



Helpline 01892 570538



Domestic Abuse Volunteer Support Services

Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Year to 31 March 2023

Charity registration number: 1143001

Company registration number: 07660698

Company Information

Trustees	Kristen Paterson	Chair, Resigned November 2023
	Jan Berry	Appointed Chair November 2023
	Kevin Corbett	Deputy Chair
	Alex Conway CTA ACA	Treasurer
	Merle Bigden	Resigned November 2023
	Jane Campbell	
	Sharon Copestake (Venerable)	Appointed November 2022
	Veronica Knight	
	Jenny Knott	Appointed February 2023
	Angela Painter	Resigned July 2022
	Jill Ruddock	Appointed November 2022
	Jackie Sumner	Appointed February 2023
Patrons	Jane Ashton DL	
	Louise Jameson	
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Solicitors	Thomson Snell & Passmore, 3 Lonsdale Gardens, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN1 1NX	
External Examiners	Bourner Bullock, 114 St Martin’s Lane, London WC2N 4BE	
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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

We are extremely proud of the huge courage of our clients over the year, and the commitment and dedication of our volunteers and staff who have worked tirelessly to deliver DAVSS holistic wrap around services for as long as needed, from prevention to crisis intervention and recovery.



Over 2022-23 DAVSS received 1,099 referrals including 68 men and involving 1,729 children, as well as supporting 5,292 helpline calls. We also provided awareness raising / training sessions to agencies, schools, community groups and the faith community about how to recognise domestic abuse and what to do about it.

Clients report that DAVSS support empowers them to make decisions and take action to take control of their lives again, thereby improving life-opportunities for them and their children who are often traumatised by their experience of abuse.

97% of clients report feeling safer after DAVSS support, as well as reporting other positive outcomes such as improved mental health and wellbeing, feeling more informed and empowered, obtaining Protective Injunctions, retaining jobs or getting new ones, starting training courses, living in safer or new accommodation, taking up volunteering, plus better nursery/school attendance and health & wellbeing outcomes for their children. Many other family members and friends, and the community also report benefitting.

Repeat victimisation for DAVSS clients is an extremely low 5% for the year showing the lasting impact of our focus on both crisis intervention and recovery, and support for as long as needed.

Over the year our volunteers provided an amazing 32,578 hours equivalent to over three and a half years of volunteer time – an enormous investment by the community in tackling domestic abuse in West Kent and a huge return on investment for our partners and funders.

DAVSS life changing services are a huge team effort and my heartfelt thanks go to everyone involved in both supporting DAVSS and delivering our much-needed services. Thank you so much for everything you do.

Kristen Paterson

Resigned November 2023

Domestic Abuse Volunteer Support Services (DAVSS)

CHARITY AND GOVERNANCE INFORMATION for the Year to 31 March 2023

Governance and Structure

DAVSS was incorporated on 7th June 2011 under the Companies Act 2006 as a private company limited by guarantee and registered as a Charity on 21st July 2011. It is governed by a memorandum and articles of association which have been in place since incorporation.

Board of Trustees and Management

DAVSS has a strong and committed Board of Trustees who are also the Directors of the charity. They are drawn from the local community and represent legal, financial, IT, community safety, voluntary sector, faith community and charity expertise, and remain up to date by professional training and/or trustee development.. One of our Trustees is a volunteer representative and has lived experience of Domestic Abuse (DA).

Trustees met quarterly over the last year with the following advisors to discuss strategic and operational aspects of the Charity:

Henu Cummins DAVSS Chief Executive Officer to August 2023, Claire Wiliams, DAVSS Chief Executive Officer from September 2023; and the Kent Police Area Commanders for Tunbridge Wells, Tonbridge & Malling and Sevenoaks & Swanley.

Public benefit

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty in Section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing DAVSS aims and objectives and in planning activities and setting policies and priorities for the year ahead. DAVSS charitable objectives are shown on page 8.

Domestic Abuse Volunteer Support Services (DAVSS)

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES AND DIRECTORS

For the Year to 31st March 2023

Our Reason for Being

Police reported 2.4 million DA-related incidents in England and Wales in 21/22

DAVSS was set up in 2011 following a successfully evaluated pilot project, which demonstrated a real need for a support service for people experiencing domestic abuse in West Kent. Referrals and helpline calls to DAVSS, along with client and agency feedback, continue to demonstrate that this need is crucial and ongoing.

18% of all crimes in England and Wales were DA-related in 21/22 compared with 15% in 19/20

During the pandemic we saw a sharp increase in DA but now that the restrictions are lifted the number of cases being reported has fallen although they remain 15% above pre-pandemic levels. Additionally, according to the latest figures available, the complexity of cases has continued to be much greater (38% involved violence in 21/22 compared with 35% in 19/20), so victims require multiple interventions and support for a longer period, something we expect to see continue for the foreseeable future.

In 21/22 in Kent there were 21 DA crimes per 1,000 people, compared with an average for England and Wales of 15

There is a widespread perception that because of its relative affluence (albeit with pockets of deprivation), DA is less likely to occur in West Kent but nothing could be further from the truth. DA is pervasive and respects no boundaries, be they ones of gender, socio-economic status, ethnic origin, age or disability and statistics show this to be the case.

