

Report of the Trustees and
Unaudited Financial Statements
for the year ended 31 March 2022
for
Reading Community Learning Centre Ltd

READING COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTRE LTD**CONTENTS**

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1. CHARITY INFORMATION

Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

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 2022. 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

Clare Furneaux
Hemamalini Sundararajan
Jennifer Theron
Karen Rowland
Katharine Sarah del Tufo
Linda Smith
Lucy England
Parveen Brar - staff representative
Raya Mohamed
Rosie Chambers
Shahanaz Uddin - resigned 6/6/2022
Simran Aul-date
Stephen Harland - resigned 14/9/2021

Company Secretary

Aisha Malik (Centre Manager)

Independent examiner

Holy Brook Associates

2. 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, currently using Zoom. 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 meetings 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 an individual is being considered as a potential new Board member they are first invited to a meeting with the Chair and Centre Manager where the work of the organisation and the contribution of the trustees is 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 Covid-19 Risk register and set of protocols.

3. 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.

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 2021-2022

Despite some longer-term funding from Henry Smith and Garfield Weston, COVID-19 has impacted our core funding. So, drawing on funder feedback, the Board started in March to develop plans for next few years as outlined below.

Our 1-Year Strategic Plan

1. We will build financial resilience and continue to diversify funding.
The financial impact of COVID-19 has heavily impacted the charity sector and our ability to generate income so we'll need to be more creative than ever in raising funds that we need to deliver our vital work. We will:
 - a. continue to maintain tight control over expenditure throughout 2021/22;
 - b. recruit a part-time business development manager to diversify our funding and promote the Centre's work;
 - c. seek either to move to cheaper shared premises or negotiate a reduced rent for our current building;
 - d. build a new strategic vision for 2022-2024 to continue to grow the organisation.
2. We will respond to the urgent need to address isolation and focus on the mental health needs of learners. The COVID-19 crisis has had a devastating impact on ethnic minority migrant and refugee women already experiencing isolation and loneliness. We will address this by providing mental health support and we will:

- a. continue to be a part of the COVID-19 Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations (VCSO) and statutory support groups
 - b. recruit one dedicated social prescriber and outreach worker who is mental health first aid trained.
3. To build closer collaboration with partner organisations to help the women we support recover from the crisis. We will:
- a. Continue to connect and engage with our partner organisations
 - b. Ensure women are referred directly to partner organisations who can provide them with the support they need.
4. We will find the women who are most often invisible to other services and offer them the support they need.
Many of the women we serve are often invisible to other services and denied the support they need. This has only been amplified and compounded by the COVID-19 crisis. We will therefore:
- a. strengthen our existing outreach activity
 - b. recruit one new outreach worker to spread the word of our services at this critical time.
5. To continue to strengthen the Board of Trustees and recruit, if possible, an ethnic minority woman to the role of Chair.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 2022-24

1. To recruit a consultant to coordinate an organisational review in Summer/Autumn 2022. This will support the strategic growth of the charity and enable us to provide the best support we can for learners.
2. To raise funding and continue to diversify funding incomes, including:
 - a. income generation from the building
 - b. to strengthen the fundraising capacity of the Centre with a focus on strengthening the management resources and
 - c. seeking stable core funding, building on the work of the business development manager.
3. To provide a core programme for a minimum of 270 learners pa, involving recruitment, assessment, delivery, Information Advice and Guidance, signposting, and well-being support to learners and others approaching the Centre for support.
4. To help to overcome isolation by creating a space for women to access information, advice and support, and build friendships, confidence and resilience.
5. To provide mental health support, awareness and referrals to partners and courses at the Centre. To put the women we work with at the heart of what we do by encouraging learners to influence and contribute to the work and direction of the Centre. We aim to do this through participation in the Trustee Board, as volunteers and through learner voice groups. We will also continue to monitor and evaluate our services to continually improve and evolve our services for learners.
6. To continue promoting and raising awareness of women's issues and rights, that are pertinent to the empowerment of migrant and refugee women who use the Centre. To embed these within the existing courses and maintain links with relevant healthcare organisations and social prescribers in light of the increased demand for support work resulting from the pandemic.
7. 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, building on increased awareness of the needs of migrant and refugee ethnic minority women.

8. To continue to develop opportunities for learners to volunteer with built-in support at the Centre. Supporting learning, employment friendship and integration, and tracking of progression.
9. To continue to recruit community volunteers and develop integration opportunities with host community members and groups.
10. To increase cultural awareness and promote friendships creating bilateral benefits for the learners and the community volunteers who support them.
11. To continue to build strategic partnerships with appropriate voluntary, statutory, and private sector organisations to provide strengthened services and opportunities for learners.

4. 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, refugees 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 ethnic minority women, many of whom are amongst the most isolated, deprived and vulnerable in our community. In 2021/2022, we supported 371 women from 34 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 ethnic minority 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.

Since the pandemic, supporting women around their mental health issues has become increasingly important and will remain a key focus.

SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES DURING THE PANDEMIC FROM APRIL 2021

RCLC was nominated by Reading Refugee Support Group (RSG) for a High Sheriff Award for our exceptional contribution to Berkshire communities over 2021. The High Sheriff Awards are focussed on recognising the exceptional work done by so many in Berkshire to support those in need in their communities during the pandemic. There were 6 award categories and over 100 nominations in total across the categories from Berkshire.

RCLC was nominated in the category, supporting the isolated, which was open to all groups and individuals who have helped isolated people feel more connected and valued. It was real recognition of what RCLC had achieved during the pandemic to be nominated. The online event showcasing the winners was truly humbling and inspiring. Thank you for nominating us RSG.

Thanks to grants and contracts from the organisations listed below, we have been able to run a sustained programme of activities throughout the year. Also, unlike many charities, our staff have stayed with us throughout the year, which has allowed us to offer real continuity, for which the trustees are very grateful:

- Reading Borough Council
- NLDC Grant from New Directions
- The DCLG Controlling Migration Grant
- The Henry Smith Charity
- Awards For All Grant
- Inner Wheel
- The Gerald Palmer Trust,
- The Garfield Weston Foundation
- The AB Charitable Trust
- The Berkshire Community Foundation Grant For Social And Mental Health Support To BAME Women
- The Berkshire Community Foundation Grant For Vaccine Support
- Public Health England for the CPAR Project
- The National Academy for Social Prescribing's 'Thriving Communities' fund (Wildbeing Project)
- Earley Charity
- University of Reading (CareWell Research Project) and
- Rental income from WEA and SmartWorks.

From April 2021 we were finally able to have more of our core programme of classes taught face to face again and the creche opened for the first time since the pandemic began. Mothers and carers who could not engage in any activities due to a lack of childcare could finally access courses and advice at the Centre face to face. RCLC continued to provide a few classes online in summer 2021 as there were still Covid-19 regulations in place. All staff took weekly Covid tests, and we also taught the learners at the Centre not only how to order the test kits but how to use them. All staff and learners wore face masks or visors to the Centre in accordance with the government guidelines at that time.

Actions taken to incorporate safe teaching, learning and support at RCLC from April 2021:

1. Practical courses such as sewing, beauty and IT and classes where the learners had very little basic English and IT skills were all taught face to face in the summer 2021 term. The remaining core programme was taught online so that we could provide a blended learning programme.
2. All learners were enrolled face to face whilst maintaining social distancing 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 WhatsApp video, the current Covid-19 protocols, and where to get support if they had symptoms of Covid-19. All learners coming to the Centre were given face masks.
3. At the start of each term, all tutors had an online in-house Zoom training session, received the Covid-19 risk register training with revised Covid regulations and the online teaching guidelines training for RCLC. All staff were given Covid test kits and face masks
4. All enrolled learners were set up with their class WhatsApp group to learn, post homework, use to connect with the tutor and stay in touch with friends from the class.
5. RCLC tutors used Zoom to teach the online classes for those learners who had IT equipment and had a higher level of English.
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. The eligibility for this course expanded to include community and faith-based organisations who were supporting people through the pandemic.

