

Company registration number: 06693843

Charity registration number: 1126928

The Signpost to Polish Success

(A company limited by guarantee)

Annual Report and Financial Statements

for the Year Ended 29 February 2024

Community Accounting Plus
Units 1 & 2 North West
41 Talbot Street
Nottingham
NG1 5GL

The Signpost to Polish Success

Contents

Reference and Administrative Details	1
Trustees' Report	2 to 15
Independent Examiner's Report	16
Statement of Financial Activities	17 to 18
Balance Sheet	19
Notes to the Financial Statements	20 to 26

The Signpost to Polish Success

Reference and Administrative Details

Trustees	Danuta Kantyka
	Monika Savage
	Edyta Wysocka
	Pawel Chrostowski
	Jerzy Ziemiewicz
	Philip Jackson
	Zbigniew Luczynski
Senior Management Team	Beata Polanowska, CEO
Charity Registration Number	1126928
Company Registration Number	06693843
Registered Office	Unit B, Tennyson Hall, Forest Road West, Nottingham NG7 4EP
Independent Examiner	John O'Brien, employee of Community Accounting Plus Units 1 & 2 North West 41 Talbot Street Nottingham NG1 5GL

The Signpost to Polish Success

Trustees' Report

The trustees, who are directors for the purposes of company law, present the annual report together with the financial statements and auditors' report of the charitable company for the year ended 29 February 2024.

Trustees and officers

The trustees and officers serving during the year and since the year end were as follows:

Trustees:	Danuta Kantyka
	Monika Savage
	Edyta Wysocka
	Pawel Chrostowski
	Jerzy Ziemiewicz
	Philip Jackson
	Zbigniew Luczynski

Structure, governance and management

Nature of governing document

The charity is a company limited by guarantee and registered charity. It is operated under the rules of its memorandum and articles of association dated 10 September 2008. It has no share capital and the liability of each member in the event of winding-up is limited to £10.

The Signpost to Polish Success

Trustees' Report

Recruitment and appointment of trustees

We have a Memorandum and Articles of Association and our Directors/Trustees are elected at our AGM through the voting process.

A prospective Director has to present a CV or completed Committee Member Application Form and - if new to the organisation - a covering letter and two references. The candidacy is discussed at the committee meeting by the existing members. All Directors are appointed for a six-month probationary period and, if this is satisfactorily completed, the appointment is confirmed.

The appointment of Directors

The charity may by ordinary resolution:

- Appoint a person who is willing to act as a Director; and
- Determine the rotation in which any additional Directors are to retire.

No person other than a Director retiring by rotation may be appointed a Director at any general meeting unless:

- He or she is recommended for re-election by the Directors; or
- Not less than fourteen nor more than thirty-five clear days before the date of the meeting, the charity is given a notice that:

- (a) Is signed by a member entitled to vote at the meeting;
- (b) States the member's intention to propose the appointment of a person as a Director;
- (c) Contains the details that, if the person were to be appointed, the charity would have to file at Companies House; and
- (d) Is signed by the person who is to be proposed to show his or her willingness to be appointed.

All members who are entitled to receive notice of a general meeting must be given not less than seven nor more than twenty-eight clear days notice of any resolution to be put to the meeting to appoint a Director other than a Director who is to retire by rotation.

The Directors may appoint a person who is willing to act as a Director.

A Director appointed by a resolution of the other Directors must retire at the next annual general meeting and must not be considered in determining the Directors who are to retire by rotation.

The appointment of a Director, whether by the charity in a general meeting or by the other Directors, must not cause the number of Directors to exceed the number fixed as the maximum number of Directors.

The Signpost to Polish Success

Trustees' Report

Major risks and management of those risks

The major risk to our continued existence is the uncertainty inherent in the search to secure funding continuity, so we submit our grant applications well in advance of the current funding expiry dates.

Objectives and activities

Objects and aims

Any charitable purpose for the benefit of the public in Nottingham and in and around the East Midlands. In particular but not exclusively for Polish and other Eastern European migrants, in particular but not exclusively:

The relief of financial hardship;

The advancement of education and training;

The provision of facilities for recreation and other leisure activities in the interest of social welfare with the object of improving their conditions of life.

Objectives, strategies and activities

- Providing regular English language courses. We hold ESOL classes at Entry 3 and beginner's levels.
- Offering Polish and other Eastern European migrants 1-2-1 information/signposting sessions. We support them with:
 - completing and understanding a wide variety of official forms and documents,
 - registering with schools and GPs,
 - helping with tenancy issues, bills, council tax,
 - helping with debt or payment issues,
 - supporting homeless people and those facing homelessness,
 - support with employment issues,
 - providing information about important changes to the welfare system concerning EEA nationals.

In the period from 1 March 2022 to 28 February 2023 we held 678 sessions, helping approximately 205 people.

•Publishing “East Midlands po Polsku”, roughly translated as “The East Midlands in Polish”, in which we continue to inform our readership about issues relevant to the Polish community across the East Midlands. Our readership is now more than 10,000.

• Running www.empp.co.uk which provides our users with instant information, running a Facebook page that has over 3,755 followers;

• Supporting EU Nationals in updating information regarding Settled Status;

•Organising workshops, meetings, social gatherings, events, developing a sense of community and working towards community cohesion. Our workshops provide comprehensive and useful information on current, topical issues. Our family events/social activities contribute to the creation of a sense of community amongst the recently arrived migrants;

The Signpost to Polish Success

Trustees' Report

- Providing volunteering opportunities for members of New & Emerging Communities which benefit them as well as members of the wider local community.