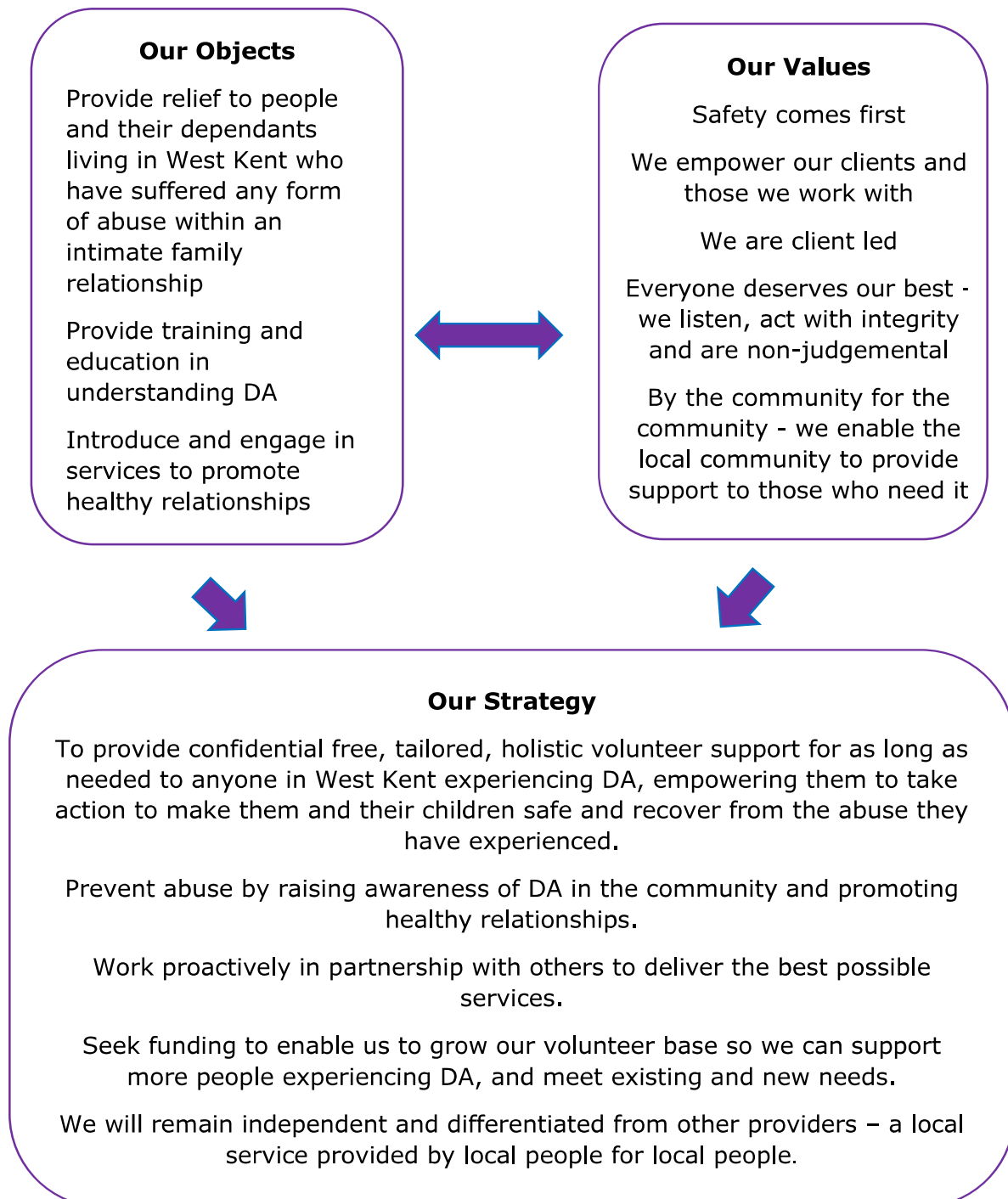
38% of all violent crimes in Kent in 21/22 in Kent were DA related, the second highest incidence in England and Wales

When victims have assets, they often do not meet the criteria for legal aid or benefits, even when they are prevented from accessing their assets by their abuser. DAVSS' vital volunteer support enables victims to secure the resources they need to take action to make them and their children safe.

The DAVSS service model is unique in that it is not time-limited, is holistic and is entirely tailored to the needs of the victim which can vary very widely. The low repeat victimisation rate we achieve along with feedback from our service users and our high reputation all demonstrate the effectiveness of our approach.

Our Objects, Values and Strategy

We believe that everyone deserves to feel safe in their intimate relationships. Our vision is that anyone who is experiencing domestic abuse of any kind by an intimate partner or close relative should have the knowledge and support necessary to protect themselves from harm and feel empowered to take control of their life again, whatever the level of risk. This vision drives our aims, our values, and strategy:



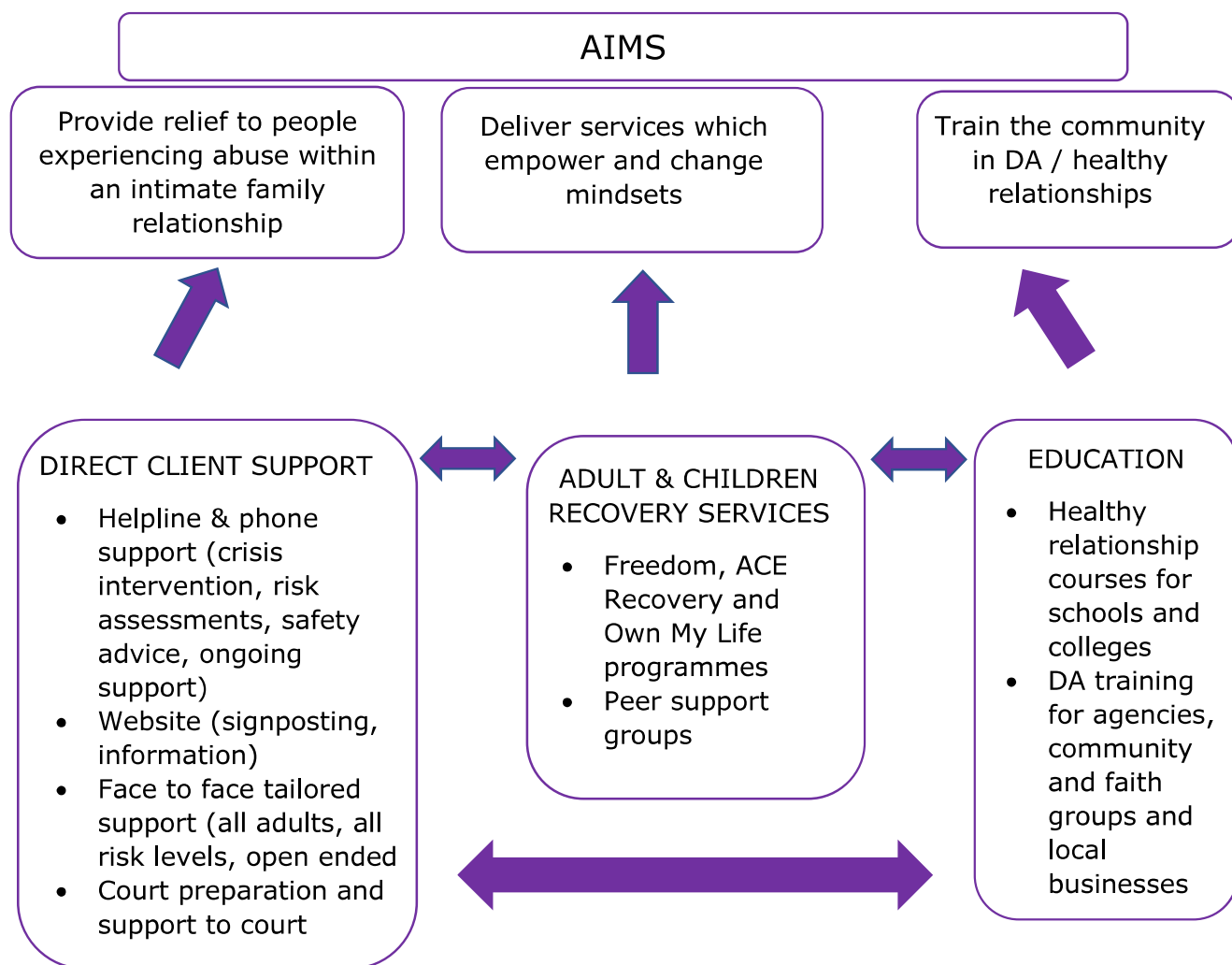
Our Services

DAVSS provides vital support services for anyone (men, women, LGBTQ+, ethnic minorities, disabled people) experiencing domestic abuse, who often have no-one else to turn to and are in desperate need of support. We work with clients from immediate crisis intervention through to recovery, empowering them to make decisions and take action to make them and their children safe.

Our services are client-centred, volunteer-led, free and confidential, include all levels of risk and are not time limited. We provide pro bono solicitors, interpreters, and recovery programmes when needed.

We work very closely with other agencies, the voluntary sector, and community groups (e.g., Police, Social Services, Health, Education, Housing, Citizens Advice), as multi-organisation partnership working is vital to the provision of DAVSS' holistic wrap-around service and our ability to support our clients effectively.

We also provide public education and raise community awareness about this serious issue to try to ensure earlier reporting, prevention and reduction wherever possible, mitigating the harmful consequences to victims and their children.



Our People

Our clients

The pervasiveness of DA is such that our clients come from all walks of life and may be of any gender, sexuality, age or ethnic origin. In 22/23 we had 1,099 referrals, 68 of whom were men, 117 were from a minority ethnic group, 26 from the LGBTQ+ community and 126 disabled people.

People identifying themselves as disabled are underrepresented in our referral group compared with those in the West Kent population, as are men and people from the LGBTQ+ community, and we continue to focus our efforts on reaching these groups.

Ethnic minority referrals to DAVSS (11% of the total) are higher than the proportion of people from ethnic minority backgrounds residing in West Kent, which shows some success in reaching these communities. However, more work is needed to ensure all ethnic groups are being reached and that the complexities of their experience and their diverse needs are fully understood and addressed.

Here are some of our clients' stories from the immediate crisis through to recovery (names have been changed and stories anonymised for client safety).

Abdul, a young adult with learning difficulties, was referred to DAVSS by the Police after they were called to attend a DA incident. He had been suffering severe emotional and psychological abuse and bullying at the hands of his brother for some time, and had sustained a number of injuries. Following a risk assessment and a safety plan being out in place with Abdul, DAVSS secured help from housing and social services. Abdul was re-housed and with DAVSS' support managed to live independently from his family and start a new life.

Stella had been married for 19 years when her husband became violent after forming a relationship with a male neighbour. One of their three children witnessed the husband buying drugs which the school reported to social services, resulting in him being denied access to any of his children. Violent acts and threats of arson ensued, as well as severe harassment by phone. DAVSS assisted Stella to secure a Non Molestation order which he breached, and he prevented her from entering her home. He was arrested and with DAVSS' help and support from social services Stella was rehoused out of the area.

Nadine's 14 year marriage was volatile and had often been abusive with some violent episodes including strangulation. The couple finally separated permanently and the husband began a new relationship. The divorce was acrimonious and the husband demanded joint custody of their two sons which Nadine felt was unsafe due to the husband's poor anger management and abuse. He and his new partner subjected Nadine to severe harassment and psychological abuse. With DAVSS' support she secured a Non Molestation order, a child protection order from social services, and additional home security from the Police. Nadine and her children attended DAVSS recovery programmes and eventually she was able to move on with her life with a new partner.

Susanna had fled from her abusive partner a year before and although a Non Molestation order was in place he had breached it several times and it was due to expire. DAVSS supported her through the court process of securing an extension. When her partner discovered her whereabouts and began to harass and threaten her DAVSS referred her case to MARAC and helped her to secure a change of accommodation. After attending the Freedom Programme Susanna felt sufficiently empowered to move forward on her own.

Our staff

Our volunteers are supported by 9.7 FTE managers and staff including five trained Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs). Managers provide coaching, mentoring, case supervision and quality assurance, and other staff provide administrative and other support.

Funding secured during the period of the pandemic enabled us to ensure we could increase staff numbers and therefore provide our volunteers with the extra coaching and support they need when dealing with the increased complexity of referrals and Helpline calls received since COVID.

We are grateful to our funders for enabling us to maintain this level of support. We are also grateful to have received new funding for a Children's Independent Domestic Abuse Advisor (IDVA) to enable us to extend our children's recovery programmes to meet the increased need.

Training is vital in order to increase the resilience of our organisation and upskill staff and volunteers, thereby creating capacity for further growth, enhancing job satisfaction, and ensuring service delivery meets national standards and best practice. Over the last year managers have received leadership training, and we also offer externally delivered mentoring for senior staff, along with inhouse and externally delivered training (including refresher training) for all staff and volunteers.

Our volunteers

Our services are delivered by our current team of 35 volunteers, which includes DA and Helpline advisors, volunteers delivering the peer support group; and others who assist with admin, coordination and fundraising. Our professionally trained volunteers commit to a minimum of 5 hours per week to supporting the DAVSS Helpline or 10 hours a week supporting clients, but most volunteers' hours significantly exceed this.

We are constantly recruiting new volunteers, and our volunteers come from a range of backgrounds. Some have life experience as survivors of domestic abuse themselves (survivors are recruited two or more years post abuse). Most of our volunteers are women but we are fortunate to also have male volunteers, so we are able to give our clients the option of having a male advisor should they prefer this. The enormous professionalism, dedication, tenacity, patience and efficiency of our volunteers ensures that our work is of the highest quality and meets the often complex needs of our clients.

New volunteer DA and Helpline Advisors have the opportunity to shadow experienced staff and volunteers, before undergoing 14 days' accredited Quality Mark DA training, plus 6 days' training on DAVSS policies, processes and procedures. They are then mentored by a fellow volunteer or qualified member of staff before 'flying solo' supporting their own clients. Further training and personal development opportunities have been provided during the year to staff and volunteers by in-house training, outside speakers and attendances at conferences and workshops.

