

Charity registration number 1148198

Company registration number 07987156 (England and Wales)

ADVOCACY MATTERS LTD
ANNUAL REPORT AND UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

ADVOCACY MATTERS LTD

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Trustees	Mrs J A Steckles - Chair Mr R Punton Mr P Shergold Mr R Netherway Mr Gordon Law
Charity number	1148198
Company number	07987156
Registered office	198 Boldmere Road Sutton Coldfield West Midlands B73 5UE
Independent examiner	Jerroms Lumaneri House Blythe Gate Blythe Valley Park Sollhull West Midlands B90 8AH

ADVOCACY MATTERS LTD

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ADVOCACY MATTERS LTD

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

The Trustees present their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the Charity's [governing document], the Companies Act 2006 and "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (effective 1 January 2019).

Objectives and activities

The objects of the charity as set out in its Articles of Association are:

1. To promote the relief of the physical and mental sickness of persons in need by reason of addiction, bereavement or loss, and to promote social inclusion for the public benefit by preventing people from becoming socially excluded, relieving the needs of those people who are socially excluded, assisting them to integrate into society with the object of improving their conditions of life by the provision of an advocacy service in the counties of the West Midlands, Warwickshire, Worcestershire, Staffordshire and Herefordshire or elsewhere in England and Wales, where need is identified, and additional support with the object of improving their conditions of life.

For the purpose of this clause, 'socially excluded' means being excluded from society or parts of society as a result of one or more of the following factors: unemployment; financial hardship; youth and old age; ill health, (physical or mental); substance abuse or dependency, including alcohol and drugs; discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, disability, ethnic origin, religion, belief, creed, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, poor education or skills attainment; relationship and family breakdown; poor housing (that is housing that does not meet basic habitable standards); crime (i.e. either as a victim of crime or as an offender rehabilitating into society).

2. To advance education, in particular training in advocacy skills and disability issues, throughout the UK.

In support of these objects, the charity will provide advocacy to all disabled people although the requirements of funders may restrict either the geographical area or type of disability for projects.

When projects are first established, great care is taken to ensure that they are consistent with the aims and objectives of the charity and the trustees consider the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit. Each advocacy case is also reviewed regularly by management in supervision with the advocate responsible to ensure that these requirements continue to be met.

The advocacy provided is independent and is not subject to the direction or approval of the funder. Funds available and advocates' time will also restrict the numbers to whom advocacy can be provided. Subject to these limits, the projects are for the benefit of all members of the disabled community irrespective of ethnicity, gender or sexuality and advocacy is provided without charge to the recipient. Referrals are dealt with dependent on need, where a crisis situation or other complex issues may require immediate action.

Each project is reviewed annually to ensure that it continues to reflect the charity objectives and has delivered benefits to the group of people the project was set up to help.

Mission Statement

To provide Disabled People with an independent advocate to ensure individuals are heard and their rights, concerns and needs are acted upon.

The Trustees have paid due regard to guidance issued by the Charity Commission in deciding what activities the Charity should undertake.

ADVOCACY MATTERS LTD

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) **FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023**

Achievements and performance

In the year under review, we have been challenged by the post COVID 19 landscape. We have had to be mindful that the virus has not gone but that there was a need to resume a pre COVID service provision. Managers and staff have responded well to all the issues with which they have been faced. Advocacy Matters have continued to risk assess for COVID 19 to ensure the safety of our service users and our staff team, but we have largely returned to regular face to face meetings and visits.

There has been a surge in demand following the pandemic with many facing issues with mental health as a direct result of isolation in lockdowns. Service users have also been in financial hardship, many needing support to access food bank services.

Post pandemic recruitment of staff and volunteers has been difficult, with many in our workforce and volunteering pool changing their lives, reducing their hours, retiring early and leaving the job market completely. This is thankfully easing at the end of March 2023.

Safeguarding issues are more prevalent within all projects. We have supported advocacy partners in increasing situations of abuse. Whilst these cases have resulted in the greater awareness of such problems and have also resulted in the improvement of safeguarding procedures and in the scrutiny of care providers, progress has been frustratingly slow, and the demand never decreases. Incidents such as these, which can often lead to protracted investigations, emphasise the need for greater diligence and the importance of independent advocacy.

As a result of the independent advocacy provided by Advocacy Matters, care provision and financial arrangements are often challenged, enabling individuals to be heard who might not otherwise have a voice and control.

2022/23 was Advocacy Matters 20th Birthday Year. On April the 9th we invited all service users, staff, and trustees to come and celebrate with us at the Advocacy Matters Tea Party. The venue was kindly donated by Jaffray Care at their Day Centre.

