

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT

England & Wales · Charity number 1084106

Details

Other names	ADVOCATE FOR MENTAL HEALTH, WESTMINSTER MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCACY PROJECT
Status	Registered
Legal form	Charitable company
Company number	04018315
Registered	2000-12-13
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

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Website	www.advocacyproject.org.uk

Activities

Objects: THE OBJECTS FOR WHICH THE CHARITY IS ESTABLISHED IS TO PROMOTE FOR THE PUBLIC BENEFIT THE RELIEF OF ALL PERSONS IN NEED WHETHER BY REASON OF THEIR LEARNING DISABILITY, MENTAL HEALTH, AGE, YOUTH, PHYSICAL DISABILITY, VISUAL OR SENSORY IMPAIRMENT OR OTHER DISADVANTAGE AND/OR BUILDING THE CAPACITY OF SUCH COMMUNITIES, IN PARTICULAR (BUT NOT EXCLUSIVELY) BY THE PROVISION OF, OR SUPPORTING THE PROVISION OF: 3.1 ADVOCACY, ADVICE, EDUCATION, TRAINING, COUNSELLING AND/OR PEER TO PEER MENTORING; 3.2 OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN AND IMPROVE LIFE SKILLS; 3.3 EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES; AND/OR ALSO BY SUCH OTHER MEANS AS MAY BE EXCLUSIVELY CHARITABLE.

Activities: The Advocacy Project ensures that London's most vulnerable people have meaningful choice and control over what happens in their lives. We support people living with mental health conditions, eating disorders, learning disabilities, dementia. We work with all age ranges from children and young people, adults and older people. We provide 1:1 advocacy, group advocacy and user involvement/engagement.

Classification

- **How:** Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information, Sponsors Or Undertakes Research, Other Charitable Activities
- **What:** General Charitable Purposes, Education/training, The Advancement Of Health Or Saving Of Lives, Disability
- **Who:** Children/young People, Elderly/old People, People With Disabilities, People Of A Particular Ethnic Or Racial Origin, Other Defined Groups

Geography

- Throughout London

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£2,923,713	£2,595,091	£1,001,736	56
2024-03-31	£2,436,531	£2,272,678	£673,114	62
2023-03-31	£2,737,805	£2,791,500	£509,261	75
2022-03-31	£2,533,425	£2,449,198	£562,956	67
2021-03-31	£2,256,528	£2,244,833	£478,729	59

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Deborah Finding		2025-10-02
Dr DELE OLAJIDE		2018-12-06
Hasib Zahir Dewan		2024-10-01
Jayesh Ramesh Patel		2024-10-01
Pankaj Shah		2024-10-01
Rachel Hutchings		2024-10-18
Rachel Russell		2024-10-11
Roger Skipp		2020-02-04

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT

England & Wales - Charity number 1084106

Accounts

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)
TRUSTEES' REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)

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THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
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**REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS OF THE CHARITY, ITS TRUSTEES AND ADVISERS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

Trustees

Dr Dele Olajide (Chair)
Roger Skipp (Vice Chair)
Pankaj Shah (Treasurer) (appointed 1 October 2024)
Hasib Dewan (appointed 1 October 2024)
Jayesh Patel (appointed 1 October 2024)
Rachel Russell (appointed 11 October 2024)
Rachel Hutchings (appointed 18 October 2024)
Gemma Bull (resigned 30 April 2024)
Helen Richardson (resigned 8 May 2025)
Adam Antonio (resigned 6 June 2025)

Company registered number

04018315

Charity registered number

1084106

Registered office

The Stowe Centre
258 Harrow Road
London
W2 5ES

Company secretary

Katherine Shaw (Appointed 8 July 2024)
Alison Wright (Resigned 8 July 2024)

Independent auditor

Cooper Parry Group Limited
Sky View
Argosy Road
East Midlands Airport
Castle Donington
Derby
DE74 2SA

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT

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TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

The Trustees present their annual report together with the audited financial statements of the Charity for the 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025. The Trustees are also directors, therefore the Annual report serves the purposes of both a Trustees' report and a directors' report under company law. The Trustees confirm that the Annual report and financial statements of the charitable company comply with the current statutory requirements, the requirements of the charitable company's governing document and the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) (effective 1 January 2019).

"The Advocacy Project breaks things down for you. Bit by bit. So, it's not one big organisation versus you, it's lots and lots of little steps to meet your goals. The Advocacy Project help provide you the confidence and the self-assurance to tackle these little steps one after another."

Marlon Morgan Advocacy project Service User Council member.

Since the Charity qualifies as small under section 382 of the Companies Act 2006, the Strategic report required of medium and large companies under the Companies Act 2006 (Strategic Report and Directors' Report) Regulations 2013 has been omitted.

"Life is about relationships and relationships are built on trust and that's what the Advocacy Project is all about to me, trust and feeling safe" Advocacy project Service User Council member.

1. Objectives and activities

1.1. Aims and objectives

The Advocacy Project supports people to speak up and to make their own choices about their lives. Our vision is a world in which every person has a voice - including those who are marginalised or vulnerable because of their circumstances. We place a relentless focus on enabling people to have their voice heard, uphold their rights, and make informed choices. We support people to have their say and help improve important services we all need, including health and social care services. We also seek to tackle testimonial injustice - this kind of injustice occurs when someone is ignored, or not believed, because of identity-prejudice towards them, for example because of their circumstances, their gender, race, disability etc.

We achieve these aims by delivering a range of projects and services - statutory and non-statutory - including advocacy, user involvement, personal health budgets and Healthwatch services. The Trustees have paid due regard to guidance issued by the Charity Commission in deciding what activities the charity should carry out.

1.2. How we work

At The Advocacy Project, we believe everyone has the right to be heard, to have control over their own life, and to be treated with dignity and respect. We support people who are often excluded or overlooked including people with protected characteristics, learning disabilities, mental ill health, older people and other disabilities to build their confidence, support them to speak up and be involved in choices made about their health and social care.

When people feel stronger, safer, and more empowered, they can shape their own futures! You can read personal stories from people we've supported on our website: www.advocacyproject.org.uk/news/real-stories-about-real-people.

Lived experience is at the heart of everything we do. Many of our staff bring personal experience of the challenges we help people navigate. We co-produce our projects with the people we support and actively recruit Trustees with lived experience. Our board includes a dedicated service user or lived experience Trustee. Alongside this, our Service User Council provides valuable insight and feedback, ensuring the voices of people who use our services inform and influence our work.

We're proud to be a diverse, inclusive organisation that reflects the communities we serve. That diversity helps us build trust and understanding, allowing us to focus on what matters most: standing alongside people who face disadvantage, discrimination, and marginalisation, and working together to create lasting change.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

1. Objectives and activities (continued)

1.3. Public Benefit

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with their duty under the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit. In planning and delivering the Charity's activities throughout the year, the Trustees have considered how these activities contribute to the Charity's aims and objectives for the public benefit.

1.4. Performance and achievements

External context

In 2024/25, the wider pressures on the health and social care sector continued to shape the environment in which The Advocacy Project operates. While the impact of the rising cost of living was less pronounced, many people using our services remained in difficult circumstances, with clear consequences for their mental and physical health. Ongoing delays and waiting lists in health and social care directly affected the people we support, increasing the urgency and complexity of advocacy needs. This has driven up referrals and placed additional pressure on our teams. We are proud to have worked with 2,801 people through our direct services and 10,844 through Healthwatch.

The abolition of NHS England signalled a major shift in health governance, creating uncertainty around commissioning and local accountability. Alongside this, the General Election brought further instability, with potential shifts in policy direction and continued scrutiny of public sector delivery. These dynamics, coupled with ongoing budget constraints across health and social care, drove up demand in our caseload in some areas. However, entering 2024/25 with a fully staffed team and increased investment in non-statutory services, we were well placed to respond to need and maintain our focus on amplifying voices.

During the year our largest contract went out for retender and we are still waiting for the result of this as this report is published. While the loss of this contract would have an impact on the size and the shape of the organisation, we have contingency plans in place to mitigate any risk.

In June 2025 we heard the news that Healthwatch England and local Healthwatch were to be abolished under the new 10-year plan. At the time of writing there is little detail, and we are working closely with both Integrated Care Board (ICB) and Local Authority colleagues to plan for the change. At this stage we do not expect this to impact until 2026/27.

Internal context

Our new permanent Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Katherine Shaw, joined us in July 2024. Katherine quickly embedded herself in the organisation and led the development of a new strategic direction, supported by Lime Green Consulting gathered data from internal and external stakeholders and working closely with the senior leadership team and Trustees developed a robust strategic plan for the next 5 years. While the environment in which we operate continues to be challenging with increased competition for funding, very tight margins in statutory funding and increased demand we remain ambitious and optimistic that the organisation can develop a sustainable business model that will secure our future for many years ahead.

With a focused Senior Leadership Team (SLT) in place, we prioritised stabilising the Charity, ensure that the internal processes and systems enable us to continue to deliver high-quality advocacy, Healthwatch and user involvement services. We were thrilled to be awarded the Advocacy quality mark (QPM) for the second time and the feedback from the assessment was extremely positive.

"The advocacy team have very robust, well executed processes and procedures in place, which provide a comprehensive Independent Advocacy service to the communities in which they work in. The assessor was extremely impressed with the breadth of support available within the service itself being complimented in addition to the many other projects they deliver. "

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

1. Objectives and activities (continued)

Internal context (continued)

"Feedback from all those we spoke with who had used the service was outstanding. There was a strong thread of excellent support being provided with people feeling listened to and empowered." **QPM inspector 2024.**

This is testament to the skills and experience of our teams. We work collaboratively with all our commissioners to ensure the quality of all our services continues to improve, responding to feedback and securing extensions on both our Healthwatch contracts.

We were delighted to have 5 new Trustees including a Treasurer joining the board all bringing with them valuable additional experience and insight to our board.

We continued to prioritise staff involvement and internal collaboration, maintaining the regular managers meetings introduced last year and building on opportunities for cross-team working. Partnerships have remained a core focus, with efforts to build new relationships and expand into new areas aligned with our strategy to play to our strengths, particularly in non-statutory advocacy, accessible information, and user-led projects.

Under our communication strategy, we invested in strategic communications to strengthen our external presence and better showcase the impact of our work and support our sales income for easy read and training. This included improving how we share stories, engage partners, and position ourselves as a leader in advocacy and involvement.

1.5. Service highlights

In 2024/25 we engaged with over 13,000 people through our services and through hosting Healthwatch. Some of these interactions were intensive one to one advocacy work, or personal health budgets or through our user voice groups, others were lighter touch through advice and information or engagement and consultation but running through all these the common thread of enabling people to be heard and acting on this to affect change.

Spot-purchase work

We continue to grow our spot purchase offer to Local authorities and saw 1,070 hours delivered this year. Next year we will expand this further taking the offer to more local authorities and recruiting more spot purchase advocates to join the 2 we currently work with.

Advocacy services

The Head of Service oversaw a very successful quality performance mark assessment, resulting in us being awarded this for the second time. Feedback was extremely positive, and we continue to improve quality and impact of our advocacy services.

- **Ealing advocacy team:** At the beginning of the financial year, we were having difficulties managing big caseloads due to being a small team. After sending a business proposal to Ealing council they agreed to increase our funding, which allowed us to recruit more staff members to take on cases. Our Care Act referrals have increased gradually in the year after providing many advocacy awareness sessions for professionals. We worked with 217 people this year.
- **Bi-borough team:** Our activity has included delivering individual advocacy awareness training to social workers, the Carers Network, the West London GP Forum, providing Input into The Ministry of Justice consultation of extending the role of IMHA into Prisons and detention centres and participating in the consultation by the University of London on Culturally Appropriate Advocacy Standards. We were proud to receive recognition from CQC inspectors for the presence of advocates and visible advocacy materials on the wards in St Charles Hospital and Bluebell Lodge and have an article published in the Royal College of Psychiatry's newsletter on advocacy in a PICU. We worked with 549 people this year.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

1. Objectives and activities (continued)

- **West London forensic advocacy service:** During Q4 2024/25, the advocacy team collaborated closely with Solaris to support service users in identifying goals related to leave, helping them navigate the application process and communicate effectively with clinical teams. Referrals were received from all 18 wards, reflecting strong engagement and trust in the service across secure and specialist units. Of the 344 issues addressed, 23% came from professionals, with the majority initiated by service users or advocates, highlighting increased awareness of advocacy rights. Advocates played a key role in care planning, Mental Health Review Tribunal preparation, and safeguarding, while also contributing to weekly Independent Long-Term Seclusion Reviews to ensure patient voices were central to decision-making. Proactive outreach and education further empowered service users, promoting self-advocacy and reducing reliance on ongoing casework. We worked with 225 people this year.

Case Study: Upholding Rights in Complex Mental Health Care

A man in his 40s, detained in a medium secure hospital with schizophrenia and emotionally unstable personality disorder, displayed complex behaviours including hunger strikes and refusal to engage with staff. He declined family involvement in his care decisions.

During his second hunger strike, concerns arose about his capacity to make treatment decisions. An Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA) was appointed, who found the existing capacity assessment was inadequately documented. The IMCA recommended a formal reassessment due to the serious health risks involved.

Although the patient declined to engage directly, the IMCA noted conflicting professional views about his capacity and advised the case be referred to the Court of Protection. Working closely with staff, the IMCA ensured legal and ethical issues were addressed, helping to safeguard the patient's rights despite limited cooperation.

User Involvement

Our User Involvement projects continue to enable the voices of older people, people with learning disabilities, and individuals facing mental health challenges, to be heard and to influence both local and strategic level decisions about health and social care. We have engaged 934 people through this work with highlights including:

- **Learning Disability (LD) User Involvement (UI) Team:** Camden and Bi-borough LD UI staff delivered a 1-day 'LD Reps Training' workshop, for all our LD Reps, covering topics such as 'First impressions', 'Being Professional', 'Speaking Up' and 'Representation'. The Reps participated in role plays and discussions with each other throughout the day.
- **Synergy' - Camden Learning Disability User Involvement:** An example of successful procurement - we developed training for the Synergy Reps, who then participated on a panel for Camden Council's Community Support Recommissioning process.
- **'Big Voice' and 'Our Choice' - Bi-Borough Learning Disability User Involvement:** We delivered regular Speak Up/Have Your Say sessions to service providers such as Pursuing Independent Paths, LDN Hub, Caxton Youth and Westminster Adult Education services, on topics such as Digital Inclusion, Planned Care and Palliative care.
- **Older People's Voice' - Westminster Older Adults User Involvement:** Our members contributed to the Adult Social Care Preventative Services Strategy, by raising the issue of 'aging well' in their own homes with reasonable, efficient and timely adjustments and access to activities and support.
- **Mental Health Voice' - City & Hackney User Involvement:** At the Mental Health Voice (MHV) committee and the Mental Health Integration Committee (MHIC) meetings, MHV members highlighted the lack of accessible mental health services in the City. This resulted in 'Public Health City and Hackney' working with us to explore ways of addressing the gaps and mapping existing services.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

1. Objectives and activities (continued)

- **Camden Mental Health User Involvement:** Our Lived Experience Advisors (LExAs) are a core part of Reach Out Camden's Alliance Management Team (AMT), Alliance Leadership Team (ALT) , and have contributed to Audit tools, Values work, and recruitment processes.

Healthwatch

- **Bi-borough:** In 2024/25, we supported over 3,400 in Westminster and 3,600 people in Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea to have their say and access information about their care. We published a total of 19 reports about the improvements people would like to see in areas like intermediate care, access to healthcare, primary mental health services for homeless communities and Enter and View. Amongst other areas, we highlighted the impact of the cost of living Crisis and people's struggles in accessing integrated support when transitioning between health and social care services. We also informed policy on dental care access through work with the Local Dental Committee and fed residents' feedback about barriers to accessing online healthcare into council strategy. Our joint report on maternity services led to improved postnatal information for new mothers.
- **Brent:** In 2024/25, 1,336 people shared their experiences of health and social care services with us, helping to raise awareness of issues and improve care and 2,413 people came to us for clear advice and information on topics which informed our reports. We published six reports highlighting the improvements people want in areas such as GP services, maternity care, and hospital discharge. Brent is one of London's most diverse boroughs, and we have continued to build strong community partnerships. This includes helping the Brent Somali organisation engage with the council and health leaders, working with food banks to understand residents' needs, and collaborating with the Brent Autism Care Navigator to explore the lived experiences of autistic residents. We also engaged with people living with dementia and their carers to review the customer care team and care needs assessment process. Their feedback was fully accepted and used to improve services.
- **Across all three boroughs:** This year, we jointly raised concerns to the Integrated Care Board about the low level of engagement on their same day GP access plans which resulted in them extending the consultation time to ensure that resident voices are reflected in decision-making processes. Through Enter & View visits to GP surgeries, we identified areas for improvement - such as complaints processes and disability access - which were reflected in our recommendations. To ensure inclusive engagement, we collaborated with partner organisations to provide translated and accessible surveys, helping us gather feedback from across our diverse community.
- **Health Equalities lecture series** - a further four successful lectures were run this year:
GP Access: What Do Patients Want?; Survivors' Stories; 2 x A Mentally Healthier Future and How We Can Get There.

Personal Health Budget (PHB)

We ceased delivery of our PHB service in Hackney, Tower Hamlets and Newham in 2024/25 and would like to thank all of our partners and commissioner for the opportunity to work on a true prevention focused project. Our Tower Hamlets Children and Young People's (CYP) PHB work was extended to October 2025.

Since its launch in 2022 with just 8 referrals, the CYP PHB service in Tower Hamlets has grown significantly, now receiving over 120 referrals. The service supports young people in accessing tailored resources to improve their mental health and wellbeing. All young people offered a PHB have received their agreed support, with improved wellbeing scores consistently reported.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

1. Objectives and activities (continued)

Infrastructure

Our people

Throughout the year we strengthened our leadership, with our new permanent CEO, Katherine Shaw, joining in July 2024. Katherine brings fresh leadership and is driving forward our new strategic direction. Lee Forster joined as our IT Manager, strengthening our digital infrastructure and supporting improved systems across the organisation, and we welcomed Gina Aston as our new Impact & Involvement Manager (Healthwatch), taking a more strategic approach to managing our Healthwatch contracts and how we measure and demonstrate impact.

To support the ambition in our new strategy we will be investing in a Deputy Head of Service role in 2025/26.

In 2024/25, 8 people joined the organisation and 12 people left (including TUPE and fixed term contracts). This gave us a retention rate of 74% which, although lower than we would hope for, however it includes 50% of staff eligible for TUPE. As we enter 2025/26, this figure is higher and remains a focus to increase to above 85%. To support this, the Senior Leadership Team continue to develop a model of staff cohesion.

This includes regular staff days and catch-ups to gather feedback, hear staff opinions and provide actions and responses where possible. Staff have fed into the new strategy and development of new values (underway). We have listened to feedback and simplified the appraisal process, reducing paperwork and focusing on short term goals. We plan to have regular pulse surveys for staff, as well as opportunities to engage through an online platform "Viva Engage". Trustees have attended staff meetings both in person and online and we continue to work hard to build confidence and relationships across SLT and the wider organisation to create a more collaborative workforce. Currently 79% of staff report being proud to work for The Advocacy Project; our aim is to make all our staff proud.

We are working to identify the 'golden thread' of advocacy across all the projects we deliver, looking at how our works connects to delivering our goal of 'raising vulnerable people's voices'.

The Employee Handbook and the Health, Safety & Wellbeing Handbook clearly set out our policies and procedures and are reviewed for compliance with legislation and best practice each year. We continue to invest in staff wellbeing by giving staff access to independent counselling in addition to a 24-hour confidential care service.

We continue to strive to make the organisation fully inclusive. This year, we undertook an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion self-assessment and a small working group are analysing the responses. We will use these to set priorities and develop an action plan. We will take a step-by-step approach, focusing on a few areas at a time to ensure that actions are deliverable and embedded in practice. We have a recognition agreement with UNISON and are a Mindful Employer and a Disability Confident Employer.

Learning and development for staff is very important to us. We support staff to achieve their Independent Advocacy Qualification (IAQ), continue to invest in our E learning platform from the Charity Consortium and work with services to identify and meet training and development needs (for example talking mats training for our Camden project and Safeguarding training tailored to Healthwatch needs).

Information Technology (IT)

Our new IT Manager has supported the organisation to move away from a hosted desktop and fully utilise Microsoft 365 for all staff. This has reduced cost and improved IT functionality and communications significantly. Lee has hosted regular IT training sessions to support the transition. We continue to explore the applications that come with Microsoft 365 to improve staff engagement and communication. We're aware of the opportunities and risks that AI can bring and are currently exploring how best to use this in the Charity.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

1. Objectives and activities (continued)

Communications

- **Internal:** We continue to produce our internal newsletter based on staff feedback that they wanted to know more about what was happening across the organisation internally. The newsletter goes out on a 6-weekly basis and includes key-dates, updates on teams, successes and key messages for staff. We plan to regularly share more company KPIs with the staff including key HR and finance data to support transparency.
- **External:** this year, we've continued to prioritise the growth and strategic development of our external communications, recognising its vital role in amplifying our impact.

Our communications work is underpinned by three core aims: raising awareness of our work, increasing funding opportunities, and inspiring volunteer engagement.

- To support this, we established a Communications and Social Media Committee. Meeting quarterly, this board-led group makes sure our messaging remains purposeful and aligned with our broader organisational goals. Their guidance is already shaping a more focused and effective communications strategy.
- Throughout 2024/25, we have delivered several events that have extended our reach and influence. Highlights include a national poetry competition judged by author and broadcaster Michael Rosen - who also headlined our Healthwatch lecture on 'Survivors' Stories' - attracting new audiences and fostering wider community engagement. We also hosted or co-hosted professional lectures exploring key sector themes such as GP Access: What Do Patients Want? and An Overview of the Patient and Carer Race Equality Framework, offering valuable CPD opportunities for staff and partners alike. As we look to enhance the impact of our Healthwatch and Speak Up lectures, we've paused the series for a strategic review, with the aim of relaunching a unified, more effective platform later this year.
- To celebrate our 25th birthday we had organised an event on 3rd June 2025 to give us an opportunity to showcase our services and launch our new strategy to an existing and new audience of stakeholders.
- Our digital presence continues to grow steadily. LinkedIn and Instagram have become key platforms for us to connect with both professional networks and the public. By aligning our posts with sector-relevant awareness campaigns and sharing content - such as staff and service user video stories - we are celebrating our work whilst deepening public understanding of the issues we address.

2. Looking to the Future

With the launch of our new five-year strategy to guide our work, developed through engagement with staff, service users, volunteers and partners, and underpinned by our enduring vision: a world in which every person has a voice, The Advocacy Project stands on strong foundations. Shaped by 25 years of championing people's voices and rights, our ambitious strategy focuses on three key goals:

- **Achieving a sustainable business model through current areas of work while maintaining quality.**
- **Expanding our reach to increase access to advocacy, advice and information for more people.**
- **Speaking up for the work we do to increase our brand awareness, amplifying our voice and reputation.**

To achieve this, we've set out five strategic workstreams - Services, Impact, People, Voice and Finance - each guiding how we develop our delivery, demonstrate value, invest in staff and volunteers, grow influence, and secure future income. It's a strategy designed to strengthen what we do best, while equipping us to adapt to a challenging external environment. We'll break these down to achievable annual priorities and as we enter the first year of the strategy we are focusing on:

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

2. Looking to the Future (continued)

- Increasing income from spot purchase, paid for services and trusts and foundations.
- Benchmarking our salaries and developing a new reward and recognition strategy.
- Reviewing our data maturity and building a plan to improve our data capture and outcome and impact measurement.
- Reviewing internal processes and systems to ensure efficiencies.

Under our CEO's leadership, we're already making progress. We'll focus on securing the future of key contracts, including the Bi-Borough Advocacy contract, where we have a rich history of delivery.

We are reviewing our governance and streamlining our IT systems to ensure we're operating efficiently and transparently. We will continue our Trustee recruitment, including introducing 'lived experience' Trustees, broadening the experience from 'service user' Trustees specifically. We're committed to strengthening partnerships and networks across the sector, building effective relationships with commissioners and other advocacy partners and recognising that collaboration is key to sustainability and systemic change.

Staff and service user involvement continues to be central. Our service user council, now six members strong, have had training in safeguarding and recruitment and will be supported this year to act as 'critical friends' to our tender work. Their insights - along with input from staff across the organisation - will be integral to how our strategy takes shape in practice.

We remain alert to wider policy and funding developments, including the government's plans to reform the Mental Health Act. We're keen to understand the role that Advocacy should and must play in assisted dying, and how we can be part of that emerging area. The pressures facing health, social care, and the voluntary sector are significant, but we are confident that by staying grounded in our values, clear on our priorities, and open to partnership, we can rise to the challenge.

In 2025/26, our income generation will focus on securing our current contracts and maximising opportunities within existing service areas. We will also build strong cases for support for non-statutory Advocacy across London. with a clear strategy, committed leadership, and a powerful community of staff, volunteers and service users behind us, The Advocacy Project is well placed to shape a future where every voice counts.

3. Strategic report

3.1. Financial overview

The voluntary and charitable sectors have faced considerable challenges in securing new income, especially with rising living costs. However, through introducing and refining internal processes (such as extending contract terms, upgrading recruitment methods, utilising in-house meeting spaces, and improving digital infrastructure), we have achieved notable cost savings and delivered a surplus of £328k in 2024/25.

Despite fluctuations in our contract portfolio, we enter the next financial year with strengthened financial reserves. The dedication and hard work of our staff, supported by senior management, continue to ensure the delivery of high-quality services to the individuals we support.

For the 2024/25 financial year:

- Turnover was £2.923m, an increase of £487k from £2.436m in 2023/24.
- Expenditure increased to £2.595m, a £322k increase from £2.273m in 2023/24.
- Funding highlights include an additional £18k for Cancer Awareness, £15k for the NL Engagement Team, £36k in spot-purchase income, and new "Easy Read" initiatives.
- The current contract with Bi Borough has been extended to February 2026 (new tender submitted in January 2025 but the outcome is pending).
- Additional funding received for Ealing Advocacy of £44k.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

3. Strategic report (continued)

- We have secured Children's CYP advocacy contract until October 2025 and Camden Alliance contract until 2027.

To enhance financial governance, we appointed a new Treasurer Trustee and continue investing in organisational development.

In response to cost-of-living pressures, we are undertaking a review to implement a structured salary band system for 2025/26, aimed at ensuring fair, transparent, market-aligned compensation for all our employees.

We also upgraded our technology systems - migrating to Office365 to reduce IT overheads, support cloud backup and disaster recovery, and enhance service delivery. Additionally, we updated our website and invested in key assets, while reducing recruitment and meeting costs via internal resource utilisation.

The Trustees are confident that our strengthened reserves, robust cost-management practices and strategic investments (including leadership, digital infrastructure, and staff development) position the organisation well for sustained financial health and service excellence.

3.2. Income generation

Throughout 2024-25, we maintained a strong focus on strategic growth, enhancing our partnerships, securing additional funding, and strengthening our offer ahead of major contract retenders. This included investment in bid readiness, expanding our voluntary sector engagement, and building new income streams.

Contracts and Bidding

We submitted several large bids this year, most significantly preparing extensively for the Bi-borough advocacy retender, originally anticipated for September 2024 but then delayed with contract extension to February 2026. We gathered service user feedback, developed new case studies, and partnered with Advocacy for All to strengthen our bid. The bid was submitted in January, and we're still waiting for the result. While this contract is significant, we have plans to mitigate risk if not successful.

We bid for the PHB iNEL, Merton, Ealing and Croydon Advocacy contracts. Although we didn't win them, we gained valuable insights and scored highly in our responses.

