

Report of the Trustees and
Unaudited Financial Statements
for the year ended 31 March 2021
for
Reading Community Learning Centre Ltd

READING COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTRE LTD

CONTENTS

Charity Information	Page 3
Structure, Governance And Management	Page 4
Objectives And Activities	Page 5
The Work Of The Centre	Page 7
• Significant Activities During The Pandemic From March 2020	Page 8
• Growing Partnerships During The Pandemic	Page 11
• Reading Borough Council	Page 12
Core Programmes Run In 2020- 2021	Page 13
• Core Programmes	Page 13
• Syrian Refugees	Page 13
• Improving Citizen Engagement – Learners Engaging With Agencies About Issues That Affect Their Lives	Page 13
• RVA Vaccine Support Grant And Covid-19 Work	Page 14
Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Work	Page 14
Learner Engagement	Page 15
Volunteers	Page 15
Removing Barriers To Learning	
• Learner Support	Page 16
• Creche	Page 17
Maintenance Of The Centre	Page 17
Staffing	Page 18
Achievement And Performance	Page 19
• Monitoring And Evaluation	Page 19
• Learner Statistics	Page 19
Quality Assurance	Page 20
• Learner Feedback And Outcomes – The Difference Our Work Makes	Page 21
• Learner Progression	Page 21
• Learner Evaluation	Page 21
Financial Review	Page 22

READING COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTRE LTD

Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 31 March 2021

The trustees, who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2021. The trustees have adopted the provisions of the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities', effective 1 January 2019.

The Trustees have complied with the duty in section 17(5) of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to public benefit guidance.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Registered Company number
6442616 (England and Wales)

Registered Charity number
1123017

Registered office
94 London Street
Reading RG1 4SJ

Trustees

Katharine Sarah del Tufo
Linda Smith
Stephen Harland- resigned 14/9/2021
Karen Rowland
Lucy England
Raya Mohamed
Jennifer Theron
Rosie Chambers
Simran Aul-date appointed 24/11/2020
Shahanaz Uddin appointed 1/12/2020
Hemamalini Sundararajan appointed 24/11/2020
Clare Furneaux- appointed 12/6/2020

Parveen Brar - staff representative

Company Secretary

Aisha Malik (Centre Manager)

Independent examiner

Holy Brook Associates

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

Reading Community Learning Centre is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated and registered as a charity. The company was incorporated on 3 December 2007 and registered as a charity on 29 February 2008 under a Memorandum of Association which established the objects and powers of the charitable company and it is governed under its Articles of Association. In the event of the company being wound up its members are required to contribute a sum not exceeding £10 towards any outstanding debts.

The Board of Directors

The directors of the company are also charity trustees for the purposes of charitable law. Under the requirements of the Memorandum and Articles, one third of the directors must retire from office each year but can offer themselves up for re-election at the Annual General Meeting.

Board members provide a wide range of financial, HR, life experience and business and management skills. Board meetings are held at approximately six weekly intervals. The Board is responsible for the strategic direction and policies of the organisation. Sub-groups have been formed to take forward the work on learner engagement, and fundraising. The Centre Manager and a Tutor representative attend Board meeting in an advisory capacity. Day to day responsibility for the running of the organisation and the provision of services is delegated to the Centre Manager under the direction of the Board.

Recruitment, appointment, and induction of trustees

When a potential new Board member approaches the organisation, they are invited first to a meeting with the Chair and Centre Manager at which the work of the organisation and the contribution of the trustees can be discussed. If there is mutual agreement that the applicant should continue with their application, they will be provided with appropriate written information about the organisation and the roles and responsibilities of trustees, and they may be invited to provide a CV, and attend a Board meeting as an observer. Their application will be discussed by the trustees and if appropriate they will be formally invited to join the Board. Further induction and training will be organised on an individual basis according to the specific needs of the appointee. Trustee packs are given to all new Trustees.

Members

Reading Community Learning Centre is a membership organisation. There are currently 57 members, mainly longstanding supporters of the work of the Centre. Reading Community Learning Centre's Board is accountable to its members for the operation of the organisation in line with its stated objectives. Members receive a report on the Centre's work and progress at least annually, and they are eligible to vote at general meetings of the organisation.

Risk management

The Directors have a responsibility to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed and to ensure that reasonable steps are taken to manage the finances effectively and guard against fraud. A number of measures and protocols have been established which aim to safeguard the finances of the Centre and to provide satisfactory systems in all areas of work which expose the charity to risk. The Board of Directors has continued to take a conservative approach to financial decisions during this year of the charity's life and has aimed to establish an appropriate reserve of funds as advised by the Charity Commission. A full risk register is maintained and reviewed at Board Meetings and staff are regularly reminded of the operational risks. Since early March 2020, the Centre Manager has developed an additional Covid19 Risk register and set of protocols.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objectives and aims

The Centre's objectives are, for the benefit of the public in the Reading area:

1. The relief of poverty and the needs of those who are socially or economically disadvantaged, in particular women and children and those from minority ethnic communities. This is done, for example, by:
 - a. providing general education and training, including language skills and other basic skills, to advance them in life and/or assist them to adapt within a new community; and
 - b. providing or assisting them in the provision of facilities in the interests of social welfare for recreation or other leisure time occupation of individuals who have need of such facilities by reason of their youth, age, financial hardship or social circumstances with the objects of improving their conditions of life and relieving the effects of isolation.
2. To promote racial and religious harmony and raise awareness about, and to promote good relations between, persons of different racial and religious groups.
3. To advance the education of the public about issues relating to migrants, those seeking asylum and/or granted refugee status to help promote knowledge, mutual understanding and mutual and good relations between them.
4. To relieve financial hardship among people living or working in the Reading area by providing information, advice and support.

The Board has referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the aims and objectives and in planning our future activities.

The Board has developed a new 2-year strategic plan 2021-2023, and revised its vision, mission, aims and objectives:

Vision

Marginalised ethnic minority women in Reading achieving their individual hopes and fulfilling their aspirations.

Mission

Reading Community Learning Centre:

- offers marginalised ethnic minority women opportunities for social, educational, integration, and volunteering activities;
- provides services that address barriers to learning.
- supports progression into further education, social and employment opportunities, and
- encourages these women to raise their issues and concerns and engage with agencies.

Aims

Reading Community Learning Centre aims to enable marginalised ethnic minority women to be skilled, confident active citizens who contribute to society.

Overall objectives

1. To provide safe, first step educational opportunities for excluded ethnic minority women- for example:
 - building their confidence and independence;
 - developing language skills;
 - pre-employment skills; and
 - getting them started on journeys towards further education and employment.

2. To support the progression of ethnic minority women onto further education, volunteering or work activities for example:
 - working with other organisations to ensure a clear pathway into further education;
 - providing supported volunteering opportunities in the centre and access volunteering opportunities in other organisations;
 - working with employers; and
 - supporting the development of internal social enterprise within RCLC.
3. Through outreach and research work in communities, engage women who face cultural, religious and social barriers in learning and integration.
4. To provide holistic women-centred support and advice that focuses on each women's individual needs. This will remove barriers to learning, integration and employment and support progression- for example:
 - free classes at convenient times during school hours;
 - access to a free crèche;
 - referral onto other organisations;
 - help with filling in forms;
 - advising how to access services; and
 - Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) on educational and employment progression.
5. To break down barriers between people from different cultures and to foster mutual support, respect, understanding and friendship. This will contribute to integration and community cohesion.
6. To provide opportunities for learners to influence the work and direction of the Centre. To allow learners to voice their issues and concerns to external agencies on issues that affect their lives- for example, learner forums, local consultations for health, police and other agencies.
7. To continue to develop opportunities for learners to volunteer with built in support at the Centre, as well as recruiting host community volunteers, supporting learning, employment friendship and integration, and tracking of progression. This will support learning, friendship, and integration.
8. To work with marginalised ethnic minority men alongside women when culturally appropriate or a particular need is identified.
9. To continue to build strategic partnerships with appropriate voluntary, statutory and private sector organisations to provide strengthened services and opportunities for learners.

Strategic objectives 2020- 2021

1. To raise at least the budgeted amounts of additional funding and to continue to diversify funding incomes types, including income generation from the building; to strengthen the fundraising capacity of the Centre with a focus on strengthening the management resources and seeking stable core funding.
2. To provide a core programme for a minimum of 270 learners per annum, involving recruitment, assessment, delivery and IAG and signposting support to learners.
3. To continue to review the strategic objectives 2019-2021, the Centre's annual Action plan, and the Centre's future development; and seek to continue needs assessment work.
4. To continue developing the RCLC learner VOICE to improve the involvement of learners in the work and development of the Centre. This will nurture the learners' confidence and skills, so they can speak out about issues that affect their lives.

