

**Charity registration number 1086151 (England and Wales)**

**Company registration number 04135225**

**ADVOCACY FOCUS**  
**ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

# ADVOCACY FOCUS

## LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

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### Trustees

Miss D Bond  
Mr M I Wahab  
Mr D O'Byrne  
Mr S J Stokes

(Appointed 27 July 2024)  
(Appointed 18 November  
2024)

Mr C B Lintern  
Mrs K Christie  
Mr D Rodgers  
Mr P S Carroll  
Mrs S M Meadows

(Appointed 25 September  
2025)

### Senior management

Justine Forster  
Leanne Hignett

Chief Executive Officer  
Services Director

### Charity number (England and Wales)

1086151

### Company number

04135225

### Registered office

Saturn House  
6-7 Mercury Rise  
Altham Business Park  
Accrington  
Lancashire  
England  
BB5 5BY

### Auditor

Mayes Business Partnership Ltd  
Reception 1, First Floor  
Offices, Red Rose Court  
Clayton Business Park  
Clayton Le Moors  
Lancashire  
BB5 5JR

### Bankers

LLOYDS BANK PLC

Nationwide Building Society

Allica Bank

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# ADVOCACY FOCUS

## CONTENTS

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	Page
Chair's Message	1
Trustees' report	2 - 15
Statement of Trustees' responsibilities	16
Independent auditor's report	17 - 19
Statement of financial activities	20
Balance sheet	21
Notes to the financial statements	23 - 32

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# ADVOCACY FOCUS

## CHAIR'S MESSAGE

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

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I would like to warmly welcome you to the Advocacy Focus Annual Report for 2024/25.

This is the third time I get to provide this update as the Chair of Trustees, and I do so with a great deal of pride, as over the last year, the team have continued to make a real difference to so many people's lives across the North of England. What the team do really helps people which is amazing.

We have been supporting people via our advocacy hubs across Lancashire, Salford, St Helens and Trafford, and the details and numbers of people that have benefited from our services over the last twelve months are contained within the following pages of the report. Our community focus hub in Burnley continues to provide support to those people in the local community who can benefit from our services and support

Advocacy Focus has also relocated its Head Office to Altham on the outskirts of Accrington where the team continue to provide their amazing services to those who need it.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the partner organisations who support us in so many ways, whether that's through fundraising, sponsorship, making sure that we have opportunities to attend key events, or any other ways of providing support. Collaborative partnerships are crucial to any organisation's success, and we are grateful to each and every partner that we work with and look forward to continuing those relationships over the coming years.

I am proud to say that we have a wonderful team at Advocacy Focus and each one of them makes me feel welcome when I meet them. We also have a talented and dedicated group of Trustees who continue to provide their time and expertise for which I am truly grateful. I hope that you will feel as inspired by the efforts of the team as I and my fellow Trustees do when you read what they have achieved over the last twelve months in this report.

Thank you.

Chris Lintern  
**Chair of Trustees**

Date: 21 July 2025

## ADVOCACY FOCUS

### TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT AND STRATEGIC REPORT) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

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#### CEO's Message

This year, we will be presenting our annual report in video format — a new, more accessible way to highlight the incredible work of the Advocacy Focus team. We're excited to share our achievements in this engaging format and hope it will help us reach even more people. Keep an eye out for its release, and please feel free to share it with others once it's live.

If you've used our services and found them valuable, we'd love to hear your feedback. And if you haven't, this report is a great way to get to know what we do and why it matters.

I will leave it to our people to tell you their story about what they have achieved over the last year. They'll tell it far better than I could. But what I will say is this: the last year, like many before it, has had its ups and downs. But through it all, the team has shown up and often gone above and beyond all expectations.

This year marks my 10th anniversary as Chief Executive of Advocacy Focus. When I joined in 2014, we were a team of just over 20. Today, we're 85 strong — and every step of that growth has been shaped by the passion, commitment and care of our people. As the demand for our services has grown, so too has our focus on creating a workplace where everyone feels safe, respected and valued. We've built a culture that encourages people to bring their whole selves to work — and that's what truly sets us apart. Because what makes Advocacy Focus special isn't just what we do, it's who we are. This year, that commitment to our people was recognised on a national stage when we were named **'Most Flexible Workplace'** at the **National Wellbeing Awards** in London. It was a proud moment for all of us — and a reflection of the care, trust and flexibility we've worked hard to build together.

So, what's next for Team AF? Well towards the end of 2024, changes to National Insurance Contributions created new financial challenges for us and others across the sector. This has led to some tough operational decisions — and we're facing a significant funding gap going into 2025. To help bridge this, we're stepping up our fundraising efforts and working with our commissioners to. The truth is, the demand for statutory advocacy is outpacing the funding available.

So, we're reaching out — to you. You can support us in many ways: share this report, spread the word, donate your time or money, or even make us your charity of the year. This helps us keep vital services running — especially for children and young people who are among the most marginalised in the UK.

I'll leave you with this thought: While the song says, *"Things can only get better,"* 2025 may still be tough. But with our brilliant team of 85 professionals, our amazing volunteers, and the support of people like you — we're hopeful.

Thank you for reading. I hope this newsletter gives you a glimpse into just how special the Advocacy Focus team truly is.

Justine Forster

Chief Executive Officer

The Trustees present their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the charity's governing document, the Companies Act 2006, FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" and the Charities SORP "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)".

## ADVOCACY FOCUS

### TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT AND STRATEGIC REPORT) (CONTINUED)

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

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#### **Objectives and activities**

The objects of the charity as set out in the Memorandum and Articles of Association are:

#### **The charity's objects are specifically restricted to the following:**

For the public benefit, the relief and assistance of people who are disadvantaged by illness, disability, age, sexual orientation or social exclusion within England, via the provision, promotion and accessibility of high quality independent advocacy and its associated services. The charity will promote wider social inclusion for the public benefit, by supporting and enabling people to represent themselves in health and social care matters, obtain appropriate services and increase their life quality and choices.

#### **Our mission:**

To help people to achieve the outcomes that matter to them in their lives, by providing high quality advocacy.

#### **Vision and Values**

##### **VISION:**

Making sure that everyone in our communities can get advocacy support if they need it.

