

Company registration number: 06816600

Charity registration number: 1128265

Cheshire East Citizens Advice Bureau North

known as

Citizens Advice Cheshire North

(A company limited by guarantee)

Annual Report and Financial Statements

for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

Bright Partnership Limited
Chartered Accountant
1 Park Street
Macclesfield
Cheshire
SK11 6SR

Cheshire East Citizens Advice Bureau North
known as Citizens Advice Cheshire North

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Cheshire East Citizens Advice Bureau North

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Trustees' Report

The trustees, who are directors for the purposes of company law, present the annual report together with the financial statements of the charitable company for the year ended 31 March 2024.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objects

The charity's purposes, as set out in the objects contained in the company's Memorandum of Association, are to promote any charitable purpose for the benefit of the community in the north of East Cheshire and surrounding areas, by the advancement of education, the protection and preservation of health and the relief of poverty, sickness and distress.

The charity's objectives are defined as above. Our aims are focused on:

- Providing the advice people need for the problems they face, and
- Improving the policies and practices that affect people's lives.

Our service provides free, independent, confidential and impartial advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities. We value diversity, promote equality and challenge discrimination.

Ensuring our work delivers our aims

Cheshire East Citizens Advice Bureau North, trading as Citizens Advice Cheshire North, (otherwise referred to as CACN in these accounts), aims to provide free, confidential, impartial and independent advice, information and advocacy for the benefit of the local community, to exercise a responsible influence on the development of social policies by research and campaigning to ensure individuals do not suffer through a lack of knowledge or an inability to express their needs effectively.

We review our aims, objectives and activities each year. The annual review seeks to examine our achievements and outcome. Together with the success of individual key projects and the benefits that have been born from them. In carrying out the review we are ensuring that that our aims, objectives and activities are in line with our stated purpose.

Our main objectives for the year have been developing our service so that it really meets the needs of the clients we are trying to support. Key activities have included:

- Gaining funding to provide a family focussed advice service to alleviate financial hardship for the benefit of local families. Gaining funding to provide a family focussed advice service to alleviate financial hardship for the benefit of local families.
- Expanding our service to include Handforth. We now provide advice face to face in all the towns in our locality, as well as providing telephone and email advice.
- Providing a benefits service for cancer patients at Macclesfield Hospital under a Macmillan project.
- Continually reviewing, and improving where necessary, the quality of the advice we deliver to all our clients.
- Revising our training model to allow more new advisers to be trained to replace the net loss of experienced advisers throughout the covid pandemic.

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Public benefit

Our main activities and who we try to help are described below. All our charitable activities focus on providing the advice people need for the problems they face and are undertaken specifically to provide public benefit. The board of trustees have had due regard to the Charity Commission guidance on public benefit and have complied with the duty in section 4 of the Charities Act 2011.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Advice and information services

The main areas of charitable activity are:

- 1) The provision of general advice and information services.
- 2) The provision of specialist advice and casework services.
 - i) Specialist debt advice funded by the Money and Pensions Service.
 - ii) Specialist welfare benefits advice funded through Macmillan with the aim of maximising income for those affected by cancer.
 - iii) Advice aimed at those suffering mental ill-health, provided by caseworkers experienced at dealing with clients struggling with complex health issues.
 - iv) Provision of advice centred around the Cheshire East Council Family Service with sessions held within Family Centre Hubs.
- 3) Operating a fuel voucher fund scheme where we have made payments toward clients' domestic fuel costs, whilst applying a robust criteria for access to this fund. In the financial year to March 2024 we received a further £10,010 of donations (£10,000 from Wilmslow Town Council) and from this money, together with surplus from the prior year, distributed a total of £13,937.
- 4) Acting as a hate Crime Reporting Centre.

Throughout the year we have continued to offer Advice and Information in the following ways:

- 1) Face to face - during the year we have offered face to face advice across our locality 5 days a week.
- 2) Telephone - during the year we moved from a call back telephone system to a Cheshire East number on Advice Line - participation is continuing as part of a county-wide telephone service. The line is covered on a rota basis between the hours of 9.30am and 4.00pm from Monday to Thursday, and 9.30 and 1pm on Friday. Outside of these times there is an automated advice service 24 hours a day.
- 3) General and specialist advice through our team of trained advisers and paid staff.