Our activities address the following issues:

- the prevention or relief of poverty;
- the relief of those in need by reason of age, ethnicity, ill health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage;
- the advancement of education (ESOL, but also education through delivering information sessions where people can learn more about rules and regulations prevailing in the UK and workshops, which have an educational value in regard to learning more about current, topical issues);
- the advancement of community development - our social activities contribute to the creation of a sense of community amongst recently arrived migrants. They have helped the newcomers develop a better understanding of the host society, assisted in their integration and encouraged positive interactions with the host population as well as nourishing friendships amongst the new arrivals, generated a sense of community spirit and, as a consequence, a more positive attitude towards the society in which they now live;
- the advancement of welfare.

Public benefit

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with the requirements of section 4 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission for England and Wales.

Our activities address the following issues:

the prevention or relief of poverty;

the relief of those in need by reason of age, ethnicity, ill health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage;

the advancement of education (ESOL, but also education through delivering information sessions where people can learn more about rules and regulations prevailing in the UK and workshops, which have an educational value in regard to learning more about current, topical issues);

the advancement of community development - our social activities contribute to the creation of a sense of community amongst the recently arrived migrants. They have helped the newcomers develop a better understanding of the host society, assisted in their integration and encouraged positive interactions with the host population as well as nourishing friendships amongst the new arrivals, generated a sense of community spirit and, as a consequence, a more positive attitude towards the society in which they now live;

the advancement of welfare.

The Signpost to Polish Success

Trustees' Report

Achievements and performance

The Signpost to Polish Success activities 01.03.2023-29.02.2024

This was a good year for SPS. In the summer of 2023 we submitted our Funding Proposal to the National Lottery Community Fund (NLCF) and in the early autumn we found out that we were successful. In January 2024 we started delivering our new three-year NLCF project.

In 2023-24 we carried on delivering our face-to-face Information Sessions. We helped our clients amidst the cost of living and energy crisis, whether through helping them to find or maintain employment, applying for a suitable benefit, training on completing journals for Universal Credit, supporting them in paying bills, negotiating their payments or making a Food Bank referral.

We provided face-to-face ESOL courses attended by learners from diverse ethnic backgrounds, such as Ukrainian, Polish, Hungarian, Bulgarian and others. In autumn 2023, we were able to provide an additional course delivered by students from the University of Nottingham preparing to teach English for Speakers of Other Languages.

We continued to publish our monthly newspaper East Midlands po Polsku, providing as always timely and topical news and information about local life and East Midlands Polish communities. We maintained close contact with our community through our Facebook East Midlands po Polsku profile, informing its members of the most up-to-date local news and developments, always focusing on building positive relationships.

We stayed in touch with local and national organisations by taking part in Zoom meetings, training sessions, conferences (with the Bank of England to present them with the key facts about our service users and our community, in the Race and Equality Symposium, Safeguarding Board meeting, with the Police and Advisers Forum).

In March 2023 we finished delivering Wellbeing sessions during which our attendees had the chance to do yoga exercises on chairs, have inspiring conversations in a supportive environment, make friends and build their strength to stay healthy throughout the winter months. We are in the process of looking for funding to continue them; the bankruptcy of Nottingham City Council does not make our endeavours easy.

In April and May 2023 we prepared and organised a school competition about Nicolaus Copernicus to promote his accomplishments at Polish Saturday schools. In this way, we wanted to contribute to the nourishment of the Polish identity among Polish children living in Nottingham.

At the end of May 2023 we organised a family event 'International Children's Day' in and outside of our office which was attended by approx. 200 people. We invited the Sheriff of Nottingham, Shuguftah Quddoos and the NLCG grant officer Eleanor Kaufman – both of them joined in the fun of the occasion. We also invited local businesses to have their stalls, Nottinghamshire Police to engage with the community and we asked many users of our services to volunteer for us on the day.

On the first Saturday in December, we went to Nottingham Playhouse to see the Christmas panto in a group of 50 people of various ethnic backgrounds, to have fun but also to build positive relationships. This year it was Cinderella. In February 2024 – together with our fantastic volunteers - we delivered our iconic Fat Thursday on a Saturday, a family event organised with the New Art Exchange.

We also delivered the project "Pomocna dłoń w czasach kryzysu energetyczno-ekonomicznego dla Polonii w Nottingham i okolicach", supported by funding from the Polish Government. Polish Consulate in Manchester also supported our family events and a school competition about Nicolaus Copernicus.

This was the final year of funding from Castle Cavendish Ltd for our ESOL classes, events and activities for the foreseeable future due to the bankruptcy of Nottingham City Council.

The Signpost to Polish Success

Trustees' Report

We continued to be a member of Fareshare – a scheme where supermarkets such as Tesco donate unwanted food to charities. We continued referring our clients to Himmah and Trussell Trust food banks, appreciating this partnership very much.

SPS library started being used again, with a reliable number of regular readers borrowing Polish books from us.

We represented the interests and spoke on behalf of members of the Polish and other Eastern European communities at several key local Zoom groups/meetings. We took part in Central Locality Partnership Zoom meetings and BAME Health Inequalities Zoom meetings.

A relatively high number of members of our community still need help with settled status. Some people have not applied yet, others have not received decisions from the EU Settlement Scheme Resolution Centre regarding their application and some needed to update their details. These people come to us for support as – due to IT and language barriers – they need our assistance.

