

Making people's lives better

The Equilibrium Foundation report
September 2022 - August 2023



EQUILIBRIUM
FOUNDATION

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Introduction from Sarah Warburton



Since its founding in 2010, the Equilibrium Foundation has been dedicated to making people's lives better. This year has been particularly impactful, with a focus on expanding our reach and resources within the North West of England.

We're proud to announce the successful widening of our biannual community support scheme, now encompassing the entire North West region. This has allowed us to reach a greater number of local causes. Additionally, I'm thrilled to introduce the first Equilibrium Foundation Grant Awards, where our panel selected seven exceptional charities focused on combating child poverty in the North West, receiving a combined sum of £60,000.

We are continually inspired by the generosity of a growing number of clients who have chosen to leave a lasting legacy by pledging to the Foundation through their wills. Their thoughtful planning will allow us to continue our important work well into the future.

Thanks to the unwavering support of our donors, we're delighted to share that we raised £194,747 this year. This incredible achievement allows us to continue supporting even more worthy charities.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sarah Warburton', with a long, flowing tail.

Sarah Warburton

Chair of the Equilibrium Foundation

Making people's lives better



£194,747

raised for good causes this year

£968,799

raised since 2010

78

charity days were used by the team

9

grants were given to local charities as part of our community support scheme

£60,000

given to charities combatting child poverty in the North West

Over 40%

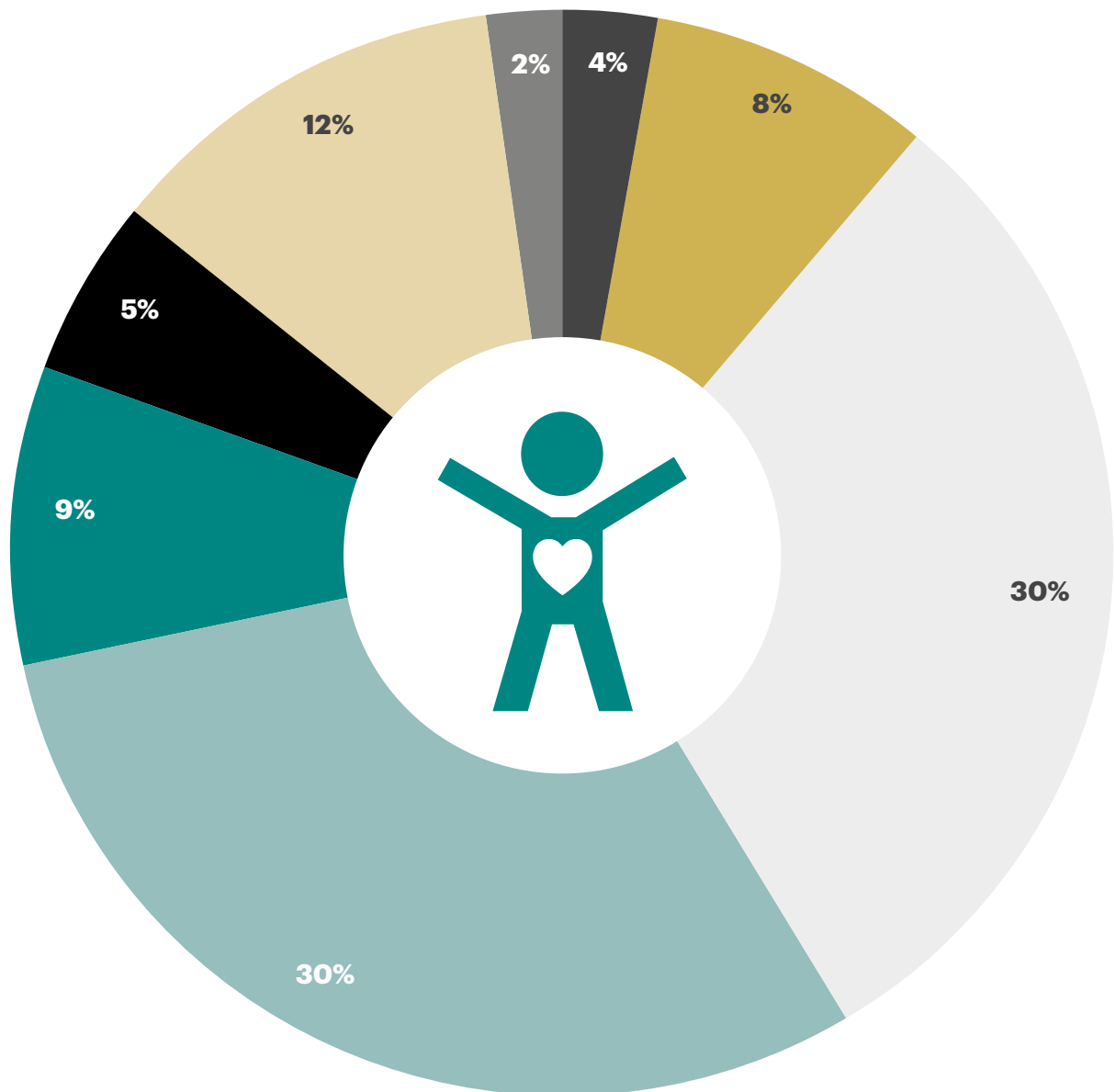
of the team giving through Give As You Earn, securing us Diamond Status again!