During the year CACN provided high quality, free advice to clients, with over 10,000 client related activities during the year. These were generated from 2,821 unique clients bringing 8,871 different issues during the year. (2022/2023 2,742 unique clients bringing 7,534 different enquiries over the year.)

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Enquiries continue to consist of several complex issues.

Debt 13% (2022/23 14%)

Welfare benefits 51% (2022/23 45%)

Employment 4% (2022/23 4%)

Housing 9% (2022/23 10%)

Relationships 6% (2022/23 6%)

In total CACN's service generated a total of £2,001,233 (2022/23: £1,284,581) in additional income for its clients.

Clients continue to present with multiple problems and on average clients are presenting with 3 issues each. This reflects the fact that easy queries can be solved through the many on-line information guides, and so our clients needing assistance to resolve their issues generally have either a complex issue or are themselves struggling.

Contribution of volunteers and paid staff

The charity success could not have been achieved without the hard work and dedication of volunteers and staff. The trustee board and senior management team recognise the tremendous contribution made by the charity's volunteers in advising the public and administering the service without which the service could not operate. Throughout 2023/24 the service employed 17 paid workers (10 FTEs) (2022/23 14 paid workers, 9 FTEs), and 36 volunteers (2022/23: 28 volunteers).

The volunteers contributed approximately 10,300 hours of work to the service during the year. We estimate the value of this help at £164,600 in respect of the year. (2022/23 £136,500 for 9,000 hours).

The trustees are also volunteers and provide another 1,200 hours a year, at an additional value of £31,600 (2022/23 £36,900).

This gives a total of volunteer manpower valued at £196,200.

Factors affecting the achievement of objectives

Maintaining sufficient funding to continue delivering the service remains a continual challenge. During 23-24 we have increased our investment in fundraising, and this has meant that we started the 24/25 year with some additional projects, however many projects are only funded for 1 year, so funding remains challenging.

The complexity of the issues that clients are facing, and the additional challenges that clients are experiencing, places additional demands on the service. The support networks that were previously in place for people are changing and we are asked to offer support that falls outside the remit of direct advice. Where people are vulnerable, it is essential that we offer support in a person-centred way and whilst necessary this can be resource intensive.

The major factor affecting the achievement of objectives remains funding. Our core Universal Information and Advice contract with Cheshire East Council was reissued until 31 March 2027, with a potential 2 year extension.

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The quality of our advice is key to our success and to ensure CACN is maintaining high standards, it regularly seeks external accreditation. Our Customer Service and Advice Quality are audited under national Citizens Advice standards, and for 2023/24 we have again achieved the highest level of compliance.

The cost of living crisis, exacerbated by high fuel costs, mortgage rate increases and high inflation in 2023/24 resulted in an increased demand for our service, often for clients with multiple issues to address. This increasing demand has necessitated the need to find more efficient methods of delivering support and alternative sources of additional funding.

The Trustee Board extend their gratitude to Will McKellar, Jenny Archard, Liz Heathcote and Jenny Owen in promoting an environment where staff and volunteers feel they are a key resource and are fully motivated.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The availability of funding in the charity sector remains difficult in a period of austerity. The charity is focused on providing added value to its funders from a base of sound financial management and ensuring that our services remain relevant to the strategic objectives of stakeholders at local and national level.

Incoming resources in the year were £431,988 (2022/23 £372,778). Of this £67,915 (2022/23 £49,442) related to restricted project activities.

A surplus of £26,333 was made in the year (2022/23 £13,447), after offsetting £11,127 (2022/23 £1,252) against restricted funds'.

At 31 March 2024 total funds were £367,380 (31 March 2023 £341,047) of which £458 was in restricted funds (2022/23 £11,585), £125,000 was in designated funds (2022/23 £113,000) and £241,922 was in unrestricted funds (2022/32 £216,462).

Principal funding sources

The Trustees extend their gratitude to Cheshire East Council who continued to support the core universal generalist advice service of the charity. Wilmslow, Macclesfield, Knutsford and Poynton Town Councils are also funding advice services in their localities. Additionally, service specific funding was received via contracts from Cheshire East Council, Integrated Care Partnership, the Money and Pensions Service, Macmillan and National Citizens Advice.

