VOICES

England & Wales · Charity number 1159445

Details

Other names	V.O.I.C.E.S (VOICES OVERCOMING INSPIRING CONSULTING EMPOWERING SURVIVORS & SERVICES)
Status	Registered
Legal form	CIO
Registered	2014-12-02
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

Address	Po Box 5184 Bath BA1 0RZ
Phone	01225984189
Email	info@voicescharity.org
Website	www.voicescharity.org

Activities

Objects: 1) TO PROMOTE AND PROTECT THE GOOD HEALTH OF THOSE WHO ARE OR WHO HAVE BEEN AFFECTED BY DOMESTIC ABUSE IN PARTICULAR BUT NOT EXCLUSIVELY BY:A) PROVIDING ADVICE, SUPPORT, INTERVENTIONS AND RECOVERY PROGRAMMES;B) ASSISTING THEM TO ENGAGE WITH SERVICE PROVIDERS ENABLING THE SERVICE PROVIDERS TO ADAPT SERVICES TO BETTER MEET THE NEEDS OF THOSE PERSONS;C) ACTIVITIES TO RELIEVE THEIR MENTAL OR EMOTIONAL DISTRESS AND WHICH PROMOTE THEIR WELLBEING SUCH AS SUPPORT GROUPS AND NETWORKS; ANDD) RELIEVING THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE WHO ARE OR WHO HAVE BEEN AFFECTED BY DOMESTIC ABUSE AND ASSISTING THEIR INTEGRATION INTO SOCIETY2) TO ADVANCE THE EDUCATION OF THE PUBLIC IN ALL ISSUES RELATING TO THE SUBJECT OF DOMESTIC ABUSE, INCLUDING CONDUCTING OR SUPPORTING RESEARCH INTO THE FACTORS THAT MAY CONTRIBUTE TO SUCH ABUSE AND THE MOST APPROPRIATE WAYS TO MITIGATE THEM AND THE PUBLISHING OF THE USEFUL RESULTS OF SUCH RESEARCH

Activities: VOICES provides a unique service based on survivor-led insights and expertise. Groups & individual support are available for victims of abuse. Where possible, support is offered to victims attending court or dealing with other agencies and services. VOICES liaises with other local DV services and also provides advocacy and training to professionals.

Downloaded from opencharities.uk/ew/1159445

Classification

- **How:** Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information, Sponsors Or Undertakes Research, Other Charitable Activities
- **What:** General Charitable Purposes, Education/training, The Advancement Of Health Or Saving Of Lives, The Prevention Or Relief Of Poverty, Economic/community Development/employment, Human Rights/religious Or Racial Harmony/equality Or Diversity, 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

- Bath And North East Somerset
- Bristol City
- Gloucestershire
- North Somerset
- Somerset
- South Gloucestershire

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2024-08-31	£307,604	£334,089	-	-
2023-08-31	£277,869	£290,491	-	-
2022-08-31	£363,602	£251,909	-	-
2021-08-31	£230,582	£218,820	-	-
2020-08-31	£194,691	£130,499	-	-

Downloaded from opencharities.uk/ew/1159445

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
EMMA SAMBROOK	Chair	2024-12-16
Aimee Coppard		2025-06-02
Benazir Jatoi Ogunlende		2023-07-10
Farha Rasul PcET MA		2016-03-21
Peter Henry Brandt		2019-09-23
Samantha Stone		2024-09-16
Sara Goneos Ms		2025-04-14

Downloaded from opencharities.uk/ew/1159445

VOICES

England & Wales - Charity number 1159445

Accounts

Your voice matters

Voices' Annual Report and Unaudited Financial Statement



31st August 2024

Registered Charity 1159445

A NOTE FROM THE CHAIRS OF TRUSTEES

Voices stands out because its commitment to long-term recovery is deeply rooted in lived experience, and that makes all the difference. This thread runs throughout the design of the holistic support it offers to survivors. And beyond that it is virtually unique in elevating survivors' voices to actively influence policy, research, and service design both within Voices and on a national level.

To illustrate that commitment, we introduce you to the hard work, joys and successes of Voices over the past year. In this report you will find both an honest assessment of what we are trying to achieve and detail on what sets Voices' work apart. We are also delighted to signpost our ambitions for Voices, with new strategic priorities going forward, built around our existing core services.

We want to express our gratitude to everyone who helps make the work of Voices possible. Firstly we want to thank our donors (and hopefully future donors) for their giving and generosity. Secondly, we are indebted to our lived experience group and our fantastic staff and volunteers, who design and provide survivors with multi-disciplinary services to meet their wide-ranging needs.

We want to warmly welcome our new CEO Emily Denne, whose leadership is already cementing the foundations built by Ursula Lindenberg, Voices' courageous founder who stepped down this year. Emily is determined to grow and develop Voices, truly understanding that it occupies a unique and vital position within the domestic abuse sector, set apart from other organisations not just by the breadth of its services, but by the depth of its understanding.

Alongside charities across the country, we recognise the current national challenges in grants and trusts fundraising that are putting pressure on our organisation.

Notwithstanding, through the efforts of all, we look forward to a rewarding year for everyone and we are pleased to share the impact of Voices' achievements this year with you.

Helen and Joanna
Voices Co-Chairs of Trustees

LETTER FROM THE CEO

As I write this, it has been six months since I started in role - and whilst it has been an incredibly busy period, I continue to feel honoured to work for a charity like Voices.

Our ethos of survivor-led, trauma-informed and bespoke support results in lives being transformed - and I am so grateful to be a small part of that.

These first months have focused on the development of policy and process, to agreeing how we will continue to use our phenomenal trauma recovery approach for our clients.

This has been essential in order to allow us to continue grow and develop with a strong base and strategy, I am confident that Voices will go from strength to strength over the coming years.

I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Ursula, as Founder-CEO - I am in no doubt about the size of the shoes I step into!

Thank you also to our amazing team, volunteers and Trustees for all that you do every day. My greatest thanks go to our Lived Experience Group whose support, humour and patience know no bounds - and whose insights are helping to change the whole VAWG sector.

I'd like to end though with a quote from a client - which for me, sums up what makes Voices special:

"The group blew my mind. To meet so many women, from all walks of life, and find that they understood and could relate to me was transformative. I just kept thinking: I'm not alone. I'm not alone. I'm really seriously not alone. These people get this.....it was a huge deal for me. As was discovering an absolute kindred spirit of a friend, and establishing deep roots together as buddies. The group brought me true nurture and nourishment, insights and solidarity, friendship and new life.."

Emily Denne

CEO Voices

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Legal and Administrative information 5

Voices' history, purpose and our people 6

Trustees' Report 10

Referrals and Beneficiaries 12

Model, ethos and support services 17

Our impact and case studies 26

Strategic direction 2025 - 2030 30

Financial Report 32

Annual Accounts 2023-2024 39

Charity name: Voices

Charity number: 1159445

Our Board: Trustees who served during the year and up to the date of this report were:

Emma Sambrook (Chair) appointed 16/12/2024
Joanna Hole (Co-Chair) 28/02/2022 resigned 25/03/2025
Helen Wehner (Co-Chair) 21/03/2016 resigned 25/03/2025
Sara Goneos appointed 25/03/2025
Francesca Carpenter
Peter Brandt
Farha Rasul
Benazir Jatoi Ogunlende
Samantha Stone appointed 16/09/2024
Brigid Musselwhite 22/09/2019 resigned 29/03/2024
Lisa Whelpdale 10/07/2023 resigned 14/08/2024
Janet Ratcliffe Robertson 10/07/2023 resigned 08/01/2024
Joanne Silver 01/09/2023 to 13/02/2024 then on sabbatical

CEO: Ursula Lindenberg until 29/02/2024
Emily Denne from 16/04/2024

Registered Office: PO BOX 5184
Bath, BA1 0RZ

Bankers: HSBC UK
41 Southgate Street
Bath, BA1 1TN

Bath Building Society
15 Queen Square
Bath, BA1 2HN

Independent Examiners: Godfrey Wilson Limited
Chartered accountants and statutory auditors
5th Floor Mariner House
62 Prince Street
Bristol, BS1 4QD



Our History:

Voices was founded in 2014, by four survivors of Domestic Abuse, who recognised that beyond crisis services, there was little in place to support them. No one seemed to be focused on their recovery or that of their children. Something needed to change - and they made this happen by creating Voices.

One of the founding members, Ursula Lindenberg, would go on to become the Charity's first CEO. Leading the charity as it developed into a centre of excellence for Domestic Abuse recovery support, led by the voices of those with lived experience.

In 2022, the charity achieved a long-held dream, opening its trauma recovery centre, 'The Villa', which provides a safe space for clients to come together and access Voices' specialist support.

Ten years on and Voices continues to work to simultaneously provide long-term trauma-informed recovery-focused support for victims and survivors of Domestic Abuse, and to amplify their voices to effect change locally and nationally. In 2024, our Founder-CEO stood down, with our new CEO, Emily Denne, taking the helm in April. As we look towards our next decade, we are excited to see how the charity will continue to grow and develop.



VOICES - OUR PURPOSE:

We will help prevent and support recovery from Domestic Abuse because we will:

- Listen to, believe, and learn from victims and survivors, amplifying their voices to help effect sector change.
- Acknowledge that while anyone can be a victim of Domestic Abuse and anyone can be a perpetrator, it remains a gendered crime. We will call out Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), and seek urgent action to address Domestic Abuse.
- Provide early help and long-term, tailored recovery support to victims and survivors of abuse.
- Provide training and awareness sessions to educate, inform, and grow awareness of Domestic Abuse among professional partners, educational settings, businesses, and the public.
- Stop the cycle of abuse through the provision of specialist programmes, focused on healthy relationships.
- Recognise the intersectionality of abuse, providing holistic support to victim/survivors.
- Continue to empower survivors through peer support, groups, and building on community strengths.

OUR PEOPLE:

	FULL TIME	PART TIME	VOLUNTEERS
Trustees	-	-	6
Services	-	4	2
Operational	1	2	1
Lived Experience Forum	-	-	8
Contracted staff	-	2	-

Voices' charity makeup as of 31/08/2024

Voices is led by a small and dedicated team of staff , who come from a wide variety of specialist backgrounds. People are at the very heart of everything we do; from our clients and volunteers, to our staff and trustees.

TRAUMA INFORMED:

Voices is proud to be a trauma informed organisation, upholding the trauma informed principles of:

- Safety
- Choice
- Trust
- Collaboration
- Empowerment

This year, our Trustees pledged their commitment to ensuring this works at every level, including within the Board.

Describing Voices:

Trustees, Members, staff, stakeholders, and survivors were asked to describe Voices in one word:



"I feel lucky: they've been the only place to 'get it'!"
(Client, talking about Voices, 2024)

TRUSTEES' REPORT



"With the support from Voices, I managed to get a non-molestation order against my abuser and am now free from abuse and a lot happier within myself" (Voices' Client)

Voices is no ordinary Domestic Abuse Service - indeed, clients frequently describe us as ***unique****.*

What makes us special is our commitment to:

- *Lived experience at the heart of our work,*
- *The bespoke nature of our support,*
- *Our recovery focus.*

Together, these elements work to empower the survivor.

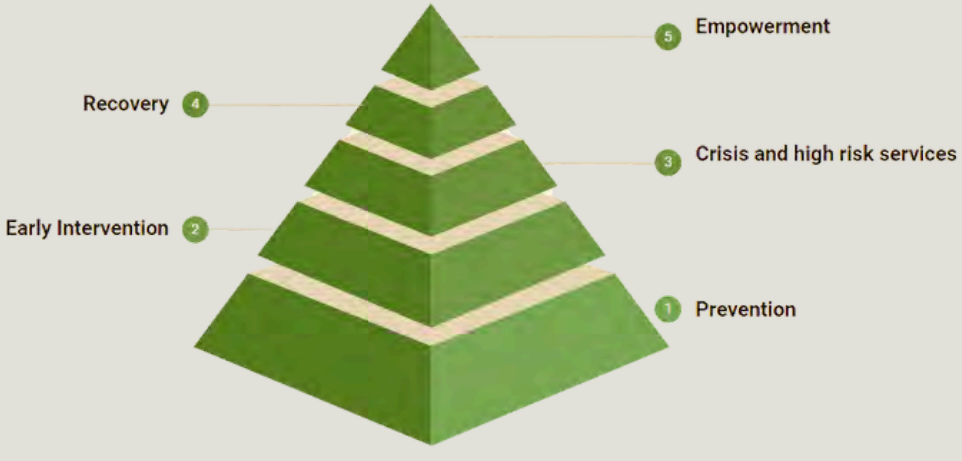
Voices fill a vital gap in statutory provision. If we envisage support services as part of a pyramid, with prevention as a foundation and empowerment creating the peak;

We know that government funding tends to focus on crisis and high-risk services. Our work supports prevention, early intervention, recovery, and empowerment, leading to lasting change for survivors' families and communities..

What does this mean in practice?

Many of our clients tell us that they did not realise that they were in an abusive relationship until it was 'too late'. By the time they identified the behaviour as abusive, the situation had become dangerous.

Our clients reflect on what a difference might have been made had they understood: healthy relationships, love bombing, red flags, informed consent, and coercion and control. They have told us that much more work needs to be done to prevent abuse and support early intervention: this is therefore a clear focus for Voices in the coming strategic period.



For victims of Domestic Abuse who access crisis and high-risk services, the focus tends to be on 'safety', usually relating to the risk posed by the perpetrator. Voices know that this does not mean the victim is safe. Instead, other risks may present, such as:

- Loss of accommodation
- Conflict over child contact
- Financial difficulties
- Family Court - which can often prolong post-separation abuse
- Stalking and harassment behaviours
- The impact of trauma on children, which may cause emotional and behavioural difficulties.

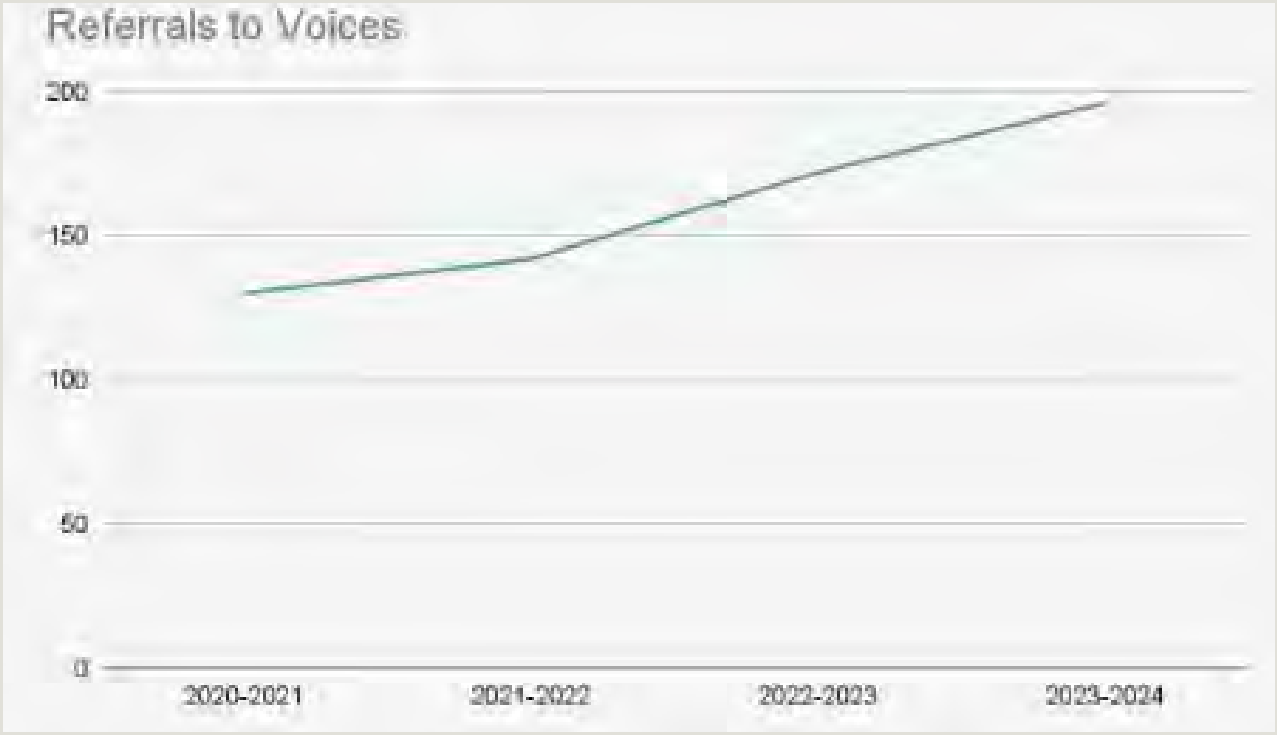
Victims can be left trying to manage this array of challenges, at a time when they are also experiencing significant psychological impacts from the abuse, with trauma impacting every part of a victim's life:



Many Domestic Abuse services stop supporting victims when they feel the most vulnerable - our long-term approach to supporting them through each stage of recovery is therefore revolutionary.

