

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

England & Wales · Charity number 1082335

Details

Other names	THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS LIMITED
Status	Registered
Legal form	Charitable company
Company number	04029535
Registered	2000-09-07
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

Address	Kilburn Grange Priory Park Road London NW6 7UJ
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Website	www.tcf.org.uk

Activities

Objects: (I) TO ADVANCE AND ASSIST IN MENTAL AND PHYSICAL WELFARE FOLLOWING SUFFERING AND INFIRMITY AMONG (A) PARENTS OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF THEIR CHILD(REN) AND (B) OTHER CLOSE RELATIVES OF ANY SUCH CHILD(REN), NORMALLY BROTHERS, SISTERS AND GRANDPARENTS;(II) TO PROMOTE AND SUPPORT RESEARCH INTO AND TO PUBLISH THE RESULTS OF RESEARCH INTO MEDICINE AND ROAD SAFETY AND OTHER CHILD LIFE PROTECTION PROJECTS LIKELY OR INTENDED EFFECTIVELY TO REDUCE DEATHS AMONG CHILDREN.

Activities: Provide peer support to parents who are bereaved of a child or children of any age (from 1 month old to an adult child) from any cause. Support is also provided to adult siblings who are bereaved of a brother or sister and also to bereaved grandparents. Information is also given to professionals involved in bereavement care.

Classification

- **How:** Provides Human Resources, Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information, Sponsors Or Undertakes Research, Acts As An Umbrella Or Resource Body
- **What:** Education/training, The Advancement Of Health Or Saving Of Lives
- **Who:** Other Defined Groups

Geography

- **Area of benefit:** NOT DEFINED. IN PRACTICE, THE UNITED KINGDOM
- Northern Ireland
- Scotland
- Throughout England And Wales

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£543,076	£504,801	£261,536	9
2024-03-31	£385,181	£572,415	-	-
2023-03-31	£488,834	£567,343	-	-
2022-03-31	£459,980	£378,221	-	-
2021-03-31	£364,068	£288,010	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Adelle Brenner		2022-11-26
Antonio Bruno		2024-11-16
David William Scammell		2025-11-22
George Robert Murray Burn		2017-11-25
Gillian Sue Hardy		2017-11-25
Jacqueline Diane Hewitt		2024-11-16
Karen Chandler		2024-11-16
Lindsay Victoria Garfitt-Brown		2025-11-22
MELIAN BARBARA MANSFIELD		2020-02-01
Sefton Elia Kwasnik		2023-01-21
Sheila Mary Phillips		2018-11-25

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Accounts

**THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT
AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
31 MARCH 2025**

Company Registration Number 04029535
Charity Number 1082335



The
**Compassionate
Friends**

Supporting bereaved parents and their families

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

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THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Introduction

The Compassionate Friends (Charity no. 1082335) was established in 1969 as a national charitable organisation supporting bereaved parents, adult siblings and grandparents after the death of a child of any age (from one month old to an adult child) and from any cause.

The Trustees of The Compassionate Friends ("TCF") present their annual report for the year ending 31 March 2025.

This Report has been prepared in accordance with the Charity's governing document and Statement of Recommended Practice (FRS102 2019) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities", published by the Charity Commission.

Our legal status and governance structure are explained in the "Structure, Governance and Management" section of this report.

Our Mission

The Compassionate Friends exists to make a difference by providing support, understanding, empathy and hope to bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents who have experienced the death of a child or children of any age (over one month old to an adult son or daughter) and from any cause.

We do this by offering high quality, accessible peer support services and information to bereaved parents and their families. We also provide information to professionals supporting bereaved parents.

Our Vision

Every bereaved parent, adult sibling and grandparent throughout the UK can find and access the lifeline of high quality, appropriate and safe peer support services.

Our Values

These basic principles guide all our activities and interactions:

- Empathy
- Compassion
- Respect
- Integrity
- Inclusivity

Our Purposes

TCF is a registered charity (no. 1082335) and its purposes are as set out in the objects contained in the Memorandum and Articles of Association:

(i) To advance and assist in mental and physical welfare following suffering among (a) parents occasioned by the death of their child(ren) and (b) other close relatives of such child(ren), normally brothers, sisters and grandparents.

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(ii) To promote and support research on parental and sibling grief intended to help to change and improve the quality of support and care provided by health, social care, political and other supporters for grieving parents and siblings.

The focus of our work and who benefits from our services

In 2024 there were 3577 deaths of children aged 1-17 years in England and Wales (National Child Mortality Database). Each year in England and Wales there are 80,000 deaths of females and 112,000 deaths of males aged 20 - 49 years. (Office of National Statistics- 2021) Many of these children not only leave behind a partner and children but grieving parents who have tragically outlived their son or daughter.

The impact of the death of a child of any age on parents and families – whether sudden or anticipated - is devastating. Grieving parents suffer deep trauma, intense and often overwhelming pain following a bereavement that is so out of the natural order. Mental health issues, chronic illness, family breakdown, and job loss can be significantly higher among those affected. Child loss can be very isolating. It can be hard to talk about, and support is sometimes inadequate and/or hard to find. Both the physical and emotional impact of the death of a child in the family is huge, intense, complex, and often long-lasting. Family and friends can be unaware of the enormity and long-lasting impact of child loss on an individuals' physical and mental health. Even grief professionals sometimes admit they are not well equipped to help families through this unique kind of loss.

The Compassionate Friends ("TCF") exists to fill this gap — providing peer support that helps families feel less alone and begin to rebuild their lives.

Our volunteers – all bereaved parents, siblings or grandparents themselves - provide empathy, support, understanding and hope to those who have suffered the death of a child or children of any age (from one month old to an adult son or daughter) and from any cause of death - for instance as a result of road traffic incident, a short or longer term illness (for example, cancer), sudden unexpected death (for example through an accident or sudden illness), by suicide or through drug or alcohol use. We are the only UK wide charity offering this peer-to-peer support to parents and their families.

The context of our work

The charity environment has been tough in the last few years. With cost of living challenges and political and economic uncertainty, individuals have less and so give less. Trusts and foundations have faced similar challenges, experiencing a downturn in income while grant applications have increased substantially. With more competition for a fewer number of grants, income for our work from trusts and foundations has seen a significant reduction. In the last two years, we had raised less than we have invested in our services and so this year in 2024-2025 there was a need to change that landscape. Financial stability and sustainability is now a key objective and increasing funding for our work is and continues to be a priority for the charity.

During this period, we also experienced challenges with retention of volunteers providing peer support. Many were increasingly impacted by events in their own lives, including ill-health of themselves or other family members, other caring responsibilities, and/or financial pressures meaning they could devote less time to volunteering. To manage these challenges, we prioritised support for our volunteers, focusing on helping to build resilience in the volunteer team. We prioritised quality and best practice in all our peer support and implemented new systems, processes and policies to provide volunteers with the best possible environment to offer consistent high levels of service for our beneficiaries and improve outcomes.

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Our Objectives in 2024- 5

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

Our main activities and beneficiaries are described below.

This year we began implementation of our 3 year strategic plan covering the period 2024-2027. Our strategic objectives are:

- Improvement in the quality of our peer support to reflect best practice;
- Continued development of infrastructure, staff and capabilities to improve outcomes and capacity; and
- Diversification of fundraising strategy and capabilities to increase fundraising and ensure financial sustainability.

Our Activities

National Helpline

Our **National Helpline** is usually the first point of contact for a newly bereaved parent. 20 trained and supported bereaved parent volunteers offered an empathic listening and support service by telephone which was open as often as possible 365 days a year. During the period of this report over 1,132 calls were received, a similar level to the previous year when we had already experienced a 33% year on year increase in calls. Approximately 130 emails per month (total of 1,560) were received by the helpline requesting support – all need follow up, finding out more information, validating parents' experience and connecting the parent with appropriate peer support.

During this year the helpline continued to receive **increasing requests from professionals** including social prescribers from GP practices, counsellors, mental health support workers and organisations offering specific support who wished to signpost a parent to TCF to supplement support they were already offering.

Support groups and one to one support

75 facilitators and co-facilitators offered confidential support groups for parents in locations throughout the UK. Volunteers also offer **one-to-one telephone and in person support** to grieving parents in their locality. Newly bereaved parents are put in touch with their local support contact or local group facilitators through the Helpline referral process.

Private **Facebook groups** are moderated by trained volunteers and offer opportunities for parents bereaved in specific ways to share together and find connection. These groups include those for parents bereaved through suicide, by substance use or alcohol, the loss of a baby or very young child, and for parents who have lost their only child or all their children. Our **Online Forum** continued to provide a compassionate space for bereaved parents to find understanding and empathy.

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Retreats and support days

During the period of the report over 400 parents and siblings attended overnight retreats or support days. The programme for each retreat included workshops, sharing sessions, creative, active and memorial sessions, talks and other supportive activities.

38 bursaries were offered to bereaved individuals who would be unable to attend a weekend or support day without financial assistance. We continued to experience increasing applications for this assistance as bereaved parents and siblings were impacted by cost of living and other economic challenges. At the same time, the cost of venues and travel to venues increased and we continued to be required to subsidise the cost of in-person supportive events.

We provided **retreat weekends** for:

- Parents bereaved by suicide or substance use (July 2024, Leeds). 50% of the parents attended lost to suicide and 50% to drug or alcohol use. 40% of the parents attending had experienced the death of their child within the last 3 years, with over half of those bereaved in the last year.
- Parents bereaved of their only child or all their children (September 2024, Bath). 30 parents attended.
- Parents in early bereavement (March 2024, Bath). 39 parents bereaved 3 years or less were supported by 12 volunteers.
- Bereaved parents held in Scotland (May 2024, Stirling). 75 parents attended for the weekend with an additional 28 as day visitors.
- Two overnight retreats for bereaved adult siblings (18 years or over) (April 2024, Lincolnshire and March 2025, Derbyshire).

Support days were held for:

- Northumberland support day for bereaved parents (September 2024)
- Bereaved fathers support day (October 2024)
- Devon support days for bereaved parents (Exeter, June 2024 and March 2025)
- Scotland support day for bereaved parents (Edinburgh, March 2025)

Library and publications

Our postal library continued to offer parents, siblings and grandparents a personal service of books and resources to support them after child or sibling loss. Books sent out are hand-picked by our librarian and tailored to the experience of the bereaved individual.

Over 60 leaflets and fact sheets are published in digital and print format offering information and support to bereaved parents and families, professionals and family supporters. Leaflets are distributed with bereavement support information packs to every newly bereaved parent and family member contacting us. 1,400 bereavement support packs were sent during this period. We continued to update our publications to ensure they are both inclusive and reflect the diversity of bereaved parents and their families. New or significantly rewritten leaflets in the period include:

Our surviving adult children and Our surviving children (under 18 years old); Grieving for our baby; A mother's grief; Handbook for remembering your child, Back at work; Coping with stigma and other judgmental attitudes; Death of an adult child and The sudden death of our child. A new leaflet for surviving siblings was published covering Navigating family relationships after the loss of a sibling.

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Our charity's magazine, *Compassion*, written by the bereaved for the bereaved continues to be published in digital and printed format and is distributed to all our beneficiaries. In 2024 we welcomed a new volunteer, Andrea Corrie, as editor.

We collaborated with the podcast provider, Bereaved Parents Club, to offer their podcasts made by bereaved parents and siblings via the TCF website.

Highlights and achievements in the year

Grief Companion Scheme

Since its inception, the Grief Companion Scheme has **supported over 400 parents** in very early grief. A grief companion is a volunteer who offers telephone or email support to a more recently bereaved parent. Typically, they offer this support once a week, for about an hour, for a period of up to 12 months, although this can vary according to need. This service is usually for those recently bereaved parents who have no other support close by but can also be where existing support is unsuitable for some reason (e.g. social anxiety, physical frailty, disability or transport or financial constraints restricting ability to travel). The Scheme allows us to carefully tailor support to the individual needs of grieving parents and has meant that we could get help to parents very quickly compared to some other services.

The grief companion and newly bereaved parent are usually matched taking account of a combination of the circumstances of their child's death, the age of their son or daughter when they died and their other life circumstances. The Volunteer and Helpline Manager and Grief Companion Manager worked closely together to ensure appropriate support was put in place for newly bereaved parents where it was felt that this type of peer support would be beneficial.

On average during this period there were 5 matches made per month. Approximately 50% of matches made continued for the full 12-month period of support with others either continuing into the new financial year or supporting for around 8 months. After one-to-one grief companion support, many parents tend to go on to access other peer support offered by TCF including retreats, support days, online and in-person groups. 56 volunteer grief companions were actively supporting during the year, with some volunteers supporting more than one parent. 19 grief companions are bereaved fathers, with 9 of those actively supporting during this year.

Feedback we have received from newly bereaved parents after being supported by the Scheme includes:

"I am benefitting enormously from the grief companion service and I'm so grateful... thank you (TCF) for being such an extraordinary support".

"Having a grief companion has given me a glimmer of hope in my grief that I may not always feel as horrific.... I also know that if there is something that comes up as I move along, I have somebody, who truly understands that I can share my feelings with and hopefully receive some good advice and emotional support. The support has been invaluable".

"Having a grief companion has made a tremendous difference. I credit my survival to key people and J is one of those that has supported me on this journey...it is such a huge blessing to have a grief companion".

Volunteers also benefit from the grief companion role. Many tell us that being able to support and offer empathic listening to another grieving parent has helped them with their own grief.

"(Being a grief companion has) given me a sense that something good can be born out of something so very awful - to be able to give support/guidance as someone who "gets it" has been amazing - and it's been lovely to be able to share memories of both our amazing girls with each other".

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"Being a grief companion has helped me realise that maybe I have turned a corner in my own grief in these last 5 years more than I had realised. I have felt alone and vulnerable and being able to support someone going through this trauma through their first year is important to me".

"It has helped me think about my own grief and how to manage it better".

Training and support for volunteers

For our volunteers, being there for others can have an impact on their own well-being as they listen and are alongside others' stories of loss and grief, many of which can be traumatic, complex and very raw. As the reach of the charity grows and as bereaved family members are finding us at an earlier point in their grief – sometimes on the day of death or before the funeral – this can all contribute to volunteers' own grief and wellbeing being impacted at times. Volunteer retention continued to be a challenge during this year – an issue affecting the charity sector generally. As part of our focus on supporting and encouraging self-awareness, self-care and building resilience, we offered the opportunity for all volunteers to attend a Resilience Workshop. 4 sessions were offered between September 2024 and January 2025. Volunteers told us:

"It was a very helpful evening to reflect on self-care, vulnerability and holding boundaries".

"All the training and support you offer is appreciated and makes a positive difference".

Throughout the year, we held **monthly volunteer sharing sessions** to enable volunteers to share and learn together, to understand more about the different support roles within our charity and to support one another with common challenges. We also provided sharing sessions for volunteers in specific roles, including for our walks facilitators or for Facebook private group and Forum moderators.

These sessions are facilitated by TCF staff team members but very much led by our volunteers' concerns and needs. Many of the concerns and issues are common across all the teams of volunteers, in whatever way they are offering support to others – for instance, supporting volunteers with boundary issues when supporting others, managing dominance at online or in person support group meetings as well as issues with onboarding and training of volunteers. These and other matters are regularly discussed to ensure a consistent approach across the charity. Volunteers have told us they appreciate being able to support one another and that they feel less alone with the support they are offering by meeting together regularly with the wider volunteer team.

"As a new volunteer, the wonderful support and encouragement I have received from TCF enables me to be there for others".

"Having contact with other volunteers through the regular online meetings has made a huge difference to my feeling supported as a volunteer and feeling part of a team, rather than a 'lone worker.' - volunteer grief companion

We continued to offer **a whole volunteer meeting online** every 6 months where volunteers hear from speakers from both inside and outside of our charity and are updated on news from our charity. During this period our volunteers heard from parents bereaved by mental health challenges and substance use, and from suicide. The aim of these presentations was to increase understanding and training and to ensure that volunteers have a greater appreciation of some the judgement and stigma surrounding these types of death.

"The online meetings are very helpful and inspiring. I hope I have the resilience to do my very best for as long as possible." – new volunteer, A

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Our **Hear For You listening support service** continued to be available to all active TCF volunteers. Any volunteer could access up to 3 confidential therapeutic sessions with one of two qualified counsellors, both bereaved parents with volunteering experience with TCF. The sessions are free of charge to volunteers and usually conducted online. The service is available to all volunteers to talk about the impact and challenges around supporting others and for when they are perhaps feeling less resilient, either related to their volunteering role, own grief or personal lives or simply to talk confidentially with someone who understands their peer support role. We encourage all volunteers to have a regular annual session as a wellbeing check-up and all new volunteers to access a session after their first 6 months in a supporting role.

"I used the Hear For You service...after the (grief companion) match ended. I was able to talk it through with her along with some other more personal issues. I found it very useful".

During winter/spring 2025, we held a series of **refresher workshops for local in-person support group facilitators**. The programme focused on sharing and encouraging best practice in peer support in a group context. We covered important aspects of group facilitation including preparation, beginnings, middles and endings of meetings, self-disclosure, inclusivity and more.

The **Volunteer Hub** on our website has been improved too to offer more tailored and practical support for volunteers.

Online support groups

Online support allows parents and siblings wherever they are in the country to meet and share with others who have experienced a similar loss and find empathy, support and hope. **45 online support groups** were run during the period of this report, facilitated each time by at least two trained volunteers. This online support was provided for parents who had experienced the loss of an older adult child (35 years+), or loss by road traffic incident, suicide, baby or toddler loss, loss of a school age child, cancer, substance or alcohol use. Groups were also held for parents bereaved of their only child or all their children, and for parents in the first three years of their loss. A group for bereaved fathers ran regularly too over the year. We offered 4 opportunities for bereaved adult siblings to come together online in a support group meeting.

"It was helpful to be able to hear other people's experience of grieving an older child which resonated with my own experience. Realisation that all I am feeling about my loss and my grieving experience is normal". – parent bereaved of older adult child

This year we added several new online support groups. Sadly, we have experienced a significant rise in parents contacting us who have lost **a pre-teen or teenage child (11-19 years) to suicide**. We piloted a group in November 2024 for these parents, and we will continue to run this group on a regular basis.

"Really grateful that this group was created. We all felt that we have different needs to parents who've lost an older adult child. Narrowing down based on our child's age was very valuable" – C, parent bereaved of daughter aged 13 to suicide

We were aware that a number of parents supported by TCF have experienced the death of a child with disabilities, complex or additional needs, and that there are aspects of this loss which are unique and present particular challenges and sadness. A new online group was offered this year for these parents and held meetings in July and November. We plan to continue this group in the future.

"To be honest I was dreading it. However, it was perfectly run and a safe space to talk about things others simply cannot comprehend" – C, parent bereaved of her daughter aged 35

In some parts of the UK, we recognise that there is no local support for parents or the in-person support there

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is can be difficult to access because of geography. We began a series of online support groups in specific locations which had the twin aims of increasing support in an area and also encouraging parents who might wish to train as a volunteer offering in-person support locally. The first area targeted was Sussex and we held three consecutive online groups for any bereaved parent in the county. Three groups for parents in Wales followed and next year we will be running online support for bereaved individuals living in northern Scotland.

“(The group was) sensitively and carefully facilitated by the TCF team. It was very emotional which made it very real and I found it made me face some things which were hard but necessary” – C, bereaved parent living in Wales.

“(We) found solace along with sadness too, that made us feel a lot less lonely in our grief” – S&L, bereaved parents living in Sussex

Supportive walks

A programme of supportive walks throughout the UK continued allowing bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents to come together walking and talking in the fresh air and among nature to find support, understanding and friendship with others similarly bereaved. **A team of 30 volunteer walk facilitators** offered walking and talking opportunities in London, Norfolk, Cumbria, Suffolk, Wales/Shropshire, Merseyside, Scotland, Southwest England, Buckinghamshire and more. New walks were offered in Northern Ireland, Huddersfield, Lancashire, Gloucestershire and Cornwall. A total of 68 walks were held during the year (a 50% increase on the previous year). Over 650 parents and adult siblings have been supported on TCF walks this year.

Financial Review

The Trustees are responsible for the finances of the Charity. They monitor the finances of TCF by receiving a financial report at each trustee meeting and by adopting a budget for each financial year.

The Trustees monitor three main aspects of the charity's finances:

- The income from various sources
- The expenses
- The reserves

Income

TCF receives donations and other income from a variety of sources, including general donations from individuals, companies and community organisations. TCF makes applications to Trusts and Foundations and takes part in Fundraising Events.

Our support days and weekend retreats are funded by beneficiaries who pay for accommodation, donors who offer bursaries and other TCF funding which may be restricted or unrestricted funds.

Income is recorded as either unrestricted or restricted funding.

Expenditure

Expenses are categorised under the following headings:

- Costs of generating funds
- Charitable activities, support costs
- Core activities
- Governance costs

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- Costs of generating funds includes fundraising staff salaries and trading expenses
- Charitable activities support costs, includes staff salaries, rent for office space, and general office running costs
- Core activities are those attributed to the peer support offered to beneficiaries, including support days/weekends, Grief Companion Scheme, Helpline, Library and volunteer training and support
- Governance costs cover audit fees, bookkeeping, insurance and other professional support

All expenditure is coded and allocated either to unrestricted or restricted funding. Restricted funding is donated for specific work and is spent according to the agreed budget between the donor and TCF.

Trustees are pleased to report that for the year under review total income received was sufficient to cover total expenditure leaving a total surplus of unrestricted and restricted funds of £38,275.

Details of income and expenditure are shown in the Statement of Financial Activities on page 19, together with notes to the accounts.

Total income and expenditure for the year:

Income received	2024-25: £543,076	(2023-24 : £385,181)
Expenditure	2024-25: £504,801	(2023-24 : £572,415)

Total fund balances at 31 March 2025 including funds brought forward at 1 April 2024:

Unrestricted funds (general reserves)	£224,471
Restricted funds	£ 37,065
Total funds at 31 March 2025	£261,536

Successful fundraising was key to the balanced budget for this year together with receipt of a legacy. In particular, fundraising events raised an additional £65,446 more than budget and TCF was gifted a legacy of £51,873.

In an effort to maintain the level of income needed to support TCF's broad range of peer support activities, an additional member of staff for the fundraising team was appointed in 2024.

Reserves

Unrestricted (general) reserves at 31 March 2025 were **£224,471** (2023-24 £170,814).

Trustees review the Reserves Policy each year. The policy is based on the Charity Commission's guidelines which require trustees to determine the level of funding required to continue its operations. Our current policy is that TCF should have four months of general reserves in hand to support the ongoing expenditure of the charity. The carry forward funds balance of unrestricted general reserve funding of £224,471 is sufficient to meet these criteria: should the unrestricted funds increase substantially then trustees would review the current budget and increase support work accordingly.

Regular review and monitoring of income and expenditure

An important aspect of Trustees' responsibilities is that of ensuring funds are available and we rely on accurate and timely monthly management accounts to keep abreast of any fall in income or unexpected costs. In general, the cost of living has risen during the past twelve months under review and shows no sign of falling in the near

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future. This affects the level of incoming donations and the ability of Trusts and Foundations to continue financial support due to the demand from charities for funding.

Our bookkeeping routines continue to improve and together with regular review of finances they allow us to make timely decisions to ensure the stability of the peer support which TCF offers.

We are very grateful to all our supporters who make TCF's work possible.

Risks

Trustees are aware of the impact of the cost-of-living crisis which affects the level of general donations from members and supporters. Every effort is made to communicate with donors and to keep abreast of the volatility of income.

Applications to Trusts, Foundations and Companies are more likely to be unsuccessful during a period of economic downturn as the funds which they have to allocate may be less when interest rates are low.

Trustees are also aware of the increase in general expenditure for the Charity. Costs are scrutinised and savings made where possible.

Future Plans

We will continue to focus on offering appropriate and tailored layers of peer support to bereaved parents, adult bereaved siblings and grandparents – including via our National Helpline, support days and retreats, local groups and one-to-one support, grief companion support, supportive walks, leaflets, publications and library access, and online support groups. We will continue to focus on our key objectives to guide our work with bereaved individuals, namely:

- Continue to develop the quality of our peer support to reflect best practice
- Increase and develop outcomes and capacity to offer support in-person, via telephone and online by developing infrastructure, staff and capabilities
- Build our fundraising capacity to increase funding and ensure financial sustainability, by targeting individual giving and effectively support and steward donors.

As part of our strategy, we will continue to identify and focus on mitigation of **key risk factors** for the charity in four key areas – our people, finances, facilities and the environment in which we operate.

During 2024 we began planning for **in-person overnight retreats for our volunteers**. The first of these will be held in northern England in April 2025, with a second retreat in March 2026 in southern England. These events are intended to enable us to meet with many of our volunteers in person and spend some time together, where volunteers are not required to support others. The content will be a mix of volunteer role-related discussion, along with elements of self-care. The emphasis will be on coming together, sharing our experiences and supporting each other.

Best practice across the charity will continue to be identified and shared to ensure that we create a learning community where feedback can be used to continue to develop the quality of peer support provided. We will encourage beneficiaries to give quantitative (and qualitative) feedback so that we can continue to monitor quality of peer support. We will act on feedback to develop and change our services where needed.

Commitment to **equity, diversity and inclusion (“EDI”)** will become part of the way we operate to ensure our charity is as inclusive as possible for beneficiaries, staff, trustees and volunteers. We will provide training to staff, trustees and volunteers and develop our outreach to diverse communities to ensure that there is equal access to TCF's peer support for bereaved parents and their families.

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We will continue to develop robust **safeguarding policies and procedures**, working with trustees, staff and volunteers to review regularly our safeguarding practice.

We will continue to focus on increasing our **communications** capacity and effectiveness. In 2024 we appointed a part-time Communications Officer who has begun the work of using our digital communications messages to reach wider and more diverse audiences. We have collaborated with the Bereaved Parents Club to make a wide range of podcasts available via TCF's website. We will continue to work on tighter branding for all digital communications, on social media and by email. We will develop a communications plan including regular supportive newsletters to all beneficiaries.

We will review and improve our **website** to ensure inclusivity, ease of navigation and access to supportive materials.

We plan to create a **film** to reach out to a range of diverse communities of bereaved parents and siblings to publicise the benefits and power of peer support and encourage the bereaved to contact our charity.

We will review the charity's **membership structure** and simplify to help modernize, ensure good governance and increase administrative efficiency. We will focus on **individual giving** from within and outside of the bereaved community. We will provide a **regular fundraising newsletter** to ensure all our donors are aware of the work we are able to do as a result of their donations. We will create an **annual fundraising event** with participation by bereaved individuals, but also friends and family. We will consider if we are able to **develop our fundraising team** to further build our income to enable us to continue to develop the support we are providing.

We will continue to work with and collaborate with **partners and networks** in bereavement support to increase visibility and reach of our support services, for example as members of relevant All Party Parliamentary Groups, National Bereavement Alliance and Support After Suicide Partnership. We will continue to network with other bereavement support charities and agencies.

Structure, Governance and Management

As a company limited by guarantee registered in England & Wales, TCF is governed by its Memorandum & Articles of Association. The organisation was based in Kilburn, London, throughout the year with a network of volunteers throughout the UK.

The Board of TCF is comprised of between six and twelve elected trustees. An elected trustee must be a beneficiary of the charity and has to apply to stand in an election by providing a short CV, details of their experience within TCF and a personal statement. Candidates are supplied with information on the responsibilities of a trustee prior to election and after election are supplied with further charity guidance booklets and details of relevant external information and training days on charity governance and management. Elected trustees serve for three years (extendable to three years and three months). Elections are held annually and by digital and postal vote; if the number of vacancies for elected trustees exceeds the number of nominated candidates, then the candidates are deemed to have been elected and there is no need for a vote. No elected trustee can be in office for longer than three terms of three years, either served consecutively or with breaks.

The Chair or Co-Chairs can serve for a maximum of three years.

Members of the charity and external candidates with the required knowledge and skills needed on the Board of Trustees are also invited to apply to join as a co-opted trustee. In addition, trustee advisors can be invited to join the Board for varying short periods of time in order to give the Board specialist advice or help.

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

All strategic directions and policies are determined by the Board of Trustees and monitored at regular Board meetings and against an annual budget.

All key decisions regarding policy, strategy, finance, governance and major pastoral issues, are taken by the Board of Trustees. Decisions are reached by a majority vote of trustees, either by voting at the regular Board meetings (absent trustees are regarded as bound by the majority votes of all trustees present) or through Board members voting by email. Certain decisions regarding the pastoral work, volunteer recruitment, training and support are delegated to the CEO and operations team but need to be ratified by the Board before they can be implemented. Key decisions regarding office management are taken by the CEO in close consultation with the Chair or Co-Chairs of trustees and, where appropriate, the Board of Trustees.

In deciding on setting pay and remuneration for the charity's key management personnel, the trustees refer to the Pay Review Policy and always bear in mind rates of pay for equivalent roles in charities of comparable size. In setting the pay for the Chief Executive, the trustees considered the requirements for the role and pay for comparable roles in similarly sized charities. The trustees will review the pay of the Chief Executive at least once a year.

Trustees' Responsibilities

The trustees (who are also directors of The Compassionate Friends for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report (incorporating the strategic report and directors' report) and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102: *The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland* (United Kingdom Accepted Accounting Practice).

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

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

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

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 18 October 2025 and signed on their behalf by:


Melian Mansfield (Nov 8, 2025 14:23:06 GMT)

Melian Mansfield
Co-Chairs of Trustees


George Burn (Oct 30, 2025 18:10:52 GMT)

George Burn

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

REFERENCE & ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

The Trustee Board

Co-Chairs: Melian Mansfield and George Burn

Vice- Chair: Vacant

Trustee and Company Secretary: Warren Weiss

Other Trustees

Ken Barclay	(resigned 16 November 2024)
Adelle Brenner	
Bruno Antonio	(appointed 16 November 2024)
Karen Chandler	(appointed 16 November 2024)
Claire Coveney	(resigned 1 June 2024)
Alison Cramp	
Gill Hardy	
Jackie Hewitt	(appointed 16 November 2024)
Jen Hughes	(resigned 16 November 2024)
Sefton Kwasnik	
Sheila Phillips	
Nisha Shah	(resigned 16 November 2024)

Chief Executive

Carolyn Brice

Registered Office

Kilburn Grange Priory
Park Road London NW6
7UJ

Auditor

Wenn Townsend
30 St. Giles
Oxford
OX1 3LE

Bankers

CAF Bank Limited 25
Kings Hill Avenue West
Malling, Kent.

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of The Compassionate Friends (the 'charitable company') for the year ended 31 March 2025 which comprise the statement of financial activities, the balance sheet, the statement of cash flows and notes to the financial statements, including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 *The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland* (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2025, and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

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

Conclusions relating to going concern

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

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

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

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the trustees' annual report², other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

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

- the information given in the trustees' report, which includes the strategic report and the directors' report prepared for the purposes of company law, for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the directors' report included within the trustees' report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the [strategic report or the]³ directors' report included within the trustees' report.

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

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

Other matter

The comparative figures presented were unaudited.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement set out on page 13, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

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

Auditor responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

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

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

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

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

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

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

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

A further description of our responsibilities is available on the FRC's website at: <https://www.frc.org.uk/auditors-responsibilities>

This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Use of our report

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



.....
Andrew Rodzynski FCA (Senior Statutory Auditor)
For and on behalf of Wenn Townsend
Statutory Auditor

30 St. Giles
Oxford
OX1 3LE

Date..... 21/11/25

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT) YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

		Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2025	Total Funds 2024
	Note	£	£	£	£
Income from:					
Donations and legacies	2	209,673	102,561	312,234	204,916
Charitable activities	3	70,795	44,127	114,922	106,682
Other trading activities	4	109,755	288	110,043	67,961
Investments	5	5,851	26	5,877	5,622
Total income		396,074	147,002	543,076	385,181
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds	6	72,299	-	72,299	84,884
Charitable activities	7	270,119	162,383	432,502	487,531
Total expenditure		342,418	162,383	504,801	572,415
Net income/(expenditure)	10	53,656	(15,381)	38,275	(187,234)
Total funds at start of year	16	170,815	52,446	223,261	410,495
Total funds carried forward	16	224,471	37,065	261,536	223,261

The Charity has no recognised gains or losses other than the results for the period as set out above.
All of the activities of the charity are classed as continuing.

The comparative Statement of Financial Activities is shown in note 12.

The notes on pages 22 to 34 form part of these financial statements

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2025

		2025 £	2024 £
	Note		
Fixed assets			
Tangible fixed assets	13	-	-
Current assets			
Debtors	14	18,543	14,783
Cash at bank and in hand		271,110	261,437
		289,653	276,220
Creditors : Amounts falling due within one year	15	(28,117)	(52,959)
Net current assets		261,536	223,261
Net assets		261,536	223,261
Funds			
Restricted funds	16	37,065	52,446
Unrestricted funds	16	224,471	170,815
Total funds		261,536	223,261

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

These financial statements were approved by the board on 18 October 2025 and signed on their behalf by:

Melian Mansfield
Melian Mansfield (Nov 8, 2025 14:23:06 GMT)
Melian Mansfield
Co-Chairs of Trustees

George Burn
George Burn (Nov 30, 2025 18:10:52 GMT)
George Burn

The notes on pages 22 to 34 form part of these financial statements

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

		2025 £	2024 £
	Note		
Reconciliation of net income to net cash flow from operating activities			
Net income/(expenditure) for the year		38,275	(187,234)
Interest receivable	5	(5,877)	(5,622)
(Increase)/decrease in debtors		(3,757)	25,366
Increase/(decrease) in creditors		(24,845)	36,494
Cash (absorbed)/generated by operations		<u>3,796</u>	<u>(130,996)</u>
 Net cash from investing activities			
Interest received		5,877	5,622
Net cash generated by investing activities		<u>5,877</u>	<u>5,622</u>
 Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		9,673	(125,374)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		261,437	386,811
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year		<u>271,110</u>	<u>261,437</u>

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

1 Accounting policies

a) Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the historical cost convention (except where otherwise stated in the accounting policy note) and in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) issued in October 2019, and the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), and the Companies Act 2006.