CACN continued to operate the Cost Of Living support funds for distribution to clients, with an additional £10,000 from Wilmslow Town Council in the 23/24 year, of this monies and the monies received in 2022/23 only £458 is unspent and is carried over as restricted reserves to be distributed in 2024-25.

The charity did not have any borrowings from any providers of funding or other sources at the balance sheet date.

Investment policy and objectives

As required in its Memorandum paragraph 4.11, furtherance of its objects, and for no other purposes, CACN has the power to invest its monies, not immediately required for its purposes, in or upon such investments, securities or property as may be thought fit, subject nevertheless to such conditions and such consents as may for the time being be imposed or required by law.

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Reserves policy

CACN is required to ensure that free monies are available in each financial year to meet any reasonably foreseeable contingency. The charity will maintain a projection of income for at least 2 years ahead and will ensure that this continues to be derived from as wide a variety of sources as possible. It will take all necessary steps to ensure that at no time within this period would it be possible for the cessation of one or more funding streams to present so serious a challenge to the future of the organisation that it could not be managed so as to continue to provide a best value advice service.

In reviewing the potential costs that could arise should a significant reduction in income be incurred the Trustees have determined that 'free' reserves should be between three and six months normal operating expenditure, as recommended by Citizens Advice. This year CACN has achieved this position.

The reasons for holding particular reserves are outlined in note 10.

Going concern

After making further appropriate enquiries, the Trustees have a reasonable expectation that the company has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. For this reason, they continue to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the financial statements.

FUTURE PLANS

Developing a sustainable service that meets the needs of our clients remains a priority of the trustee board for 2024/25. The charity will build on the work completed in the previous financial year to develop diversified funding streams to increase our sustainability and enable us to build a diverse service that is responsive to client needs.

The charity will continue to work to ensure that it delivers a cost-effective service, meaning that we are not only offering value for money to our existing funders but that we have a viable offer, whilst never compromising on the high quality service that our clients expect and deserve.

Having reviewed the risks the charity are facing the trustees have invested resource in funding a part-time bid writer to enable us to increase the number of funding bids submitted and to build our capacity in this area.

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STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

Cheshire East Citizens Advice Bureau North (CACN) was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee on 11th February 2009. The charity commenced operations on 1st April 2009 at which date the assets and liabilities of the unincorporated Macclesfield Wilmslow and District Citizens Advice Bureau were acquired. This charity was formed on 7th October 1997 as a merger of the Wilmslow and Macclesfield bureaux, which were originally constituted in 1940 and 1966 respectively. The maximum liability of each member is limited to £10 and on 31 March 2024 the company had 8 members (2023: 7).

Cheshire East Citizens Advice Bureau North is a registered charity. Following a re-branding exercise by the national Citizens Advice service in 2015 the company is now known as Citizens Advice Cheshire North (otherwise referred to as CACN in these accounts). Outreaches are sometimes referred to as Citizens Advice Wilmslow, Citizens Advice Knutsford or Citizens Advice Poynton.

The Memorandum and Articles of Association, as amended on 24 February 2009, 12 September 2016, 11 September 2017 and May 2023 are the governing documents of the charity.

Recruitment and appointment of trustees

The charity is governed through a trustee board. Trustees who have held office during the year are listed on page 9. The Articles of Association provide for a minimum of four and a maximum of fifteen trustees. The trustees meet 6 times per year with additional quarterly meetings for the sub-committees listed below.

Trustees are elected to the Board for a three-year period and are appointed by a resolution of its members at an AGM. The board has powers to co-opt members who shall retire at the following AGM and may offer themselves for re-election.

The board is supported by a network of sub-committees, covering Finance; Governance; Executive; Health and Safety; Personnel; Operations and Risk; Funding and Relationships; Services, Policies and Procedures; and Technology.

The trustees who have served during the year can be seen on page 9. None of the trustees has any beneficial interest in the company. All of the trustees are members of the company and guarantee to contribute £10 in the event of a winding up.

The organisation is co-ordinated from its office in Macclesfield.

Trustee induction and training

New trustees are briefed on their legal obligations under charity and company law, the content of the Memorandum and Articles of Association, the committee and decision-making processes, the business plan and recent financial performance of the charity. They also meet key employees and other trustees. Trustees are encouraged to attend appropriate external training events where these will facilitate the understanding of their role.