7. When face to face classes and support were not possible, RCLC successfully stayed in contact with our most vulnerable learners over the phone. The outreach work continued virtually (by phone, Zoom or WhatsApp video calls) and when possible, face to face, 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.
8. RCLC stayed in contact with the elderly female learners from the Pakistani Community Centre (PCC), and the elderly Nepalese ladies who were enrolled on our ESOL Skills for Health Courses at the Warehouse. Friendly phone chats were arranged once a week to support them to 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. Our very popular online seated yoga course for the elderly learners from the PCC and Indian Community Association continued throughout the year with learners commenting on how much easier it was for them as they did not need to worry about travelling by bus yet still meet friends and do exercise safely in their own home.
9. RCLC regularly liaised with staff on the changing needs in the community so that we could respond appropriately and quickly.

With Covid-19 rules changing from the Autumn 2021 term we were able to run all the core programmes including IAG (Information Advice and Guidance) face to face with a creche albeit with smaller classes to maintain social distancing, mask wearing and teaching in ventilated rooms. This face-to-face contact for some was vital as many ethnic minority women were isolated and vulnerable over the lockdown period.

Increased support needs

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. 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 Ethnic minority 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 Ethnic minority people. Runnymede Trust report that in their survey over a third of Ethnic minority 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.

Responding to learners' mental health needs

In response to the learner feedback and an increase in mental health concerns during the pandemic, RCLC in partnership with Compass Recovery College (mental health and wellbeing organisation based in Reading, Berkshire, UK, commissioned by Reading Borough Council) and our trained mental health tutor a programme of health and wellbeing courses was developed to take place each term. It was important to address this increased need around mental and physical health by delivering workshops and programmes which used graded language and had translation support to meet learner needs. We knew that these courses had to be taught face to face

where additional outreach, signposting to specialist services and 1:1 support could be provided in private at the Centre rather than online where women could not talk in private.

Since the pandemic, RCLC has had to change and adapt its ways of working providing additional weekly telephone support to 30+ vulnerable learners per month. Although we were successfully able to adapt our services to deliver learning, and outreach support online, eventually all core programmes were taught face to face from Autumn 2021. RCLC faced many challenges which were carried over from the previous year when the pandemic was at its height. Please see the table below for the challenges and how RCLC responded.

Challenge due to the pandemic	Action taken by RCLC
Rising waiting lists for the English classes. Pre-pandemic these were 10-15 people per language class; this rose to 24 people on each language course during the period we were closed and has not declined since. To meet the social distancing rules and the RCLC Covid 19 risk register guidelines we could not run all the classes face to face. Some delivery was online (but many learners did not have the equipment, language or IT knowledge to do this).	<p>We added an additional English Conversation Intermediate Class taught twice a week from Autumn 2021 responding to learner feedback requesting more English classes with more frequency. We now have English Conversation classes with in-house progression routes from the pre-entry level through to intermediate all taking place twice a week.</p> <p>From the autumn term in 2021, we were able to increase our class sizes in response to government Covid guidelines. This also helped to reduce waiting lists. We ended the 2021/2022 academic year with class sizes of up to 15 learners in the summer 2022 term.</p>
Many learners did not have access to equipment (smartphone, tablet or computer), the internet – or if they did it was often with very poor signal strength - or the language or IT skills to learn online.	<p>With the support of the RCLC Outreach team and the generous support of RVA's (Reading Voluntary Action) Digital Inclusion Programme For The Under 60's, the RCLC outreach worker was able to help our learners to fill in application forms and apply for free digital kits, connectivity and support. In total seven women were able to benefit from this scheme. Sadly, not many of our learners were eligible due to their income and there was limited funding for the under 60's for the scheme.</p>
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, being able to make new friends and getting to know new people across cultures, which they simply could not do online. Learning this way was just not the same and it just exacerbated their loneliness and isolation.	<p>The change in government guidelines in summer 2021 enabled RCLC to run face to face classes again which meant those women who really could not learn online, needed a creche or had very little language skills were able to learn at RCLC face to face after a long hiatus. RCLC prioritised these classes to be run face to face which was a huge lifeline for the many women who faced additional barriers associated with home learning.</p> <p>Building supportive relationships and connections with body language, eye contact, smiles and gestures, were now possible face to face. This helped clients feel comfortable, at ease and able to talk more freely. This supportive relationship takes much longer to build over the phone.</p> <p>RCLC continued with its blended learning with half the core programme being taught online as well as some face to face.</p> <p>Outreach support for 30 women per month was also provided both face to face and virtually. This included befriending chats for the older learners from the Nepali, Pakistani and Indian community.</p>

Challenge due to the pandemic	Action taken by RCLC
Some learners did not have a private and safe home environment in which to learn. It was hard to speak freely and express themselves when they were surrounded by family and people who could listen in.	RCLC remained open for those learners who could travel to RCLC and needed face-to-face support. Outreach visits to the home (with full PPE) or phone calls were also available. Learners who were most vulnerable were prioritised (those learners with no access or ability to engage in online learning, who could only speak a few words of English or were in receipt of 1:1 support) onto the face-to-face classes from summer 2021.
Women were deterred from joining online classes due to the pressures of caring for their families, time taken up for 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.	RCLC outreach workers helped complete forms for learners who were eligible for the RVA's Digital Inclusion Programme For The Under 60's to access equipment and connectivity. From summer 2021, all the beginners and pre-entry English classes were taught face to face as were the practical and IT Classes so that learners could use the IT, beauty and sewing equipment at the Centre. This meant that the women could have time for themselves, learn in a safe space and have access to equipment which they did not have at home.
Learners and staff feeling overwhelmed by Covid 19 and the lockdown situation.	Summer 2021: RCLC's Let's Chat and Learn online discussion group took place every Wed from 3pm- 4pm. The first two sessions (open to all women) were delivered in partnership with <u>Compass Recovery College</u> about mental health, depression, anxiety, panic attacks and how to deal with them, and their services. A total of 27 women attended these sessions. RCLC continued the weekly chat group for learners online so that they could ask questions about health and wellbeing led by our Programme Development Worker/ Outreach Worker for 32 women From autumn 2021 RCLC started running its mental and physical wellbeing workshops and classes focusing on teaching mindfulness, identifying common mental health issues such as anxiety or depression and simple techniques to cope with these issues as well as where to get specialist support. These classes were graded to meet the English requirements of the learners with extra 1:1 support such as translation and assisted signposting at the Centre from our MHFA trainer and outreach worker.

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; this 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.

VACCINE SUPPORT WORK

RVA Vaccine Support Grant and Covid-19 Work

RCLC were successful in receiving the RVA Vaccine Support Grant for £1,500. With this funding we:

- Worked in partnership with HealthWatch Reading and ran a session for RCLC learners discussing the vaccine and dispelling the myths around it at the end of Feb 2022 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 our Outreach Worker- 32 women
- 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 learners were taught how to use Covid-19 tests, where to get them and were informed about up-to-date government guidelines around Covid-19 in addition to vaccine information.
- RCLC shared the Covid-19 translated materials to learners through our face-to-face classes and class WhatsApp groups and Facebook.

Vaccination and Health Check Day

- On 22/3/2022 RCLC in partnership with RVA and local NHS nurses, became a vaccine Centre offering vaccinations to RCLC learners and anyone else in the local area who needed one. A community nurse carried out health checks for blood sugar levels, BMI and blood pressure too. Prior to this session an information session on vaccines was delivered to all the classes for 112 learners.

PARTNERSHIPS DURING THE PANDEMIC

- We were a 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).
- Working 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 held webinar sessions on COVID-19, gave information on accessing vaccines, translated information, and promoted the vaccine Centres.
- RCLC also regularly attended many Reading Borough 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.