We liaised with the Polish Consulate in Manchester regarding various issues. We also briefed the Consulate on the challenges and difficulties Polish migrants face living in Nottingham and the surrounding areas. The manager of SPS maintained membership of the Advisory Committee to the Polish Consul in Manchester.

We attended commemorative events, representing the Polish post-2004 community. We attended the Warsaw Airbridge Remembrance Service and All Saints ceremony at the Newark War Cemetery, as well as the ceremony at the Calverton Cross commemorating the first Polish aircrew fatality during WWII. We attended the unveiling of the statue of the Polish national hero, Gen. Sikorski, at the Newark-upon-Trent Cemetery.

We also worked with the Regional ITV team. Its reporter asked us for our comments on the elections in Poland and the engagement of the local Polish community in October 2023. In February 2024 ITV recorded a feature about SPS and its work for the regional news.

We will now present our 2023-24 activities in more detail:

ESOL at SPS

We delivered four courses funded by Castle Cavendish Ltd and one led by University of Nottingham student teachers. They were held at the SPS premises. 51 learners attended our lessons twice or more. The classes were conducted once a week, for 2 hours, at the intermediate level and for beginners. Some students were referred to us by the Jobcentre Plus work coaches.

Our learners came from countries such as Poland, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Iran, Lithuania, China, Czech Republic, Romania and Italy.

All learners said they would recommend our course to somebody else. They would like to have lessons more than once a week and would want to continue learning English at SPS. The atmosphere during lessons was positive, supportive and friendly. Students were welcome to suggest topics for conversations. They gained new friends and also learned about life in the UK. Some of our ESOL learners became SPS volunteers during our International Children's Day family event.

Case studies:

Mateusz - 31 years old alcoholic, began to attend the English course at SPS as a way to start a new life. As he progressed with his English, he started considering further education. His dream was to gain the relevant skills and qualifications to be an accountant. He made new friends, his self-confidence increased significantly. Marek felt at ease during the classes, no one judged him because of his previous life experiences.

The Signpost to Polish Success

Trustees' Report

Oleksiy - 18 year old from Ukraine - after completing an English language course at beginner's level, he found his dream job as a car mechanic. The experience and knowledge gained during our course helped him to find his job and to communicate at work with his co-workers, supervisors and clients. Dima is very young, finding his first job after SPS ESOL course set him on a path towards personal and professional growth in his new environment as well as financial independence.

Newspaper & webpage

We published 9 issues of 'East Midlands po Polsku' and distributed them across the East Midlands (with main distribution points in Nottingham, Derby, Leicester and Lincoln as well as Nottingham prison). The newspaper is also available on our website www.empp.co.uk and a digital publishing platform called www.issuu.com and www.fliphtml5.com. Thanks to the newspaper we delivered reliable news to the most vulnerable people, increased their knowledge of life in the UK, and current local, regional and national affairs as well as created a sense of community among Polish readers by informing them of the life of Polish people in the East Midlands.

Social Media

The estimated reach of the 'East Midlands po Polsku' Facebook page in the period of 1st March 2023, to 29th February 2024 was 64,411. This means that over

64,000 Facebook accounts saw content posted on our profile. We informed our followers about SPS services, EMpP prize competition winners, local and regional events and celebrations, government and local authority announcements, educational and professional opportunities, job offers, and foodbank support. We implemented marketing strategies to increase the number of recipients of our posts and as a result, we enlarged our reach as 17,914 people visited our Facebook page. We also received 374 new profile likes. Our Facebook profile currently has 4121 followers.

Volunteering

In 2023-24 we had 38 volunteers.

We have a group of volunteers who regularly write for the 'East Midlands po Polsku' newspaper - historical, regional, informative about events, places, people, send us recipes, prepare a section with art workshops for children and crossword puzzles, proofread before sending it to the printers as well as help us with the distribution of EMpP or take photos for us.

In 2023-24 we gained new volunteers who write on various topics related to life in Great Britain, as well as articles that help small businesses appear on the Internet.

We also have a group of volunteers who, together with SPS staff, organise family events. At our 'International Children's Day' and 'Fat Thursday on a Saturday' event they helped us with marketing and promotion, by leading art and craft workshops, activities for children, by looking after our stalls, registration list and questionnaires.

We have four volunteers who come to our office to help us fold freshly printed newspapers before we distribute them to local shops. We also have volunteers who take care of the garden in front of our office.

We also appreciate the support from our trustees who give us their time and expertise.

The Signpost to Polish Success

Trustees' Report

Wellbeing Yoga Workshops March 2023

We continued to deliver free 4 wellbeing workshops, which aimed to improve physical and mental health of the participants. During the whole course (from December 2022 to March 2023) we delivered 10 yoga classes on chairs. They were adapted to the physical abilities of the participants. In addition, there were numerous conversations about wellbeing with Agnieszka, the yoga coach. Participants learned new exercises that they would continue at home. These workshops were very popular and most of the participants took part in all 10 sessions, evaluating them as very useful not only in improving their physical and mental health but also enabling them to meet new people.

Competition about Nicolaus Copernicus in Nottingham Polish Schools

Thanks to funding from the Polish Consulate in Manchester, we organized a competition about Nicolaus Copernicus, one of the Patrons of the Year 2023 in Poland. On 19th February we celebrated the 550th anniversary of his birth. The competition aimed to strengthen the sense of identity among the pupils of the two Nottingham-based Polish Saturday schools and enabled us to deepen our partnerships, working with the schools. We prepared a presentation about the astronomer and a test paper which pupils had to complete. The winners received gift vouchers and certificates. It was a great opportunity to promote knowledge about the Polish scientist among young people.