5. To continue identifying ways in which women's issues and rights, that are relevant to the empowerment of women who use the Centre, can inform the services offered by RCLC. To embed these within the existing courses and maintain links with relevant organisations.
6. To further improve and strengthen the marketing and communication of the Centre as a source of support, advice and signposting to learners, and other communities and organisations
7. To continue to develop opportunities for learners to volunteer with built in support at the Centre, as well as recruiting host community volunteers, supporting learning, employment friendship and integration, and tracking of progression. To continue to develop integration opportunities with host community members and groups. To increase cultural awareness, reduce isolation, encourage English practice and promote friendships.
8. To continue to build strategic partnerships with appropriate voluntary, statutory and private sector organisations to provide strengthened services and opportunities for learners

THE WORK OF THE CENTRE

Reading Community Learning Centre (RCLC) exists to help marginalised women from ethnic minority backgrounds to achieve their individual potential. The majority of the women we support are migrants or asylum seekers who speak little or no English, and often have limited contact outside of the home. No matter what barriers a woman faces we work alongside her as she overcomes obstacles to realising her aspirations. For many women, this includes improving their English, volunteering locally, gaining qualifications or securing a job.

Based in central Reading, we offer a programme of outreach activities, training classes, workshops and social opportunities at our Centre. These are designed to build confidence, increase skills and reduce the social isolation of local BAME women, many of whom are amongst the most isolated, deprived and vulnerable in our community. In 2020/2021, we supported 196 women from 35 different countries. Our model encourages community cohesion, breaks down barriers between cultures, and fosters mutual respect amongst the women. No other service in Reading reaches such a diverse group of women, giving us a unique insight into the needs of local BAME communities.

Reading Community Learning Centre provides informal education and support for women who are unable to access more mainstream services because of the educational, social or cultural barriers they face. Some of the women who come to the Centre have had little access to formal education, most do not speak English, and sometimes they are not literate in their own language. Almost all the migrant and refugee learners face cultural and other challenges, and for some the Centre offers their only contact outside their immediate family. The Centre's unique success has been in making learning accessible to the hardest to reach learners through a community-based approach, built on gaining the trust of often isolated communities and designing courses and services to meet their needs.

RCLC's educational provision creates ways into education for the most tentative and least confident of learners. Women with very limited language and literacy skills can take their first steps into learning here and women who have gained qualifications in their countries of birth can access support to develop their English skills. This may mean coming to a social activity, joining an English conversation class or learning English through one of several practical creative classes. Learners are drawn from many different ethnic and religious backgrounds. The development of cross-cultural friendships is one of the most important benefits for many RCLC learners.

SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES DURING THE PANDEMIC FROM MARCH 2020

In March 2020 we had to close the Centre one week early in March 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic in line with UK government advice. This meant we had to quickly move to running classes online and supporting learners and others through weekly telephone calls following the Easter break in April 2020 in addition to training our staff and setting the tutors up with zoom and mobile phones. Thanks to the support of Connect Reading and Focus Group Ltd, RCLC were able to purchase 7 new mobiles for staff so that they could stay in touch with learners, deliver classes and respond to enquiries from home enabling learning and outreach support to continue. During March and April 2020, the Centre created a new digital and classroom-based programme to support our learners online from the Summer term in 2020. For RCLC to be able to provide its services over the summer term 2020 the following changes in our delivery of classes and support were made;

1. All classes were taught online via zoom or through smaller Whats App video groups. The latter was for those learners without any access to laptops or tablets, and who were taught in small groups of three.
2. All learners were enrolled face to face keeping social distance and using PPE. At the enrolment stage all learners were given a detailed induction on health and safety, online safety, how to log into zoom for their classes, how to use Whats App video, the current Covid-19 protocols, and where to get support if they had symptoms of Covid-19.
3. Prior to the classes starting all tutors had an online in-house zoom training session, received the Covid-19 risk register training, the online teaching guidelines training for RCLC, and were given mobile phones. New policies for the Covid-19 risk register and a code of practice for online teaching for staff were formalised in April 2020.
4. All enrolled learners had their own classroom Whats App video chat groups to learn, post homework and use to connect with the tutor and stay in touch with friends from the class.
5. RCLC tutors chose whether to use Zoom or Whats App video platforms to teach their subject as this was dependent on the learners who had been enrolled and what their digital needs and abilities were.
6. Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) courses for the community and voluntary sector funded by RBC were developed from new online teaching materials and training released by Mental Health First Aid England. These courses were primarily for employees of DWP, RBC and the VCS sector who were supporting people with financial difficulties over the pandemic.
7. RCLC successfully stayed in contact with our most vulnerable learners over the phone during the time that face to face support was not possible. The outreach work continued virtually and over the phone, allowing the outreach worker to check in on learners once a week to make sure that they were safe, healthy or if they needed anything like groceries, medicine or other support which we could refer them to. Shaheen Kausar (outreach worker) was given a new mobile phone so any ethnic minority migrant or refugee women who needed support and advice could connect with Shaheen whilst she was working from home.
8. RCLC stayed in contact with the elderly learners from the PCC and Warehouse and the elderly Nepalese ladies from the ESOL Skills for Health Courses. Friendly phone chats were arranged once a week to support them and reduce loneliness and isolation. These calls provided the latest health information regarding the pandemic and in supporting them to access the services they needed as they were on the shielding list and housebound.
9. RCLC regularly liaised with staff on the changing needs in the community so that we could respond appropriately and quickly.
10. The creche sadly had to be closed over the summer term in 2020 and staff had to be furloughed. The creche reopened in the autumn 2020 term following the change in government guidelines.

Thanks to the grant we received from Reading Borough Council we were able to purchase PPE equipment, pay for extra cleaning hours and have our building deep cleaned prior to the start of the autumn term in 2020. We were able to safely meet the required standards as stipulated in our Covid-19 Risk Register. Without this grant we would have struggled to provide a safe learning and working environment for staff, learners and volunteers. It is thanks to this grant that we were able to operate our face to face services again, which was vitally important to so many ethnic minority women who were isolated and vulnerable over the lockdown period.

RCLC continues to experience an increase in demand as we support women and their families through the pandemic. Many have experienced disproportionate challenges and difficulties around mental and physical health, loss of finance, social isolation and domestic abuse,- compounded by language barriers and racism.

During the pandemic, RCLC has had to change and adapt its ways of working. We have launched a new blended online and face-to-face programme, and provided additional weekly telephone support to 30+ vulnerable learners per month. During the year, the Centre has been open whenever this was legal and safe for learners, with staff working from home when necessary.

Although we were successfully able to adapt our services to deliver learning, IAG (Information Advice and Guidance) and outreach support online it was just the same as face-to-face support. RCLC faced many challenges over this period which included;

- a) Rising waiting lists for the English classes. Pre-pandemic these were 10-15 people; this rose to 24 people on each language course during the period we were closed and has not declined since. This was because we had to run online or smaller face to face classes to meet the social distancing rules and Covid 19 risk register guidelines for RCLC.

Our learners also faced additional challenges:

- Learners who did not have access to equipment (smartphone, tablet or computer) that they could use to learn online
- Learners who had no access to the internet, or very limited, poor signal strength
- Learners who did not know how to use Zoom or other online learning platforms
- Learners' language barriers, which made it harder to access the learning online
- Learners feeling a lack of connection through online learning – the learners wanted to see the teacher and get the one-to-one support they would in a class. They missed the additional holistic support from the centre and being able to make new friends and getting to know new people, which they simply could not do online. Learning this way was just not the same.
- The advice and guidance sessions from our outreach worker and guest speakers did continue online but it was not the same. Building supportive relationships and connections were harder without body language, eye contact and smiles and gestures, which cannot be done over the phone. The relationships that help clients feel comfortable, at ease and able to talk more freely take much longer over the phone.

RCLC was able to deliver some classes face to face in the autumn 2020 term. This was for:

- i) practical courses such as sewing and beauty, and
- ii) those who had very little basic English and IT skills and who could not learn online.

- b) The Learners did not experience the same reduction in loneliness and isolation using online discussions as they would have face to face. This has made it harder for them to make friends across cultures and has reduced the learner's improvements in their mental and physical health. Peer support was far harder online.
- c) Some learners do not have a private and safe home environment in which to learn in. It can be hard to speak freely and express themselves when as they are surrounded by family and people who can listen in.
- d) Women were deterred from joining online classes due to the pressures of caring for their families, time taken up home schooling, and family decisions to prioritise giving laptops and other equipment to children or to their partners. Women lacked the ability to take time for themselves.
- e) Learners and staff feeling overwhelmed by Covid 19 and the lockdown situation.