Voices was the light at the end of a very dark tunnel for me and my son. They came into our lives at the point when I felt most broken and helped me to see that there was a way forward. Through the support of Voices, I was able to see a future filled with hope, freedom and happiness for my little boy. Without their support, I think we would still be very lost. I was fortunate to access 1:1 and group support, both of which helped immensely, not only in finding my self-confidence and rebuilding our life, but also in developing a circle of friends who 'get it' and have survived too.

Having had many experiences where I wasn't believed, coming into Voices was the first time I felt heard which was so powerful. We now have an amazing life ahead of us and this was all started at a time when I didn't know where to turn and with Voices answering my call." (Ella, 2024).



REFERRALS

Over the last year, Voices received 196 referrals, which marks a 14% increase on the last year. Consistent with previous years, we continue to see an increase in our referral rates year-on-year.

Following a recent change in our recording processes and referral management systems, we anticipate further increases to referral numbers in the coming year.

It is worthy of note that Voices also recognise that the referral numbers do not fully reflect our actual work - for example, it does not include people we are supporting who were referred in previous periods, those who contact us for advice and signposting, or the wider impact on the family. Our work includes supporting clients to access support for their children and others impacted by the abuse.

REFERRALS INTO VOICES

Self-referrals made up over 65% of our annual intake in the last year. The second most common source of referrals was from Bath based multi-agency service, Southside, who operate the commissioned Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) service.

Other servises referring into Voice are:

- GP's
- NHS
- Police
- Schools
- Universities
- Bath Mind
- Julian House
- Independent health care agencies



OUR BENEFICIARIES

A snapshot picture:

Voices seeks to offer an inclusive service, recognising that anyone can be a victim of Domestic Abuse and anyone can be a perpetrator.

Risks and needs:

Time Frame:
September 2023 - August 2024

Inclusivity:

49.61%

Clients who considered themselves to have a disability

18.6%

Multiple disabilities

Mental and emotional wellbeing:

90%

Clients who identified mental and emotional wellbeing needs

Client needs:

Safety concerns

68%

Housing concerns

45%

Criminal or civil court needs

52%

"When you have come from a situation where you are told and believe that it's all your fault; that nobody else would understand; and that you are all alone, to find a group of incredibly strong women who are able to understand your experiences from a place of great depth, it can truly change your world".
(Voices' client)

OUR BENEFICIARIES:

Voices offer an all-inclusive service for adults who have been impacted by Domestic Abuse, noting that anyone can be a victim of Domestic Abuse, and anyone can be a perpetrator. However, we acknowledge that it does remain a gendered crime where women are more likely to be the victim and men are more likely to be perpetrators.

Research tells us that approximately one in five adults will experience Domestic Abuse in their lifetimes, with this equating to one in four women and one in six-seven men. For this last year 95% of our clients identified as CIS women. This does highlight that we have further work to do to ensure that men feel safe and able to access our services.

A high proportion of our clients have additionally experienced Sexual Violence, with our figures aligning with national statistics that tell us that approximately 50% of Sexual Violence can additionally be categorised as Domestic Abuse. Recognising this need, we were pleased to support SARSAS to offer a safe space to support women impacted by sexual violence in our trauma recovery centre. In addition, just over 60% of our clients reported experiencing stalking and harassment.

Given the fact that isolation is a known tactic of Domestic Abuse perpetrators, it is perhaps unsurprising that almost three-quarters of our clients additionally note that they lacked support networks when they first accessed our services. Voices therefore strongly support the building of peer networks and we offer the only Domestic Abuse group-work recovery provision for a wide area, covering approximately 870km2, with a population of c.375,000 people.

As a result, whilst we are based in Bath, and primarily our services are available to those based in Bath and North East Somerset (BANES), we are seeing increasing referrals from across the local area, including: Bristol, Wiltshire, Frome, and wider Somerset. Notably, 10% of our clients came from Bristol in this last year.

A high proportion of service users also report mental health symptoms and emotional wellbeing difficulties. In line with research that indicates between 51-75% of women who experience Domestic Abuse will go on to experience Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or Complex-PTSD, many of our clients present with PTSD symptoms. This last year has seen almost 50% of Voices' clients (49.61%) recorded as having a disability, with mental health being the most common form. Over 90% of our clients identified mental and emotional wellbeing needs.



"Voices have been a huge help and I know they will be an integral part of my healing, they have been extremely accommodating, kind and compassionate" (Voices' Client)

This difficulty has become more pronounced over the last year, where growing waiting lists and the challenges of a 'postcode lottery' have greatly impacted people's ability to access specialist services. Voices therefore utilises its trauma-informed approach to support individuals to build their resilience, understand the impact of trauma, and learn to self-manage symptoms. We find that clients are now open for extended periods, accessing more forms of support in our service and that we are 'holding' cases owing to the pressure on other services. Together with the ever-increasing referral numbers, this has placed additional strain on the charity.





44% of clients identified as having concerns around their safety

52% had criminal or civil court needs

45% had housing difficulties

48% had needs around education training and employment

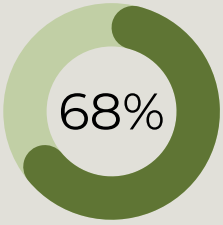
68% described concerns around their safety

""I still feel alone as I do not talk to anyone about what happened but being with voices has really helped me manage better and given me a voice to talk about things that I do not share with others. Abuse survivors can feel very isolated as it's shameful to talk about and some do not understand and we are fearful of being judged". (Voices Client).



Support for the wider family:

Voices recognise that Domestic Abuse has long-term implications on the entire family. 75 clients supported in the year had children, with a total of 140 children between them.

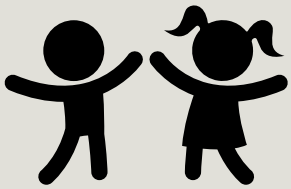


68% of our clients reported having concerns about how Domestic Abuse had impacted their children.

Voices ensures that our support includes:

- Sessions looking at the impact on children.
- Signposting and referrals to specialist support for children.
- Accessing funds to ensure children and young people can engage with therapeutic support.
- Legal advice and support around child contact.

We are very proud of this wider impact of our work.



Voices support parents attending Freedom by offering a free creche facility.

"You have changed my life and my children's lives too" (Voices' client).



OUR MODEL AND ETHOS:

Voices offers long-term recovery services for victims and survivors of Domestic Abuse utilising a trauma-informed approach. This means we abide by the core principles of trauma-informed practice.

We are fortunate to deliver most of our services directly from our trauma-informed recovery centre based in Bath, known as 'The Villa'.

The Villa was designed with victims and survivors to create a warm, welcoming space where clients feel safe. Importantly the building was developed to not look like a traditional office, but instead a place of comfort, where relationships are built.

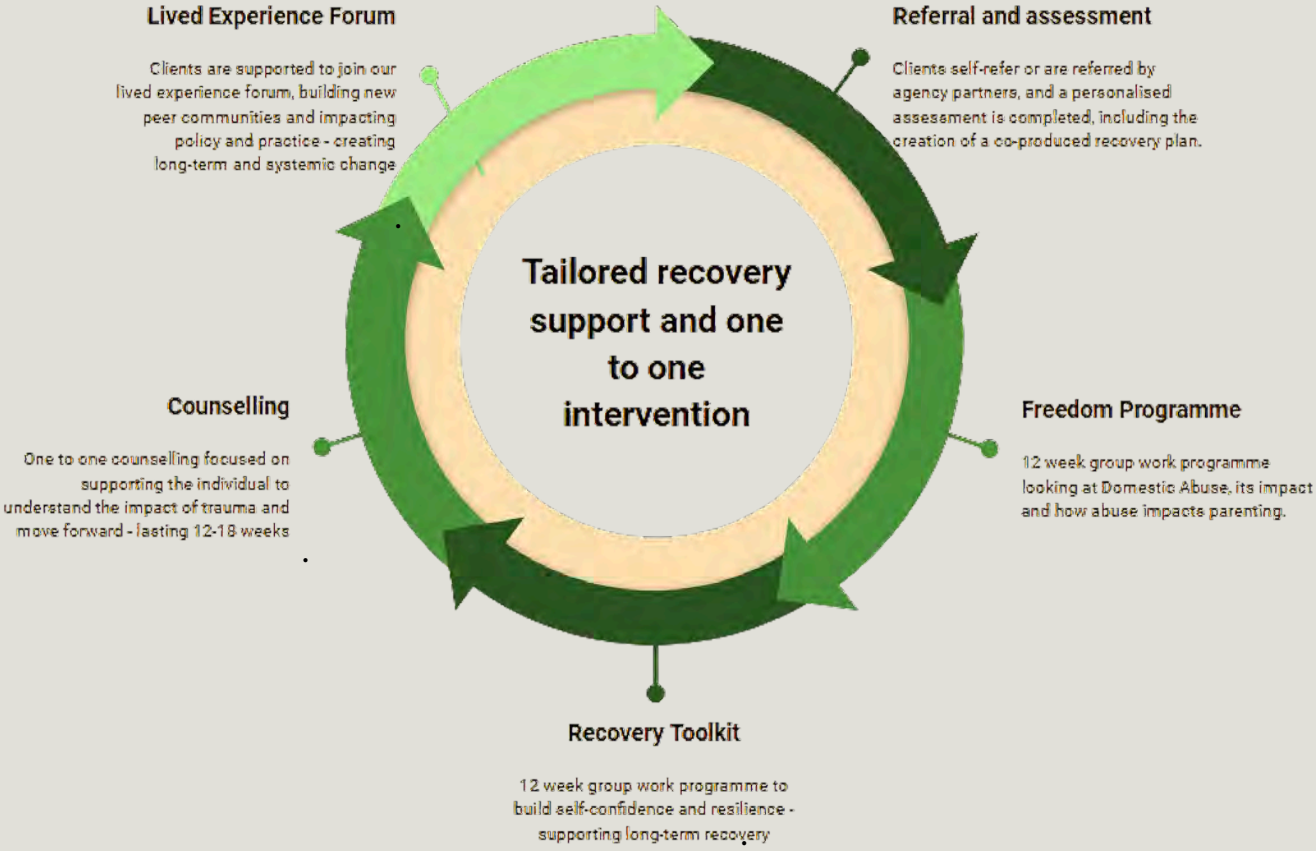
Voices' ethos is that **recovery is prevention** and our clients are supported to access multiple services over an extended period, to minimise the risk of them returning to or being vulnerable to a new abusive relationship.

THE VILLA



"There is a friendly and kind atmosphere in the building and you are always welcomed with a nice cup of coffee and a smile".
(Voices' client talking about The Villa)

For this reason, our support tends to be long-term, tapering to allow for safe, planned closures in collaboration with the client. Recognising that everyone's experience of trauma is different, no two people's experiences of our services are the same. Nevertheless, a pathway through our services might look a little like this:



In this example, a client will have completed two group-work courses with us, engaged with counselling, and joined our lived experience forum, whilst having the ongoing support of a Recovery Practitioner on a one-to-one basis.

"Having multiple sources of support has given me the opportunity to not only understand what happened, but to understand how to prevent it happening again in the future. In addition, receiving 1:1 counselling alongside group work has meant that I had the opportunity to work in further depth and in a 1:1 setting on the things I was learning within the group". (Voices' client talking about the importance of multi-disciplinary support).

OUR SUPPORT SERVICES

We have been pleased to continue to offer our multi-disciplinary, trauma-informed, and holistic services which focus on supporting survivors to recover from Domestic Abuse over this last year. An important feature of our support is the focus on rebuilding communities and developing peer relationships, which is achieved through group work and our range of creative workshops.



Collaging art workshop

Our workshops run throughout the year: this fabulous artwork was created during our therapeutic collaging workshop, allowing participants to explore and externalise complex emotions. Collaging offers individuals a sense of control and empowerment over feelings of anxiety.

Pat Craven's Freedom Programme:
The Freedom Programme is an accredited and evaluated twelve-week course, designed to support women affected by Domestic Abuse perpetrated by men. The programme examines the roles played by the attitudes and beliefs of the perpetrator and how this might impact victims and survivors. Its focus is on helping participants to better understand and make sense of what has happened to them, and move away from self-blame.

The programme additionally describes the impact of Domestic Abuse on children, and on parenting.

During this year, we have run the Freedom Programme three times (term time only). The course is 'rolling' meaning people can join the course throughout the year and newer participants are offered additional support by long-standing group members.

We are delighted that Freedom is supported by a creche, enabling those with young children also to attend.

.

Rockpool's Recovery Toolkit:
Voices ran the accredited Recovery Toolkit course three times over the last year. This twelve-week course aims to assist and equip women with the knowledge needed to help them recover from the effects of abuse. This means that unlike Freedom, the group is only suitable for those no longer in an abusive relationship.

The programme is designed to support people's recovery from Domestic Abuse, helping them rebuild their confidence, self-esteem and resilience. Topics covered include:

- Understanding our thoughts and emotions
- Communication styles
- Healthy relationships
- The effects of abuse on children and parenting
- Boundaries and trust.

A client who completed Recovery Toolkit during this year reflected on the impact of the course, telling us:

"Coming to Recovery Toolkit has opened my eyes massively to my own strength and potential. I am feeling more confident in myself than I can ever remember. I will be taking forward so much knowledge and am excited to receive what I am worth and only what I accept going forward in life!"