5. COURSE PROGRAMME

Core Programmes run in 2021 - 2022

In total we have had 371 women who have completed our core programmes in the academic year 2021/2022. Throughout the 2021/2022 financial year due to government guidelines some terms were taught with a mixture of online and face to face classes whilst others were completely face to face.

Summer 2021 (online and face to face classes)

- English Conversation Pre-Entry and Beginners (at RCLC)
- English Conversation Improvers and Intermediate (online via Zoom)
- English Reading and Writing Beginners (online via Zoom)
- English Reading and Writing Improvers (at RCLC)
- Sewing Beginners, And Improvers (at RCLC)
- Looking Good Feeling Good Improvers (at RCLC)
- Beginners IT (at RCLC)

Autumn 2021 (all face-to-face classes)

- English Conversation Pre-Entry, Beginners, Improvers and Intermediate
- English Reading and Writing Beginners and Improvers
- Sewing Beginners and Improvers
- Looking Good Feeling Good
- ESOL Skills for Employability (course for men and women)
- Beginners IT
- Mindfulness and Stress Management
- Psychological First Aid Workshop

Spring 2022 (all face-to-face classes)

- English Conversation Pre-Entry, Beginners, Improvers and Intermediate
- English Reading and Writing Beginners and Improvers
- Sewing Beginners and Improvers
- Looking Good Feeling Good
- ESOL Skills for Employability (course for men and women)
- Beginners IT
- Mindfulness and Stress Management
- Psychological First Aid Workshop
- Exercise Class

Alongside our core programme of classes, we also ran a free Zumba Exercise Class with creche from Nov- Feb 2022, funded by Reading Borough Council's Small Grant Programme. The funding provided access to physical exercise to migrant and refugee ethnic minority women who would not have the means, knowledge or accessibility to any sports activities outside of their homes. This was the first exercise class that these learners had attended in over 2 years due to the pandemic. A total of 12 women completed the 10-week course.

Supporting Syrian, Afghan and Ukrainian 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.

- RCLC has also regularly attended the Afghan Resettlement Scheme Case Management meetings (ARAP) led by RBC which started in the summer of 2021 following the withdrawal of international forces from Afghanistan in April 2021. Working in partnership with other members on the board we supported Afghan women to access the ESOL Classes, 1:1 outreach support and translation support at the Centre.
- Since autumn 2021 we have seen a steep increase in the number of refugees and asylum seekers enrolled on courses at the Centre reflecting the global migration trends but also because we have received more referrals from partners such as RRSB and Care 4 Calais. As these women have no recourse to public funding, they cannot access any support from the accredited learning providers in Reading but can from RCLC.
- Sadly, as Russia declared war on Ukraine this year, we started to see our first Ukrainian refugees at the Centre in the summer of 2022. However as Ukrainian refugees can access publicly funded courses, healthcare and other support services we have seen far fewer Ukrainian nationals come to the Centre. We are continuing to work in partnership with the Council to support any Ukrainian refugee women who need our support.
- By the end of the spring term 2022, around 40% of the learners were asylum seekers and refugees. This is a big increase in comparison to this time last year when the percentage was just 17%. The vast majority of the new arrivals to our Centre in the last two terms have been from the Eritrea and Hong Kong.

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

536 learners (please see details below) attended the information sessions at RCLC with guest speakers over the three terms or were supported on enrichment activities as well as outreach sessions outside the Centre. 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 we ran the following sessions and trips;

Autumn 2021

- A trip to Caversham Court Gardens Park for elderly Nepali women with Readibus and translation support.
- A guest speaker from the Victims First Specialist service, covering Berkshire providing support for victims of sexual violence, specifically within the ethnic minority communities. These communities may not be aware of the service Victims First can provide. They offer an ISVA service, offering emotional and practical support/ advocacy; however, their organisation also offers support for any individuals affected by crime. The sessions were attended by 40 women
- Adviza (National Careers Service) gave information sessions to 88 learners
- Healthwatch interviewed four learners with very few English language skills to complete the Healthwatch questionnaire on accessibility of health services. We will receive the report once it has been completed.

Spring 2022

- A visit from The Learning Hub, Institute of Education from the University of Reading for 2 multi-lingual story telling sessions at the creche for the 6 children and their parents. The aim of the sessions was to encourage parents to tell stories to children in their first language as well as learning to read in English. Having a second language is hugely beneficial for the children. Research shows that learning a second language boosts problem-solving, critical-thinking, and listening skills, in addition to improving memory,

concentration, and the ability to multitask. Children proficient in other languages also show signs of enhanced creativity and mental flexibility.

- 21 learners attended two indoor gardening workshops held at the MERL (Museum of English Rural Life) supported by our outreach worker in partnership with Food 4 Families to encourage indoor gardening.
- Adviza (National Careers Service) gave information sessions to 99 learners
- The NHS Cancer Services Team held a focus group with 8 learners to gauge learner feedback on the information in their new cancer leaflets to make sure that they were relevant and understood by different communities before finalising it.
- Volunteer led Reading Library visit which included a tour of the library and how to make a library card. At the end of the trip one of the learners said:

“There are so many books with lots of local information, and in many languages (not just English) I will bring my children to become members too”

Summer 2022

- A visit from ReadFood’s Sarah Pedlow to introduce the Womens’ Project which gives women the opportunity to volunteer at Readifood for 2-3 hours per week and receive training to help them get some work experience for their CV for 28 learners.
- Oxford Health Nurses and Azra Raja (inclusion manager at RVA) delivered information sessions to 55 learners on the Covid-19 vaccine
- Adviza (National Careers Service) gave information sessions to 100 learners
- Supported trip to the Abbey Wellbeing Café for 10 women
- Celebration picnic for 47 learners and their children at RCLC with food and certificates
- Outdoor English Conversation Class at Forbury Gardens for 24 women with food and certificates for the end of term.

Mental Health First Aid Courses (MHFA)

In response to the growing need for MHFA courses in Reading during the pandemic since Mar 2021, RCLC were requested by RBC to run some MHFA Courses online for the voluntary and statutory sector staff across Reading, Slough, Wokingham, West Berkshire, and Bracknell 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 2021-March 2022 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 2021.

Following on from these successful courses RCLC received additional funding from RBC to deliver more MHFA Courses online and one face to face. The course eligibility was expanded by RBC to include staff and volunteers who worked for faith-based organisations supporting people through the pandemic. From May 2021 we delivered 5 MHFA Courses for 54 men and women. The advantage of teaching it online has meant that RCLC was able to engage with many people across a large area and the course was accessible to those who struggled to travel due to the pandemic guidelines, mental health or physical needs.

