

THE RIVER MANCHESTER
A CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION
(CHARITY No. 1153700)
Annual Report & Accounts
For the year ending MARCH 2025

THE RIVER MANCHESTER
SIGNIFICANT INFORMATION

Registered Name

Charity Incorporated Organisation
The River Manchester
Registration no. 1153700

Trustees

Deborah Fuller, Chair
Sefadzi Kofi Amesu, Treasurer
Ernest Edifor
Deborah Anderton

Registered Office

3 Pepperhill Road
Moss Side
Manchester M16 7PD

Independent Examiners

Rana & Co
P O Box 145
Manchester M19 1UY

Bankers

The Co-operative Bank
Delf House, Southway,
Skelmersdale, Lancashire WN8 6NY

Charity Incorporated Organisation registered with the Charity Commission on 6 September 2013.

The Trustees present their Annual Report together with the independently examined financial statements of The River Manchester for the year ended 31 March 2025.

The Trustees who served during the year and up to the date of this report, together with the charity's professional advisers, are listed on the accompanying Information Page.

Structure, Governance and Management

The management and administration of the charity is carried out by the Chief Executive Officer, Mrs Lydia Chan, who reports to the Board of Trustees on a quarterly basis. She is supported in the day-to-day running of the charity by a core staff member, the Project Co-ordinator (Donna Barber), a part-time driver, accounts staff, and a committed team of 10 regular volunteers.

Volunteers receive daily briefings to keep them informed of operational updates and health and safety matters. The CEO meets both individually and collectively with staff for supervision and also facilitates team meetings and feedback sessions with volunteers, enabling insights and concerns to be shared openly.

The Board of Trustees meets quarterly, with additional meetings held as required to review progress and plan the future development of the charity. The Trustees are currently seeking to recruit additional trustees to strengthen governance and expertise.

Trustees' Statement – Public Benefit

The Trustees confirm that the charity's objectives have been developed in accordance with the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit. Throughout the year, the Trustees have reviewed the charity's activities both informally and at official Trustees' meetings and have had due regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit at all times.

Risk Management

The Trustees are responsible for identifying and managing the risks faced by the charity. Systems and controls are in place to provide reasonable, though not absolute, assurance against material misstatement, loss, or exposure to risk. Risk reviews are undertaken regularly, and policies and procedures are implemented to minimise internal risks.

A significant risk identified during the year related to the lease of the charity's building, as the property owners decided to sell the building at auction in September 2024. This posed a risk of increased rental costs or loss of premises. Following careful consideration, the Trustees resolved to purchase the building using existing reserves, supported by a fundraising strategy and a mortgage. The building was successfully purchased on 17 December 2024, securing the charity's long-term operational base.

Objectives and Activities

Objectives

The charity's objectives are:

The relief and support of persons who have suffered, or are in danger of suffering, from social and emotional difficulties, including those fleeing domestic violence or sexual abuse, and their children and dependants, through the provision of food, clothing, furniture, friendship, training, and other assistance.

Activities

Fundamental to the work of The River Manchester is our faith in Jesus Christ. Our Christian faith brings hope and transformation, which we demonstrate in practical ways. We provide a safe and welcoming environment where connections can be made, practical support such as food, clothing, furniture, and training can be accessed.

Activities During the Year

Fundraising and Income Generation

The charity's income strategy is based on three key income streams:

1. Charity shop income
2. Donations from individual and corporate donors
3. Grant funding

The Trustees recognise the risks of over-reliance on a single income source. This was particularly evident in the previous year when grant income declined. Encouragingly, during the year under review, total income increased from £156,589 to £209,640, representing an increase of 33.87%.

Income from all three streams enabled the charity to further develop its intervention programmes, including one-to-one emotional wrap-around support for women and children moving to safety, expanded mental health workshops, and the purchase of the charity's building.

Retail and Café

The charity operates two social enterprises: a charity shop and a café/community food club. These initiatives generate income while also providing training and

empowerment opportunities for women to develop skills and move towards employment.

Participants involved in the food club completed Food Safety Level 2 training to ensure compliance with food hygiene standards. The charity shop continues to play a vital role, enabling the provision of resettlement packages for clients while serving the local East Manchester community.

Removal Service

With a dedicated team of volunteers, supported by volunteer and paid drivers and two assistants, the charity delivered an emergency moving service for women and children fleeing domestic abuse. Funding was secured to provide this service at low or no cost for direct referrals.

Training and Skills Development

The Project Co-ordinator, who is also a specialist domestic abuse worker, delivered one-to-one emotional support and recruited four trainee counsellors. The counselling service continues to grow in reputation, with a current waiting time of approximately six weeks, significantly shorter than statutory services.