In May 2022 we completed our Theory of Change supporting the charities resilience and objectives. The whole staff team, volunteers and service users were involved in the formulation of this with Leah Salinger Consultant to facilitate. This was made possible with the grant funding from Charitable Aid Foundation and has brought a new outlook, business plan operational changes. These changes have included a communication strategy, new publicity materials and the production of the Advocacy Matters News Flash newsletter. (See 5 Below)

On the 5th of August Advocacy Matters in partnership with Bostin Creatives premiered 'Personal Best', the film we produced with monies from the creative city grant provided by Birmingham City council as part of the Commonwealth Games Festival. The film went on to be shown across Birmingham, Walsall, and Sandwell at the Commonwealth Games Festival events. (See 6 Below)

In December 2022 we began the process of reapplying for the Quality Performance Mark in Advocacy from NDTI, completing the self-assessment workbook. We will complete this process in June 2023. Advocacy Matters held a Celebration of Advocacy event at Sutton Coldfield Town Hall on the 19th of February 2023 as the final event of our 20th year.

Advocacy Matters office refurbishment started in February 2023 and was finished March 2023. We have repurposed the office to provide a training room and community space to further the charities objectives.

In 20 years, we have advocated 20,280 people across Birmingham & Walsall, 1164 of these were supported by volunteers. This is around 220,500 hours of advocacy support.

ADVOCACY MATTERS LTD

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Advocacy Matters Projects

The following is a brief review for the period of each of the major projects run and supported by Advocacy Matters.

1. My Side

The trustees consider this type of project and particularly the training and employment of volunteers to be a fundamental part of the DNA of Advocacy Matters. We have agreed to continue to fund the project from grant funding and Unrestricted Funds.

We have provided a range of different services on this project including one to one advocacy casework, group work, volunteer training, support, supervision, attendance at events and the continued promotion of our work. The project also facilitates user groups of disabled adults and those with support needs across Birmingham and Walsall.

During the year support was given by 42 Volunteers covering this range of activities and Independent Advocacy support was given to 48 people.

One of the project's aims is to recruit and train volunteer advocates, which has been challenging since the pandemic. This recruitment has continued, and a number of carefully vetted and trained volunteer advocates are undertaking advocacy work with careful support and supervision.

There is still a clear demand for non-statutory advocacy work in Birmingham and we continue to be a much-needed service for support for individuals with needs who do not meet the eligibility for statutory advocacy. We have been able to provide independent advocacy for 48 users, but this still leaves a huge number of people in Birmingham for whom no Independent advocacy is available.

The training element of this project has largely passed to the Volunteer Advocacy Training section of the Birmingham Advocacy Hub, see 4 below.

The Steering Group is an important part of this project and provides input into the charity's governance from all areas of Birmingham and Walsall. It functions to provide former and current advocacy partners with the opportunity to access peer advocacy as well as develop self-advocacy skills. The purpose of the group is to address common barriers that prevent people accessing facilities in their local communities. Members are actively involved in such matters as the interviewing of all new staff, the provision of advice as to what accessible information should be provided by the charity, the design and content of the accessible information documentation produced and in contributing to the development of future projects for which the charity applies for funding.

In this financial year we have received grants from 29th May Charitable Trust, Saintbury Trust and The Eveson Trust to support our volunteering work.

2. Physical Disability Advocacy

This project is now being funded by ICB (Birmingham Integrated Care Board) has again been renewed. The project provides support for people who have experienced strokes or have other long-term, chronic conditions, including certain physical disabilities arising from spinal injuries, amputations, neurological conditions, traumatic brain injury etc.

During the year to 31st March 2023, support with Independent Advocacy was provided to 58 people and a range of development activities were carried out at Queen Elizabeth and Good Hope hospitals, GP surgeries, the health Exchange and others.

'Excellent advocate. Extremely kind and understanding of my needs. Five star thank you for being my voice'.

ADVOCACY MATTERS LTD

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

3. Walsall Care Act Advocacy

The nature and scope of this project is the same as that of the Birmingham Care Act Advocacy project, see 4 below, albeit on a smaller scale. The arrangement was direct with Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council up until October 2022. Since October 2022 we have been providing this Care Act Service in a partnership with POHWER.

During the year under review, support prior to October 2022 was provided for 142 individuals. Subsequent to October 2022 until 31st March 2023 support was provided for 130 individuals.

4. Birmingham Advocacy Hub

Birmingham City Council issued a tender encompassing not only statutory advocacy but also a pre-defined amount of non-statutory advocacy and volunteer training. This project was awarded to POHWER, a national advocacy provider.

Advocacy Matters entered into a partnership agreement with POHWER to provide Advocacy Services on an agreed basis. This project commenced on 1st April 2019. It was retendered and won in April 2022 and will be contracted until April 2027. This Partnership is of critical importance to Advocacy Matters. It incorporated the Care Act, IMCA, and a substantial part of the My Side projects which represented most of the charity's existing business. In addition, other statutory advocacy and some non-statutory advocacy is also included.

