

SHEFFIELD M.E. GROUP

England & Wales · Charity number 1095416

Details

Status Registered

Legal form Other

Registered 2003-01-15

Register [View on the Charity Commission register](#)

Contact

Address The Circle
33 Rockingham Lane
Sheffield
S1 4FW

Phone 01142536700

Email info@sheffieldmegroup.co.uk

Website www.sheffieldmegroup.co.uk

Activities

Objects: 1. TO RELIEVE SUFFERING FROM THE ILLNESS VARIOUSLY KNOWN AS MYALGIC ENCEPHALOMYELITIS (ME), CHRONIC FATIGUE SYNDROME (CFS) OR POST-VIRAL FATIGUE SYNDROME (PVFS) AND IN PARTICULAR BY THE PROVISION OF HELP AND ASSISTANCE THROUGH MUTUAL SUPPORT AND INFORMATION EXCHANGE.2. TO EDUCATE THE GENERAL PUBLIC THROUGH THE PROMOTION AND DISSEMINATION OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT ME/CFS/PVFS.

Activities: To support people living with from ME/CFS and to raise awareness of the illnesses.

Classification

- **How:** Provides Human Resources, Provides Buildings/facilities/open Space, Provides Advocacy/advice/information
- **What:** The Advancement Of Health Or Saving Of Lives
- **Who:** People With Disabilities

Geography

- Barnsley
- Derbyshire
- Doncaster
- Rotherham
- Sheffield City

Finances

| Period end | Income | Expenditure | Assets | Employees |
|------------|----------|-------------|--------|-----------|
| 2024-12-31 | £192,269 | £128,166 | - | - |
| 2023-12-31 | £84,233 | £102,405 | - | - |
| 2022-12-31 | £111,041 | £84,022 | - | - |
| 2021-12-31 | £74,478 | £69,175 | - | - |
| 2020-12-31 | £74,973 | £54,701 | - | - |

Trustees

| Name | Role | Appointed |
|--------------------|------|------------|
| Alison Millar | | 2019-05-23 |
| Anthony Pedder | | 2025-12-16 |
| Dr Caroline Dalton | | 2025-05-20 |
| Mandy Jeffcock | | 2025-05-20 |

SHEFFIELD M.E. GROUP

England & Wales - Charity number 1095416

Accounts



Sheffield
ME & Fibromyalgia
Group

Annual Report

2024

www.sheffieldmegroup.co.uk

Registered Charity: 1095416

Introduction



Our Charity

Sheffield ME and Fibromyalgia Group (SMEFG) is a registered charity supporting people in South Yorkshire and North Derbyshire living with ME/CFS, fibromyalgia and/or long Covid. We are also committed to raising awareness of the conditions and promoting positive changes to local service provision for people living with these illnesses. We currently support a growing 635 members in the area.



Charitable purposes

1. To relieve those suffering from the illnesses variously known as Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME), chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS) or post-viral fatigue syndrome (PVFS) and fibromyalgia and in particular by the provision of help and assistance through mutual support and information exchange.
2. To educate the general public through the promotion and dissemination of knowledge about ME/CFS/PVFS.



Outcomes for Members

Our annual report is structured following the 3 outcomes for our Members:

1. Our members make more informed life choices by accessing quality information about their illness and support available
2. The economic situation of our members is maximised
3. Our members increase their links and active engagement with other sufferers, carers and allies to reduce their social isolation



Funding

Thank you to our funders who this year have been **The National Lottery Community Fund - Reaching Communities, The National Lottery Community Fund - Awards for All England, Healthwatch Sheffield & Voluntary Action Sheffield, The People's Postcode Lottery, The Charles and Elsie Sykes Trust, Sheffield Town Trust, The University of Sheffield, and The Brelms Trust.**

Update from our Chair



CAROLYN LEARY

Welcome everyone to the 2024 Annual Report of the Sheffield ME, fibromyalgia and long Covid group. 2024 was a year full of ideas, new activities, some staff changes and a lot of voluntary effort! As ever, we are a very small charity that punches above its weight and has gained a national reputation – there are no other local groups that have a team of paid staff and this many members. But of course being more well known means finding more people who want our support and those who want to volunteer and give back, so we're on an upward spiral and sometimes struggle to keep up with ourselves!

We embarked on some new ventures in 2024 – a partnership with Healthwatch and local health and well-being groups to create a new set of resources to raise awareness of long Covid, particularly among minoritised communities who were not accessing healthcare. We also partnered with the Medical School to host 2 students on placement. The pages ahead describe the wide variety of services and activities we provided for and with our members. We are hugely grateful to our dedicated benefits advice team whose tireless work has been at times life-changing, and all the tutors, volunteers and staff who contribute to make this charity unique.

2024 saw Elyane Bardou, our Charity Director, move on to new life adventures, with a final fund-raising blitz which has put us in the strong financial position we are in. In October Pauline Kimantas joined us as Charity Director for a temporary period and kept the show on the road. Emma Isaac did a great job as Communications Officer and moved on in July, and we were fortunate to appoint Claire Watkinson in November. In between, we are hugely grateful to Nolwenn Kirsch who volunteered and sustained our social media posting and newsletter. And without the ongoing support of our membership we couldn't have achieved so much.

Looking forward, 2024 will be my last full year as Chair of Trustees. It has been an absolute honour to be able to help this charity grow as a compassionate and caring community, and to find ways to enable members to speak out – most notable were our 2 large #MillionsMissing events before the pandemic. By the next AGM I will have been chair for 7 years and in my book that's a good time for someone to bring new insights though I hope to remain as a Trustee if elected. It's been a totally illuminating 7 years hearing people's incredible and painfully familiar stories of frustration and resilience. I have never known illnesses where change, improvement and new knowledge is met with such entrenched resistance by those whose job it is to respond to patient needs. However, I remain resolute and will continue to put energies into fighting this cause. Meanwhile I wish to convey my enormous gratitude to all members, staff and Trustees and our patron, Berlie Doherty, for your unswerving support and kindness over the years.

The Team

Current Staffing Team

- Charity Director - Maria Ashmore
- Senior Benefits Advisor - Emma Kirby
- Benefits Advisor - Ceri De'Ath
- Admin Worker - Em Biczuk
- Communications Development Officer - Claire Watkinson
- Bookkeeper - Clare Bateman
- Freelance support - Ellie Upton - Loach, Pippa Line

Our Trustees

- Simon Briggs
- Becca Gransbury (Co-Chair until June, then Minutes secretary)
- Beatrice Greenfield (until June)
- Isabel Hemmings
- Carolyn Leary - (Co-Chair until June, then Chair)
- Alison Millar
- Ellen Roy

Our Patron

Our patron is the ever supportive Berlie Doherty.

The people making this possible

Our charity is run by people with ME/CFS, fibromyalgia and/or long Covid and their carers. Lived experience of the conditions is common among our volunteers, staff, and trustees. Our work is highly member-led, and decision-making is informed by the collection of ideas and feedback from our community.

As we end 2024 and look forward to 2025, we now have a strong team of 6 staff delivering fantastic services to members, and we're looking to continue to strengthen and develop what we offer.

However you've got involved this year - providing feedback, suggesting new ideas, volunteering or participating in our activities - we want to say **Thank You** for being part of our valuable community.

“ Every town & city needs this service. ”

Big thanks to our volunteers!

We are so grateful for all the volunteers who dedicated time helping our charity and community in so many ways throughout this year: being a trustee, contributing to and editing our magazine, moderating our facebook groups, hosting meet-ups and activities, the list goes on!

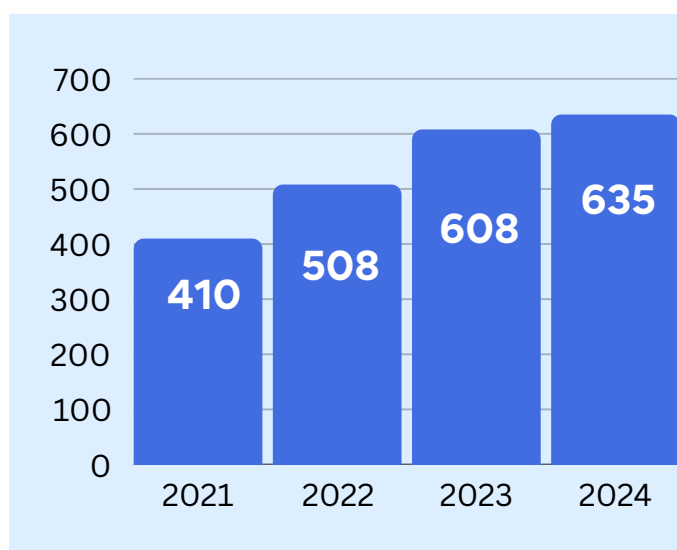
In the year ahead, we will continue to provide volunteering opportunities for our members and other volunteers including students, as we continue to grow our charity both online and in-person.

Our membership

We continue to operate at a stable number of members and are looking to increase this in 2025. A big thanks to our Admin worker, Em, who has spent much time on ensuring all memberships on our database are active and current.

Thank you to everyone who has joined us or helped raise awareness of our support.

We hope in 2025 to be able to grow our membership across the region, and to diversify our membership from an equalities perspective by working towards ensuring we engage with and are representative of marginalised groups and communities.



Our membership growth over time

Outcome 1

Our members make more informed life choices by accessing quality information about their illness and support available

This includes information, updates, tips & tools to manage symptoms, signposts and more.

Point of contact



Email queries answered

453



Phone queries answered

246

Topics of queries: health, support regarding specific issues, benefits, membership, our activities, specific event or idea, listening ear.

Website



Views of our website

44,643



Unique visitors

19,972

Topics: benefits, educational talks, management of symptoms, support available.

e-news



Digital newsletters sent

72



Total number of subscribers

736 Members **1,243** General

With relevant updates and information about activities, expert talks, latest research etc.

Social media



Facebook followers

2,190



X followers

1,226
2025 figure



Instagram followers

343



YouTube Subscribers

2,120



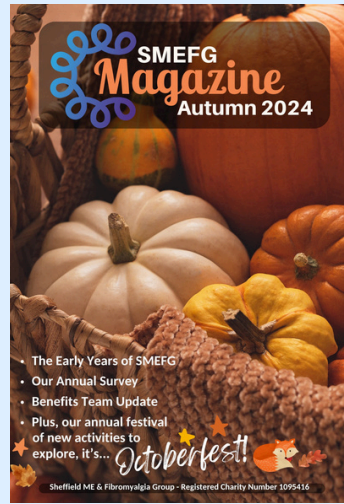
YouTube views

52,084

Sharing information on what our charity is doing, activities and opportunities for members to be involved, relevant activities and events organised by others in our region, and accurate information from reputable sources on national developments, policy and research relevant to ME/CFS, fibromyalgia and long Covid.

Quarterly magazine

All our members receive our magazine via email or post. Led by our Trustee Becca (huge thank you Becca!) and contributed to by volunteers, members & staff. Informative, entertaining, to keep in touch with the community and the wider world.

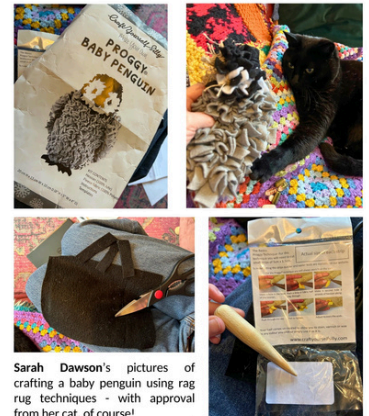


A variety of features including topics such as:

- Benefits updates and advice
- Poetry
- Arts & Crafts
- Entertainment: quizzes, jokes
- Care plans update with Sheffield ME/CFS Service
- Research updated on ME/CFS, fibromyalgia and long Covid
- Gamechangers - tips and tricks from the community to manage the conditions
- Write-ups of our online science talks
- Updates on our activities & projects
- Cooking & Nutrition

Members' Crafts

Many thanks to Sarah and Jayne who have sent in photos after attending our Crafternoon sessions!



Sarah Dawson's pictures of crafting a baby penguin using rag rug techniques - with approval from her cat, of course!

Regular wellbeing activities

A total of **202** social and wellbeing activities offered free of charge throughout the year. Hosted by professional tutors and volunteers.

These qigong, mindfulness and singing activities not only provide a safe and accessible space for our members to practice healthy activities and to make new social connections, but it also provides them with tools to practice at home and help relieve symptoms in their daily life.

“When I first moved back to Chesterfield I went to a couple of the socials in Sheffield which was really nice to meet other people in the same situation. This made me feel less alone and was nice to feel understood by people that 'got it'.”

“As a member, being able to talk to other people who are sharing the same illness and it's horrible effects on our lives [has helped me]. Having that contact is emotionally very valuable for often isolated people like me.”

Outcome 2

The economic situation of our members is maximised

Benefits & social care advice

Our benefits service, made up of two advisers, continued to grow in 2024, with a 15% rise in clients supported and significant increases in financial outcomes—36% more in yearly gains and 30% more in back payments. We maintained a high success rate and saw a slight rise in client satisfaction. The team also handled more complex cases, particularly around ESA and Universal Credit, while continuing to streamline processes and expand resources to better support our members.



138

clients supported from initial advice to challenging decisions



169

cases opened - supporting **31** individuals with more than one issue



269

one-off advice provided on benefits, housing, and social care



3

online information sessions: *Information Session on Preparing for Winter, Benefits Updates and Information Webinar, Universal Credit Information Session*

Casework support

We provide casework support across a wide range of social security benefits, including help with new claims, renewals, mandatory reconsiderations, and representation at appeals and tribunals. We also assist with social care-related issues and mobility.

£ 618k

yearly income through support (equates to £11,899.72 per week)

£ 166k

in back payments received (full number is £166,849.62)

95%

Success rate

99%

Success rate when support provided before the MR stage (for PIP only)

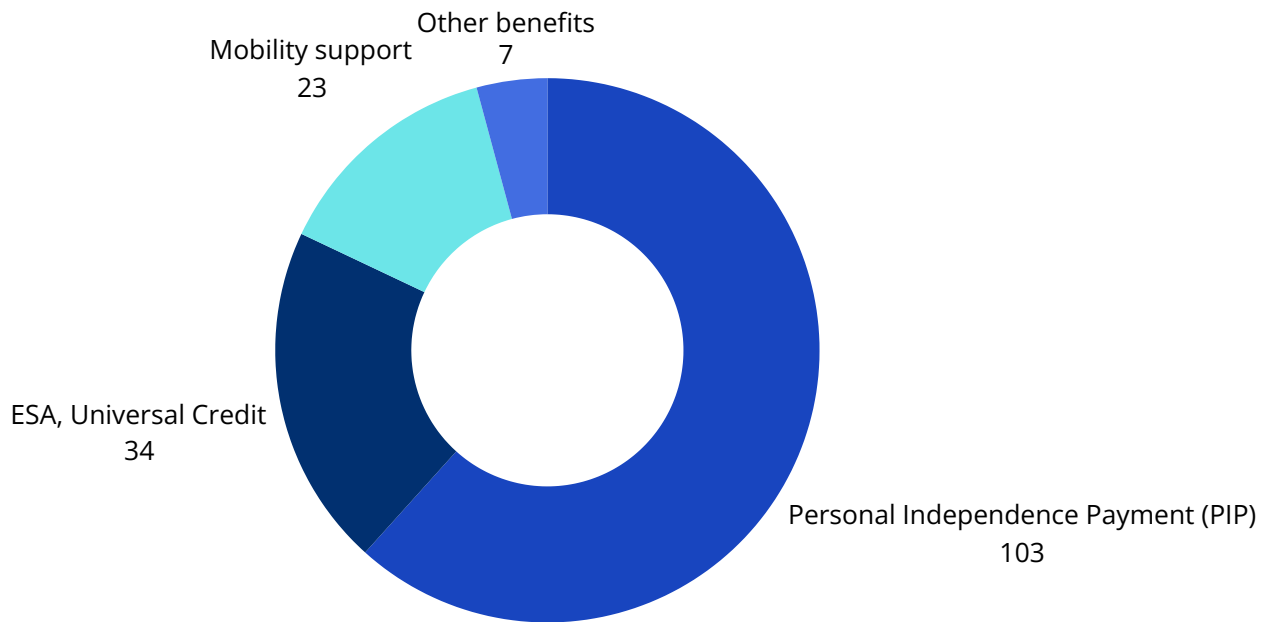
4.93/5

Client satisfaction rating

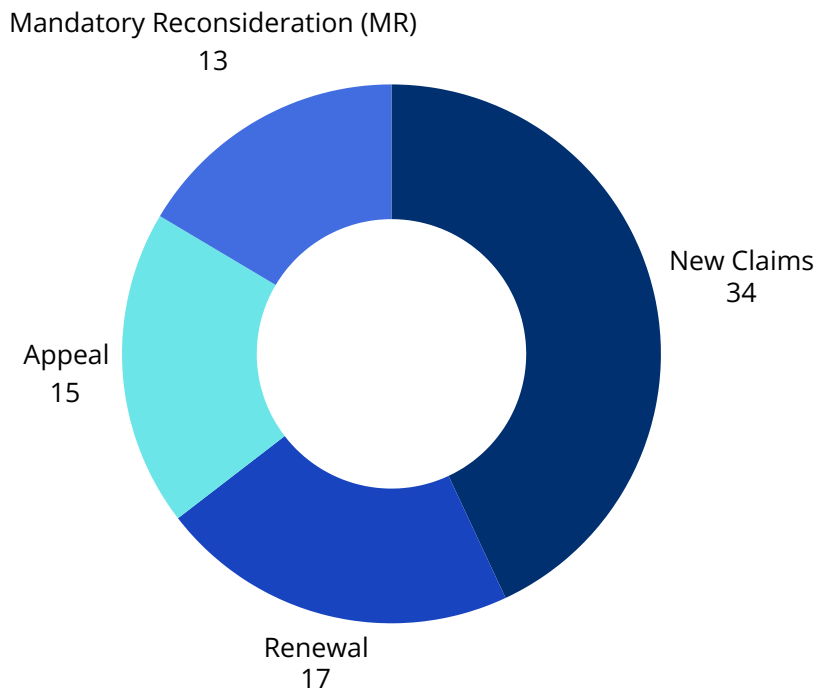
“ It's changed my life. Now that I have PIP, I can get better without the pressure of needing to work full time. I feel happier, more secure and a lot less stressed!!! ”

“ I can't thank you enough Emma. Your process and emotional support was fantastic. I said I would have felt the same if awarded or not, you were so thorough, patient, knowledgeable and encouraging. Thank you so much. ”

Area of casework supported



Stage of claim supported



“ It has meant I can pay my bills so it has made all the difference and removed a huge stress. It has meant I could continue living in my home. ”

“ I'd like to thank Ceri for her professionalism, kindness and the time she took to talk to me and help me to understand the process. I had been wavering on whether going to the tribunal but being able to talk it through and get a better understanding of the process and risks involved really helped. ”

Outcome 3

Our members increase their links and active engagement with other sufferers, carers and allies to reduce their social isolation

Our regular online social & wellbeing activities

Mindfulness



32 sessions hosted by Jane, a professional tutor

“ Mindfulness has helped me manage stress levels, and mental health issues associated with chronic illness and the resulting isolation. ”

Qigong



29 sessions hosted by Orla, a professional tutor

French conversation



11 sessions hosted by Tina, a volunteer member

The Short Book Club



22 sessions hosted by Anita, a volunteer member

“ I've enjoyed being able to join in gentle activity from home. ”

Online Singing



25 sessions hosted by Helen, a professional tutor

Pilates



12 sessions hosted by Lorna, a professional tutor

“ Helped with improving social interaction and self esteem doing something I thought I would never do. ”

Crafternoon



11 sessions hosted by Ellen, a trustee and volunteer member



“ Thank you so much for your support to push us forward and to make us [feel like] we are not alone but we are as a family. ”

Plant Lovers Group



8 sessions hosted by Sally, a volunteer member

Relax, Breathe, Sing (in-person singing)



11 sessions hosted by Helen, a professional tutor



“ I enjoy singing and via SMEFG I can attend the face-to-face singing group, which I love. The structure of the session is tailored to allow rest time and it is possible to sing sitting down, which doesn't happen with able bodied groups. Given I suffer with ME and POTS, I really appreciate it. ”

Warm Water Swimming



8 sessions hosted by various members

“ [SMEFG] has completely transformed my daily living circumstances... I can't imagine another service being so helpful. ”

In-person meet-ups

Long Covid Meet-Up



12 meet-ups hosted by Alison, a trustee and volunteer member

Cuppa & Chat



9 meet-ups hosted by Becca, a trustee and volunteer member

Stannington Meet-Up



12 meet-ups hosted by Chris, a volunteer member

“ A member I met at a Meet Up told me about Dr Gupta in York who is very proactive in treating POTS/dysautonomia. I am now [a] patient of his thanks to that encounter. ”

The Long Covid Network

Since June 2024, our Charity has supported coordination of the Sheffield Long Covid Network. The Network is for people who are living with long Covid, a carer for someone living with long Covid and/or someone living or working in Sheffield interested in or doing work related to long Covid.

The Network is led by members, and we will work together to support each other to achieve these objectives:

- Support people with long Covid
- Raise awareness of long Covid
- Provide a voice in response to the services that affect us
- Support connections between people and organisations
- Develop partnerships and share resources and knowledge

Meetings are online on the 28th of every month from 11am to 12 pm. If you would like to join, contact us on: longcovidnetsheff@gmail.com

Picnics Meet-ups

ME/CFS and Fibromyalgia Awareness Day Picnic



19 attended on the 12th May 2024

Clifton Park Picnic, Rotherham



6 attended on 26th June 2024

Octoberfest



SMEFG offered a bunch of new activities to members for Octoberfest!

A total of **33** people attended a mixture of online and in-person events, from movie and theatre nights from the comfort of home, to learning new arts and crafts, including watercolour painting and DIY bath salts.



Peer support platforms

“ The online chat groups are a lifeline. Without them there would be no one. Sometimes I help and support other people. Sometimes other people help me. ”

Private Facebook group

480
members

Public Facebook group

2,307
members

Long Covid Facebook group

222
members

Our Facebook groups continued to be a platform for people to ask questions, share tips, news and experiences, and most of all support each other.

WhatsApp groups that support our activities

85
members

General Chat WhatsApp group

31
members

ME/CFS Stannington group

9
members

WhatsApp activity groups include SMEFG swimming, Les Frenchies, Plant Lover's Group and Crafternoon.

Our AGM



32 participants

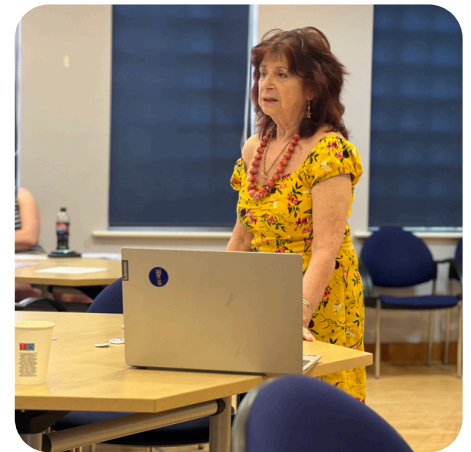


14 in-person



18 online

At our AGM, Ros Norsworthy delivered a captivating and passionate talk about the early history of the SMEFG. It was inspirational to hear that we are continuing the same battle to improve the quality of life and knowledge around the conditions. Special thanks to Pippa Line, who collected the memories and weaved them into such an interesting article.



Our Christmas Social



53 participants



45 in-person



8 online

We had the best turnout ever in bringing people together including prospective members at our Christmas gathering. A festive, jolly, family-friendly event that included the talented magician John, beautiful live singing & carols with Stan Edge and the Belle Hags quartet, a quiz which was won by The Christmas Puddings, the online team and a delicious buffet.



Education and awareness

Long Covid

2024 included a welcome opportunity to work directly with Healthwatch on their programme to identify how long Covid was impacting minoritised communities.

We were able to work with Darnall Wellbeing to run a survey gathering patient experience of services and access to them, we produced one version of a readable summary of the NICE guidelines on long Covid for patients, and one version to be given to GPs, a leaflet co-designed with patients on what people would most want their friends and family/loved ones to know, and a checklist of common symptoms to help patients talk with their GPs.

We also supported other projects in Sheffield e.g. ISRAAC Somali Community project to develop materials to be disseminated among their communities. What we learnt was how many people lived with long Covid or similar symptoms, but were not being diagnosed or properly listened to and investigated, and often did not know whether they had long Covid or not. This exacerbated existing health inequalities.

What other support is available for Long Covid?

Local support available in Sheffield:

- **Darnall Well Being** host a monthly Long Covid Support Group at Darnall primary Care Centre. Booking is essential if you want to join their meeting – contact them on 0114 2496315 or email: dwb.enquiries@darnallwellbeing.org.uk
- **The Sheffield ME and Fibromyalgia Group** provide a range of support to people with Long Covid – contact them on 0114 253 6700 or through their website: www.sheffieldmegroup.co.uk
- **SOHAS (Sheffield Occupational Health Advisory Service)** can provide advice on work-related health issues – contact them on 0114 275 5760 or through their website: www.sohas.co.uk

Advice on Long Covid

To find out more information or advice on Long Covid visit the following national websites:

- Your COVID Recovery <https://www.yourcovidrecovery.nhs.uk/>
- My Long COVID Needs <https://mylongcovid.org.uk/>
- Long Covid Support <https://www.longcovid.org/>

healthwatch Sheffield

vas
supporting community action

ROSHWI

What is Long Covid?

Long Covid is when the symptoms of your Covid-19 infection last for longer than 12 weeks.

Healthwatch have shared all these resources:
<https://www.healthwatchsheffield.co.uk/long-covid-resources>

ME Awareness Day May 12th 2024

We were delighted to be invited to run a stall at the Hallamshire Hospital jointly with the ME/CFS service.

Together we spent two full days at the hospital, talking to patients but especially staff and students. We located ourselves in the canteen and had many conversations - we were very warmly received, and we went into many departments including neurology, rheumatology, infectious diseases, physiotherapy and more,

leaving leaflets and information about the illnesses and our group. Staff were very willing to listen, some still referred to ME as 'chronic fatigue' but were open to discussion. SMEFG had also specially produced resources for health care professionals on our website and shared the link with many staff.