The charity is a public benefit entity as defined by FRS102.

The accounts have been prepared under the going concern concept, as the trustees believe this to be the most appropriate as it is considered that there are no material uncertainties, although the cost of living crisis during the past 12 months has been taken into account. Currently, income is sufficient but should there be a significant reduction, Trustees will review outgoings and plan accordingly.

The charity operates from a number of branches in different parts of the country. The transactions and balances from those branches have been included in these accounts.

b) Income

Income from donations and legacies is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the item(s) of income have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the Grants, including grants for fixed assets, are recognised within the accounts as they become receivable. Grants received in the accounting period in respect of future accounting periods are deferred until those periods.

c) Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

Direct costs, including directly attributable salaries, are allocated on an actual basis to the activities. Support costs are allocated over the activities based on the estimated percentages of cost used.

Governance costs include the costs of meeting constitutional and statutory requirements and include costs associated with the strategic management of the charity's activities. They have been included in support costs.

d) Fixed assets

Expenditure on assets with an estimated economic life of more than twelve months and a cost of more than £2,000 are capitalised.

Depreciation is calculated so as to write off the cost of an asset, less its estimated residual value, over the useful economic life of that asset as follows:

Fixtures, fittings and equipment:	25% Straight line
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e) Trade

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due

f) Cash at bank and in hand

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

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

1 Accounting policies (*continued*)

g) Creditors

Creditors are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts received.

h) Operating leases

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

i) Unrestricted funds

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objects at the discretion of the trustees.

j) Restricted funds

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes. Expenditure which meets these criteria is charged to the fund, together with a fair allocation of management and support costs. Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

2 Donations and legacies

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2025 £
Donations	103,789	9,211	113,000
Grants receivable	54,011	93,350	147,361
Legacies	51,873	-	51,873
	209,673	102,561	312,234

Prior year comparative

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £
Donations	49,869	12,392	62,261
Grants receivable	37,350	95,305	132,655
Legacies	10,000	-	10,000
	97,219	107,697	204,916

3 Income from: Charitable activities

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2025 £
<i>Core activities</i>			
Membership subscriptions	53,296	-	53,296
Other activities	-	5,914	5,914
Events	17,499	38,213	55,712
	70,795	44,127	114,922

Prior year comparative

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £
<i>Core activities</i>			
Membership subscriptions	56,088	-	56,088
Other activities		2,900	2,900
Events	42,858	4,836	47,694
	98,946	7,736	106,682

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

4 Income from: Other trading activities

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2025 £
Fundraising activities	105,447	-	105,447
Trading income	4,308	288	4,596
	109,755	288	110,043

Prior year comparative

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £
Fundraising activities	60,617	784	61,401
Trading income	6,005	555	6,560
	66,622	1,339	67,961

5 Investment income

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2025 £
Bank interest receivable	5,851	26	5,877

Prior year comparative

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £
Bank interest receivable	5,535	7	5,622

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

6 Expenditure on: Raising funds

	Activities undertaken directly £	Support Costs (Note 8) £	Total 2025 £
Sale of goods	933	-	933
Fundraising costs	56,845	14,521	71,366
	57,778	14,521	72,299

Prior year comparative

	Activities undertaken directly £	Support Costs (Note 8) £	Total 2024 £
Sale of goods	1,940	-	1,940
Fundraising costs	68,277	14,667	82,944
	70,217	14,667	84,884

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

7 Expenditure on: Charitable activities

	Activities undertaken directly £	Support Costs (Note 8) £	Total 2025 £
<i>Core activities</i>			
Helpline	23,136	7,261	30,397
Library	9,916	1,211	11,127
Supportive events	146,296	47,194	193,490
Other pastoral activities	146,662	50,826	197,488
	326,010	106,492	432,502

Prior year comparative

	Activities undertaken directly £	Support Costs (Note 8) £	Total 2024 £
<i>Core activities</i>			
Helpline	24,070	7,335	31,405
Library	9,529	1,223	10,752
Supportive events	192,874	47,673	240,547
Other pastoral activities	153,488	51,339	204,827
	379,961	107,570	487,531

8 Support costs

	Premises costs £	Office expenses £	Other Expenses £	Total 2025 £
<i>Core activities</i>				
Helpline	1,329	3,011	2,921	7,261
Library	222	502	487	1,211
Supportive events	8,639	19,568	18,987	47,194
Other pastoral activities	9,304	21,074	20,448	50,826
	19,494	44,155	42,843	106,492
Fundraising costs	2,658	6,021	5,842	14,521
Total 2025	22,152	50,176	48,685	121,013

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

8 Support costs (continued)

Prior year comparative

	Premises costs £	Office expenses £	Other Expenses £	Total 2024 £
<i>Core activities</i>				
Helpline	1,733	2,803	2,799	7,335
Library	289	467	467	1,223
Supportive events	11,266	18,218	18,189	47,673
Other pastoral activities	12,132	19,619	19,588	51,339
	<u>25,420</u>	<u>41,107</u>	<u>41,043</u>	<u>107,570</u>
Fundraising costs	3,466	5,605	5,596	14,667
Total 2024	<u>28,886</u>	<u>46,712</u>	<u>46,639</u>	<u>122,237</u>

Support costs have been allocated to activities based on estimated percentages of costs used.

Governance costs of £46,216 (2024: £46,060) have been included in support costs.

9 Staff costs and numbers

The aggregate payroll costs were:

	2025 £	2024 £
Wages and salaries	248,883	219,921
Social security costs	18,583	20,203
Pension costs	5,569	4,371
	<u>273,035</u>	<u>244,495</u>

During the year, one employee received emoluments of between £60,000 and £70,000. (2024: one).

Benefits paid to key management personnel of the charity during the year were £64,611 (2024: £62,304).

The average number of staff employed by the charity during the financial year amounted to:

	2025 No.	2024 No.
Peer support services	7	5
Administration	2	3

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

10 Net income/(expenditure)

Operating surplus/(deficit) is stated after charging:

	2025 £	2024 £
Auditor's fees		
Accounts preparation	1,500	-
Audit	5,000	-
Independent examiner's fees		
Accounts preparation	-	2,232
Independent examination	-	1,488
Trustees' expenses		
Travel (5 trustees, 2024: 5 trustees)	88	1,009

11 Taxation

The charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

12 Comparative Statement of Financial Activities

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2024 £
Income from:				
Donations and legacies	2	97,219	107,697	204,916
Charitable activities	3	98,946	7,736	106,682
Other trading activities	4	66,622	1,339	67,961
Investments	5	5,535	87	5,622
Total income		268,322	116,859	385,181
Expenditure on:				
Raising funds	6	84,884	-	84,884
Charitable activities	7	368,722	118,809	487,531
Total expenditure		453,606	118,809	572,415
Net income/(expenditure) and net movement in fund:	10	(185,284)	(1,950)	(187,234)
Total funds at start of year	16	356,099	54,396	410,495
Total funds carried forward	16	170,815	52,446	223,261

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

13 Tangible fixed assets

	Office Equipment £	Total £
Cost		
At 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2024	7,322	7,322
Depreciation		
At 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2024	7,322	7,322
Net book value		
At 31 March 2025 and 31 March 2024	-	-

14 Debtors

	2025 £	2024 £
Income tax recoverable	3,675	5,426
Prepayments	14,868	9,357
	18,543	14,783

15 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2025 £	2024 £
Accruals and deferred income	17,475	28,356
PAYE and other taxes	6,048	5,178
Other creditors	4,594	19,425
	28,117	52,959

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

16 Movement in funds

	At 1 April 2024	Income	Expenditure	At 31 March 2025
		£	£	£
Restricted Funds				
Scottish Forum	9,841	18,604	(23,788)	4,657
TCF Local support group funds	5,763	26,380	(22,979)	9,164
National Lottery Community Fund Grant for the Grief Companions Project	13,788	42,090	(42,768)	13,110
Bereaved Fathers	688	-	(688)	-
Helpline	-	2,500	(2,500)	-
Leaflets	-	5,914	(5,914)	-
Library	408	1,096	(716)	788
Siblings	-	15,305	(15,305)	-
Suicide	6,125	21,418	(19,747)	7,796
Online Support	12,500	-	(12,500)	-
Bursaries	-	4,295	(4,295)	-
Substance Use	3,333	2,500	(5,833)	-
Cancer	-	2,000	(2,000)	-
Volunteer Training and Support	-	2,750	(2,750)	-
Merchandise	-	400	(400)	-
Walks	-	1,750	(200)	1,550
	52,446	147,002	(162,383)	37,065
Unrestricted general funds	170,815	396,074	(342,418)	224,471
Total funds	223,261	543,076	(504,801)	261,536

Scottish Forum - monies given to finance supportive retreat weekends and support days in Scotland.

TCF Local support group funds - monies donated to support TCF's work in particular regions of the UK.

The National Lottery Community Fund Grant for the Grief Companion Project - monies given to TCF to expand the scheme which offers peer befriending to newly bereaved parents.

Bereaved Fathers – monies donated to support bereaved fathers.

Helpline - monies given to fund the provision of a telephone and email national helpline for bereaved parents, siblings, grandparents and the professionals supporting them.

Leaflets - monies given to fund provision of supportive publications for the bereaved.

Library – monies donated to support a postal library for the bereaved.

Siblings - monies to provide support services for bereaved adult siblings (18 years+).

Suicide - monies to provide support services for parents bereaved by suicide.

Online support - funds to enable some services to be delivered online.

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Movement in funds (continued)

Bursaries - monies donated to provide financial assistance to individuals attending retreat weekends and support days.

Substance use - monies provide to support our work with individuals bereaved by drug or alcohol use.

Cancer – monies donated to support work with parents bereaved by cancer.

Volunteer Training and Support – monies given to provide training and support to our volunteers.

Walks – monies given to fund our programme of supportive walks around the UK.

Merchandise – monies paid by purchasers of TCF goods or books on bereavement topics.

Movement in funds - prior year

	At 1 April 2023	Income £	Expenditure £	At 31 March 2024 £
Restricted Funds				
Scottish Forum	9,841	-	-	9,841
TCF Local support group funds	23,160	32,966	(50,363)	5,763
National Lottery Community Fund Grant for the Grief Companions Project	-	17,545	(3,757)	13,788
Bereaved Fathers	-	2,335	(1,647)	688
Helpline	-	20,000	(20,000)	-
Leaflets	-	3,000	(3,000)	-
Library	-	503	(95)	408
Siblings	2,798	6,445	(9,243)	-
Suicide	9,977	13,900	(17,752)	6,125
Online Support	8,570	15,025	(11,095)	12,500
Bursaries	50	830	(880)	-
Substance Use	-	4,310	(977)	3,333
	54,396	116,859	(118,809)	52,446
Unrestricted general funds	356,099	268,322	(453,606)	170,815
Total funds	410,495	385,181	(572,415)	223,261

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

16 Net assets by fund

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2025 £
Debtors	18,543	-	18,543
Cash at bank and in hand	234,045	37,065	271,110
Creditors	(28,117)	-	(28,117)
	<u>224,471</u>	<u>37,065</u>	<u>261,536</u>

Net assets by fund - prior year

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024 £
Debtors	14,783	-	14,783
Cash at bank and in hand	208,991	52,446	261,437
Creditors	(52,959)	-	(52,959)
	<u>170,815</u>	<u>52,446</u>	<u>223,261</u>

17 Company limited by guarantee

The company is limited by guarantee and as such has no issued share capital. In the event of the company being wound up the liability of the members is limited to £1 each.

18 Related party transactions

There are no related party transactions in either the current or previous year in addition to those disclosed elsewhere in the accounts.

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England & Wales - Charity number 1082335

Accounts

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT
AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
31 MARCH 2024

Company Registration Number 04029535
Charity Number 1082335



The
**Compassionate
Friends**

Supporting bereaved parents and their families

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

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THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Introduction

The Compassionate Friends was established in 1969 as a national charitable organisation supporting bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents after the death of a child of any age and from any cause.

The Trustees of The Compassionate Friends ("TCF") present their annual report for the year ending 31 March 2024.

This Report has been prepared in accordance with the charity's governing document and Statement of Recommended Practice (FRS102 2019) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities", published by the Charity Commission.

Our legal status and governance structure are explained in the "Structure, Governance and Management" section of this report.

Our Objectives

TCF is a registered charity and its purposes as set out in the objects contained in our Memorandum and Articles:

- (i) To advance and assist in mental and physical welfare following suffering and infirmity among (a) parents occasioned by the death of their child(ren) and (b) other close relatives of such child(ren), normally brothers, sisters and grandparents;
- (ii) To promote and support research on parental and sibling grief intended to help to change and improve the quality of support and care provided by health, social care, political and other supporters for grieving parents and siblings.

Our Mission

The Compassionate Friends aims to make a difference by providing support, understanding, empathy and hope to bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents who have experienced the death of a child or children of any age (over one month old to an adult son or daughter) and from any cause.

We do this by offering high quality, accessible peer support services and information to bereaved parents and their families. We also provide information to professionals supporting bereaved parents.

Our Vision

Every bereaved parent, adult sibling and grandparent throughout the UK can find and access the lifeline of high quality, appropriate and safe peer support services.

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Our Values

These basic principles guide all our activities and interactions:

- Empathy
- Compassion
- Respect
- Integrity
- Inclusivity

Ensuring our work delivers our aims

The period of this report covers the final year of our 2021-2024 strategic plan. Each year we review our aims, objectives and activities. The trustees met with staff and volunteers in early November 2023 to review what we achieved and the outcomes of our work in the previous 12 months. We looked at the success of each key activity and the benefits they have brought to the bereaved parents, adult siblings and grandparents we help. These regular reviews also help us ensure our aims, objectives and activities remained focused on our stated purposes. We have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing our aims and objectives and in planning our future activities. In particular, the trustees consider how planned activities will contribute to the aims and objectives they have set.

The review in early November 2023 reviewed the achievements of our 2021-2024 strategic plan, and focused on building for the future, developing key objectives and activities for the new strategic plan to take TCF from 2024- 2027. A meeting in early March 2024 took place with a team of trustees and staff to continue to process of building this plan for the future.

The focus of our work and who benefits from our services

"Every parent's nightmare is to lose a child"

This is a cliché, but for many, many families the nightmare tragically becomes a reality. Each year in the UK 9,000 (Office of National Statistics) children and young people under the age of 30 years die – and this figure does not include the adults (87,000 in 2019) who die at the age of 30 or over many of whom not only leave behind a partner and children but grieving parents who have tragically outlived their son or daughter.

It is not an overstatement to say that the impact of child loss on parents and families – whether sudden or anticipated is devastating. Grieving parents suffer deep trauma and intense and often overwhelming pain following a loss that is so out of the natural order. Both the physical and emotional impact of the death of a child in the family is huge, intense, complex, and often long-lasting. Parents' ability to cope with child loss can be exacerbated by the lack of support services and appropriate information. Many professionals or family and friends are not aware of the enormity and long-lasting impact of child loss on an individual's physical and mental health.

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Our volunteers – all bereaved parents, siblings or grandparents themselves - provide support, understanding and hope to who have suffered the death of a child or children of any age (from one month old to an adult son or daughter) and from any cause of death - for instance as a result of road traffic incident, a short or longer term illness (for example, cancer), sudden unexpected death (for example through an accident or sudden illness), by suicide or through drug or alcohol use. We are the only UK wide charity offering this vital peer-to-peer support to parents and their families.

We continue to focus on the provision of high-quality, accessible peer support to parents and their families bereaved of a child. All our services work together to offer bereaved individuals – whatever the cause of their bereavement - the type of peer support that feels most helpful and appropriate for their particular needs at whatever point they are in their loss.

Our main activities and objectives

Our main activities and who we try to help are described below. All our charitable activities focus on this support and are undertaken to further our charitable purposes for the public benefit. After two years of growth in our reach and infrastructure, this year our strategic focus moved to consolidation of services. Economic and political conditions, including the cost-of-living crisis, high inflation driving up costs, and the aftermath of the pandemic (where funding moved from bereavement support to cost of living causes), created a challenging environment. Like many charitable organisations, we experienced an overall decrease in donor income, particularly from grant making trusts and foundations (-18%), as well as a stagnation in income from challenge events and individual giving, while costs continued to increase. Moreover, we experienced additional challenges created by difficulties in recruitment and retention of volunteers largely due to the aftermath of the pandemic and the challenges of cost of living for many individuals, changing priorities for volunteers. We therefore chose to concentrate our scarce resources on our core services and areas of particular need.

Nevertheless, during the period of this report we supported over 10,300 bereaved parents and 1300 bereaved siblings. Approximately 16% of the parents were bereaved by suicide, 12% by cancer, 7% by sudden illness or accident, 7% by road traffic incident and 3% by drug or alcohol use.

National Helpline

Our **National Helpline** is usually the first point of contact for a newly bereaved parent. 19 trained and supported bereaved parent volunteers offered an empathic listening and support service by telephone which was open as often as possible 365 days a year. During the period of this report over 1,226 calls were received, a similar level to the previous year when we had already experienced a 33% year on year increase in calls. 760 requests for email support were received and answered by the Helpline. Many parents prefer initial email contact as it can be so very difficult to speak verbally about their devastating loss and grief, particularly in the early weeks and months after their loss.

The majority of calls and emails continued to be from bereaved mothers, although there continued to be **increasing requests from professionals** and support agencies during this period, including GP practices, counsellors, mental health support workers and organisations offering specific support who wished to signpost a parent to TCF support in order to

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supplement the support they were already offering. Enquiries and referrals continued to be from wellbeing or social prescribers and mental health team representatives.

Local and online support groups and local 1-1 support

84 facilitators and co-facilitators offered support groups for parents in a well-facilitated, safe and confidential environment in over 70 locations throughout the UK. Volunteers also offer **1-1 telephone and in person support** to grieving parents in their locality. Newly bereaved parents are put in touch with their local support contact or local group facilitators through the Helpline referral process. This referral process needed to be managed carefully to ensure recently bereaved parents received appropriate support without overwhelming the local support volunteer.

38 online support groups were run during the period of this report, facilitated each time by at least 2 trained volunteers. Online support was provided for parents who had experienced the loss of an older adult child (35 years+), or loss by road traffic incident, suicide, baby or toddler loss, of a school age child, cancer, substance or alcohol use. Groups were also held for parents who had suffered the death of more than one child, for parents bereaved of their only child or all their children, and for newly bereaved parents (3 years or under). The group for bereaved fathers ran regularly too over the year. We also offered 3 opportunities for bereaved adult siblings to come together online in a support group meeting.

Our 12 private **Facebook groups** continued to grow in numbers. Each group was well-moderated by trained volunteers and offered opportunities for parents bereaved in specific ways to share together and find connections. These include those for parents bereaved through cancer, through suicide, by substance use or alcohol, the loss of a baby or very young child, for parents who have lost their only child or all their children, and more. Our **Online Forum** continued to provide a safe and compassionate space for bereaved parents to find understanding, empathy and hope.

Retreats and support days

During the period of the report, 390 parents and siblings attended retreats or support days planned and delivered by a team of volunteers. The programme for each retreat included talks, workshops, sharing sessions, creative, active and memorial sessions, and other supportive activities.

Bursaries were offered to any bereaved individual who would be unable to attend a weekend or support day without financial assistance. We experienced an increase in applications for this assistance as bereaved parents and siblings were impacted by cost of living and other economic challenges. At the same time, the cost of venues and travel to venues increased and we found that we were required to subsidise the cost of in-person supportive events to a larger extent than ever before.

We provided **retreat weekends** for:

- Parents bereaved by suicide or substance or alcohol use (July 2023, Birmingham) 66% of the parents attending had experienced the death of their son or daughter less than 5 years ago. 36 of the parents attending had lost a child to suicide, 22 to drug or alcohol use. The youngest child was 15 years old at their death.

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- Parents bereaved of their only child or all their children (August 2023, Bath). 38 parents attended, supported by 10 volunteers.
 - All bereaved parents, adult siblings, or grandparents from any cause of loss (January 2024, Northamptonshire). 104 parents, siblings and grandparents participated in a range of sharing sessions, workshops and activities.
 - Parents in very early bereavement (March 2024, Bath)- 39 parents bereaved 3 years or less were supported by 12 volunteers.
 - Bereaved siblings (18 years or over) (April 2023, Birmingham)

Support days were held for:

- Bereaved parents in northeast England (June 2023)
- Adult bereaved siblings (September 2023)
- Bereaved fathers (October 2023)

Grief Companion Scheme

The Grief Companion Scheme has continued to offer one-to-one peer support to newly bereaved parents. A grief companion is a volunteer who offers telephone or email support to a more recently bereaved parent. Typically, they offer this support once a week, for about an hour, for a period of up to 12 months, although this can vary according to need. This service is usually for those recently bereaved parents who has no other TCF support close by but can also be where existing support is unsuitable for some reason (e.g. social anxiety, physical frailty, disability or transport or financial constraints restricting ability to travel). Since its inception, the Scheme has **supported over 293 parents** in very early grief.

Supportive walks

A programme of supportive walks throughout the UK continued to develop where bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents could come together outdoors to find support, understanding and friendship with others similarly bereaved. **A team of 25 volunteer walk facilitators** offered walking and talking opportunities in London, Norfolk, Cumbria, Suffolk, Wales/Shropshire, Merseyside, Scotland, Southwest England, Buckinghamshire and more. A total of 45 walks were held during the year.

Support was offered to volunteer walk facilitators through regular sharing sessions. We regularly receive feedback from parents and siblings about the value of these informal events in providing an environment for bereaved individuals to make connections and share together.

Library

Our postal library continued to offer parents, siblings and grandparents a personal service of books and resources to support them after child loss. Each set of books sent out are hand-picked by our librarian to match the experience of the bereaved individual.

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Highlights and achievements in the year

Bereaved Fathers' Day

As part of our plan to engage more men and share the benefits of peer support with dads, in October 2023 in London we organised our **first support day for bereaved fathers**. Thirty bereaved fathers spent the day together talking, sharing about their grief, their loss, and their children and supporting one another. Part of the day included a walk in the City of London where dads could stroll and talk together. Two speakers, both bereaved dads themselves, shared their experiences of child loss and how they have coped since the death of their sons.

Some of the feedback received included:

"The day was extremely well organised and offered a really comfortable balance of reflective discussion opportunities and less structured chances to socialise... I found it a very supportive day and an opportunity to reflect on some of the issues around our own bereavement, which, after nearly five years, I maybe push into the background sometimes".

"It was a privilege to hear other people's journey after loss. I was very moved by all who were able to speak, and it helped me get a sense of perspective on my loss. It is unusual to be in an environment where so many bereaved people are together, I felt very supported and very fortunate to be there".

"Thank you for a really helpful day. Being in the company of other bereaved fathers has helped, along with the wonderful speakers and helpers. The sharing session was very powerful".

Grief Companion Scheme

During the period of this report, there **were 60 grief companion matches** - where a longer bereaved parent volunteer was put in contact with a more recently bereaved parent to offer 1-1 peer support over the telephone or via email. The grief companion and newly bereaved parent are usually matched taking account of a combination of the circumstances of their child's death, the age of their son or daughter when they died and their general life circumstances. The Volunteer and Helpline Manager and Grief Companion Manager worked closely together to ensure appropriate support is put in place for newly bereaved parents where it was felt that this type of peer support would be beneficial. On average there were 6 matches made per month. Approximately, 75% of matches made continued for the full 12-month period of support. 52 volunteer grief companions were actively supporting during the year. 22 grief companions are bereaved fathers, with 7 of those actively supporting during the year. It has been important for the Scheme to have a pool of grief companion volunteers (approximately 110 during the period of this report) who are ready to support. The existence of this service and the volunteers ready to offer peer support has meant that **we could get help to parents very quickly** compared to some other services.

"[My grief companion, T] knew exactly where I was coming from in our conversations and could guide me through some very dark days".

"Thank you for the invaluable service which is so personal to each of us. I know there are many volunteers giving their time and sharing of their very selves".

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"[My grief companion, K's] compassion and understanding of my feelings and letting me know that... we could have a little more control and a ray of light in those feelings. He was so easy to talk to, caring and made me feel worthwhile again. It was good to have the weekly slot".

"Having a grief companion has made a tremendous difference. I credit my survival to key people and J is one of those that has supported me on this journey...it is such a huge blessing to have a grief companion".

"Someone who knew how I was feeling and put up with my blubbing. Someone who didn't give me platitudes and say "it's all going to be ok" because it never will be. After a few months I found it really good that I could get in touch when I was feeling really low and know that someone would understand".

Volunteers also benefit from the grief companion role. Many tell us that being able to support and offer empathic listening to another grieving parent has helped them with their own grief for their child.

"(Being a grief companion has) given me a sense that something good can be born out of something so very awful - to be able to give support/guidance as someone who "gets it" has been amazing - and it's been lovely to be able to share memories of both our amazing girls with each other".

"Being a grief companion has helped me realise that maybe I have turned a corner in my own grief in these last 5 years more than I had realised. I have felt alone and vulnerable and being able to support someone going through this trauma through their first year is important to me".

"It has helped me think about my own grief and how to manage it better".

Training and support for volunteers

For our volunteers, being there for others can have an impact on their own well-being as they listen and are alongside others' stories of loss and grief, many of which can be traumatic, complex and very raw. As the reach of the charity grows and as bereaved family members are finding us at an earlier point in their grief – sometimes on the day of death or before the funeral – this can all contribute to volunteers' own grief and wellbeing being impacted at times. Volunteer recruitment and retention also continued to be a challenge during this year – an issue affecting the charity sector generally. We therefore continued to prioritise and focus on supporting and encouraging self-awareness, self-care and building resilience for all our volunteers.

Throughout the year, we held **monthly volunteer sharing sessions** to enable volunteers to share and learn together, to understand more about the different support roles within our charity and to support one another with common challenges. We also provided sharing sessions for volunteers in specific roles, for instance, walks facilitators or for Facebook private group and Forum moderators. We continued to offer a whole volunteer meeting online every 6 months where volunteers can share the challenges and positives of their volunteering role, be supported by one another, stay connected, hear from speakers from both inside and outside of our charity and feel part of the wider volunteer and staff team. These sessions are facilitated

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by TCF staff team members but very much led by our volunteers concerns and needs. Many of the concerns and issues are common across all the teams of volunteers, in whatever way they are offering support to others – for instance, supporting volunteers with boundary issues when supporting others, managing dominance at online or in person support group meetings as well as issues with onboarding and training of volunteers. These and other matters are regularly discussed to ensure a consistent approach across the charity. Volunteers have told us they appreciate being able to support one another and that they feel less alone with the support they are offering by meeting together regularly with the wider volunteer team.

Our **Hear For You listening support service** continued to be available to all active TCF volunteers. This offered up to 3 x 50 minute confidential therapeutic sessions by one of two qualified counsellors, both bereaved parents with volunteering experience with TCF. The sessions are free of charge to individual volunteers and conducted online or by telephone. The service is available to all volunteers to talk about the impact and challenges around supporting others and for when they are perhaps feeling less resilient, either related to their volunteering role, own grief or personal lives or simply to talk confidentially with someone who understands their peer support role. During the year over 30 listening support sessions were taken up. We encourage all volunteers to have a regular annual session as a wellbeing check-up and all new volunteers to access a session after their first 6 months in a supporting role.

“As a new volunteer the wonderful support and encouragement I have received from TCF, enables me to be there for others”.

With guidance from NCVO, a new **Volunteer Agreement** was developed in the autumn/winter of 2023 and in place in January 2024. The new agreement ensures that guidance for our volunteer team is up-to-date and accurate, and that protections are in place for our volunteers and the charity. This was part of a wider drive to continue to develop the best practice in governance and to help volunteers know what to expect from our charity.

Governance – policies and procedures

As a result of an audit process, in July 2023 we began the process of **updating, renewing and writing all the charity’s policies and procedures** to ensure we had a set of policies for volunteers, staff, beneficiaries and funders which were fit for purpose, up-to-date and to underpin our work. By March 2024 most new policies were in place including our Adult Safeguarding Policy, DEI Policy, Whistleblowing Policy and Data Protection and Privacy Policies.

As part of our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, we have sourced DEI training for staff and trustees, which will roll out to all as part of our initiatives in 2024-2025.

The clear guidance, policies and procedures, together with the ethos and values permeating the organisation, means that we receive a good deal of feedback about the charity, for instance:

“I’ve been amazed at what an efficient organisation TCF is. What has struck me in particular is that it’s like a kind of ‘perfect circle’. There is help when you need it so much in the early days and later, when you are stronger, you can play your part to contribute by supporting others in the same situation. In a time when there’s no money and public services are in utter chaos TCF has been a haven of sanity and good practice to me”.

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Bereaved Parents Day

We participated in National Bereaved Parents Day on 3 July 2023. In the week leading up to the Day we shared stories from bereaved parents showing how aspects of peer support from TCF has been beneficial for them and what has helped them feel less alone. Stories were shared via social media on our website.

The stories and words are both moving and inspiring and we are grateful to all those who sent them in to us in the weeks leading up to the day. There was a great deal of comment and activity on our social media pages about the day and the stories, with sharing of our posts by other charities. We know we helped others feel less alone, and reached out to parents and family members who may not have known about TCF peer support before.

Digital and printed publications supporting bereaved individuals

We published in digital and print format over **60 leaflets and fact sheets** offering information and support to bereaved parents and families, as well as professionals and family supporters. Leaflets are distributed with bereavement support information packs which are sent to every newly bereaved parent and family members contacting us. Updates of existing publications continued our objective of ensuring our publications are inclusive and reflect the diversity in the population of bereaved parents and their families.

This year our leaflets went through an audit process to develop further inclusivity in terms of readability and diversity – including accessibility to minority communities. Hence, many were rewritten this year for example, *Coping with special occasions*; *Bereavement and your health*; *For parents bereaved of an only child or all their children*; *For parents bereaved of a child with complex needs or disabilities*.

New leaflets were also published. *Introducing TCF - For health and social care professionals* helped to reassure those working with bereaved individuals of the high quality of support given by TCF and how peer support can be beneficial. *Our surviving adult children* addressed the issues that can arise between parents and the adult siblings of their child. A fact sheet was published on *Aging without descendants* – for those parents where all their children have died, covering issues such as care and support in old age and inheritance and will concerns. We also published an accessible leaflet, *My child has died. How do I talk about my grief?* addressing bereaved parents' interactions with family, friends and colleagues.

During the year we made some other important changes to our publications supporting bereaved parents and siblings. From the Summer 2023 edition we combined our 4 newsletters – Compassion, TCF News and newsletters for parents bereaved of their only child/all their children and sibling newsletter – into one A4 magazine. The new format has generally been welcomed - as being more convenient to have one publication in a larger/easier to read format. We are now sending our publications in digital format to all bereaved parents and their families. These publications are an important layer of support for all and are now more widely available and read by all.

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Support for adult bereaved siblings

We achieved our target of reaching over 1300 bereaved adult siblings by 2024. We offered 2 supportive in-person events for bereaved siblings during this period – an overnight retreat in Birmingham (April 2023) and support day in Sheffield (September 2023). We provided regular online support groups for adult bereaved siblings. The well-moderated, private Facebook group for siblings continued to grow in member numbers offering a forum for bereaved siblings to connect and find understanding together.

Informal support - Manoir Mouret

Our relationship with the owners of Manoir Mouret- **a retreat venue near Toulouse in France** – developed in 2023 and offered parents an opportunity for some respite with others similarly bereaved. One of the most difficult challenges for bereaved parents is to go on a holiday and so, although this was not a TCF-managed retreat weekend, it offered a way for bereaved parents to come together in a warm and welcoming environment. 28 parents benefited from staying at Manoir Mouret over 2 weeks in June and September 2023, with a further 4 bereaved families staying at the retreat for a families' week in July/August 2023 with their school age surviving children.

Future plans

We will continue to focus on offering appropriate layers of peer support to bereaved parents, adult bereaved siblings and grandparents – including our National Helpline, support days and retreats, local groups and 1-1 support, grief companion support, leaflets, publications and library access, online support groups. Following our survey of our beneficiaries conducted in summer 2023 and subsequent review with staff, trustees and volunteers held in November 2023, we will publish a Strategic Plan for 2024-2027 with focus on 3 key objectives:

- To develop the quality of our peer support to reflect best practice.
- To increase our capacity to offer support in-person, via telephone and online.
- Build our fundraising capacity to target individual giving and effectively support and steward donors.

Develop the quality of our peer support to reflect best practice

We will continue to **support a team of around 300 volunteers** and will firmly focus on **prioritising self-care, self-awareness, and building resilience in our volunteers**, all of whom offer the peer support and empathic listening which are at the heart of the bereavement support services provided by TCF. We will do this by offering:

- A strengthened and streamlined volunteer on-boarding and induction
- High quality initial and ongoing training for volunteers, including increasing numbers of training to offer a rolling programme when possible
- Continuing training for volunteers in supporting specific areas of loss that are not their own
- Free of charge access to our Hear for You listening support scheme for volunteers
- Bringing our volunteers together regularly for support and sharing of best practice in-person and online.