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Organisation structure

CACN is a member of Citizens Advice, the operating name of the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux, which provides a framework for standards of advice and casework management as well as monitoring progress against these standards. Operating policies are independently determined by the Board of Directors in order to fulfil its charitable objects and comply with the national membership requirements.

The Chief Officer of the organisation has been appointed by the trustees to manage the day-to-day operations of the charity. In addition, there is an experienced team of paid staff and volunteers who are key to the service offered by the charity. Decisions are made by the trustee board in line with the Business Development Plan and are reviewed at least annually.

The Senior Management Team meet to review progress against targets and the Charity's financial position and to discuss issues referred to them by the trustee board. Reports and recommendations are then taken to the full board for approval, and their implementation is organised by the chief executive and the staff team. There are regular staff, volunteer and senior management team meetings which ensure that progress is being made against targets. There is an Annual General Meeting, which involves the staff team, trustee board, members, and other stakeholders.

Pay and remuneration of key management personnel

The trustees consider that the board of trustees and the senior management team (SMT) comprise the key management personnel of the charity. The trustee board review staff pay rises annually for all staff.

Key risks and uncertainties

CACN performs an annual Risk Management exercise. A risk management strategy and risk register were agreed by the Trustee Board. The Trustees recognise that any major risks to which the charity is exposed need to be reviewed and systems put in place to mitigate those risks. To that end CACN is continually monitoring and managing its risk, reviewing the risk register and ensuring action plans are in place to mitigate its key risks.

Included in external risks is that of the loss of funding. The effects of this are minimised by the procedures in place, which result in funding being secured from a variety of sources. The charity continues to seek to diversify its funding sources. Internal risks are minimised by the implementation of procedures for authorisation of all transactions and projects and to ensure consistent quality of delivery for all operational aspects of the charitable bureau. These procedures are periodically reviewed to ensure that they still meet the needs of the charity.

Cheshire East Council remains our largest single funder and should they continue to pass on its own restrictions in funding to organisations like ours, the consequences will only cause further hardship and a reduction in our capacity to maintain current delivery. Due to this we are consistently looking to diversify our income streams, and have made significant strides to maintain the funding support from the Money and Pensions Service (MAPS), Town Councils in Wilmslow, Poynton, Knutsford and Macclesfield. In addition, we have had grants from the NHS Cheshire and Wirral Integrated Care Board, Macmillan, Cheshire Community Foundation, and funding via Citizens Advice for our Family Advice project.

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The trustees, having had consideration to and mindful of the risk factors for the charity, identify the following:

- A. Securing funding remains a serious challenge to maintain but to expand our service. We understand that the next few years are critical for us in terms of our sustainability and ultimately our long term survival, the Trustees are taking this risk very seriously and are responding accordingly
- B. The funding climate is not getting any easier, nor do we expect it to improve any time soon - coupled with this demand for our service is increasing meaning that we risk being unable to carry on meeting our clients needs and experience reputational risk as a result.
- C. In order that we can continue to deliver it is essential that we maintain our volunteer base. We, along with many other Local Citizens Advice, are finding it harder to attract suitable volunteers.

Trustees plans and strategies for managing these risks.

- A. A fundraising strategy has been developed for the next financial year that broadens our approach to income generation, we are working towards building our unrestricted income to allow us to create a cushion should we face further reductions in our funding levels.
- B. A bid writer has been employed to ensure the charity has sufficient capacity to submit funding applications and increase our chances of success.
- C. The training plan for new advisers has been reviewed and updated to enable us to increase the volunteer pool. This has been working successfully, with new volunteers having been increased from 8 to 12 per year.

Factors that are likely to affect the financial performance or position in 2024/25 and further years:

- Core funding is currently received from Cheshire East Council in the form of a contract currently in place until 31st March 2027, with a potential extension of 2 years.
- The political environment remains uncertain, the impact of key national developments is still very much an 'unknown quantity' but has the potential to impact on our position.
- A possible increased competition in an ever-changing voluntary sector marketplace - we know that the voluntary sector is becoming a much more competitive sector, particularly as funding becomes ever harder to access, as a result we are seeing organisations diversifying their service offer and moving further towards our 'core market'

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Reference and Administrative Details