Training for GP practices

In August we were happy to hear that one of our members, Laura Boyles, had agreed with her GP practice to invite us to run a training session. She and Carolyn, our Chair, delivered training on the 3 illnesses, provided personal stories of impact and information on NICE guidance, on the recent inquest into the death of Maeve Boothby O'Neill, and on what our group can offer. This session was very well received, and was even more powerful with the voice of one of our members. If this is something you think your GP practice would welcome, please let us know.

Sheffield University Medical School

We reached out to the Medical school in the late spring and were delighted that they approved us to join the programme of community placements for medical students in the autumn. Two brilliant 3rd year students joined us and after an intensive induction involving meeting members, they immediately found their mission that there was no training on offer and lots of myths around about the illnesses and so thought through carefully the best ways of raising awareness.



They embarked on capturing and writing up an anonymised case study for publication in a student medical journal, they jointly ran an information stall with us at the Winter Gardens for 2 days in December, and they produced a clear set of slides in preparation for running information sessions for GPs, and for patients to send/take to their GPs if appropriate. They also produced a summary guide for medical students to increase their awareness. All these resources will be appearing on our website in 2025. We were so impressed with how these students listened to our members and were skilful and clear in producing useful targeted information. They intend to invite the ME Association to do a talk for the student neurology society. We hope to repeat this placement in 2025.

Big thanks to our Funders!



Sheffield Town Trust



The Charles & Elsie Sykes Trust

And a huge thank you to all who donated to our charity this year



Looking forward into 2025 and beyond...

• **Listening, learning, changing**

As a Charity, our membership, volunteers and staff make up could more widely reflect the communities we aim to support, including global majority communities and people with all other protected characteristics including sexuality and gender. Over the next 12-18 months, we will make conscious and measurable efforts to better reflect a wider range of individuals and communities.

We will do this by working with global majority led organisations across our geographical patch and engaging in a series of conversations with groups representing communities of interest so that we can better represent and involve more people living with ME/CFS, fibromyalgia and long Covid.

We will assess our staff and volunteer recruitment procedures and governance to ensure this is a constant and visible thread of our practice.

• **Diversifying our income**

We will continue to develop ways of raising vital funds for our charity, to support our membership, make a difference locally, sustain and hopefully grow our brilliant staff team.

• **Improve volunteering and events**

We aim to recruit staff to support our volunteers and enable us to host more events throughout the year. We wish to offer new inclusive opportunities for our members to volunteer, share skills, share opinions, take initiative and participate in projects.

• **Increase our benefits offer**

We know that more and more people need support with benefits and that this will continue to grow as we increase our outreach activities. In order to meet this need, we plan to expand our benefits team and will look to raise funds to enable us to extend this offer.

Get in touch!

Phone

0114 2536700

Email

info@sheffieldmegroup.co.uk

Address

The Circle
33 Rockingham Lane
Sheffield
S1 4FW

Website

www.sheffieldmegroup.co.uk



@sheffieldmefm

Instagram

@sheffieldmefm

Facebook

facebook.com/SheffieldMEand
FibromyalgiaGroup

YouTube

@sheffieldmefibromyalgiagroup

Phone line and office opening hours - Monday to Thursday, 11am to 2pm

SHEFFIELD ME AND FIBROMYALGIA GROUP

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

for the year ended 31 December 2024

(registered Charity Number 1095416)

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SHEFFIELD ME AND FIBROMYALGIA GROUP

Trustees' report

The trustees are pleased to present their report and financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2024.

The trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities", issued in March 2005, in preparing the annual report and financial statements of the charity.

Organisation

Sheffield ME and Fibromyalgia Group is a registered charity and is governed by a constitution dated 11 October 2001, as amended 8 December 2002, and was entered on the register of charities on 15 January 2003.

The group is managed by a voluntary committee who are elected at each Annual General Meeting.

Since 2002, part-time staff have been employed. At the end of 2024, our staff team totalled 99 weekly hours.

Objects of the charity

The objects of the charity are:

- to relieve those suffering from the illnesses known as myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME)/ chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS)/ post-viral fatigue syndrome (PVFS), fibromyalgia, and long Covid.
- to educate the general public through the promotion and dissemination of knowledge about the conditions.

We do this through our benefits and social care service, helpline, magazine and information sharing, wellbeing and social activities, peer support groups, befriending and educational talks. We also network with local organisations to raise awareness and improve local support provision for our community. We do not give medical advice nor do we offer individual treatment programmes. Where possible we signpost to relevant bodies and resources. We are an independent charity relying on grants, donations and income from our nominal membership fee.

Public Benefit Statement

Sheffield ME and Fibromyalgia Group is a registered charity supporting those with ME/CFS/PVFS, fibromyalgia and long Covid, their families and carers. Our impact on our members is reduced social isolation, enhanced wellbeing, empowerment and improved understanding of their illness and support available, maximised welfare benefits entitlement and social care support. Our wider aim is fighting stigma through education, and improving local support provision.

The trustees regularly give due consideration to the Commission's guidance in deciding what activities they should undertake, by reviewing the needs of their beneficiaries, by ensuring that the service is fully inclusive and that no detriment or harm arises from the organisation by carrying out its activities.

We operate with respect to each individual person and we aim to give each one an opportunity to have their say and to become more involved in the group, whilst working within our adopted policies and guidelines.

Our core values are based on our charitable objectives as stated in our constitution.

SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

Trustees' report (continued)

Reserves policy

Sheffield ME Group aims to hold free reserves of 3 months running costs, which would equate to £37,522 based on the 2025 budget. The Group met this target during 2024, the unrestricted funds being £78,339 at 31 December 2024.

The reserve fund will be ring-fenced to offer protection to employees, to meet any outstanding overhead costs, contracts and leases plus payment of any other outstanding liabilities.

Trustees' responsibilities for the financial statements

The trustees are responsible for preparing financial statements for each financial period which show the state of affairs of the Charity and of the surplus or deficit of the Charity for that period. In preparing those financial statements the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity 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 Charity and enable the trustees to prepare financial statements.

The trustees are responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention of fraud and other irregularities.

Signed on behalf of the trustees on.....12 JUNE 2025 By

.....*C. Leary*.....

Print name.....CAROLYN LEARY.....
Trustee

SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

I report on the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2024, which are set out on pages 6 to 8.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145 (5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act
- have not been met; or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:  _____

Craig Williamson
White Rose Accounting for Charities
The Ghyll
Threapland
Aspatia
CA7 2EL

Date: 12/06/2025

SHEFFIELD ME AND FIBROMYALGIA GROUP

Income and Expenditure Account for the Year Ended 31 December 2024

| | Notes | Unrestricted funds £ | Restricted funds £ | Total 2024 £ | Total 2023 £ |
|--|-------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Income | | | | | |
| Grants and donations | 1 | | | | |
| Members' subscriptions | 2 | 60,450 | 123,024 | 183,474 | 77,684 |
| Gift aid received | | 8,110 | 0 | 8,110 | 6,102 |
| Fundraising | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 447 |
| | | 685 | 0 | 685 | 0 |
| Total Income | | 69,245 | 123,024 | 192,269 | 84,233 |
| Expenditure | | | | | |
| Salaries and national Insurance | 3 | 27,431 | 62,183 | 89,614 | 82,816 |
| Payroll fees | | 0 | 689 | 689 | 304 |
| Recruitment & DBS checks | | 94 | 261 | 355 | 120 |
| Staff training | | 2,227 | 2,658 | 4,885 | 373 |
| Staff travel | | 0 | 61 | 61 | 6 |
| Trustee training | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 32 |
| Events, conference, workshops and activities | | 1,766 | 7,522 | 9,288 | 5,279 |
| Premises rental and room hire | | 1,012 | 5,671 | 6,683 | 5,148 |
| Insurance | | 0 | 1,143 | 1,143 | 1,066 |
| Telephone, internet and web | | 345 | 1,060 | 1,405 | 989 |
| IT Support | | 0 | 484 | 484 | 0 |
| Equipment | | 0 | 3,747 | 3,747 | 444 |
| Postage | | 2 | 2,603 | 2,605 | 1,129 |
| Software | | 0 | 630 | 630 | 0 |
| Stationery and office | | 0 | 83 | 83 | 142 |
| Subscriptions | | 1,182 | 2,108 | 3,290 | 2,667 |
| Publicity and newsletter | | 160 | 2,395 | 2,555 | 1,234 |
| Volunteers' travel and social | | 51 | 119 | 170 | 0 |
| Accountancy | | 63 | 147 | 210 | 215 |
| Professional fees | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 175 |
| Bank, Paypal & Wix charges | | 0 | 269 | 269 | 206 |
| Other | | 0 | - | 0 | 60 |
| Total Expenditure | | 34,333 | 93,833 | 128,166 | 102,405 |
| Surplus / (Deficit) for the year | | 34,912 | 29,191 | 64,103 | (18,172) |
| Charity Funds as at 01 December 2024 | | 43,156 | 43,110 | 86,266 | 104,438 |
| Transfer from Restricted to Unrestricted Funds | | 271 | (271) | 0 | 0 |
| Charity Funds as at 01 December 2024 | | 43,427 | 42,839 | 86,266 | 104,438 |
| Charity Funds as at 31 December 2024 | 4 | 78,339 | 72,030 | 150,369 | 86,266 |

SHEFFIELD ME AND FIBROMYALGIA GROUP

Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2024

| | 2024 £ | 2023 £ |
|----------------------------------|----------------|---------------|
| Current Assets | | |
| Cash at Bank and in Hand | 151,134 | 86,266 |
| Debtors | 1,996 | 0 |
| Prepayments | 678 | 0 |
| Total Current Assets | 153,808 | 86,266 |
| Current Liabilities | | |
| Accruals | 3,439 | 0 |
| Total Current Liabilities | 3,439 | 0 |
| Net Current Assets | 150,369 | 86,266 |
| Total Net Assets | 150,369 | 86,266 |
| Charity Funds | | |
| Represented by | | |
| Unrestricted funds | 78,339 | 43,427 |
| Restricted funds | 72,030 | 42,839 |
| Total Funds | 150,369 | 86,266 |

Signed on behalf of the Trustees on.....12/06/2025 by

Trustee *C. Leary*

PRINT NAME:..... C. LEARY

SHEFFIELD ME AND FIBROMYALGIA GROUP

Notes to the Accounts for the Year Ended 31 December 2024

1 Accounting Policies

(a) Basis of preparation

The Financial Statements have been prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2006, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102), and the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with FRS102 (effective from January 2015 and updated with effect from January 2016) - (the Charities SORP (FRS102)), as modified for smaller charities. The Charity meets the definition of a public benefit entity as defined under FRS102.

(b) Donation and fund accounting

Unrestricted funds comprise those funds which the trustees are free to use in accordance with the charitable objects.

Restricted funds are to be used for specific purposes laid down by the donor.

(c) Resources expended

Expenditure is included on an accruals basis.

2 Grants and donations

| | Unrestricted funds | Restricted funds | Total 2024 |
|--|-----------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| | £ | £ | £ |
| Grants:- | | | |
| The National Lottery Community Fund - Reaching Communities 2014 - 2026 | - | 79,054 | 79,054 |
| The National Lottery Community Fund - Awards for All | - | 19,910 | 19,910 |
| Healthwatch Sheffield - Long Covid Network | - | 6,157 | 6,157 |
| South Yorkshire's Community Foundation - Community Grants | - | 4,613 | 4,613 |
| Department for Work and Pensions - Access to Work | - | 6,183 | 6,183 |
| The Charles & Elsie Sykes Trust | - | 2,500 | 2,500 |
| The JG Graves Charitable Trust | - | 2,000 | 2,000 |
| Sheffield Town Trust | 2,000 | 1,500 | 3,500 |
| The Company of Cutlers in Hallamshire | - | 1,000 | 1,000 |
| Lloyds Bank Foundation for England and Wales | 50,000 | 0 | 50,000 |
| The University of Sheffield | 5,096 | 0 | 5,096 |
| Healthwatch Sheffield - Long Covid Community Grant | 496 | 0 | 496 |
| Sub total | 57,592 | 122,917 | 180,509 |
| Donations | 2,858 | 107 | 2,965 |
| Total grants and donations | 60,450 | 123,024 | 183,474 |

3 Staff costs

Staff costs during the period were:-

| | 2024 £ | 2023 £ |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Gross salaries and employers pension | 89,614 | 82,816 |
| Employer's national insurance | - | - |
| | 89,614 | 82,816 |

Number of staff: 6 part time staff

4 Restricted funds

| | Balance at 01/01/2024 £ | Transfer to Unrestricted Funds £ | Revised Balance at 01/01/2024 £ | Income £ | Expenditure £ | Balance at 31/12/2024 £ |
|--|-------------------------------|---|--|----------------|------------------|-------------------------------|
| The National Lottery Community Fund - Reaching Communities 2018 - 2023 | 851 | - | 851 | - | 851 | 0 |
| The National Lottery Community Fund - Reaching Communities 2014 - 2026 | 38,722 | - | 38,722 | 79,054 | 77,444 | 40,332 |
| Tai Chi Classes Restricted Donation | 436 | - | 436 | - | - | 436 |
| ME Local Network | 2,830 | - | 2,830 | - | 1,968 | 862 |
| The University of Sheffield | 271 | (271) | 0 | - | - | 0 |
| The National Lottery Community Fund - Awards for All | - | - | 0 | 19,910 | 992 | 18,918 |
| Voluntary Action Sheffield - Long Covid Network | - | - | 0 | 6,157 | 2,844 | 3,313 |
| South Yorkshire's Community Foundation - Community Grants | - | - | 0 | 4,613 | - | 4,613 |
| Department for Work and Pensions - Access to Work | - | - | 0 | 6,183 | 6,183 | 0 |
| The Charles & Elsie Sykes Trust | - | - | 0 | 2,500 | 1,351 | 1,149 |
| The JG Graves Charitable Trust | - | - | 0 | 2,000 | 2,000 | 0 |
| Sheffield Town Trust | - | - | 0 | 1,500 | 93 | 1,407 |
| The Company of Cutlers in Hallamshire | - | - | 0 | 1,000 | - | 1,000 |
| Member's Donations for In-Person Singing Group | - | - | 0 | 107 | 107 | 0 |
| | 43,109 | (271) | 42,839 | 123,024 | 93,833 | 72,030 |

**SHEFFIELD ME AND FIBROMYALGIA
GROUP**

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

for the year ended 31 December 2024

(registered Charity Number 1095416)

| Contents | Page |
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| Income and Expenditure Account | 6 |
| Balance Sheet | 7 |
| Notes to the Accounts | 8 |

SHEFFIELD ME AND FIBROMYALGIA GROUP

Trustees' report

The trustees are pleased to present their report and financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2024.

The trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities", issued in March 2005, in preparing the annual report and financial statements of the charity.

Organisation

Sheffield ME and Fibromyalgia Group is a registered charity and is governed by a constitution dated 11 October 2001, as amended 8 December 2002, and was entered on the register of charities on 15 January 2003.

The group is managed by a voluntary committee who are elected at each Annual General Meeting.

Since 2002, part-time staff have been employed. At the end of 2024, our staff team totalled 99 weekly hours.

Objects of the charity

The objects of the charity are:

- to relieve those suffering from the illnesses known as myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME)/ chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS)/ post-viral fatigue syndrome (PVFS), fibromyalgia, and long Covid.
- to educate the general public through the promotion and dissemination of knowledge about the conditions.

We do this through our benefits and social care service, helpline, magazine and information sharing, wellbeing and social activities, peer support groups, befriending and educational talks. We also network with local organisations to raise awareness and improve local support provision for our community. We do not give medical advice nor do we offer individual treatment programmes. Where possible we signpost to relevant bodies and resources. We are an independent charity relying on grants, donations and income from our nominal membership fee.

Public Benefit Statement

Sheffield ME and Fibromyalgia Group is a registered charity supporting those with ME/CFS/PVFS, fibromyalgia and long Covid, their families and carers. Our impact on our members is reduced social isolation, enhanced wellbeing, empowerment and improved understanding of their illness and support available, maximised welfare benefits entitlement and social care support. Our wider aim is fighting stigma through education, and improving local support provision.

The trustees regularly give due consideration to the Commission's guidance in deciding what activities they should undertake, by reviewing the needs of their beneficiaries, by ensuring that the service is fully inclusive and that no detriment or harm arises from the organisation by carrying out its activities.

We operate with respect to each individual person and we aim to give each one an opportunity to have their say and to become more involved in the group, whilst working within our adopted policies and guidelines.

Our core values are based on our charitable objectives as stated in our constitution.

SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

Trustees' report (continued)

Reserves policy

Sheffield ME Group aims to hold free reserves of 3 months running costs, which would equate to £37,522 based on the 2025 budget. The Group met this target during 2024, the unrestricted funds being £78,339 at 31 December 2024.

The reserve fund will be ring-fenced to offer protection to employees, to meet any outstanding overhead costs, contracts and leases plus payment of any other outstanding liabilities.

Trustees' responsibilities for the financial statements

The trustees are responsible for preparing financial statements for each financial period which show the state of affairs of the Charity and of the surplus or deficit of the Charity for that period. In preparing those financial statements the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity 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 Charity and enable the trustees to prepare financial statements.

The trustees are responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention of fraud and other irregularities.

Signed on behalf of the trustees on.....12 JUNE 2025 By

.....*C. Leary*.....

Print name.....CAROLYN LEARY.....
Trustee

SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

I report on the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2024, which are set out on pages 6 to 8.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145 (5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act
- have not been met; or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:  _____

Craig Williamson
White Rose Accounting for Charities
The Ghyll
Threapland
Aspatia
CA7 2EL

Date: 12/06/2025

SHEFFIELD ME AND FIBROMYALGIA GROUP

Income and Expenditure Account for the Year Ended 31 December 2024

| | Notes | Unrestricted funds £ | Restricted funds £ | Total 2024 £ | Total 2023 £ |
|--|-------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Income | | | | | |
| Grants and donations | 1 | | | | |
| Members' subscriptions | 2 | 60,450 | 123,024 | 183,474 | 77,684 |
| Gift aid received | | 8,110 | 0 | 8,110 | 6,102 |
| Fundraising | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 447 |
| | | 685 | 0 | 685 | 0 |
| Total Income | | 69,245 | 123,024 | 192,269 | 84,233 |
| Expenditure | | | | | |
| Salaries and national Insurance | 3 | 27,431 | 62,183 | 89,614 | 82,816 |
| Payroll fees | | 0 | 689 | 689 | 304 |
| Recruitment & DBS checks | | 94 | 261 | 355 | 120 |
| Staff training | | 2,227 | 2,658 | 4,885 | 373 |
| Staff travel | | 0 | 61 | 61 | 6 |
| Trustee training | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 32 |
| Events, conference, workshops and activities | | 1,766 | 7,522 | 9,288 | 5,279 |
| Premises rental and room hire | | 1,012 | 5,671 | 6,683 | 5,148 |
| Insurance | | 0 | 1,143 | 1,143 | 1,066 |
| Telephone, internet and web | | 345 | 1,060 | 1,405 | 989 |
| IT Support | | 0 | 484 | 484 | 0 |
| Equipment | | 0 | 3,747 | 3,747 | 444 |
| Postage | | 2 | 2,603 | 2,605 | 1,129 |
| Software | | 0 | 630 | 630 | 0 |
| Stationery and office | | 0 | 83 | 83 | 142 |
| Subscriptions | | 1,182 | 2,108 | 3,290 | 2,667 |
| Publicity and newsletter | | 160 | 2,395 | 2,555 | 1,234 |
| Volunteers' travel and social | | 51 | 119 | 170 | 0 |
| Accountancy | | 63 | 147 | 210 | 215 |
| Professional fees | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 175 |
| Bank, Paypal & Wix charges | | 0 | 269 | 269 | 206 |
| Other | | 0 | - | 0 | 60 |
| Total Expenditure | | 34,333 | 93,833 | 128,166 | 102,405 |
| Surplus / (Deficit) for the year | | 34,912 | 29,191 | 64,103 | (18,172) |
| Charity Funds as at 01 December 2024 | | 43,156 | 43,110 | 86,266 | 104,438 |
| Transfer from Restricted to Unrestricted Funds | | 271 | (271) | 0 | 0 |
| Charity Funds as at 01 December 2024 | | 43,427 | 42,839 | 86,266 | 104,438 |
| Charity Funds as at 31 December 2024 | 4 | 78,339 | 72,030 | 150,369 | 86,266 |

SHEFFIELD ME AND FIBROMYALGIA GROUP

Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2024

| | 2024 £ | 2023 £ |
|----------------------------------|----------------|---------------|
| Current Assets | | |
| Cash at Bank and in Hand | 151,134 | 86,266 |
| Debtors | 1,996 | 0 |
| Prepayments | 678 | 0 |
| Total Current Assets | <u>153,808</u> | <u>86,266</u> |
| Current Liabilities | | |
| Accruals | 3,439 | 0 |
| Total Current Liabilities | <u>3,439</u> | <u>0</u> |
| Net Current Assets | <u>150,369</u> | <u>86,266</u> |
| Total Net Assets | <u>150,369</u> | <u>86,266</u> |
| Charity Funds | | |
| Represented by | | |
| Unrestricted funds | 78,339 | 43,427 |
| Restricted funds | 72,030 | 42,839 |
| Total Funds | <u>150,369</u> | <u>86,266</u> |

Signed on behalf of the Trustees on.....12/06/2025 by

Trustee *C. Leary*

PRINT NAME:..... C. LEARY

SHEFFIELD ME AND FIBROMYALGIA GROUP

Notes to the Accounts for the Year Ended 31 December 2024

1 Accounting Policies

(a) Basis of preparation

The Financial Statements have been prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2006, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102), and the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with FRS102 (effective from January 2015 and updated with effect from January 2016) - (the Charities SORP (FRS102)), as modified for smaller charities. The Charity meets the definition of a public benefit entity as defined under FRS102.

(b) Donation and fund accounting

Unrestricted funds comprise those funds which the trustees are free to use in accordance with the charitable objects.

Restricted funds are to be used for specific purposes laid down by the donor.

(c) Resources expended

Expenditure is included on an accruals basis.

2 Grants and donations

| | Unrestricted funds | Restricted funds | Total 2024 |
|--|-----------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| | £ | £ | £ |
| Grants:- | | | |
| The National Lottery Community Fund - Reaching Communities 2014 - 2026 | - | 79,054 | 79,054 |
| The National Lottery Community Fund - Awards for All | - | 19,910 | 19,910 |
| Healthwatch Sheffield - Long Covid Network | - | 6,157 | 6,157 |
| South Yorkshire's Community Foundation - Community Grants | - | 4,613 | 4,613 |
| Department for Work and Pensions - Access to Work | - | 6,183 | 6,183 |
| The Charles & Elsie Sykes Trust | - | 2,500 | 2,500 |
| The JG Graves Charitable Trust | - | 2,000 | 2,000 |
| Sheffield Town Trust | 2,000 | 1,500 | 3,500 |
| The Company of Cutlers in Hallamshire | - | 1,000 | 1,000 |
| Lloyds Bank Foundation for England and Wales | 50,000 | 0 | 50,000 |
| The University of Sheffield | 5,096 | 0 | 5,096 |
| Healthwatch Sheffield - Long Covid Community Grant | 496 | 0 | 496 |
| Sub total | 57,592 | 122,917 | 180,509 |
| Donations | 2,858 | 107 | 2,965 |
| Total grants and donations | 60,450 | 123,024 | 183,474 |

3 Staff costs

Staff costs during the period were:-

| | 2024 £ | 2023 £ |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Gross salaries and employers pension | 89,614 | 82,816 |
| Employer's national insurance | - | - |
| | 89,614 | 82,816 |

Number of staff: 6 part time staff

4 Restricted funds

| | Balance at 01/01/2024 £ | Transfer to Unrestricted Funds £ | Revised Balance at 01/01/2024 £ | Income £ | Expenditure £ | Balance at 31/12/2024 £ |
|--|-------------------------------|---|--|----------------|------------------|-------------------------------|
| The National Lottery Community Fund - Reaching Communities 2018 - 2023 | 851 | - | 851 | - | 851 | 0 |
| The National Lottery Community Fund - Reaching Communities 2014 - 2026 | 38,722 | - | 38,722 | 79,054 | 77,444 | 40,332 |
| Tai Chi Classes Restricted Donation | 436 | - | 436 | - | - | 436 |
| ME Local Network | 2,830 | - | 2,830 | - | 1,968 | 862 |
| The University of Sheffield | 271 | (271) | 0 | - | - | 0 |
| The National Lottery Community Fund - Awards for All | - | - | 0 | 19,910 | 992 | 18,918 |
| Voluntary Action Sheffield - Long Covid Network | - | - | 0 | 6,157 | 2,844 | 3,313 |
| South Yorkshire's Community Foundation - Community Grants | - | - | 0 | 4,613 | - | 4,613 |
| Department for Work and Pensions - Access to Work | - | - | 0 | 6,183 | 6,183 | 0 |
| The Charles & Elsie Sykes Trust | - | - | 0 | 2,500 | 1,351 | 1,149 |
| The JG Graves Charitable Trust | - | - | 0 | 2,000 | 2,000 | 0 |
| Sheffield Town Trust | - | - | 0 | 1,500 | 93 | 1,407 |
| The Company of Cutlers in Hallamshire | - | - | 0 | 1,000 | - | 1,000 |
| Member's Donations for In-Person Singing Group | - | - | 0 | 107 | 107 | 0 |
| | 43,109 | (271) | 42,839 | 123,024 | 93,833 | 72,030 |

SHEFFIELD M.E. GROUP

England & Wales - Charity number 1095416

Accounts



Sheffield
ME & Fibromyalgia
Group

Registered Charity: 1095416

OUR ANNUAL REPORT Jan - Dec 2023



@sheffieldmefm



@sheffieldmefm



facebook.com/SheffieldME
andFibromyalgiaGroup

www.sheffieldmegroup.co.uk

info@sheffieldmegroup.co.uk

Introduction

Our charity

We are a registered charity supporting people in South Yorkshire and North Derbyshire living with ME/CFS, fibromyalgia and/or long Covid. We are also committed to raising awareness of the conditions and promoting positive changes to local service provision for people living with these illnesses. We currently support a growing **608 members** in the area.