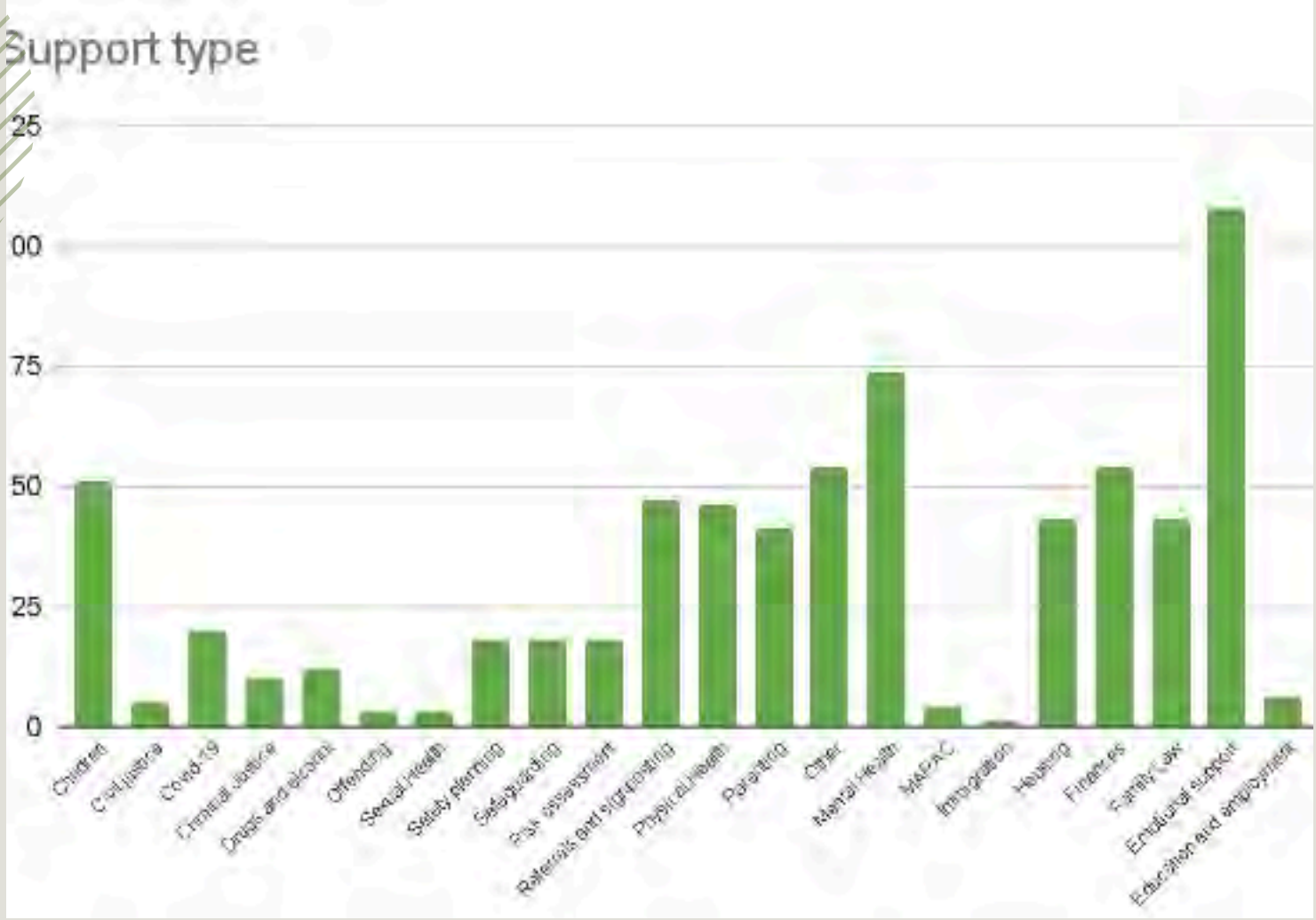
One-to-one support:
Voices prides itself on offering person-centered, bespoke, and holistic support to clients, recognising that everyone's experience of Domestic Abuse will look different. Clients can access one-to-one support from a Recovery Practitioner, which might involve face-to-face contact, telephone support, or virtual meetings.

Our Recovery Practitioners work with each client to develop an individualised recovery plan identifying risks, needs, and goals. Whilst much of our support will focus on safety planning and helping clients better understand Domestic Abuse, we aim to be creative and consider the wider needs of each person. Examples of support areas include:

- Finances
- Housing and safe accommodation
- Accessing specialist support for children and young people
- Rebuilding communities and developing healthy relationships.

Recovering from abuse brings our clients into contact with multiple services, systems and other professionals. We work to support our clients to safely navigate these systems in order to achieve the outcomes they deserve. The chart overleaf demonstrates the many areas of a family's life that can be impacted by abuse - showing how our team has supported our clients over the year.

"I now have the courage to endure the (court etc) storm ahead. I didn't have the strength before and I couldn't have done it" (Voices' client).



COUNSELLING:

During this year we have continued to support clients through our specialist counselling provision. We are delighted to have now employed our first Therapeutic Lead (September 2024) and are therefore hopeful of seeing this area of our work further develop in the coming year.

"Having counselling through voices charity has completely changed my life and way of thinking. Having struggled each and everyday with mental health and trauma related to previous abuse, I found myself completely lost and feeling like I was past any help. The counselling has changed my way of thinking, helped me manage and deal with my past trauma and helped to prevent me from self sabotage. It had enabled me to begin to enjoy life and understand that I can definitely move forward with the knowledge of the appropriate tools and having put lots of trauma issues to rest. This service has changed everything for me for the better and I can never be thankful enough for help and support that I have had".
(Voices' Client).

LEGAL SUPPORT

Voices are one of the only services providing clients with specialist support through family court, which has been widely recognised as a gap in provision for victims and survivors of Domestic Abuse. A report by the Domestic Abuse Commissioner (2023) identified that over 70% of victims going through Family Court did not receive specialist support.

We are proud therefore to offer a free law clinic for survivors in conjunction with the University of the West of England (UWE), whereby student solicitors and barristers provide brief legal interventions, advice and advocacy, overseen by their lecturers.

The impact of Legal Support:

"The only reason I've been able to finally face walking through the door to the Court room, is because of the exquisite support offered to me by Voices.

It took my patient, insightful and highly experienced case workers ten months to get me to the point where I felt resourced sufficiently to face my perpetrator in court.

Without their care and skillfully placed stepping stones I know, for sure, I wouldn't have been able to summon the courage to do what I have had to do.

Voices have been by my side, at every turn, as I engage with the Court processes - which is to say that they have been with me through what is undoubtedly the hardest part of my life path so far. No question has been too small, no worry has been too big, no moment of pure fear has ever wobbled them. They hold the ground beneath my feet, facilitating me to then stand strong and tall in the legal world, and advocate with all I've got on behalf of my children.

For me, Voices are the exact lifeline I have needed in order to endure the court world and all that it entails. They are my glue. They are my constant legal encyclopedia. They are my guides and my light as I walk the tunnel. For all of this, and more, I am profoundly grateful: it is only with their support that I have been able to level up and do what's necessary legally to protect my family." ('Clara'. 2024).

LIVED EXPERIENCE FOR CHANGE:

Our Lived Experience forum meets monthly in our premises and alongside this peer network being an important part of their recovery journey, they continue to generously input their knowledge and experience into policy and practice. This means that they have been instrumental in supporting our strategic consultation process, alongside working on both local and national projects. Examples from this year include:

- Meeting with Triangle, to ensure the Domestic Abuse empowerment star aligned with individuals' actual experience of Domestic Abuse. We understand the consultation was very well received by Triangle and led to a number of changes being made to the process. Triangle told us "It was so wonderful to have the opportunity to hear the expertise of the group [...] and absolutely forensic level of analysis on the Star, I can't express how helpful it was. They were a lovely, generous and supportive group who really helped me understand their perspectives and the nuance and considerations around the areas we discussed [...] I am in awe of the work you do and I am so grateful that I can feed in the views of everyone".

- Ongoing work with University College London Research project for child mental health practitioners perspectives on providing support for families where there is intimate partner violence.

- Continuing to support the development and evaluation of the IRIS+ project, which sees Doctors and GP practices, who are usually the first point of contact for disclosure of Domestic Abuse, to be trained in a trauma-informed manner to identify and ask questions about Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence, recognising the links between abuse and physical/mental health and have the means to signpost clients safely for support.

- Partnering with SafeLives in the development of the Legal Education Foundation-funded DA Training for Family Lawyers, by running consultations with survivors to inform the content of the training programme. This now forms a national training offer for family law professionals from 2023/24, available to book via SafeLives, and has produced significant outcomes such as an 800% increase in trainees' confidence in working safely with perpetrators to avoid collusion.

- The group were involved in NIHR Policy Research Unit for Children and Families project- focussing on outcome measures for child maltreatment/domestic abuse.

- Facilitating a Lived Experienced session with researchers at Oxford University to advise on how to engage in a trauma-informed approach to working with survivors and young people who are engaging with PPI work (Patient and Public Involvement) in the field of Domestic Abuse.

Voices strongly believe that this consultative practice, enabling those who have experienced abuse to impact policy and practice is sector-changing.

"When you have come from a situation where you are told and believe that it's all your faulty; that nobody else would understand; and that you are all alone, to find a group of incredibly strong women who are able to understand your experiences from a place of great depth, it can truly change your world. (Voices' Lived Experience Member).

ANNA'S STORY

Many of our Lived Experience Group have been with Voices a long time. Here, 'Anna' tells us her story...



I guess my story starts a long time before I came into contact with Voices. Being a daughter of a mother in abusive relationships and growing up in an abusive environment, weird and unhealthy relationships were the norm.

When my children turned 6 weeks old, I booked my first counselling session because I wanted to be the best mum I could be and break the cycle of intergenerational abuse. I would go for counselling on and off for the next 16 years, always trying to uncover how I could be better and what I could do to make relationships better.

Making contact

This was up until I found myself coming out of a controlling coercive relationship at the end of those 16 years. A powerhouse of a woman at the time came into my life and explained to me emotional abuse and controlling coercion and even though I could follow what she was saying, I couldn't understand it well enough to explain it to my daughters. She spoke to them with me, and for me. I trusted and valued this powerhouse friend who got me to safety. She told me about the Freedom programme, and asked me to sign myself up and see if I can figure out why she asked me to go there.

.

Most importantly, she told me that after the experiences I just lived through, I needed to join the sisterhood and sit within feminine power for a while.

Freedom Programme

I probably didn't know it at the time, but I think I was a bit of a man-hater - some might say, for good reason. On the Freedom Programme I learnt about what abuse is, where it is, how it happens and what healthy/unhealthy relationships look like. I was blown away that I'd had similar experiences to other women.

I felt validated. I understood.

All this time of going to counselling to see how I could be a better person, to have better relationships - and what I learnt from the Freedom Programme is that I am a beautiful person - I am just terrible at picking partners because I couldn't differentiate between unhealthy, familiar, abusive relationships and the healthy ones. I learnt a lot and realised that not all men are bad.

.

Recovery Toolkit

I felt so fortunate because at the end of the Freedom Programme I was able to join the Voices Toolkit Programme. Recovery from a lifetime of tumultuous experiences takes time, several weeks on a course was brilliant but I needed more education I guess. So, I now felt like I understood abuse and signs to look out for, but how do you move on from that?

I remember even at this time, still feeling lower than a snake's belly, dead inside, numb to the world with no way of knowing how to feel anything again. Well, the Toolkit helped me to move forward, to heal and re-energise, to value myself and set boundaries - to live again. I made new friends, friends that didn't recoil in disgust or tell me to man up - people who understood, shared their own stories and wisdom - we learned from each other.

Almost nine years later and I am still close friends with someone I met in the group and we communicate daily.

Lived experience group

I initially got involved with the lived experience group through being invited to engage in online consultations with researchers at various universities to input and feedback back on what would work (or not) when thinking about conducting research into aspects of domestic abuse.

I remember it felt good to be able to have conversations with professionals, be taken seriously, inform their understanding and shape the conversations and domestic violence landscape, within the area and beyond. As the LE group grew, we agreed group rules, applied for small pots of funding to branch out our ideas and think of ways we can actively contribute to voices, support others and break the silence of abuse.

My journey of recovery with Voices continues on and I continue to make new connections within the LE group. Being part of the Lived Experience group is important to me because I want to give back as much as I have gained from Voices and support Voices to support others.

I want to be an ambassador for others to know that abuse does not define us, that we can love and laugh again, be safe and accepted, where all voices are heard in the process. Voices is a special place and for me, it is people that makes places and everyone I meet in Voices is a Champion for someone else - I see this all the time within the walls of Voices.

I stay in the Lived Experience group because I feel nurtured, valued, respected and feel the group can make a difference for others.

Our ideas are taken seriously and acted upon, we all work together for the greater good of supporting survivors of abuse and ending violence against women.



"I felt listened to. I felt validated"

OUR IMPACT



A snapshot picture:

Through our survivor-led approach, ongoing community engagement, and tailored support services, Voices is committed to creating a safer, more informed community, ultimately breaking the cycle of domestic abuse.

Our Impact

Time Frame: September 2023 - August 2024

Children and parenting:

Increased understanding of DA impact on children 91%

Parenting improved 67%

Increased understanding of DA:

Completing Voices support increased my knowledge and understanding of Domestic Abuse 85%

Impact of Voices' support:

Positive health outcomes
81%

Trauma Symptoms improved
85%

Reduced isolation
85%

"Voices have and continue to be life changing for me and my family. They are the only people I truly believe have my best interests at heart. They help me of a daily basis to become a strong, more independent and confident woman. Without voices I would be lost after the abuse I suffered". (Voices' Client).

At Voices, we continuously monitor and evaluate the impact of our services through a robust combination of qualitative and quantitative measures. Utilising widely recognized national tools—such as WEMWEBS, CORE-10, and POWER assessments—we assess our clients' progress at the start, during, and upon completion of their support, effectively evidencing the distance traveled on their recovery journey.

We are proud to report that our impact over the past year has been profound:

- **Empowerment Through Knowledge:** 85% of clients felt more capable of recognizing abusive behavior as a result of our support, a crucial step toward reclaiming autonomy and fostering healthier relationships.
- **Enhanced Parenting Skills**: 91% gained a deeper understanding of the impact of abuse on children, with 67% noting improvements in their parenting skills, thereby breaking the cycle of abuse for future generations.
- **Positive Health Outcomes:** 81% of clients reported improved health and well-being, underscoring the effectiveness of our holistic approach to recovery.
- **Trauma Management:** 85% expressed an increased understanding of trauma and how to manage their symptoms, equipping them with essential tools for their healing process.

A significant strength of Voices is our group-work approach, which has proven transformative for many clients. Nearly 85% of those who completed group sessions reported feeling less isolated.

One client shared, "Group work brought me a degree of anonymity while allowing me to relate to others who have experienced similar situations. It not only provided invaluable insights but also helped me form lifelong friendships during dark times. The 1:1 support gave me the courage to engage with the group and reclaim my power, making every session a vital part of my healing process."

Our support doesn't just end with the individual; it creates a ripple effect throughout the community. 92% of clients indicated that the support they received from Voices has empowered them to help others experiencing Domestic Abuse, amplifying our impact beyond the immediate beneficiaries.



Even the quietest whispers, can create a symphony of change.

PARTNERSHIP WORK:

Voices is committed to working in partnership with organisations across Bath and North East Somerset (BANES).

As founding members of the Domestic Abuse Practitioners group and members of the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board, we actively contribute to local policy and practices.



Collaborative Efforts for Broader Change:

Here we shine a spotlight on one aspect of our partnership approach through our work with the Local Family Justice Board (LFJB). This work speaks to our commitment to improve criminal and family court processes for survivors of Domestic Abuse.

In partnership with the South-West Local Family Justice Board, we co-founded and currently chair the Domestic Abuse Sub-Group. This group raises awareness of Domestic Abuse—particularly coercive control—and its implications within the family court system.

A key initiative this year has been the development of a Court guide for survivors navigating the Family Court as litigants in person. Created collaboratively with legal experts, academics, and those with lived experience, this guide aims to provide essential resources for individuals affected by Domestic Abuse. We are excited to be seeking funding for a national rollout.

Looking ahead, we will also work to synthesize findings from the Domestic Abuse Commissioner's 2023 report on the Family Court, helping to educate professionals on the challenges survivors face during court proceedings.

"Voices have changed my life completely. I have gone from being a victim feeling frightened of the world and nervous of everything to a strong and powerful woman with much more knowledge. My journey hasn't finished and I still have obstacles to overcome but voices have changed my life in so many ways that I will forever be thankful for everything." (Voices Client).

CHARLOTTE'S STORY



I escaped from Yorkshire to Bath in Summer 2021 after leaving a toxic environment to put it mildly. With a safe home and new beginnings, I thought it would be easy to fit back in to "normal" life. This couldn't have been further from the truth.

Voices feels like a big family...

Only once you are out of your situation, does it then start processing in your body and all sorts of symptoms from for example PTSD surface. Life feels worthless and in a kind of weird way, you wished you'd be back in the past as you were used to that. It's what you knew. I cannot describe in words how alien it is to have a kind word said to you without consequences. Or even what it's like for someone to ask you how your day was. The guilt and shame was too much.

I was very isolated and had only told the police about my "life". Voices have been incredible for my recovery these past 3 years.

I have completed Voices' Freedom program, Recovery Toolkit, one-to-one counselling and now I am involved in the lived experience work. All of this has been lifesaving for me. So much knowledge shared, tears and laughter too. I will never forget the people I met in the groups and still talk to some.

No one likes to talk about abuse that happens behind closed doors, even family members. Voices not only gives you the opportunity to meet wonderful people who've been through similar situations but more importantly, it gives you that feeling of empowerment to carry on. That you're not alone. That you can do it despite the bad days you still have. And that you are not to blame.