We won the Children's CYP PHB contract (£30,000) and signed an MOU with all CAHMS teams across CNWL, allowing us to deliver ad hoc CYP advocacy across the ICB, positioning us well for future opportunities. We also submitted and won the Camden Alliance bid in Q3.

We submitted a bid for Hillingdon Healthwatch due to the strategic location of the contract in CNWL.

We've been working with the Learning Disability team across CNWL, who have commissioned digital inclusion, easy read and health inequality focused work, and we successfully completed the cancer screening project. We're now looking at continued funding to expand into sexual health and menopause awareness for people with learning disabilities.

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

3. Strategic report (continued)

Trusts, Foundations, and Corporate Support

We've made significant progress building a pipeline of funding to support non-statutory work, including applications to:

- City Bridge Trust – £150,000 (non-statutory advocacy)
- Garfield Weston – £30,000 (core funding)
- Earl's Court Fund – £15,000 (digital inclusion)
- Clothworkers Foundation – £25,000 (website redevelopment)
- The Masons, Mercers, Legal & General, National Lottery Community Fund – in progress

While we were unsuccessful with City Bridge and Masons, we reached second-stage assessment, indicating that our case for support is strong in a highly competitive funding environment.

We also fundraised to support a new website redevelopment project and expand our health inequalities work, including sexual health, menopause, and diabetes information for people with learning disabilities.

We've been working on a joint bid with Advocacy for All to the National Lottery to fund community-based advocacy with people with learning disabilities. We also developed the older people's community advocacy project, aimed at improving dementia care planning, and submitted a funding proposal.

Volunteering and Social Value

A new advocacy volunteer model has been embedded, with 4 active volunteers supporting RPR referrals. We created a Volunteer Handbook, updated website content, and produced new volunteer recruitment materials. The next phase will focus on recruiting people with lived experience and supporting them into volunteer - and potentially paid - roles, with corporate sponsorship for training (e.g., IAQ).

Volunteering with Healthwatch continues to be very successful with 45 volunteers actively volunteering.

We now have a carbon measurement in place, strengthening our environmental social value offer. Additionally, we've created an Easy Read pipeline and pricing model, increased rates to £40/hour, and developed promotional materials to boost visibility and income generation.

We expanded our community-based project proposals, submitting new applications to trusts and foundations to diversify funding and build sustainability. 2024-25 has been a year of consolidation and preparation, with progress across bids, partnerships, and income generation.

We've used learning from unsuccessful tenders to improve future submissions, deepened voluntary sector collaboration and attracted new funding to support health equity and inclusion.

We're now well-positioned for major opportunities in 2025-26, with a strong foundation for growth from a variety of income sources - including our new focus on paid-for services.

3.3. Structure

The Advocacy Project is a Charity, and a company limited by guarantee. Our objects enable us to have a governance structure with a board of Trustees and a user council. We are a unitary board with four board committees – Finance, Risk & Audit; HR, Remuneration & Policy; Business Development and Fundraising; and Information, Communications and social media. In line with our values (and with permission from the Charity Commission), we pay Service User Trustees a London Living Wage for their time as Trustees. The board delegates day-to-day management to the CEO who works with and through the senior leadership team.

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

3. Strategic report (continued)

3.4. Governance

Save for those members of the Board elected by the User Councils, members of the Board are elected by the Members at the AGM for two years, or three years in the case of the Chair of the Board, and retire at the end of their term. Members of the Board elected at the AGM following the adoption of these Articles may be elected for one or two years (as the Board may determine). Any member of the Board who is willing to act may be appointed for further terms of office, but no member of the Board may serve for more than eight years consecutively.

During this year we have taken steps to further progress our governance. We successfully recruited 5 new Trustees one of whom is also the Treasurer. They bring with them a wealth of diverse experience and skills. As we enter 2025/26, we are actively recruiting a Trustee with a legal or HR background to further strengthen our governance. Having a diverse board of Trustees that reflect the people we support is of great importance to the Charity, as it demonstrates our values in practice. We have widened our approach to capturing service user voice at a strategic level by expanding the role of Service User Trustee to Lived Experience Trustee, enabling us to recruit from a wider pool. We are actively recruiting for two positions.

We established a new committee (Information, Communications and Social Media Committee) and re-established our Business Development Committee under the leadership of a new chair. We developed a new role (Lead Trustee for Safeguarding) and a Safeguarding Working Group to reinforce our commitment to safeguarding.

We were delighted to appoint Roger Skipp to the role of Deputy Chair in December 2024.

In the current year, we plan to review our Articles of Association and Governance Handbook to ensure they are still relevant and appropriate.

The Annual General Meeting for 2024 was held on 21 November 2024. We also had an away day on 15 November 2024 with external facilitation when the Trustees and SLT worked to develop our new 5-year strategy.

3.5. Management

The Board of Trustees is responsible for the strategic direction and accountability structures of the Charity with delegation to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for the implementation of the goals and strategic objectives to the Chief Executive Officer. The CEO is accountable to the Chair and responsible for the Senior Leadership team (Head of Finance and IT, Head of Fundraising and Business development and Head of Services.)

3.6. Reserves policy

As part of our financial strategy, our policy remains to maintain unrestricted funds equivalent to three to six months' expenditure. The Trustees are confident that maintaining reserves at this level will allow us to continue operations in the event of a significant drop in funding, providing time to explore alternative income streams.

3.7. Investment policy

The Trustees take a prudent view to the investment of surplus funds as these are being retained as reserves to allow the Charity to continue in operations in the event of an unexpected reduction in income. Accordingly, the surplus funds are placed on deposit with UK financial institutions.

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Statement of Trustees' responsibilities

The Trustees (who are also the directors of the Charity for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial . Under company law, the Trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Charity and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, 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 of the Charities SORP (FRS 102);
- make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards (FRS 102) have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the Charity's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Charity 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 Charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Disclosure of information to auditor

Each of the persons who are Trustees at the time when this Trustees' report is approved has confirmed that:

- so far as that Trustee is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the charity's auditor is unaware, and
- that Trustee has taken all the steps that ought to have been taken as a Trustee in order to be aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charity's auditor is aware of that information.

Auditor

The auditor, Cooper Parry Group Limited, has indicated his willingness to continue in office and their reappointment will be proposed at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting.

Approved by order of the members of the board of Trustees and signed on their behalf by:

Signed by:


D O Ajide (Chair)

Date: 1 October 2025

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE ADVOCACY PROJECT

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of The Advocacy Project (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 the related notes, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, 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's 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 United Kingdom, including the Financial Reporting Council'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.

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE ADVOCACY PROJECT (CONTINUED)

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the Annual report other than the financial statements and our Auditor's report thereon. The Trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the Annual report. 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.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of our 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 Directors' 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 by the charitable company, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the charitable company's 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.

Responsibilities of Trustees

As explained more fully in the Trustees' responsibilities statement, 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.

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE ADVOCACY PROJECT (CONTINUED)

Auditor's 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:

Our assessment focused on key laws and regulations the charitable company has to comply with and areas of the financial statements we assessed as being more susceptible to misstatement. These key laws and regulations included but were not limited to compliance with the Companies Act 2006, Charities Act 2011, Charities (Protection and Social Investment) Act 2016, taxation legislation, data protection, anti bribery and employment legislation.

We are not responsible for preventing irregularities, including fraud. Our approach to detecting irregularities, including fraud, included, but was not limited to, the following:

- obtaining an understanding of the legal and regulatory framework applicable to the charitable company and how the charitable company is complying with that framework, including agreement of financial statement disclosures to underlying documentation and other evidence;
- obtaining an understanding of the charitable company's control environment and how the charitable company has applied relevant control procedures, through discussions with Trustees and other management and by performing walkthrough testing over key areas;
- obtaining an understanding of the charitable company's risk assessment process, including the risk of fraud;
- reviewing meeting minutes of those charged with governance throughout the year; and
- performing audit testing to address the risk of management override of controls, including testing journal entries and other adjustments for appropriateness, evaluating the business rationale of significant transactions outside the normal course of business and reviewing accounting estimates for bias.

Whilst considering how our audit work addressed the detection of irregularities, we also considered the likelihood of detection of fraud based on our approach. Irregularities arising from fraud are inherently more difficult to detect than those arising from error.

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 for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our Auditor's report.

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE ADVOCACY PROJECT (CONTINUED)

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's Trustees, 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 Trustees 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's trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Signed by:



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Glen Bott (Senior Statutory Auditor)
for and on behalf of Cooper Parry Group Limited
Sky View
Argosy Road
East Midlands Airport
Castle Donington
Derby
DE74 2SA

Date: 11 November 2025

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCORPORATING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

	Note	Restricted funds 2025 £	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Total funds 2025 £	Total funds 2024 £
Income from:					
Charitable activities	2	1,301,486	1,549,941	2,851,427	2,378,048
Investments	3	-	15,638	15,638	33,040
Other income	4	-	56,648	56,648	25,443
Total income		1,301,486	1,622,227	2,923,713	2,436,531
Expenditure on:					
Charitable activities:	5				
Support costs		227,527	301,503	529,030	628,987
Governance costs		9,865	12,296	22,161	20,306
Staff costs		192,563	847,530	1,040,093	1,158,354
Direct expenditure		889,970	110,568	1,000,538	454,626
Depreciation		-	3,269	3,269	10,405
Total expenditure		1,319,925	1,275,166	2,595,091	2,272,678
Net movement in funds		(18,439)	347,061	328,622	163,853
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward		86,181	586,933	673,114	509,261
Net movement in funds		(18,439)	347,061	328,622	163,853
Total funds carried forward		67,742	933,994	1,001,736	673,114

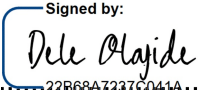
THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)
REGISTERED NUMBER: 04018315

BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 MARCH 2025

	Note	2025 £	2024 £
Fixed assets			
Intangible assets	10	720	1,440
Tangible assets	11	15,501	3,554
Current assets			
Debtors: amounts falling due after more than one year	12	950	1,317
Debtors: amounts falling due within one year	12	32,981	100,987
Cash at bank and in hand		1,404,284	1,961,148
		<u>1,438,215</u>	<u>2,063,452</u>
Current liabilities			
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	13	(452,700)	(1,395,332)
Net current assets		985,515	668,120
Total net assets		<u>1,001,736</u>	<u>673,114</u>
Charity funds			
Restricted funds	17	67,742	86,181
Unrestricted funds			
General funds	17	933,994	586,933
Total unrestricted funds	17	<u>933,994</u>	<u>586,933</u>
Total funds		<u>1,001,736</u>	<u>673,114</u>

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

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Trustees and signed on their behalf by:

Signed by:


D Olajide (Chair)

Date: 1 October 2025

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

	Note	2025 £	2024 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash used in operating activities	14	(558,006)	(120,256)
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of intangible assets		-	(2,160)
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(14,496)	(2,214)
Interest received		15,638	33,040
Net cash provided by investing activities		1,142	28,666
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year		(556,864)	(91,590)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		1,961,148	2,052,738
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year	15	1,404,284	1,961,148

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

1. Accounting policies

1.1 Basis of preparation of financial statements

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) - Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

1.2 Going concern

These financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis, as the Trustees have a reasonable expectation that the company will continue for the foreseeable future. The Trustees have reviewed and considered relevant information, including the annual budget and future cash flows in making their assessment.

1.3 Income

All income is recognised once the Charity has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount of income receivable can be measured reliably.

1.4 Expenditure

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Expenditure on charitable activities is incurred on directly undertaking the activities which further the Charity's objectives, as well as any associated support costs.

1.5 Allocation and apportionment of costs

Staff and support costs are allocated to the particular activity where the costs relate to that activity.

1.6 Interest receivable

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the Charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the institution with whom the funds are deposited.

1.7 Intangible assets

Intangible assets comprise primarily of computer software and internal database systems. Such assets are defined as having useful lives and the costs are amortised on a straight line basis over their estimated useful lives of 5 years. Intangible assets are stated at cost less amortisation and are reviewed for impairment whenever there is an indication that the carrying value may be impaired.

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

1. Accounting policies (continued)

1.8 Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are initially recognised at cost. After recognition, under the cost model, tangible fixed assets are measured at cost less accumulated depreciation and any accumulated impairment losses. All costs incurred to bring a tangible fixed asset into its intended working condition should be included in the measurement of cost.

Depreciation is charged so as to allocate the cost of tangible fixed assets less their residual value over their estimated useful lives, using the straight-line method.

Depreciation is provided on the following basis:

Fixtures and fittings	-	33% on cost
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1.9 Taxation

The Charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities. It benefits from the exemptions available to charities under Part 11 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 and section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992, to the extent that income and gains are applied to charitable purposes.

1.10 Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the Trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objectives of the Charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

1.11 Financial instruments

Financial assets and financial liabilities are recognised in the balance sheet when the company becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Trade and other debtors and creditors are classified as basic financial instruments and measured at initial recognition at transaction price. Debtors and creditors are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest rate method. A provision is established when there is objective evidence that the company will not be able to collect all amounts due.

Cash and cash equivalents are classified as basic financial instruments and comprise cash in hand and at bank.

1.12 Hire purchase and leasing commitments

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to profit or loss on a straight line basis over the period of the lease.

1.13 Pension costs and other post-retirement benefits

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

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

1. Accounting policies (continued)

1.14 Cash and cash equivalents

These comprise cash at bank and other short-term highly liquid bank deposits with an original maturity of three months or less.

1.15 Debtors

Debtors do not carry any interest and are stated at their nominal value. Appropriate allowances for estimated irrecoverable amounts are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities when there is objective evidence that the asset is impaired.

1.16 Trade Creditors

Trade creditors are not interest bearing and are stated at their nominal value.

1.17 Significant judgements and estimates

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with generally accepted accounting practice requires management to make estimates and judgement that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities as well as the disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the balance sheet date and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the reporting period.

There is estimation uncertainty in calculating accruals, accrued income and deferred income and a review of these accounts are carried regularly. Whilst every attempt is made to ensure that the calculations are as accurate as possible, there remain a risk that not all expenses and income have been considered.

The key point of estimation for accrued and deferred income relates to the point in time in which work has been completed to the standard of acceptance by the donor within restricted income.

2. Charitable activities

	Restricted funds 2025 £	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Total funds 2025 £
Contracts and grants	<u>1,301,486</u>	<u>1,549,941</u>	<u>2,851,427</u>
	Restricted funds 2024 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £
Contracts and grants	<u>757,286</u>	<u>1,620,762</u>	<u>2,378,048</u>

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

3. Investment income

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Total funds 2025 £
Interest receivable	15,638	15,638

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £
Interest receivable	33,040	33,040

4. Other incoming resources

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Total funds 2025 £
Spot Purchase activity	37,874	37,874
Easy Read	12,521	12,521
Various	6,253	6,253
	<u>56,648</u>	<u>56,648</u>

	Restricted funds 2024 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £
Easy Read	-	2,103	2,103
Various	2,428	20,912	23,340
	<u>2,428</u>	<u>23,015</u>	<u>25,443</u>

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

5. Analysis of expenditure on charitable activities

Summary by fund type

	Restricted funds 2025 £	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Total 2025 £
Support costs	-	139,071	139,071
Direct expenditure	1,000,460	1,040,171	2,040,631
Depreciation	-	3,269	3,269
Governance costs	-	22,161	22,161
Staff cost	319,465	-	319,465
Management Cost	-	70,494	70,494
	<u>1,319,925</u>	<u>1,275,166</u>	<u>2,595,091</u>

	Restricted funds 2024 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £
Support costs	-	137,151	137,151
Direct expenditure	571,564	1,051,821	1,623,385
Depreciation	-	10,405	10,405
Governance costs	-	20,306	20,306
Staff cost	344,007	-	344,007
Management Cost	-	137,424	137,424
	<u>915,571</u>	<u>1,357,107</u>	<u>2,272,678</u>

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

6. Analysis of expenditure by activities

	Activities undertaken directly 2025 £	Support costs 2025 £	Total funds 2025 £
Staff cost	-	319,465	319,465
Office cost	-	139,071	139,071
Management cost	-	70,494	70,494
Direct expenditure	2,040,631	-	2,040,631
Depreciation	-	3,269	3,269
Governance costs	-	22,161	22,161
	<u>2,040,631</u>	<u>554,460</u>	<u>2,595,091</u>

	Activities undertaken directly 2024 £	Support costs 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £
Staff cost	-	344,007	344,007
Office cost	-	137,151	137,151
Management cost	-	137,424	137,424
Direct expenditure	1,623,385	-	1,623,385
Depreciation	-	10,405	10,405
Governance costs	-	20,306	20,306
	<u>1,623,385</u>	<u>649,293</u>	<u>2,272,678</u>

7. Auditor's remuneration

	2025 £	2024 £
Fees payable to the Charity's auditor for the audit of the Charity's annual accounts	<u>19,200</u>	<u>18,040</u>

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

8. Staff costs

	2025 £	2024 £
Wages and salaries	907,499	960,513
Social security costs	81,569	123,262
Pension costs	51,025	74,579
	<u>1,040,093</u>	<u>1,158,354</u>

The average number of persons employed by the Charity during the year was as follows:

	2025 No.	2024 No.
Employed staff	43	49
Sessional	13	13
	<u>56</u>	<u>62</u>

The number of employees whose employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) exceeded £60,000 was:

	2025 No.	2024 No.
In the band £70,001 - £80,000	1	-

9. Trustees' remuneration, benefits and expenses

The Trustees were not paid any remuneration or received any other benefits from employment (2024: Nil) or expenses, except for one Trustee (2024: two Trustees), who has been reimbursed expenses.

No Trustee received payment for professional or other services supplied to the charity (2024: £26,013).

The key management personnel of the charity comprise the CEO, Head of Finance, Head of Business Development, Head of Services. The total employee remunerations of key management personnel of the charity were £258,133 (2024: £309,730).

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

10. Intangible assets

	Computer software £
Cost	
At 1 April 2024	24,869
At 31 March 2025	<u>24,869</u>
Amortisation	
At 1 April 2024	23,429
Charge for the year	720
At 31 March 2025	<u>24,149</u>
Net book value	
At 31 March 2025	<u><u>720</u></u>
At 31 March 2024	<u><u>1,440</u></u>

11. Tangible fixed assets

	Fixtures and fittings £
Cost or valuation	
At 1 April 2024	92,864
Additions	14,496
At 31 March 2025	<u>107,360</u>
Depreciation	
At 1 April 2024	89,310
Charge for the year	2,549
At 31 March 2025	<u>91,859</u>

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

11. Tangible fixed assets (continued)

	Fixtures and fittings £
Net book value	
At 31 March 2025	15,501
	<u><u> </u></u>
At 31 March 2024	3,554
	<u><u> </u></u>

12. Debtors

	2025 £	2024 £
Due after more than one year		
Other debtors	950	1,317
	<u><u> </u></u>	<u><u> </u></u>
	2025 £	2024 £
Due within one year		
Trade debtors	10,992	67,694
Other debtors	400	403
Prepayments and accrued income	21,589	32,890
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	<u><u>32,981</u></u>	<u><u>100,987</u></u>

13. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

	2025 £	2024 £
Trade creditors	35,365	84,149
Other taxation and social security	28,229	31,328
Other creditors	23,498	13,811
Accruals	88,306	107,472
Deferred income	277,302	1,158,572
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	<u><u>452,700</u></u>	<u><u>1,395,332</u></u>

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year (continued)

	2025 £	2024 £
Deferred income at 1 April 2024	1,158,572	1,560,937
Resources deferred during the year	1,353,148	1,076,685
Amounts released from previous periods	(2,234,418)	(1,479,050)
	<u>277,302</u>	<u>1,158,572</u>

Deferred income represents income received in advance of the relevant services being performed.

14. Reconciliation of net movement in funds to net cash flow from operating activities

	2025 £	2024 £
Net income for the year (as per Statement of Financial Activities)	328,622	163,853
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation charges	3,270	10,405
Decrease in debtors	68,373	183,343
Decrease in creditors	(942,632)	(444,817)
Interest received	(15,638)	(33,040)
Net cash used in operating activities	<u>(558,005)</u>	<u>(120,256)</u>

15. Analysis of cash and cash equivalents

	2025 £	2024 £
Cash at bank and in hand	1,404,284	1,961,148
Total cash and cash equivalents	<u>1,404,284</u>	<u>1,961,148</u>

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

16. Analysis of changes in net debt

	At 1 April 2024 £	Cash flows £	At 31 March 2025 £
Cash at bank and in hand	1,961,148	(556,864)	1,404,284
	<u>1,961,148</u>	<u>(556,864)</u>	<u>1,404,284</u>

17. Statement of funds

Statement of funds - current year

	Balance at 1 April 2024 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Balance at 31 March 2025 £
Unrestricted funds				
Reserves	<u>586,933</u>	<u>1,622,227</u>	<u>(1,275,166)</u>	<u>933,994</u>
Restricted funds				
WJC LD Our Choice	11,311	42,288	(52,834)	765
WJC LD Advocacy	10,150	82,326	(81,165)	11,311
Big Voice	462	48,517	(48,637)	342
Speak Up Speak Out	2,727	12,875	(14,761)	841
WJ OA Advocacy	57,428	196,759	(200,095)	54,092
WJ OA UI	4,103	36,051	(39,763)	391
City & Hackney PHB	-	239,895	(239,895)	-
Newham PHB	-	327,000	(327,000)	-
Tower Hamlet PHB	-	305,000	(305,000)	-
Tower Hamlet CYP PHB	-	10,775	(10,775)	-
	<u>86,181</u>	<u>1,301,486</u>	<u>(1,319,925)</u>	<u>67,742</u>
Total of funds	<u>673,114</u>	<u>2,923,713</u>	<u>(2,595,091)</u>	<u>1,001,736</u>

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

17. Statement of funds (continued)

Statement of funds - prior year

	Balance at 1 April 2023 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers in/out £	Balance at 31 March 2024 £
Unrestricted funds					
Designated funds					
Designated Funds - all funds	2,271	-	(2,991)	720	-
General funds					
Reserves	417,784	1,676,817	(1,506,860)	(808)	586,933
Total Unrestricted funds	420,055	1,676,817	(1,509,851)	(88)	586,933
Restricted funds					
WJC LD Our Choice	6,055	41,663	(36,407)	-	11,311
WJC LD Advocacy	18,795	79,928	(88,573)	-	10,150
Big Voice	-	47,711	(47,249)	-	462
Speak Up Speak Out	-	13,107	(10,380)	-	2,727
WJ OA Advocacy	61,742	191,028	(195,342)	-	57,428
WJ OA UI	114	35,607	(31,618)	-	4,103
City & Hackney PHB	-	250,670	(250,670)	-	-
Newham PHB	-	33,000	(33,000)	-	-
Tower Hamlet PHB	-	55,000	(55,000)	-	-
Tower Hamlet CYP PHB	2,500	12,000	(14,500)	-	-
Speak Up Radio	-	-	(88)	88	-
	89,206	759,714	(762,827)	88	86,181
Total of funds	509,261	2,436,531	(2,272,678)	-	673,114

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

18. Operating lease commitments

At 31 March 2025 the Charity had commitments to make future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:

	2025 £	2024 £
Not later than 1 year	10,345	2,700
Later than 1 year and not later than 5 years	20,998	3,492
	<u>31,343</u>	<u>6,192</u>

19. Analysis of net assets between funds

Analysis of net assets between funds - current year

	Restricted funds 2025 £	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Total funds 2025 £
Tangible fixed assets	-	15,501	15,501
Intangible fixed assets	-	720	720
Debtors due after more than one year	-	950	950
Current assets	67,742	1,369,523	1,437,265
Creditors due within one year	-	(452,700)	(452,700)
Total	<u>67,742</u>	<u>933,994</u>	<u>1,001,736</u>

Analysis of net assets between funds - prior year

	Restricted funds 2024 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £
Tangible fixed assets	-	3,554	3,554
Intangible fixed assets	-	1,440	1,440
Debtors due after more than one year	-	1,317	1,317
Current assets	86,181	1,975,954	2,062,135
Creditors due within one year	-	(1,395,332)	(1,395,332)
Total	<u>86,181</u>	<u>586,933</u>	<u>673,114</u>

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

20. Employee benefit obligations

The Charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme for all qualifying employees. The charge to income and expenditure account in respect of defined contribution scheme was £51,025 (2024: £74,579).

21. Related party disclosures

Except for the transactions referred to in Note 9 to the accounts, there were no related party transactions for the year ended 31 March 2025 or 31 March 2024.

22. Company limited by guarantee

The company is a private company limited by guarantee and accordingly does not have share capital. The members of the Company are the Trustees named on page 1. In the event of the company being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited up to £1 per member of the company. The Company was incorporated in England and Wales and information relating to the registered office can be found on page 1.

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT

England & Wales - Charity number 1084106

Accounts

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)
TRUSTEES' REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)

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THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)

**REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS OF THE CHARITY, ITS TRUSTEES AND ADVISERS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

Trustees

Dele Olajide, (Chair)
Roger Skipp
Adam Antonio
Helen Richardson
Mike Hagan (Retired 13 November 2023)
Jonathan R Ellis (Resigned 9 March 2024)
Gemma Bull (Retired 30 April 2024)
Hasib Z Dewan (Appointed 1 October 2024)
Jayesh R Patel (Appointed 1 October 2024)
Pankaj N Shah (Appointed 1 October 2024)
Rachel G Russell (Appointed 11 October 2024)
Rachel Hutchings (Appointed 18 October 2024)

Company registered number

04018315

Charity registered number

1084106

Registered office

C/O Seeds Hub
Empire Way
London
HA9 0RJ

Company secretary

Katherine Shaw (Appointed 8 July 2024)
Alison Wright (Resigned 8 July 2024)

Independent auditors

Cooper Parry Group Limited
New Derwent House
69-73 Theobalds Road
London
WC1X 8TA

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)

TRUSTEES' REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

The Trustees present their annual report together with the audited financial statements of the Charity for the year 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. The Trustees are also directors, therefore the Annual report serves the purposes of both a Trustees' report and a directors' report under company law. The Trustees confirm that the Annual report and financial statements of the charitable company comply with the current statutory requirements, the requirements of the charitable company's governing document and the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) (effective 1 January 2019).

“Life is about relationships and relationships are built on trust and that’s what the Advocacy Project is all about to me, trust and feeling safe” Advocacy Project Service User Council member.

1. Objectives and activities

1.1. Aims and objectives

The Advocacy Project supports people to speak up and to make their own choices about their lives. Our vision is a world in which every person has a voice - including those who are marginalised or vulnerable because of their circumstances. We place a relentless focus on enabling people to have their voice heard, uphold their rights, and make informed choices. We support people to have their say and help improve important services we all need, including health and social care services. We also seek to tackle testimonial injustice - this kind of injustice occurs when someone is ignored, or not believed, because of identity-prejudice towards them, for example because of their circumstances, their gender, race, disability etc.

We achieve these aims by delivering a range of projects and services - statutory and non-statutory - including advocacy, user involvement, personal health budgets and Healthwatch services. The Trustees have paid due regard to guidance issued by the Charity Commission in deciding what activities the charity should carry out.

1.2. How we work

We try hard not to do things "to" people or "for" people. Instead, we help people find their own voices and develop their capacity to do things for themselves - increasing their own agency. These principles underpin our approach to evaluating our impact. We know people feel stronger, safer and more confident after working with us. Click here to read some real stories from real people we've worked with:
<https://www.advocacyproject.org.uk/news/real-stories-about-real-people/>

Many staff who work for The Advocacy Project have lived experience of the issues we work on (whether learning disability, mental health or other disabilities). Two of our Trustees are service users. Our User Council involves people who use our services in decision-making about the organisation. Having the voices of lived experience at all levels of the organisation informs our approach to everything we do.