Charitable purposes

1. To relieve those suffering from the illnesses variously known as Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME), chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS) or post-viral fatigue syndrome (PVFS) and fibromyalgia and in particular by the provision of help and assistance through mutual support and information exchange.
2. To educate the general public through the promotion and dissemination of knowledge about ME/CFS/PVFS.

Strategic outcomes

Our annual report is structured following the 3 strategic outcomes of our charity:

1. Our members make more informed life choices by accessing quality information about their illness and support available
2. The economic situation of our members is maximised
3. Our members increase their links and active engagement with other sufferers, carers and allies to reduce their social isolation



Funding

Thank you to our funders who this year have been the National Lottery Reaching Communities, Healthwatch and The People's Postcode Lottery. They have funded our welfare benefits service, activities programme, long Covid resource creation project, and information service to support our members and the wider community across South Yorkshire and North Derbyshire.

Letter from the Chair...

Welcome to our 2023 Annual Report, a very busy year for our charity. We managed to return to holding our AGM in person and online, and decided that going 'hybrid' is the way forward to best accommodate everyone's needs. Becca Gransbury and myself were elected as Co-Chairs and it has been a delight working closely with her. Our Trustees supported the charity through a number of staff changes so that by the end of the year we had secured a highly skilled team and longer term stability.



Our 5 year Lottery funding ceased at the end of December and Trustees worked with staff to successfully secure core funding for the charity for a further 3 years which we are delighted about. So by the end of 2023 the charity was in a strong position with an experienced and excited staff team ready to tackle 2024. Membership continues to increase steadily embracing people with long Covid, fibromyalgia and ME/CFS and we worked hard with Healthwatch and other local community groups to raise the profile of long Covid in our area. Nationally we contributed to a new 'Delivery Plan' led by the Dept for Health and Social Care for those living with ME/CFS and worked with other groups across the UK to put pressure on for the NICE guideline for ME/CFS to be implemented. We'll keep you updated.

As ever our welfare benefits team have steadily continued offering free advice and support and have achieved significant wins - we are so grateful to them for skilfully supporting members through the highly stressful process of claiming their entitlement to benefits. We've had some brilliant volunteers working in the office to help get records online and reduce clutter so a huge thanks to them for sharing their time. A big thanks also goes to Sheila Broadhead for her work as our treasurer, helping with financial reports and putting budgets together for funding bids.

So, we are feeling very positive about the charity's ability to support members during the year ahead, and we will build on our relationships with our local NHS services, local and national groups to represent members' interests. If you would like to talk about becoming a Trustee or volunteering for our group, please get in touch!

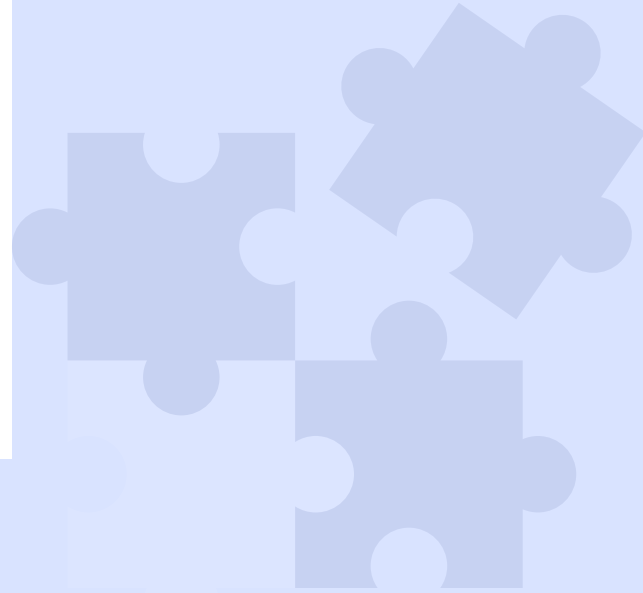
Carolyn Leary, Co-Chair

Our Trustees

- **Simon Briggs** (until Sept)
- **Becca Gransbury Co-Chair** (from May)
- **Beatrice Greenfield**
- **Isabel Hemmings**
- **Carolyn Leary - Chair** (until May), **Co-Chair** (from May)
- **Alison Millar**
- **Ellen Roy** (from May)
- **Emma Saville** (until Sept)
- **Duraiya Kapasi** (until Sept)

Associate Trustee

Sheila Broadhead - Treasurer



Our Staff

- **Elyane Bardou - Charity Manager**
- **Amy Palmer - Charity Manager** (Feb-Oct)
- **Emma Kirby - Senior Benefits Adviser** (joined in March)
- **Ayan Farrah, Ellie Jones, Helen Walkington - Benefits Advisers** (short term)
- **Pippa Line - Engagement Officer** (until August), **Assistant Project Worker** (from Sept)
- **Emma Biczuk - Admin Worker** (joined in Oct)
- **Maddy Whitby - Admin Worker** (Feb-Sept)
- **Emma Isaac - Communications Development Officer** (joined in Oct)
- **Clare Bateman - Bookkeeper** (joined in Oct)

Our Patron

Our patron is the ever supportive Berlie Doherty.

The people making this possible

Our charity is run by people with ME/CFS, fibromyalgia and/or long Covid and their carers. Lived experience of the conditions, or other invisible illnesses, is common among our volunteers, staff, and trustees. Our work is highly member-led, and decision-making is informed by the continuous collection of ideas and feedback from our community.

Staff team - 5 years ago, we had 2 benefits advisers and 1 info & communications officer. By the end of 2023, we managed to form a more robust staff team detailed above. Every staff member in our new team is highly skilled and experienced in their role, with a strong dedication to helping the people we support, which makes us very confident and excited in the future work of our charity.

However you've got involved this year - providing feedback, suggesting new ideas, volunteering or participating in our activities - we want to say 'Thank you' for being part of our community!

Big thanks to our volunteers!

We are so grateful for the 40+ volunteers who dedicated time helping our charity and community in so many ways throughout this year: being a trustee, contributing to and editing our magazine, moderating our facebook group, befriending a member, hosting meet-ups and activities, decluttering our office and digitalising our paperwork, being a treasurer...

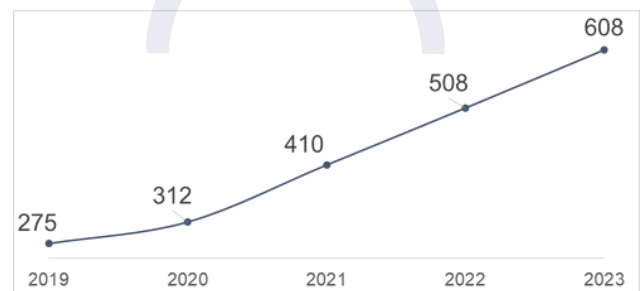
In the year ahead, we will continue to provide volunteering opportunities for our members and other volunteers including students, as we continue to grow our charity both online and in-person.

Our membership

Our membership has more than doubled in the last 4 years, increasing between 14% and 31% each year to reach 608 members at the end of 2023.

48% of our members have a recurring membership, demonstrating the value of our long-lasting support and community.

Thank you to everyone who has joined us or helped raise awareness of our support. You make our community what it is!



Our membership growth over time

Outcome 1

Our members make more informed life choices by accessing quality information about their illness and support available

This includes information, updates, tips & tools to manage symptoms, signposts and more.

Point of contact



700
email queries
answered



172
phone queries
answered

Topics of queries: health, support regarding specific issues, benefits, membership, our activities, specific event or idea, listening ear.

Website



47,575
views of our website

35,459

views of our pages dedicated to information sharing.

Topics: benefits, educational talks, management of symptoms, support available.

e-news



76
digital newsletters sent to

976

recipients

with relevant updates and information about activities, expert talks, latest research etc.

Facebook page

2,018
followers

Sharing information on what our charity is doing, activities and opportunities for members to be involved, relevant activities and events organised by others in our region, and accurate information from reputable sources on national developments, policy and research relevant to ME/CFS, fibromyalgia and long Covid.

Twitter

1,012
followers

Science to your sofa

Gut Microbes as Cause and Treatment of ME/CFS

Prof Simon Carding - Research Leader, Gut Microbes in Health and Disease, Quadram Institute, Norwich.

Co-hosted with Cinnamon Days CIC

1,240
viewers across
Zoom, Facebook
and YouTube



Viewers included people living with the condition(s), carers and workers in related fields.

Created by
20
volunteer
members
+ staff

All our members receive our
magazine via email or post

24 pages or more!

*Informative, entertaining, to keep in touch with the
community and the wider world.*

21 informative articles on:

- Benefits updates and advice
- Acces to Work
- Wheelchair accessible trails in the area
- Care plans update with Sheffield ME/CFS Service
- Genetic research on ME/CFS
- Gamechangers - tips and tricks from the community to manage the conditions
- Write-ups of our online science talks
- Updates on our activities & projects
- Nutrition

**Quarterly
magazine**

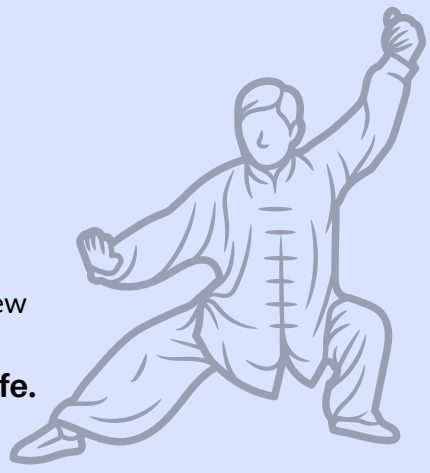


**Regular
wellbeing
activities**

A total of **68** weekly and fortnightly sessions
hosted by professional tutors

The details of these activities is described in Outcome 3.

These qigong, mindfulness and singing activities not only provide a safe and accessible space for our members to practice healthy activities and to make new social connections, but it also provides them with **tools to practice at home and help relieve symptoms in their daily life.**



"Mindfulness has given me the skills to help manage the many symptoms of ME."

"[Singing sessions] have been helpful for managing the breathing issues I experienced with long covid and I believe are a great tool for my efforts to soothe the vagus nerve which effects my symptoms of M.E."

**New
resources**

We secured a Long Covid Community Grant with Healthwatch/VAS to create resources for people with long Covid and healthcare professionals:

- **Family and Friends leaflet**, explaining in simple words what it is like to live with the illness;
- **Long Covid NICE guideline for patients**, a 3-page summary of the guideline;
- **Long Covid NICE guideline for GPs**, a 1-page summary with key information that your GP should know;
- **Long Covid Symptom Tracker**, to be used as a helper for medical appointments.

The resources can be found on our website.

Outcome 2

The economic situation of our members is maximised

Benefits & social care advice

A good year for our benefits service, which for the time includes a senior benefits adviser thanks to the new staff team structure. There has been a lot of work done on ironing our processes and procedures, and making referrals more streamlined and accessible.

120 clients supported, from initial advice to challenging decisions

73 one-off advice provided on benefits, housing, social care

1 online information session on changes to the work capability assessment

Casework support

Casework support includes: first claims, reviews, challenging decisions, benefits checks, social care checks, accessing further support in the area of housing, mobility, aids and adaptations.

"Peace of mind"

"It helps me be able to feel a bit like me again"

£ 456,8k

Yearly increase

£ 128k

Arrears

97%

success rate

100%

success rate when support provided before the MR stage

"PIP allows me to compensate for the ways that my illness affects me, and participate in my life to a fuller extent. Having the support of the benefits team in order to maintain this is invaluable for my quality of life."

"Tremendous positive difference to help with the cost of living and additional expense that I face."

Mobility support & other

4.7/5

client satisfaction rating

ESA, Universal Credit

Mandatory Reconsideration (MR)

Appeal

Renewal

Stage of claim supported

New Claim

Area of casework supported

Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

"I have been able to buy aids such as a light weight kettle, light weight cutlery, lightweight pens. "

"The message I would like to leave is thank you for listening to me and supporting me and helping me navigate the complexities of the benefits system! Emma is very good at providing support and cares and is compassionate which is rare these days!"

Outcome 3

Our members increase their links and active engagement with other sufferers, carers and allies to reduce their social isolation

A total of **147** social and wellbeing activities offered free of charge throughout the year. Hosted by professional tutors and volunteers.



Weekly Mindfulness

30 sessions hosted by Jane, a professional tutor

"I find these very beneficial in helping with stress and symptoms and also very important in providing social interaction as I rarely leave the house and have very few social interaction besides the classes."



Weekly Qigong

33 sessions hosted by Orla, a professional tutor

"I have found the qigong invaluable. It is one of the few activities I am able to do as with ME/CFS one cannot do normal exercise. It helps relieve symptoms and is energising. It is also good to be able to mix with other people as I am alone in my house much of the time."

Monthly French conversation

10 sessions hosted by Tina, a volunteer member

"Very accessible and welcoming and there is no pressure to be on top form, either in terms of your French or your health!"



Fortnightly Singing

22 sessions hosted by Helen, a professional tutor

"Having access to the singing group is a great boost to my general well-being and gives me a sense of connection to the world which I otherwise would not have."

"Some [singing] sessions I'm moved to tears by the music and communal feeling and every session I end up with a big smile on my face. [...] I feel a genuine fondness for the other members and miss them when they don't attend."

In-person meet-ups



33 meet-ups hosted by our members

"The meet-ups are always enjoyed by everyone. It's great to be with people in the same situation and, whilst we talk about all manner of things, a lot of useful information is always exchanged."

Pilates, Warm water swimming

3 sessions hosted by a tutor (pilates) or volunteer (swimming)
The swimming group is keeping in touch on whatsapp

"I was really fragile, and it was so nice to be supported to do this."

New wellbeing activities



Skill-focused activities

Arts & Craft, British Sign Language, Cartooning, Writing workshop

17 sessions hosted by a tutor or a volunteer member



Really good fun, easy to do and great to try something different. [cartooning]

Our AGM

30 participants



Our first ever hybrid AGM - both in the Circle, and online on Zoom. Our special guest was **Adam Lowe**, explaining his role as a lay person in the NICE guideline development committee for ME/CFS, resulting in the new guideline being published in October 2021. Adam is also a performance poet and performed some of his work for us.



50 participants
30 in person and
20 online



A jolly, hybrid, family-friendly event to get together!

Live carols & singalong with Stan Edge and the Belle Haggs quartet
Professional juggling show by Chris Marley
Quiz, poem, raffle and chatter
A free, healthy buffet to suit all diets
30 prizes won, in-person and online

Our Christmas social



Quarterly magazine

Another way to share among the community

Content from the community included:

- Details of members' meet-ups
- Tips & tricks for everyday life
- Poems, stories, music, craft, photos
- Entertainment: quiz, jokes



Befriending



4 long lasting friendships

128 phone calls

115 hours over the phone

"At times I feel so alone and had not spoken to a single person for a number of days, I welcome the call & always look forward to it."

"The befriending scheme is wonderful, it has made a positive difference in my life. I'm looking forward to each call. The calls often break up long periods of time of being on my own - I can spend days without talking to anyone."

Thank you to our 4 long-standing volunteers who have been opening their hearts to new friendships. We would like to further develop this invaluable scheme over the coming year.

Peer support platforms

Private Facebook group

394 members

Public Facebook group

2041 members

Long Covid Facebook group

186 members



Our Facebook groups continued to be a platform for people to ask questions, share tips, news and experiences, and most of all support each other.

Looking forward

Becoming completely hybrid

We are aiming at significantly increasing our in-person activities offer. This would mean continuing our in-person meet-ups and organising more in-person activities in Sheffield and in the rest of our area of benefit (South Yorkshire and North Derbyshire). These would be organised as much as possible outdoors, or indoors with appropriate communication around safety measures in place.

The success of our hybrid Christmas party demonstrated that we are capable of offering completely hybrid events to our community, which we aim to do for our major events like our AGM.

Reaching out beyond Sheffield

Currently, the majority of our membership lives in Sheffield. We wish to reach out to the rest of our area of benefit by engaging with individuals, community groups, local authorities, Voluntary Action offices and Healthwatch branches, and organising activities in those areas.

Long Covid outreach

We intend to collaborate with long Covid Hubs and long Covid support groups across South Yorkshire and North Derbyshire for as long as they exist to reach out to individuals and provide sustainable long-term support and a wider engagement platform for people through our membership.

Increasing active engagement of our members

We wish to offer new inclusive opportunities for our members to volunteer, share skills, share opinions, take initiative and participate in projects. These will be both online and in-person. For some members we hope this can be a step-by-step approach to re-discovering previous skills and interests, and growing in confidence. Our small swimming group has been a prime example of this, with people returning to the pool after 6 years and more.

Diversifying our income

We will look into developing new ways of raising vital funds for our charity, to support our growing membership, make a difference locally, sustain and develop our current staff team, and to enable us to take on more projects and ideas coming from our community.

Big thanks to our Funders!



And a huge *Thank you!* to all who donated to our charity this year 

Get in touch!

Our address (office open Monday to Thursday, 10.45am to 2.15pm)

The Circle
33 Rockingham Lane
Sheffield S1 4FW



Our phone line (open Monday to Thursday, 10.45am to 2.15pm)
0114 2536700


Our email
info@sheffieldmegroup.co.uk



Our website
www.sheffieldmegroup.co.uk



Our social media - follow us!

Facebook  facebook.com/SheffieldMEandFibromyalgiaGroup

Twitter  [@sheffieldmefm](https://twitter.com/sheffieldmefm)

Instagram  [@sheffieldmefm](https://instagram.com/sheffieldmefm)

SHEFFIELD ME AND FIBROMYALGIA GROUP

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

for the year ended 31 December 2023

(registered Charity Number 1095416)

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SHEFFIELD ME AND FIBROMYALGIA GROUP

Legal information

Trustees

Carolyn Leary Chair
Simon Briggs
Becca Gransbury
Beatrice Greenfield
Isabel Hemmings
Duraiya Kapasi
Alison Millar
Emma Saville

Registered Charity Number

1095416

Principal address

The Circle
33 Rockingham Lane
Sheffield
S1 4FW

Bank

Lloyds TSB
Church Street
Sheffield

Independent examiner

Craig Williamson
White Rose Accounting for Charities
The Ghyll
Threapland
Aspatria
CA7 2EL

SHEFFIELD ME AND FIBROMYALGIA GROUP

Trustees' report

The trustees are pleased to present their report and financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2023.

The trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities", issued in March 2005, in preparing the annual report and financial statements of the charity.

Organisation

Sheffield ME and Fibromyalgia Group is a registered charity and is governed by a constitution dated 11 October 2001, as amended 8 December 2002, and was entered on the register of charities on 15 January 2003.

The group is managed by a voluntary committee who are elected at each Annual General Meeting. Since 2002, part-time staff have been employed. At the end of 2023, our staff team totalled 99 weekly hours.

Objects of the charity

The objects of the charity are:

- to relieve those suffering from the illnesses known as myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME)/ chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS)/ post-viral fatigue syndrome (PVFS), fibromyalgia, and long Covid.
- to educate the general public through the promotion and dissemination of knowledge about the conditions.

We do this through our benefits and social care service, helpline, magazine and information sharing, wellbeing and social activities, peer support groups, befriending and educational talks. We also network with local organisations to raise awareness and improve local support provision for our community. We do not give medical advice nor do we offer individual treatment programmes. Where possible we signpost to relevant bodies and resources. We are an independent charity relying on grants, donations and income from our nominal membership fee.

Public Benefit Statement

Sheffield ME and Fibromyalgia Group is a registered charity supporting those with ME/CFS/PVFS, fibromyalgia and long Covid, their families and carers. Our impact on our members is reduced social isolation, enhanced wellbeing, empowerment and improved understanding of their illness and support available, maximised welfare benefits entitlement and social care support. Our wider aim is fighting stigma through education, and improving local support provision.

The trustees regularly give due consideration to the Commission's guidance in deciding what activities they should undertake, by reviewing the needs of their beneficiaries, by ensuring that the service is fully inclusive and that no detriment or harm arises from the organisation by carrying out its activities.

We operate with respect to each individual person and we aim to give each one an opportunity to have their say and to become more involved in the group, whilst working within our adopted policies and guidelines.

Our core values are based on our charitable objectives as stated in our constitution.

SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

Trustees' report (continued)

Reserves policy

Sheffield ME Group aims to hold free reserves of 3 months running costs, which would equate to £33,142 based on the 2024 budget. The Group met this target during 2023, the unrestricted funds being £43,156 at 31 December 2023.

The reserve fund will be ring-fenced to offer protection to employees, to meet any outstanding overhead costs, contracts and leases plus payment of any other outstanding liabilities.

Trustees' responsibilities for the financial statements

The trustees are responsible for preparing financial statements for each financial period which show the state of affairs of the Charity and of the surplus or deficit of the Charity for that period. In preparing those financial statements the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity 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 Charity and enable the trustees to prepare financial statements.

The trustees are responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention of fraud and other irregularities.

Signed on behalf of the trustees on.....11.06.2024..... By

..........

Print name.....Carolyn Leary.....

Trustee

SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

I report on the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2023, which are set out on pages 6 to 8.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145 (5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements: q to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and q to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the have not been met; or
- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper

Signed: 

Craig Williamson
White Rose Accounting for Charities
The Ghyll
Threapland
Aspatria
CA7 2EL

Date: 6/6/2024

SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

Receipts and Payments Account for the year ended 31 December 2023


| | | Unrestricted funds | Restricted funds | Total 2023 | Total 2022 |
|--|-------|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| | | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| | Notes | | | | |
| Receipts | 1 | | | | |
| Grants and donations | 2 | 3,890 | 73,794 | 77,684 | 105,719 |
| Members' subscriptions | | 6,102 | 0 | 6,102 | 5,292 |
| Gift aid received | | 447 | 0 | 447 | - |
| Fundraising | | - | 0 | 0 | 30 |
| Total receipts | | 10,439 | 73,794 | 84,233 | 111,041 |
| Payments | | | | | |
| Salaries and national Insurance | 3 | 17,518 | 65,298 | 82,816 | 62,267 |
| Payroll fees | | 0 | 304 | 304 | 352 |
| Recruitment & DBS checks | | 0 | 120 | 120 | 15 |
| Staff training | | 0 | 373 | 373 | 90 |
| Staff travel | | 0 | 6 | 6 | 301 |
| Trustee training | | 0 | 32 | 32 | 50 |
| Events, conference, workshops and activities | | 3,610 | 1,669 | 5,279 | 4,385 |
| Premises rental and room hire | | 0 | 5,148 | 5,148 | 5,511 |
| Insurance | | 0 | 1,066 | 1,066 | 982 |
| Telephone, internet and web | | 0 | 989 | 989 | 1,238 |
| Equipment | | 269 | 175 | 444 | 3,105 |
| Postage | | 0 | 1,129 | 1,129 | 1,445 |
| Stationery and office | | 0 | 142 | 142 | 302 |
| Subscriptions | | 176 | 2,491 | 2,667 | 2,120 |
| Publicity and newsletter | | 0 | 1,234 | 1,234 | 1,618 |
| Volunteers' travel and social | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 61 |
| Accountancy | | 0 | 215 | 215 | 205 |
| Professional fees | | 175 | 0 | 175 | 0 |
| Bank , Paypal & WIX charges | | 206 | - | 206 | 154 |
| Other | | 60 | - | 60 | (179) |
| Total payments | | 22,014 | 80,391 | 102,405 | 84,022 |
| Net receipts/(payments) for the year | | (11,575) | (6,597) | (18,172) | 27,019 |
| Cash and bank balance at 01/01/2023 | | 28,554 | 75,884 | 104,438 | 77,419 |
| Correction to fund allocation at 01/01/2023 | | 26,177 | (26,177) | 0 | 0 |
| Revised cash and bank balance at 01/01/2023 | | 54,731 | 49,707 | 104,438 | 77,419 |
| Cash and bank balance at 31/12/2023 | 4 | 43,156 | 43,110 | 86,266 | 104,438 |

SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

Statement of assets and liabilities as at 31 December 2023

| | 2023 £ | 2022 £ |
|---------------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Monetary assets | | |
| Balance at bank and cash | 86,266 | 104,438 |
| | <u>86,266</u> | <u>104,438</u> |
| | | |
| | £ | £ |
| Liabilities | | |
| Rent and room hire | 0 | 1,324 |
| Independent examination | 215 | 205 |
| Postage | 0 | 207 |
| ICT | 0 | 127 |
| Telephone, internet and website | 440 | 12 |
| Equipment | 0 | 9 |
| Service review | 0 | 286 |
| Printing | 0 | 326 |
| Qigong sessions | 0 | 80 |
| Bank, paypal and Wix charges | 5 | 0 |
| Payroll processing | 165 | 0 |
| Singing sessions | 480 | 0 |
| Events | 250 | 0 |
| | <u>1,555</u> | <u>2,577</u> |

Signed on behalf of the Trustees on.....11.06.2024..... by

Trustee 

PRINT NAME: Carolyn Leary.....

SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2023

1 Receipts and payments account

Because the level of income and expenditure is below £250,000, the group has opted for accounts to be prepared on a receipts and payments basis rather than an accruals basis. This is in line with Charity Commission guidelines for small groups and is seen as more appropriate for this group.

| 2 Grants and donations | Unrestricted funds | Restricted funds | Total 2023 |
|--|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| | £ | £ | £ |
| Grants:- | | | |
| Big Lottery Fund 2018 - 2023 | - | 31,072 | 31,072 |
| Big Lottery Fund 2024 - 2026 | - | 38,722 | 38,722 |
| Healthwatch Long Covid Community Grant Stage 2 | 2,000 | 0 | 2,000 |
| ME Local Network | - | 3,000 | 3,000 |
| University of Sheffield | 0 | 1,000 | 1,000 |
| Sub total | 2,000 | 73,794 | 75,794 |
| Donations | 1,890 | 0 | 1,890 |
| Total grants and donations | 3,890 | 73,794 | 77,684 |

3 Staff costs

Staff costs during the period were:-

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|
| Gross salaries and employers pension | 82,816 |
| Employer's national insurance | - |
| | <u>82,816</u> |

Number of staff: 6 part time staff

4 Restricted funds

| | Balance at 01/01/2023 | Correction to Unrestricted | Revised Balance at 01/01/2023 | Receipts | Payments | Balance at 31/12/2023 |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Big Lottery Fund Lottery 2018 - 2023 | 49,271 | - | 49,271 | 31,072 | 79,491 | 851 |
| Big Lottery Fund Lottery 2024 - 2026 | 0 | - | 0 | 38,722 | 0 | 38,722 |
| Tai Chi Classes restricted donation | 436 | - | 436 | - | - | 436 |
| Fundraising (Emer's fundraising) | 420 | - 420 | 0 | - | - | 0 |
| ME group Derby | 3,750 | - 3,750 | 0 | - | - | 0 |
| Postcode Neighbourhood Trust | 22,007 | - 22,007 | 0 | - | - | 0 |
| ME Local Network | - | - | 0 | 3,000 | 171 | 2,830 |
| University of Sheffield | - | - | 0 | 1,000 | 729 | 271 |
| | <u>75,884</u> | <u>(26,177)</u> | <u>49,707</u> | <u>73,794</u> | <u>80,391</u> | <u>43,110</u> |

SHEFFIELD ME AND FIBROMYALGIA GROUP

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

for the year ended 31 December 2023

(registered Charity Number 1095416)

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Becca Gransbury
Beatrice Greenfield
Isabel Hemmings
Duraiya Kapasi
Alison Millar
Emma Saville

Registered Charity Number

1095416

Principal address

The Circle
33 Rockingham Lane
Sheffield
S1 4FW

Bank

Lloyds TSB
Church Street
Sheffield

Independent examiner

Craig Williamson
White Rose Accounting for Charities
The Ghyll
Threapland
Aspatria
CA7 2EL

SHEFFIELD ME AND FIBROMYALGIA GROUP

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SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

Trustees' report (continued)

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The trustees are responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention of fraud and other irregularities.

Signed on behalf of the trustees on..... 11.06.2024 By

..... 

Print name..... Carolyn Leary

Trustee

SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

I report on the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2023, which are set out on pages 6 to 8.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145 (5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

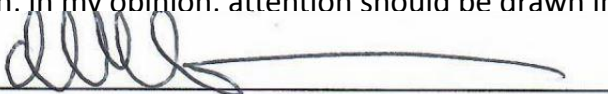
My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
a) to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
b) to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the requirements of section 131 of the 2011 Act have not been met; or
- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper

Signed: _____



Craig Williamson
White Rose Accounting for Charities
The Ghyll
Threapland
Aspatria
CA7 2EL

Date: _____

6/6/2024

SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

Receipts and Payments Account for the year ended 31 December 2023

| | | Unrestricted funds | Restricted funds | Total 2023 | Total 2022 |
|--|-------|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| | | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| | Notes | | | | |
| Receipts | 1 | | | | |
| Grants and donations | 2 | 3,890 | 73,794 | 77,684 | 105,719 |
| Members' subscriptions | | 6,102 | 0 | 6,102 | 5,292 |
| Gift aid received | | 447 | 0 | 447 | - |
| Fundraising | | - | 0 | 0 | 30 |
| Total receipts | | 10,439 | 73,794 | 84,233 | 111,041 |
| Payments | | | | | |
| Salaries and national Insurance | 3 | 17,518 | 65,298 | 82,816 | 62,267 |
| Payroll fees | | 0 | 304 | 304 | 352 |
| Recruitment & DBS checks | | 0 | 120 | 120 | 15 |
| Staff training | | 0 | 373 | 373 | 90 |
| Staff travel | | 0 | 6 | 6 | 301 |
| Trustee training | | 0 | 32 | 32 | 50 |
| Events, conference, workshops and activities | | 3,610 | 1,669 | 5,279 | 4,385 |
| Premises rental and room hire | | 0 | 5,148 | 5,148 | 5,511 |
| Insurance | | 0 | 1,066 | 1,066 | 982 |
| Telephone, internet and web | | 0 | 989 | 989 | 1,238 |
| Equipment | | 269 | 175 | 444 | 3,105 |
| Postage | | 0 | 1,129 | 1,129 | 1,445 |
| Stationery and office | | 0 | 142 | 142 | 302 |
| Subscriptions | | 176 | 2,491 | 2,667 | 2,120 |
| Publicity and newsletter | | 0 | 1,234 | 1,234 | 1,618 |
| Volunteers' travel and social | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 61 |
| Accountancy | | 0 | 215 | 215 | 205 |
| Professional fees | | 175 | 0 | 175 | 0 |
| Bank , Paypal & WIX charges | | 206 | - | 206 | 154 |
| Other | | 60 | - | 60 | (179) |
| Total payments | | 22,014 | 80,391 | 102,405 | 84,022 |
| Net receipts/(payments) for the year | | (11,575) | (6,597) | (18,172) | 27,019 |
| Cash and bank balance at 01/01/2023 | | 28,554 | 75,884 | 104,438 | 77,419 |
| Correction to fund allocation at 01/01/2023 | | 26,177 | (26,177) | 0 | 0 |
| Revised cash and bank balance at 01/01/2023 | | 54,731 | 49,707 | 104,438 | 77,419 |
| Cash and bank balance at 31/12/2023 | 4 | 43,156 | 43,110 | 86,266 | 104,438 |

SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

Statement of assets and liabilities as at 31 December 2023

| | 2023 £ | 2022 £ |
|---------------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Monetary assets | | |
| Balance at bank and cash | 86,266 | 104,438 |
| | <u>86,266</u> | <u>104,438</u> |
| | | |
| | £ | £ |
| Liabilities | | |
| Rent and room hire | 0 | 1,324 |
| Independent examination | 215 | 205 |
| Postage | 0 | 207 |
| ICT | 0 | 127 |
| Telephone, internet and website | 440 | 12 |
| Equipment | 0 | 9 |
| Service review | 0 | 286 |
| Printing | 0 | 326 |
| Qigong sessions | 0 | 80 |
| Bank, paypal and Wix charges | 5 | 0 |
| Payroll processing | 165 | 0 |
| Singing sessions | 480 | 0 |
| Events | 250 | 0 |
| | <u>1,555</u> | <u>2,577</u> |

Signed on behalf of the Trustees on.....11.06.2024..... by

Trustee 

PRINT NAME: Carolyn Leary.....

SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2023

1 Receipts and payments account

Because the level of income and expenditure is below £250,000, the group has opted for accounts to be prepared on a receipts and payments basis rather than an accruals basis. This is in line with Charity Commission guidelines for small groups and is seen as more appropriate for this group.

| 2 Grants and donations | Unrestricted funds | Restricted funds | Total 2023 |
|--|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| | £ | £ | £ |
| Grants:- | | | |
| Big Lottery Fund 2018 - 2023 | - | 31,072 | 31,072 |
| Big Lottery Fund 2024 - 2026 | - | 38,722 | 38,722 |
| Healthwatch Long Covid Community Grant Stage 2 | 2,000 | 0 | 2,000 |
| ME Local Network | - | 3,000 | 3,000 |
| University of Sheffield | 0 | 1,000 | 1,000 |
| Sub total | 2,000 | 73,794 | 75,794 |
| Donations | 1,890 | 0 | 1,890 |
| Total grants and donations | 3,890 | 73,794 | 77,684 |

3 Staff costs

Staff costs during the period were:-

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|
| Gross salaries and employers pension | 82,816 |
| Employer's national insurance | - |
| | <u>82,816</u> |

Number of staff: 6 part time staff

4 Restricted funds

| | Balance at 01/01/2023 | Correction to Unrestricted | Revised Balance at 01/01/2023 | Receipts | Payments | Balance at 31/12/2023 |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Big Lottery Fund Lottery 2018 - 2023 | 49,271 | - | 49,271 | 31,072 | 79,491 | 851 |
| Big Lottery Fund Lottery 2024 - 2026 | 0 | - | 0 | 38,722 | 0 | 38,722 |
| Tai Chi Classes restricted donation | 436 | - | 436 | - | - | 436 |
| Fundraising (Emer's fundraising) | 420 | - 420 | 0 | - | - | 0 |
| ME group Derby | 3,750 | - 3,750 | 0 | - | - | 0 |
| Postcode Neighbourhood Trust | 22,007 | - 22,007 | 0 | - | - | 0 |
| ME Local Network | - | - | 0 | 3,000 | 171 | 2,830 |
| University of Sheffield | - | - | 0 | 1,000 | 729 | 271 |
| | <u>75,884</u> | <u>(26,177)</u> | <u>49,707</u> | <u>73,794</u> | <u>80,391</u> | <u>43,110</u> |

SHEFFIELD M.E. GROUP

England & Wales - Charity number 1095416

Accounts



OUR ANNUAL REPORT 2022



@sheffieldmefm



facebook.com/SheffieldME
andFibromyalgiaGroup

www.sheffieldmegroup.co.uk

info@sheffieldmegroup.co.uk

Our charity

*We are a registered charity supporting anyone in South Yorkshire and North Derbyshire living with ME/CFS, fibromyalgia and/or long COVID, in particular by the provision of help and assistance through mutual support and information exchange. We are also committed to raising awareness of the conditions and promoting positive changes to local service provision for people living with these illnesses. We currently support **508 members** in the area. Our patron is the ever supportive Berlie Doherty.*



Charitable purposes

1. To relieve those suffering from the illnesses variously known as Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME), chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS) or post-viral fatigue syndrome (PVFS) and fibromyalgia and in particular by the provision of help and assistance through mutual support and information exchange.
2. To educate the general public through the promotion and dissemination of knowledge about ME/CFS/PVFS.

Funding

Thank you to our funders who this year have been the National Lottery Reaching Communities, Sheffield City Council, Healthwatch and The People's Postcode Lottery. They have funded our welfare benefits service, activities programme, and information service to support our members and the wider community across South Yorkshire and North Derbyshire.



People

in the lead

Our charity is run by people with ME/CFS, fibromyalgia and/or long COVID and their carers. Lived experience of the conditions is common among our volunteers, staff, and trustees. We 'get it', so we can provide a safe space and are committed to growing our impact. However you've got involved this year - providing feedback, suggesting new ideas, volunteering or participating in our activities - we want to say 'Thank you' for being part of our community!

Chairperson's report



It's been a significant year for the Sheffield ME and Fibromyalgia Group as we have begun to emerge from the many restrictions of previous years. We have felt compelled to respond to the clear and growing need that many living with long COVID are experiencing both similar symptoms to those with MECFS and similar responses from health care professionals. Our Facebook Long Covid group went from strength to strength and led to regular face to face meet-ups, as requested by members. Thanks to Alison Millar for coordinating these. As our online activities of previous years helped reach many more people, during 2022 we offered both online and some face-to-face meet-ups for our members.

The new NICE guideline for MECFS was published in October 2021 and throughout 2022 we engaged with key partners nationally and locally to raise awareness among health care professionals, leading up to our SpeakUp project, described here in the report. We continued actively participating in the Network of local ME groups across the country that we had jointly set up in 2021 and contributed to the Department for Health and Social Care Delivery Plan. Some real highlights for us locally in 2022 locally were:

- our Art Exhibition, celebrating 20 years since we became a charity (though the group has been running many years longer than that). Many members showcased their art and craft talents, which you can still see on our website and featured in our winter 22 magazine.
- our nutrition project, which was expertly led by one of our Trustees Isabel Hemmings, independently funded, including talks and group sessions online
- picnics in the park, started in the summer and we hope to continue again in summer 2023
- our 4 online 'Science to your sofa' talks to international audiences with Gez Medinger focussing on Long Covid, the DECODE ME genome research project, the ME Association talking about implementing the NICE guideline, and Resia Pretorius from South Africa and Caroline Dalton from Sheffield talking about microclots
- and we always want to say a massive thank you to our benefits team whose dedicated work makes life-changing differences to our members

We hope this report gives you a sense of our vibrant charity which has much input from members living with these conditions. There are many people to thank for their support during the year, but I would want to give a special mention Becca Gransbury who does an incredible job curating our magazine every quarter. We were very sad when we found that our Charity Manager Elyane was going to be leaving to travel, but we are delighted we have successfully recruited a full skilled and experienced team to take us forward in 2023.

Carolyn Leary, Chairperson

Trustees & staff

Trustees

- Simon Briggs
- Becca Gransbury
- Beatrice Greenfield
- Isabel Hemmings
- Duraiya Kapasi
- Carolyn Leary (Chair)
- Alison Millar
- Emma Saville

Associate Trustee

- Sheila Broadhead
Treasurer

Staff

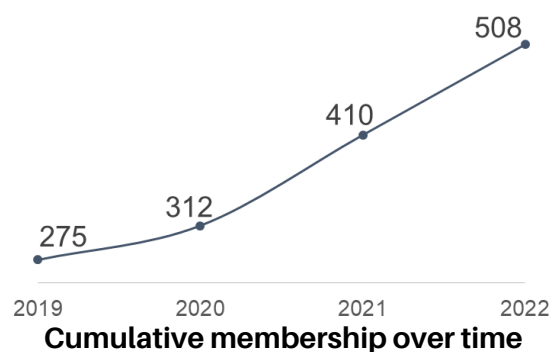
- Elyane Bardou - Charity Manager
- Ayan Farrah, Ellie Jones and Sarah Smith - Benefits advisers
- Pippa Line - Engagement Officer

Thanks to our volunteers!

As ever, our charity benefits from a huge amount of support from volunteers. Their contributions range from being Treasurer - a special shout out to Sheila Broadhead, to contributing to and publishing our quarterly magazine, to helping members engage safely online through our digital inclusion project, and helping with our benefits service (special thanks to Mandy!). Our social media, especially Facebook, is well supported by members who keep a watchful eye and alert us when needed. Our office 'listening ear' service is enhanced by the befriending service set up with trained volunteers, based on learning from best practice locally. This year, the Trustees have accessed fundraising training, essential for our sustainability next year. In the year ahead we really hope we can develop more opportunities for members and volunteers including students as we continue to grow our charity.

Our membership

Our membership has very nearly doubled since 2019 and we finished 2022 with 520 members. Thank you to everyone who has joined us or spread the word. You make our community what it is!



Outreach

Our membership is not evenly spread across the whole of south Yorkshire nor does it include the diversity of people affected by the conditions so we have put more energy into reaching out to underrepresented communities. Funds from the Tackling Inequalities Fund (Sheffield City Council) has enabled us to reach out to more populations who experience ME/CFS, fibromyalgia and Long COVID.

We used this money to pay our staff additional hours to reach out to 3 key populations to raise awareness and engage those living with the conditions: young people, people from black and minority ethnic communities and LGBTQIA+ people. We linked up with 47 organisations including the NHS ME/CFS Service, Long COVID Hub, IAPT, Sheffield City Council, 12 BAME focussed organisations (ISRAAC, Shipshape, Broomhall Centre) 17 young adults focused groups (Chilypep, Sheffield Young Carers, SAYiT) and more.

We also had media appearances through articles in People Keeping Well, Bradway Bugle, Now Then & InterAction magazines, and interviews/podcasts with BBC Radio Sheffield, Help Sheffield, and Yorkshire Live Examiner.

Coming together in 2022...

Our conditions are very isolating. This year we have come together with others who 'get it' through regular activities, meet ups, and projects to share our lived experience and encourage each other in the pursuit of activities.

Activities



Mindfulness

25 sessions.
>16 members



Qigong

17 sessions.
>14 members



Singing

17 sessions.
>23 members



Forest bathing

6 sessions.
>14 members



Art workshops

8 sessions.
>10 members



Meet-ups & picnic

14 events
23 people making it out!



Online socials

3 sessions with
10 members.



Philosophy

2 sessions with
5 members



Seated thai chi



Online French conversation

8 sessions with
10 'membres'.



Long COVID group

Monthly

"Since being diagnosed in 2019 I have received virtually no support from the medical field. [...] I've felt totally alone and cut adrift whilst my life and health have steadily deteriorated. For this reason Sheffield ME & Fibromyalgia Group is a lifeline. A welcoming and supportive community offering the chance to both learn and interact. Keeping abreast of current developments relating to the illness offers hope for a brighter future. Also the range of ways you can physically or virtually get involved means no one is excluded. A true lifeline." Beck

Creating new friendships.
131 hrs over phone and letters.
8 members befriended and
7 volunteer befrienders.

Befriending

Digital inclusion

Support in using devices & internet.
Facilitated by students/volunteers.
17 face-to-face sessions - 9
supported

Peer support

Our Facebook groups have grown as platforms for people to support each other. They ask questions, share tips, news and experiences. We host 3 groups:

- Private & confidential members only group - **375** community members
- Open group for allies, friends & carers - **1900** community members
- Long COVID information sharing group - **152** community members

181 phone queries answered..

Topics of queries: health, support regarding specific issues, benefits, membership, our activities, specific event or idea, or simply needing a listening ear.

Point of contact

Info & practical support in 2022...

"The quality of Sheffield ME Fibromyalgia is second to none from the activities to the support, information, reducing isolation and always developing new ways of helping." - Anne, member

Casework support: benefit checks, social care applications, UC/ESA/IB, and PIP advice.

We supported 67 benefit applications with 29 successful awards so far.

Online sessions: Topics included starting a PIP claim, PIP renewals, mandatory reconsiderations and appeals. Recording and write-ups were provided to our whole community.

Benefits & social care advice

Information sharing

Quarterly magazine



Content included articles on:

- Information on cost of living support
- The new NICE guideline for ME/CFS
- Peer guidance on how to live within our energy
- Local resources and support services
- Health benefits of spending time outdoors
- Celebration of news achievements
- Update on political advances
- GP best practice
- Write-ups of our online educational talks
- Updates on our activities and projects
- Member arts corner: write-ups of our online art workshops plus poems, stories, craft and photos
- Entertainment: sudoku, mindful colouring, quiz

Website

9,783 people have viewed our informative webpages on ME/CFS, fibromyalgia and long COVID.

Online talks by experts

All talks were recorded and uploaded on our [YouTube](#) and [website](#). Follow-up emails to participants included links to the resources mentioned. Write-ups of the talks were included in our magazine.

Participants included people living with the conditions, carers and healthcare professionals.



Microclots

with Prof Resia Pretorius & Dr Caroline Dalton.

Vascular pathology in post viral conditions: the role of microclots.

2,300 people reached.



Long COVID Q&A

with Gez Medinger, investigative science journalist & co-author of The Long COVID Handbook.

Communicating with GPS, pacing, new research, viral persistence
13,380 people reached.



DecodeME study

with Prof Chris Ponting. DecodeME is the world's largest study into ME/CFS, investigating whether it may be partly genetic & if so, help pinpoint causes.

3,000 people reached.



Making the new NICE guideline work for people with ME

with Dr Shepherd, Hon Medical Adviser of the ME Association /NICE committee member on ME/CFS.

Almed at healthcare professionals.
3,700 people reached.

Voice & awareness

"A service that other people cannot provide. An expertise that other people cannot provide. Being able to contact someone who understands is priceless." - RN, member



Our SpeakUp and outreach work initiated meaningful collaborations with local decision makers. Highlights of the work done so far (collaboration is still ongoing):

- Adult Health & Social Care drafted an action plan to improve access to support
- New GP training and Integrated Care Board protocol are being discussed
- ME/CFS Service is drafting an annual care plan with input from our members
- The IAPT 'Living Well with Fatigue' course and staff training course are being updated to include specific needs of people with ME/CFS

Long COVID: we are now an active part of the Long COVID steering group run by VAS and Healthwatch, shaping better support for patients.

Helping improve health and social care provision for people with ME/CFS and fibromyalgia. We collaborated with Healthwatch Sheffield to gather our community's experiences in accessing support, to identify barriers, find solutions and engage decision makers to implement positive changes.

We presented our findings at a stakeholder engagement event gathering 10 senior policy and decision makers from the NHS and Sheffield City Council and other local organisations who also support our client group, with a follow-up meeting a month later. Our collaborative work continues next year with further meetings arranged with senior officers and politicians committed to making a difference.

51 members volunteered for admin, leafleting, interviewing, & creating a leaflet for GPs.

112 people surveyed

38 participants in focus groups

Arts exhibition

38 members volunteered



Marie's 2021 fundraiser supported a 2-week exhibition in Sheffield Winter Gardens, featuring member artwork & an info desk. We raised awareness of our conditions, lives, the work of our charity, and spread hope to others facing the conditions.

Members contributed artwork, designed layouts, wrote contributions, and hosted the stall.

We uploaded the whole exhibition to our [website](#), to share it with members who are housebound, bedbound or living far away.

189 people have watched it online.



"Looking at the whole exhibition, it felt really powerful and emotive: expressions of grief, lament and the devastating illness that ME is, mixed with signs of hope and things to hold onto, and some light-hearted fun interspersed." - Alison, member

Nutrition project



Trustee and therapeutic nutritionist Isabel Hemmings provided our members with webinars and nutrition sessions to help us understand the role of what types of food we eat in maintaining energy levels.

We hope this will lead to further work around diet and managing chronic health conditions in future.

Our impact

The data demonstrating our impact has been collated from: survey (85 members participants) and feedback forms, interviews with beneficiaries, quotes and stories submitted via email or phone call, and our casework software Charitylog.

1

Members make more informed life choices by accessing quality information about their illness and support available

98%

feel more informed about their illness, how to manage it and the support available to them

"This group is invaluable to its members and for some activities non-members. Provides valuable information in an area where it is hard to be found. Gives hope, understanding and support." - GW

"I have learnt a lot that I can use to try to manage my condition."

2

The economic situation of our beneficiaries is maximised

This year, we supported our clients to win:

£ 2764
Weekly
Increase

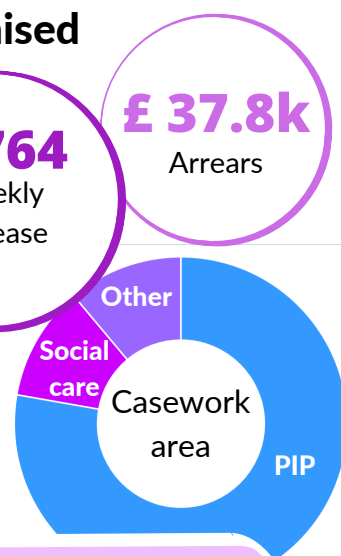
£ 37.8k
Arrears

"I am now able to pay for a home help, which is a huge support. I have also been able to purchase a mobility scooter. This helps me get out and about more, and gives me better access to the local open spaces, and shops."

"I wouldn't have been able to complete the process without them as it is SO stressful. Their reassurance and guidance was essential and helped reduce my anxiety levels significantly."

"The extra income means I can now heat the house properly, also having PIP mobility means I have a disabled bus pass, so I can use buses more."

"A huge difference, less stress day to day with worry about money. Being able to pay for prescriptions and travel."



3

Members increase their links and active engagement with other sufferers, carers and allies to reduce their social isolation

94% feel more socially connected, less isolated

"The digital inclusion support gave me another window to communicate with. I am now using all sorts of apps like Gmail and Google."

"I hope the group is able to continue to offer so much help to people with ME, particularly when so many people are housebound like me and have little to look forward to without the group." - AC

"It has meant a lot to be able to come together with other people experiencing similar things and to do things gently and with understanding that we may be struggling with our health. [...] This is particularly so while I'm too unwell to go out of the house and am starved of human company."

"I really really appreciate all that SMEFG does to serve and include our community ME/CFS/FM/LC in whatever way we can engage. Always looking to and investigating new ways to tackle our heterogenous conditions. Including everyone of us, in whatever way & whenever we can join in, THANK YOU !!!!!" - JO

"I have found organising and hosting the S11 Meet Ups incredibly beneficial. [...] and have now made three local friends. [...] The people who attend regularly often tell me how the Meet Ups have been a godsend for them as ME is obviously isolating."

88% feel heard/seen and supported

"I felt empowered to be part of an exhibition that got our voices heard. I also felt seen, which is a big deal for someone who's not physically well enough to be out and about much."

"A refuge from the disbelief and contempt from the NHS and general public/ neighbours"

87% feel more positive and hopeful

"ME, Fibromyalgia and Long Covid can be very tough to live with. Being a member of the group prevents me from feeling alone in dealing with them. I cannot express how positive and empowering an experience being part of the wonderful SMEFG community is. The value of being connected to other local people who "get it", is invaluable." - AM

"It's very comforting to know the ME/CFS group is there for you, it makes you feel less isolated and just knowing there are other people going through the same and to know you can reach out for help or just a little conversation to help you feel better."

79% feel empowered to speak up and to do more

"I feel valued, connected and my voice heard through my Craft in spite of my absence. Subsequently I feel empowered and encouraged to do more art and craft to raise awareness of the invisible ME community. This left me feeling good about yourself and proud of my work."

"Volunteering at the art exhibition and charity means I have met new people and engaged with the public. After stopping work this year due to ME and fibro it was nice to communicate with others. It has distracted me from my own health issues, gave me a sense of purpose and has been fun. It has made me think about volunteering more on the days I feel well." - AC

"This exhibition [...] inspired me to get creative again, (and to do something different than the usual life activities) [...] It also helped me to feel included and by having a purpose and focus to be part of something positive that is happening in the city whilst also feeling empowered to help raise awareness to others in Sheffield and beyond as to what having CFS / Fibro can be all about."

Looking forward

Pursuing our game-changing work with local decision-makers

We aim to pursue the ongoing joint work with the ME/CFS Service, Sheffield City Council Adult Health and Social Care, Long COVID Hub, IAPT, Healthwatch and VAS in improving support for people living with the conditions in our area. We are looking forward to taking the learning from the SpeakUp! project forwards, and as well as sharing our symptom management knowledge with the growing Long COVID community. We know, from being part of the ME Local Network, that our work is seen as a model of best practice by local support groups across the UK. We will be using our position as the only ME/CFS benefits service to inform negotiations between the DWP and ME advocates around PIP.

Hiring a skilled & diverse team

We wish to hire a senior benefits adviser to fill the benefits adviser role which has remained vacant since July. On top of their advisory role, they will monitor and promote the service, and actively support our members with additional cost of living issues. Conscious that our current manager's role entails a significant amount of admin work, we wish to bring the charity manager's role down to 0.8fte and hire a 0.35fte admin support worker. This will enable queries to be handled more efficiently and will allow the manager to focus on partnership working, fundraising and growth of the charity.