Covid 19 has further exposed some of the health and wider inequalities that persist in our society. The virus itself has had a disproportionate impact on certain sections of the population, including those living in most deprived neighbourhoods and people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities.

There is emerging evidence that the pandemic has increased BAME women's mental health support needs along with increased domestic abuse. Just under four in ten (36%) adults in Britain reported that during the coronavirus crisis and lockdown they have experienced an increase in stress or anxiety. Two in ten (21%) said that they have been finding lockdown difficult to cope with, while 14% said that social isolation was making 'relationships at home more difficult than usual'. This last figure rose to one in five (19%) for BME groups. A recent Red Cross Report identifies that following lockdown the situation has worsened for BAME people. Runnymede Trust report that in their survey over a third of BAME people (36%) have experienced an increase in stress or anxiety during the coronavirus crisis, with one out of five struggling with social isolation.

The detrimental experience of racism has continued to be a strong theme throughout this pandemic, with Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Black African, Black Caribbean and Chinese groups reporting either an increase in racial attacks or abuse, or 'being treated unfairly because of their ethnicity', since the start of the coronavirus crisis.

The feedback from learners in our online classes highlighted how the pandemic had had a devastating impact on their mental health and increased loneliness. Many of them felt that;

- They were lonelier, more depressed and had worse physical and mental health because they could not attend classes, social activities, or access support and friendship.
- Shielding in homes -with elders, home-schooling, depression meant that they felt unable to raise alarms, and exacerbated their mental health problems as they had no privacy.
- There was a lack of access to culturally appropriate food packages.
- Language barriers and lack of IT equipment and technical skills affected access to GP services and medication online
- Women who were shielding and whose families could not visit experienced more domestic violence, and culturally they felt obliged to stay at home to look after the elderly in their home and not report any issues.

Despite some longer-term funding from Henry Smith and Garfield, COVID-19 has impacted our core funding. So, drawing on funder feedback, the Board started in March to develop a 2-year strategic plan to:

1. Build financial resilience and diversify funding by

- recruiting a part-time business development manager;
- seeking either to move to cheaper shared premises or negotiate reduced rent;
- building a new strategic vision for 2022-2024 by commissioning an organisational review.

2. Respond to the urgent need to address isolation and focus on the mental health needs of learners; find the women who are most often invisible to other services by

- recruiting a part-time mental health first aid trained social prescriber/outreach worker;
- collaborating more closely with partner organisations

During the year 2021-22 work started leading to:

- Wildbeing partnership;
- Community Participatory Action Research Statutory/VCS partnership funded by Health Education England and Public Health England SE; and
- Carewell Research Partnership with University of Reading.

We will report on these in the next annual report.

GROWING PARTNERSHIPS DURING THE PANDEMIC

- Being part of local steering groups and forums (Reading Voluntary Action's Voluntary Community Sector Together; RVA/ RBC VCS Leaders' meetings and Hub; Hate Crime, Mental health, and Loneliness and Isolation forums).
- Now working more closely with Utulivu and Action for Cohesion and Racial Equality ACRE on mental health issues and RCLC is part of ACRE's community champion group.
- Through the Vaccine Support Group, we hold webinar sessions on COVID-19, give information on accessing vaccines, translate information, and promote the vaccine centres.
- RCLC also regularly attended many council and VCS led steering groups during the pandemic such as the Berkshire West Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, The Reading COVID-19 Outbreak Engagement Board, The Reading and West Berkshire Employment Forum, RVA Readifriends Forum, The RVA Social Prescribing Forum, The Loneliness and Social Isolation Steering Group, The RBC Health Inequalities Meeting (linking into the Health and Wellbeing Board strategy), The RBC led Mental Wellbeing group, The RBC Led Older Peoples Working Group Meetings, The One Reading Hub VCS Leaders Meetings and The Volunteer Development Group Meetings.

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

Reading Borough Council's (RBC) Narrowing The Gap (NTG) partnership moved to supporting service users and others experiencing stress, loneliness social isolation. Our two-service level agreement lots with RBC, 12.1 (titled, Facilitating Peer Support and Reducing Social Isolation For Adults At Risk Because of Language and Cultural Barriers in partnership with CommuniCare and Reading Refugee Support Group) and Lot 1.3 (titled, Steps Towards Employment in partnership with CommuniCare and Reading Refugee Support Group) continued to run online over the pandemic.

RBC Lot 12.1

We were unable to run any classes for the elderly Pakistani, Indian and Nepali women who were on the shielding list with underlying health conditions and were housebound from March to November 2020. Face to face exercise classes, ESOL Skills for Health, trips and language classes were not feasible due to their increased vulnerability. Learning and engaging in online classes was harder due to the language barrier, a lack of confidence, and a lack of IT equipment and knowledge. We therefore changed our support to providing regular befriending phone calls every week, to remain in contact with the ladies and provide them with outreach support over the phone. This part of our work increased over the pandemic which meant that we needed to employ an additional outreach worker to support Shaheen from Dec 2020.

From Nov 2020 our yoga tutor was able to run an online seated yoga class for elderly Pakistani and Indian women. Over the academic year 2020/2021 we have been able to run two hugely successful online seated yoga classes for a total of 47 Indian and Pakistani women. We will continue to run these online until the women feel ready to start face to face classes again. This was a huge accomplishment for them as they had never even used a computer before, let alone Zoom. It was a real boost to their confidence, physical and mental health. Some comments from the learners;

"The sessions are delivered in excellent way & given an opportunity to stretch muscle. The sessions help to contribute to my physical & emotional wellbeing. I would not like to miss these sessions & AM comfortable doing them online."

"It is the best exercise I get in lockdown. At my age of 70, I need to do stretching exercises. I will strongly recommend these sessions to continue."

"Exercising with Simran is great way to improve health along with having fun. My happiness levels have increased & I would definitely like to do the online exercises."

Course Programme

Thanks to grants and contracts from Reading Borough Council, NLDC Grant from New Directions, The DCLG Controlling Migration Grant, The Co-Op Local Community Fund, Inner Wheel, Tampon Tax Grant (Berkshire Community Foundation), Mars Goodness Knows Grant (Berkshire Community Foundation), The Gerald Palmer Trust, The Garfield Weston Foundation, The Alchemy Foundation, The Henry Smith Charity, Awards For All Grant, The AB Charitable Trust, The Earley Charity, The Berkshire West CCG Grant, The Big Lottery Covid-19 Grant and rental income from WEA and Smart Works, we have been able to run a sustained programme of activities throughout the year.

CORE PROGRAMMES RUN IN 2020-2021

In total we have had 156 women who have completed our core programmes between April 2020 and Mar 2021. Throughout the 2020/2021 financial year due to government guidelines some terms were taught completely online whilst others had a mixture of online and face to face classes.

Summer 2020 (all classes were taught completely online due to COVID-19 restrictions)

- English Conversation Beginners and Improvers
- English Reading and Writing beginners
- Sewing Beginners, and Improvers
- Looking Good Feeling Good Improvers
- Employability course for men and women

Autumn 2020 (mixture of online and face to face classes)

- English Conversation Beginners (face to face classes) and Improvers (online classes)
- English Reading and Writing beginners (online classes) and Improvers (face to face classes)
- Sewing Beginners and Improvers (face to face classes)
- Looking Good Feeling Good (face to face classes)
- Employability course for men and women (online classes)
- Beginners IT (face to face classes)

Spring 2021 (all classes were taught completely online due to COVID-19 restrictions)

- English Conversation Beginners and two Improvers classes
- English Reading and Writing Improvers
- Looking Good Feeling Good
- Employability course for men and women

Alongside our core programme of classes, we also ran Awards for All's funded programme 'Empowering Women Through Physical Activity' with Zumba. The popular Zumba classes started in January 2019, and were very successful, with 19 women in the weekly exercise class. Sadly, due to the lockdown we had to stop all of the exercise classes in March 2020. The Zumba classes were able to finally restart on 3/11/2020 but only online due to government restrictions. The last Zumba class finished in spring 2021.

Syrian Refugees

The Centre has worked closely with the Reading Refugee Support Group in helping the families, especially the women, access ESOL classes and community resources. A representative from the Centre has regularly attended the Reading Borough Council Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Programme Case Management Group. Over the pandemic there were no SVPR Meeting or new families who could arrive in Reading due to the government guidelines around the pandemic.