6. 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

371 learners enrolled on our core programme of courses at RCLC 2021/2022

- 91% of our core programme learners have no UK qualifications or are at an entry level in ESOL
- 6% of our learners have qualifications at level 1-level 3 (UK)
- 19% of learners have a degree or higher from their home country
- 92% of our learners are unemployed
- 26% of our learners are on benefits (it is important to remember that 40% of our learners were asylum seekers and refugees who could not work and were ineligible to claim benefits due to their immigration status so in reality this percentage should be much higher)
- 4% of our learners are retired
- 8% of our learner's work part-time or full-time
- 17% of our learners use the crèche, a lifeline for those who cannot afford childcare costs (please note we had to have fewer children in the creche due to social distancing rules)
- 28% are aged 41-50; 27% of our learners are aged 31-40; 25% are aged 19-30; 20% are 51 plus.
- 6% of our learners are refugees and 27% are asylum seekers (in 2021 this figure was 12%, it has more than doubled this year), whilst 69% of the learners had not been living in the UK 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.
- 9% of learners disclosed that they needed additional support. Of this 9%, 50% of the women declared they had additional social and emotional difficulties and 32% had mental health difficulties.
- 9% of the learners progressed into full-time or part-time employment and 5% onto volunteering. This figure of 8% is 3% higher 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 at RCLC

- 6% of our learners progressed onto accredited courses with the WEA, Reading College or New Directions whilst 7% progressed onto other courses in the community.
- This year learners came from an amazing 33 different countries with the majority from the following; 15% Libya, 13% Hong Kong, 12% Pakistan, 12% Eritrea, 8% Afghanistan, 4% Morocco, 3% Turkey, 3% Syria, 2% India, 2% Iraq, 2% Namibia, 2% Ukraine, 2% Bangladesh, 2% El Salvador, 2% Nepal, 2% Sri Lanka, 2% Romania, 2% Sudan. The remaining 10% of learners came from Ethiopia, Honduras, Ecuador, Iran, Mexico, Poland, Senegal, Spain, Thailand, Venezuela and Yemen.
- Current learners speak 27 different languages. 26% of the learners on the courses this year spoke Arabic as their first language compared to 35% last year. 13% of the learners speak Chinese, 12% of the learners speak Urdu, 8% speak Tigrinya, 7% speak Pashto, 6% speak Spanish and 4% speak Amharic. Other languages spoken in the Centre include Bengali, Calabar, Farsi, German, Hindi, Kurdish, Nepali, Oshiwambo, Persian, Polish, Punjabi, Romanian, Tamil, Thai, Turkish, Ukrainian, Wolof and Yoruba.
- Our learners are mostly from the following wards; Abbey (40%), Katesgrove (17%), Whitley (5%), Battle (5%), Park (4%), Church (4%), Tilehurst (2%), Southcote (2%), Shinfield North (2%), Redlands (2%), Minster (2%), Coley (2%)

7. 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 2021/2022 were undertaken in February, May and June 2022 by the Centre 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 evaluations and a collection of case studies from each class per term.

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 at RCLC, jobs, volunteering or external courses both accredited and non-accredited in the academic year 2021/2022. 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.
- 14% of the learners progressed into employment or volunteering- this figure has doubled since last year. This low figure was primarily due jobs being scarce over the pandemic 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.

- 98% 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.
- 98% 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.
- 93% 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.

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 but the learner voice group will restart Autumn 2022.

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 practice 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 2020, pre pandemic we had 19 volunteers. Our classroom volunteers are mainly qualified teachers. However, due to social distancing rules and the small number of learners who we could have in the classroom meant that we could not add a classroom volunteer into the classroom until summer 2021, 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. During 2022 we welcomed our volunteers back into the classroom and will build up our volunteer group again in Autumn 2022.

This year we had 7 learner volunteers of whom:

- 3 were classroom volunteers
- 1 was an admin volunteer
- 1 was a creche volunteer
- 2 were volunteer translators

We also had 2 long-term classroom volunteers who were ex-teachers.

8. OUR PARTNERSHIPS

We are building strategic partnerships with voluntary, statutory and other organisations whose work affects our learners, to provide appropriate and stronger services and opportunities for them. We raise awareness of the issues and needs of the women we serve, wherever possible using their own voices. We sit on many panels influencing policy in Reading, and act as a source of expertise on the issues facing the women we serve for other organisations.

We have formal partnerships with Reading Refugee Group and Communicare and informal partnerships with Social Prescribers (RVA), RVA Schools and Parent Engagement Officer, ACRE, Berkshire Women's Aid, Alafia, Oxford Road FGM, City of Sanctuary, Welfare Rights, Citizens Advice Reading (CAR), Readifriends, Adviza, Indian Community Association (ICA), Pakistani Community Centre (PCC), Nepali groups such as SSFA, REGBA, Local CCGs, South Reading Patients Forum and Healthwatch

Through attendance at many meetings (RBC led and RVA led) we have been promoting the work of the Centre and this year engaged in new and exciting partnerships promoting the work of the Centre, increasing referrals both to RCLC and from RCLC as well as providing more opportunities for the women to engage in new activities since the pandemic. Please see below a list of the regular meetings and panels RCLC contributes to locally over 2021/2022;

- RBC Narrowing the Gap Meetings and CTG Meetings
- Wellbeing Health Forum Meetings
- Mental Wellbeing Meetings
- Health Inequalities
- Quarterly subcontractor's meetings with New Directions
- Local Strategic Partnership meetings such the Loneliness and Isolation Steering Group
- Working in partnership with GPs meeting (social prescribing, hosted by RVA)
- RBC Older peoples working group meetings and Physical Disability and Sensory Needs Network (PDSN)-
- Readifriends
- Vaccine Support Group Meetings
- Emergency Covid Support Group Meetings
- RVA Thriving Communities
- Volunteer Development Group Meetings
- Older People's Working Group
- VCS Prevention Forum/ Voluntary Leaders Meetings
- West Berkshire Employability Forum
- RAN (Reading Advice Network) meetings
- CPAR Partnership Meetings (Research project with ACRE, RVA, RCLC, RBC)
- CareWell Research Project Meetings (Reading Uni, RRSg)
- Migrant Women's Voices and Sanctuary Conference Meetings (Reading University, RRSg)
- RBC Afghan Refugee Resettlement Meetings
- RBC Syrian Vulnerable Person Relocation Meetings (SVPR)

GROWING NEW PARTNERSHIPS

A number of new partnerships have developed this year and we are grateful for the opportunities they have offered:

Thriving Communities Wellbeing Project:

- In the summer of 2021, RCLC started their new partnership with RVA, The Museum of English Rural Life (MERL), The Reading Museum, Sport in Mind and the Reading Green Wellbeing Network (Nature Nurture, British Islamic Gardens (BIG) and Readifood) with funding from The National Academy for Social

Prescribing's 'Thriving Communities' fund. This fund was set up to support local voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise projects to improve and increase the range and reach of available social prescribing community activities – especially for those people most impacted by COVID-19 and health inequalities.

- RCLC received referrals from the RVA social prescribers onto our programmes but also through access to our 1:1 outreach support. We also referred and signposted clients as well as encouraged our learners to engage in external enrichment activities at the MERL, at RISC and at the Reading Museum. These activities helped to build their confidence, social networks, mental wellbeing, independence, and language skills.
- In Autumn 2021, the first in a series of trips were organised for four classes from RCLC to have supported and translated visits to MERL, receive a tour, visit the gardens but also take part in activities linked to their English such a looking at poetry, an investigation and the health and beauty qualities of the plants- linking to the beauty class. A total of 43 learners attended.
- In Spring 2022 there were another two class trips to attend indoor gardening workshops at MERL and RISC. A total of 49 learners attended.
- In summer 2022 there were three trips to the Reading Museum for the 35 learners. Learners walked to the museum with their teachers, received a tour, took part in workshops and were able to practice their English.
- One of the RCLC learners on the gardening workshop is a carer and had a lot of issues with arranging carers to support her son's condition and was so stressed and despondent that she gave up and ended up doing everything herself, rarely leaving the house. She likes gardening and was very happy to join with one of her friends. It was only a 3-week project which was convenient for her to attend. She learnt new skills and shared her skills with others.
She said:
"I really enjoyed the experience! I have been living in Reading for many years and was not aware of MERL"
- Feedback indicates that even with these short, micro-opportunities at the museums, there was an average increase in wellbeing with over half of participants remarking that they felt happier by the end of the session compared to how they felt at the outset. 76% of attendees felt that they had learnt something new, 70% enjoyed the company of others, and 58% of attendees said that they felt better during the session.
- What was heartening too was that the taster opportunities, for some, inspired a keenness to return to the museums with their families. This was evident in feedback with some attendees saying that they would like to 'come back' or 'having longer in museum'. In turn, the enthusiasm to return had the potential to connect them with other programmes and opportunities.
- In total 112 women took part in the activities from RCLC, and some returned to MERL with their families to visit whilst others joined the Babies Yoga at MERL

RCLC & Compass Recovery College

- RCLC successfully applied for a £1000 grant from Compass Recovery College. This was for voluntary groups in Reading, who were embedded in and providing grass roots support to their communities. Each community group was to work collaboratively with Compass to create bespoke mental health and wellbeing offers. The aim of this funding was to support mental health and wellbeing in vulnerable groups in Reading, by enabling local voluntary and community groups to create bespoke wellbeing workshops with Compass, in a way that reflected the individual experiences and needs of their communities.
- RCLC used the grant towards two staff training workshops on emotional boundaries and self-relaxation and funding towards the creche and tutor costs to teach four 2-hr workshops which were co-produced with

RCLC and Compass Recovery College. The workshops were on topics such as understanding common mental health challenges (e.g. anxiety, depression); 5 Ways to Wellbeing; Being Kinder to Ourselves and Yoga for self-care. By embedding mental health and wellbeing as a golden thread throughout the RCLC core programme it was way to create a mental health aware centre for staff and learners.