##### **VALUES:**

We are a team who care deeply about everything we do. We want everyone who works with us to follow our core values when working with others.

We made our values together as a team. They show who we are and makes sure everything we do is clear and meaningful.

- **Quality** – We only deliver high quality advocacy. We have over 25 years' experience of providing expert, person-led advocacy and are sector leaders with the awards to prove it!
- **People** – We put people at the heart of everything we do. We care about people and want to enable them to make positive change in their lives.
- **Respectful** – We are a respectful team. We treat everyone fairly and equally and make sure everyone feels valued, respected, and listened to.
- **Trust** – You can trust us to keep your information private and safe.
- **Independent** – We are independent of councils and health services, and we are on your side.
- **Learning** – We never stop learning. We are always improving and developing our services. We learn from the people we support, our partners and each other.

## ADVOCACY FOCUS

### TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT AND STRATEGIC REPORT) (CONTINUED)

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

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#### Service Delivery Objectives

- **Specialist Advocacy** "Everyone who has the right to specialist advocacy can get it quickly and to a high standard."
- **Community Advocacy** "Strengthening people and communities by offering high quality, preventative services and activities."
- **Influencing** "Making a difference in society through education and supporting people, professionals, and communities."
- **Grow Income** "Broadening funding streams to retain what we have and add what is needed to our services."
- **Partnership** "We will work with a range of people and services to help the whole community get better support and access to services."
- **People** "Our team will be well trained, diverse, resilient, and ready to meet the changing needs of the community."

#### Our impact in numbers

- We received 4,257 new referrals and supported people through 6,164 specialist advocacy cases in Lancashire, Trafford, and St Helens.
- We received 491 new referrals and supported children and young people through 597 specialist advocacy cases in St Helens, Trafford, and Salford.
- 32 Independent Visitors provided 880 hours of support over a total of 220 visits. Making a positive difference to the lives of children and young people in Salford and St Helens.
- We received 292 new referrals and worked on 373 cases to provide support to adults through community and self-advocacy. A further 1291 people received Tier 1 advice, information and signposting in Lancashire and St Helens.
- We received 322 new referrals and supported adults in East Lancashire through 389 cases as part of our preventative Community Focus service, funded by the Big Lottery. A further 105 people were supported during drop-in sessions at our Burnley Hub.
- We received 62 new referrals and worked on 400 active cases. Providing 5,133 hours of support through our Spot Purchase service across the North of England.
- 12 Mission Impossible Peer Advocacy groups were held. An average of 13 members attended these sessions, making positive changes within Trafford Local Authority.
- 5 community volunteers provided 42 hours of support at our Burnley Hub.
- 8 hospital volunteers carried out 19 hospital drop-ins, making a positive difference in their local communities.

## ADVOCACY FOCUS

### TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT AND STRATEGIC REPORT) (CONTINUED)

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

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#### *Public benefit*

The Trustees have paid due regard to guidance issued by the Charity Commission in deciding what activities the charity should undertake.

#### **Advocacy in Action – Henry's Story**

Meet Henry. Henry was living in a care home in Skelmersdale, where he wasn't free to leave. The staff always knew where he was, and he lacked capacity around his care and treatment. Henry had deprivation of liberty safeguards in place, known as DoLS. But Henry didn't want to stay there. He wanted to move to Cumbria to be closer to his daughter and son.

Henry's brother lived in Skelmersdale and visited him every other month. While Henry's children wanted him to move to Cumbria, his brother was worried that the move might not be good for Henry's health.

Henry was allocated a Relevant Person's Representative, or RPR, who met with him many times. They discovered Henry's love for gardening and being outdoors. Henry often talked about his past work as a landscaper and how much it meant to him.

Unfortunately, Henry's current care home had no garden, just a small concrete area. Henry rarely went outside and often said, how he would love to get back in the garden and grow some plants and vegetables.

Henry's RPR contacted his social worker and discussed Henry's wishes. They also spoke to Henry's children and brother to make them aware of their role and explain the steps they would take to support Henry's views. The RPR explained that they would be contacting a solicitor and asking a Judge in the Court of Protection to review Henry's situation and make a decision on what they thought was best for him.

Henry's social worker and family in Cumbria found some care homes that could meet Henry's needs. With the support of his RPR, Henry looked at pictures and videos of these homes, taken by his children. Henry chose a care home he liked, which had a large garden and an area where residents could grow plants or vegetables.

Henry's case was heard in the Court of Protection. His RPR supported him throughout the hearing, explaining everything that was happening. Henry was able to tell the Judge his dream of living close to his children and going "out into the world." After considering all the different views, the Judge decided it was in Henry's best interests to move to the care home in Cumbria.

Henry's RPR ensured that his views and wishes were heard, ultimately helping him live the life he wanted. Henry's advocate made sure everyone important to Henry understood the process, helping them feel at ease too. After hearing he could move, Henry cried and told his advocate, "You helped make my dreams come true."

Since moving, Henry has been gardening most days and has gone on several trips with the care home and his family. He now spends quality time with his children, and the care home supports regular contact with his brother. Henry says that since moving, it's "like I'm in heaven." His son expressed gratitude to the RPR, saying, "Many thanks for all you did. We were very happy with the outcome, and it was a joy to work with you to achieve decisions that were in Dad's best interests."



## ADVOCACY FOCUS

### TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT AND STRATEGIC REPORT) (CONTINUED)

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

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#### **This year, we launched our 'Family and Friends' Project**

We spoke to people who use our service, members of the public, and our team to find out what problems people face when dealing with health and social care services.

From this, we created helpful resources, workshops, and training videos. These are designed to support people to advocate for themselves and people they care about.

Over the past year, we made short training videos on topics like:

- **Safeguarding Others**
- **What is Advocacy?**
- **The Different Types of Advocacy**

More videos are coming soon, including:

- **The Role of the Advocate**
- **Accessing Health and Social Care**

We also created in-person workshops about:

- **Self-Advocacy**
- **Health and Social Care Complaints**

These workshops will soon be turned into online webinars.