A summary of each of the elements of the project is given below.

Care Act Advocacy

Care Act Advocacy is a form of statutory Advocacy governed by the Care Act 2014 whereby local authorities must arrange an independent advocate to facilitate the involvement of a person in their assessment, in the preparation of their care and support plan, in the review of their care plan, and in appropriate safeguarding procedures. This independent advocacy must be implemented to provide support if the following two conditions are met: -

- Where an individual has substantial difficulty in being fully involved in these processes.
- Where there is no one appropriate available to support and represent the person's wishes.

The role of the independent advocate is to support and represent the person and to facilitate their involvement in the key processes and interactions with the local authority. Advocates ensure the individuals are able to challenge the outcome of Local Authority Care Act processes. Acting as an advocate for a person who has substantial difficulty in engaging with care and support processes is a responsible position.

'The advocate ensured that jargon was removed from the conversation, or at least explained in an understandable way'.

Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy (IMCA)

The Mental Capacity Act came into force in April 2007 introducing statutory Independent advocacy and imposing on the NHS and Local Authorities the duty to instruct advocates in defined situations concerning individuals who have been assessed to lack capacity for those decisions. The MCA requires the provision of non-instructed advocacy to individuals, aged 16 and over, who have been assessed to lack capacity for specific decisions and who have no family or friends who might otherwise advocate on their behalf.

This may include those with learning difficulties, dementia, mental health issues, acquired brain injury and cognitive impairments associated with serious physical illness.

IMCA is a very specialist form of advocacy and all advocates involved in this form of advocacy are required to undertake the Independent Advocacy Qualification.

IMCA must be instructed in decisions of long term moves of accommodation (8 weeks or longer and serious medical treatment decisions. IMCA must also be instructed for decisions within The Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards 2009. The IMCA may be instructed within safeguarding procedures and care home review, although this has been largely superseded by the Care Act provisions 2014.

ADVOCACY MATTERS LTD

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Independent Mental Health Advocacy (IMHA)

IMHA is covered by Mental Health Act Revision 2007 and relates to inpatients held under a section of the Mental Health Act 1983. The IMHA will support inpatients with all aspects of challenging their section under the Mental Health Act. The IMHA will support individuals at ward rounds, discharge and to identify a solicitor for tribunal.

IMHA can also support those individuals who are discharged on a Community Treatment Order to the community. Those on a CTO are still considered to be under a section of the Mental Health Act. Therefore, they can be recalled to hospital on the discretion of their treating clinicians.

Paid Persons Representative (PPR)

As part of the deprivation of Liberty Safeguard 2009 we provide the Paid persons Representative to individuals deprived of their liberty in hospitals and care homes. PPR visit the person deprived of their liberty regularly. Help the person to understand their Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) authorisation and how it affects them. As far as possible, assist the person to exercise their rights if they want to challenge their deprivation.

Independent Complaints Advocacy Service (ICAS)

National Health Complaints are the statutory responsibility of the National Health Service, but these are commissioned through Public Health England and the local authority. The ICAS advocate can support any citizen who requires support with making an NHS complaint. An ICAS advocate supports individuals to write, submit and appeal NHS Complaints. Ultimately the ICAS advocate will support the complainant to take their complaint to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman. Once the Ombudsman has responded the role of the ICAS advocate terminates.

Community Advocacy

Community Advocacy applies to all the issues, for individuals with support needs, face which fall outside of statutory advocacy. Community advocates support many citizens to have a voice and challenge decisions that affect their lives. It supports individuals to ensure their rights are upheld and they have the services they are entitled to and need. In 22/23 we have supported people to access appropriate housing, make complaints and ensure they are financially empowered and have all the monies they are entitled to and are free from abuse.

Volunteer Advocacy Training

Birmingham City Council would like citizens across the communities in Birmingham to gain advocacy skills to be able to advocate for themselves and their communities. Therefore, one of the forms of advocacy which Birmingham City Council are keen to support is advocacy by volunteers which they are promoting by supporting the training of potential new advocates.

'It was a great session, very informative and interactive. I learned the importance of advocacy, what makes a good advocate and the importance of valuing people'.

1676 referrals were dealt with in the Birmingham Advocacy Hub Project during the period and 4 training courses were held providing volunteer training for 48 participants.

ADVOCACY MATTERS LTD

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

5. Charities Aid Foundation Resilience Grants

The Main Grant was awarded in October 2021. This was used to employ staff needed to make Advocacy Matters a robust charity. Using this grant, we have appointed a full-time senior advocate, a user-led facilitator to work with the steering group and a Finance Manager.