- The workshops and courses were a huge success with 37 learners and 8 RCLC staff attending over the summer term. 98% of learners reported feeling happier, less isolated, with reduced stress and depression, improved mental health and feeling more supported.

FUTURE PARTNERSHIP WORK

New Project: Promoting friendships, Reducing Loneliness and Isolation

RCLC successfully applied for the RBC Covid-19 Small Grant for £10,000 towards the RCLC Befriending Facilitator post. RCLC will be working in partnership with Mustard Tree from Sep 2022 to start a much-needed bilingual befriending service. RVA will also be giving £10,000 to RCLC from its Ageing Well Fund to match the RBC funding to start the small befriending programme for a year. This new funding will be used to fund a 2 day per week facilitator who will receive training and how to set up the befriending programme for RCLC through Engage Befriending (Mustard Tree). Mustard Tree provide training to the newly recruited bilingual, female befriending volunteers. Regular trainings will be received through Engage.

Jelly Arts and RCLC

A new partnership project between Jelly Arts and RCLC will start next year. A programme of eight sessions (six at RCLC and two at Jelly Arts in Broad Street Mall) will teach hand sewing techniques on scrap fabrics to create a small quilt. The course will focus on building new friendships to reduce loneliness and isolation as well as learn new sewing skills. The sessions will be drop ins, open to all ethnic minority women to come together, have a cup of tea and make friends whilst also produce a piece of artwork to display at RCLC. The course will be funded by Reading Borough Council's Small Grants.

Food for Families and RCLC

In partnership with Food 4 Families RCLC will run a 10-week course linking health and wellbeing with gardening once a term. The aim of the project will be for learners to learn how to grow their own food with or without a garden and on a budget and improve their wellbeing through a new community garden which will be built over the summer.

9. READING BOROUGH COUNCIL COMMISSIONED WORK

Reading Borough Council's (RBC) Narrowing The Gap (NTG II) 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 and later as government guidelines changes face to face over the pandemic. The NTG partnership will come to an end in Sep 2022. At this point a new partnership will start for RCLC under the Council's Closing The Gap (CTG) over the next 3 years.

RBC Lot 12.1

Lot 12.1 titled, "Facilitating peer support and reducing social isolation for adults at risk because of language or cultural barriers" is a partnership between RCLC, CommuniCare and Reading Refugee Support Group. 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 2021. 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, using public transport and a lack of IT equipment and knowledge. With RBC's agreement, 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 and has continued to run, which meant that we needed to employ an additional outreach worker funded through grants, to support our current outreach worker from Dec 2021.

From Nov 2021 our yoga tutor was able to run an online seated yoga class for elderly Pakistani and Indian women. Over the academic year 2021/2022 we have been able to run three hugely successful online seated yoga classes for a total of 60 Indian and Pakistani women. We will continue to run these online until they feel they are ready to learn face to face. 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. At present they prefer online learning as it means that they can still meet up every week, make new friends and get some exercise without having to worry about using public transport. Some comments from the learners:

"I would like to continue online yoga classes with our Tutor. I thoroughly enjoy them and look forward to them every Monday. Helps me talk to other ladies, get motivated and actually do some yoga. The RCLC Tutor n is a brilliant teacher. Very explanatory in her yoga sessions. Love her and the classes."

"Thanks for the Zoom yoga sessions. As I live far away it is not possible for me to come to Reading for classes, so the Zoom sessions are excellent for me. I have benefited so much from doing yoga. My aches and pains have reduced and my back feel less painful. Many thanks for doing this class. I really have benefited from them."

In January 2022 we were able to run our popular ESOL Skills 4 Health Classes for elderly Nepali women at the Warehouse again. Twenty-six Nepali women completed 2 courses in the spring and summer term covering healthy eating, how to make an appointment at the GP surgery, form filling, giving medical information, making a medical info card, a visit to the health centre, women's health, how to get a prescription and a visit to the pharmacy, health checks, diabetes and blood pressure.

RBC Lot 1.3

Lot 1.3 titled, "Supporting steps towards employment" is a partnership between RCLC, CommuniCare and Reading Refugee Support Group. This partnership not only allows the charity to extend its core programme and outreach work but also helps us to achieve a long-term ambition of starting courses to support men and women into work.

Working with a wide range of referral partners, this partnership bid focusses on employability, up-skilling, and employment support for people with complex or longer-term support needs which affect their ability to gain employment - in particular, language acquisition, cultural restrictions, trauma, and exclusion from statutory support through ineligibility. Gaining confidence, English language skills, understanding of the job market and basic tools (CVs), and supported volunteering, are evidenced ways of tackling poverty, unemployment, and health inequalities

Over 2021/ 2022 371 learners enrolled and completed our core programmes of courses. 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 2021/2022

New Directions

RCLC are in a 2-year partnership with New Directions College. As a subcontractor for New Directions, we have delivered non accredited learning programmes for 120 migrant ethnic minority women over the academic year 2021/2022.

The funding RCLC receives is from the Neighbourhood Learning In Deprived Communities (NLDC Fund) which supports local Voluntary and other third sector organisations to develop their capacity to deliver learning opportunities for the residents of disadvantaged neighbourhoods. RCLC engages with some of the most vulnerable learners from Reading and were commissioned by New Directions College to continue to successfully widen participation, engage learners who were traditionally hardest to reach and to give them a joy of learning promoting lifelong learning. In the academic year 2021/2022 RCLC achieved its target of 120 learners.

New Directions will be renting out our IT classroom and laptops in autumn 2022 which will not only be wonderful for learners at the Centre who can progress onto accredited courses at RCLC run by New Directions but also in generating funds for the charity through rental income.

Closing the Gap Overview (Reading Borough Council)

Closing the Gap (CTG), which was previously commissioned under the Narrowing the Gap II framework, is an established programme within Reading for the commissioning of services to:

- tackle poverty, discrimination and disadvantage.
- promote wellbeing; and
- support thriving communities.

CTG brings together funding from Public Health, Adult Social Care, Housing and Neighbourhoods and the Resources Directorate along with additional funding from the Clinical Commissioning Group to continue support for these causes and further the good work already undertaken to date. Tenders are invited from organisations to enable people in Reading to overcome disadvantage and achieve better outcomes which have been divided into three tender areas listed below;

- Outcome 1: To support people to get out and stay out of poverty
Indicative Funding £270,300.00 per annum
- Outcome 2: To build resilience, independence and wellbeing, connect people to support and focus on individual and community strengths
Indicative Funding £551,700 per annum
- Outcome 3: To invest in VCS infrastructure support
Indicative Funding £158,000.00 per annum

REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER: 06442616 (England and Wales)

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1123017

RCLC successfully applied in partnership with local charities Communicare, Christian Community Action (CCA), Mustard Tree, CIRDIC (Churches in Reading Drop In Centre) and Faith Christian Group for partnership tender for outcome 1 and were successful.