All four counsellors are registered members of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP). Staff and volunteers also attended training on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) and trauma-informed practice to enhance support for clients affected by trauma.

Training Courses Delivered

A range of courses were delivered to support mental health and recovery from trauma associated with domestic abuse, including:

- **Living Life to the Full (CBT-based)**

Two six-week courses ran from 12 September to 17 October 2024 (12 participants) and from 10 September to 15 October 2024 (10 participants). The course explored mood, emotions, behaviours, and healthy routines. One participant shared that the course helped her find the confidence to speak openly for the first time in a safe and accepting environment.

- **Domestic Abuse Awareness – Recovery Toolkit**

A six-week programme delivered from 25 September to 13 November 2024, attended by eight participants weekly. Topics included types of abuse, the power and control wheel, leaving the perpetrator, the impact of abuse on mothers and children, and healthy relationships.

- **You and Me, Mum**

A ten-week programme delivered from 14 May to 23 July 2024 with ten participants, focusing on recovery from domestic violence and addressing behavioural challenges in children affected by abuse.

- **Health and Wellbeing Sessions**

Delivered from 31 October to 5 December 2024, incorporating mindfulness, arts and crafts, jewellery making, fascinator making, card making, and doodle art, providing a safe space for relaxation and recovery.

Events Organised During the Year

- Christmas wreath-making workshop (10 participants)
- Christmas dinner for volunteers in recognition of their dedication and commitment
- Two open days for the community

Volunteers

During the year, 61 volunteers were recruited. Volunteers provided coaching, one-to-one support, and confidence-building opportunities, helping individuals gain experience and preparation for the workplace.

The charity prides itself on fostering a strong sense of community and belonging, creating a supportive “family” environment for volunteers who may otherwise feel isolated. Volunteers are encouraged to support one another, and new volunteers are welcomed with enthusiasm. A Volunteer Policy is in place and available upon request.

Impact and Achievements

The charity’s work addressing food, furniture, and financial poverty, alongside supporting survivors of domestic abuse, achieved the following impact:

1. A total of 1,135 referrals across all services, excluding the community food club, which supports approximately 80 individuals.
2. Distribution of 710 emergency food parcels, including weekly deliveries to a refuge in Chorlton supporting seven single women.
3. Counselling hours increased from 135 hours in 2024 to 538 hours in the year under review, reflecting increased demand and positive impact in reducing isolation, suicidal ideation, and mental health challenges.
4. Furniture support valued at over £3,260 was provided through donations from the charity shop.
5. Support for 28 “move to safety” relocations for single mothers and their children into secure tenancies.
6. Additional referrals for domestic abuse workshops, one-to-one support, counselling, advice, and signposting.

Beneficiaries reported feeling safer, more connected, and more confident, with improved mental health, wellbeing, and employment aspirations. Referrals were primarily received from high-risk agencies including Women’s Aid, Independent

Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs), Early Help, Children's Services, Social Services, and WAST.

Client Testimony

"The River is my family, providing me with a support network and friends for the first time in my life, as well as a stable home. The courses, counselling, and wellbeing sessions gave me a lifeline. Without this support, I would not be where I am today, returning to employment."

Building Space

The charity operates from a two-shop-floor unit with two rooms upstairs. While the premises enable current service delivery, limited space restricts further growth in staffing, resources, and service capacity. The upstairs area includes a refurbished training room and stock room, with a stairlift providing disability access.

Plans for the Future and Challenges

The charity plans to continue empowering individuals through its services, strengthen partnerships with referral agencies, and recruit additional trainees into its training programmes. Collaboration will continue with Openshaw community organisations, Gorton Hub, Women's Aid, IDVAs, Manchester City Council Social Services, and other agencies.

Key priorities for the coming year include:

1. Increasing income from the food club and charity shop
2. Improving IT systems and digital inclusion
3. Updating the charity's website, strengthening our presence
4. Increase provision for counselling

Financial Review and Reserves Strategy

The auction of the charity's building during the year required the Trustees to convene a series of emergency meetings to carefully assess both the short-term and long-term financial implications of purchasing the property. While the acquisition represented a significant financial commitment, the Trustees concluded that securing ownership of the building was a strategic decision that would protect the charity from future rental uncertainty, provide long-term cost stability, and support sustainable service delivery.

The purchase of the building necessitated the use of a substantial proportion of the charity's reserves and resulted in the deferral of planned capital expenditure, including the purchase of a van. Following completion of the purchase, the charity's free reserves were reduced to approximately **£30,000**, equivalent to around three months of operating expenditure.

