; anyone who is subject to specific health or social care legislation.

Both advocates will undertake core modules of:

- Principles and practice of independent advocacy;
- The legislative framework which impacts upon the independent advocacy role; and
- Entitlements to independent advocacy.

After which, they will undertake their specialist modules of either:

- Independent complaints advocacy (IHCA); or
- Independent advocacy within adult social care (ICAA).

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Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance continued:

a) **ADVOCACY continued:**

Statutory advocacy continued:

This is a step in the right direction for both the organisation and its staff as it diversifies its workload, allowing advocates to reach more disabled people particularly those with complex or mental health needs – empowering them to make informed choices about their care and treatment and ensuring each individual's unique needs and preferences are considered.

Health Advocacy:

Health Advocacy has formed a vital part of CHOICE's service provision for over a decade firstly under Service Level Agreements, which were renewed annually until Nov 2021 when we were moved to a three-year contract. The final year of that three-year contract with Homerton University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (the Trust), expired in Oct 2024 but was extended for a further year with a small increase from Nov 2024.

The Trust's funding is very valuable as it allows CHOICE to continue to support local disabled people in the City of London and Hackney who have physical and/or sensory impairments with their health advocacy needs. The fundamental emphasis and focus of health advocacy is seeing things from the user's perspective, aiming to empower users to access and use health services on an informed and equitable basis. Thus shifting the unbalanced relationship between service users (particularly those from different impairment, ethnic and cultural backgrounds), service providers and health care professionals.

CHOICE's health advocacy role is to elicit the views, needs, expectations and concerns of its service users and to actively pursue and act in their best interests. This involves Advocates working with the disabled person to:

- be more involved in important decisions about their health care needs;
- know and use their rights;
- Access the health care services they need;
- Voice their wishes and feelings;
- Receive support to raise concerns or complaints;
- Access and use health services on an equal basis.

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Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance continued:

a) **ADVOCACY continued:**

Health Advocacy continued:

The year under review witnessed more disruption for many people who needed to access the National Health Service (NHS): especially disabled people who required additional support to do so, due to industrial action during the summer of 2024.

According to NHS England:

"Junior doctors took industrial action from 7am on Thurs 27th Jun to 7am on Tues 2nd Jul 2024. Since strikes began, the cumulative total of acute inpatient and outpatient appointments rescheduled is now nearly 1.5 million (1,486,258).

The action saw 61,989 inpatient and outpatient appointments rescheduled, and 23,001 staff were absent from work due to strikes at the peak of the action".

NHS National Medical Director, Professor Sir Stephen Powis said:

"These figures bring into sharp focus the impact that this latest round of industrial action has had on patients, with nearly 62,000 appointments postponed in recent days – but we know in reality this is likely to be even higher... Colleagues across the NHS will now be doing everything they can to ensure patients who were due to receive consultations, tests or treatment get appointments rebooked as quickly as possible.¹"

Of the c.62,000 appointments postponed during the industrial action, about a third (20,455) were based in London and the largest majority of them (19,772) were for acute in- and out-patient appointments². These figures demonstrate that CHOICE's health advocacy service is needed now more than ever as disabled people will need support to reschedule their vital appointments particularly as they hold the key to improving their health and wellbeing.

During the year, CHOICE supported service users using a variety of methods including: telephone, email, face-to-face and online engagements both within the community (i.e. hospitals, local authority offices, community centres, home visits) and from the CHOICE office.

¹ Source: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/2024/07/nhs-publishes-data-following-junior-doctors-strike-4/>

² Source: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/workforce-and-reschedule-sitrep-20250801.xlsx>

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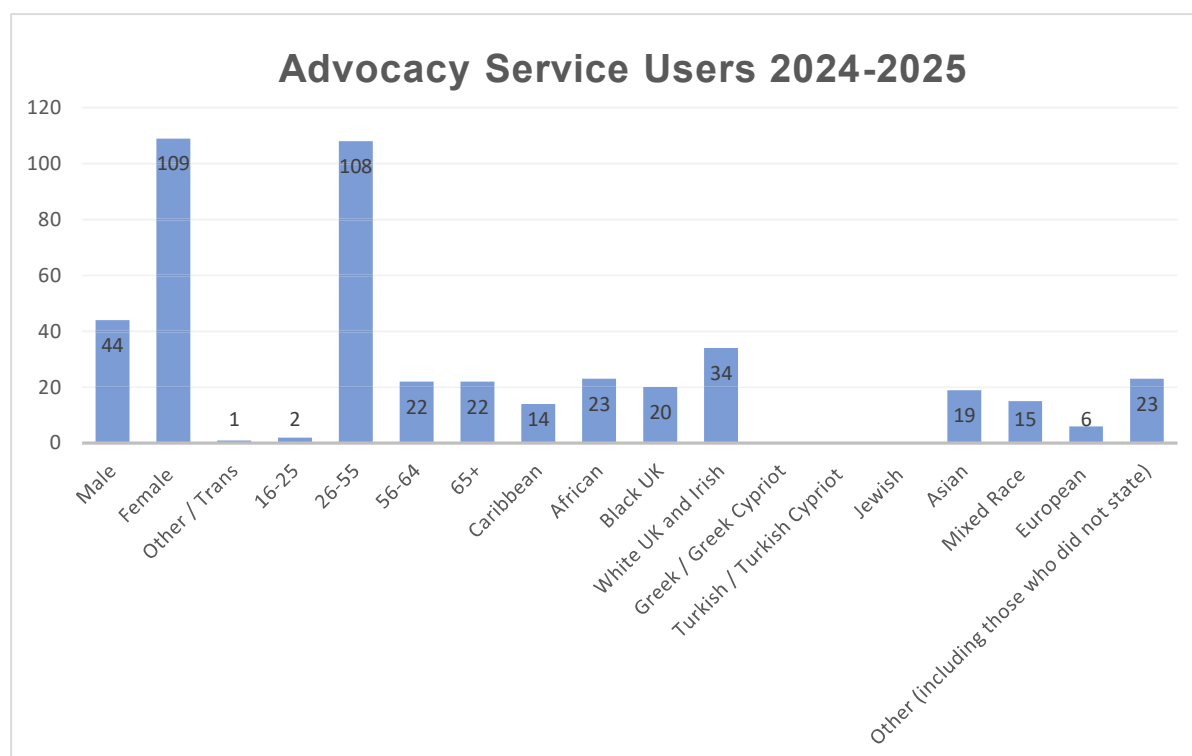
Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance continued:

a) **ADVOCACY continued:**

Funding during this period allowed us to support a total of 154 disabled people (157 in 2023-2024), with their non-statutory, statutory and health advocacy matters; some of whom had multiple issues which included:

- health-related issues including accessing medical services, communicating with health professionals regarding their treatment and making complaints;
- housing support, which included adaptations and repairs;
- physical and mental health / emotional wellbeing support;
- support around their domestic, family and personal challenges;
- statutory advocacy issues including Care Act assessments and safeguarding enquiries;
- Child protection.

The following bar chart presents statistical data for the 154 disabled people (157 in 2023-2024) who utilised the Advocacy service:



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Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance continued:

b) DISABILITY HATE CRIME:

The organisation continued its role within a consortium funded by the Mayor's Office for Policing And Crime (MOPAC) entitled "Community Alliance To Combat Hate" ("CATCH"), which started its life in 2016-17. The consortium completed its initial 2-year contract last year and is now in the final phase of an additional 2-year extension, which is due to expire in Oct 2025 (making 4-years in total).

CATCH partners are:

- Galop (lead partner and anti-LGBT+ hate crime specialist);
- Choice in Hackney (Anti-disability hate crime specialist);
- Real (Anti-disability hate crime specialist);
- Stay Safe East (Anti-disability hate crime specialist);
- Community Security Trust (Anti-Semitic hate crime specialist);
- East European Resource Centre (Anti-Central and Eastern European hate crime specialist);
- Tell MAMA (Anti-Muslim hate crime specialist); and
- The Monitoring Group (Anti-racist hate crime specialist).

The consortium works in partnership with the above network of community organisations specialising in supporting people who have experienced a hate crime due to their protected characteristics i.e. race/ethnicity, faith/religion, sexual orientation/gender identity and/or disability. Referrals come into CHOICE via CATCH's triage service, which is managed by Galop.

CATCH partners work to tackle hate crime, discrimination and abuse within their protected characteristic equality strands. Whilst we all have our own individual specialisms, network partners 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 - the source of some referrals during the period.

CHOICE's Hate Crime Advocate identifies the support needs of individuals and enables them to access other services and also:

- Assists with reporting incidents;
- Supports individuals through criminal justice processes;
- Delivers outreach to communities impacted by hate crime to promote the service;
- Share good practice internally within the partnership.

Some of the assistance provided throughout the year was to support service users within the Criminal Justice System. Many of these service users are referred to CHOICE after being unsuccessful in having their voices heard. This may be due to an entrenched reluctance of individuals to engage with disabled people as their equals.

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Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance continued:

b) DISABILITY HATE CRIME continued:

As long ago as 2012, the government recognised that:

- *"Disability hate crime is a serious issue which affects a considerable number of disabled people and their families each year. In March, the Home Office published findings from the British Crime Survey 2010/11 which suggested that there were 65,000 disability hate crimes a year. They also published Police data for 2011/12 which showed that only 1,744 disability hate crimes were recorded by the police".*

It is surprising to note that within the period of one year only a small percentage (less than 3 per cent) of disability hate crimes were recorded by the police. It would be interesting to compare the disability hate crime picture from 2011/12 to what has happened over the last 12-months but unfortunately, statistics on hate crimes recorded by the police and information on hate crime from the Crime Survey for England and Wales to Mar 2025 will not be released until Oct 2025.

Since the CATCH consortium's inception in 2016/17, CHOICE and other partners have worked very closely with the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) who have made many direct referrals into the Hate Crime partnership.