RCLC also applied in partnership with Reading Refugee Support Group for outcome 2 and were also successful with this focusing on work with refugee, migrant and asylum-seeking families in Reading. These new partnerships will start in November 2022.

10. RCLC AND RESEARCH PROJECTS

We aim to influence policy and service development across Reading, by advocating for our learners, and wherever possible supporting them to voice their concerns and ideas to agencies and organisations directly. Over this past year we have worked with ex-learners and staff who trained to become researchers, including at universities, on the issues and barriers faced by ethnic minority and refugee women in our community. This year RCLC have taken part in three research projects listed below.

Community Participatory Action Research Project (CPAR)

- Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, inequalities in health have become magnified amongst some Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) groups disproportionately affected. Public Health England's (PHE) report, *COVID-19: Understanding The Impact On BAME Communities*, demonstrates the widening of existing health inequalities and makes 8 recommendations.
- Community Participatory Action Research puts the community and community experiences at the heart of the research project and empowers the community to set a research agenda. The project was led by 5 community volunteers from each of the partner organisations who were trained by SCDC and used a variety of research methods to look into the impact of the pandemic on BAME communities in Reading.
- Aim of the CPAR Research was to;
 - Train individuals from organisations drawn from BAME communities in CPAR to tackle health issues related to COVID-19
 - Equip the BAME community researchers with the skills to later deliver CPAR to help in addressing wider inequalities.
 - Share learning from CPAR across networks in the SE and beyond
- This CPAR project is a follow up of PHE report. The Focus is on the Impact of Covid-19 on ethnic minority communities in Reading. It was a partnership project between RVA, RCLC, Alliance for Cohesion and Racial Equality (ACRE), RBC & The University of Reading (UoR) funded by the Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC)
- 5 local researchers focusing on 4 Key areas:
 - The Impact of Covid19 on Mental Health of Ethnic Minority Men in Reading (ACRE)
 - Maternal services and the impact of digital inclusion (ACRE)
 - Investigating the impact of Covid-19 among Nepalese community groups in Reading, Berkshire, UK (RVA)
 - Impact of Covid-19 on ethnic minority migrant and refugee women in accessing healthcare services (RCLC)
- The RCLC researchers explored inequalities in accessing health services and identifying needs. They completed 104 questionnaires. The final report is yet to be released but the key findings were that over 50% of the women interviewed did not know of the 119 Covid helpline and could not access healthcare services on their own largely due to the language barrier, or access to a translator. More than 20% reported a deterioration in their mental and physical health.
- The overall project aims to bring about change to locally based health and social systems and will inform our work from April 2022 onwards. This is part of our mission to ensure that the often-overlooked voices of ethnic minority women are heard by local statutory and voluntary partners in local decision-making.

Community Consultation for Quality of Life (CCQoL)

- In partnership with Reading University School of Architecture for RBC, RCLC were involved in a research project where five RCLC classes had the opportunity to be involved in a Community Consultation for Quality of Life (CCQoL) organised by Reading University in March 2022.
- The aim of the project was to review approaches to community consultation across England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, and to provide space for people to have a say in the planning of their city, in particular looking at how it affects their quality of life (a person's physical, social and psychological wellbeing)
- This involved trips to the Broad St Mall pop up room, an interactive room to give feedback. The University also visited RCLC to carry out focus group discussions/ questionnaires with a total of 24 learners.

CareWell Research Project

This research project is in partnership with The University of Reading (UoR) and Reading Refugee Support Group. RCLC is employing 3 community researchers with lived experience of migration and/or seeking sanctuary as a refugee or asylum seeker to find out about the care experiences of families who have relatives in different countries and how caring responsibilities affect their wellbeing and opportunities for education, employment, social activities. We also want to find out about how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected families with their caring responsibilities and accessing services. The three researchers have just completed their training and will start interviewing researchers over the next academic year.

New Research Project - Migrant Voices

- In partnership with the University of Reading and RRSF (funded by the John Sykes Foundation and the University) RCLC will produce a collection of published Women's Stories using the RCLC peer researchers and Reading University Students to collect and write up case studies over the next academic year.
- The Migrant Women's Voices and Sanctuary Conference led by Reading Community Learning Centre and Reading Refugee Support Group will raise awareness of the lived experiences and needs of sanctuary seekers and other migrants in our local community and foster social cohesion, diversity and inclusion. The project will share the amazing life stories of migrant and refugee minority ethnic women in Reading, who came to the UK and became learners at Reading Community Learning Centre, in a collection of stories and celebration event in 2023.

11. 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 and non-learner Information, Advice and 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 work 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 40% of our learners require additional support.

Building on the Centre's current support work with around 34 vulnerable ethnic minority women per month and others referred during Covid19. RCLC applied and successfully received grant funding from The Berkshire Community Foundation Grant For Social And Mental Health Support To BAME Women and The National Academy for Social Prescribing's 'Thriving Communities' fund (Wildbeing Project) 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 April 2021- Aug 2022. 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 895 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 2021- Mar 2022. Out of these women 39% 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 offers important support for children under 5 years old. It was wonderful to finally have the creche open from May 2021. We had to reduce the numbers in the creche to meet government guidelines, but it meant that those women who could not engage in learning could now do so.

Whilst the creche was closed the children 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, including as refugees or asylum seekers in hotels.

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. In the academic year 2021/2022 133 children were able to access the creche.

On of our learners who found the creche to be a lifeline said,

“Thank you so much. I can't thank you enough for your excellent work. My son is very happy with you in the creche”

12. 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 changing government guidelines regarding safe working and learning environments meant that the robust Covid-19 Risk register was updated and reviewed before the start of each term. All staff and volunteers would also receive inductions on the risk register before the start of each term. Learners coming into the Centre were and still are given inductions on how to keep themselves and others safe at the Centre.

The inductions included general health and safety, how to use the Centre safely due to Covid-19 (keeping a safe distance, bringing in their own equipment, using hand sanitizers, using separate entrances, a one-way system, completing a health form, having their temp checked etc), wearing face masks, ventilation as well as the general induction info regarding the courses and how to use Zoom if the Centre closed down again.

The Centre has been fully open for the academic year 2021/2022. Maintenance of the building includes the annual checks for;

- fire alarms and carbon monoxide alarms
- PAT testing and electrics
- emergency lighting
- fire extinguishers
- cleaning
- heaters and boiler
- computer equipment, software, back up clouds and virus protection.
- Covid-19 PPE equipment, signage and lateral flow tests for staff and volunteers

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.

Sadly, in September 2021 the charity SmartWorks (interview coaching and dressing support to help women get into employment) who rented the top floor at the Centre, moved out to new premises across the road as they needed more space and lift access. We were very sad to lose them as they were a wonderful charity to share the building with and we often referred our learners to them when they had job interviews. We still refer our learners to them but have so far been unsuccessful in finding new tenants for the top floor. Due to the increase in the number of learners wanting face to face to classes and to reduce waiting lists we added an extra English conversation class and so have converted one of the rooms on the top floor into a classroom to meet learner demand and need.

13. STAFFING

During 2021/22 we continued to employ a 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 April 2021 onwards to support our current outreach worker.

We currently employ 5 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 and employability tutor. We also employ a part-time data administrator who records, inputs and analyses our learner data.

14. FINANCIAL REVIEW

Despite continuing to keep a tight control over our expenditure during the year, we are reporting a net expenditure in the region of £23,000 for 2021/22. This is in contrast with 2020/21 when we reported a net income of around £57,000.

We saw a positive net income in 2020/21 that was higher than in previous years due to both increased income and decreased expenditure during that financial year. This is due to some funding streams coming to an end during 2020/21, e.g., DCLG funds of around £38,000 a year. In addition to this, other income has reduced due to SmartWorks moving out of the top floor of our London Street premises in October 2021; this was generating income of roughly £19,000 per year and we have not found a replacement tenant.