We are also a highly diverse organisation. This inclusivity and diversity helps us develop understanding and trust with service users. Understanding and trust means our work is truly focused on those things that make a real difference to the lives of people who face disadvantage, discrimination, and marginalisation.

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

1. Objectives and activities (continued)

1.3. Performance and achievements

External context

Throughout the year inflation remained high. We saw more stability and the impact of the increase in cost of living, while still being felt, was less apparent. We do, however, remain acutely aware that many people were still struggling to make ends meet and this often had a significant impact on their physical and mental health.

Waiting lists have become common place in the health and social care system and the impact this has on the people that use our services should not be underestimated. This, in turn, has seen the services we deliver struggle to meet demand. With resources and budgets under pressure, we've seen rises in referrals and increased scrutiny from commissioners on our delivery.

The 2023/24 job market in health and social care was challenging and we struggled to recruit to some of our services, which presented significant risk to our service quality. However, this pressure has reduced and as of the beginning of 2024/25 we are fully staffed and receiving good quality applications for advertised roles. This has provided us an opportunity to develop and staff our own non-statutory services utilising other income streams we have identified.

Internal context

We saw a significant change in our Senior Leadership Team (SLT) in 2023/24 with an overall reduction in team from 7 to 4 people and were joined by an interim CEO, Donna Covey, in September 23 to support our SLT while we recruited to a permanent position. We are delighted to have appointed a permanent CEO, Katherine Shaw who joined the Charity in July 2024.

Donna and the SLT worked hard to reintroduce opportunities for staff to get together and to be involved in all aspects of the charity and will continue to build on this in 2024/25. It was important to build relationships within the team and regroup as an organisation focused on providing a good quality service to all. SLT also launched the regular managers meeting which focused on cross departmental work and identifying opportunities to collaborate and share ideas.

Many contracts were extended, and we were able to develop some of the services we held through adding additional provision. The lack of certainty politically impacted on decision making at a local government level although we did see an increased number of statutory tenders realised compared to the previous year.

Service highlights

Despite a challenging external environment and a reduction in resources, The Advocacy Project has successfully reached over 3,000 people through our range of services.

Referrals across all types of advocacy (statutory and non-statutory) have continued to increase past pre-pandemic levels, our advocacy services worked with just under 1,000 advocacy partners over the year, we've seen our other three key areas of work continue to benefit service users, user involvement, personal health budgets and Healthwatch services. Our Healthwatch saw over 1,500 people come to us for advice and signposting and an equal amount share their views with us.

Personal Health Budget (PHB)

Our PHB service in Hackney, Tower Hamlets and Newham received over 1,300 referrals and our pilot Children and Young People's (CYP) PHB service in Tower Hamlets had a fantastic year, with four times as many referrals as the first year and 58 young people receiving items chosen by them to help support their wellbeing which this story illustrates so well:

Sayeed is a young person living in Tower Hamlets receiving support from Tower Hamlets CAMHS. Sayeed is 12yrs old and from Uganda. He was referred to CAMHS to assess a possible ADHD diagnosis because of his difficulties with focus/attention, self-regulation and over-activity. Sayeed has a history of medical complexities having sustained a traumatic brain injury in 2018 and his father has also been seriously ill with cancer and recovering from a stroke. Sayeed's mum cares for his dad as well as the three children, all with their own challenges. In school, Sayeed often requires adult support to maintain focus, manage behaviour and access

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT

(A company limited by guarantee)

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

1. Objectives and activities (continued)

learning. He was given an ADHD diagnosis and is now on medication. Since receiving his PHB items of clothing, football boots and a football for £298, Sayeed's mum has told us his confidence has grown as he's been able to get outside and make new friends in the area whilst playing football.

Ealing Forensic

Service expansion: our Ealing Forensic team successfully expanded service delivery to ensure that an advocate is now present on every ward, meeting a key standard. This expansion has led to a steady increase in referrals throughout the year.

Establishment and positive feedback: Our team is now well-established across the wards, and we have received excellent verbal feedback from both staff and patients. Notably, our service was highlighted for its outstanding reporting at the forensic consortium. Patients attending external groups have praised the service as the best, often noting they are aware of their advocate, unlike patients in other hospitals who frequently don't know who their advocate is.

Impactful Mental Health Review Tribunal (MHRT) Statements: feedback from patients has underscored the value of our support in writing MHRT statements. We've successfully assisted four patients in presenting their stories and viewpoints, which has significantly impacted their cases. Solicitors have commented positively on the quality of these statements and have referred clients to us specifically for this support, highlighting the effectiveness and importance of our work in this area.

Ealing and Bi Borough Advocacy

Ealing: Our Advocacy teams in Ealing have provided valuable feedback to the Care Quality Commission (CQC) on how Ealing manage their responsibilities under the Care Act 2014, as part of the CQC inspection of local authorities. They've also delivered an advocacy awareness session and provided promotional leaflets at the Ealing Social Work Managers' team meeting and attended the Ealing Learning Disability Partnership board meeting.

Bi Borough: The team have supported patients to get their views heard as part of the Gorden Hospital consultation and supported Care Homes in Westminster to understand their duty to make a Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) application for residents who aren't allowed to leave the home.

User Involvement

Our User Involvement projects continue to enable the voices of elderly residents, those with learning disabilities and/or individuals facing mental health challenges, to be heard and influence both local and strategic level decisions about health and social care.

Highlights include:

- **Service User Involvement Team** – the team have run additional digital inclusion sessions with our Learning Disability (LD) groups, looking at blocks to services caused by a lack of technological understanding in the LD community. This work has been recommissioned in 2024/25.

- **Camden** – our Synergy Reps took part in an interview panel to recruit a new Head of Service in Commissioning for Camden. They developed their own questions and score sheets. Feedback has been positive – Chris Lehman (Head of Adult Social Care Strategy and Commissioning and Deputy Disability Advisory and Support Service) reported that their contribution to the selection was valuable, especially regarding Synergy's commitment to 'Jargon-Busting'.

- **Bi-Borough Learning Disability User Involvement (Big Voice and Our Choice)** – as part of this project we delivered a Women's Health survey on behalf of NHS North West London. The Easy Read material produced was shared across eight boroughs within the local Integrated Care Board.

- **Cancer Screening Project and Digital Inclusion projects** – we secured funding to improve access to cancer screening for people with learning disabilities across Brent, Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea through identifying and reducing barriers to screening and support services.

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT

(A company limited by guarantee)

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

1. Objectives and activities (continued)

• **Westminster Older Adults UI (Older People's Voice - OPV)** – Members of our OPV were consulted on the draft Bi-Borough Health & Wellbeing Strategy for Westminster and Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. They raised ten points of concern including: long waiting phone times to get through to the GP practice receptionist; the need for staff to more appropriately reflect the communities they serve; the need for Equality and Diversity training. These concerns and suggestions were accepted by the presenter who agreed to take them to the relevant agencies, the wider team, and the place-based leadership team.

• **City & Hackney Mental Health UI (Mental Health Voice - MHV)** – Members of our MHV project continue to work with the Mental Health Integrated Committee (MHIC) focusing on the delivery of integrated mental health care between Health and Social Care within the City & Hackney System. Three new MHV User Representatives have been elected to the MHIC.

• **Camden Mental Health UI** – Members supported 7 Patients' Council members to undertake monthly ward inspections at St. Pancras and, following the move, at Highgate Mental Health wards.

Healthwatch

• **Mental Health Services work** - in the bi-borough, our work on changes to acute mental health services has encouraged Central and North West London NHS and the Integrated Care Board to do more to address the needs of diverse communities. This has included dedicated work looking at how mental health services can better address the needs of people who are currently homeless, and people who are neurodiverse.

• **Brent outreach** - we worked with local partners from the Somali community to help build knowledge and understanding of mental health conditions and to share information about how to access mental health services. 160 people attended drop-in sessions to learn more about accessing care, 45 people were assisted in accessing services through outreach, and 120 people from the local Somali community attended training sessions.

• **Across all three boroughs** - we have helped put pressure on the local Integrated Care System (ICS) to delay plans to change the way patients access same-day care from their GPs. We have called for more engagement with patients to ensure that any changes to care reflect their needs, and we're pleased to say that the ICS have delayed their plans by 12 months to make this engagement possible. Healthwatch teams across all three boroughs will be involved in this engagement, ensuring that our networks are fully involved in developing primary care across the area.

• **Health Equalities lecture series** - continues to prove popular with over 500 people registering for the 10 events we ran, with varied and fascinating subjects including:

- o Raising the voice of our unpaid carers
- o Leading the fight against sickle-cell disease
- o Challenging the myths: what does it mean to live well with HIV?

Wider organisational news

• **National Annual Advocacy Conference** – staff attended the conference in Birmingham to work with other advocacy providers to share best practice and review the challenges to the sector.

• **Staff cohesion** – our Senior Development Team have worked to reintroduce regular staff days and catch-ups to gather feedback, hear staff opinions and provide actions and responses where possible. We've worked hard to build confidence and relationships across SLT and the wider organisation to create a more collaborative workforce. As a result, we have a strong team who we know feel better supported to help us reach our organisational goal of supporting vulnerable people.

• **Training** – we've been looking at ways to make training available to as many staff as possible within a limited budget, and have signed up for the charities learning consortium. This has enabled staff to select the online courses that work for them and attend at a convenient time. It also means that development needs and learning opportunities identified during appraisals can be followed up in a meaningful way.

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

1. Objectives and activities (continued)

• **IT Training** – In response to feedback gathered during team days and monthly meetings, we've prioritised IT training, recognising its importance to our staff. We arranged for an external trainer to conduct sessions twice a week during the first and last weeks of June, so that everyone could find a date that they were able to attend.

• **Internal Comms** – our comms team have developed a new internal newsletter based on staff feedback that they wanted to know more about what was happening across the organisation internally. The newsletter goes out on a 6-weekly basis and includes key-dates, updates on teams, successes and key messages for staff. Feedback on this has been positive.

• **External Comms**

We have updated elements of the website, ensuring a new section on partnerships and how funders and partners can work with us, as well as adding volunteering information (including a new volunteer handbook and information booklet). We have ensured the website is updated with current news stories which line up with our communications strategy and which focus on celebrating key dates in the calendar. We upload stories onto all our social media channels to drive footfall to the website directly, therefore improving our SEO and ensuring more people are aware of our services.

We have run a successful series of 'Speak Up' lectures over the last 12 months, with attendance between 30 – 40 and a mix of staff and external partners or stakeholders. Originally intended as a staff development opportunity on themes and topics related to our work, we are reviewing the series for the new year. Recent topics have included: Obsessive Compulsive Disorder; Hoarding Behaviour and an introduction to NHS DIALOG+ care planning tool.

• **Spot-purchase work** – our Head of Service has developed a spot-purchase model supported by the volunteers and staff available to meet an increased need for ad-hoc advocacy across London. Many providers need advocacy but are unaware of the demand and haven't gone to tender. If we're able to meet this demand, we can build relationships and strengthen our advocacy network, therefore giving us better opportunities to win new business.

Staffing and structure

This year has brought some changes in our senior management. We've welcomed an interim CEO and Head of Service, two new members of staff to our Senior Leadership Team who brought a wealth of experience from the sector and beyond.

Ali Wright, most recently our Acting CEO, handed over to our interim CEO Donna Covey in September 23. Ali had been with the organisation since 2001. The board, the Senior Leadership Team and all staff would like to thank Ali for all her hard work and dedication. Within the organisation, we have focused on our skill and capacity-building as part of our commitment to social value in each of the boroughs where we work.

We reviewed our IT infrastructure and digital strategy and identified the need for an IT manager to enable us to modernise and meet the needs of staff and service users. We successfully recruited to this post at the beginning of 2024/25.

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

1. Objectives and activities (continued)

1.4. Looking forward

Our permanent CEO, Katherine Shaw joined us in July 2024 and under her leadership our attention will be on continuing our work to strengthen the foundations and therefore ensuring sustainability of the charity, with a focus on securing the Bi Borough Advocacy contract (where we have a rich history of delivery) whilst looking ahead and undertaking a strategic review to identify our vision and goals for the future. The challenges in the health and social system and the impact this has on the voluntary sector remain a concern. We need to continue to be open-minded to the opportunities available for the organisation, for example working closely with others in the sector through partnerships, to ensure we can meet the needs of the communities in the most effective and efficient ways.

In 2024/25 we undertook a trustee recruitment drive and have been extremely pleased with the calibre of applications and have appointed 5 new Trustees that will be formally ratified at our forthcoming AGM.

Staff and service user collaboration continue to be a key theme for us. The service user council has 6 members and provides a vital link between service users and the board. Last year, we were able to provide training for the council in both safeguarding and recruitment. This year, they will receive development to act as critical friends supporting our tender submissions. Their voices and perspectives will be central in the development of our new strategy. Opportunities for staff to come together and be involved in the future direction of the Advocacy Project will be key to our success.

We're keeping a watching brief on plans under the new government and welcome the commitment to review the outdated Mental Health Act, although what this will mean in practice we are waiting to see.

Our income generation focus will initially be to secure the future of our current contracts and maximise opportunities generated through our current service areas. Following our strategic review, we'll develop supporting strategies - including income generation - to clearly set out intention and targets.

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

2. Strategic report

Financial review

2.1. Financial review: overview

The voluntary and charitable sectors have faced considerable challenges in securing new income, especially with the rising cost of living. However, through the introduction and improvement of several internal processes, we have achieved notable cost savings, culminating in a surplus of £164k.

Despite fluctuations in our contract portfolio, we enter the next financial year, 2024/25, with strengthened financial reserves. We also welcomed new leadership with the appointment of a CEO. The dedication and hard work of our staff, supported by senior management, continue to ensure the delivery of high-quality services to the individuals we support.

For the financial year 2023/24, our turnover stood at £2.4m, reflecting a decrease of £301k from 2022/23. Expenditure for 2023/24 was £2.3m, down by £519k compared to £2.79m in the previous year. During the year, we successfully secured a modest new contract for Cancer Awareness, further diversifying our service offerings.

As a result of tender process in 2022/23, contracts for advocacy services in Hammersmith and Fulham, Hackney, and Broadmoor came to an end at the start of the 2023/24 financial year.

Aligned with our strategic goals, both the trustees and the Senior Leadership Team are committed to investing in organisational development to support long-term growth and sustainability. This includes a continued focus on staff training and development. In response to the increasing cost of living, we have introduced pay increases that align with our staff's skills, education, and experience. These measures are aimed at ensuring competitive and equitable compensation across the organisation.

We are also investing in technology to enhance service delivery, and a new IT manager has been appointed to drive this transformation.

Our financial position remains robust, with a significant proportion of our current assets held in cash reserves, ensuring a healthy liquidity ratio of 1.4, which provides sufficient coverage for our current liabilities. To strengthen our financial governance, we plan to appoint a new Treasury Trustee to further enhance our financial processes.

The Trustees remain committed to the continued financial health and operational success of the organisation as we look ahead to the future.

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

2. Strategic report (continued)

Financial review (continued)

2.2. Income generation

As a result of a significant reduction in Senior Leadership Team resources in 2023/24, the Business Development Plan was refocused several times. We responded to all relevant advocacy and Healthwatch tenders that met our criteria, meeting our target on the Business Development action plan to respond to at least 6 large tenders over the year. We responded to 7 tenders with a collective annual value of £1.4 million, including Brent Advocacy, Tower Hamlets Advocacy, Kingston Healthwatch, Lambeth Healthwatch, Barnet Enfield and Haringey Forensic Advocacy and Croydon Advocacy. We believe with a change of government we may see an influx of contracts that may be relevant for The Advocacy Project.

The tendering environment for the advocacy contracts is becoming exceptionally competitive, with several highly qualified bidders offering similar services. In addition, the current market conditions such as a high demand for cost efficiency have made local councils to be particularly selective. Although we did not win a new contract in 2023/24, we've carried out an analysis to further develop our tender responses and develop ways to improve our bidding process. We discovered scores have matched, or in some cases been higher than, historical winning scores and this represents the increased competition for winning these contracts overall. All contracts we bid for went to incumbent suppliers or the big-name providers. We also found it very challenging to meet the requirements of the budgets given, whilst maintaining our expected standard – a few bids were lost due to this.

In response to feedback and analysis, as well as perceived demands on these contracts, we've developed a new volunteering model for advocacy which we can use to add value. We've also developed our carbon reduction plan to improve our commitment to reducing carbon emissions, in line with NHS goals. These actions will significantly increase our social value scores, giving us better opportunity to win new contracts.

In response to this extremely competitive market, we've kept a focus on: expanding our existing projects; maintaining quality; looking for development opportunities within these priority areas and developing small innovative projects that can bring additional experience and resource to the organisation. We've extended the Autism Spectrum Disorder service, brought more provision to the Ealing Forensic team and added additional advocacy resource to Lavender Walk.

We've looked at developing smaller models of non-statutory work which we can use to fundraise around. For example, the health inequality work around cancer screening can be upscaled and sold to different local authorities or expanded across different themes to bring in new income. Local authorities have expressed significant interest in this type of work. In relation to this, we've been able to send our first wave of trust and foundation applications for which we have received our first £5,000 grant for cancer screening. Cases for support around health inequalities and cancer screening, as well as non-statutory community-based advocacy, have been written up and are now being actively sent to funders. This work is already showing levels of success and interest in the sector.

Additional one-off project funding:

Healthwatch won an additional £8,000 to run projects focused on health inequalities including two additional projects covering mental health and a series of visits to local food banks and community kitchens to have conversations with people accessing the services about the winter healthcare that they're entitled to ways to stay well.

We gained £30,000 funding under RMP partners in Brent and the Vibrant and Health Communities community chest fund to deliver a project focused on reducing health inequalities for people with learning disabilities. The model involved creating video case studies of people's experiences of cancer screening and hosting peer-led question and answer sessions. This is a completely new stream of funding we can package and deliver on a larger scale covering health inequalities which we are looking at doing for sexual and reproductive health as well as healthy lifestyles which is in line with the majority of local authority health and wellbeing strategies.

No complaints have been received about our fundraising practices whether undertaken directly or by agencies acting on our behalf. We're registered with the Fundraising Regulator.

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

2. Strategic report (continued)

Financial review (continued)

Our governance handbook, our business development procedures and our employee handbook show how we protect vulnerable people and others from unreasonable intrusion of a person's privacy, unreasonably persistent approaches, or undue pressure to donate. We don't use direct marketing fundraising techniques. We don't use face-to-face or door-to-door fundraising techniques, nor do we outsource donor relationships to third parties. We do not exchange or sell our donors' and supporters' personal data.

2.3 Reserves Policy

As part of our financial strategy, our policy remains to maintain unrestricted funds equivalent to three to six months' expenditure. The trustees are confident that maintaining reserves at this level will allow us to continue operations in the event of a significant drop in funding, providing time to explore alternative income streams.

2.4 Investment policy

The Trustees take a prudent view to the investment of surplus funds as these are being retained as reserves to allow the Charity to continue in operations in the event of an unexpected reduction in income. Accordingly, the surplus funds are placed on deposit with UK financial institutions.

3. Structure, governance and management

3.1. Structure

The Advocacy Project is a charity, and a company limited by guarantee. Our objects enable us to have a governance structure with a Board of Trustees and a User Council. We're a unitary board, and have four board committees – Finance, Risk & Audit; HR, Remuneration & Policy; Business Development and Fundraising; and Advocacy & Change.

In line with our values (and with permission from the Charity Commission), we pay service user trustees at London Living Wage for their time as trustees. The board delegates day-to-day management to the CEO (or Acting CEO) who works with and through the SLT.

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

3. Structure, governance and management (continued)

3.2. Governance

Our governance handbook sets out the standards which trustees must conform to, and includes clear policies on managing conflict of interest, duty and loyalty. This handbook, which was reviewed during the financial year 2020-21, assisted the charity in passing the rigorous process of accreditation to the Quality Performance Mark (QPM) – the kitemark for advocacy providers. The QPM desktop assessment report from 2021 describes the handbook as a "really excellent document". It also states, "the organisational governance framework is impressive, as is the use of external experts in governance of the field as well as lawyers, health & safety and data protection experts to ensure compliance with legislation and best practice". Our safeguarding policies and practice have been assessed through the same process as being "excellent, comprehensive and clear". The 2021 desktop assessment report also states that our governance handbook and many of our policies "could be used as exemplars in other organisations".

Having a diverse board of trustees that reflect the people we support is of great importance to the Charity, as it demonstrates our values in practice.

In 2023/24 we said goodbye to two trustees. Mike Hagan, our service user trustee, who brought such insight and perspective and Jonathan Ellis, whose knowledge and support was invaluable.

All recruitment is carried out using an open selection process and competency-based interviews. We're often asked to write articles for organisations like The Governance Institute (ICSA) and speak at charity sector conferences on how we have achieved board diversity in practice, and how we've made our governance processes accessible to everyone using approaches like financial accounts being available in Easy Read.

3.3. People management

The Employee Handbook and the Health, Safety & Wellbeing Handbook clearly set out our policies and procedures and are reviewed for compliance with legislation and best practice each year. We continue to invest in staff wellbeing by giving staff access to independent counselling in addition to a 24-hour confidential care service.

Learning and development for staff is very important to us. We support staff to achieve their Independent Advocacy Qualification (IAQ) or other professional qualifications. We also give staff time off in lieu to attend our monthly lecture series, run in collaboration with Councillor Ketan Sheth, where national experts discuss topics of interest in the health and social care field.

Our policy is to consult with employees and discuss issues likely to affect their interests. Information is given through regular staff briefings, updates and reports which aim for a common awareness on the part of all employees of the financial and economic factors affecting the organisation's performance.

We have a recognition agreement with UNISON. We are a Mindful Employer and a Disability Confident Employer.

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Statement of Trustees' responsibilities

The Trustees (who are also the directors of the Charity for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' report including the Strategic report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under company law, the Trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Charity and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, 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 of the Charities SORP (FRS 102);
- make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards (FRS 102) have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the Charity's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Charity 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 Charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Disclosure of information to auditors

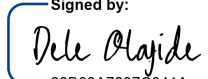
Each of the persons who are Trustees at the time when this Trustees' report is approved has confirmed that:

- so far as that Trustee is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the charity's auditors are unaware, and
- that Trustee has taken all the steps that ought to have been taken as a Trustee in order to be aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charity's auditors are aware of that information.

Auditors

The auditors, Cooper Parry Group Limited, have indicated their willingness to continue in office and their reappointment will be proposed at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting.

Approved by order of the members of the board of Trustees and signed on their behalf by:

Signed by:


D Olayide (Chair)

Date: 27 November 2024

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE ADVOCACY PROJECT

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of The Advocacy Project (the 'charitable company') for the year ended 31 March 2024 which comprise the Statement of financial activities, the Balance sheet, the Statement of cash flows and the related notes, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, 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 2024 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the United Kingdom, including the Financial Reporting Council'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.

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE ADVOCACY PROJECT (CONTINUED)

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the Annual report other than the financial statements and our Auditors' report thereon. The Trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the Annual report. 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.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the information given in the Trustees' report is inconsistent in any material respect with the financial statements; or
- sufficient accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the Trustees' responsibilities statement, 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.

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE ADVOCACY PROJECT (CONTINUED)

Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditor under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and report in accordance with the Act and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

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 Auditors' 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:

We gained an understanding of the legal and regulatory framework applicable to the company and the industry in which it operates, and considered the risk of acts by the company that were contrary to applicable laws and regulations, including fraud. We discussed with the Directors the policies and procedures in place regarding compliance with laws and regulations. We discussed amongst the audit team the identified laws and regulations, and remained alert to any indications of non-compliance.

During the audit we focussed on laws and regulations which could reasonably be expected to give rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements, including, but not limited to, the Companies Act 2006 and UK tax legislation. Our tests included agreeing the financial statement disclosures to underlying supporting documentation and enquiries with management.

Our procedures in relation to fraud included but were not limited to: inquiries of management whether they have any knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud, and discussions amongst the audit team regarding risk of fraud such as opportunities for fraudulent manipulation of financial statements. We determined that the principal risks related to posting manual journal entries to manipulate financial performance and management bias through judgements in accounting estimates. We also addressed the risk of management override of internal controls, including testing journals and evaluating whether there was evidence of bias by the directors that represented a risk of material misstatement due to fraud. Our tests included agreeing the financial statement disclosures to underlying supporting documentation.

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. In assessing the potential risks of material misstatement we obtained an understanding of; the entities operations, including the nature of its revenue sources and services and of its objectives and strategies to understand the classes of transactions, account balances, expected financial statement disclosures and business risks that may result in risks of material misstatement. We did not identify any matters relating to non-compliance with laws and regulations relating to fraud.

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

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
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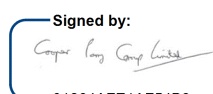
INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE ADVOCACY PROJECT (CONTINUED)

Auditors' report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Part 4 of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an Auditors' report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and its members, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Signed by:



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Cooper Parry Group Limited

Jane Wills (Senior Statutory Auditor)

for and on behalf of Cooper Parry Group Limited

New Derwent House

69-73 Theobalds Road

London

WC1X 8TA

Date: 27 November 2024

Cooper Parry Group Limited are eligible to act as auditors in terms of section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCORPORATING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

	Note	Restricted funds 2024 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	Total funds 2023 £
Income from:					
Donations and legacies	2	757,286	1,620,762	2,378,048	2,721,849
Investments	3	-	33,040	33,040	11,762
Other income	4	2,428	23,015	25,443	4,194
Total income		759,714	1,676,817	2,436,531	2,737,805
Expenditure on:					
Charitable activities:	5				
Support costs		191,263	437,724	628,987	763,305
Governance costs		6,331	13,975	20,306	38,271
Staff costs		184,046	974,308	1,158,354	1,562,552
Direct expenditure		381,187	73,439	454,626	416,863
Depreciation		-	10,405	10,405	10,509
Total expenditure		762,827	1,509,851	2,272,678	2,791,500
Net (expenditure)/income		(3,113)	166,966	163,853	(53,695)
Transfers between funds	17	88	(88)	-	-
Net movement in funds		(3,025)	166,878	163,853	(53,695)
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward		89,206	420,055	509,261	562,956
Net movement in funds		(3,025)	166,878	163,853	(53,695)
Total funds carried forward		86,181	586,933	673,114	509,261

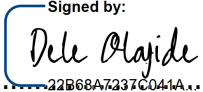
THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)
REGISTERED NUMBER: 04018315

BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 MARCH 2024

	Note	2024 £	2023 £
Fixed assets			
Intangible assets	10	1,440	2,271
Tangible assets	11	3,554	8,755
Current assets			
Debtors: amounts falling due after more than one year	12	1,317	1,217
Debtors: amounts falling due within one year	12	100,987	284,430
Cash at bank and in hand		1,961,148	2,052,738
		<u>2,063,452</u>	<u>2,338,385</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	13	(1,395,332)	(1,840,150)
Net current assets		668,120	498,235
Total net assets		<u><u>673,114</u></u>	<u><u>509,261</u></u>
Charity funds			
Restricted funds	17	86,181	89,206
Unrestricted funds			
Designated funds	17	-	2,271
General funds	17	586,933	417,784
Total unrestricted funds	17	<u>586,933</u>	<u>420,055</u>
Total funds		<u><u>673,114</u></u>	<u><u>509,261</u></u>

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

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Trustees and signed on their behalf by:

Signed by:


D Olayide (Chair)

Date: 27 November 2024

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

	Note	2024 £	2023 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash used in operating activities	14	(120,256)	1,309,927
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of intangible assets		(2,160)	-
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(2,214)	(5,954)
Interest received		33,040	11,762
Net cash provided by investing activities		28,666	5,808
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year		(91,590)	1,315,735
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		2,052,738	737,003
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year	15	1,961,148	2,052,738

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

1. Accounting policies

1.1 Basis of preparation of financial statements

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) - Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

1.2 Going concern

These financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis, as the Trustees have a reasonable expectation that the company will continue for the foreseeable future. The Trustees have reviewed and considered relevant information, including the annual budget and future cash flows in making their assessment. In the year the charity has proactively taken steps to ensure current contracts are maintained and growth is achieved by winning new contracts.