Securing funds for after November 2023

We will need to secure funds to enable our work into 2024 and beyond. Our funding strategy is up-to-date and we aim to start applying in the new year, following recommendations from SYFAB advisers.

Big Thanks to our Funders



**NATIONAL
LOTTERY FUNDED**



**South Yorkshire's
Community
Foundation**

Supported by players of



Awarded funds from



PEOPLE KEEPING WELL

PKW

IN THEIR COMMUNITY

**Sheffield
City Council**



SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

for the year ended 31 December 2022

(Registered Charity Number 1095416)

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| Independent examiner's report | 5 |
| Receipts and payments account | 6 |
| Statement of assets and liabilities | 7 |
| Notes to the accounts | 8 |

SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

Legal information

Trustees

| | |
|---------------------|----------------------------|
| Carolyn Leary | Chair |
| Simon Briggs | |
| Becca Gransbury | |
| Beatrice Greenfield | appointed 22 November 2022 |
| Isabel Hemmings | |
| Duraiya Kapasi | |
| Alison Millar | |
| Emma Saville | |

Registered Charity Number

1095416

Principal address

The Circle
33 Rockingham Lane
Sheffield
S1 4FW

Bank

Lloyds TSB
Church Street
Sheffield

Independent examiner

Craig Williamson
White Rose Accounting for Charities
The Ghyll
Threapland
Aspatria
CA7 2EL

SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

Trustees' report

The trustees are pleased to present their report and financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2022.

The trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities", issued in March 2005, in preparing the annual report and financial statements of the charity.

Organisation

Sheffield ME Group is a registered charity and is governed by a constitution dated 11 October 2001, as amended 8 December 2002, and was entered on the register of charities on 15 January 2003.

The group is managed by a voluntary committee who are elected at each Annual General Meeting. Since 2002, part-time staff have been employed (60 hours total).

Objects of the charity

The objects of the charity are:-

- to relieve those suffering from the illness variously known as Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME), Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS) or Post-Viral Fatigue Syndrome (PVFS) and, in particular, by the provision of help and assistance through mutual support and information exchange.
- to educate the general public through the promotion and dissemination of knowledge about ME/CFS/PVFS.

We do this by providing online and in-person wellbeing and social activities and drop-ins, talks relevant to the conditions as well as seeking media coverage and liaison with other voluntary and statutory organisations. We do not give medical advice nor do we offer individual treatment programmes. Where possible we signpost to relevant bodies and resources. We are a self-help group with finite resources and we are, therefore, restricted to providing the above services.

Public Benefit Statement

Sheffield ME group is a self-help group which encourages and helps support those with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME), Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS) and their families and carers to use their own resources so that they are better able to manage the illness and the changes it has made to their lives. We do this by providing a wide range of services tailored to meet a variety of needs and/or circumstances and by raising awareness of the condition.

The trustees regularly give due consideration to the Commission's guidance in deciding what activities they should undertake, by reviewing the needs of their beneficiaries, by ensuring that the service is fully inclusive and that no detriment or harm arises from the organisation by carrying out its activities.

We operate with respect to each individual person and we aim to give each one an opportunity to have their say and to become more involved in the group, whilst working within our adopted policies and guidelines.

Our core values are based on our charitable objectives as stated in our constitution.

SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

Trustees' report (continued)

Reserves policy

Sheffield ME Group aims to hold free reserves of 3 months running costs, which would equate to £28,386 based on the 2023 budget. The Group met this target during 2022, the unrestricted reserves being £28,554 at 31 December 2022.

The reserve fund will be ring-fenced to offer protection to employees, to meet any outstanding overhead costs, contracts and leases plus payment of any other outstanding liabilities.

Trustees' responsibilities for the financial statements

The trustees are responsible for preparing financial statements for each financial period which show the state of affairs of the Charity and of the surplus or deficit of the Charity for that period. In preparing those financial statements the trustees are required to:-

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity 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 Charity and enable the trustees to prepare financial statements.

The trustees are responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention of fraud and other irregularities.

Signed on behalf of the trustees on..... By

.....

Print name.....
Trustee

SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

I report on the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2022, which are set out on pages 6 to 8.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145 (5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
- q to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
 - q to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act
- have not been met; or
- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed: _____

Craig Williamson
White Rose Accounting for Charities
The Ghyll
Threapland
Aspatria
CA7 2EL

Date: _____

SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

Receipts and Payments Account for the year ended 31 December 2022

| | | Unrestricted funds £ | Restricted funds £ | Total 2022 £ | Total 2021 £ |
|--|-------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | Notes | | | | |
| Receipts | 1 | | | | |
| Grants and donations | 2 | 2,093 | 103,626 | 105,719 | 68,577 |
| Members' subscriptions | | 5,292 | - | 5,292 | 4,246 |
| Fundraising | | 30 | - | 30 | 1,655 |
| Total receipts | | 7,415 | 103,626 | 111,041 | 74,478 |
| Payments | | | | | |
| Salaries and national Insurance | 3 | - | 62,267 | 62,267 | 55,242 |
| Payroll fees | | - | 352 | 352 | 235 |
| Recruitment & DBS checks | | - | 15 | 15 | 115 |
| Staff training | | - | 90 | 90 | 57 |
| Staff travel | | - | 301 | 301 | 62 |
| Trustee training | | - | 50 | 50 | - |
| Events, conference, workshops and activities | | 141 | 4,244 | 4,385 | 2,731 |
| Premises rental and room hire | | - | 5,511 | 5,511 | 5,820 |
| Insurance | | - | 982 | 982 | 609 |
| Telephone, internet and web | | - | 1,238 | 1,238 | 714 |
| Equipment | | - | 3,105 | 3,105 | 0 |
| Postage | | - | 1,445 | 1,445 | 924 |
| Stationery and office | | - | 302 | 302 | 93 |
| Subscriptions | | - | 2,120 | 2,120 | 733 |
| Publicity and newsletter | | - | 1,618 | 1,618 | 1,104 |
| Volunteers' travel and social | | - | 61 | 61 | 79 |
| Accountancy | | - | 205 | 205 | 205 |
| Bank , Paypal & WIX charges | | 154 | - | 154 | 107 |
| Other | | (179) | - | (179) | 327 |
| Total payments | | 116 | 83,906 | 84,022 | 69,157 |
| Net receipts/(payments) for the year | | 7,299 | 19,720 | 27,019 | 5,321 |
| Cash and bank balance at 01/01/2021 | | 21,255 | 56,164 | 77,419 | 72,098 |
| Cash and bank balance at 31/12/2021 | 5 | 28,554 | 75,884 | 104,438 | 77,419 |

SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

Statement of assets and liabilities as at 31 December 2022

| | 2022 | 2021 |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| | £ | £ |
| Monetary assets | | |
| Balance at bank and cash | 104,438 | 77,419 |
| | <u>104,438</u> | <u>77,419</u> |
| | £ | £ |
| Liabilities | | |
| Rent and room hire | 1,324 | - |
| Independent examination | 205 | 205 |
| Postage | 207 | 399 |
| ICT | 127 | 457 |
| Office telephone calls & mobiles | 12 | 503 |
| Equipment | 9 | - |
| Service review | 286 | - |
| Printing | 326 | - |
| Qigon sessions | 80 | - |
| | <u>2,577</u> | <u>1,564</u> |

Signed on behalf of the Trustees on..... by

Trustee

PRINT NAME:.....

SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2022

1 Receipts and payments account

Because the level of income and expenditure is below £250,000, the group has opted for accounts to be prepared on a receipts and payments basis rather than an accruals basis. This is in line with Charity Commission guidelines for small groups and is seen as more appropriate for this group.

| 2 Grants and donations | Unrestricted funds | Restricted funds | Total 2022 |
|---|-----------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| | £ | £ | £ |
| Grants:- | | | |
| Big Lottery Fund | - | 61,535 | 61,535 |
| ME group Derby | | 3,750 | 3,750 |
| Postcode Neighbourhood Trust | | 24,341 | 24,341 |
| Sheffield City Council Tackling Inequalities Fund grant | | 12,000 | 12,000 |
| Healthwatch Sheffield - SpeakUp small grants scheme | | 2,000 | 2,000 |
| Sub total | - | 103,626 | 103,626 |
| Donations | 2,093 | - | 2,093 |
| Total grants and donations | 2,093 | 103,626 | 105,719 |

3 Staff costs

Staff costs during the period were:-

Gross salaries and employers pension
Employer's national insurance

£

62,267

-

62,267

Number of staff: 4 part time staff

4 Restricted funds

| | Balance at 01/01/2022 | Receipts | Payments | Balance at 31/12/2022 |
|---|--------------------------|----------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Big Lottery Fund Lottery | 52,363 | 61,535 | 64,627 | 49,271 |
| South Yorkshire Community Foundation | 1,120 | - | 1,120 | - |
| ZEST small grants scheme award | 750 | - | 750 | - |
| Tai Chi Classes restricted donation | 436 | - | - | 436 |
| Fundraising (Marie's hair-raising fundraising) | 1,075 | - | 1,075 | - |
| Fundraising (Emer's fundraising) | 420 | - | - | 420 |
| ME group Derby | - | 3,750 | - | 3,750 |
| Postcode Neighbourhood Trust | - | 24,341 | 2,334 | 22,007 |
| Healthwatch Sheffield - SpeakUp small grants scheme | - | 2,000 | 2,000 | - |
| Sheffield City Council Tackling Inequalities Fund grant | - | 12,000 | 12,000 | - |
| | 56,164 | 103,626 | 83,906 | 75,884 |

SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

for the year ended 31 December 2022

(Registered Charity Number 1095416)

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| Independent examiner's report | 5 |
| Receipts and payments account | 6 |
| Statement of assets and liabilities | 7 |
| Notes to the accounts | 8 |

SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

Legal information

Trustees

| | |
|---------------------|----------------------------|
| Carolyn Leary | Chair |
| Simon Briggs | |
| Becca Gransbury | |
| Beatrice Greenfield | appointed 22 November 2022 |
| Isabel Hemmings | |
| Duraiya Kapasi | |
| Alison Millar | |
| Emma Saville | |

Registered Charity Number

1095416

Principal address

The Circle
33 Rockingham Lane
Sheffield
S1 4FW

Bank

Lloyds TSB
Church Street
Sheffield

Independent examiner

Craig Williamson
White Rose Accounting for Charities
The Ghyll
Threapland
Aspatria
CA7 2EL

SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

Trustees' report

The trustees are pleased to present their report and financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2022.

The trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities", issued in March 2005, in preparing the annual report and financial statements of the charity.

Organisation

Sheffield ME Group is a registered charity and is governed by a constitution dated 11 October 2001, as amended 8 December 2002, and was entered on the register of charities on 15 January 2003.

The group is managed by a voluntary committee who are elected at each Annual General Meeting. Since 2002, part-time staff have been employed (60 hours total).

Objects of the charity

The objects of the charity are:-

- to relieve those suffering from the illness variously known as Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME), Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS) or Post-Viral Fatigue Syndrome (PVFS) and, in particular, by the provision of help and assistance through mutual support and information exchange.
- to educate the general public through the promotion and dissemination of knowledge about ME/CFS/PVFS.

We do this by providing online and in-person wellbeing and social activities and drop-ins, talks relevant to the conditions as well as seeking media coverage and liaison with other voluntary and statutory organisations. We do not give medical advice nor do we offer individual treatment programmes. Where possible we signpost to relevant bodies and resources. We are a self-help group with finite resources and we are, therefore, restricted to providing the above services.

Public Benefit Statement

Sheffield ME group is a self-help group which encourages and helps support those with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME), Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS) and their families and carers to use their own resources so that they are better able to manage the illness and the changes it has made to their lives. We do this by providing a wide range of services tailored to meet a variety of needs and/or circumstances and by raising awareness of the condition.

The trustees regularly give due consideration to the Commission's guidance in deciding what activities they should undertake, by reviewing the needs of their beneficiaries, by ensuring that the service is fully inclusive and that no detriment or harm arises from the organisation by carrying out its activities.

We operate with respect to each individual person and we aim to give each one an opportunity to have their say and to become more involved in the group, whilst working within our adopted policies and guidelines.

Our core values are based on our charitable objectives as stated in our constitution.

SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

Trustees' report (continued)

Reserves policy

Sheffield ME Group aims to hold free reserves of 3 months running costs, which would equate to £28,386 based on the 2023 budget. The Group met this target during 2022, the unrestricted reserves being £28,554 at 31 December 2022.

The reserve fund will be ring-fenced to offer protection to employees, to meet any outstanding overhead costs, contracts and leases plus payment of any other outstanding liabilities.

Trustees' responsibilities for the financial statements

The trustees are responsible for preparing financial statements for each financial period which show the state of affairs of the Charity and of the surplus or deficit of the Charity for that period. In preparing those financial statements the trustees are required to:-

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Signed on behalf of the trustees on..... By

.....

Print name.....
Trustee

SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

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White Rose Accounting for Charities
The Ghyll
Threapland
Aspatria
CA7 2EL

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SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

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SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

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| ICT | 127 | 457 |
| Office telephone calls & mobiles | 12 | 503 |
| Equipment | 9 | - |
| Service review | 286 | - |
| Printing | 326 | - |
| Qigon sessions | 80 | - |
| | <u>2,577</u> | <u>1,564</u> |

Signed on behalf of the Trustees on..... by

Trustee

PRINT NAME:.....

SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2022

1 Receipts and payments account

Because the level of income and expenditure is below £250,000, the group has opted for accounts to be prepared on a receipts and payments basis rather than an accruals basis. This is in line with Charity Commission guidelines for small groups and is seen as more appropriate for this group.

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| Healthwatch Sheffield - SpeakUp small grants scheme | | 2,000 | 2,000 |
| Sub total | - | 103,626 | 103,626 |
| Donations | 2,093 | - | 2,093 |
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3 Staff costs

Staff costs during the period were:-

Gross salaries and employers pension
Employer's national insurance

£

62,267

-

62,267

Number of staff: 4 part time staff

4 Restricted funds

| | Balance at 01/01/2022 | Receipts | Payments | Balance at 31/12/2022 |
|---|--------------------------|----------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Big Lottery Fund Lottery | 52,363 | 61,535 | 64,627 | 49,271 |
| South Yorkshire Community Foundation | 1,120 | - | 1,120 | - |
| ZEST small grants scheme award | 750 | - | 750 | - |
| Tai Chi Classes restricted donation | 436 | - | - | 436 |
| Fundraising (Marie's hair-raising fundraising) | 1,075 | - | 1,075 | - |
| Fundraising (Emer's fundraising) | 420 | - | - | 420 |
| ME group Derby | - | 3,750 | - | 3,750 |
| Postcode Neighbourhood Trust | - | 24,341 | 2,334 | 22,007 |
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| Sheffield City Council Tackling Inequalities Fund grant | - | 12,000 | 12,000 | - |
| | 56,164 | 103,626 | 83,906 | 75,884 |

SHEFFIELD M.E. GROUP

England & Wales - Charity number 1095416

Accounts



ANNUAL REPORT

JAN - DEC 2021



Sheffield
ME & Fibromyalgia
Group

Registered Charity: 1095416

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THE CHARITY

Registered with the Charity Commission: 1095416

Registered office & contact details

- Address: The Circle, 33 Rockingham Lane, Sheffield S1 4FW
- Website: www.sheffieldmegroup.co.uk
- Email: info@sheffieldmegroup.co.uk
- Telephone: 0114 253 6700 / 07753 948 186

Patron

- Berlie Doherty

Objectives

- To relieve those suffering from these illnesses variously known as Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME), Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS) or Post-Viral Fatigue Syndrome (PVFS), Fibromyalgia and long COVID, in particular by the provision of help and assistance through mutual support and information exchange.
- To educate the general public through the promotion and dissemination of knowledge about ME/CFS/PVFS, Fibromyalgia and long COVID.

Trustees

- Simon Briggs
- Becca Gransbury
- Beatrice Greenfield (until October 2021)
- Isabel Hemmings
- Duraiya Kapasi
- Carolyn Leary (Chair)
- Alison Millar
- Emma Saville

Associate Trustee

- Sheila Broadhead (Treasurer)

Employees

- Elyane Bardou - Communications & Office Coordinator (until July 2021) and Charity Manager (from July 2021)
- Ellie Jones and Sarah Smith - Benefits advisers

CHAIR'S REPORT

2021 was another exciting year of development for the charity with growing membership and increasing participation. We noted that it was 20 years since the charity adopted its first formal constitution and decided that was cause for some celebration, while acknowledging the many years the group had been running prior to that date. In October 2021, NICE published the new guideline for ME/CFS which local members had lobbied hard for and had contributed to its development. This provides a sound basis for future discussion with health care professionals.



This report tells of the wide range of activities run by the group and our ongoing efforts to reach out even further to those isolated by the conditions. We were fortunate to receive further funds from fund-raising efforts and grants in addition to our core National Lottery Community Fund grant enabling us to extend our activities. However, the funds are just one part of the story - we could not have achieved everything described in this report without a huge amount of hard work by members, volunteers, Trustees and staff. The contributions from everyone are too many to mention but our aim is to run an inclusive group where people can offer to do as much as they feel able and can be supported to do so, while developing skills and fulfilment.

Delivering services online and our remote way of working (initiated out of necessity in 2020) has proven to be effective and popular with members in 2021 too. Our benefits advice service has become more efficient and effective. Our online activities are well received and reach new people who are housebound and bedbound. We have managed to engage our existing community, and reach out to new members, as well as creating and strengthening partnerships.

Conscious of the higher engagement and information available to people with ME/CFS compared to people with fibromyalgia, we have tried to engage better with people with fibromyalgia and dedicated guest speaking events to this condition.

We have also wanted to support local groups to develop in other areas and so have been part of the creation of a UK-wide network of local ME support groups, called the ME Local Network, aiming at increasing networking between local groups, sharing support and best practice around the work we do, joining forces on campaigning issues, and raising the voices of local groups to a national level.

One thing that has been unique for our group is our 'Science to your sofa' series where we have invited very eminent scientists from US and UK to talk directly to those living with the conditions through online talks. We have been truly humbled by the willingness of those working at the highest level of research to share their expertise and time with us, sometimes across challenging time zones.

We hope you enjoy reading our report and that we meet at some activities or events in 2022.

Carolyn Leary, Chair

DEVELOPMENT OF OUR GROUP



New funding secured enabled us to provide all our members with varied online wellbeing and social activities, as a way to keep socially, mentally and physically active. We intend to pursue this service delivery after receiving extremely positive feedback from our community. *'Zoom sessions have been a complete game changer for me, the silver lining of the lockdowns! It's a very inclusive way for people who would have problems with attending regular sessions at a venue to join in some activities with a socially interactive group.'* R. O., member

This year has also seen the birth of our new befriending scheme, to support the most isolated with friendly weekly or fortnightly phone calls. We recruited and inducted 9 volunteer befrienders, one of whom is a member of our Group. *'The befriending scheme is wonderful, it has made a positive difference in my life. I'm looking forward to each call. The calls often break up long periods of time of being on my own - I can spend days without talking to anyone [...] it's good to have someone who's here to definitely ring you.'* - Kathy, befriendeed

We have worked to develop our links locally and reach out further to people living with the conditions. Our Group achieved status as a community partner of Healthwatch Sheffield, providing more visibility and opportunities for engagement and collaboration. Thanks to the DPO COVID-19 Emergency Fund, our staff team was reinforced with 6 additional hours, used to outreach to people with long COVID. We strengthened our partnership with the ME Service in Sheffield, and put together a bid (as yet unsuccessful) to create a better pathway for people living with long COVID and ME/CFS - with the CFS/ME Service and the AWRC¹. We will support the implementation of the new NICE guideline for ME/CFS with our local CFS/ME Service and primary care services and work for a better NHS pathway for patients.

In July 2021, our Group underwent a staff restructuring, appointing our Communications and Office Coordinator to the full time role of Charity Manager, after receiving approval from the National Lottery Community Fund. This enabled our Group to further develop by providing a management infrastructure to support new staff members and volunteers. This relieved our Chair of some of the management duties and hands-on tasks, making this role accessible for people living with the health conditions.

¹ Advanced Wellbeing Research Centre, leading research on long COVID in Sheffield Hallam University

SOCIAL AND WELLBEING ACTIVITIES

In-person social drop-ins

Our members organised 9 in-person meet-ups around Sheffield, reaching 37 beneficiaries. Regular meet-ups were also organised especially for people with long COVID.

These were organised safely in outdoor venues, and allowed members to get together near their own homes, chat with others who understand these illnesses and gain support and friendship, thereby reducing the isolation these illnesses can cause.

Expansion of our online activities programme

With additional funding from Sheffield City Council for our online activities over winter 2021, we provided a packed programme including seated tai chi, mindfulness, qigong, nutrition, singing and gathered feedback from participants afterwards.



Our lasting partnership with our Qigong instructor Orla O'Connor enabled us to continue the online sessions over Spring and Summer free of charge. In addition, we secured funding from South Yorkshire Community Foundation for our online activities from October 2021 to May 2022.

At the end of 2021, thanks to our member Marie's fundraiser, we were able to start our programme of arts workshops with writing, drawing, singing and painting classes. We had surveyed our members throughout Summer via online and paper questionnaire, to shape the programme with their input.

Our online wellbeing and social group activities attracted a total of 284 registrations throughout the year. See the full engagement report in Appendix I.

A new Nutrition and Cookery programme

A survey was sent out to our members to ask for themes of interest, to help us create the programme with our trustee, and registered nutritional therapist, Isabel Hemmings. We linked up with further local professionals to create a diverse programme. The programme was of 7 sessions covering topics such as energy production, healthy fats, managing body weight and reducing food waste.

All our 410 members received via email and post write-ups of talks and resources, as well as our Members' Cookbook, made from our members' contributions, containing easy nutritional recipes and cooking tips.



Feedback form our online activities

We have collected feedback from our members after our winter 2021 programme of online activities, highlighting the following impacts:

- **Reduced social isolation:** many reported they felt more connected to the community by meeting weekly with others, doing activities as a group and chatting after the sessions
- **Improved mental health:** weekly activities reduced isolation, while some participants of the mindfulness, qigong and singing sessions reported that these activities had improved their mental health
- **Increased general activity level**
- **Easing of symptoms and feeling energised** through qigong, mindfulness and seated tai chi
- Gave **something to look forward to** each week, and the willingness to try more!

For all activities the rating was above 4.4/5 and the intention to continue participating was over 90%.

Quotes about our programme of online activities:

'Lots of benefits, physically, and mentally coped much better. Improved balance, coordination, ability to relax and sleep, and felt happier and calmer. Wonderful to be able to participate without having to travel.' - Tina M., member [about seated tai chi]

'I loved the classes, they helped me manage my symptoms, my pain levels were nearly always less following a session. They have also helped me better cope with the lockdown which has been very isolating, and helped me maintain social interaction. The classes also increased my knowledge in the field (I knew far less before), and made me feel better physically and mentally.' - Emma, member of SMEFG [about mindfulness]

'I enjoyed the Zoom sessions with Orla. Doing the gentle movements was calming. Activities like this are the only way I can interact with people who really understand.' - Caroline, member of SMEFG [about qigong]

'Helpful in depth information on nutrition. Inspiring tips on how to eat more healthily with limited energy. Good opportunity to chat about the issues.' - Sue, member of SMEFG [about nutrition]

'Lifted my mood, improved my breathing, reduced loneliness, and helped me develop a new skill.' - Frank, member of SMEFG [about singing]

Phone support



Our office phone is answered by our Communications Officer/Charity Manager all year round.

An estimate of 215² phone queries were responded to via the office line, concerning our services, membership, the conditions in general, specific events or local services, or simply seeking a listening ear from someone who understands.

² We set up a new office phone log at the end of April to record all the queries coming through the office line. From April to December 2021, 161 calls were answered, which gives an estimate of 240 for a whole year.

Over the winter lockdown, we phoned those members that we had identified as digitally excluded (not having an email account). 30 members without online access were reached by our staff and volunteers to have a chat and see if there is anything they would need. We also posted a letter at the start of the lockdown in January 2021 via post and email, to reassure our members and ask if we could help any further in these difficult times.

Magazine

The Group's magazine was distributed quarterly to all members, via post and email. Over its usual 24 pages, it contained a range of informative and entertaining content, part of which was contributed by our members. Content included:

- Our Group's activities
- Local developments and support services
- Current research on the health conditions
- Write-ups of our speaker events
- Tips to manage symptoms, e.g. pacing
- Nutrition advice
- Photos of artwork, poems, stories from members
- Quiz and jokes
- Colouring-in

A very special thank you to Becca Gransbury, our editor, and to all who contributed.



ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH

In 2021, we made reaching out to people with long COVID one of our priorities. This has involved the whole staff team as well as some trustees. We participated in local forums and meetings on local long COVID support services. The survey we created gathered insightful data about the needs of people with long COVID. As a result, we have developed information content on long COVID on our website, developed our long COVID Facebook group, and hosted long COVID in-person meet-ups. We have also encouraged our guest speakers to talk about long COVID. We are still actively looking for new ways to reach out to people with long COVID, as well as how to adapt our services better, and have plans to invite guest speakers who specialise in this topic.