The organisational support for management which this grant provided enabled Senior Management to concentrate on Advocacy Matters' 5-year Strategic Plan, ensuring that this is delivered successfully. User involvement and the service user facilitation role are of vital importance to Advocacy Matters as a user-led organisation. A better communication channel between beneficiaries and management/trustees to drive forward a user led strategic plan and business plan.

The other Resilience grant was used to ensure Advocacy Matters becomes a resilient charity and a road map for change has been developed. Consultants have been employed to develop a Theory of Change for the charity and a communication strategy. The theory of change has solidified our goals and purpose. We have also had consultancy support to develop cases for support for funding bids and to identify potential funders. We have also been able to pay for all staff members to complete the Independent Advocacy Qualification and complete the Quality Performance Mark in advocacy from NDTI.

The money for the Main Grant and the Resilience Grant was used by 31st March 2023.

6. Birmingham City Council Creative City Grant

Advocacy Matters Steering Group of disabled people in conjunction with community groups across Birmingham created a bespoke film and portable screen experience for the Commonwealth Games. Advocacy Matters was chosen, alongside 106 other community groups, to receive a *Creative City* project grant, thanks to funding from *Birmingham City Council*. In partnership with *Blue and White Creative*, delivered by the *Bostin' Creative Arts & Theatre* team, Advocacy Matters made a short film *Personal Best*, which was screened and shared as part of the *Commonwealth Games Birmingham 2022 Festival*.

7. Childrens Age Assessments- Appropriate Adult

The age assessment of unaccompanied children seeking asylum is a challenging process and is there to establish if the individual will be supported as a child or adult. Often Children and young people seeking asylum do not have documentation with proof of age and sometimes are not aware of how old they are or their birthdate. A child or young person undergoing an age assessment must have the opportunity to have an appropriate adult present with them during the interviews. It is important that the role of the appropriate adult is clearly explained at the outset of the interviews, and it is recommended that the same appropriate adult is used throughout the age assessment.

Advocacy Matters were awarded a contract to provide this service from Birmingham Children's Trust in January 2023. As of 31st of March 2023 we are still awaiting our first referrals.

Financial review

The results for the year are set out in the attached Financial Statements and Notes. The net movement of funds for the period amounted to a surplus of £7,392. The total retained reserves at 31st March 2023 amounted to £591,524.

It is the policy of the Charity that unrestricted funds which have not been designated for a specific use should be maintained at a level equivalent to between three and six month's expenditure. The Trustees consider that reserves at this level will ensure that, in the event of a significant drop in funding, they will be able to continue the Charity's current activities while consideration is given to ways in which additional funds may be raised. This level of reserves has been maintained throughout the year.

ADVOCACY MATTERS LTD

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

The trustees periodically review the reserves position of the charity to ascertain whether or not the funds that they are holding are adequate for its work. In doing this they take into consideration the financial risks to which the charity is subject, the assets and working capital requirements for continued service delivery and for unforeseen circumstances, particularly relating to uncertainties of future funding.

A further major consideration is the drastic change in the way that many projects are being funded. In many cases remuneration is on a per hour or per referral basis with payment in arrears with no guarantee of the number of referrals which will be required. This places all the risk on to the provider and could have a catastrophic effect on the charity's funds if things go wrong.

At 31 March 2023 the charity had reserves of £591,524 of which £514,847 were unrestricted. The trustees have reviewed whether unrestricted funds can be applied for public benefit whilst maintaining an appropriate level of free reserves. The trustees are of the opinion that free reserves (reserves available for working capital, development and provision of the service) should be at least six months costs of running the organisation. The trustees therefore consider that the free reserves are adequate.

Plans for future periods

The trustees will continue to seek new projects which are suitable and beneficial to the community of people with disabilities, which are consistent with the charity's aims and objectives, and which deliver public benefit to all members of the community.

Despite the reduction in funding from Local Authorities generally and the reluctance of other potential funders to fund non-statutory advocacy we have been successful in maintain local authority and grant funding. However this does not means that different approaches to fundraising aren't required if the charity is to mitigate risk and remain sustainable with adequate levels of funding and this is now a priority which is being addressed.

One of the Objects of the charity is to advance education, by providing training in advocacy skills and disability issues. This training is now handled by the Volunteer Advocacy Training section of the Birmingham Advocacy Hub (see 4 above) and will continue to be a priority. A brief outline of the type of facilities which could be provided is available on the charity's website. This training will normally be provided to other advocacy organisations or health professionals to the ultimate public benefit of the disabled community.

The training of professionals in disability awareness under the Working with Learning Disabled Parents project, which took place some time ago, has shown the necessity of such training and the charity will continue to look for similar opportunities.