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YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

-
- Developing teams of volunteers and groups for specific types of loss

Our ultimate focus will be to increase volunteer retention and minimise burnout.

We plan to hold 2 volunteer **in-person overnight meetings** at different locations where a sense of community can be fostered among volunteers and support and training can be offered.

Best practice across the charity will be identified and shared to ensure that we create a learning community where feedback can be used to continue to develop the quality of peer support provided. We will work to create metrics and systems to measure quality of peer support and performance. We will continue to regularly survey TCF users to monitor satisfaction and develop and change our services where needed.

Increase capacity to offer support in-person, via telephone and online.

We will focus on 2 aspects of developing our capacity to support – our staff team and communication capabilities and resources.

We will continue to support the **staff team** and develop role appropriate training in a range of skills and competencies, for example, management and volunteer management skills, charity specific skills, DEI training, safeguarding and technical training. As well as training and development, we will put in place benefits to support staff well-being and work/life balance. We will recruit additional support staff to ensure that supportive in-person and online events, our helpline and local and 1-1 in person support has the administrative support required to deliver increased capacity and excellent outcomes.

We will continue to **outsource HR support** to ensure that we are offering an up-to-date, compliant, inclusive and compassionate working (and volunteering) environment. We will review our staffing structure, roles and responsibilities, and create clarified organisational and succession plans.

We will continue to develop the **efficiency of the administrative and finance operations** of our charity using our CRM and outsourcing our bookkeeping functions. These changes will allow us to communicate with and support bereaved individuals with greater regularity and ease and manage all our operations – volunteer management, supportive events, finance, membership, fundraising, communications with greater productivity, clarity and efficiency.

We will increase the **diversity of our comms messages** and make our diverse voices more visible. We will work to create metrics and systems to capture feedback, measure quality of our performance and share these in comms messages to reach out to more bereaved parents and their families.

We will create **training videos of best practice** in peer support and develop **podcasts** to share with bereaved individuals to offer support.

We will continue to make **improvements to our website** for ease of navigation, inclusivity and access to supportive materials.

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We will continue to work with and collaborate with **partners and networks** in bereavement support to increase visibility and reach of our support services, for example as members of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Bereavement Care, the National Bereavement Alliance and as members of the Support After Suicide Partnership.

Build our fundraising capacity

We will continue to **build our fundraising team** to develop income from trusts and foundations, challenge events and community sources. We also hope to recruit for a new role to manage and steward individual donors and increase digital fundraising capability.

We will work to continue to **diversify our income**, including multi-year funding for key projects a, targeting local funding for local support for bereaved parents and families and accessing corporate funding where we can. We will continue to prioritise stewarding of our supporters who participate in personal challenges and community fundraising.

We will **review our donating membership structure** and look to simplify and streamline membership of our organisation.

We will develop an **annual event** to fundraise for TCF which will also offer an opportunity for bereaved parents and their families to remember their child.

Financial Review for the year 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

During the first half of the year Trustees found that, along with other charities, raising funds was more difficult than in the previous year. In September 2023 Trustees decided to revise the budget for income and expenditure and also to discuss ways in which more emphasis could be given to raising funds so that no cuts had to be made on the peer support offered.

As a result we have been able to maintain the breadth of support with less income than budgeted for initially but with an upturn in income during the second half of year due to Trustees, staff and supporters being aware of the need for extra efforts in fundraising.

Total income for the year was **£385,181** (2023: £488,834).

Compared with the previous year :

- Donations were down by £98,090
- Income from Trading activities was down by £12,342
- General fundraising was up by £3,730 and income from interest on bank deposits was up by £3,049

Total expenditure for the year was **£572,415** (2023: £567,343).

The additional expense this year, compared with 2023 was for costs associated with fundraising.

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Unrestricted (general reserves) and Restricted Funds

Funds carried forward at 31 March 2024 were as follows:

- Unrestricted funds (general reserves) **£170,815**. The deficit for the year of £185,284 was covered by general reserves brought forward.
- Restricted funds **£52,446**. The draw down on restricted funds from the previous year was £1,950 and a further adjustment reduced the funds by £24,297 to account for an overstatement of branch accounts during the year 2022-23, as referred to in Note 20.
- Restricted Funds can only be spent on particular projects. These are taken into account when the annual budget is set. The Funds are not included in Reserves but are reported on within the monthly management accounts so that income and expenditures are clearly identifiable.

Reserves

The level of Reserves is carefully considered at Trustee meetings. Throughout the year Trustees have monitored the level of Unrestricted funds (free reserves) by a review of monthly management accounts and cashflow.

Trustees regularly review the policy on free Reserves and revise it when appropriate. While it is still considered that free Reserves should not exceed six months' operational expenditure of £240,000 by more than 20 percent, in the present difficult economic climate Trustees now consider that, as a matter of prudence, the minimum level of free Reserves should be four months of operational expenditure, ie £160,000. Operational expenditure in this context includes salaries, events and office costs other than those covered by projects which are separately funded, e.g. The Grief Companions Scheme.

At the end of the year, free reserves were £170,815, which is within the required range.

Risks

Trustees are aware of the impact of the cost-of-living crisis which affects the level of general donations from members and supporters. Every effort is made to communicate with donors and to keep abreast of the volatility of income.

Applications to Trusts, Foundations and Companies are more likely to be unsuccessful during a period of economic downturn as the funds which they have to allocate may be less when interest rates are low.

Trustees are also aware of the increase in general expenditure for the Charity. Costs are scrutinised and savings made where possible.

Structure, Governance and Management

As a company limited by guarantee registered in England & Wales, TCF is governed by its Memorandum & Articles of Association. The organisation was based in Kilburn, London, throughout the year with a network of volunteers throughout the United Kingdom.

The Board of TCF is comprised of between six and twelve elected Trustees. An Elected Trustee must be a Member and has to be nominated by a donating TCF Member and provide

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

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a short CV, details of their experience within TCF and a personal statement. Candidates are supplied with information on the responsibilities of a Trustee prior to election and after election are supplied with further charity guidance booklets and details of relevant external information and training days on charity governance and management. Elected Trustees serve for three years (extendable to three years and three months). Elections are held annually and by digital and postal vote; if the number of vacancies for elected Trustees exceeds the number of nominated candidates, then the candidates are deemed to have been elected and there is no need for a vote. No elected Trustee can be in office for longer than three terms of three years, either served consecutively or with breaks. The chair can only serve for a maximum of three years.

Members of the Charity and external candidates with the required knowledge and skills needed on the Board of Trustees are also invited to apply to join as a co-opted Trustee. In addition, Trustee Advisors can be invited to join the Board for varying short periods of time in order to give the Board specialist advice or help.

All strategic directions and policies are determined by the Board of Trustees and monitored at regular Board meetings and against an annual budget.

All key decisions regarding policy, strategy, finance, governance and major pastoral issues, are taken by the Board of Trustees. Decisions are reached by a majority vote of Trustees, either by voting at the regular Board meetings (absent Trustees are regarded as bound by the majority votes of all Trustees present) or through Board members voting by email. Certain decisions regarding the pastoral work, volunteer recruitment, training and support are delegated to the CEO and operations team but need to be ratified by the Board before they can be implemented. Key decisions regarding office management are taken by the CEO in close consultation with the Chair or Co-Chairs of Trustees and, where appropriate, the Board of Trustees.

In making arrangements for setting pay and remuneration for the charity's key management personnel, the Trustees always bear in mind rates of pay for equivalent roles in charities of comparable size. In setting the pay for the Chief Executive, the Trustees considered the requirements for the role and pay for comparable roles in similarly sized charities. The Trustees will review the pay of the Chief Executive at least once a year.

Trustees' Responsibilities

The trustees (who are also directors of The Compassionate Friends for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report (incorporating the strategic report and directors' report) and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102: *The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland* (United Kingdom Accepted Accounting Practice).

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

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

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

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

Approved by the Board of Trustees and signed on their behalf by:

Melian Mansfield

Melian Mansfield
Co-Chairs of Trustees

George Burn

George Burn

Date: 24 October 2024.....

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

REFERENCE & ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

The Trustee Board

Co-Chairs: Melian Mansfield and George Burn

Vice- Chair: vacant

Company Secretary: Warren Weiss

Other Trustees

Margaret Brearley (stepped down January 2024)

Ken Barclay

Adelle Brenner

Claire Coveney

Alison Cramp

Gill Hardy

Jen Hughes (co-opted January 2024)

Sefton Kwasnik

Melian Mansfield

Andrew Miller (stepped down January 2024)

Sheila Phillips

Nisha Shah

Trustee Adviser

Guy Paton

Chief Executive

Carolyn Brice

Registered Office

Kilburn Grange

Priory Park Road

London NW6 7UJ

Independent Examiner

Joshua Kingston, BSc., ACA

Burton Sweet Limited

The Clock Tower

5 Farleigh Court

Old Weston Road

Flax Bourton

Bristol BS48 1UR

Bankers

CAF Bank Limited

25 Kings Hill Avenue

West Malling, Kent.

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2024.

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

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

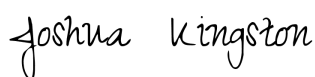
Independent examiner's statement

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

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

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Company 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.



Joshua Kingston BSc., ACA
Burton Sweet Limited
The Clock Tower
5 Farleigh Court
Old Weston Road
Flax Bourton
Bristol BS48 1UR

Date: 24 October 2024

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

		Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2024	Total Funds 2023
	Note	£	£	£	£
Income from:					
Donations and legacies	2	97,219	107,697	204,916	303,006
Charitable activities	3	98,946	7,736	106,682	102,952
Other trading activities	4	66,622	1,339	67,961	80,303
Investments	5	5,535	87	5,622	2,573
Total income		268,322	116,859	385,181	488,834
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds	6	84,884	-	84,884	76,872
Charitable activities	7	368,722	118,809	487,531	490,471
Total expenditure		453,606	118,809	572,415	567,343
Net income/(expenditure) and net movement in fund:	10	(185,284)	(1,950)	(187,234)	(78,509)
Total funds at the start of the year (as previously stated)	16	356,099	78,693	434,792	513,301
Prior year adjustment	19	-	(24,297)	(24,297)	(24,297)
Total funds at start of year (restated)	16	356,099	54,396	410,495	489,004
Total funds carried forward	16	170,815	52,446	223,261	410,495

The Charity has no recognised gains or losses other than the results for the period as set out above.
All of the activities of the charity are classed as continuing.

The comparative Statement of Financial Activities is shown in note 12.

The notes on pages 20 to 30 form part of these financial statements

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 MARCH 2024

Company Number 04029535

	Note	2024 £	2023 £ (Restated)
Fixed assets			
Tangible fixed assets	13	-	-
Current assets			
Debtors	14	14,783	40,149
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>261,437</u>	<u>386,811</u>
		276,220	426,960
Creditors : Amounts falling due within one year	15	<u>(52,959)</u>	<u>(16,465)</u>
Net current assets		223,261	410,495
Net assets		<u><u>223,261</u></u>	<u><u>410,495</u></u>
Funds			
Restricted funds	16	52,446	54,396
Unrestricted funds	16	170,815	356,099
Total funds		<u><u>223,261</u></u>	<u><u>410,495</u></u>

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

- (i) 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
- (ii) The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011.
- (iii) The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

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

These financial statements were approved by the trustees on 24 October 2024 and are signed on their behalf by:

Melian Mansfield

Melian Mansfield
Co-Chairs of Trustees

George Burn

George Burn

The notes on pages 20 to 30 form part of these financial statements

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

1 Accounting policies

a) Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the historical cost convention (except where otherwise stated in the accounting policy note) and in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) issued in October 2019, and the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), and the Companies Act 2006.

The charity is a public benefit entity as defined by FRS102.

The accounts have been prepared under the going concern concept, as the trustees believe this to be the most appropriate as it is considered that there are no material uncertainties, although the cost of living crisis during the past 12 months has been taken into account. Currently, income is sufficient but should there be a significant reduction, Trustees will review outgoings and plan accordingly.

The charity operates from a number of branches in different parts of the country. The transactions and balances from those branches have been included in these accounts.

b) Income

Income from donations and legacies is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the item(s) of income have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the Grants, including grants for fixed assets, are recognised within the accounts as they become receivable. Grants received in the accounting period in respect of future accounting periods are deferred until those periods.

c) Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

Direct costs, including directly attributable salaries, are allocated on an actual basis to the activities. Support costs are allocated over the activities based on the estimated percentages of cost used.

Governance costs include the costs of meeting constitutional and statutory requirements and include costs associated with the strategic management of the charity's activities. They have been included in support costs.

d) Fixed assets

Expenditure on assets with an estimated economic life of more than twelve months and a cost of more than £2,000 are capitalised.

Depreciation is calculated so as to write off the cost of an asset, less its estimated residual value, over the useful economic life of that asset as follows:

Fixtures, Fittings and equipment	25% straight line
----------------------------------	-------------------

e) Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

f) Cash at bank and in hand

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

g) Creditors

Creditors are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts received.

h) Operating leases

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

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

1 Accounting policies (*continued*)

i) Unrestricted funds

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objects at the discretion of the trustees.

j) Restricted funds

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes. Expenditure which meets these criteria is charged to the fund, together with a fair allocation of management and support costs. Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

2 Donations and legacies

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £
Donations	49,869	12,392	62,261
Grants receivable	37,350	95,305	132,655
Legacies	10,000	-	10,000
	97,219	107,697	204,916

Prior year comparative

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2023 £
Donations	177,015	72,972	249,987
Grants receivable	13,425	39,594	53,019
	190,440	112,566	303,006

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

3 Income from: Charitable activities

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £
<i>Core activities</i>			
Membership subscriptions	56,088	-	56,088
Other activities	-	2,900	2,900
Events	42,858	4,836	47,694
	98,946	7,736	106,682

Prior year comparative

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2023 £
<i>Core activities</i>			
Membership subscriptions	16,833	-	16,833
Other activities	51	700	751
Events	66,659	18,709	85,368
	83,543	19,409	102,952

4 Income from: Other trading activities

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £
Fundraising activities	60,617	784	61,401
Trading income	6,005	555	6,560
	66,622	1,339	67,961

Prior year comparative

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2023 £
Fundraising activities	76,141	1,272	77,413
Trading income	2,890	-	2,890
	79,031	1,272	80,303

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

5 Investment income

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £
Bank interest receivable	5,535	87	5,622
	5,535	87	5,622

Prior year comparative

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2023 £
Bank interest receivable	2,533	40	2,573
	2,533	40	2,573

6 Expenditure on: Raising funds

	Activities undertaken directly £	Support Costs (Note 8) £	Total 2024 £
Sale of goods	1,940	-	1,940
Fundraising costs	68,277	14,667	82,944
	70,217	14,667	84,884

Prior year comparative

	Activities undertaken directly £	Support Costs (Note 8) £	Total 2023 £
Sale of goods	4,106	-	4,106
Fundraising costs	59,209	13,557	72,766
	63,315	13,557	76,872

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

7 Expenditure on: Charitable activities

	Activities undertaken directly £	Support Costs (Note 8) £	Total 2024 £
<i>Core activities</i>			
Helpline	24,070	7,335	31,405
Library	9,529	1,223	10,752
Supportive events	192,874	47,673	240,547
Other pastoral activities	153,488	51,339	204,827
	379,961	107,570	487,531

Prior year comparative

	Activities undertaken directly £	Support Costs (Note 8) £	Total 2023 £
<i>Core activities</i>			
Helpline	23,847	6,778	30,625
Library	2,421	1,129	3,550
Supportive events	167,375	44,059	211,434
Other pastoral activities	197,413	47,449	244,862
	391,056	99,415	490,471

8 Support costs

	Premises costs £	Office expenses £	Other Expenses £	Total 2024 £
<i>Core activities</i>				
Helpline	1,733	2,803	2,799	7,335
Library	289	467	467	1,223
Supportive events	11,266	18,218	18,189	47,673
Other pastoral activities	12,132	19,619	19,588	51,339
	25,420	41,107	41,043	107,570
Fundraising costs	3,466	5,605	5,596	14,667
Total 2024	28,886	46,712	46,639	122,237

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

8 Support costs (continued)

Prior year comparative

	Premises costs £	Office expenses £	Other Expenses £	Total 2023 £
<i>Core activities</i>				
Helpline	674	4,338	1,766	6,778
Library	112	723	294	1,129
Supportive events	4,383	28,197	11,479	44,059
Other pastoral activities	4,721	30,367	12,361	47,449
	<u>9,890</u>	<u>63,625</u>	<u>25,900</u>	<u>99,415</u>
Fundraising costs	1,349	8,676	3,532	13,557
Total 2023	<u>11,239</u>	<u>72,301</u>	<u>29,432</u>	<u>112,972</u>

Support costs have been allocated to activities based on estimated percentages of costs used.
Governance costs of £3,720 (2023: £3,456) have been included in support costs.

9 Staff costs and numbers

The aggregate payroll costs were:

	2024 £	2023 £
Wages and salaries	219,921	217,382
Social security costs	20,203	14,049
Pension costs	4,371	3,675
	<u>244,495</u>	<u>235,106</u>

During the year, one employee received emoluments of between £60,000 and £70,000. In the prior year, no employees received emoluments of more than £60,000.

Benefits paid to key management personnel of the charity during the year were £62,304 (2023: £57,997).

The average number of staff employed by the charity during the financial year amounted to:

	2024 No	2023 No
Peer support services	5	6
Administration	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

10 Net income/(expenditure)

Operating surplus/(deficit) is stated after charging:

	2024	2023
	£	£
Independent examiner's fees		
Accounts preparation	2,232	2,076
Independent examination	1,488	1,380
Trustees' expenses		
Travel (5 trustees, 2023: 0 trustees)	1,009	-

11 Taxation

The charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.

12 Comparative Statement of Financial Activities - Restated

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds
	£	£	2023
	<i>(Restated)</i>	<i>(Restated)</i>	<i>(Restated)</i>
Income from:			
Donations	190,440	112,566	303,006
Charitable activities	83,543	19,409	102,952
Other trading activities	79,031	1,272	80,303
Investments	2,533	40	2,573
Total income	355,547	133,287	488,834
Expenditure on:			
Raising funds	76,872	-	76,872
Charitable activities	344,064	146,407	490,471
Total expenditure	420,936	146,407	567,343
Net income/(expenditure) and net movement in funds	(65,389)	(13,120)	(78,509)
Total funds as at 1 April 2022	421,488	67,516	489,004
Total funds at 31 March 2023	356,099	54,396	410,495

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

13 Tangible fixed assets

	Office equipment £	Total £
Cost		
At 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2023	<u>7,322</u>	<u>7,322</u>
Depreciation		
At 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2023	<u>7,322</u>	<u>7,322</u>
Net book value		
At 31 March 2024 and 31 March 2023	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>

14 Debtors

	2024 £	2023 £
Income tax recoverable	5,426	36,221
Prepayments	9,357	3,928
	<u>14,783</u>	<u>40,149</u>

15 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2024 £	2023 £
Accruals and deferred income	28,356	9,911
PAYE and other taxes	5,178	4,020
Other creditors	19,425	2,534
	<u>52,959</u>	<u>16,465</u>

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

16 Movement in funds

	At 1 April 2023 £	Income £	Expenditure £	At 31 March 2024 £
Restricted Funds				
Scottish Forum	9,841	-	-	9,841
TCF Local support group funds	23,160	32,966	(50,363)	5,763
National Lottery Community Fund Grant for the Grief Companions Project	-	17,545	(3,757)	13,788
Bereaved Fathers	-	2,335	(1,647)	688
Helpline	-	20,000	(20,000)	-
Leaflets	-	3,000	(3,000)	-
Library	-	503	(95)	408
Siblings	2,798	6,445	(9,243)	-
Suicide	9,977	13,900	(17,752)	6,125
Online support	8,570	15,025	(11,095)	12,500
Bursaries	50	830	(880)	-
Substance use	-	4,310	(977)	3,333
	<u>54,396</u>	<u>116,859</u>	<u>(118,809)</u>	<u>52,446</u>
Unrestricted funds				
General funds	356,099	268,322	(453,606)	170,815
	<u>356,099</u>	<u>268,322</u>	<u>(453,606)</u>	<u>170,815</u>
	<u>410,495</u>	<u>385,181</u>	<u>(572,415)</u>	<u>223,261</u>

Restricted funds

The Scottish Forum fund - monies given to finance supportive retreat weekends in Scotland.

TCF Local support group funds - monies donated to support TCF's work in particular regions of the UK.

The National Lottery Community Fund Grant for the Grief Companion Project - monies given to TCF to expand the scheme which offers peer befriending to newly bereaved parents.

Helpline - monies given to fund the provision of a telephone and email national helpline for bereaved parents, siblings, grandparents and the professionals supporting them.

Leaflets - monies given to fund provision of supportive publications for the bereaved.

Training - funding for volunteer training and support.

Siblings - monies to provide support services for bereaved adult siblings (18 years+).

Suicide - monies to provide support services for parents bereaved by suicide.

Online support - funds to enable some services to be delivered online.

Bursaries - monies donated to provide financial assistance to individuals attending retreat weekends and support days.

Substance use - monies provide to support our work with individuals bereaved by drug or alcohol use.

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16 Movement in funds (continued)

Movement in funds - prior year restated

	At 1 April 2022 £	Income £	Expenditure £	At 31 March 2023 £
Restricted Funds				
Scottish Forum	-	39,416	(29,575)	9,841
TCF Local support group funds	36,061	18,177	(31,078)	23,160
National Lottery Community Fund Grant for the Grief Companions Project	6,738	18,594	(25,332)	-
Helpline	-	12,000	(12,000)	-
Leaflets	-	3,550	(3,550)	-
Training	-	2,000	(2,000)	-
Siblings	14,475	7,000	(18,677)	2,798
Suicide	10,123	14,500	(14,646)	9,977
Online support	69	14,550	(6,049)	8,570
Bursaries	50	-	-	50
Substance use	-	3,500	(3,500)	-
	<u>67,516</u>	<u>133,287</u>	<u>(146,407)</u>	<u>54,396</u>
Unrestricted funds				
General funds	421,488	355,547	(420,936)	356,099
	<u>421,488</u>	<u>355,547</u>	<u>(420,936)</u>	<u>356,099</u>
	<u>489,004</u>	<u>488,834</u>	<u>(567,343)</u>	<u>410,495</u>

17 Company limited by guarantee

The company is limited by guarantee and as such has no issued share capital. In the event of the company being wound up the liability of the members is limited to £1 each.

18 Related party transactions

There are no related party transactions in either the current or previous year in addition to those disclosed elsewhere in the accounts.

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19 Prior year adjustment

Since the balance sheet date, it became apparent that the amount in the prior year accounts relating to cash held at branches was overstated. The impact of the restatement is shown below:

	2022 £	2023 £
Reduction in cash balances	(24,297)	(24,297)
Reduction in donations received	24,297	-
Reduction in restricted funds brought forward	-	24,297

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

England & Wales - Charity number 1082335

Accounts

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TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT
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31 MARCH 2023

Company Registration Number 04029535
Charity Number 1082335



The
**Compassionate
Friends**

Supporting bereaved parents and their families

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

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THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

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Introduction

The Compassionate Friends was established in 1969 as a national charitable organisation supporting bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents after the death of a child of any age and from any cause.

The Trustees of The Compassionate Friends ("TCF") present their annual report for the year ending 31 March 2023.

This Report has been prepared in accordance with the charity's governing document and Statement of Recommended Practice (FRS102 2019) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities", published by the Charity Commission.

Our legal status and governance structure are explained in the "Structure, Governance and Management" section of this report.

Our Objectives

TCF is a registered charity and its purposes as set out in the objects contained in our Memorandum and Articles:

- (i) To advance and assist in mental and physical welfare following suffering and infirmity among (a) parents occasioned by the death of their child(ren) and (b) other close relatives of such child(ren), normally brothers, sisters and grandparents;
- (ii) To promote and support research on parental and sibling grief intended to help to change and improve the quality of support and care provided by health, social care, political and other - supporters for grieving parents and siblings.

Our Mission

The Compassionate Friends aims to make a difference by providing support, understanding and hope to bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents who have experienced the death of a child or children of any age (over one month old to an adult son or daughter) and from any cause.

We do this by offering accessible, high quality peer support services and information to bereaved parents and their families.

Our Vision

Every bereaved parent, adult sibling and grandparent throughout the UK can find and access the lifeline of high quality, appropriate and safe peer support services.

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How our work delivers Public Benefit

“Every parent’s nightmare is to lose a child”

This is a cliché, but for many, many families the nightmare tragically becomes a reality. Each year in the UK 9,000 (Office of National Statistics) children and young people under the age of 30 years die – and this figure does not include the adults (87,000 in 2019) who die at the age of 30 or over, many of whom not only leave behind a partner and children but grieving parents, who have tragically outlived their son or daughter.

It is not an overstatement to say that the impact of child loss – whether sudden or anticipated – on parents and families is devastating. Grieving parents suffer a deep trauma and intense and often overwhelming pain following a loss that is so out of the natural order. Both the physical and emotional impact of the death of a child in the family is huge, intense, complex and often long-lasting. Parents’ ability to cope with child loss can be exacerbated by the lack of support services and appropriate information. Many professionals or family and friends are not aware of the enormity and long-lasting impact of child loss on an individual’s physical and mental health.

National peer-to-peer support for over 50 years

TCF is a charitable organisation of bereaved parents and their families providing support, understanding and hope to other bereaved parents, adult siblings and grandparents who have suffered the death of a child or children of any age (from one month old to an adult son or daughter) and from any cause of death - for instance as a result of road traffic incident, a short or longer term illness (for example, cancer), sudden unexpected death (for example through an accident or sudden illness), by suicide or through drug or alcohol use. We are the only UK nationwide charity offering this vital peer-to-peer support to parents and their families.

As the first peer-to-peer charity in the UK for grieving parents, we have been bringing understanding, support, friendship and hope to bereaved parents for over 50 years. The charity began in 1969 when grieving parents Iris and Joe Lawley, Bill and Joan Henderson and Betty Rattigan were brought together for mutual support by Simon Stephens, then a young chaplain in a Coventry hospital. Together they formed TCF. The peer to-peer support they offered each other as bereaved parents has remained at the heart of the charity since those first early days.

Many newly bereaved parents and other family members tell us that peer support can be more helpful to them than professional counselling, as only others who have suffered a similar loss can appreciate the trauma, depth and all-encompassing nature and impact of the death of a child. Grieving individuals are helped to feel understood, validated and more safely held in their grief. Speaking with others, and particularly others further along in their loss, means that the newly bereaved can ‘take off the mask’ they wear every day and thus can feel better able to share more openly and honestly about how they are feeling without the fear of being ‘moved on’ or otherwise made to feel they are failing or ‘stuck’ in their grief. Perhaps most important of all, bereaved parents and siblings are able to talk about their children or brothers and sisters without the fear or being ‘shut down’.

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How our work delivers its aims

Our support for grieving parents and siblings is delivered throughout the UK by over 250 volunteers, who all know grief for a child or sibling first-hand. We offer training and support to develop our wonderful volunteers' competence and capacity to listen with empathy and offer validation and normalisation of the experiences and the complexity of emotions experienced by grieving individuals. Our small, but hardworking and committed staff team continues to provide support to all aspects of the charity – including fundraising, volunteer recruitment, onboarding, training, support and management, administration and finance.

Equal access to our support and inclusion is important to our charity. TCF is a secular organisation and offers support to bereaved families irrespective of the age of child (from a month old), cause of death, or ethnic, social, economic, faith or economic backgrounds. Our support is offered to any parent affected by the death of a child, including adoptive parents, blended and step-families, and same sex couples. We welcome bereaved parents and siblings where the death of a child has been very recent or a loss that happened many years ago.

Three - year Strategic Plan - a focus on growth in a challenging environment

The period of this report covers **year 2 of a three - year Strategic Plan**. The plan was developed by the Trustees and CEO following a period of groundwork and preparation including a range of research projects, reviews, analysis and planning activities. The resulting Plan was designed to further the continued development of the charity. The strategic focus of the Plan was on **growth and increased reach** of our services and support for grieving parents and their families.

Year 2 of the Plan was implemented in the **challenging post-pandemic/lockdown environment** where just as family and friends were returning to a more 'normal' life bereaved parents and families were struggling to find any kind of normality again. This was particularly true of those bereaved of their child in late 2019 and during 2020 and after. Our volunteers were supporting parents who were experiencing an intensity and complexity to their grief which had been impacted by the lack of face to face opportunities as well as for those who have been unable to access the usual rituals after death such as a large funeral or memorial service. They were also unable to meet and be supported in person by family and friends or professional services and charities like TCF during the pandemic years. Although our services returned to in-person support on a more consistent basis in early 2022, we continued to offer the online (e.g. support groups online) and telephone and one-to-one support services (e.g. grief companions, helpline) which had been established and/or developed during the pandemic years – ultimately offering a hybrid model of support during the year.

The impact of the pandemic and the economic and political environments – including government turmoil in 2022, the cost-of-living crisis and a war in Europe from early 2023 - meant that the **fundraising environment for our charity** presented a greater challenge than had been envisaged, with more good causes chasing less available funds. Indeed, many funders were diverting funding away from bereavement support to cost of living causes. Although challenge and community fundraising events were beginning to return in person, there was still a reluctance among members and donors to gather together in large numbers

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at events and/or to ask for sponsorship during a year where costs of living were rising and the economic and political outlook was uncertain.

Our work supporting grieving parents and their families relies on the dedication and commitment of our wonderful 250 volunteers. We cannot do what we do without them. This year, however, our operating environment presented challenges for **volunteer recruitment and retention**. We were fortunate that very many of our dedicated volunteers continued their vital roles providing support and understanding to grieving families during the year. However, some found that they were unable to continue volunteering for our charity as they or family members were suffering from ill-health or they were needed elsewhere, for instance for other caring responsibilities. Indeed, some have found it a necessity to change their priorities post-pandemic – for instance turning more of their attention toward paid work to deal with rising inflation and other personal economic challenges. Difficulties with volunteer retention during this period was a trend reported by many organisations and we struggled, like many, to recruit new and retain some existing volunteers.

Despite the challenges presented by aspects of the environment outside of the our control, we continued to focus on delivering the Strategic Plan, albeit with some adjustments to take account of changed circumstances. Thus, we continued to focus on the two underpinning prerequisites set by Trustees to:

- i) Retain current, and further build upon, TCF's infrastructure
- ii) Ensure sufficient funds so strategic objectives can be met

Delivering on our strategic pre-requisites. How did we do?

Prerequisite goal 1) **Retaining and further build upon, TCF's infrastructure including volunteers, staffing and systems.**

For our volunteers and staff, being there for others can have an impact on their own well-being as it is not always possible for volunteers in supporting roles to protect themselves from others' stories of loss and grief, many of which can be traumatic, complex and very raw. As the reach of the charity grows and as bereaved family members are finding us at an earlier point in their grief – sometimes on the day of death or before the funeral – together with the effects of the pandemic/lockdowns on normal grieving rituals and support for the bereaved, have all contributed to volunteers' own grief and wellbeing being impacted at times. We therefore continued to **prioritise and focus on supporting and encouraging self-care and resilience for all our volunteers.**

To provide support for our volunteer team, our volunteer management team – Ruth Mercier, Shirley Gower and Sharon Rose - have facilitated **regular sharing sessions and volunteer meetings** online where volunteers can share the challenges and positives of their volunteering role, be supported by one another, stay connected, hear from speakers from both inside and outside of our charity and feel part of the wider volunteer and staff team. From January 2023, we also held monthly one hour 'volunteer drop in' sessions to enable volunteers to share and learn together, to understand more about the different support roles within our charity and to support one another with common challenges. These sessions are facilitated by TCF staff team members but very much led by our volunteers concerns and needs. All have been well attended and volunteers have told us they appreciate being able to support one another and

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that they feel less alone with the support they are offering by meeting together regularly with the wider volunteer team.

Our **Hear For You listening support service** continued to be available to all active TCF volunteers. This offered up to 3 x 50-minute confidential therapeutic sessions by one of two qualified counsellors, both bereaved parents with volunteering experience with TCF. The sessions are free of charge to individual volunteers and conducted online or by telephone. The service is available to all volunteers to talk about the impact and challenges around supporting others and for when they are perhaps feeling less resilient, either related to their volunteering role, own grief or personal lives or simply to talk confidentially with someone who understands their peer support role. During the year over 30 listening support sessions were taken up. We encourage all volunteers to have a regular annual session as a wellbeing check-up and all new volunteers to access a session after their first six months in a supporting role.

What our volunteers say *"I really appreciate the care TCF show for volunteers....Your care is very much appreciated and enables me to continue supporting others."*

We offered four free **resilience workshops** to all TCF volunteers during the autumn/winter of 2022/23. These were generously offered and sensitively presented by Ann Chalmers, bereaved parent and CEO of Child Bereavement UK. 120 volunteers were able to attend one of the four repeated workshops. Volunteers shared with us their appreciation of the reminder of how supporting vulnerable individuals can impact personally, as well as the importance of self-care, self-awareness and maintaining good boundaries to aid in volunteer resilience-building.

What our volunteers said *"I found the session thought-provoking. It gave me ideas to take away with me which I can usefully use as a volunteer to help me in my role. It made me think about my experience as a volunteer which isn't always an easy role as you are taking on people's pain and emotions. So it is positive to think about ways in which we can help ourselves, look after our own mental and physical health while supporting other people."*

Continuing our emphasis on self-care for volunteers, we engaged creative writing therapist, Sam Gray, to run three supportive writing workshops during October and November 2022. The theme was self-compassion and self-care through writing with the emphasis on hope and resilience. 36 volunteers took up these sessions, which were well received.