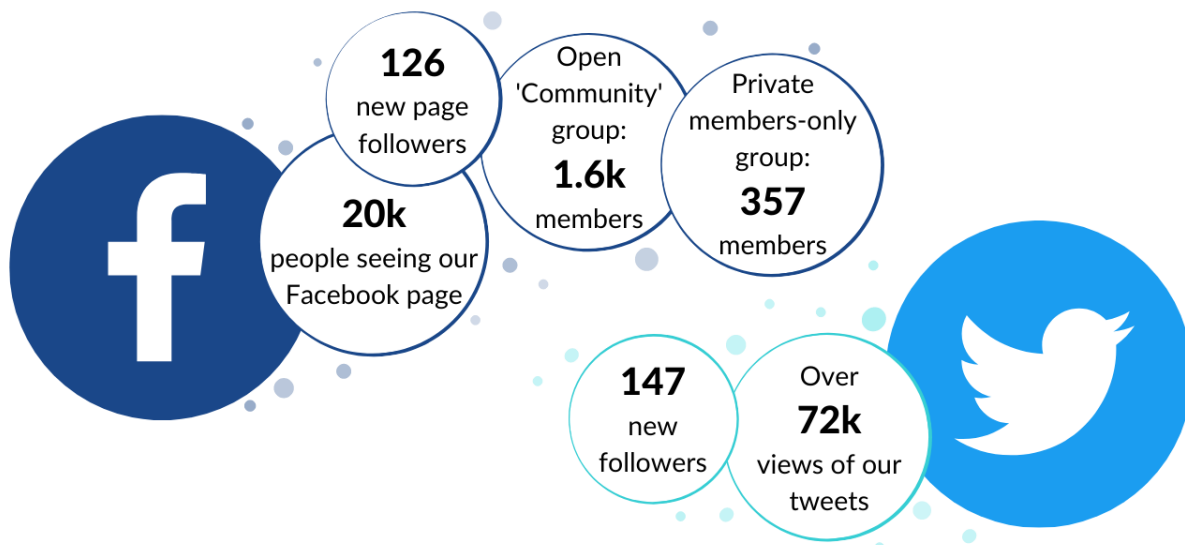


We have published articles in local and national journals about

- Accessing benefits and challenging decisions,
- How our online activities have been a game changer for many of our members,
- Marie's fundraiser (see [Events](#) section)
- General introduction to our Group

In order to improve the engagement of our existing members, we initiated a digital inclusion project, this involved recruiting a student from Sheffield University to coordinate the project via a fully funded placement over Summer. The project aimed at offering IT equipment on extended loan to our members, and providing them with support to use the internet. Members found it helpful to have someone to talk through their IT issues with.

Social media



We were, as always, very active on Facebook and Twitter, to keep our community informed both with what we were doing and with news relevant to them. Our Facebook groups are the main platform for peer support used by our members. People can share experiences, ask questions and give tips to others. We have a volunteer moderator in both our Facebook groups.

All our talks were broadcast live on Zoom and on our Facebook page, and available to watch afterwards through our website and on our YouTube channel.

Our long COVID Facebook group numbered 81 people by the end of the year.

Website



- 9,449 visits (6% more than the previous year)
- 5,161 unique visitors
- 8,265 views of our website's informative content on the health conditions, on benefits and social care, and of our educational talks
- '[Watch previous talks](#)' is our most visited page with 2,399 views

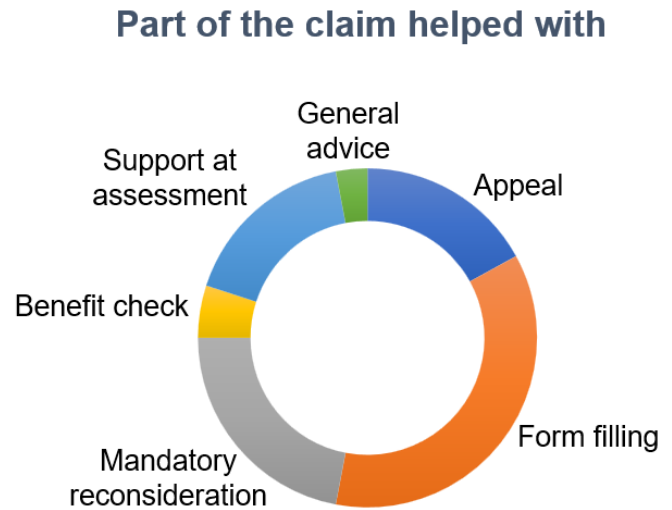
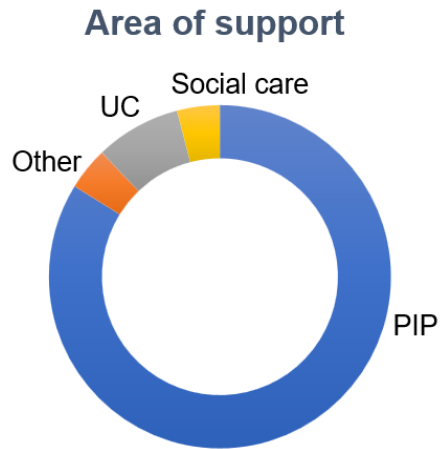
E-news

In 2021, we sent 45 newsletters via email (e-news) to our members and a wider audience of subscribers, to inform them of our activities and to share information and news of the sector. At the end of the year, our mailing list comprised 607 recipients.

WELFARE AND BENEFITS ADVICE

Overview

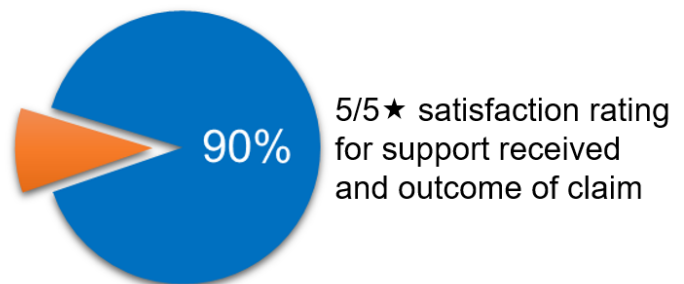
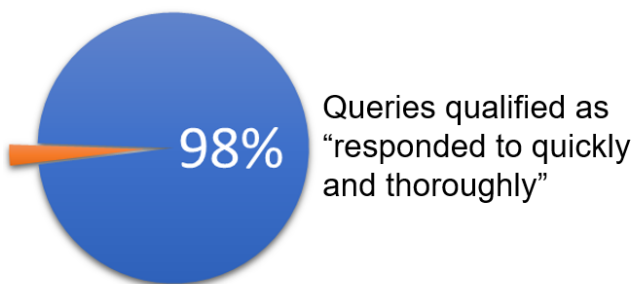
In 2021, our benefits and social care advisers supported 64 individuals, dealt with over 98 new referrals and responded to over 400 one-off queries.



Financial outcomes

- The total benefits arrears paid to members was £66,331.19
- The total weekly income increase for members was £5,000.08

Feedback from benefits clients



What difference has this award made to your life?

I am now able to pay for a home help, which is a huge support. I have also been able to purchase a mobility scooter. This helps me, get out and about more, and gives me better access to the local open spaces, and shops

It means I can afford to pay for a cleaner easier and am now saving for a mobility scooter

At the start of the pandemic, one of our clients was working full-time as a key worker, now she says, *'I am mostly in bed and only able to do things like personal care, but even this is exhausting and takes time. I am unable to work, drive, cook a meal, walk far, concentrate on anything for long, plus many others.'*

We supported her to claim disability benefits, and, when her claim was initially denied, to help her challenge this decision. This led to a weekly income increase of £120 and a back pay of £2,700.

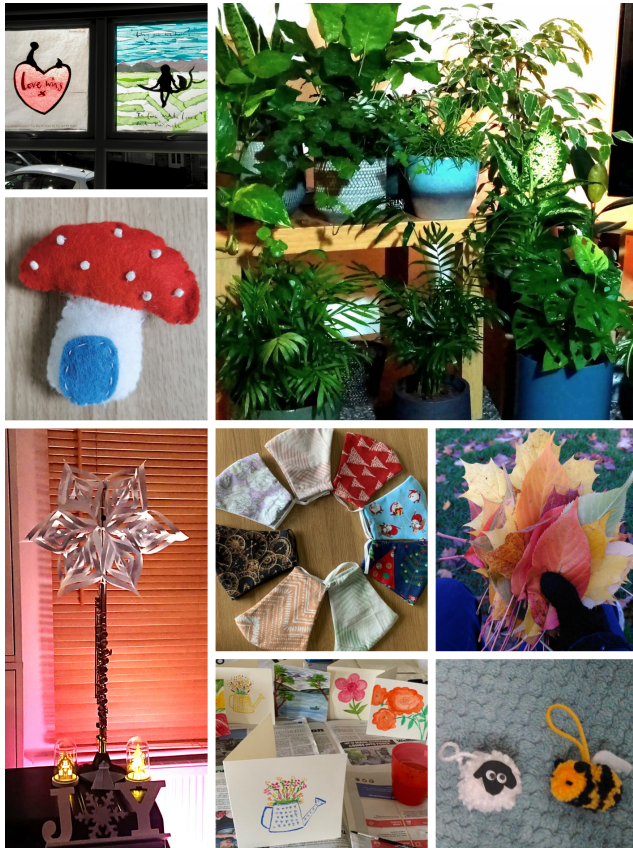
Additional activity

In addition to the core support service, our team also:

- Created new connections to raise awareness of our new social care service and created comprehensive content on social care on our website.
- Ran an 'Introduction to Welfare Benefits' training with Doncaster and Bassetlaw trainee GPs
- Ran two 'Introduction to Social Care' sessions with our members
- Met with the stakeholder engagement manager at IAS to feedback key issues from our clients
- Joined the new local ME network benefits working group, to see how local ME groups around the country can work together to call for changes to the benefits system
- Attended a stakeholder event for the Health and Disability Green Paper, and submitted a response on behalf of the group
- Submitted a response to the Work and Pensions Select Committee enquiry into benefits assessments
- Encouraged our members to submit their own individual experiences to these consultations, and signposted them to relevant resources

EVENTS

Millions Missing – 12th May 2021



As the provisional NICE Guideline for ME/CFS was being reviewed, we turned this annual campaigning event into a celebration of our community.

We organised an online members-only event and invited everyone to share their creativity as well as positive events that had happened since lockdown.

It was a lovely 2-hour event with 35 people attending on Zoom, and 13 members contributing with photos, readings and testimonies.

The live stream on our private members Facebook group was very successful with 184 interactions generated.

The event also marked the launch of Marie's hair-razing fundraising!

Marie's hair-razing fundraising launched 12th May 2021

We helped our artistic member, Marie, who initiated a head-shaving fundraiser to support our Group, to:

- organise accessible arts classes of all kinds for our members
- make an exhibition in Sheffield to showcase the amazing creativity of our members and contribute to raising awareness of the conditions.

£1,235 were raised from 65 generous donors.

We have organised a programme of art activities, both online and in person, starting at the end of 2021 and over to 2022. These include drawing, writing, singing, painting and photography. Our art exhibition will be organised in 2022. A huge thank you to Marie!



Consultation on the NICE draft guideline on long COVID- 23rd September 2021



As a recognised stakeholder in the NICE process, our charity was committed to send a response to the consultation on the new updated draft rapid guideline for the definition, diagnosis, support and management of long COVID. We invited our members to feed in to our official submission with their views and comments. For this purpose, we organised a discussion on Zoom and invited people to send feedback via email or phone call. 18 members engaged in this consultation.

AGM - 22nd October 2021

Our AGM was hosted online on Zoom on the 22nd of October. 21 people participated in the Zoom event or watched the YouTube recording.

Christmas social - 10th December 2021

Our Christmas social took place online on Zoom, and was a lovely social event. It included a Christmas quiz, a ghost story, a Christmas craft activity, songs and a natter! 48 people registered and 28 made it on Zoom.

Online talks and Q&A open to all

We have been very fortunate to be able to organise online talks and Q&A sessions with a number of highly prestigious speakers, people who are leaders in their fields. These have attracted national and international audiences. These talks are organised to share knowledge about the health conditions, and are aiming at:

- People living with ME/CFS, fibromyalgia and long COVID, their family and carers
- Health and social care professionals
- The general public

Every talk is organised on Zoom with a chat open for people to ask their questions. They are also live streamed on our [Facebook page](#) where people can comment and ask their questions live. Each talk is recorded, then uploaded for a later watch on our website and YouTube channel. A write-up of the talk is created by our team and published in our quarterly magazine, to ensure that those members who are not online also have access to the information.

Our 2021 talks reached over 40,000 people. The full engagement report can be found in Appendix II.

1. Dr Sanjay Gupta – 13th February 2021



POTS (a remarkable condition)

Dr Sanjay Gupta is a Consultant Cardiologist and heart Specialist at York Teaching Hospital. Dr Gupta's work includes a focus on the diagnosis, management and treatment of Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome (POTS) which is something many people from our community live with. This talk had been requested by one of our members.

2. Cort Johson – 27th May 2021

Q&A on Fibromyalgia

Cort Johnson has written over a thousand blogs on ME/CFS and fibromyalgia in the past 15 years, making scientific research accessible to anyone thanks to their comprehensiveness and depth. Cort was elected Prohealth's Advocate of the Year 2015 and received the Special Services Award from IACFS/ME (International Association for Chronic Fatigue Syndrome/Myalgic Encephalomyelitis) in 2016.

Health Rising is an extremely valuable website providing timely, accurate information to people with chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS) and fibromyalgia. It's been rated as one of the best fibromyalgia blogs. Subscribers of this website include people living with the conditions, as well as doctors and researchers.



3. Des Quinn – 8th September 2021



Fundamentals of Fibromyalgia

Des Quinn is the Chair of FMA UK (Fibromyalgia Action UK) which is a national charity supporting people with fibromyalgia. He gave a presentation on the basics of fibromyalgia and how it affects the large community of people who live with it every day. We dipped into some of the science of fibromyalgia and the research that underpins what we know of the condition today. We also spoke about the charity FMA UK, its mission and its activities. This was a great opportunity for anyone who might wish to be introduced to fibromyalgia, or to gain a greater understanding of the condition.

4. Prof Ron Davis and Janet Dafoe – 11th October 2021

Progress and Challenges for a Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFS) Diagnostic

Ronald W. Davis, Ph.D., is Professor of Biochemistry and of Genetics at Stanford University School of Medicine, Director of the Stanford Genome Technology Center, and Director of the Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Research Center at Stanford University. Dr. Davis is a member of the National Academy of Sciences. He is devoted to finding a cure for Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFS). His research focuses on exploring causes for ME/CFS and establishing a diagnostic that can be rapidly disseminated.



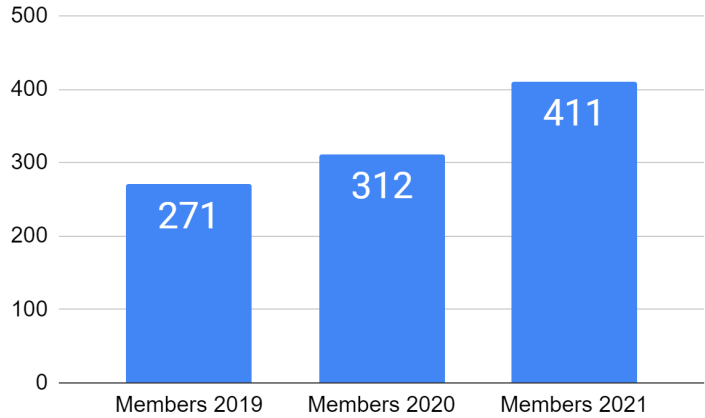
MEMBERSHIP

Overview of our membership

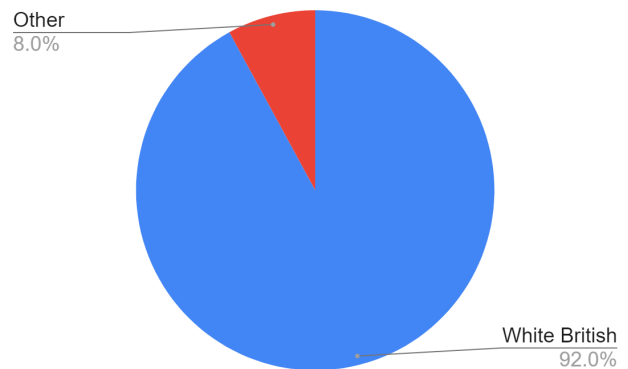
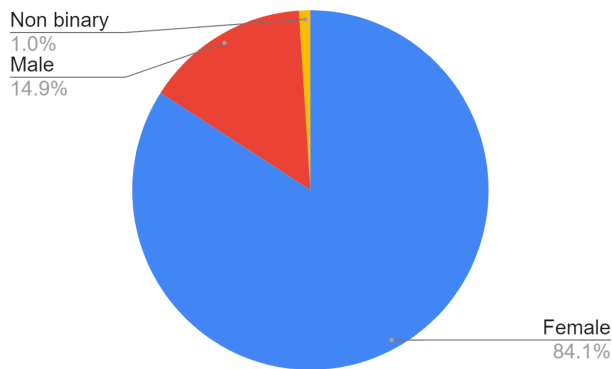
At the end of 2021, our Group was supporting 411 members, which is 32% more people than the year before.

91% of our members were living in South Yorkshire or North Derbyshire.

29% of our members subscribed to a recurring annual membership.



Our demographics were collected on a voluntary basis and the graphs below show the responses of 289 of our members. We wish to undergo additional outreach work in 2022 to reach more men and more people from diverse ethnicities.



Fees

The Group's membership fees were maintained at £12 per year for 2021. We expect to be able to continue at that level in 2022.

VOLUNTEERING

We always welcome new volunteers and encourage members to be involved in our activities as much as they wish and are able to. Our new befriending scheme has attracted 9 more volunteers, some students, some in or out of employment. We recruited 5 additional volunteers to help us create communications resources and phone our members over the winter lockdown.

Development in volunteers management

Our staff team has developed a comprehensive induction pack for volunteers, comprising our updated policies and training materials on GDPR, safeguarding, health and safety, equality and diversity, volunteering, and data breach. Our befrienders also received a thorough guidance for volunteer befrienders including information on how to handle difficult conversations and a case study shared by one of our members illustrating the journey of living with ME, through diagnosis and accessing support.

Estimated volunteer hours 2020

| Activity | Number | Hours | Volunteers | Total hours |
|-------------------------------------|--------|-------|------------|-------------|
| Drop-ins | 9 | 2 | 1 | 18 |
| Online activities (host or co-host) | 92 | 1 | 1 | 92 |
| Xmas social | 1 | 3 | 5 | 15 |
| AGM, Talks & guest events | 5 | 1 | 3 | 15 |
| Millions Missing | 1 | 2 | 3 | 6 |
| Members phone round | 5 | 1 | 5 | 25 |
| Trustees meeting | 12 | 3 | 8 | 288 |
| Magazine | 4 | 30 | 3 | 360 |
| Social media admin | 150 | 1 | 1 | 150 |
| Befriending | | | | 103 |
| Additional Trustee involvement | | | | 1000 |
| Total hours | | | | 2072 |

GOING FORWARD

The publication of the new NICE guideline for ME/CFS in October 2021 has given a huge boost to our ability to engage with health care professionals with some clarity about diagnosis and what services should and shouldn't be offered. We will commit to working with health care services to improve access and quality and relevance of services on behalf of all those living with the conditions.

We have identified four key areas of focus for our own organisational development that we wish to address in 2022.

Increasing our team's capacity further

Our membership has grown significantly this year and we have developed new successful projects. Our Group has many more ideas to improve our existing projects, and to work more closely with local NHS services on key issues such as the implementation of the new NICE guidelines. In 2022, we would like to secure funding for a new member of staff to support communications, engagement and outreach. We would also like to increase our volunteer capacity, which brings us to the next key issue.

Creating additional inclusive volunteering opportunities

Being online means that the previous volunteering opportunities in the office, such as being involved in administration or answering phone queries, which many of our members have done in the past, have become unnecessary. One of our objectives in the next year will be to design more accessible volunteering opportunities for our members, so they can help the Group in various ways, from their own homes.

Outreach to people with long COVID

There is an estimate of 10,000 people³ with long COVID in Sheffield, many of whom will present similar symptoms as ME/CFS and will benefit from getting involved with our community. This year, we have reached 14. There is a need to reach out further to these people.

Outreach to males, young adults and BAME communities

Considering the demographics of our membership, we would like to try to reach out to more males and people from diverse backgrounds in the next year. We are also aware that the large majority of our membership is over 40 years old, however these health conditions affect people of any age, so we would like to reach out to young adults too.

³ Alun Windle, Chief Nurse and Vaccination Lead NHS Sheffield CCG, 11 Aug 2021

APPENDICES

Appendix I: Engagement report for our online activities

| Activity | Number of sessions | Engagement |
|----------------------------|--------------------|--|
| Mindfulness | 18 | 44 registrants Up to 24 attendees per session |
| Qigong | 24 | 44 registrants Up to 22 attendees per session |
| Seated Tai Chi | 17 | 42 registrants Up to 16 attendees per session |
| Nutrition | 7 | 32 members registered Up to 22 attendees per sessions |
| Singing | 14 | 18 registrants Up to 7 attendees per session |
| French conversation | 9 | 12 registrants Up to 9 attendees per session |
| Quiz | 5 | 18 registrants Up to 7 attendees per session |
| Online social get together | 5 | 23 registrants Up to 6 attendees per session |
| Writing | 2 | 15 members registered Up to 5 attendees per sessions |
| Drawing | 2 | 18 members registered Up to 7 attendees per sessions |
| Painting | 2 | 18 members registered Up to 7 attendees per sessions |

The story of our member, AC

How online qigong and mindfulness have helped me cope with the lockdown - AC

I have felt unsettled and anxious at times during the pandemic and I have found the Mindfulness sessions very helpful indeed, I have felt more relaxed and calmer after the sessions and it has also encouraged me to practise Mindfulness on my own at other times when I have started to feel stressed. I find it very beneficial practising Mindfulness with a group. I also enjoyed the social interaction during the Zoom sessions which I find helpful in reducing feelings of loneliness and isolation which have been worse during the pandemic. I have felt better mentally as a result of Mindfulness, I also think that Mindfulness does help with reduction of pain and fatigue by helping the body and mind to relax more deeply.

The Qigong sessions helped distract me and help with the feelings of isolation and loneliness which were further increased by lockdown. Helped with having social interaction with people outside my own household. Qigong is something that I wanted to try before but I wasn't able to find a class close enough to manage to attend. I actually feel that I have a life now due to having some Zoom sessions thanks to the Sheffield ME Group. I wasn't able to manage to do the full class, but I did feel that as I was able to do a bit more each week that it was helping me to feel better physically and I found that over time I was starting to feel more relaxed and calmer. Having the class on Zoom was good for me because getting to a face to face class is very problematic and I probably would have found it too difficult to attend.

Appendix II: Engagement report for our online talks

| Dr Sanjay Gupta | Cort Johnson | Des Quinn | Prof Ron Davis | |
|-----------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|---|
| 117 | 68 | 98 | 261 | Registrants to the Zoom event |
| 92% | 88% | 94% | 76% | <i>From the UK</i> |
| 32% | 51% | 52% | 24% | <i>From the wider South Yorkshire area</i> |
| 29% | 43% | 30% | 17% | <i>Members of SMEFG</i> |
| 74% | 88% | 86% | 81% | <i>Living with ME/CFS, Fibromyalgia or long COVID</i> |
| 26% | 21% | 9% | 17% | <i>Caring for someone who has ME/CFS, Fibromyalgia or long COVID symptoms</i> |
| 11% | 10% | 26% | 18% | <i>Working for an organisation who supports people with ME/CFS, Fibromyalgia or long COVID symptoms</i> |
| 52 | 31 | 47 | 134 | People present on the Zoom call |
| 4,600 | 2,600 | 1,100 | 4,800 | Reach on Facebook⁴ |
| 20,994 | 479 | 367 | 5,158 | Views on YouTube/website⁵ |

⁴ Number of people reached estimated by the Facebook analytics tool from the number of views and interactions with the video. Data collected on 5th Oct 2022.

⁵ Data collected on 5th Oct 2022.

SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

for the year ended 31 December 2021

(registered Charity Number 1095416)

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| Trustee's report | 25-26 |
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| Receipts and payments account | 28 |
| Statement of assets and liabilities | 29 |
| Notes to the accounts | 30 |

SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

Legal information

Trustees

Carolyn Leary

Chair

Simon Briggs

Beatrice Greenfield

Resigned 28 October 2021

Becca Gransbury

Isabel Hemmings

Duraiya Kapasi

Alison Millar

Emma Saville

Registered Charity Number

1095416

Principal address

The Circle

33 Rockingham Lane

Sheffield

S1 4FW

Bank

Lloyds TSB

Church Street

Sheffield

Independent examiner

Craig Williamson

White Rose Accounting for Charities

The Ghyll

Threapland

Aspatria

CA7 2EL

SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

Trustees' report

The trustees are pleased to present their report and financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2021.

The trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities", issued in March 2005, in preparing the annual report and financial statements of the charity.

Organisation

Sheffield ME Group is a registered charity and is governed by a constitution dated 11 October 2001, as amended 8 December 2002, and was entered on the register of charities on 15 January 2003.

The group is managed by a voluntary committee who are elected at each Annual General Meeting. Since 2002, part-time staff have been employed (60 hours total).

Objects of the charity

The objects of the charity are:-

- to relieve those suffering from the illness variously known as Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME), Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS) or Post-Viral Fatigue Syndrome (PVFS) and, in particular, by the provision of help and assistance through mutual support and information exchange.
- to educate the general public through the promotion and dissemination of knowledge about ME/CFS/PVFS.

We do this through our newsletters, drop-ins, library, IT support, information services, Listening Ear service, website, networking, hosting events and also via media coverage and liaison with other voluntary and statutory organisations. We do not give medical advice nor do we offer individual treatment programmes. Where possible we signpost to relevant bodies and resources. We are a self-help group with finite resources and we are, therefore, restricted to providing the above services.

Public Benefit Statement

Sheffield ME group is a self-help group which encourages and helps support those with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME), Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS) and their families and carers to use their own resources so that they are better able to manage the illness and the changes it has made to their lives. We do this by providing a wide range of services tailored to meet a variety of needs and/or circumstances and by raising awareness of the condition.

The trustees regularly give due consideration to the Commission's guidance in deciding what activities they should undertake, by reviewing the needs of their beneficiaries, by ensuring that the service is fully inclusive and that no detriment or harm arises from the organisation by carrying out its activities.

We operate with respect to each individual person and we aim to give each one an opportunity to have their say and to become more involved in the group, whilst working within our adopted policies and guidelines.

Our core values are based on our charitable objectives as stated in our constitution.

trustees report cntd.....

SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

Trustees' report (continued)

Reserves policy

Sheffield ME Group aims to hold free reserves of 3 months running costs, which would equate to £23,030 based on the 2022 budget. The Group currently holds £21,255 in free reserves, just £1,775 short of target. This will be met in 2022.

