

VITAL PROJECTS

England & Wales · Charity number 1155071

Details

Other names	BRADFORD AND AIREDALE MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCACY GROUP, BAMHAG
Status	Registered
Legal form	CIO
Registered	2013-12-18
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

Address	Tradeforce Building Cornwall Place Bradford BD8 7JT
Phone	01274770118
Email	hello@vitalprojects.org.uk
Website	www.vitalprojects.org.uk

Activities

Objects: TO PROMOTE FOR THE PUBLIC BENEFIT THE PROVISION OF SERVICES DIRECTED TOWARDS ADVOCACY FOR USERS OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SERVICES WITH A VIEW TO THE PRESERVATION AND PROTECTION OF THEIR GOOD HEALTH BY:- I)HELPING PEOPLE SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES PARTICULARLY IN SITUATIONS OF STRESS (SUCH AS THEIR ENCOUNTERS WITH PROFESSIONALS AND AT TRIBUNALS.); II)RECRUITING, TRAINING AND SUPPORTING ADVOCATES, WHO WHERE POSSIBLE WILL BE MATCHED WITH INDIVIDUALS REQUIRING HELP AND SUPPORT;AND III)WORKING COLLECTIVELY WITH A BROAD RANGE OF PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY, TO REALISE COMMON INTERESTS IN EMPOWERING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE USERS.

Activities: VITAL (Value, Involve, Talk Advocate & Link) were previously known as Bradford and Airedale Mental Health Advocacy Group (BAMHAG) is a service user led mental health organisation and was established in 1989. Our mission is to ensure that the vulnerable and disadvantaged have a voice within the health and social care framework, whilst supported by experts by experience. www.vitalprojects.org.uk

Classification

- **How:** Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information, Other Charitable Activities
- **What:** General Charitable Purposes, Education/training, The Advancement Of Health Or Saving Of Lives, Disability, Other Charitable Purposes
- **Who:** Children/young People, Elderly/old People, People With Disabilities, Other Charities Or Voluntary Bodies, Other Defined Groups, The General Public/mankind

Geography

- Bradford City

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£162,278	£161,100	-	-
2024-03-31	£192,343	£201,231	-	-
2023-03-31	£189,066	£199,701	-	-
2022-03-31	£203,520	£187,630	-	-
2021-03-31	£211,522	£190,480	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Sara Firth	Chair	2016-07-07
Chris Buckley		2022-09-22
Colin Perry		2013-08-13
JACQUELINE OLDROYD		2013-08-13
Richard Ellis		2021-06-21
TREVOR RAMSAY		2013-08-13

VITAL PROJECTS

England & Wales - Charity number 1155071

Accounts

VITAL PROJECTS
TRUSTEES' REPORT AND UNAUDITED ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

VITAL PROJECTS

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Trustees	Trevor Ramsay (<i>Trustee</i>) Jacqueline Oldroyd (<i>Chairperson</i>) Colin Perry (<i>Secretary</i>) Richard Ellis (<i>Trustee</i>) Chris Buckley (<i>Treasurer</i>)
Charity number	1155071
Principal address	First Floor Tradeforce Building Cornwall Place Bradford West Yorkshire BD8 7JT
Telephone:	01274 770118
Email:	hello@vitalprojects.org.uk
Independent examiner	Kevin J Meddings MAAT Kevin Meddings Accountancy Services 55 Crowther Avenue Calverley Leeds West Yorkshire LS28 5SA
Bankers	Caf Bank Ltd 25 Kings Hill Avenue Kings Hill West Malling Kent ME19 4JQ

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VITAL PROJECTS

TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

The Trustees present their report and accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025.

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the accounts and comply with the charity's constitution, the Charities Act 2011 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 published on 16 July 2014.

Governing Document

The organisation is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) which is a legal structure and enables us to better respond to an ever-changing environment. The organisation is governed by a constitution which has been agreed and is registered with the Charity Commission and sets out the organisations governance and governance structure.

Trustees, Organisational Structure and Governance

Vital is an Expert by Experience service user led organisation with specialist mental health understanding and was established in 1989. As a Charity Incorporated Organisation, we are independent of statutory health and social care providers, and the Charity Trustees are responsible for managing the affairs of the organisation. The Charity's Director along with other key staff is responsible for the day-to-day operation and management of the charity on behalf of the Trustees who are increasingly active in their role providing support to the continued role in developing the charity to enable reach and quality services.

Potential Trustees with the necessary skills in key areas such as a mental health and or employment practice background go through a recruitment process, completing an application form and providing referees. Once skills are ascertained and screening undertaken potential trustees have the opportunity to meet with current Trustees and attend a Trustee Meeting (or a part of a meeting) and if all is well may be co-opted to the Trustee Board and then stand formally for election at the Annual General Meeting. When new Trustees are appointed, they are introduced to the work of Vital and provided with the information they need to fulfil their roles, which includes information about the role of Trustees and Charity Law. Training events both in-house and external are made available to Trustees, and at times Trustees may undertake training specific to their roles as well as attending conferences and seminars. All existing Trustees have long experience of being a charity Trustee. Under Charity Law the Trustees elect officer roles of Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary at their first meeting following the AGM.

The Trustees hold regular meetings and maintain contact outside of meetings to ensure effective and efficient decisions are made in a timely manner and as needed.

The Trustees who served during the year were as follows:

Trevor Ramsay (*Trustee*)
 Jacqueline Oldroyd (*Chairperson*)
 Colin Perry (*Secretary*)
 Richard Ellis (*Trustee*)
 Chris Buckley (*Treasurer*)

Risk Management

The Trustees have identified and assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed and are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate the exposure to the major risks. Where appropriate risks are mitigated by the introduction of policies and developed working practices and where appropriate are covered by insurance. In considering risks to the organisation a reserves policy has been established and agreed - Vital are aiming to increase reserves in line with policy

VITAL PROJECTS

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Objectives

VITAL was established in 1989 as a direct result of research showing that patients in Lynfield Mount Hospital had no-one independent to speak up for them. Since this time, we have been successful in delivering several services throughout Bradford & Airedale that have acted to empower, involve and inform mental health service users and their carers. In 1999 VITAL registered as a charity with the Charity Commission and under our old name of Bradford & Airedale Mental Health Advocacy Group (BAMHAG). Having developed a specialist understanding of the principles, standards and legal framework of specialist advocacy provision we have undertaken to increase our service user group to include people who need advocacy and who are not mental health service users. However, the advocacy services will be limited to people who could be defined as vulnerable adults either because of ill health or by receipt of health and social care services.

The objectives of the charity are to:

1. Provide a free; confidential and independent advocacy support to people who need support to be heard and who are living in Bradford & Airedale.
2. Support people to speak for themselves particularly in and around situations of stress (such as their encounters with professionals). Recruiting, training and supporting volunteers and
3. Work collectively with a broad range of people in empowering them to participate in health and social care decisions.

In setting our objectives and planning our activities our trustees have given serious consideration to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit and in particular the advancement of health, well-being, and citizenship.

Activities

In addition to delivering on contracted and commissioned projects we have increased our provision of community advocacy to those that have no statutory advocacy rights. We are delighted however to have had the opportunity to retain key skills needed ensuring that we were in a position for future growth and development via independent consultancy. We have continued to work with people who have a need for statutory advocacy to access those services when they experience difficulties and raising concerns when they are brought to us.

Independent Community Advocacy

Providing advocacy support to those who have no statutory right to advocacy has never been needed more and amazingly the more statutory rights people have to advocacy the more limited and restricted advocacy has become. Being an organisation led by "experts by experience" helps us offer non-judgemental support, a higher level of empathy and, in our experience, a greater understanding of people than many other services.

People with mental ill health really don't want an advocate to be in a smart suit treating them the same way as every other mental health professional. They are relieved to know their advocate has also "been there". Allowing them to develop a deeper trust, helping them to open up more, telling them things they may not have felt comfortable telling other "professionals". We all have mental health issues, and sometimes, we all have a struggle to be heard. Over 30 years since we started our organisation, it's important to remember why we are still vital - because there are people that will still go unheard. There are so many unheard voices in the health and social care systems who can benefit from our user led person approach.

Our experienced advocates support people to have a voice and be heard in a variety of situations when they have difficulties accessing support. This can involve meeting with people to help them work out what they want, what they want to say, who they need speak with, and how they navigate accessing the person that they may need to speak with. Advocates often go with individuals to appointments and can help them to understand their options and choices and possible outcomes to help them make decisions about their health and care.

VITAL PROJECTS

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Partnership and Collaborative Working

Vital continue to work with and build links within Bradford to better able us to support the people that use our services and maintain an active role within the Advocacy sector at local, regional and national level.

We continued this year to work alongside Lancashire and South Cumbria Provider Collaborative and NHS England with activities including strategic development and independent support for quality and compliance assessment visits ensuring patients voices are paramount.

Vital have along with partners have been part of a team working to develop a bid to support a research programme that will hopefully result in a piece of independent academic research to evidence the value of good quality advocacy support.

We are working in partnership with the Peter Doody Foundation, a charity established by families who have tragically lost loved ones to Sudden Unexpected Death in Epilepsy (SUDEP). Despite its significance, SUDEP is not always openly discussed in clinical settings, leaving many patients and families without the information and support they need.

Together, we are developing a self-advocacy kit and toolkit, alongside training for volunteers, to help open up conversations between patients and healthcare providers. This initiative combines lived experience with practical resources, empowering people with epilepsy and their families to ask questions, access support, and feel more confident in their care. By creating space for these vital discussions, we aim to reduce barriers, strengthen patient voice, and ultimately improve outcomes and wellbeing.

Finally, we have also been working with Epilepsy Action to develop and deliver a generalised self-advocacy toolkit, designed to give people living with epilepsy the knowledge, skills and confidence to take an active role in their care and better navigate their engagement with healthcare process. Building on Epilepsy Action's strong community reach, we will be running monthly workshops throughout the coming year with their existing client base.

These sessions will provide practical guidance, peer support, and opportunities to practise advocacy skills in a safe and supportive environment. Through this collaboration, we aim to embed self-advocacy into everyday epilepsy care, ensuring that individuals and families feel equipped to communicate effectively with clinicians, access the support they need, and make informed decisions about their health and wellbeing.

Advocacy in a Secure Setting

Our experienced team support individuals who are in secure settings from admission, transition and through to discharge. Vital have over twenty years' experience in this area of advocacy provision which combines the complexities of Mental Health Legislation and Criminal Justice Legislation and other factors.

We have been delivering self-advocacy sessions at the Moorlands Forensic Unit, supporting individuals preparing to leave the facility. The programme is designed to build confidence and self-advocacy skills, helping participants navigate healthcare and community services more effectively once they transition back into the community. It also equips them to train as peer volunteers, enabling them to provide support to others entering the system in the future.

Our first six-week programme has been very well received, with excellent feedback from both participants and healthcare professionals, who have reported noticeable improvements in communication, confidence, and readiness for independence. This work is creating a sustainable model of peer-led support and ensuring that individuals feel empowered and prepared during a critical stage of their journey. There is a waiting list for the next sessions which will run later in the year.

VITAL PROJECTS

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

We ensure that individuals have access to legal processes and that they can understand complicated processes and their detention rights, providing one to one support and support in meetings with professionals providing care and treatment. Our service works across all three secure wards and has good access to space which is confidential for one-to-one discussions as and when needed. Ninety per cent of people in the secure setting are accessing independent advocacy and are actively engaging the support of the advocate who has presence is known and is trusted by those that need the service – we think this speaks for itself. This year has also seen us launch a guide for people who are being discharged which contains information about where to go for support and some of the things to expect, the guide has been well received and was possible due to a successful local funding bid.

Maintaining high standards of quality in the delivery of key services

We continue to maintain our Quality Performance Mark as a provider independent advocacy; a robust quality performance mark in which aspects of the organisation, services are assessed and includes interviews with people using our services and third-party stakeholders. The process of assessment is both a rigorous and rewarding experience providing an opportunity to shine a torch into our work and reflect on what we do, why we do it and ultimately how we do it.