5

charities nominated by our team received a share of

£25,000

Breakdown of sectors



Animal



Community



Education



Healthcare & research



Mental health & wellbeing



Overseas aid



Poverty relief



Sports

How we made a difference

This year we have supported over 70 charities who are all doing incredible work in our community. Here's just a glimpse of the ways we've been able to make a meaningful impact.

Hollow Heart

Hollow Heart launched in 2022 with the vision of giving people the confidence to start having conversations about their mental health and wellbeing sooner, so they did not feel alone and would be able to find the support they needed. To encourage this Hollow Heart developed a heart shaped pin to be worn as a symbol of openness and to signify a willingness to listen.

Through a close collaboration this year, Equilibrium has provided Hollow Heart with valuable guidance on becoming a Community Interest Company (CIC). Additionally, an Equilibrium philanthropy advisor assisted them in outlining their future goals.

To further solidify their support, the Equilibrium Foundation donated £2,000 to the newly formed CIC. These funds will be used to purchase a stock of heart-shaped pins, raising awareness for Hollow Heart's cause and helping them achieve their vision.

The Toy Appeal

Each year Equilibrium host three client Christmas lunches. Clients are invited to take part in a prize raffle to raise money for The Toy Appeal, who provide toy sacks for underprivileged children across Manchester and Cheshire who would otherwise not receive a gift at Christmas. The charity has seen demand increase year on year, so we are thrilled to have raised £13,435.63 through client donations and matched funding from the Foundation.

The Equilibrium team further supported The Toy Appeal by rolling up their sleeves for an organised a charity day where they tackled the impressive task of packing thousands of gifts for delivery.

Prize raffle

Give a child a gift this Christmas

Help The Toy Appeal provide even more Christmas Day toy sacks for underprivileged children across Manchester and Cheshire by entering our prize raffle.

Cash donation

- 1 Put your donation into the envelope provided.
- 2 Write your name on the front of the envelope.

Online donation

- 1 Scan the QR code on the right or go to equilibrium.link/toyappeal and select the 'give now' button to make your donation.
- 2 Once payment has been confirmed, write your name and that you've made an online donation on the envelope provided.

Pass your envelope to the Equilibrium team member on your table before dessert to be entered in the prize raffle. If there is no team member on your table, we will collect it from you.

Libby

We have continued to invest in our financial skills project, 'Libby's Big Aeroplane Adventure' which is designed to provide teachers with the materials they need to effectively teach KS2 children about finance in a fun, engaging way.

The project has continued to grow this year and we have been able to reach over 500 children with our free financial literacy workshops.

In the face of the cost-of-living crisis, educating the next generation about finances is more important than ever. Over the next year, we'll be developing new resources for early years and primary school children, all designed to be inclusive of special educational needs. These engaging digital learning materials will allow us to reach more children than ever before.

"The class were presented with a relatable budgeting task and had the opportunity to use their own mathematical reasoning skills to tackle this. The children were given the right level of support but were also given time to talk through the task and discuss with a partner. The resources given out were bright and colourful and pitched at the right level for the class."
Helen Roberts, Broadheath Primary School



Winter fuel fund

Launched in 2019, the Equilibrium winter fuel fund enables our clients to help local elderly and vulnerable residents by pledging their winter fuel payment. This year typical household energy bills increased by around 59% above their winter 2021/22 levels (UK Parliament). These donations supported those who may otherwise have to make the impossible choice between heating or eating over the winter.