Over the year, volunteer numbers have reduced due to the impact of the increased cost of living on some volunteers' financial circumstances which has necessitated their leaving volunteering and taking up paid employment. These volunteers tell us that volunteering with DAVSS has given them the skills and confidence to obtain paid work.

As can be seen from the quotes below, volunteers themselves say that they find the work very challenging but satisfying at the same time, and feel that they are making a real difference to both their clients and to their own personal development.

Volunteering for DAVSS is very rewarding, especially working with clients at crisis and see how the support we provide changes their lives for the better. They are back at being themselves which is great to witness.

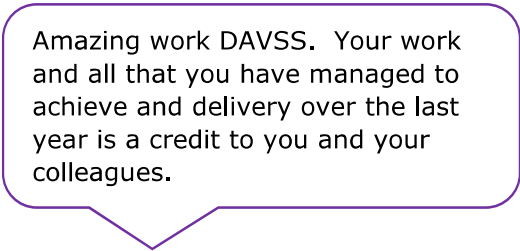
I support clients in court and every time I find out that my client gets a Non Molestation order I find it very rewarding. You get something back for yourself.

Our Funders

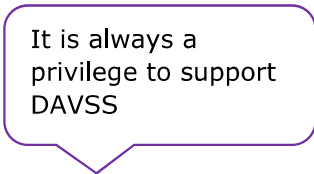
The support of our funders has been critical to our continuing success, and we are indebted to their understanding of the challenges of domestic abuse, and their generosity in supporting the provision of our services. Our funders have recognised the impact of the current financial situation and where possible some of them have provided additional funding available to help address this.

Our funders include public sector agencies and organisations, independent foundations, trusts, community groups, the faith community and our many individual donors. We could not deliver our services without their incredible support.

The highly positive client outcomes achieved, and most importantly the positive response of our service users, together with feedback from referring agencies, demonstrates the life-changing impact of this funding. Funders have said:



Amazing work DAVSS. Your work and all that you have managed to achieve and delivery over the last year is a credit to you and your colleagues.



It is always a privilege to support DAVSS

Our Partner Agencies

DAVSS continues to work closely with a wide range of organisations in the area and could not deliver our tailored holistic wrap-around services without their support. This includes the police, solicitors, housing, the Courts, Witness Care Service, social services, health, schools, and others. In particular, we work closely with the three Community Safety Partnerships and the three local authorities in West Kent who have consistently supported DAVSS with funding, along with Kent Police. We also work with partner agencies regarding the new abuse law and obligations to support victims of abuse wherever they reside and including those experiencing controlling and coercive behaviour, and the new partnership structures.

We continue to work with voluntary organisations (from debt advice through to equine therapy), community groups and the faith community.

Many of our partners have reluctantly extended their waiting lists or have reduced some services due to financial pressures. Our volunteers and staff have stepped up to these challenges and ensured that DAVSS services have continued to be delivered seamlessly.

We are very grateful to all our partners, and to the business community, for their support over the year.

Our Achievements

In 22/23 we received 1,099 referrals, 9% more than pre COVID levels

Average hours per volunteer was 795, 19%, more than pre pandemic

Our volunteer Advisors provided 1,662 legal option sessions

Helpline calls supported totalled 5,290 36% more than pre-pandemic

99 civil and 8 criminal court proceedings

220 people attended our recovery programmes. DAY course participants totalled 641

1,729 children were involved in the referrals supported in the year

We are proud of the huge courage of our clients, and the dedication and commitment of our volunteers and staff who work tirelessly to provide highest quality customised wrap-around services for as long as needed by the client, from immediate crisis intervention through to recovery.

We have continued our learning from COVID and have ensured our services meet the needs of the new post-COVID environment; including the challenges caused by a more constant perpetrator presence as the hybrid /working from home model has been more widely adopted, and the impact of the financial environment over the year and the increased cost of living.

We continue to support clients to obtain legal protection for them and their children. This includes delivering legal options sessions, assisting in the preparation of court papers, liaising closely with the courts, and acting as a McKenzie Friend where required, and DAVSS pro bono support by partner solicitors and a barrister. Clients welcome this support and say they could not have accessed vital legal protection without our volunteers and staff, as the trauma they have suffered can severely reduce their capacity to cope with what they perceive as an intimidating and daunting court process.

Following COVID we have reinstated our face-to-face trauma led recovery programmes for adults and children. Clients tell us these help them and their children recover from the abuse they have experienced, better recognise the nature of abusive relationships and empower them to move on and lead independent lives again. Our Peer Support Groups have also received extremely positive feedback and clients tell us they are a key part of recovery.

We resumed our training and awareness raising activities about DA with schools, agency front line staff, community groups, professional groups, businesses and the faith community on which we have consistently received very positive feedback.

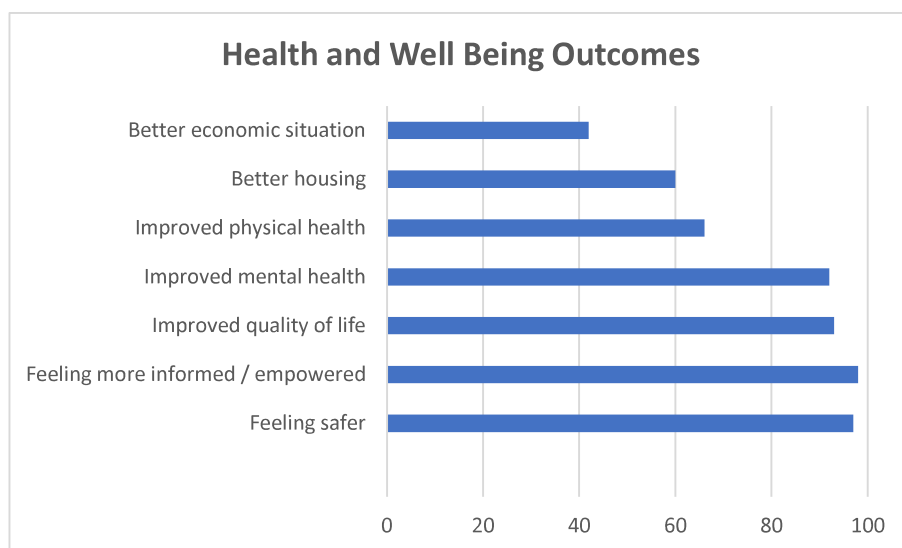
DAVSS' services has been recognised over 23-23 by the following awards: Tunbridge Wells Love Where You Live Awards 2022 – Volunteer of the Year and DAVSS was a finalist for the Charity of the Year; and the Kent Charity Awards 2022 – Best use of Volunteers

Our Impact

We assess our impact using a combination of quantitative and qualitative measures. Quantitative measures include client surveys, the number of protective legal orders obtained, repeat victimisation rates and value for money. Qualitative measures are primarily in the form of the feedback we receive from clients, partner agencies, funders and others in the field of DA; but we also, on case closure, compile case studies which serve to document the outcomes of individual cases.