Charity Registration Number: 1128265
Company Registration Number: 06816600
The charity is incorporated in England and Wales.
Registered Office: Sunderland House
Sunderland Street
Macclesfield
Cheshire
SK11 6JF
Independent Examiner: Bright Partnership Limited
Chartered Accountant
1 Park Street
Macclesfield
Cheshire
SK11 6SR
Bankers: CAF Bank Limited
25 Kings Avenue
Kings Hill
West Malling
Kent
ME19 4JQ

Trustees and officers

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

Trustees: P T O'Brien - Chair
D W Robinson - Treasurer
S Feeney (appointed 11 March 2024)
R J Watson - Vice Chair
C Campbell-Kelly
A Marriott (appointed 15 January 2024)
S L Moss (appointed 8 July 2024)
J A Jackson
E L Raw
S Davies (appointed 8 July 2024)
G M Willock (resigned 13 November 2023)

Secretary: W A Mckellar

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Ex officio members

S E Heathcote - Business Manager

Cllr S Bennett-Wake - Representing Cheshire East Council
(appointed 11 September 2023)

Cllr L Braithwaite - Representing Cheshire East Council

J Parkinson - Volunteer representative

S Jackson - Representing Citizens Advice nationally

Cllr B Puddicombe - Representing Cheshire East Council
(resigned 11 September 2023)

Statement of trustees' responsibilities

The trustees (who are also the directors of Cheshire East Citizens Advice Bureau North 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".

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.

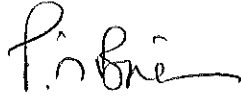
The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

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Trustees' Report

The annual report was approved by the trustees of the charity on 18 November 2024 and signed on its behalf by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. T. O'Brien', written over a dotted line.

P T O'Brien
Chair and Trustee

Cheshire East Citizens Advice Bureau North

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Independent Examiner's Report to the trustees of Cheshire East Citizens Advice Bureau North ('the Company')

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Company for the year ended 31 March 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

Since the Company's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of Bright Partnership Limited, which is one of the listed bodies.

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:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of Cheshire East Citizens Advice Bureau North 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.



Neil Kennington FCA
Chartered Accountant
Bright Partnership Limited
1 Park Street
Macclesfield
Cheshire
SK11 6SR

18 November 2024

Cheshire East Citizens Advice Bureau North

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**Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2024
(Including Income and Expenditure Account and Statement of Total
Recognised Gains and Losses)**

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Income and Endowments from:					
Donations and legacies		2,074	10	2,084	5,775
Charitable activities	3	353,522	67,905	421,427	364,131
Investment income	4	8,477	-	8,477	2,872
Total income		<u>364,073</u>	<u>67,915</u>	<u>431,988</u>	<u>372,778</u>
Expenditure on:					
Charitable activities	5	<u>(312,943)</u>	<u>(92,712)</u>	<u>(405,655)</u>	<u>(359,331)</u>
Total expenditure		<u>(312,943)</u>	<u>(92,712)</u>	<u>(405,655)</u>	<u>(359,331)</u>
Net income/(expenditure)		51,130	(24,797)	26,333	13,447
Transfers between funds		<u>(13,670)</u>	<u>13,670</u>	-	-
Net movement in funds		37,460	(11,127)	26,333	13,447
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward		<u>329,462</u>	<u>11,585</u>	<u>341,047</u>	<u>327,600</u>
Total funds carried forward	10	<u><u>366,922</u></u>	<u><u>458</u></u>	<u><u>367,380</u></u>	<u><u>341,047</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 15 to 22 form an integral part of these financial statements.

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Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2024

	Note	2024 £	2023 £
Current assets			
Debtors	8	13,411	11,667
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>396,364</u>	<u>399,021</u>
		409,775	410,688
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	9	<u>(42,395)</u>	<u>(69,641)</u>
Net assets		<u>367,380</u>	<u>341,047</u>
Funds of the charity:			
Restricted income funds			
Restricted funds	10	458	11,585
Unrestricted income funds			
Unrestricted funds		<u>366,922</u>	<u>329,462</u>
Total funds	10	<u>367,380</u>	<u>341,047</u>

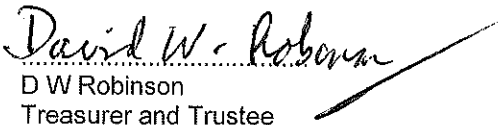
For the financial year ending 31 March 2024 the charity was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

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.