Improving citizen engagement – learners engaging with agencies about issues that affect their lives

A total of 845 women were seen at drop ins by our IAG level 3 accredited advisors, Shaheen and Petra either face to face or online for the academic year 2020/2021. This is in addition to our core programmes which ran in 20/21. At these drop-in sessions they were given information advice and guidance (IAG) over the phone or in person on various topics such as benefits, housing, immigration, utilities, course progression and much more. This figure doesn't include 76 learners who attended the information sessions either online or face to face at RCLC with guest speakers over the three terms as well as outreach sessions. Guest speakers are invited to the centre so that women have the opportunity to engage and access important information in a safe and private environment. The guest speakers are broadly categorised into terms which are themed on women's health, accessing local services or are linked to women's rights and safety. This year however we had to cancel all of the planned summer 2020 planned guest speakers due to Covid-19. Over autumn 2020 and spring 2021 we ran additional online information sessions.

RVA Vaccine Support Grant and Covid-19 Work

RCLC were successful in receiving the RVA Vaccine Support Grant for £1500. With this funding we:

- We supported the RBC Public health team with the recording of COVID-19 and flu vaccine messages in Urdu- this is a You Tube Video on the RBC website: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vdh6aFrAfRY>
- Shaheen Kausar developed a survey in Urdu for elderly BAME groups to find out their experiences of using GP services, as a member of the South Reading Patient's Group and the RCLC Outreach Worker.
- We supported 24 ethnic minority refugee and migrant women to complete the Healthwatch questionnaire about people's experiences using health and social care services during Covid-19.
- We shared information on the Covid-19 vaccine (ingredients, safety, Q & A), information on social distancing, rules and guidance on tier 4 regulations, and information on who should be getting the vaccine and its importance. This was through our online classes and regular phone calls checks for 60 women
- HealthWatch ran a session for RCLC learners discussing the vaccine and dispelling the myths around it at the end of Feb 2021 in some of the main languages spoken by learners at the Centre
- We provided regular phone checks with our elderly Nepali, Pakistani and Indian learners- checking they have received their vaccines, giving them information and supporting them through illnesses with befriending calls. (20-30 women per month)
- We provided a weekly chat group for learners online so that they can ask questions about health and wellbeing led by Shaheen- 32 women
- We delivered an online zoom session with Nisa Unis (RBC Covid19 Communication Engagement and Outreach Officer) about Covid-19, advice and the experiences of lockdown- 18 ethnic minority women attended.
- RCLC attended the Vaccine Support Group meetings where feedback and experiences of our learners over the pandemic was shared. Information received from the meetings was disseminated to RCLC learners, staff, volunteers and the women we supported outside of the classes.
- RCLC was a surge testing site working in partnership with RBC. A total of 45 tests were administered, with staff and tutors explaining and showing the women how to take Covid-19 tests.
- RCLC completed the online survey for the Insight Survey RBC (working to understand how we can communicate key COVID-19 messages in an engaging, motivating and mobilising people living in Berkshire. We also shared the Covid-19 translated materials to learners through our class whats app groups and Facebook with our learners and shared information with our learners about the newly created Reading Families Carers Card. We supported 2 families in making this card.

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID (MHFA) WORK

In response to the growing need for MHFA courses in Reading during the pandemic since Mar 2020, RCLC were requested by RBC to run some MHFA First Courses online for the voluntary sector and statutory sector staff who were supporting vulnerable men and women in financial crisis over the pandemic. We were given funding from RBC to run a total of 5 courses from April 2020- March 2021 for a total of 45 men and women. We were also requested by RVA to run an additional 2 MHFA courses for volunteers and charity sector staff working during the pandemic with face-to-face roles who were working with vulnerable and isolated families. A total of 23 men and women completed these two RVA Funded MHFA Courses over Oct and Nov 2020.

We are planning to run more courses throughout 2021 and 2022. These are funded. Every course we have taught has been full, and taught online via Zoom. We are hoping that by next year we can start teaching this course face to face. However, the advantage of teaching it online has meant that RCLC were able to engage with many people across Reading, Slough, Wokingham, West Berkshire and Bracknell. Online courses may also be more accessible to those who struggle to travel due to mental health or physical needs.

LEARNER ENGAGEMENT

Learner evaluations are held at the end of each term during which learners of the Centre evaluate their learning programmes and raise any issues, concerns, improvements or just highlight what they enjoyed most about their time at the Centre. When the Centre was closed due to Covid-19 these learner evaluation forms were completed by learners online and when classes resumed face-to-face they went back to their paper versions.

In autumn 2016 we started our Learner Voice Forum to engage the learners more deeply in planning and decision making about the running of the Centre. We held a series of meetings to engage learners from the classes and talk to them about what a learner forum is, how they could be involved, who would like to be a part of it and why it was important for them to be involved. A group of 12 learners formed the learners' forum group and from their discussions we were able to discuss their ideas at our strategic business plan day. It was their idea to raise money for the Centre by running pampering sessions at the Centre, selling food and other items. We implemented this by running a termly Women's Day where we raise money for the Centre by selling international food made by the learners, selling beauty treatments by the learners and tutor of the beauty class as well as a bric-a-brac sale.

Sadly, due to the pandemic and the closure of the Centre for two terms we were unable to run any of fundraising activities which had been proposed by the learners. We hope that we can run something next year, but this is dependent on government guidelines. Although we were in lockdown and unable to engage in face-to-face learner forums, we engaged in many online Covid-19 and health related discussions. The 2-day per week RCLC Outreach/ Support Worker and 1-day per week support worker also held weekly chat groups when we were in lockdown where learners could come and raise any issues or concerns that they had and get advice.

This year 2 ex-learners, who previously benefitted from the opportunities provided by the Centre, have joined the Board.

VOLUNTEERS

Some learners have chosen to undertake additional voluntary activities at the Centre. As a small organisation with only a small number of part-time paid staff, volunteering is central to the success of our work. For the volunteers, being able to contribute to the community provides satisfaction and enables them to develop and practise skills they may not otherwise be able to use. For some volunteers it has also provided a basis from which to move into paid employment.

At the start of this academic year, we had 19 volunteers:

- 4 in the reception/administrative roles (learner volunteers)
- 15 classroom volunteers (4 of these 15 were ex-learner volunteers and the remaining 8 were Reading University students and ex-teachers)

Our classroom volunteers are mainly qualified teachers. However, due to the pandemic, we could not have any volunteers in the Centre. Two of our classroom volunteers were able to volunteer in our online classes but many of the classroom volunteers were vulnerable and were shielding so could not come back when the centre reopened in Sep 2020. Moreover, due to social distancing rules and the small number of learners who we could have in the classroom we could not add a classroom volunteer into the classroom, as it meant taking up the

space of a learner. The office volunteers also could not volunteer as the office has no window and does not have enough space for another person.

Another initiative of our learner forum is to nurture learners to become board members. We have also been pleased to gain the support of three new trustees who have joined the board, Simran Aul an ex-RCLC learner and a yoga teacher, Hemamalini Sundhararajan, also an ex-RCLC learner currently supporting Shaheen with outreach and Shahanaz Uddin, a Healthwatch Officer.

REMOVING BARRIERS TO LEARNING

To achieve our strategic objective that focuses on removing barriers to learning, we offer excellent learner support and crèche facilities.

Learner Support

The Centre provides hands-on support, advice and encouragement, as many of the people we work with face difficulties that go well beyond their learning needs. Several of our learners have been through very traumatic experiences due to war or becoming refugees or are isolated from their families. The Centre is often seen as a first port of call for help by learners and others with a wide variety of problems and difficulties including accessing benefits, experiencing domestic violence, and dealing with immigration issues. Dealing with a complex society like ours is daunting for women with few language skills and little experience outside the home, or for those who have been traumatised by their current situation or recent history. For many women a simple referral to another agency is not enough.

This year our informal drop-in sessions have been face to face, online, and through telephone calls. So, although the centre was closed for two terms and we were working from home, our IAG and outreach services did not stop. RCLC continued supporting women with accessing local services and getting expert help when they needed it, e.g., by making appointments, acting as a link between the user and the service, explaining what letters or forms are about, befriending telephone calls, translating and giving vital health information in regard to the pandemic, and sometimes acting as an advocate for a vulnerable user. Our evaluation shows that the Centre's work breaks down isolation of the women and their families and helps them link into the wider community. In addition, there is evidence from the literature on global maternal literacy that shows that mothers who can speak, read and write in the language of the country they live in have healthier children who are more able to thrive in education themselves. Around a third of our learners require additional support.