The reserve fund will be ring-fenced to offer protection to employees, to meet any outstanding overhead costs, contracts and leases plus payment of any other outstanding liabilities.

Trustees' responsibilities for the financial statements

The trustees are responsible for preparing financial statements for each financial period which show the state of affairs of the Charity and of the surplus or deficit of the Charity for that period. In preparing those financial statements the trustees are required to:-

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity 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 Charity and enable the trustees to prepare financial statements.

The trustees are responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention of fraud and other irregularities.

Signed on behalf of the trustees on 4 Oct 22 By



Print name CAROLYN LEARY
Trustee

SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

I report on the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2021, which are set out on pages 6 to 8.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145 (5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
q to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
q to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act
have not been met; or
- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:  _____

Craig Williamson
White Rose Accounting for Charities
The Ghyll
Threapland
Aspatria
CA7 2EL

Date: 14/5/22

SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

**Receipts and Payments Account
for the year ended 31 December 2021**

| | | Unrestricted funds £ | Restricted funds £ | Total 2021 £ | Total 2020 £ |
|--|-------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | Notes | | | | |
| Receipts | 1 | | | | |
| Grants and donations | 2 | 1,746 | 66,832 | 68,577 | 71,106 |
| Members' subscriptions | | 4,246 | - | 4,246 | 3,867 |
| Fundraising | | - | 1,655 | 1,655 | - |
| Total receipts | | <u>5,992</u> | <u>68,487</u> | <u>74,478</u> | <u>74,973</u> |
| Payments | | | | | |
| Salaries and national Insurance | 3 | - | 55,242 | 55,242 | 41,335 |
| Payroll fees | | - | 235 | 235 | 250 |
| Recruitment & DBS checks | | - | 115 | 115 | 67 |
| Staff training | | - | 57 | 57 | 233 |
| Staff travel | | - | 62 | 62 | 222 |
| Trustee training | | - | - | - | 812 |
| Christmas social | | - | - | - | 465 |
| Events, conference, workshops and activities | | - | 2,731 | 2,731 | 2,172 |
| Premises rental and room hire | | - | 5,820 | 5,820 | 3,606 |
| Insurance | | - | 609 | 609 | 563 |
| Telephone, internet and web | | - | 714 | 714 | 227 |
| IT equipment and repairs | | - | - | - | 317 |
| Postage | | - | 924 | 924 | 1,049 |
| Stationery and office | | - | 93 | 93 | 1,085 |
| Subscriptions | | - | 733 | 733 | 582 |
| Publicity and newsletter | | - | 1,104 | 1,104 | 1,525 |
| Volunteers' travel and social | | 36 | 43 | 79 | 40 |
| Accountancy | | - | 205 | 205 | 205 |
| Paypal charges | | 107 | - | 107 | - |
| Other | | 327 | - | 327 | (55) |
| Total payments | | <u>470</u> | <u>68,687</u> | <u>69,157</u> | <u>54,701</u> |
| Net receipts/(payments) for the year | | <u>5,522</u> | <u>(201)</u> | <u>5,321</u> | <u>20,272</u> |
| Cash and bank balance at 01/01/2021 | | 15,733 | 56,365 | 72,098 | 51,826 |
| Cash and bank balance at 31/12/2021 | 5 | <u>21,255</u> | <u>56,164</u> | <u>77,419</u> | <u>72,098</u> |

SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

**Statement of assets and liabilities
as at 31 December 2021**

| | 2021 | 2020 |
|----------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| | £ | £ |
| Monetary assets | | |
| Balance at bank and cash | 77,419 | 72,098 |
| | <u>77,419</u> | <u>72,098</u> |
| | | |
| | 2021 | 2020 |
| | £ | £ |
| Liabilities | | |
| Rent and room hire | - | 1,162 |
| Independent examination | 205 | 205 |
| Postage | 399 | 394 |
| ICT | 127 | 127 |
| Office telephone calls & mobiles | 503 | 9 |
| Zoom online IT subscription | 330 | - |
| Flowers for retiring trustees | - | 123 |
| | <u>1,564</u> | <u>2,020</u> |

Signed on behalf of the Trustees on.....4 Oct 22 by

C. Leary
Trustee

PRINT NAME: CAROLYN LEARY

SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2021

1 Receipts and payments account

Because the level of income and expenditure is below £250,000, the group has opted for accounts to be prepared on a receipts and payments basis rather than an accruals basis. This is in line with Charity Commission guidelines for small groups and is seen as more appropriate for this group.

| | Unrestricted funds | Restricted funds | Total 2021 |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|---------------|
| | £ | £ | £ |
| 2 Grants and donations | | | |
| Grants:- | | | |
| Big Lottery Fund | - | 60,328 | 60,328 |
| DPO Covid-19 Emergency Fund | - | 2,274 | 2,274 |
| South Yorkshire Community Foundation | - | 2,480 | 2,480 |
| University of Sheffield (Internship) | - | 1,000 | 1,000 |
| ZEST small grants scheme award | - | 750 | 750 |
| Sub total | - | 66,832 | 66,832 |
| Donations | 1,746 | - | 1,746 |
| Total grants and donations | 1,746 | 66,832 | 68,577 |

3 Staff costs

Staff costs during the period were:-

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|
| Gross salaries and employers pension | 55,242 |
| Employer's national insurance | - |
| | 55,242 |

Number of staff: 3 part time staff

4 Restricted funds

| | Balance at 01/01/2021 | Receipts | Payments | Balance at 31/12/2021 |
|---|-----------------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Big Lottery Fund Lottery | 48,397 | 60,328 | 56,361 | 52,363 |
| DPO Covid-19 Emergency Fund | 5,022 | 2,274 | 7,296 | - |
| Sheffield City Council Community COVID-19 Response Fund | 2,180 | - | 2,180 | - |
| South Yorkshire Community Foundation | - | 2,480 | 1,360 | 1,120 |
| University of Sheffield (Internship) | - | 1,000 | 1,000 | - |
| ZEST small grants scheme award | - | 750 | - | 750 |
| Tai Chi Classes | 766 | - | 330 | 436 |
| Fundraising (Marie's hair-raising fundraising) | - | 1,235 | 160 | 1,075 |
| Fundraising (Emer's fundraising) | - | 420 | - | 420 |
| | 56,365 | 68,487 | 68,687 | 56,164 |

SHEFFIELD M.E. GROUP

England & Wales - Charity number 1095416

Accounts



ANNUAL REPORT

JAN - DEC 2020



Sheffield
ME & Fibromyalgia
Group

Registered Charity: 1095416

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THE CHARITY

Registered charity: 1095416

Registered office & contact details

- Address: The Circle, 33 Rockingham Lane, Sheffield S1 4FW
- Website: www.sheffieldmegroup.co.uk
- Email: info@sheffieldmegroup.co.uk
- Telephone: 0114 253 6700 / 07753948186

Patrons

- Berlie Doherty
- The Very Reverend Peter Bradley

Objectives

- To relieve those suffering from these illnesses variously known as myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME), chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS), post-viral fatigue syndrome (PVFS) and fibromyalgia, in particular by the provision of help and assistance through mutual support and information exchange.
- To educate the general public through the promotion and dissemination of knowledge about ME/CFS/PVFS/fibromyalgia.

Trustees

- Simon Briggs
- Becca Gransbury
- Beatrice Greenfield
- Isabel Hemmings
- Duraiya Kapasi
- Carolyn Leary (Chair)
- Alison Millar
- Ellen Roy (until October 2020)
- Emma Saville (from October 2020)
- Danny Sherwood (until October 2020)
- Debbie Stephenson (until October 2020)
- Marie Vintin (until October 2020)

Associate Trustees

- Sheila Broadhead (Treasurer)

Employees

- Elyane Bardou - Communications officer (joined May 2020)
- Harriet Grant - Communications officer (until May 2020)
- Ellie Jones - Benefits adviser (joined April 2020)
- Sarah Smith - Benefits adviser

CHAIR'S REPORT

2020, an exceptionally challenging year for everyone. Full stop. But even more so when living with chronic conditions like ME/CFS, fibromyalgia and all the other illnesses that our members contend with. This was the year of Facebook posts helping people find which shops had delivery slots less than 3 weeks ahead, where accessing social care was unbelievably difficult as many staff went off sick, and when those who were familiar with personal lockdown due to illness found they had more resilience than some for whom it was a new shock. Suddenly schools were delivered online, enabling young people with chronic illness to access schooling never before available, students could study from home, pantomimes were accessible online, the National Theatre was streamed to people's home. This marked a turning point for inclusion, but set against a backdrop of great fear as the pandemic spread out of control, our NHS was under huge strain but we could hear the garden birdsong like never before.



Our Communications Officer, Harriet stayed on beyond her resignation to help us keep the charity going, and as we recruited both Elyane, to replace her, and Ellie Jones to join Sarah Smith sharing the benefits work, we built a strong and virtual team working from a distance. Group members helped each other out where they could, and we all learnt how to 'Zoom'. This report shows the fruits of the enthusiasm and creativity brought to the Group by Elyane, her skills in running the charity competently and the breadth of the programme is testament to her hard work. Sarah and Ellie have done an amazing job winning appeal after appeal to ensure members access the benefits and back pay that is their entitlement - it really shouldn't be this hard to claim what is rightfully yours. So a huge thanks to everyone who has supported the charity through such an exceptional year - the Trustees who have helped keep the show on the road, the volunteers and students who have come on board and given their time generously, to Berlie Doherty and Peter Bradley as patrons, to Carol Binks for all her help in setting up our talks, and the many many more. I would like to say a special thankyou to Sheila Broadhead who has acted as our treasurer, providing sound book-keeping and financial advice which helps us all feel we are in safe hands. We've done lots this year but also learnt lots, and with the help of everyone, we will continue to build this charity. Thank you all.

Carolyn Leary, Chair

Handwritten signature of Carolyn Leary.

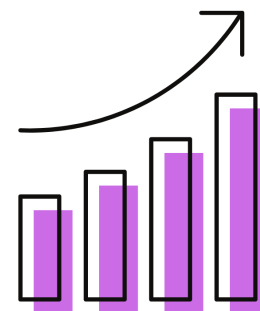
DEVELOPMENT OF OUR GROUP



The pandemic has given our Group the opportunity to rethink the way we deliver our services, including our welfare benefits service, and our social and wellbeing activities. In Spring 2020 we decided to move our activities online, creating new opportunities for everyone including our housebound and bedbound members. We have purchased a Zoom license enabling us to organise large events as well as private activities for members. Being online means that more people were able to attend, when they felt too weak to come to venues before. We also took advantage of this to invite international guest speakers to deliver online talks, raising even more the profile of our community.

“Zoom sessions have been a complete game changer for me, the silver lining of the lockdowns! It’s a very inclusive way for people who would have problems with attending regular sessions at a venue to join in some activities with a socially interactive group.”- R. O., member

In November 2020, our Group was successful in securing the DPO Covid-19 Emergency Fund which enabled us to add 6 hours to each staff member, bringing the communications officer to 36 hours a week and the benefits advisers to 24 hours a week. This additional time has enabled our communications officer, among other things, to organise more online activities for our members. Our benefits advice service has been expanded to support our members with social care advocacy.



In 2020, observing the growing community of people with long term effects of Covid-19, our Group has decided to open up our services to those living with this emerging condition, with symptoms resembling those experienced by people living with ME/CFS and fibromyalgia. We have published articles in local newspapers, created a survey for long haulers to gather their insights about support needs, and published new website content related to long covid.

SOCIAL AND WELLBEING ACTIVITIES

In-person social drop-ins

A total of 14 in-person drop-ins were held in January and February 2020 at various cafes in Sheffield, Chesterfield and Barnsley. These allow members to get together near their own homes, chat with others who understand these illnesses and gain support and friendship, thereby reducing the isolation these illnesses can cause. They are run by our volunteers and as the sessions are held in local eateries they present no cost to the Group.

Online activities



Our volunteers and staff have ran online activities through Summer, which were:

- The Big Quiz: 14 sessions and up to 12 attendees per quiz
- Arts & craft: 10 sessions and up to 8 attendees per session
- Social drop-ins: 14 sessions and up to 8 attendees per social

Our online activities programme was developed further in October with our very first OctoberFest which included a variety of social, wellbeing and informative activities. More information on the OctoberFest programme and attendance can be found in the [Events](#) section. Our Christmas Jingle & Mingle festival comprised more activities that are mentioned in the [Events](#) section.

Phone support



Our office phone line was operating all year round, answered by our Communications Officer. Phone calls received included queries about the conditions, our services, benefits support, membership, or sometimes just having a chat with someone who understands.

Realising the detrimental impact of the pandemic on the mental health of our members, our staff team endeavoured to reach out to our members via phone calls, to check in on them and make sure they had everything they needed.

Magazine

The Group's magazine was distributed to all members. It is designed to inform members about ME, Fibromyalgia and the Group's activities, and also to entertain them, over its usual 24 A4 pages. This year, the Autumn and Winter editions were merged into a big Autumn-Winter bumper edition due to a massive amount of information arising early November, among which was the long-awaited release of the NICE draft guidelines on ME/CFS.

A special thank you to Becca Gransbury, our editor, and to all who contributed.

The image displays three magazine covers for the Sheffield ME & Fibromyalgia Group. The left cover is the Spring 2020 issue, featuring a medical article on unexplained symptoms and a talk by Dr. David Tuller. The middle cover is the Summer 2020 issue, highlighting new staff, online activities, and lockdown stories. The right cover is the Autumn/Winter 2020 bumper issue, featuring an update on NICE guidelines, a new online talk with Dr. Diane O'Leary, and other news.

Sheffield ME & Fibromyalgia Group
Spring 2020 Magazine

Medically Unexplained Symptoms: Shaky Evidence, Shaky Practice
 with Dr David Tuller, DrPH
 2pm Monday 16th March 2020
 The Circle, 33 Rockingham Lane, Sheffield, S1 4FW

Hosted by: Sheffield ME & Fibromyalgia Group
Book free tickets on eventbrite: bit.ly/ZRwTcvP

Gut Microbes in Health and Disease
 With Professor Simon Carding
 2pm Friday 24th April 2020

Sheffield ME & Fibromyalgia Group Annual General Meeting & Lecture
 Sheffield ME Group is a Registered Charity: Number 1095416

Sheffield ME & Fibromyalgia Group
Summer 2020 Magazine

What's on - New Staff - Millions Missing 2020
Online Activities - Professor Carding's Talk on Gut Health
Lockdown Stories - and much more!

The Circle
 33 Rockingham Lane
 Sheffield S1 4FW

0114 253 6700
 info@sheffieldmegroup.co.uk
 www.sheffieldmegroup.co.uk

Sheffield ME Group is a Registered Charity: Number 1095416

Sheffield ME & Fibromyalgia Group
Autumn/Winter 2020 Magazine
BUMPER ISSUE!

Update on NICE guidelines
 "This guideline takes us to where we should have been in 2007" – Carolyn Leary, Chair

NICE "Recognise that people with ME/CFS may have experienced prejudice and disbelief and feel stigmatised by people who do not understand their illness"

Graded Exercise Therapy

New online talk with Dr Diane O'Leary
 November 20th

PIP: Lockdown updates and Sue's story

Nigel Speight on ME in children

Octoberfest Write-up

All About Nutrition

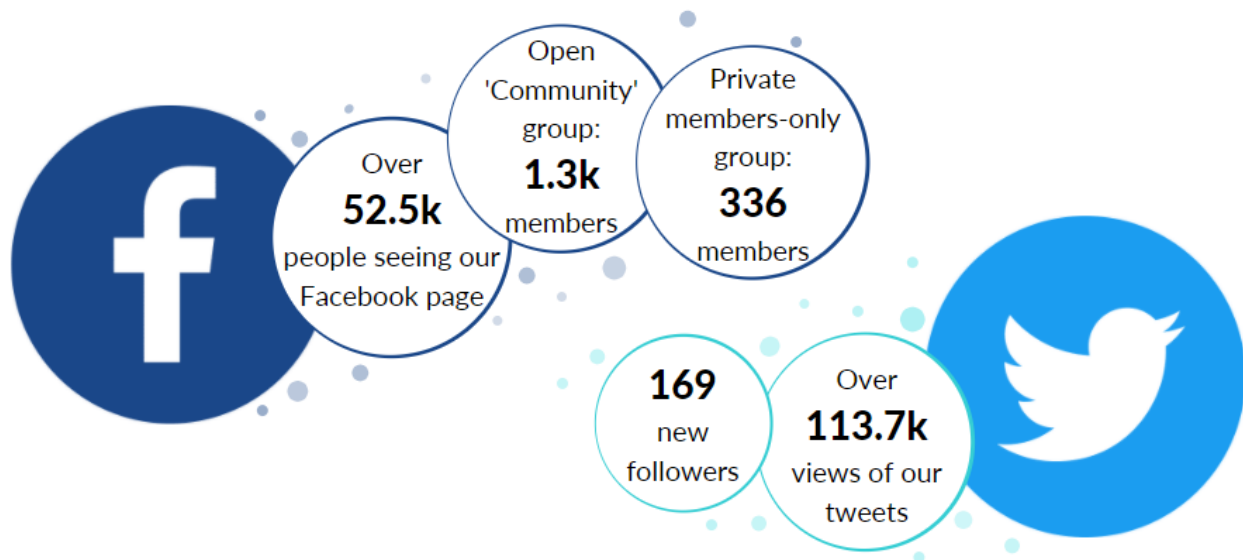
Jingle & Mingle festival

Plus, the APPG on ME, our AGM/Workwell Talk, Creative Writing Tips, and more!
 Sheffield ME Group is a Registered Charity: Number 1095416

ONLINE ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH

Besides the engagement via online activities, our Group has been very active in sharing various informative content via social media, on our website and through our mailing list.

Social media



Facebook is the main source of traffic to our website. Over 52,500 people have seen our page content throughout the year, which is 6 times more than the year before. By the end of 2020, 1,007 people had liked our Facebook page, representing a 61% increase compared to the previous year. Our Long Covid group was created in August 2020 and involved 36 people at the end of 2020. It was at the time an open group reaching out to people with long covid in South Yorkshire and North Derbyshire.

Website



- 8,900 visits which is 229% higher than the year before.
- 5,200 unique visitors which is 162% more than the year before.
- Our most visited page is the recording of previous talks which totals over 2,400 views.

E-news

27 e-news bulletins were sent throughout the year to our members and/or general mailing list. They are emails with information about our Group's activities and other relevant news from the worlds of ME/CFS and fibromyalgia.

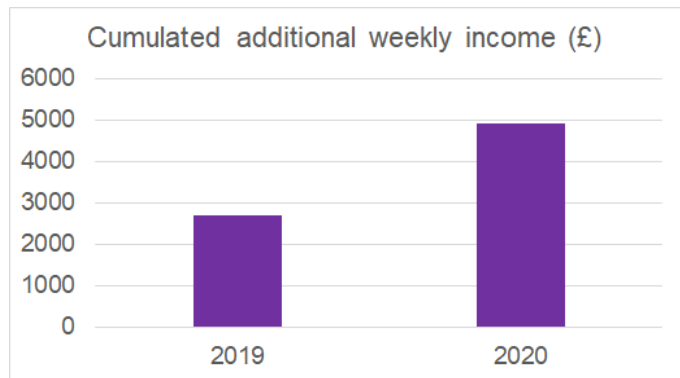
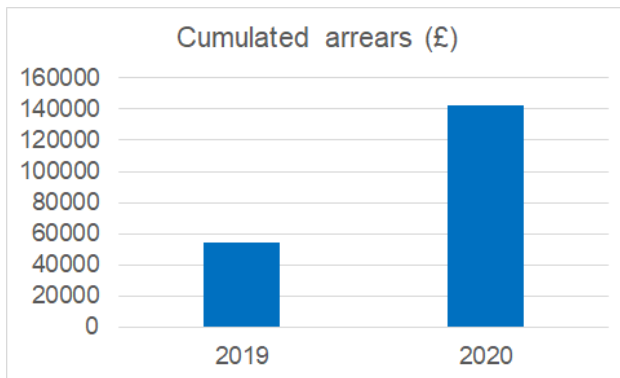
WELFARE AND BENEFITS ADVICE

Changes

- As of Autumn 2020 we started taking on members experiencing ME-like symptoms (fatigue, PEM, brain fog) as a result of long covid.
- Since April 2020 we have been remote working. We have been providing advice and advocacy via telephone, email, zoom and post. This is in line with the DWP who were holding assessments and tribunals over the telephone.
- Since November 2020 we have been supporting clients with social care matters

Financial outcomes

- Combined arrears earned (back pay received after appealing decisions) = £142,150.18
- Combined additional weekly income = £4,902.55



Overview and feedback from benefits clients

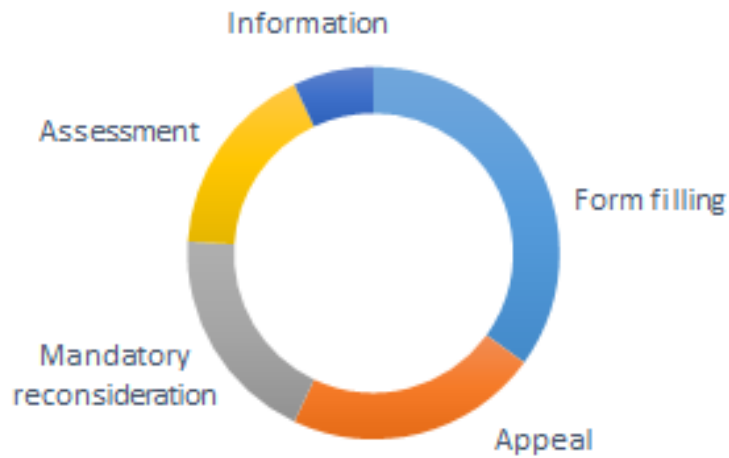


78% of cases concerned Personal Independence Payment



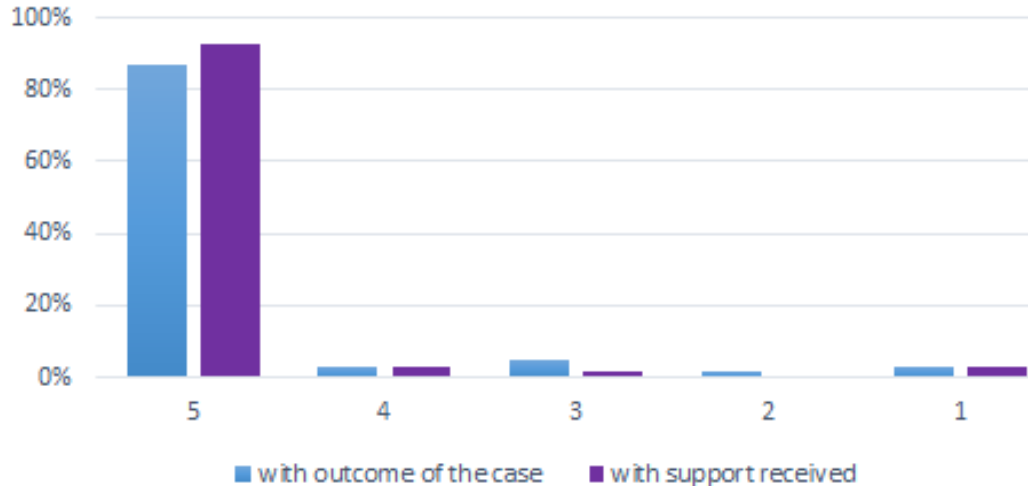
97% of queries qualified as "responded to quickly and thoroughly"

Support area for our casework clients



Satisfaction of clients

(5 very satisfied, 1 not satisfied)



Follow up from independent review

In December 2019 the Group commissioned Sheffield Citizens Advice Bureau to carry out a review of our benefits advice service using the opportunity created by the retirement of one of the two advisers, and to inform our recruitment.

The report made the following recommendations:

- Use case recording software to speed up assessment, advice giving and data recording. The reviewer made three possible suggestions.

- Establish a routine assessment/triage process to identify the nature of the benefit problem, what capacity the client has to self-help/manage the issue and what level of support is required and available.
- Subscribe to other Citizens Rights organisations in order to ensure our advisers remain at the forefront of understanding the ever changing systems.

In response, we have made the following changes:

- We now use CharityLog, one of the recommended case recording tools, to record benefits advice.
- We have put together an Advice Service Procedures policy to manage our capacity.
- We now subscribe to Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG), Rightsnet and Benefits and Work, so that our advisors have access to the most current information.

Welfare rights training for GP trainees

This year we ran 2 training sessions on welfare rights with GP trainees in Sheffield and Barnsley. The aim of the training was to help GPs be more confident in signposting patients to welfare rights advice services, and identify when they might be able to support patients to access welfare support, for example by providing medical evidence.

45 participants responded to our feedback form

87% found the training 'very useful', and 13% found the training 'somewhat useful'

84% improved their knowledge of the welfare benefits system

Quotes from participants

'Useful session. I feel I now have some idea as to where to signpost patients if needed. understand what role a GP may have in helping with patients' financial troubles.

'Very useful topic and presentation. It is something I did not know about much beforehand and because of the complexity is difficult to figure out via reading/self-study. I would definitely recommend this becoming a regular/routine VTS session. Ellie presented well and I liked how you have also focused on our questions and finding information you did not have ready'

'I will definitely be trying to utilize the information provided and thereby gain better knowledge. I think practice is what is needed now. I think that it is a really good topic that GPs do need to be aware of'

Case studies from our benefits and social care clients

1- This member needed help with a PIP MR, she said:

'The biggest barrier I faced to accessing welfare benefits was understanding of the system and feeling utterly deflated and patronised by the service. I needed someone to help me complete forms and to explain the processes to me. I was so stressed from the whole experience I would have given up if I'd not had the support. The extra payments have taken away so much stress and pressure. I have been worried about meeting bills and running the house and losing sleep over the fact I may have to get a job and knowing my health wouldn't allow me to.'

2- This member got covid in May 2020, and has been experiencing ongoing symptoms which affect her ability to manage her day-to-day life. She applied for Personal Independence Payment, but was turned down. Sarah supported her to challenge this decision, and she was awarded the benefit, meaning she is over £80 per week better off.