1.3 Income

All income is recognised once the Charity has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount of income receivable can be measured reliably.

1.4 Expenditure

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

1.5 Allocation and apportionment of costs

Staff and support costs are allocated to the particular activity where the costs relate to that activity.

1.6 Interest receivable

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the Charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the institution with whom the funds are deposited.

1.7 Intangible assets

Intangible assets comprise primarily of computer software and internal database systems. Such assets are defined as having useful lives and the costs are amortised on a straight line basis over their estimated useful lives of 5 years. Intangible assets are stated at cost less amortisation and are reviewed for impairment whenever there is an indication that the carrying value may be impaired.

1.8 Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are initially recognised at cost. After recognition, under the cost model, tangible fixed assets are measured at cost less accumulated depreciation and any accumulated impairment losses. All costs incurred to bring a tangible fixed asset into its intended working condition should be included in the measurement of cost.

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

1. Accounting policies (continued)

1.8 Tangible fixed assets (continued)

Depreciation is charged so as to allocate the cost of tangible fixed assets less their residual value over their estimated useful lives, using the straight-line method.

Depreciation is provided on the following basis:

Fixtures and fittings	-	33% on cost
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1.9 Taxation

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

1.10 Fund accounting

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

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objectives of the Chariry. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

1.11 Financial instruments

Financial assets and financial liabilities are recognised in the balance sheet when the company becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Trade and other debtors and creditors are classified as basic financial instruments and measured at initial recognition at transaction price. Debtors and creditors are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest rate method. A provision is established when there is objective evidence that the company will not be able to collect all amounts due.

Cash and cash equivalents are classified as basic financial instruments and comprise cash in hand and at bank.

1.12 Hire purchase and leasing commitments

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to profit or loss on a straight line basis over the period of the lease.

1.13 Pension costs and other post-retirement benefits

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

1.14 Cash and cash equivalents

These comprise cash at bank and other short-term highly liquid bank deposits with an original maturity of three months or less.

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

1. Accounting policies (continued)

1.15 Debtors

Debtors do not carry any interest and are stated at their nominal value. Appropriate allowances for estimated irrecoverable amounts are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities when there is objective evidence that the asset is impaired.

1.16 Trade Creditors

Trade creditors are not interest bearing and are stated at their nominal value.

1.17 Significant judgements and estimates

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with generally accepted accounting practice requires management to make estimates and judgement that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities as well as the disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the balance sheet date and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the reporting period.

There is estimation uncertainty in calculating accruals, accrued income and deferred income and a review of these accounts are carried regularly. Whilst every attempt is made to ensure that the calculations are as accurate as possible, there remain a risk that not all expenses and income have been considered.

The key point of estimation for accrued and deferred income relates to the point in time in which work has been completed to the standard of acceptance by the donor within restricted income.

2. Other trading activities

	Restricted funds 2024 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £
Donations legacies	757,286	1,620,762	2,378,048

	Restricted funds 2023 £	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Total funds 2023 £
Donations legacies	507,774	2,214,075	2,721,849

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

3. Investment income

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £
Interest receivable	33,040	33,040

	Restricted funds 2023 £	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Total funds 2023 £
Interest receivable	2,194	9,568	11,762

4. Other incoming resources

	Restricted funds 2024 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £
Other donations	2,428	23,015	25,443

	Restricted funds 2023 £	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Total funds 2023 £
Other donations	782	3,412	4,194

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

5. Analysis of expenditure on charitable activities

Summary by fund type

	Restricted funds 2024 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £
Support costs	375,309	1,432,338	1,807,647
Staff costs	381,187	73,439	454,626
Direct expenditure	-	10,405	10,405
Governance costs	6,331	(6,331)	-
	<u>762,827</u>	<u>1,509,851</u>	<u>2,272,678</u>

	Restricted funds 2023 £	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Total 2023 £
Support costs	422,766	1,941,362	2,364,128
Staff costs	116,797	300,066	416,863
Direct expenditure	-	10,509	10,509
Governance costs	7,102	(7,102)	-
	<u>546,665</u>	<u>2,244,835</u>	<u>2,791,500</u>

6. Analysis of expenditure by activities

	Activities undertaken directly 2024 £	Support costs 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £
Support costs	1,158,354	649,293	1,807,647
Staff costs	454,626	-	454,626
Direct expenditure	10,405	-	10,405
	<u>1,623,385</u>	<u>649,293</u>	<u>2,272,678</u>

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

6. Analysis of expenditure by activities (continued)

	Activities undertaken directly 2023 £	Support costs 2023 £	Total funds 2023 £
Support costs	1,562,552	801,576	2,364,128
Staff costs	416,863	-	416,863
Direct expenditure	10,509	-	10,509
	<u>1,989,924</u>	<u>801,576</u>	<u>2,791,500</u>

Analysis of support costs

	Support costs 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £
Support costs	628,987	628,987
Governance costs	20,306	20,306
	<u>649,293</u>	<u>649,293</u>

	Support costs 2023 £	Total funds 2023 £
Support costs	763,305	763,305
Governance costs	38,271	38,271
	<u>801,576</u>	<u>801,576</u>

7. Auditors' remuneration

	2024 £	2023 £
Fees payable to the Charity's auditor for the audit of the Charity's annual accounts	<u>18,040</u>	<u>16,345</u>

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

8. Staff costs

	2024 £	2023 £
Wages and salaries	960,513	1,316,410
Social security costs	123,262	159,430
Pension costs	74,579	86,712
Management salaries	344,007	369,605
	<u>1,502,361</u>	<u>1,932,157</u>

The average number of persons employed by the Charity during the year was as follows:

	2024 No.	2023 No.
Employed staff	62	64
Sessional	-	11
	<u>62</u>	<u>75</u>

The number of employees whose employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) exceeded £60,000 was:

	2024 No.	2023 No.
In the band £70,001 - £80,000	-	1

9. Trustees' remuneration and benefits

The Trustees were not paid or received any other benefits from employment (2023: Nil) except for service users A Antonio and M Hagan, who have been paid the London Living Wage and incurred expenses during the year of £1,130 (2023: £2,859). This is in accordance with the charity's governing document. These expenses included a £500 recruitment referral fee for a Trustee.

No Trustee received payment for professional or other services supplied to the charity (2023: Nil) except for J Davey, who was paid remuneration of £26,013 (2023: £79,988) in her capacity as the CEO. The charity also paid £NIL (2023: £8,135) towards her pension contributions. She received no employment benefits for her role as a trustee.

The key management personnel of the charity comprise the CEO, Deputy CEO, Head of Finance, Head of Business Development, Head of Services and Head of Comms. The total employee remunerations of key management personnel of the charity were £309,730 (2023: £301,531).

Trustee's expenses

There were no Trustees' expenses paid for the year ended 31 March 2024 nor for the year ended 31 March 2023.

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

10. Intangible assets

	Computer software £
Cost	
At 1 April 2023	22,709
Additions	2,160
At 31 March 2024	24,869
Amortisation	
At 1 April 2023	20,438
Charge for the year	2,991
At 31 March 2024	23,429
Net book value	
At 31 March 2024	1,440
At 31 March 2023	2,271

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

11. Tangible fixed assets

	Fixtures and fittings £
Cost or valuation	
At 1 April 2023	90,650
Additions	2,214
At 31 March 2024	<u>92,864</u>
Depreciation	
At 1 April 2023	81,895
Charge for the year	7,415
At 31 March 2024	<u>89,310</u>
Net book value	
At 31 March 2024	<u>3,554</u>
At 31 March 2023	<u>8,755</u>

12. Debtors

	2024 £	2023 £
Due after more than one year		
Other debtors	<u>1,317</u>	<u>1,217</u>
Due within one year		
Trade debtors	67,694	184,862
Other debtors	403	8,714
Prepayments and accrued income	32,890	90,854
	<u>100,987</u>	<u>284,430</u>

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

13. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

	2024 £	2023 £
Trade creditors	84,149	41,232
Other taxation and social security	31,328	42,557
Other creditors	13,811	35,310
Accruals and deferred income	1,266,044	1,721,051
	<u>1,395,332</u>	<u>1,840,150</u>

14. Reconciliation of net movement in funds to net cash flow from operating activities

	2024 £	2023 £
Net income/expenditure for the period (as per Statement of Financial Activities)	163,853	(53,695)
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation charges	10,405	10,509
Decrease/(increase) in debtors	183,343	(86,724)
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	(444,817)	1,451,599
Interest received	(33,040)	(11,762)
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	<u>(120,256)</u>	<u>1,309,927</u>

15. Analysis of cash and cash equivalents

	2024 £	2023 £
Cash in hand	1,961,148	2,052,738
Total cash and cash equivalents	<u>1,961,148</u>	<u>2,052,738</u>

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

16. Analysis of changes in net debt

	At 1 April 2023	Cash flows	At 31 March 2024
	£	£	£
Cash at bank and in hand	2,052,738	(91,590)	1,961,148
	<u>2,052,738</u>	<u>(91,590)</u>	<u>1,961,148</u>

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

17. Statement of funds

Statement of funds - current year

	Balance at 1 April 2023 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers in/out £	Balance at 31 March 2024 £
Unrestricted funds					
Designated funds					
Designated Funds - all funds	2,271	-	(2,991)	720	-
General funds					
Reserves	417,784	1,676,817	(1,506,860)	(808)	586,933
Total Unrestricted funds	420,055	1,676,817	(1,509,851)	(88)	586,933
Restricted funds					
WJC LD Our Choice	6,055	41,663	(36,407)	-	11,311
WJC LD Advocacy	18,795	79,928	(88,573)	-	10,150
Big Voice	-	47,711	(47,249)	-	462
Speak Up Speak Out	-	13,107	(10,380)	-	2,727
WJ OA Advocacy	61,742	191,028	(195,342)	-	57,428
WJ OA UI	114	35,607	(31,618)	-	4,103
City & Hackney PHB	-	250,670	(250,670)	-	-
Newham PHB	-	33,000	(33,000)	-	-
Tower Hamlet PHB	-	55,000	(55,000)	-	-
Tower Hamlet CYP PHB	2,500	12,000	(14,500)	-	-
Speak Up Radio	-	-	(88)	88	-
	89,206	759,714	(762,827)	88	86,181
Total of funds	509,261	2,436,531	(2,272,678)	-	673,114

Restricted funds represent income designated for specific purposes within the charity. These funds are allocated to support various projects, including user engagement services, a supported volunteering scheme, the "Big Plan" initiative, the Dual Diagnosis User Involvement Project, and the Mental Health Recovery Personal Health Budget Support Service. Each fund is utilised strictly according to donor conditions, ensuring the charity fulfils its intended impact in these areas.

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

17. Statement of funds (continued)

Statement of funds - prior year

	Balance at 1 April 2022 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers in/out £	Balance at 31 March 2023 £
Unrestricted funds					
Designated funds					
Designated Funds - all funds	6,813	-	(4,542)	-	2,271
General funds					
General Funds - all funds	475,748	-	(43,077)	(14,887)	417,784
Total Unrestricted funds	482,561	-	(47,619)	(14,887)	420,055
Restricted funds					
Restricted Funds - all funds	80,395	510,752	(516,828)	14,887	89,206
Total of funds	562,956	510,752	(564,447)	-	509,261

18. Summary of funds

Summary of funds - current year

	Balance at 1 April 2023 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers in/out £	Balance at 31 March 2024 £
Designated funds	2,271	-	(2,991)	720	-
General funds	417,784	1,676,817	(1,506,860)	(808)	586,933
Restricted funds	89,206	759,714	(762,827)	88	86,181
	509,261	2,436,531	(2,272,678)	-	673,114

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

18. Summary of funds (continued)

Summary of funds - prior year

	Balance at 1 April 2022 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers in/out £	Balance at 31 March 2023 £
Designated funds	6,813	-	(4,542)	-	2,271
General funds	475,748	-	(43,077)	(14,887)	417,784
Restricted funds	80,395	510,752	(516,828)	14,887	89,206
	<u>562,956</u>	<u>510,752</u>	<u>(564,447)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>509,261</u>

19. Analysis of net assets between funds

Analysis of net assets between funds - current period

	Restricted funds 2024 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £
Tangible fixed assets	-	3,554	3,554
Intangible fixed assets	-	1,440	1,440
Debtors due after more than one year	-	1,317	1,317
Current assets	86,181	1,975,954	2,062,135
Creditors due within one year	-	(1,395,332)	(1,395,332)
Total	<u>86,181</u>	<u>586,933</u>	<u>673,114</u>

Analysis of net assets between funds - prior period

	Restricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds - class ii 2023 £	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Total funds 2023 £
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	8,755	8,755
Intangible fixed assets	-	2,271	-	2,271
Debtors due after more than one year	-	-	1,217	1,217
Current assets	89,206	-	2,247,962	2,337,168
Creditors due within one year	-	-	(1,840,150)	(1,840,150)
Total	<u>89,206</u>	<u>2,271</u>	<u>417,784</u>	<u>509,261</u>

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A company limited by guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

20. Employee benefit obligations

The Charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme for all qualifying employees. The charge to income and expenditure account in respect of defined contribution scheme was £74,579 (2023: £86,859).

21. Related party disclosures

Except for the transactions referred to in Note 9 to the accounts, there were no related party transactions for the year ended 31 March 2024 or 31 March 2023.

22. Designated fund

There are funds of NIL (2023: £2,271) that have been designated by the Trustees for the purpose of specific purposes included within general funds.

23. Company limited by guarantee

The company is a private company limited by guarantee and accordingly does not have share capital. The members of the Company are the Trustees named on page 1. In the event of the company being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited up to £1 per member of the company. The Company was incorporated in England and Wales and information relating to the registered office can be found on page 1.

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT

England & Wales - Charity number 1084106

Accounts



Haines Watts
Chartered Accountants
And Statutory Auditors
New Derwent House
69-73 Theobalds Rd
London WC1X 8TA

Dear Sirs

**THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023**

The following representations are made on the basis of enquiries of management and staff with relevant knowledge and experience such as we consider necessary in connection with your audit of the charity's financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023. These enquiries have included inspection of supporting documentation where appropriate and are sufficient to satisfy ourselves that we can make each of the following representations. All representations are made to the best of our knowledge and belief.

General

- 1 We have fulfilled our responsibilities as trustees as set out in the terms of your engagement letter dated 16 June 2022, under the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Act 2011 for preparing financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view and for making accurate representations to you.
- 2 All the transactions undertaken by the charity have been properly reflected and recorded in the accounting records.
- 3 All the accounting records have been made available to you for the purpose of your audit. We have provided you with unrestricted access to all appropriate persons within the charity, and with all other records and related information requested, including minutes of all management and trustee meetings and correspondence with The Charity Commission.
- 4 The financial statements are free of material misstatements, including omissions.
- 5 We accept and approve the adjustments made to arrive at the financial statements, as set out in the attached appendix.

Internal control and fraud

- 6 We acknowledge our responsibility for the design, implementation and maintenance of internal control systems to prevent and detect fraud and error. We have disclosed to you the results of our risk assessment that the financial statements may be misstated as a result of fraud.
- 7 We have disclosed to you all instances of known or suspected fraud affecting the entity involving management, employees who have a significant role in internal control or others that could have a material effect on the financial statements.
- 8 We have also disclosed to you all information in relation to allegations of fraud or suspected fraud affecting the entity's financial statements communicated by current or former employees, analysts, regulators or others.

Assets and liabilities

- 9 The charity has satisfactory title to all assets and there are no liens or encumbrances on charity's assets, except for those that are disclosed in the notes to the financial statements.
- 10 All actual liabilities, contingent liabilities and guarantees given to third parties have been recorded or disclosed as appropriate.
- 11 We have no plans or intentions that may materially alter the carrying value and where relevant the fair value measurements or classification of assets and liabilities reflected in the financial statements.

Accounting estimates

- 12 Significant assumptions used by us in making accounting estimates, including those measured at fair value, are reasonable.

Loans and arrangements

- 13 The charitable company has not granted any advances or credits to, or made guarantees on behalf of, directors other than those disclosed in the financial statements.

Legal claims

- 14 We have disclosed to you all claims in connection with litigation that have been, or are expected to be, received and such matters, as appropriate, have been properly accounted for, and disclosed in, the financial statements.

Laws and regulations

- 15 We have disclosed to you all known instances of non-compliance or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations whose effects should be considered when preparing the financial statements.

Related parties

- 16 Related party relationships and transactions have been appropriately accounted for and disclosed in the financial statements. We have disclosed to you all relevant information concerning such relationships and transactions and are not aware of any other matters which require disclosure in order to comply with legislative and accounting standards requirements.

Subsequent events

- 17 All events subsequent to the date of the financial statements which require adjustment or disclosure have been properly accounted for and disclosed.

Going concern

- 18 We believe that the charity's financial statements should be prepared on a going concern basis on the grounds that current and future sources of funding or support will be more than adequate for charity's needs. We have considered a period of twelve months from the date of approval of the financial statements. We believe that no further disclosures relating to the charity's ability to continue as a going concern need to be made in the financial statements.

Grants and donations

- 19 All grants, donations and other income, the receipt of which is subject to specific terms or conditions, have been notified to you. There have been no breaches of terms or conditions in the application of such income.

We acknowledge our legal responsibilities regarding disclosure of information to you as auditors and confirm that so far as we are aware, there is no relevant audit information needed by you in connection with preparing your audit report of which you are unaware.

Each trustee has taken all the steps that he ought to have taken as a trustee in order to make himself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that you are aware of that information.

Yours faithfully



.....
Name: DELE OLAJIDE

Signed on behalf of the board of trustees

Date: Dec 19, 2023

Charity No 1084106

Company No 04018315

REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER: 04018315 (England and Wales)
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1084106

The Advocacy Project
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

Report of the Trustees and
Audited Financial Statements
for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

The Advocacy Project
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for the year ended 31 March 2023

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The Advocacy Project
Reference and Administrative Details
for the year ended 31 March 2023

Trustees	A Antonio M Hagan D Olajide J Davey (resigned 31/3/2023) J R Ellis R Skipp G Bull L C Baliga (resigned 31/5/2022) H Richardson
Company secretaries	A Wright
Registered office	c/o SEIDs Hub Empire Way Wembley London HA9 0RJ
Registered company number	04018315 (England and Wales)
Registered charity number	1084106
Independent auditors	Cooper Parry Group Limited Statutory Auditor New Derwent House 69-73 Theobalds Road London WC1X 8TA

The Advocacy Project
Report of the Trustees
for the year ended 31 March 2023

The trustees present their report and accounts for the year ended 31 March 2023.

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the accounts and comply with the charity's governing document, the Companies Act 2006 and "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (as amended for accounting periods commencing from 1 January 2016)

Objectives and activities

Objectives and aims

The Advocacy Project supports people to speak up and to make their own choices about their lives. Our vision is a world in which every person has a voice - including those who are marginalised or vulnerable because of their circumstances. We place a relentless focus on enabling people to have their voice heard, uphold their rights, and make informed choices. We support people to have their say and help improve important services we all need, including health and social care services. We also seek to tackle testimonial injustice - this kind of injustice occurs when someone is ignored, or not believed, because of identity-prejudice towards them, for example because of their circumstances, their gender, race, disability etc.

We achieve these aims by delivering a range of projects and services - statutory and non-statutory - including advocacy, user involvement, personal health budgets and Healthwatch services. The trustees have paid due regard to guidance issued by the Charity Commission in deciding what activities the charity should carry out.

How we work

We try hard not to do things "to" people or "for" people. Instead, we help people find their own voices and develop their capacity to do things for themselves - increasing their own agency. These principles underpin our approach to evaluating our impact. We know people feel stronger, safer and more confident after working with us. Click here to read some real stories from real people we've worked with: <https://www.advocacyproject.org.uk/news/real-stories-about-real-people/>

Many staff who work for The Advocacy Project have lived experience of the issues we work on (whether learning disability, mental health or other disabilities). Two of our trustees are service users. Our user council involves people who use our services in decision-making about the organisation. Having the voices of lived experience at all levels of the organisation informs our approach to everything we do.

We are also a highly diverse organisation. This inclusivity and diversity helps us develop understanding and trust with service users. Understanding and trust means our work is truly focused on those things that make a real difference to the lives of people who face disadvantage, discrimination, and marginalisation.

The Advocacy Project
Report of the Trustees
for the year ended 31 March 2023

Objectives and activities

Performance and achievements

External context

The emerging cost of living crisis provided the backdrop for the last financial year, together with the ongoing societal effects of the pandemic which are still being felt. We remain acutely aware of people struggling to make ends meet, and the effect this has on their physical and mental health. We have seen a resurgence in contact from people impacted by this ongoing crisis, who are having to make tough choices which exacerbate pre-existing issues and health concerns, as well as the impact it has had on our own staff.

The job market in health and social care has remained challenging throughout the year, in part a legacy of the tough situations experienced by staff during the pandemic. Across the sector all agencies found it difficult to recruit skilled staff. One significant impact of this has been that gaps in the external teams we work with can mean it takes longer to resolve issues for the people we support.

Key highlights

Despite the turbulent external environment and staffing challenges, The Advocacy Project has had a strong year. We have seen our four key areas of work continue to benefit service users: advocacy, user involvement, personal health budgets and Healthwatch services. Referrals across all types of advocacy (statutory and non-statutory) have now climbed back to pre-pandemic levels. We're feeding our successes, challenges and learning into our strategic planning and service development for the year ahead.

We continue to place ourselves as leaders in the field of advocacy and safeguarding, offering consultations and insights into development of both local and national policy.

- In the early part of the year, we came together with over 40 advocacy providers to send an open letter to the Prime Minister, raising concerns about the proposed repeal of the Human Rights Act and introduction of the Bill of Rights. The proposed reforms would make it difficult for advocacy providers and other organisations to hold public services accountable.
- Our specialist Independent Mental Capacity Advocate leads contributed detailed expertise to the consultation on the changes to the Mental Capacity Act Code of Practice and implementation of the Liberty Protection Safeguards, both in collaboration with other advocacy providers and in a direct response to the Department of Health and Social Care.
- We advised colleagues in other health and social care organisations on implementing the new guidelines on use of force in mental health settings.
- In view of our specialist knowledge and experience of people with complex needs in relation to learning disabilities, mental health, and ADHD, we've been commissioned to do some very specific advocacy to support people who experience the intersection of these issues.

Our Healthwatch service has expanded considerably during this financial year.

- We successfully won two new Healthwatch contracts: Westminster and Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. We're delighted to have welcomed a new team to the organisation who have established positive relationships in the boroughs. Along with our existing service in Brent, these have pioneered work in the three boroughs to gather patient feedback on health and care services in both community and in-patient settings.
- Healthwatch Brent made a major contribution to the borough's health and wellbeing strategy and continues to go from strength to strength. The team carried out 'enter and view' visits to inpatient wards at Park Royal Hospital following intelligence from advocacy services that there's overrepresentation of young black men who have been sectioned under the Mental Health Act.
- Our work on access to GP services and the evaluation of enhanced access to practices where GPs have offered extra hours over evenings and weekends has resulted in us making some powerful recommendations for improvement. We've continued to evaluate access to primary care over the 12-month period to identify improvements.

Our commitment to excellence in safeguarding and our skill in training people with a view to their individual learning styles and information needs has continued to shine through. We've been regularly commissioned by the local voluntary and community sector to train their boards and staff.

- We have worked on a number of additional innovative safeguarding projects, including looking at how to make safeguarding processes more culturally sensitive, and analysing the first-hand experiences of people going through safeguarding processes. Following on from the extremely positive response to the Biborough Staying Safe project Phase 2, we were asked to develop Phase 3 to promote safeguarding amongst borough residents from diverse communities.

The Advocacy Project
Report of the Trustees
for the year ended 31 March 2023

Objectives and activities

- Our former CEO had a specialism in safeguarding in faith settings and in religious and spiritual abuse, an incredibly important area (as evidenced from the recent publication of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse in faith communities and other research). We've been fortunate to benefit from this insight and experience and are able to continue to offer a specialist level of support.
- In March 2023 we delivered safeguarding governance training to 14 senior leaders who sit on the safeguarding committee at Notting Hill Genesis housing association. Our former CEO and Head of Service Delivery brought their depth of experience and expertise in this area. NHG's designated safeguarding lead said "First and foremost, I want to thank you for delivering such a powerful training. It was well received, and I have already heard from a few people who thought it was excellent, very informative, and insightful. We can definitely direct our safeguarding strategy in the right direction with the help of the training." Participants said, "you really challenged us - made us think deeply about how we can improve our governance of safeguarding and our practice."
- We supported community engagement programmes to promote awareness of illegal money lending (in response to the economic crisis) and hate crime.
- In Hackney, we launched our Your Voice Matters project to capture service user feedback on their experience of safeguarding processes.

Our user-involvement and co-production continues to turn user feedback into actionable intelligence which helps shape and improve local public services.

- A highlight of this service is the teams' close work with the "What matters to you?" NHS North West London Co-Design Advisory Body (DAB). This is a small group of professionals and third sector/community groups who were invited to advise NHS NWL on how they could improve their engagement with the local community. The DAB is an opportunity to provide feedback, ideas, insights and learning from local communities and seldom heard groups to NHS North West London Integrated Care Board. Our user involvement team has been asked to support patient, resident and community engagement across North West London.
- Our specialist teams for people with learning disabilities worked with commissioners to improve the accessibility of their approach to better meet the needs of those with - or at risk of developing - type 2 diabetes. This included a redesign of website information.

The Personal Health Budget team continues to provide personalised services for both adults and children. Our PHB services have expanded into new boroughs, and we've promoted and trained staff across Newham and Tower Hamlets. We've also developed five videos for NHS England to support the training they deliver on personal health budgets, drawing on our practical experience representing a diversity of service user voices.

Our AGM and staff conference event was a great success and a highlight of the year. The talks from external speakers - Paul Morrison, Trustee of the Trussell Trust and Jo Kay, Programmes Manager, Sufra - about food poverty were very well received. This stimulated much discussion about the impact of nutrition on mental and physical health. The headline speaker was so popular we asked him to return and host a staff development session as part of our new lecture series. The AGM and staff conference highlighted the diversity of our board, our staff and our volunteers and the quality of our work, and showcased the very considerable skills of our staff with learning disabilities and their creative talents.

Our informative public discussions on reducing health inequalities continue to go from strength to strength and attract nationally renowned speakers. Our monthly lecture series on reducing health inequalities, in collaboration with Cllr Ketan Sheth, has attracted audiences of health and social care professionals, as well as members of the public, who have engaged in stimulating collaborative discussion. Highlights have included talks from nationally renowned speakers including Dame Cally Palmer (National Cancer Director, NHS England and CEO of Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust) and Claire Murdoch CBE (National Director for Mental Health). In addition, we introduced a daytime lecture series focused on continuing professional development for staff in health and social care. Both series have attracted renowned experts as speakers, and participant audiences include policy-makers, health and social care professionals, service users and members of the public from across the country. Topics we've covered over the last financial year include:

- How we can combat modern slavery with Charlotte Jamieson, Modern Slavery and Exploitation Coordinator for Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster.
- Tackling inequalities in diabetes care with Salma Mehar, consultant dietitian in North West London and Dr Ethie Kong, GP and former chair of NHS Brent.
- Challenging the myths: what it means to live well with HIV with Dr Laura Waters, Chair of the British HIV Association and HIV Treatment Advisor at NHS England.
- Covid recovery: what next for our NHS with Dr Piers Milner (Director of Strategy, LNWH), Nipa Shah (Programme Director, Brent Health Matters), Dr Ethie Kong (Senior GP, Westminster), Jenny Lanyero (Senior Nurse Practitioner, CNWL) discussing the impact of the pandemic on enduring health inequalities.