Voices feels like it is a big family. Kindness, compassionate and knowledgeable. Just a few words on what Voices is.

I am forever grateful for everything Voices have done for me. I will continue to work with Voices and they have empowered me to help others in our situations when I am able.

VOICES STRATEGY 2025-2030

In these uncertain times for charities nationwide, we are optimistic to continue to raise awareness and support our valuable clients. We aim to do more outreach work and create other places of safety to meet with clients within the community.

By providing more remote support and outreach with home/community visits where there are mobility needs or other challenges to travel, we can bridge a further gap in services. We aim to reach more marginalised groups who cannot otherwise access our premises and form more partnerships in doing so.



Lived Experience at the Heart:
Voices was founded by four survivors of Domestic Abuse, and a decade on we continue to listen to, believe in, and be guided by the voices of those with lived experience. Voices will work actively to break the silence and amplify the voices of those with lived experience.



Recovery Focus:
Voices is dedicated to supporting long-term recovery from Domestic Abuse through the provision of trauma-informed, multi-disciplinary services, which are tailored to meet the needs of the individual. Ths will include group work, one to one support, therapeutic services and legal support.



Education and prevention:
Voices will offer a range of services to help prevent Domestic Abuse, break the cycle of abuse, and empower people to seek early intervention services. We will provide specialist training and healthy relationships sessions to professionals, educational establishments, corporate partners, and the public.

VOICES

This poem was written by one of our clients.

It talks to the impact of Domestic Abuse and the recovery support provided by Voices.

It is shared here with our thanks .



When you experience Domestic Abuse
It can make you feel like you're no use
When all your confidence has left and gone
It makes you feel like they have won.

You feel crushed and no longer yourself
You feel you can't speak to anyone else
No one seems to understand what you've been through
But deep within, you want to feel new.

You do not want to remain so crushed
Feeling like your life has turned to mush
Allow your voice to begin to appear
Then the way forward can start to be clear.

You do not have to remain squashed and put down
Stand tall, speak out and wear your crown
Your new found voice can guide the way
Leading you to a much better day.

It's thanks to Voices you can see
All that you deserve and all that you're meant to be
You can get over the abuse you've been dealt
With thanks to Voices support and help.



FINANCIAL REPORT:

The last financial year has been a challenging one for Voices, and we ended the financial year with a slight deficit of £26,485. However, our overarching financial picture for this year remains positive. With an income this year of £302,254 plus £5,350 for gifts in kind, we secured a total income of £307,604, compared to £277,869 in 2022-2023.

INCOME AND FUNDRAISING

Voices is a non-commissioned charity, and our predominant funding sources are grants, trusts and foundations, including: Garfield Weston, Lloyds Bank Foundation, The Tudor Trust and the National Lottery.

We are fortunate to additionally receive support from the local Police Crime Commissioner (PCC) and the local ICB.

Voices is working to diversify its income streams. This year, our non-grant related income was £44,250 are actively developing new fundraising activities.

RISKS

Voices recognises that the current national challenges in grants and trusts fundraising are putting pressure on our organisation, alongside charities across the country. For Voices, this challenge is more pronounced as a number of our multi-year grants are due to finish in the coming financial year. For this reason, we are considering a range of ways to diversify our income.

Further risks are noted as a result of the ever-increasing demand on the service, which typically outstrips capacity. This is compounded by the following factors:

- Closure of partnership services or restrictions on their offer.
- Cost of living crisis.

- Demands on the NHS and mental health services, leading to extended waiting lists.

As a result, Voices continues to review our services and referral processes to consider how we can extend our provision of services, without compromising our trauma-informed approach or quality of support.

Reserves policy:
Voices has reviewed its reserves policy during this financial year. This sets out our the Trustees' long-term ambition to have reserves that meet the following criteria:

- To sustain the charity's core services, for a period of three months without detriment to its beneficiaries. Voices will seek to ensure that all beneficiaries are supported to access external services and other support organisations in the event of our closure, to minimise the risk of re-traumatisation. Voices have costed the operational costs of running our services for three months, as £77,186.

- To support the charity in providing a skeleton service for a further three months to enable emergency funding to be sought and secure the charity's future. This equates to a total of £36,557. This involves the CEO, Head of Services, and one further staff member being kept in role, but working from home. This would focus on providing a safe transition out of service to our most vulnerable clients and the opportunity to look for further funding. In the event this is not possible, the CEO will be able to ensure the safe closure of the charity.

In line with best practice, Voices will ensure that a minimum of three months of operating costs are held in reserves between both designated and unrestricted funds. For Voices, this currently sits at £77,186.

Voices ended this financial year with reserves of £218,612 (unrestricted reserves of £161,662). Whilst this is a positive position, Voices recognises that the challenges facing the charitable sector are likely to require our using reserves to sustain our core services in the coming year(s).

Governance and public benefit:
Voices is a CIO and was registered on the 2nd December 2014. A constitution is in place to ensure appropriate governance and management, and our charitable objects are set out here:

- To promote and protect the good health of those who are or who have been affected by Domestic Abuse in particular but not exclusively by:
  a. Providing advice, support, interventions and recovery programmes.
  b. Assisting them to engage with service providers enabling the service providers to adapt services to better meet the needs of those persons.
  c. Activities to relieve their mental or emotional distress and which promote their wellbeing such as support groups and networks,
  d. Relieving the needs of people who are or who have been affected by Domestic Abuse and assisting their integration into society.

- To advance the education of the public in all issues relating to the subject of Domestic Abuse, including conducting or supporting research into the factors that may contribute to such abuse and the most appropriate ways to mitigate them and the publishing of the useful results of such research.

This report has focused on what Voices has achieved over the last year, and the outcomes of our work in the reporting period. However, in addition, during this year, a full strategic consultation has occurred, enabling Voices and the Trustee Board to fully review our vision, values, and purpose and develop a new five-year strategy. In considering this strategic direction, the Trustees have considered their responsibilities and referred to the guidance contained within the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit. We are therefore confident that our new strategy continues to align with our charity objects and delivers public benefit.

Structure, governance and management:
Voices has two senior leadership roles: the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Head of Service. The staffing structure for the charity is outlined overleaf.



CSquared's brilliant spinathon raised an amazing £1325.05 for Voices in August

The Charity is overseen by an experienced Board of Trustees, with two Co-Chairs. The Board includes Trustees with Lived Experience and two Trustees directly oversee Safeguarding and Finance.

A full Board meeting takes place each quarter, and three sub-committees are in effect:

- **The People Committee:** this committee, chaired by our Safeguarding Trustee focuses on all the people involved in Voices, including: clients, members, volunteers, and staff. The focus is on ensuring that Voices:
  - Has an experienced and committed staff body
  - Recruit staff appropriately
  - Manages safeguarding matters in line with legislation and best practice
  - Is proactive in managing its responsibilities in being a Trauma-Informed organisation
  - Supports staff wellbeing.

- **Governance Committee**: is chaired by one of our experienced Trustees and focuses on ensuring Voices is appropriately led, with thought to our leadership, constitution, recruitment and induction of Trustees. During this year, they have been focusing on developing a cohesive, well-informed board and setting up arrangements for a period of mutual assessment once the new Chair of Trustees has been appointed

- **Finance committee:** Chaired by our Finance lead, the finance sub-group is focused on ensuring Voices is financially sustainable and overseeing our budgetary management.



APPOINTMENT OF TRUSTEES:

Trustees are appointed by the decision of the members during the Annual General Meeting (AGM) or by the Board 'at any time' (Clause 13 (4) and (5) of the CIO constitution). In normal circumstances, Trustees who have completed their term of office, stand down at the AGM.

Potential new Trustees are sought through open and transparent advertising processes, including the use of local networks and social media. No Trustee is appointed without an interview process and the opportunity to attend a Board meeting before being confirmed in role. During the appointment process, appropriate checks will be made, including any potential conflicts of interest, DBS vetting and Disqualified Directors Register.

Voices is aware of its commitment to diversity and inclusion, and is working to ensure the Board embraces diversity, including in regard to experience, background and knowledge. In addition, we work to ensure that the Board includes members with lived experience.

New Trustees are supported in their induction period through meetings with the Chair, the potential for 'buddying' and a comprehensive induction pack. In addition, each new Trustee meets one-to-one with our CEO.

Looking forward:

This coming year (September 2024 - August 2025) marks the start of our new strategic direction.

Detailed overleaf are our priorities for this period, linked to our values.

/t's given me the hope back that I can heal and move on. I don't have to be a victim and let what has happened dominate my life. It's giving me a safe place to be vulnerable and heal where there is no judgement but compassion and support.

I don't feel like I'm crazy anymore as voices get it they understand just what the abuse does to people and I no longer feel so alone." (Voices' Client).

OUR VALUES	PRIORITIES	MEASURING SUCCESS
Trauma Informed	• Introduction of Trauma Informed Practice Training. • Focussing on Voices as a centre of excellence. • Launch Breathe Free - a new psychoeducational group work course. • In house clinical Lead role introduced.	• Evaluation questionnaires demonstrating impact of training and professionals trained across the locality. • Increased tailored clients support on a case by case basis. • Psychoeducational course run twice in 2024-2025, demonstrating increased understanding of trauma and ability to manage own symptoms. • Improved outcome monitoring.
Victim voice at the heart	• Introduction of Survivor Engagement Advisor. • Review constitution. • Review membership model.	• Expansion and development of the lived experience forum. • Increased membership.
Holistic	• Use of our centre for groups, activities and multi-agency partner work. • Multi-disciplinary services continue and develop. • Bespoke recovery pathways.	• Client feedback and increased peer relationships. • Collaboration with partner agencies. • Impact measurement.
Passionate	• Staff wellbeing prioritised. • New outcome and impact measurement tools introduced.	• Staff feedback. • New impact tools introduced - that demonstrate the specialist provision being offered by Voices.
Activists	• Diversifying our income and growing our name. • New website development. • Introduction of new Domestic Abuse training for professionals. • Launch of newsletter.	• Delivery of training courses. • New website and logo developed and operational. • Expanded Lived Experience. consultation.

2023 - 2024

Highlights

We've had another fabulous year!
Here are just a small fraction of our highlights...



Kirsten attended the Circle Fund conference in London with Lloyds Bank

Ursula's fond farewell

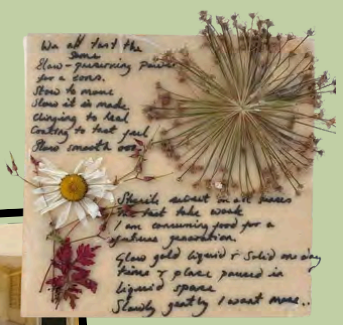


The support of Bath Students Union, RAG





Nayana Jaidev joining us as Charity Support Officer!







Our wonderful art workshops

We had a great day selling crafts and gifts at the Bath Christmas Market



THANK YOU

Voices would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who helps makes our charity what it is.

Thank you to our clients, lived experience group, Members, Trustees, volunteers and our team.

But a particular thank you to everyone who has helped to fund us over the last year: we simply could not do it without you.

Voices

01225 984189 | *info@voicescharity.org*

www.voicescharity.org

Statement of responsibilities of the Trustees

The trustees are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102: The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and the incoming resources and application of resources, including the net income or expenditure, of the charity for the year. In preparing those financial statements the trustees are required to:

- *select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;*
- *observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;*
- *make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;*
- *state whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and*
- *prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.*

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and which enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the constitution. The trustees 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 corporate and financial information included on the charity's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other
jurisdictions.

Independent examiners

Godfrey Wilson Limited were reappointed as independent examiners to the charity during the year and have expressed their willingness to continue in that capacity.

Approved by the trustees on 20 May 2025 and signed on their behalf by

Emma Sambrook
Chair

Peter Brandt
Finance Sub Committee Trustee

Independent examiner's report

To the trustees of

VOICES

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of VOICES (the CIO) for the year ended 31 August 2024, which are set out on pages 40 to 56.

Responsibilities and basis of report
As the charity trustees of the CIO you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the CIO's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement
Since the CIO's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW), which is one of the listed bodies.

Godfrey Wilson Limited also provides management accounts and payroll services to the CIO. I confirm that as a member of the ICAEW I am subject to the FRC's Revised Ethical Standard 2016, which I have applied with respect to this engagement.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:
(1) accounting records were not kept in respect of the CIO as required by section 130 of the Act; or
(2) the accounts do not accord with those records; or
(3) the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Date: 20 May 2025
Dougal Howard ACA
Member of the ICAEW
For and on behalf of:
Godfrey Wilson Limited
Chartered accountants and statutory auditors
5th Floor Mariner House
62 Prince Street
Bristol
BS1 4QD

VOICES

Statement of financial activities

For the year ended 31 August 2024

	Note	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	**2024 Total £**	Restated 2023 Total £
Income from:					
Donations	3	1,000	33,287	**34,287**	33,298
Charitable activities	4	170,676	100,410	**271,086**	238,922
Other income	5	-	2,231	**2,231**	5,649
Total income		171,676	135,928	**307,604**	277,869
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds		-	19,827	**19,827**	19,883
Charitable activities		205,419	108,843	**314,262**	270,608
Total expenditure	7	205,419	128,670	**334,089**	290,491
Net income / (expenditure) and net movement in funds	8	(33,743)	7,258	**(26,485)**	(12,622)
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward		90,723	154,374	**245,097**	257,719
Total funds carried forward		56,980	161,632	**218,612**	245,097

All of the above results are derived from continuing activities. There were no other recognised gains or losses other than those stated above. Movements in funds are disclosed in note 14 to the accounts.

Prior period expenditure has been restated to better reflect the use of resources split between the statutory headings. There has been no change to total expenditure or not movement in funds.

VOICES

Balance sheet

As at 31 August 2024

	Note	£	**2024** **£**	2023 £
Current assets				
Debtors	11	**11,383**		53,699
Cash at bank and in hand		**231,278**		200,746
		242,661		254,445
Liabilities				
Creditors: amounts falling due within 1 year	12	**(24,049)**		(9,348)
Net assets	13		**218,612**	245,097
Funds	14			
Restricted funds			**56,980**	90,723
Unrestricted funds				
Designated funds			**55,000**	55,000
General funds			**106,632**	99,374
Total charity funds			**218,612**	245,097

Approved by the trustees on 20 May 2025 and signed on their behalf by

Emma Sambrook
Chair

Peter Brandt
Finance Trustee

1. Accounting policies

a) Basis of preparation

VOICES is a CIO registered in England and Wales. The registered office address is PO Box 5184, Bath, BA1 0RZ.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities in preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

VOICES meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note.

b) Going concern basis of accounting

The accounts have been prepared on the assumption that the charity is able to continue as a going concern, which the trustees consider appropriate having regard to the current level of unrestricted reserves. There are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern.

c) Income

Income is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the item of income have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Income from the government and other grants, whether 'capital' grants or 'revenue' grants, is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the grants have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably and is not deferred.

d) Donated services and facilities

Donated professional services and donated facilities are recognised as income when the charity has control over the item, any conditions associated with the donated item have been met, the receipt of economic benefit from the use by the charity of the item, is probable and the economic benefit can be measured reliably. In accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102), general volunteer time is not recognised.

On receipt, donated professional services and donated facilities are recognised on the basis of the value of the gift to the charity which is the amount the charity would have been willing to pay to obtain services or facilities of equivalent economic benefit on the open market; a corresponding amount is then recognised in expenditure in the period of receipt.

e) Interest receivable

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity: this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the bank.