Overall, our volunteers have told us that they feel very supported and cared for by the staff team in their roles:

"I've been volunteering for over 10 years now. I am really pleased that TCF support for volunteers has grown substantially in that time. Things now offered, like this workshop, the writing workshop and other self-care information are vital for mental wellbeing of volunteers. I know that in the early days of my volunteering roles these workshops would have been incredibly useful. So I am glad that newer volunteers can gain this support early on, it's brilliant."

Our volunteer support benefitted hugely from the appointment of **volunteer and helpline assistant**, Jo Kitterick, in August 2022. This role includes responding to email requests to our helpline, ensuring information about our support is up to date, improvement and introduction

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of administration systems. Jo has quickly made a difference to the support we offer volunteers as well as to our callers and those who email us for support.

During the year, we began regular monthly meetings for our **volunteer management staff team** to share together, discuss ideas and suggestions, and find support on a regular basis. Many of the concerns and issues are common across all the teams of volunteers, in whatever way they are offering support to others – for instance, supporting volunteers with boundary issues when supporting others, managing dominance challenges at online or in-person support group meetings as well as issues with onboarding and training of volunteers. These and other matters are regularly discussed to ensure a consistent approach across the charity.

Our **staff** are also impacted by the nature of our work and in particular, are hearing stories of traumatic and complex loss every day. Our staff team list can be found here www.tcf.org.uk/staff. A key focus of the year was staff retention and to ensure our growing dedicated and hardworking staff team felt well supported. We introduced additional **well-being support** during the year including mental health days, access to all the training and support opportunities available for volunteers and allocation of funds to support staff well-being activities and team building. A more formal appraisal and review system was put in place to celebrate staff achievements and develop competency and skills in staff team members. Our staff team meet together online to share information once a month. Towards the end of the year, we began research into partnering with outside HR support to ensure the charity is meeting its responsibilities to our employees and that we have helpful and supportive agreements and policies in place with our volunteers.

What our staff say:

“There are so many positives to being part of the TCF staff and volunteer team...A very significant part of this positivity is linked to my relationships and interactions with all the staff team”.

Further **infrastructure improvements** have made good progress during the year. In July 2022 the transfer of all data to the **new Beacon Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system** was begun and our office and administration staff have been working hard to ensure all data is clean and up to date. The implementation of the CRM has been a major project for the charity spanning the whole of the year, but is already providing us with increased efficiencies in the membership, fundraising, volunteer onboarding, co-ordination and management functions of the charity. We continue to work to utilise the system to develop efficiencies and capabilities in managing supportive events, digital communications and finance.

As we grow and develop, the charity requires **efficient and timely finance functions**. To meet these needs during the year a decision was made to move to a new bookkeeping service and accounting software – Xero – which is able to integrate with the Beacon CRM. Preparation for the move took place during autumn/winter 2022/23, with everything in place for the switch over by 31 March 2023.

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Prerequisite goal 2) **Ensuring sufficient funds are raised so strategic objectives can be met.**

Annual and three-year fundraising plans and targets were developed by Stephen Armstrong and Jenny King – our fundraising team - but had to be modified to meet a more challenging grants and donations environment than expected. Excluding membership and friends of TCF donations, merchandise sales, booking fees for supportive events or Gift Aid, fundraising income remained broadly as the previous year (with just a small 1.03% increase). Grants from trusts and foundations took the biggest hit with income down over 25% on the prior year. Income from challenge events and community fundraising was just up (3.5% increase) on budgeted expectations, reflecting the return to in-person events after the pandemic and lockdown years as well as the launch of the first charity-wide annual fundraising event – the 2.5 Challenge. A fundraising highlight was the October 2022 Royal Parks Half Marathon: nine runners raised over £16,000 for our charity. We were also fortunate in early 2023 to be gifted the opportunity to auction a desirable classic car owned by Kirk and Pam Mawer's daughter, Lizzie, raising a £14,000 donation from the buyer.

However, the reduced income from fundraising activities overall was a consequence of the challenges posed by the economic and political environment. Expenditure for the year, therefore, needed to be in accordance with lower fundraising income than expected and thus we were unable to push forward with some of the additional staff and activities planned to meet our strategic objectives – including the appointment of a sibling support coordinator and communications manager.

Delivering on our strategic objectives - how did we do?

Alongside the prerequisites, in year 2 of the Plan the charity **concentrated on working towards and delivering our key objectives** set by the strategic goals outlined in the Plan. The following section outlines in brief our progress meeting these targets by the end of March 2023.

- **Increase reach/quantity/scope and quality of services to bereaved parents.** Our target of 12,000 users of our support by 2024 is on track, with a reach of **11,000 bereaved individuals** on our CRM system by end of the current reporting period. An additional 500 individuals are professional contacts. Our service quality is also improving as we offer increased support and opportunities for training and learning to volunteers and act on feedback and evaluations of our services from bereaved individuals.

Despite the challenging recruitment environment, during the period of this report, 33 new volunteers were recruited and onboarded, including 12 group facilitators/co-facilitators, five online group facilitators, five offering one-to-one local support and eight new walk facilitators. six volunteers retired or stepped away from supporting during this period, with others taking a break to attend to other life priorities post pandemic. (Figures do not include grief companions – see below).

- **Expand the services of TCF in those regions of the UK which are underserved**
Underserved regions were initially identified as Northern Ireland, some parts of Scotland, Wales and some areas of Northern England and SW England. **Additional support days**

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were run in 2021/2022 in some of these areas and work undertaken to source new venues for bereavement support days in areas in Northern England and Wales. New **local groups** have been set up in some of these areas. Informal support has been put in place too with **TCF walks and lunches/teas** for bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents taking place in Scotland, Merseyside, SW England, Derbyshire.

It should be noted that challenges are now arising in hitherto well-served areas, as key support groups closed during the year in important and relatively densely populated areas such as Hampshire, Surrey and Kent.

- **Increase diversity and reach of TCF across all minority and under-represented groups, both in our service and throughout the organization**

A **trustee working party** was set during this period to look at the area of equality, diversity and inclusion and make recommendations. Our initial targets will be **a policy document, as well as diversity and inclusion planning and training for all staff and volunteers** which will be implemented by end 2023.

- **Improve and develop support for bereaved siblings**

Our target was to reach 1300 bereaved adult siblings by 2024. During the period of this report our reach grew to 1200 and despite the challenging volunteering environment we recruited **5 new sibling volunteer supporters**. We held 2 bereavement support in-person events in 2022 - one of which was a partnership with the University of Sheffield - and 2 are planned for 2023. We now offer a dedicated email newsletter for bereaved siblings and regular online support groups for adult bereaved siblings. The private Facebook group for siblings continued to grow in member numbers offering a forum for bereaved siblings to connect and find understanding together.

- **Provision of support for bereaved parents in specific circumstances**

Although there is much that unites as bereaved parents than divides us, we do allocate our scarce resources in a targeted way where we can make a difference to parents in specific types of circumstances.

During the period of this report, the main cause of death shared with us continued to be **suicide** by sons and daughters from age 13 through to adults in their 50s. The majority of deaths by suicide were as the result of a first attempt, with depression, anxiety, stress, bullying, alienation, loss or relationship issues being cited as some of the main underlying factors. Loss to **drug and alcohol use** continued to rank high on causes of death too with many parents mentioning that substance use increased for their child during the lockdowns and in the months immediately afterwards when the world was opening up. Substance use was often cited as one of the contributing factors in losing a child or sibling to suicide. Many parents continued to share with us the societal stigma, judgemental attitudes and lack of understanding they face, with few avenues to turn to for support.

We continued to develop specific support for specific causes of loss such as suicide or substance use – with the provision of regular online (for suicide and substance/alcohol use) and in-person support groups (for suicide – in London, Glasgow, Bristol for instance). Our team of bereavement by suicide supporters offer one to one contact for any parent

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bereaved by suicide throughout the UK. We also offered an annual retreat weekend for parents bereaved by suicide or substance/alcohol use in July 2022.

Parents who have experienced the **loss of an only child or all their children** can be particularly vulnerable. We bring these parents together in a regular online support group to share and find understanding together. During the period of this report, we ran a weekend retreat in Oxfordshire for these parents and a regular printed and email newsletter specifically for parents without surviving children.

We started to offer occasional **online support groups for parents in specific circumstances** including a new group for parents bereaved by Covid or during the pandemic, parents who had experienced the loss of more than one child and parents bereaved in the last three years. We continued to offer online group support to other parents including those bereaved by cancer, by road traffic accident, loss of a baby/toddler and loss of a school age child.

Some support was offered to parents bereaved of a **child with disabilities or complex needs**. It remains challenging to find volunteers who are willing to be peer supporters around loss to murder or manslaughter and for grandparents (bereaved of a grandchild).

At retreat weekends and bereavement support days, we continued to offer sharing sessions around specific causes of loss or life circumstances. A bereavement support information pack is sent to all new parents in contact with us. The packs are always customised to support parents and families in different circumstances of loss.

Our 12 moderated, private online Facebook groups focusing on different aspects of loss continued to grow in member numbers. These include those for parents bereaved through cancer, through suicide, by substance use or alcohol, the loss of a baby or very young child, for parents who have lost their only child or all their children, and more.

- **Increase public awareness of TCF**

In February/March 2023, TCF worked with the world's largest outdoor advertising company, JC Decaux, and advertising and branding agency, The Raised Eyebrow Society, to launch a **hard-hitting campaign raising awareness of parental bereavement, some of the challenges surrounding child loss, and how peer support can help**. The campaign was gifted free of charge to our charity. Large, illuminated digital posters were displayed at over 200 roadside sites throughout the UK for a minimum of 14 days. The advertisements were shown 22 million times (adult impressions). A social media campaign was run alongside reaching over 30,000 users on Facebook with similar percentage increase in followers on Instagram and Twitter.

Helpline calls and emails were slightly up during the period of the campaign, and website traffic from new users were up by 29%, with users overall increasing by 27%. An article in Woman & Home (circulation 204,000) was published as a direct consequence of the awareness campaign. We warmly thank everyone at JC Decaux, The Raised Eyebrow Society and the designers and artists who made the campaign possible.

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MEETING OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES THROUGH OUR SERVICES. How did we do?

Throughout the period of the report and year 2 of the Strategic Plan, we continued to focus on the provision of high-quality, accessible peer support to parents and their families through our services and support. All our services work together to offer bereaved individuals the type of peer support that feels most helpful and appropriate for their particular needs at whatever point they are in their loss.

National Helpline

Approximately 1,200 calls were received by our Helpline during the period April 2022 to end March 2023 – this was a significant **increase of over 33%** on calls received in the previous year (when we were still in the midst of pandemic lockdowns). More than **1,400 requests for email support** were also received – representing a huge **47% increase**. We are increasingly finding that more parents prefer initial email contact as it can be so very difficult to speak verbally about their devastating loss and grief, particularly in the early weeks and months after their loss.

As in previous years, the majority of calls and emails continued to be from bereaved mothers, although there was a significant increase in requests from professionals and support agencies during this period, including GP practices, counsellors, mental health support works and organisations offering specific support such as Brake (a road traffic incident support charity) or Meningitis Now who wished to signpost a parent to our support to supplement the support their organisation was already offering. The largest increase in enquiries and referrals continued to be from wellbeing and mental health support roles such as social prescribers, wellbeing advisers or mental health team representative. Our initial responses to these agencies are important in terms of building understanding and trust in our charity and what we offer to grieving parents and adult bereaved siblings.

What professionals have said:

“You’re doing some fantastic work, to help others in a similar position, so I want to thank and acknowledge your hard work and to let you know that I really appreciate your dedication to this cause and all the wonderful work your organisation is doing for everyone, that finds themselves bereft with losing a loved one” (from a professional who had contact with us by email on behalf of a bereaved patient).

Wider family and blended family members and friends continued to contact us too with concerns about their bereaved family member’s emotional and physical health following the loss of their child or sibling. They were often grateful for our support and reassurance.

What family members have said:

“Thank you for putting my partner in touch with your helpline. He called last night and for the 1st time in 3 months there seems to be a teeny tiny light at the end of a very long tunnel - it's a start and I couldn't be more thrilled and relieved; your helpline team member was so easy to talk to.”

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Our Helpline and Volunteer Manager, Ruth Mercier trained and supported our 19 dedicated Helpline volunteers, who answered calls every day of the year during this period.

What newly bereaved parents say:

"I don't think (the volunteer) will ever realise how very much she helped because of her time and words on that evening. I have found an inner strength, I have found someone who does know how I feel, who can tell me that life can carry on, in a different way".

Local support groups and one-to-one support

By April 2022 all local support groups who were planning to return to supporting in-person after the lockdowns were back to meeting face-to-face. Most meet monthly. **99 facilitators and co-facilitators offered groups for parents** (and sometimes adult bereaved siblings) to meet and share together in a well-facilitated, safe and confidential environment in over 70 locations throughout the UK. During the latter half of the period of this report we experienced a **growth in referrals** of newly bereaved parents to local support groups in a number of different parts of the country. This can create large group sizes which can be overwhelming for volunteers - particularly for newer group facilitators. Our Volunteer Manager, Ruth Mercier worked closely with these volunteers to ensure they are supported and that referrals and group support dynamics are managed as best as possible.

Over **100 volunteers offered one-to-one telephone and in-person support** to grieving parents in their locality. Newly bereaved parents are put in touch with their local support contact or local group facilitators through the Helpline referral process. Again, this referral process needed to be managed carefully to ensure recently bereaved parents received appropriate support without overwhelming the local support volunteer.

We continued to offer group facilitation and local support training online for our volunteers. Sessions were run over four weekend half days in June and October 2022 and a full working day session in February 2023.

What parents say:

"The regular group meetings are a lifeline for me. Thank you for facilitating the online support groups for bereavement by suicide so well and making differences to the lives of bereaved parents".

In-person and online supportive events

During this period, our supportive events moved from almost totally online to a **hybrid provision**, continuing with a rationalised online support group provision, while also returning to in-person retreat weekends and support days.

So, we continued to provide online support groups for parents in specific circumstances, but as in-person supportive events returned we reviewed the programme and concentrated on offering groups where there was a significant and ongoing need. **43 online groups** were run during the period of this report, facilitated each time by at least 2 volunteers. A maximum of 15 parents/siblings attended each group and we provided groups for loss of an older adult child (35 years+), bereaved by road traffic incident, suicide, baby/toddler loss, bereavement of a

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school age child, loss to cancer, loss to substance or alcohol use. Groups were also held for parents who had suffered the loss of more than one child, for parents bereaved of their only child or all their children, and for parents bereaved by Covid or in the last three years. The group for bereaved fathers ran regularly too over the year. We offered four opportunities for bereaved adult siblings to come together online in a support group meeting.

What parents say:

"Thank you again, TCF, for your support and kindness. I always feel more ready to keep going after talking with TCF groups online and knowing I am not alone".

As the lockdowns lifted, and anxieties about Covid eased, we were able to return to offering a range of **in-person retreat weekends and support days**. Each event was usually delivered by a team of volunteers, often including some staff members, with the bulk of the organisation, co-ordination, administration and volunteer support given by our Events Manager, Sharon Rose. A full programme for each retreat is offered including talks, workshops, sharing sessions, and other supportive activities. We request evaluations from participants at each of our events and make changes to subsequent retreats based on this feedback.

We offer **bursaries** to any bereaved individual who would be unable to attend a weekend or support day without financial assistance. During the period of this report, we experienced an increase in applications for this assistance as parents and siblings themselves were impacted by cost of living and other economic challenges. At the same time, the cost of venues and travel to venues is increased and we found that we were required to subsidise the cost of in-person supportive events even more than was the case pre-pandemic.

During the period of this report **two weekend gatherings for bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents were held in Stirling, Scotland** – one in May 2022 and the second in March 2023. The pent-up desire for parents to meet up in person meant that both events were very well attended with approximately 100 participants each time. Around one third of attendees at both events were newly bereaved (i.e. in the first three years of their loss). Both gatherings in Scotland during the year were predominantly delivered by volunteers.

We also returned to offering a **retreat weekend for parents bereaved by suicide or by substance or alcohol use**. This was held in Birmingham in June 2022. 14 volunteers supported 56 parents and one grandparent. 50% of parents attending had experienced the loss of their child less than three years ago, 68% fewer than five years ago. 40 parents at the retreat had lost a child to suicide, and 16 to drug use (sometimes tragically ending in suicide). The youngest child was 14 years old at their death.

This was followed in July by a **weekend retreat for parents bereaved of their only child or all their children** held in Oxfordshire. 25 parents were supported by seven volunteers. Feedback from parents was excellent overall, although for some first timers at such a weekend, it was a hugely intense and emotional experience.

A well-attended **support day** in Derbyshire was held in November 2022.

We had not been able to plan a **retreat weekend in England for all parents, siblings and grandparents** since before the pandemic in November 2019. In January 2023 in Northamptonshire we held our first national retreat weekend for over three years. 100 bereaved individuals attended and we were fortunate to have a volunteer team of over 25 in

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number, offering a varied programme of workshops, guest speakers, sharing sessions, memorial activities and well-being activities. A third of the parents and siblings attending were in the first 3 years of their loss, the remainder were bereaved before 2019.

In February 2023, a retreat weekend for **parents in early bereavement** was organised and held in a venue near Bath, Somerset. 43 parents attended with 16 volunteers offering support. High ratio of volunteers to parents is needed due to vulnerability of parents in early grief attending. The most recently bereaved parent at the retreat was just four months from the loss of their child. All parents attending were less than three years since their loss, most in the first 12-24 months. Over 50% of parents attending were bereaved by suicide or substance use.

What parents say:

"It's been my first experience of TCF and I'm so impressed by the whole organisation. The weekend was so well organised and all run by fellow bereaved volunteers. It was an incredible experience".

"Being at a retreat everyone knows why you're there. You don't need to explain this heavy grief you carry around ...you never go home feeling alone, and that's something TCF facilitates so well."

Two supportive in-person events were held for bereaved adult siblings during the year. In May 2022 an **overnight retreat for 35 siblings** was organised in Birmingham, followed by a **supportive day event in Sheffield for 25 bereaved adult siblings**. Both events were run by volunteers who are adult bereaved siblings themselves.

What siblings say:

"After losing my brother, I felt so alone. Thanks to this fantastic charity, I was able to find support and connection".

Grief Companion Scheme

Now in its third year of operation, our Grief Companion Scheme has continued to offer one-to-one peer support to newly bereaved parents. A grief companion is a TCF volunteer who offers telephone or email support to a more recently bereaved parent. Typically they offer this support once a week, for about an hour, for a period of up to 12 months, although this can vary according to need. This is usually when a recently bereaved parent has no other TCF support close by but can also be where existing support is unsuitable for some reason (e.g., social anxiety, physical frailty, disability or transport or financial constraints restricting ability to travel). Since its inception, the Scheme has **supported over 220 parents** in early grief (usually within the first two years of their loss). The scheme is expertly managed by Shirley Gower, Grief Companion Manager with support from Suzanne Cannon, Administrator for the Scheme. Many new innovations have been introduced during this year including a comprehensive induction document for all new grief companions.

During the period of this report, there were **64 'matches'**, (i.e. where a bereaved parent volunteer has been put in contact with a more recently bereaved parent who has been referred to the scheme through the Helpline). The Volunteer and Helpline Manager and Grief Companion Manager worked closely together to ensure appropriate support is put in place for newly bereaved parents where it was felt that this type of peer support would be beneficial. On average there were five matches made per month. 85% of matches made continued for the

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full 12-month period of support. From mid-2022, we saw the number of referrals of newly bereaved parents increase and this has been a trend that has continued during the whole of the subsequent reporting period. Almost 50 volunteer grief companions were actively supporting during the year, with eight of those supporting more than one parent at a time. It has been important for the Scheme to have a pool of grief companion volunteers who are ready to support. It has meant that we could get help to parents very quickly compared to some other services.

"The Grief Companion Scheme is such a vital part of the support we can now offer to bereaved parents who might find groups difficult or inaccessible". S, TCF staff team member.

What parents say:

"[My grief companion's] support was invaluable at a most terrible time in my life - it was the first time I had really looked for outside support and I couldn't have asked for anything better ... she certainly kept me from drowning in my grief, explaining that going backwards was normal when I thought I had made no progress. It felt like she was swimming beside me and when I started to go under, she was there keeping my head above the water".

"Having [my Grief Companion] in my life has given me a lifeline. Her presence has been a beacon of security and hope".

Volunteers also benefit from the grief companion role. Many tell us that being able to support and offer empathic listening to another grieving parent has helped them with their own grief for their child.

What grief companions say....

"[Being a grief companion has] given me a sense that something good can be borne out of something so very awful - to be able to give support/guidance as someone who "gets it" has been amazing - and it's been lovely to be able to share memories of both our amazing girls with each other".

Informal support – Walks, lunches and teas

Spring 2022 saw the re-start and huge **development in walks** for bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents across the UK. New walk facilitators came forward during the year, and **eight new volunteers joined the existing team** offering walking and talking opportunities not only in London, but also in Cumbria, Suffolk, Wales/Shropshire, Merseyside, Scotland, South West England, Buckinghamshire and more. A total of 38 walks were held during the year, most in the spring, summer and early autumn months, but one or two also held during the winter. Support was offered to volunteer walk facilitators through regular sharing and sessions. The walking programme has grown so fast this year that the administration of the walks was taken on in autumn 2023 by the Volunteer Support Assistant. We regularly receive feedback from parents and siblings about the value of these informal events in providing an environment for bereaved individuals to make connections and share together.

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What parents say:

"The walks we have been on... are the first thing we felt able to do, since our son's death where we could walk and talk with others who truly know the depth of grief we have all experienced. This has been healing and helped us try to get back on our feet".

An **afternoon tea** was held in Perthshire for bereaved parents in August 2022 hosted by TCF volunteer, Fiona Foreman. In September 2022 an **informal lunch** was held in London (organised by former Chair of Trustees, Maria Ahern). 45 bereaved parents attended.

Informal support - Manoir Mouret

During the period of this report, we began a new relationship with a **retreat venue in France**. Jack and Margaret Reckitt, the owners of Manoir Mouret, which is about an hour from Toulouse, offered their beautiful venue for respite and a break for bereaved parents supported by TCF. The first 12 parents attended the first week offered in August 2022. One of the most difficult challenges for bereaved parents is to go on holiday and so although this was not a TCF-managed retreat weekend, it offered a way for bereaved parents to come together in a warm and welcoming environment. This first week was hugely successful. Three further weeks will be made available in 2023.

Online, digital and printed communications and support

In the early part of the year, we continued to offer **online talks** which had been a feature of our support during the lockdown. In July, Dr Laura Towers offered an online presentation, chaired by TCF Trustee Claire Coveney, based on her four year study at Sheffield University -**Life After Death: Experiences of Sibling Bereavement Over the Life Course**. An audience of over 90 attended. Also in July 2022, Barbara Douglas offered an online presentation to 100 attendees exploring the subject of **Trauma and Bereaved Parents**, covering the reality of the post-traumatic stress symptoms experienced by many bereaved parents and family members and an examination of what can help. Our online **Candlelighting** took place in December 2022 – just before the Christmas holiday, which is a particularly painful and difficult time for bereaved families. Each talk/or online event was recorded and uploaded online, building a resource library of supportive videos which will continue to be accessed.

TCF publish over **50 leaflets** offering information and suggestions to bereaved parents and families, as well as professionals and family supporters. These were downloaded over 40,000 times this year and distributed with bereavement support information packs sent to every new parent, sibling or grandparent that contacts us. As well as updates of existing publications during the year, new leaflets were published including **Coping with Friends, Family and Social Situations**, **Our Grief Following the Accidental Death of our Child** and **Sibling Grief After Suicide**. Thank you to Abi May and her team of leaflet writers, editors and proof-readers for continuing to develop our leaflets and fact sheets to ensure they are inclusive, up-to-date and relevant.

We continued to send **regular email and printed news, magazines and communications** to parents, siblings and grandparents. Our **library of over 1,000 books** and resources on all aspects of bereavement and grief began to be fully operational once again after the pandemic. Mary Hartley, our dedicated volunteer librarian, resumed her personalised service of recommending and sending helpful books to parents and other family members.

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Our **social media presence** continued to build throughout the year on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Our Facebook page was visited over 106,000 times in the period between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023. Our Instagram page attracted over 3,500 new visits. Many bereaved parents and their families have told us they regularly access support and information from our social media posts.

Collaboration and networking

During the year, TCF was cited or involved in advising and/or finding participants in a number of research studies. A bereaved by suicide in later life report mentioned TCF as a key player in support for parents who have lost to suicide. Our charity was involved in a call for participants for a University of Bristol study in to the emotional care of parents who have cared for and lost a child with a life limiting illness; a University of Cardiff study for anyone bereaved by Covid; an Institute for Crime and Justice Policy Research (Birkbeck, University of London) and the Centre for Death and Society (University of Bath) research study Voicing Loss: Meanings and Implications of Participation by Bereaved People in Inquests. We are also supporting a new research study into work and bereavement from the University of Sheffield. We have also been invited to contribute to the Child Death Review conducted by University of Birmingham/NHS Birmingham Community Healthcare, a study on Sibling Loss in Adolescence by a researcher at the University of Middlesex and have been invited to join advisory board for a new study exploring siblings experience of suicide bereavement.

We continue to collaborate with other charities and organisations in the field of bereavement support. TCF are members of the **All-Party Parliamentary Group on Bereavement Care**. We attend Members Meetings of the **Support After Suicide Partnership** to represent the views of parents and siblings bereaved by suicide. We attended the **Suicide Bereavement UK Conference** (September 2022) and exhibited at the **Police Family Liaison Officers National Conference** in October 2022.

Our previous Chair of Trustees, co-opted Trustee and long-time volunteer, **Margaret Brearley**, was the recipient of the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee Volunteering Award in June 2022. TCF volunteer **Carol Keach** received the British Empire Medal in King Charles III's New Year honours (January 2023) in recognition of over 30 years of service to the community through her work with bereaved parents with TCF in Northamptonshire.

Future plans – from growth to consolidation

During years 1 and 2 of the Strategic Plan, the focus has been on building the **infrastructure** of the charity to help us to meet demand for our services. The central emphasis has been on developing **strategic goals** and supporting **growth** not only in our reach to bereaved parents and their families throughout the UK but also the quality of peer support offered.

In year 3 (2023-24), we will move to a period of **consolidation** allowing this rapid period of change and growth to 'bed in'. This will ensure that we can continue our consistency of support and allow our volunteers and staff team to focus on continuing to provide high-quality peer support to parents, siblings and grandparents throughout the UK.

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In a challenging environment for recruitment and retention, we plan to continue to **prioritise self-care, resilience building and support for our volunteers**, all of whom offer the peer support and empathic listening which is at the heart of the bereavement support services provided by TCF. We will do this by offering high quality initial and ongoing training for volunteers, free of charge access to our Hear for You listening support scheme for volunteers and by bringing our volunteers together regularly for support and sharing of best practice in-person and online. We will strengthen and streamline our volunteer on-boarding, induction and training processes and introduce robust volunteer two-way agreements to ensure we are valuing and rewarding volunteers' vital contribution to the charity as highly as possible. We will continue to ensure that our Helpline and Volunteer Manager, Ruth Mercier, has strong administrative support in place to allow her to concentrate on the support and management of volunteers.

As our staff and volunteer teams grow we will begin to **outsource Human Resources (HR) support** to ensure that we are offering an up-to-date, compliant, inclusive and compassionate working and volunteering environment. We will continue to add to our staff team and outsource support for the team as resources allow – to build our capacity in supportive events, communications and fundraising.

We will continue **a hybrid approach** – both **in-person and online** - to offering support. This will include **in-person** general support days around the UK and retreat weekends for all organised by location e.g. Scottish retreat weekend, UK retreat weekend, as well as targeted retreats for specific causes of death(e.g. parents bereaved by suicide or substance use), life circumstances (e.g. parents bereaved of an only child or all their children) or for those in very early bereavement. We will continue to provide local in-person support groups around the UK and work towards increasing the availability of local support where possible. We will continue to encourage informal events for bereaved parents and siblings, including support for our programme of walks, and other informal events such as bring and share lunches and teas. These can be an important first step for the newly bereaved to start to engage with the more formal, structured peer support services.

Our rolling programme of **online support groups** for parents in particular circumstances and for bereaved adult siblings will continue. These offer the opportunity for grieving individuals to access peer support wherever they are located in the UK. We will continue to review demand for these and adjust the number and type of groups as necessary.

We will continue to offer **high quality national Helpline support** – both by telephone and email. This support will remain steady, of a consistent high standard, and available every day – a much needed anchor in a period of national and personal adjustment following the pandemic and as bereaved individuals are faced with economic challenges.

As we come to the end of the three- year funding for the **Grief Companion Scheme project**, we hope to secure continued funding for this important layer of support provided to bereaved parents throughout the UK, particularly where there is no other in-person available or accessible.

We will continue to develop the **efficiency of the administrative and financial operations** of our charity using the new Beacon CRM and outsourcing our bookkeeping functions. These changes will allow us to communicate with and support our members with greater regularity

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and ease and manage all our operations – volunteer management, supportive events, finance, membership, fundraising, communications with greater productivity, clarity and efficiency.

We will work to **diversify our income**, including multi-year funding for key projects, targeting local funding for local support for bereaved parents and families and accessing corporate funding where we can. We will continue to prioritise stewarding for our supporters who participate in personal challenges and community fundraising. We will continue to work to increase our charity's funding from digital sources.

We will develop a forward looking **2024-2028 Strategic Plan hand-in-hand with a Communications Plan** to continue building the charity's reach and development. We will continue to regularly survey and garner feedback from all TCF users to monitor satisfaction and develop and change our services where needed.

Financial Review

The Trustees are responsible for the finances of the Charity. They monitor the finances of TCF by adopting a budget for each financial year and receiving a financial report at each Trustee meeting.

The Trustees monitor three main aspects of the charity's finances:

- The income from various sources
- The expenses
- The reserves

Income

The income of the charity comes from four main sources as follows:

- Membership and general donations
- The proceeds from fundraising events and donations from Friends of TCF
- Securing grants and donations from foundations, trusts and corporate bodies
- Fees in respect of gatherings and retreats

Unrestricted income can be spent on TCF's general charitable purposes as set out in the budget for the year.

Restricted income can only be spent on particular purposes/projects as specified by the donor.

During the year the total income of the Charity was £488,834 (2022: £459,980). The split between Unrestricted and Restricted Funds received in the year is:

Unrestricted £355,547 (2022: £256,237)

Restricted £133,287 (2022: £203,743)

Expenditure

During the year the charity spent £567,343 (2022: £378,221).

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The split between Unrestricted and Restricted Fund expenditure during the year is :

Unrestricted	£420,936 (2022: £211,781)
Restricted	£146,407 (2022: £ 166,440)

The strategic plan for year 2 (as referred to earlier in this Report) included expenditure in respect of additional staff to enable growth in the charity's outreach and support. Unspent funds brought forward from the previous year (2021-22) were drawn down in order to achieve our goals.

Reserves

During the year TCF's expenditure of £567,343 exceeded income of £488,834 by £78,509.

The deficit reduced the funds as follows:

Unrestricted funds	£(65,389)	Total funds at 31 March 23	£356,099
Restricted funds	£(13,120)	Total funds at 31 March 23	£78,693

The Trustees give careful consideration to the level of reserves. The Charity's policy on reserves is set out as follows:

"The Trustees have, after considering the guidance issues by the Charity Commission, established a policy that sufficient general funds should be held to enable the activities of TCF to continue for a minimum of six months taking into account:

- (i) The forecast expenditure of running the Charity allowing for planned increases or decreases in ongoing expenses
- (ii) The current sources of income and the heavy reliance on one off donations and fundraising events
- (iii) A review of the risks facing the Charity, particularly those which would lead to a reduction in the level or reach of our services

The level of free reserves of £356,099 is sufficient for activities to continue for six months and funds are reviewed on a regular basis throughout the year. Currently, the monthly cost of salaries and other costs for providing support to bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents amounts to approximately £50,000. Should reserves exceed this amount by 50% on a monthly basis for six months then Trustees would review the programme of events and support and increase activities in order to keep reserves down to an economically viable level, thus ensuring provision of maximum support services to those in need.

This policy is reviewed at least once every financial year.

The Restricted funds balance at 31 March 2023 was £78,693; these funds can only be spent on projects for which the original fund application was made.

The Trustees are responsible for investing the reserves of TCF. In light of the periodic need to draw on the funds at short notice the Trustees have decided to keep the reserves on bank deposit.

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Structure, Governance and Management

As a company limited by guarantee registered in England & Wales, TCF is governed by its Memorandum & Articles of Association. The organisation was based in Kilburn, London, throughout the year with a network of volunteers throughout the United Kingdom.

The Board of TCF is comprised of between six and twelve elected Trustees. An Elected Trustee must be a Member and has to be nominated by a donating TCF Member and provide a short CV, details of their experience within TCF and a personal statement. Candidates are supplied with information on the responsibilities of a Trustee prior to election and after election they are supplied with further charity guidance booklets and details of relevant external information and training days on charity governance and management. Elected Trustees serve for three years (extendable to three years and three months). Elections are held annually and by digital and postal vote; if the number of vacancies for elected Trustees exceeds the number of nominated candidates, then the candidates are deemed to have been elected and there is no need for a vote. No elected Trustee can be in office for longer than three terms of three years, either served consecutively or with breaks. The chair can only serve for a maximum of three years.