Building on the Centre's current support work with around 34 per month vulnerable ethnic minority learners and others referred during Covid19, RCLC applied and successfully received grant funding from Berkshire West CCG to employ an ex-member of staff for 1 day pw to offer a listening ear and active signposting and referral service to those who with less extreme mental health issues, especially those requiring weekly support calls. This released the current outreach and support worker to further develop work with people, mainly women, with more extreme examples of stress, depression, and mental ill health from Jan 2020- Mar 2020. The role involved both telephone calls and distanced meetings outside. By adding a new member of staff to the team we were able to engage with 109 more women over the 3-month duration of the grant. The phone support for our elderly clients consisted of:

- Information, advice and guidance on Covid, vaccines, government guidelines on the pandemic, how to do lateral flow tests and where to get them, identifying and supporting women to get vaccinations and encouraging them to take part in online group chats about COVID-19;
- Providing Information about services (such as online food orders, getting medicine delivered to their home) not available in their first language;

- Providing information to help dispel myths about vaccines, COVID-19 and access to accurate and trusted health information in their first language;
- Translation support- form filling, translating utility bills and referrals to CommuniCare for benefit information support and translation support for refugees based at the local hotel with RRSg;
- Referrals to RVA social prescribers; and
- Providing mental health support over the phone by our trained mental health first aider and referring learners onto Talking Therapies, Adult Social Care and the Intercultural Psychological Clinic.

A total of 1,030 women were supported with information, advice and guidance (IAG) with support varying from benefit support, filling in forms, making telephone calls, translation support to accompanying them to access services at the Centre from April 2020- Mar 2021. Out of these women 32% of these were not RCLC learners and had been referred to us from friends, neighbours or other organisations. More recently we are also seeing an increase in the number of referrals from RVA Social prescribing.

Crèche

Alongside its other activities, the Centre provides a crèche which offered important support for children under 5 years old. Sadly, this year the creche had to be closed from March 2020 and the staff were furloughed for the summer term in 2020 as the country went into lockdown. The creche remained closed until the summer of 2021 when government guidelines allowed us to reopen the centre. Unlike our classes this was something that could not be run online which meant that many women who needed to engage in learning could not do so as they did not have access to the creche, schools were closed, and they were just too busy caring and home-schooling. However, once the centre reopened in the autumn term in 2020, the creche staff were employed as teaching assistants for the face-to-face classes in the sewing beginners and improvers courses and English conversation class.

The children too missed out on creche support. Many of these children have had little social contact outside their family and almost all have no English language when they arrive. Some are unfamiliar with toys or have no experience of playing with other children. Others are living in, or have already lived through, extremely difficult circumstances.

Through the crèche, children learn to speak English, to be confident separated from their mothers, and to take part in educational play which stimulates social, emotional, physical and intellectual development, in the care of a multicultural team of well-trained, loving workers. The crèche also helps to develop language skills and the ability to socialise and provides informal parenting advice and support. This provides crucial school readiness skills.

We currently employ two crèche workers and a crèche supervisor. Thankfully the creche reopened in April 2021 and has remained open since then.

MAINTENANCE OF THE CENTRE

The Centre continues to be a comfortable and well-maintained environment for learners to attend. We have ensured that our IT equipment and software is kept up-to-date and we maintain robust security software. Considerable funds have been spent on maintaining security, fire equipment and alarms, safety lighting, electrical testing and gas heating maintenance in the building.

As a result of the lockdown measures from Mar 2020, a new Covid-19 risk register had to be made in March 2020. The closure also required the following measures to be taken:

- Centre Manager to notify the building insurers and landlord of changes to the use of the building and ascertain that the building would be adequately insured whilst it was closed.
- All waste and fire hazards from outside the building to be cleared. Although the centre was closed the Centre Manager had to check on the building once a week and make sure it was cleaned regularly and still safe.
- Local council bins to be removed from the RCLC car park and left outside the car park gates to be emptied and car park gates to be locked.
- All stakeholders, funders, volunteers staff and learners were to be notified through emails, social media, partner newsletters, RCLC website and the Reading Services Guide of the closure and the new online working methods from home for all RCLC Staff.
- Centre Manager to regularly update Facebook and the RCLC Website with info relevant to Covid-19 and support that people can access in Reading with particular reference to translated support for ethnic minority women.

Although the Centre was closed the building still had to be maintained with the annual checks regarding fire alarms, PAT testing, emergency lighting, electrics, fire extinguishers, cleaning, heating, computer equipment etc. We are very grateful to RBC for their Covid-19 grant funding which allowed us to re-open the Centre for safe usage by vulnerable ethnic minority female learners in September 2020, by providing a safe environment according to the RCLC Covid-19 Risk register and government guidelines. The funding aided RCLC in purchasing a professional deep clean of the building, hand sanitiser dispensers and refills in every room, removal of hand dryers and 8 new paper hand towel and soap dispensers with soap, new bins, office screens for staff when meeting people, disposable gloves, antibacterial cleaning products, extra cleaning hours, disposable masks and aprons and new Covid-19 signage and distancing tape.

Due to the increased cleaning costs which incurred when RCLC was open we successfully applied and received an Earley Charity Covid-19 Support Grant to help pay for the extra cleaning costs.

In December 2020 a new boiler was finally installed at RCLC by the landlord. The previous boiler was very old and could no longer be repaired and had to be replaced.

STAFFING

During 2020/21 we continued to employ a part-time Centre Manager who has worked tirelessly to manage the team and, with the Trustees, promote and develop the work of the Centre. In addition, we continue to employ a part-time Programme Development/Outreach Support Worker, whose work has been invaluable in building relationships with other organisations, spreading the word about our service, recruiting new learners and supporting women on the phone, and running the community-based learning programme. Due to new grant funding we were also able to employ an additional 1-day per week outreach worker from Jan 2021 onwards to support our current outreach worker. We currently employ 6 sessional tutors: a sewing tutor (for the sewing beginners and improvers classes), one beauty tutor for Looking Good Feeling Good, one English conversation tutor, one IT Tutor, one reading and writing tutor and a tutor for our employability programme. We also employ a part-time data administrator who records, inputs and analyses our learner data.

ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Centre continues to collect evidence of its outputs and outcomes through:

- Enrolment forms and attendance records of people attending. These forms record the diversity of people participating in learning opportunities, retention and achievement. We also record data onto an educational management information system database.
- Tracking of progression into further learning, volunteering and work.
- Evidence of outcomes and progression through feedback forms, records of course reviews, regular 1:1 interviews completed by all of the staff, students and trustees using volunteers as interpreters as required.
- Case studies and individual learning records and diaries of individual learning journeys and evidencing the impact of engagement in informal learning.
- For the children in the crèche: enrolment forms and attendance records, termly reviews, feedback from parents and individual learning journeys for the children.

Learner Statistics

196 learners enrolled on our core programme of courses at RCLC 2020/2021

- 90% of our core programme learners have no UK qualifications or are at an entry level in ESOL
- In total 8% of our learners have qualifications at level 1-level 3 (UK)
- 38% of learners have a degree or higher from their home country
- 90% of our learners are unemployed
- 15% of our learners are on benefits
- 5% of our learners are retired
- 10% of our learner's work part-time or full-time
- 7% of our learners use the crèche, a lifeline for those who cannot afford childcare costs (this is half of the usage compared to last year as the creche was closed)
- 42% of our learners are aged 31-40; 31% are aged 41-50; 13% are aged 19-30; 14% are 51 plus.
- 5% of our learners are refugees and 12% are asylum seekers (this is a huge increase as last year this figure was only 1%), whilst 39% of the learners have been in the UK for more than 3 years. Last year 60% of the learners had been here for more than 3 years. Demographically we have seen a huge increase in the number of new migrants and refugees in this academic year- more so than in any other year.
- 12% of learners disclosed that they needed additional support. Of this 12%, 56% of the women with additional needs are women with mental health difficulties. In comparison, last year this figure was lower and accounted for 30% showing the steep increase in the number of women disclosing mental health issues.
- 6% of the learners progressed into full-time or part-time employment. This figure is 8% lower than last year but was primarily due to the difficulty faced by many people wanting to progress into volunteering or

employment for the first time when large sectors of the economy were badly affected by the pandemic and the lockdown (people were furloughed, made redundant or left without any employment).