Achievements and Performance

As an organisation with over 30 years' experience, we have seen many changes within the provision of advocacy, the advocacy sector and legislation pertaining to the delivery of advocacy. Vital remain strongly focussed on the underlying principles of our advocacy delivery and are passionate about the value that independent advocacy can play in transforming people's lives.

One of the biggest achievements is that we are still here because we know that people need us and we are driven to support people as a user-run organisation - experts by experience. It means that we value mental health issues, and the everyday management of recovery from them as real assets to those who run and provide our services. We believe this is important and underpins our organisational values. It means that we really do care about people being heard. Our local understanding and knowledge mean that we can help individuals navigate complex processes and situations and to enable better outcomes and change lives.

Vital Trustees would like to thank everyone that has continued to support the work we do and the vital support services we provide to individuals who need them.

VITAL PROJECTS

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Financial Review

We continue to receive funding to carry out the charitable purposes of the organisation from a number of sources. In this financial year the Charity can report a surplus of £1,178 (2024 a deficit of £8,888).

Following the conclusion of the annual cycle of funding there was a transfer of £33,094 into general unrestricted reserves. This has enabled us to fund our freelance team to provide management, finance, and marketing support for all activities of the organisation. Unrestricted reserves at the end of the financial year amounted to £21,932 (2024: balance of £19,766). Restricted reserves in respect of one service amounted to £2,935 and this was committed to be spent in the 2025/26 financial year.

Due to severe funding cuts, Vital have had to reduce staff and expenditure in order to ensure its survival. A working cash flow forecast is produced on a monthly basis, which agrees to our current bank balances and shows expected income and expenditure to March 25, ensuring that the board have timely information to aid decision making. This method means that the board work constantly in 'real time', assessing the situation and future financial predictions. A weekly bank balance update showing 'actual' predicted expenditure for the month is also emailed to our Chair and Director for review. Bank balances held at 31 March 2025 amounted to £19,496.

VITAL has constantly strived to improve its financial management and transparency, costs are fully apportioned on a full cost recovery basis and good financial policies and procedures ensure that Vitals' finances are constantly monitored with monthly reporting to the Trustee Board.

Reserves Policy

VITAL's Trustees have an established financial reserves policy to ensure the organisation can meet its objectives. Our general reserves are those that are not restricted to or designated for some specific purpose. They provide some protection to the organisation and its charitable activities by allowing time to adjust to any changing financial circumstances, limiting the risk in the event of a downturn in income or an unexpected need for financial expenditure. In devising this policy, the Trustees have considered the length of time it would take to wind up the organisation (should it ever be necessary) and the costs entailed in meeting our obligations.

Taking into account liabilities, and considering other significant factors such as lease agreements, and employer responsibilities if the organisation were to close; the Trustees decided reserves for VITAL should be established at between three and six months of the charity's average yearly expenditure and is currently aiming to increase the reserves in line with policy.

Investment Policy

VITAL Trustees recognise the need to replenish the organisations capital investment, and to build into all funding current and future a capital fund to allow for this. When capital investment occurs, it is linked to the depreciative value and life span of items, and as such happens as and when needed, and, according to available spending.

VITAL PROJECTS

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Plans for the Future

We were established to provide independent advocacy support to people who had no one to support them and that purpose is the same today as it was in 1989. Our services are still vital to people who have no legal or statutory rights to independent advocacy support, the people who have a need, but no rights and we intend to do our best to provide these people with support. Our vital services for the future will aim to support those who use mental health services and those who feel vulnerable due to other factors, including older age, trauma, and illness

Our service is delivered by passionate individuals, many of whom have their own experiences of mental ill health and have benefitted from our service. It is these people who have designed and shaped our plans for delivery, based on the direct feedback given from service users in our consultation. We are proud to be an Expert by Experience 'user led' organisation as this ensures that our services are relevant and appropriate to local needs as well as being delivered in a manner that best engages the very people we aim to support, advocate and empower.

Going forward Vital want to retain, support and grow one of the most experienced, skilled, committed and passionate team of advocates. We will continue to provide a workplace environment where people can grow and achieve their potential without fear of being held back by their experience of mental ill health whether past, or ongoing. Vital intend to build on the excellent reputation for providing a supportive and challenging place to work and learn from everyone we work with.

We intend to work hard building on our excellent reputation to establish and secure funding to maintain and develop our organisation, the people we work with and those who work with us. Our focus will be:

- Continue our role as a provider of Community Advocacy services for those with no legal entitlement to statutory advocacy provision.
- Continue to develop campaigns and resources that support individuals experiencing difficulties and ensuring concerns are heard in the delivery of services.
- To educate and empower people through the delivery of our programme workshops (i.e. Self-Advocacy) in a variety of community settings.
- Continue to promote our unique experts by experience service delivery model.
- Continue to foster and develop local partnerships with local businesses and others wanting to deliver mental health awareness in the workplace and better practices.
- Continue to work closely with local partners to develop and deliver innovative services to enable people to be given a voice in times of stress and difficulty in their dealings with health and social care providers.

Strategic Development will continue to be a key component going forward for the Trustee Board. As a small charity we know Vital has a lot to give based on experience and knowledge gathered across the thirty years we've been doing what we do. We will continue to adapt to an ever-changing environment whilst working with and supporting people to be heard in relation to their health and social care needs.

VITAL PROJECTS

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the accounts in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted).

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the Trustees to prepare accounts 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 of the charity for that period. In preparing these accounts the Trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- Observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP 2015 (FRS 102).
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- State whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the accounts.
- Prepare the accounts on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the accounts comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and constitution. 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.

The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the charity and financial information included on the charity's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of accounts may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

On behalf of the board of trustees

Jacqueline Oldroyd
Chairperson

Dated: 27 November 2025

VITAL PROJECTS

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF VITAL PROJECTS

I report on the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2025, which are set out on pages 9 to 16.

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 period under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- (i) examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- (ii) to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- (iii) to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the 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 you as 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:

- (a) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
 - (i) to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
 - (ii) to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act;
 have not been met; or
- (b) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Kevin J Meddings MAAT

Kevin Meddings Accountancy Services
55 Crowther Avenue
Calverley
Leeds
West Yorkshire
LS28 5SA

Dated: 27 November 2025

VITAL PROJECTS

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

		Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total 2025	Total 2024
	Notes	£	£	£	£
Income					
Voluntary income	2	5,952	-	5,952	6,207
Bank interest		266	-	266	179
Grants receivable		-	154,882	154,882	185,957
Refunds		1,178	-	1,178	-
Total income		7,396	154,882	162,278	192,343
Expenditure					
Charitable activities	3	38,324	122,776	161,100	201,231
Total expenditure		38,324	122,776	161,100	201,231
Net income/(expenditure)/net movement in funds before transfers		(30,928)	32,106	1,178	(8,888)
Transfers between funds		33,094	(33,094)	-	
Net income/(expenditure)/net movement in funds after transfers		2,166	(988)	1,178	(8,888)
Total funds brought forward		19,766	3,923	23,689	32,577
Total funds carried forward		21,932	2,935	24,867	23,689

VITAL PROJECTS

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2025

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
Current assets					
Cash at bank and in hand		24,541	(5,045)	19,496	38,644
Debtors and prepayments	6	-	7,980	7,980	1,296
		<u>24,541</u>	<u>2,935</u>	<u>27,476</u>	<u>39,940</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	7	(2,609)	-	(2,609)	(16,251)
		<u>21,932</u>	<u>2,935</u>	<u>24,867</u>	<u>23,689</u>
The funds of the charity					
Unrestricted funds		21,932	-	21,932	19,766
Restricted funds	8	-	2,935	2,935	3,923
		<u>21,932</u>	<u>2,935</u>	<u>24,867</u>	<u>23,689</u>
Total charity funds		<u><u>21,932</u></u>	<u><u>2,935</u></u>	<u><u>24,867</u></u>	<u><u>23,689</u></u>

The accounts were approved by the Trustees on 27 November 2025

Jacqueline Oldroyd
Chairperson

VITAL PROJECTS

STATEMENT OF CASHFLOWS AS AT 31 MARCH 2025

	Notes	2025 £	2024 £
Cash (used) in operating activities	10	(19,414)	(9,520)
Cashflows from investing activities			
Bank interest received		266	179
		<hr/>	<hr/>
(Decrease) in cash equivalents in the year		(19,148)	(9,341)
Cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		38,644	47,985
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Total cash equivalents at the end of the year		19,496	38,644
		<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

VITAL PROJECTS

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

1 Accounting policies

1.1 Basis of preparation

The accounts are prepared under the historical cost convention unless otherwise stated.

The accounts 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 (FRS102) issued on 16 July 2014, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS102), the Charities Act 2011 and UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice as it applies from 1 January 2015.

Having considered future planned activities and the reserves available to the charity, the trustees are satisfied that the financial statements should be prepared on the going concern basis.

The charity meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS102.

1.2 Incoming resources

Donations and legacies are accounted for when they are received by the charity. Other income is accounted for on an accruals basis as far as is prudent to do so.

Core funding revenue grants are credited to the income and expenditure account at the time when received. Revenue grants for specific projects are credited to the income and expenditure account when received and unspent amounts at the year end are carried forward as restricted funds in the balance sheet. Where income is received in advance of the next financial year this may be deferred in accordance with the terms of the funding agreements.

1.3 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost less depreciation. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost less estimated residual value of each asset over its expected useful life, as follows:-

Equipment	25% Straight Line
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Only individual items of a capital nature costing £5,000 or more are included on the balance sheet.

1.4 Pensions

The charity operate a stakeholder pension scheme. Contributions are charged in the accounts as they become payable in accordance with the rules of the scheme.

1.5 Accumulated funds

Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors as to how they may be used.

Designated funds comprise funds which have been set aside at the discretion of the trustees for specific purposes.

1.6 Resources expended

Expenditure is recognised on an accruals basis as a liability is incurred. Expenditure includes any VAT which cannot be recovered and is reported as part of the expenditure to which it relates.

VITAL PROJECTS

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for beneficiaries.

Governance costs includes those costs associated with meeting the constitutional and statutory requirement of the charity.

All costs are allocated between the categories on the Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA) on a basis designed to reflect the use of the resource.

1.7 Gifts in kind

The charity receives the benefit of work carried out by volunteers whose expenses are reimbursed.

2 Voluntary income

	2025	2024
	£	£
Employers Allowance	5,000	5,000
Donations	952	1,108
Other income	-	99
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	5,952	6,207

3 Charitable activities

	2025	2024
	£	£
Salaries and Wages	84,894	102,720
Freelance Costs	41,103	55,084
Healthcare Provision	472	533
Staff Pensions	8,335	8,250
Payroll Costs	365	681
Rent and Rates	6,525	11,965
Room hire	262	-
Removal costs	832	-
Telephone	1,799	2,241
Office Costs	3,699	4,751
Promotion and Information Costs	319	1,853
Training	119	78
Away day	-	257
Travelling Costs and User Expenses	1,039	255
Computer Servicing and Consumables	7,611	8,065
Publications and Subscriptions	24	75
Insurance	892	1,174
Bank Charges	60	60
Repairs and Renewals	-	118
Website Costs	1,189	1,459
Legal and Professional	399	340
Independent Examination	800	800
Sundries	362	472
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	161,100	201,231
	<hr/>	<hr/>

VITAL PROJECTS

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

4 Trustees

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

No travel expenses or other costs were reimbursed in the year (2024: none).

Trustees Indemnity Insurance amounting to £354 was paid in the year.

We can confirm that there are no other related party transactions that require disclosure in the accounts.

5 Number of employees

The average monthly number of employees during the year was:-

	2025 Number	2024 Number
Employees	5	6
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Employment costs		
	2025 £	2024 £
Wages and salaries	79,408	95,944
Social security costs	5,486	6,776
Other pension costs	8,335	8,250
Health insurance	472	533
Freelance costs	41,103	55,084
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	134,804	166,587
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

There were no employees whose annual emoluments were £60,000 or more.