Library at SPS

We run a library with books in both Polish and English. The books cover various topics and suit different age groups of readers, so everyone can find something for themselves. The book lending service returned to SPS after a Coronavirus break and from March 2023 to February 2024 our readers borrowed 33 books.

International Children's Day 2023

Our International Children's Day took place on May 31 from 12.30 pm to 2.30 pm at the SPS office in Nottingham and, as usual, was very popular. Despite the bad weather, over 200 people attended the event and took part in the activities and attractions prepared by SPS.

Our young guests danced together with a professional animator Ola from Party with Alex, participated in art workshops, enjoyed face painting, water tattoos and coloured their hair with special paints, they played in table football or took part in our raffle to win exciting prizes; all thanks to our wonderful volunteers, who we can always rely on and whom we would like to thank for their help.

There was also a police car with Officer Lucy who attracted crowds of both younger and older participants. Right next to the police vehicle, there was a van selling delicious Polish swirl ice creams.

Local businesses together with SPS held stalls with their products. We also hosted the Sheriff of Nottingham Shugftah Quddoos and Eleanor Kaufman from the National Lottery Community Fund, who talked on various topics with the participants of the event, helped us draw prizes, and actively participated in party activities organized by our animator.

Our participants reflected our diverse local communities, they were Polish, British, Ukrainian, as well as from other ethnic backgrounds.

The event was successful and we received positive feedback from our visitors:

"A well-organized event. Children are interested in attractions, which makes us adults very happy!"

"Every year these events are getting better. My children are looking forward to this event and are never disappointed."

The Signpost to Polish Success

Trustees' Report

“ We managed to buy some interesting books, eat a good cake and relax properly!”

“ Thank you so much for organising this event. It was lovely to have fun among Polish community”.

Family Event ‘Fat Thursday on a Saturday’, 3 February 2024

The ninth edition of ‘Fat Thursday on a Saturday’ took place on 3rd February. It was organised by The Signpost to Polish Success working together with the gallery the New Art Exchange.

The theme for 2024 was Polish ethnic design. During art workshops whole families created multi-coloured cockerels, painted houses and traditional hats with peacock feathers. We prepared presentations for the event, which included information about Poland and famous Polish people, the tradition of Fat Thursday and the types of folk patterns according to the region. All guests could also taste delicious traditional doughnuts and drink coffee or tea while watching films about Polish history and places in Poland that are interesting to visit. We organized a tombola and Polish books fair, and one of our volunteers prepared a stall with Polish greeting cards and folk-style bookmarks.

During the event, we had special guests such as Sheriff of Nottingham Shugufah Quddoos and Eleanor Kaufman from the National Lottery Community Fund and Police Community Inspector Gurmit Kaur from Nottinghamshire Police, who talked to the participants and took part in the prepared activities. We were also visited by a representative of the local television station ITV, who prepared a short report from the meeting. It was broadcast on February 21. Event participants could also meet Suki Shergill from Nottingham City Council, who helped us as a volunteer to register attendees.

One of the event participants commented: "Thank you very much for organizing a wonderful, integration meeting on the occasion of Fat Thursday. The doughnuts were very tasty, along with coffee or tea. My children enjoyed the art workshops. They created beautiful works of art with great commitment. We are looking forward to the next events. We would also like to thank the entire team for the effort they put into preparing this event.”

Foodbank

During 2023-24 year there was a continuous need for SPS support with foodbank referrals and food parcels. Most of our clients have low income, some are unemployed, experiencing homelessness. We refer them for food parcels to Himmah (who can sometimes deliver parcels directly to the clients' home address) and Trussell Trust foodbanks.

SPS issued approx. 267 food bank referrals. Also, 2 people received our special gift vouchers. Approx. 324 individuals received SPS food parcels– mainly bakery products that SPS acquired from local Tesco stores thanks to the FareShare Scheme.

1-2-1 Information sessions

We helped a large number of people in very difficult situations, preventing them from becoming more vulnerable. However, some of our service users are still highly vulnerable, unable to use other services due to language barriers, fear and distrust. These people are in need of our attention and advice. We help people with various problems such as translating letters from British authorities, helping to deal with debts, applying for Universal Credit, PIP, LWCRA housing or communicating with DWP.

We continue to work with several organisations and government agencies, such as Nottingham Law Centre, St. Anns Advice Centre, Citizen’s Advice, Welfare Rights Advisors at Nottingham City Council, DUWC, Nottinghamshire Police, Action Fraud, HMRC, DWP, ACAS and many more.

In the period from 1st March 2023 to 28th February 2024 we held 720 support sessions, for 205 people, approx. between 50-70 sessions a month.

The Signpost to Polish Success

Trustees' Report

Debt

In the 2023-24 financial year we supported 28 clients with debt problems during 51 sessions. Some people were referred to the organisations specialising in legislated debt help. We helped with making initial contact with debt collection agencies in order for the client to negotiate a repayment plan. We supported clients when they had to respond to liability orders by helping them to collect, organise and scrutinise all relevant documents, we assisted them when an offer of repayment plan was introduced, we explained to them how to follow court procedures when the case was filed to the court.