Quantitative Measures

Pre-and-post support **Wellbeing Surveys** show the impact of DAVSS support with clients reporting the following **percentage** improvements in different aspects of their life:



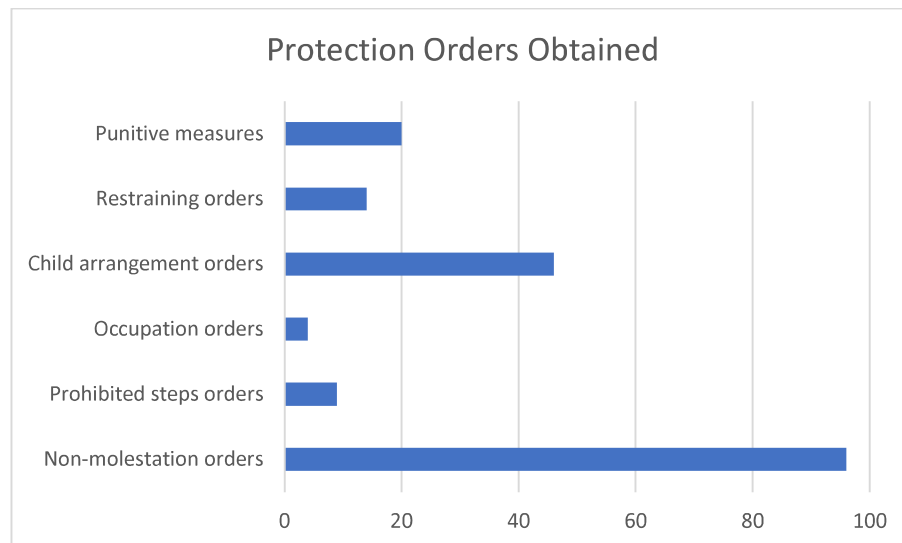
The overall aim of our Freedom Programme for adults is to improve the self-confidence of our clients which can be badly affected by the trauma of abuse and to equip them with the ability to recognise the difference between healthy and abusive relationships. Our post programme evaluations consistently show that clients feel they have made a significant improvement in all the areas addressed as a result of their attendance on this programme.

The Own My Own Life Programme, designed for those clients who have succeeded in moving on after experiencing an abusive relationship, aims to improve their feelings of physical safety for both themselves and their children and to help them achieve a better quality of life by picking up the threads of their former life including securing employment where appropriate.

41 children participated in the children's recovery programmes (ACE and Freedom), all of whom reported a greater level of understanding and ability to recognise abusive behaviour and what to do about it, than before attending the course. Most importantly, all indicated that they understood they were in no way to blame for the abuse and had improved wellbeing outcomes.

641 young people aged 14-15 attended Domestic Abuse Awareness sessions for Young People (DAY), the primary aims of which are to improve understanding and recognition of abuse and equip them with the means to deal with abusive behaviours should they encounter any.

During the year we were able to secure 169 **Protection Orders** and 20 **Punitive Measures**, thus helping our clients and their dependents keep safe.



Further evidence of our effectiveness is provided by the low rate of **repeat victimisation** we are able to achieve. This stands at 5% for 2022-23.

Additionally, our volunteer model ensures that we can offer **excellent value for money**. In the 12 months from 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022 our volunteers provided a total of **32,578** hours on casework, the helpline, project work, administration and fundraising, which, calculated at the Kent average earnings rate, equates to a cash equivalent of **£550,000**, an extraordinary return on investment. This represents a massive return on partners' support, funding, and a huge investment in our community and by the community.

Qualitative Measures – Feedback From clients

This time six months ago I wasn't even getting out of bed, I wasn't getting the kids to school on time, I wasn't seeing anyone. My mindset is so different now. I'm so proud of myself. The only way I can describe it is that I feel empowered. I don't know what I would do without you guys. You've given me my empowerment back. I love you all so much. You're an angel.

DAVSS has been amazing, helping me sort out my economic, housing problem, guiding me through charities that can help me arrange my life in the right direction. My advisor is such an amazing and supportive person, who makes me feel warm and safe. She has been next to me through the darkest moments in my life and helped me stand on my feet. I will always be grateful for everything DAVSS has helped me and how it has empowered me.

You are really helpful and supportive. You are there to help people. Anyone who is in this situation should contact you straight away. You are a big help to someone who has no one in this country. You are the inspiration for me, without you I wouldn't have come this far. I won't find a friend like you, you've helped me all along the way.

DAVSS has been my lifeline ever since I first contacted them, I now have more confidence to manage my situation. The support I have received has been lifechanging

Thank you, you've been wonderful. It should be mandatory for victims of domestic abuse. Freedom was great and it should be taught in schools. Its been really good support and really appreciated. I don't really want to be closed off. It's been a great help.

Thank you for all your help, before working with you I was trying to navigate the court system on my own, your help and advice with the statements made all the difference, before I was feeling really anxious but I was able to go into court feeling confident and was so happy when the judge found all my allegations as fact.

I think you guys have been amazing and really helpful. The teachers tell me that the kids are really settled now and don't go into school crying. I couldn't have done it without you.

I would not be alive without DAVSS. I felt believed and began to see he was the culprit. I was not a whore / tramp but a decent human being and a good Mum. I am so grateful for the help and support me and the children have received from DAVSS

The course was eye-opening - very instructive - life changing. It has helped my self-belief and confidence. I fully recommend it to everybody. It's helped my mental health. Thank you for everything.

Brilliant course. I have found the confidence to apply to court for child arrangement order and feel that I am more in control of my life now.

I would definitely recommend the face to face course. Listening to others and talking over our "shared" experiences I have learnt a lot about abusive behaviours. The course has clarified my suspicions and built my confidence. I NEEDED this course

This course has helped pull me out of a very dark place and enable me to move forwards on my own understanding what the abuse was, how it happened and that it was never my fault.