- 85% of our learners progressed onto internal courses, an increase of 11% from last year.
- 2% of our learners progressed onto accredited courses with the WEA or New Directions (this is a decline from 9% last year) whilst 6% progressed onto other courses in the community.
- This year learners came from an amazing 35 different countries with the majority from the following;

Libya (22%), Pakistan (19%), Turkey (8%), Syria (5%), Iran (4%), Sri Lanka (4%), Afghanistan (4%), India (3%), Algeria (3%), Hong Kong (3%), Eritrea (2%), Spain (2%), Brazil (1%), China (1%), Kuwait (1%), Poland (1%), Zimbabwe (1%), Greece (1%), Chili (1%), Mauritius (1%). Morocco (1%), Ukraine (1%). The remaining 11% came from Ecuador, Egypt, France, Ghana, Nepal, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Saudia Arabic, St Vincent, Tunisia and the UK.
- Current learners speak 25 different languages and are from 35 countries all over the world. 35% of the learners on the courses this year spoke Arabic as their first language compared to 21% last year. Roughly 18% of the learners speak Urdu, 8% speak Turkish, 4% speak Tamil, 4% speak Chinese, 4% speak Persian, 4% speak Spanish, 3% speak Hindi, 3% speak Pushto, 2% speak Amharic, 2% speak Portuguese, 2% speak Farsi, 2% speak Creole, 2% speak Greek, 2% speak Polish and 2% speak Shona. The remaining 3% speak English, Nepali, Fante, French, Romanian and Russian.
- Our learners are from Abbey (29%), Katesgrove (8%), Battle (7%), Whitley (7%), Minster (7%), Church (6%), Swallowfield (6%), Thames (6%), Southcote (6%), Earley (3%), Tilehurst (3%), Park (2%), Coronation (2%), Slough (2%), Hawkened (1%), Redlands (1%), Shinfield North (1%), Norcot (1%), Winnersh (1%) and Windsor (1%).

During the height of the pandemic we had waiting lists of 20 learners per course as we were unable to run classes at the Centre over summer.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

Following initial interviews to identify learning needs, the Centre records achievement, recruitment and retention to check that quality learning is taking place, and that it has met the learners' needs. Progression opportunities are discussed termly by tutors and information advice and guidance advisors.

As part of the quality assurance procedures, regular teaching observations are undertaken which monitor methods of delivery, assessment, management of diversity, and equal opportunities, e-learning contributions and learners' comments. All tutors and crèche staff are qualified and supervised. Observations for the academic year 2019/ 2020 were undertaken in January and February 2020 by the Centre Manger and a New Directions Quality Assurance Manager.

In addition to the observations undertaken by the Centre Manager, New Directions has observed a selection of the tutors. Each tutor also completes a course evaluation after every session.

Approximately 10% of learners are interviewed yearly by staff, students and Trustees. Unfortunately, this year, due to the Covid-19 lockdown, our planned learner interviews could not take place, though there were class feedback sessions.

Learner Feedback and Outcomes – the difference our work makes

Interviews with learners over six years have identified that:

- the learners particularly value learning new skills, gaining confidence and the chance of progression;
- the staff are seen as very welcoming, encouraging, kind and friendly and give practical and emotional support;
- learners like the Centre's family atmosphere, friendliness and safety;
- learners make friends and enjoy themselves;
- the teachers and staff are seen as friendly, supportive and helpful; and
- the learners are mutually supportive.

Through regularly analysing our learner data and undertaking learner interviews we have identified the following key outcomes from our work. Information we have collected is given under the following two headings.

Learner Progression

- An incredible 96% of all our learners progressed on to either internal courses, jobs, volunteering or external courses both accredited and non-accredited in the academic year 2020/2021. This figure highlights the importance of the Centre as an important steppingstone in the journey for our learners to be able to aspire and grow their skills, confidence and become active participants of the community in which they live.
- 7% of the learners progressed into employment or volunteering, this figure is half the 14% from last year. This low figure was primarily due to the pandemic and 2 lockdowns with many people in the country furloughed or made redundant. Jobs were scarce over this period which made it increasingly difficult for our learners who wanted to progress into volunteering or employment for the first time especially when large sectors of the economy were badly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Learner Evaluation

- Almost 100% of learners taking English classes report that they are now more confident in speaking English in everyday situations, though some note that they still lack full confidence and some still struggle with understanding English.
- 97% of learners from the English classes reported that they are now more confident and independent. They can venture out where they wouldn't have gone before with their new confidence and independence. This allows them to be more resilient, active and empowered members of their community, and better prepared for living and working in the UK. e.g. talk to neighbours, make phone calls, go shopping, get on a bus, visit the doctor or hospital, visit their children's school on their own, read their children stories.
- 97% of learners reported feeling happier, less isolated, with reduced stress and depression, improved mental health and feeling more supported. This was particularly true for single parents, those who had no family in the UK, and those who had experienced traumatic situations.
- 92% of learners reported making new friends with women from different backgrounds, thus feeling less isolated and lonely and more connected by building stronger social networks.
- Many learners identified that having access to free classes and the crèche were particularly important for them as they were on benefits or low incomes. Others are paying for courses elsewhere or would be willing to pay for extra classes at RCLC.

This feedback is broadly consistent with earlier years.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

As always, we keep a tight control over expenditure and as a result we are pleased to report a net income in the region of £57,000 for 2020/21. This is an increase from 2019/20 when our net income was around £24,000.

The increase in net income is due to both increased income and decreased expenditure during financial year 2020/21. We were very grateful to receive some additional restricted funding to help us through the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, which amounted to almost £16,000. We also received a full year's worth of restricted funding from Henry Smith during 2020/21 (£31,667), when in 2019/20 we received eight months' worth of funding (£20,800). In addition to these restricted funds, we received unrestricted money into the General Fund during the year. This includes unrestricted funding from Garfield Weston and AB Charitable trust, plus rent from SmartWorks.

Our costs decreased overall during 2020/21 compared with 2019/20 as the Centre was forced to close due to the pandemic. While we ran as many classes as we could online, it was not always possible to do this for all courses, so our programme costs are around £19,000 lower in 2020/21 (£28,000) compared with 2019/20 (£47,000). This is offset slightly by increased building costs, which reflect the increase in cleaning and other costs incurred to keep the Centre safe when it was possible to be open. Staffing costs have also increased year-on-year, which is partly due to the fact that we have taken on an additional outreach worker.

Income and expenditure figures are monitored monthly against the annual budget and reviewed by the Board at each meeting. We continue to produce detailed cash flow forecasts every month, as we are aware that our financial position remains fragile, particularly given the uncertainty we are all now facing due to the continuing effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. When contracts are due for review, every effort is made to ensure services are purchased from the most cost-effective source.

Reading Borough Council

The basis of Reading Community Learning Centre's grant from Reading Borough Council (RBC) was changed during 2018/19. Funding from RBC consists of two strands of commissioned work under employment and adult social care themes. This money has continued to provide a valuable base, as it makes a substantial contribution towards core costs. However, indications are that we may suffer further cuts to funds provided by RBC, although we will make every effort to protect this income stream.

New Directions

We have maintained our partnership work with New Directions and continue to receive Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities (NLDC) funding from them. Our core programme of first steps courses is part funded by New Directions for those learners who meet the enrolment eligibility criteria and complete the course.

Other Income

Other income has come from the use of the top floor of our London Street premises by SmartWorks. They contributed a third of our rent, buildings insurance and utility costs and paid the rates on the top floor. This relationship continued until October 2021, when SmartWorks moved into new premises. We will therefore see a drop in this income in the next financial year, 2021/22.

In previous years, including 2019/20, WEA used facilities at the Centre to provide a complementary programme of ESOL progression and other introductory courses. We received no such income during 2020/21 while the Centre was open, as we needed all available space in order to allow social distancing. However, we are expecting to see some income from WEA's use of the Centre's facilities again from September 2021.

Some of our other sources of income received during 2020/21 have been given below:

- DCLG Controlling Migration funding has been provided for activities in support of the Centre's language work. We have a significant amount of this funding left as at 31 March 2021 (around £58,000) and we have agreed with DCLG that these funds can become unrestricted (effective August 2020). These will be put towards Centre running costs over the next few years.
- The Henry Smith Charity has provided funding towards certain salaries, rent and other building costs.
- Garfield Weston Foundation and AB Charitable Trust have contributed towards our core costs.
- Tampon Tax and Big Lottery have provided funds for salaries.
- The Co-Op Community Fund has provided funding for computers, sewing machines and other equipment for the Centre.

As in previous years, other funding applications were made but were unsuccessful.

We continue to charge learners a small fee for each course and for the use of places in the crèche (when we are able to have the crèche open). Other fundraising events are held throughout the year.

Reserves Policy

The Board has examined the Charity Commission's requirements for reserves in the light of the main risks to the organisation. Originally, the Board had established a policy whereby the unrestricted funds not committed or invested in tangible assets would be held to cover 3 months' running costs, which with the current rent and salary levels now requires an amount of £53,000 to be held. With our continued profits, we have been able to reach this level in the General Reserve.