Case Study

Tomasz was facing significant financial hardship due to accumulated debt with EON, a utility provider. SPS stepped in to provide support and guidance to reduce the debt burden and mitigate the client's financial distress. Through collaborative efforts with Nottingham Law Centre and the debt advisor, the client's debt was substantially reduced, leading to improved financial stability and well-being. SPS staff helped with translation as the client does not speak English, as well as with communication between both parties.

The case of Tomasz highlights the importance of proactive intervention and collaborative efforts in addressing a client's debt and financial hardship. It underscores the critical role that charities like SPS play in supporting individuals and families facing financial difficulties and emphasizes the need for continued efforts to promote financial literacy, empower individuals, and alleviate poverty in our communities.

Welfare Benefits UC

We held 310 sessions regarding welfare benefits. We assisted our service users in: making Universal Credit claims online; due to their lack of IT skills notifying DWP of changes in personal circumstances; requesting advance payments; helping with adding notes to UC journals; completing Work Capability Assessment forms; requesting Mandatory Reconsiderations; lodging appeals to the Tribunal Service against DWP decisions. We also provided information and helped with applying for Child Benefit.

Case Study

Grzegorz is a 58 year old Polish national. He's permanently disabled due to an accident at work a few years ago. Grzegorz doesn't have manual dexterity in his right hand. Grzegorz's claim for UC was suspended. Grzegorz was very upset as he was left with no income to pay his rent or to buy necessities like food etc. Grzegorz doesn't speak English, he also lacks IT skills, he doesn't know how to log in online into his UC account. At SPS we check his UC journal on a regular basis and reply to the coach messages. Grzegorz's UC was suspended due to an administrative error. SPS worker helped the client go through the whole appeal process. The client's claim was reinstated and his payment was backdated. He was happy with the support received from SPS and was pleased with the appeal decision.

In situations where vulnerable individuals face barriers due to language and disabilities, the impact of administrative errors can be particularly severe, leading to financial instability and heightened distress. The intervention of SPS played a pivotal role in resolving the client's predicament.

Personal Independence Payment

We help with the whole process from initiating PIP claims to organising professional assistance in completing PIP forms. We assisted our clients with every stage of the claim in progress: making enquiries for updates with current claims; arranging health assessment/translation and appealing; requesting Mandatory Reconsideration; or lodging appeals to the Tribunal if needed.

We noticed an increased number of people applying for PIP due to bad health.

The Signpost to Polish Success

Trustees' Report

Case study

Jan a middle-aged man, has been grappling with severe mental health challenges for several years. His condition significantly impairs his ability to work and perform daily activities independently. Recognizing his need for support, Jan applied for Personal Independence Payment (PIP), a vital benefit designed to provide financial assistance to individuals with disabilities. However, his initial application for PIP was refused, leaving him without crucial support to meet his needs and maintain his well-being. SPS conducted a comprehensive assessment of Jan's case, reviewing his medical records, assessing his functional abilities, and identifying the grounds for appeal. Based on their assessment, SPS developed a strategic support plan aimed at advocating for Jan's rights and securing the PIP benefits he was entitled to. Thanks to the intervention of SPS, Jan's appeal to the tribunal was successful, and he was awarded the PIP benefits he rightfully deserved, backdated to the initial claim.

This case demonstrates the vital role that SPS plays in enabling an individual with mental health challenges to access essential benefits and support services. PIP awards provide a step towards stability and better management of the client's mental health condition and daily living. It provided hope for a more secure future, knowing there is support available to help manage his challenges. The client was less worried about paying bills etc. due to the financial stability that was provided by the PIP award.

Housing issues

We supported 45 people during 95 sessions focused on housing issues. Most of the interventions required sending applications for council housing, ensuring all relevant documents were delivered to Housing Aid or Nottingham Homelink and providing all relevant translations.

We had many cases concerned with Council Tax bills, debts, single person discount, refunds, change of address, council tax reduction and housing benefit entitlement. SPS worker contacted several landlords and housing associations to request repairs or a move due to bad relationships with neighbours. We observed an increase in cases where landlords raised their rent to unaffordable levels for the tenants. Many of our clients received Section 21C eviction notices when they did not agree to the rent increase. Clients were advised about actions they needed to take. They were also referred to the agencies that could support them by taking legal action against the landlord.

Case Study

Nowak family consists of a father, a mother and her two school-aged children. Mrs Nowak has been living with a disability for several years, which significantly limits her mobility and ability to work. Despite her challenges, Mrs Nowak has been the primary caregiver for her children and has managed to maintain their modest lifestyle through various support systems from SPS. Recently, the family received notice from their landlord informing them of a substantial increase in rent. This unexpected development posed a significant threat to the family's housing stability, as they were already struggling to make ends meet on a fixed income. Mrs. Nowak was hesitant to accept the rent increase due to financial constraints but faced the looming possibility of eviction if unable to comply with the landlord's demands. In response to the Nowak family's imminent housing crisis, our charity intervened to provide much-needed assistance and support. The family was referred to Housing Aid and Framework where it was given legal advice. Our charity helped the client to register and bid on housing properties available for them. In the meantime we engaged in constructive dialogue with the landlord to explore alternative solutions that would allow the family to remain in their current residence without facing undue financial hardship. The landlord agreed to extend by 2 months the section 21C notice, this gave the local authority more time to find a suitable property for the family.

Due to SPS intervention, the family was provided with practical help and advice to deal with the issue.

The Signpost to Polish Success

Trustees' Report

Health issues

We helped 45 clients with health-related matters during 109 sessions. We helped by making appointments and translating documents from GP practices and hospitals, asking for patient records and medical evidence; completing Capacity for Work Assessments, PIP forms; requesting sick/fit notes; making referrals to other available health services like OT, psychiatrists, physiotherapy.