From partner agencies

DAVSS occupies a crucial role in West Kent supporting and advocating for vulnerable victims of domestic abuse. Their trained advisers are always ready to help; it really is life-changing support (Kent Police).

A victim said she had no idea how to get support but DAVSS validates her experiences of emotional abuse and she appreciated the backing and reassurance from professionals. She felt very supported. She lost her confidence but DAVSS helped her to see her own worth (Social Services).

We have a fantastic working relationship with DAVSS, they are our go to on specialist domestic abuse and safeguarding matters. We know they always have the client's best interests at heart and they act with integrity and the utmost professionalism (Housing).

Fantastic work, great job on getting that Order. It's great to hear such a positive outcome from a MARAC referral, very well done. The Non- Molestation Order certainly seems to have had a positive outcome. Really good work and helps us from a police perspective (Kent Police)

We are looking forward to DAVSS delivering another DAY session to our students. We have had positive feedback from the students and from parents since your year 8 visit. The work you guys are doing is life changing.

Thank you for running this group, we think it will be really beneficial for the children and it's good to know what the group involves in case we need it again for other children

From other organisations

We are so grateful to be able to onward refer our clients to DAVSS and joint work them which is essential for sustainable move on for our clients. We love that like us DAVSS work hard to secure the best possible results for their clients. The fact that it is long term is life changing!
(Charity)

Thank you again for inviting me to meet DAVSS volunteers and staff. I thought the charity was amazing. I loved how in depth the charity goes and how quickly you contact your clients. I was taken aback and thoroughly enjoyed learning more (SARC).

Finally, the client **case studies** compiled during the year (a selection of which are included in an earlier section) show that as a result of DAVSS volunteer support clients experience many positive outcomes including living in safer or new accommodation, improved well-being and mental/physical health, retaining jobs or getting new ones, starting training courses, taking up volunteering, and reporting health improvements plus improved wellbeing for their children. Many other family members and friends also benefit from the changes made to survivors' lives.

Conclusion

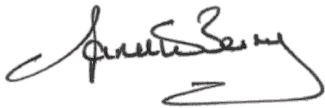
Over the next year, we plan to seek new accommodation arrangements as we have out-grown our current office space. We also plan to improve efficiency by implementing a new IT database. Recruiting new volunteers will continue throughout the year as a key priority, and we will recruit case workers to provide interim support while new volunteer recruitment and training is underway.

Once again, our heartfelt thanks go to our courageous clients. Also, to DAVSS volunteers and staff - their professionalism, dedication and commitment, has been more important than ever and without them we could not have met the challenges of the post COVID environment, nor provided our much-needed support services.

We have put a cash value on the hours spent by our volunteers and the investment by our funders in tackling domestic abuse, but our clients tell us that their improved well-being and the improved life chances of their children resulting from the support of our volunteers, are way beyond any financial value.

We would also like to thank the many partner organisations, our funders, and the community, who have supported DAVSS over the year - we could not deliver our vital services without you.

Approved by the trustees of the charity on 18/12/2023..... and signed on its behalf by: Type text here



Jan Berry

Chair



Alexander Conway

Treasurer

Domestic Abuse Volunteer Support Services

Finance Report

The Financial Statements show the financial results for DAVSS. 2023 was another strong year for income generation, with total income of £473,480 (2022: £436,908). The stable income level was again due to continued support from all of DAVSS main supporters along with funding from the National Lottery, which provided additional funding of £123,619 in the year ended 31 March 2023.

Of the total income receivable for the year £224,787 was unrestricted and £248,693 was for specific projects (March 2022 £217,953 and £218,955 respectively). This balanced split of types of funding has allowed DAVSS to meet its objectives for the financial year and leaves it in a positive position to continue its work going forward.

During the period, total expenditure increased by £83,262 from £340,786 in 2021/22 to £424,048 this financial year. Total expenditure was split £205,329 to unrestricted activities (2022: £125,861) and £218,719 to specific projects (2022: £214,925). The main reason, as in the prior year, for increased expenditure is a result of increased staff costs in the year. By increasing the number of staff and thus associated staff costs DAVSS has been able to ensure increased support to its volunteers and provide additional assistance to more complex and time-consuming cases that have arisen out of Covid-19.

For the 2022/23 financial year the charity is able to report a net surplus of £49,432 in the year (2022: £96,122 surplus). The majority of this surplus has arisen from unrestricted funds £29,974 with restricted funds contributing £19,458 of the surplus.

Total reserves have therefore increased from £409,484 to £458,916 of which £35,047 is for restricted purposes and £95,000 is a designated reserve leaving £328,869 free reserves to meet day-to-day expenditure.

The designated reserves comprise £95,000 to fund any future relocation of the offices and costs associated with hiring suitable office space and to meet on-going statutory obligations to DAVSS employed staff.

Reserves Policy

The current reserves policy is to keep approximately six months running costs in general/free reserve. Consequently, with average monthly expenditure at £35,337, the free reserves of £328,869 at the end of March 2023 are above the target level (9 months cover), providing the charity with an adequate buffer to meet and deliver its services were any unexpected events were to occur.

Free reserves comprise the total reserves available to the charity, less those reserves whose uses are restricted or else designated for specific purposes. The Trustees actively review the policy for maintaining free reserves, taking into

consideration the major risks faced by the charity, their likely impact on income and planned expenditure, and an assessment of the ways to mitigate such risks.

Going concern

The charity's financial position and performance has been outlined in the financial review above. The Trustees have assessed projected future income, expenditure, and cash flows over a 3-year period to March 2026. Consideration has been given to the stability, predictability and diversity of various income streams in making this assessment. The Trustees believe that the Charity's financial resources and contingency planning is sufficient to ensure the ability of the Charity to continue as a going concern for the foreseeable future and therefore the financial statements have been prepared on this basis.

Investment Policy

The Trustees have continued to adopt a conservative investment policy that seeks to maximize the benefits of its cash flow and is not seeking to build up any long-term reserve. Any cash surplus to immediate requirements is kept on a charity cash deposit with Scottish Widows & Skipton. The Scottish Widows & Skipton accounts are currently at capacity in respect of the £85,000 Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS). The trustees will actively exploring further opportunities to maximise returns on funds that are not required for immediate purposes and keep the investment policy under consistent review.