We've also made lots of easy-to-use resources. You can download and print them for free from our website. Topics include:

- Signposting to other services
- Common terms
- DNACPRs (do not attempt resuscitation orders)
- Rights of the Nearest Relative
- Section 117 Aftercare
- Lasting Power of Attorney and Deputies
- A guide to Deprivation of Liberty

This next year, we will be inviting members of the public to join our Family and Friends Steering Group. This group will help us make and review more videos and useful resources.

## **ADVOCACY FOCUS**

### **TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT AND STRATEGIC REPORT) (CONTINUED)**

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

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#### **Self-Advocacy in Action**

The Mission Impossible Self-Advocacy Group entered its third year in 2024/2025. The group consists of people with learning disabilities and autism in Trafford. Its aim is to help people to develop the skills to speak out about issues that affect them.

The group works with services to make them better for the people who use them.

This year, the group has talked about issues such as:

- Transport (such as bus passes, hospital transport, and 'Ring and Ride')
- Housing
- Employment
- Health inequalities
- Co-Production

Some of the key work the group has completed this year included:

- Helped to restart the Learning Disability Partnership Board. They worked with Trafford Council and other services to help improve support for people with learning disabilities. The board is still quite new but will play a key role in making services better across Trafford.
- Talked to Healthwatch about their experiences using health services. Healthwatch then planned to improve these services and share it with Trafford Council.
- Helped Trafford Council check how well they were working with people who use their services. This is called co-production. Trafford used the group's feedback to create a plan for better co-production. One result of this plan was setting up the Learning Disability Partnership Boards.
- Trafford Council worked with a partner to write their Adult Social Care Strategy for 2024–2027. The partner asked the group about their experiences, and the feedback ensured that the strategy included the views of people with learning disabilities and autism.
- Took part in the national self-advocacy movement, by going to conferences in Manchester, Birmingham, and Blackpool.
- Joined Greater Manchester Confirm and Challenge meetings. The meetings aim to improve services across the whole Greater Manchester area.

#### **Feedback from professionals and people we support**

##### **Lancashire – professional we worked with**

It has been an absolute pleasure to work with Amy. Amy has most certainly gone above and beyond to support, and I cannot thank her enough for all her hard work, and I will be very happy to work with her again. Thank you, Amy!

##### **Lancashire – professional we worked with**

Pauline was always professional and clear about what she could offer. This gave me an increased understanding of the role of an advocate. This was particularly useful as a newly qualified social worker at the time.

## **ADVOCACY FOCUS**

### **TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT AND STRATEGIC REPORT) (CONTINUED)**

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

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Pauline was also flexible and able to offer appointments at short notice which was often useful in this case where there were frequent changes. Pauline also adapted some of her approach due to the person's communication needs and preferences.

#### **Lancashire – person we supported**

I want to thank Michelle. She is an asset to the team that provided professional support and advice, gave her time to me, and has shown genuine compassion and empathy throughout.

She was extremely polite and helpful and a pleasure to work with through the process. She really was wonderful. I am extremely grateful for her help and support and cannot put into words how grateful I am.

#### **Trafford – person we supported**

Ashley's support has been crucial for both health complaints and Care Act advocacy (and community advocacy in the past). He supported me for over 2 years. He just gets it - how overwhelming life can be for an autistic person, how difficult we can find it to communicate verbally and how people with invisible disabilities can often need support too.

He respects and accommodates my need to communicate via email, in person or via video calls and that I can experience situational mutism and become frustrated and overwhelmed easily due to anxiety and Pathological Demand Avoidance. I feel like I'm in control of my own complaints and assessments, which is important to me and I'm able to express the things that matter to me without being dismissed, which creates a safe space for me to be honest. He is also very respectful in terms of consent.

#### **Lancashire – person we supported**

Lauren put great effort into helping me understand my rights and navigate many difficult situations during the time she supported me. She gave me the confidence and support to stand up for what I felt was right.

#### **Lancashire – person we supported**

My advocate provided excellent support and advice. Aimee is an excellent advocate. She took the time to offer guidance and support and made a difficult situation less stressful with her support.

#### **Salford Children's – person we supported**

If I didn't want to go in the meetings, you would go in the meetings for me and speak what I said in my words. If I didn't understand something you would explain it to me. You are a good person. You made me feel more confident. Before working with you I was a 2/10 with confidence and now I am at a 9.

#### **Lancashire – person we supported**

You listened to me when I felt I wasn't being listened to. I would totally recommend this service to anyone who feels they don't have a voice.

#### **Lancashire – person we supported**

She rang me up and put my case across. She helped me know my rights. She gave me hope that someone is there to help as I was feeling lost on where to go from here.

#### **St Helen's Children's – professional we worked with**

Di is absolutely fantastic. She consistently goes above and beyond for our young person, following up emails and contacting relevant professionals to ensure his voice is heard. Di took the time to develop a positive relationship with our young person and this is now a relationship he values.

#### **Trafford – person we supported**

The Peer Support and Self-Advocacy group is useful and has helped me to grow in confidence when expressing myself.

## ADVOCACY FOCUS

### TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT AND STRATEGIC REPORT) (CONTINUED)

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

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#### **St Helen's Children – person we supported**

She always made me feel comfortable and helped me express my feelings every time. When in complicated situations she would always defend me and get my issues resolved. Diane is lovely she never failed to make me smile even in stressful situations.

#### **Sector Updates**

##### **Mental Health Bill**

The government introduced the Mental Health Bill to Parliament in November 2024. This Bill is very similar to the one that the last government introduced. It will soon have its third reading in the House of Lords, before going to the House of Commons. Some of the key things in the Bill are:

- Removing learning disability and autism from Section 3 1983.
- Offering advocacy to informal patients, not just people detained under the Mental Health Act.
- Replacing nearest relatives with nominated persons.
- Shortening the amount of time someone can be held under Section 3.
- Greater access to the Tribunal.
- No longer using police and prison cells for people in a mental health crisis.

##### **Liberty Protection Safeguards**

The government has not provided an update on the Liberty Protection Safeguards. However, demand for advocacy under the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards continues to rise. Advocacy Focus leads a group of advocacy providers to discuss these challenges.