"I was having a wonderful life before covid. I was fit and well and working full time as a freight train driver. I worked anytime of the night and day and 24/7. My hobbies included singing, playing a baritone horn (big brass instrument) and exercising. Prior to lockdown, I was having a personal training session every week. When lockdown started in March, I continued to work full time as a Key Worker. I am married, with a 16 year old son.

Unfortunately I caught covid in May. This was a huge shock as I was very careful. The original infection was quite mild but the post covid syndrome is horrendous. It started about 2 weeks after the original infection. It started with a massive relapse of my original symptoms (sore throat, cough, chest pain, fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea, brain fog and many, many more). I am still sick with many of these symptoms."

3- Because of changes in her life, this member needed help with social care. She was supported by Sarah to access a social care package and to be put on the priority list for re-housing because of her health condition.

"I am very grateful for the support from Sheffield ME & Fibromyalgia Group, especially over the past year. I suffer from ME and have had several issues over the years not only with my health but also with my benefits and getting support with the difficulties of carrying out everyday tasks.

Sarah did a fantastic job of helping me to get a needs assessment done over the phone, and she also arranged for me to speak with the right people at Sheffield City Council to start discussing future accommodation with me, including going down the medical priority route."

EVENTS

Millions Missing – 12th May 2020



Every year we host ‘#MillionsMissing’ as part of a global campaign giving voice to local people's experiences of these devastating conditions and a platform for local MPs who support our demands for more funding for bio-medical research into this much-ignored condition.

This year, we were online on Zoom with many prestigious guests! The line up included interviews with Olivia Blake MP, Paul Blomfield MP, testimonies by local journalist Laura Elliott and member Mhari-Ann, live storytelling, arts and songs by our members, and more.

The live event was also broadcasted on Facebook and attracted over 2,300 viewers. The recording of the whole event was then uploaded on YouTube and generated 150 more views. A Music Fest was organised at the end of the visibility action which generated 4,200 views.

Online OctoberFest – 5th to 23rd October 2020



This online festival introduced our membership and beyond to a whole new world of online activities: mindfulness, seated tai chi, singing, writing workshop, murder mystery, play reading, French conversation, as well as a nutrition talk, an introduction to being a trustee, PIP tips and a social. This festival was a real success and boosted attendance to online activities.

84 people made 278 registrations across all the activities. 38% of registrants were members of our Group, 94% were people living with ME/CFS, Fibromyalgia and long Covid symptoms, and 85% were living in South Yorkshire.

As we were planning on continuing online activities in the long term, we took the opportunity of the OctoberFest to gather some precious insights from our members, in a spirit of always working as a group and including them in the decision-making.

The feedback survey comprised:

- Global rating of the OctoberFest
- Rating of each activity on a likert scale
- Willingness to do the activities again
- Best things of this festival
- Areas of improvement
- Specific assessment of accessibility, set up, programme, inclusion within the Group
- Space to request activities that we should do in the future
- General availability for activities like these during the week

The OctoberFest received a general rating of 4.9/5 with very positive feedback.

Please see the OctoberFest reporting in appendix I.

Annual General Meeting - 22nd October 2020

Our AGM took place on Zoom, before the talk by the Workwell Foundation. 40 members participated in the Zoom event or watched the recording on Youtube.

Discussions on the NICE draft guideline for ME/CFS - November & December 2020



The NICE guidelines for the diagnostic and management of ME/CFS had been in place since 2007.

In this guideline, graded exercise therapy and cognitive behavioural therapy were recommended to health professionals dealing with ME/CFS patients. After intense campaigning from the ME/CFS community around the negative consequences of these practices on patients, the guidelines had been put under review and a new draft was presented in November 2020.

As a recognised stakeholder in the NICE process, our Group intended to submit feedback to NICE about this new draft guideline based on our members' views and comments. For this, we organised 2 members-only sessions to discuss the draft, as well as an open discussion with Dr David Tuller gathering 104 people. Dr Tuller shared his thoughts on the draft and addressed attendees' comments. The recording of this talk was uploaded on our website. These events generated valuable discussions that shaped our Group's official response to NICE.

Jingle & Mingle online Christmas festival – 14th to 18th December 2020



This week before Christmas was filled with themed online activities open to all: Christmas storytelling with our patron Berlie Doherty, Christmas singalong, Christmas quiz and DIY Christmas decorations workshop.

38 people registered to one or more of the activities, of whom 36 were members. The week ended with a members-only Jingle Ball social to which 25 members participated, some of whom running quiz, games and storytelling.

Online talks and Q&A open to all

These talks aim at increasing the knowledge of people with ME/CFS, fibromyalgia and long covid about the conditions, at educating professionals working in related sectors like medicine or social care, and at raising awareness of the conditions among the general public. Every talk is live streamed on our Facebook page where people can comment and ask their questions live. Each talk is recorded, then uploaded for a later watch on our website and youtube channel.

The full engagement report for these talks can be found in appendix II.

1. Dr Nigel Speight and the TYMES Trust – 24th September 2020



ME/CFS in Children and young people

This talk was aimed at families supporting young people and those not getting the support they need from schools and services.

Dr Nigel Speight is the foremost expert on children and young people with ME/CFS. He is a semi-retired British doctor based in the North East of England who specialises in Pediatric ME/cfs and has been involved in fighting many child protection cases in which children with ME/cfs were at risk of being removed from their parents. He has acted as a voluntary pediatric medical advisor for many ME/cfs

charities. He has been outspoken about the risks to children with ME/cfs being misdiagnosed as having a psychiatric condition.

Debbie Burgess from the TYMES Trust introduced the work of this only national ME charity dedicated to children and young people with ME and their families.

2. The Workwell Foundation – 22nd October 2020



Preventing Post-Exertional Malaise – Pacing and Energy Management in ME/CFS

Our guests Staci Stevens and Dr Mark Van Ness from the Workwell Foundation have been studying ME/CFS using cardiopulmonary exercise testing for the past 21 years. They shared with us recent findings about post-exertional malaise, as well as their relevance in determining pacing strategies and energy conservation. The talk included information from their recent manuscripts, heart rate monitoring and energy conservation tips.

3. Dr Diane O'Leary – 20th November 2020



Seeing the big picture: ME, Fibromyalgia, MUS, FND and long Covid

Dr Diane O'Leary is a philosopher and bioethicist, currently a Visiting Fellow at the Center for Philosophy of Science at University of Pittsburgh. Her work focuses on mind-body issues in medicine, with special attention to confusion about dualism in diagnosis.

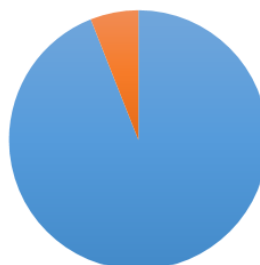
Misunderstanding about dualism has made it difficult for many patients to access safe, ethical care, particularly those with ME/CFS, fibromyalgia, Ehlers-Danlos syndrome and chronic Lyme disease.

One of the most impactful areas of Dr. O'Leary's work is the effort to show how medicine relies on mind-body confusions to support outdated social ideas about women. To secure health equity for women, Dr. O'Leary supports eliminating gender as a factor in psychosomatic diagnosis.

MEMBERSHIP

Overview of our membership

At the end of 2020, our Group was composed of 312 members, which is 15% more than the year before. 94% of our members were living in South Yorkshire or North Derbyshire. In October 2020, we started gathering demographic data to build a fuller picture of our membership.



94% of our members live in South Yorkshire and North Derbyshire



New options for getting membership

In July 2020, we set up an option to get membership through our website. This includes the option to get a recurring membership, and to add a donation. 29% of our members at the end of 2020 had used this purchase option.

Fees

The Group's membership fees were maintained at £12 per year for 2020. We expect to be able to continue at that level next year.

VOLUNTEERS

We welcome volunteers and encourage members to contribute time if they can. Many have learnt new skills, refreshed old ones, gained self-esteem and made friendships through this. Some have also gone on to paid employment.

Estimated volunteer hours 2020

| Activity | Number | Hours | Volunteers | Total hours |
|----------------------------------|--------|-------|------------|-------------|
| Drop-ins | 14 | 2.5 | 1 | 35 |
| Arts & Craft | 10 | 1 | 1 | 10 |
| Online OctoberFest and Xmas fest | 1 | 15 | 1 | 15 |
| Xmas social | 1 | 3 | 4 | 12 |
| AGM, Talks & guest events | 5 | 1 | 3 | 15 |
| Millions Missing | 1 | 2 | 5 | 10 |
| Members phone round | 2 | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| Trustees meeting | 12 | 3 | 9 | 324 |
| Magazine | 3 | 30 | 4 | 360 |
| Social media admin | 150 | 1 | 1 | 150 |
| Total hours | | | | 931 |

GOING FORWARD

As 2021 beckons we gradually realise this will be the 20th anniversary since the Group became a registered charity. We know the Group has been in existence quite a bit longer, before it was registered and look forward to finding out some history!

This year has shown us how much new technologies can be used to support our most isolated and housebound members and increase opportunities for connection. But in such strange times we also know how painfully many are missing face to face contact, and when the time at home includes living with the deep fatigue and never-ending pain, many are really missing the opportunities to have contact and a change of scenery.

We will clearly now move forward working both online and, as soon as the situation allows, resuming safe face-to-face contact. We are as a charity just starting to understand how best to support our members with access to online support including devices and technical help.

The more we do, the more we find out what we could do - our phone round of members who do not have emails has shown this - and it is clear that the Group would benefit if there were more staff resources. The additional staff hours have really helped during the latter part of 2020 and we will do our utmost to undertake a staffing restructure, hopefully with the aim of establishing a charity manager role.

Hosting talks has been a very successful part of our activities - using Zoom and live-streaming on Facebook we are proud to be able to offer 'scientists to your sofa' and bring the latest research into the homes of members, with health professionals joining us too. We are becoming more confident in reaching out to even more eminent scientists, researchers and those with a global understanding of the worlds of ME/CFS and fibromyalgia.

During the coming year we also hope to strengthen our relationship with the local ME Clinic, particularly to ensure those being discharged know they can reach out to us.

The year ahead holds many opportunities - we await the delayed publication of the new NICE guideline for ME/CFS, some promising research is exploring new understanding of ME, diagnosis of fibromyalgia is shifting to be based more on patient experience. However, we are extremely concerned about the high number of people not recovering from covid-19 and experiencing post-viral symptoms that we are so familiar with, along with the familiar situation that the medical establishment still has little to offer that helps. We will be prepared to welcome new members.

APPENDICES

Appendix I: OctoberFest festival report

| | |
|---|------------|
| Total number of registrations | 278 |
| People registered | 84 |
| Members of our Group | 38% |
| From South Yorkshire | 85% |
| From UK + Ireland | 92% |
| From outside UK + Ireland | 8% |
| People living with one or more of the following: ME/CFS, fibromyalgia, long covid symptoms | 94% |

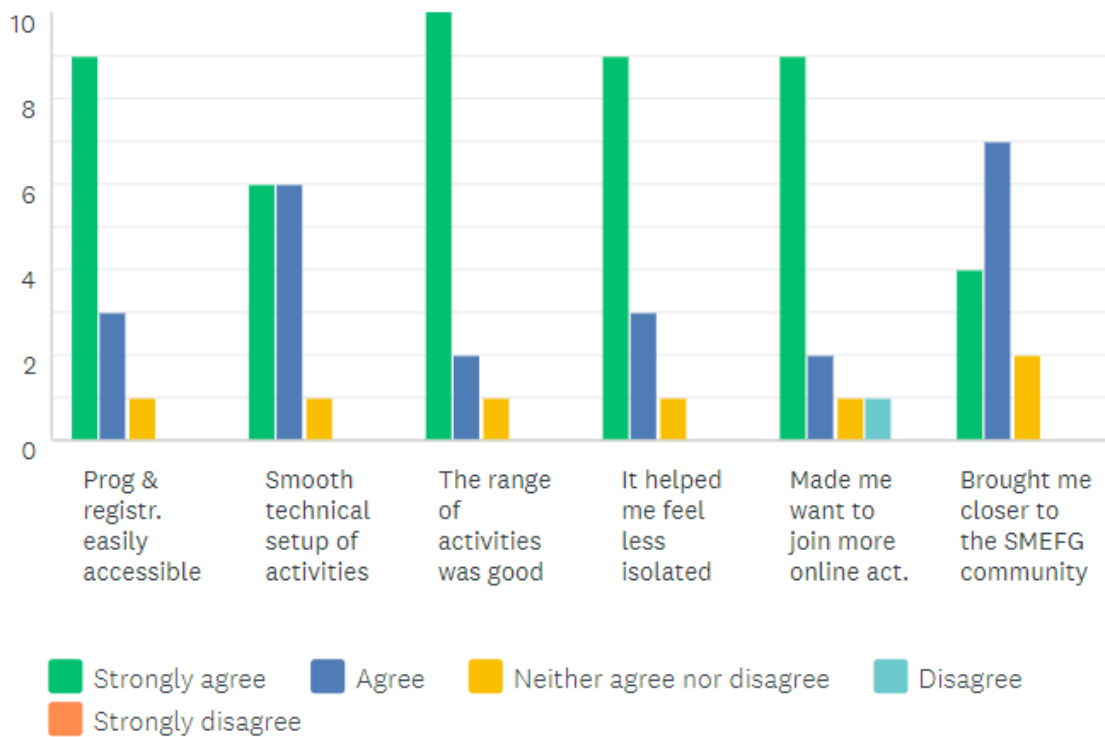
Registrations breakdown for each activity:

| | | |
|--------------------|----|-----------------------|
| Mindfulness 2 | 28 | |
| Mindfulness 1 | 23 | (36 different people) |
| Tai Chi 2 | 27 | |
| Tai Chi 1 | 25 | (36 different people) |
| Nutrition talk | 32 | |
| PIP 1 | 14 | |
| PIP 2 | 13 | (23 different people) |
| Singing 1 | 15 | |
| Singing 2 | 12 | (21 different people) |
| Murder mystery | 16 | |
| Let's grab a drink | 15 | |
| Chris' quiz | 14 | |
| Writing workshop 1 | 14 | |
| Writing workshop 2 | 12 | |
| Play reading | 10 | |
| French | 9 | |
| Arts & Craft | 4 | |

How would you rate the OctoberFest overall?



Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements based on your experience of the OctoberFest:



Feedback quotes:

"[What I liked the most was] Being able to take part at home. I had wanted to join in before but was not able to get to venues."

"Huge big thank you for organising Octoberfest. I did enjoy and get a lot from it. I would like to try more."

"Thank you very much for organising Octoberfest, it was a good distraction and I did feel less isolated, I would like very much to attend more online activities."

Appendix II: Engagement report of our online talks

Dr Nigel Speight

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Total number of registrants | 82 |
| Members of our Group | 11% |
| From South Yorkshire + North Derbyshire | 16% |
| From UK + Ireland | 84% |
| People living with one or more of the following: ME/CFS, Fibromyalgia, long Covid symptoms | 32% |
| People caring for someone who lives with ME/CFS, Fibromyalgia or long Covid symptoms | 66% |
| People working or volunteering for an organisation who supports people with ME/CFS, Fibromyalgia or long Covid symptoms | 20% |
| Max people present on the Zoom call | 44 |
| Views on Facebook | 3.6k |
| Views on YouTube/Website | 458 |
| Total reach of event to date | 4k |

The Workwell Foundation

| | |
|---|------------|
| Total number of registrants | 424 |
| Members of our Group | 5% |
| From South Yorkshire + North Derbyshire | 16% |
| From UK + Ireland | 67% |
| People living with one or more of the following: ME/CFS, Fibromyalgia, long Covid symptoms | 83% |
| People caring for someone who lives with ME/CFS, Fibromyalgia or long Covid symptoms | 12% |
| People working or volunteering for an organisation who supports people with ME/CFS, Fibromyalgia or long Covid symptoms | 11% |
| Max people present on the Zoom call | 180 |
| Views on Facebook | 930 |
| Views on YouTube/Website | 241 |
| Total reach of event to date | 1.1k |

Dr Diane O'Leary

| Total number of registrants | 113 |
|---|------------|
| Members of our Group | 27% |
| From South Yorkshire + North Derbyshire | 37% |
| From UK + Ireland | 93% |
| People living with one or more of the following: ME/CFS, Fibromyalgia, long Covid symptoms | 73% |
| People caring for someone who lives with ME/CFS, Fibromyalgia or long Covid symptoms | 14% |
| People working or volunteering for an organisation who supports people with ME/CFS, Fibromyalgia or long Covid symptoms | 15% |
| Max people present on the Zoom call | 50 |
| Views on Facebook | 950 |
| Views on YouTube/Website | 194 |
| Total reach of event to date | 1.1k |

SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

for the year ended 31 December 2020

(Registered Charity Number 1095416)

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| Statement of assets and liabilities | 7 |
| Notes to the accounts | 8 |

SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

Legal information

Trustees

| | |
|---------------------|---------------------------|
| Carolyn Leary | Chair |
| Simon Briggs | |
| Beatrice Greenfield | Appointed 22 October 2020 |
| Becca Gransbury | |
| Isabel Hemmings | Appointed 16 April 2020 |
| Duraiya Kapasi | Appointed 16 January 2020 |
| Alison Millar | |
| Ellen Roy | Resigned 22 October 2020 |
| Emma Saville | Appointed 16 January 2020 |
| Danny Sherwood | Resigned 22 October 2020 |
| Debbie Stephenson | |
| Marie Vinton | Resigned 22 October 2020 |

Registered Charity Number

1095416

Principal address

The Circle
33 Rockingham Lane
Sheffield
S1 4FW

Bank

Lloyds TSB
Church Street
Sheffield

Independent examiner

Craig Williamson
White Rose Accounting for Charities
The Ghyll
Threapland
Aspatia
CA7 2EL

SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

Trustees' report

The trustees are pleased to present their report and financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2020.

The trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities", issued in March 2005, in preparing the annual report and financial statements of the charity.

Organisation

Sheffield ME Group is a registered charity and is governed by a constitution dated 11 October 2001, as amended 8 December 2002, and was entered on the register of charities on 15 January 2003.

The group is managed by a voluntary committee who are elected at each Annual General Meeting. Since 2002, part-time staff have been employed (60 hours total).

Objects of the charity

The objects of the charity are:-

- to relieve those suffering from the illness variously known as Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME), Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS) or Post-Viral Fatigue Syndrome (PVFS) and, in particular, by the provision of help and assistance through mutual support and information exchange.
- to educate the general public through the promotion and dissemination of knowledge about ME/CFS/PVFS.

We do this through our newsletters, drop-ins, library, IT support, information services, Listening Ear service, website, networking, hosting events and also via media coverage and liaison with other voluntary and statutory organisations. We do not give medical advice nor do we offer individual treatment programmes. Where possible we signpost to relevant bodies and resources. We are a self-help group with finite resources and we are, therefore, restricted to providing the above services.

Public Benefit Statement

Sheffield ME group is a self-help group which encourages and helps support those with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME), Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS) and their families and carers to use their own resources so that they are better able to manage the illness and the changes it has made to their lives. We do this by providing a wide range of services tailored to meet a variety of needs and/or circumstances and by raising awareness of the condition.

The trustees regularly give due consideration to the Commission's guidance in deciding what activities they should undertake, by reviewing the needs of their beneficiaries, by ensuring that the service is fully inclusive and that no detriment or harm arises from the organisation by carrying out its activities.

We operate with respect to each individual person and we aim to give each one an opportunity to have their say and to become more involved in the group, whilst working within our adopted policies and guidelines.

Our core values are based on our charitable objectives as stated in our constitution.

trustees report cntd.....

SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

Trustees' report (continued)

Reserves policy

Sheffield ME Group aims to hold free reserves of 3 months running costs, which would equate to £19,080 based on the 2021 budget for existing activity. The Group currently holds £15,731 in free reserves. It is the intention of the group to achieve this level of reserve over the next few years through fundraising, donations and via other appropriate means.

The reserve fund will be ring-fenced to offer protection to employees, to meet any outstanding overhead costs and obligations, i.e. to enable a 3 month notification of any contractual leases and payment of outstanding liabilities.

Trustees' responsibilities for the financial statements

The trustees are responsible for preparing financial statements for each financial period which show the state of affairs of the Charity and of the surplus or deficit of the Charity for that period. In preparing those financial statements the trustees are required to:-

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity 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 Charity and enable the trustees to prepare financial statements.

The trustees are responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention of fraud and other irregularities.

Signed on behalf of the trustees on...28th Oct 2021..... By



.....
Print name..... Carolyn Leary
Trustee

SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

I report on the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2020, which are set out on pages 6 to 8.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145 (5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

q to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and

q to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act

have not been met; or

(2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed: Craig Williamson

Craig Williamson
White Rose Accounting for Charities
The Ghyll
Threapland
Aspatria
CA7 2EL

Date: 28th October 2021

SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

Receipts and Payments Account for the year ended 31 December 2020

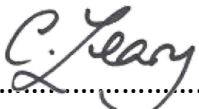
| | | Unrestricted funds £ | Restricted funds £ | Total 2020 £ | Total 2019 £ |
|--|-------|----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | Notes | | | | |
| Receipts | 1 | | | | |
| Grants and donations | 2 | 2,193 | 68,913 | 71,106 | 62,248 |
| Members' subscriptions | | 3,867 | - | 3,867 | 3,227 |
| Fundraising | | - | - | - | 2,688 |
| Sales | | - | - | - | 158 |
| Bank interest | | - | - | - | 2 |
| Total receipts | | <u>6,060</u> | <u>68,913</u> | <u>74,973</u> | <u>68,323</u> |
| Payments | | | | | |
| Salaries and national Insurance | 3 | - | 41,335 | 41,335 | 36,626 |
| Freelance staff | | - | - | - | 1,840 |
| Payroll fees | | - | 250 | 250 | 746 |
| Recruitment | | - | 67 | 67 | - |
| Staff training | | - | 233 | 233 | 262 |
| Trustee training | | - | 812 | 812 | - |
| Christmas social | | - | 465 | 465 | 372 |
| Events, conference, workshops and activities | | 1,334 | 838 | 2,172 | 5,136 |
| Premises rental and room hire | | - | 3,606 | 3,606 | 4,975 |
| Insurance | | - | 563 | 563 | 528 |
| Telephone, internet and web | | - | 227 | 227 | 334 |
| IT equipment and repairs | | - | 317 | 317 | 1,374 |
| Postage | | - | 1,049 | 1,049 | 1,415 |
| Stationery and office | | - | 1,085 | 1,085 | 548 |
| Subscriptions | | - | 582 | 582 | 245 |
| Publicity and newsletter | | - | 1,525 | 1,525 | 2,839 |
| Staff and volunteers' travel | | - | 262 | 262 | 974 |
| Accountancy | | - | 205 | 205 | 205 |
| Other | | (55) | - | (55) | 57 |
| Total payments | | <u>1,279</u> | <u>53,422</u> | <u>54,701</u> | <u>58,477</u> |
| Net receipts/(payments) for the year | | <u>4,781</u> | <u>15,491</u> | <u>20,272</u> | <u>9,847</u> |
| Cash and bank balance at 01/01/2020 | | 10,952 | 40,874 | 51,826 | 41,979 |
| Cash and bank balance at 31/12/2020 | 5 | <u>15,733</u> | <u>56,365</u> | <u>72,098</u> | <u>51,826</u> |

SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

Statement of assets and liabilities as at 31 December 2020

| | 2020 | 2019 |
|--|---------------|---------------|
| | £ | £ |
| Monetary assets | | |
| Balance at bank and cash | 72,098 | 51,826 |
| | 72,098 | 51,826 |
| | | |
| | 2020 | 2019 |
| | £ | £ |
| Liabilities | | |
| Rent and room hire | 1,162 | 70 |
| Independent examination | 205 | 205 |
| Postage | 394 | 235 |
| ICT | 127 | - |
| Telephone calls | 9 | - |
| Flowers for retiring trustees | 123 | - |
| Stationery and office | - | 248 |
| Publicity and newsletter | - | 400 |
| Staff travel | - | 24 |
| Training for trustees | - | 420 |
| Events, conference, workshops and activities | - | 660 |
| Christmas Social | - | 205 |
| | 2,020 | 2,467 |

Signed on behalf of the Trustees on.....28th October 2021.. by

Trustee.....

PRINT NAME: Carolyn Leary.....

SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

Notes to the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2020

1 Receipts and payments account

Because the level of income and expenditure is below £250,000, the group has opted for accounts to be prepared on a receipts and payments basis rather than an accruals basis. This is in line with Charity Commission guidelines for small groups and is seen as more appropriate for this group.

| 2 Grants and donations | Unrestricted funds | Restricted funds | Total 2020 |
|---|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| | £ | £ | £ |
| Grants:- | | | |
| Big Lottery Fund | - | 59,145 | 59,145 |
| DPO Covid-19 Emergency Fund | - | 6,822 | 6,822 |
| Sheffield City Council Community COVID-19 Response Fund | - | 2,180 | 2,180 |
| Sub total | <u>-</u> | <u>68,147</u> | <u>68,147</u> |
| Donations:- | | | |
| Donation for Tai Chi classes | - | 766 | 766 |
| General donations | 2,193 | - | 2,193 |
| Total grants and donations | <u>2,193</u> | <u>68,913</u> | <u>71,106</u> |

3 Staff costs

Staff costs during the period were:-

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Gross salaries and employers pension | 41,335 |
| Employer's national insurance | - |
| | <u>41,335</u> |
| Number of staff: | 3 part time staff |

4 Restricted funds

| | Balance at 01/01/2020 | Receipts | Payments | Balance at 31/12/2020 |
|---|--------------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Big Lottery Fund Lottery | 40,372 | 59,145 | 51,119 | 48,397 |
| DPO Covid-19 Emergency Fund | - | 6,822 | 1,800 | 5,022 |
| People's Health Trust | 297 | - | 297 | - |
| Sheffield City Council Community COVID-19 Response Fund | - | 2,180 | - | 2,180 |
| Art Group | 205 | - | 205 | - |
| Tai Chi Classes | - | 766 | - | 766 |
| | <u>40,874</u> | <u>68,913</u> | <u>53,422</u> | <u>56,365</u> |