Risk Management Statement

The Trustees actively review both the strategic and operational risks which the charity faces. These cover both short and long term risks and in particular concern financial sustainability and reputation. The Trustees confirm that they are satisfied that strategies, systems and controls considered appropriate for a charity of its size are, as far as possible, in place to mitigate any significant risk. Although DAVSS continues to have good success rates in securing project funding, this is within the context of an ever-challenging funding environment. The Trustees are aware that careful management and planning is required to mitigate against this, which includes on-going review of budgeting and costing procedures and ensuring adequate monitoring and reporting procedures. The Trustees have in place the necessary policies and procedures on a wide range of issues for a service of this type including a user's charter, protection from abuse, equality and diversity, health and safety, vulnerable adults, child protection and safeguarding, lone working, compliance with fire regulation tests, diversity and financial controls policy and procedures.

Domestic Abuse Volunteer Support Services

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Domestic Abuse Volunteer Support Services

I report to the trustees (who are also Directors for the purpose of company law) on my examination of the financial statements of Domestic Abuse Volunteer Support Services ('the charitable company') for the year ended 31 March 2023 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet and related notes.

This report is made solely to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with section 145 of the Charities Act 2011. My work has been undertaken so that I might state to the charity's trustees those matters I am required to state to them in this report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, I do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's trustees as a body, for my work, for this report, or for the opinions I have formed.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of charitable company you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the financial statements of the charitable company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of the charitable company's financial statements carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act') and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

An independent examination does not involve gathering all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently does not cover all the matters that an auditor considers in giving their opinion on the financial statements. The planning and conduct of an audit goes beyond the limited assurance that an independent examination can provide. Consequently I express no opinion as to whether the financial statements present a 'true and fair' view and my report is limited to those specific matters set out in the independent examiner's statement.

Independent examiner's statement

Since the charitable 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 ICAEW, which is one of the listed bodies.

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

- accounting records were not kept in respect of the charitable company as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
- the financial statements do not accord with those records; or

- the financial statements do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the financial statements give a 'true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
- the financial statements 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 financial statements to be reached.

Bourner Bullock

Russell Joseph ACA

Bourner Bullock

Chartered Accountants

114 St Martin's Lane

Covent Garden

London

WC2N 4BE

Date:.....18.12.2023.....

Domestic Abuse Volunteer Support Services

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The trustees (who are also the directors for the purpose of company law) are responsible for preparing the Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the trustees must prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). 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 the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period.

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- a) select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- b) observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- c) make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- d) state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- e) prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue to operate.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charitable company's transactions and 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 company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Domestic Abuse Volunteer Support Services

Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

(Including Income and Expenditure Account and Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses)

	Note	Unrestricted Funds 2023	Restricted Funds 2023	Designated Funds 2023	Total Funds 2023	Total 2022
		£	£	£	£	£
Income from						
Donations and legacies	4	221,588	125,074	-	346,662	316,209
<i>Charitable activities:</i>						
The National Lottery Fund		-	123,619	-	123,619	119,265
<i>Other trading activities:</i>						
Fundraising		1,763	-	-	1,763	1,349
Investment income	5	1,436	-	-	1,436	85
Total income		224,787	248,693	-	473,480	436,908
Expenditure on:						
Raising funds		144	90	-	234	198
Charitable activities	6	205,185	218,629	-	423,814	340,588
Total expenditure		205,329	218,719	-	424,048	340,786
Net income/(expenditure) and net movement in funds for the year		19,458	29,974	-	49,432	96,122
Reconciliation of:						
Total funds brought forward		309,411	5,073	95,000	409,484	313,362
Transfers between funds		-	-	-	-	-
Total funds carried forward	12	328,869	35,047	95,000	458,916	409,484

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year. All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

Domestic Abuse Volunteer Support Services

Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2023

Charity registration number: 1143001
Company registration number: 07660698

	Note	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	9	2,822	4,233
Current assets			
Debtors	10	19,525	2,621
Cash at bank and in hand		456,487	433,164
Total current assets		476,012	435,785
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	11	19,918	30,534
Net current assets		456,094	405,251
Net assets/(liabilities)		458,916	409,484
Funds of the Charity			
Unrestricted income funds	12	328,869	309,411
Restricted income funds	12	35,047	5,073
Designated funds	12	95,000	95,000
Total funds		458,916	409,484

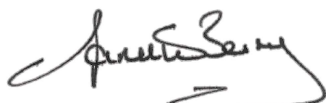
For the financial year ending 31 March 2023 the company was entitled to exemption under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

No members have required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year ended 31 March 2023 in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

The directors acknowledge their responsibility for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and for the preparation of accounts.

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

Approved by the trustees, and authorised for issue on 18/12/2023 and signed on their behalf by:



Jan Berry

Chair



Alexander Conway

Treasurer

Domestic Abuse Volunteer Support Services

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

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.

Basis of preparation

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 (2nd Edition, effective January 2019) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

Domestic Abuse Volunteer Support Services 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.

Donations

Voluntary income including donations, gifts and grants that provide core funding or are 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.

Government grants

Grants that do not impose specified future performance-related conditions on the recipient are recognised in income when the grant proceeds are received or receivable.

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.

Domestic Abuse Volunteer Support Services

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

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.

Support costs

Support costs include central functions and have been allocated to activity cost categories on a basis consistent with the use of resources, for example, allocating property costs by floor areas, or per capita, staff costs by the time spent and other costs by their usage.

Governance costs

These include the costs attributable to the Charity's compliance with constitutional and statutory requirements, including audit, strategic management and trustees' meetings and reimbursed expenses.

Financial instruments

The Charity only enters into basic financial instrument transactions that result in the recognition of financial assets and liabilities like trade and other debtors and creditors.

Financial assets that are measured at cost and amortised cost are assessed at the end of each reporting period for objective evidence of impairment. If objective evidence of impairment is found, an impairment loss is recognised in profit or loss.

Financial assets and liabilities are offset and the net amount reported in the Balance Sheet when there is an enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously.

The Charity does not have anything other than basic financial instruments.

Tangible Fixed Assets

Individual fixed assets costing £1,000 or more are capitalised at cost and are depreciated over their estimated useful economic lives on a straight line basis as follows:

Office equipment	25% straight line basis
-------------------------	--------------------------------

Debtors

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 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.