6 Debtors and prepayments

	2025 £	2024 £
Grants receivable	7,980	-
Prepayments	-	1,296
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	7,980	1,296
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

VITAL PROJECTS

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

7 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2025 £	2024 £
Deferred Income	-	9,900
Taxes and social security costs	1,087	1,280
Creditors and Accruals	1,522	5,071
	<u>2,609</u>	<u>16,251</u>

8 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 2024 £	Incoming resources £	Movement in funds		Balance at 31 March 2025 £
			Resources expended £	Transfers £	
Airedale Primary Care Trust	-	31,918	(22,272)	(9,646)	-
Mental Health Advocacy within a forensic setting	-	26,371	(25,690)	(681)	-
Independent Complaints Advocacy	-	59,400	(49,534)	(9,866)	-
The National Lottery	3,923	25,613	(23,736)	(2,865)	2,935
NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria	-	11,580	(1,544)	(10,036)	-
	<u>3,923</u>	<u>154,882</u>	<u>(122,776)</u>	<u>(33,094)</u>	<u>2,935</u>

9 Contingent Liability – Pensions

The contributions made by the charity are made to the Pensions Trust Growth Plan. This is a small multi-employer pension plan which is in most respects a money purchase arrangement. In May 2012 the Trust advised the Trustees that the overall Growth Plan had a deficit in funding and as a result there was a requirement to incur additional contributions to bridge the shortfall in funding. Vital will be required to pay additional monthly contributions which will increase annually by 3%. Currently the potential debt to the charity amounts to £11,896 but no provision has been made in these accounts on the assumption that the organisation does not intend to withdraw from the fund.

VITAL PROJECTS

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

10 Reconciliation of net movement in funds to net cashflows from operating activities

	2025 £	2024 £
Net movement in funds	1,178	(8,888)
(Increase) in debtors	(6,684)	(216)
(Decrease) in creditors	(13,642)	(237)
(Deduct) bank interest received	(266)	(179)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Net cash (used) in operating activities	(19,414)	(9,520)
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

VITAL PROJECTS

England & Wales - Charity number 1155071

Accounts

VITAL PROJECTS
TRUSTEES' REPORT AND UNAUDITED ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

VITAL PROJECTS

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Trustees	Sara Firth (<i>Chairperson</i>) Trevor Ramsay (<i>Trustee</i>) Jacqueline Oldroyd (<i>Secretary/Treasurer</i>) Colin Perry (<i>Trustee</i>) Richard Ellis (<i>Trustee</i>) Chris Buckley (<i>Trustee</i>)
Charity number	1155071
Principal address	First Floor Tradeforce Building Cornwall Place Bradford West Yorkshire BD8 7JT
Telephone:	01274 770118
Email:	hello@vitalprojects.org.uk
Independent examiner	Kevin J Meddings MAAT Kevin Meddings Accountancy Services 55 Crowther Avenue Calverley Leeds West Yorkshire LS28 5SA
Bankers	Caf Bank Ltd 25 Kings Hill Avenue Kings Hill West Malling Kent ME19 4JQ Lloyds TSB plc 45 Hustlergate Bradford West Yorkshire BD1 1PP

VITAL PROJECTS

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Statement of cashflows	13
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VITAL PROJECTS

TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

The Trustees present their report and accounts for the year ended 31 March 2023.

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the accounts and comply with the charity's constitution, the Charities Act 2011 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 published on 16 July 2014.

Having rebranded and relaunched as Vital (registered as Vital Projects) the organisation has spent some time this year consolidating and ensuring a future that is stable and able to provide the core services, being mindful that the work we do is needed more than ever before.

Governing Document

The organisation is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) which is a legal structure and enables us to better respond to an ever-changing environment. The organisation is governed by a constitution which has been agreed and is registered with the Charity Commission and sets out the organisations governance and governance structure.

Trustees, Organisational Structure and Governance

Vital is an Expert by Experience service user led organisation with specialist mental health understanding and was established in 1989. As a Charity Incorporated Organisation, we are independent of statutory health and social care providers and the Charity Trustees are responsible for managing the affairs of the organisation. The Charity's Director along with other key staff is responsible for the day-to-day operation and management of the charity on behalf of the Trustees who are increasingly active in their role providing support to the continued role in developing the charity to enable reach and quality services.

Vitals' constitution allows for up to 12 Trustees to be appointed and are elected and re-elected at the Annual General Meeting (AGM), and those Trustees that have held office during the financial year and at the date of this report are set out below.

Potential Trustees first need to be approved as members of Vital and must agree to support the aims and objectives of the organisation for a minimum of three months prior to being considered for Trusteeship. Potential Trustees will then go through a recruitment process, completing an application and meeting with current Trustees before being co-opted and then standing for election at the AGM. When new Trustees are appointed, they are introduced to the work of Vital and provided with the information they need to fulfil their roles, which includes information about the role of Trustees and Charity Law. Training events both in-house and external are made available to Trustees, and at times Trustees may undertake training specific to their roles as well as attending conferences and seminars. All existing Trustees have long experience of being a charity Trustee. Under Charity Law the Trustees elect officer roles of Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary at their first meeting following the AGM.

The Trustees hold regular six weekly meetings and have maintained contact outside of meetings to ensure effective and efficient decisions are made in a timely manner and as needed.

The Trustees who served during the year were as follows:

Sara Firth (*Chairperson*)
Trevor Ramsay (*Trustee*)
Jacqueline Oldroyd (*Secretary / Treasurer*)
Colin Perry (*Trustee*)
Richard Ellis (*Trustee*)
Chris Buckley (*Trustee*)

VITAL PROJECTS

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

Risk Management

The Trustees have identified and assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed and are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate the exposure to the major risks. Where appropriate risks are mitigated by the introduction of policies and developed working practices and where appropriate are covered by insurance. In considering risks to the organisation a reserves policy has been established and agreed - Vital are aiming to increase reserves in line with policy.

Objectives

VITAL was established in 1989 as a direct result of research showing that patients in Lynfield Mount Hospital had no-one independent to speak up for them. Since this time, we have been successful in delivering several services throughout Bradford & Airedale that have acted to empower, involve and inform mental health service users and their carers. In 1999 VITAL registered as a charity with the Charity Commission and under our old name of Bradford & Airedale Mental Health Advocacy Group (BAMHAG). Having developed a specialist understanding of the principles, standards and legal framework of specialist advocacy provision we have undertaken to increase our service user group to include people who need advocacy and who are not mental health service users. However, the advocacy services will be limited to people who could be defined as vulnerable adults either because of ill health or by receipt of health and social care services.

The objectives of the charity are to:

1. Provide a free; confidential and independent advocacy support to people who need support to be heard and who are living in Bradford & Airedale.
2. Support people to speak for themselves particularly in and around situations of stress (such as their encounters with professionals). Recruiting, training and supporting volunteers and
3. Work collectively with a broad range of people in empowering them to participate in health and social care decisions.

In setting our objectives and planning our activities our trustees have given serious consideration to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit and in particular the advancement of health, well-being, and citizenship.

VITAL PROJECTS

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

Activities

In addition to delivering on contracted and commissioned projects we have increased our provision of community advocacy to those that have no statutory advocacy rights. We are delighted however to have had the opportunity to retain key skills needed ensuring that we were in a position for future growth and development via independent consultancy. We have continued to work with people who have a need for statutory advocacy to access those services when they experience difficulties and raising concerns when they are brought to us.

'[Vital] is clear what they offer, that comes across very well, the advocates are very clear with clear boundaries. Vital is a trusted organisation...no one else does what they are doing. It's a very skilled organisation'. (External Stakeholder)

Independent Community Advocacy

Providing advocacy support to those who have no statutory right to advocacy. Our experienced advocate support people to have a voice and be heard in a variety of situations when they have difficulties accessing support. This can involve meeting with people to help them work out what they want, what they want to say, who they need speak with, and how they navigate accessing the person that they may need to speak with. Advocates often go with individuals to appointments and can help them to understand their options and choices and possible outcomes to help them make decisions about their health and care.

"In the past I have had difficulty accessing crisis service, the advocate has helped me be able to phone the service and supported me when I have been speaking with crisis service. I now feel more confident in accessing the crisis service without support, but know if it becomes difficult that I can come back to my advocate... It's nice to have someone on my side who takes time to understand what I am saying and what I want." (Person who accessed the service.)

'I write down what I feel and prepare for the meetings – I wouldn't have thought to do that without the advocate. Now I share that with other people who struggle, them [Vital Projects] helping me has meant I help others.' (Person who accessed advocacy)

Providing Independent NHS Complaints Advocacy

Our experienced advocates support people in their complaints about the treatment or care that they or a loved one received from an NHS service. This type of advocacy can include waiting times, a lack of care and treatment, failure to diagnose and supporting families who have lost a loved one and are dealing with bereavement. Advocates help individuals to work out what they want to complain about in times when they haven't yet had the opportunity to process their thoughts, and then to write the complaint. We support individuals in navigating complex processes to ensure the complaint gets to the right place / people. We then support individuals to understand any response / outcomes that they get and possible next steps when appropriate. In complex cases resulting in an unexpected bereavement, we have supported individuals through coroners court and in other cases supported people to go to the Parliamentary Health Ombudsman.

"Without your service I would not have had the tools to address such a difficult issue without further stress and trauma. The advocate was calm, and listened to me, showed great empathy and emotional support. The advocate helped me to understand my rights and where I was in the system. I found the complaint very daunting, but my advocate helped me every step of the way. I feel the service received was first class and my advocate had a massive input. Thank you for your hard work in supporting me throughout this long-drawn-out process. You have been amazing." (Person who accessed the service.)

'I was immensely reassured by the professional approach and confidentiality of the service.' (Person who accessed the service)

VITAL PROJECTS

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

Providing Advocacy in a Secure Setting

Our experienced team support individuals who are in secure settings from admission, transition and through to discharge. Vital have over twenty years' experience in this area of advocacy provision which combines the complexities of Mental Health Legislation and Criminal Justice Legislation and other factors. We ensure that individuals have access to legal processes and that they can understand complicated processes and their detention rights, providing one to one support and support in meetings with professionals providing care and treatment. Our service works across all three secure wards and has good access to space which is confidential for one-to-one discussions as and when needed. Ninety per cent of people in the secure setting are accessing independent advocacy and are actively engaging the support of the advocate who has presence is known and is trusted by those that need the service – we think this speaks for itself. This year has also seen us launch a guide for people who are being discharged which contains information about where to go for support and some of the things to expect, the guide has been well received and was possible due to a successful local funding bid.

'The advocate is absolutely brilliant, easy to get hold of, and makes good relationships with people who use our services. It's really easy to refer into. They are very good, and person centred.' (External Stakeholder)

Maintaining high standards of quality in the delivery of key services

We have again been successful in achieving the QPM – a robust quality performance mark in which aspects of the organisation, services are assessed, and includes interviews with people using our services and third-party stakeholders. The process of assessment is both a rigorous and rewarding experience providing an opportunity to shine a torch into our work and reflect on what we do, why we do it and ultimately how we do it.

"Vital Projects is an outstanding values driven advocacy service which demonstrates its commitment to the involvement of people who use the services it provides, with engagement and representation at all levels within the organisation. Trustees and staff are very proud of their impressive history of a genuinely user led ethos and practice.

Staff support is excellent, with a clearly very motivated and passionate team. Staff feel involved in the future of Vital Projects, its place within the local community and its contribution to community development.