The MPS website actively encourages survivors of any type of hate crime to come forward and report it and includes a helpful definition of what hate crime and hate crime incidents are:

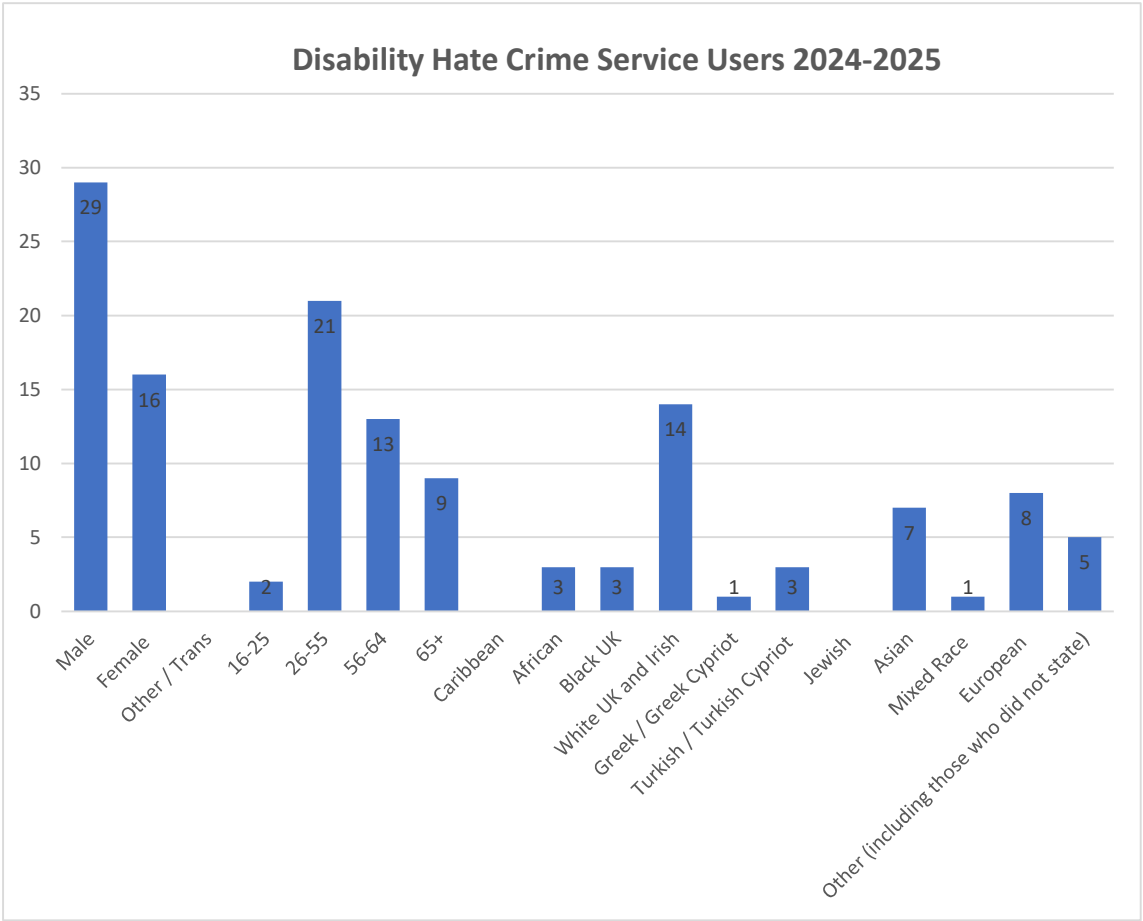
- *"In most crimes it is something the victim has in their possession or control that motivates the offender to commit the crime. With hate crime it is 'who' the victim is, or 'what' the victim appears to be that motivates the offender to commit the crime. A hate crime is defined as 'Any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a person's race or perceived race; religion or perceived religion; sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation; disability or perceived disability and any crime motivated by hostility or prejudice against a person who is transgender or perceived to be transgender'".⁶*

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Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance continued:

- b) **DISABILITY HATE CRIME continued:**
At the time of writing, the organisation is pleased to report the existing lead provider, Galop successfully bid for the Hate Crime contract allowing CHOICE to continue to offer that service beyond Oct 2025, when it was due to expire. As a consequence CHOICE is hosting a Hate Crime Awareness Day in the autumn of 2025 in association with Hackney Council and the CATCH partners to provide advice, information, awareness and support survivors of hate crime. Further details of the event will be provided in next year’s report.

During the year, CHOICE met the needs of 45 disabled people with their disability hate crime matters (32 in 2023-2024). The following bar chart presents data for the Hate Crime Project:



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Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance continued:

c) INFORMATION GUIDANCE & ADVOCACY (IGA) Project:

The organisation is now in its second of five-years funding totalling £294,400 from City Bridge Trust, the funding arm of The City of London Corporation's charity, Bridge House Estates (1035628) towards its Information Guidance and Advocacy (IGA) service.

This project is about giving service users equality, a voice and upholding their rights. In particular through the provision of holistic, person-centred and co-produced solutions to issues. This will ensure the user is engaged at every stage of the process, that they are listened to and lead in decision-making; thereby allowing them to make informed choices and have control and a voice over how they run their lives.

The service is fully accessible for service users with information broken down into manageable chunks, expanded on, and/or explained in ways that are accessible as many times as is necessary utilising a variety of formats (i.e. Easy Read, Braille). This raises disabled people's awareness of needed services, which, when taken advantage of, improve their quality of life. Accessible information will also allow informed decision-making.

The service is headed up by an experienced IGA Officer who mentors disabled volunteers giving them the confidence, knowledge and skills to firstly take on light, followed by more complex cases. The IGA team work jointly to provide the service virtually/in person through partnership working with disabled people supporting with:

- Breaking down information that someone with i.e. learning difficulties has received: explaining/ensuring they understand the content, providing solutions, meeting deadlines and supporting to make informed decisions.
- Form-filling for accessible travel i.e. Blue Badge applications, welfare benefit applications, essential disability-related items i.e. washing machine for a disabled person who is incontinent/on low income.
- Provision of information via text etc to promote and increase uptake of needed services and to encourage users to make cost-savings from providers with workers negotiating on their behalf for favourable terms.
- Non-statutory advocacy i.e. obtaining care package, resolving complaints, appeals etc.

These timely interventions ensure service users play an active role in co-producing solutions to resolve their issues with IGA supporting to prioritise and review documentation; responding promptly to avoid crisis.

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Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance continued:

c) IGA Project continued:

Some of the many benefits of this new service is that: the IGA Officer is not limited by a restrictive eligibility criteria and will be able to discuss all matters so that multiple issues can be dealt with amongst the team as necessary. For example, one volunteer can apply to the landlord to make adaptations or essential repairs to the home, whilst another works alongside the first to apply for grants to furnish it. A third volunteer can apply for free or affordable accessible transport i.e. a Freedom Pass. All of the above provides one service user with the ability to reduce social isolation by going out and about in their community, and improved health and wellbeing as their home is being made accessible and more comfortable.

The above example has allowed other services within the Charity to be able to make referrals into the IGA where they are unable to deal with matters due to restrictive eligibility criteria. This one-stop-shop approach is appealing to both CHOICE – as our service is more holistic but also benefits the service user who doesn't have to repeat themselves to another provider as all their data is stored securely on one central database (Charity Log), which is easily accessible by other teams.

Below are some IGA highlights during the period under review:

- **Volunteer numbers** – the organisation exceeded the funder's target by having 9 new disabled volunteers plus 3 remaining in post from the previous year. All of whom were engaged with a wide variety of administrative tasks, casework (i.e. housing issues, welfare benefits, form-filling, general advocacy issues) and research.
One volunteer moved from being an IGA volunteer to supporting our Hate Crime Advocate in a voluntary role. Another obtained well-paid work and a third obtained two short-term paid contracts (one being with CHOICE as a Trainee Advocate).
- **Caseworker training** – all caseworkers (volunteers) had undertaken the Choices into Work in-house advocacy training, which included principles of empowerment and 'agency' e.g. allowing the service user to make 'unwise' but informed decisions which were reiterated during the caseworker induction sessions.
- **Partnership working** – all service users sign partnership agreements and agree to share changes to life, circumstances or mental health to ensure everyone maintains a safe and collaborative working partnership. Everyone also receives and approves summaries of initial instruction meetings.
- **Provision of accessible information** – over 100 recipients received bulk messages from the IGA service with useful information about local organisations / services that could attract concessions or cost-savings on i.e. energy bills.

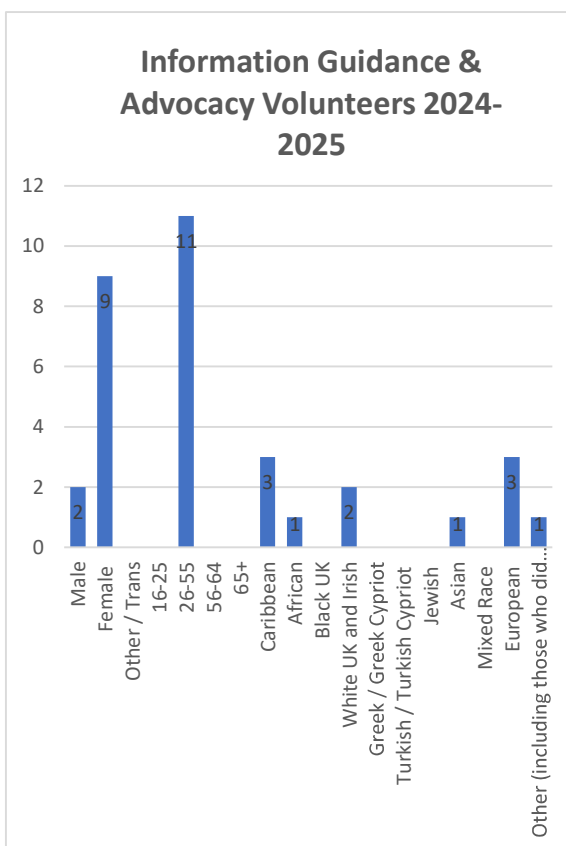
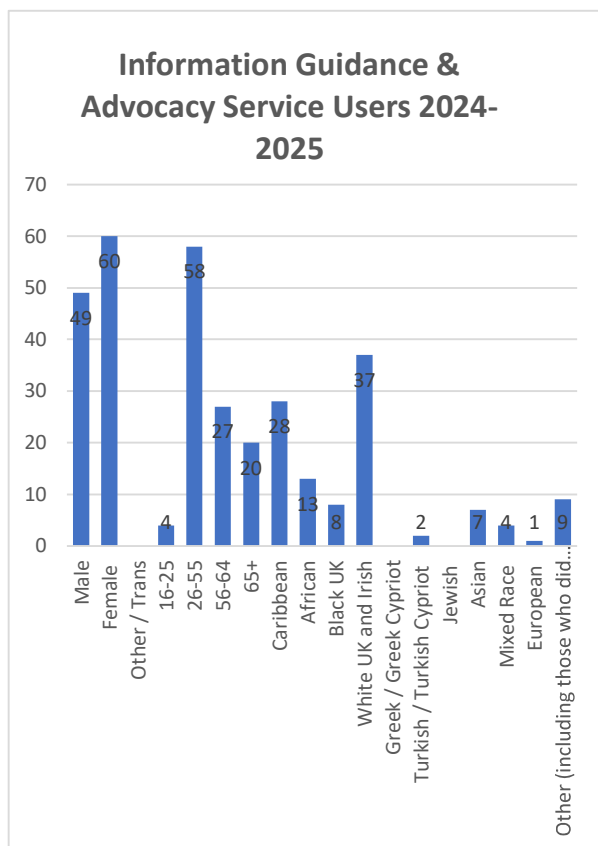
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Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance continued:

c) IGA Project continued:

- **Explaining and prioritising paperwork** – of the 160 new referrals entering the service in the year only 8 required no paperwork explained but over 80 had 2 or more documents that required explanation. As such, the funder's target for this area of work was exceeded.
- **Form-filling** – this was typically made up of claims and appeals for benefits; applications to join a housing register; and separate disability questionnaires (with one referral requiring three separate questionnaires). Again, the funder's target was exceeded.
- **Non-Statutory Advocacy** – the types of issues dealt with under this area of work ranged from housing repairs to an Independent Office for Police Conduct investigation and the target was exceeded.

The following bar chart presents statistical data for the 109 disabled people (75 in 2023-2024) who utilised the IGA service together with the 11 Volunteers (5 in 2023-2024) who supported them:



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Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance continued:

d) COMMUNITY CARE & HOUSING:

This new service, which started in Jan 2025 is funded by City Bridge Foundation's Propel programme with the Disability Law Service (DLS) as the lead provider. DLS is funded to train two Trainee Solicitors to partner with Deaf & Disabled People's Organisations (DDPOs) – one of which is CHOICE - to give advice to disabled people and their carers in an holistic manner that is accessible and takes into account reasonable adjustments.

The aim of the service is to promote social welfare advice; linking trainee solicitors with organisations in the community. This collaboration allowed CHOICE to launch a free legal advice clinic providing advice to those who have a community care or housing issue.

The community care and housing legal clinic accepts referrals from CHOICE's Community Care & Housing Advisor who will provide general advice to disabled people but can also make referrals into the legal clinic for service users to receive specialist advice. This clinic runs once a week alternating each week between the two areas of law. Service users can get support with the following areas:

Community Care:

- Requesting, Reviewing & Challenging Care & Support Assessments and Plans for local authority care and support services (adult service users, children service users and carers);
- Challenging Personal Budgets & requesting Direct Payments for care and support services;
- Challenging financial assessments & charges for care / support services;
- Challenging 'Disabled Facilities Grant' decisions; and
- Requesting aftercare services following sectioning under the Mental Health Act 1983.

Housing:

- Homelessness assistance for people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness;
- Possessions ('Eviction') proceedings whether with Local Authority, Housing Associations / Trusts or private landlords;
- Unlawful eviction;
- Housing disrepair matters;
- Neighbour and landlord harassment; and
- Anti-social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs).

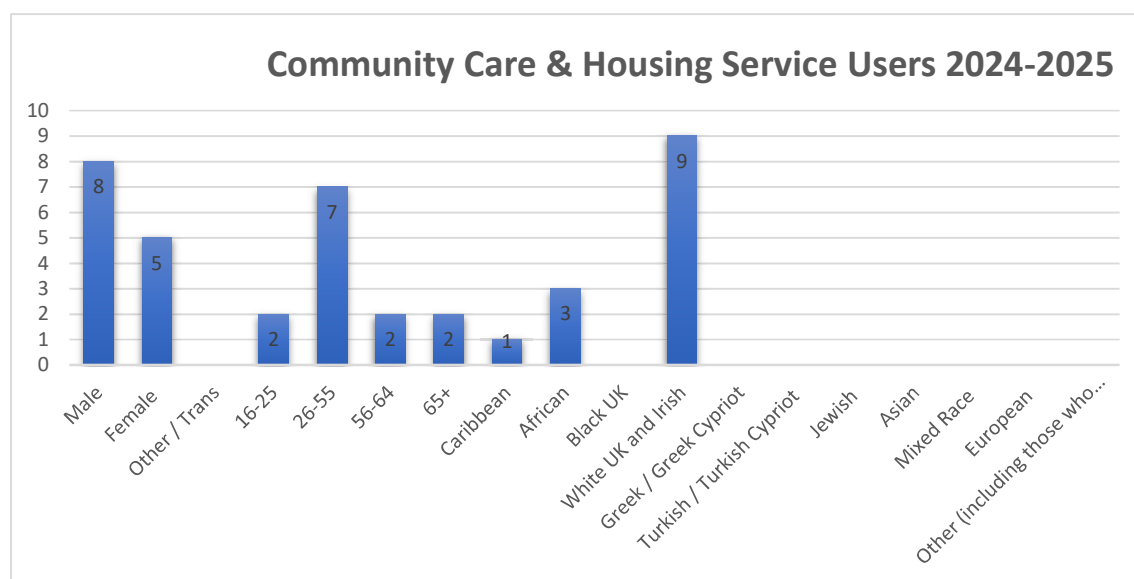
Whilst still in its infancy, the organisation is hopeful the Community Care & Housing service will continue beyond its 1-year as initial discussions with the lead provider, DLS have shown promise.

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Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance continued:

d) COMMUNITY CARE & HOUSING PROJECT continued:

The Community Care & Housing service had already supported 13 disabled people since its inception in Jan 2025 – 31st Mar 2025 and service users' statistical data is provided below:



e) TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT DEPT (TED):

CHOICE received 3-years continuation funding from Henry Smith Charity's Improving Lives programme, which is due to expire in Jan 2026. This funding allowed the Training & Employment Dept ("TED") to run part of its fully accredited suite of training programmes made up of:

- Choices into Work training – each programme consists of 13-weeks classroom-based generic advocacy training followed by a 12-week work placement at CHOICE or host organisations. Funding allowed the Charity to run two Choices into Work programmes this year;
- Disability Hate Crime specialist training – a 6-week classroom-based training course followed by a 12-week work placement at CHOICE and host organisations. Funding allowed the organisation to hold one training programme this year; and
- Disability & Domestic Violence specialist training – 6-weeks classroom-based training followed by 12-weeks work placement at CHOICE and host organisations. Unfortunately, this specialist programme was unfunded during the period under review and as such no programmes are planned until further funding has been sourced.

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Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance continued:

e) TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT DEPT (TED):

Henry Smith Charity – Improving Lives also fund trainees to engage in supplementary sessions of: Coaching; a Job Club; and Mentoring schemes. Further details are below.

Choices into Work training:

This *generic advocacy* training programme is now in its fifteenth year and fully accredited. On successful completion of all components (classroom-based element and work placement), trainees are awarded a nationally recognised qualification (some for the first time) from CHOICE's accrediting body, Open College Network Credit 4 Learning (OCN).

Course content:

Currently, the self-explanatory course content includes topics on:

- History and models of disability;
- Principles of Advocacy Parts 1-3;
- Confidence Building;
- Local Authority services;
- Legislation;
- Safeguarding Adults at Risk;
- Welfare Benefits Parts 1-2;
- Pathways into Academics;
- Applying for Work;
- Job Search; and
- Networking.

The course continues to be delivered with a choice of online (via Zoom Video Conferencing) or on a face-to-face basis. This mixed approach allows access to disabled trainees who would ordinarily be unable to attend the course in-person whilst the face-to-face experience provides an additional layer of networking opportunities that some of our trainees find very beneficial.

A total of 26 disabled people engaged in the 2 Choices into Work generic advocacy training programmes held in the year (26 in 2023-2024).

Disability Hate Crime training programme:

This specialist training programme was funded by Henry Smith Charity – Improving Lives during the year; allowing us to recruit and engage disabled people to undertake accredited disability-related training not carried out anywhere else in the United Kingdom.

The training is specialist as trainees are expected to come with some relevant experience or academic qualification as the course is intensive. Unlike the generic advocacy focussed Choices into Work training programme, which offers a range of accreditation levels, the Disability Hate Crime training course only offers a Level 4 award, which is at Diploma level.

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Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance continued:

e) TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT DEPT continued:

Disability Hate Crime training programme:

Training model:

The Disability Hate Crime training course is made up of:

- Classroom-based element - six 6-hour sessions, with work tasks to complete for each session. Trainee numbers per programme were limited to a maximum of 8. A variety of assessment methods were included such as homework; essays; presentations; and the end of term 2500-word essay.
- Work experience through work placement - 12-weeks totalling 72-hours+ at CHOICE or other host organisations, allowing trainees to put what they learnt during the classroom element into practice when they advocated for themselves and disabled survivors of hate crime.

Work placement and job opportunities:

Due to the organisation providing Disability Hate Crime Advocacy as part of the Community Alliance to Combat Hate consortium, which is funded by the Mayor of London, trainees could also be offered a work placement at CHOICE where they could be exposed to relevant casework.

Training and experience in this area has allowed more disabled people to apply for jobs as Hate Crime Advocates, within local government, the police service and university, as well as voluntary opportunities as representatives on consultative committees in these areas.

One training programme was held during the year at an accessible venue. This delivery method offered trainees greater flexibility, particularly those who were already employed and could therefore undertake the course (including their work placement, which contained appropriate casework) from their workplaces should they choose to do so.

Course content:

The following areas were included in the course:

- Representing clients in multi-agency meetings; carrying out risk assessments; Safeguarding; Care Act assessments; Trauma-based approach; Complaints to agencies such as the police and housing; the roles of the different agencies and bodies i.e. Housing, Anti-Social Behaviour Teams; and supporting people through the criminal justice system – including reporting to the police and going to court.