Case Study

We support many elderly clients with a lack of IT skills and also with limited English. Our charity books GP and hospital appointments, requests Polish translators or interpreters for them on the line if needed.

Dorota faces significant challenges in accessing essential healthcare services due to language barriers. Her struggle to schedule appointments with a general practitioner (GP) and access physiotherapy exacerbates her health concerns and diminishes her quality of life. She is dependant and sometimes is not able to attend appointments when they are booked. SPS worker books appointments for the client, requesting a Polish interpreter for each appointment. Recognizing the importance of physiotherapy in maintaining Dorota's mobility and independence, SPS advocated on her behalf to secure a physiotherapy referral and assisted her in coordinating appointments with physiotherapists.

The case of Dorota identifies problems of the elderly generation that doesn't speak English and struggles to have their health needs met.

Employment issues

We held 29 sessions for 21 people with employment issues. We contacted employers to discuss contract terminations and statutory sick pay. We referred people to ACAS for detailed advice in very difficult cases. We offered further support by assisting, for example, with translation. SPS clients can attend free English lessons to improve their English language skills to enhance their employment prospects.

Case Study

SPS service user Julia was a hardworking person, unfortunately, she was diagnosed with cancer, compelling her to take an extended period off work for treatment and recovery. Despite her entitlement to annual leave Julia faced a dilemma when her employer refused to grant her this essential benefit during her sick leave, exacerbating her financial strain and emotional distress. Julia's battle with cancer not only took a toll on her physical health but also imposed significant financial burdens on her family.

Our organization intervened to provide assistance and support. Julia successfully obtained her entitled annual leave during her sick leave, providing her with much-needed financial relief and peace of mind. By advocating for her rights and providing legal, financial, and emotional support, SPS empowered Julia to navigate her workplace challenges with confidence and dignity, allowing her to focus on her recovery and well-being.

Hate crime

We had 3 sessions with 3 different people. We helped to report Hate Crime on the True Vision website.

The Signpost to Polish Success

Trustees' Report

Case study

In a residential area within Top Valley, Nottingham, a Roma family comprising 3 members has been subjected to discrimination by their neighbours. The family, which includes an elderly couple who suffer with many health problems and a son that has epilepsy, has resided in the neighbourhood for quite a few years. However, their presence has been met with hostility and prejudice from some residents. Members of the Roma family report experiencing verbal abuse and derogatory remarks from their neighbours on multiple occasions. These remarks often target their ethnicity and cultural background, perpetuating negative stereotypes and fostering a hostile environment. There have been reports of property damage inflicted upon the Roma family's residence. Acts of vandalism, such as car damage, flower pot damage, spitting at the door also leaving rubbish outside the front door. Most of the accidents were reported to the Police and Nottingham City Council but according to the client, not much action was taken against the neighbours.

We helped the client to report those incidents through hate crime website True Vision. We provided the client with ongoing support and also signposted them to different organisations that might help resolve this issue.

Financial review

Policy on reserves

The money that we have in our accounts is allocated to different activities, according to the funding application forms we submit.

We have some general income which we may use for the activities for which we do not obtain funding.

We also have enough money in our accounts to make sure that SPS can provide its services for at least 6 months in case we fail to obtain any future funding.

We aim to make sure that SPS financial situation is reasonably stable.

We fundraise and generate an income ourselves to cover all our costs.

The Signpost to Polish Success

Trustees' Report

Statement of trustees responsibilities

The trustees (who are also the directors of The Signpost to Polish Success for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland". The report and accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions in the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under company law the trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards, comprising FRS 102 have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that can disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Small companies provision statement

This report has been prepared in accordance with the small companies regime under the Companies Act 2006.

The annual report was approved by the trustees of the charity on and signed on its behalf by:

.....
Monika Savage
Trustee

The Signpost to Polish Success

Independent Examiner's Report to the trustees of The Signpost to Polish Success ('the Company')

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of The Signpost to Polish Success ('the Company')

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the company for the year ended 29 February 2024.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees of the Company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the Company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your charity's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Company as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act 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; or
4. the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities [applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)].

I have no concerns and 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.

.....
John O'Brien MSc, FAIA, FCCA, FCIE, employee of Community Accounting Plus
Fellow of the Association of Charity Independent Examiners

Units 1 & 2 North West
41 Talbot Street
Nottingham
NG1 5GL

Date:.....

The Signpost to Polish Success

Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 29 February 2024 (Including Income and Expenditure Account and Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses)

	Note	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Income and Endowments from:					
Donations and legacies	2	60	-	60	-
Charitable activities	3	12,118	65,599	77,717	46,440
Investment income	4	776	-	776	71
Total Income		<u>12,954</u>	<u>65,599</u>	<u>78,553</u>	<u>46,511</u>
Expenditure on:					
Charitable activities	5	<u>(67,170)</u>	<u>(29,356)</u>	<u>(96,526)</u>	<u>(90,734)</u>
Total Expenditure		<u>(67,170)</u>	<u>(29,356)</u>	<u>(96,526)</u>	<u>(90,734)</u>
Net (expenditure)/income		<u>(54,216)</u>	<u>36,243</u>	<u>(17,973)</u>	<u>(44,223)</u>
Net movement in funds		(54,216)	36,243	(17,973)	(44,223)
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward		<u>173,326</u>	<u>440</u>	<u>173,766</u>	<u>217,989</u>
Total funds carried forward	10	<u><u>119,110</u></u>	<u><u>36,683</u></u>	<u><u>155,793</u></u>	<u><u>173,766</u></u>

All of the charity's activities derive from continuing operations during the above two periods.