The independence of the services provided was clear throughout the principles and practice at Vital Projects." (Independent Assessor for National Development Team for Inclusion)



"There is a positive ethos of shared values and teamwork. Advocates spoke warmly of the mutual support they offer each other, ensuring that there is plenty of opportunity to debrief from stressful, challenging or crisis work. Advocates and Advocacy Managers receive regular one-to-one supervision, as well as ad-hoc support. Advocates feel that their life experience and professional experience is valued by the organisation and that their welfare is prioritised. The Advocates are committed, enthusiastic and proud of their work. Advocates talked about how long

VITAL PROJECTS

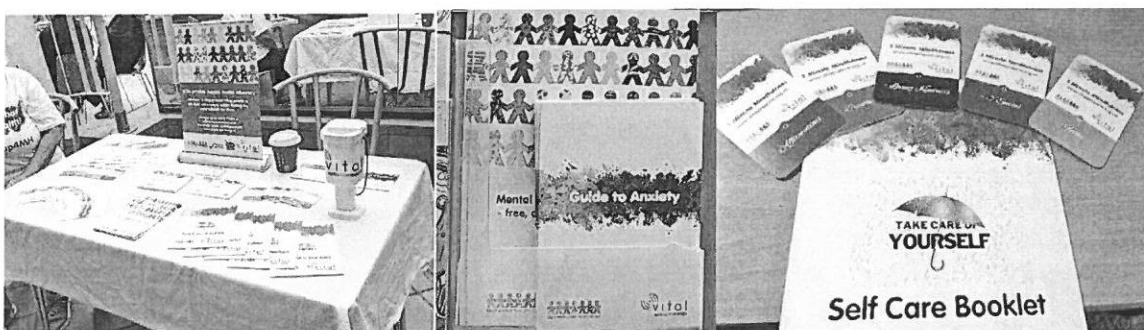
TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

they had been working at Vital Projects, some had left to work elsewhere and subsequently returned to Vital Projects as they appreciate the supportive culture. Advocates feel that they have been engaged in and supported through a period of change within the organisation. Their views are sought about issues facing the organisation and they feel that their views are valued and listened to.” (Independent Assessor for National Development Team for Inclusion)

Local and National Activities

Every year we are active and promoting the values and benefits of Independent Advocacy in Advocacy Awareness Week, Mental Health Week and other events at local, regional and national levels. We were invited to speak about our expert by experience user led mental health advocacy at the National Advocacy Conference and have worked with individuals who are involved in academic research into independent advocacy.

This year we have been out and about sharing information about our services, talking and engaging with people who have been able to share with us the difficulties they are experiencing with their own health and caring for others. We have shared with many, the resources we have developed to help reduce anxiety as well as promoting self-care and mindfulness. For a small grass roots user-led mental health organisation this is a huge achievement and a huge implication for our limited resources.



VITAL PROJECTS

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

Achievements and Performance

As an organisation with over 30 years' experience, we have seen many changes within the provision of advocacy, the advocacy sector and legislation pertaining to the delivery of advocacy. Vital remain strongly focussed on the underlying principles of our advocacy delivery and are passionate about the value that independent advocacy can play in transforming people's lives.

One of the biggest achievements is that we are still here because we know that people need us and we are driven to support people as a user-run organisation - experts by experience. It means that we value mental health issues, and the everyday management of recovery from them as real assets to those who run and provide our services. We believe this is important and underpins our organisational values. It means that we really do care about people being heard. Our local understanding and knowledge mean that we can help individuals navigate complex processes and situations and to enable better outcomes and change lives.

We continue to be nationally recognised for our Quality Advocacy Service provision via the National Development Team for Inclusions quality assessment. This is a robust quality assessment and assurance system for providers of independent advocacy in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Other Achievements Include:

- Ensuring a whole organisation approach to future development and growth.
- Securing new income to support organisational development and growth.
- Securing funding to produce resources such as a Guide to Discharge following detention in a secure setting and a guide to Managing Anxiety.
- Retention of experienced, passionate and dedicated staff team and Trustee Board which makes us more effective and efficient.
- We have a new website that has enabled us to raise the profile of our work and services we offer.
- We have maintained and developed our Social Media presence which currently includes Facebook, X (formerly twitter), WhatsApp & Instagram.
- We have worked with a Videographer to produce a set of videos that will better able people to understand our work and how we can support them: <https://vimeo.com/821982768>
- Increased our role in providing well-being activities for those experiencing social isolation through our Roadshow events.

Vital Trustees would like to thank everyone that has continued to support the work we do and the vital support services we provide to individuals who need them.

VITAL PROJECTS

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

Financial Review

We continue to receive funding to carry out the charitable purposes of the organisation from a number of sources. In this financial year the Charity can report a deficit of £10,635 (2022 a surplus of £15,890).

Following the conclusion of the annual cycle of funding there was a transfer of £61,985 into general unrestricted reserves. This has enabled us to fund our freelance team to provide management, finance, and marketing support for all activities of the organisation. Unrestricted reserves at the end of the financial year amounted to £32,577 (2022: balance of £18,950).

Due to severe funding cuts, Vital have had to reduce staff and expenditure in order to ensure its survival. A working cash flow forecast is produced on a monthly basis, which agrees to our current bank balances and shows expected income and expenditure to March 23, ensuring that the board have timely information to aid decision making. This method means that the board work constantly in 'real time', assessing the situation and future financial predictions. A weekly bank balance update showing 'actual' predicted expenditure for the month is also emailed to our Chair and Director for review. Bank balances held at 31 March 2023 amounted to £47,985.

VITAL has constantly strived to improve its financial management and transparency, costs are fully apportioned on a full cost recovery basis and good financial policies and procedures ensure that Vitals' finances are constantly monitored with monthly reporting to the Trustee Board.

Reserves Policy

VITAL's Trustees have an established financial reserves policy to ensure the organisation can meet its objectives. Our general reserves are those that are not restricted to or designated for some specific purpose. They provide some protection to the organisation and its charitable activities by allowing time to adjust to any changing financial circumstances, limiting the risk in the event of a downturn in income or an unexpected need for financial expenditure. In devising this policy, the Trustees have considered the length of time it would take to wind up the organisation (should it ever be necessary) and the costs entailed in meeting our obligations.

Taking into account liabilities, and considering other significant factors such as lease agreements, and employer responsibilities if the organisation were to close; the Trustees decided reserves for VITAL should be established at between three and six months of the charity's average yearly expenditure and is currently aiming to increase the reserves in line with policy.

Investment Policy

VITAL Trustees recognise the need to replenish the organisations capital investment, and to build into all funding current and future a capital fund to allow for this. When capital investment occurs, it is linked to the depreciative value and life span of items, and as such happens as and when needed, and, according to available spending.

Funders and Supporters

In addition to locally commissioned services, legacies and donations received we would especially like to thank the following for their support:

Bradford CNet
Irwin Mitchell
Brelms Trust CIO
Arnold Clark
Albert Hunt

VITAL PROJECTS

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

Plans for the Future

We were established to provide independent advocacy support to people who had no one to support them and that purpose is the same today as it was in 1989. Our services are still vital to people who have no legal or statutory rights to independent advocacy support, the people who have a need, but no rights and we intend to do our best to provide these people with support. Our vital services for the future will aim to support those who use mental health services and those who feel vulnerable due to other factors, including older age, trauma, and illness

Our service is delivered by passionate individuals, many of whom have their own experiences of mental ill health and have benefitted from our service. It is these people who have designed and shaped our plans for delivery, based on the direct feedback given from service users in our consultation. We are proud to be an Expert by Experience 'user led' organisation as this ensures that our services are relevant and appropriate to local needs as well as being delivered in a manner that best engages the very people we aim to support, advocate and empower.

Going forward Vital want to retain, support and grow one of the most experienced, skilled, committed and passionate team of advocates. We will continue to provide a workplace environment where people can grow and achieve their potential without fear of being held back by their experience of mental ill health whether past, or ongoing. Vital intend to build on the excellent reputation for providing a supportive and challenging place to work and learn from everyone we work with.

We intend to work hard building on our excellent reputation to establish and secure funding to maintain and develop our organisation, the people we work with and those who work with us. Our focus will be:

- To engage with local commissioning processes promoting an understanding of the work we do.
- Continue to develop an understanding of marketplace economies that threaten small grass roots providers.
- Continue our role as a provider of Community Advocacy services for those with no legal entitlement to statutory advocacy provision.
- Continue our NHS Complaints Advocacy for those that need our independent advocacy to navigate NHS complaints systems.
- Continue to develop campaigns and resources that support individuals experiencing difficulties and ensuring concerns are heard in the delivery of services.
- To educate and empower people through the delivery of our programme workshops (i.e. Self-Advocacy) in a variety of community settings.
- Continue to promote our unique experts by experience service delivery model.
- Continue to foster and develop local partnerships with local businesses and others wanting to deliver mental health awareness in the workplace and better practices.
- Continue to work closely with local partners to develop and deliver innovative services to enable people to be given a voice in times of stress and difficulty in their dealings with health and social care providers.

Strategic Development will continue to be a key component going forward for the Trustee Board. As a small charity we know Vital has a lot to give based on experience and knowledge gathered across the thirty years we've been doing what we do. We will continue to adapt to an ever-changing environment whilst working with and supporting people to be heard in relation to their health and social care needs.

VITAL PROJECTS

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

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the accounts in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted).

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the Trustees to prepare accounts 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 of the charity for that period. In preparing these accounts the Trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- Observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP 2015 (FRS 102).
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- State whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the accounts.
- Prepare the accounts on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the accounts comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and constitution. 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.

The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the charity and financial information included on the charity's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of accounts may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

On behalf of the board of trustees

Sara Firth
Trustee

Dated: 14 December 2023

VITAL PROJECTS

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF VITAL PROJECTS

I report on the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2023, which are set out on pages 11 to 17.

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 period under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- (i) examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- (ii) to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- (iii) to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the 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 you as 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:

- (a) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
 - (i) to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
 - (ii) to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act;
 have not been met; or
- (b) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Kevin J Meddings MAAT

Kevin Meddings Accountancy Services
55 Crowther Avenue
Calverley
Leeds
West Yorkshire
LS28 5SA



Dated: 14 December 2023

VITAL PROJECTS

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

		Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total 2023	Total 2022
	Notes	£	£	£	£
Income					
Voluntary income	2	5,515	-	5,515	5,845
Bank interest		146	-	146	1
Grants receivable		9,502	173,289	182,791	197,674
Rates refund		614	-	614	-
		<u>15,777</u>	<u>173,289</u>	<u>189,066</u>	<u>203,520</u>
Expenditure					
Charitable activities	3	64,135	135,566	199,701	187,630
		<u>64,135</u>	<u>135,566</u>	<u>199,701</u>	<u>187,630</u>
Net (expenditure)/net income/net movement in funds before transfers					
		(48,358)	37,723	(10,635)	15,890
Transfers between funds					
		61,985	(61,985)	-	-
Net (expenditure)/income/net movement in funds after transfers					
		13,627	(24,262)	(10,635)	15,890
Total funds brought forward					
		18,950	24,262	43,212	27,322
Total funds carried forward					
		<u>32,577</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>32,577</u>	<u>43,212</u>

VITAL PROJECTS

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2023

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Current assets					
Cash at bank and in hand		39,898	8,087	47,985	49,171
Debtors and prepayments	6	-	1,080	1,080	14,335
		<u>39,898</u>	<u>9,167</u>	<u>49,065</u>	<u>63,506</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	7	(7,321)	(9,167)	(16,488)	(20,294)
		<u>32,577</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>32,577</u>	<u>43,212</u>
The funds of the charity					
Unrestricted funds		25,480	-	25,480	18,950
Other charitable funds		7,097	-	7,097	-
Designated funds (Projects)		-	-	-	24,262
Restricted funds	8	-	-	-	-
		<u>32,577</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>32,577</u>	<u>43,212</u>
Total charity funds		<u>32,577</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>32,577</u>	<u>43,212</u>

The accounts were approved by the Trustees on 14 December 2023

Sara Firth
Trustee

VITAL PROJECTS

STATEMENT OF CASHFLOWS AS AT 31 MARCH 2023

	Notes	2023 £	2022 £
Cash (used)/generated in operating activities	10	(1,332)	15,437
Cashflows from investing activities			
Bank interest received		146	1
(Decrease)/increase in cash equivalents in the year		(1,186)	15,438
Cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		49,171	33,733
Total cash equivalents at the end of the year		47,985	49,171

VITAL PROJECTS

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

1 Accounting policies

1.1 Basis of preparation

The accounts are prepared under the historical cost convention unless otherwise stated.