CHOICE IN HACKNEY
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2025

Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance continued:

e) TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT DEPT continued:

Disability Hate Crime training programme continued:

Fundraising efforts:

There were changes to personnel during the period as the part-time Disability Hate Crime Trainer post, which was job-shared between two individuals, saw one leave to take up a full-time post elsewhere and the other retire. At the time of writing, CHOICE has undertaken a substantial fundraising drive for the TED and is hopeful that all elements (and some new ones, which will be facilitated by alumni during i.e. Train the Trainer courses) will form part of our offer to disabled people who wish to improve their knowledge, skills, educational attainment and work experiences.

A total of 8 disabled people undertook the Disability Hate Crime training course during the year (2023-2024: 8).

Disability & Domestic Violence training programme:

The organisation was unable to continue this specialist training programme during the year as it remained unfunded. However, in the hope that it will be able to source funding at some stage, a brief overview of the course is given below:

Course content:

Each programme has 6-sessions designed to train a group of disabled people to become professional advocates, specialising in domestic violence. Training topics include:

- Introduction to domestic violence; Safety planning and risk assessments; Child protection processes; Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC); Housing issues; and the civil and criminal courts.

The disability element is very rarely addressed even within the disabled movement and this course will be able to equip trainees with the skills needed to better manage situations, bridge the gap within domestic violence and disability and examine in detail how the two can be related.

The service is essential due to the increase of incidents of domestic violence and the demand for support services, particularly within mainstream organisations (which are often inaccessible for disabled people).

As the disabled people CHOICE works with continue to face multiple barriers of discrimination in their lives, having these additional skills and knowledge will assist them to grow in confidence and compete for jobs against non-disabled candidates.

CHOICE IN HACKNEY
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
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Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance continued:

e) TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT DEPT continued:

Coaching:

The coaching sessions are supplemental to the Choices into Work training programmes. The focus on personal development, confidence building, preparing service users for sourcing and retaining work etc. made them appealing and have been in high demand.

Carried out on a one-to-one basis by a highly skilled and experienced Coach, the sessions provide disabled people with the space to self-reflect and address employment challenges. Different confidence building techniques are provided in an empathetic and encouraging environment, which had positive impacts on trainee outcomes.

Some coaching session themes included:

- confidence building;
- visualisation techniques;
- goal setting; and
- role-plays to help with interviews and meetings with employers.

CHOICE is pleased to have successfully supported 24 trainees (20 in 2023-2024) with a wide-range of employment-related issues during the period.

Job Club:

As with the coaching sessions, it was not essential for trainees to attend the Job Club in order to receive their accredited award. However, these sessions remained very popular.

As group sessions were held on a fortnightly basis, there was enough time for trainees to complete their vital coursework in between sessions to allow for regular attendance.

Its focus on developing employment skills where trainees shared their experiences and challenges in a collaborative and supportive environment with their peers. Topics for discussion included:

- applying for work;
- networking;
- speaking to employers about access needs; and
- many more topics intended to support our trainees to find and stay in work.

19 disabled people (25 in 2023-2024) took part in the Job Club.

CHOICE IN HACKNEY
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
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Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance continued:

e) TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT DEPT continued:

Mentoring:

Trainees who successfully completed the classroom-based elements of our training courses had the opportunity to put everything they learnt into practice as they familiarised themselves with the work of an Advocate during their work placement at CHOICE or a host organisation. The work placement was an essential part of the course and in order to receive the OCN award, it remains a requirement for both the classroom-based and work placement elements to be completed.

CHOICE trainees shadowed an experienced disabled Advocate during their bespoke and fully accessible placement, where they viewed the Advocate's casework, understood how to apply the classroom-based elements of the course to "live" cases and adopted the many different approaches and disciplines that come with advocacy practice. 12 trainees benefited from this work placement (12 in 2023-2024).

This year, the organisation is proud to report a 41% employment success rate among our trainees. The bar chart below shows demographics of the following disabled trainees:

- 26 completed 2 Advocacy Choices into Work courses (2023-2024:26);
- 8 completed 1 Disability Hate Crime course (2023-2024: 8);
- 24 took part in Coaching sessions (2023-2024: 20);
- 19 engaged in the Job Club (2023-2024: 25); and
- 12 were mentored during a work placement (2023-2024: 12).



CHOICE IN HACKNEY
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
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Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance continued:

f) BEFRIENDING PLUS / VOLUNTEER PROJECT:

CHOICE's Befriending Plus / Volunteer project is a long-running service which tackles feelings of loneliness and social isolation that some disabled people experience. Whilst it remained unfunded during the period under review, CHOICE used some of its reserves to continue some of its services. The impact that the scaled down version has had on its disabled beneficiaries had been significant, as it provided essential support in everyday life through a range of volunteer-led initiatives in the office or within the community as follows:

- Office volunteers - disabled and non-disabled volunteers gain office experience whilst supporting CHOICE in its core functions including CHOICE's social media platforms, meeting fundraising aims, administration, design and marketing.
- Befriending - volunteers regularly contact service users / escort them to places, reducing social isolation and encouraging community engagement and feelings of independence.
- Gardening - transforming inaccessible green spaces into places they can conveniently take in the fresh air, exercise and enjoy time outdoors thereby also increasing mental and physical health and wellbeing.
- Corporate Volunteering – the Charity was thrilled to have regular contact with three local organisations who approached us to coordinate corporate volunteering days. These group sessions, where teams take on multiple gardens in a day, has become an enjoyable event for both the disabled recipients and the volunteers.

Following the Coronavirus ("COVID-19") pandemic, the project was expanded, enabling disabled people to also benefit from the following services:

- Walking friends - volunteers encourage service users to leave their homes, take in some exercise and enjoy the fresh air whilst maintaining social-distancing practices.
- Shopping and medication drop-off - volunteers purchase groceries and medication and deliver them to the door of the disabled service user.

Results and Impact:

This year, the Befriending Plus / Volunteer Project supported:

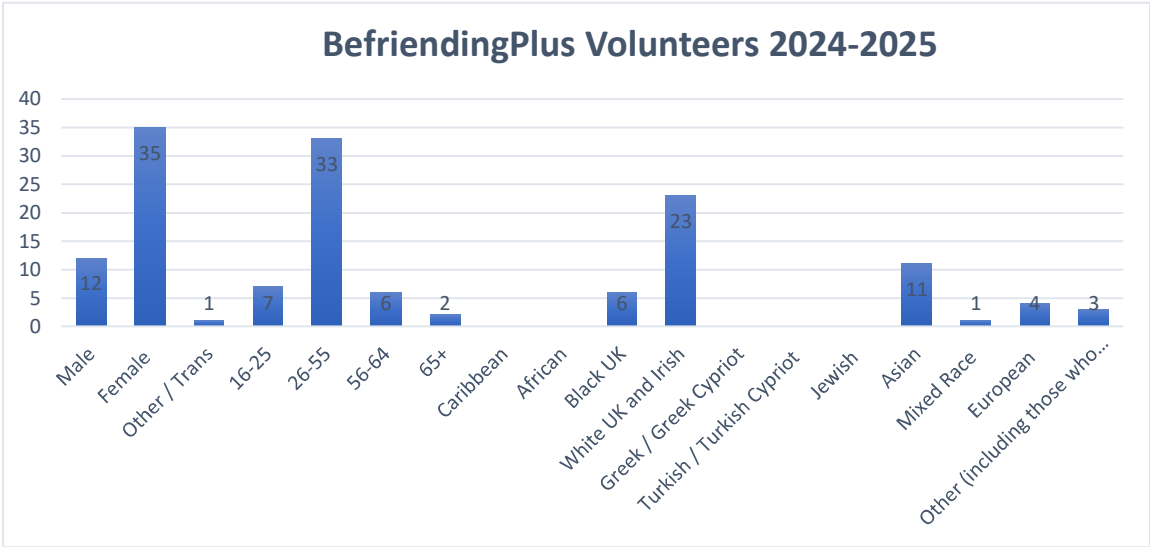
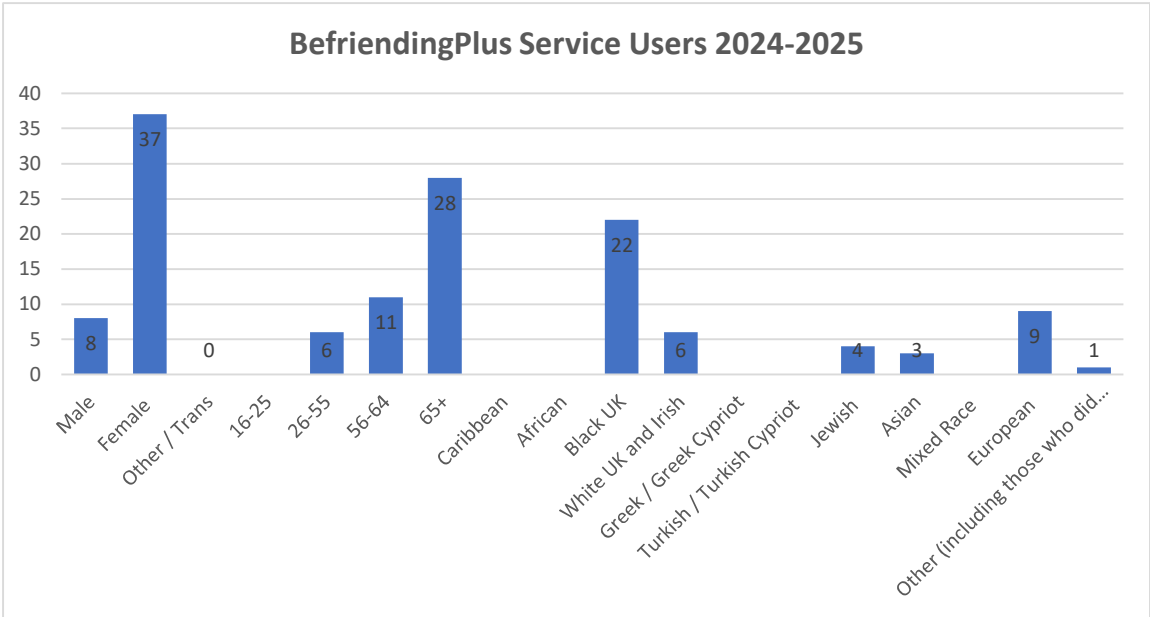
- 22 gardening relationships
- 9 befriending partnerships
- 6 walking volunteers
- 6 shopping volunteers
- 3 Administrators

Each of the above relationships represents a unique and valued connection, making daily life more manageable and meaningful for members of the local community.