In recognition of this temporary reduction in reserves, the Trustees implemented a recovery strategy to strengthen the charity's financial resilience. This included the successful securing of **grant funding and a loan**, alongside the mortgage arrangement for the property, which together have been used to stabilise cash flow, rebuild reserves, and support ongoing operations.

The Trustees operate a reserves strategy that aims to maintain free reserves at a minimum level equivalent to **three months' operating costs**, providing sufficient flexibility to manage income volatility, respond to unforeseen events, and invest selectively in strategic growth. The reserves position and cash flow forecasts are reviewed regularly by the Trustees as part of ongoing financial oversight.

Looking ahead, the Trustees' financial strategy focuses on rebuilding reserves beyond the minimum threshold, strengthening unrestricted income streams through the charity shop and food club, and diversifying funding sources to support service expansion, digital development, and long-term sustainability.

Independent Examiner

Rana & Co was appointed as the Independent Examiner for the year.



Deborah Fuller
Chair of Trustees

THE RIVER MANCHESTER

Statement of financial activities
for the year ended 31 March 2025

		2025	2025	2025		2024
	Notes	Unrestricted	Restricted	Endowment	Total funds	Prior Period
		Fund	Fund	Fund	Total funds	Total funds
		£	£		£	£
Income and Endowments from:	3					
Donations and Legacies	3.1	81250	42857	0	124107	81956
Other Trading Activities	3.2	85533	0	0	85533	74634
Total		166783	42857	0	209640	156590
Expenditure On:	4					
Charitable Activities	4.1 & 4.2	116722	35022	0	151744	158438
Other	4.3	1211	0	0	1211	996
Total		117933	35022	0	152955	159434
Net Gains/(losses) on Investments		0	0	0	0	0
Net Income (expenditure)		48850	7835		56685	-2844
Transfers between funds		0	0	0	0	0
Net Movement in Funds		48850	7835	0	56685	-2844
Reconciliation of Funds						
Total funds brought forward		113420	11732		125152	
Total Funds carried forward		162270	19567		181837	

THE RIVER MANCHESTER

Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2025

	Notes	2025 Total Funds	2024 Total Funds
Fixed Assets			
Tangible Assets	5.1		
Total Fixed Assets		188,965	5710
Currents Assets			
Debtors	5.2	1,340	3,900
Cash at bank and in hand		64,052	120,437
Total Current Assets		<u>65,392</u>	<u>124,337</u>
Current Liabilities			
Creditors: Amount falling due			
within one year	5.3	3,097	4,895
		62,295	119,442
Net Current Assets/(Liabilities)		251,260	125,152
Total Assets less current liabilities			
Long Term Liability			
Creditors: Amount falling due			
More than One year			-
Provision for Liabilities	5.4	69,423	
Net Assets		<u>181,837</u>	<u>125,152</u>
The Funds of the Charity	5.4		
Restricted Income funds		19567	11732
Unrestricted Fund		162,270	113,420
Total Charity Funds		<u>181,837</u>	<u>125,152</u>

THE RIVER MANCHESTER

Notes to financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025

1. Basis of preparation

1.1 Basis of accounting

These accounts have been prepared on the basis of historic cost in accordance with:

* Accounting and reporting by Charities - statement of Recommended Practice (SORP 2015);

* and with*

--

 accounting standards;
or

--

 Financial Reporting Standards for Smaller Enterprises (FRSSE);

* and with the Charities Act.

1.2 Change in basis of accounting

This set of accounts represent The River Manchester 12th year financial reporting.

2. Accounting policies

This standard list of accounting policies has been applied by the charity except for those deleted. Where a difference or additional policy has been adopted then this is detailed in the box below.

INCOMING RESOURCES

Recognition of Incoming resources	These are included in the Statement of Financial Activities (Sofa) When: <ul style="list-style-type: none">* the charity becomes entitled to the resources;* the trustees are virtually certain they will receive the resources; and* the monetary value can be measured with sufficient reliability.
Incoming resources with related expenditure	Where incoming resources have related expenditure (as with fundraising or contract income) the incoming resources and related expenditure are reported gross in the SOFA.
Grants and donations	Grants and donations are only included in the SOFA at the same time as the gift to which they relate.
Gifts in kind	Gifts in kind are accounted for at a reasonable estimate of their value to the charity or the amount actually realised. Gifts in kind for sale or distribution are included in the accounts as gifts only when sold or distributed by the charity. Gifts in kind for use by the charity are included in the SOFA as incoming resources when receivable.
Donated services and facilities	These are only included in incoming resources (with an equivalent amount in resources expended) where the benefit to the charity is reasonably quantifiable, measurable and material. The value placed on these resources is the estimated value to the charity of the service or facility received.
Volunteer help	The value of any voluntary help received is not included in the accounts but is described in the trustees' annual report.
Investment Income	This is included in the accounts when receivable.
Expenditure and Liabilities Liability recognition	Liabilities are recognised as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to pay out resources.
Governance costs	Include costs of the preparation and examination of statutory accounts, the costs of trustee meetings and cost of any legal advice to trustees on governance or constitutional matters.
Support Costs	Support costs include central functions and have been allocated to activity cost categories on a basis consistent with the use of resources.
Assets	These are capitalised if they can be used for more than one year, and cost at least a thousand pounds. They are valued at cost

