



ANNUAL REPORT

JAN - DEC 2020



Sheffield
ME & Fibromyalgia
Group

Registered Charity: 1095416

TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE CHARITY	2
Registered office & contact details	3
Patrons	3
Objectives	3
Trustees	3
Associate Trustees	3
Employees	4
CHAIR'S REPORT	5
SOCIAL AND WELLBEING ACTIVITIES	7
In-person social drop-ins	7
Online activities	7
Phone support	7
Magazine	8
ONLINE ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH	9
Social media	9
Website	9
E-news	9
WELFARE AND BENEFITS ADVICE	10
Changes	10
Financial outcomes	10
Overview and feedback from benefits clients	10
Follow up from independent review	11
Welfare rights training for GP trainees	12
Case studies from our benefits and social care clients	12
EVENTS	14
Millions Missing – 12th May 2020	14
Online OctoberFest – 5th to 23rd October 2020	15
Annual General Meeting - 22nd October 2020	15
Discussions on the NICE draft guideline for ME/CFS - November & December 2020	16
Jingle & Mingle online Christmas festival – 14th to 18th December 2020	16
Online talks and Q&A open to all	17
Dr Nigel Speight and the TYMES Trust – 24th September 2020	17
The Workwell Foundation – 22nd October 2020	17
Dr Diane O'Leary – 20th November 2020	18
MEMBERSHIP	19
Overview of our membership	19
New options for getting membership	19
Fees	19

VOLUNTEERS	20
Estimated volunteer hours 2020	20
GOING FORWARD	21
APPENDICES	22
Appendix I: OctoberFest festival report	22
Appendix II: Engagement report of our online talks	24
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2020	26

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

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C. Leary". The signature is stylized with a large, flowing 'C' and 'L'.

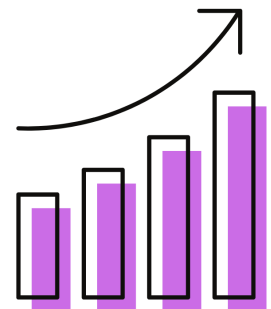
DEVELOPMENT OF OUR GROUP



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.

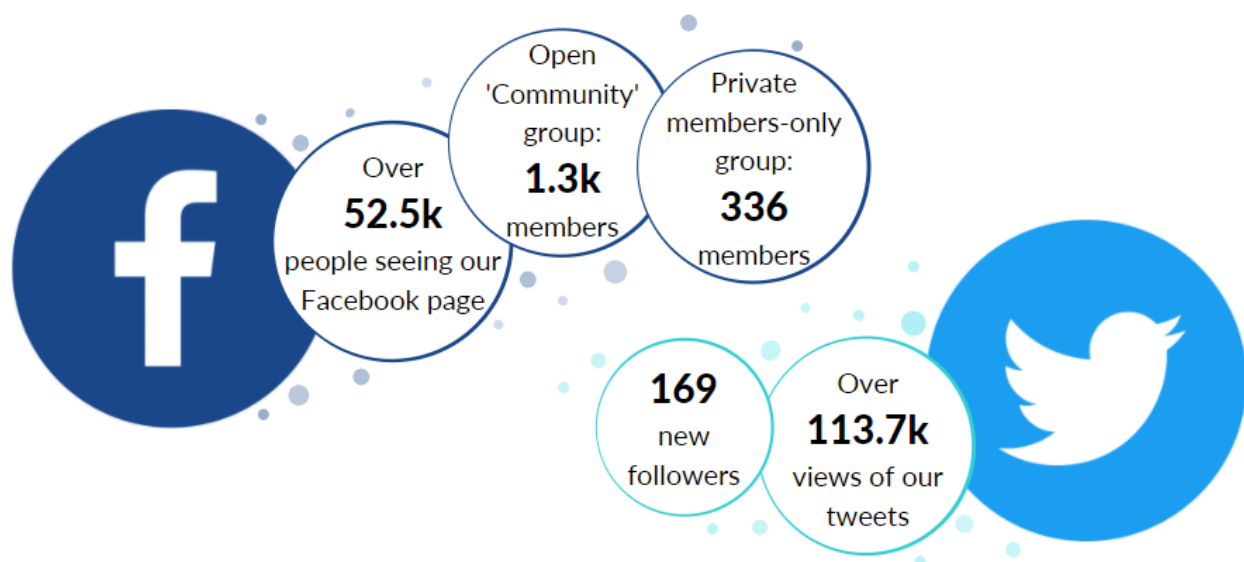
A special thank you to Becca Gransbury, our editor, and to all who contributed.



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.