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

- f) BEFRIENDING PLUS / VOLUNTEER PROJECT continued:**
The Befriending Plus / Volunteer project supported 45 service users (73 in 2023-2024); and 48 volunteers (70 in 2023-2024) in the year as shown in the bar chart below:



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REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
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Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance continued:

g) ACTIVE LIFESTYLE:

CHOICE's Active Lifestyle service supports local disabled people in wellbeing activities to improve their overall physical and mental health whilst also reducing social isolation. Starting its life in 2012, it has organised a variety of events over the years including:

- Boccia;
- Golf workshops;
- Kayaking at Hackney Reservoir;
- Women's boxing;
- Squash; Tennis; and
- Leyton Orient Football Club's Community Day.

The project's main activities include:

- Exercise sessions organised in conjunction with CHOICE's host organisation, Salvation Army Hoxton for face-to-face and/or online sessions, where service users can enjoy keep fit activities from the comfort of their homes;
- Social clubs (also from the Salvation Army or online) where disabled service users can bond over shared interests and experiences;
- Buddies / volunteers are provided to escort disabled people to local accessible gyms / recreational centres to support with navigating their way around the different equipment available.

Unfortunately, the project has been unfunded for several years and unable to offer any activities. CHOICE is hopeful that with a concerted fundraising effort and the cooperation of local businesses, the organisation will be able to revive this valuable project.

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

h) DR MALCOLM AICKIN:

This year saw the very sad passing of our Chair, Dr Malcolm Aickin who had been a much-loved friend to the organisation. Aged 75 years and having served CHOICE as a Treasurer from 2010-11 until 2024, when he became Chair, Malcolm passed away in Dec 2024.

The following is a tribute in loving memory of Malcolm:

Dr Malcolm Aickin,
Chair of the Board of Trustees of
CHOICE IN HACKNEY



Photographed during **Trustees, Staff and Volunteers "Meet and Greet" on 26th Sept 2024**
in the Garden Room of the Marie Lloyd Centre
to celebrate CHOICE IN HACKNEY's first few months in
the newly refurbished community hub.

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Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance continued:

h) DR MALCOLM AICKIN continued:

CHOICE's end of year meal:

During Jan 2024, Trustees, volunteers and staff gathered together at the Open Kitchen N1 in Hoxton Street for a slightly delayed end of year evening meal and we were pleased to have Malcolm (front, right) join us on the day.



CHOICE's 25th anniversary event:

CHOICE marked its 25th anniversary at an event held on 13th Sep 2017 at Amnesty International UK Human Rights Action Centre. The event was opened by Malcolm Aickin who recounted the history of CHOICE (i.e. that it started its life as an advocacy project, having just 2-advocates and a part-time administrator).

Here is an extract of Malcolm's inspirational speech, which he gave during the 25th Anniversary celebrations:

"Let me welcome you to this celebration of 25 years of CHOICE IN HACKNEY, which has always been a Disabled People's User Led Organisation. So, let me tell you I am Dyslexic. As I am sure you know Dyslexia runs in families. So, I want to tell you a story about my grandfather's uncle: he was so seriously affected by Dyslexia that it was unlikely he would follow his boyhood dream of a career in joining the Royal Navy... However, after undertaking an oral examination (instead of a written one), he went on to pass his training at Dartmouth.

There was a Blue Plaque outside the house he lived in in Whitehall, which commemorates him and it was later turned into the first headquarters of the Secret Intelligence Service that he founded. His successors have been known as "C" ever since and in James Bond novels, as "M". So, he did not do badly!

However, we should not think life is easy. There are Trustees at CHOICE IN HACKNEY who had been told by other organisations their impairment meant they could not possibly be a charity trustee. They are hardworking, competent diligent Trustees: to deny them that opportunity is just a terrible waste of human potential. "



Dr Malcolm Aickin, the then Treasurer of CHOICE IN HACKNEY, addressing delegates at the CHOICE IN HACKNEY 25th Anniversary celebration

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

h) DR MALCOLM AICKIN continued:



Photo:
CHOICE IN HACKNEY Treasurer, **Malcolm Aickin** (left) and a service user light candles on the CHOICE IN HACKNEY 25th Anniversary cake.

TESTIMONIES:

The CHOICE team all had nothing but praise for Malcolm as demonstrated below:

"My co-trustees have made my job as Chair a real pleasure and having a Treasurer as hard working and reliable as Malcolm, is very reassuring!" **Mary Julian, as CHOICE Chair during the 2014-15 Annual General Meeting**

"Its such sad news to hear of the passing of Malcolm, he was such a pleasant, joyful and approachable person. He will be sadly missed, as he was very supportive to the staff and to the organisation". **Ola Macauley, CHOICE Advocate**

"Malcolm is synonymous with the board for me. His charming manner and affable nature made him a pleasure to see at CHOICE IN HACKNEY events. Even when times were tough for CHOICE IN HACKNEY, his reports always made our future seem bright. I'll never forget the enthusiasm he showed for our projects both inside and outside of the organisation". **Paul Salt, CHOICE Volunteer Coordinator and Administrator**

"Malcolm was a very approachable person who I really enjoyed working with over the years – a very patient man who could make the most complicated of issues appear straightforward and easy to follow. He was a real ambassador for CHOICE IN HACKNEY who was always available to offer his support whenever it was needed." **Monica Matthews, CHOICE Administrator**

"I have always found Malcolm to be a good listener who always had 5-minutes to spare when I needed to brainstorm or have another person's perspective on the organisation: there was a sense of relief after our conversations. He was also very willing to help and would often attend meetings with potential funders and consultants to offer his unique insights and contributions – all of which were very valuable." **Caroline Nelson, CHOICE Chief Executive Officer**

Dr Malcolm Aickin will be sadly missed by all.

CHOICE IN HACKNEY
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2025

Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance continued:

i) MONITORING & EVALUATION OF SERVICES:

Trustees are pleased to report the CHOICE team continued its work with consultant, Jason Pollard of Community Impact CIC throughout this financial year. The Client Relationship Management (CRM) database, Charity Log allowed the Charity to develop a set of working impact outcomes and measurement indicators that captured the aims and objectives of each service.

Each project entered data directly onto the CRM, logging outcomes, outputs, and service users' feedback. A variety of reports were produced for funders and for discussion at:

- the Annual General Meeting;
- Sub-Groups;
- Steering Groups; and
- Team meetings.

CHOICE is now in a better position to know when it is functioning correctly and where there is room for improvement so that service provision matches our users' wants and needs.

The Monitoring & Evaluation framework created a large volume of work that included finalising the Outcomes Framework demonstrating how projects can capture:

- data on deliverables (outputs);
- Engagement data (satisfaction surveys etc); and
- Impact (i.e. what difference our services make).

This approach aligns impact reporting to a set of outcome measures and brings all three data types into a single reporting framework.

Anonymised case studies also form part of the evaluation, and are written to show the work CHOICE does in practice.

The draft Impact Report for the Advocacy service describes some of the ways advocacy interventions made a difference to disabled people. Change is described against outcomes which are clearly defined and measureable. Between Jan – Dec 2024 a review was conducted of 25 randomised service user cases and within each advocacy area (IGA; Hate Crime; and General) individual cases were analysed to understand the:

1. Service user's issue of concern;
2. Actions taken by the Advocate;
3. Role the Advocate took in each particular case; and
4. Outcome.

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

i) MONITORING & EVALUATION OF SERVICES continued:

Cases were catalogued by i.e. their complexity. Taken together, the data collected was used to describe advocacy in practice, and some of the ways advocacy benefited disabled people accessing it. For General Advocacy, it was noted cases covered a wide range of issues however, within the case review:

- at least 7 cases (28%) had some type of housing concern;
- health-related issues were raised in 20% of cases; and
- family law matters accounted for 12%.

Housing was the largest area of concern and a number of outcomes are relevant to housing advocacy (i.e. having the financial resources to live independently, being aware of the full range of benefits and entitlements available, or simply feeling safe at home).

The case review showed that providing service users with greater control over their lives is empowering and has a positive effect on their well-being. Interviews showed this impact to be an important one as stated by one participant who said: "... I feel a lot more relaxed now. I don't have that... high level of anxiety that I had before. I also know that CHOICE is just a phone call or email way..."

The full draft report is available upon request.

j) FUNDERS – NEW AND OLD:

During the year under review, there were funder contracts that were due to expire, some were being retendered whilst another allowed the Charity to introduce a new complementary service to its current offer. Each one will be discussed in turn:

i) Health Advocacy - funder, Homerton Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust's 3-year health advocacy contract ended in Oct 2024 with potential for a 2-year extension (1-year at a time). This service is for the provision of advocacy for physically and sensory impaired disabled people who are residents of City of London and London Borough of Hackney. The Trust is a long-term funder of CHOICE and there is a good working relationship.

As per the contract, CHOICE negotiated a 1-year extension with the Trust in Oct 2024, which included a 2.2% increase to support the rise in cost of living. Although this is due to expire on 31st Oct 2025, CHOICE will approach the Trust in Aug 2025 to express an interest in extending the contract by 1-year for the second (and final) time. If successful, this will allow the organisation to continue to offer a health advocacy service to 31st Oct 2026.

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

j) FUNDERS – NEW AND OLD continued:

ii) Retendering of Hate Crime consortium - funder, Mayor's Office for Policing And Crime (MOPAC) re-tendered the Hate Crime service, which is due to expire in Sept 2025. The organisation has been a partner within the consortium entitled "Community Alliance To Combat Hate" ("CATCH") since inception in 2016-17. The consortium works in partnership with a network of community organisations who specialise in supporting people who have experienced a hate crime due to their protected characteristics.

Existing lead provider, Galop successfully bid for the contract allowing CHOICE to continue to offer that service and negotiated an increase to the initial offer of 6-hours per week; increasing it to 14-hours per week.

iii) Community Care & Housing Service – this new service, which started in Jan 2025 promotes social welfare and housing advice linking disabled Hackney residents with trainee solicitors providing a free legal advice clinic. A detailed breakdown of the service is provided earlier in the report.

k) NEW SERVICES:

i) Statutory advocacy – the CHOICE advocates are undertaking a Level 4 National Vocational Qualification in statutory advocacy training (with two separate specialist modules: one on NHS Complaints and the other on the Care Act). The Advocates will begin to have a statutory advocacy caseload starting around Sept 2025. This type of work is in demand and gives the advocates greater variety and diversity of work experience as the non-statutory advocacy work will reduce over time.