This year an outstanding £5,825 was raised for the following charities:

The Wishing Well – supporting their vital meals and welfare service that reaches around 150 of the most vulnerable people in our community every day, particularly those who live alone or face challenges in preparing their own meals.

Friends of the Elderly – Their grant service provides older people struggling to make ends meet with the essentials they need to live with dignity and in comfort. This included the purchase of a new fridge freezer for a bedbound 92-year-old lady, allowing her carer to batch cook and freeze meals for her.

Age UK Stockport – Donations this year covered the cost of hot meals and resources such as flasks and blankets. Age UK's Chief Executive poignantly noted, "The pressure here is relentless – people are so worried and anxious."

"It made a huge, huge, huge difference. I don't know how to describe it, but I feel relieved. I feel happier. I feel more organised – I have clean clothes; it's made life a lot easier."

James, age 67, Friends of the Elderly grant recipient



Climbing Mount Kilimanjaro

Equilibrium Partner and Financial Planner, Jason Lowe pushed himself to his limits by taking on Mount Kilimanjaro this year whilst raising money for four very worthwhile causes – Reubens Retreat, East Cheshire Hospice, Cancer Research UK and Nightingale Hospice House.

After months of training, Jason, along with his friend, Mark Dunn, crossed six ecological zones, from lush rainforest to the harsh, beautiful Arctic zone. After six gruelling days of ascension, they arrived at the summit – the temperature, a mere -22°.

Jason smashed his original target of £10,000 and was truly humbled by everyone who had supported him:

“This must have been the toughest challenge that I have done so far. You can only train so much for a trek like this and whilst I felt like I had done enough, the mental strain of keeping pushing on my legs, when my lungs were screaming at me, was extremely tough, especially on the last climb.”

I am constantly amazed by the generosity of our clients, friends, team and family for the amazing support, without which none of this would be possible. With the fantastic support of The Equilibrium Foundation, its matched funding on contributions and gift aid, we have raised a tremendous £32,000, giving a much-needed boost of £8,000 to each of our chosen charities. Thank you all so much!”



£25,000 to local charities



The Equilibrium team nominated five charities to receive a share of a £25,000 donation.

Anthony Nolan

Anthony Nolan supports patients battling blood cancer and blood disorders every step of the way. They find them lifesaving stem cell matches, fund research for better treatments, and ensure the best possible experience before, during, and after transplants.

St Rocco's Hospice

St Rocco's Hospice goes beyond end-of-life care. They provide holistic support, addressing the physical, psychological, and emotional needs of patients with life-limiting illnesses. Their focus is on maximising quality of life for both patients and their loved ones.

Just Drop In Macclesfield

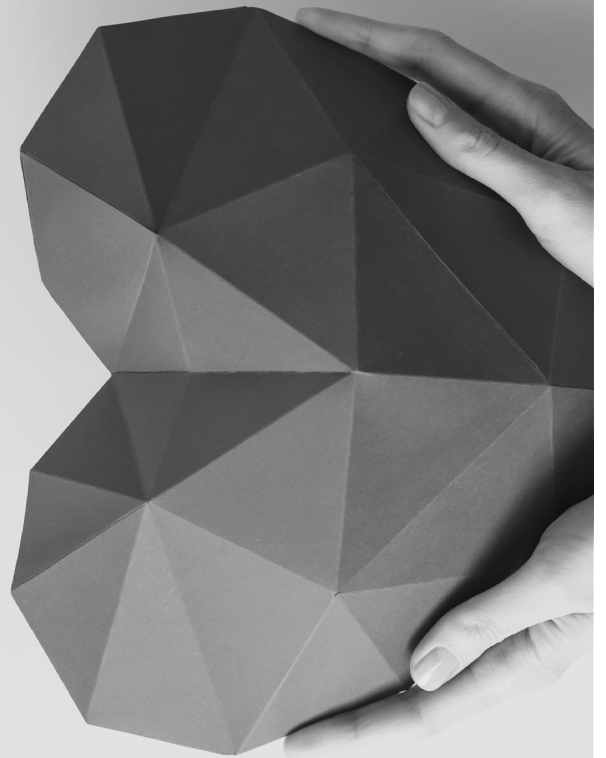
Just Drop In is a welcoming space offering free support to children and young adults in the community. They provide counselling and wellbeing services to help young people navigate challenges and build emotional resilience, as well as support available for parents and carers

Barnabus

Barnabus, a homeless charity, offers a lifeline to hundreds each week. Their Beacon Centre provides daily drop-in sessions with vital resources. People can come to them to access assistance in looking for jobs, housing, healthcare, and recovery, plus essentials like food and clothing. The centre empowers them to build a future.