Members of the Charity and external candidates with the required knowledge and skills needed on the Board of Trustees are also invited to apply to join as a co-opted Trustee. In addition, Trustee Advisors can be invited to join the Board for varying short periods of time in order to give the Board specialist advice or help.

All strategic directions and policies are determined by the Board of Trustees and monitored at regular Board meetings and against an annual budget.

All key decisions regarding policy, strategy, finance, governance and major pastoral issues, are taken by the Board of Trustees. Decisions are reached by a majority vote of Trustees, either by voting at the regular Board meetings (absent Trustees are regarded as bound by the majority votes of all Trustees present) or through Board members voting by email. Certain decisions regarding the pastoral work, volunteer recruitment, training and support are delegated to the CEO and operations team but need to be ratified by the Board before they can be implemented. Key decisions regarding office management are taken by the CEO in close consultation with the Chair or Co-Chairs of Trustees and, where appropriate, the Board of Trustees.

In making arrangements for setting pay and remuneration for the charity's key management personnel, the Trustees always bear in mind rates of pay for equivalent roles in charities of comparable size. In setting the pay for the Chief Executive, the Trustees considered the requirements for the role and pay for comparable roles in similarly sized charities. The Trustees will review the pay of the Chief Executive at least once a year.

Risk Assessment Policy

The Trustees regularly review and update identified major risks that might face the charity and its ability to function in pursuit of its charitable objectives, as a result of loss of reputation caused by inappropriate guidance being given to our beneficiaries, or an inability to maintain

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its current level of activities through lack of funding. In addition, risks associated with each identifiable project are assessed before it is undertaken.

In general terms, the Trustees regularly consider any areas of TCF operations where there is a perceived risk to the charity and appropriate action is taken to manage any risks that are identified.

The Trustees identified the principal risks facing the charity: the risk of inadequate future funding; the possible loss of current staff; the risk of losing volunteers.

The Trustees adopted the following plans and strategies for their mitigation; expanding the hours worked of the experienced fundraiser and, in September 2021, appointing a new Events and Community Fundraiser; a series of initiatives to retain and support staff are included as part of the three-year strategic plan; a series of initiatives to support and train volunteers were included in the three -year strategic plan.

Data Protection/Privacy Policy

TCF is committed to protecting people's personal information. Our Privacy Policy (available to view and download from our website) sets out the basis on which we process any personal information collected or provided to us.

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Trustees' Responsibilities

The trustees (who are also directors of The Compassionate Friends for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report (incorporating the strategic report and directors' report) and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102: *The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland* (United Kingdom Accepted Accounting Practice).

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

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

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

Approved by the Board of Trustees and signed on their behalf by:

Melian Mansfield

Melian Mansfield
Co-Chairs of Trustees

George Burn

George Burn

Oct 06 2023
Date:

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REFERENCE & ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

The Trustee Board

Chair: Andrew Miller KC until 21 January 2023

Vice- Chair: Susan Hughes

Co-Chairs: Melian Mansfield and George Burn from 21 January 2023

Company Secretary: George Burn

Other Trustees

Maria Ahern	(resigned 23 January 2023)
Margaret Brearley	
Ken Barclay	
Adelle Brenner	(appointed 21 January 2023)
Gina Claye	(resigned 23 January 2023)
Claire Coveney	(appointed 21 January 2023)
Alison Cramp	(appointed 21 January 2023)
Gill Hardy	
Jen Hughes	
Sefton Kwasnik	(appointed 21 January 2023)
Melian Mansfield	
Andrew Miller	(co-opted 21 January 2023)
Sheila Phillips	
Nisha Shah	
Nigel Taylor (co-opted)	
Warren Weiss	

Trustee Adviser

Guy Paton

Chief Executive

Carolyn Brice

Registered Office

Kilburn Grange
Priory Park Road
London NW6 7UJ

Independent Examiner

Joshua Kingston, BSc., ACA
Burton Sweet Limited
The Clock Tower
5 Farleigh Court
Old Weston Road
Flax Bourton
Bristol BS48 1UR

Bankers

CAF Bank Limited
25 Kings Hill Avenue
West Malling, Kent.

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INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2022.

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

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

Independent examiner's statement

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

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

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Company 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.



Joshua Kingston BSc., ACA
Burton Sweet Limited
The Clock Tower
5 Farleigh Court
Old Weston Road
Flax Bourton
Bristol BS48 1UR

Date: Oct 06 2023

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

		Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2023	Total Funds 2022
	Note	£	£	£	£
Income from:					
Donations	2	190,440	112,566	303,006	308,350
Charitable activities	3	83,543	19,409	102,952	84,685
Other trading activities	4	79,031	1,272	80,303	66,874
Investments	5	2,533	40	2,573	71
Total income		355,547	133,287	488,834	459,980
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds	6	76,872	-	76,872	64,400
Charitable activities	7	344,064	146,407	490,471	313,821
Total expenditure		420,936	146,407	567,343	378,221
Net income/(expenditure) and net movement in fund	10	(65,389)	(13,120)	(78,509)	81,759
Total funds brought forward	17	421,488	91,813	513,301	431,542
Total funds carried forward	17	356,099	78,693	434,792	513,301

The Charity has no recognised gains or losses other than the results for the period as set out above.
All of the activities of the charity are classed as continuing

The comparative Statement of Financial Activities is shown in note 12.

The notes on pages 27 to 38 form part of these financial statements

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 MARCH 2023

Company Number 04029535

	Note	2023 £	2022 £
Fixed assets			
Tangible fixed assets	13	-	-
Current assets			
Debtors	14	40,149	45,570
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>411,108</u>	<u>476,530</u>
		451,257	522,100
Creditors : Amounts falling due within one year	15	<u>(16,465)</u>	<u>(8,799)</u>
Net current assets		434,792	513,301
Net assets		<u>434,792</u>	<u>513,301</u>
Funds			
Restricted funds	18	78,693	91,813
Unrestricted funds	18	356,099	421,488
Total funds		<u>434,792</u>	<u>513,301</u>

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

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

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

These financial statements were approved by the trustees on Oct 06 2023 and are signed on their behalf by:

Melian Mansfield

Melian Mansfield
Co-Chairs of Trustees

George Burn

George Burn

The notes on pages 27 to 38 form part of these financial statements

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

1 Accounting policies

a) Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the historical cost convention and in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) issued in October 2019 and the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011 (or Companies Act 2006) and UK Generally Accepted Practice as it applies from 1 January 2019.

The charity is a public benefit entity as defined by FRS102.

The accounts have been prepared under the going concern concept, as the trustees believe this to be the most appropriate as it is considered that there are no material uncertainties, although the cost of living crisis during the past 12 months has been taken into account. Currently, income is sufficient but should there be a significant reduction, Trustees will review outgoings and plan accordingly.

b) Income

Income is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the item(s) of income have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

c) Grants

Grants, including grants for fixed assets, are recognised within the accounts as they become receivable. Grants received in the accounting period in respect of future accounting periods are deferred until those periods.

d) Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

Direct costs, including directly attributable salaries, are allocated on an actual basis to the activities. Support costs are allocated over the activities based on the estimated percentages of cost used.

Governance costs include the costs of meeting constitutional and statutory requirements and include costs associated with the strategic management of the charity's activities. They have been included in support costs.

e) Fixed assets

Expenditure on assets with an estimated economic life of more than twelve months and a cost of more than £2,000 are capitalised.

Depreciation is calculated so as to write off the cost of an asset, less its estimated residual value, over the useful economic life of that asset as follows:

Fixtures, Fittings and equipment	25% straight line
----------------------------------	-------------------

f) Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

g) Cash at bank and in hand

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

h) Creditors

Creditors are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts received.

i) Operating leases

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

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

1 Accounting policies (*continued*)

j) Unrestricted funds

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objects at the discretion of the trustees.

Unrestricted designated funds have been set aside by the trustees out of unrestricted general funds for specific future purposes or projects.

k) Restricted funds

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes. Expenditure which meets these criteria is charged to the fund, together with a fair allocation of management and support costs. Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

2 Donations

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2023 £
Donations and legacies	177,015	72,972	249,987
Grants receivable	13,425	39,594	53,019
	<u>190,440</u>	<u>112,566</u>	<u>303,006</u>

Prior year comparative

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2022 £
Donations and legacies	121,913	186,437	308,350
	<u>121,913</u>	<u>186,437</u>	<u>308,350</u>

Donations received from trustees and related parties during the year were £2,504 (2022: £2,140).

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

3 Income from: Charitable activities

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds
	£	£	2023 £
<i>Core activities</i>			
Membership subscriptions	16,833	-	16,833
Other activities	51	700	751
Events	66,659	18,709	85,368
	83,543	19,409	102,952

Prior year comparative

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds
	£	£	2022 £
<i>Core activities</i>			
Membership subscriptions	22,161	-	22,161
Other activities	23,249	-	23,249
Events	23,421	15,854	39,275
	68,831	15,854	84,685

4 Income from: Other trading activities

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds
	£	£	2023 £
Fundraising activities	76,141	1,272	77,413
Trading income	2,890	-	2,890
	79,031	1,272	80,303

Prior year comparative

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds
	£	£	2022 £
Fundraising activities	60,454	1,438	61,892
Trading income	4,982	-	4,982
	65,436	1,438	66,874

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

5 Investment income

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2023
	£	£	£
Bank interest receivable	2,533	40	2,573
	<u>2,533</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>2,573</u>

Prior year comparative

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2022
	£	£	£
Bank interest receivable	57	14	71
	<u>57</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>71</u>

6 Expenditure on: Raising funds

	Activities undertaken directly	Support Costs (Note 8)	Total 2023
	£	£	£
Sale of goods	4,106	-	4,106
Fundraising costs	59,209	13,557	72,766
	<u>63,315</u>	<u>13,557</u>	<u>76,872</u>

Prior year comparative

	Activities undertaken directly	Support Costs (Note 8)	Total 2022
	£	£	£
Sale of goods	984	-	984
Fundraising costs	53,450	9,966	63,416
	<u>54,434</u>	<u>9,966</u>	<u>64,400</u>

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

7 Expenditure on: Charitable activities

	Activities undertaken directly £	Support Costs (Note 8) £	Total 2023 £
<i>Core activities</i>			
Helpline	23,847	6,778	30,625
Library	2,421	1,129	3,550
Gathering and events	167,375	44,059	211,434
Other pastoral activities	197,413	47,449	244,862
	391,056	99,415	490,471

Prior year comparative

	Activities undertaken directly £	Support Costs (Note 8) £	Total 2022 £
<i>Core activities</i>			
Helpline	20,909	4,983	25,892
Library	1,953	831	2,784
Gathering and events	58,664	32,390	91,054
Other pastoral activities	159,209	34,882	194,091
	240,735	73,086	313,821

8 Support costs

	Premises costs £	Office expenses £	Other Expenses £	Total £
<i>Core activities</i>				
Helpline	674	4,338	1,766	6,778
Library	112	723	294	1,129
Gathering and events	4,383	28,197	11,479	44,059
Other pastoral activities	4,721	30,367	12,361	47,449
	9,890	63,625	25,900	99,415
Fundraising costs	1,349	8,676	3,532	13,557
Total 2023	11,239	72,301	29,432	112,972

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

8 Support costs (continued)

Prior year comparative

	Premises costs £	Office expenses £	Other Expenses £	Total £
<i>Core activities</i>				
Helpline	747	2,869	1,367	4,983
Library	125	478	228	831
Gathering and events	4,858	18,646	8,886	32,390
Other pastoral activities	5,232	20,080	9,570	34,882
	<u>10,962</u>	<u>42,073</u>	<u>20,051</u>	<u>73,086</u>
Fundraising costs	1,495	5,737	2,734	9,966
Total 2022	<u>12,457</u>	<u>47,810</u>	<u>22,785</u>	<u>83,052</u>

Support costs have been allocated to activities based on estimated percentages of costs used.
Governance costs of £3,456 (2022: £2,917) have been included in support costs.

9 Staff costs and numbers

The aggregate payroll costs were:

	2023 £	2022 £
Wages and salaries	217,382	187,302
Social security costs	14,049	11,380
Pension costs	3,675	3,382
	<u>235,106</u>	<u>202,064</u>

No employee received emoluments of more than £60,000.
Benefits paid to key management personnel of the charity during the year were £57,997 (2022: £54,603).

The average number of staff employed by the charity during the financial year amounted to:

	2023 No	2022 No
Pastoral and befriending services	<u>10</u>	<u>9</u>

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

10 Net income/(expenditure)

Operating surplus/(deficit) is stated after charging:

	2023	2022
	£	£
Independent examiner's fees		
Accounts preparation	2,076	1,840
Independent examination	1,380	1,223
Trustees' expenses		
Travel (0 trustees, 2022: 1 trustee)	-	132

11 Taxation

The charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.

12 Comparative Statement of Financial Activities

	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total Funds
	Funds	Funds	2022
	£	£	£
Income from:			
Donations	121,913	186,437	308,350
Charitable activities	68,831	15,854	84,685
Other trading activities	65,436	1,438	66,874
Investments	57	14	71
Total income	256,237	203,743	459,980
Expenditure on:			
Raising funds	64,400	-	64,400
Charitable activities	147,381	166,440	313,821
Total expenditure	211,781	166,440	378,221
Net income/(expenditure)	44,456	37,303	81,759
Transfers between funds	1,513	(1,513)	-
Net movement in funds	45,969	35,790	81,759
Total funds as at 1 April 2021	375,519	56,023	431,542
Total funds at 31 March 2022	421,488	91,813	513,301

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

13 Tangible fixed assets

	Office equipment £	Total £
Cost		
At 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023	7,322	7,322
Depreciation		
At 1 April 2022	7,322	7,322
Charge for the year	-	-
At 31 March 2023	7,322	7,322
Net book value		
At 31 March 2023	-	-
At 31 March 2022	-	-

14 Debtors

	2023 £	2022 £
Income tax recoverable	36,221	42,020
Prepayments	3,928	3,550
	40,149	45,570

15 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2023 £	2022 £
Accruals and deferred income	9,911	6,523
PAYE and other taxes	4,020	1,841
Other creditors	2,534	435
	16,465	8,799

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

16 Commitments

At 31 March 2023 the charity had minimum total commitments under non-cancellable operating leases as set out below:

	Property 2023 £	Property 2022 £
Falling due:		
Within 1 year	-	3,384

17 Movement in funds

	At 1 April 2022 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	At 31 March 2023 £
Restricted Funds					
Scottish Forum	-	39,416	(29,575)	-	9,841
TCF Local support group funds	60,358	18,177	(31,078)	-	47,457
National Lottery Community Fund Grant for the Grief Companions Project	6,738	18,594	(25,332)	-	-
Helpline	-	12,000	(12,000)	-	-
Leaflets	-	3,550	(3,550)	-	-
Training	-	2,000	(2,000)	-	-
Siblings	14,475	7,000	(18,677)	-	2,798
Suicide	10,123	14,500	(14,646)	-	9,977
Online support	69	14,550	(6,049)	-	8,570
Bursaries	50	-	-	-	50
Substance use	-	3,500	(3,500)	-	-
	91,813	133,287	(146,407)	-	78,693
Unrestricted funds					
General funds	421,488	355,547	(420,936)	-	356,099
	421,488	355,547	(420,936)	-	356,099
	513,301	488,834	(567,343)	-	434,792

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

17 Movement in funds (continued)

Restricted funds

The Whirlow fund - used to fund an annual retreat for bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents.

The Scottish Forum fund - monies given to finance supportive retreat weekends in Scotland.

The Northern Ireland Branch fund - monies raised for support services for beneficiaries in Northern Ireland.

TCF Local support group funds - monies donated to support TCF's work in particular regions of the UK.

The National Lottery Community Fund Grant for the Grief Companion Project - monies given to TCF to expand the scheme which offers peer befriending to newly bereaved parents.

Helpline - monies given to fund the provision of a telephone and email national helpline for bereaved parents, siblings, grandparents and the professionals supporting them.

Leaflets - monies given to fund provision of supportive publications for the bereaved.

Training - funding for volunteer training and support.

Retreats - monies donated to provide and subsidise weekend and one day supportive retreats for the bereaved.

Siblings - monies to provide support services for bereaved adult siblings (18 years+).

Suicide - monies to provide support services for parents bereaved by suicide.

Online support - funds to enable some services to be delivered online.

Bursaries - monies donated to provide financial assistance to individuals attending retreat weekends and support days.

Substance use - monies provided to support our work with individuals bereaved by drug or alcohol use.

Designated funds

The TCF Local support group funds represented monies held by local groups that provide support services to beneficiaries. The trustees reconsidered the allocation of these funds in the prior year and concluded that they should be recognised as restricted funds, so the balance was transferred to the TCF Local Support Group Fund.

The Training and support of volunteers fund represented funds received from a generous legacy. The trustees set these funds aside for a training programme for volunteers which had to be cancelled due to Covid restrictions. The charity is now rethinking its training strategy, so the funds were transferred back to General Funds last year.

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

17 Movement in funds (continued)

Movement in funds - prior year

	At 1 April 2021 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	At 31 March 2022 £
Restricted Funds					
Whirlow	1,718	-	-	(1,718)	-
Scottish Forum	15,415	19,797	(170)	(35,042)	-
Northern Ireland Branch	10,768	-	(505)	(10,263)	-
TCF Local support group funds	-	53,038	(38,190)	45,510	60,358
National Lottery Community Fund Grant for the Grief Companions Project	28,122	36,716	(58,100)	-	6,738
Helpline	-	19,950	(19,950)	-	-
Leaflets	-	4,350	(4,350)	-	-
Training	-	26,500	(26,500)	-	-
Retreats	-	4,025	(4,025)	-	-
Siblings	-	18,025	(3,550)	-	14,475
Suicide	-	16,223	(6,100)	-	10,123
Online support	-	5,069	(5,000)	-	69
Bursaries	-	50	-	-	50
	<u>56,023</u>	<u>203,743</u>	<u>(166,440)</u>	<u>(1,513)</u>	<u>91,813</u>
Unrestricted funds					
Designated funds					
TCF Local support group funds	10,780	658	(970)	(10,468)	-
Volunteer training and support	75,078	-	-	(75,078)	-
General funds	289,661	255,579	(210,811)	87,059	421,488
	<u>375,519</u>	<u>256,237</u>	<u>(211,781)</u>	<u>1,513</u>	<u>421,488</u>
	<u>431,542</u>	<u>459,980</u>	<u>(378,221)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>513,301</u>

18 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Other net assets £	Total 2022 £
Restricted funds	78,693	78,693
Unrestricted funds:		
Designated funds	-	-
General funds	356,099	356,099
	<u>434,792</u>	<u>434,792</u>

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

18 Analysis of net assets between funds (continued)

Analysis of net assets between funds - prior year

	Other net assets £	Total 2022 £
Restricted funds	91,813	91,813
Unrestricted funds:		
Designated funds	-	-
General funds	421,488	421,488
	<u>513,301</u>	<u>513,301</u>

19 Company limited by guarantee

The company is limited by guarantee and as such has no issued share capital. In the event of the company being wound up the liability of the members is limited to £1 each.

20 Related party transactions

Trustees waived expenses of £nil (2022: £1,250) during the year.

Other than those disclosed elsewhere in the accounts there are no further related party transactions in either the current or previous year.

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

England & Wales - Charity number 1082335

Accounts

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT
AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
31 MARCH 2022

Company Registration Number 04029535
Charity Number 1082335



The
**Compassionate
Friends**

Supporting bereaved parents and their families

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

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THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

Introduction

The Compassionate Friends was established in 1969 as a national charitable organisation supporting bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents after the death of a child of any age and from any cause.

The Trustees of The Compassionate Friends ("TCF") present their annual report for the year ending 31 March 2022.

This Report has been prepared in accordance with the charity's governing document and Statement of Recommended Practice (FRS102 2019) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities", published by the Charity Commission.

Our legal status and governance structure are explained in the "Structure, Governance and Management" section of this report

How our work delivers Public Benefit

"Every parent's nightmare is to lose a child"

This is a cliché, but for many, many families the nightmare tragically becomes a reality. Each year in the UK 9,000 (Office of National Statistics) children and young people under the age of 30 years die – and this figure does not include the adults (87,000 in 2019) who die at the age of 30 or over, many of whom leave behind grieving parents, who have outlived their son or daughter, and often also a grieving partner and children of their own.

National peer-to-peer support for over 50 years

TCF is a charitable organisation of bereaved parents and their families dedicated to the support and care of other bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents who have suffered the death of a child or children of any age (from one month old to an adult son or daughter) and from any cause of death. We are the only UK nationwide charity offering this vital peer -to-peer support to parents and their families.

As the first peer-to-peer charity in the UK for grieving parents, we have been bringing understanding, support, friendship and hope to bereaved parents for over 50 years. The charity began in 1969 when grieving parents Iris and Joe Lawley, Bill and Joan Henderson and Betty Rattigan were brought together for mutual support by Simon Stephens, then a young chaplain in a Coventry hospital. Together they formed The Compassionate Friends. The mutual peer-to-peer support they offered each other as bereaved parents has remained at the heart of the charity since those first early days.

Our Mission

The Compassionate Friends aims to make a difference by providing support, understanding and hope to bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents who have experienced the death of a child or children of any age (over 1 month old to an adult son or daughter) and from any cause.

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

We do this by offering accessible, high quality peer support services and information to bereaved parents and their families.

Our Vision

Every bereaved parent, adult sibling and grandparent throughout the UK can find and access the lifeline of high quality, appropriate and safe peer support services.

Our Purpose

TCF is a registered charity and its purposes are as set out in the objects contained in our Memorandum and Articles:

- (i) To advance and assist in mental and physical welfare following suffering among (a) parents occasioned by the death of their child(ren) and (b) other close relatives of such child(ren), normally brothers, sisters and grandparents;
- (ii) To promote and support research on parental and sibling grief intended to help to change and improve the quality of support and care provided by health, social care, political and other supporters for grieving parents and siblings.

Our Objectives

TCF is a registered charity and its purposes as set out in the objects contained in our Memorandum and Articles:

- (i) To advance and assist in mental and physical welfare following suffering and infirmity among (a) parents occasioned by the death of their child(ren) and (b) other close relatives of such child(ren), normally brothers, sisters and grandparents;
- (ii) To promote and support research on parental and sibling grief intended to help to change and improve the quality of support and care provided by health, social care, political and other supporters for grieving parents and siblings.

The impact of child loss

The grief of bereaved parents is devastating and overwhelming. In experiencing the sudden or anticipated death of a beloved son or daughter, parents endure a profound trauma, a loss so out of the natural order and acutely painful it changes their lives forever in a multitude of ways. Both the physical and emotional impact of the death of a child is huge and often long-lasting. Parents' situations and ability to cope with their loss can be exacerbated by the lack of appropriate information or support services - particularly the case for those who have experienced the sudden death of their child outside of a hospital or hospice environment. Parents can struggle to find understanding and appropriate support from those around them as many professionals or family and friends are not aware of the enormity of the impact of child loss on an individual's mental and physical health.

Emotionally parents are battling with a range of complex and intense emotions – including anger, rage, despair, hopelessness, loneliness, heartbreak, remorse, constant yearning,

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emptiness, guilt and shame. It can be very difficult for parents to manage the intensity of their emotions and to find outlets to express how they feel. Moreover, the death of a son or daughter – whether sudden or anticipated – often results in acute and long-lasting symptoms of post-traumatic stress; just some of these symptoms can include high anxiety, hyper-vigilance, flashbacks, memory loss, feeling disconnected from everything and everyone, inability to sleep, fear of going outside or extreme restlessness, physical pain, despair, hopelessness and wanting to die. For many, the circumstances of loss result in deep trauma which can impact their ability to manage their working lives or to cope on a day to day basis with even simple tasks. In early grief particularly, many bereaved parents find it impossible to engage in or enjoy social activities. They may act out of character and not be able to concentrate on or find much enjoyment in work, studies or their usual leisure activities. They can often feel a need to withdraw from family and the wider community. This can lead to symptoms and feelings of depression and disconnection. In trying to cope with the enormity of their grief, parents can often feel very alone and can struggle with finding purpose and meaning to their days and lives. Following their loss, they can question their identity and doubt their ability to re-engage in life in normal ways again or even how life can ever be meaningful again. For some parents, the loss of their child can lead them to feeling that life is no longer worthwhile or a wish to be with their deceased child.

Physically, grief can be exhausting and can weaken the immune system often leading to physical ill-health or an exacerbation of existing physical or mental health problems. Sleep and appetite can be adversely impacted as well as the ability or motivation to look after their physical or mental health. Parents can struggle to meet their financial commitments or fall behind with their work commitments because they lack the concentration, commitment or motivation to carry out these roles. Many feel unable to work for several months or years following their loss with some parents feeling unable to return to work full time or to return to the same job. Most parents struggle with the concentration needed to manage household bills or other related financial paperwork.

The loss of a child can also have a huge impact on personal relationships, often resulting in relationship breakdowns between a couple, their surviving children or within the wider family. This can exacerbate stress levels which exist already as the result of losing a child. The repercussions of the death of a son or daughter can last for many years and cause huge changes in family dynamics and financial stresses which in turn can create long term rifts and ongoing financial pressures leading to increased levels of depression, anxiety and isolation.

The benefits of peer support

Peer support from fellow bereaved parents or siblings either face-to-face, on the telephone or online is a special and unique kind of support which has the following benefits:

- Reduces the social isolation frequently experienced after the death of a child, grandchild or adult sibling
- Provides a hugely valuable safe place where parents and their close family can speak honestly about how they are really feeling
- Understands, recognizes and normalizes the intensity of early grief and the long-lasting impact of child loss
- Encourages and sustains bereaved parents and families – as hearing from others further on in their grief offers comfort and hope for a future without their loved one and demonstrates ways they might survive such a devastating loss

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- Continues support, understanding and friendship after the first weeks or months of loss when family or friends' support may have diminished

Newly bereaved parents often comment that this peer support can be more helpful to them than professional counselling, in that only other bereaved parents can appreciate and understand the trauma, depth and all-encompassing nature of child loss. This helps them to feel understood, validated and more safely held in their grief. Speaking with another bereaved parent who is further along in their loss, means that the newly bereaved can 'take off the mask' that they wear every day, and in doing so, they feel better able to share more openly and honestly about how they are feeling without the fear of being 'moved on', or otherwise made to feel they are failing or 'stuck' in their grief. Perhaps most important of all, bereaved parents are able to talk about their precious children without the fear of being 'shut down'.

How our work delivers our aims

Thanks to its 250 wonderful volunteers, all who know grief for a child or sibling first-hand and who are trained to listen empathically and care for others, TCF can connect bereaved parents and their close family members to one another in many ways - through conversations one-to-one in person or in groups, by telephone, online, through the written word, and via social media. Through such contact with others the bereaved find understanding, a lifeline and can gradually find purpose, resilience and new hope.

We are an inclusive organisation and exist to provide peer-to-peer support, understanding, friendship and hope directly to bereaved families and individuals whose child has died whether as a baby (from one month old), infant, school age child, teenager or adult son or daughter, whether it is a recent loss or one that happened many years ago. The death may have been from any cause, for instance, as a result of a road traffic incident, a short- or longer-term illness such as cancer, sudden unexpected death, an accident in or outside the home, suicide or through drug or alcohol use.

Equal access to our support and services is important to us. TCF has no religious affiliation and offers support to bereaved families irrespective of the age of the child, cause of death, ethnic, social, economic, faith or political backgrounds. We provide support to any family affected by the death of a child, and this includes adoptive parents, step- and blended families, same sex couples and single parent families. We respect the privacy of all those who come to us for support and offer a confidential service.

We review our aims, objectives and activities each year. This review looks at our services and achievements during the 12 months between April 2021 – March 2022.

During the financial year 2020-21 we undertook a series of research projects, reviews, analysis and planning activities to enable the development of a new 3-year strategic plan for the charity designed to ensure that our aims, objectives and activities remain focused on our stated purposes. This plan was approved by the Board of Trustees in early 2021 and implementation began on 1 April 2021. Regular reviews of the strategic plan by a Strategy Committee comprising Trustees and the CEO, as well as the full Trustee Board at Board meetings, ensured that we carefully monitored, accessed progress and made any adjustments needed during the year 1 phase of implementation.

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Summary of services, activities and achievements in the year

Given all the uncertainty due to Covid, the fact that the easing of restrictions was gradual during the year and life was still not fully back to 'normal', our charity continued to cope well by staying flexible and making changes and adjustments in delivery of support during such a fluid situation. Indeed, the post Covid period remained full of uncertainties and stop-starts, as restrictions were eased gradually but Covid itself and Covid related fears continued to have an impact.

As a result, while some of our in-person support did start to return (albeit with limited numbers and with restrictions still in place), we continued, during the first 6 months of the year, to provide our support services largely online or via telephone and email. However, from October 2021, we were gradually able to move to a hybrid approach returning to in-person support with online, digital and telephone support services running alongside.

Moreover, due to the uncertainties still remaining in the post-pandemic period, and despite some aspects of the change in our operating environment being incredibly motivating and beneficial for our charity - for instance being able to connect with and support online volunteers and bereaved parents all over the UK - we were unable to develop some of the planned initiatives in the year. However, following the groundwork and preparation undertaken through 3 research studies, a user survey and further analysis in the year 2020 -21, in April 2021 we did begin the implementation of the 3-year strategic plan for the charity for 2021- 2024. To ensure that we could implement the plan we put in place 2 underpinning goals:

- (i) To retain current staff and volunteers as far as possible and further build upon TCF's infrastructure and human resources**
- (ii) To ensure sufficient funds were raised so that the strategic objectives can be met**

The plan developed listed our strategic objectives during the 3-year period from April 2021 as:

- (i) Increase reach/quantity/scope and quality of services to bereaved parents**
- (ii) Expand the services of TCF in those regions of the UK which are under-served**
- (iii) Increase the diversity and reach of TCF across all minority and under-represented groups, both in our service and throughout our organisation**
- (iv) Improve and develop support for bereaved siblings**
- (v) Increase support for bereaved parents in specific circumstances**
- (vi) Increase public awareness of TCF**

In year 1 of the plan our focus has been on the first 2 building blocks/prerequisites to ensure that in future years we can meet our plan objectives.

Prerequisite goal 1) Retaining current volunteers and staff and further build upon TCF's infrastructure and human resources

For our volunteers and staff, being there for others can have an impact on their own well-being as it is not always possible for individuals in supporting roles to protect themselves from others' stories of loss and grief, many of which can be very traumatic. We, therefore, **continued to**

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prioritise and focus on support and self-care for our volunteers. This support has been offered through **sharing sessions online** – these provide an important and vital opportunity to stay connected with volunteers. The sessions offered information on the impact of the pandemic on bereaved families, enabled our volunteers to hear from guest speakers in the bereavement support sector, and offered a forum to share and discuss experiences and challenges for our volunteers in their roles supporting bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents. We have also used the online environment to offer dedicated training and support to teams of volunteers based throughout the UK who are offering specific forms of peer support – for example, online sharing sessions and supportive meetings for our Helpline volunteer team, those volunteers who are moderating our private Facebook groups, local one to one support contacts and group facilitators, for grief companions and our volunteer team facilitating online support groups for specific circumstances of loss. This move to online meetings and sharing sessions has helped the charity to address some of the geographical barriers and obstacles we have traditionally had in how to engage, motivate and stay in touch with volunteers in outlying areas of UK. It has had a huge positive impact on volunteer morale in feeling a greater sense of belonging and being part of a team and in reducing feelings of isolation especially given the majority of our volunteers support remotely on their own.

Continuing this focus on support for our volunteers, we provided a further two **online sessions for volunteers and staff focusing on supporting bereaved family members expressing suicidal ideation.** These customised 10 Tools for Talking About Suicide workshops were run in collaboration with the charity, Olly's Future.

We emphasised the importance, particularly through the challenging period presented by the Covid pandemic, of self-care among our volunteers by offering 4 **writing for wellbeing workshops** to support and emphasise volunteer and staff self-care, with 4 sessions run online during April and May 2021. Additional opportunities for volunteers to take part in relaxation workshops were offered during autumn 2021, encouraging the team to care for themselves as they care for others. We actively encouraged our volunteers to avail of these opportunities to care for themselves.

In May 2021 we committed to the vital provision of a **listening support service for volunteers. Hear For You**, which was developed specifically with our peer supporters in mind. As the reach of our charity develops, as our volunteer numbers grow, as bereaved family members find us at an earlier point in their grief, sometimes even on the day of death or before their loved one's funeral together with the additional trauma of the pandemic having made the normal rituals of grieving and available support problematic, the impact on our volunteers and their own grief and wellbeing has intensified. The Hear For You scheme offered volunteers up to 2 x 50 minute confidential listening support sessions via online video conferencing or telephone free of charge with one of two qualified counsellors, both of whom are also bereaved parents and have volunteer experience within TCF. This ran as a pilot for 6 months and after adaptations, as a result of feedback from users and the counsellors, we confirmed its continued provision in November 2021 and that the number of sessions per volunteer, per issue could be increased to 3. This is now an established feature of support for volunteers.

What our volunteers say...

"I really appreciate the care TCF show for volunteers. One would think that it is obvious that volunteers are important and need to be cared for and nurtured. Unfortunately I know, from personal experience, that a number of charities and organisations don't look after their staff and volunteers. Your care is very much appreciated and enables me to continue supporting others."