The Centre's costs for 2020/21 were lower than usual as we were forced to close for a large portion of the year due to national lockdowns and restrictions. While many classes were moved online, it was not always possible to run courses in this way. For the year 2021/22 we have understandably seen an increase in costs. Most significantly, staff pay has increased due to increased hours worked and pay increases being awarded where appropriate, e.g. in line with National Living Wage levels and to ensure the pay we offer is fair and competitive. Utility bills have also increased compared with 2020/21 as the Centre has been open for most of 2021/22.

Income and expenditure figures are monitored monthly against the annual budget and reviewed by the Board at each meeting. We produce detailed cash flow forecasts every month, as we are aware of the importance of closely monitoring our financial position, particularly given the uncertainty we are all 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.

The Board and Centre Manager have been focusing on securing more long-term funding for the Centre and we are delighted to have secured some new funding from Big Lottery and Reading Borough Council during Summer 2022, which will greatly improve the Centre's financial security for the next few years

Reading Borough Council

The basis of Reading Community Learning Centre's contracts with Reading Borough Council (RBC) was changed during 2018/19. Funding from RBC consists of two strands of commissioned work (Closing the Gap outcomes 1 and 2) under employment and adult social care themes. From September 2022, the basis of our contracts with RBC will change again, although the two new strands of commissioned work are under similar themes as before. This money has and will continue to provide a valuable base, as it makes a substantial contribution towards our costs.

RBC also provided some one-off funding during 2021/22 to help with the impact of closure of the Centre during the pandemic (£10,000) and for Zumba classes (around £1,500).

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 largely come from the use of the top floor of our London Street premises by SmartWorks, which generated around £10,000 worth of income during 2021/22 (£19,000 in 2020/21). Until they moved out in October 2021, SmartWorks contributed a third of our rent, buildings insurance and utility costs and paid the

rates on the top floor. Unfortunately, we have not found a replacement tenant although we are seeing increased demand for the Centre's services and have started to use the top floor ourselves.

We have seen the return to WEA using facilities at the Centre in 2021/22 to provide a complementary programme of ESOL progression and other introductory courses. This generated around £2,000 worth of income during the year. We received no such income during 2020/21 while the Centre was open, as we needed all available space to allow for social distancing.

Some of our other sources of income received during 2021/22 have been given below:

- The Henry Smith Charity has provided funding towards certain salaries, rent and other building costs.
- Garfield Weston Foundation has contributed towards our core costs.
- Earley Charity and Berkshire Community Foundation have provided funds for salaries.
- CPAR and Carewell Research projects have funded the costs of peer researchers.

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

We continue to charge learners a small enrolment fee for each course and for the use of places in the crèche. 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 £55,000 to be held. 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 (£33,000).
- A premises reserve (£19,500) has also been set up to cover redecoration costs under our lease, plus other premises costs for 2022/23 that are not covered by restricted or other designated funds.
- Finally, when the DCLG funding was moved to unrestricted funds in August 2020, the Board decided to spread this funding over the following three years rather than spend it all during 2021/22. A reserve of £48,000 was 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.

Report of the Trustees and
Unaudited Financial Statements
for the year ended 31 March 2022
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 13 September 2022 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	31 st March 2022	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.

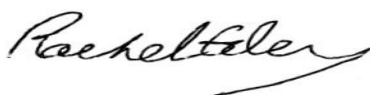
Basis of independent examiner's statement My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes 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: 19th September
2022

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

REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER: 06442616 (England and Wales)
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1123017

Unaudited Financial Statements

for the year ended 31 March 2022

for

Reading Community Learning Centre Ltd

Statement of Financial Activities
(Incorporating an Income and Expenditure Account)
for the year ended 31 March 2022

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2022 Total Funds £	2021 Total Funds £
INCOME FROM					
Charitable activities	2				
Grants – Core programme		15,000	89,453	104,453	147,147
Grants – Community education		-	8,715	8,715	-
Grants – Covid-19 costs		10,000	1,500	11,500	15,996
Courses		3,250	-	3,250	13,641
Crèche		-	5,000	5,000	-
Total charitable activities		28,250	104,668	132,918	176,784
Donations and legacies		8,057	-	8,057	3,653
Other income	3	11,544	-	11,544	19,440
Total income		47,851	104,668	152,519	199,877
EXPENDITURE ON					
Charitable activities					
Building costs		51,041	12,788	63,829	59,562
Office costs		2,828	348	3,176	2,250
Programme costs		5,136	39,929	45,066	27,653
Staffing		16,740	45,951	62,691	53,257
Independent examination		380	-	380	373
Total expenditure		76,124	99,017	175,142	143,096
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)		(28,273)	5,651	(22,623)	56,782
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		195,976	53,545	249,521	192,738
Movements between restricted and unrestricted funds	7	309	(309)	-	-
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		168,011	58,887	226,898	249,519

Balance Sheet
at 31 March 2022

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2022 Total Funds £	2021 Total Funds £
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible assets	8	3,372	-	3,372	2,777
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	9	11,468	3,954	15,422	12,842
Cash at bank		160,098	88,053	248,151	249,291
Total current assets		171,566	92,007	263,573	262,133
CREDITORS					
Amounts falling due within one year	10	(6,928)	(33,121)	(40,048)	(15,392)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		164,638	58,886	223,524	246,742
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		168,010	58,886	226,896	249,519
NET ASSETS		168,010	58,886	226,896	249,519
FUNDS	12				
Unrestricted funds				168,011	195,976
Restricted funds				58,886	53,545
TOTAL FUNDS				226,898	249,521

Balance Sheet
at 31 March 2022 – continued

The charitable company is entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 for the year ended 31 March 2022.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2022 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 13 September 2022 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 2022

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 2022 – 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	2022	2021
		£	£
Grants	Core programme	104,453	147,147
Grants	Crèche	5,000	-
Grants	Research projects	8,715	-
Registration fees	Courses	3,250	2,156
MHFA courses	Courses	-	11,485
Grants	Covid-19 costs	11,500	15,996
		132,918	176,784

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

	2022	2021
	£	£
Reading Borough Council	36,750	36,750
Reading Borough Council – Building Closure	10,000	-
Reading Borough Council – Covid-19	-	2,678
Reading Borough Council – Zumba	1,470	-
Furlough payments	-	1,318
New Directions (NLDC)	12,000	8,000
DCLG	-	38,340
Henry Smith	32,233	31,667
Garfield Weston	15,000	15,000
Big Lottery Covid-19 grant	-	10,000
AB Charitable Trust	-	15,000
Earley Charity	5,000	2,000
BWCCG and RVA grant	5,000	2,390
Berkshire Community Foundation grants	3,500	-
CPAR Research Project	4,452	-
Carewell Research Project	4,263	-
	129,668	163,143

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the Year Ended 31 March 2022 – continued

3. OTHER INCOME

	2022	2021
	£	£
Rent receivable	9,720	19,440
Room and facilities hire	1,824	-
	<u>11,544</u>	<u>19,440</u>

4. NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)

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

	2022	2021
	£	£
Depreciation – owned assets	1,536	1,114
Other operating leases	720	720
Independent Examiner remuneration	380	373
	<u>2,636</u>	<u>2,207</u>

The Independent Examiner did not undertake any other work for the charity.

5. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

During the year to 31 March 2022 two of the trustees were paid for work they did outside of their trustee duties.

Hemamalini Sundharajan was paid a total of £4,159 (£1,199 2020/21). This is for her work as an outreach worker (£3,483) and as a researcher (£676). A laptop worth £400 was provided for conducting this work during the year to 31 March 2021, although this is property of the Centre and will be returned. Hemamalini's outreach work was funded by the BWCCG and RVA grant and the Berkshire Community Foundation grant. Her work as a researcher was funded by the CPAR Research Project grant.