Chester Zoo

Chester Zoo work with endangered wildlife and are a major wildlife charity making a vital contribution to tackling the global extinction crisis at a time when it's needed most. The zoo plays a vital role in the future of wildlife on this planet.



Equilibrium Foundation Grant Awards



With a staggering 34% of children in the North West of England living in poverty (BBC), the decision to centre our first grant awards on supporting charities that alleviate child poverty in the region was both compelling and imperative.

We were delighted to receive a huge number of applications from such well-deserving organisations. Despite the fact that our judging panel (consisting of Equilibrium client Chris Fox, The Bursary Foundation founder Jenny Hopkinson, Andrew Evans of Think Philanthropy and several team members) had an extremely tough job deciding on the winners. However, after careful consideration, we take immense pride in revealing the recipients of this year's awards who all received a share of £60,000:

Bare Necessities, Wilmslow

Addressing hygiene poverty, Bare Necessities is a toiletry bank that collects and distributes essential products to a network of charities. The grant will support their Give a Smile and Give a Wash Day projects, providing toothbrushes, toothpaste and laundry detergents. These initiatives play a pivotal role in bolstering self-esteem and overall wellbeing for children and their families.

Bolton Toy Library

Dedicated to enriching disadvantaged children's lives up to the age of eight, Bolton Toy Library facilitates interactive play, lending toys, books, and specialised resources. It serves as a nurturing space for vulnerable families, offering essential support services alongside play opportunities. A Diversity Support Worker will be appointed using the grant, focusing on aiding non-native English-speaking families out of poverty.

Children Today, Chester

Children Today provides grants, advice and guidance that allow children and young people (up to the age of 25) living with disabilities to access specialised equipment (including trikes, adapted buggies, powered wheelchairs, lightweight wheelchairs, bubble tubes, seating systems and tough beds).



Home-Start Trafford, Salford and Wigan

With a mission to provide support to families with young children during challenging times, Home-Start has built a community network of trained volunteers and experts. Their grant will provide targeted aid for local families facing poverty and debt. The funds will also sustain a part-time position dedicated to organising and distributing essential items.

Norbrook Youth Club, Wythenshawe

This youth club empowers young people aged 6 – 18 through a range of weekly sessions in a secure environment. Their grant will be channelled towards enhancing kitchen facilities used for healthy cooking classes. Notably, these improvements will focus on ensuring accessibility for individuals with disabilities.

Prevent2Protect, Salford

This organisation tackles the pressing issue of safeguarding young people through educational workshops. Notably, their GANG for LIFE? project addresses gang-related concerns among those aged 9-16. The grant will allow them to expand the reach and frequency of these workshops.

Swinton Lions Community Sports Foundation

Promoting healthy lifestyles and sports engagement, Swinton Lions Community Sports Foundation leverages Rugby League as a medium for empowerment. The grant will support the development of innovative programs across four targeted community hubs in Manchester, catering to those aged 7-18. The awards will have a different theme for each round of awards, enabling us to spotlight a range of issues depending on what we believe to be most relevant at the time.

Community support scheme

Our community scheme provides grants of up to £500 to charities based in the North West every six months. Here are this year's winners...

Bridging the Gap

Theodora Children's Charity

Children Today Charitable Trust

Child Bereavement UK

Missing People's Helpline

Citywise

Just Drop In

The Countess Charity



"We are thrilled to have the support of the Equilibrium community support scheme, which will go towards our Character Mentoring Programmes in schools in Rusholme and Moss Side. Children are paired with volunteer mentors, mainly university students, who work together to boost their confidence, build their resilience and grow in character strengths to help them succeed in all areas of their lives"
Jess Roper, Manchester Programmes Manager, Citywise

"This winter we have seen a 51% increase in the number of people needing our support. The cost-of-living crisis has hit our communities harder than we could have imagined and, sadly, it shows no sign of abating. Support from the Equilibrium Community Support Scheme will help us to react quickly to the increased needs of our community and remain a constant support during such unprecedented and unpredictable times. Thank you!"