The accounts 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 (FRS102) issued on 16 July 2014, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS102), the Charities Act 2011 and UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice as it applies from 1 January 2015.

Having considered future planned activities and the reserves available to the charity, the trustees are satisfied that the financial statements should be prepared on the going concern basis.

The charity meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS102.

1.2 Incoming resources

Donations and legacies are accounted for when they are received by the charity. Other income is accounted for on an accruals basis as far as is prudent to do so.

Core funding revenue grants are credited to the income and expenditure account at the time when received. Revenue grants for specific projects are credited to the income and expenditure account when received and unspent amounts at the year end are carried forward as restricted funds in the balance sheet. Where income is received in advance of the next financial year this may be deferred in accordance with the terms of the funding agreements.

1.3 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost less depreciation. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost less estimated residual value of each asset over its expected useful life, as follows:-

Equipment	25% Straight Line
-----------	-------------------

Only individual items of a capital nature costing £5,000 or more are included on the balance sheet.

1.4 Pensions

The charity operate a stakeholder pension scheme. Contributions are charged in the accounts as they become payable in accordance with the rules of the scheme.

1.5 Accumulated funds

Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors as to how they may be used.

Designated funds comprise funds which have been set aside at the discretion of the trustees for specific purposes.

1.6 Resources expended

Expenditure is recognised on an accruals basis as a liability is incurred. Expenditure includes any VAT which cannot be recovered and is reported as part of the expenditure to which it relates.

VITAL PROJECTS

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

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for beneficiaries.

Governance costs includes those costs associated with meeting the constitutional and statutory requirement of the charity.

All costs are allocated between the categories on the Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA) on a basis designed to reflect the use of the resource.

1.7 Gifts in kind

The charity receives the benefit of work carried out by volunteers whose expenses are reimbursed.

2 Voluntary income

	2023 £	2022 £
Employers Allowance	5,000	4,000
Donations	515	1,395
Training	-	450
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	5,515	5,845

3 Charitable activities

	2023 £	2022 £
Salaries and Wages	98,915	100,790
Freelance Costs	54,557	45,685
Healthcare Provision	525	455
Staff Pensions	8,233	9,073
Payroll Costs	621	626
Rent and Rates	9,290	7,763
Telephone	3,178	2,665
Office Costs	4,384	4,511
Promotion and Information Costs	1,500	787
Training and Supervision	-	56
Travelling Costs and User Expenses	409	228
Computer Servicing and Consumables	4,852	5,109
Publications and Subscriptions	139	248
Insurance	1,174	1,081
Quality Performance Mark	2,598	-
Bank Charges	72	108
Repairs and Renewals	120	145
Website Costs	7,816	6,735
Legal and Professional	103	280
Independent Examination	800	800
Sundries	415	485
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	199,701	187,630
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

VITAL PROJECTS

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

4 Trustees

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

No travel expenses or other costs were reimbursed in the year (2022: none).

Trustees Indemnity Insurance amounting to £344 was paid in the year.

We can confirm that there are no other related party transactions that require disclosure in the accounts.

5 Number of employees

The average monthly number of employees during the year was:-

	2023 Number	2022 Number
Employees	5	5
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Employment costs		
	2023 £	2022 £
Wages and salaries	91,814	94,014
Social security costs	7,101	6,776
Other pension costs	8,233	9,073
Health insurance	525	455
Freelance costs	54,557	45,685
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	162,230	156,003
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

There were no employees whose annual emoluments were £60,000 or more.

6 Debtors and prepayments

	2023 £	2022 £
Prepayments	1,080	1,335
Grants receivable	-	13,000
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	1,080	14,335
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

7 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2023 £	2022 £
Deferred Income	9,167	14,167
Taxes and social security costs	1,482	1,368
Creditors and Accruals	5,839	4,654
Monies held on behalf of other organisations	-	105
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	16,488	20,294
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

VITAL PROJECTS

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

8 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:-

	Movement in funds				Balance at 31 March 2023 £
	Balance at 1 April 2022 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	
Airedale Primary Care Trust	-	31,918	(17,044)	(14,874)	-
Mental Health Advocacy within a forensic setting	322	26,371	(21,775)	(4,918)	-
Independent Complaints Advocacy	16,349	110,000	(87,700)	(38,649)	-
The National Lottery Covid-19 Support	1,938	-	(1,500)	(438)	-
Persimmon	359	-	-	(359)	-
Asda Foundation	300	-	-	(300)	-
The Brelms Trust CIO	2,494	5,000	(7,547)	53	-
Sovereign Health Care	2,500	-	-	(2,500)	-
	<u>24,262</u>	<u>173,289</u>	<u>(135,566)</u>	<u>(61,985)</u>	<u>-</u>

9 Contingent Liability – Pensions

The contributions made by the charity are made to the Pensions Trust Growth Plan. This is a small multi-employer pension plan which is in most respects a money purchase arrangement. In May 2012 the Trust advised the Trustees that the overall Growth Plan had a deficit in funding and as a result there was a requirement to incur additional contributions to bridge the shortfall in funding. Vital will be required to pay additional monthly contributions which will increase annually by 3%. Currently the potential debt to the charity amounts to £13,724 but no provision has been made in these accounts on the assumption that the organisation does not intend to withdraw from the fund.

10 Reconciliation of net movement in funds to net cashflows from operating activities

	2023 £	2022 £
Net movement in funds	(10,635)	15,890
Decrease/(increase) in debtors	13,255	(6,520)
(Decrease)/increase in creditors	(3,806)	6,068
Deduct bank interest received	(146)	(1)
	<u>(1,332)</u>	<u>15,437</u>
Net cash (used)/generated in operating activities	<u>(1,332)</u>	<u>15,437</u>

VITAL PROJECTS

England & Wales - Charity number 1155071

Accounts

VITAL PROJECTS
TRUSTEES' REPORT AND UNAUDITED ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

VITAL PROJECTS

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Trustees	Sara Firth (<i>Chairperson</i>) Trevor Ramsay (<i>Trustee</i>) Jacqueline Oldroyd (<i>Secretary/Treasurer</i>) Colin Perry (<i>Trustee</i>) Richard Ellis (<i>Trustee</i>) Chris Buckley (<i>Co-Optee Trustee</i>)
Charity number	1155071
Principal address	First Floor Tradeforce Building Cornwall Place Bradford West Yorkshire BD8 7JT
Telephone:	01274 770118
Email:	info@bamhag.co.uk
Independent examiner	Kevin J Meddings MAAT Kevin Meddings Accountancy Services 55 Crowther Avenue Calverley Leeds West Yorkshire LS28 5SA
Bankers	Caf Bank Ltd 25 Kings Hill Avenue Kings Hill West Malling Kent ME19 4JQ Lloyds TSB plc 45 Hustlergate Bradford West Yorkshire BD1 1PP

VITAL PROJECTS

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Balance sheet	9
Statement of cashflows	10
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VITAL PROJECTS

TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

The Trustees present their report and accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022.

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the accounts and comply with the charity's constitution, the Charities Act 2011 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 published on 16 July 2014.

Having rebranded and relaunched as Vital (registered as Vital Projects) the organisation has spent some time this year consolidating and ensuring a future that is stable and able to provide the core services, being mindful that the work we do is needed more than ever before.

Governing Document

The organisation is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) which is a legal structure and enables us to better respond to an ever changing environment. The organisation is governed by a constitution which has been agreed and is registered with the Charity Commission and sets out the organisation's governance and governance structure.

Trustees, Organisational Structure and Governance

Vital is an Expert by Experience service user led organisation with specialist mental health understanding and was established in 1989. As a Charity Incorporated Organisation, we are independent of statutory health and social care providers and the Charity Trustees are responsible for managing the affairs of the organisation. The Charity's Director along with other key staff is responsible for the day-to-day operation and management of the charity on behalf of the Trustees who are increasingly active in their role providing support to the continued role in developing the charity to enable reach and quality services.

Vital's constitution allows for up to twelve Trustees to be appointed and are elected and re-elected at the Annual General Meeting (AGM), and those Trustees that have held office during the financial year and at the date of this report are set out below.

Potential Trustees first need to be approved as members of Vital and must agree to support the aims and objectives of the organisation for a minimum of three months prior to being considered for Trusteeship. Potential Trustees will then go through a recruitment process, completing an application and meeting with current Trustees before being co-opted and then standing for election at the AGM. When new Trustees are appointed they are given an introduction to the work of Vital and provided with the information they need to fulfil their roles, which includes information about the role of Trustees and Charity Law. Training events both in-house and external are made available to Trustees, and at times Trustees may undertake training specific to their roles as well as attending particular conferences and seminars. All existing Trustees have long experience of being a charity Trustee. Under Charity Law the Trustees elect officer roles of Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary at their first meeting following the AGM.

The Trustees hold regular six weekly meetings and have maintained contact outside of meetings to ensure effective and efficient decisions are made in a timely manner and as needed.

The trustees who served during the year were:

Sara Firth (*Chairperson*)
 Trevor Ramsay (*Trustee*)
 Jacqueline Oldroyd (*Secretary/Treasurer*)
 Colin Perry (*Trustee*)
 Richard Ellis (*Trustee*)
 Chris Buckley (*Co-Optee Trustee*)

VITAL PROJECTS

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

Risk Management

The Trustees have identified and assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed, and are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate the exposure to the major risks. Where appropriate risks are mitigated by the introduction of policies and developed working practices and where appropriate are covered by insurance. In considering risks to the organisation a reserves policy has been established and agreed - Vital are aiming to increase reserves in line with policy.

Objectives

Vital was established in 1989 as a direct result of research showing that patients in Lynfield Mount Hospital had no-one independent to speak up for them. Since this time we have been successful in delivering a number of services throughout Bradford & Airedale that have acted to empower, involve and inform mental health service users and their carers. In 1999 Vital registered as a charity with the Charity Commission. Having developed a specialist understanding of the principles, standards and legal framework of specialist advocacy provision we have undertaken to increase our service user group to include people who need advocacy and who are not mental health service users. However, the advocacy services will be limited to people who could be defined as vulnerable adults either as a result of ill health or by receipt of health and social care services.

The objectives of the charity are to:

1. Provide a free; confidential and independent advocacy support to people who need support to be heard and who are living in the area of Bradford & Airedale.
2. Support people to speak for themselves particularly in situations of stress (such as their encounters with professionals). Recruiting, training and supporting volunteers and
3. Work collectively with a broad range of people in empowering them to participate in health and social care decisions.

In setting our objectives and planning our activities our Trustees have given serious consideration to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit and in particular the advancement of health, well-being and citizenship.

Activities

In addition to delivering on contracted and commissioned projects we have increased our provision of community advocacy to those that have no statutory advocacy rights. We are delighted however to have had the opportunity to retain key skills needed ensuring that we are in a position for future growth and development via independent consultancy.

The whole team, Staff, Volunteers and Trustees have worked extremely hard to continue the development of new and innovative ways of working.

We've been active in:

- Providing advocacy support to those who have no statutory right to advocacy
- Providing advocacy support to people whose rights, entitlements are ignored
- Picking up on a shortfall in Local Authority advocacy commissioning
- Maintaining high standards of quality in the delivery of key services
- Networking and ensuring we are up to date with key events at local, regional, and national levels
- Fundraising and developing relationships with current funders
- Ensuring access to services and signposting accordingly
- Ensuring a whole organisation approach to future development and growth
- Securing new income to support organisational development and growth

VITAL PROJECTS

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

Achievements and Performance

Vital is a well-established service user led organisation and has provided advocacy and advocacy-based services since 1989. In this time we have led the development of advocacy services within Bradford & District, developed and responded to a variety of changes and now enable the district to meet its duties under Statutory legislation for the provision of Independent Advocacy under; Mental Health Act, Mental Capacity Act, Care Act along with Independent NHS Complaints Advocacy.