The financial statements on pages 13 to 22 were approved by the trustees, and authorised for issue on 18 November 2024 and signed on their behalf by:


P T O'Brien
Chair and Trustee


D W Robinson
Treasurer and Trustee

The notes on pages 15 to 22 form an integral part of these financial statements.

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Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

1 Charity status

The charity is limited by guarantee, incorporated in England and Wales, 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.

The address of its registered office is:

Sunderland House
Sunderland Street
Macclesfield
Cheshire
SK11 6JF

2 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

Cheshire East Citizens Advice Bureau North 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.

Grant receivable

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

Gifts and intangible income

In addition to the above, the charity also receives help and support in the form of voluntary assistance in advising the public. This help and support is not included in the financial statements. However, its value to the charity has been estimated and disclosed in the trustees' report.

Bank interest

Bank interest is included in the Statement of Financial Activities on receipt.

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Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

Deferred income

Incoming resources from grants, where related to performance and specific deliverables, are accounted for as the charitable company earns the right to the consideration by its performance. Where income is received in advance of performance it is treated as deferred income and included within creditors.

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.

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.

Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Designated funds are allocated out of unrestricted funds by the trustees for specific purposes. The use of such funds is at the trustees' discretion.

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 to the financial statements.

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.

Cash flow

Citizens Advice Cheshire North has taken advantage of the exemptions in FRS1 from the requirement to produce a cash flow statement on the grounds that it is a small company.

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Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

3 Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
Cheshire East Council	136,470	-	136,470
Macclesfield Town Council	50,000	-	50,000
Knutsford Town Council	21,042	-	21,042
Wilmslow Town Council	34,268	10,000	44,268
Poynton Town Council	16,563	-	16,563
Citizens Advice - National	45,904	-	45,904
Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board	9,049	-	9,049
NHS Cheshire and Wirral Partnership	40,226	-	40,226
Cheshire Community Foundation - Stockport and District Mind	-	703	703
Macmillan Benefits Advice	-	29,272	29,272
Money and Pensions Service Debt Advice	-	27,930	27,930
Total for 2024	<u>353,522</u>	<u>67,905</u>	<u>421,427</u>
Total for 2023	<u>319,041</u>	<u>45,090</u>	<u>364,131</u>

4 Investment income

	Unrestricted funds General £	Total funds £
Deposit account interest	8,477	8,477
Total for 2024	<u>8,477</u>	<u>8,477</u>
Total for 2023	<u>2,872</u>	<u>2,872</u>

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Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

5 Expenditure on charitable activities

	Activity undertaken directly £	Activity support costs £	Total expenditure £
Salaries	247,884	76,264	324,148
Staff & volunteers	5,290	1,065	6,355
Office	6,914	18,940	25,854
Premises	3,220	26,723	29,943
Governance	-	3,988	3,988
Others	14,946	421	15,367
Total for 2024	278,254	127,401	405,655
Total for 2023	239,819	119,511	359,330

6 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 from the charity during the year.

7 Staff costs

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

	2024 No	2023 No
Employees	17	14

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

8 Debtors

	2024 £	2023 £
Prepayments	9,393	9,404
Accrued income	4,018	2,263
	13,411	11,667

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Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

9 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2024 £	2023 £
Funds held for third parties	3,240	3,352
Accrued expenses	8,035	9,641
Accrual and deferred income	31,120	56,648
	<u>42,395</u>	<u>69,641</u>

10 Funds

	Balance at 1 April 2023 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2024 £
Unrestricted funds					
<i>General</i>					
General Funds	216,462	364,073	(312,943)	(25,670)	241,922
<i>Designated</i>					
Cash Flow Buffer	32,000	-	-	-	32,000
Redundancy Provision	51,000	-	-	12,000	63,000
Premises Reserve	20,000	-	-	-	20,000
IT Reserve	10,000	-	-	-	10,000
	<u>113,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>12,000</u>	<u>125,000</u>
Total unrestricted funds	<u>329,462</u>	<u>364,073</u>	<u>(312,943)</u>	<u>(13,670)</u>	<u>366,922</u>
Restricted funds					
HESF - Fuel vouchers	4,385	10,010	(13,937)	-	458
CCF - SDM	-	703	(1,518)	815	-
Debit Advice - MaPs	-	27,930	(33,732)	5,802	-
Debit Advice - Homelessness	7,200	-	(8,781)	1,581	-
Macmillan Benefits Advice	-	29,272	(34,744)	5,472	-
	<u>11,585</u>	<u>67,915</u>	<u>(92,712)</u>	<u>13,670</u>	<u>458</u>
Total restricted funds	<u>11,585</u>	<u>67,915</u>	<u>(92,712)</u>	<u>13,670</u>	<u>458</u>
Total funds	<u>341,047</u>	<u>431,988</u>	<u>(405,655)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>367,380</u>