##### **Children and Young People**

###### **Children's Social Care Reforms:**

The Labour government shared plans to improve children's social care. They published a paper called *Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive*, and they are also working on the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill. These changes are in the early stages.

The reforms aim to achieve four main outcomes:

- Children, young people, and families stay together and get the help they need.
- Children and young people are supported by their family network.
- Children and young people are safe in and outside of their homes.
- Children in care and care leavers have stable, loving homes.

###### **Deprivation of Liberty**

The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill is currently going through Parliament. If passed, it would change Section 25 of the Children Act 1989 and mean that children can be deprived of their liberty in places other than secure children's homes.

## ADVOCACY FOCUS

### TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT AND STRATEGIC REPORT) (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

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#### *Volunteers*

##### **Volunteer Services**

We are excited to share an update on our amazing volunteers and the incredible impact they've made over the past year.

##### **Let's start with the roles our volunteers take on:**

- In our hospitals, our volunteers support patients on mental health wards and help them understand their rights, complete paperwork, and signpost them to other support services.
- In the community, they help with NHS complaints, support our duty advocate and team home visits.
- Our Independent Visitors build trusted relationships by visiting children in care every month, offering ongoing support and a friendly face.

##### **When it comes to training and development:**

- Every volunteer completes shadowing and receives training around NHS complaints, confidentiality, and conducting home visits.
- We're putting together a step-by-step guide to help volunteers grow in confidence the more time they spend volunteering with us.

##### **Where you'll find our volunteers:**

- Our volunteers are currently supporting services in Burnley, Whalley, St Helens, Ormskirk, Chorley and Trafford.
- We've had such a great response that most of our volunteer spots are now filled, and we've started a waiting list for those that are keen to get involved.

##### **Some highlights from this year:**

- Five dedicated volunteers supported our Burnley Hub, including two university placement students.
- Seven more stepped into hospital support roles- each one completed their training and made a real difference.

##### **Why does volunteers matter at Advocacy Focus?**

- Because volunteers help us reach more people, more quickly, and with the same care and dedication we bring to all our work.
- Their time, care and commitment are helping us grow and improve in everything we do.

##### **To every one of our volunteers – thank you.**

Your support makes a real difference, and we're so grateful to have you alongside us and an essential part of our team.

##### **What it means to be an Independent Visitor**

I really enjoy being an Independent Visitor. It is such a rewarding experience. I met Jake\* 18 months ago shortly after his 15th birthday and I think both of us were a little unsure as to what to expect and what, if anything, we would have in common given our age difference of 46 years!

However, we have built a strong, trusting relationship which is based on fun but also allows us to talk about the issues of the day and what is going on in his life and his future aspirations. Our shared adventures have ranged from Go Karting, indoor climbing, attending a pottery class, and going to the theatre to see the play he is studying for GCSE. Or a simple dog walk and catch up over a coffee! I see Jake once a month and it is very easy to find times to meet that work for both of us.

It has been an absolute pleasure to see his confidence grow and his willingness to trust and educate me on the issues facing young people in care today. Being an Independent Visitor has reinforced my belief that the best thing you can give young people is your time and consistency.

I would encourage people of all ages to consider volunteering to be an Independent Visitor. It's truly life changing for both you and the young person you support.

- *Beverly, Independent Visitor*

*\*Names have been changed to protect the identity of the people we support.*

## ADVOCACY FOCUS

### TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT AND STRATEGIC REPORT) (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

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#### Strategic report

The description under the headings "Achievements and performance" and "Financial review" meet the company law requirements for the Trustees to present a strategic report.

#### Achievements and performance

*Significant activities and achievements against objectives*

##### Wellbeing at Advocacy Focus

As we look back over the past year, it's clear that our communities continue to face challenges. People are waiting longer for support from the NHS, and the ongoing cost-of-living crisis is taking a toll on everyone's wellbeing.

At Advocacy Focus, we believe that to truly support others, we must first look after our own team. That's why our approach to wellbeing is built around **prevention, support, and aftercare**—helping our people before difficulties arise, being there during tough times, and continuing to check in afterwards.

Our **Wellbeing Team** plays a key role in this. They plan activities, lead informative sessions at team meetings, and share practical ideas, to help everyone care for their own wellbeing.

Team meetings are a chance to connect, learn, and celebrate successes together. We continue to recognise incredible contributions from our team, through our **ABCD (Above and Beyond the Call of Duty)** and **Good Buddy** awards. We also honour long standing team members with **Long Service Awards**, marking 5, 10, or even 15 years with our charity.

This year, we introduced the **Kindness Baton**, giving team members the chance to thank each other for acts of kindness. These are shared in our quarterly newsletter, '*Feel Good Focus*,' spreading positivity throughout the team.

Our **Wellbeing Room** at head office offers a peaceful space to read, relax, pray, or simply have a chat. We also welcome YOLO Wellbeing, Louise Magee from Tropic and Margaret Shuttleworth who is an acupuncturist, for quarterly treatments for the team.

Our monthly **Wellbeing Walks** continued throughout the year, which catered to all fitness levels, and gave our team the chance to unwind and relax, in and around the countryside. Our Employee Assistance Programme also continued to offer benefits such as complementary therapy treatments, prescription costs and glasses.

Our **flexible working** model allows our team to manage their own work commitments and working hours, making a four-day working week possible. To continue with the flexibility we are known for, we will launch our **Unlimited Annual Leave Policy** in the coming year. These benefits support a healthy life balance, help us attract new talent, and retain the amazing people we already have.

We were proud to take part in **Mind's Workplace Wellbeing Index** again this year—and even prouder to be named **Top Employer for the third year in a row**. We also finished the year on a high, when we won the **Most Flexible Workplace** award at the **Great British Workplace Wellbeing Awards**. An award that shows our deep commitment to creating a supportive, flexible workplace where our people can truly thrive.

## ADVOCACY FOCUS

### TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT AND STRATEGIC REPORT) (CONTINUED)

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

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#### Marketing

##### Marketing in Numbers:

**104,711** Annual website visits / **24.6% growth**

**50,493** Annual website users / **27.1% growth**

**2,442** - total followers on social media / **44.7% growth**

**39.4%** Newsletter open rate / **11-13% higher than industry average**

##### Marketing in Words:

This year, we stepped up our marketing to make sure more people heard our message.