Domestic Abuse Volunteer Support Services

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

Creditors

Creditors are classified as current liabilities if the Charity does not have an unconditional right, at the end of the reporting period, to defer settlement of the creditor for at least twelve months after the reporting date, otherwise they are presented as non-current liabilities. Creditors are recognised initially at the transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

Fund accounting

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 funds available only towards a restricted purpose as instructed by the donor of the funds. The designated fund is held to provide for the upcoming termination of the premises lease and the costs of relocating.

2 Judgements

Estimates and judgements are continually evaluated and are based on historical experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances.

The trustees consider that there are no significant areas of judgements or estimates.

3 Employee numbers

The number of employees during the year was 12 (2022: 12). No employees received more than £60,000 from the charity in the year.

During the year, volunteers provided support for victims of domestic abuse, as well as taking helpline calls, assisting with both admin and funding, and leading the peer support group.

4 Income from donations

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Grants (Community Safety Partnership/ Local Authorities/ Health)	59,423	52,668	112,091	120,454
Independent trust grants	131,226	72,406	203,632	131,773
Private donations	30,939	-	30,939	63,982
	221,588	125,074	346,662	316,209

Domestic Abuse Volunteer Support Services

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

5 Investment Income

All of the investment income totalling £1,436 (2022: £85) arises from money held in interest bearing deposit accounts.

6 Expenditure on Charitable Activities

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total funds 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Direct costs (see note 6.1)	157,970	163,010	320,980	261,443
Support costs (see note 6.2)	44,815	55,619	100,434	76,936
Governance costs (see note 6.3)	2,400	-	2,400	2,210
Total	205,185	218,629	423,814	340,588

6.1 Analysis of direct costs

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total funds 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Staff salaries	144,471	149,080	293,551	240,019
Employers' national insurance	10,841	11,187	22,028	16,515
Employers' pension costs	2,658	2,743	5,401	4,909
Total	157,970	163,010	320,980	261,443

Domestic Abuse Volunteer Support Services

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

6.2 Analysis of support costs

	Unrestricted 2023 £	Restricted 2023 £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Staff salaries	7,604	7,846	15,450	12,631
Employers' national insurance	570	589	1,159	869
Employers' pension costs	140	144	284	259
Other staff costs	-	-	-	433
Staff entertainment/gifts	1,029	1,163	2,192	979
Volunteers' expenses	3,543	6,456	9,999	147
Staff expenses	236	2,401	2,637	9,255
Training & development	3,961	10,484	14,445	13,930
Meetings & room hire	-	3,222	3,222	437
Recruitment	1,594	2,779	4,373	2,819
Day programme	336	1,059	1,395	211
Recovery programme	710	607	1,317	-
Clinical Supervision	378	3,028	3,406	-
PPS & telephone	1,612	7,008	8,620	9,902
IT technical support	297	6	303	1,588
Computer software	6,532	5,408	11,940	10,800
Insurance	972	-	972	953
Subscriptions	3,254	489	3,743	251
Bank fees	100	-	100	31
Advertising fees	-	155	155	120
Foreign exchange differences	3	-	3	-
Accountancy fees	6,093	2,775	8,868	9,562
Legal fees	-	-	-	215
Consulting fees	4,440	-	4,440	131
Depreciation	1,411	-	1,411	1,411
Total	44,815	55,619	100,434	76,936

Domestic Abuse Volunteer Support Services

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

6.3 Analysis of governance costs

	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Trustees' expenses	-	1,010
Independent examination fee	2,400	1,200
Total	2,400	2,210

7 Trustees' remuneration and expenses

No trustees, nor any persons connected with them, have received any remuneration from the Charity during the current year or the previous year.

No benefits from the Charity were received during the year to 31 March 2023 (2022: £1,010 to cover travel expenses).

8 Staff costs

Analysis of staff costs and remuneration including key management personnel:

	2023 £	2022 £
Salaries	309,001	252,650
Employers' national insurance costs	23,187	17,384
Employers' pension costs	5,685	5,168
Total	337,873	275,202

Domestic Abuse Volunteer Support Services

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

9 Fixed assets

	Office equipment £
Cost or valuation	
At 1 April 2022	5,644
Additions	-
At 31 March 2023	5,644
Depreciation	
At 1 April 2022	(1,411)
Charge for the year	(1,411)
At 31 March 2023	(2,822)
Carrying amount	
At 31 March 2022	4,233
At 31 March 2023	2,822

10 Debtors: amounts falling due within one year

	Unrestricted 2023 £	Restricted 2023 £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Trade debtors	-	120	120	-
Prepayments & accrued income	14,880	4,525	19,405	2,621
	14,880	4,645	19,525	2,621

11 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	Unrestricted 2023 £	Restricted 2023 £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Trade creditors	1,013	-	1,013	2,297
Accruals & deferred income	3,269	-	3,269	12,603
NEST creditor	894	282	1,176	1,004
HMRC creditor	11,025	3,285	14,310	14,630
Other creditors	150	-	150	-
	16,351	3,567	19,918	30,534

Domestic Abuse Volunteer Support Services

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

12 Funds

	Balance at 1 April 2022 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers between funds £	Balance at 31 March 2023 £
Unrestricted funds					
General unrestricted funds (as restated)	309,411	224,787	(205,329)	-	328,869
Designated funds	95,000	-	-	-	95,000
Total unrestricted funds	404,411	224,787	(205,329)	-	423,869
Restricted funds	5,073	248,693	(218,719)	-	35,047
Total funds	409,484	473,480	(424,048)	-	458,916

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

Unrestricted funds: These funds are provided by donors for support of the Charity, without restriction on how funds should be deployed.

Designated funds: These funds have been reserved for the upcoming termination of the premises lease, and will cover the costs of relocation and setting up a new premises. It is estimated that the relocation will take place within the next 12 months.

Restricted funds:

National Lottery fund

A total of £123,619 (2022: £119,265) was received from the National Lottery fund in relation to the Transforming Lives project. During the year ended 31 March 2023 this was spent in full, with material expenditure as follows: £89,422 being spent on salaries (including employers' national insurance and pension costs), £8,390 on staff training, £4,692 on volunteer expenses and £3,102 on room hire.

13 Related party transactions

There have been no transactions with persons or entities that are closely connected to the charity or its trustees (2022: £nil).

Domestic Abuse Volunteer Support Services

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

13 Operating leases

Total of future minimum lease payments is as follows:

	2023	2022
Not later than one year	434	-
Later than one year and not later than five years	1,701	-
Later than five years	-	-
	<u>2,135</u>	<u>-</u>

The amount of non-cancellable operating lease payments recognised as an expense during the year was £408 (2022 - £nil).