Many individuals who are vulnerable as a result of mental health and other factors do not have a legal right to access statutory advocacy services which is locally commissioned elsewhere via the Local Authority and Clinical Commissioning Group. At Vital we work hard to support vulnerable individuals who need Independent Advocacy and who have no legal right to an advocacy service.

We have continued this year to develop and deliver our unique self-advocacy workshops which have been provided across a number of local groups. Being a mixture of clear communication skills/assertiveness, the self-advocacy session has been specifically designed to tackle the imbalance of power when meeting with professionals that people find disempowering. In excess of a hundred individuals have now had the opportunity to attend one of the self-advocacy workshops and the feedback shows that people have benefitted greatly in their ability and confidence to self-advocate. We intend in the future to continue to provide self-advocacy workshops and to offer other programme workshops with our Experts by Experience design and delivery.

We continue to be nationally recognised for our Quality Advocacy Service provision via the National Development Team for Inclusions quality assessment. This is a robust quality assessment and assurance system for providers of independent advocacy in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The following is an extract from the Assessment Report:

*“People with lived experience of using services sit on the board of Trustees and are in paid employment for Vital Projects. The assessor felt that the service was **one of the most truly user led advocacy providers** he had encountered. People with lived experience of using mental health services help shape strategy and organisational priorities.”*

Vital Trustees would like to thank everyone that has continued to support the work we do and the vital support services we provide to individuals who need them. Vital are looking positively towards the future, and hope that we are able to continue as partner providers to ensure that people within the District have access to quality independent advocacy.

VITAL PROJECTS

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

Financial Review

We continue to receive funding to carry out the charitable purposes of the organisation from a number of sources. In this financial year the Charity can report a surplus of £15,890 (2021 a surplus of £21,042).

At the end of the financial year there was a balance of £24,262 on seven restricted funds and this money is due to be spent in the 2022/23 financial year.

Following the conclusion of the annual cycle of funding there was a transfer of £46,040 into general unrestricted reserves. This has enabled us to fund our freelance team to provide management, finance, and marketing support for all activities of the organisation. Unrestricted reserves at the end of the financial year amounted to £18,950 (2021: balance of £18,553).

Due to severe funding cuts, Vital have had to reduce staff and expenditure in order to ensure its survival. A working cash flow forecast is produced on a monthly basis, which agrees to our current bank balances and shows expected income and expenditure to March 2022, ensuring that the board have timely information to aid decision making. This method means that the board work constantly in 'real time' assessing the situation and future financial predictions. A weekly bank balance update showing 'actual' predicted expenditure for the month is also emailed to our Chair and Director for review. Bank balances held at 31 March 2022 amounted to £49,171.

Vital has constantly strived to improve its financial management and transparency, costs are fully apportioned on a full cost recovery basis and good financial policies and procedures ensure that Vitals' finances are constantly monitored with monthly reporting to the Trustee Board.

Reserves Policy

Vital's Trustees have an established financial reserves policy to ensure the organisation can meet its objectives. Our general reserves are those that are not restricted to or designated for some specific purpose. They provide some protection to the organisation and its charitable activities by allowing time to adjust to any changing financial circumstances, limiting the risk in the event of a downturn in income or an unexpected need for financial expenditure. In devising this policy, the Trustees have considered the length of time it would take to wind up the organisation (should it ever be necessary) and the costs entailed in meeting our obligations.

Taking into account liabilities, and considering other significant factors such as lease agreements, and employer responsibilities if the organisation were to close, the Trustees decided reserves for Vital should be established at between three and six months of the charity's average yearly expenditure and is currently aiming to increase the reserves in line with policy.

Investment Policy

Vital Trustees recognise the need to replenish the organisations capital investment, and to build into all funding current and future a capital fund to allow for this. When capital investment occurs, it is linked to the depreciative value and life span of items, and as such happens as and when needed, and according to available spending.

VITAL PROJECTS

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

Plans for the Future

We were established to provide independent advocacy support to people who had no one to support them and that purpose is the same today as it was in 1989. Our services are still vital to people who have no legal or statutory rights to independent advocacy support, the people who have a need, but no rights and we intend to do our best to provide these people with support. Our vital services for the future will aim to support those who use mental health services and those who feel vulnerable due to other factors, including older age, trauma and illness.

Our service is delivered by passionate individuals, many of whom have their own experiences of mental ill health and have benefitted from our service. It is these people who have designed and shaped our plans for delivery, based on the direct feedback given from service users in our consultation. We are proud to be an Expert by Experience 'user led' organisation as this ensures that our services are relevant and appropriate to local needs as well as being delivered in a manner that best engages the very people we aim to support, advocate, and empower.

Going forward Vital want to retain, support and grow one of the most experienced, skilled, committed and passionate team of advocates. We will continue to provide a workplace environment where people can grow and achieve their potential without fear of being held back by their experience of mental ill health whether past, or ongoing. Vital intend to build on the excellent reputation for providing a supportive and challenging place to work and learn from everyone we work with.

We intend to work hard building on our excellent reputation to establish and secure funding to maintain and develop our organisation, the people we work with and those who work with us. Our focus will be:

- Community Advocacy services for those with no legal entitlement to statutory advocacy provision.
- NHS Complaints Advocacy – advocates will help beneficiaries to navigate the NHS complaints systems.
- Campaign Advocacy – this is group advocacy, looking at issues facing the community. The team work in between our members and service providers, ensuring concerns are heard in the delivery of services.
- Develop our advocacy provision within Forensic In-patients by providing additional support to those working towards being discharged from services
- Increase our role in providing well-being activities for those experiencing social isolation
- Develop better links with local community centres to ensure we are outreaching to those most in need
- To educate and empower people through the delivery of our programme workshops (i.e. Self-Advocacy) in a variety of community settings.
- Develop our unique experts by experience service delivery model
- Foster and develop local partnerships with local businesses and others wanting to deliver mental health awareness in the workplace and better practices.
- Continue to work closely with local partners to develop and deliver innovative services to enable people to be given a voice in times of stress and difficulty in their dealings with health and social care providers.

Strategic Development will continue to be a key component going forward for the Trustee Board. As a small charity we know Vital has a lot to give based on experience and knowledge gathered across the thirty years we've been doing what we do. We will continue to adapt to an ever-changing environment whilst working with and supporting people to be heard in relation to their health and social needs.

VITAL PROJECTS

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the accounts in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted).

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the Trustees to prepare accounts 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 of the charity for that period. In preparing these accounts the Trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP 2015 (FRS 102);
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- State whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the accounts;
- Prepare the accounts on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the accounts comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and constitution. 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.

The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the charity and financial information included on the charity's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of accounts may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

On behalf of the board of Trustees

.....
Sara Firth (*Chairperson*)

Dated: 22 September 2022

VITAL PROJECTS

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF VITAL PROJECTS

I report on the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2022, which are set out on pages 8 to 14.

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 period under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- (i) examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- (ii) to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- (iii) to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the 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 you as 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:

- (a) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
 - (i) to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
 - (ii) to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act;have not been met; or
- (b) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Kevin J Meddings MAAT

Kevin Meddings Accountancy Services
55 Crowther Avenue
Calverley
Leeds
West Yorkshire
LS28 5SA

Dated: 5 October 2022

VITAL PROJECTS

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
Income					
Voluntary income	2	5,395	450	5,845	6,379
Bank interest	1	1	-	1	1
Grants receivable		5,900	191,774	197,674	205,089
Other income		-	-	-	53
Total income		11,296	192,224	203,520	211,522
Expenditure					
Charitable activities	3	56,939	130,691	187,630	190,480
Total expenditure		56,939	130,691	187,630	190,480
Net income/(expenditure)/net movement in funds before transfers		(45,643)	61,533	15,890	21,042
Transfers between funds		46,040	(46,040)	-	-
Net income/net movement in funds after transfers		397	15,493	15,890	21,042
Total funds brought forward		18,553	8,769	27,322	6,280
Total funds carried forward		18,950	24,262	43,212	27,322

VITAL PROJECTS

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2022

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2022 £	Total 2021 £
Current assets					
Cash at bank and in hand		18,950	30,221	49,171	33,733
Debtors and prepayments	6	-	14,335	14,335	7,815
		<u>18,950</u>	<u>44,556</u>	<u>63,506</u>	<u>41,548</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	7	-	(20,294)	(20,294)	(14,226)
		<u>18,950</u>	<u>24,262</u>	<u>43,212</u>	<u>27,322</u>
The funds of the charity					
Unrestricted funds		18,950	-	18,950	18,553
Other charitable funds					
Restricted funds	8	-	24,262	24,262	8,769
		<u>18,950</u>	<u>24,262</u>	<u>43,212</u>	<u>27,322</u>
Total charity funds		<u><u>18,950</u></u>	<u><u>24,262</u></u>	<u><u>43,212</u></u>	<u><u>27,322</u></u>

The accounts were approved by the Trustees on 22 October 2022

.....
Sara Firth (*Chairperson*)

VITAL PROJECTS

STATEMENT OF CASHFLOWS AS AT 31 MARCH 2022

	Notes	2022 £	2021 £
Cash generated in operating activities	10	15,437	12,276
Cashflows from investing activities			
Bank interest received		1	1
		<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
Increase in cash equivalents in the year		15,438	12,277
Cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		33,733	21,456
		<u>33,733</u>	<u>21,456</u>
Total cash equivalents at the end of the year		<u>49,171</u>	<u>33,733</u>

VITAL PROJECTS

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

1 Accounting policies

1.1 Basis of preparation

The accounts are prepared under the historical cost convention unless otherwise stated.

The accounts 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 (FRS102) issued on 16 July 2014, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS102), the Charities Act 2011 and UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice as it applies from 1 January 2015.

Having considered future planned activities and the reserves available to the charity, the trustees are satisfied that the financial statements should be prepared on the going concern basis.

The charity meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS102.

1.2 Incoming resources

Donations and legacies are accounted for when they are received by the charity. Other income is accounted for on an accruals basis as far as is prudent to do so.

Core funding revenue grants are credited to the income and expenditure account at the time when received. Revenue grants for specific projects are credited to the income and expenditure account when received and unspent amounts at the year end are carried forward as restricted funds in the balance sheet. Where income is received in advance of the next financial year this may be deferred in accordance with the terms of the funding agreements.

1.3 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost less depreciation. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost less estimated residual value of each asset over its expected useful life, as follows:-

Equipment	25% Straight Line
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Only individual items of a capital nature costing £5,000 or more are included on the balance sheet.

1.4 Pensions

The charity operate a stakeholder pension scheme. Contributions are charged in the accounts as they become payable in accordance with the rules of the scheme.

1.5 Accumulated funds

Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors as to how they may be used.

Designated funds comprise funds which have been set aside at the discretion of the trustees for specific purposes.

1.6 Resources expended

Expenditure is recognised on an accruals basis as a liability is incurred. Expenditure includes any VAT which cannot be recovered and is reported as part of the expenditure to which it relates.

VITAL PROJECTS

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for beneficiaries.

Governance costs includes those costs associated with meeting the constitutional and statutory requirement of the charity.

All costs are allocated between the categories on the Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA) on a basis designed to reflect the use of the resource.

1.7 Gifts in kind

The charity receives the benefit of work carried out by volunteers whose expenses are reimbursed.

2 Voluntary income

	2022	2021
	£	£
Employers Allowance	4,000	4,000
Donations	1,395	1,379
Training	450	-
Cash incentive from copier company	-	1,000
	<u>5,845</u>	<u>6,379</u>

3 Charitable activities

	2022	2021
	£	£
Salaries and Wages	100,790	108,895
Freelance Costs	45,685	37,220
Healthcare Provision	455	421
Staff Pensions	9,073	9,781
Payroll Costs	626	615
Rent and Rates	7,763	8,015
Telephone	2,665	2,504
Office Costs	4,511	4,724
Promotion and Information Costs	787	608
Training and Supervision	56	1,317
Travelling Costs and User Expenses	228	36
Computer Servicing and Consumables	5,109	5,616
Publications and Subscriptions	248	80
Insurance	1,081	1,767
Bank Charges	108	69
Repairs and Renewals	145	124
Website Costs	6,735	6,833
Legal and Professional	280	40
Independent Examination	800	1,440
Sundries	485	375
	<u>187,630</u>	<u>190,480</u>

VITAL PROJECTS

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

4 Trustees

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

No travel expenses or other costs were reimbursed in the year (2021: none).