We reached over **257,000** people through our website, social media, and email marketing – connecting with more people than ever.

Our website saw **104,711** visits, with our 'What is advocacy?' page still holding the top spot as our most viewed.

Across our channels, we sparked conversation – shared lived experiences, advocacy guides, celebrated our people, and more. Our top post? A spotlight on one of our incredible Independent Visitors – which reached over **5,675** people organically.

We also reintroduced our bi-monthly newsletter, now sent to over **600 subscribers**, with a **39.4% open rate** – smashing the sector average.

But our marketing isn't just about the numbers – it's about giving people the information they need when they don't know where to turn or who to talk to.

Our content remains free and accessible to everyone who needs it. And we'll keep talking about it, ensuring everyone has access to the support and resources we provide.

## ADVOCACY FOCUS

### TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT AND STRATEGIC REPORT) (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

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#### Advocacy in Action – Evie's Story

Hi, I'm Evie. I'm nine years old and I live in a children's home. They want me to move to a foster family soon. I used to talk to my mum every night before bed, but my social worker said I can only talk to her twice a week now. They were worried about something with my mum, but nothing else happened. I didn't know why I couldn't speak to Mum anymore. Not talking to my mum every night made me really sad and it was making me feel bad and worried.

I like talking to my support staff about how I feel. But I can be shy and scared to talk to my social worker and other grown-ups. My support staff thought I should talk to an advocate to help me make my voice louder.

When my advocate came to meet me, they knew I might be shy. So, they asked what I like to help me feel better. My support staff told them I love Disney, I really like Mickey and Minnie Mouse. My advocate brought colouring pages for our visit.

I was really quiet at first and hid my face with a big cushion. But when my advocate got out the sheets and asked if I could help draw Mickey, I ran over and sat at the table with her. She was really good at colouring with me. After a while, I felt like I could talk to her. My advocate told me what they do and how they can help, and I talked about my feelings and what I wanted to happen. I told her how I felt about not talking to my mum every night. I really liked that she listened to me and didn't tell me what she thought I should do or how I should feel.

I was happy for my advocate to tell my social worker and my Cafcass guardian what I said. After that, my social worker said I could talk to my mum every night again. I was so happy, and I started to feel better again.

I used to be really shy about talking to grown-ups, but after meeting with my advocate, I felt like my thoughts and feelings were important. I got more confident to talk to other grown-ups too. Now I can tell them what I think and how I feel, and people listen to what I have to say.

#### **Financial review**

##### *Reserves policy*

The increase in activity by the charity requires a sensible approach to setting its reserves policy. At 31 March 2025, the estimated redundancy/closure costs for the organisation amounted to £320,000 (2024: £340,000), and this is set aside as a designated fund to provide cash flow so that service delivery could be continued or redundancy/closure costs met whilst further funds were sought or the organisation would up.

At 31 March 2025, this leaves £438,840 (2024: £530,508) available to increase advocacy provision, ensure readiness for the external legislative changes in advocacy and the implementation of measures to increase advocacy accessibility within other minority and rural communities.

#### **Structure, governance and management**

The Charity is a company limited by guarantee and the liability of the members is limited to a sum not exceeding £10, as detailed in the Articles of Association.

The Trustees, who are also the directors for the purpose of company law, and who served during the year and up to the date of signature of the financial statements were:

Miss D Bond

Mr M I Wahab

Mr D O'Byrne

Mr S J Stokes

Mr C B Lintern

Mrs K Christie

Mr D Rodgers

Mr P S Carroll

Mrs S M Meadows

(Appointed 27 July 2024)

(Appointed 18 November 2024)

(Appointed 25 September 2025)



## **ADVOCACY FOCUS**

### **TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT AND STRATEGIC REPORT) (CONTINUED)**

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

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#### *Recruitment and appointment of trustees*

Recruitment of Trustees is an open process with applications welcomed at all times from any sector of the community. An annual review of the Board is completed and targeted recruitment is undertaken if the Board identifies gaps in skills or representation. Appointments are made by the Board and are subject to confirmation at the Annual General Meeting. There is a rolling programme of election periods to ensure continuity.

#### *Induction and training of new trustees*

Trustees are inducted by the Chair and Chief Executive. All Trustees are encouraged to undertake advocacy training and are offered access to other relevant training to support them in their role as well as peer support through fellow Trustees. A job description detailing levels of responsibility is provided during induction. All Trustees are subject to DBS clearance.

#### **Auditor**

In accordance with the company's articles, a resolution proposing that Mayes Business Partnership Ltd be reappointed as auditor of the company will be put at a General Meeting.

## ADVOCACY FOCUS

### TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT AND STRATEGIC REPORT) (CONTINUED)

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

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#### An update on Operations

- We started the year with a big move – relocating our Head Office from The Old Tannery in Accrington to Saturn House in Altham. We were warmly welcomed by our new neighbours and landlord, Creativeworld Marketing.

Our new space is open plan, surrounded by countryside, and designed with our team's wellbeing in mind. The move has proved popular with our people, they love our new base of operations.

- We partnered with PM+M Solutions for Business, who have taken over our payroll management. Their cloud-based system helped us digitalise and streamline the process, making it faster and more efficient for everyone.
- We're proud to report that our annual health and safety audit score rose from 83% in 2023 to **87.79%** in 2024. A big step forward that shows our ongoing commitment to maintaining a safe and positive workplace for all.
- This year, we began laying the groundwork for a new, bespoke IT system in partnership with Meritec Limited. The system will modernise how we manage all referrals and triage, with plans to integrate all our internal systems in the future. We are excited about our digital transformation journey, so watch this space!
- We launched season 3 of our podcast, FocusAF, and welcomed our new host, Jody Roberts. Jody's been exploring topics that matter to us and the people we support.

Listen to season 3 of our FocusAF podcast on your favourite podcast platform to find out more about our new host, and what topics we are talking about at Advocacy Focus.