1. Accounting policies (continued)

f) Funds accounting

Unrestricted funds are available to spend on activities that further any of the purposes of the charity. Designated funds are unrestricted funds of the charity which the trustees have decided at their discretion to set aside to use for a specific purpose. Restricted funds are donations which the donor has specified are to be solely used for particular areas of the charity's work or for specific projects being undertaken by the charity.

g) Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

h) Allocation of support and governance costs

Support costs are those functions that assist the work of the charity but do not directly undertake charitable activities. Governance costs are the costs associated with the governance arrangements of the charity, including the costs of complying with constitutional and statutory requirements and any costs associated with the strategic management of the charity's activities. These costs have been allocated between cost of raising funds and expenditure on charitable activities on the basis of staff costs:

	2024	2023
Raising funds	**2.6%**	3.6%
Charitable activities	**97.4%**	96.4%

i) Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

j) Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

k) Creditors

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

l) Financial instruments

The charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value with the exception of bank loans which are subsequently recognised at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

1. Accounting policies (continued)

m) Operating leases

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the statement of financial activities as they fall due.

n) Accounting estimates and key judgements

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

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

The key sources of estimation uncertainty that have a significant effect on the amounts recognised in the financial statements are donated services and facilities as set out in note 1(d).

o) Pension costs

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme for its employees. There are no further liabilities other than that already recognised in the SOFA.

2. Prior period comparatives: statement of financial activities

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	**2023 Total £**
Income from:			
Donations	500	32,798	**33,298**
Charitable activities	186,940	51,982	**238,922**
Other Income	-	5,649	**5,649**
Total income	187,440	90,429	**277,869**
Expenditure on:			
Raising funds	-	19,883	**19,883**
Charitable activities	211,352	59,256	**270,608**
Total expenditure	211,352	79,139	**290,491**
Net income / (expenditure) and net movement in funds	(23,912)	11,290	**(12,622)**

3. Income from donations

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	**2024 Total £**
Donations	1,000	27,937	**28,937**
Gifts in kind	-	5,350	**5,350**
	1,000	33,287	**34,287**

Gifts in kind were for labour costs of premises maintenance.

Prior period comparative:

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2023 Total £
Donations	500	31,898	32,398
Gifts in kind	-	900	900
	500	32,798	33,298

4. Income from charitable activities

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	**2024 Total £**
Grants > £5,000			
Avon & Somerset Police & Crime Commissioner	21,000	-	**21,000**
Garfield Weston	-	30,000	**30,000**
NHS BSW	35,886	-	**35,886**
Lloyds Bank Foundation	-	25,000	**25,000**
The National Lottery Awards for All	19,490	-	**19,490**
The National Lottery Reaching Communities	74,000	-	**74,000**
Tudor Trust	-	40,000	**40,000**
Grants < £5,000	20,300	3,000	**23,300**
Training income	-	2,410	**2,410**
Total income from charitable activities	170,676	100,410	**271,086**

Prior period comparative:

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2023 Total £
Grants > £5,000			
Avon & Somerset Police & Crime Commissioner	21,667	-	21,667
Bath and North East Somerset Council	23,607	-	23,607
Cobalt Trust	-	10,000	10,000
Lloyds Bank Foundation	-	27,250	27,250
Medlock	-	10,000	10,000
National Grid	9,990	-	9,990
Stand With Us	24,000	-	24,000
The National Lottery Reaching Communities	104,766	-	104,766
Grants < £5,000	2,910	1,800	4,710
Training income	-	2,932	2,932
Total income from charitable activities	186,940	51,982	238,922

5. Other income

	2024	2023
	£	£
Room hire	**2,231**	5,649

All room hire income in the current and prior year was unrestricted.

6. Government grants

The charity receives government grants, defined as funding from Avon & Somerset Police & Crime Commissioner; NHS Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire; Frome Council; and The National Lottery. The total value of such grants during the year ended 31 August 2024 was £152,876 (2023: £150,040 from Avon & Wilts PCC, NHS BANES Council, and The National Lottery). There are no unfulfilled conditions or contingencies attaching to these grants in the current or prior year.

7. Total expenditure

	Raising funds £	Charitable activities £	Support and governance costs £	**2024 Total £**
Staff costs (note 9)	4,982	187,943	9,135	**202,060**
Insurance and premises costs	-	32,034	14,686	**46,720**
Other staff costs	-	23,578	-	**23,578**
Office expenses	-	10,062	6,703	**16,765**
Fundraising expenses	13,591	-	-	**13,591**
Accountancy	-	-	9,773	**9,773**
Project / session expenses	-	7,418	1,140	**8,558**
Consultation for counselling	-	4,557	-	**4,557**
Provision of charitable services	-	4,302	-	**4,302**
Survivor consultation	-	3,634	-	**3,634**
Legal and professional fees	-	-	282	**282**
Marketing	177	-	-	**177**
Volunteer expenses	-	92	-	**92**
Sub-total	18,750	273,620	41,719	**334,089**
Allocation of support and governance costs	1,077	40,642	(41,719)	**-**
Total expenditure	**19,827**	**314,262**	**-**	**334,089**

Total governance costs were £2,848 (2023: £3,391).

7. Total expenditure (continued)
Prior period comparative

	Raising funds £	Charitable activities £	Support and governance costs £	Restated 2023 Total £
Staff costs (note 9)	5,844	155,141	8,337	169,322
Insurance and premises costs	-	29,264	12,761	42,025
Office expenses	204	9,107	6,270	15,581
Project / session expenses	-	10,191	2,688	12,879
Fundraising expenses	12,259	-	-	12,259
Accountancy	-	-	8,817	8,817
Provision of charitable services	-	8,020	-	8,020
Other staff costs	-	7,695	-	7,695
Consultation for counselling	-	7,566	-	7,566
Legal and professional fees	-	-	4,545	4,545
Survivor consultation	-	1,765	-	1,765
Volunteer expenses	-	17	-	17
Sub-total	18,307	228,766	43,418	290,491
Allocation of support and governance costs	1,576	41,842	(43,418)	-
Total expenditure	19,883	270,608	-	290,491

Prior period expenditure has been restated to better reflect the use of resources split between the statutory headings. There has been no change to total expenditure.

8. Net movement in funds

This is stated after charging:

	2024	2023
	£	£
Operating lease payments	**34,000**	34,000
Trustees' remuneration	**Nil**	Nil
Trustees' reimbursed expenses	**Nil**	46
Independent examiners' remuneration:		
▪ Independent examination (excluding VAT)	**2,200**	2,150
▪ Other services (excluding VAT)	**4,587**	4,647

Trustee reimbursed expenses in the prior year related to DBS checks for two trustees.

In common with other charities of our size and nature we use our Independent Examiners to assist with the preparation of the financial statements. Our Independent Examiners have also provided bookkeeping and payroll services to the charity during the year.

9. Staff costs and numbers

Staff costs were as follows:

	2024	2023
	£	£
Salaries and wages	**188,149**	158,910
Social security costs	**10,339**	7,268
Pension costs	**3,571**	3,144
	202,059	169,322

No employee earned more than £60,000 during the current or prior year.

The key management personnel of the charity comprise the Chief Executive Officer and Head of Services. The total employee salary and benefits of the key management personnel were £92,774 (2023: £69,524).

	2024	2023
	No.	No.
Average head count	**7.00**	7.50

10. Taxation

The charity is exempt from corporation tax as all its income is charitable and is applied for charitable purposes.

11. Debtors

	2024	2023
	£	£
Prepayments	**2,883**	2,833
Accrued income	**-**	42,366
Deposits	**8,500**	8,500
	11,383	53,699

12. Creditors : amounts due within 1 year

	2024	2023
	£	£
Trade creditors	**3,009**	1,844
Accruals	**16,396**	3,968
Other taxation and social security	**3,825**	2,796
Pension	**819**	740
	24,049	9,348

13. Analysis of net assets between funds

	Restricted funds	Unrestricted funds	Total funds
	£	£	£
Current assets	59,514	183,147	**242,661**
Current liabilities	(2,534)	(21,515)	**(24,049)**
Net assets at 31 August 2024	**56,980**	**161,632**	**218,612**

Prior year comparative	Restricted funds	Unrestricted funds	Total funds
	£	£	£
Current assets	92,304	162,141	254,445
Current liabilities	(1,581)	(7,767)	(9,348)
Net assets at 31 August 2023	90,723	154,374	245,097

14. Movements in funds

	At 1 September 2023 £	Income £	Expenditure £	**At 31 August 2024 £**
Restricted funds				
Avon & Somerset Police & Crime Commissioner	1,526	21,000	(21,609)	**917**
BANES CIL	17,941	-	(17,941)	**-**
BANES COMF	3,520	-	(3,520)	**-**
Circle Fund	-	2,000	(270)	**1,730**
Frome Council	-	2,500	-	**2,500**
J & M Britton Charitable Trust	-	2,000	(60)	**1,940**
Legal Education Fund	7,806	-	(695)	**7,111**
Liz & Jack Daniel Foundation	-	8,800	(2,477)	**6,323**
NHS BHIF	-	35,886	(30,811)	**5,075**
Quartet Community Foundation	-	5,000	(1,451)	**3,549**
ROSA Fund	7,377	-	(7,377)	**-**
St John's Foundation (Programme)	6,042	-	(6,042)	**-**
The National Lottery Awards for All	-	19,490	-	**19,490**
The National Lottery Reaching Communities	91	74,000	(74,091)	**-**
The National Lottery (New Premises)	6,768	-	(2,863)	**3,905**
The National Lottery (Uplift for Cost of Living)	38,266	-	(33,826)	**4,440**
Women's Aid Training	1,386	-	(1,386)	**-**
Zucchetti UK Ltd	-	1,000	(1,000)	**-**
Total restricted funds	90,723	171,676	(205,419)	**56,980**
Unrestricted funds				
Designated funds:				
Salaries	55,000	-	-	**55,000**
Total designated funds	55,000	-	-	**55,000**
General funds	99,374	135,928	(128,670)	**106,632**
Total unrestricted funds	154,374	135,928	(128,670)	**161,632**
Total funds	245,097	307,604	(334,089)	**218,612**

14. Movements in funds (continued)

Purposes of restricted funds

Avon & Somerset Police & Crime Commissioner	Funding for VOICES' Gateway service.
BANES CIL	Grant for new premises.
BANES COMF	Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) - Recovery work salary and overheads grant.
Circle Fund	Hardship payments for clients, administered by VOICES and monitored by SafeLives via monthly reports.
Frome Council	To fund client work for individuals from Frome.
J & M Britton	To fund client work for individuals from Bristol Area.
Legal Education Fund	LEF funding was provided for the facilitation of survivor consultation groups by SafeLives.
Liz & Jack Daniel Foundation	To fund the creche for group work and associated utilities for the premises.
NHS BHIF	To fund recovery practitioner salaries, a portion of rent, utilities for premises, and staff management costs.
Quartet Community Foundation	To fund the creche for group work and associated utilities for the premises.
ROSA Fund	Funding from Stand With Us for new Executive Officer and Centre Administrator roles, staff training, travel and wellbeing support, and consulting, IT or website improvements.
St John's Foundation (Programme)	To cover the salary for the head of services and costs associated with group work.
The National Lottery Awards for All	Therapeutic Practitioner post and staff management costs for client counselling services.
The National Lottery Reaching Communities	To go towards core costs including salaries for CEO and Finance Administrator.
The National Lottery (New Premises)	Uplift funding as part of existing Reaching Communities grant. Designated for premises project costs.
The National Lottery (Uplift for Cost of Living)	To go towards cost of living increases to core and staff costs.

14. Movements in funds (continued)

Purposes of restricted funds (continued)

Women's Aid Training	For staff training at Women's Aid and Women's Aid membership fees.
Zucchetti UK Ltd	Christmas gift card donations for clients and families in December 2023.

Purposes of designated funds

Salaries	Funds to cover salary costs if a shortfall in funding arises.

Prior year comparative	At 1 September 2022 £	Income £	Expenditure £	**At 1 September 2023 £**
Restricted funds				
Circle Fund	5,169	-	(5,169)	**-**
Avon & Somerset Police & Crime Commissioner	4,437	21,667	(24,578)	**1,526**
ROSA Fund	-	24,000	(16,623)	**7,377**
The National Lottery Awards for All	124	-	(124)	**-**
The National Lottery Reaching Communities	-	66,500	(66,409)	**91**
Renishaw	885	500	(1,385)	**-**
The National Lottery (Uplift for Cost of Living)	-	38,266	-	**38,266**
Lloyds Bank Foundation	21,411	-	(21,411)	**-**
Community Matters Fund	-	9,990	(9,990)	**-**
St John's Foundation (Admin, Comms & Marketing)	10,000	-	(10,000)	**-**
St John's Foundation (Programme)	6,085	-	(43)	**6,042**
The National Lottery (New Premises)	10,991	-	(4,223)	**6,768**
BANES COMF	34,307	-	(30,787)	**3,520**
Legal Education Fund	8,060	-	(254)	**7,806**
BANES CIL	13,166	23,607	(18,832)	**17,941**
Women's Aid Training	-	2,910	(1,524)	**1,386**
Total restricted funds	114,635	187,440	(211,352)	**90,723**
Unrestricted funds				
Designated funds:				
Salaries	55,000	-	-	**55,000**
Total designated funds	55,000	-	-	**55,000**
General funds	88,084	90,429	(79,139)	**99,374**
Total unrestricted funds	143,084	90,429	(79,139)	**154,374**
Total funds	257,719	277,869	(290,491)	**245,097**

15. Operating lease commitments

The charity had operating leases at the year end with total future minimum lease payments as follows:

	2024	2023
	£	£
Amount falling due:		
Within 1 year	**34,000**	34,000
Within 1 - 5 years	**5,667**	39,667
	39,667	73,667

16. Related party transactions

There were no related party transactions in the current or prior period.

VOICES

England & Wales - Charity number 1159445

Accounts

Charity no. 1159445

VOICES

Report and Unaudited Financial Statements

31 August 2023

VOICES

Reference and administrative details

For the year ended 31 August 2023

Charity number	1159445
Registered office	PO Box 5184 Bath BA1 0RZ
Trustees	The trustees who served during the year and up to the date of this report were as follows: Peter Brandt Francesca Carpenter — appointed 1 August 2023 Joanna Hole Brigid Musselwhite Pedro Nunes — resigned 27 February 2023 Benazir Ogunlende — appointed 10 July 2023 Farha Rasul Janet Ratcliffe Robertson — appointed 10 July 2023 Jo Silver Dr Helen Wehner Lisa Whelpdale — appointed 10 July 2023
Chief executive officer	Ursula Lindenberg
Bankers	HSBC UK 41 Southgate Street Bath BA1 1TN Bath Building Society 15 Queen Square Bath BA1 2HN
Independent examiners	Godfrey Wilson Limited Chartered accountants and statutory auditors 5th Floor Mariner House 62 Prince Street Bristol BS1 4QD

VOICES

Report of the trustees

For the year ended 31 August 2023

Reference and administrative information set out on page 1 forms part of this report. The financial statements comply with current statutory requirements, the Constitution and the Statement of Recommended Practice - Accounting and Reporting by Charities (effective from January 2019).

Objectives and activities

To promote and protect the good health of those affected by domestic abuse. To advance the education of the public in all issues relating to domestic abuse.

Group recovery programmes, free to clients, running weekly in term-time:

- The Freedom Programme, a nationally recognised programme identifying domestic abuse and enabling survivors to make safe choices in moving out of abusive relationships, with a free creche for pre-school children;
- The Recovery Toolkit, a psycho-educational group recovery programme building resilience and promoting well-being while recovering from abusive relationships; and
- Lived Experience Group - for people with lived experience of domestic abuse to connect as a platform to promote survivor insights informing policy and service development.

Individual domestic abuse recovery support sessions for survivors resident primarily within Bath & North East Somerset, based on a Personal Recovery Plan, designed in consultation with individual clients.

Advocacy, advice and signposting, and the provision of information for victims and survivors, family members, friends, and the wider public, via the charity's website and social media.

The provision of specialist counselling and therapeutic support for survivors of domestic and sexual abuse, free to clients.

The facilitation and provision of free legal advice and signposting relating to domestic abuse and family law through a weekly clinic for VOICES clients and those of partner organisations.

Support and facilitation for survivors wishing to consult or give feedback on service provision to local authority, national government or other agencies and services, researchers and local and national charity partners.

The provision of healthy relationship and domestic abuse awareness training to local agencies, professional bodies, community and educational settings, local services, and businesses.

Consultation with national/local strategic groups and local authorities on policy and service design, providing lived experience insights and survivor voice input.

The charity operates a hardship fund to which individuals can apply. Applications are considered according to a fixed set of criteria, and granted once approved by the CEO/Head of Services.

