



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, befriendee

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.

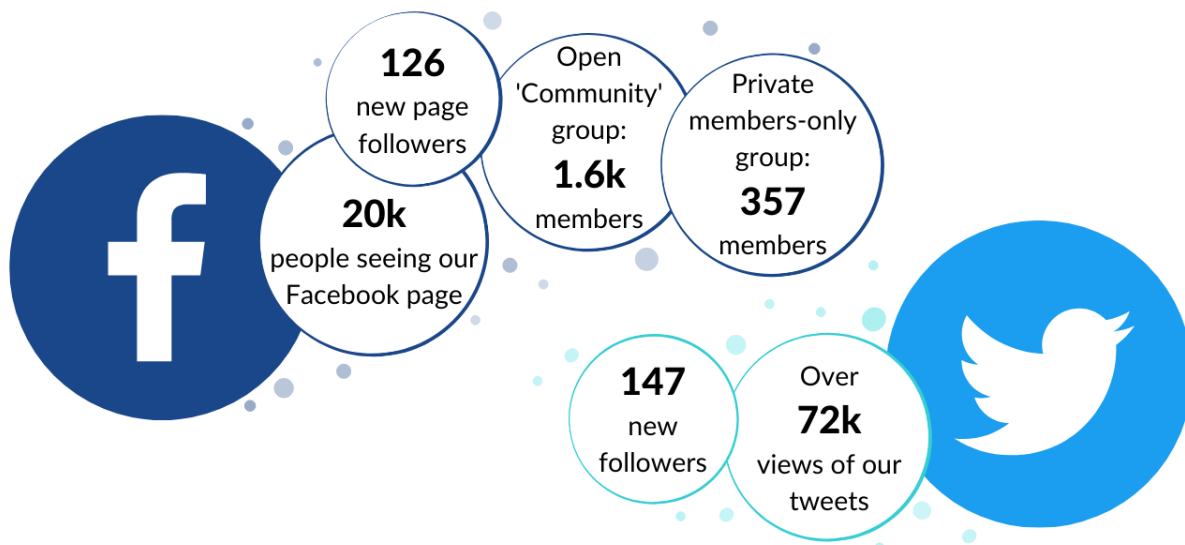


We have published articles in local and national journals about

- 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

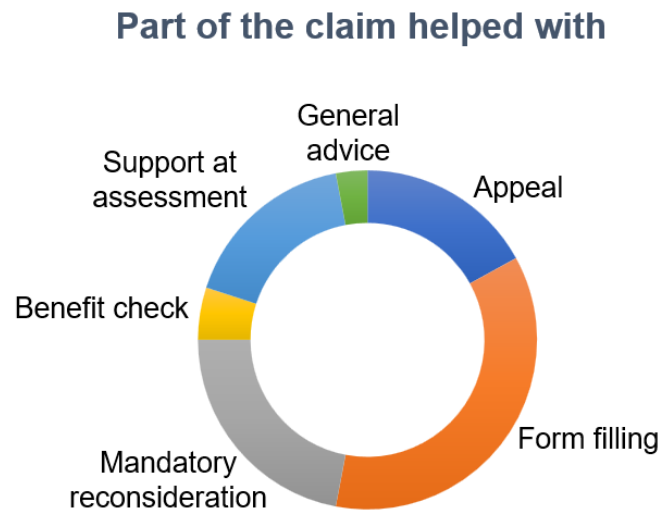
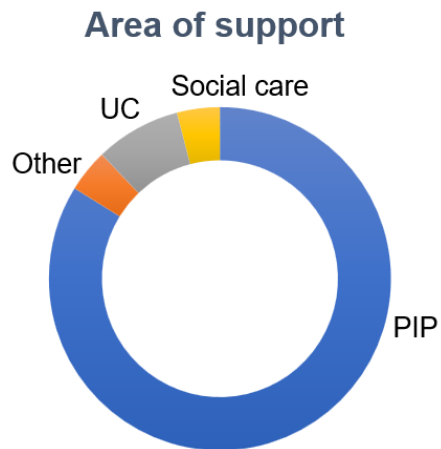
E-news