- Our good friends at Cube HR, and Cheryle Britton of YOLO Wellbeing, took part in challenges to fundraise for Advocacy Focus. With the team at Cube HR raising over £2,100 by tackling the Yorkshire 3 Peaks challenge, and Cheryle raising almost £2,000 by taking on a personal Ironman challenge. A huge thank you to them all for their amazing efforts and for raising vital funds for our preventative service, Community Focus.
- In October, we partnered with our friends at Lancashire Women – to hold a fashion fundraiser at Mitton Hall.

Over 100 people attended the event, and together we raised **£1,642** for both charities.

- We ramped up our commitment to raising vital funds for the essential work we do as a charity. There are plenty of exciting plans in the works for next year – so keep an eye out, and support us if you can!

If you'd like to help raise money for Advocacy Focus, we'd love to hear from you. Get in touch at [fundraise@advocacyfocus.org.uk](mailto:fundraise@advocacyfocus.org.uk) to chat about how you can get involved.

The Trustees' report, including the strategic report, was approved by the Board of Trustees.

Mr C B Lintern  
Trustee

9 December 2025

## **ADVOCACY FOCUS**

### **STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES**

***FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025***

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The Trustees, who are also the directors of Advocacy Focus for the purpose of company law, are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that year.

In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

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

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that 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.

# ADVOCACY FOCUS

## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF ADVOCACY FOCUS

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### Opinion

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

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2025 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, 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 charity 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 charity's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

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

### Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the 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 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 in relation to which the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

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

## ADVOCACY FOCUS

### INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT (CONTINUED) TO THE TRUSTEES OF ADVOCACY FOCUS

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#### **Responsibilities of Trustees**

As explained more fully in the statement of Trustees' responsibilities, the Trustees, who are also the directors of the charity for the purpose 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 charity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

#### **Auditor's 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 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.

The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is detailed below.

- i) Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- (ii) Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the company's internal control.
- (iii) Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the directors.

## ADVOCACY FOCUS

### INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT (CONTINUED) TO THE TRUSTEES OF ADVOCACY FOCUS

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(iv) Conclude on the appropriateness of the directors' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the company's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the company to cease to continue as a going concern.

(v) Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Due to the sector in which the client operates we have identified that compliance with Employment Legislation and The Companies Act 2006 as areas most likely to have a material impact on the financial statements.

Owing to the inherent limitations of an audit there is an unavoidable risk that we may not have detected some material misstatements in the financial statements, even though we have properly planned and performed our audit in accordance with auditing standards. For example, the further removed non-compliance with laws and regulations (irregularities) is from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, the less likely the inherently limited procedures required by auditing standards would identify it. In addition, as with any audit, there remained a higher risk of non-detection of irregularities, as these may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal controls. We are not responsible for preventing non-compliance and cannot be expected to detect non-compliance with all laws and regulations.

A further description of our responsibilities is available on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: <https://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities>. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

#### Use of our report

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



**Mr Craig Peter Fishwick FCCA (Senior Statutory Auditor)**

For and on behalf of Mayes Business Partnership Ltd, Statutory Auditor  
Chartered Certified Accountants  
Reception 1, First Floor  
Offices, Red Rose Court  
Clayton Business Park  
Clayton Le Moors  
Lancashire  
BB5 5JR  
9 December 2025

Mayes Business Partnership Ltd is eligible for appointment as auditor of the charity by virtue of its eligibility for appointment as auditor of a company under section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

## ADVOCACY FOCUS

### STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Restricted funds 2025 £	Total 2025 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £
<b>Income from:</b>							
Donations and legacies	3	-	1,501	1,501	-	1,494	1,494
Charitable activities	4	2,564,986	-	2,564,986	2,442,077	-	2,442,077
Investments	5	8,474	-	8,474	19,231	-	19,231
<b>Total income</b>		<u>2,573,460</u>	<u>1,501</u>	<u>2,574,961</u>	<u>2,461,308</u>	<u>1,494</u>	<u>2,462,802</u>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>							
Raising funds	6	720	1,501	2,221	2,540	1,494	4,034
Charitable activities	7	2,688,285	-	2,688,285	2,387,167	-	2,387,167
Other expenditure	12	265	-	265	-	-	-
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<u>2,689,270</u>	<u>1,501</u>	<u>2,690,771</u>	<u>2,389,707</u>	<u>1,494</u>	<u>2,391,201</u>
Net gains/(losses) on investments	13	<u>4,142</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>4,142</u>	<u>(14,728)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(14,728)</u>
<b>Net income/(expenditure) and movement in funds</b>		<u>(111,668)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(111,668)</u>	<u>56,873</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>56,873</u>
<b>Reconciliation of funds:</b>							
Fund balances at 1 April 2024		<u>870,508</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>870,508</u>	<u>813,635</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>813,635</u>
<b>Fund balances at 31 March 2025</b>		<u>758,840</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>758,840</u>	<u>870,508</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>870,508</u>

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year. All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

The notes on pages 23 to 32 form part of these financial statements.

# ADVOCACY FOCUS

## BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 MARCH 2025

	Notes	2025 £	£	2024 £	£
<b>Fixed assets</b>					
Tangible assets	15		56,196		64,021
Investments	16		240,051		142,125
			<u>296,247</u>		<u>206,146</u>
<b>Current assets</b>					
Debtors	17	289,303		308,030	
Cash at bank and in hand		303,598		436,096	
		<u>592,901</u>		<u>744,126</u>	
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</b>	18	<u>(130,308)</u>		<u>(79,764)</u>	
<b>Net current assets</b>			<u>462,593</u>		<u>664,362</u>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>			<u>758,840</u>		<u>870,508</u>
<b>The funds of the charity</b>					
Unrestricted funds	20		758,840		870,508
			<u>758,840</u>		<u>870,508</u>

The notes on pages 23 to 32 form part of these financial statements.

The company is entitled to the exemption from the audit requirement contained in section 477 of the Companies Act 2006, for the year ended 31 March 2025.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 with respect to accounting records and the preparation of financial statements.