Heidi Exell, Project Manager, Bridging The Gap

The logo for Bridging The Gap, with the words "Bridging" and "Gap" in green and "The" in orange, separated by a stylized orange bridge graphic.

We're very grateful to Equilibrium for their support again. This grant will mean we're able to support even more children with our pathways services and vital adapted equipment including funding towards an adapted trike and bubble tube. This equipment is often truly life-changing for the children we support and their families, offering more opportunities to spend quality time together. Children like Cody, from Ellesmere Port, who's now able to join in playing with his brother and cousins thanks to his adapted trike."
Sarah Hampton, Fundraiser, Children Today Charitable Trust

Team charity days

To give back to the community, Equilibrium offers all employees three days each year to volunteer. They can either choose their own charity or participate in team volunteer days organised by our dedicated Charity Champions at local organisations.

These team efforts have ranged from painting and decorating to raising awareness through leaflet drops. Just this year, our team has made a positive difference at Friends for Leisure, East Cheshire Hospice, The Toy Appeal, Cash for Kids, Just Drop In, The Wingate Centre, and The Message Community Charity.

Well done team!



A look ahead

The Equilibrium Foundation's future continues to look bright.

As we edge closer to raising £1,000,000, we now look to offer a more structured approach in providing larger grants to specific sectors. With the support of our trustee and philanthropy expert, Andrew Evans, we will seek to do this in a way that ensures maximum impact.

Despite our continuous growth we will still retain the ability to pivot quickly, which will allow us to focus on immediate areas of need as they arise.

We can't wait to see all the positive impacts the Foundation will have over the next few years.



Objectives and activities

The Equilibrium Foundation exists to make people's lives better by supporting charitable causes with a particular focus on the North West of England.

We support a wide range of organisations with a particular emphasis on education and disability charities and on helping people experiencing all sorts of disadvantages to have better opportunities for learning and employment.

The principal objective of the charity is to promote and assist, through the provision of grants and other financial assistance, charitable activities and other charitable organisations which may be nominated by the staff and clients of Equilibrium Financial Planning LLP.

We want to have the maximum possible impact, so we mostly support new and smaller charities (typically with incomes of less than £100,000 a year). Grants are normally between £2,000 and £10,000 and we sometimes offer support for more than one year.

In supporting the activities of our fundraisers and in making charitable donations, the trustees have been mindful of the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit at our trustee meetings.

The trustees have complied with the duty in Section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission.

Structure and governance

The governing document is a trust deed dated 8 June 2010. The charity is constituted a trust. Trustees who are employed by Equilibrium Financial Planning LLP are appointed or reappointed on a five-year basis. External trustees are appointed or reappointed every three years.

All trustees give their time voluntarily and do not receive any remuneration or benefits. No

charges or costs are paid by the charity as all these are borne by Equilibrium Financial Planning LLP.

An in-house finance team oversee the finances for the trust and there is minimal risk of fraud. Professional insurance is in place to mitigate risks and provide indemnity cover for the trustees, public liability cover and legal expenses.

Financial review

Brief statement on the charity's policy reserves

It is the charity's policy that any balance held by The Foundation in excess of £2,000 (surplus cash over and above any restricted donations or committed funds) is to be distributed. The trustees will ask the staff of Equilibrium Financial Planning LLP to suggest suitable charitable recipients.

Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees report

Signature(s): 

Full name: Sarah Warburton

Position: Chair

Date: 1 February 2024

Reference and administration details

Charity name: The Equilibrium Foundation

Registered charity number: 1136933

Charity's principal address: Ascot House, Epsom Avenue, Handforth, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 3DF

Accountants: Azets, Ship Canal House, 98 King St, Manchester M2 4WU

Auditors: Azets, Ship Canal House, 98 King St, Manchester M2 4WU

Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
A Evans			
D Jukes			
C Lawson			
B Rogers			
S Warburton	Chair		

Statement of trustees' responsibilities

We confirm that the following representations are made on the basis of enquiries of management and staff with relevant knowledge and experience and, where appropriate, of inspection of supporting documentation, sufficient to satisfy ourselves that we can properly make each of the following representations to you, in connection with your examination of the charity's receipts and payments account (the 'account') and a statement of assets and liabilities (the 'statement') as its annual statement of account for the year ended 31 August 2023.