The funds breakdown for 2023 is shown in note 10.

The notes on pages 20 to 26 form an integral part of these financial statements.

The Signpost to Polish Success

Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 29 February 2024 (Including Income and Expenditure Account and Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses)

These are the figures for the previous accounting period and are included for comparative purposes

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2023 £
Income and Endowments from:				
Charitable activities	3	9,720	36,720	46,440
Investment income	4	71	-	71
Total income		<u>9,791</u>	<u>36,720</u>	<u>46,511</u>
Expenditure on:				
Charitable activities	5	-	(90,734)	(90,734)
Total expenditure		<u>-</u>	<u>(90,734)</u>	<u>(90,734)</u>
Net income/(expenditure)		9,791	(54,014)	(44,223)
Transfers between funds		<u>14,688</u>	<u>(14,688)</u>	<u>-</u>
Net movement in funds		24,479	(68,702)	(44,223)
Reconciliation of funds				
Total funds brought forward		<u>148,847</u>	<u>69,142</u>	<u>217,989</u>
Total funds carried forward	10	<u><u>173,326</u></u>	<u><u>440</u></u>	<u><u>173,766</u></u>

The notes on pages 20 to 26 form an integral part of these financial statements.

The Signpost to Polish Success
(Registration number: 06693843)
Balance Sheet as at 29 February 2024

	Note	2024 £	2023 £
Current assets			
Debtors	7	936	810
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>160,967</u>	<u>178,989</u>
		161,903	179,799
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	8	<u>(6,110)</u>	<u>(6,033)</u>
Net assets		<u>155,793</u>	<u>173,766</u>
Funds of the charity:			
Restricted income funds			
Restricted funds	10	36,683	440
Unrestricted income funds			
Unrestricted funds		<u>119,110</u>	<u>173,326</u>
Total funds	10	<u>155,793</u>	<u>173,766</u>

For the financial year ending 29 February 2024 the charity was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Directors' responsibilities:

- The members have not required the charity to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476; and
- The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions relating to companies subject to the small companies regime within Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006.

The financial statements on pages 17 to 26 were approved by the trustees, and authorised for issue on and signed on their behalf by:

.....
Pawel Chrostowski
Trustee

The notes on pages 20 to 26 form an integral part of these financial statements.

The Signpost to Polish Success

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 29 February 2024

1 Accounting policies

Summary of significant accounting policies and key accounting estimates

The principal accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all the years presented, unless otherwise stated.

Statement of compliance

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with 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)) (issued in October 2019) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

Basis of preparation

The Signpost to Polish Success meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy notes.

Going concern

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis.

The trustees assess whether the use of going concern is appropriate i.e. whether there are any material uncertainties related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the ability of the charity to continue as a going concern. The trustees make this assessment in respect of a period of one year from the date of approval of the financial statements.

Exemption from preparing a cash flow statement

Under the exemption available to smaller charities the Board of Trustees has chosen not to include a Statement of Cash Flows within the financial statements.

Income and endowments

Voluntary income including donations, gifts, legacies and grants that provide core funding or are of a general nature is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured with sufficient reliability.

Donations and legacies

Donations are recognised when the charity has been notified in writing of both the amount and settlement date. In the event that a donation is subject to conditions that require a level of performance by the charity before the charity is entitled to the funds, the income is deferred and not recognised until either those conditions are fully met, or the fulfilment of those conditions is wholly within the control of the charity and it is probable that these conditions will be fulfilled in the reporting period.

The Signpost to Polish Success

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 29 February 2024

Expenditure

All expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to that expenditure, it is probable settlement is required and the amount can be measured reliably. All costs are allocated to the applicable expenditure heading that aggregate similar costs to that category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated on a basis consistent with the use of resources, with central staff costs allocated on the basis of time spent, and depreciation charges allocated on the portion of the asset's use. Other support costs are allocated based on the spread of staff costs.

Charitable activities

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them.

Taxation

The charity is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 of the Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes. Accordingly, the charity is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income or capital gains received within categories covered by Chapter 3 Part 11 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992, to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

Trade debtors

Trade debtors are amounts due from customers for merchandise sold or services performed in the ordinary course of business.

Trade debtors are recognised initially at the transaction price. They are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, less provision for impairment. A provision for the impairment of trade debtors is established when there is objective evidence that the charity will not be able to collect all amounts due according to the original terms of the receivables.

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents comprise cash on hand and call deposits, and other short-term highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to a known amount of cash and are subject to an insignificant risk of change in value.

Fund structure

Unrestricted income funds are general funds that are available for use at the trustees' discretion in furtherance of the objectives of the charity.

Restricted income funds are those grants for use in a particular area or for specific purposes, the use of which is restricted to that area or purpose.

Pensions and other post retirement obligations

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme for employees. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the charity. Pension costs charges in the Statement of Financial Activities represent the contributions payable by the charity during the year.