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To support the existing staff team, a committee of Trustees was appointed in October 2021 to focus on human resource issues. Planning for well-being and mental health support for the staff team was also started. Staff during this year were working partly in the office and partly remotely. Our team were affected by Covid themselves, sometimes more than once, resulting in additional challenges for charity operations and in fostering of a collaborative team-based environment.

A key focus for the year was the **appointment of additional staff** identified in the strategic plan to build on the charity's infrastructure. In October 2021, **Karolina Zwierzyk joined the team as Office Manager**, with responsibility for efficiency and productivity of all the charity's admin functions. She also took on responsibility, with Trustee adviser Guy Paton, for the research and implementation of a new (Customer Relationship Management system (CRM) to replace our existing aging and increasingly creaking Access database. The spec and supplier for a new CRM was finalised and approved by Trustees in March 2022.

Prerequisite goal 2) Ensuring sufficient funds were raised so that the strategic objectives can be met

A funding plan for the years 2021-23 was developed and projections made beyond 2023 to include bids for **larger single year donations** from grant making bodies, trusts and foundations for specific projects as well as a focus **on developing multi-year funding** where possible. To achieve this, **Stephen Armstrong**, our Head of Fundraising, **increased his hours** to 4 days per week from April 2021.

As in person fundraising events began to resume after the pandemic from Autumn/Winter 2021/22, our funding plan also included developing and increasing income from challenge events and through community fundraising. To meet this aim, **Jenny King** joined our staff team in September 2021 as **Events and Community Fundraiser**. Her brief was to increase funding from challenge events and community sources and also to develop an annual community fundraising campaign in which all members and supporters of the charity could get involved.

OUR SERVICES

During 2021 – 22 and in year 1 of the strategic plan, we continued to provide peer support to bereaved parents and their families through our range of services.

National Helpline

Approximately 900 calls and 500 email requests for support were received by our Helpline during the period of this report, a small decrease on pre-pandemic periods. Activity on our Helpline during this period reflected the national and global situation with the coronavirus pandemic, based on what we were hearing from regular networking with other Helplines and charities during this time. In particular, we found call volumes tended to be significantly lower during those periods when a new lockdown was announced or when we were emerging from a period of lockdown. As people adjusted to each lockdown, call volumes would increase again. Call volumes increased most from September 2021 onwards. Email requests for support also started to increase from this time.

The majority of our calls continued to be from bereaved parents, particularly mothers. Calls and emails from professionals were significantly lower than usual during the early lockdown

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but from September 2021 onwards, there was a noticeable increase from mental health teams, GPs, and counsellors. Specifically, more referrals were being received from recently created mental health support roles such as social prescribers and wellbeing advisors. GP practices often refer their patients to these services who in turn contacted our charity to find out more about our peer support and referral process for patients experiencing child bereavement.

Our Helpline comprised 24 committed volunteers with 2 new volunteers joining the team in September 2021. Two sessions were held to share best practice and offer support to our Helpline team during a challenging year.

What parents say...

"Without TCF, I'm not sure where I would have found the strength to carry on... I can't thank you all enough for the work you do."

In person and online supportive events

Throughout the year we continued to provide **online support groups** for parents in specific circumstances, for instance loss to suicide, loss to cancer, bereaved fathers, loss of a baby or very young child, or a school age child, an older adult child (35 years+), for those parents who have lost their only child or all their children. We also continued monthly groups for bereaved adult siblings. In the year we added new online groups for lone parents, loss to road traffic incident, bereavement by a sudden accident, parents located in Northern Ireland and for parents bereaved abroad. We also began to offer **regular group support for parents bereaved by Covid or during the pandemic**. All online groups were facilitated by trained volunteers and have allowed bereaved parents from all over the UK from Land's End to John O'Groats to connect with others online similarly bereaved in a way that would not have been possible in person. During the year we had over 30 volunteers involved in delivering these online support groups. We use feedback from participants in each session to improve facilitation and the support offered.

A total of **81 online support groups for parents in specific circumstances or bereaved adult siblings** were run during the period of this report (a slight increase on the previous year). These online groups have continued to help our charity address some of the geographical obstacles which the bereaved encounter in accessing peer support in isolated or outlying areas of the UK where there is not always much in the way of local, on-the-ground services.

What parents and siblings say...

"I always leave a meeting feeling better and not so alone. the facilitators are excellent and so very kind and gentle. I am always very grateful to them for their time and for sharing. It helps to know I have a place I can go where I can cry and express myself and know everyone really understands and doesn't judge me. "

Following a review of resourcing, we developed a hybrid approach to in-person and online support. So during the autumn of 2021, as pandemic restrictions started to be lifted, we offered a series of bereavement support days particularly for parents in early bereavement. These were held in Glasgow (September 2021), Derbyshire (October 2021), Hampshire (October 2021) and Belfast (October 2021). An additional support day for parents bereaved by suicide or substance use was held in Glasgow in March 2022.

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Towards the end of the report period, after a break of 2 years due to the pandemic, we restarted our 2 day weekend retreats with a supportive event for parents in early bereavement (under 3 years bereaved) held near Bath, Somerset in February 2022.

What parents say...

"Your team have given us so much support. Thank you for creating such a caring and supportive platform for all the families out there that are going through such heart break and loss".

Further online support

Our **11 moderated, confidential online Facebook groups** focusing on different aspects of loss continued throughout the period of this report, including for parents bereaved through cancer or long-term illness, by suicide, through drugs or alcohol, the loss of a baby or very young child, parents whose only child or all their children have died, adult bereaved siblings, and more. The need to connect with other bereaved parents and to share grief and loss together continued during this time as restrictions continued in the first half of the year. In response to demand, a new private Facebook group was set up for parents bereaved of a school age child (age 5-16 years).

We continued to host **online talks and presentations by bereaved parents and siblings** offering personal reflections on parental and sibling loss. These have all been well attended, with 150+ attendees at each. Speakers have included Sangeeta Mahajan, Jane Oundjian MBE and Joanne Cacciatore. We also held an Inquests Information Evening, with speakers Andrew Miller KC and solicitor Sefton Kwasnik. Each talk was recorded and uploaded online, building up a resource library of helpful and supportive videos which are being accessed by many in the weeks and months following the live events.

We held our **annual online candle lighting remembrance event** in December 2021 as part of the TCF Worldwide Candle Lighting event. 300 bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents came together to remember their loved ones during this particularly difficult time of year for the bereaved and a further 3500 viewed the livestream of the event. The event was also available on The Compassionate Friends UK YouTube channel.

What parents say..'

"What a wonderful and remarkable job this charity does in providing comfort to bereaved parents in a real time of need"

Grief Companion Scheme

In its second year of operation, the **Grief Companion Scheme** has continued to be managed and developed by Shirley Gower. Our dedicated volunteer grief companions offered one-to-one peer befriending and support to over 180 newly bereaved parents, particularly in areas of the country which are not covered by an existing TCF local one to one support contact or support group.

This year we have extended the Scheme to include some parents who may have a TCF local contact and/or support group close by, but where this existing support is unsuitable for some reason (e.g., social anxiety, inability to attend due to frailty, ill health disabilities or transport or financial constraints restricting ability to travel). Many newly bereaved parents can also understandably find it hard to cope with the details of others' losses in a support group setting

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or, depending on the circumstances of their loss, may have a strong need to share their 'story' but to just one person rather than a whole group of parents. This can make 1:1 support more appropriate for early loss in some situations. Often this 1-1 support can be put in place relatively quickly compared to many other services, and is in place for longer (up to 12 months).

With the growth in the Scheme over the year, in January 2022 Suzanne Cannon was appointed part time administrator for the Scheme. The extra resource has made possible the introduction of a review and evaluation process (once a match is underway, at a 6–8-week review, 6 month follow up with Hear for You counsellor (new), 12 month catch up and evaluation – the latter providing feedback to continue to improve and develop the experience of both the newly bereaved parents and the volunteer companions).

Local 1-1 support and groups

Covid restrictions forced the closure of all of our in person support for much of 2021. However, during the last few months of 2021, the majority of **local support groups resumed in-person monthly meetings** and **local support contacts** began to meet newly bereaved parents in person once again. This return to in-person support varied across the country based on the circumstances of each group, the requirements of the venue they were using as well as the circumstances and vulnerabilities of individual volunteers and those they were supporting. Volunteer sharing sessions continued to be offered online, allowing volunteers from around the UK to share best practice, find support from one another and the staff team and discuss some of the challenges they faced resuming in-person support. We continued to offer **group facilitation and local support training online**. Sessions were run over 6 half day online training workshops during the course of the year and were attended by an average of 10 volunteers each session. Access was offered to these training opportunities to professionals and volunteers in other organisations offering bereavement support. The year saw the development of specific online training and induction for new local support contacts, who offer one to one support to a range of parents in their local area.

Informal support

With restrictions lifting, we were able to begin and develop our informal **walks for bereaved parents and siblings**. The walks programme restarted in London in May 2021 in accordance with Covid related government guidance at that time in June Terry Ahern, facilitator of the London TCF walks programme, ran an online talk and workshop. This workshop offered volunteers interested in offering walks to bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents around the country, the basics and tips for leading a successful TCF walk. The talk was well attended and resulted in a number of new volunteers coming forward to offer to facilitate walks. This in turn led the start of a varied programme of walks throughout the UK, which began in earnest in spring 2022.

What parents say...

"These walks are a powerful healing experience for me. You all keep me going in my pain and grief".

Support for specific circumstances of loss

We continued to develop **specific support for specialist groups** of the bereaved – for example, for those with no surviving children (through a quarterly newsletter, monthly online support group); bereaved siblings (a newsletter written by bereaved adult siblings for this group

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printed in hardcopy but also distributed digitally and a monthly online support group); those bereaved by suicide or substance use (monthly online support groups for both types of loss, and a national supporter team for parents bereaved by suicide offering initial peer support covering the UK geographically, a bereavement support day in Glasgow; informal walks for parents bereaved by suicide; support groups for parents bereaved by suicide in London (in person and online), Manchester, Bristol, Glasgow). A small grandparent supporter team began to meet regularly during the period of this report. A bereavement support information pack continued to be sent to over 1000 parents and their families seeking support and information after child loss. The pack was always customised to support parents and families in different circumstances of loss.

What parents say...

"A big thank you for the information pack you sent me; it gives me a lot of comfort knowing there is such genuine support out there".

Publications, newsletters and leaflets

We published over 50 **leaflets and fact sheets offering information and suggestions** to bereaved parents and families, as well as professionals and other supporters of bereaved families. These were downloaded over 40,000 times and distributed with both digital and physical information packs. These publications are unique in that they are written by bereaved parents and siblings. As well as updates of existing publications, new leaflets were published including *Grieving The death of a twin child*, *Grieving for our child who experienced mental health problems*, *When your child has died abroad*, *Helping parents when their child dies at university*, and *Coping with Christmas*. In December 2021, we published a well-received more **visual, inclusive leaflet – My child has died. How do I cope?** Designed to be an easier read publication, it is more accessible to parents in the first few raw weeks or months of loss and to those where English is not a first language.

"The leaflet is beautifully written, as I knew it would be, and full of quiet wisdom. Since we lost our son I have benefited hugely from the resources provided by TCF"

Over 5,000 **supportive magazines and newsletters** were sent to bereaved parents and their families, including specific supportive publications for bereaved adult siblings and parents who have experienced the loss of their only child or children.

In the latter half of the year, once the Covid limitations were lifted, our **library** of 1,000 books and resources on all aspects of bereavement resumed its unique service and our dedicated volunteer librarian, Mary Hartley, restarted providing a personalised choice of titles to support the bereaved. In late 2021, our library of books was moved from our Kilburn office to enable a more efficient service to be offered. **Regular email** and printed news continued to extend our reach to bereaved families and professionals, keeping both groups in touch with news from our charity and the support available.

In November, we published an anthology of poems compiled by bereaved father, David Bransbury. **Forget-Me-Not Poems: A Collection of Poetry Honouring Children Gone Too Soon** contained 100 poems written by bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents, together with photos of their loved ones. Many of the poems have been sponsored and together with sales of the book raised funds for and awareness of our charity.

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Digital communications and website re-launch

Early in the year a refresh and update to our website was undertaken, going live in late April 2021. Key changes included easier user-navigation, modernised design, more white space and images reflecting we are a 'people' charity. We created a more supportive, inclusive, welcoming and active site, giving more prominence to Helpline and Donate buttons, providing specific portals for those looking for support or information e.g. specifically for bereaved parents, or for siblings, professionals, supporter/fundraisers, volunteers – containing all the pages relevant to an individual's circumstances and relationship with TCF. A new section for news, guest blogs, support videos was created, as well as the ability to create an *In Memory Fund* for a child or loved one.

We continued to lodge supportive videos of online talks, events, and sharing sessions for our members and also volunteers on our YouTube channel. Our social media presence continued to build throughout the year on Facebook, Twitter and increasingly on Instagram. We know that many bereaved parents and their families regularly access support and information from our social media posts. We continued to live stream online talks by inspiring speakers. Each live stream reached over 3000 viewers.

National Bereaved Parents Day took place on 3 July raising awareness of all parents who have lost a child of any age and any cause. Collaborating with other child loss charities, we focused on the theme *#keepingtheirmemoryalive* sharing some of the inspiring ways parents honour and remember their children through our website, via a video montage and via social media. The video on Facebook was viewed over 2,000 times.

Collaboration and networking

We continued to **collaborate with other charities and organisations** in the field of bereavement support. TCF were represented and played a full part on the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Bereavement Care and in the National Bereavement Alliance (NBA).

TCF are also members of the Support After Suicide Partnership and attend Members Meetings regularly to represent the views of parents and siblings bereaved by suicide. TCF also attended the virtual Suicide Bereavement UK International Conference in September 2021. We gave support to the third National Grief Awareness Week (December 2021). We participated in networking meetings with other bereavement organisations across Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Our members and volunteers have spoken about child death and supporting bereaved parents and their families to a number of **organisations and professionals** in a range of settings during the year, for example, the Coroners E-Conference, Demystifying Death Week in Scotland, Missing People charity meeting, training for paediatric hospital staff across Surrey. Cruse volunteer meetings, and the newly formed UK Commission on Bereavement.

Our members have participated in a range of **research studies** during the year, including a study looking at the emotional care of parents who have cared for and lost a child with a life limiting illness (University of Bristol); bereaved by Covid study (University of Cardiff), a study looking at the meaning and implication of participation by bereaved people in inquests (Institute from Crime and Justice Policy Research at Birkbeck, University of London and Centre for

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Death and Society (University of Bath) and a work and bereavement study (University of Sheffield).

Future Plans

We will continue our focus on the provision of high-quality peer-to-peer support to parents and grandparents bereaved of a child or grandchild throughout the UK with reference to our strategic aims. We will do this through a range of telephone, in person and online support and through the provision of high quality administrative and mentoring support from our staff team to those we support, both our volunteers and the bereaved public. We will also continue to build our support for bereaved adult siblings and will raise awareness within the community of bereaved, as well as the general public, of peer support offered by The Compassionate Friends. Our mission to educate around the devastating impact and heartbreak that follows the death of a child will also go on.

Following the first year of the implementation of our **3 year strategic plan 2021- 2024** we will continue to review progress regularly in years 2 and 3 and make changes as our operating and funding environment changes.

We will continue to prioritise **self-care, resilience building and support for our volunteers**, all of whom offer the peer support and empathy, which is at the heart of the bereavement support services provided by TCF. If our volunteers are well - supported they will continue to offer high quality support to bereaved parents and other family members and we will be able to retain our volunteer team members for longer. We will do this by continuing to offer high quality initial and ongoing training for all teams of volunteers. We will offer support by an increased staff team, focused on volunteer management, co-ordination support and guidance. We will continue to fund the Hear For You listening support service for all volunteers, offering our 250 volunteers in the UK a confidential place where they can discuss and share any concerns or issues around their volunteering roles at TCF, their grief or wellbeing. We will continue to bring our volunteers together regularly for support and sharing of best practice, both online and in person.

We will continue to return to a **programme of in-person weekend retreats and support days**, which will include general gatherings organised by location (e.g. Scottish gathering, UK National gathering) as well as targeted retreats for specific causes of death or life circumstances – for example, a retreat for parents in very early bereavement, for parents who have lost their only child/children, for those parents bereaved by suicide or substance use, and for bereaved adult siblings. We will also plan a number of **one-day supportive events** around the UK for bereaved parents. We will continue to encourage and support **informal events** for bereaved parents and siblings, including our series of walks, lunches, teas and informal get-togethers. These can be an important first step for the newly bereaved to start to engage with our peer support services. We will continue to recruit more walk facilitators and volunteers creating more informal events.

We will establish a **hybrid model of support** which will utilise the very best of online support – with the advantage that parents and other family members can access support wherever they are located in the UK – together with traditional in-person support. We will continue to review the balance of each as demand and resources allow.

We will continue to develop and grow the **Grief Companion Scheme** – funded by the National Lottery - reaching areas of the country where there is little local support and helping to further

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reduce the isolation and lack of support experienced by many bereaved parents. Managed by our Grief Companion Coordinator, Shirley Gower, the Scheme will continue to offer support to newly bereaved parents (in the first 2 years of their loss) given by bereaved parents who are at least 3 years past their own loss. The support of volunteer grief companions will continue to be a priority for the Coordinator. With an assistant now supporting the scheme, it will be possible to more effectively monitor and evaluate the benefits of grief companion support and make changes where required. Crucially for the continuation of the scheme, we will begin to plan for a renewal or a new source of funding after the multi-year funding comes to an end in Spring 2023.

We will continue the development of **'teams' of supporters** to ensure that we can target support for specific groups of the bereaved. Following the establishment of the bereaved by suicide supporter team, who offer initial support to parents bereaved by suicide, we will continue to work to establish similar supporters for bereaved grandparents, for parents with no surviving children, and for parents bereaved of a child with complex needs or disabilities. We are reliant on volunteers who have themselves experienced these specific losses to come forward to train and then support as members of these national teams. However, this model continues to offer us the best way to ensure the volunteers in each team receive excellent training, support and mentoring from staff and through contact, discussion and sharing with their team members.

We will continue to **develop TCF's infrastructure**, recruiting additional key staff to build our capacities to support and to increase public knowledge about our charity. Key posts will be a volunteer support assistant, to support the work of Ruth Mercier Volunteer and Helpline manager, and a communications professional to develop and implement a communications strategy to reach out to key stakeholders. As our staff team grows we will need to strengthen our HR policies and procedures and prioritise support and wellbeing for all TCF employees.

We will continue to develop the efficiency, productivity and capabilities of our national office and the operations of our charity. With the help of our Trustee Adviser, Guy Paton, we will implement a **new CRM** (database) offering the best support to the membership, fundraising, volunteer management, supportive events, communications and finance functions of the charity.

We will undertake a gap analysis to establish where TCF currently has more limited reach for example, Wales and Northern England. We will **initiate analysis to better understand the diversity and reach of TCF** across minority and under-represented groups, including bereaved fathers, LGBT communities and ethnic minorities. We will ensure we have an equality, diversity and inclusion policy in place and regularly review and update all our policies and procedures. We will continue to **build our peer support and reach in the regions of the UK and across diverse communities**.

We will increase peer support for adult (18 years+) **bereaved siblings** by developing a team of sibling volunteers who will run online and in-person support groups for siblings. We will return to in person supportive events, including overnight retreats and support days for bereaved siblings. Our newsletter for bereaved siblings will continue to be published in print and digitally 4 times a year, employing volunteer guest editors. Over the period of the plan, we hope to appoint a Sibling Coordinator to improve recruitment and support of sibling volunteers and develop our peer support services for adult bereaved siblings.

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We will target existing and new funders to develop and diversify our income streams – including looking for larger grants and for multi-year funding. We will take advantage of the reinstatement of **challenge and community events** after the pandemic and the appointment of our Events & Community Fundraiser to focus on developing funding from the stewardship of the many parents, siblings, grandparents and other supporters who take part in challenges and events to benefit TCF financially. We will plan and run an annual community fundraising campaign which will appeal to our varied membership. We will continue to work to increase our charity's funding from **digital income** streams.

Over the period of the plan, we will work to **increase the profile and awareness of TCF within identified target groups** who come into contact with bereaved parents and adult siblings and may be able to signpost e.g. educational establishments, police, coroners, funeral directors, hospitals, hospices, GPs, other healthcare professionals, social services, faith personnel, donors, other bereaved parents, well-known people/celebrities who may have been affected by child bereavement. As part of our plan, we hope to appoint **a communications specialist** to develop a detailed and effective comms strategy to target these groups and increase our reach to bereaved parents and their families throughout the UK.

We will continue to regularly **survey all TCF users** to monitor satisfaction and develop and change our services where necessary.

Financial Review

The Trustees are responsible for the finances of the Charity. They monitor the finances of TCF by receiving a financial report at each Trustee meeting and by adopting a budget for each financial year.

The Trustees monitor three main aspects of the charity's finances

- The income from various sources
- The expenses
- The reserves

Income

The income of the charity comes from four main sources as follows:

- Membership donations and fees
- The proceeds from fundraising events and donations from Friends of TCF
- Securing grants and donations from foundations and trusts
- Fees in respect of gathering and retreats

Unrestricted income can be spent on TCF'S general charitable purposes as set out in the budget for the year.

Restricted income can only be spent on particular purposes/projects as specified by the donor.

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During the year the total income of the Charity was £459,980 (2021: £364,068). The split between Unrestricted and Restricted Funds received in the year is:

Unrestricted	£256,237 (2021: £312,484)
Restricted	£203,743 (2021: £ 51,584)

Expenditure

During the year the charity spent £378,221 (2021: £288,010).

The split between Unrestricted and Restricted Fund expenditure during the year is :

Unrestricted	£211,781 (2021: £248,113)
Restricted	£166,440 (2021: £ 39,897)

As the year progressed, following the pause in normal activities due to Covid, the Charity was able to resume its planned programme of growth and support, and adapt to changes such as the continued use of online support which was very much appreciated by participants when first introduced and which has become part of the ongoing support work now offered by TCF. In the event, expenditure did not exceed income for the year and a surplus was added to reserves.

Reserves

During the year TCF's income of £459,980 exceeded expenditure of £378,221 by £81,759.

The surplus increased the funds as follows :

Unrestricted funds	£45,969	Total funds at 31 March 22	£421,488
Restricted funds	£35,790	Total funds at 31 March 22	£91,813

The Trustees give careful consideration to the level of reserves. The Charity's policy on reserves is set out as follows:

"The Trustees have, after considering the guidance issues by the Charities' Commission, established a policy that sufficient general funds should be held to enable the activities of TCF to continue for a minimum of six months taking into account:

- (i) The forecast expenditure of running the charity allowing for planned increases or decreases in ongoing expenses
- (ii) The current sources of income and the heavy reliance on one off donations and fundraising events
- (iii) A review of the risks facing the charity, particularly those which would lead to a reduction in the level or reach of our services

The monthly income of the Charity is relatively volatile and so the Unrestricted funds will fluctuate from month to month. The Trustees would consider the Unrestricted funds to be excessive only if they were persistently above a level that would allow the activities of TCF to continue for twelve months without any source of income. In this case, the Trustees would determine how any excess Unrestricted funds should be spent to meet the aims and objectives

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of the charity. The level of Unrestricted funds is reviewed at least once a quarter. This policy is reviewed at least once every financial year.

The free reserves at 31 March 2022 were £346,410 and fall within the range set out above.

The Restricted funds balance at 31 March 2022 was £91,813; these funds can only be spent on projects for which the original fund application was made.

The anticipated draw down of Unrestricted reserves in support of the planned expansion of activities (as reported in 2020/21) did not materialise due to the continuing effects of Covid and changes in the type of support work undertaken during the year. Recruitment of staff detailed in year 1 of the Strategic Plan, for one post, was postponed until 2022-23. However, as the implementation of the Strategic Plan continues, Trustees will closely monitor expenditure to ensure that expenditure of reserves does not impact the policy of maintaining a balance which allows the charity to continue its activities for six months.

The Trustees are responsible for investing the reserves of TCF. In light of the periodic need to draw on the funds at short notice the Trustees have decided to keep the reserves on bank deposit.

Structure, Governance and Management

The Compassionate Friends (TCF) was founded in 1969 in Coventry and is governed by its Memorandum & Articles of Association as a Company, limited by guarantee registered in England & Wales. The organisation was based in Kilburn, London, throughout the year with a network of volunteers throughout the United Kingdom.

The Board of TCF is comprised of between six and twelve elected Trustees. An Elected Trustee must be a Member and has to be nominated by a donating TCF Member and provide a short CV, details of their experience within TCF and a personal statement. Candidates are supplied with information on the responsibilities of a Trustee prior to election and after election they are supplied with further charity guidance booklets and details of relevant external information and training days on charity governance and management. Elected Trustees serve for three years (extendable to three years and three months). Elections are held annually and by digital and postal vote; if the number of vacancies for elected Trustees exceeds the number of nominated candidates, then the candidates are deemed to have been elected and there is no need for a vote. No elected Trustee can be in office for longer than three terms of 3 years, either served consecutively or with breaks. The chair can only serve for a maximum of 3 years.

Members of the Charity and external candidates with the required knowledge and skills needed on the Board of Trustees are also invited to apply to join as a co-opted Trustee. In addition, Trustee Advisors can be invited to join the Board for varying short periods of time in order to give the Board specialist advice or help.

All strategic direction and policy are determined by the Board of Trustees and monitored at regular Board meetings and against an annual budget.

All key decisions regarding policy, strategy, finance, governance and major pastoral issues, are taken by the Board of Trustees. Decisions are reached by a majority vote of Trustees, either by voting at the regular Board meetings (absent Trustees are regarded as bound by the majority votes of all Trustees present) or through Board members voting by email. Certain

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

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decisions regarding the pastoral work, volunteer recruitment, training and support are delegated to the CEO and operations team but need to be ratified by the Board before they can be implemented. Key decisions regarding office management are taken by the CEO in close consultation with the Chair of Trustees and, where appropriate, the Board of Trustees.

In making arrangements for setting pay and remuneration for the charity's key management personnel, the Trustees always bear in mind rates of pay for equivalent roles in charities of comparable size. In setting the pay for the Chief Executive, the Trustees considered the requirements for the role and pay for comparable roles in similarly sized charities. The Trustees will review the pay of the Chief Executive at least once a year.

Risk Assessment Policy

The Trustees regularly review and update identified major risks that might face the charity and its ability to function in pursuit of its charitable objectives, as a result of loss of reputation caused by inappropriate guidance being given to our beneficiaries, or an inability to maintain its current level of activities through lack of funding. In addition, risks associated with each identifiable project are assessed before it is undertaken.

In general terms, the Trustees regularly consider any areas of TCF operations where there is a perceived risk to the charity and appropriate action is taken to manage any risks that are identified.

The Trustees identified the principal risks facing the charity: the risk of inadequate future funding; the possible loss of current staff; the risk of losing volunteers.

The Trustees adopted the following plans and strategies for their mitigation; expanding the hours worked of the experienced fundraiser and, in September 2021, appointing a new Events and Community Fundraiser; a series of initiatives to retain and support staff are included as part of the 3-year strategic plan; a series of initiatives to support and train volunteers were included in the 3 -year strategic plan.

Data Protection/Privacy Policy

The Compassionate Friends is committed to protecting people's personal information. Our Privacy Policy (available to view and download from our website) sets out the basis on which we process any personal information collected or provided to us.

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

Trustees' Responsibilities

The trustees (who are also directors of The Compassionate Friends for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report (incorporating the strategic report and directors' report) and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102: *The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland* (United Kingdom Accepted Accounting Practice).

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

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

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

Approved by the Board of Trustees and signed on their behalf by:

Andrew Miller KC, Chair of Trustees

Date:

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

REFERENCE & ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

The Trustee Board

Chair: Andrew Miller KC

Vice- Chair: Susan Hughes

Company Secretary: George Burn

Other Trustees

Maria Ahern

Margaret Brearley (co-opted)

Ken Barclay

Gina Claye

Claire Coveney (co-opted)

Gill Hardy

Jen Hughes

Melian Mansfield

Sheila Phillips

Nisha Shah

Nigel Taylor (co-opted)

Warren Weiss

Trustee Advisers

Guy Paton

Chief Executive

Carolyn Brice

Registered Office

Kilburn Grange

Priory Park Road

London NW6 7UJ

Independent Examiner

Joshua Kingston, BSc., ACA

Burton Sweet Limited

The Clock Tower

5 Farleigh Court

Old Weston Road

Flax Bourton

Bristol BS48 1UR

Bankers

CAF Bank Limited

25 Kings Hill Avenue

Kings Hill

West Malling

Kent ME19 4JQ

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2022.

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

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

Independent examiner's statement

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

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

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Company 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.

Joshua Kingston BSc., ACA
Burton Sweet Limited
The Clock Tower
5 Farleigh Court
Old Weston Road
Flax Bourton
Bristol BS48 1UR

Date:

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

		Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2022 £	Total Funds 2021 £
	Note				
Income from:					
Donations	2	121,913	186,437	308,350	302,343
Charitable activities	3	68,831	15,854	84,685	25,711
Other trading activities	4	65,436	1,438	66,874	35,891
Investments	5	57	14	71	123
Total income		256,237	203,743	459,980	364,068
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds	6	64,400	-	64,400	70,091
Charitable activities	7	147,381	166,440	313,821	217,919
Total expenditure		211,781	166,440	378,221	288,010
Net income/(expenditure)	10	44,456	37,303	81,759	76,058
Transfers between funds		1,513	(1,513)	-	-
Net movement in funds		45,969	35,790	81,759	76,058
Total funds brought forward	17	375,519	56,023	431,542	-
Total funds carried forward	17	421,488	91,813	513,301	76,058

The Charity has no recognised gains or losses other than the results for the period as set out above.

All of the activities of the charity are classed as continuing

The comparative Statement of Financial Activities is shown in note 12.

The notes on pages 24 to 35 form part of these financial statements

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 MARCH 2022

	Note	2022 £	2021 £
Fixed assets			
Tangible fixed assets	13	-	-
Current assets			
Debtors	14	45,570	44,229
Cash at bank and in hand		476,530	401,138
		522,100	445,367
Creditors : Amounts falling due within one year	15	(8,799)	(13,825)
Net current assets		513,301	431,542
Net assets		513,301	431,542
Funds			
Restricted funds	18	91,813	56,023
Unrestricted funds	18	421,488	375,519
Total funds		513,301	431,542

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

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

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

These financial statements were approved by the trustees on..... and are signed on their behalf by:

Andrew Miller KC

Company Number 04029535

The notes on pages 24 to 35 form part of these financial statements

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

1 Accounting policies

a) Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the historical cost convention and in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) issued in October 2019 and the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011 (or Companies Act 2006) and UK Generally Accepted Practice as it applies from 1 January 2019.

The charity is a public benefit entity as defined by FRS102.

The accounts have been prepared under the going concern concept, as the trustees believe this to be the most appropriate as it is considered that there are no material uncertainties with respect to the effects of Covid-19.

b) Income

Income is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the item(s) of income have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

c) Grants

Grants, including grants for fixed assets, are recognised within the accounts as they become receivable. Grants received in the accounting period in respect of future accounting periods are deferred until those periods.

d) Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

Direct costs, including directly attributable salaries, are allocated on an actual basis to the activities. Support costs are allocated over the activities based on the estimated percentages of cost used.

Governance costs include the costs of meeting constitutional and statutory requirements and include costs associated with the strategic management of the charity's activities. They have been included in support costs.

e) Fixed assets

Expenditure on assets with an estimated economic life of more than twelve months and a cost of more than £2,000 are capitalised.

Depreciation is calculated so as to write off the cost of an asset, less its estimated residual value, over the useful economic life of that asset as follows:

Fixtures, Fittings and equipment	25% straight line
----------------------------------	-------------------

f) Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

g) Cash at bank and in hand

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

h) Creditors

Creditors are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts received.

i) Operating leases

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

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

1 Accounting policies (*continued*)

j) Unrestricted funds

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objects at the discretion of the trustees.

Unrestricted designated funds have been set aside by the trustees out of unrestricted general funds for specific future purposes or projects.

k) Restricted funds

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes. Expenditure which meets these criteria is charged to the fund, together with a fair allocation of management and support costs. Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

2 Donations

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2022 £
Donations and legacies	121,913	186,437	308,350
	<u>121,913</u>	<u>186,437</u>	<u>308,350</u>

Prior year comparative

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2021 £
Donations and legacies	251,771	46,672	298,443
Grants receivable	-	3,900	3,900
	<u>251,771</u>	<u>50,572</u>	<u>302,343</u>

Donations received from trustees and related parties during the year were £2,140 (2021: £1,646).