3. Analysis of Incoming resources

3.1 Voluntary Income	2025 Total	2024 Total
	£	£
Donation from Sponsors/ individuals	57861	17513
Gift Aid Tax Claimed	3389	7317
Grants Received	62857	57125
	<u>124107</u>	<u>81956</u>
3.2 Activities for generating funds	Unrestricted funds	Unrestricted funds
	£	£
Sponsorship -HMRC 80% Job Retention Grant	-	-
Sales of Donated Goods	85533	74634
	<u>85533</u>	<u>74634</u>
3.3 Investment Income	funds	funds
	£	£
Bank Interest Received	-	-
	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
3.4 Charitable Activities Income	funds	funds
Van Donation Received	-	-
	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Total	209640	156589

4. Analysis of resources expended

4.1 Cost of Charitable activities	2025	2024
	Total	Total
	£	£
Salaries and wages	92307	78901
PAYE/Employer & Employee NI	17406	14579
Pension Contribution	4059	3804
Staff Training Cost	124	82
Volunteers Training Cost	45	107
Vehicle Repair/Hire Cost	516	1158
Vehicle Petrol Expenses	994	1251
Volunteer/Staff Travel Expenses	350	1110
Volunteer Expenses	1550	2570
Project Cost	5578	6484
Heat & Light	3799	10776
Rent	6885	12992
Business/Water Rates	732	1116
Insurances	2542	2121
Caretaking	2174	660
Repairs & Maintenance	1864	6437
Postage & Stationery/printing	436	346
Phone & Internet	870	632
Publicity Cost/Website	537	1034
IT Cost	1338	210
Equipment Purchased	269	757
Materials Purchased	51	-
Cafeteria /Food Club Purchased	1357	2781
Cafeteria Equipment	1497	320
	<u>147278</u>	<u>150229</u>
4.2 Governance Cost	£	£
Audit & Accountancy Cost	700	6750
Trustee Meeting Expenses	172	101
Bank Charges	822	881
Building Loan Interest Paid	1922	
Fees Paid	850	477
	<u>4465</u>	<u>8209</u>
4.3 Other Resources Cost		
Depreciation Fixture & Fittings	690	345
Depreciation Motor Vehicle	521	651
	<u>1211</u>	<u>996</u>
Gains and Losses		
Asset Write off Van	-	-
Total	<u>152955</u>	<u>159434</u>

5. Notes to accounts Balance Sheet

5.1 Tangible Fixed Assets

	YH63FML			
	Building	Motor Van	Fixture/ Fittings	Total
	£	£	£	£
Building				
Cost 15/10/2024	184466	7200	3450	195116
Depreciation				
Balance b/f		4595	345	4940
Charge for the period		521	690	1211
20% reducing				
	-	5116	1035	6151
Net Book Value				
as at 31 March 2025	184466	2084	2415	188965
As at 31 March 2024		2605	3105	5710

5.2 Debtors

£
Staff Wages advanced
1,340
1,340

5.3 Accruals

£
Accountancy & Audit
150
HMRC- PAYE & NI
1293
Staff Pension Auto Enrolment
676
Repairs & maintenance
673
Utilita
305
3097

5.4 Long Term Liability

Co-Op Bank Loan
70000
Less: Repayment
577
69423

5.4 Charity Funds

	01-Apr-24	Income	Expenditure	31-Mar-25
	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted Funds	113420	166,783	117933	162,270
Restricted Funds	11732	42857	35022	19567
Total Charity Funds				181,837

Independent Examiner's Report on the Trustees of The River Manchester

I wish to report of the accounts of the River Manchester for the year ended 31 March 2025, which are set out on pages 1 to 6

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner:

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity
commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act), and
to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a "true and fair view" and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements:
to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Charities Act;

to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting
requirements of the 2011 Charities Act have not been met; or
- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the
accounts to be reached.

Rana & Co



Independent Examiner
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