Contribution made by volunteers

Volunteers with lived experience and those without direct experience of domestic abuse make a valuable contribution to the work of VOICES, modelling the benefits of recovery work and peer support, and are provided with appropriate management, support and training if working directly with clients.

Our role in development and research alongside academic and strategic partners offers our clients the opportunity to turn their lived experiences into valuable insights for policy makers and researchers. The contribution of volunteers through consultation and in feedback to VOICES about our own services confirms that effective change and successful services can only happen through co-creation.

VOICES' founding mission was to ensure survivors are at the heart of the conversation locally and nationally around how best to prevent and respond to domestic abuse. Volunteers with lived experience contributed to consultations in family law (family law professionals and training needs, Cafcass, and child contact), health and mental health (through consultations with researcher members of the Violence and Abuse Mental Health Network), and local government (advocating for survivors to be creating, not rating services at local area level).

Among the various impacts of the post-COVID public health situation and the cost of living crisis was the impact on volunteer and peer support opportunities through 2022/23, which remained constrained by external pressures.

Other contributions by volunteers in 2022/23 included:

- Sponsored walks and cycle rides and other fundraising activities;
- Provision of handmade items to support clients' wellbeing and health through the cost of living crisis by local volunteer knitters and craftspeople;
- Provision of support to staff running the Freedom Programme and Recovery Toolkit; and
- Volunteer support provided to VOICES for building maintenance and decorating work.

Achievements and performance

VOICES has become a centre of excellence for domestic abuse recovery, providing training and consultation that is informed by lived experience and long-term support work. Our model of integrated, accessible and tailored support plays a key role in building stronger relationships in the community; enabling people to fulfil their potential by working to safely address issues at the earliest possible stage, with peer-led and group programmes to combat social isolation and aid reintegration in working and social life.

VOICES' integrated support and focus on recovery has proven effective in transforming self-confidence and addressing the root causes of mental health problems associated with Domestic and Sexual Abuse.

VOICES supported 137 individual survivors and victims and their families between 1 September 2022 and 31 August 2023, and continues to provide high-quality, effective and bespoke services in the community to support individuals, their families, and the wider community.

The charity provides value for money services, not only in terms of the benefit to individual clients, but in terms of the wider benefit to local families and communities, and through improving other service responses (e.g. Talking Therapies, housing or DWP) to domestic abuse.

We have continued to develop a unique space for trauma recovery in Bath, increasing options for partnership with other organisations to benefit local people and their community, and supporting their wellbeing needs.

VOICES' domestic abuse recovery services
During the period, VOICES received 140 referrals, an increase of 31% compared to the previous year. There were then 37 internal referrals for additional services. The most significant referring organisation was Southside Family Project, the local commissioned service providing IDVA and family support, from which 24 referrals were received (17% of the total referrals that year).

Stronger together: group programmes
VOICES continued to provide a suite of domestic abuse recovery and peer support programmes through the period from September 2022 to August 2023. This service is free to clients, with travel and childcare costs provided for clients on low incomes, with some group provision arranged at venues in the local community to ensure access, capacity and safety.

For the period of the report, 48 women attended the Freedom Programme, 16 women attended social and creative groups, and 13 attended the Recovery Toolkit (only 2 out of 3 Recovery Toolkits were run this year due to vulnerability of clients after the Covid lockdowns. There was much hesitation amongst clients about joining groups again, especially as covid numbers increased that winter).

For the Freedom programme, three 12-week in-person group programmes took place, together with 2 online programmes. A drop-in programme for the creative and social group ran through the year, and three 12-week in-person programmes of the Recovery Toolkit took place. A drop-out rate of only 4% was recorded across all programmes.

Just over 40% of activities by the services team related to group work (principally individual support), and 50% of service team hours were undertaken with group programme facilitation and related work.

"The Freedom Project allowed me to understand the abuse and changed my perceptions of my ex. Recovery Toolkit gave me the strength to move on." (A VOICES client)

Individual recovery support work - COVID-19 and the cost of living crisis
Individual recovery support was provided throughout the year by the team, and principally by two recovery support workers, with gateway support into services from VOICES' referrals and law lead, 3 associate counsellors, access to a free legal clinic run with the University of the West of England, and services as a whole managed by VOICES' Head of Services. This involved detailed casework with 89 clients and 1-2-1 gateway support to access group programmes from the referrals and law lead for 29 clients, while 44 clients received legal clinic, therapy, advice and consultation support. The largest areas of support needs concerned emotional support, and children and parenting, followed by mental health support. Other regular support needs included finances, family law, housing and physical health issues.

Although VOICES did not provide dedicated services for children, the charity did so indirectly through advocacy and support work, as well as group programmes addressing parenting and impacts of abuse on children. In 2022/23, more than 70 children aged 0-18 were supported in this way, and c. 10-15 young adults 18-25, as adult children living with clients supported by VOICES.

January 2023 marked the first full year since VOICES opened a recovery centre in Bath for women and girls who have experienced domestic and sexual abuse, a confidential space where people can come to meet with others for peer support and group programmes, to receive individual recovery support and access other services such as counselling or our free legal clinic.

During this first year, the charity consulted with people we work with about how to develop and decorate the space and created a garden space with the pro bono help of an architect and designer. Both the garden and building have been designed with the trauma recovery aims of the charity in mind, to be inclusive, calm and welcoming spaces. VOICES made alterations to make the building accessible, with support from funders including the Bath & North East Somerset Community Infrastructure Levy fund, and Bath Disability Trust.

The Villa has provided space for partnership and co-location. In the first year in our new building, we provided space to co-located services, including 4 therapeutic and empowerment groups, 2 specialist counsellors providing weekly support, a monthly multi-agency practitioner network meeting and women's music therapy and music groups. The space has great potential for further partnerships to support women and girls.

Most importantly for our beneficiaries, the Villa provides space for the VOICES model of trauma-informed, multi-disciplinary domestic abuse recovery support to be developed.

"I learned, over time, to open up and share my experiences in a safe, friendly environment. I quickly began to own my thoughts and situation. It gave me confidence to begin the terrifying process of leaving my marriage." (VOICES client)

Five core values of trauma-informed working

- Safety: ensuring physical and emotional safety;
- Trustworthiness: creating respectful environments where personal boundaries are maintained;
- Choice: creating environments where individuals have choice and control;
- Collaboration: making decisions with the individual and sharing power; and
- Empowerment: prioritising empowerment and skill building.

(Harris and Fallot, 2009)

Having dedicated space to provide trauma-informed services is something that has been proven to increase the benefits of support services for people who have suffered trauma and abuse. VOICES have long subscribed to the principles of trauma-informed working and received training in 2018/19 from One Small Thing. Stephanie Covington has led the way in the development of gender responsive approaches to supporting people after and through trauma. VOICES are a member organisation of the South West Trauma Informed Network.

Research has shown that holistic services supporting women are best able to implement trauma-informed approaches. The principles of trauma-informed working, upon which VOICES bases its holistic approach, are Safety, Trust, Choice, Collaboration and Empowerment.

Safety
Our unique safe space is the physical representation of the emotional space we aim to foster for survivors. A place to be listened to, believed and where recovery is nurtured. This is psychological safety, an antidote to the tactics of coercive control and emotional abuse that have been used by perpetrators.

Trust
VOICES works hard to establish a sense of trust with people who approach us for support.

Building and earning trust is something that requires time and an opportunity to question or explore different options for support. This begins with a conversation, and listening to the diverse experiences of people, with an emphasis on person-centred support.

Choice and transparency
From first contact with the charity, whether through our website or in a phone call, we aim to provide transparency and choice for people who we have the privilege to work with. This means explaining how we work and what we do, and providing as much information as we can about what choices are available for individuals and families dealing with the impacts of domestic and sexual abuse. Informed choice is the basis for support and recovery work at VOICES.

Collaboration
We understand our work with people as a collaboration, based on mutual respect and regard, recognising the strengths and strategies that people are already bringing to solve problems and mitigate their risks, while learning about the areas in which they might require help, and unlocking the support that working with other survivors in group settings can provide. We develop a personal recovery plan with people for whom we provide individual recovery support, dependent on our capacity to fund this work independently, as it is not currently foreseen in Domestic Abuse commissioning models.

Empowerment
Ultimately, support from VOICES should enhance a person's sense of agency in their own recovery journey. We hope that by supporting people to regain a say in their lives and in their recovery, we can aid trauma healing and help survivors and their families to rebuild their lives and realise their full potential as unique and amazing individuals. Part of this work includes the opportunity to provide insights from lived experience to policy makers and services.

During 2022/23, VOICES' trauma-informed practice expertise has supported a renewed focus by the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board on the need for self-referral options and better communication of domestic abuse support pathways, and underpins the new Practitioner Network initiated in BANES by VOICES with local commissioned services working with domestic abuse victims and survivors as founder members.

VOICES trauma-informed framework for multidisciplinary domestic abuse recovery support has been developed as a Theory of Change during 2023, to which the whole organisation and people with lived experience contributed. This work has been kindly supported by Dr Natalia Lewis at Bristol University. Our Theory of Change is available by request/on our website.

Peer group programmes

"It has been great for learning how to be "me" again amongst women who have similar experiences. Sharing ideas and feeling valued is also a source of motivation. I've met some fabulous people along the way and many that I hope will continue to feature in some way or another in my future life. That's been great for confidence and not feeling so alone and misunderstood." (VOICES client)

The delivery of VOICES group programmes to local survivors was supported by charitable funding, particularly from Garfield Weston Foundation and the Cobalt Trust, with creche costs supported by the Renishaw Charitable Trust during the period.

Recovery practitioner support

"My mental health has improved, my confidence has increased, my support network has grown, my boundaries have been tightened, my self-respect has grown, and my understanding of unhealthy relationships has improved, learning how to say 'no' has been one of the biggest challenges for me as well as calling the police when needed, due to an unhealthy upbringing, but VOICES have made me feel reborn and able to use the tools they have taught me to do this." (VOICES client)

Small funds creating big changes: VOICES' hardship and cost of living support for domestic abuse survivors and their families

The cost of living crisis has made those subject to coercive control and financial abuse even more vulnerable. Specialist advocacy from VOICES and elsewhere is critical in understanding the whole picture around finances, debt and need that together create hardship for adult and child survivors of domestic abuse.

Crucial, small-scale financial and practical help at the right time can be instrumental in helping survivors make significant progress towards recovery and a productive and fulfilled life after domestic abuse.

During 2022/23, a significant majority of VOICES clients received hardship funding to overcome barriers at transition points in their recovery. During the cost of living crisis, VOICES hardship funding proved an innovative and flexible way to address unexpected expenses for clients relating to children's needs, financial abuse, court processes, wellbeing and mental health support, among others.

Having operated our own, similar Hardship Fund since 2019, VOICES have been part of a national scheme called the Circle Fund, run by national charity SafeLives and funded by NatWest Group, involving specialist services around the country. This groundbreaking national pilot concluded in June 2023 and the final report will deliver new knowledge about the nature of financial/economic abuse, gaps in provision of short-term crisis funding for abuse survivors, and about the barriers to recovery for survivors and their families.

We were able to support clients with 80 Circle Fund grants, meeting varied needs including increased home security, access to refuges, travel costs to attend court, cooking items, moving costs, new mattresses, flooring, maternity clothing and mobile phones.

VOICES focus on whole family support, even though our programmes currently work only with adult caregivers and pre-school children via creche services. As such, when the cost of living crisis hit immediately following the relaxation of COVID-19 constraints, VOICES mobilised to provide as much targeted support as was possible for a small charity to the families we work with.

Examples of outcomes benefitting parents and children during the cost of living crisis include:

- Providing 200 people with energy advice and support, working together with a specialist energy consultant;
- Distributed 80 warm packs to households in the 2022/23 winter season;
- Produced an accessible guide to DIY and low/no cost adaptations to your home to help reduce energy consumption and utility bills, which was distributed to clients;
- Visited women in their homes to advise on energy and condensation issues;
- Advocated with social housing providers to make changes to ensure health and wellbeing of families during the 2022/23 winter fuel crisis;
- Provided electric blankets, draft excluders and other energy saving items to clients across Bath & North East Somerset;
- Provided low-cost food preparation items, including microwaves and air fryers;
- Raised £9,990 in funds to help our clients via the Western Power Distribution Community Matters Fund;
- In 2021/22, raised £5,000 via a new application to the NatWest/SafeLives Circle Fund to provide hardship and crisis relief payments to clients through the year for items such as new secure mobile phones for adults and young people, home security devices, providing wellbeing support and essential items;
- Provided a bridge into other services including Southside Family Support, refuge and children's centres;
- Supported a young mother into refuge provision when her abusive family jeopardised her living situation in social housing; and
- Accessing safe accommodation (refuge) for one woman and her teenager who are now recovering from 15 years of post-separation abuse.

Lived Experience consultation work

"I hope at least some good can come from the awful experience I have had. I hope that the feedback and information I have given about my experiences, both during and after the abusive relationship, might help women in the future. If lived experience work can help services such as the legal profession understand and be more caring, then I will feel I have achieved something worthwhile." (A VOICES Lived Experience consultation participant)

Our role in development and research alongside academic and strategic partners offers our clients the opportunity to use their lived experiences. In 2022/23, 60% of clients said that due to their VOICES experience they had been able to help others in a similar position.

These consulting activities are an opportunity for clients to transform negative experiences into valuable insights for policy makers, which feedback confirms can be healing and empowering for clients. Effective change and the creation of appropriate services can only happen through co-creation.

VOICES established a Lived Experience group in October 2022. As with similar initiatives around the country, there have been significant difficulties accessing dedicated funding to run and facilitate the group, and it is the area of support that has found least success with funding applications. VOICES continues to build the case for support, pointing to the influence survivors have had through the very founding of VOICES, in initiatives to support local authorities such as Bath & North East Somerset, participating in national studies during the COVID-19 pandemic and providing research advisory panels for national research investigations into interventions to support mental and physical health of adult and child survivors, and the impact of remote consultations on survivors seeking support through GP practices. The charity is still looking for support with facilitating this work to be able to fully develop its potential and to properly support people with lived experience of abuse to take part bravely and safely.

Despite the challenges of funding and resourcing Lived Experience consultation with survivors, VOICES continued to have a wide-ranging involvement in Lived Experience consultation work locally and nationally in 2022/23, which was both very productive and ground-breaking. We are extremely grateful to all those who bravely shared their individual experience and insights to support change and improvements across the system. The outcomes of our project involvement are detailed below.

*"We have consulted with VOICES experts by experience group for several research projects to help ensure that our research design and process is ethical, does not cause harm to survivors and is relevant to people who use domestic abuse services. VOICES have given us feedback in group consultations or individual written feedback on documents; this has been invaluable throughout the past two years. VOICES has helped us re-evaluate how we deliver workshops online and face to face to ensure that participants feel safe and included. VOICES has improved the quality of our written materials and our research materials (such as interview schedules and survey questions) so that we ask relevant questions and communicate more effectively. VOICES has also helped steer the direction of research projects to ensure that we think about questions of interest to experts by experience, and not just health professionals, from the beginning of studies. We cannot emphasise how much the expert advice, guidance and critique has supported us to improve the quality of our research and its dissemination." (*Dr Claire Powell, UCL, NIHR Children & Families Policy Research Unit)

VOICES' founding mission to ensure survivors are at the heart of the conversation locally and nationally around how best to prevent and respond to domestic abuse has resulted in impacts both locally and nationally, which have become more concrete through 2022/23, and extend across family law (family law professionals and training needs, Cafcass and child contact), health and mental health (Violence and Abuse Mental Health Network), and local government (advocating for survivors to be creating, not merely rating services at local area level).

Results of Lived Experience consultation work

The production of "MORE HARM THAN GOOD: A guide for commissioners, policy-makers and service managers making sure health and social care services work for survivors of child maltreatment and domestic abuse" published by the National Institute of Health Research Policy Research Unit Children and Families 2022/23.