We have applied to The Lottery Community Fund to work with young disabled people 13-18 in transition from children to adult services as we have in the past. This will focus on the Walsall area where there is the greatest need and deprivation.

We have also applied to The Lottery to work with isolated older adults to ensure they live an active and fulfilling life as long as possible.

Structure, governance and management

The Charity is a company limited by guarantee. The trustees/directors named on page 1 are also the only members of the company. In the event of the company being wound up, their liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 each.

The charity was incorporated on 12th March 2012 and is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association. The company was formed specifically to take over the operations of Advocacy Matters, an unincorporated charity which has since been decommissioned. The company commenced operations on 1st October 2012 at which point any remaining assets or liabilities of the unincorporated charity were transferred to the company.

ADVOCACY MATTERS LTD

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

The Trustees, who are also the directors for the purpose of company law, and who served during the year and up to the date of signature of the financial statements were:

Mrs J A Steckles - Chair

Mr R Punton

Mr P Shergold

Mr R Netherway

Mr Gordon Law

Mr C Chadwick

Mr A M Parker

(Resigned 27 January 2023)

(Resigned 27 January 2023)

The charity is governed by an Executive Committee comprising all the Trustees who are also Directors and the only members of the company. During the year under review, the day-to-day management of the charity was undertaken by the Chief Executive Officer with the assistance of three Operations Managers and two Senior Advocates.

Where there is a requirement for a new trustee, candidates will normally be identified from recommendations by existing trustees or Operations Managers, particularly bearing in mind the skills and experience which such candidates would bring in areas which are beneficial to the charity but may not necessarily be represented by the existing trustees. Potential new trustees will usually be interviewed by the Chair and one of the Chief Executive who will explain the concept of advocacy and the aims and objectives of the charity. They are also informed of their legal obligations under charity and company law, the Charity Commission guidance on public benefit and are provided with leaflets from the Charity Commission so that they are aware of their roles and responsibilities before they decide to take on the role. Successful candidates are invited to attend the next trustees' meeting as observers and are provided with a copy of the Memorandum and Articles of Association.

New trustees are voted in by the Executive Committee and appointments are subject to Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Scheme checks. New trustees are provided with a trustee Induction Pack and offered Trustee training. Advocacy Training is available to ensure the new trustee is fully aware of the meaning of advocacy.

All members of the Executive Committee give their time voluntarily and do not receive any benefits from the charity. Note 7 to the accounts shows any expenses claimed by the Trustees during the period.

The Steering Group, which is incorporated into the My Side project, ensures that the charity remains "user led" and provides an important element of the charity's structure and governance.

Risk management

The Trustees continually assess the risks to which the charity and its staff are exposed. This has been more relevant than ever because of the potential dangers of COVID 19. Where appropriate, systems, policies and procedures have been implemented to reduce these risks. They cover areas such as health and safety of staff, volunteers and visitors and lone working for staff and volunteers. These policies and procedures are regularly reviewed to ensure they are up to date and cover all areas involving the charity. All staff and volunteer appointments are subject to Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Scheme checks and full training is given to safeguard not only the safety of staff and volunteers but also the users for whom they may be advocating. A written risk assessments are carried out for every disabled person who is to be supported by a member of staff or volunteer and is held on file.

Risk Assessments relating to the office are carried out annually and Health and Safety is included on the Agenda of Staff Meetings.

Financial Risk is a major consideration for a small charity and liquid funds and reserves are regularly reviewed to ensure that there is sufficient working capital for the charity's needs. This includes the ability to finance the expenditure for those projects where payment for services is made in arrears.

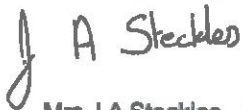
ADVOCACY MATTERS LTD

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Pay policy

The trustees consider the Chief Executive Officer and the three Operations Managers to be key management personnel but the pay policy for these key personnel is the same as for other staff. The pay of all staff is reviewed annually and will normally be increased in line with, or above, average earnings benchmarked against similar roles at other charities or the public sector, with a view to ensuring that they are paid at least as well as those benchmarks.

The Trustees' report was approved by the Board of Trustees.



Mrs J A Steckles - Chair
Chair of Trustees

27 October 2023

ADVOCACY MATTERS LTD

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

The Trustees, who are also the directors of Advocacy Matters Ltd for the purpose 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).

Company Law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that year.

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

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Charity will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Charity 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 Charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Insofar as the trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's Independent Examiner is unaware; and
- the trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant information and to establish that the Independent Examiner is aware of that information.

The strategic report under the Companies Act 2006 (Strategic Report and Directors' Report) Regulations 2013 is not required as the charity qualifies as a small charitable company.