Trustees Indemnity Insurance amounting to £317 was paid in the year.

We can confirm that there are no other related party transactions that require disclosure in the accounts.

5 Number of employees

The average monthly number of employees during the year was:-

	2022 Number	2021 Number
Employees	5	5
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Employment costs		
	2022 £	2021 £
Wages and salaries	94,014	100,697
Social security costs	6,776	8,198
Other pension costs	9,073	9,781
Health insurance	455	421
Freelance costs	45,685	37,220
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	156,003	156,317
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

There were no employees whose annual emoluments were £60,000 or more.

6 Debtors and prepayments

	2022 £	2021 £
Grants receivable	13,000	-
Prepayments	1,335	7,815
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	14,335	7,815
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

7 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2022 £	2021 £
Deferred Income	14,167	9,167
Taxes and social security costs	1,368	2,293
Creditors and Accruals	4,654	2,661
Monies held on behalf of other organisations	105	105
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	20,294	14,226
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

VITAL PROJECTS

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

8 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:-

	Movement in funds				Balance at 31 March 2022 £
	Balance at 1 April 2021 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	
Airedale Primary Care Trust Mental Health Advocacy within a forensic setting	-	31,918	(18,371)	(13,547)	-
Independent Complaints Advocacy	-	26,371	(17,873)	(8,176)	322
The National Lottery Covid-19 Support	3,973	110,000	(73,157)	(24,467)	16,349
Persimmon	4,137	-	(2,199)	-	1,938
Asda Foundation	359	-	-	-	359
Bradford District Care Trust	300	-	-	-	300
Brelms Trust	-	13,000	(13,252)	252	-
Sovereign Health Care	-	5,000	(2,688)	182	2,494
Covid Community Champions	-	3,200	-	(700)	2,500
	-	2,735	(3,151)	416	-
	8,769	192,224	(130,691)	(46,040)	24,262
	8,769	192,224	(130,691)	(46,040)	24,262

9 Contingent Liability – Pensions

The contributions made by the charity are made to the Pensions Trust Growth Plan. This is a small multi-employer pension plan which is in most respects a money purchase arrangement. In May 2012 the Trust advised the Trustees that the overall Growth Plan had a deficit in funding and as a result there was a requirement to incur additional contributions to bridge the shortfall in funding. Vital will be required to pay additional monthly contributions which will increase annually by 3%. Currently the potential debt to the charity amounts to £20,827 but no provision has been made in these accounts on the assumption that the organisation does not intend to withdraw from the fund.

10 Reconciliation of net movement in funds to net cashflows from operating activities

	2022 £	2021 £
Net movement in funds	15,890	21,042
(Increase) in debtors	(6,520)	(6,735)
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	6,068	(2,030)
Deduct bank interest received	(1)	(1)
	15,437	12,276
Net cash generated in operating activities	15,437	12,276

VITAL PROJECTS

England & Wales - Charity number 1155071

Accounts

VITAL PROJECTS
TRUSTEES' REPORT AND UNAUDITED ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

VITAL PROJECTS

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Trustees	Sara Firth (Chairperson) Trevor Ramsay (Treasurer) Jacqueline Oldroyd (Secretary) Colin Perry Richard Ellis
Charity number	1155071
Principal address	First Floor Tradeforce Building Cornwall Place Bradford West Yorkshire BD8 7JT
Telephone:	01274 770118
Email:	info@bamhag.co.uk
Independent examiner	Kevin J Meddings MAAT Stuart B Lodge & Co Chartered Accountants 44 Bradford Road Idle Bradford West Yorkshire BD10 9PE
Bankers	Caf Bank Ltd 25 Kings Hill Avenue Kings Hill West Malling Kent ME19 4JQ Lloyds TSB plc 45 Hustlergate Bradford West Yorkshire BD1 1PP

VITAL PROJECTS

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Balance sheet	10
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VITAL PROJECTS

TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

The Trustees present their report and accounts for the year ended 31 March 2021.

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the accounts and comply with the charity's constitution, the Charities Act 2011 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 published on 16 July 2014.

Having rebranded and relaunched as Vital (registered as Vital Projects) the organisation has spent some time this year consolidating and ensuring a future that is stable and able to provide the core services, being mindful that the work we do is needed more than ever before.

Governing Document

The organisation is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) which is a legal structure and enables us to better respond to an ever changing environment. The organisation is governed by a constitution which has been agreed and is registered with the Charity Commission and sets out the organisation's governance and governance structure.

Trustees, Organisational Structure and Governance

Vital is an Expert by Experience service user led organisation with specialist mental health understanding and was established in 1989. As a Charity Incorporated Organisation we are independent of statutory health and social care providers and the Charity Trustees are responsible for managing the affairs of the organisation. The Charity's Director along with other key staff is responsible for the day to day operation and management of the charity on behalf of the Trustees who are increasingly active in their role providing support to the continued role in developing the charity to enable reach and quality services.

Vital's constitution allows for up to twelve Trustees to be appointed and are elected and re-elected at the Annual General Meeting (AGM), and those Trustees that have held office during the financial year and at the date of this report are set out below.

Potential Trustees first need to be approved as members of Vital and must agree to support the aims and objectives of the organisation for a minimum of three months prior to being considered for Trusteeship. Potential Trustees will then go through a recruitment process, completing an application and meeting with current Trustees before being co-opted and then standing for election at the AGM. When new Trustees are appointed they are given an introduction to the work of Vital and provided with the information they need to fulfil their roles, which includes information about the role of Trustees and Charity Law. Training events both in-house and external are made available to Trustees, and at times Trustees may undertake training specific to their roles as well as attending particular conferences and seminars. All existing Trustees have long experience of being a charity Trustee. Under Charity Law the Trustees elect officer roles of Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary at their first meeting following the AGM.

The Trustees hold regular six weekly meetings and have maintained contact outside of meetings to ensure effective and efficient decisions are made in a timely manner and as needed.

The trustees who served during the year were:

Sarah Firth (Chairperson)
Trevor Ramsay (Treasurer)
Jacqueline Oldroyd (Secretary)
Colin Perry
Richard Ellis

VITAL PROJECTS

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Risk Management

The Trustees have identified and assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed, and are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate the exposure to the major risks. Where appropriate risks are mitigated by the introduction of policies and developed working practices and where appropriate are covered by insurance. In considering risks to the organisation a reserves policy has been established and agreed - Vital are aiming to increase reserves in line with policy.

Objectives

Vital was established in 1989 as a direct result of research showing that patients in Lynfield Mount Hospital had no-one independent to speak up for them. Since this time we have been successful in delivering a number of services throughout Bradford & Airedale that have acted to empower, involve and inform mental health service users and their carers. In 1999 Vital registered as a charity with the Charity Commission. Having developed a specialist understanding of the principles, standards and legal framework of specialist advocacy provision we have undertaken to increase our service user group to include people who need advocacy and who are not mental health service users. However, the advocacy services will be limited to people who could be defined as vulnerable adults either as a result of ill health or by receipt of health and social care services.

The objectives of the charity are to:

1. provide a free; confidential and independent advocacy support to people who need support to be heard and who are living in the area of Bradford & Airedale.
2. support people to speak for themselves particularly in situations of stress (such as their encounters with professionals). Recruiting, training and supporting volunteers and
3. work collectively with a broad range of people in empowering them to participate in health and social care decisions.

In setting our objectives and planning our activities our Trustees have given serious consideration to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit and in particular the advancement of health, well-being and citizenship.

VITAL PROJECTS

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Activities

Vital have as you would expect been extremely active across key areas and have continued to provide a service adapting our working practices to enable provision within Covid-19 restrictions. The whole team, staff, volunteers, and Trustees have worked extremely hard to master new and innovative ways of working and provided advocacy and support to over 700 people. In addition to delivering on contracted and commissioned projects we have increased our provision of community advocacy to those that have no statutory advocacy rights.

This year we have maintained and developed, which for a small organisation working at a local level is a phenomenal achievement given the climate and the pandemic. We are delighted, however, to have had the opportunity to retain key skills needed ensuring that we were in a position for future growth and development via independent consultancy.

We've been active in:

- Consolidating and delivering key services
- Networking and ensuring we are up to date with key events
- Developing social media platform and digital abilities
- Fundraising and developing relationships with current funders
- Ensuring access to services and signposting accordingly
- Picking up on a shortfall in Local Authority advocacy commissioning
- Providing advocacy support to those who have no statutory right to advocacy
- Providing advocacy support to people whose rights, entitlements are ignored
- Developing with the Care Trust a new service to support families impacted by serious incidents get access to independent support.

VITAL PROJECTS

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Achievements and Performance

Vital is a well-established service user led organisation and has provided advocacy and advocacy based services since 1989. In this time we have led the development of advocacy services within Bradford & District, developed and responded to a variety of changes and now enable the district to meet its duties under Statutory legislation for the provision of Independent Advocacy under; Mental Health Act, Mental Capacity Act, Care Act along with Independent NHS Complaints Advocacy.

Many individuals who are vulnerable as a result of mental health and other factors do not have a legal right to access statutory advocacy services which is locally commissioned elsewhere via the Local Authority and Clinical Commissioning Group. At Vital we work hard to support vulnerable individuals who need Independent Advocacy and who have no legal right to an advocacy service.

We have continued this year to develop and deliver our unique self-advocacy workshops which have been provided across a number of local groups. Being a mixture of clear communication skills/assertiveness, the self advocacy session has been specifically designed to tackle the imbalance of power when meeting with professionals that people find disempowering. In excess of a hundred individuals have now had the opportunity to attend one of the self-advocacy workshops and the feedback shows that people have benefitted greatly in their ability and confidence to self-advocate. We intend in the future to continue to provide self-advocacy workshops and to offer other programme workshops with our Experts by Experience design and delivery.

We continue to be nationally recognised for our Quality Advocacy Service provision via the National Development Team for Inclusions quality assessment. This is a robust quality assessment and assurance system for providers of independent advocacy in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The following is an extract from the Assessment Report:

*“People with lived experience of using services sit on the board of Trustees and are in paid employment for Vital Projects. The assessor felt that the service was **one of the most truly user led advocacy providers** he had encountered. People with lived experience of using mental health services help shape strategy and organisational priorities.”*

Vital Trustees would like to thank everyone that has continued to support the work we do and the vital support services we provide to individuals who need them. Vital are looking positively towards the future, and hope that we are able to continue as partner providers to ensure that people within the District have access to quality independent advocacy.

VITAL PROJECTS

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Financial Review

We continue to receive funding to carry out the charitable purposes of the organisation from a number of sources. The charity for this financial period covered in this report indicates a surplus of £21,042 (2020 a deficit of £71,280).

At the end of the financial year there was a balance of £8,769 on four restricted funds and this money is due to be spent in the 2021/22 financial year. In respect of the ICAT Project there is also deferred income of £9,167 to be utilised in the same financial year.

Following the conclusion of the annual cycle of funding there was a transfer of £31,509 unspent restricted funding into general unrestricted reserves which at the year amounted to £18,553 (2020: deficit balance of £977).

Due to severe funding cuts, Vital have had to reduce staff and expenditure in order to ensure its survival. A working cash flow forecast is produced on a monthly basis, which agrees to our current bank balances and shows expected income and expenditure to March 2021, ensuring that the board have timely information to aid decision making. This method means that the board work constantly in 'real time' assessing the situation and future financial predictions. A weekly bank balance update showing 'actual' predicted expenditure for the month is also emailed to our Chair and Director for review. Bank balances held at 31 March 2021 amounted to £33,733.

Vital has constantly strived to improve its financial management and transparency, costs are fully apportioned on a full cost recovery basis and good financial policies and procedures ensure that Vital finance is constantly monitored with monthly reporting to the Trustee Board.