The Advocacy Project
Report of the Trustees
for the year ended 31 March 2023

Objectives and activities

- How we can fight the cost-of-living crisis with Paul Morrison, Trustee of The Trussell Trust.

Staffing and structure

This year has brought some changes in our senior management. We've welcomed two new members of staff to our senior leadership team, who bring a wealth of experience from the sector and beyond.

In November we welcomed Emilia Halupka as Head of Finance, who brings expertise in financial management from the education sector. In January we also welcomed Freya Marshall as Head of Business Development and Fundraising. Freya brings extensive experience to this role and is leading on our strategy and planning in this area.

Judith Davey, our CEO since 2016, stepped down from her role as of 31 March this year. The Advocacy Project's board of trustees thanks Judith for her hard work and commitment to the organisation and especially her work in steering the organisation through the challenges of the pandemic and helping to diversify our range of services.

Ali Wright, our former Deputy CEO, stepped into the role of Acting CEO. She has been with the organisation since 2001 and brings a wealth of knowledge of all aspects of our work. The board, Ali, the Senior Leadership Team and all staff continue to work closely together for the benefit of our service users.

Within the organisation we have focused on our skill and capacity-building as part of our commitment to social value in each of the boroughs where we work. We've seen evidence within our organisation of the significant benefit of recruiting people from outside the sector who have strong transferable skills. We've continued to use our networks and head-hunters to fill our vacant posts, and we've continued the learning and development support we give to staff. Our strong learning and development offer (as evidenced in last year's QPM report on our work, which we passed with flying colours) has meant we've been able to fill key staffing gaps and are developing innovative ways of targeting different communities of people with strong transferable skills.

The Advocacy Project
Report of the Trustees
for the year ended 31 March 2023

Objectives and activities

Looking forward

In the coming year our focus will be on continuing to embed a positive, collaborative work environment, and fostering our culture of innovation and creativity. In the first part of the year, our Acting CEO will provide seamless continuity between the outgoing CEO and the new incumbent who will then take forward our mission and vision.

As noted above, the external context over the last and previous financial years has been difficult for all organisations within the sector and beyond. We're well aware of the pressures faced by all organisations in the health and social care sector, and the knock-on effect this is having on the people we support. Our strategy for the coming year recognises the constraints of the external environment and focuses on strengthening the foundations of our organisation, embedding learning from challenges, and continuing to build an organisation with good infrastructure and brand awareness that is known for delivering top quality support for both staff and our partners.

A key part of our focus this year is on embedding the re-launched user council, with the support of our new dedicated User Voice Participation Lead. Our user council are working closely with the Board to bring their perspective into our strategic decision-making. We welcome the unique perspective that people with lived experience provide and are proud to enable them to guide decisions and development within the organisation.

In the coming financial year we're recognising the excellent work achieved by all our advocacy services including those where their contract period draws to a close. We're really proud to be able to pass the services on with such dedicated and skilled staff. One of the advantages of working in our sector is that the skills and knowledge developed within teams can be passed to colleagues in other organisations when contracts change hands, which of course helps develop the sector and ultimately benefits service users.

Our fundraising strategy for the year ahead is led by our new Head of Business and Fundraising. Having, in previous years, expanded our services into four workstreams, our medium-to-long term strategy is to consolidate. We'll focus on deepening our relationships within the sector and maximising opportunities generated through our current service areas. This includes extending our safeguarding training provision, which has been extremely well-received. The next step in our safeguarding training programme includes an opportunity for our staff to enhance their knowledge and develop their skills by shadowing safeguarding trainers and sharing their safeguarding experience with others.

Some highlights of our upcoming work across the organisation are below.

- Our Healthwatch service is planning a volunteer training programme, led by our Volunteers and Projects Officer, which focuses on building capacity of other local grassroots organisations to work with a diverse pool of volunteers and provide meaningful engagement. We will add this training to The Advocacy Project training offer and it will be open to all of our networks.
- We're excited to be continuing to lead on co-production in the Camden Mental Health Resilience Alliance and ensuring the voices of people with lived experience are front and centre of this work. Our Lived experience advisers (LExAs) will make sure the alliance respects, listens and acts on the experiences shared by people with lived experience of mental health difficulties and the mental health services in Camden.
- As part of social value commitment, we are exploring options to create a carbon reduction plan with the aim of being a net zero organisation. We feel it's important to engage with our responsibility to reduce carbon emissions across London and wish to find ways for all of our team to sincerely engage with our proposed plan.
- We're really proud to continue in our plans to host inspiring leaders and practitioners speaking on a range of health topics as part of our health inequalities lectures series in collaboration with Cllr Ketan Sheth and Healthwatch Brent. In the next financial year, lectures include:
 - Leading the fight against sickle-cell disease with Dame Elizabeth Nneka Anionwu, a trailblazer who established the UK's first nurse-led sickle cell screening and counselling centre based in Brent. Dame Elizabeth and others share their work supporting those affected by the disease and development in combating sickle cell.
 - Prostate Cancer: speak up, get support and boost survival rates: with Brent CSV we welcome practitioners including consultant urological surgeon, Dr Rajesh Kavia. Inspirational cancer survivor Errol McKellar MBE talks about his campaign to generate awareness about the illness and encourage men to get regularly tested.

The Advocacy Project
Report of the Trustees
for the year ended 31 March 2023

Strategic report

Financial review: overview

The voluntary and charity sector continues to be a challenging environment in terms of securing new income and managing expenditure for critical functions including staff recruitment in the context of the steep rise in cost of living. The impact of the external environment resulted in closing the year with a deficit of £54k.

Despite these challenges and movement of contracts, we move forward into the next financial year with robust financial management in place under the leadership of new Head of Finance and new CEO. The hard work and dedication of our staff, supported by senior management, continues to provide a high quality service to the people we support.

Our turnover for 2022/23 was £2.74m which is an increase of £0.21m from 2021/22 when turnover was £2.53m. Expenditure during the year was £2.79m which is an increase of £0.34m from 2021/22, when expenditure was £2.45m. During the year we secured new contracts including:

- Tower Hamlets Personal Health Budgets
- Newham Personal Health Budgets
- Healthwatch RBKC & Westminster
- Brent ASD Care Navigator pilot

Hammersmith and Fulham, Hackney and Broadmoor advocacy contracts came to the end of their contract period.

Our policy is that unrestricted funds that have not been designated for a specific use should be maintained at a level equivalent to between three- and six-months' expenditure. The trustees consider that reserves at this level will ensure that, in the event of a significant drop in funding, we can continue current activities whilst considering alternative ways to raise additional funds. Due to unpredicted one-off cost at the year end the reserves level decreased to 2.5 months cover. This will be rectified in the following years by introducing a new strategy, the employment of new SLT members including Head of Business Development and Fundraising, to strengthen the ability to achieve targets, and the continues focus on the cost control.

In line with our strategic aims, trustees and the senior leadership team are committed to investing in organisational development to support our continued growth and sustainability.

We continue to invest in staff training and development. We continue to work on development of pay progression framework supporting staff to progress up salary band in commensurate with their skills, education, and experience. We're also investing more on technology to deliver services innovatively and offer staff flexible working facilities and environment.

The Advocacy Project
Report of the Trustees
for the year ended 31 March 2023

Strategic report

Financial review

Financial review: fundraising

Our approach to growth and diversifying income is to extend our core business across London and key national work through a variety of income sources, including public sector contracts, private health and social care contracts, and grants from trusts and foundations.

We exceeded our 2022-2023 income target by 250% at the beginning of the year. The surge in income for Q1 22/23 came from: two new Healthwatch services (Westminster and Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea); Personal Health Budget contracts; bespoke safeguarding work in the community.

Our new Head of Business Development, Freya Marshall, has developed our fundraising strategy for 23/24. This includes business development KPIs for 23/24 as well as a trust and foundations pipeline of potential donors with a collective value of over £1,000,000 that may be available to The Advocacy Project. The fundraising strategy will align with the upcoming organisational and communications strategies. Other key areas for development are:

- identifying innovation projects and opportunities, including projects such as peer-led advocacy and volunteer management
- key trusts, foundations and local funding including The National Lottery
- safeguarding training development
- continuing to foster strong relationships across the sector to enable us to actively contribute to meeting the needs of local people

No complaints have been received about our fundraising practices whether undertaken directly or by agencies acting on our behalf. We're registered with the Fundraising Regulator.

Our governance handbook, our business development procedures, and employee handbook show how we protect vulnerable people and others from unreasonable intrusion of a person's privacy, unreasonably persistent approaches, or undue pressure to donate. We do not use direct marketing fundraising techniques. We do not use face-to-face or door-to-door fundraising techniques, nor do we outsource donor relationships to third parties. We do not exchange or sell our donors and supporters personal data.

The Advocacy Project
Report of the Trustees
for the year ended 31 March 2023

Structure, governance and management

Structure

The Advocacy Project is a charity and a company limited by guarantee. Our objects enable us to have a governance structure with a board of trustees and a user council. We're a unitary board, and have four board committees - Finance, Risk & Audit; HR, Remuneration & Policy; Business Development and Fundraising; and Advocacy & Change.

In line with our values (and with permission from the Charity Commission), we pay service user trustees at London Living Wage for their time as trustees. The board delegates day-to-day management to the CEO (or Acting CEO) who works with and through the senior leadership team.

Governance

Our governance handbook sets out the standards which trustees must conform to, and includes clear policies on managing conflict of interest, duty and loyalty. This handbook, which was reviewed during the financial year 2020-2021, assisted the charity in passing the rigorous process of accreditation to the Quality Performance Mark (QPM) - the kitemark for advocacy providers. The QPM desktop assessment report from 2021 describes the handbook as a "really excellent document". It also states "the organisational governance framework is impressive, as is the use of external experts in governance the field as well as lawyers, health & safety and data protection experts to ensure compliance with legislation and best practice". Our safeguarding policies and practice have been assessed through the same process as being "excellent, comprehensive and clear". The 2021 desktop assessment report also states that our governance handbook and many of our policies "could be used as exemplars in other organisations".

Having a diverse board of trustees that reflect the people we support is of great importance to the charity as it demonstrates our values in practice. All recruitment is carried out using an open selection process and competency-based interviews. We're often asked to write articles for organisations like The Governance Institute (ICSA) and speak at charity sector conferences on how we have achieved board diversity in practice, and how we've made our governance processes accessible to everyone using approaches like financial accounts being available in easy read.

People management

The Employee Handbook and the Health, Safety & Wellbeing Handbook clearly set out our policies and procedures and are reviewed for compliance with legislation and best practice each year. We continue to invest in staff wellbeing by giving staff access to independent counselling in addition to a 24-hour confidential care service.

Learning and development for staff is very important to us. We support staff to achieve their independent advocacy qualification (IAQ) or other professional qualifications. We also give staff time off in lieu to attend our monthly lecture series, run in collaboration with Councillor Ketan Sheth, where national experts discuss topics of interest in the health and social care field.

Our policy is to consult with employees and discuss issues likely to affect their interests. Information is given through regular staff briefings, updates and reports which aim for a common awareness on the part of all employees of the financial and economic factors affecting the organisation's performance.

We have a recognition agreement with UNISON. We are a Mindful Employer and a Disability Confident Employer.

Trustees' responsibility statement

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

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

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

The Advocacy Project
Report of the Trustees
for the year ended 31 March 2023

Trustees' responsibility statement - continued

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

In so far as the trustees are aware:

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

Auditors

The audit business of Haines Watts London LLP was acquired by Cooper Parry Group Limited on 14 November 2023. Haines Watts London LLP has resigned as auditor and Cooper Parry Group Limited has been appointed in its place. The auditors, Cooper Parry Group Limited, will be proposed for re-appointment at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting.

Report of the trustees, incorporating a strategic report, approved by order of the board of trustees, as the company directors, on ~~Dec 19, 2023~~..... and signed on the board's behalf by:



.....
D Olajide - Trustee

Report of the Independent Auditors to the Members of The Advocacy Project

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of The Advocacy Project (the 'charitable company') for the year ended 31 March 2023 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Statement of Financial Position, the Statement of Cash Flows and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland'.

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 2023 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, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland'; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

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

Conclusions relating to going concern

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

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

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

Other information

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

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

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

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

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

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

Report of the Independent Auditors to the Members of The Advocacy Project

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

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

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

- adequate accounting records have not been kept or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of trustees

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

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

Our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

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

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.

We gained an understanding of the legal and regulatory framework applicable to the company and the industry in which it operates, and considered the risk of acts by the company that were contrary to applicable laws and regulations, including fraud. We discussed with the Directors the policies and procedures in place regarding compliance with laws and regulations. We discussed amongst the audit team the identified laws and regulations, and remained alert to any indications of non-compliance.

During the audit we focussed on laws and regulations which could reasonably be expected to give rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements, including, but not limited to, the Companies Act 2006 and UK tax legislation. Our tests included agreeing the financial statement disclosures to underlying supporting documentation and enquiries with management.

Our procedures in relation to fraud included but were not limited to: inquiries of management whether they have any knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud, and discussions amongst the audit team regarding risk of fraud such as opportunities for fraudulent manipulation of financial statements. We determined that the principal risks related to posting manual journal entries to manipulate financial performance and management bias through judgements in accounting estimates. We also addressed the risk of management override of internal controls, including testing journals and evaluating whether there was evidence of bias by the directors that represented a risk of material misstatement due to fraud. Our tests included agreeing the financial statement disclosures to underlying supporting documentation.

Report of the Independent Auditors to the Members of The Advocacy Project

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

Use of our report

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



Jane Wills (Senior Statutory Auditor)
for and on behalf of Cooper Parry Group Limited
Statutory Auditor
New Derwent House
69-73 Theobalds Road
London
WC1X 8TA

Date: Dec 19, 2023

The Advocacy Project
Statement of Financial Activities
(Incorporating an Income and Expenditure Account)
for the year ended 31 March 2023

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	2023 Total funds £	2022 Total funds £
Income and endowments from						
Other trading activities	2	2,214,073	-	507,776	2,721,849	2,463,663
Investment income	3	9,568	-	2,194	11,762	242
Other income		3,412	-	782	4,194	69,520
Total		<u>2,227,053</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>510,752</u>	<u>2,737,805</u>	<u>2,533,425</u>
Expenditure on						
Raising funds	4	-	-	-	-	93
Charitable activities						
Support costs	5	559,953	-	203,352	763,305	588,667
Governance costs		31,131	-	7,140	38,271	18,647
Staff costs		1,373,013	-	189,539	1,562,552	1,758,999
Direct expenditure		300,066	-	116,797	416,863	68,763
Depreciation		5,967	4,542	-	10,509	14,029
Total		<u>2,270,130</u>	<u>4,542</u>	<u>516,828</u>	<u>2,791,500</u>	<u>2,449,198</u>
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)		(43,077)	(4,542)	(6,076)	(53,695)	84,227
Transfers between funds	19	(14,887)	-	14,887	-	-
Net movement in funds		(57,964)	(4,542)	8,811	(53,695)	84,227
Reconciliation of funds						
Total funds brought forward		475,748	6,813	80,395	562,956	478,729
Total funds carried forward		<u>417,784</u>	<u>2,271</u>	<u>89,206</u>	<u>509,261</u>	<u>562,956</u>
Continuing operations						
All income and expenditure has arisen from continuing activities.						

The notes form part of these financial statements

The Advocacy Project
Statement of Financial Position
31 March 2023

		2023	2022
	Notes	£	£
Fixed assets			
Intangible assets	13	2,271	6,813
Tangible assets	14	8,755	8,768
		<u>11,026</u>	<u>15,581</u>
Current assets			
Debtors: amounts falling due within one year	15	284,430	198,556
Debtors: amounts falling due after more than one year	15	1,217	367
Cash at bank and in hand		2,052,738	737,003
		<u>2,338,385</u>	<u>935,926</u>
Creditors			
Amounts falling due within one year	16	(1,840,150)	(388,551)
Net current assets		<u>498,235</u>	<u>547,375</u>
Total assets less current liabilities		509,261	562,956
NET ASSETS		<u>509,261</u>	<u>562,956</u>
Funds	19		
Unrestricted funds:			
Unrestricted fund		417,784	475,748
Designated fund		2,271	6,813
		<u>420,055</u>	<u>482,561</u>
Restricted funds:			
Restricted fund		89,206	80,395
Total funds		<u>509,261</u>	<u>562,956</u>

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on 19 Dec 2023 and were signed on its behalf by:



.....
D Olajide - Trustee

The Advocacy Project
Statement of Cash Flows
for the year ended 31 March 2023

		2023	2022
	Notes	£	£
Cash flows from operating activities			
Cash generated from operations	1	1,309,927	5,732
Net cash provided by operating activities		<u>1,309,927</u>	<u>5,732</u>
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(5,954)	(3,505)
Interest received		11,762	242
Net cash provided by/(used in) investing activities		<u>5,808</u>	<u>(3,263)</u>
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period		<u>1,315,735</u>	<u>2,469</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		<u>737,003</u>	<u>734,534</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period		<u><u>2,052,738</u></u>	<u><u>737,003</u></u>

The notes form part of these financial statements

The Advocacy Project

Notes to the Statement of Cash Flows for the year ended 31 March 2023

1. Reconciliation of net (expenditure)/income to net cash flow from operating activities

	2023 £	2022 £
Net (expenditure)/income for the reporting period (as per the Statement of Financial Activities)	(53,695)	84,227
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation charges	10,509	14,028
Interest received	(11,762)	(242)
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	(86,724)	8,946
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	1,451,599	(101,227)
Net cash provided by operations	<u>1,309,927</u>	<u>5,732</u>

2. Analysis of changes in net funds

	At 1/4/22 £	Cash flow £	At 31/3/23 £
Net cash			
Cash at bank and in hand	737,003	1,315,735	2,052,738
	<u>737,003</u>	<u>1,315,735</u>	<u>2,052,738</u>
Total	<u>737,003</u>	<u>1,315,735</u>	<u>2,052,738</u>

The Advocacy Project

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2023

1. Accounting policies

Basis of preparing the financial statements

The financial statements of the charitable company, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019)', Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Companies Act 2006. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

Going concern

These financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis, as the directors have a reasonable expectation that the company will continue for the foreseeable future. The Directors have reviewed and considered relevant information, including the annual budget and future cash flows in making their assessment. In the year the charity has proactively taken steps to ensure current contracts are maintained and growth is achieved by winning new contracts.

Income

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

Expenditure

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Significant judgements and estimates

There are no critical accounting judgements and estimation uncertainty at the end of the reporting period that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the financial year.

Allocation and apportionment of costs

Staff and support costs are allocated to the particular activity where the costs relate to that activity.

Overhead costs are apportioned based on the income of a particular activity.

Intangible assets

Intangible assets comprise primarily computer software and internal database systems. Such assets are defined as having finite useful lives and the costs are amortised on a straight line basis over their estimated useful lives of 5 years. Intangible assets are stated at cost less amortisation and are reviewed for impairment whenever there is an indication that the carrying value may be impaired.

Tangible fixed assets

Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life.

Fixtures and fittings - 33% on cost

Taxation

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

Fund accounting

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

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.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

The Advocacy Project

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued for the year ended 31 March 2023

1. Accounting policies - continued

Financial instruments

Financial assets and financial liabilities are recognised in the balance sheet when the company becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Trade and other debtors and creditors are classified as basic financial instruments and measured at initial recognition at transaction price. Debtors and creditors are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest rate method. A provision is established when there is objective evidence that the company will not be able to collect all amounts due.

Cash and cash equivalents are classified as basic financial instruments and comprise cash in hand and at bank.

Hire purchase and leasing commitments

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to profit or loss on a straight line basis over the period of the lease.

Pension costs and other post-retirement benefits

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

Cash and cash equivalents

These comprise cash at bank and other short-term highly liquid bank deposits with an original maturity of three months or less.

Debtors

Debtors do not carry any interest and are stated at their nominal value. Appropriate allowances for estimated irrecoverable amounts are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities when there is objective evidence that the asset is impaired.

Trade Creditors

Trade creditors are not interest bearing and are stated at their nominal value.

Significant judgements and estimates

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with generally accepted accounting practice requires management to make estimates and judgement that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities as well as the disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the balance sheet date and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the reporting period.

There is estimation uncertainty in calculating accruals, accrued income and deferred income and a review of these accounts are carried regularly. Whilst every attempt is made to ensure that the calculations are as accurate as possible, there remain a risk that not all expenses and income have been considered.

The key point of estimation for accrued and deferred income relates to the point in time in which work has been completed to the standard of acceptance by the donor within restricted income.

The Advocacy Project

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued for the year ended 31 March 2023

2. Other trading activities

	2023	2022
	£	£
Charitable trading activities	2,721,849	2,463,663

3. Investment income

	2023	2022
	£	£
Interest receivable	11,762	242

4. Raising funds

Raising donations and legacies

	2023	2022
	£	£
Postage and stationery	-	93

5. Charitable activities costs

	Direct Costs	Support costs (see note 6)	Totals
	£	£	£
Support costs	-	763,305	763,305
Governance costs	-	38,271	38,271
Staff costs	1,562,552	-	1,562,552
Direct expenditure	416,863	-	416,863
Depreciation	10,509	-	10,509
	1,989,924	801,576	2,791,500

6. Support costs

	Other	Governance costs	Totals
	£	£	£
Support costs	763,305	-	763,305
Governance costs	-	38,271	38,271
	763,305	38,271	801,576

Support costs, included in the above, are as follows:

Other

	2023 Support costs	2022 Total activities
	£	£
Staff costs	76,562	65,329
Building and office costs	154,462	126,143
Support and development costs	532,281	413,300
	763,305	604,772

The Advocacy Project

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued for the year ended 31 March 2023

6. Support costs - continued Governance costs

	2023 Governance costs £	2022 Total activities £
Auditors' remuneration	16,435	10,500
Management fees	1,580	1,651
Governance support	15,743	6,443
AGM & Annual report	4,513	26
	<u>38,271</u>	<u>18,620</u>

7. Net income/(expenditure)

Net income/(expenditure) is stated after charging/(crediting):

	2023 £	2022 £
Depreciation - owned assets	5,967	9,488
Computer software amortisation	<u>4,542</u>	<u>4,541</u>

8. Auditors' remuneration

	2023 £	2022 £
Fees payable to the charity's auditors and their associates for the audit of the charity's financial statements	<u>16,435</u>	<u>10,500</u>

9. Trustees' remuneration and benefits

The trustees were not paid or received any other benefits from employment (2022: Nil) except for service users, Judith Davey, A Antonio and M Hagan, who have been paid the London Living Wage and incurred expenses during the year of £2,859 (2022: £1,650). This is in accordance with the charity's governing document. These expenses included a £500 recruitment referral fee for a trustee.

No trustee received payment for professional or other services supplied to the charity (2022: Nil) except for J Davey, who was paid remuneration of £79,988 (2022: £66,687) in her capacity as the CEO. The charity also paid £8,135 (2022: £4,001) towards her pension contributions. She received no employment benefits for her role as a trustee.

The key management personnel of the charity comprise the CEO, Deputy CEO, Head of Finance, Head of Business Development, Head of Services and Head of Comms. The total employee benefits of key management personnel of the charity were £301,531 (2022: £296,291).

Trustees' expenses

There were no trustees' expenses paid for the year ended 31 March 2023 nor for the year ended 31 March 2022.

The Advocacy Project

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued for the year ended 31 March 2023

10. Staff costs

	2023 £	2022 £
Wages and salaries	1,686,015	1,535,819
Social security costs	159,430	138,356
Pension costs	86,712	81,116
	<u>1,932,157</u>	<u>1,755,291</u>

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	2023	2022
Employed staff	64	60
Sessional	11	7
	<u>75</u>	<u>67</u>

The number of employees whose employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) exceeded £60,000 was:

	2023	2022
£60,001 - £70,000	-	1
£70,001 - £80,000	1	-
	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>

11. Comparatives for the statement of financial activities

	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
Income and endowments from				
Other trading activities	1,927,138	-	536,525	2,463,663
Investment income	191	-	51	242
Other income	69,520	-	-	69,520
Total	<u>1,996,849</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>536,576</u>	<u>2,533,425</u>
Expenditure on				
Raising funds	93	-	-	93
Charitable activities				
Support costs	333,668	-	254,999	588,667
Governance costs	14,703	-	3,944	18,647
Staff costs	1,522,146	-	236,853	1,758,999
Direct expenditure	54,022	-	14,741	68,763
Depreciation	6,481	4,542	3,006	14,029
Total	<u>1,931,113</u>	<u>4,542</u>	<u>513,543</u>	<u>2,449,198</u>
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)	65,736	(4,542)	23,033	84,227
Reconciliation of funds				
Total funds brought forward	410,011	11,354	57,364	478,729

The Advocacy Project

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued for the year ended 31 March 2023

11. Comparatives for the statement of financial activities - continued

	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
Total funds carried forward	475,747	6,812	80,397	562,956

12. Restricted income

The income funds of the charity include restricted funds comprising the following unexpected balances of donations and grants held on trust for specific purposes:

	Balance at 1 April 2022 £	Incoming Resources £	Movement in funds Resources expended £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2023 £
Professional Advocacy	14,382	79,928	(75,515)	-	18,795
RBKC Group Advocacy	-	47,104	(47,270)	166	-
Our Choice	645	41,292	(35,882)	-	6,055
Older Adult Advocacy	60,381	191,028	(189,667)	-	61,742
Dual Diagnosis	-	12,500	(20,214)	7,714	-
User Involvement	-	35,000	(34,886)	-	114
PHB	-	100,000	(106,353)	6,353	-
PHB	-	2,500	-	-	2,500
Community Speak Up Radio	4,987	1,400	(7,041)	654	0
	80,395	510,752	(516,828)	14,887	89,206

Transfers from unrestricted funds were made at the year end (2022: £8,078) to cover the deficits caused by loss making contracts.

Prior year

	Balance at 1 April 2021 £	Incoming Resources £	Movement in funds Resources expended £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2022 £
PHB	-	90,000	(90,000)	-	-
Professional Advocacy	12,589	79,930	(78,137)	-	14,382
Kew Advocacy Training	-	6,000	6,068	68	-
Our Choice	-	41,056	(40,411)	-	645
Lottery Community Fund	3,838	-	(3,838)	-	-
Older Adult Advocacy	40,937	191,027	(171,581)	-	60,381
RBKC Group Advocacy	-	47,104	(47,177)	73	-
Dual Diagnosis	-	12,500	(20,165)	7,665	-
Community Speak Up Radio	-	28,458	(23,471)	-	4,987
User Involvement	-	40,500	(40,773)	273	-
	57,364	536,575	(540,779)	8,078	80,395

The Advocacy Project

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued for the year ended 31 March 2023

13. Intangible fixed assets

Computer software £

Cost

At 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023

22,709

Amortisation

At 1 April 2022

15,896

Charge for year

4,542

At 31 March 2023

20,438

Net book value

At 31 March 2023

2,271

At 31 March 2022

6,813

14. Tangible fixed assets

Fixtures and fittings £

Cost

At 1 April 2022

101,325

Additions

5,954

Disposals

(16,629)

At 31 March 2023

90,650

Depreciation

At 1 April 2022

92,557

Charge for year

5,967

Eliminated on disposal

(16,629)

At 31 March 2023

81,895

Net book value

At 31 March 2023

8,755

At 31 March 2022

8,768

15. Debtors

2023
£

2022
£

Amounts falling due within one year:

Trade debtors

184,862

144,303

Other debtors

8,714

5,653

Prepayments and accrued income

90,854

48,600

284,430

198,556

The Advocacy Project

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued for the year ended 31 March 2023

15. Debtors - continued

	2023	2022
	£	£
Amounts falling due after more than one year:		
Other debtors	1,217	367
	<u>1,217</u>	<u>367</u>
Aggregate amounts	285,647	198,923
	<u>285,647</u>	<u>198,923</u>

16. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2023	2022
	£	£
Trade creditors	41,232	2,714
Social security and other taxes	42,557	38,016
Other creditors	35,310	10,272
Accruals and deferred income	1,721,051	337,549
	<u>1,840,150</u>	<u>388,551</u>

17. Leasing agreements

Minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases fall due as follows:

	2023	2022
	£	£
Within one year	2,700	2,700
Between one and five years	3,492	6,192
	<u>6,192</u>	<u>8,892</u>

18. Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds	Designated funds	Restricted funds	2023 Total funds	2022 Total funds
	£	£	£	£	£
Fixed assets	8,755	2,271	-	11,026	15,581
Current assets	2,249,179	-	89,206	2,338,385	935,926
Current liabilities	(1,840,150)	-	-	(1,840,150)	(388,551)
	<u>417,784</u>	<u>2,271</u>	<u>89,206</u>	<u>509,261</u>	<u>562,956</u>

Designated funds relate to the Intangible assets of the business.