ADVOCACY MATTERS LTD

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

TO THE TRUSTEES OF ADVOCACY MATTERS LTD

I report to the Trustees on my examination of the financial statements of Advocacy Matters Ltd (the Charity) for the year ended 31 March 2023.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the Trustees of the Charity (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) 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 Charity 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 the Charity's financial statements carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act). 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.

Independent examiner's statement

Since the Charity'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 , 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 that in any material respect:

- 1 accounting records were not kept in respect of the Charity as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
- 2 the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
- 3 the financial statements 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 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.



Jerroms

Richard Alan Horton

Chartered Certified Accountant

Lumanerl House
Blythe Gate
Blythe Valley Park
Sollihull
West Midlands
B90 8AH

Dated: 27 October 2023

ADVOCACY MATTERS LTD

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total 2023 £	Unrestricted funds 2022 £	Restricted funds 2022 £	Total 2022 £
Income from:							
Donations and legacies	3	-	9,720	9,720	34,976	-	34,976
Charitable activities	4	538,531	114,080	652,611	454,348	178,678	633,026
Other trading activities	5	1,369	-	1,369	5,993	-	5,993
Investments	6	769	-	769	82	-	82
Total income		540,669	123,800	664,469	495,399	178,678	674,077
Expenditure on:							
Raising funds	7	16,862	-	16,862	7,109	-	7,109
Charitable activities	8	438,064	202,151	640,215	381,987	90,400	472,387
Total expenditure		454,926	202,151	657,077	389,096	90,400	479,496
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources before transfers		85,743	(78,351)	7,392	106,303	88,278	194,581
Gross transfers between funds		4,248	(4,248)	-	5,650	(5,650)	-
Net income/(expenditure) for the year/							
Net movement in funds		89,991	(82,599)	7,392	111,953	82,628	194,581
Fund balances at 1 April 2022		424,856	159,276	584,132	312,903	76,648	389,551
Fund balances at 31 March 2023		514,847	76,677	591,524	424,856	159,276	584,132

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

The statement of financial activities also complies with the requirements for an income and expenditure account under the Companies Act 2006.

ADVOCACY MATTERS LTD

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 MARCH 2023

	Notes	2023 £	£	2022 £	£
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	12		9,407		6,688
Current assets					
Debtors	13	42,890		43,343	
Cash at bank and in hand		541,706		536,948	
		584,596		580,291	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	14	(2,479)		(2,847)	
Net current assets			582,117		577,444
Total assets less current liabilities			591,524		584,132
Income funds					
Restricted funds	16		76,677		159,276
Unrestricted funds			514,847		424,856
			591,524		584,132

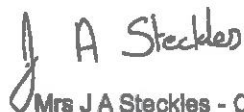
The company is entitled to the exemption from the audit requirement contained in section 477 of the Companies Act 2006, for the year ended 31 March 2023.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 with respect to accounting records and the preparation of financial statements.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year in question in accordance with section 476.

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

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees on 27 October 2023


Mrs J A Steckles - Chair
Trustee

Company registration number 07987156

ADVOCACY MATTERS LTD

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

	Notes	2023 £	£	2022 £	£
Cash flows from operating activities					
Cash generated from operations	19		13,115		205,792
Investing activities					
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(9,126)		(3,702)	
Investment income received		769		82	
Net cash used in investing activities			(8,357)		(3,620)
Net cash used in financing activities			-		-
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents			4,758		202,172
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year			536,948		334,776
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year			541,706		536,948

ADVOCACY MATTERS LTD

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

1 Accounting policies

Charity Information

Advocacy Matters Ltd is a private company limited by guarantee incorporated in England and Wales. The registered office is 198 Boldmere Road, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, B73 5UE.

1.1 Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Charity's [governing document], the Companies Act 2006, FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" ("FRS 102") and the Charities SORP "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (effective 1 January 2019). The Charity is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the Charity. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, [modified to include the revaluation of freehold properties and to include investment properties and certain financial instruments at fair value]. The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below.

1.2 Going concern

At the time of approving the financial statements, the Trustees have a reasonable expectation that the Charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus the Trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

1.3 Charitable funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of their charitable objectives.

Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors as to how they may be used. The purposes and uses of the restricted funds are set out in the notes to the financial statements.

Endowment funds are subject to specific conditions by donors that the capital must be maintained by the Charity.

1.4 Income

Income is recognised when the Charity is legally entitled to it after any performance conditions have been met, the amounts can be measured reliably, and it is probable that income will be received.

Cash donations are recognised on receipt. Other donations are recognised once the Charity has been notified of the donation, unless performance conditions require deferral of the amount. Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant is recognised at the time of the donation.

Legacies are recognised on receipt or otherwise if the Charity has been notified of an impending distribution, the amount is known, and receipt is expected. If the amount is not known, the legacy is treated as a contingent asset.