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

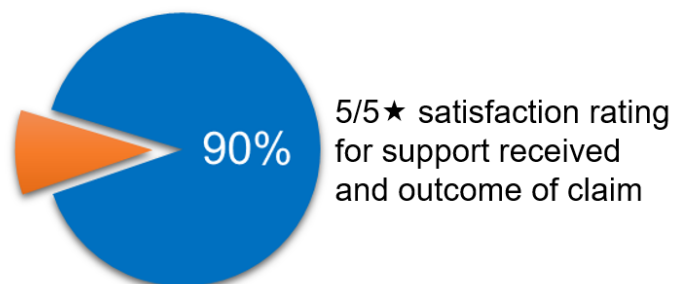
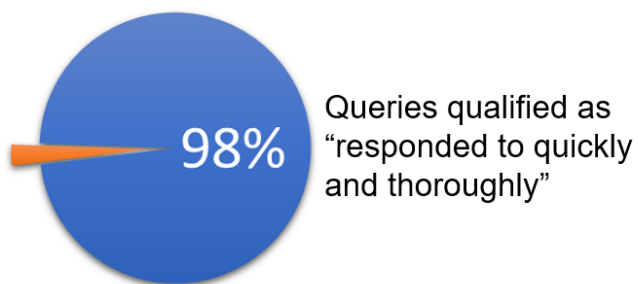
In 2021, our benefits and social care advisers supported 64 individuals, dealt with over 98 new referrals and responded to over 400 one-off queries.



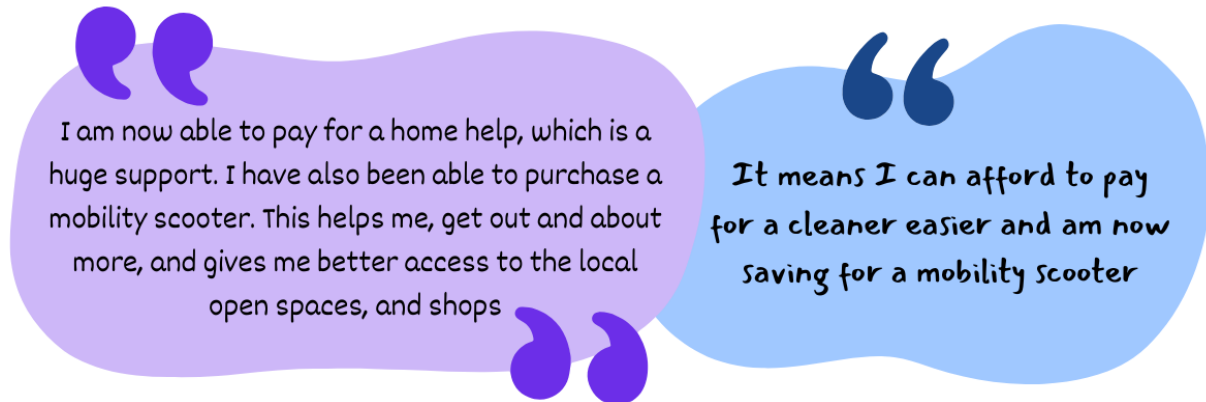
Financial outcomes

- 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?



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.