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

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees on 9 December 2025

Mr C B Lintern  
Trustee

Mr D Rodgers  
Trustee

Company registration number 04135225 (England and Wales)



## ADVOCACY FOCUS

### STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

	Notes	2025 £	£	2024 £	£
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>					
Cash absorbed by operations	22		(38,329)		(23,077)
<b>Investing activities</b>					
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(8,893)		(29,113)	
Purchase of investments		(125,000)		-	
Proceeds from disposal of investments		31,250		93,750	
Investment income received		8,474		19,231	
<b>Net cash (used in)/generated from investing activities</b>			(94,169)		83,868
<b>Net cash generated from financing activities</b>			-		-
<b>Net (decrease)/increase in cash and cash equivalents</b>			(132,498)		60,791
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year			436,096		375,305
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at end of year</b>			303,598		436,096

The notes on pages 23 to 32 form part of these financial statements.

# ADVOCACY FOCUS

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

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### 1 Accounting policies

#### Charity information

Advocacy Focus is a private company limited by guarantee incorporated in England and Wales. The registered office is Saturn House, 6-7 Mercury Rise, Altham Business Park, Accrington, Lancashire, BB5 5BY, England.

#### 1.1 Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the charity's governing document, the Companies Act 2006, FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" and the Charities SORP "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)". The charity is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

The charity has taken advantage of the provisions in the SORP for charities not to prepare a statement of cash flows.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charity. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, [modified to include the revaluation of freehold properties and to include investment properties and certain financial instruments at fair value]. The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below.

#### 1.2 Going concern

At the time of approving the financial statements, the Trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus the Trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

#### 1.3 Charitable funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of their charitable objectives.

Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors or grantors as to how they may be used. The purposes and uses of the restricted funds are set out in the notes to the financial statements.

#### 1.4 Income

Cash donations are recognised on receipt. Other donations are recognised once the charity has been notified of the donation, unless performance conditions require deferral of the amount. Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant is recognised at the time of the donation.

Legacies are recognised on receipt or otherwise if the charity has been notified of an impending distribution, the amount is known, and receipt is expected. If the amount is not known, the legacy is treated as a contingent asset.

# ADVOCACY FOCUS

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

### 1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

#### 1.5 Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to transfer economic benefit to a third party, 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 classified by activity. The costs of each activity are made up of the total of direct costs and shared costs, including support costs involved in undertaking each activity. Direct costs attributable to a single activity are allocated directly to that activity. Shared costs which contribute to more than one activity and support costs which are not attributable to a single activity are apportioned between those activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources. Central staff costs are allocated on the basis of time spent, and depreciation charges are allocated on the portion of the asset's use.

#### 1.6 Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are initially measured at cost and subsequently measured at cost or valuation, net of depreciation and any impairment losses.

Depreciation is recognised so as to write off the cost or valuation of assets less their residual values over their useful lives on the following bases:

Leasehold improvements	In accordance with the lease
Computers	25% reducing balance
Website	Enter depreciation rate via StatDB - cd199

The gain or loss arising on the disposal of an asset is determined as the difference between the sale proceeds and the carrying value of the asset, and is recognised in the statement of financial activities.

#### 1.7 Fixed asset investments

#### 1.8 Impairment of fixed assets

At each reporting end date, the charity reviews the carrying amounts of its tangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have suffered an impairment loss. If any such indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset is estimated in order to determine the extent of the impairment loss (if any).

#### 1.9 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities.

#### 1.10 Financial instruments

The charity has elected to apply the provisions of Section 11 'Basic Financial Instruments' and Section 12 'Other Financial Instruments Issues' of FRS 102 to all of its financial instruments.

Financial instruments are recognised in the charity's balance sheet when the charity becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Financial assets and liabilities are offset, with the net amounts presented in the financial statements, when there is a legally enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously.

# ADVOCACY FOCUS

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

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### 1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

#### **Basic financial assets**

Basic financial assets, which include debtors and cash and bank balances, are initially measured at transaction price including transaction costs and are subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the transaction is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial assets classified as receivable within one year are not amortised.

#### **Basic financial liabilities**

Basic financial liabilities, including creditors and bank loans are initially recognised at transaction price unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial liabilities classified as payable within one year are not amortised.

Debt instruments are subsequently carried at amortised cost, using the effective interest rate method.

Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of operations from suppliers. Amounts payable are classified as current liabilities if payment is due within one year or less. If not, they are presented as non-current liabilities. Trade creditors are recognised initially at transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

#### **Derecognition of financial liabilities**

Financial liabilities are derecognised when the charity's contractual obligations expire or are discharged or cancelled.

#### **1.11 Employee benefits**

The cost of any unused holiday entitlement is recognised in the period in which the employee's services are received.

Termination benefits are recognised immediately as an expense when the charity is demonstrably committed to terminate the employment of an employee or to provide termination benefits.

#### **1.12 Retirement benefits**

Payments to defined contribution retirement benefit schemes are charged as an expense as they fall due.

### 2 Critical accounting estimates and judgements

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, the Trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised where the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods where the revision affects both current and future periods.

## ADVOCACY FOCUS

### NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

#### 3 Income from donations and legacies

	Restricted funds 2025 £	Restricted funds 2024 £
Donations and gifts	1,501	1,494

#### 4 Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £
<b>Provision of advocacy services</b>		
Service level agreements	2,281,836	2,207,906
Performance related grants	28,594	5,500
Other income	251,441	207,996
<b>Training and private contracts</b>		
Service level agreements	3,115	20,675
	2,564,986	2,442,077

#### 5 Income from investments

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £
Income from listed investments	4,629	15,876
Interest receivable	3,845	3,355
	8,474	19,231

#### 6 Expenditure on raising funds

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Restricted funds 2025 £	Total 2025 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £
<b>Fundraising and publicity</b>						
Other fundraising costs	720	1,501	2,221	2,540	1,494	4,034