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

3 Income from: Charitable activities

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds
	£	£	2022 £
<i>Core activities</i>			
Membership subscriptions	22,161	-	22,161
Other activities	23,249	-	23,249
Events	23,421	15,854	39,275
	68,831	15,854	84,685

Prior year comparative

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds
	£	£	2021 £
<i>Core activities</i>			
Membership subscriptions	23,311	-	23,311
Other activities	2,100	-	2,100
Events	-	300	300
	25,411	300	25,711

4 Income from: Other trading activities

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds
	£	£	2022 £
Fundraising activities	60,454	1,438	61,892
Trading income	4,982	-	4,982
	65,436	1,438	66,874

Prior year comparative

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds
	£	£	2021 £
Fundraising activities	29,216	712	29,928
Trading income	5,963	-	5,963
	35,179	712	35,891

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

5 Investment income

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2022 £
Bank interest receivable	57	14	71
	57	14	71

Prior year comparative

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2021 £
Bank interest receivable	123	-	123
	123	-	123

6 Expenditure on: Raising funds

	Activities undertaken directly £	Support Costs (Note 8) £	Total 2022 £
Sale of goods	984	-	984
Fundraising costs	53,450	9,966	63,416
	54,434	9,966	64,400

Prior year comparative

	Activities undertaken directly £	Support Costs (Note 8) £	Total 2021 £
Sale of goods	2,770	-	2,770
Fundraising costs	58,731	8,590	67,321
	61,501	8,590	70,091

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

7 Expenditure on: Charitable activities

	Activities undertaken directly £	Support Costs (Note 8) £	Total 2022 £
<i>Core activities</i>			
Helpline	20,909	4,983	25,892
Library	1,953	831	2,784
Gathering and events	58,664	32,390	91,054
Other pastoral activities	159,209	34,882	194,091
	240,735	73,086	313,821

Prior year comparative

	Activities undertaken directly £	Support Costs (Note 8) £	Total 2021 £
<i>Core activities</i>			
Helpline	16,704	4,296	21,000
Library	1,413	715	2,128
Gathering and events	12,595	27,921	40,516
Other pastoral activities	124,205	30,070	154,275
	154,917	63,002	217,919

8 Support costs

	Premises costs £	Office expenses £	Other Expenses £	Total £
<i>Core activities</i>				
Helpline	747	2,869	1,367	4,983
Library	125	478	228	831
Gathering and events	4,858	18,646	8,886	32,390
Other pastoral activities	5,232	20,080	9,570	34,882
	10,962	42,073	20,051	73,086
Fundraising costs	1,495	5,737	2,734	9,966
Total 2022	12,457	47,810	22,785	83,052
Total 2021	13,535	34,429	23,628	71,592

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

8 Support costs (continued)

Prior year comparative

	Premises costs £	Office expenses £	Other Expenses £	Total £
<i>Core activities</i>				
Helpline	812	2,066	1,418	4,296
Library	135	344	236	715
Gathering and events	5,279	13,427	9,215	27,921
Other pastoral activities	5,685	14,461	9,924	30,070
	<u>11,911</u>	<u>30,298</u>	<u>20,793</u>	<u>63,002</u>
Fundraising costs	1,624	4,131	2,835	8,590
Total 2021	<u>13,535</u>	<u>34,429</u>	<u>23,628</u>	<u>71,592</u>

Support costs have been allocated to activities based on estimated percentages of costs used.
 Governance costs of £23,629 (2021: £23,629) have been included in support costs.

9 Staff costs and numbers

The aggregate payroll costs were:

	2022 £	2021 £
Wages and salaries	187,302	130,698
Social security costs	11,380	7,404
Pension costs	3,382	2,840
	<u>202,064</u>	<u>140,942</u>

No employee received emoluments of more than £60,000.
 Benefits paid to key management personnel of the charity during the year were £54,603 (2021: £49,993).

The average number of staff employed by the charity during the financial year amounted to:

	2022 No	2021 No
Pastoral and befriending services	<u>9</u>	<u>6</u>

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

10 Net income/(expenditure)

Operating surplus/(deficit) is stated after charging:

	2022	2021
	£	£
Depreciation	-	145
Independent examiner's fees	3,063	2,917
Trustees' expenses		
Travel (1 trustee, 2021: No trustees)	132	-

11 Taxation

The charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.

12 Comparative Statement of Financial Activities

	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total Funds
	Funds	Funds	2021
	£	£	£
Income from:			
Donations	251,771	50,572	302,343
Charitable activities	25,411	300	25,711
Other trading activities	35,179	712	35,891
Investments	123	-	123
Total income	312,484	51,584	364,068
Expenditure on:			
Raising funds	70,091	-	70,091
Charitable activities	178,022	39,897	217,919
Total expenditure	248,113	39,897	288,010
Net income/(expenditure)	64,371	11,687	76,058
Transfers between funds	-	-	-
Net movement in funds	64,371	11,687	76,058
Total funds as at 1 April 2020	311,148	44,336	355,484
Total funds at 31 March 2021	375,519	56,023	431,542

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
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13 Tangible fixed assets

	Office equipment £	Total £
Cost		
At 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022	<u>7,322</u>	<u>7,322</u>
Depreciation		
At 1 April 2021	7,322	7,322
Charge for the year	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
At 31 March 2022	<u>7,322</u>	<u>7,322</u>
Net book value		
At 31 March 2022	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
At 31 March 2021	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>

14 Debtors

	2022 £	2021 £
Income tax recoverable	42,020	38,373
Prepayments	3,550	5,856
	<u>45,570</u>	<u>44,229</u>

15 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2022 £	2021 £
Accruals and deferred income	6,523	9,684
PAYE and other taxes	1,841	2,640
Other creditors	435	1,501
	<u>8,799</u>	<u>13,825</u>

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16 Commitments

At 31 March 2022 the charity had minimum total commitments under non-cancellable operating leases as set out below:

	Property 2022 £	Property 2021 £
Falling due:		
Within 1 year	3,384	3,384

17 Movement in funds

	At 1 April 2021 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	At 31 March 2022 £
Restricted Funds					
Whirlow	1,718	-	-	(1,718)	-
Scottish Forum	15,415	19,797	(170)	(35,042)	-
Northern Ireland Branch	10,768	-	(505)	(10,263)	-
TCF Local support group funds	-	53,038	(38,190)	45,510	60,358
National Lottery Community Fund Grant for the Grief Companions Project	28,122	36,716	(58,100)	-	6,738
Helpline	-	19,950	(19,950)	-	-
Leaflets	-	4,350	(4,350)	-	-
Training	-	26,500	(26,500)	-	-
Retreats	-	4,025	(4,025)	-	-
Siblings	-	18,025	(3,550)	-	14,475
Suicide	-	16,223	(6,100)	-	10,123
Online support	-	5,069	(5,000)	-	69
Bursaries	-	50	-	-	50
	56,023	203,743	(166,440)	(1,513)	91,813
Unrestricted funds					
Designated funds					
TCF Local support group funds	10,780	658	(970)	(10,468)	-
Volunteer training and support	75,078	-	-	-	75,078
General funds	289,661	255,579	(210,811)	11,981	346,410
	375,519	256,237	(211,781)	1,513	421,488
	431,542	459,980	(378,221)	-	513,301

During the year, the trustees reviewed the treatment of the regional funds and came to the conclusion that it was more appropriate to include them all within restricted funds. Therefore the TCF local support group funds have been transferred to a restricted local support Group fund, and the remaining restricted Scottish Forum fund was transferred to the fund also.

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
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YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

17 Movement in funds (continued)

Restricted funds

The Whirlow fund - used to fund an annual retreat for bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents.

The Scottish Forum fund - monies given to finance supportive retreat weekends in Scotland.

The Northern Ireland Branch fund - monies raised for support services for beneficiaries in Northern Ireland.

TCF Local support group funds - monies donated to support TCF's work in particular regions of the UK.

The National Lottery Community Fund Grant for the Grief Companion Project - monies given to TCF to expand the scheme which offers peer befriending to newly bereaved parents.

Helpline - monies given to fund the provision of a telephone and email national helpline for bereaved parents, siblings, grandparents and the professionals supporting them.

Leaflets - monies given to fund provision of supportive publications for the bereaved.

Training - funding for volunteer training and support.

Retreats - monies donated to provide and subsidise weekend and one day supportive retreats for the bereaved.

Siblings - monies to provide support services for bereaved adult siblings (18 years+).

Suicide - monies to provide support services for parents bereaved by suicide.

Online support - funds to enable some services to be delivered online.

Bursaries - monies donated to provide financial assistance to individuals attending retreat weekends and support days.

Designated funds

The TCF Local support group funds represent monies held by local groups that provide support services to beneficiaries.

The Training and support of volunteer fund represents the funds received during the year from a generous legacy. The trustees have decided to set these funds aside to provide training and support for its volunteers.

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
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17 Movement in funds (continued)

Movement in funds - prior year

	At 1 April 2020 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	At 31 March 2021 £
Restricted Funds					
Whirlow	1,718	-	-	-	1,718
Scottish Forum	15,677	792	(1,054)	-	15,415
Northern Ireland Branch	9,191	4,435	(2,858)	-	10,768
National Lottery Community Fund Grant for the Grief Companions Project	17,750	46,357	(35,985)	-	28,122
	<u>44,336</u>	<u>51,584</u>	<u>(39,897)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>56,023</u>
Unrestricted funds					
Designated funds					
TCF Local support group funds	11,143	997	(962)	(398)	10,780
Volunteer training and support	76,654	-	(1,576)	-	75,078
General funds	223,351	311,487	(245,575)	398	289,661
	<u>311,148</u>	<u>312,484</u>	<u>(248,113)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>375,519</u>
	<u>355,484</u>	<u>364,068</u>	<u>(288,010)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>431,542</u>

18 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Other net assets £	Total 2021 £
Restricted funds	91,813	91,813
Unrestricted funds:		
Designated funds	75,078	75,078
General funds	346,410	346,410
	<u>513,301</u>	<u>513,301</u>

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18 Analysis of net assets between funds (continued)

Analysis of net assets between funds - prior year

	Other net assets £	Total 2021 £
Restricted funds	56,023	56,023
Unrestricted funds:		
Designated funds	85,858	85,858
General funds	289,661	289,661
	<u>431,542</u>	<u>431,542</u>

19 Company limited by guarantee

The company is limited by guarantee and as such has no issued share capital. In the event of the company being wound up the liability of the members is limited to £1 each.

20 Related party transactions

Trustees waived expenses of £1,250 (2021: £Nil) during the year.

Other than those disclosed elsewhere in the accounts there are no further related party transactions in either the current or previous year.

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

England & Wales - Charity number 1082335

Accounts

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Company Registration Number 04029535
Charity Number 1082335



The
**Compassionate
Friends**

Supporting bereaved parents and their families

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

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THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

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Introduction

The Compassionate Friends was established in 1969 as a national charitable organisation supporting bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents after the death of a child of any age and from any cause.

The Trustees of The Compassionate Friends ("TCF") present their annual report for the year ending 31 March 2022.

This Report has been prepared in accordance with the charity's governing document and Statement of Recommended Practice (FRS102 2019) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities", published by the Charity Commission.

Our legal status and governance structure are explained in the "Structure, Governance and Management" section of this report

How our work delivers Public Benefit

"Every parent's nightmare is to lose a child"

This is a cliché, but for many, many families the nightmare tragically becomes a reality. Each year in the UK 9,000 (Office of National Statistics) children and young people under the age of 30 years die – and this figure does not include the adults (87,000 in 2019) who die at the age of 30 or over, many of whom leave behind grieving parents, who have outlived their son or daughter, and often also a grieving partner and children of their own.

National peer-to-peer support for over 50 years

TCF is a charitable organisation of bereaved parents and their families dedicated to the support and care of other bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents who have suffered the death of a child or children of any age (from one month old to an adult son or daughter) and from any cause of death. We are the only UK nationwide charity offering this vital peer -to-peer support to parents and their families.

As the first peer-to-peer charity in the UK for grieving parents, we have been bringing understanding, support, friendship and hope to bereaved parents for over 50 years. The charity began in 1969 when grieving parents Iris and Joe Lawley, Bill and Joan Henderson and Betty Rattigan were brought together for mutual support by Simon Stephens, then a young chaplain in a Coventry hospital. Together they formed The Compassionate Friends. The mutual peer-to-peer support they offered each other as bereaved parents has remained at the heart of the charity since those first early days.

Our Mission

The Compassionate Friends aims to make a difference by providing support, understanding and hope to bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents who have experienced the death of a child or children of any age (over 1 month old to an adult son or daughter) and from any cause.

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We do this by offering accessible, high quality peer support services and information to bereaved parents and their families.

Our Vision

Every bereaved parent, adult sibling and grandparent throughout the UK can find and access the lifeline of high quality, appropriate and safe peer support services.

Our Purpose

TCF is a registered charity and its purposes are as set out in the objects contained in our Memorandum and Articles:

- (i) To advance and assist in mental and physical welfare following suffering among (a) parents occasioned by the death of their child(ren) and (b) other close relatives of such child(ren), normally brothers, sisters and grandparents;
- (ii) To promote and support research on parental and sibling grief intended to help to change and improve the quality of support and care provided by health, social care, political and other supporters for grieving parents and siblings.

Our Objectives

TCF is a registered charity and its purposes as set out in the objects contained in our Memorandum and Articles:

- (i) To advance and assist in mental and physical welfare following suffering and infirmity among (a) parents occasioned by the death of their child(ren) and (b) other close relatives of such child(ren), normally brothers, sisters and grandparents;
- (ii) To promote and support research on parental and sibling grief intended to help to change and improve the quality of support and care provided by health, social care, political and other supporters for grieving parents and siblings.

The impact of child loss

The grief of bereaved parents is devastating and overwhelming. In experiencing the sudden or anticipated death of a beloved son or daughter, parents endure a profound trauma, a loss so out of the natural order and acutely painful it changes their lives forever in a multitude of ways. Both the physical and emotional impact of the death of a child is huge and often long-lasting. Parents' situations and ability to cope with their loss can be exacerbated by the lack of appropriate information or support services - particularly the case for those who have experienced the sudden death of their child outside of a hospital or hospice environment. Parents can struggle to find understanding and appropriate support from those around them as many professionals or family and friends are not aware of the enormity of the impact of child loss on an individual's mental and physical health.

Emotionally parents are battling with a range of complex and intense emotions – including anger, rage, despair, hopelessness, loneliness, heartbreak, remorse, constant yearning,

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emptiness, guilt and shame. It can be very difficult for parents to manage the intensity of their emotions and to find outlets to express how they feel. Moreover, the death of a son or daughter – whether sudden or anticipated – often results in acute and long-lasting symptoms of post-traumatic stress; just some of these symptoms can include high anxiety, hyper-vigilance, flashbacks, memory loss, feeling disconnected from everything and everyone, inability to sleep, fear of going outside or extreme restlessness, physical pain, despair, hopelessness and wanting to die. For many, the circumstances of loss result in deep trauma which can impact their ability to manage their working lives or to cope on a day to day basis with even simple tasks. In early grief particularly, many bereaved parents find it impossible to engage in or enjoy social activities. They may act out of character and not be able to concentrate on or find much enjoyment in work, studies or their usual leisure activities. They can often feel a need to withdraw from family and the wider community. This can lead to symptoms and feelings of depression and disconnection. In trying to cope with the enormity of their grief, parents can often feel very alone and can struggle with finding purpose and meaning to their days and lives. Following their loss, they can question their identity and doubt their ability to re-engage in life in normal ways again or even how life can ever be meaningful again. For some parents, the loss of their child can lead them to feeling that life is no longer worthwhile or a wish to be with their deceased child.

Physically, grief can be exhausting and can weaken the immune system often leading to physical ill-health or an exacerbation of existing physical or mental health problems. Sleep and appetite can be adversely impacted as well as the ability or motivation to look after their physical or mental health. Parents can struggle to meet their financial commitments or fall behind with their work commitments because they lack the concentration, commitment or motivation to carry out these roles. Many feel unable to work for several months or years following their loss with some parents feeling unable to return to work full time or to return to the same job. Most parents struggle with the concentration needed to manage household bills or other related financial paperwork.

The loss of a child can also have a huge impact on personal relationships, often resulting in relationship breakdowns between a couple, their surviving children or within the wider family. This can exacerbate stress levels which exist already as the result of losing a child. The repercussions of the death of a son or daughter can last for many years and cause huge changes in family dynamics and financial stresses which in turn can create long term rifts and ongoing financial pressures leading to increased levels of depression, anxiety and isolation.

The benefits of peer support

Peer support from fellow bereaved parents or siblings either face-to-face, on the telephone or online is a special and unique kind of support which has the following benefits:

- Reduces the social isolation frequently experienced after the death of a child, grandchild or adult sibling
- Provides a hugely valuable safe place where parents and their close family can speak honestly about how they are really feeling
- Understands, recognizes and normalizes the intensity of early grief and the long-lasting impact of child loss
- Encourages and sustains bereaved parents and families – as hearing from others further on in their grief offers comfort and hope for a future without their loved one and demonstrates ways they might survive such a devastating loss

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-
- Continues support, understanding and friendship after the first weeks or months of loss when family or friends' support may have diminished

Newly bereaved parents often comment that this peer support can be more helpful to them than professional counselling, in that only other bereaved parents can appreciate and understand the trauma, depth and all-encompassing nature of child loss. This helps them to feel understood, validated and more safely held in their grief. Speaking with another bereaved parent who is further along in their loss, means that the newly bereaved can 'take off the mask' that they wear every day, and in doing so, they feel better able to share more openly and honestly about how they are feeling without the fear of being 'moved on', or otherwise made to feel they are failing or 'stuck' in their grief. Perhaps most important of all, bereaved parents are able to talk about their precious children without the fear of being 'shut down'.

How our work delivers our aims

Thanks to its 250 wonderful volunteers, all who know grief for a child or sibling first-hand and who are trained to listen empathically and care for others, TCF can connect bereaved parents and their close family members to one another in many ways - through conversations one-to-one in person or in groups, by telephone, online, through the written word, and via social media. Through such contact with others the bereaved find understanding, a lifeline and can gradually find purpose, resilience and new hope.

We are an inclusive organisation and exist to provide peer-to-peer support, understanding, friendship and hope directly to bereaved families and individuals whose child has died whether as a baby (from one month old), infant, school age child, teenager or adult son or daughter, whether it is a recent loss or one that happened many years ago. The death may have been from any cause, for instance, as a result of a road traffic incident, a short- or longer-term illness such as cancer, sudden unexpected death, an accident in or outside the home, suicide or through drug or alcohol use.

Equal access to our support and services is important to us. TCF has no religious affiliation and offers support to bereaved families irrespective of the age of the child, cause of death, ethnic, social, economic, faith or political backgrounds. We provide support to any family affected by the death of a child, and this includes adoptive parents, step- and blended families, same sex couples and single parent families. We respect the privacy of all those who come to us for support and offer a confidential service.

We review our aims, objectives and activities each year. This review looks at our services and achievements during the 12 months between April 2021 – March 2022.

During the financial year 2020-21 we undertook a series of research projects, reviews, analysis and planning activities to enable the development of a new 3-year strategic plan for the charity designed to ensure that our aims, objectives and activities remain focused on our stated purposes. This plan was approved by the Board of Trustees in early 2021 and implementation began on 1 April 2021. Regular reviews of the strategic plan by a Strategy Committee comprising Trustees and the CEO, as well as the full Trustee Board at Board meetings, ensured that we carefully monitored, accessed progress and made any adjustments needed during the year 1 phase of implementation.

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Summary of services, activities and achievements in the year

Given all the uncertainty due to Covid, the fact that the easing of restrictions was gradual during the year and life was still not fully back to 'normal', our charity continued to cope well by staying flexible and making changes and adjustments in delivery of support during such a fluid situation. Indeed, the post Covid period remained full of uncertainties and stop-starts, as restrictions were eased gradually but Covid itself and Covid related fears continued to have an impact.

As a result, while some of our in-person support did start to return (albeit with limited numbers and with restrictions still in place), we continued, during the first 6 months of the year, to provide our support services largely online or via telephone and email. However, from October 2021, we were gradually able to move to a hybrid approach returning to in-person support with online, digital and telephone support services running alongside.

Moreover, due to the uncertainties still remaining in the post-pandemic period, and despite some aspects of the change in our operating environment being incredibly motivating and beneficial for our charity - for instance being able to connect with and support online volunteers and bereaved parents all over the UK - we were unable to develop some of the planned initiatives in the year. However, following the groundwork and preparation undertaken through 3 research studies, a user survey and further analysis in the year 2020 -21, in April 2021 we did begin the implementation of the 3-year strategic plan for the charity for 2021- 2024. To ensure that we could implement the plan we put in place 2 underpinning goals:

- (i) To retain current staff and volunteers as far as possible and further build upon TCF's infrastructure and human resources**
- (ii) To ensure sufficient funds were raised so that the strategic objectives can be met**

The plan developed listed our strategic objectives during the 3-year period from April 2021 as:

- (i) Increase reach/quantity/scope and quality of services to bereaved parents**
- (ii) Expand the services of TCF in those regions of the UK which are under-served**
- (iii) Increase the diversity and reach of TCF across all minority and under-represented groups, both in our service and throughout our organisation**
- (iv) Improve and develop support for bereaved siblings**
- (v) Increase support for bereaved parents in specific circumstances**
- (vi) Increase public awareness of TCF**

In year 1 of the plan our focus has been on the first 2 building blocks/prerequisites to ensure that in future years we can meet our plan objectives.

Prerequisite goal 1) Retaining current volunteers and staff and further build upon TCF's infrastructure and human resources

For our volunteers and staff, being there for others can have an impact on their own well-being as it is not always possible for individuals in supporting roles to protect themselves from others' stories of loss and grief, many of which can be very traumatic. We, therefore, **continued to**

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prioritise and focus on support and self-care for our volunteers. This support has been offered through **sharing sessions online** – these provide an important and vital opportunity to stay connected with volunteers. The sessions offered information on the impact of the pandemic on bereaved families, enabled our volunteers to hear from guest speakers in the bereavement support sector, and offered a forum to share and discuss experiences and challenges for our volunteers in their roles supporting bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents. We have also used the online environment to offer dedicated training and support to teams of volunteers based throughout the UK who are offering specific forms of peer support – for example, online sharing sessions and supportive meetings for our Helpline volunteer team, those volunteers who are moderating our private Facebook groups, local one to one support contacts and group facilitators, for grief companions and our volunteer team facilitating online support groups for specific circumstances of loss. This move to online meetings and sharing sessions has helped the charity to address some of the geographical barriers and obstacles we have traditionally had in how to engage, motivate and stay in touch with volunteers in outlying areas of UK. It has had a huge positive impact on volunteer morale in feeling a greater sense of belonging and being part of a team and in reducing feelings of isolation especially given the majority of our volunteers support remotely on their own.

Continuing this focus on support for our volunteers, we provided a further two **online sessions for volunteers and staff focusing on supporting bereaved family members expressing suicidal ideation.** These customised 10 Tools for Talking About Suicide workshops were run in collaboration with the charity, Olly's Future.

We emphasised the importance, particularly through the challenging period presented by the Covid pandemic, of self-care among our volunteers by offering 4 **writing for wellbeing workshops** to support and emphasise volunteer and staff self-care, with 4 sessions run online during April and May 2021. Additional opportunities for volunteers to take part in relaxation workshops were offered during autumn 2021, encouraging the team to care for themselves as they care for others. We actively encouraged our volunteers to avail of these opportunities to care for themselves.

In May 2021 we committed to the vital provision of a **listening support service for volunteers. Hear For You**, which was developed specifically with our peer supporters in mind. As the reach of our charity develops, as our volunteer numbers grow, as bereaved family members find us at an earlier point in their grief, sometimes even on the day of death or before their loved one's funeral together with the additional trauma of the pandemic having made the normal rituals of grieving and available support problematic, the impact on our volunteers and their own grief and wellbeing has intensified. The Hear For You scheme offered volunteers up to 2 x 50 minute confidential listening support sessions via online video conferencing or telephone free of charge with one of two qualified counsellors, both of whom are also bereaved parents and have volunteer experience within TCF. This ran as a pilot for 6 months and after adaptations, as a result of feedback from users and the counsellors, we confirmed its continued provision in November 2021 and that the number of sessions per volunteer, per issue could be increased to 3. This is now an established feature of support for volunteers.

What our volunteers say...

"I really appreciate the care TCF show for volunteers. One would think that it is obvious that volunteers are important and need to be cared for and nurtured. Unfortunately I know, from personal experience, that a number of charities and organisations don't look after their staff and volunteers. Your care is very much appreciated and enables me to continue supporting others."

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To support the existing staff team, a committee of Trustees was appointed in October 2021 to focus on human resource issues. Planning for well-being and mental health support for the staff team was also started. Staff during this year were working partly in the office and partly remotely. Our team were affected by Covid themselves, sometimes more than once, resulting in additional challenges for charity operations and in fostering of a collaborative team-based environment.

A key focus for the year was the **appointment of additional staff** identified in the strategic plan to build on the charity's infrastructure. In October 2021, **Karolina Zwierzyk joined the team as Office Manager**, with responsibility for efficiency and productivity of all the charity's admin functions. She also took on responsibility, with Trustee adviser Guy Paton, for the research and implementation of a new (Customer Relationship Management system (CRM) to replace our existing aging and increasingly creaking Access database. The spec and supplier for a new CRM was finalised and approved by Trustees in March 2022.

Prerequisite goal 2) Ensuring sufficient funds were raised so that the strategic objectives can be met

A funding plan for the years 2021-23 was developed and projections made beyond 2023 to include bids for **larger single year donations** from grant making bodies, trusts and foundations for specific projects as well as a focus **on developing multi-year funding** where possible. To achieve this, **Stephen Armstrong**, our Head of Fundraising, **increased his hours** to 4 days per week from April 2021.

As in person fundraising events began to resume after the pandemic from Autumn/Winter 2021/22, our funding plan also included developing and increasing income from challenge events and through community fundraising. To meet this aim, **Jenny King** joined our staff team in September 2021 as **Events and Community Fundraiser**. Her brief was to increase funding from challenge events and community sources and also to develop an annual community fundraising campaign in which all members and supporters of the charity could get involved.

OUR SERVICES

During 2021 – 22 and in year 1 of the strategic plan, we continued to provide peer support to bereaved parents and their families through our range of services.

National Helpline

Approximately 900 calls and 500 email requests for support were received by our Helpline during the period of this report, a small decrease on pre-pandemic periods. Activity on our Helpline during this period reflected the national and global situation with the coronavirus pandemic, based on what we were hearing from regular networking with other Helplines and charities during this time. In particular, we found call volumes tended to be significantly lower during those periods when a new lockdown was announced or when we were emerging from a period of lockdown. As people adjusted to each lockdown, call volumes would increase again. Call volumes increased most from September 2021 onwards. Email requests for support also started to increase from this time.

The majority of our calls continued to be from bereaved parents, particularly mothers. Calls and emails from professionals were significantly lower than usual during the early lockdown

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but from September 2021 onwards, there was a noticeable increase from mental health teams, GPs, and counsellors. Specifically, more referrals were being received from recently created mental health support roles such as social prescribers and wellbeing advisors. GP practices often refer their patients to these services who in turn contacted our charity to find out more about our peer support and referral process for patients experiencing child bereavement.

Our Helpline comprised 24 committed volunteers with 2 new volunteers joining the team in September 2021. Two sessions were held to share best practice and offer support to our Helpline team during a challenging year.

What parents say...

"Without TCF, I'm not sure where I would have found the strength to carry on... I can't thank you all enough for the work you do."

In person and online supportive events

Throughout the year we continued to provide **online support groups** for parents in specific circumstances, for instance loss to suicide, loss to cancer, bereaved fathers, loss of a baby or very young child, or a school age child, an older adult child (35 years+), for those parents who have lost their only child or all their children. We also continued monthly groups for bereaved adult siblings. In the year we added new online groups for lone parents, loss to road traffic incident, bereavement by a sudden accident, parents located in Northern Ireland and for parents bereaved abroad. We also began to offer **regular group support for parents bereaved by Covid or during the pandemic**. All online groups were facilitated by trained volunteers and have allowed bereaved parents from all over the UK from Land's End to John O'Groats to connect with others online similarly bereaved in a way that would not have been possible in person. During the year we had over 30 volunteers involved in delivering these online support groups. We use feedback from participants in each session to improve facilitation and the support offered.

A total of **81 online support groups for parents in specific circumstances or bereaved adult siblings** were run during the period of this report (a slight increase on the previous year). These online groups have continued to help our charity address some of the geographical obstacles which the bereaved encounter in accessing peer support in isolated or outlying areas of the UK where there is not always much in the way of local, on-the-ground services.

What parents and siblings say...

"I always leave a meeting feeling better and not so alone. the facilitators are excellent and so very kind and gentle. I am always very grateful to them for their time and for sharing. It helps to know I have a place I can go where I can cry and express myself and know everyone really understands and doesn't judge me. "

Following a review of resourcing, we developed a hybrid approach to in-person and online support. So during the autumn of 2021, as pandemic restrictions started to be lifted, we offered a series of bereavement support days particularly for parents in early bereavement. These were held in Glasgow (September 2021), Derbyshire (October 2021), Hampshire (October 2021) and Belfast (October 2021). An additional support day for parents bereaved by suicide or substance use was held in Glasgow in March 2022.

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Towards the end of the report period, after a break of 2 years due to the pandemic, we restarted our 2 day weekend retreats with a supportive event for parents in early bereavement (under 3 years bereaved) held near Bath, Somerset in February 2022.

What parents say...

"Your team have given us so much support. Thank you for creating such a caring and supportive platform for all the families out there that are going through such heart break and loss".

Further online support

Our **11 moderated, confidential online Facebook groups** focusing on different aspects of loss continued throughout the period of this report, including for parents bereaved through cancer or long-term illness, by suicide, through drugs or alcohol, the loss of a baby or very young child, parents whose only child or all their children have died, adult bereaved siblings, and more. The need to connect with other bereaved parents and to share grief and loss together continued during this time as restrictions continued in the first half of the year. In response to demand, a new private Facebook group was set up for parents bereaved of a school age child (age 5-16 years).

We continued to host **online talks and presentations by bereaved parents and siblings** offering personal reflections on parental and sibling loss. These have all been well attended, with 150+ attendees at each. Speakers have included Sangeeta Mahajan, Jane Oundjian MBE and Joanne Cacciatore. We also held an Inquests Information Evening, with speakers Andrew Miller KC and solicitor Sefton Kwasnik. Each talk was recorded and uploaded online, building up a resource library of helpful and supportive videos which are being accessed by many in the weeks and months following the live events.

We held our **annual online candle lighting remembrance event** in December 2021 as part of the TCF Worldwide Candle Lighting event. 300 bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents came together to remember their loved ones during this particularly difficult time of year for the bereaved and a further 3500 viewed the livestream of the event. The event was also available on The Compassionate Friends UK YouTube channel.

What parents say..'

"What a wonderful and remarkable job this charity does in providing comfort to bereaved parents in a real time of need"

Grief Companion Scheme

In its second year of operation, the **Grief Companion Scheme** has continued to be managed and developed by Shirley Gower. Our dedicated volunteer grief companions offered one-to-one peer befriending and support to over 180 newly bereaved parents, particularly in areas of the country which are not covered by an existing TCF local one to one support contact or support group.

This year we have extended the Scheme to include some parents who may have a TCF local contact and/or support group close by, but where this existing support is unsuitable for some reason (e.g., social anxiety, inability to attend due to frailty, ill health disabilities or transport or financial constraints restricting ability to travel). Many newly bereaved parents can also understandably find it hard to cope with the details of others' losses in a support group setting

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or, depending on the circumstances of their loss, may have a strong need to share their 'story' but to just one person rather than a whole group of parents. This can make 1:1 support more appropriate for early loss in some situations. Often this 1-1 support can be put in place relatively quickly compared to many other services, and is in place for longer (up to 12 months).

With the growth in the Scheme over the year, in January 2022 Suzanne Cannon was appointed part time administrator for the Scheme. The extra resource has made possible the introduction of a review and evaluation process (once a match is underway, at a 6–8-week review, 6 month follow up with Hear for You counsellor (new), 12 month catch up and evaluation – the latter providing feedback to continue to improve and develop the experience of both the newly bereaved parents and the volunteer companions).

Local 1-1 support and groups

Covid restrictions forced the closure of all of our in person support for much of 2021. However, during the last few months of 2021, the majority of **local support groups resumed in-person monthly meetings** and **local support contacts** began to meet newly bereaved parents in person once again. This return to in-person support varied across the country based on the circumstances of each group, the requirements of the venue they were using as well as the circumstances and vulnerabilities of individual volunteers and those they were supporting. Volunteer sharing sessions continued to be offered online, allowing volunteers from around the UK to share best practice, find support from one another and the staff team and discuss some of the challenges they faced resuming in-person support. We continued to offer **group facilitation and local support training online**. Sessions were run over 6 half day online training workshops during the course of the year and were attended by an average of 10 volunteers each session. Access was offered to these training opportunities to professionals and volunteers in other organisations offering bereavement support. The year saw the development of specific online training and induction for new local support contacts, who offer one to one support to a range of parents in their local area.

Informal support

With restrictions lifting, we were able to begin and develop our informal **walks for bereaved parents and siblings**. The walks programme restarted in London in May 2021 in accordance with Covid related government guidance at that time in June Terry Ahern, facilitator of the London TCF walks programme, ran an online talk and workshop. This workshop offered volunteers interested in offering walks to bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents around the country, the basics and tips for leading a successful TCF walk. The talk was well attended and resulted in a number of new volunteers coming forward to offer to facilitate walks. This in turn led the start of a varied programme of walks throughout the UK, which began in earnest in spring 2022.

What parents say...

"These walks are a powerful healing experience for me. You all keep me going in my pain and grief".

Support for specific circumstances of loss

We continued to develop **specific support for specialist groups** of the bereaved – for example, for those with no surviving children (through a quarterly newsletter, monthly online support group); bereaved siblings (a newsletter written by bereaved adult siblings for this group

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printed in hardcopy but also distributed digitally and a monthly online support group); those bereaved by suicide or substance use (monthly online support groups for both types of loss, and a national supporter team for parents bereaved by suicide offering initial peer support covering the UK geographically, a bereavement support day in Glasgow; informal walks for parents bereaved by suicide; support groups for parents bereaved by suicide in London (in person and online), Manchester, Bristol, Glasgow). A small grandparent supporter team began to meet regularly during the period of this report. A bereavement support information pack continued to be sent to over 1000 parents and their families seeking support and information after child loss. The pack was always customised to support parents and families in different circumstances of loss.