Restricted funds relate to cash received for restricted income work which was not completed as at year end and, therefore, held within deferred income.

The Advocacy Project

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the year ended 31 March 2023

19. Movement in funds

	At 1/4/22 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 31/3/23 £
Unrestricted funds				
Unrestricted fund	475,748	(43,077)	(14,887)	417,784
Designated fund	6,813	(4,542)	-	2,271
	482,561	(47,619)	(14,887)	420,055
Restricted funds				
Restricted fund	80,395	(6,076)	14,887	89,206
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>562,956</u>	<u>(53,695)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>509,261</u>

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
Unrestricted fund	2,227,053	(2,270,130)	(43,077)
Designated fund	-	(4,542)	(4,542)
	2,227,053	(2,274,672)	(47,619)
Restricted funds			
Restricted fund	510,752	(516,828)	(6,076)
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>2,737,805</u>	<u>(2,791,500)</u>	<u>(53,695)</u>

Comparatives for movement in funds

	At 1/4/21 £	Net movement in funds £	At 31/3/22 £
Unrestricted funds			
Unrestricted fund	410,011	65,737	475,748
Designated fund	11,354	(4,541)	6,813
	421,365	61,196	482,561
Restricted funds			
Restricted fund	57,364	23,031	80,395
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>478,729</u>	<u>84,227</u>	<u>562,956</u>

The Advocacy Project

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued for the year ended 31 March 2023

19. Movement in funds - continued

Comparative net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
Unrestricted fund	1,996,849	(1,931,112)	65,737
Designated fund	-	(4,541)	(4,541)
	<u>1,996,849</u>	<u>(1,935,653)</u>	<u>61,196</u>
Restricted funds			
Restricted fund	536,576	(513,545)	23,031
	<u>536,576</u>	<u>(513,545)</u>	<u>23,031</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u><u>2,533,425</u></u>	<u><u>(2,449,198)</u></u>	<u><u>84,227</u></u>

A current year 12 months and prior year 12 months combined position is as follows:

	At 1/4/21 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 31/3/23 £
Unrestricted funds				
Unrestricted fund	410,011	22,660	(14,887)	417,784
Designated fund	11,354	(9,083)	-	2,271
	<u>421,365</u>	<u>13,577</u>	<u>(14,887)</u>	<u>420,055</u>
Restricted funds				
Restricted fund	57,364	16,955	14,887	89,206
	<u>57,364</u>	<u>16,955</u>	<u>14,887</u>	<u>89,206</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u><u>478,729</u></u>	<u><u>30,532</u></u>	<u><u>-</u></u>	<u><u>509,261</u></u>

A current year 12 months and prior year 12 months combined net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
Unrestricted fund	4,223,902	(4,201,242)	22,660
Designated fund	-	(9,083)	(9,083)
	<u>4,223,902</u>	<u>(4,210,325)</u>	<u>13,577</u>
Restricted funds			
Restricted fund	1,047,328	(1,030,373)	16,955
	<u>1,047,328</u>	<u>(1,030,373)</u>	<u>16,955</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u><u>5,271,230</u></u>	<u><u>(5,240,698)</u></u>	<u><u>30,532</u></u>

The Advocacy Project

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued for the year ended 31 March 2023

20. Employee benefit obligations

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme for all qualifying employees. The charge to income and expenditure account in respect of defined contribution schemes was £86,859 (2022: £81,116).

21. Related party disclosures

Except for the transactions referred to in Note 9 to the accounts, there were no related party transactions for the year ended 31 March 2023.

22. Designated fund

There are funds of £2,271 (2022: £6,813) that have been designated by the Trustees for the purpose of specific purposes included within general funds.

23. Company limited by guarantee

The company is a private company limited by guarantee and accordingly does not have share capital. The members of the Company are the Trustees named on page 1. In the event of the company being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited up to £1 per member of the company. The Company was incorporated in England and Wales and information relating to the registered office can be found on page 1.

The Advocacy Project - Financial Statements

Final Audit Report

2023-12-19

Created:	2023-12-18
By:	Emily Crowhurst (emily.crowhurst@cooperparry.com)
Status:	Signed
Transaction ID:	CBJCHBCAABAAC-eZNZBiZ6_bz9VupoGD48zOTQySjdXy

"The Advocacy Project - Financial Statements" History

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2023-12-19 - 4:31:12 PM GMT
-  Signer jane.wills@cooperparry.com entered name at signing as Cooper Parry Group Limited
2023-12-19 - 4:32:06 PM GMT
-  Document e-signed by Cooper Parry Group Limited (jane.wills@cooperparry.com)
Signature Date: 2023-12-19 - 4:32:08 PM GMT - Time Source: server
-  Agreement completed.
2023-12-19 - 4:32:08 PM GMT

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT

England & Wales - Charity number 1084106

Accounts

REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER: 04018315 (England and Wales)
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1084106

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)

Report of the Trustees and

Audited Financial Statements

for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT

Contents of the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2022

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THE ADVOCACY PROJECT

Reference and Administrative Details for the year ended 31 March 2022

Trustees	A Antonio C Starza-Allen (resigned 31/12/2021) M Hagan D Olajide J S Mckinlay (resigned 31/12/2021) J Davey J R Ellis R Skipp G Bull L C Baliga (appointed 20/5/2021) H Richardson (appointed 20/5/2021)
Company secretaries	J Davey M F Pace
Registered office	c/o SEIDs Hub Empire Way Wembley London HA9 0RJ
Registered company number	04018315 (England and Wales)
Registered charity number	1084106
Independent auditors	Haines Watts Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditor New Derwent House 69-73 Theobalds Road London WC1X 8TA

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
Report of the Trustees
for the year ended 31 March 2022

The trustees present their report and accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022.

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the accounts and comply with the charity's governing document, the Companies Act 2006 and "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (as amended for accounting periods commencing from 1 January 2016)

Objectives and activities

Objectives and aims

The Advocacy Project supports people to speak up and to make their own choices about their lives. Our vision is a world in which every person has a voice - including those who are marginalised or vulnerable because of their circumstances. We place a relentless focus on enabling people to have their voice heard, uphold their rights, and make informed choices. We support people to have their say and help improve important services we all need, including health and social care services. We also seek to tackle testimonial injustice - this kind of injustice occurs when someone is ignored, or not believed, just because of their circumstances, their gender, race, or disability.

We achieve these aims by delivering a range of projects and services - statutory and non-statutory including advocacy, user involvement, personal health budgets and Healthwatch services. The trustees have paid due regard to guidance issued by the Charity Commission in deciding what activities the charity should carry out.

How we work

We try hard not to do things "to" people or "for" people. Instead, we help people find their own voices and develop their capacity to do things for themselves - increasing their own agency. These principles underpin our approach to evaluating our impact. We know people feel stronger, safer and more confident after working with us. Click here to read some real stories from real people we've worked with:
<https://www.advocacyproject.org.uk/news/real-stories-about-real-people/>

Many staff who work for The Advocacy Project have lived experience of the issues we work on (whether learning disability, mental health or other disabilities). Two of our trustees are service users. Having the voices of lived experience at all levels of the organisation informs our approach to everything we do.

We are also a highly diverse organisation. This inclusivity and diversity helps us develop understanding and trust with service users. Understanding and trust means our work is truly focused on those things that make a real difference to the lives of people who face disadvantage, discrimination, and marginalisation.

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
Report of the Trustees
for the year ended 31 March 2022

Objectives and activities

Achievements and performance

Like all organisations across health and social care, we've had to navigate numerous pandemic-related challenges over the past year. During early 2021/22 the country was coming out of lockdown restrictions; we had a phased return to face-to-face working with thorough risk assessments to make sure staff and people we work with were as safe as possible. Throughout the pandemic we adapted our services to respond to people's needs at that time - including through additional welfare checks from our user involvement teams and the 'stay connected' personal health budget service which meant people could more easily get support for their mental health.

In Q2 the government's proposals for mandatory vaccinations came into view, which would firstly affect our staff working within CQC registered care homes and later included the proposal for staff working within NHS settings. We kept staff fully informed and took a measured approach to exploring alternative options for those staff who didn't want to be vaccinated. Through our careful management of this process we did not lose a single member of staff due to the vaccine requirements. Although the legislation was later revoked, it did affect our ability to recruit new advocates during this period and added to Covid-related workload pressures for both advocates and managers.

Advocacy referrals dipped considerably across the country through the pandemic. Our referrals are now returning towards previous levels, and we're continuing to work closely with commissioners to make sure all care groups and communities are being properly referred to advocacy services.

Staffing levels have been challenging. Unsurprisingly, we've experienced increased levels of sickness absence over the past year (both short and long term). In common with organisations across the country, the job market for health and social care was at times completely flat and it was difficult to recruit staff. We addressed any staffing gaps through prioritisation, internal re-deployment, flexible staffing models and secondments.

We're continuing to see the impact of the pandemic on our service users. In recent months our advocates have reported that staffing gaps in other health and social care organisations are having a significant impact on the people we work with. People are not getting the services they need - and advocates are spending more time trying to follow up cases with external professionals. This has meant advocates are encountering blocks to their work; it's taking longer to close cases; and service users' frustration has at times impacted directly on our staff.

Even with the significant challenges above, we've come through the pandemic period a stronger and more resilient organisation. We've learnt from adjusting our working methods, brought new ways of doing things into our working practice, and delivered our projects and services in more creative and flexible ways.

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
Report of the Trustees
for the year ended 31 March 2022

Objectives and activities

Focus on quality

This year has seen a focus on striving for continuous quality improvement across the organisation. We aim for high quality services which can be evidenced and lead to improved outcomes for the people who use our services.

In the earlier part of the year, we reviewed many of our organisational policies including those for safeguarding, confidentiality, equality and diversity, lone working and whistleblowing. We updated advocacy-specific policies on prioritisation, non-instructed advocacy, and engagement protocols. In this period we delivered training in safeguarding and data-protection for the whole organisation, as well as further developing advocates' skills in non-instructed advocacy.

In September 2021 we passed the Quality Performance Mark (QPM) with flying colours. The QPM accreditation is run by the National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi) (funded by The Department of Health) as a means of assessing advocacy services against a rigorous set of quality standards. In addition to the "deep dive" review of our governance, policies and procedures, there was an intensive three-day on-site assessment including interviews with staff, service users, commissioners and other external stakeholders. We were delighted the quality of our work, our strong governance and our diversity were recognised. We were particularly pleased the assessor recommended many of our policies as exemplars that other organisations could adopt. Our safeguarding policy and practice was particularly commended.

Following on from QPM, our plan for continuous improvement was to focus on excellent quality advocacy practice. To maintain quality service within the constraints of the external environment, we put an emphasis on our prioritisation policy and new methods of tracking casework. We set individual recording targets for each advocate which take into account a range of factors including contracted hours, type of advocacy delivered and any considerations that need to be given for extra time allowances specifically for staff who have disabilities. Commissioners are starting to note the improvements in reporting that the Head of Service Delivery has brought about. For example, Westminster City Council and Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea have said our reporting is now "exemplary".

We delivered a series of further safeguarding training sessions for the advocacy teams, and in Q2 we noted an increase in the number of safeguarding concerns raised as a result. Staff across the organisation were now better equipped to identify potential concerns and were clear about our alerting responsibilities. Staff indicated there are sometimes delays in the concerns being accepted by local authorities, which we are continuing to address through our escalation protocol. Our next step is to integrate the safeguarding section of our case management system. This will mean we can use the data to challenge unreasonable delays by safeguarding teams and make sure those in greatest need receive help and support when they need it most.

In Q4 we designed service development planning sessions for all our advocacy, user involvement, personal health budget and Healthwatch services. We planned these to give each team opportunity to focus in on what's needed for their specific service - and opportunity to share best practice across services. For the advocacy teams we designed the sessions to examine strengths, challenges, opportunities, and threats against each advocacy charter domain.

Other activities planned in Q4 for delivery in the new financial year include upgrades to our case management system to help us capture more detailed information and making it more efficient for staff to use. In Q4 we also prepared for the upcoming introduction of Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS) by planning training for our advocates who work under the Mental Capacity Act.

Staffing and organisational culture

Right across the organisation, our strong focus on staff development has resulted in a number of internal promotions this financial year. This has included senior appointments being filled internally, which has strengthened our management capacity. Seven other members of staff have taken up promotions or secondments - evidencing our commitment to staff professional development. In addition, we've also had a number of staff who had previously worked for The Advocacy Project apply to re-join the organisation - testimony to our positive working environment.

We've mentioned above that Covid has had an impact on recruitment right across the sector. Despite experiencing this ourselves earlier in the financial year, we adapted our recruitment approach with very positive results, and brought in a number of skilled and experienced staff. We were particularly pleased with our recruitment drives in our forensic services which are known in the sector to be more difficult to recruit to.

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
Report of the Trustees
for the year ended 31 March 2022

Objectives and activities

Other organisational news

On 1 April 2021 we began delivering the Healthwatch Brent service, which has gone from strength to strength over the financial year. We've developed strong connections with local communities - particularly those who are seldom heard - and partnered with various agencies in the borough to make sure residents can speak up and help improve local health and social care services. Successes include our Patient Voice and GP Access surveys, and leading on the consultation to refresh the Health & Wellbeing Strategy to make sure it meets the needs of residents and patients. As a result of the GP Access surveys, we submitted recommendations to Brent Primary Care commissioning team and 11 GP practices across the borough to help to improve access to GP appointments for Brent residents. As well as delivering a full Healthwatch service, our track record has meant we've also been commissioned to do specific additional work.

User involvement successes over the year included working with the Biborough on a housing consultation for people with learning disabilities and their carers as part of the pre-tender exercise for supported housing. The report we co-produced together with people with learning disabilities has been positively received by the Bi-borough. In Q4, the user involvement team carried out a detailed survey in Camden to research equality and diversity in people's experiences of mental health services. In November we were delighted to re-start the contract for Synergy: the experts by experience service for people with learning disabilities in Camden, having previously held this contract for several years. We welcomed the project manager and six people with learning disabilities into our staff team. Synergy's recent projects have included working with Mental Health Voice (MHV) and the National Pledge to Reduce Ethnic Inequalities in Mental Health Systems. Two service users were filmed for a Synergy webinar on their experiences of accessing local mental health services and the support they received from MHV.

Our Personal Health Budgets (PHB) service has grown considerably throughout the year. We were commissioned to work on the new digital platform Patient Knows Best (PKB) and have rolled this out with commissioners and key stakeholders. We secured a new PHB contract for children & young people in Tower Hamlets, an exciting development with an expansion into a new borough and a new client group. We're also working with the North East London Clinical Commissioning Group to offer PHBs for mental health recovery to people in Tower Hamlets and Newham based on the City & Hackney model. This includes access to the 'stay connected' PHB.

Our year-long community radio station project - Speak Up Radio - launched in June 2021 and provided a valuable and easy-to-understand information about access to services, health and wellbeing, and information about access to advocacy and eligibility criteria sprinkled amongst music, interviews with service users and talks.

In Q4 we began mobilisation for Brent ASD care navigation (autism spectrum disorder)- this service will provide support to adults who are waiting for an ASD assessment or have been recently diagnosed as being autistic, in accessing health and social care. As well as providing views and experiences to strategic boards and decision makers on health issues and access to support and services.

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
Report of the Trustees
for the year ended 31 March 2022

Objectives and activities

Looking forward

As we do each year, we've reviewed our strategic plan. This year, as we emerge from the Covid pandemic into a somewhat changed world, we've focused in on what will make most difference for the people we work with given the external environment we face together. We're well aware of the pressures faced by all organisations in the health and social care sector, and the knock-on effect this is having on the people we support. We've prioritised focusing in on delivery a quality service and maintaining our financial sustainability so we can continue to offer a bedrock of support - and change lives for the better - in these challenging times.

Our strategic priorities this year are as follows.

Prioritising those in greatest need

- focusing on those who struggle to get their voice heard
- proactively highlighting unmet need internally and externally
- analysing our data and taking action on under/over representation of particular user groups
- identifying and removing barriers
- not doing work that's outside our remit

Making sure the voices of people in greatest need are at the heart of all we do

- greater focus on outcomes - individual, local and national
- strengthen our 'user voice' work, including user council
- capture detailed intelligence on what people are telling us
- work with the Advocacy & Change Committee to bring voices of those in greatest need to the attention of those in powerful positions

'Getting the basics right'; fine-tuning our operating model to support our ultimate aims

- high quality person-centred work
- exemplary customer service
- feedback and complaints inform our service development
- efficient operating model supports business needs and ultimate aims
- income strategy meets business needs and ultimate aims

'Getting the basics right' includes a particular focus on supporting our staff team. Covid has taken its toll on workplaces across the sector and country, and The Advocacy Project is no exception. Having prioritised staff safety and mental health at an individual level throughout the pandemic, particularly through periods of remote-working, our focus now is to strengthen our collective spirit. We'll be carrying out a number of initiatives to build the network of strong team relationships that have underpinned our successes as an organisation to date.

Given the many changes we've faced, and continue to face, in the external environment over the last two years, we'll keep the strategic plan, the income diversification plan, and our financial forecast under close review.

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
Report of the Trustees
for the year ended 31 March 2022

Strategic report

Financial review

It was another challenging and a tough financial year, as the impact of Covid and the steep rise in cost of living contributed to a volatile operating environment. It continues to be difficult to bring in new income sources, especially from trust and foundations and donations, whilst recruiting skilled and experienced staff is expensive.

However, despite these challenges we have come through the difficult year in good financial shape, and this is due to tight financial management and, in large part, due to the hard work of our staff who continue to provide the best service we can to the people we support. We showed a solid financial performance throughout the year and closed the year with a surplus of £84k.

Our turnover for 2021/22 was £2.53m which is increase of £274k from 2020/21 when turnover was £2.26m.

During the year we secured new contracts including:

- Brent Healthwatch,
- Hackney Independent Advocacy Health Complaints Service
- Camden Learning disabilities experts by Experience
- Expansion of the Personal Health Budget (PHB) project.
- Community radio

Expenditure during the year was £2.45m which is an increase of £204k from 2020/21, when expenditure was £2.24m.

Our policy is that unrestricted funds that have not been designated for a specific use should be maintained at a level equivalent to between three and six months' expenditure. The trustees consider that reserves at this level will ensure that, in the event of a significant drop in funding, will enable us to continue current activities while consideration is given to ways in which additional funds may be raised.

In line with our strategic aims, trustees agreed to invest unrestricted reserves in organisational development to support our growth and sustainability.

We were able to give our staff a small pay increases this year to help with the rising costs. We continue to invest in staff training and development. We are introducing a new pay progression framework which will enable staff to progress up salary band in commensurate with their skills, education, and experience. We are also investing more on technology to deliver services innovatively and offer staff flexible working facilities and environment.

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
Report of the Trustees
for the year ended 31 March 2022

Strategic report
Financial review
Fundraising

The Advocacy Project's approach to growth and income diversification is to extend our core business across London and key national work through a variety of income sources - public sector contracts, private health and social care contracts, and grants from trusts and foundations.

We continue to invest in seeking funds from trusts and foundations and also private providers over the year. We have diversified into delivery of Healthwatch - statutory user involvement focused on reducing health inequalities and gathering patient and resident voices to improve delivery of local health and social care services, initially in Brent in 2021. Since then, we have secured two more Healthwatch services - one in Westminster and one in Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, starting in April 2022, with combined contract value of £1,499,542 over 5 years.

Despite not having a Head of Business Development since Oct 2021, we made strong progress in FY2021/22, successfully winning number of multi-year contracts totalling around £1.2m over five years of which £320k was received in the 2021/22 financial year and exceeding our target of £300k. Our ratio of bids issued to bids won remains high.

Highlights include:

- Extending our work on rollout of Personal Health Budgets
- Winning more advocacy contracts to help residents raise complaints about the NHS
- Being awarded the contract to run the Healthwatch service in Brent
- Camden Learning Disabilities Experts by Experience- transforming local services for people with learning disabilities
- Speak Up Radio - an online radio station for people with learning disabilities and mental health issues with the Imperial Health Charity
- Brent ASD care navigator pilot project
- Independent Advocacy Health Complaints Service in Hackney

No complaints have been received about our fundraising practices whether undertaken directly or by agencies acting on our behalf. We are registered with the Fundraising Regulator.

Our governance handbook, our business development procedures, and employee handbook show how we protect vulnerable people and others from unreasonable intrusion of a person's privacy, unreasonably persistent approaches, or undue pressure to donate. We do not use direct marketing fundraising techniques. We do not use face-to-face or door-to-door fundraising techniques, nor do we outsource donor relationships to third parties. We do not exchange or sell our donors and supporters personal data.

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
Report of the Trustees
for the year ended 31 March 2022

Structure, governance and management

Structure

The Advocacy Project is a charity and a company limited by guarantee. Our objects enable us to have a governance structure with a board of trustees and a user council. We are a unitary board, and have four board committees - Finance, Risk & Audit; HR, Remuneration & Policy; Business Development and Fundraising; and Advocacy & Change (a new committee set up in 2021 to enable us to have greater impact on systemic change)

In line with our values (and with permission from the Charity Commission), we pay service user trustees at London Living Wage for their time as trustees. The board delegates day-to-day management to the Chief Executive who works with and through the senior leadership team.

Governance

Our governance handbook sets out the standards to which trustees must conform, and includes clear policies on managing conflict of interest, duty and loyalty. This handbook, which was reviewed during the previous financial year, assisted the charity in passing the rigorous process of accreditation to the Quality Performance Mark (QPM) - the kitemark for advocacy providers. The QPM desktop assessment report from 2021 describes the handbook as a "really excellent document". It also states that "the organisational governance framework is impressive, as is the use of external experts in governance the field as well as lawyers, health & safety and data protection experts to ensure compliance with legislation and best practice. Our safeguarding policies and practice have been assessed through the same process as being "excellent, comprehensive and clear". The 2021 desktop assessment report also states that our governance handbook and many of our policies "could be used as exemplars in other organisations".

Having a diverse board of trustees that reflect the people we support is of great importance to the charity as it demonstrates our values in practice. All recruitment is carried out using an open selection process and competency-based interviews. We're often asked to write articles for organisations like The Governance Institute (ICSA) and speak at charity sector conferences on how we have achieved board diversity in practice, and how we've made our governance processes accessible to everyone using approaches like financial accounts being available in easy read. Detailed information about the trustees can be found here: www.advocacyproject.org.uk/who-we-are/trustees

Management

The Employee Handbook and the Health, Safety & Wellbeing Handbook clearly set out our policies and procedures and are reviewed for compliance with legislation and best practice each year. We improved our staff wellbeing offer still further by giving all staff access to independent clinical supervision in addition to a 24 hour confidential care service (which provides access to counselling).

We're known in the advocacy sector for the strength of our learning and development programme for staff. We support staff to achieve their national advocacy qualification (NAQ) or other professional qualifications. This year we've given staff time off in lieu to attend our new monthly lecture series, which we're running in collaboration with Councillor Ketan Sheth, where national experts discuss topics of interest in the health and social care field.

The Advocacy Project's policy is to consult and discuss with employees matters likely to affect employees' interests. Information about matters of concern to employees is given through regular staff briefings, information bulletins and reports which seek to achieve a common awareness on the part of all employees of the financial and economic factors affecting the organisation's performance.

We have a recognition agreement with UNISON.

We are a Mindful Employer and a Disability Confident Employer. Applications for employment by people with protected characteristics and disabilities are always fully considered, bearing in mind the aptitudes of the applicant concerned. In the event that members of staff become disabled, every effort is made to ensure that their employment continues and that the appropriate training is arranged. It is the policy of the charity that training, career development and promotion of disabled people should, as far as possible, be identical to that of other employees. We have developed easy read contracts of employment, appraisal and supervision processes for our staff with learning disabilities.

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2022

Trustees' responsibility statement

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

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

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

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

In so far as the trustees are aware:

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

Report of the trustees, incorporating a strategic report, approved by order of the board of trustees, as the company directors, on**27/09/2022**..... and signed on the board's behalf by:



.....
D Olajide - Trustee

Report of the Independent Auditors to the Members of The Advocacy Project

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of The Advocacy Project (the 'charitable company') for the year ended 31 March 2022 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Statement of Financial Position, the Statement of Cash Flows and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland'.

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 2022 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, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland'; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

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

Conclusions relating to going concern

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

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

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

Other information

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

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

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

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

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

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

Report of the Independent Auditors to the Members of The Advocacy Project

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

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

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

- adequate accounting records have not been kept or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of trustees

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

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

Our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

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

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:

We gained an understanding of the legal and regulatory framework applicable to the charity and the area in which it operates, and considered the risk of acts by the charity that were contrary to applicable laws and regulations, including fraud. We discussed with the trustees the policies and procedures in place regarding compliance with laws and regulations. We discussed amongst the audit team the identified laws and regulations, and remained alert to any indications of non-compliance.

During the audit we focussed on laws and regulations which could reasonably be expected to give rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements, including, but not limited to, the Charities Act 2011. Our tests included agreeing the financial statement disclosures to underlying supporting documentation and enquiries with management.

Our procedures in relation to fraud included but were not limited to: inquires of management whether they have any knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud, and discussions amongst the audit team regarding risk of fraud such as opportunities for fraudulent manipulation of financial statements. We determined that the principal risks related to posting manual journal entries to manipulate financial performance and management bias through judgements in accounting estimates. We also addressed the risk of management override of internal controls, including testing journals and evaluating whether there was evidence of bias by management that represented a risk of material misstatement due to fraud.

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

**Report of the Independent Auditors to the Members of
The Advocacy Project**

Use of our report

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

Haines Watts

[Haines Watts \(Sep 27, 2022 18:51 GMT+1\)](#)

Jane Wills (Senior Statutory Auditor)
for and on behalf of Haines Watts
Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditor
New Derwent House
69-73 Theobalds Road
London
WC1X 8TA

Date: 27/09/2022

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT

Statement of Financial Activities (Incorporating an Income and Expenditure Account) for the year ended 31 March 2022

		Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	2022 Total funds £	2021 Total funds £
	Notes					
Income and endowments from						
Donations and legacies	2	-	-	-	-	800
Other trading activities	3	1,927,138	-	536,525	2,463,663	2,255,622
Investment income	4	191	-	51	242	106
Other income		69,520	-	-	69,520	3,336
Total		<u>1,996,849</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>536,576</u>	<u>2,533,425</u>	<u>2,259,864</u>
Expenditure on						
Raising funds	5	93	-	-	93	-
Charitable activities	6					
Support costs		333,668	-	254,999	588,667	586,296
Governance costs		14,703	-	3,944	18,647	8,664
Staff costs		1,522,146	-	236,853	1,758,999	1,291,252
Direct expenditure		54,022	-	14,741	68,763	343,961
Depreciation		6,481	4,542	3,006	14,029	14,660
Total		<u>1,931,113</u>	<u>4,542</u>	<u>513,543</u>	<u>2,449,198</u>	<u>2,244,833</u>
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)		65,736	(4,542)	23,033	84,227	15,031
Reconciliation of funds						
Total funds brought forward		410,011	11,354	57,364	478,729	463,698
Total funds carried forward		<u>475,747</u>	<u>6,812</u>	<u>80,397</u>	<u>562,956</u>	<u>478,729</u>

Continuing operations

All income and expenditure has arisen from continuing activities.