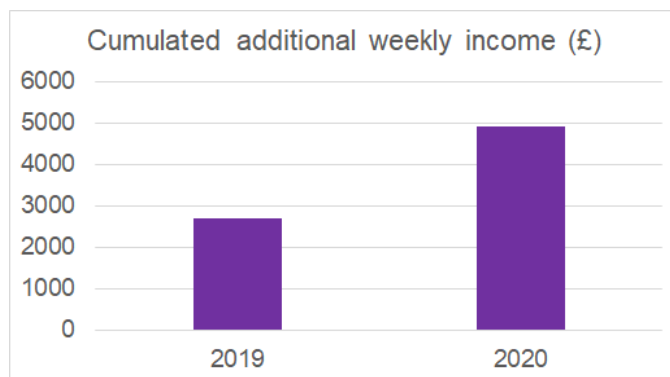
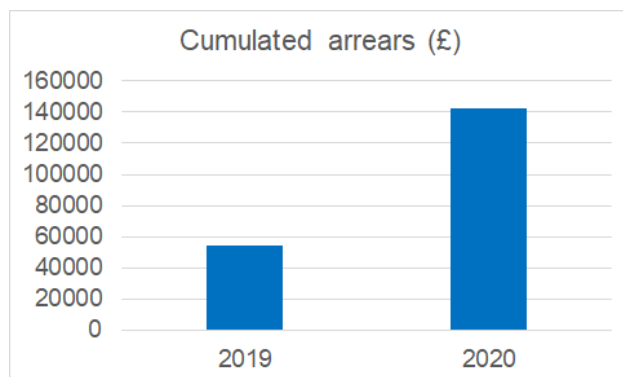
WELFARE AND BENEFITS ADVICE

Changes

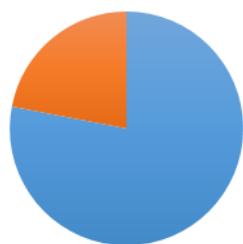
- As of Autumn 2020 we started taking on members experiencing ME-like symptoms (fatigue, PEM, brain fog) as a result of long covid.
- Since April 2020 we have been remote working. We have been providing advice and advocacy via telephone, email, zoom and post. This is in line with the DWP who were holding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

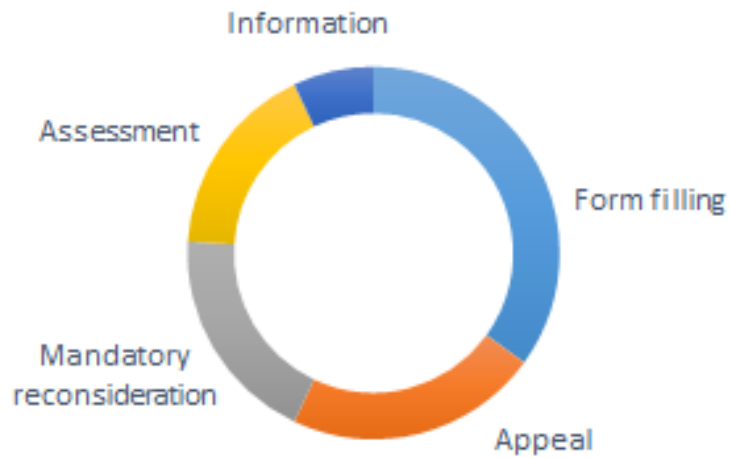


78% of cases concerned
Personal Independence
Payment



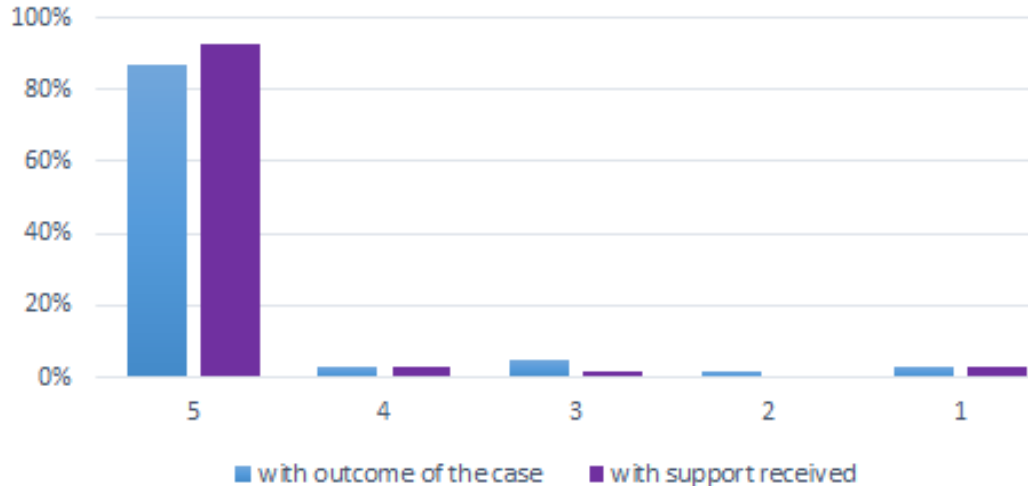
97% of queries
qualified as
"responded to quickly
and thoroughly"

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.