Conclusion of pilot Domestic Abuse training for family lawyers in mid-2023, and publication by SafeLives in September 2023 of a report detailing the impact and benefits of the training, *"Is there a human being behind that?" SafeLives' Domestic Abuse Training for Family Lawyers."*

Publication in the BMJ in September 2022 of a National Institute of Health Research project funded by the Home Office led by Dr Claire Powell (UCL), involving VOICES as research advisory board members: *Powell C, Feder G, Gilbert R, et al. Child and family-focused interventions for child maltreatment and domestic abuse: development of core outcome sets. BMJ Open 2022;12:e064397. doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2022-064397*

Facilitation by VOICES of a Financial Abuse workshop involving lived experience consultation with the University of the West of England (UWE) and Pretty Digital. UWE researchers and Pretty Digital (a women-led media company) consulted with VOICES clients in March 2023 to look into ways to use technology to support people who are going through financial/economic abuse.

Involvement as Lived Experience advocates in the Cafcass Learning and Improvement Board, which concluded its work after three years in May 2023. Results of this work included adding a module to Cafcass training about trauma impacts and the potential weaponisation of victims' mental health by perpetrators of domestic abuse.

Providing survivor consultation and lived experience expertise in consultancy work with Central Bedfordshire Council and Somerset Council to optimise survivor consultation and co-creation by local authorities developing their domestic abuse strategies in response to the duties and guidance resulting from the Domestic Abuse Act.

Fundraising targets set for 2022/23

Grant, room hire and public donations fundraising targets were not met (our success rate with regard to funding applied for fell, potentially due to increased competition for trust/foundation funds, while public donations continued to be negatively affected by COVID-19 and the cost of living crisis and room hire income was less than budgeted during the period). Despite considerable effort through our leadership and fundraising team, VOICES' income fell by c. £86,000 from 2021/22.

Financial review

The charity ended the 2022/23 operating year with sufficient reserves to be deemed a going concern and no unplanned debtors.

With the exception of the single Recovery Tool Kit noted on page 4, we were able to deliver all other planned activities without compromise to quantity or quality.

VOICES finished 2022/23 in a relatively healthy position after a challenging year, with net assets of £245,097 compared with £257,719 in 2021/22. This decrease of 5% on the previous year reflected a reduced income position of £277,869 (2022: £363,602) and a difficult year for the sector as a whole.

Risks going forward were identified as continued funding required beyond summer of 2024 to meet the financial burden of funding for the charity premises, with operating costs/rent of c. £55K per year; a shift in funder focus away from domestic abuse to e.g. cost of living themes; public donations and community fundraising income still shrinking, as the wider community, public and private sector are all affected by the negative economic climate.

Reserves policy
VOICES held general reserves of £99,374 as of 31 August 2023 (2022: £88,084) and designated reserves of £55,000 (2022: £55,000). The stated aim of the charity being to hold unrestricted reserves to cover 3 months' operating costs (£87,485, based on annual expenditure of £290,491), the amount of unrestricted reserves held is above the target set, at the end of the period.

However, the charity's commitment to provide long-term support over 18 months to 2 years and sometimes significantly longer to survivors of domestic abuse, among which there is a high incidence of PTSD (of which research has shown a higher incidence rate than among military veterans) and other profound impacts, means that higher levels than the minimum set out in our reserves policy are in the interests of our beneficiaries to ensure consistent support without unplanned gaps in vital services for our clients.

The board of trustees has considered its reserves policy and set itself the ambition to have reserves at a level that meet the following criteria:
- To sustain the charity's core services supported by unrestricted funds, for a period of three months without detriment to its beneficiaries;
- To support the charity in providing a skeleton service for a further three months (including overheads) to enable emergency funding to be sought and available for use; and
- To meet the winding up costs for the charity should there be no prospect of funding going forward – such costs would be in terms of redundancies and meeting any contractual debts.

Principle sources of funding
The charity's principal sources of funds are trusts and foundations (incl. Tudor Trust; Lloyds Bank Foundation; Garfield Weston; Medlock Charitable Trust; Ludlow Charitable Trust; Cobalt Trust), Government grants (incl. The National Lottery Reaching Communities Fund; Contain Outbreak Management Fund; Community Infrastructure Levy Fund).

Principle risks
The principle risks of the charity are:
- Financial pressures resulting from rising demand for specialist domestic abuse services, including mental health sport and existential support for clients, compounded by the cost of living crisis and upward pressure on operating costs; and
- Increasing competition for funds granted by trusts and foundations, and public funding made available through central and local government, due to the impact of COVID-19 and the cost of living crisis on smaller charities.

Structure, governance and management
Trustee vacancies arising may be filled by the decision of the members at the AGM or by charity trustees "at any time" (clause 13 (4) and (5) of CIO Constitution).

Positions are advertised through local charity networks and appropriate social media. In addition informal personal networks are used.

A written role description is used and prospective trustees present CVs and have discussions with CEO and trustees prior to appointment. Any links with existing trustees are declared at this point.

During 2022/23, VOICES had a Board of Trustees, including the Chair, Secretary, and Chairs of Finance and HR Sub-Committees. VOICES was led by a CEO assisted by an Executive Officer, a Centre Administrator, a Finance Administrator, a Head of Services who manages the staff team comprising a Referrals and Law Lead, two Recovery Practitioners and two associate Psychotherapists.

No paid services were provided by related parties of either staff or Trustees during 2022/23.

Public benefit

The objects for which the charity is established are to provide public benefit through the:

- Promotion and protection of the good health of those who are or have been affected by domestic abuse, in particular but not exclusively by: providing advice, support, interventions and recovery programmes; by assisting them to engage with service providers enabling the service providers to adapt services to better meet the needs of those persons; through activities to relieve their mental or emotional distress and which promote their wellbeing such as support groups and networks; and by relieving the needs of people who are or have been affected by domestic abuse and assisting their integration into society; and
- By advancing the education of the public in all issues relating to the subject of domestic abuse, including conducting or supporting research into the factors that may contribute to such abuse and the most appropriate ways to mitigate them, and the publishing of the useful results of such research.

The trustees review the aims, objectives and activities of the charity each year. This report focuses on what the charity has achieved and the outcomes of its work in the reporting period. The trustees report the progress of the activities that underpin each aspect of the charity's objectives and the benefits the charity has brought to those groups of people that it aims to help. The review also helps the trustees ensure the charity's aims, objectives and activities remained focused on its stated purposes. The trustees have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the charity's aims and objectives and in planning its future activities. The trustees also give consideration to how planned activities will contribute to the aims and objectives that have been determined.

Statement of responsibilities of the trustees

The trustees are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102: The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and the incoming resources and application of resources, including the net income or expenditure, of the charity for the year. In preparing those financial statements the trustees are required to:

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

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and which enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the constitution. The trustees 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 corporate and financial information included on the charity's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

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

Members of the charity have no liability to contribute to the assets of the charity in the event of winding up. The trustees are members of the charity but this entitles them only to voting rights. The trustees have no beneficial interest in the charity.

Independent examiners
Godfrey Wilson Limited were re-appointed as independent examiners to the charity during the year and have expressed their willingness to continue in that capacity.

Approved by the trustees on 9 February 2024 and signed on their behalf by

Brigid Musselwhite
Co-Chair of the trustees

Joanna Hole
Co-Chair of the trustees

Independent examiner's report

To the trustees of

VOICES

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of VOICES (the CIO) for the year ended 31 August 2023, which are set out on pages 15 to 31.

Responsibilities and basis of report
As the charity trustees of the CIO you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the CIO's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement
Since the CIO's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW), which is one of the listed bodies.

Godfrey Wilson Limited also provides management accounts and payroll services to the CIO. I confirm that as a member of the ICAEW I am subject to the FRC's Revised Ethical Standard 2016, which I have applied with respect to this engagement.

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

(1) accounting records were not kept in respect of the CIO as required by section 130 of the Act; or
(2) the accounts do not accord with those records; or
(3) the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Date: 9 February 2024
Rob Wilson FCA
Member of the ICAEW
For and on behalf of:
Godfrey Wilson Limited
Chartered accountants and statutory auditors
5th Floor Mariner House
62 Prince Street
Bristol
BS1 4QD

VOICES

Statement of financial activities

For the year ended 31 August 2023

	Note	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	**2023 Total £**	2022 Total £
Income from:					
Donations	3	500	32,798	**33,298**	26,736
Charitable activities	4	186,940	51,982	**238,922**	336,866
Other income	5	-	5,649	**5,649**	-
Total income		187,440	90,429	**277,869**	363,602
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds		-	23,675	**23,675**	27,898
Charitable activities		211,352	55,464	**266,816**	224,011
Total expenditure	7	211,352	79,139	**290,491**	251,909
Net income / (expenditure) and net movement in funds	8	(23,912)	11,290	**(12,622)**	111,693
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward		114,635	143,084	**257,719**	146,026
Total funds carried forward		90,723	154,374	**245,097**	257,719

All of the above results are derived from continuing activities. There were no other recognised gains or losses other than those stated above. Movements in funds are disclosed in note 14 to the accounts.

VOICES

Balance sheet

As at 31 August 2023

	Note	£	2023 £	2022 £
Current assets				
Debtors	11	**53,699**		16,833
Cash at bank and in hand		**200,746**		250,829
		254,445		267,662
Liabilities				
Creditors: amounts falling due within 1 year	12	**(9,348)**		(9,943)
Net assets	13		**245,097**	257,719
Funds	14			
Restricted funds			**90,723**	114,635
Unrestricted funds				
Designated funds			**55,000**	55,000
General funds			**99,374**	88,084
Total charity funds			**245,097**	257,719

Approved by the trustees on 9 February 2024 and signed on their behalf by

Brigid Musselwhite
Co-Chair of the trustees

Joanna Hole
Co-Chair of the trustees

1. Accounting policies

a) Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities in preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

VOICES meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note.

b) Going concern basis of accounting

The accounts have been prepared on the assumption that the charity is able to continue as a going concern, which the trustees consider appropriate having regard to the current level of unrestricted reserves. There are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern.

c) Income

Income is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the item of income have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Income from the government and other grants, whether 'capital' grants or 'revenue' grants, is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the grants have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably and is not deferred.

d) Donated services and facilities

Donated professional services and donated facilities are recognised as income when the charity has control over the item, any conditions associated with the donated item have been met, the receipt of economic benefit from the use by the charity of the item, is probable and the economic benefit can be measured reliably. In accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102), general volunteer time is not recognised.

On receipt, donated professional services and donated facilities are recognised on the basis of the value of the gift to the charity which is the amount the charity would have been willing to pay to obtain services or facilities of equivalent economic benefit on the open market; a corresponding amount is then recognised in expenditure in the period of receipt.

e) Interest receivable

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity: this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the bank.

1. Accounting policies (continued)

f) Funds accounting

Unrestricted funds are available to spend on activities that further any of the purposes of the charity. Designated funds are unrestricted funds of the charity which the trustees have decided at their discretion to set aside to use for a specific purpose. Restricted funds are donations which the donor has specified are to be solely used for particular areas of the charity's work or for specific projects being undertaken by the charity.

g) Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

h) Allocation of support and governance costs

Support costs are those functions that assist the work of the charity but do not directly undertake charitable activities. Governance costs are the costs associated with the governance arrangements of the charity, including the costs of complying with constitutional and statutory requirements and any costs associated with the strategic management of the charity's activities. These costs have been allocated between cost of raising funds and expenditure on charitable activities on the basis of staff costs:

	2023	2022
Raising funds	**5.3%**	8.4%
Charitable activities	**94.7%**	91.6%

i) Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

j) Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

k) Creditors

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

l) Financial instruments

The charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value with the exception of bank loans which are subsequently recognised at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

1. Accounting policies (continued)

m) Operating leases

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the statement of financial activities as they fall due.

n) Accounting estimates and key judgements

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

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

There are no key sources of estimation uncertainty that have a significant effect on the amounts recognised in the financial statements.

o) Pension costs

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme for its employees. There are no further liabilities other than that already recognised in the SOFA.

2. Prior period comparatives: statement of financial activities

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	**2022 Total £**
Income from:			
Donations	8,500	18,236	**26,736**
Charitable activities	224,814	112,052	**336,866**
Total income	233,314	130,288	**363,602**
Expenditure on:			
Raising funds	-	27,898	**27,898**
Charitable activities	212,681	11,330	**224,011**
Total expenditure	212,681	39,228	**251,909**
Net income and net movement in funds	20,633	91,060	**111,693**

3. Income from donations

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	**2023 Total £**
Donations	500	31,898	**32,398**
Gifts in kind	-	900	**900**
	500	32,798	**33,298**

Gifts in kind were for labour costs of premises maintenance.

Prior period comparative:

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2022 Total £
Donations	8,500	18,236	26,736

4. Income from charitable activities

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	**2023 Total £**
Grants > £5,000			
Avon & Somerset Police & Crime Commissioner	21,667	-	**21,667**
Bath and North East Somerset Council	23,607	-	**23,607**
Cobalt Trust	-	10,000	**10,000**
Lloyds Bank Foundation	-	27,250	**27,250**
Medlock	-	10,000	**10,000**
National Grid	9,990	-	**9,990**
Stand With Us	24,000	-	**24,000**
The National Lottery Reaching Communities	104,766	-	**104,766**
Grants < £5,000	2,910	1,800	**4,710**
Training income	-	2,932	**2,932**
Total income from charitable activities	186,940	51,982	**238,922**

Prior period comparative:

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2022 Total £
Grants > £5,000			
Avon & Somerset Police & Crime Commissioner	20,583	-	20,583
Bath and North East Somerset Council	79,607	-	79,607
Circle Fund	7,500	-	7,500
Cobalt Trust	-	10,000	10,000
Garfield Weston	-	30,000	30,000
Legal Education Fund	9,000	-	9,000
Lloyds Bank Foundation	24,698	-	24,698
Persula Foundation	-	5,000	5,000
St John's Foundation	10,000	4,000	14,000
The National Lottery Awards for All	9,928	-	9,928
The National Lottery Reaching Communities	58,500	-	58,500
Tudor Trust	-	42,000	42,000
Grants < £5,000	4,998	3,000	7,998
Training income	-	18,052	18,052
Total income from charitable activities	224,814	112,052	336,866

5. Other income

	2023	2022
	£	£
Room hire	**5,649**	-

All room hire income in the current and prior year was unrestricted.

6. Government grants

The charity receives government grants, defined as funding from Avon & Somerset Police & Crime Commissioner, Bath & North East Somerset Council and The National Lottery. The total value of such grants during the year ended 31 August 2023 was £150,040 (2022: £168,618). There are no unfulfilled conditions or contingencies attaching to these grants in the current or prior year.

7. Total expenditure

	Raising funds £	Charitable activities £	Support and governance costs £	**2023 Total £**
Staff costs (note 9)	7,792	140,520	21,010	**169,322**
Project / session expenses	-	10,191	2,688	**12,879**
Other staff costs	-	7,695	-	**7,695**
Volunteer expenses	-	17	-	**17**
Provision of charitable services	-	8,020	-	**8,020**
Fundraising expenses	12,259	-	-	**12,259**
Office expenses	204	9,107	6,270	**15,581**
Insurance and premises costs	-	20,271	21,754	**42,025**
Consultation for counselling	-	7,566	-	**7,566**
Legal and professional fees	-	-	4,545	**4,545**
Survivor consultation	-	1,765	-	**1,765**
Accountancy	-	-	8,817	**8,817**
Sub-total	20,255	205,152	65,084	**290,491**
Allocation of support and governance costs	3,420	61,664	(65,084)	**-**
Total expenditure	**23,675**	**266,816**	**-**	**290,491**

Total governance costs were £3,391 (2022: £2,583).

Other staff costs includes £2,034 from a Funder specifically granted and restricted to staff wellbeing, £2,541 from restricted core funding for staff supervision, and £2,025 from restricted funding specifically granted for training. The remaining balance was outlay on staff recruitment, subsistence and travel costs.

Provision of charitable services includes resources to provide direct cost of living/energy support to clients came from the Community Matters Fund and were distributed directly to clients by VOICES.