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT

Statement of Financial Position 31 March 2022

		2022 £	2021 £
Fixed assets	Notes		
Intangible assets	14	6,813	11,354
Tangible assets	15	8,768	14,750
		<u>15,581</u>	<u>26,104</u>
Current assets			
Debtors: amounts falling due within one year	16	198,556	199,487
Debtors: amounts falling due after more than one year	16	367	8,382
Cash at bank and in hand		737,003	734,534
		<u>935,926</u>	<u>942,403</u>
Creditors			
Amounts falling due within one year	17	(388,551)	(489,778)
		<u></u>	<u></u>
Net current assets		<u>547,375</u>	<u>452,625</u>
Total assets less current liabilities		<u>562,956</u>	<u>478,729</u>
NET ASSETS		<u>562,956</u>	<u>478,729</u>
Funds	19		
Unrestricted funds:			
Unrestricted fund		475,748	410,011
Designated fund		6,813	11,354
		<u>482,561</u>	<u>421,365</u>
Restricted funds:			
Restricted fund		80,395	57,364
		<u>80,395</u>	<u>57,364</u>
Total funds		<u>562,956</u>	<u>478,729</u>

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on
27/09/2022..... and were signed on its behalf by:



 D Olajide - Trustee

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT

Statement of Cash Flows for the year ended 31 March 2022

	Notes	2022 £	2021 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Cash generated from operations	1	5,732	332,649
Net cash provided by operating activities		5,732	332,649
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(3,505)	(9,860)
Interest received		242	106
Net cash used in investing activities		(3,263)	(9,754)
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period		2,469	322,895
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		734,534	411,639
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period		737,003	734,534

The notes form part of these financial statements

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT

Notes to the Statement of Cash Flows for the year ended 31 March 2022

1. Reconciliation of net income to net cash flow from operating activities

	2022 £	2021 £
Net income for the reporting period (as per the Statement of Financial Activities)	84,227	15,031
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation charges	14,028	14,660
Interest received	(242)	(106)
Decrease in debtors	8,945	51,495
(Decrease)/increase in creditors	(101,226)	251,569
Net cash provided by operations	<u>5,732</u>	<u>332,649</u>

2. Analysis of changes in net funds

	At 1/4/21 £	Cash flow £	At 31/3/22 £
Net cash			
Cash at bank and in hand	734,534	2,469	737,003
	<u>734,534</u>	<u>2,469</u>	<u>737,003</u>
Total	<u>734,534</u>	<u>2,469</u>	<u>737,003</u>

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2022

1. Accounting policies

Basis of preparing the financial statements

The financial statements of the charitable company, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019)', Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Companies Act 2006. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

Income

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

Expenditure

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Significant judgements and estimates

There are no critical accounting judgements and estimation uncertainty at the end of the reporting period that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the financial year.

Allocation and apportionment of costs

Staff and support costs are allocated to the particular activity where the costs relate to that activity.

Overhead costs are apportioned based on the income of a particular activity.

Intangible assets

Intangible assets comprise primarily computer software and internal database systems. Such assets are defined as having finite useful lives and the costs are amortised on a straight line basis over their estimated useful lives of 5 years. Intangible assets are stated at cost less amortisation and are reviewed for impairment whenever there is an indication that the carrying value may be impaired.

Tangible fixed assets

Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life.

Fixtures and fittings - 33% on cost

Taxation

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

Fund accounting

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

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.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

Financial instruments

Financial assets and financial liabilities are recognised in the balance sheet when the company becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued for the year ended 31 March 2022

1. Accounting policies - continued

Financial instruments

Trade and other debtors and creditors are classified as basic financial instruments and measured at initial recognition at transaction price. Debtors and creditors are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest rate method. A provision is established when there is objective evidence that the company will not be able to collect all amounts due.

Cash and cash equivalents are classified as basic financial instruments and comprise cash in hand and at bank.

Cash and cash equivalents

These comprise cash at bank and other short-term highly liquid bank deposits with an original maturity of three months or less.

Debtors

Debtors do not carry any interest and are stated at their nominal value. Appropriate allowances for estimated irrecoverable amounts are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities when there is objective evidence that the asset is impaired.

Trade Creditors

Trade creditors are not interest bearing and are stated at their nominal value.

2. Donations and legacies

	2022	2021
	£	£
Donations and gifts	-	800
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

3. Other trading activities

	2022	2021
	£	£
Charitable trading activities	2,463,663	2,255,622
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

4. Investment income

	2022	2021
	£	£
Interest receivable	242	106
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

5. Raising funds

Raising donations and legacies

	2022	2021
	£	£
Postage and stationery	93	-
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued for the year ended 31 March 2022

6. Charitable activities costs

	Direct Costs £	Support costs (see note 7) £	Totals £
Support costs	(16,105)	604,772	588,667
Governance costs	27	18,620	18,647
Staff costs	1,758,999	-	1,758,999
Direct expenditure	68,763	-	68,763
Depreciation	14,029	-	14,029
	<u>1,825,713</u>	<u>623,392</u>	<u>2,449,105</u>

7. Support costs

	Other £	Governance costs £	Totals £
Support costs	604,772	-	604,772
Governance costs	-	18,620	18,620
	<u>604,772</u>	<u>18,620</u>	<u>623,392</u>

Support costs, included in the above, are as follows:

Other

	2022 Support costs £	2021 Total activities £
Staff costs	65,329	107,510
Building and office costs	126,143	135,354
Support and development costs	413,300	343,432
	<u>604,772</u>	<u>586,296</u>

Governance costs

	2022 Governance costs £	2021 Total activities £
Auditors' remuneration	10,500	6,110
Management fees	1,651	1,509
Governance support	6,443	979
AGM & Annual report	26	66
	<u>18,620</u>	<u>8,664</u>

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued for the year ended 31 March 2022

8. Net income/(expenditure)

Net income/(expenditure) is stated after charging/(crediting):

	2022	2021
	£	£
Depreciation - owned assets	9,488	10,118
Computer software amortisation	4,541	4,542
	<u>14,029</u>	<u>14,660</u>

9. Auditors' remuneration

	2022	2021
	£	£
Fees payable to the charity's auditors and their associates for the audit of the charity's financial statements	10,500	6,110
	<u>10,500</u>	<u>6,110</u>

10. Trustees' remuneration and benefits

The trustees were not paid or received any other benefits from employment (2021: Nil) except for service users, A Antonio and M Hagan, who have been paid the London Living Wage and the total during the year was £1,650 (2021: £733). This is in accordance with the charity's governing document.

No trustee received payment for professional or other services supplied to the charity (2021: Nil) except for J Davey, who was paid remuneration of £66,687 (2021: £66,300) in her capacity as the CEO. The charity also paid £4,001 (2021: £3,978) towards her pension contributions. She received no employment benefits for her role as a trustee.

The key management personnel of the charity comprise the CEO, Deputy CEO, Head of Finance, Head of Business Development, Head of Services and Head of Comms. The total employee benefits of key management personnel of the charity were £267,862 (2021: 258,399).

Trustees' expenses

There were no trustees' expenses paid for the year ended 31 March 2022 nor for the year ended 31 March 2021.

11. Staff costs

	2021	2020
	£	£
Wages and salaries	1,131,102	1,109,740
Social security costs	130,325	90,897
Pension costs	77,658	53,139
	<u>1,339,085</u>	<u>1,253,776</u>

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	2022	2021
Employed staff	60	54
Sessional	7	5
	<u>67</u>	<u>59</u>

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued for the year ended 31 March 2022

11. Staff costs - continued

The number of employees whose employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) exceeded £60,000 was:

	2022	2021
	1	1
£60,001 - £70,000		

12. Comparatives for the statement of financial activities

	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
Income and endowments from				
Donations and legacies	595	-	205	800
Other trading activities	1,667,209	-	588,413	2,255,622
Investment income	79	-	27	106
Other income	3,336	-	-	3,336
Total	1,671,219	-	588,645	2,259,864
Expenditure on				
Charitable activities				
Support costs	378,607	-	207,689	586,296
Governance costs	6,443	-	2,221	8,664
Staff costs	1,035,638	-	255,614	1,291,252
Direct expenditure	241,284	-	102,677	343,961
Depreciation	10,118	4,542	-	14,660
Total	1,672,090	4,542	568,201	2,244,833
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)	(871)	(4,542)	20,444	15,031
Transfers between funds	(27,556)	-	27,556	-
Net movement in funds	(28,427)	(4,542)	48,000	15,031
Reconciliation of funds				
Total funds brought forward	438,438	15,896	9,364	463,698
Total funds carried forward	410,011	11,354	57,364	478,729

13. Restricted income

The income funds of the charity include restricted funds comprising the following unexpected balances of donations and grants held on trust for specific purposes:

	Balance at 1 April 2021 £	Movement in funds			Balance at 31 March 2022 £
		Incoming Resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	
PHB	-	90,000	(90,000)	-	-
Professional Advocacy	12,589	79,930	(78,137)	-	14,382
Kew Advocacy Training	-	6,000	6,068	68	-
Our Choice	-	41,056	(40,411)	-	645

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued for the year ended 31 March 2022

13. Restricted income - continued

Lottery Community Fund	3,838	-	(3,838)	-	-
Older Adult Advocacy	40,937	191,027	(171,581)	-	60,383
RBKC Group Advocacy	-	47,104	(47,177)	73	-
Dual Diagnosis	-	12,500	(20,165)	7,665	-
Community Speak Up	-	-	-	-	-
Radio	-	28,458	(23,471)	-	4,987
User Involvement	-	40,500	(40,773)	273	-
	<u>57,364</u>	<u>536,575</u>	<u>(540,779)</u>	<u>8,078</u>	<u>80,397</u>

Transfers from unrestricted funds were made at the year end (2021: £8,078) to cover the deficits caused by loss making contracts.

Prior year

	Balance at 1 April 2020 £	Incoming Resources £	Movement in funds Resources expended £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2021 £
PHB	-	90,000	(91,600)	-	-
Professional Advocacy	3,360	79,930	(70,701)	-	12,589
Knew Advocacy Training	-	6,000	(6,438)	438	-
Speak Up Speak Out	-	12,500	(23,587)	11,087	-
Our Choice	-	41,047	(54,380)	13,333	-
Lottery Community Fund	-	83,676	(79,838)	-	3,838
Dual Diagnosis	-	-	-	-	-
Older Adult Advocacy	-	191,027	(150,090)	-	40,937
Big Voice	-	47,864	(50,406)	2,542	-
User Involvement	6,004	35,000	(41,161)	157	-
	<u>9,364</u>	<u>588,644</u>	<u>(568,201)</u>	<u>27,557</u>	<u>57,364</u>

14. Intangible fixed assets

	Computer software £
Cost	
At 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022	<u>22,709</u>
Amortisation	
At 1 April 2021	11,355
Charge for year	<u>4,541</u>
At 31 March 2022	<u>15,896</u>
Net book value	
At 31 March 2022	<u>6,813</u>
At 31 March 2021	<u>11,354</u>

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the year ended 31 March 2022

15. Tangible fixed assets

Fixtures
and
fittings
£

Cost

At 1 April 2021

97,820

Additions

3,505

At 31 March 2022

101,325

Depreciation

At 1 April 2021

83,069

Charge for year

9,488

At 31 March 2022

92,557

Net book value

At 31 March 2022

8,768

At 31 March 2021

14,751

16. Debtors

2022

2021

£

£

Amounts falling due within one year:

Trade debtors

144,303

151,234

Other debtors

5,653

4,313

Prepayments and accrued income

48,600

43,940

198,556

199,487

Amounts falling due after more than one year:

Other debtors

367

8,382

Aggregate amounts

198,923

207,869

17. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

2022

2021

£

£

Trade creditors

2,714

23,610

Social security and other taxes

38,016

37,375

Other creditors

10,272

9,853

HMRC Furlough creditor

-

37,063

Accruals and deferred income

337,549

381,877

388,551

489,778

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued for the year ended 31 March 2022

18. Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds	Designated funds	Restricted funds	2022 Total funds	2021 Total funds
	£	£	£	£	£
Fixed assets	8,768	6,813	-	15,581	26,104
Current assets	855,531	-	80,395	935,926	942,403
Current liabilities	(388,551)	-	-	(388,551)	(489,778)
	<u>475,748</u>	<u>6,813</u>	<u>80,395</u>	<u>562,956</u>	<u>478,729</u>

19. Movement in funds

	At 1/4/21	Net movement in funds	At 31/3/22
	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds			
Unrestricted fund	410,011	65,737	475,748
Designated fund	11,354	(4,541)	6,813
	<u>421,365</u>	<u>61,196</u>	<u>482,561</u>
Restricted funds			
Restricted fund	57,364	23,031	80,395
	<u>57,364</u>	<u>23,031</u>	<u>80,395</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>478,729</u>	<u>84,227</u>	<u>562,956</u>

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources	Resources expended	Movement in funds
	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds			
Unrestricted fund	1,996,849	(1,931,112)	65,737
Designated fund	-	(4,541)	(4,541)
	<u>1,996,849</u>	<u>(1,935,653)</u>	<u>61,196</u>
Restricted funds			
Restricted fund	536,576	(513,545)	23,031
	<u>536,576</u>	<u>(513,545)</u>	<u>23,031</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>2,533,425</u>	<u>(2,449,198)</u>	<u>84,227</u>

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued for the year ended 31 March 2022

19. Movement in funds - continued

Comparatives for movement in funds

	At 1/4/20 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 31/3/21 £
Unrestricted funds				
Unrestricted fund	438,438	(871)	(27,556)	410,011
Designated fund	15,896	(4,542)	-	11,354
	<u>454,334</u>	<u>(5,413)</u>	<u>(27,556)</u>	<u>421,365</u>
Restricted funds				
Restricted fund	9,364	20,444	27,556	57,364
	<u>9,364</u>	<u>20,444</u>	<u>27,556</u>	<u>57,364</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>463,698</u>	<u>15,031</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>478,729</u>

Comparative net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
Unrestricted fund	1,671,219	(1,672,090)	(871)
Designated fund	-	(4,542)	(4,542)
	<u>1,671,219</u>	<u>(1,676,632)</u>	<u>(5,413)</u>
Restricted funds			
Restricted fund	588,645	(568,201)	20,444
	<u>588,645</u>	<u>(568,201)</u>	<u>20,444</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>2,259,864</u>	<u>(2,244,833)</u>	<u>15,031</u>

A current year 12 months and prior year 12 months combined position is as follows:

	At 1/4/20 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 31/3/22 £
Unrestricted funds				
Unrestricted fund	438,438	64,866	(27,556)	475,748
Designated fund	15,896	(9,083)	-	6,813
	<u>454,334</u>	<u>55,783</u>	<u>(27,556)</u>	<u>482,561</u>
Restricted funds				
Restricted fund	9,364	43,475	27,556	80,395
	<u>9,364</u>	<u>43,475</u>	<u>27,556</u>	<u>80,395</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>463,698</u>	<u>99,258</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>562,956</u>

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued for the year ended 31 March 2022

19. Movement in funds - continued

A current year 12 months and prior year 12 months combined net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
Unrestricted fund	3,668,068	(3,603,202)	64,866
Designated fund	-	(9,083)	(9,083)
	<u>3,668,068</u>	<u>(3,612,285)</u>	<u>55,783</u>
Restricted funds			
Restricted fund	1,125,221	(1,081,746)	43,475
	<u>1,125,221</u>	<u>(1,081,746)</u>	<u>43,475</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u><u>4,793,289</u></u>	<u><u>(4,694,031)</u></u>	<u><u>99,258</u></u>

20. Employee benefit obligations

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme for all qualifying employees. The charge to income and expenditure account in respect of defined contribution schemes was £81,116 (2021: £77,869).

21. Related party disclosures

There were no related party transactions for the year ended 31 March 2022.

22. Designated fund

There are funds of £6,813 that have been designated by the Trustees for the purpose of specific purposes included within general funds.

23. Company limited by guarantee

The company is a private company limited by guarantee and accordingly does not have share capital. The members of the Company are the Trustees named on page 1. In the event of the company being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited up to £1 per member of the company. The Company was incorporated in England and Wales and information relating to the registered office can be found on page 1.



Haines Watts
Chartered Accountants
And Statutory Auditors
New Derwent House
69-73 Theobalds Rd
London WC1X 8TA

Dear Sirs

**THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022**

The following representations are made on the basis of enquiries of management and staff with relevant knowledge and experience such as we consider necessary in connection with your audit of the charity's financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2022. These enquiries have included inspection of supporting documentation where appropriate and are sufficient to satisfy ourselves that we can make each of the following representations. All representations are made to the best of our knowledge and belief.

General

- 1 We have fulfilled our responsibilities as trustees as set out in the terms of your engagement letter dated 16 June 2022, under the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Act 2011 for preparing financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view and for making accurate representations to you.
- 2 All the transactions undertaken by the charity have been properly reflected and recorded in the accounting records.
- 3 All the accounting records have been made available to you for the purpose of your audit. We have provided you with unrestricted access to all appropriate persons within the charity, and with all other records and related information requested, including minutes of all management and trustee meetings and correspondence with The Charity Commission.
- 4 The financial statements are free of material misstatements, including omissions.
- 5 We accept and approve the adjustments made to arrive at the financial statements, as set out in the attached appendix.

Internal control and fraud

- 6 We acknowledge our responsibility for the design, implementation and maintenance of internal control systems to prevent and detect fraud and error. We have disclosed to you the results of our risk assessment that the financial statements may be misstated as a result of fraud.
- 7 We have disclosed to you all instances of known or suspected fraud affecting the entity involving management, employees who have a significant role in internal control or others that could have a material effect on the financial statements.
- 8 We have also disclosed to you all information in relation to allegations of fraud or suspected fraud affecting the entity's financial statements communicated by current or former employees, analysts, regulators or others.

Assets and liabilities

- 9 The charity has satisfactory title to all assets and there are no liens or encumbrances on charity's assets, except for those that are disclosed in the notes to the financial statements.
- 10 All actual liabilities, contingent liabilities and guarantees given to third parties have been recorded or disclosed as appropriate.
- 11 We have no plans or intentions that may materially alter the carrying value and where relevant the fair value measurements or classification of assets and liabilities reflected in the financial statements.

Accounting estimates

- 12 Significant assumptions used by us in making accounting estimates, including those measured at fair value, are reasonable.

Loans and arrangements

- 13 The charitable company has not granted any advances or credits to, or made guarantees on behalf of, directors other than those disclosed in the financial statements.

Legal claims

- 14 We have disclosed to you all claims in connection with litigation that have been, or are expected to be, received and such matters, as appropriate, have been properly accounted for, and disclosed in, the financial statements.

Laws and regulations

- 15 We have disclosed to you all known instances of non-compliance or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations whose effects should be considered when preparing the financial statements.

Related parties

- 16 Related party relationships and transactions have been appropriately accounted for and disclosed in the financial statements. We have disclosed to you all relevant information concerning such relationships and transactions and are not aware of any other matters which require disclosure in order to comply with legislative and accounting standards requirements.

Subsequent events

- 17 All events subsequent to the date of the financial statements which require adjustment or disclosure have been properly accounted for and disclosed.

Going concern

- 18 We believe that the charity's financial statements should be prepared on a going concern basis on the grounds that current and future sources of funding or support will be more than adequate for charity's needs. We have considered a period of twelve months from the date of approval of the financial statements. We believe that no further disclosures relating to the charity's ability to continue as a going concern need to be made in the financial statements.

Grants and donations

- 19 All grants, donations and other income, the receipt of which is subject to specific terms or conditions, have been notified to you. There have been no breaches of terms or conditions in the application of such income.

We acknowledge our legal responsibilities regarding disclosure of information to you as auditors and confirm that so far as we are aware, there is no relevant audit information needed by you in connection with preparing your audit report of which you are unaware.

Each trustee has taken all the steps that he ought to have taken as a trustee in order to make himself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that you are aware of that information.

Yours faithfully



Name: DELE OLAJIDE

Signed on behalf of the board of trustees

Date: 27/09/2022

Charity No 1084106

Company No 04018315

The Advocacy Project financial accounts for 31 March 2022

Final Audit Report

2022-09-27

Created:	2022-09-26
By:	Mike Joy (mjoy@hwca.com)
Status:	Signed
Transaction ID:	CBJCHBCAABAALs9k3ecVkmTJMc0X7eFrgwqMvIwqdJWk

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-  Signer jwills@hwca.com entered name at signing as Haines Watts
2022-09-27 - 5:51:18 PM GMT- IP address: 185.175.36.151
-  Document e-signed by Haines Watts (jwills@hwca.com)
Signature Date: 2022-09-27 - 5:51:20 PM GMT - Time Source: server- IP address: 185.175.36.151
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THE ADVOCACY PROJECT

England & Wales - Charity number 1084106

Accounts

REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER: 04018315 (England and Wales)
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1084106

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)

Report of the Trustees and

Audited Financial Statements

for the Year Ended 31 March 2021

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
Contents of the Financial Statements
for the year ended 31 March 2021

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THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
Reference and Administrative Details
for the year ended 31 March 2021

Trustees	Adam Antonio Ms Claire Starza-Allen Michael Hagan Dr Dele Olajide Jacqueline Sheila Mckinlay Judith Davey Jonathan Robert Ellis Roger Skipp Ms Gemma Bull Satish Mathur (resigned 16/4/2020) Ms Lesley Carol Baliga (appointed 20/5/2021) Ms Helen Richardson (appointed 20/5/2021)
Company secretary	Judith Davey
Registered office	Kemp House 152-160 City Road London EC1V 2NX
Registered company number	04018315 (England and Wales)
Registered charity number	1084106
Independent auditors	Haines Watts Chartered Accountants New Derwent House 69-73 Theobalds Road London WC1X 8TA

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
Report of the Trustees
for the year ended 31 March 2021

The trustees present their report and accounts for the year ended 31 March 2021.

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the accounts and comply with the charity's governing document, the Companies Act 2006 and "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (as amended for accounting periods commencing from 1 January 2016)

Objectives and activities

Objectives and aims

The Advocacy Project ensures that the most vulnerable people have meaningful choice and control over what happens in their lives. Our vision is a world in which every person has a voice. We place a relentless focus on enabling people to have their voice heard, uphold their rights, and make informed choices. We also seek to tackle testimonial injustice - this kind of injustice occurs when someone is ignored, or not believed, just because of their circumstances, their gender, race, or disability.

We achieve these aims by delivering a range of projects and services - statutory and non-statutory - including advocacy, user involvement and personal health budgets. The trustees have paid due regard to guidance issued by the Charity Commission in deciding what activities the charity should undertake

How we work

We try hard not to "do things to people" or do things for people. We help people to find their own voices and develop their capacity to do things for themselves - increase their own agency. These principles underpin our approach to evaluating our impact. We know that people feel stronger, safer and more confident after working with us. Click here to read some real stories from real people <https://www.advocacyproject.org.uk/news/real-stories-about-real-people/>

Just like last year, we are proud that, as of the date of publication, around 40% of staff have lived experience of the issues on which we work (whether learning disability, mental health or other disabilities). Two of our trustees are service users.

We are also a highly diverse organisation. This inclusivity and diversity helps us develop understanding and trust with service users. Understanding and trust means that our work is truly focused on those things that make a real difference to the lives of people who face disadvantage, discrimination and marginalisation.

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
Report of the Trustees
for the year ended 31 March 2021

Objectives and activities

Achievements and performance

The economic climate continues to have been tough and there have been challenging times due to the COVID pandemic. However due to robust planning, strong risk management and a great deal of hard work by staff and trustees, this year has seen strong performance from The Advocacy Project.

It's been an incredibly tough year for the people that we work with, many of whom are no longer with us. We will use our memories of these people to inspire us in the work we do moving forwards. While many people can just about manage in "normal times", the impacts of the COVID pandemic showed how quickly vulnerable people can become desperate. The calls to our single point of access increased by over 50% from March 2020 and the issues are increasing complex. In line with advocacy referrals plummeting nationally, people contacting us felt they had nowhere else to turn for help. We were successful in applying for COVID-19 funding to do deep signposting (so people didn't "fall down the cracks" as we referred them to other agencies).

We undertook proactive wellbeing checks with people whose details we had in our GDPR compliant database - checking in with people to see how they're doing, nipping many issues in the bud and also highlighting systemic issues. It also helped us build people's capacity in terms of keeping themselves safe. The outcomes from this work were strong.

Many people managed to engage digitally (even those traditionally regarded as hard to reach through digital channels). However, digital channels are not appropriate in all cases and the digital divide has clearly deepened. We have felt very viscerally their increase in social isolation and loneliness that this divide is causing.

We have learnt from these experiences and have adapted accordingly. For example, we have now built "surge capacity" into our single point of access so that it's easier to manage sudden increases in contact from the public.

Other highlights from the year include:

- Winning a Personnel Today award for supporting staff to work safely at home during lockdown. We have also increased our wellbeing offer to staff through extending their access to clinical supervision
- Winning some prestigious work in Brent will deepen our focus on health inequalities in the borough
- Together with our health and social care partners in London Boroughs of City and Hackney, we have been highly commended in the HSJ Awards for the Personal Health Budget work on digital inclusion
- We opened our staff learning and development offer to commissioners, service users and the voluntary and community sector. Attendance at these vital sessions on topics like safeguarding and cuckooing has ranged between 100-250 people
- We have also played a key role in the national advocacy network and contributing on key topics such as inappropriate use of Do Not Resuscitate, and looking at the implications of the review of the Mental Health Act in terms of culturally appropriate and culturally sensitive advocacy

Without exception all our funders and commissioners have worked collaboratively with us through these shared challenges so that we all do our best for the people we serve. We'd like to thank them for this constructive engagement.

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
Report of the Trustees
for the year ended 31 March 2021

Objectives and activities

Looking forward

We have reviewed our strategic plan again this year (as we did last year). We have concluded that the strategic plan contains the right goals and objectives, but the timetable for certain activities in the plan should be expedited to enable us to help change more people's lives more profoundly and also ensure that we remain financially sustainable. The pace of change has been slower this year due to the COVID pandemic, but we remain on track.

We also reviewed our income diversification plan, and no substantive changes were made. We continue to prioritise developing income streams from trusts and foundations to fund key projects. We will also target private providers of health and social care as potential funders of our work as the margin is higher in this area.

Given the particularly volatile operating environment at the present time, we will keep the strategic plan, the income diversification plan, and our financial forecast under close review. We are keenly aware that the impact of COVID-19 pandemic related expenditure on already cash strapped budgets is starting to bite, and a number of our public sector commissioners are experiencing financial difficulties. Increasing the funding we get from private health and social care markets, and from trusts and foundations is key to sustainability as the better margin on this work helps to offset the very low margins that we get from public sector funders.