Reserves Policy

Vital's Trustees have an established financial reserves policy to ensure the organisation can meet its objectives. Our general reserves are those that are not restricted to or designated for some specific purpose. They provide some protection to the organisation and its charitable activities by allowing time to adjust to any changing financial circumstances; limiting the risk in the event of a down turn in income or an unexpected need for financial expenditure. In devising this policy the Trustees have considered the length of time it would take to wind up the organisation (should it ever be necessary) and the costs entailed in meeting our obligations.

Taking into account liabilities, and considering other significant factors such as lease agreements, and employer responsibilities if the organisation were to close, the Trustees decided reserves for Vital should be established at between three and six months of the charity's average yearly expenditure and is currently aiming to increase the reserves in line with policy.

Investment Policy

Vital Trustees recognise the need to replenish the organisations capital investment, and to build into all funding current and future a capital fund to allow for this. When capital investment occurs it is linked to the depreciative value and life span of items, and as such happens as and when needed, and according to available spending.

VITAL PROJECTS

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Plans for the Future

We were established to provide independent advocacy support to people who had no one to support them and that purpose is the same today as it was in 1989. Our services are still vital to people who have no legal or statutory rights to independent advocacy support, the people who have a need but no rights and we intend to do our best to provide these people with support. Our vital services for the future will aim to support those who use mental health services and those who feel vulnerable due to other factors, including older age, trauma and illness.

Our service is delivered by passionate individuals, many of whom have their own experiences of mental ill health and have benefitted from our service. It is these people who have designed and shaped our plans for delivery, based on the direct feedback given from service users in our consultation.

We are proud to be an Expert by Experience 'user led' organisation as this ensures that our services are relevant and appropriate to local needs as well as being delivered in a manner that best engages the very people we aim to support, advocate and empower.

We intend to work hard building on our excellent reputation to establish and secure funding to maintain and develop our organisation, the people we work with and those who work with us. Our focus will be:

- Community Advocacy services for those with no legal entitlement to statutory advocacy provision.
- NHS Complaints Advocacy – advocates will help beneficiaries to navigate the NHS complaints systems.
- Campaign Advocacy – this is group advocacy, looking at issues facing the community. The team work in between our members and service providers, ensuring concerns are heard in the delivery of services.
- Advocacy in a Forensic Setting – a statutory service under the Mental Health Act, including attending ward rounds and meetings with beneficiaries.
- Well-being activities for those experiencing social isolation.
- Skills based volunteering opportunities.
- Education – aiming to educate people in various ways in relation to informing people what it really feels like to have mental health issues along with self-advocacy workshops.
- Experts by Experience delivering services as well as consultancy, training and presentations to others wanting to deliver better practices in the workplace and within services around mental health issues.
- Continue to work closely with local partners to develop and deliver innovative services to enable people to be given a voice in times of stress and difficulty in their dealings with health and social care providers.

Strategic Development will continue to be a key component going forward for the Trustee Board and following from the work done by the Charity with Weston Charity Awards as a Pilotlight partner charity. As a small charity we know Vital has a lot to give based on experience and knowledge gathered across the thirty years we have been doing what we do and we will continue to adapt to and ever-changing environment whilst continuing to work with and support people to be heard.

VITAL PROJECTS

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the accounts in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted).

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the Trustees to prepare accounts 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 of the charity for that period. In preparing these accounts the Trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP 2015 (FRS 102);
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- State whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the accounts;
- Prepare the accounts on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the accounts comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and constitution. 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.

The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the charity and financial information included on the charity's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of accounts may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

On behalf of the board of Trustees

.....

Trustee

Dated:

VITAL PROJECTS

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF VITAL PROJECTS

I report on the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2021, which are set out on pages 9 to 15.

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 period under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- (i) examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- (ii) to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- (iii) to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the 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 you as 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:

- (a) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
 - (i) to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
 - (ii) to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act;have not been met; or
- (b) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Kevin J Meddings MAAT

Stuart B Lodge & Co
Chartered Accountants
44 Bradford Road
Idle
Bradford
West Yorkshire
BD10 9PE

Dated:

VITAL PROJECTS

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £
Income					
Voluntary income	2	6,379	-	6,379	6,097
Bank interest		1	-	1	13
Grants receivable		-	205,089	205,089	184,239
Other income		53	-	53	28
Total income		6,433	205,089	211,522	190,377
Expenditure					
Charitable activities	3	18,412	172,068	190,480	261,657
Total expenditure		18,412	172,068	190,480	261,657
Net income/(expenditure)/net movement in funds before transfers		(11,979)	33,021	21,042	(71,280)
Transfers between funds		31,509	(31,509)	-	-
Net income/(expenditure)/net movement in funds after transfers		19,530	1,512	21,042	(71,280)
Total funds brought forward		(977)	7,257	6,280	77,560
Total funds carried forward		18,553	8,769	27,322	6,280

VITAL PROJECTS

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2021

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £
Current assets					
Cash at bank and in hand		18,553	15,180	33,733	21,456
Debtors and prepayments	6		7,815	7,815	1,080
		<u>18,553</u>	<u>22,995</u>	<u>41,548</u>	<u>22,536</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	7	-	(14,226)	(14,226)	(16,256)
		<u>18,553</u>	<u>8,769</u>	<u>27,322</u>	<u>6,280</u>
The funds of the charity					
Unrestricted funds		18,553	-	18,553	(977)
Other charitable funds					
Restricted funds	8	-	8,769	8,769	7,257
		<u>18,553</u>	<u>8,769</u>	<u>27,322</u>	<u>6,280</u>
Total charity funds		<u><u>18,553</u></u>	<u><u>8,769</u></u>	<u><u>27,322</u></u>	<u><u>6,280</u></u>

The accounts were approved by the Trustees on

.....

Trustee

VITAL PROJECTS

STATEMENT OF CASHFLOWS AS AT 31 MARCH 2021

	Notes	2021 £	2020 £
Cash generated/(used) in operating activities	10	12,276	(78,875)
Cashflows from investing activities			
Bank interest received		1	13
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Increase/(decrease) in cash equivalents in the year		12,277	(78,862)
Cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		21,456	100,318
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Total cash equivalents at the end of the year		33,733	21,456
		<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

VITAL PROJECTS

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

1 Accounting policies

1.1 Basis of preparation

The accounts are prepared under the historical cost convention unless otherwise stated.

The accounts 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 (FRS102) issued on 16 July 2014, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS102), the Charities Act 2011 and UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice as it applies from 1 January 2015.

Having considered future planned activities and the reserves available to the charity, the trustees are satisfied that the financial statements should be prepared on the going concern basis.

The charity meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS102.

1.2 Incoming resources

Donations and legacies are accounted for when they are received by the charity. Other income is accounted for on an accruals basis as far as is prudent to do so.

Core funding revenue grants are credited to the income and expenditure account at the time when received. Revenue grants for specific projects are credited to the income and expenditure account when received and unspent amounts at the year end are carried forward as restricted funds in the balance sheet. Where income is received in advance of the next financial year this may be deferred in accordance with the terms of the funding agreements.

1.3 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost less depreciation. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost less estimated residual value of each asset over its expected useful life, as follows:-

Equipment	25% Straight Line
-----------	-------------------

Only individual items of a capital nature costing £5,000 or more are included on the balance sheet.

1.4 Pensions

The charity operate a stakeholder pension scheme. Contributions are charged in the accounts as they become payable in accordance with the rules of the scheme.

1.5 Accumulated funds

Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors as to how they may be used.

Designated funds comprise funds which have been set aside at the discretion of the trustees for specific purposes.

1.6 Resources expended

Expenditure is recognised on an accruals basis as a liability is incurred. Expenditure includes any VAT which cannot be recovered and is reported as part of the expenditure to which it relates.

VITAL PROJECTS

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for beneficiaries.

Governance costs includes those costs associated with meeting the constitutional and statutory requirement of the charity.

All costs are allocated between the categories on the Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA) on a basis designed to reflect the use of the resource.

1.7 Gifts in kind

The charity receives the benefit of work carried out by volunteers whose expenses are reimbursed.

2 Voluntary income

	2021	2020
	£	£
Employers Allowance	4,000	3,000
Donations	1,379	3,097
Cash incentive from copier company	1,000	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	6,379	6,097

3 Charitable activities

	2021	2020
	£	£
Salaries and Wages	108,895	186,913
Freelance Costs	37,220	14,339
Healthcare Provision	421	628
Childcare Costs	-	844
Staff Pensions	9,781	13,615
Payroll Costs	615	872
Rent and Rates	8,015	15,228
Telephone	2,504	2,566
Office Costs	4,724	6,201
Promotion and Information Costs	608	835
Training and Supervision	1,317	-
Travelling Costs and User Expenses	36	2,787
Computer Servicing and Consumables	5,616	5,051
Publications and Subscriptions	80	12
Insurance	1,767	1,561
Bank Charges	69	60
Repairs and Renewals	124	226
Website Costs	6,833	6,072
Legal and Professional	40	1,218
Independent Examination	1,440	1,290
Fundraiser Costs	-	1,080
Sundries	375	164
HR Consultancy and Support	-	95
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	190,480	261,657
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

VITAL PROJECTS

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

4 Trustees

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

No travel expenses or other costs were reimbursed in the year (2020 - travel expenses amounting to £473 was reimbursed to 2 Trustees).

Trustees Indemnity Insurance amounting to £518 was paid in the year.

We can confirm that there are no other related party transactions that require disclosure in the accounts.

5 Number of employees

The average monthly number of employees during the year was:-

	2021 Number	2020 Number
Employees	5	7
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Employment costs		
	2021 £	2020 £
Wages and salaries	100,697	174,833
Social security costs	8,198	12,080
Other pension costs	9,781	13,615
Health insurance	421	628
Childcare costs	-	844
Freelance costs	37,220	14,339
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	156,317	216,339
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

There were no employees whose annual emoluments were £60,000 or more.

6 Debtors and prepayments

	2021 £	2020 £
Prepayments	7,815	1,080
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

7 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2021 £	2020 £
Deferred Income	9,167	9,167
Taxes and social security costs	2,293	1,974
Creditors and Accruals	2,661	5,010
Monies held on behalf of other organisations	105	105
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	14,226	16,256
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

VITAL PROJECTS

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

8 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:-

	Movement in funds				
	Balance at 1 April 2020 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2021 £
Airedale Primary Care Trust	-	31,918	(26,420)	(5,498)	-
Mental Health Advocacy within a forensic setting	-	26,371	(8,251)	(18,120)	-
Independent Complaints Advocacy	-	110,000	(95,562)	(10,465)	3,973
Garfield Weston	2,757	-	(3,805)	1,048	-
The Big Lottery	4,500	-	(6,435)	1,935	-
The National Lottery Covid-19 Support	-	35,000	(31,095)	232	4,137
Persimmon	-	1,000	-	(641)	359
Tesco	-	500	(500)	-	-
Asda Foundation	-	300	-	-	300
	<u>7,257</u>	<u>205,089</u>	<u>(172,068)</u>	<u>(31,509)</u>	<u>8,769</u>

9 Contingent Liability – Pensions

The contributions made by the charity are made to the Pensions Trust Growth Plan. This is a small multi-employer pension plan which is in most respects a money purchase arrangement. In May 2012 the Trust advised the Trustees that the overall Growth Plan had a deficit in funding and as a result there was a requirement to incur additional contributions to bridge the shortfall in funding. Vital will be required to pay additional monthly contributions which will increase annually by 3%. Currently the potential debt to the charity amounts to £30,645 but no provision has been made in these accounts on the assumption that the organisation does not intend to withdraw from the fund.

10 Reconciliation of net movement in funds to net cashflows from operating activities

	2021 £	2020 £
Net movement in funds	21,042	(71,280)
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	(6,735)	4,992
(Decrease) in creditors	(2,030)	(12,574)
Deduct bank interest received	(1)	(13)
	<u>12,276</u>	<u>(78,875)</u>
Net cash generated/(used) in operating activities	<u>12,276</u>	<u>(78,875)</u>