The Signpost to Polish Success

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 29 February 2024

2 Income from donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds General £	Total 2024 £
Donations and legacies;		
Donations from companies, trusts and similar proceeds	60	60
	<u>60</u>	<u>60</u>

3 Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Grants & donations	-	65,599	65,599	36,720
Activities	686	-	686	1,566
Advertising	9,373	-	9,373	8,022
Fundraising	2,059	-	2,059	132
	<u>12,118</u>	<u>65,599</u>	<u>77,717</u>	<u>46,440</u>

4 Investment income

	Unrestricted funds General £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Interest receivable and similar income;			
Interest receivable on bank deposits	776	776	71
	<u>776</u>	<u>776</u>	<u>71</u>

The Signpost to Polish Success

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 29 February 2024

5 Expenditure on charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Telephone & communications	1,032	1,568	2,600	2,459
Equipment, repairs & renewals	168	-	168	40
Events & activities	14	602	616	488
Hospitality & foodbank	-	-	-	167
Legal & professional	3,215	813	4,028	3,455
Wages, NI & pension	51,850	11,713	63,563	65,650
Insurance	-	1,123	1,123	1,081
Office supplies	2,902	2,420	5,322	5,543
Rent & room hire	5,489	6,973	12,462	4,396
Recruitment	-	-	-	10
Training & conference	-	-	-	9
Travel & networking	2,500	1,432	3,932	4,002
Tutor fees	-	2,712	2,712	3,434
	67,170	29,356	96,526	90,734

6 Staff costs

The aggregate payroll costs were as follows:

	2024 £	2023 £
Staff costs during the year were:		
Wages and salaries	62,435	64,531
Pension costs	1,128	1,119
	63,563	65,650

The monthly average number of persons (including senior management team) employed by the charity during the year was as follows:

	2024 No	2023 No
The average number of employees during the year was	4	6

3 (2023 - 5) of the above employees participated in the Defined Contribution Pension Schemes.

Contributions to the employee pension schemes for the year totalled £1,128 (2023 - £1,119).

The Signpost to Polish Success

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 29 February 2024

No employee received emoluments of more than £60,000 during the year.

The total employee benefits of the key management personnel of the charity were £34,643 (2023 - £34,338).

7 Debtors

	2024 £	2023 £
Prepayments	<u>936</u>	<u>810</u>

8 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2024 £	2023 £
Other creditors	<u>6,110</u>	<u>6,033</u>

9 Charity status

The charity is a charity limited by guarantee and consequently does not have share capital. Each of the trustees is liable to contribute an amount not exceeding £10 towards the assets of the charity in the event of liquidation.

10 Funds

	Balance at 1 March 2023 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Balance at 29 February 2024 £
Unrestricted funds				
<i>General</i>				
General fund	173,326	12,954	(67,170)	119,110
Restricted funds				
The National Lottery Community Fund	-	49,869	(13,186)	36,683
Training & skills	-	8,500	(8,500)	-
PCC Nottinghamshire	-	5,180	(5,180)	-
Polish Consulate	-	2,050	(2,050)	-
Events	440	-	(440)	-
Total restricted funds	<u>440</u>	<u>65,599</u>	<u>(29,356)</u>	<u>36,683</u>
Total funds	<u>173,766</u>	<u>78,553</u>	<u>(96,526)</u>	<u>155,793</u>

The Signpost to Polish Success

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 29 February 2024

	Balance at 1 March 2022 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	Balance at 28 February 2023 £
Unrestricted funds					
<i>General</i>					
General fund	148,847	9,791	-	14,688	173,326
Restricted					
The National Lottery					
Community Fund	43,010	20,000	(59,304)	(3,706)	-
Training & skills	8,000	6,450	(14,450)	-	-
Salaries	10,132	-	(1,967)	(8,165)	-
Health engagement	2,000	-	(2,000)	-	-
Events	-	2,270	(1,830)	-	440
The Home Office	6,000	8,000	(11,183)	(2,817)	-
Total restricted funds	<u>69,142</u>	<u>36,720</u>	<u>(90,734)</u>	<u>(14,688)</u>	<u>440</u>
Total funds	<u><u>217,989</u></u>	<u><u>46,511</u></u>	<u><u>(90,734)</u></u>	<u><u>-</u></u>	<u><u>173,766</u></u>

The specific purposes for which the funds are to be applied are as follows:

The National Lottery Community Fund contributes towards the running costs and salaries.

The Training and skills fund contributes to the costs of courses and skills development for our users. The primary funder is Castle Cavendish.

PCC contributes towards running costs and salaries.

Polish Consulate contributes towards events, running costs and salaries.

The Signpost to Polish Success

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 29 February 2024

11 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total funds at 29 February 2024 £
Current assets	119,110	42,793	161,903
Current liabilities	-	(6,110)	(6,110)
Total net assets	<u>119,110</u>	<u>36,683</u>	<u>155,793</u>
	Unrestricted funds Designated £	Restricted funds £	Total funds at 28 February 2023 £
Current assets	173,326	6,473	179,799
Current liabilities	-	(6,033)	(6,033)
Total net assets	<u>173,326</u>	<u>440</u>	<u>173,766</u>

12 Fees payable to independent examiner

During the period, the fees payable (excluding VAT) to the charity's independent examiner Community Accounting Plus are analysed as follows:

	2024 £	2023 £
Independent examination	835	755
Other financial services	572	547
	<u>1,407</u>	<u>1,302</u>

13 Taxation

The charity is a registered charity and is therefore exempt from taxation.

14 Trustees remuneration and expenses

No trustees, nor any persons connected with them, have received any remuneration from the charity during the year.

No trustees have received any reimbursed expenses or any other benefits from the charity during the year.

15 Related party transactions

There were no related party transactions in the year.