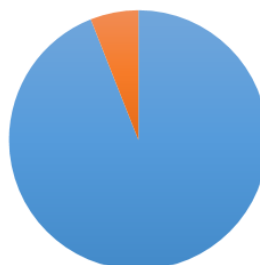
Misunderstanding about dualism has made it difficult for many patients to access safe, ethical care, particularly those with ME/CFS, fibromyalgia, Ehlers-Danlos syndrome and chronic Lyme disease.

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%

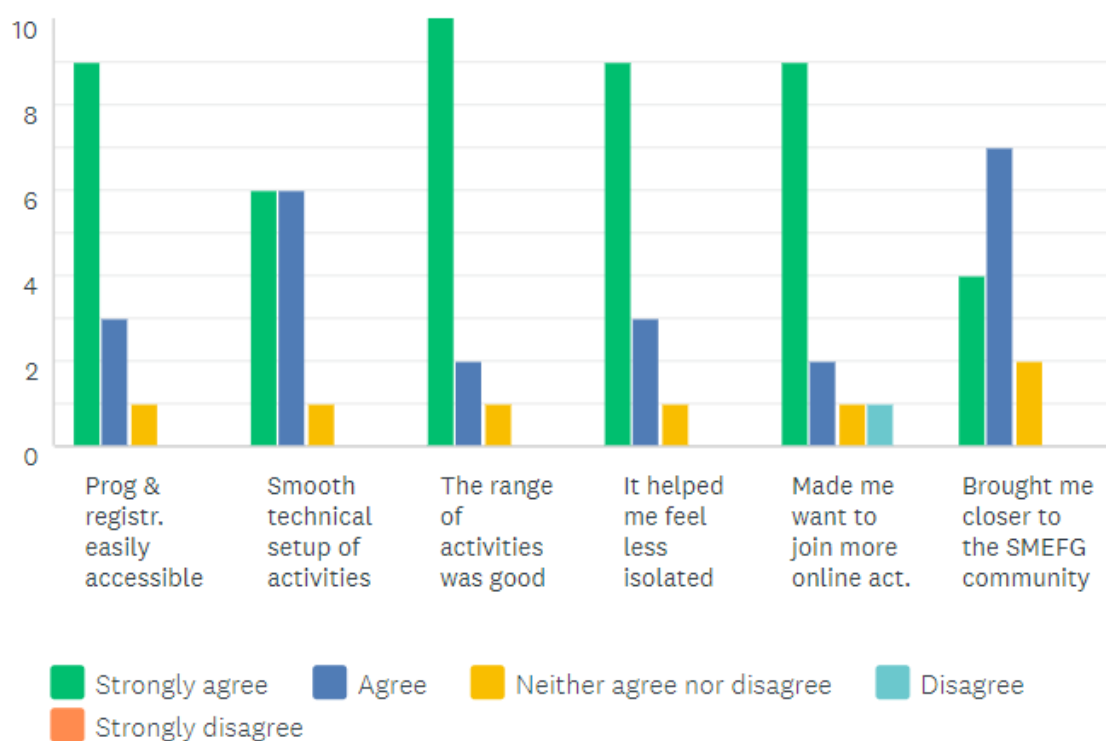
Registrations breakdown for each activity:

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)

Contents	Page
Legal information	2
Trustee's report	3-4
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	
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
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 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		6,060	68,913	74,973	68,323
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		1,279	53,422	54,701	58,477
Net receipts/(payments) for the year		4,781	15,491	20,272	9,847
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	15,733	56,365	72,098	51,826

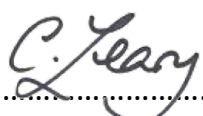
SHEFFIELD ME GROUP

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	-	68,147	68,147
Donations:-			
Donation for Tai Chi classes	-	766	766
General donations	2,193	-	2,193
Total grants and donations	2,193	68,913	71,106

3 Staff costs

Staff costs during the period were:-

Gross salaries and employers pension	41,335
Employer's national insurance	-
	41,335
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
	40,874	68,913	53,422	56,365