Simran Aul received £750 (£308 2020/21) for teaching online seated exercises classes during the year. These costs were funded by Reading Borough Council Lot 12.1 "Outreach & Community Education".

Raya Mohamed was paid £587 for working in the creche during the year. This was to provide cover for regular creche staff. The majority of this (£485) was paid for using funding from Earley Charity with the remainder (£102) coming from general funds.

Trustees' expenses

Simran Aul was reimbursed a total of £173 during the year ended 31 March 2022. These expenses cover her monthly Zoom subscriptions, which are required for her to teach online seated exercise classes. These costs were funded by Reading Borough Council Lot 12.1 "Outreach & Community Education".

There were no trustees' expenses paid for the year ended 31 March 2021.

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the Year Ended 31 March 2022 – continued

6. STAFF COSTS

	2022	2021
	£	£
Wages and salaries	103,611	81,404
Social security costs	1,127	37
Other pension costs	2,680	2,367
	<u>107,418</u>	<u>83,808</u>

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

	2022	2021
Crèche	3	3
Tutor	6	6
Outreach and Support Worker	2	1
Manager	1	1
Administrator	1	1
	<u>13</u>	<u>12</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 2020/21, the charity received a grant of £38,340 from DCLG Controlling Migration and also had carried forward grant from 2019/20. Some of this funding was used towards the running costs of the Centre during 2020/21, however it was clear that there would be an underspend of this grant. It was confirmed in August 2020 that the remaining grant could be transferred to unrestricted funds and used towards the running costs of the Centre.

Much of the DCLG underspend has been put in a designated reserve titled "DCLG (2022-24)" as the board plans to use this funding over a few years. See Note 12 for further details.

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the Year Ended 31 March 2022 – continued

8. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Improvements to property £	Furniture, fixtures & fittings £	Computer & other equipment £	Totals £
COST				
At 1 April 2021	9,224	4,264	19,612	33,100
Additions	-	1,000	1,259	2,259
Disposals	-	(504)	(8,989)	(9,493)
At 31 March 2022	9,224	4,760	11,882	25,865
DEPRECIATION				
At 1 April 2021	9,224	3,418	17,681	30,323
Disposals	-	(376)	(8,989)	(9,365)
Charge for year	-	180	1,357	1,536
At 31 March 2022	9,224	3,221	10,048	22,494
NET BOOK VALUE				
At 31 March 2022	-	1,538	1,833	3,372
At 31 March 2021	-	846	1,931	2,777

9. DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2022 £	2021 £
Trade debtors	4,220	1,104
Accrued income	1,584	1,958
Prepayments	9,618	9,780
	15,422	12,842

10. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE TO WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2022 £	2021 £
Social security and social taxes	1,586	-
Other creditors	10,619	-
Deferred Income	25,732	14,133
Accrued expenses	2,112	1,258
	40,048	15,392

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the Year Ended 31 March 2022 – continued

11. LEASING AGREEMENTS

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

	2022	2021
	£	£
Within one year	36,000	36,000
Between one and five years	-	36,000
	<u>36,000</u>	<u>72,000</u>

12. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

	At 01/04/2021	Net movement in funds	Transfer between funds	At 31/03/2022
	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds				
General Fund	18,398	(26,695)	20,809	12,511
General Reserve	53,000	-	2,000	55,000
Designated Reserve (SmartWorks)	1,578	(1,578)	-	-
Designated Reserve (Staffing)	42,000	-	(9,000)	33,000
Designated Reserve (Premises)	33,000	-	(13,500)	19,500
Designated Reserve (DCLG 2022-24)	48,000	-	-	48,000
	<u>195,976</u>	<u>(28,273)</u>	<u>309</u>	<u>168,011</u>
Restricted funds				
Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities	5,338	(5,338)	-	-
RBC – Narrowing the Gap (Lot 1.3)	11,524	(192)	-	11,331
RBC – Outreach & Community Education (Lot 12.1)	26,735	2,524	-	29,260
Reading Borough Council – Zumba	-	-	-	-
Inner Wheel	2,567	(2,566)	-	-
Henry Smith	(2,531)	7,676	-	5,145
Awards4All	2,450	(2,450)	-	-
Earley Charity	-	1,773	-	1,773
BWCCG and RVA grants	871	3,100	-	3,971
Berkshire Community Foundation	-	309	(309)	-
CPAR Research Project	-	315	-	315
Carewell Research Project	-	3,721	-	3,721
MHFA courses	6,592	(3,221)	-	3,370
	<u>53,545</u>	<u>5,651</u>	<u>(309)</u>	<u>58,886</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>249,521</u>	<u>(22,623)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>226,898</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the Year Ended 31 March 2022 – 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	47,851	(74,546)	(26,695)
Designated Reserve (SmartWorks)	-	(1,578)	(1,578)
	47,851	(76,124)	(28,273)
Restricted funds			
Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities	12,000	(17,338)	(5,338)
RBC – Narrowing the Gap (Lot 1.3)	23,500	(23,692)	(192)
RBC – Outreach & Community Education (Lot 12.1)	13,250	(10,726)	2,524
Reading Borough Council – Zumba	1,470	(1,470)	-
Inner Wheel	-	(2,566)	(2,566)
Henry Smith	32,233	(24,558)	7,676
Awards4All	-	(2,450)	(2,450)
Earley Charity	5,000	(3,227)	1,773
BWCCG and RVA grants	5,000	(1,900)	3,100
Berkshire Community Foundation	3,500	(3,191)	309
CPAR Research Project	4,452	(4,136)	315
Carewell Research Project	4,263	(542)	3,721
MHFA courses	-	(3,221)	(3,221)
	104,668	(99,017)	5,651
TOTAL FUNDS	152,519	(175,142)	(22,623)

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the Year Ended 31 March 2022 – continued

12. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS – continued**2020/21 Comparatives for movement in funds**

	At 01/04/2020	Net movement in funds	Transfers 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
	104,995	27,784	63,197	195,976
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
	87,744	28,998	(63,197)	53,545
TOTAL FUNDS	192,739	56,782	-	249,521

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the Year Ended 31 March 2022 – continued

12. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS – continued

2020/21 comparative net 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

There were a number of transfers between funds during the year. All were approved by the trustees and, where appropriate, the funder. More details are given below.

General Reserve

The Board has set aside £55,000 to cover three months' working capital requirements and three months' rent payments. This is in line with the Centre's reserving policy.

Designated Reserve (Staffing)

An amount of £33,000 has been set aside from the General Reserve to cover around three months' worth of staffing costs.

Designated Reserve (Premises)

An amount of £19,500 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 2022/23 that are not covered by restricted funds. This reserve has decreased slightly from last year as some of the DCLG designated reserve will cover premises-related costs.

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the Year Ended 31 March 2022 – continued

12. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS – continued

Designated Reserve (SmartWorks)

A small designated reserve was held to show the deposit paid by SmartWorks Reading on their rental of premises. This reserve is no longer required as at 31 March 2022, since SmartWorks moved out in October 2021 and the deposit was returned.

Designated Reserve (DCLG 2022-24)

During the year to 31 March 2021, we were allowed to take underspent restricted funds of around £62,500 from DCLG into unrestricted funds, with the permission of DCLG. The Board decided to spread this unrestricted funding over a number of years rather than spend it all during 2021/22. The designated reserve of £48,000 has been set up to use during financial years 2022/23 and 2023/24.

Henry Smith

There was a small deficit of £2,531 shown in the Henry Smith restricted fund as at 31 March 2021. This related 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 covered 1 February to 31 July 2021. This income was pro-rated in the financial statements since only part of it related 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 was cleared during the year ended 31 March 2022 when the deferred income was unwound, and further instalments were 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 2022.