The training is fully funded by lead provider, Rethink Mental Illness including 1-day per month each for study costs and full supervision.

ii) Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) – at the time of writing funder, Rethink Mental Illness have approached CHOICE to undertake some DoLS work for 14-hours per week for 6-months initially. Going forward, there is a possibility of an extension and this will be linked to CHOICE's mentoring scheme to allow trainees to specialise in this field.

Technical supervision will be undertaken by Rethink's Community Advocacy Partnerships Manager who has experience in this field with the CHOICE Chief Executive Officer undertaking formal supervision to reduce costs.

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

I) QUALITY MARKS:

i) Trusted Charity Standard: the process to renew this quality mark which the organisation first acquired in Oct 2018 has started.

Achieving the award offers both users and funders/commissioners external verification of the quality and credibility of CHOICE, as it has allowed the organisation to:

- improve the way it works – providing a better quality of service to those that rely on it;
- have more efficient organisational systems and procedures – freeing up much needed time and energy to focus on what really matters;
- provide greater credibility and legitimacy – by reassuring beneficiaries, supporters, donors, volunteers and staff who want to know their organisation is well run, accountable and transparent;
- engage the whole organisation – involving everyone in the process of improving the way they work. In that regard, Trusted Charity Standard will want to meet with staff, trustees and possibly service users and volunteers.

ii) Advice Quality Standard (AQS): the organisation is in the process of acquiring the AQS for organisations offering face-to-face advice.

The key benefits of the AQS is that it provides case management best practice.

CHOICE Advocates will:

- be better able to plan their casework;
- carry it out following best practice guidelines; and
- regularly review it to foster continuous improvement. In particular, being aware of the main areas of risk.

By working within the AQS framework, staff can closely scrutinise their work and develop good habits to improve their working practices.

iii) Open College Network Credit4Learning (OCN): - is the awarding body of CHOICE's Training & Employment Dept (TED) accredited suite of programmes. CHOICE continues to be recognised by OCN as a training academy, which it has enjoyed since 2013/14.

Formal award levels start at Level 1 – 3 for Trainees undertaking the Choices into Work course (specialising in Advocacy) however for those with relevant experience, this can increased to a Level 4 Diploma (for specialist Hate Crime and/or Disability & Domestic Violence courses).

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

m) COLLABORATIVE WORKING:

CHOICE has worked collaboratively with organisations for many years. In particular, Inclusion London, which supports 70+ Deaf & Disabled People's Organisations (DDPOs) across London to promote disabled people's equality and inclusion. CHOICE benefited from the Cornerstone 2 consortium made up of nine DDPOs, led by Inclusion London. The organisation continues to benefit from this collaboration by having access to the "*Talking About Disability*" guide, which is available upon request. The guide aims to give anyone working to make society more inclusive for disabled people some powerful tools to help change hearts and minds on disability.

The consortium developed and tested communications resources to reframe the narrative around disability: changing understanding, thereby creating systemic change. This will build capacity and capabilities not only of project partners, but all 70+ London DDPOs, increasing their visibility and ability to advocate for change and reach more disabled Londoners.

The guide is in two parts. Part One ('What are strategic communications?') is a brief introduction to strategic communications and framing – what it is, why it's important and what it involves. Part Two ('How to talk about disability') is based on research insights.

More recently, CHOICE along with other London-based DDPOs engaged with Inclusion London on a piece of *employment-based* research. This paid activity is part of a consortium led by Inclusion London in conjunction with the Learning and Work Institute. It offers DDPOs a central voice in shaping and influencing the research and its recommendations on employment support for disabled people.

Each DDPO was involved in the following ways:

- Providing some DDPO researcher time to input into the design of the research, analysis of findings and final recommendations;
- Setting up a DDPO advisory group made up of London-based DDPO CEOs, alongside Inclusion London and the researchers that met 4 times between Jan – May 2025 to advise and input into research design, findings and recommendations;
- Promoting and publicising the research project to DDPO members and service users so they can be interviewed and become research participants; and
- Advise The Learning and Work Institute on access issues.

The Learning and Work Institute agreed to work collaboratively with DDPOs on the research, findings and recommendations that will come out of the work.

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Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance continued:

n) CHALLENGING GOVERNMENT REFORMS TO WELFARE BENEFITS:

A response to the government's Green Paper: "Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working" (pub. 18 Mar 2025) was forwarded to the Secretary of State on 15th Apr 2025 by the CHOICE Chief Executive Officer who worked collaboratively with CHOICE Trustees / staff. The green paper includes benefit changes that are explicitly designed to cut welfare spending with a focus on disability-related and incapacity benefits (i.e. Universal Credit, Personal Independence Payment and contributory benefits), which will negatively impact many disabled people and those with long-term health conditions. A copy of the letter was sent to local MPs (Dame Meg Hillier and Diane Abbott) who invited the organisation to formally respond to the consultation, which it duly did.

As a result of these activities and the many resulting protests, the Secretary of State issued a statement on 30th Jun 2025 that said:

- *"The Government has committed to making two changes to strengthen the Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payment (PIP) Bill: implementing the new eligibility requirements for PIP from Nov 2026 for new claims only, and adjusting Universal Credit rates to make sure all existing recipients of the Universal Credit health element – and any new claimant meeting the severe conditions criteria and those who qualify under Special Rules for End of Life – have the combined rate of their Universal Credit standard allowance and Universal Credit health element protected in real terms".*

This demonstrates the power of working collectively so that disabled people's voices can be heard and positive tangible action can be taken.

o) RESTRUCTURING:

Thanks to three-year's core funding (2023-2026) from Lloyds Bank Foundation for England & Wales and the foundation's Enhance package, CHOICE's advocacy service underwent a restructuring process with support from consultancy firm, Roots HR.

A new Deputy Chief Executive Officer role, which will, amongst other tasks include the line management of the Advocacy team and deputising for the CHOICE CEO during i.e. periods of annual leave.

Following an internal recruitment process, the successful candidate who already has a part-time role with CHOICE is now in post and fulfilling 7-hours per week.

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

p) HELLO (AGAIN) AND GOODBYE:

The CHOICE team:

- Welcomes: Advocacy Mentor (Hate Crime and Generic Advocacy), **Zoe Rubenstein** and Community Care & Housing Advisor, **Emily-May Palmer** both of whom are familiar with the organisation having either volunteered and/or worked with it previously.
- Bids farewell to: Disability Hate Crime Trainer, **David Landau** as he settles into his retirement and Trainee Disability Rights Advocate, **Jacek Korczak** whose temporary post with the organisation came to an end.

The whole organisation wishes them well for the future.

q) FUNDERS:

In the year under review, CHOICE received funding from:

1. **Homerton Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust** – to provide health advocacy to disabled residents of the City of London and Hackney who have physical and/or sensory impairments.
2. **London Borough of Hackney via Rethink Mental Illness** - to provide a statutory and non-statutory advocacy service to disabled 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.
3. **Henry Smith Charity - Improving Lives** – towards the Choices into Work and Disability Hate Crime training courses (both part of the Training & Employment Dept), which provides classroom-based advocacy/disability hate crime training, work placements and mentoring. Additional coaching support and a Job Club is also funded.
4. **Lloyds Bank Foundation for England & Wales** – a three-year unrestricted grant to support CHOICE's charitable activities / costs.
5. **Mayor's Office for Policing And Crime (MOPAC)** – to provide disability hate crime advocacy to disabled people who live or work in Greater London as part of the Community Alliance To Combat Hate (CATCH) consortium.
6. **City Bridge Foundation** (the funding arm of The City of London Corporation's charity, Bridge House Estates) – five-year's funding towards the provision of information, guidance and advocacy to disabled residents of Hackney and the City, allowing independence, choice and control over their lives and reducing inequality.

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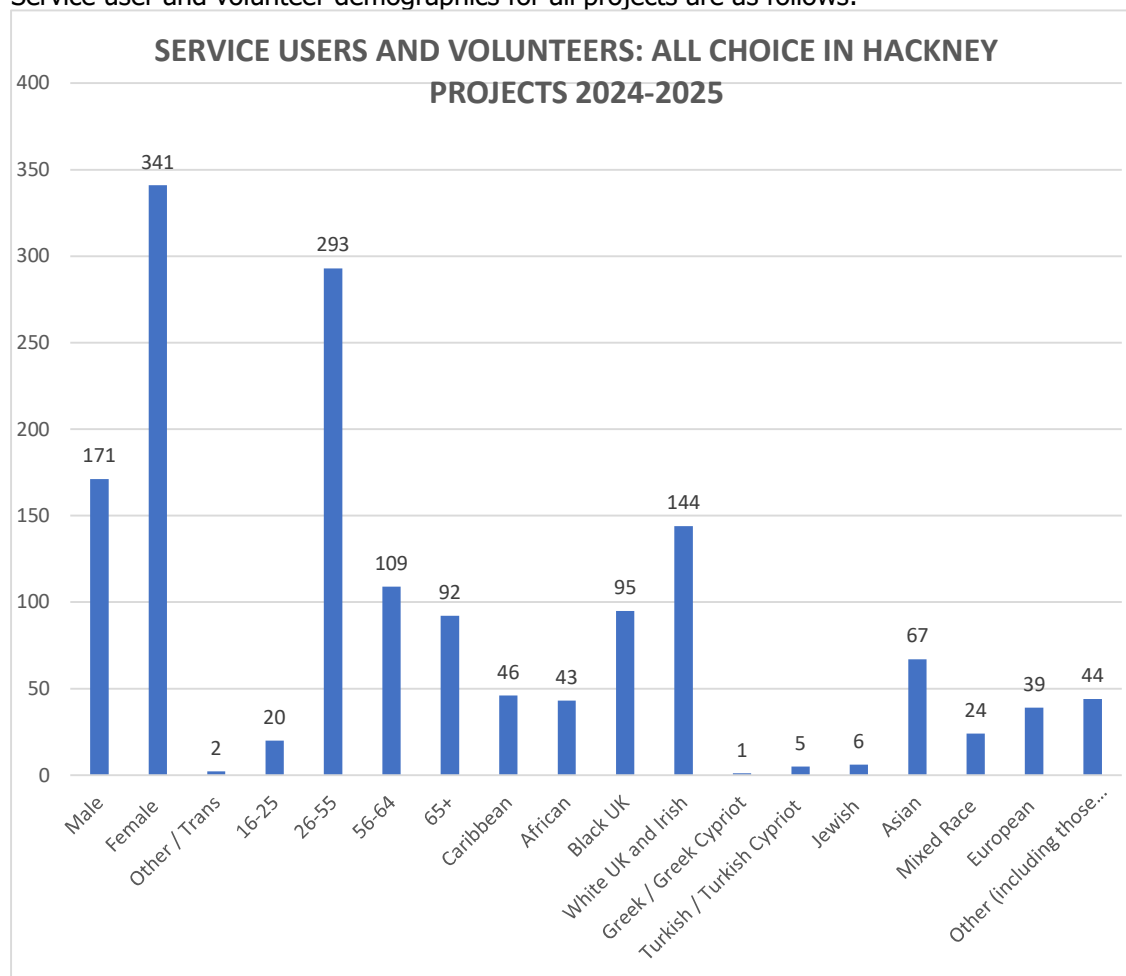
Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance continued:

q) FUNDERS continued:

7. **Disability Law Service (DLS)** – this legal advice consortium funded by City Bridge Foundation's Propel programme provided a Community Care & Housing (CC&H) service to residents of Hackney promoting social welfare / housing advice. CHOICE's CC&H Advisor provided general advice and made referrals into DLS' legal clinic for specialist advice.

The level of funding in the year allowed CHOICE to work with a total of 514 people (1,021 in 2023-2024). Whilst this is significantly lower than in the last year, it should be noted that last year's funding allowed us to support an additional 518 people (340 service users and 178 volunteers) through the "Relieving the cost of living fund for disabled people in Hackney".

Service user and volunteer demographics for all projects are as follows:



CHOICE IN HACKNEY
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
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Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance continued:

r) PARTNERSHIP WORKING:

CHOICE is committed to partnership working to ensure our quality assurance standards are met and that we provide quality services to disabled people. We understand that as a small charity with limited resources, it is in our best interests to amplify our reach by cooperating with other organisations in order that we achieve our goals, aims / missions and targets, either collectively or individually.

Partnership working allows us to improve our reach to include more disabled people by working across sectors and boroughs with other organisations. In so doing, we raise awareness of the person-centred disabled-focussed services we provide within an expanded community. Thus securing the rights of more disabled people as full citizens, enabling them to improve their quality of life and promote an inclusive society where they participate fully and equally.

CHOICE is pleased to continually expand and strengthen the 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.

CHOICE's network of organisations includes, but is not limited to:

1. **Rethink Mental Illness (RMI)** – the lead provider of CHOICE's statutory and non-statutory advocacy services, which are funded by London Borough of Hackney. This relationship has developed well over the last 2+years and there is good rapport between both partners (at senior and staff levels) with regular referrals being made into the services.
2. **Community Alliance to Combat Hate ("CATCH")** – the consortium works in partnership with a network of community organisations (including CHOICE via its Disability Hate Crime service) specialising in supporting people who have experienced a hate crime due to their protected characteristics i.e. race/ethnicity, faith/religion, sexual orientation/gender identity and/or disability. Referrals come into CHOICE via CATCH's triage service, which is managed by Galop, the lead provider.

CHOICE also carries out joint-working with other disability-related partner organisations - Real and Stay Safe East.

CHOICE IN HACKNEY
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2025

Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance continued:

r) **PARTNERSHIP WORKING continued:**

3. **Hackney Council for Voluntary Service (HCVS)** – CHOICE is a long-term associate member of HCVS which acts as the catalyst between Hackney's third sector organisations / residents and the local authority to i.e. address inequalities in the borough. We have developed good working relationships with the charity and our Chief Executive Officer is a former board member. Our staff have gained knowledge, developed key skills after attending numerous training courses including on completing grant applications, first aid etc. We have also lent our support to HCVS' campaigns to lobby central and local governments to make Hackney a better place to live and work.
4. **Hackney People First** – supports disabled people with Learning Disabilities and CHOICE worked collaboratively with them for many years. In 2014, CHOICE partnered with them (and other local organisations including Disability Back-Up and the People's Network) to hold an event organised by and for Hackney's disabled residents to help develop inclusive and accessible services entitled "Nothing About Us, Without Us". The event was well attended with guest speakers including local Councillors.
5. **Inclusion London** – this pan-London disability-related organisation provides CHOICE with a range of training programmes to build our skills, knowledge and sustainability. CHOICE responds to requests for support in their policy work.
6. **Marie Lloyd Centre** – CHOICE's new location is within this centre of expertise, warmth, activity and connection for disabled people, older people, carers and those at risk of harm from addiction as it is shared space with other voluntary and third sector organisations where there are opportunities for closer joint-working. Our partners include: Age UK East London (landlord), City & Hackney Carers Centre, Holly Street Luncheon Club, the Huddleston Centre, MRS Independent Living and soon to include the Hackney Harm Reduction Hub.
7. **Hackney Opportunity Hub** – this organisation has 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.
8. **Alliance for Inclusive Education ("ALLFIE")** – we are working jointly with ALLFIE to increase the number of younger disabled people we support with our services, in particular CHOICE's Training & Employment Dept activities.

CHOICE IN HACKNEY
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2025

Financial Review:

At the end of the previous year Restricted Funds held amounted to £136,101. The majority of these were expended on the projects for which they were intended as set out in Note 12 of the financial statements. Further funds have been raised for ongoing activities and Restricted Funds of £62,502 are carried forward. In consequence there was a deficit in the Restricted Funds on the year of £73,599 (2024: deficit £60,798).

The unrestricted reserves carried forward from the previous year amounted to £140,603. After considering the deficit for the year of £41,682 (2024: surplus £92,988) the unrestricted reserves carried forward amounted to £98,921.

Total incoming resources amounted to £168,781 (2024: £319,482) and total resources expended were £284,062 (2024: £287,292). This resulted in a deficit on the year of £115,281 (2024: surplus £32,190).

Risk:

Trustees are pleased to report that following the appointment of a part-time Deputy Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who manages the Advocacy team, the CEO has been able to focus on the management of the whole organisation. This has continued to reduce the risk of over-reliance on the CEO allowing her to focus on meeting the strategic aims of the Charity and fundraising.

A new source of income has allowed CHOICE to introduce a new service – the Community Care & Housing service. This project is part of a consortium headed up by the Disability Law Service (DLS) and is funded for 1-year. However, the charity is hopeful the contract length will be extended beyond Jan 2026. This service has allowed the other projects within CHOICE to make referrals into it particularly with housing issues, which are very contemporary and our service users have access to specialist legal advice therefore mitigating risk of i.e. homelessness. The organisation will continue to source new funding in order to build on its current offer to its service users.

Due to increased use of Information Communications Technology, CHOICE dispensed with paper records in order to reduce storage space. With this came the risks from cyber-attack and the need for electronic data security. The Charity has taken further steps to enhance the reasonable data security measures that were already in place across all team members and Trustees are satisfied with these levels of protection.

CHOICE remains committed to the ideals of a Disabled People's User-Led Organisation ("DPULO"). As noted previously, this presents its own risks in a period of financial austerity. CHOICE continues to adapt business models and funding bids to articulate the added value created by employment of disabled staff. CHOICE will continue to work with others such as Inclusion London to campaign for Access to Work to cover full costs.

CHOICE IN HACKNEY
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2025

Reserves Policy:

The Charity sets aside funds, as unrestricted reserves to meet future anticipated or contingent expenditure, in particular to cover costs such as staff sickness or 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 £72,500 - £217,500.

CHOICE has made some use of Reserves to maintain existing and to develop new services. As a result, the tangible assets ("free reserves") have reduced and at the year-end amounted to £98,921 (2024: £140,603).

GOING CONCERN:

The Trustees actively foster relations with existing funders and seek additional funding sources emphasising the value for money in terms of historic costs per service user outcome. Further multi-year funding has been secured and will continue to be sourced, although as noted above, Restricted Funds are less than at the end of the previous year, they remain at a healthy level.

In consequence, the Trustees are of the opinion that the Charity will be able to continue as a going concern into 2028 and beyond.

CHOICE IN HACKNEY
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2025

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 LLP, 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 **12th Sept** 2025 and signed on their behalf by:



Vice-Chair: Andrew Price

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

TO THE MEMBERS OF CHOICE IN HACKNEY

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of Choice in Hackney for the period ended 31 March 2025.

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.

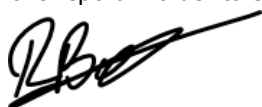
Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the Company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of the Company's accounts carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). 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

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.



Richard Billinghamurst
Knox Cropper LLP
Chartered Accountants
65-68 Leadenhall Street, London, EC3A 2AD

Date: 22/09/2025

CHOICE IN HACKNEY
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
(INCORPORATING THE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2025

	Notes	Restricted Funds £	Unrestricted Funds £	Total 2025 £	Restricted Funds £	Unrestricted Funds £	Total 2024 £
INCOME FROM:							
Grants and donations	2(a)	85,361	1,347	86,708	153,157	84,042	237,199
Charitable activities	2(b)	-	81,052	81,052	-	81,743	81,743
Investments		-	1,021	1,021	-	540	540
Other income		-	-	-	-	-	-
Total		<u>85,361</u>	<u>83,420</u>	<u>168,781</u>	<u>153,157</u>	<u>166,325</u>	<u>319,482</u>
EXPENDITURE ON:							
Raising funds	3	-	10,736	10,736	-	6,590	6,590
Charitable activities	3	158,960	114,366	273,326	213,955	66,747	280,702
Total		<u>158,960</u>	<u>125,102</u>	<u>284,062</u>	<u>213,955</u>	<u>73,337</u>	<u>287,292</u>
Net income/(expenditure)		(73,599)	(41,682)	(115,281)	(60,798)	92,988	32,190
Transfers between funds		-	-	-	-	-	-
NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS		<u>(73,599)</u>	<u>(41,682)</u>	<u>(115,281)</u>	<u>(60,798)</u>	<u>92,988</u>	<u>32,190</u>
Balances brought forward at 1 April		<u>136,101</u>	<u>140,603</u>	<u>276,704</u>	<u>196,899</u>	<u>47,615</u>	<u>244,514</u>
BALANCES CARRIED FORWARD AT 31 MARCH		<u>62,502</u>	<u>98,921</u>	<u>161,423</u>	<u>136,101</u>	<u>140,603</u>	<u>276,704</u>

All income and expenditure has arisen from continuing activities.