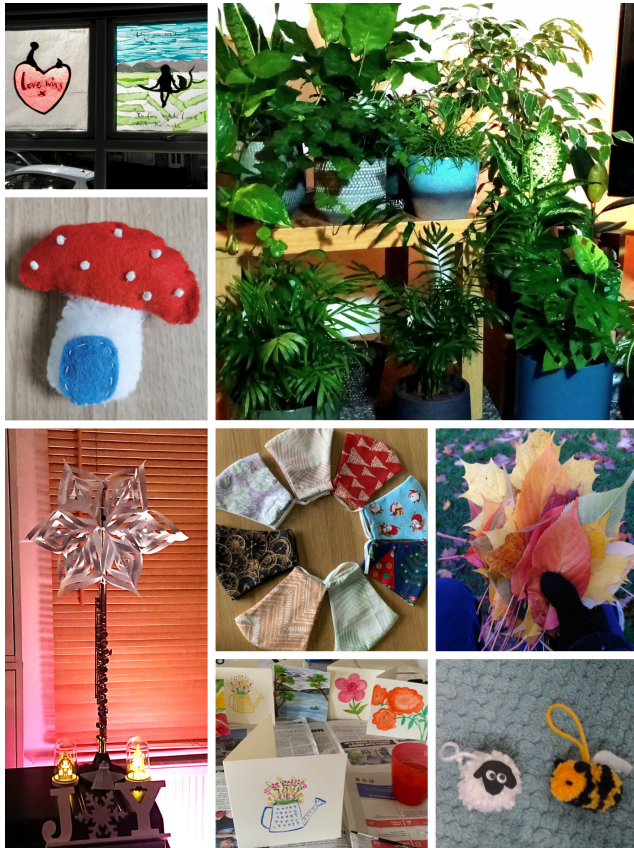
Additional activity

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.



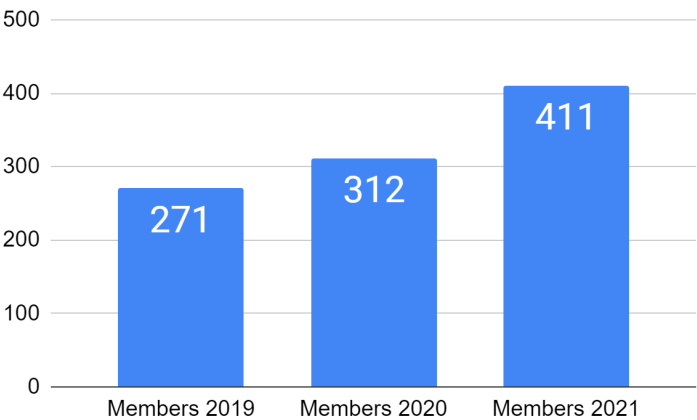
MEMBERSHIP

Overview of our membership

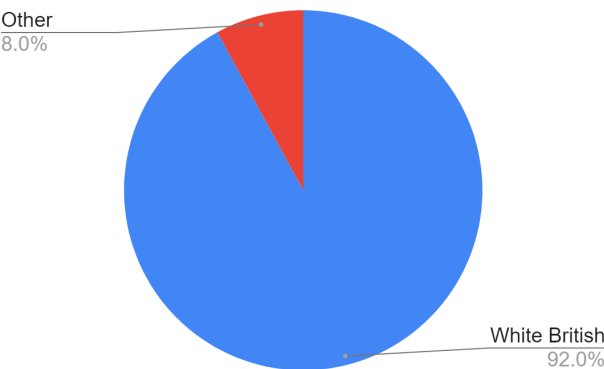
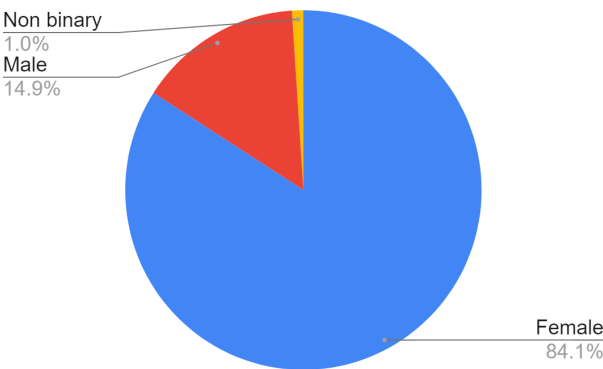
At the end of 2021, our Group was supporting 411 members, which is 32% more people than the year before.

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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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

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 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

TrusteeC. Leary.....

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