Funds are also being held in designated reserves as follows:

- One has been set up for the designated purpose of staff costs (£42,000).
- A premises reserve (£33,000) has also been set up to cover redecoration costs under our lease, plus other premises costs for 2020/21 that are not covered by restricted funds.
- A reserve has been created to show the deposit paid by SmartWorks on their rental of part of the premises (£1,578).
- Finally, since the DCLG funding has moved to unrestricted funds as of August 2020, the Board has decided to spread this funding over the next three years rather than spend it all in 2021/22. A reserve of £48,000 has been set up to reflect the portion of these funds we are planning to spend in 2022/23 and 2023/24. Having this funding set aside allows for the fact that sources of future funding are uncertain.

Our designated reserves have increased quite significantly over the last year, due to the Centre's significantly increased proportion of unrestricted funding. In previous years, restricted funds covered a much higher proportion of expected costs for the following year, meaning that we did not require the same levels of designated reserves.

Report of the Trustees and
Unaudited Financial Statements
for the year ended 31 March 2020
for
Reading Community Learning Centre Ltd

Report of the trustees, incorporating a strategic report, approved by order of the Board of Trustees, as the company directors on, 15/11/2021 and signed on the Board's behalf by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Sarah del Tufo'.

K. Sarah del Tufo (Chair of the Board of Trustees)



**CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES**

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

**Report to the trustees/
members of**

Reading Community Learning Centre

**On accounts for the year
ended**

31st March 2021

**Charity no
(if any)**

1123017

Set out on pages

1-2

**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 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

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

**Basis of independent
examiner's statement**

My examination was carried out in accordance with 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 the 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 material matters have come to my attention which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect,:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:


Date: 27rd August 2021

Name:

Rachel Eden

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body (if
any):

ACMA (Chartered Institute of Management Accountants)

Address:

Holy Brook Associates, Curious Lounge, 1st Floor, Pinnacle Building,

Tudor Road, Reading, England,

RG1 1NH

Section B**Disclosure**

NONE

Unaudited Financial Statements
for the year ended 31 March 2021
for
Reading Community Learning Centre Ltd

Statement of Financial Activities
(Incorporating an Income and Expenditure Account)
For the Year Ended 31 March 2021

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2021 Total Funds £	2020 Total Funds £
INCOME FROM					
Charitable activities	2				
Grants – Core programme		30,000	117,147	147,147	115,120
Grants – Community education		-	-	-	9,915
Grants – Covid-19 costs		1,318	14,678	15,996	-
Courses		5,056	8,585	13,641	9,215
Crèche		-	-	-	10,735
Total charitable activities		36,374	140,410	176,784	144,985
Donations and legacies		3,653	-	3,653	6,770
Other income	3	19,440	-	19,440	29,118
Total income		59,467	140,410	199,877	180,873
EXPENDITURE ON					
Charitable activities					
Building costs		22,189	37,373	59,562	56,791
Office costs		1,850	400	2,250	2,412
Programme costs		4,342	23,311	27,653	46,856
Staffing		2,929	50,328	53,257	49,634
Independent examination		373	-	373	1,183
Total expenditure		31,683	111,412	143,096	156,876
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)		27,784	28,998	56,782	23,997
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		104,994	87,743	192,738	168,741
Movements between restricted and unrestricted funds	7	63,197	(63,197)	-	-
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		195,975	53,544	249,519	192,738

Balance Sheet
at 31 March 2021

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2021 Total Funds £	2020 Total Funds £
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible assets	8	2,777	-	2,777	2,861
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	9	4,114	8,728	12,842	11,842
Cash at bank		190,341	58,950	249,291	208,851
Total current assets		194,455	67,678	262,133	220,693
CREDITORS					
Amounts falling due within one year	10	(1,258)	(14,133)	(15,392)	(30,817)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		193,197	53,545	246,742	189,877
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		195,974	53,545	249,519	192,738
NET ASSETS		195,974	53,545	249,519	192,738
FUNDS	12				
Unrestricted funds				195,976	104,994
Restricted funds				53,545	87,744
TOTAL FUNDS				249,521	192,738

Balance Sheet
at 31 March 2021 – continued

The charitable company is entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 for the year ended 31 March 2021.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2021 in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

The Trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for:

- a) Ensuring that the charitable company keeps accounting records that comply with Section 386 and 387 of the Companies Act 2006; and
- b) Preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company as at the end of each financial year and of its surplus or deficit for each financial year in accordance with the requirements of Sections 394 and 395 and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the charitable company.

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

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on 15 November 2021 and were signed on its behalf by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Sarah del Tufo'.

K. Sarah del Tufo (Chair of the Board of Trustees)

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the Year Ended 31 March 2021

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of preparing the financial statements

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

The charity has taken advantage of the disclosure exemptions applicable to smaller charities.

Pension costs and other post-retirement benefits

The charitable company operates a defined contribution pension scheme. Contributions payable to the charitable company's pension scheme are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities in the period to which they relate.

Going Concern

The board of trustees considers that the use of the going concern basis of accounting is appropriate because there are no material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the ability of the charity to continue as a going concern.

Income

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

Expenditure

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

Tangible fixed assets

Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life. In the year of acquisition, depreciation is recorded based on the number of months the asset is in service.

Improvements to property	Straight line over 1 year
Furniture, fixtures & fittings	25% on reducing balance
Computer equipment	33% on cost

Taxation

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

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the Year Ended 31 March 2021 – continued

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the board of trustees. Designated funds are unrestricted funds which have been allocated by the Board for particular purposes.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes. Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes.

Hire purchase and leasing commitments

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities on a straight line basis over the period of the lease.

2. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	Activity	2021	2020
		£	£
Grants	Core programme	147,147	115,120
Crèche provision	Crèche	-	10,735
Grants	Community education	-	9,915
Registration fees	Courses	2,156	6,175
MHFA courses	Courses	11,485	3,040
Grants	Covid-19 costs	15,996	-
		176,784	144,985

Grants received, included in the above, are as follows:

	2021	2020
	£	£
Reading Borough Council	36,750	30,625
Reading Borough Council - Covid-19	2,678	-
Furlough payments	1,318	-
New Directions (NLDC)	8,000	3,750
DCLG	38,340	38,340
Tampon Tax	-	9,605
Henry Smith	31,667	20,800
Garfield Weston	15,000	10,000
Awards4All	-	9,915
The Cumber Family Trust	-	1,000
The Alchemy Foundation	-	1,000
Big Lottery Covid-19 grant	10,000	-
AB Charitable Trust	15,000	-
Earley Charity	2,000	-
BWCCG and RVA grant	2,390	-
	163,143	125,035

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the Year Ended 31 March 2021 – continued

3. OTHER INCOME

	2021	2020
	£	£
Rent receivable	19,440	19,206
Room and facilities hire	-	9,367
Miscellaneous other income	-	545
	<u>19,440</u>	<u>29,118</u>

4. NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)

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

	2021	2020
	£	£
Depreciation – owned assets	1,114	1,033
Other operating leases	720	720
Accounts and independent examination	373	1,183
	<u>2,207</u>	<u>2,936</u>

5. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

During the year to 31 March 2021 two of the trustees were paid for work they did outside of their trustee duties.

Hemamalini Sundharajan was paid a total of £1,199 for her role as an outreach support worker from January 2021. A laptop worth £400 was provided for conducting this work, although this is property of the Centre and will be returned. These costs were funded by the BWCCG and RVA grant.

Simran Aul received £308 for teaching online seated exercises classes between November 2020 and February 2021. These costs were funded by Reading Borough Council Lot 12.1 "Outreach & Community Education".

There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 31 March 2020.

Trustees' expenses

There were no trustees' expenses paid for the year ended 31 March 2021 nor for the year ended 31 March 2020.

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the Year Ended 31 March 2021 – continued

6. STAFF COSTS

	2021	2020
	£	£
Wages and salaries	81,404	85,556
Social security costs	37	508
Other pension costs	2,367	2,033
	<u>83,808</u>	<u>88,097</u>

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

	2021	2020
Crèche	3	3
Tutor	6	6
Outreach and Support Worker	1	1
Manager	1	1
Administrator	1	1
Learner Data Administrator	-	1
	<u>12</u>	<u>13</u>

No member of staff was paid more than £60,000 in the year.

Key management personnel

The charity considers its key management personnel to comprise the trustees and Aisha Malik, the office manager.

7. FUNDING FROM DCLG CONTROLLING MIGRATION

During the year the charity received a grant of £38,340 from DCLG Controlling Migration and had carried forward grant from 2019/20. Some of the grant has been used towards the running costs of the Centre during 2020/21, but there is still a significant amount remaining. It was confirmed with DCLG in August 2020 that the remaining grant can be transferred to unrestricted funds. These funds will continue to be used towards the running costs of the Centre.