CHOICE IN HACKNEY**BALANCE SHEET****AS AT 31st MARCH 2025**

	Notes	2025	2024
		£	£
FIXED ASSETS			
Tangible Assets	7	-	-
Intangible Assets	8	2,246	3,208
		<u>2,246</u>	<u>3,208</u>
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors	9	103,315	194,633
Cash at Bank and in hand		<u>71,195</u>	<u>105,528</u>
		174,510	300,161
CREDITORS: Amounts falling due within one year	10	<u>(15,333)</u>	<u>(26,665)</u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS		159,177	273,496
NET ASSETS		<u>161,423</u>	<u>276,704</u>
FUNDS			
Restricted Funds	12	62,502	136,101
Unrestricted Funds			
Designated Funds		-	-
General Fund	11	<u>98,921</u>	<u>140,603</u>
		<u>161,423</u>	<u>276,704</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 **12th Sep 2025** and signed on behalf of the board

Vice-Chair: Andrew Price

Andrew Price

Treasurer: Matthew Baxter

Signed by:
Matthew Baxter
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Registered Company Number: 03423122

Registered Charity Number: 1077287

CHOICE IN HACKNEY

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2025

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.

The presentation currency of the financial statements is Pound Sterling (£).

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, audit and strategic planning.

f. Tangible and Intangible 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

Intangible assets are stated at cost less amortisation. Assets are amortised once brought into use. Amortisation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost less estimated residual value of each asset over its expected useful life, as follows:

CRM system: 20% straight line basis

CHOICE IN HACKNEY**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (Continued)****FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2025****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	Unrestricted Funds	2025 Total	2024 Total
	£	£	£	£
City Bridge Trust	56,540	-	56,540	57,315
Lloyds Bank Foundation	-	-	-	75,000
Mayor's Office for Policing & Crime (MOPAC)	23,175	-	23,175	22,838
The National Lottery	-	-	-	73,004
Inclusion London	-	823	823	7,375
Hackney Council FO	-	-	-	166
Alliance for Inclusive Education	-	120	120	300
Other income and Donations	-	404	404	1,201
Disability Law Service	5,646	-	5,646	-
	<u>85,361</u>	<u>1,347</u>	<u>86,708</u>	<u>237,199</u>

2(b). INCOMING RESOURCES FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES**- Contracts for services and performance related grants**

	Restricted Funds	Unrestricted Funds	2025 Total	2024 Total
	£	£	£	£
Homerton University Hospital – Advocacy	-	47,866	47,866	47,431
The Advocacy Project – Advocacy	-	-	-	4,380
Rethink Mental Illness - Advocacy	-	33,186	33,186	29,932
	<u>-</u>	<u>81,052</u>	<u>81,052</u>	<u>81,743</u>

CHOICE IN HACKNEY**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (Continued)****FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2025****3. ANALYSIS OF RESOURCES EXPENDED**

	Raising Funds	Charitable Activities	Total 2025	Total 2024
<u>Unrestricted</u>	£	£	£	£
Staff costs	10,736	96,627	107,363	65,896
Staff training	-	-	-	50
Accountancy	-	1,100	1,100	662
Independent examination fee	-	1,030	1,030	850
Rent	-	6,860	6,860	1,150
Other Costs	-	8,039	8,039	4,479
Legal & Professional Fees	-	710	710	250
	10,736	114,366	125,102	73,337
<u>Restricted</u>				
Staff costs	-	124,722	124,722	152,161
Staff training	-	95	95	150
Accountancy	-	2,357	2,357	2,628
Independent examination fee	-	2,370	2,370	2,400
Rent	-	15,709	15,709	21,200
Other Costs	-	11,920	11,920	32,990
Legal & Professional Fees	-	1,787	1,787	2,426
	-	158,960	158,960	213,955
	10,736	273,326	284,062	287,292

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 £18,000 (2024: £18,000).

4. STAFF NUMBERS AND COSTS

	2025 £	2024 £
Salaries	213,092	203,475
Social security costs	14,613	10,538
Employer pension	4,380	4,044
Redundancy costs	-	-
	<u>232,085</u>	<u>218,057</u>

The average number of employees during the year was 11 (2024:10).

1 employee earned more than £60,000 during the year under review (2024: none).

The remuneration of senior management amounted to £62,941 (2024: £51,117).

CHOICE IN HACKNEY

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (Continued)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2025

5. TRUSTEES REMUNERATION

During the year, one Trustee received reimbursement of expenses amounting to £13 (2024: £13).

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 2024	2,316	23,964	26,280
Additions	-	-	-
At 31 st March 2025	<u>2,316</u>	<u>23,964</u>	<u>26,280</u>
Depreciation			
At 1 st April 2024	2,316	23,964	26,280
Charged for the year	-	-	-
At 31 st March 2025	<u>2,316</u>	<u>23,964</u>	<u>26,280</u>
Net Book Value			
At 31 st March 2025	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
At 31 st March 2024	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>

8. INTANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	CRM System £
Cost	
At 1 st April 2024	4,812
Additions	-
At 31 st March 2025	<u>4,812</u>
Depreciation	
At 1 st April 2024	1,604
Charged for the year	962
At 31 st March 2025	<u>2,566</u>
Net Book Value	
At 31 st March 2025	<u>2,246</u>
At 31 st March 2024	<u>3,208</u>

CHOICE IN HACKNEY**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (Continued)****FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2025****9. DEBTORS**

	2025	2024
	£	£
Grant debtors	35,211	34,679
Prepayments and other debtors	8,154	5,054
Accrued income	59,950	154,900
	<u>103,315</u>	<u>194,633</u>

10. CREDITORS: Amounts falling due within this year

PAYE	5,492	7,024
Accruals and other creditors	9,841	19,641
	<u>15,333</u>	<u>26,665</u>

11. UNRESTRICTED FUNDS

	Brought Forward	Incoming Resources	Resources Expended	Transfers	Carried Forward
	£	£	£	£	£
General Fund	140,603	83,420	(125,102)	-	98,921
Total Unrestricted Funds	<u>140,603</u>	<u>83,420</u>	<u>(125,102)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>98,921</u>

PRIOR YEAR

	Brought Forward	Incoming Resources	Resources Expended	Transfers	Carried Forward
	£	£	£	£	£
General Fund	47,615	166,325	(73,337)	-	140,603
Total Unrestricted Funds	<u>47,615</u>	<u>166,325</u>	<u>(73,337)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>140,603</u>

CHOICE IN HACKNEY**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (Continued)****FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2025****12. RESTRICTED FUNDS**

	Brought Forward	Incoming Resources	Resources Expended	Transfers	Carried Forward
	£	£	£	£	£
Disability LIB	499	23,175	(23,674)	-	-
Advocacy, Training and Employment	126,710	-	(67,187)	-	59,523
Information Guidance & Advocacy	8,892	56,540	(62,453)	-	2,979
Disability Law Service	-	5,646	(5,646)	-	-
Active Lifestyle	-	-	-	-	-
Total Restricted Funds	136,101	85,361	(158,960)	-	62,502

PRIOR YEAR	Brought Forward	Incoming Resources	Resources Expended	Transfers	Carried Forward
	£	£	£	£	£
Disability LIB	499	22,838	(22,838)	-	499
Advocacy, Training and Employment	196,400	-	(69,690)	-	126,710
Information Guidance & Advocacy	-	57,315	(48,423)	-	8,892
Cost of Living Fund	-	73,004	(73,004)	-	-
Total Restricted Funds	196,899	153,157	(213,955)	-	136,101

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.

Information Guidance & Advocacy – funding received from City Bridge Trust (the funding arm of The City of London Corporation's charity, Bridge House Estate) – for the provision of information, guidance and advocacy to disabled residents of Hackney and the City, allowing independence, choice and control over their lives and reducing inequality.

CHOICE IN HACKNEY**NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (Continued)****FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2025**

Community Care & Housing – the service is funded by City Bridge Foundation and promotes social welfare advice; linking trainee solicitors with organisations in the community. This collaboration between the lead provider, Disability Law Service and CHOICE allowed the charity to launch a free legal advice clinic providing advice to those who have a community care or housing issue.

Cost of Living Fund – The Government's Community Organisations Cost of Living Fund, delivered by The National Lottery Community Fund supported a new project "Relieving the cost of living for disabled people of Hackney". This went towards the continuation and expansion of existing services to help meet the increased levels of demand within the cost of living crisis.

13. FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS

At the 31st March 2025 the Charity had commitments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:

	2025	2024
	£	£
Amounts payable:		
Within one year	3,924	23,713
Between two and five years	3,270	12,402
After five years	-	-
	<u>7,194</u>	<u>36,115</u>

In addition to the above, the Charity has a licence agreement for its office premises for an annual rent of £25,000. The licence is reviewed every June.

14. CAPITAL COMMITMENTS

There were no capital commitments at 31st March 2025 (2024: Nil).

15. CONTINGENT LIABILITIES

There were no contingent liabilities at 31st March 2025 (2024: Nil).

16. NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

	Fixed Assets	Cash at Bank	Debtors	Current Liabilities	Total
	£	and in Hand £	£	£	£
Unrestricted	2,246	68,643	43,365	(15,333)	98,921
Restricted	-	2,552	59,950	-	62,502
Total	<u>2,246</u>	<u>71,195</u>	<u>103,315</u>	<u>(15,333)</u>	<u>161,423</u>

CHOICE IN HACKNEY

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (Continued)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2025

<i>PRIOR YEAR</i>	Fixed Assets	Cash at Bank	Debtors	Current Liabilities	Total
	£	and in Hand £	£	£	£
Unrestricted	3,208	40,663	123,397	(26,665)	140,603
Restricted	-	64,865	71,236	-	136,101
Total	3,208	105,528	194,633	(26,665)	276,704

17. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

There were no related party transaction during the year.