ADVOCACY MATTERS LTD

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

1.5 Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to transfer economic benefit to a third party, 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 classified by activity. The costs of each activity are made up of the total of direct costs and shared costs, including support costs involved in undertaking each activity. Direct costs attributable to a single activity are allocated directly to that activity. Shared costs which contribute to more than one activity and support costs which are not attributable to a single activity are apportioned between those activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources. Central staff costs are allocated on the basis of time spent, and depreciation charges are allocated on the portion of the asset's use.

1.6 Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are initially measured at cost and subsequently measured at cost or valuation, net of depreciation and any impairment losses.

Depreciation is recognised so as to write off the cost or valuation of assets less their residual values over their useful lives on the following bases:

Plant and equipment	3 years straight line
Fixtures and fittings	3 years straight line

The gain or loss arising on the disposal of an asset is determined as the difference between the sale proceeds and the carrying value of the asset, and is recognised in the statement of financial activities.

1.7 Impairment of fixed assets

At each reporting end date, the Charity reviews the carrying amounts of its tangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have suffered an impairment loss. If any such indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset is estimated in order to determine the extent of the impairment loss (if any).

1.8 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities.

1.9 Financial Instruments

The Charity has elected to apply the provisions of Section 11 'Basic Financial Instruments' and Section 12 'Other Financial Instruments Issues' of FRS 102 to all of its financial instruments.

Financial instruments are recognised in the Charity's balance sheet when the Charity becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Financial assets and liabilities are offset, with the net amounts presented in the financial statements, when there is a legally 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.

Basic financial assets

Basic financial assets, which include debtors and cash and bank balances, are initially measured at transaction price including transaction costs and are subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the transaction is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial assets classified as receivable within one year are not amortised.

ADVOCACY MATTERS LTD

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

Basic financial liabilities

Basic financial liabilities, including creditors and bank loans are initially recognised at transaction price unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial liabilities classified as payable within one year are not amortised.

Debt instruments are subsequently carried at amortised cost, using the effective interest rate method.

Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of operations from suppliers. Amounts payable are classified as current liabilities if payment is due within one year or less. If not, they are presented as non-current liabilities. Trade creditors are recognised initially at transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

Derecognition of financial liabilities

Financial liabilities are derecognised when the Charity's contractual obligations expire or are discharged or cancelled.

1.10 Employee benefits

The cost of any unused holiday entitlement is recognised in the period in which the employee's services are received.

Termination benefits are recognised immediately as an expense when the Charity is demonstrably committed to terminate the employment of an employee or to provide termination benefits.

1.11 Retirement benefits

Payments to defined contribution retirement benefit schemes are charged as an expense as they fall due.

2 Critical accounting estimates and judgements

In the application of the Charity's accounting policies, the Trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised where the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods where the revision affects both current and future periods.

3 Donations and legacies

	Restricted funds	Unrestricted funds
	2023	2022
	£	£
Donations and gifts	9,720	34,976

ADVOCACY MATTERS LTD

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

4 Charitable activities

	Charitable Income 2023 £	Charitable Income 2022 £
POhWER Contract	498,767	411,721
Physical Disability	39,764	42,627
Income from charitable activities	114,080	178,678
	<u>652,611</u>	<u>633,026</u>
Analysis by fund		
Unrestricted funds	538,531	454,348
Restricted funds	114,080	178,678
	<u>652,611</u>	<u>633,026</u>

5 Other trading activities

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Unrestricted funds 2022 £
Fundraising events	<u>1,369</u>	<u>5,993</u>

6 Investments

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Unrestricted funds 2022 £
Interest receivable	<u>769</u>	<u>82</u>

ADVOCACY MATTERS LTD

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

7 Raising funds

	Unrestricted funds	Unrestricted funds
	2023	2022
	£	£
<u>Fundraising and publicity</u>		
Raising funds	8,763	5,692
Staff costs	8,099	1,417
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Fundraising and publicity	16,862	7,109
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	<u>16,862</u>	<u>7,109</u>

ADVOCACY MATTERS LTD

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

8 Charitable activities

	Charitable Expenditure		Governance costs		Admin costs		Depreciation		Total 2023	Charitable Expenditure		Governance costs		Admin costs		Total 2022
	2023	£	2023	£	2023	£	2023	£	£	2022	£	2022	£	2022	£	£
Staff costs	146,128		17,401		322,555		-		486,084	76,989		24,867		302,421		404,257
Depreciation and impairment	-		-		-		6,407		6,407	-		-		-		-
Charitable activities	56,024		-		19,173		-		75,197	13,431		-		30,577		44,008
	202,152		17,401		341,728		6,407		567,688	90,400		24,867		332,998		448,265
Share of support costs (see note)	67,383		-		-		-		67,383	14,861		-		-		14,861
Share of governance costs (see note)	-		5,144		-		-		5,144	-		9,261		-		9,261
	269,535		22,545		341,728		6,407		640,215	105,261		34,128		332,998		472,387
Analysis by fund																
Unrestricted funds	67,384		22,545		341,728		6,407		438,064	14,861		34,128		332,998		381,987
Restricted funds	202,151		-		-		-		202,151	90,400		-		-		90,400
	269,535		22,545		341,728		6,407		640,215	105,261		34,128		332,998		472,387