Our plan remains as follows:

Our Delivery & Impact

- Review and improve existing services across advocacy and user involvement
- Continue to innovate across both advocacy and, specifically, user involvement
- Continue diversifying into new markets with complementary products and services
- Place even more emphasis on evaluating the day-to-day and long-term impact of our work

Our Team

- Continue to build on our successful user-led staffing model
- Improve environments, technology, and working practices so that our staff can thrive, and can do their best work
- Strengthen our staff/trustees and quality of delivery through training, recruitment and succession planning

Our Governance

- Maintain the focus and leadership we have on excellent governance

Our Partners & Income Generation

- Build and deepen existing commissioning partnerships
- Create and build new partnerships, with a focus on user involvement
- Continue building relationships across community partners to further our charitable aims
- Develop other funding streams to further increase financial resilience
- Foster a fundraising culture across the entire organisation

Building Our Profile

- Clarify and strengthen our positioning and messaging
- Develop a formal marketing and communications programme that ties in business development and fundraising campaigns/events
- Create a consistent format and pool of case studies to help promote our cause

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
Report of the Trustees
for the year ended 31 March 2021

Strategic report

Financial review

This financial year has been particularly tough , both in terms of maintaining income level and delivering services, where needed most, and cost effectively. No one could have prepared for the impact of COVID 19 pandemic on service delivery. For a long time, we could not carry out face-to-face advocacy, yet there was growing new demand, such as increase in contacts to our single point of access from people in desperate circumstances. We invested in ICT to provide all staff with necessary equipment such as a laptop and mobile phones so they can work remotely and flexibly. We moved out of St Charles office to save on rent and utilities. The working environment for our staff was difficult but they found innovative ways to deliver services to our vulnerable service users and protect our finances.

Despite the difficulties our turnover for 2020-21 is £2.26m which is an increase of £165k from 2019-20. This is because we secured three new multi years contracts with annual value of nearly £300k. We also received grant funding from the National Lottery to support our work during COVID.

Expenditure during the year was £2.24m (2020 : £2.19m) and we ended the year with a small surplus of £15k.

The outcome was better than expected given the year we had, and this gives us a good platform for the new financial year, 2021-22.

Our policy is that unrestricted funds that have not been designated for a specific use should be maintained at a level equivalent to between three and six months' expenditure. The trustees consider that reserves at this level will ensure that, in the event of a significant drop in funding, will enable us to continue current activities while consideration is given to ways in which additional funds may be raised.

In line with our strategic aims, trustees agreed to invest unrestricted reserves in organisational development to support our growth and sustainability. This year we continued to use some reserves to build a robust platform for the future including replacing laptops, mobile phones and further improvements to our case management database system and telephony system to enable flexible working environment.

This has enabled us to extend our reach, particularly during the pandemic so that we can work with more people more cost effectively. This investment in technology and infrastructure has already served us well in that it enabled a very smooth transition to home-based working. We continued to use reserves to invest in business development which is necessary to secure new community grants and ensure sustainability

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
Report of the Trustees
for the year ended 31 March 2021

Strategic report
Financial review
Fundraising

A review of our fundraising programme (which started in 2017) shows that we have generated £6.7m in income which represent steady and sustainable growth. Although there is more that we would like to achieve we no longer have "all our eggs in one basket" - we no longer have a dependency on any single source of funding. However please note that as most of the work that we get is multi-year, so it does not all show in the accounts for any individual year.

Like last year, again we have made strong progress; successfully winning grants and contracts totalling around £1m over three years. Our ratio of bids issued to bids won remains high.

The Advocacy Project's approach to growth and income diversification is to extend our core business across London and key national work through a variety of income sources - public sector contracts, private health and social care contracts, and grants from trusts and foundations. We will invest in seeking funds from trusts and foundations and also private providers over the year. We are also seeking to diversify into delivery of Healthwatch - statutory user involvement focused on reducing health inequalities and gathering patient and resident voices to improve delivery of local health and social care services.

In contrast to last year, we have seen a slight decrease in gifts and income in kind from corporates, and also legacies (possibly due to the pandemic). We hope to nurture these early signs of new income streams, but this is not an area of investment or particular focus.

Other highlights include:

- Extending our work on rollout of Personal Health Budgets
- Winning more advocacy contracts to help residents raise complaints about the NHS
- Being awarded the contract to run the Healthwatch service in Brent

No complaints have been received about our fundraising practices whether undertaken directly or by agencies acting on our behalf. We are registered with the Fundraising Regulator.

Our governance handbook, our business development procedures, and employee handbook show how we protect vulnerable people and others from unreasonable intrusion of a person's privacy, unreasonably persistent approaches or undue pressure to donate. We do not use direct marketing fundraising techniques. We do not use face-to-face or door-to-door fundraising techniques, nor do we outsource donor relationships to third parties. We do not exchange or sell our donors and supporters personal data.

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2021

Structure, governance and management

Structure

The Advocacy Project is a charity and a company limited by guarantee. Our objects enable us to have a governance structure with a board of trustees and a user council. We are a unitary board, and have three board committees - Finance, Risk & Audit, HR, Remuneration & Policy, and Business Development and Fundraising Committee.

In line with our values (and with permission from the Charity Commission), we pay service user trustees at London Living Wage for their time as trustees. The board delegates day-to-day management to the Chief Executive who works with and through the Senior Leadership Team.

Governance

Our governance handbook sets out the standards to which trustees must conform, and includes clear policies on managing conflict of interest, duty and loyalty. This handbook, which was reviewed during the year, assisted the charity in passing the rigorous process of accreditation to the Quality Performance Mark (QPM) - the kitemark for advocacy providers. The QPM desktop assessment report from 2021 describes the handbook as a "really excellent document". It also states that "the organisational governance framework is impressive, as is the use of external experts in governance the field as well as lawyers, health & safety and data protection experts to ensure compliance with legislation and best practice. Our safeguarding policies and practice have been assessed through the same process as being "excellent, comprehensive and clear. The 2021 desktop assessment report also states that our governance handbook and many of our policies "could be used as exemplars in other organisations".

Having a diverse board of trustees that reflect the people we support is of great importance to the charity as it demonstrates our values in practice. We have recruited a diverse board; around one third of trustees are service users. All recruitment was carried out using an open selection process and competency-based interviews. We are often asked to write articles for organisations like The Governance Institute (ICSA) and speak at Charity Sector conferences on how we have achieved board diversity in practice, and how we have made our governance processes accessible to everyone using approaches like financial accounts being available in easy read. Detailed information about the trustees can be found at:

<http://www.advocacyproject.org.uk/who-we-are/trustees>

Management

The Employee Handbook and the Health, Safety & Wellbeing Handbook clearly set our policies and procedures and are reviewed for compliance with legislation and best practice each year. We have improved our staff wellbeing offer still further by providing all staff with access to independent clinical supervision in addition to a 24 hour confidential care service (which provides access to counselling).

Known in the advocacy sector for the strength of our learning & development programme for staff, we support staff to achieve their national advocacy qualification (NAQ) or other professional qualifications. National experts contribute on a pro bono basis to our monthly lecture series, #TAPlectures. Subjects this year include issues facing people at the end of their life, safeguarding, and cuckooing.

The Advocacy Project's policy is to consult and discuss with employees matters likely to affect employees' interests. Information about matters of concern to employees is given through regular staff briefings, information bulletins and reports which seek to achieve a common awareness on the part of all employees of the financial and economic factors affecting the organisation's performance.

We have a recognition agreement with UNISON.

We are a Mindful Employer and a Disability Confident Employer. Applications for employment by people with protected characteristics and disabilities are always fully considered, bearing in mind the aptitudes of the applicant concerned. In the event that members of staff become disabled, every effort is made to ensure that their employment continues and that the appropriate training is arranged. It is the policy of the charity that training, career development and promotion of disabled people should, as far as possible, be identical to that of other employees. We have developed easy read contracts of employment, appraisal and supervision processes for our staff with learning disabilities.

Trustees' responsibility statement

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

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2021

Trustees' responsibility statement - continued

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

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

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

In so far as the trustees are aware:

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

Report of the trustees, incorporating a strategic report, approved by order of the board of trustees, as the company directors, on 21 September 2021..... and signed on the board's behalf by:



.....
Dr Dele Olajide - Trustee

Report of the Independent Auditors to the Trustees of The Advocacy Project

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of The Advocacy Project (the 'charitable company') for the year ended 31 March 2021 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Statement of Financial Position, the Statement of Cash Flows and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland'.

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 2021 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, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland'; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

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

Conclusions relating to going concern

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

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

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

However, because not all future events or conditions can be predicted, this statement is not a guarantee as to the charity's ability to continue as a going concern. The COVID-19 viral pandemic is one of the most significant economic events for the UK with unprecedented levels of uncertainty of outcomes. It is therefore difficult to evaluate all of the potential implications on the charity's activities and wider economy. The Trustees' view on the impact of COVID-19 is disclosed on page 3 & 4.

Other information

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

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

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

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the information given in the Report of the Trustees is inconsistent in any material respect with the financial statements; or
- the charitable company has not kept adequate accounting records; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Report of the Independent Auditors to the Trustees of The Advocacy Project

Responsibilities of trustees

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

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

Our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditors under Section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and report in accordance with the Act and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

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

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:

We gained an understanding of the legal and regulatory framework applicable to the charity and the area in which it operates, and considered the risk of acts by the charity that were contrary to applicable laws and regulations, including fraud. We discussed with the trustees the policies and procedures in place regarding compliance with laws and regulations. We discussed amongst the audit team the identified laws and regulations, and remained alert to any indications of non-compliance.

During the audit we focussed on laws and regulations which could reasonably be expected to give rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements, including, but not limited to, the Charities Act 2011. Our tests included agreeing the financial statement disclosures to underlying supporting documentation and enquiries with management.

Our procedures in relation to fraud included but were not limited to: inquires of management whether they have any knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud, and discussions amongst the audit team regarding risk of fraud such as opportunities for fraudulent manipulation of financial statements. We determined that the principal risks related to posting manual journal entries to manipulate financial performance and management bias through judgements in accounting estimates. We also addressed the risk of management override of internal controls, including testing journals and evaluating whether there was evidence of bias by management that represented a risk of material misstatement due to fraud.

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

**Report of the Independent Auditors to the Trustees of
The Advocacy Project**

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Part 4 of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditors' report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



Haines Watts Chartered Accountants
Eligible to act as an auditor in terms of Section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006
New Derwent House
69-73 Theobalds Road
London
WC1X 8TA

Date: 25/10/21

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT

**Statement of Financial Activities
(Incorporating an Income and Expenditure Account)
for the year ended 31 March 2021**

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	2021 Total funds £	2020 Total funds £
Income and endowments from						
Donations and legacies	2	594	-	206	800	3,049
Other trading activities	3	1,667,210	-	588,412	2,255,622	2,090,425
Investment income	4	79	-	27	106	1,477
Other income		<u>3,336</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>3,336</u>	<u>-</u>
Total		1,671,219	-	588,645	2,259,864	2,094,951
Expenditure on Charitable activities						
Support costs	5	378,607	-	207,689	586,296	622,018
Governance costs		6,443	-	2,221	8,664	4,425
Staff costs		1,035,638	-	255,614	1,291,252	1,253,776
Direct expenditure		241,284	-	102,677	343,961	305,250
Depreciation		<u>10,118</u>	<u>4,542</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>14,660</u>	<u>6,437</u>
Total		1,672,090	4,542	568,201	2,244,833	2,191,906
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)		(871)	(4,542)	20,444	15,031	(96,955)
Transfers between funds	19	<u>(27,556)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>27,556</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Net movement in funds		(28,427)	(4,542)	48,000	15,031	(96,955)
Reconciliation of funds						
Total funds brought forward		438,438	15,896	9,364	463,698	560,653
Total funds carried forward		<u>410,011</u>	<u>11,354</u>	<u>57,364</u>	<u>478,729</u>	<u>463,698</u>

Continuing operations

All income and expenditure has arisen from continuing activities.

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT

Statement of Financial Position 31 March 2021

		2021 £	2020 £
Fixed assets	Notes		
Intangible assets	13	11,354	15,896
Tangible assets	14	<u>14,750</u>	<u>15,008</u>
		26,104	30,904
Current assets			
Debtors: amounts falling due within one year	15	199,487	245,892
Debtors: amounts falling due after more than one year	15	8,382	13,472
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>734,534</u>	<u>411,639</u>
		942,403	671,003
Creditors			
Amounts falling due within one year	16	(489,778)	(238,209)
Net current assets		<u>452,625</u>	<u>432,794</u>
Total assets less current liabilities		478,729	463,698
NET ASSETS		<u>478,729</u>	<u>463,698</u>
Funds	19		
Unrestricted funds:			
Unrestricted fund		410,011	438,438
Designated fund		<u>11,354</u>	<u>15,896</u>
		<u>421,365</u>	<u>454,334</u>
Restricted funds:			
Restricted fund		<u>57,364</u>	<u>9,364</u>
Total funds		<u>478,729</u>	<u>463,698</u>

The charitable company is entitled to exemption from audit under Section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 for the year ended 31 March 2021.

The members have not deposited notice, pursuant to Section 476 of the Companies Act 2006 requiring an audit of these financial statements.

The trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for

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

These financial statements have been audited under the requirements of Section 145 of the Charities Act 2011.

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on ..21 Sept 2021..... and were signed on its behalf by:

The notes form part of these financial statements

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT
Statement of Financial Position - continued
31 March 2021



.....
Dele Olajide - Trustee

The notes form part of these financial statements

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT

Statement of Cash Flows
for the year ended 31 March 2021

	Notes	2021 £	2020 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Cash generated from operations	1	<u>332,649</u>	<u>(22,274)</u>
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities		<u>332,649</u>	<u>(22,274)</u>
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(9,860)	(5,638)
Interest received		<u>106</u>	<u>1,477</u>
Net cash used in investing activities		<u>(9,754)</u>	<u>(4,161)</u>
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period		<u>322,895</u>	<u>(26,435)</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		<u>411,639</u>	<u>438,074</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period		<u><u>734,534</u></u>	<u><u>411,639</u></u>

The notes form part of these financial statements

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT

**Notes to the Statement of Cash Flows
for the year ended 31 March 2021**

1. Reconciliation of net income/(expenditure) to net cash flow from operating activities			
	2021	2020	
	£	£	
Net income/(expenditure) for the reporting period (as per the Statement of Financial Activities)	15,031	(96,955)	
Adjustments for:			
Depreciation charges	14,660	6,437	
Interest received	(106)	(1,477)	
Decrease in debtors	51,495	47,479	
Increase in creditors	<u>251,569</u>	<u>22,242</u>	
Net cash provided by/(used in) operations	<u><u>332,649</u></u>	<u><u>(22,274)</u></u>	
 2. Analysis of changes in net funds			
	At 1/4/20	Cash flow	At 31/3/21
	£	£	£
Net cash			
Cash at bank and in hand	<u>411,639</u>	<u>322,895</u>	<u>734,534</u>
	<u>411,639</u>	<u>322,895</u>	<u>734,534</u>
Total	<u><u>411,639</u></u>	<u><u>322,895</u></u>	<u><u>734,534</u></u>

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2021

1. Accounting policies

Basis of preparing the financial statements

The financial statements of the charitable company, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019)', Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Companies Act 2006. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis. The Directors have reviewed and considered relevant information, including the annual budget and future cash flows in making their assessment. In particular, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Directors have taken into account the impact on their business of possible scenarios brought on by the impact of COVID-19, alongside the measures that they can take to mitigate the impact. In the year the charity has proactively taken steps to ensure current contracts are maintained and found alternative ways of delivering services and keeping in touch with service users. For the future the charity will attempt to continue to improve grow by winning new contracts and increasing income and profitability. Based on these assessments, given the measures that have been and could be undertaken to mitigate the current adverse conditions, and the current resources available, the Directors have concluded that they can continue to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the annual report and accounts.

Income

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

Expenditure

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Significant judgements and estimates

There are no critical accounting judgements and estimation uncertainty at the end of the reporting period that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the financial year.

Allocation and apportionment of costs

Staff and support costs are allocated to the particular activity where the costs relate to that activity.

Overhead costs are apportioned based on the income of a particular activity.

Intangible assets

Intangible assets comprise primarily computer software and internal database systems. Such assets are defined as having finite useful lives and the costs are amortised on a straight line basis over their estimated useful lives of 5 years. Intangible assets are stated at cost less amortisation and are reviewed for impairment whenever there is an indication that the carrying value may be impaired.

Tangible fixed assets

Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life.

Fixtures and fittings	- 33% on cost
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Taxation

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

Fund accounting

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

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued for the year ended 31 March 2021

1. Accounting policies - continued

Fund accounting

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.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

Financial instruments

Financial assets and financial liabilities are recognised in the balance sheet when the company becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Trade and other debtors and creditors are classified as basic financial instruments and measured at initial recognition at transaction price. Debtors and creditors are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest rate method. A provision is established when there is objective evidence that the company will not be able to collect all amounts due.

Cash and cash equivalents are classified as basic financial instruments and comprise cash in hand and at bank.

Cash and cash equivalents

These comprise cash at bank and other short-term highly liquid bank deposits with an original maturity of three months or less.

Debtors

Debtors do not carry any interest and are stated at their nominal value. Appropriate allowances for estimated irrecoverable amounts are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities when there is objective evidence that the asset is impaired.

Trade Creditors

Trade creditors are not interest bearing and are stated at their nominal value.

2. Donations and legacies

	2021	2020
	£	£
Donations and gifts	<u>800</u>	<u>3,049</u>

3. Other trading activities

	2021	2020
	£	£
Charitable trading activities	<u>2,255,622</u>	<u>2,090,425</u>

4. Investment income

	2021	2020
	£	£
Interest receivable	<u>106</u>	<u>1,477</u>

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT

**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the year ended 31 March 2021**

5. Charitable activities costs

	Direct Costs £	Support costs (see note 6) £	Totals £
Support costs	-	586,296	586,296
Governance costs	-	8,664	8,664
Staff costs	1,291,252	-	1,291,252
Direct expenditure	343,961	-	343,961
Depreciation	14,660	-	14,660
	<u>1,649,873</u>	<u>594,960</u>	<u>2,244,833</u>

6. Support costs

	Other £	Governance costs £	Totals £
Support costs	586,296	-	586,296
Governance costs	-	8,664	8,664
	<u>586,296</u>	<u>8,664</u>	<u>594,960</u>

Support costs, included in the above, are as follows:

Other

	2021 Support costs £	2020 Total activities £
Staff costs	107,510	108,380
Building and office costs	135,354	173,359
Support and development costs	343,432	340,279
	<u>586,296</u>	<u>622,018</u>

Governance costs

	2021 Governance costs £	2020 Total activities £
Auditors' remuneration	6,110	3,095
Management fees	1,509	1,330
Governance support	979	-
AGM & Annual report	66	-
	<u>8,664</u>	<u>4,425</u>

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued for the year ended 31 March 2021

7. Net income/(expenditure)

Net income/(expenditure) is stated after charging/(crediting):

	2021	2020
	£	£
Depreciation - owned assets	10,118	6,437
Computer software amortisation	<u>4,542</u>	<u>-</u>

8. Auditors' remuneration

	2021	2020
	£	£
Fees payable to the charity's auditors and their associates for the audit of the charity's financial statements	<u>6,110</u>	<u>3,095</u>

9. Trustees' remuneration and benefits

The trustees were not paid or received any other benefits from employment (2020: Nil) except for service users, A Antonio and M Hagan, who have been paid the London Living Wage and the total during the year was £733 (2020: £1,025). This is in accordance with the charity's governing document.

No trustee received payment for professional or other services supplied to the charity (2020: Nil) except for J Davey, who was paid remuneration of £66,300 (2020: £66,400) in her capacity as the CEO. The charity also paid £3,978 (2020: £3,984) towards her pension contributions. She received no employment benefits for her role as a trustee.

The key management personnel of the charity comprise the CEO, Deputy CEO, Head of Finance, Head of Business Development and Head of Services. The total employee benefits of key management personnel of the charity were £258,399 (2020: 273,824).

Trustees' expenses

There were no trustees' expenses paid for the year ended 31 March 2021 nor for the year ended 31 March 2020.

10. Staff costs

	2021	2020
	£	£
Wages and salaries	1,131,102	1,109,740
Social security costs	130,325	90,897
Pension costs	<u>77,658</u>	<u>53,139</u>
	<u>1,339,085</u>	<u>1,253,776</u>

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	2021	2020
Employed staff	54	53
Sessional	<u>5</u>	<u>7</u>
	<u>59</u>	<u>60</u>

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the year ended 31 March 2021

10. Staff costs - continued

The number of employees whose employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) exceeded £60,000 was:

	2021	2020
£60,001 - £70,000	1	-
£70,001 - £80,000	-	1
	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>

11. Comparatives for the statement of financial activities

	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
Income and endowments from				
Donations and legacies	3,049	-	-	3,049
Other trading activities	1,614,552	-	475,873	2,090,425
Investment income	<u>1,477</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,477</u>
Total	1,619,078	-	475,873	2,094,951
Expenditure on				
Charitable activities				
Support costs	502,242	-	119,776	622,018
Governance costs	3,420	-	1,005	4,425
Staff costs	944,806	-	308,970	1,253,776
Direct expenditure	222,026	-	83,224	305,250
Depreciation	<u>6,437</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>6,437</u>
Total	1,678,931	-	512,975	2,191,906
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)	(59,853)	-	(37,102)	(96,955)
Transfers between funds	<u>(23,587)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>23,587</u>	<u>-</u>
Net movement in funds	(83,440)	-	(13,515)	(96,955)
Reconciliation of funds				
Total funds brought forward	521,878	15,896	22,879	560,653
Total funds carried forward	<u>438,438</u>	<u>15,896</u>	<u>9,364</u>	<u>463,698</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the year ended 31 March 2021

The income funds of the charity include restricted funds comprising the following unexpected balances of donations and grants held on trust for specific purposes:

Transfers from unrestricted funds were made at the year end (2020: £23,587) to cover the deficits caused by loss making contracts.

		Movement in funds			
	Balance at 1 April 2019	Incoming Resources	Resources expended	Transfers	Balance at 31 March 2020
	£	£	£	£	£
PHB	-	69,255	(69,413)	158	-
Professional Advocacy	10,348	79,930	(86,918)	-	3,360
RBK&C Group Advocacy	-	47,104	(52,123)	5,019	-
Our Choice	-	41,056	(54,822)	13,766	-
Dual Diagnosis	5,672	12,500	(21,486)	3,314	-
Older Adult Advocacy	-	191,028	(192,358)	1,330	-
User Involvement	6,859	35,000	(35,855)	-	6,004
	22,879	475,873	(512,975)	23,587	9,364

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the year ended 31 March 2021

13. Intangible fixed assets

Computer
software
£

Cost

At 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021

22,709

Amortisation

At 1 April 2020

6,813

Charge for year

4,542

At 31 March 2021

11,355

Net book value

At 31 March 2021

11,354

At 31 March 2020

15,896

14. Tangible fixed assets

Fixtures
and
fittings
£

Cost

At 1 April 2020

87,959

Additions

9,860

At 31 March 2021

97,819

Depreciation

At 1 April 2020

72,951

Charge for year

10,118

At 31 March 2021

83,069

Net book value

At 31 March 2021

14,750

At 31 March 2020

15,008

15. Debtors

2021
£

2020
£

Amounts falling due within one year:

Trade debtors

151,234

192,822

Other debtors

4,313

3,533

Prepayments and accrued income

43,940

49,537

199,487

245,892

Amounts falling due after more than one year:

Other debtors

8,382

13,472

Aggregate amounts

207,869

259,364

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT

**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the year ended 31 March 2021**

16. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2021	2020
	£	£
Trade creditors	23,610	617
Social security and other taxes	37,375	33,137
Other creditors	9,853	9,636
HMRC Furlough creditor	37,063	-
Accruals and deferred income	<u>381,877</u>	<u>194,819</u>
	<u>489,778</u>	<u>238,209</u>

17. Leasing agreements

Minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases fall due as follows:

	2021	2020
	£	£
Within one year	<u>-</u>	<u>33,000</u>

18. Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds	Designated funds	Restricted funds	2021 Total funds	2020 Total funds
	£	£	£	£	£
Fixed assets	14,750	11,354	-	26,104	30,904
Current assets	885,039	-	57,364	942,403	671,003
Current liabilities	<u>(489,778)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(489,778)</u>	<u>(238,209)</u>
	<u>410,011</u>	<u>11,354</u>	<u>57,364</u>	<u>478,729</u>	<u>463,698</u>

19. Movement in funds

	At 1/4/20	Net movement in funds	Transfers between funds	At 31/3/21
	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds				
Unrestricted fund	438,438	(871)	(27,556)	410,011
Designated fund	<u>15,896</u>	<u>(4,542)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>11,354</u>
	454,334	(5,413)	(27,556)	421,365
Restricted funds				
Restricted fund	<u>9,364</u>	<u>20,444</u>	<u>27,556</u>	<u>57,364</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>463,698</u>	<u>15,031</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>478,729</u>

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the year ended 31 March 2021

19. Movement in funds - continued

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
Unrestricted fund	1,671,219	(1,672,090)	(871)
Designated fund	-	(4,542)	(4,542)
	1,671,219	(1,676,632)	(5,413)
Restricted funds			
Restricted fund	588,645	(568,201)	20,444
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>2,259,864</u>	<u>(2,244,833)</u>	<u>15,031</u>

Comparatives for movement in funds

	At 1/4/19 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 31/3/20 £
Unrestricted funds				
Unrestricted fund	521,878	(59,853)	(23,587)	438,438
Designated fund	15,896	-	-	15,896
	537,774	(59,853)	(23,587)	454,334
Restricted funds				
Restricted fund	22,879	(37,102)	23,587	9,364
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>560,653</u>	<u>(96,955)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>463,698</u>

Comparative net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
Unrestricted fund	1,619,078	(1,678,931)	(59,853)
Restricted funds			
Restricted fund	475,873	(512,975)	(37,102)
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>2,094,951</u>	<u>(2,191,906)</u>	<u>(96,955)</u>

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued for the year ended 31 March 2021

19. Movement in funds - continued

A current year 12 months and prior year 12 months combined position is as follows:

	At 1/4/19 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 31/3/21 £
Unrestricted funds				
Unrestricted fund	521,878	(60,724)	(51,143)	410,011
Designated fund	<u>15,896</u>	<u>(4,542)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>11,354</u>
	537,774	(65,266)	(51,143)	421,365
Restricted funds				
Restricted fund	<u>22,879</u>	<u>(16,658)</u>	<u>51,143</u>	<u>57,364</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>560,653</u>	<u>(81,924)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>478,729</u>

A current year 12 months and prior year 12 months combined net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
Unrestricted fund	3,290,297	(3,351,021)	(60,724)
Designated fund	<u>-</u>	<u>(4,542)</u>	<u>(4,542)</u>
	3,290,297	(3,355,563)	(65,266)
Restricted funds			
Restricted fund	<u>1,064,518</u>	<u>(1,081,176)</u>	<u>(16,658)</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>4,354,815</u>	<u>(4,436,739)</u>	<u>(81,924)</u>

20. Employee benefit obligations

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme for all qualifying employees. The charge to income and expenditure account in respect of defined contribution schemes was £77,869 (2020: £68,345).

21. Related party disclosures

There were no related party transactions for the year ended 31 March 2021.

22. Designated fund

There are funds of £11,354 that have been designated by the Trustees for the purpose of specific purposes included within general funds.

THE ADVOCACY PROJECT

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued for the year ended 31 March 2021

23. Company limited by guarantee

The company is a private company limited by guarantee and accordingly does not have share capital. The members of the Company are the Trustees named on page 1. In the event of the company being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited up to £1 per member of the company. The Company was incorporated in England and Wales and information relating to the registered office can be found on page 1.