1. We acknowledge, as trustees our collective responsibility under the Charities Act 2011 for presenting the account and statement and confirm that we have approved the account and statement for the year ended 31 August 2023. We also acknowledge our responsibility for making accurate representations to you. All the accounting records have been made available to you for the purpose of your assignment and all the transactions undertaken by the charity have been properly reflected and recorded in the accounting records. All other records

and related information, including minutes of all trustee and management meetings, have been made available to you.

2. We confirm that the charity is entitled to prepare receipts and payments accounts and is eligible for an independent examination of its account and statement, and that there are no circumstances which we should draw to your attention which would invalidate this eligibility. We acknowledge that the work performed by you is substantially less in scope than an audit performed in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland).

3. All grants, donation and other incoming resources, the receipt of which is subject to specific terms or conditions, have been notified to you. There have been no breaches of terms or conditions during the period in the application of such incoming resources.

4. The charity has satisfactory title to all assets and there are no liens or encumbrances on the charity's assets except as disclosed to you.

5. Other than those disclosed, the charity has not entered into any transactions or has balances outstanding involving trustees, officers or other related parties, which require disclosure under the law. If relevant, appropriate disclosure has been made of the control of the charity.

6. We acknowledge our responsibility for the design and implantation of internal controls to prevent and detect errors or fraud, and have disclosed to you the results of our assessment of the risk that the account and statement may be materially misstated as a result of fraud. We are unaware of any irregularities, including fraud and suspected fraud, involving management, employees or others who have significant roles in internal

control, or those employed by the charity where the fraud could have a material effect on the financial statements. No allegations of such irregularities or breaches have come to our notice.

7. We are unaware of any breaches or possible breaches of statute, regulations, contracts, agreements or the charity's constitution which might result in the charity suffering significant penalties or other loss. No allegations of such irregularities or breaches have come to our notice. We confirm that the charity has had no non-routine communication with Charity Commission during or since the period of which you are unaware.

8. We have reviewed the affairs of the charity and confirm that no income is subject to income or capital gains tax. We have also reviewed the VAT treatment in relation to contractual services provided by the charity and confirm that VAT has been correctly accounted for.

9. The account and statement have been prepared on the going concern basis as we believe that adequate cash and resources will be available to cover the charity's requirements for working capital and capital expenditure for at least the next twelve months.

10. There have been no events since the reporting date which necessitate revision of the figures included in the account and statement or inclusion of a note thereto. Should further material events occur, which may necessitate revision of the figures included in the financial statements or inclusion of a note thereto, we will advise you accordingly.

Receipts and payments accounts


For the period from 01/09/2022 to 31/08/2023

Receipts and payments accounts

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts	86,013	110,041	-	196,054	162,682
A2 Asset and investment sales	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	86,013	110,041	-	196,054	162,682
A3 Payments	69,070	142,007	-	211,077	200,974
A4 Asset and investment purchases	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	69,070	142,007	-	211,077	200,974
Net of receipts (payments)	16,943	-31,966	-	-15,023	-38,292
A5 Transfers between funds	-37,479	37,479	-	-	-38,292
A6 Cash funds last year end	28,663	862	-	29,525	67,817
Cash funds this year end	8,127	6,375	-	14,502	29,525

Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Cash at bank	8,127	6,375	-
B2 Other monetary assets	-	-	-	-
B3 Investment assets	-	-	-	-
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use	-	-	-	-
B5 Liabilities	-	-	-	-

Signed: 

Name: Debbie Jukes

Date: 3 June 2024

Independent examiner's report

Report to the trustees/ members of	The Equilibrium Foundation
On accounts for the year ended	31 August 2023
Charity no (if any)	1136933
Set out on pages	18
Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner	<p>The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.</p> <p>It is my responsibility to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act, • to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act, and • to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.
Basis of independent examiner's statement	<p>My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.</p>
Independent examiner's statement	<p>In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention</p> <p>1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and • to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act have not been met; or <p>2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.</p>

Signed:	Name:	Date:
Relevant professional qualification(s) or body:	Chartered Accountant	
Address	Azets Audit Services Fleet House, New Road, Lancaster LA1 1EZ	



EQUILIBRIUM FOUNDATION

Registered charity number: 1136933

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