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Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

	Balance at 1 April 2022 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Balance at 31 March 2023 £
Unrestricted funds				
<i>General</i>				
General Funds	201,763	323,356	(308,657)	216,462
<i>Designated</i>				
Cash Flow Buffer	32,000	-	-	32,000
Redundancy Provision	51,000	-	-	51,000
Premises Reserve	20,000	-	-	20,000
IT Reserve	10,000	-	-	10,000
	<u>113,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>113,000</u>
Total unrestricted funds	<u>314,763</u>	<u>323,356</u>	<u>(308,657)</u>	<u>329,462</u>
Restricted				
HESF - Fuel vouchers	-	14,332	(9,947)	4,385
CEC - Fuel vouchers	5,637	-	(5,637)	-
CCF - SDM	-	8,027	(8,027)	-
Debit Advice - MaPs	-	27,063	(27,063)	-
Debit Advice - Homelessness	7,200	-	-	7,200
	<u>12,837</u>	<u>49,422</u>	<u>(50,674)</u>	<u>11,585</u>
Total restricted funds	<u>12,837</u>	<u>49,422</u>	<u>(50,674)</u>	<u>11,585</u>
Total funds	<u>327,600</u>	<u>372,778</u>	<u>(359,331)</u>	<u>341,047</u>

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Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

Fund Descriptions

General Funds

These are the accumulated unrestricted funds of the charity.

Designated Funds

Cash Flow Buffer

Many projects are paid quarterly in arrears after statistics have been submitted and analysed by the funder. The result is that CACN has to find the operational costs of these projects for up to 5 months before receiving funding and the trustees allocate these reserves to cover these periods.

Redundancy Provision

As projects terminate it is not always possible to redeploy the staff and redundancy payments are needed. The trustees have allocated these reserves to cover this contingency.

Premises Reserve

There are contractual obligations on the current lease, and there may be a need to move elsewhere, with all the associated costs. The trustees have allocated these reserves to cover this contingency.

IT Reserve

IT is critical to CACN's operation and much of the current equipment is ageing, with replacement looming. The trustees have allocated these reserves for this development over the next two to three years.

Restricted Funds

HESF - Fuel vouchers

Money originally given by Cheshire East Council to be distributed on their behalf to help clients having difficulty paying their fuel bills. This was a fund which we also opened to public donations. This was increased this year primarily by a donation from Wilmslow Town Council.

CEC - Fuel vouchers

Money originally given by Cheshire East Council to be distributed on their behalf to help clients having difficulty paying their fuel bills.

CCF - SDM

Money from the Cheshire Community Foundation for a joint advocacy project with Stockport and District MIND.

Debt Advice - MaPs

Money from a national Citizens Advice agreement with the Money and Pension Service to provide the wider debt and money advice casework.

Debt Advice - Homelessness

Money from CRISIS to support our work in preventing homelessness through debt.

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Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

Macmillan Benefits Advice

Money from a national Citizens Advice agreement with Macmillan to provide benefits advice casework for people affected by cancer.

Funds received as Custodian Agent

CACN acts as custodian of some funds for other local charities to enable rapid distribution to clients when needed. At the year end these were:

£401 on behalf of Wilmslow Aid Trust, a charity that gives grants to people in need within the Wilmslow area. The monies have been used for travel expenses where clients have had to visit the Macclesfield office.

£1,577 on behalf of Knutsford and District Lions Club - a Wenceslas project which collects donated Winter Fuel monies to help the less fortunate avoid fuel debt (£1,398) within the Knutsford area, and a Knutsford hardship fund. (£179)

£1,290 on behalf of Rina's fund which CACN administer to fund Debt Relief Orders for money advice clients who cannot afford the £90 fee.

11 Related party transactions

There were no related party transactions in the year.