What parents say...

"A big thank you for the information pack you sent me; it gives me a lot of comfort knowing there is such genuine support out there".

Publications, newsletters and leaflets

We published over 50 **leaflets and fact sheets offering information and suggestions** to bereaved parents and families, as well as professionals and other supporters of bereaved families. These were downloaded over 40,000 times and distributed with both digital and physical information packs. These publications are unique in that they are written by bereaved parents and siblings. As well as updates of existing publications, new leaflets were published including *Grieving The death of a twin child*, *Grieving for our child who experienced mental health problems*, *When your child has died abroad*, *Helping parents when their child dies at university*, and *Coping with Christmas*. In December 2021, we published a well-received more **visual, inclusive leaflet – My child has died. How do I cope?** Designed to be an easier read publication, it is more accessible to parents in the first few raw weeks or months of loss and to those where English is not a first language.

"The leaflet is beautifully written, as I knew it would be, and full of quiet wisdom. Since we lost our son I have benefited hugely from the resources provided by TCF"

Over 5,000 **supportive magazines and newsletters** were sent to bereaved parents and their families, including specific supportive publications for bereaved adult siblings and parents who have experienced the loss of their only child or children.

In the latter half of the year, once the Covid limitations were lifted, our **library** of 1,000 books and resources on all aspects of bereavement resumed its unique service and our dedicated volunteer librarian, Mary Hartley, restarted providing a personalised choice of titles to support the bereaved. In late 2021, our library of books was moved from our Kilburn office to enable a more efficient service to be offered. **Regular email** and printed news continued to extend our reach to bereaved families and professionals, keeping both groups in touch with news from our charity and the support available.

In November, we published an anthology of poems compiled by bereaved father, David Bransbury. **Forget-Me-Not Poems: A Collection of Poetry Honouring Children Gone Too Soon** contained 100 poems written by bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents, together with photos of their loved ones. Many of the poems have been sponsored and together with sales of the book raised funds for and awareness of our charity.

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Digital communications and website re-launch

Early in the year a refresh and update to our website was undertaken, going live in late April 2021. Key changes included easier user-navigation, modernised design, more white space and images reflecting we are a 'people' charity. We created a more supportive, inclusive, welcoming and active site, giving more prominence to Helpline and Donate buttons, providing specific portals for those looking for support or information e.g. specifically for bereaved parents, or for siblings, professionals, supporter/fundraisers, volunteers – containing all the pages relevant to an individual's circumstances and relationship with TCF. A new section for news, guest blogs, support videos was created, as well as the ability to create an *In Memory Fund* for a child or loved one.

We continued to lodge supportive videos of online talks, events, and sharing sessions for our members and also volunteers on our YouTube channel. Our social media presence continued to build throughout the year on Facebook, Twitter and increasingly on Instagram. We know that many bereaved parents and their families regularly access support and information from our social media posts. We continued to live stream online talks by inspiring speakers. Each live stream reached over 3000 viewers.

National Bereaved Parents Day took place on 3 July raising awareness of all parents who have lost a child of any age and any cause. Collaborating with other child loss charities, we focused on the theme *#keepingtheirmemoryalive* sharing some of the inspiring ways parents honour and remember their children through our website, via a video montage and via social media. The video on Facebook was viewed over 2,000 times.

Collaboration and networking

We continued to **collaborate with other charities and organisations** in the field of bereavement support. TCF were represented and played a full part on the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Bereavement Care and in the National Bereavement Alliance (NBA).

TCF are also members of the Support After Suicide Partnership and attend Members Meetings regularly to represent the views of parents and siblings bereaved by suicide. TCF also attended the virtual Suicide Bereavement UK International Conference in September 2021. We gave support to the third National Grief Awareness Week (December 2021). We participated in networking meetings with other bereavement organisations across Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Our members and volunteers have spoken about child death and supporting bereaved parents and their families to a number of **organisations and professionals** in a range of settings during the year, for example, the Coroners E-Conference, Demystifying Death Week in Scotland, Missing People charity meeting, training for paediatric hospital staff across Surrey. Cruse volunteer meetings, and the newly formed UK Commission on Bereavement.

Our members have participated in a range of **research studies** during the year, including a study looking at the emotional care of parents who have cared for and lost a child with a life limiting illness (University of Bristol); bereaved by Covid study (University of Cardiff), a study looking at the meaning and implication of participation by bereaved people in inquests (Institute from Crime and Justice Policy Research at Birkbeck, University of London and Centre for

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Death and Society (University of Bath) and a work and bereavement study (University of Sheffield).

Future Plans

We will continue our focus on the provision of high-quality peer-to-peer support to parents and grandparents bereaved of a child or grandchild throughout the UK with reference to our strategic aims. We will do this through a range of telephone, in person and online support and through the provision of high quality administrative and mentoring support from our staff team to those we support, both our volunteers and the bereaved public. We will also continue to build our support for bereaved adult siblings and will raise awareness within the community of bereaved, as well as the general public, of peer support offered by The Compassionate Friends. Our mission to educate around the devastating impact and heartbreak that follows the death of a child will also go on.

Following the first year of the implementation of our **3 year strategic plan 2021- 2024** we will continue to review progress regularly in years 2 and 3 and make changes as our operating and funding environment changes.

We will continue to prioritise **self-care, resilience building and support for our volunteers**, all of whom offer the peer support and empathy, which is at the heart of the bereavement support services provided by TCF. If our volunteers are well - supported they will continue to offer high quality support to bereaved parents and other family members and we will be able to retain our volunteer team members for longer. We will do this by continuing to offer high quality initial and ongoing training for all teams of volunteers. We will offer support by an increased staff team, focused on volunteer management, co-ordination support and guidance. We will continue to fund the Hear For You listening support service for all volunteers, offering our 250 volunteers in the UK a confidential place where they can discuss and share any concerns or issues around their volunteering roles at TCF, their grief or wellbeing. We will continue to bring our volunteers together regularly for support and sharing of best practice, both online and in person.

We will continue to return to a **programme of in-person weekend retreats and support days**, which will include general gatherings organised by location (e.g. Scottish gathering, UK National gathering) as well as targeted retreats for specific causes of death or life circumstances – for example, a retreat for parents in very early bereavement, for parents who have lost their only child/children, for those parents bereaved by suicide or substance use, and for bereaved adult siblings. We will also plan a number of **one-day supportive events** around the UK for bereaved parents. We will continue to encourage and support **informal events** for bereaved parents and siblings, including our series of walks, lunches, teas and informal get-togethers. These can be an important first step for the newly bereaved to start to engage with our peer support services. We will continue to recruit more walk facilitators and volunteers creating more informal events.

We will establish a **hybrid model of support** which will utilise the very best of online support – with the advantage that parents and other family members can access support wherever they are located in the UK – together with traditional in-person support. We will continue to review the balance of each as demand and resources allow.

We will continue to develop and grow the **Grief Companion Scheme** – funded by the National Lottery - reaching areas of the country where there is little local support and helping to further

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reduce the isolation and lack of support experienced by many bereaved parents. Managed by our Grief Companion Coordinator, Shirley Gower, the Scheme will continue to offer support to newly bereaved parents (in the first 2 years of their loss) given by bereaved parents who are at least 3 years past their own loss. The support of volunteer grief companions will continue to be a priority for the Coordinator. With an assistant now supporting the scheme, it will be possible to more effectively monitor and evaluate the benefits of grief companion support and make changes where required. Crucially for the continuation of the scheme, we will begin to plan for a renewal or a new source of funding after the multi-year funding comes to an end in Spring 2023.

We will continue the development of **'teams' of supporters** to ensure that we can target support for specific groups of the bereaved. Following the establishment of the bereaved by suicide supporter team, who offer initial support to parents bereaved by suicide, we will continue to work to establish similar supporters for bereaved grandparents, for parents with no surviving children, and for parents bereaved of a child with complex needs or disabilities. We are reliant on volunteers who have themselves experienced these specific losses to come forward to train and then support as members of these national teams. However, this model continues to offer us the best way to ensure the volunteers in each team receive excellent training, support and mentoring from staff and through contact, discussion and sharing with their team members.

We will continue to **develop TCF's infrastructure**, recruiting additional key staff to build our capacities to support and to increase public knowledge about our charity. Key posts will be a volunteer support assistant, to support the work of Ruth Mercier Volunteer and Helpline manager, and a communications professional to develop and implement a communications strategy to reach out to key stakeholders. As our staff team grows we will need to strengthen our HR policies and procedures and prioritise support and wellbeing for all TCF employees.

We will continue to develop the efficiency, productivity and capabilities of our national office and the operations of our charity. With the help of our Trustee Adviser, Guy Paton, we will implement a **new CRM** (database) offering the best support to the membership, fundraising, volunteer management, supportive events, communications and finance functions of the charity.

We will undertake a gap analysis to establish where TCF currently has more limited reach for example, Wales and Northern England. We will **initiate analysis to better understand the diversity and reach of TCF** across minority and under-represented groups, including bereaved fathers, LGBT communities and ethnic minorities. We will ensure we have an equality, diversity and inclusion policy in place and regularly review and update all our policies and procedures. We will continue to **build our peer support and reach in the regions of the UK and across diverse communities**.

We will increase peer support for adult (18 years+) **bereaved siblings** by developing a team of sibling volunteers who will run online and in-person support groups for siblings. We will return to in person supportive events, including overnight retreats and support days for bereaved siblings. Our newsletter for bereaved siblings will continue to be published in print and digitally 4 times a year, employing volunteer guest editors. Over the period of the plan, we hope to appoint a Sibling Coordinator to improve recruitment and support of sibling volunteers and develop our peer support services for adult bereaved siblings.

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We will target existing and new funders to develop and diversify our income streams – including looking for larger grants and for multi-year funding. We will take advantage of the re-instatement of **challenge and community events** after the pandemic and the appointment of our Events & Community Fundraiser to focus on developing funding from the stewardship of the many parents, siblings, grandparents and other supporters who take part in challenges and events to benefit TCF financially. We will plan and run an annual community fundraising campaign which will appeal to our varied membership. We will continue to work to increase our charity's funding from **digital income** streams.

Over the period of the plan, we will work to **increase the profile and awareness of TCF within identified target groups** who come into contact with bereaved parents and adult siblings and may be able to signpost e.g. educational establishments, police, coroners, funeral directors, hospitals, hospices, GPs, other healthcare professionals, social services, faith personnel, donors, other bereaved parents, well-known people/celebrities who may have been affected by child bereavement. As part of our plan, we hope to appoint **a communications specialist** to develop a detailed and effective comms strategy to target these groups and increase our reach to bereaved parents and their families throughout the UK.

We will continue to regularly **survey all TCF users** to monitor satisfaction and develop and change our services where necessary.

Financial Review

The Trustees are responsible for the finances of the Charity. They monitor the finances of TCF by receiving a financial report at each Trustee meeting and by adopting a budget for each financial year.

The Trustees monitor three main aspects of the charity's finances

- The income from various sources
- The expenses
- The reserves

Income

The income of the charity comes from four main sources as follows:

- Membership donations and fees
- The proceeds from fundraising events and donations from Friends of TCF
- Securing grants and donations from foundations and trusts
- Fees in respect of gathering and retreats

Unrestricted income can be spent on TCF'S general charitable purposes as set out in the budget for the year.

Restricted income can only be spent on particular purposes/projects as specified by the donor.

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During the year the total income of the Charity was £459,980 (2021: £364,068). The split between Unrestricted and Restricted Funds received in the year is:

Unrestricted	£256,237 (2021: £312,484)
Restricted	£203,743 (2021: £ 51,584)

Expenditure

During the year the charity spent £378,221 (2021: £288,010).

The split between Unrestricted and Restricted Fund expenditure during the year is :

Unrestricted	£211,781 (2021: £248,113)
Restricted	£166,440 (2021: £ 39,897)

As the year progressed, following the pause in normal activities due to Covid, the Charity was able to resume its planned programme of growth and support, and adapt to changes such as the continued use of online support which was very much appreciated by participants when first introduced and which has become part of the ongoing support work now offered by TCF. In the event, expenditure did not exceed income for the year and a surplus was added to reserves.

Reserves

During the year TCF's income of £459,980 exceeded expenditure of £378,221 by £81,759.

The surplus increased the funds as follows :

Unrestricted funds	£45,969	Total funds at 31 March 22	£421,488
Restricted funds	£35,790	Total funds at 31 March 22	£91,813

The Trustees give careful consideration to the level of reserves. The Charity's policy on reserves is set out as follows:

"The Trustees have, after considering the guidance issues by the Charities' Commission, established a policy that sufficient general funds should be held to enable the activities of TCF to continue for a minimum of six months taking into account:

- (i) The forecast expenditure of running the charity allowing for planned increases or decreases in ongoing expenses
- (ii) The current sources of income and the heavy reliance on one off donations and fundraising events
- (iii) A review of the risks facing the charity, particularly those which would lead to a reduction in the level or reach of our services

The monthly income of the Charity is relatively volatile and so the Unrestricted funds will fluctuate from month to month. The Trustees would consider the Unrestricted funds to be excessive only if they were persistently above a level that would allow the activities of TCF to continue for twelve months without any source of income. In this case, the Trustees would determine how any excess Unrestricted funds should be spent to meet the aims and objectives

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of the charity. The level of Unrestricted funds is reviewed at least once a quarter. This policy is reviewed at least once every financial year.

The free reserves at 31 March 2022 were £421,488 and fall within the range set out above.

The Restricted funds balance at 31 March 2022 was £91,813; these funds can only be spent on projects for which the original fund application was made.

The anticipated draw down of Unrestricted reserves in support of the planned expansion of activities (as reported in 2020/21) did not materialise due to the continuing effects of Covid and changes in the type of support work undertaken during the year. Recruitment of staff detailed in year 1 of the Strategic Plan, for one post, was postponed until 2022-23. However, as the implementation of the Strategic Plan continues, Trustees will closely monitor expenditure to ensure that expenditure of reserves does not impact the policy of maintaining a balance which allows the charity to continue its activities for six months.

The Trustees are responsible for investing the reserves of TCF. In light of the periodic need to draw on the funds at short notice the Trustees have decided to keep the reserves on bank deposit.

Structure, Governance and Management

The Compassionate Friends (TCF) was founded in 1969 in Coventry and is governed by its Memorandum & Articles of Association as a Company, limited by guarantee registered in England & Wales. The organisation was based in Kilburn, London, throughout the year with a network of volunteers throughout the United Kingdom.

The Board of TCF is comprised of between six and twelve elected Trustees. An Elected Trustee must be a Member and has to be nominated by a donating TCF Member and provide a short CV, details of their experience within TCF and a personal statement. Candidates are supplied with information on the responsibilities of a Trustee prior to election and after election they are supplied with further charity guidance booklets and details of relevant external information and training days on charity governance and management. Elected Trustees serve for three years (extendable to three years and three months). Elections are held annually and by digital and postal vote; if the number of vacancies for elected Trustees exceeds the number of nominated candidates, then the candidates are deemed to have been elected and there is no need for a vote. No elected Trustee can be in office for longer than three terms of 3 years, either served consecutively or with breaks. The chair can only serve for a maximum of 3 years.

Members of the Charity and external candidates with the required knowledge and skills needed on the Board of Trustees are also invited to apply to join as a co-opted Trustee. In addition, Trustee Advisors can be invited to join the Board for varying short periods of time in order to give the Board specialist advice or help.

All strategic direction and policy are determined by the Board of Trustees and monitored at regular Board meetings and against an annual budget.

All key decisions regarding policy, strategy, finance, governance and major pastoral issues, are taken by the Board of Trustees. Decisions are reached by a majority vote of Trustees, either by voting at the regular Board meetings (absent Trustees are regarded as bound by the majority votes of all Trustees present) or through Board members voting by email. Certain

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decisions regarding the pastoral work, volunteer recruitment, training and support are delegated to the CEO and operations team but need to be ratified by the Board before they can be implemented. Key decisions regarding office management are taken by the CEO in close consultation with the Chair of Trustees and, where appropriate, the Board of Trustees.

In making arrangements for setting pay and remuneration for the charity's key management personnel, the Trustees always bear in mind rates of pay for equivalent roles in charities of comparable size. In setting the pay for the Chief Executive, the Trustees considered the requirements for the role and pay for comparable roles in similarly sized charities. The Trustees will review the pay of the Chief Executive at least once a year.

Risk Assessment Policy

The Trustees regularly review and update identified major risks that might face the charity and its ability to function in pursuit of its charitable objectives, as a result of loss of reputation caused by inappropriate guidance being given to our beneficiaries, or an inability to maintain its current level of activities through lack of funding. In addition, risks associated with each identifiable project are assessed before it is undertaken.

In general terms, the Trustees regularly consider any areas of TCF operations where there is a perceived risk to the charity and appropriate action is taken to manage any risks that are identified.

The Trustees identified the principal risks facing the charity: the risk of inadequate future funding; the possible loss of current staff; the risk of losing volunteers.

The Trustees adopted the following plans and strategies for their mitigation; expanding the hours worked of the experienced fundraiser and, in September 2021, appointing a new Events and Community Fundraiser; a series of initiatives to retain and support staff are included as part of the 3-year strategic plan; a series of initiatives to support and train volunteers were included in the 3 -year strategic plan.

Data Protection/Privacy Policy

The Compassionate Friends is committed to protecting people's personal information. Our Privacy Policy (available to view and download from our website) sets out the basis on which we process any personal information collected or provided to us.

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Trustees' Responsibilities

The trustees (who are also directors of The Compassionate Friends for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report (incorporating the strategic report and directors' report) and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102: *The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland* (United Kingdom Accepted Accounting Practice).

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

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

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

Approved by the Board of Trustees and signed on their behalf by:

Andrew Miller KC, Chair of Trustees

Date:

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

REFERENCE & ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

The Trustee Board

Chair: Andrew Miller KC

Vice- Chair: Susan Hughes

Company Secretary: George Burn

Other Trustees

Maria Ahern

Margaret Brearley (co-opted)

Ken Barclay

Gina Claye

Claire Coveney (co-opted)

Gill Hardy

Jen Hughes

Melian Mansfield

Sheila Phillips

Nisha Shah

Nigel Taylor (co-opted)

Warren Weiss

Trustee Advisers

Guy Paton

Chief Executive

Carolyn Brice

Registered Office

Kilburn Grange

Priory Park Road

London NW6 7UJ

Independent Examiner

Joshua Kingston, BSc., ACA

Burton Sweet Limited

The Clock Tower

5 Farleigh Court

Old Weston Road

Flax Bourton

Bristol BS48 1UR

Bankers

CAF Bank Limited

25 Kings Hill Avenue

Kings Hill

West Malling

Kent ME19 4JQ

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2022.

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

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

Independent examiner's statement

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

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

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Company 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.

Joshua Kingston BSc., ACA
Burton Sweet Limited
The Clock Tower
5 Farleigh Court
Old Weston Road
Flax Bourton
Bristol BS48 1UR

Date:

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

		Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2022 £	Total Funds 2021 £
	Note				
Income from:					
Donations	2	121,913	186,437	308,350	302,343
Charitable activities	3	68,831	15,854	84,685	25,711
Other trading activities	4	65,436	1,438	66,874	35,891
Investments	5	57	14	71	123
Total income		256,237	203,743	459,980	364,068
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds	6	64,400	-	64,400	70,091
Charitable activities	7	147,381	166,440	313,821	217,919
Total expenditure		211,781	166,440	378,221	288,010
Net income/(expenditure)	10	44,456	37,303	81,759	76,058
Transfers between funds		1,513	(1,513)	-	-
Net movement in funds		45,969	35,790	81,759	76,058
Total funds brought forward	17	375,519	56,023	431,542	355,484
Total funds carried forward	17	421,488	91,813	513,301	431,542

The Charity has no recognised gains or losses other than the results for the period as set out above.

All of the activities of the charity are classed as continuing

The comparative Statement of Financial Activities is shown in note 12.

The notes on pages 24 to 35 form part of these financial statements

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 MARCH 2022

	Note	2022 £	2021 £
Fixed assets			
Tangible fixed assets	13	-	-
Current assets			
Debtors	14	45,570	44,229
Cash at bank and in hand		476,530	401,138
		522,100	445,367
Creditors : Amounts falling due within one year	15	(8,799)	(13,825)
Net current assets		513,301	431,542
Net assets		513,301	431,542
Funds			
Restricted funds	18	91,813	56,023
Unrestricted funds	18	421,488	375,519
Total funds		513,301	431,542

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

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

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

These financial statements were approved by the trustees on..... and are signed on their behalf by:

Andrew Miller KC

Company Number 04029535

The notes on pages 24 to 35 form part of these financial statements

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

1 Accounting policies

a) Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the historical cost convention and in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) issued in October 2019 and the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011 (or Companies Act 2006) and UK Generally Accepted Practice as it applies from 1 January 2019.

The charity is a public benefit entity as defined by FRS102.

The accounts have been prepared under the going concern concept, as the trustees believe this to be the most appropriate as it is considered that there are no material uncertainties with respect to the effects of Covid-19.

b) Income

Income is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the item(s) of income have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

c) Grants

Grants, including grants for fixed assets, are recognised within the accounts as they become receivable. Grants received in the accounting period in respect of future accounting periods are deferred until those periods.

d) Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

Direct costs, including directly attributable salaries, are allocated on an actual basis to the activities. Support costs are allocated over the activities based on the estimated percentages of cost used.

Governance costs include the costs of meeting constitutional and statutory requirements and include costs associated with the strategic management of the charity's activities. They have been included in support costs.

e) Fixed assets

Expenditure on assets with an estimated economic life of more than twelve months and a cost of more than £2,000 are capitalised.

Depreciation is calculated so as to write off the cost of an asset, less its estimated residual value, over the useful economic life of that asset as follows:

Fixtures, Fittings and equipment	25% straight line
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f) Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

g) Cash at bank and in hand

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

h) Creditors

Creditors are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts received.

i) Operating leases

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

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

1 Accounting policies (*continued*)

j) Unrestricted funds

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objects at the discretion of the trustees.

Unrestricted designated funds have been set aside by the trustees out of unrestricted general funds for specific future purposes or projects.

k) Restricted funds

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes. Expenditure which meets these criteria is charged to the fund, together with a fair allocation of management and support costs. Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

2 Donations

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2022 £
Donations and legacies	121,913	186,437	308,350
	<u>121,913</u>	<u>186,437</u>	<u>308,350</u>

Prior year comparative

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2021 £
Donations and legacies	251,771	46,672	298,443
Grants receivable	-	3,900	3,900
	<u>251,771</u>	<u>50,572</u>	<u>302,343</u>

Donations received from trustees and related parties during the year were £2,140 (2021: £1,646).

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

3 Income from: Charitable activities

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2022 £
<i>Core activities</i>			
Membership subscriptions	22,161	-	22,161
Other activities	23,249	-	23,249
Events	23,421	15,854	39,275
	68,831	15,854	84,685

Prior year comparative

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2021 £
<i>Core activities</i>			
Membership subscriptions	23,311	-	23,311
Other activities	2,100	-	2,100
Events	-	300	300
	25,411	300	25,711

4 Income from: Other trading activities

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2022 £
Fundraising activities	60,454	1,438	61,892
Trading income	4,982	-	4,982
	65,436	1,438	66,874

Prior year comparative

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2021 £
Fundraising activities	29,216	712	29,928
Trading income	5,963	-	5,963
	35,179	712	35,891

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

5 Investment income

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2022 £
Bank interest receivable	57	14	71
	57	14	71

Prior year comparative

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2021 £
Bank interest receivable	123	-	123
	123	-	123

6 Expenditure on: Raising funds

	Activities undertaken directly £	Support Costs (Note 8) £	Total 2022 £
Sale of goods	984	-	984
Fundraising costs	53,450	9,966	63,416
	54,434	9,966	64,400

Prior year comparative

	Activities undertaken directly £	Support Costs (Note 8) £	Total 2021 £
Sale of goods	2,770	-	2,770
Fundraising costs	58,731	8,590	67,321
	61,501	8,590	70,091

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

7 Expenditure on: Charitable activities

	Activities undertaken directly £	Support Costs (Note 8) £	Total 2022 £
<i>Core activities</i>			
Helpline	20,909	4,983	25,892
Library	1,953	831	2,784
Gathering and events	58,664	32,390	91,054
Other pastoral activities	159,209	34,882	194,091
	240,735	73,086	313,821

Prior year comparative

	Activities undertaken directly £	Support Costs (Note 8) £	Total 2021 £
<i>Core activities</i>			
Helpline	16,704	4,296	21,000
Library	1,413	715	2,128
Gathering and events	12,595	27,921	40,516
Other pastoral activities	124,205	30,070	154,275
	154,917	63,002	217,919

8 Support costs

	Premises costs £	Office expenses £	Other Expenses £	Total £
<i>Core activities</i>				
Helpline	747	2,869	1,367	4,983
Library	125	478	228	831
Gathering and events	4,858	18,646	8,886	32,390
Other pastoral activities	5,232	20,080	9,570	34,882
	10,962	42,073	20,051	73,086
Fundraising costs	1,495	5,737	2,734	9,966
Total 2022	12,457	47,810	22,785	83,052
Total 2021	13,535	34,429	23,628	71,592

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

8 Support costs (continued)

Prior year comparative

	Premises costs £	Office expenses £	Other Expenses £	Total £
<i>Core activities</i>				
Helpline	812	2,066	1,418	4,296
Library	135	344	236	715
Gathering and events	5,279	13,427	9,215	27,921
Other pastoral activities	5,685	14,461	9,924	30,070
	<u>11,911</u>	<u>30,298</u>	<u>20,793</u>	<u>63,002</u>
Fundraising costs	1,624	4,131	2,835	8,590
Total 2021	<u>13,535</u>	<u>34,429</u>	<u>23,628</u>	<u>71,592</u>

Support costs have been allocated to activities based on estimated percentages of costs used.
 Governance costs of £23,629 (2021: £23,629) have been included in support costs.

9 Staff costs and numbers

The aggregate payroll costs were:

	2022 £	2021 £
Wages and salaries	187,302	130,698
Social security costs	11,380	7,404
Pension costs	3,382	2,840
	<u>202,064</u>	<u>140,942</u>

No employee received emoluments of more than £60,000.
 Benefits paid to key management personnel of the charity during the year were £54,603 (2021: £49,993).

The average number of staff employed by the charity during the financial year amounted to:

	2022 No	2021 No
Pastoral and befriending services	<u>9</u>	<u>6</u>

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

10 Net income/(expenditure)

Operating surplus/(deficit) is stated after charging:

	2022	2021
	£	£
Depreciation	-	145
Independent examiner's fees	3,063	2,917
Trustees' expenses		
Travel (1 trustee, 2021: No trustees)	132	-

11 Taxation

The charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.

12 Comparative Statement of Financial Activities

	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total Funds
	Funds	Funds	2021
	£	£	£
Income from:			
Donations	251,771	50,572	302,343
Charitable activities	25,411	300	25,711
Other trading activities	35,179	712	35,891
Investments	123	-	123
Total income	312,484	51,584	364,068
Expenditure on:			
Raising funds	70,091	-	70,091
Charitable activities	178,022	39,897	217,919
Total expenditure	248,113	39,897	288,010
Net income/(expenditure)	64,371	11,687	76,058
Transfers between funds	-	-	-
Net movement in funds	64,371	11,687	76,058
Total funds as at 1 April 2020	311,148	44,336	355,484
Total funds at 31 March 2021	375,519	56,023	431,542

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

13 Tangible fixed assets

	Office equipment £	Total £
Cost		
At 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022	<u>7,322</u>	<u>7,322</u>
Depreciation		
At 1 April 2021	7,322	7,322
Charge for the year	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
At 31 March 2022	<u>7,322</u>	<u>7,322</u>
Net book value		
At 31 March 2022	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
At 31 March 2021	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>

14 Debtors

	2022 £	2021 £
Income tax recoverable	42,020	38,373
Prepayments	3,550	5,856
	<u>45,570</u>	<u>44,229</u>

15 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2022 £	2021 £
Accruals and deferred income	6,523	9,684
PAYE and other taxes	1,841	2,640
Other creditors	435	1,501
	<u>8,799</u>	<u>13,825</u>

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

16 Commitments

At 31 March 2022 the charity had minimum total commitments under non-cancellable operating leases as set out below:

	Property 2022 £	Property 2021 £
Falling due:		
Within 1 year	3,384	3,384

17 Movement in funds

	At 1 April 2021 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	At 31 March 2022 £
Restricted Funds					
Whirlow	1,718	-	-	(1,718)	-
Scottish Forum	15,415	19,797	(170)	(35,042)	-
Northern Ireland Branch	10,768	-	(505)	(10,263)	-
TCF Local support group funds	-	53,038	(38,190)	45,510	60,358
National Lottery Community Fund Grant for the Grief Companions Project	28,122	36,716	(58,100)	-	6,738
Helpline	-	19,950	(19,950)	-	-
Leaflets	-	4,350	(4,350)	-	-
Training	-	26,500	(26,500)	-	-
Retreats	-	4,025	(4,025)	-	-
Siblings	-	18,025	(3,550)	-	14,475
Suicide	-	16,223	(6,100)	-	10,123
Online support	-	5,069	(5,000)	-	69
Bursaries	-	50	-	-	50
	56,023	203,743	(166,440)	(1,513)	91,813
Unrestricted funds					
Designated funds					
TCF Local support group funds	10,780	658	(970)	(10,468)	-
Volunteer training and support	75,078	-	-	(75,078)	-
General funds	289,661	255,579	(210,811)	87,059	421,488
	375,519	256,237	(211,781)	1,513	421,488
	431,542	459,980	(378,221)	-	513,301

During the year, the trustees reviewed the treatment of the regional funds and came to the conclusion that it was more appropriate to include them all within restricted funds. Therefore the TCF local support group funds have been transferred to a restricted local support Group fund, and the remaining restricted Scottish Forum fund was transferred to the fund also.

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

17 Movement in funds (continued)

Restricted funds

The Whirlow fund - used to fund an annual retreat for bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents.

The Scottish Forum fund - monies given to finance supportive retreat weekends in Scotland.

The Northern Ireland Branch fund - monies raised for support services for beneficiaries in Northern Ireland.

TCF Local support group funds - monies donated to support TCF's work in particular regions of the UK.

The National Lottery Community Fund Grant for the Grief Companion Project - monies given to TCF to expand the scheme which offers peer befriending to newly bereaved parents.

Helpline - monies given to fund the provision of a telephone and email national helpline for bereaved parents, siblings, grandparents and the professionals supporting them.

Leaflets - monies given to fund provision of supportive publications for the bereaved.

Training - funding for volunteer training and support.

Retreats - monies donated to provide and subsidise weekend and one day supportive retreats for the bereaved.

Siblings - monies to provide support services for bereaved adult siblings (18 years+).

Suicide - monies to provide support services for parents bereaved by suicide.

Online support - funds to enable some services to be delivered online.

Bursaries - monies donated to provide financial assistance to individuals attending retreat weekends and support days.

Designated funds

The TCF Local support group funds represented monies held by local groups that provide support services to beneficiaries. The trustees have reconsidered the allocation of these funds and have concluded that they should be recognised as restricted funds, so the balance has been transferred to the TCF Local Support Group Fund.

The Training and support of volunteer fund represented funds received from a generous legacy. The trustees set these funds aside for a training programme for volunteers which had to be cancelled due to Covid restrictions. The charity is now rethinking its training strategy, so the funds have been transferred back to General Funds.

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

17 Movement in funds (continued)

Movement in funds - prior year

	At 1 April 2020 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	At 31 March 2021 £
Restricted Funds					
Whirlow	1,718	-	-	-	1,718
Scottish Forum	15,677	792	(1,054)	-	15,415
Northern Ireland Branch	9,191	4,435	(2,858)	-	10,768
National Lottery Community Fund Grant for the Grief Companions Project	17,750	46,357	(35,985)	-	28,122
	<u>44,336</u>	<u>51,584</u>	<u>(39,897)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>56,023</u>
Unrestricted funds					
Designated funds					
TCF Local support group funds	11,143	997	(962)	(398)	10,780
Volunteer training and support	76,654	-	(1,576)	-	75,078
General funds	223,351	311,487	(245,575)	398	289,661
	<u>311,148</u>	<u>312,484</u>	<u>(248,113)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>375,519</u>
	<u>355,484</u>	<u>364,068</u>	<u>(288,010)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>431,542</u>

18 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Other net assets £	Total 2022 £
Restricted funds	91,813	91,813
Unrestricted funds:		
Designated funds	-	-
General funds	421,488	421,488
	<u>513,301</u>	<u>513,301</u>

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

18 Analysis of net assets between funds (continued)

Analysis of net assets between funds - prior year

	Other net assets £	Total 2021 £
Restricted funds	56,023	56,023
Unrestricted funds:		
Designated funds	85,858	85,858
General funds	289,661	289,661
	<u>431,542</u>	<u>431,542</u>

19 Company limited by guarantee

The company is limited by guarantee and as such has no issued share capital. In the event of the company being wound up the liability of the members is limited to £1 each.

20 Related party transactions

Trustees waived expenses of £1,250 (2021: £Nil) during the year.

Other than those disclosed elsewhere in the accounts there are no further related party transactions in either the current or previous year.