# ADVOCACY FOCUS

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

### 7 Expenditure on charitable activities

	Provision of advocacy services 2025 £	Provision of advocacy services 2024 £
<b>Direct costs</b>		
Staff costs	1,645,516	1,385,806
Depreciation and impairment	16,419	13,257
Operating leases	52,177	40,836
Rates and water	330	432
Insurance	8,372	9,517
Light and heat	1,488	8,281
Telephone	28,402	58,454
Postage and stationery	5,060	4,948
Advertising	11,655	36,144
Sundries	15,055	6,970
Staff training	25,010	25,903
Repairs and maintenance	6,118	6,223
Volunteer expenses	9,559	8,565
IT costs	48,187	43,806
Other costs	126,417	132,054
	<u>1,999,765</u>	<u>1,781,196</u>
<b>Share of support and governance costs (see note 8)</b>		
Support	684,486	601,862
Governance	4,034	4,109
	<u>2,688,285</u>	<u>2,387,167</u>
<b>Analysis by fund</b>		
Unrestricted funds	<u>2,688,285</u>	<u>2,387,167</u>

### 8 Support costs allocated to activities

	Provision of advocacy services 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Staff costs	656,873	597,466
Non-audit services	6,763	4,396
Consultants	20,850	-
Governance	4,034	4,109
	<u>688,520</u>	<u>605,971</u>

# ADVOCACY FOCUS

## NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

### 8 Support costs allocated to activities

(Continued)

	2025 £	2024 £
<b>Governance costs comprise:</b>		
Staff costs	194	459
Audit fees	3,840	3,650
	<u>4,034</u>	<u>4,109</u>

### 9 Net movement in funds

2025  
£

2024  
£

The net movement in funds is stated after charging/(crediting):

Fees payable for the audit of the charity's financial statements	3,840	3,650
Depreciation of owned tangible fixed assets	16,419	13,257
Loss on disposal of tangible fixed assets	265	-
	<u>20,524</u>	<u>16,967</u>

### 10 Trustees

None of the Trustees (or any persons connected with them) received any remuneration or benefits from the charity during the year.

### 11 Employees

The average monthly number of employees during the year was:

	2025 Number	2024 Number
Charitable	60	52
Support	20	18
	<u>80</u>	<u>70</u>

### Employment costs

	2025 £	2024 £
Wages and salaries	2,033,842	1,770,376
Social security costs	170,456	127,229
Other pension costs	98,091	85,667
	<u>2,302,389</u>	<u>1,983,272</u>

## ADVOCACY FOCUS

### NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

#### 11 Employees

(Continued)

The number of employees whose annual remuneration was more than £60,000 is as follows:

	2025 Number	2024 Number
Senior management team	1	1

#### 12 Other expenditure

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £
Net loss on disposal of tangible fixed assets	265	-

#### 13 Gains and losses on investments

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £
Gains/(losses) arising on:		
Revaluation of investments	4,142	(14,728)

#### 14 Taxation

The charity is exempt from taxation on its activities because all its income is applied for charitable purposes.



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

	Leasehold improvements	Computers	Website	Total
Cost	£	£	£	£
At 1 April 2024	3,084	161,684	10,200	174,968
Additions	-	8,893	-	8,893
Disposals	(3,084)	-	-	(3,084)
At 31 March 2025	-	170,577	10,200	180,777
Depreciation and impairment				
At 1 April 2024	2,665	106,276	2,040	110,981
Depreciation charged in the year	154	15,245	1,020	16,419
Eliminated in respect of disposals	(2,819)	-	-	(2,819)
At 31 March 2025	-	121,521	3,060	124,581
Carrying amount				
At 31 March 2025	-	49,056	7,140	56,196
At 31 March 2024	452	55,409	8,160	64,021

	Listed investments	£
<b>Cost or valuation</b>		
At 1 April 2024	142,125	
Additions	125,000	
Valuation changes	4,176	
Disposals	<u>(31,250)</u>	
At 31 March 2025	<u>240,051</u>	
<b>Carrying amount</b>		
At 31 March 2025	<u>240,051</u>	
	<u>142,125</u>	
At 31 March 2024	<u>142,125</u>	
	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Listed investments carrying amount	240,051	142,125

## ADVOCACY FOCUS

### NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

#### 17 Debtors

	2025 £	2024 £
<b>Amounts falling due within one year:</b>		
Trade debtors	213,875	211,927
Other debtors	-	31,250
Prepayments and accrued income	75,428	64,853
	<u>289,303</u>	<u>308,030</u>

#### 18 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2025 £	2024 £
Other taxation and social security	39,769	32,535
Trade creditors	11,268	16,520
Other creditors	17,378	12,396
Accruals and deferred income	61,893	18,313
	<u>130,308</u>	<u>79,764</u>

#### 19 Retirement benefit schemes

	2025 £	2024 £
<b>Defined contribution schemes</b>		
Charge to profit or loss in respect of defined contribution schemes	<u>98,091</u>	<u>85,667</u>

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme for all qualifying employees. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the charity in an independently administered fund.

#### 20 Unrestricted funds

The unrestricted funds of the charity comprise the unexpended balances of donations and grants which are not subject to specific conditions by donors and grantors as to how they may be used. These include designated funds which have been set aside out of unrestricted funds by the trustees for specific purposes.

	At 1 April 2024 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Gains and losses £	At 31 March 2025 £
General funds	<u>870,508</u>	<u>2,573,460</u>	<u>(2,689,270)</u>	<u>4,142</u>	<u>758,840</u>
<b>Previous year:</b>					
	At 1 April 2023 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Gains and losses £	At 31 March 2024 £
General funds	<u>813,635</u>	<u>2,461,308</u>	<u>(2,389,707)</u>	<u>(14,728)</u>	<u>870,508</u>

## ADVOCACY FOCUS

### NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

#### 21 Related party transactions

There were no disclosable related party transactions during the year (2024 - none).

#### 22 Cash absorbed by operations

	2025 £	2024 £
(Deficit)/surplus for the year	(111,668)	56,873
<b>Adjustments for:</b>		
Investment income recognised in statement of financial activities	(8,474)	(19,231)
Loss on disposal of tangible fixed assets	265	-
Fair value gains and losses on investments	(4,142)	14,728
Depreciation and impairment of tangible fixed assets	16,419	13,257
<b>Movements in working capital:</b>		
Decrease/(increase) in debtors	18,727	(91,294)
Increase in creditors	50,544	2,590
<b>Cash absorbed by operations</b>	<b>(38,329)</b>	<b>(23,077)</b>

#### 23 Analysis of changes in net funds

The charity had no material debt during the year.