ADVOCACY MATTERS LTD

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

9 Trustees

None of the Trustees (or any persons connected with them) received any remuneration or benefits from the Charity during the year.

10 Employees

The average monthly number of employees during the year was:

	2023 Number	2022 Number
	21	18
Employment costs	2023 £	2022 £
Wages and salaries	446,757	369,274
Social security costs	31,875	25,760
Other pension costs	15,551	10,640
	494,183	405,674

There were no employees whose annual remuneration was more than £60,000.

11 Taxation

The charity is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within section 505 of the Taxes Act 1988 or section 252 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that these are applied to its charitable objects.

12 Tangible fixed assets

	Plant and equipment £	Fixtures and fittings £	Total £
Cost			
At 1 April 2022	66,327	14,698	81,025
Additions	-	9,126	9,126
At 31 March 2023	66,327	23,824	90,151
Depreciation and impairment			
At 1 April 2022	59,639	14,698	74,337
Depreciation charged in the year	3,365	3,042	6,407
At 31 March 2023	63,004	17,740	80,744
Carrying amount			
At 31 March 2023	3,323	6,084	9,407
At 31 March 2022	6,688	-	6,688

ADVOCACY MATTERS LTD

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

13 Debtors

	2023 £	2022 £
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Trade debtors	42,890	39,180
Prepayments and accrued income	-	4,163
	<u>42,890</u>	<u>43,343</u>

14 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2023 £	2022 £
Trade creditors	(521)	517
Accruals and deferred income	3,000	2,330
	<u>2,479</u>	<u>2,847</u>

15 Retirement benefit schemes

Defined contribution schemes

The Charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme for all qualifying employees. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the Charity in an independently administered fund.

The charge to profit or loss in respect of defined contribution schemes was £15,551 (2022 - £10,640).

ADVOCACY MATTERS LTD

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

16 Restricted funds

The income funds of the charity include restricted funds comprising the following unexpended balances of donations and grants held on trust for specific purposes:

	Balance at 1 April 2021 £	Movement in funds			Balance at 1 April 2022 £	Movement in funds			Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2023 £
		Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £		Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £		
Walsall Care Act	-	59,070	(53,419)	(5,651)	-	60,609	(56,332)	(4,277)	-	-
CAF Resilience Grants	-	119,609	(36,981)	-	82,628	46,536	(129,164)	-	-	-
Crisis Advocacy	34,374	-	-	-	34,374	-	-	-	-	34,374
Moving on Project	42,303	-	-	-	42,303	-	-	-	-	42,303
Next Stop	(4,885)	-	-	-	(4,885)	-	-	4,885	-	-
Working with Learning Disabled Parents	4,856	-	-	-	4,856	-	-	(4,856)	-	-
Creative City - Personal Best	-	-	-	-	-	10,280	(10,280)	-	-	-
Training Costs - Sutton Charities	-	-	-	-	-	6,375	(6,375)	-	-	-
	76,648	178,679	(90,400)	(5,651)	159,276	123,800	(202,151)	(4,248)	76,677	

ADVOCACY MATTERS LTD

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

17 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total 2023 £	Unrestricted funds 2022 £	Restricted funds 2022 £	Total 2022 £
Fund balances at 31 March 2023 are represented by:						
Tangible assets	9,407	-	9,407	6,688	-	6,688
Current assets/(liabilities)	505,440	76,677	582,117	418,168	159,276	577,444
	<u>514,847</u>	<u>76,677</u>	<u>591,524</u>	<u>424,856</u>	<u>159,276</u>	<u>584,132</u>

18 Related party transactions

There were no disclosable related party transactions during the year (2022 - none).

19 Cash generated from operations

	2023 £	2022 £
Surplus for the year	7,392	194,581
Adjustments for:		
Investment income recognised in statement of financial activities	(769)	(82)
Depreciation and impairment of tangible fixed assets	6,407	3,551
Movements in working capital:		
Decrease in debtors	453	7,487
(Decrease)/Increase in creditors	(368)	255
Cash generated from operations	<u>13,115</u>	<u>205,792</u>

20 Analysis of changes in net funds

The Charity had no debt during the year.