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the Year Ended 31 March 2021 – continued

8. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Improvements to property £	Furniture, fixtures & fittings £	Computer & other equipment £	Totals £
COST				
At 1 April 2020	9,224	4,264	18,582	32,070
Additions	-	-	1,030	1,030
Disposals	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2021	9,224	4,264	19,612	33,100
DEPRECIATION				
At 1 April 2020	9,224	3,136	16,849	29,209
Disposals	-	-	-	-
Charge for year	-	282	832	1,114
At 31 March 2021	9,224	3,418	17,681	30,323
NET BOOK VALUE				
At 31 March 2021	-	846	1,931	2,777
At 31 March 2020	-	1,128	1,733	2,861

9. DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2021 £	2020 £
Trade debtors	1,104	2,842
Accrued income	1,958	-
Prepayments	9,780	9,000
	12,842	11,842

10. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE TO WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2021 £	2020 £
Social security and social taxes	-	1,228
Other creditors	-	8,140
Deferred Income	14,133	19,425
Accrued expenses	1,258	2,024
	15,392	30,817

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the Year Ended 31 March 2021 – continued

11. LEASING AGREEMENTS

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

	2021	2020
	£	£
Within one year	36,000	36,000
Between one and five years	36,000	72,000
	<u>72,000</u>	<u>108,000</u>

12. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

	At 01/04/2020	Net movement in funds	Transfer between funds	At 31/03/2021
	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds				
General Fund	5,417	27,784	(14,803)	18,398
General Reserve	50,000	-	3,000	53,000
Designated Reserve (Smartworks)	1,578	-	-	1,578
Designated Reserve (Staffing)	28,000	-	14,000	42,000
Designated Reserve (Premises)	20,000	-	13,000	33,000
Designated Reserve (DCLG 2022-24)	-	-	48,000	48,000
	<u>104,995</u>	<u>27,784</u>	<u>63,197</u>	<u>195,976</u>
Restricted funds				
Co-Operative Group	3,401	(82)	(3,319)	-
DCLG Controlling Migration	45,252	17,249	(62,501)	-
Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities	(962)	6,300	-	5,338
RBC – Narrowing the Gap (Lot 1.3)	5,738	5,786	-	11,524
RBC – Outreach & Community Education (Lot 12.1)	22,531	4,204	-	26,735
Reading Borough Council – Covid-19	-	184	(184)	-
Inner Wheel	3,461	(894)	-	2,567
Tampon Tax	9,604	(9,511)	(93)	-
Henry Smith	(3,731)	1,200	-	(2,531)
Awards4All	2,450	-	-	2,450
Big Lottery Covid-19 grant	-	-	-	-
Earley Charity	-	-	-	-
BWCCG and RVA grant	-	871	-	871
MHFA courses	-	3,692	2,900	6,592
	<u>87,744</u>	<u>28,998</u>	<u>(63,197)</u>	<u>53,545</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>192,739</u>	<u>56,782</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>249,521</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the Year Ended 31 March 2021 – continued

12. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS – continued

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

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General Fund	56,567	(31,683)	24,884
Restricted funds			
Co-Operative Group	-	(82)	(82)
DCLG Controlling Migration	38,340	(21,091)	17,249
Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities	8,000	(1,700)	6,300
RBC – Narrowing the Gap (Lot 1.3)	23,500	(17,714)	5,786
RBC – Outreach & Community Education (Lot 12.1)	13,250	(9,046)	4,204
Reading Borough Council – Covid-19	2,678	(2,494)	184
Inner Wheel	-	(894)	(894)
Tampon Tax	-	(9,511)	(9,511)
Henry Smith	31,667	(30,467)	1,200
Awards4All	-	-	-
Big Lottery Covid-19 grant	10,000	(10,000)	-
Earley Charity	2,000	(2,000)	-
BWCCG and RVA grant	2,390	(1,519)	871
MHFA courses	8,585	(4,894)	3,692
	140,410	(111,412)	28,998
TOTAL FUNDS	196,977	(143,096)	53,882

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the Year Ended 31 March 2021 – continued

12. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS – continued**2019/20 Comparatives for movement in funds**

	At 01/04/2019	Net movement in funds	Transfers between funds	At 31/03/2020
	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted Funds				
General Fund	801	43,898	(39,283)	5,417
General Reserve	45,000	-	5,000	50,000
Designated Reserve (Smartworks)	-	-	1,578	1,578
Designated Reserve (Staffing)	14,000	-	14,000	28,000
Designated Reserve (Premises)	-	-	20,000	20,000
	59,801	43,898	1,295	104,994
Restricted Funds				
Co-Operative Group	3,978	(577)	-	3,401
DCLG Controlling Migration	68,244	(22,992)	-	45,252
Comic Relief	1,295	-	(1,295)	-
Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities	1,169	(2,131)	-	(962)
RBC – Narrowing the Gap (Lot 1.3)	5,974	(236)	-	5,738
RBC – Outreach & Community Education (Lot 12.1)	16,383	6,148	-	22,531
Inner Wheel	7,000	(3,539)	-	3,461
Tampon Tax	2,434	7,170	-	9,604
MarsGoodnessKnows	2,463	(2,463)	-	-
Henry Smith	-	(3,731)	-	(3,731)
Awards4All	-	2,450	-	2,450
	108,940	(19,901)	(1,295)	87,744
TOTAL FUNDS	168,741	23,997	-	192,738

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the Year Ended 31 March 2021 – continued

12. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS – continued

2019/20 Comparative net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted Funds			
General Fund	67,838	(23,940)	43,898
Restricted Funds			
Co-Operative Group	-	(577)	(577)
DCLG Controlling Migration	38,340	(61,332)	(22,992)
Comic Relief	3,750	(5,881)	(2,131)
Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities	19,583	(19,820)	(236)
RBC – Narrowing the Gap (Lot 1.3)	11,042	(4,893)	6,149
RBC – Outreach & Community Education (Lot 12.1)	-	(3,539)	(3,539)
Inner Wheel	9,605	(2,435)	7,170
Tampon Tax	-	(2,463)	(2,463)
MarsGoodnessKnows	20,800	(24,531)	(3,731)
Henry Smith	9,915	(7,465)	2,450
Awards4All	-	(577)	(577)
	113,035	(132,936)	(19,900)
TOTAL FUNDS	180,873	(156,876)	23,997

General Reserve

The Board has set aside £53,000 in order to cover three months' working capital requirements and three months' rent payment. This is in line with the Centre's reserving policy.

Designated Reserve (Staffing)

An amount of £42,000 has been set aside from the General Reserve to cover around six months' worth of staffing costs. This reserve has increased from £28,000 at 31 March 2020 due to the decrease in restricted funding that covers staffing costs.

Designated Reserve (Premises)

An amount of £33,000 has been put aside to cover redecoration of the premises in line with the terms and conditions of the lease and other general premises costs for 2021/2022 that are not covered by restricted funds. Again, this reserve has increased over the last year as the reduction in restricted funds means more costs in the coming year will need to be met from unrestricted funds.

Designated Reserve (SmartWorks)

A designated reserve of £1,578 has been created, which represents the deposit paid by SmartWorks Reading on their rental of part of the premises.

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the Year Ended 31 March 2021 – continued

12. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS – continued

Designated Reserve (DCLG 2022-24)

Since the DCLG funding has moved to unrestricted funds as of August 2020 (see Note 7), the Board has decided to spread this funding over the next three years rather than spend it all in 2021/22. This allows for the fact that sources of future funding are uncertain. The £48,000 in this reserve is to be split 50/50 over financial years 2022/23 and 2023/24, to contribute towards the Centre's future running costs.

Henry Smith

There is a small deficit of £2,531 shown in the Henry Smith restricted fund at 31 March 2021. This relates to a slight mismatch in the pro-rated income received from Henry Smith and the pattern of expenditure from these restricted funds towards the end of the 2020/21 financial year.

A sum of £15,950 was received in late January 2021, which covers 1 February to 31 July 2021. This income has been pro-rated in the financial statements since only part of it relates to the 2021/22 financial year. However, slightly more than the pro-rated grant was spent in February and March 2021 on costs relating to the year ended 31 March 2021.

The deficit shown will be cleared during the year ended 31 March 2022 when the deferred income is unwound and further instalments of this income are received. Income and expenditure relating to all sources of funding are monitored carefully by the Centre Manager and Treasurer to ensure that no permanent deficits emerge.

13. RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

There are no related party transactions for the year ended 31 March 2021.