7. Total expenditure (continued)
Prior period comparative

	Raising funds £	Charitable activities £	Support and governance costs £	2022 Total £
Staff costs (note 9)	7,171	78,516	42,475	128,162
Project / session expenses	-	9,267	-	9,267
Other staff costs	-	1,716	-	1,716
Volunteer expenses	-	291	-	291
Provision of charitable services	-	2,260	-	2,260
Fundraising expenses	13,859	-	-	13,859
Marketing	340	-	-	340
Office expenses	-	10,585	6,694	17,279
Insurance and premises costs	-	32,493	20,545	53,038
Consultancy	-	12,581	-	12,581
Legal and professional fees	-	-	5,229	5,229
Accountancy	-	4,832	3,055	7,887
Sub-total	21,370	152,541	77,998	251,909
Allocation of support and governance costs	6,528	71,470	(77,998)	**-**
Total expenditure	27,898	224,011	**-**	251,909

8. Net movement in funds

This is stated after charging:

	2023	2022
	£	£
Operating lease payments	**34,000**	28,333
Trustees' remuneration	**Nil**	Nil
Trustees' reimbursed expenses	**46**	260
Independent examiners' remuneration:		
▪ Independent examination (excluding VAT)	**2,150**	1,950
▪ Other services (excluding VAT)	**4,647**	4,333

Trustee reimbursed expenses were for DBS checks for two trustees (2022: travel and subsistence for two trustees).

9. Staff costs and numbers

Staff costs were as follows:

	2023	2022
	£	£
Salaries and wages	**158,910**	120,763
Social security costs	**7,268**	4,922
Pension costs	**3,144**	2,477
	169,322	128,162

No employee earned more than £60,000 during the year.

The key management personnel of the charity comprise the Chief Executive Officer and Head of Services. The total employee salary and benefits of the key management personnel were £69,524 (2022: £64,260).

	2023	2022
	No.	No.
Average head count	**7.50**	6.00

10. Taxation

The charity is exempt from corporation tax as all its income is charitable and is applied for charitable purposes.

11. Debtors

	2023	2022
	£	£
Prepayments	**2,833**	-
Accrued income	**42,366**	8,333
Deposits	**8,500**	8,500
	53,699	16,833

12. Creditors : amounts due within 1 year

	2023	2022
	£	£
Trade creditors	**1,844**	1,629
Accruals	**3,968**	6,252
Other taxation and social security	**2,796**	1,509
Pension	**740**	553
	9,348	9,943

13. Analysis of net assets between funds

	Restricted funds	Unrestricted funds	**Total funds**
	£	£	**£**
Current assets	92,304	162,141	**254,445**
Current liabilities	(1,581)	(7,767)	**(9,348)**
Net assets at 31 August 2023	**90,723**	**154,374**	**245,097**

Prior year comparative	Restricted funds	Unrestricted funds	**Total funds**
	£	£	**£**
Current assets	114,635	153,027	**267,662**
Current liabilities	-	(9,943)	**(9,943)**
Net assets at 31 August 2022	**114,635**	**143,084**	**257,719**

14. Movements in funds

	At 1 September 2022 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers between funds £	**At 31 August 2023 £**
Restricted funds					
Circle Fund	5,169	-	(5,169)	-	**-**
Avon & Somerset Police & Crime Commissioner	4,437	21,667	(24,578)	-	**1,526**
ROSA Fund	-	24,000	(16,623)	-	**7,377**
The National Lottery Awards for All	124	-	(124)	-	**-**
The National Lottery Reaching Communities	-	66,500	(66,409)	-	**91**
Renishaw	885	500	(1,385)	-	**-**
The National Lottery (Uplift for Cost of Living)	-	38,266	-	-	**38,266**
Lloyds Bank Foundation	21,411	-	(21,411)	-	**-**
Community Matters Fund	-	9,990	(9,990)	-	**-**
St John's Foundation (Admin, Comms & Marketing)	10,000	-	(10,000)	-	**-**
St John's Foundation (Programme)	6,085	-	(43)	-	**6,042**
The National Lottery (New Premises)	10,991	-	(4,223)	-	**6,768**
BANES COMF	34,307	-	(30,787)	-	**3,520**
Legal Education Fund	8,060	-	(254)	-	**7,806**
BANES CIL	13,166	23,607	(18,832)	-	**17,941**
Women's Aid Training	-	2,910	(1,524)	-	**1,386**
Total restricted funds	114,635	187,440	(211,352)	-	**90,723**
Unrestricted funds					
Designated funds:					
Salaries	55,000	-	-	-	**55,000**
Total designated funds	55,000	-	-	-	**55,000**
General funds	88,084	90,429	(79,139)	-	**99,374**
Total unrestricted funds	143,084	90,429	(79,139)	-	**154,374**
Total funds	257,719	277,869	(290,491)	-	**245,097**

14. Movements in funds (continued)

Purposes of restricted funds

Circle Fund	Hardship payments for clients, administered by VOICES and monitored by SafeLives via monthly reports.
Avon & Somerset Police & Crime Commissioner	Funding for VOICES' Gateway service.
ROSA Fund	Funding from Stand With Us for new Executive Officer and Centre Administrator roles, staff training, travel and wellbeing support, and consulting, IT or website improvements.
The National Lottery Awards for All	Associate counsellor costs, management and overheads.
The National Lottery Reaching Communities	To go towards core costs including salaries for CEO and Finance Administrator.
Renishaw	For Creche costs for group programmes over 12 months.
The National Lottery (Uplift for Cost of Living)	To go towards cost of living increases to core and staff costs.
Lloyds Bank Foundation	Continuation funding for an additional 12 months to cover the costs of the recovery practitioner up until 31 July 2023.
Communities Matter Fund	Cost of living and heating support fund for clients.
St John's Foundation (Admin, Comms & Marketing)	To go towards expenses relating to our new premises.
St John's Foundation (Programme)	To cover the salary for the head of services and costs associated with group work.
The National Lottery (New Premises)	Uplift funding as part of existing Reaching Communities grant. Designated for premises project costs.
BANES COMF	Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) - Recovery work salary and overheads grant.
Legal Education Fund	LEF funding was provided for the facilitation of survivor consultation groups by SafeLives.

14. Movements in funds (continued)
Purposes of restricted funds (continued)

BANES CIL	Grant for new premises.
Women's Aid Training	For staff training at Women's Aid and Women's Aid membership fees.

Purposes of designated funds

Salaries	Funds to cover salary costs if a shortfall in funding arises.

14. Movements in funds (continued)

Prior year comparative	At 1 September 2021 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers between funds £	**At 31 August 2022 £**
Restricted funds					
Circle Fund	-	7,500	(2,331)	-	**5,169**
Avon & Somerset Police & Crime Commissioner	4,123	20,583	(20,269)	-	**4,437**
Allen Lane	453	-	(453)	-	**-**
Quartet Community Foundation	10,000	-	(10,000)	-	**-**
The National Lottery Awards for All	-	9,928	(9,804)	-	**124**
The National Lottery Reaching Communities	-	58,500	(58,500)		**-**
Group Costs Various Funders	1,227	-	(1,227)	-	**-**
Renishaw	-	3,500	(2,615)	-	**885**
Quartet Express	-	4,998	(4,998)	-	**-**
Lloyds Bank Foundation	18,516	24,698	(21,803)	-	**21,411**
Care Forum Health Watch BANES	774	-	(774)	-	**-**
St John's Foundation (Freedom)	686	-	(686)	-	**-**
St John's Foundation (Admin, Comms & Marketing)	10,000	15,000	(15,000)	-	**10,000**
Counselling Pot Various Funders	3,966	-	(3,966)	-	**-**
St John's Foundation (Programme)	12,463	-	(6,378)	-	**6,085**
The National Lottery (New Premises)	31,794	-	(20,803)	-	**10,991**
BANES COMF	-	56,000	(21,693)	-	**34,307**
Legal Education	-	9,000	(940)	-	**8,060**
BANES CIL	-	23,607	(10,441)	-	**13,166**
Total restricted funds	94,002	233,314	(212,681)	-	**114,635**
Unrestricted funds					
Designated funds:					
Salaries	-	-	-	55,000	**55,000**
Total designated funds	-	-	-	55,000	**55,000**
General funds	52,024	130,288	(39,228)	(55,000)	**88,084**
Total unrestricted funds	52,024	130,288	(39,228)	-	**143,084**
Total funds	146,026	363,602	(251,909)	-	**257,719**

15. Operating lease commitments

The charity had operating leases at the year end with total future minimum lease payments as follows:

	2023	2022
	£	£
Amount falling due:		
Within 1 year	**34,000**	34,000
Within 1 - 5 years	**39,667**	73,667
	73,667	107,667

16. Related party transactions

There were no related party transactions in the current or prior period.

VOICES

England & Wales - Charity number 1159445

Accounts

Charity no. 1159445

VOICES

Report and Unaudited Financial Statements

31 August 2022

VOICES

Reference and administrative details

For the year ended 31 August 2022

Charity number	1159445
Registered office	PO Box 5184 Bath BA1 0RZ
Trustees	The trustees who served during the year and up to the date of this report were as follows: Peter Brandt Joanna Hole appointed 28 February 2022 Brigid Musselwhite Pedro Nunes appointed 28 February 2022 Farha Rasul Jo Silver Dr Helen Wehner
Chief executive officer	Ursula Lindenberg
Bankers	HSBC UK 41 Southgate Street Bath BA1 1TN
Independent examiners	Godfrey Wilson Limited Chartered accountants and statutory auditors 5th Floor Mariner House 62 Prince Street Bristol BS1 4QD

VOICES

Report of the trustees

For the year ended 31 August 2022

Reference and administrative information set out on page 1 forms part of this report. The financial statements comply with current statutory requirements, the Constitution and the Statement of Recommended Practice - Accounting and Reporting by Charities (effective from January 2019).

Objectives and activities
To promote and protect the good health of those affected by domestic abuse. To advance the education of the public in all issues relating to domestic abuse.

Group recovery programmes, running weekly in term-time:

- The Freedom Programme, a nationally recognised programme identifying domestic abuse and enabling survivors to make safe choices in moving out of abusive relationships, with a free creche for pre-school children;
- The Recovery Toolkit, a psycho-educational group recovery programme building resilience and promoting well-being while recovering from abusive relationships; and
- A social and creative group (Meeting And Talking Empowering Survivors, or MATES) combatting social isolation and promoting peer support and sustained recovery from domestic abuse.

Individual recovery support sessions for survivors resident primarily within Bath & North East Somerset, based on a Personal Recovery Plan designed in consultation with individual clients.

Advocacy, advice and signposting, and the provision of information for victims and survivors, family members, friends, and the wider public, via the charity's website and social media.

The provision of specialist counselling and therapeutic support for survivors of domestic and sexual abuse, free to clients.

The provision of free legal advice and signposting relating to domestic abuse and family law through a regular clinic for VOICES clients.

Support & facilitation for survivors wishing to consult or give feedback on service provision to local authority, national government or other agencies and services, researchers and local and national charity partners.

The provision of healthy relationship and domestic abuse awareness training to local agencies, professional bodies, community and educational settings, local services, and businesses.

Consultation with strategic groups on policy and service design, providing lived experience insights and survivor voice input.

The charity operates a hardship fund to which individuals can apply. Applications are considered according to a fixed set of criteria, and granted once approved by the CEO/Head of Services.

Contribution made by volunteers
Volunteers with lived experience and those without direct experience of domestic abuse make a valuable contribution to the work of VOICES, modelling the benefits of recovery work and peer support, and are provided with appropriate management, support and training if working directly with clients.

Our role in development and research alongside academic and strategic partners offers our clients the opportunity to turn their lived experiences into valuable insights for policy makers and researchers. The contribution of volunteers through consultation and in feedback to VOICES about our own services confirms that effective change and successful services can only happen through co-creation.

VOICES' founding mission was to ensure survivors are at the heart of the conversation locally and nationally around how best to prevent and respond to domestic abuse. Volunteers with lived experience contributed to consultations in family law (family law professionals and training needs, Cafcass, and child contact), health and mental health (through consultations with researcher members of the Violence and Abuse Mental Health Network), and local government (advocating for survivors to be creating, not rating services at local area level).

Among the various impacts of the continuing public health concerns and an emerging cost of living crisis was the impact on volunteer and peer support opportunities through 2021/22, which remained constrained by external pressures.

Other contributions by volunteers in 2021/22 included:
- Sponsored walks and other fundraising activities;
- Provision of support to staff running the Freedom Programme and Recovery Toolkit; and
- Volunteer support provided to VOICES for building maintenance and decorating work.

Achievements and performance
VOICES began its 8th operating year having survived the impact of both COVID-19 and a move to new premises in a relatively sound position financially, but a stronger position strategically than in past years. Fundraising successes and the strong support of the VOICES board ensured that the charity weathered the emergent cost of living crisis relatively well, although this continues to represent a significant threat to small independently funded charities like VOICES.

Some significant milestones were achieved for the charity during 2021/22, which are detailed here below:

Founding a dedicated centre for domestic abuse recovery support
After intensive work by the VOICES team and board through 2020/21 to identify and fund a centre dedicated to domestic abuse recovery work, decisive support was received from the National Lottery, St John's Foundation, Quartet Community Foundation and the Roper Charitable Trust to enable the development of a dedicated space for domestic and sexual abuse recovery work, and the charity moved to new premises in January 2022 on a long-term lease.

Royal Visit to VOICES

In February 2022, VOICES was honoured to receive a visit from The Queen Consort (then HRH the Duchess of Cornwall), who opened the new centre and met with staff and clients to discuss the need for DA recovery support and the survivor voice work that VOICES does locally and nationally. This visit, hosted and facilitated by St John's Foundation in Bath of which Her Majesty is Patron, provided important recognition of the value of the work that VOICES does outside the commissioning framework to support and empower people with lived experience of domestic abuse to recover and thrive. Clients and staff with lived experience who met with Her Majesty appreciated her informed support and focus on survivor voices inspiring change.

Opportunities for partnership working were strengthened by the relocation. Co-locating with a sexual abuse recovery service from January 2022 opened the door to strongly advocate for funding and support for survivors of domestic and sexual abuse at a local level. Also, to strengthen the case for support for survivors of domestic and sexual abuse, through the new Integrated Care System for Bath, Swindon & Wiltshire that brought together health and social care funding/services from April 2022.

Clients have said consistently that the new space feels accessible, calm, welcoming and homely and that having a dedicated space in which to receive support makes a positive difference to their wellbeing and experience of support.

During the first 8 months in the new building, VOICES were able to provide space to a commissioned sexual abuse and assault service to run an art therapy group, an evening peer support group and for 2 counsellors to work for one day per week serving clients from the region. Group managers for the service confirmed client feedback was that the space was really positive and felt welcoming and warm.

Other visitors to the new building in early 2022 included Bath & North East Somerset's Director of People and Policy, Director of Public Health and the A&S Police area commander for Bath, as well as representatives from the National Lottery, Quartet Community Foundation and St John's Foundation.

A new website for VOICES - trauma informed design and digital innovations

With help from social media consultancy, 92 Minutes Ltd., the charity was able to increase its digital presence through the autumn of 2021 in advance of the launch of VOICES' new website, built in collaboration with Bristol-based digital partners Modular Digital, in mid-November 2021. The new site, developed together with people with lived experience, went live on 17 November 2021, ahead of a campaign for the 16 Days of Activism Against Violence Against Women & Girls from 25 November (International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women & Girls) to 10 December (International Human Rights Day) 2021. This development was funded by a grant from Women's Aid/Comic Relief.

The website formed the basis for a new trauma-informed digital service to support people impacted by domestic abuse, increase access to information and support, and present VOICES as a digital platform for survivor voices to be heard.

VOICES' Referrals and Law Lead also initiated the development of an innovative app in collaboration with UWE, to allow people going through family court to safely store documents and chart their journey through legal processes on their phone. This work was ongoing at the end of the operating year.

Women's Aid National Quality Standards Stage One accreditation
VOICES achieved Women's Aid National Quality Standards Stage One assurance for the charity on 18 November 2021, after undergoing a thorough assessment of the charity's policies and processes by specialist assessors.

VOICES' domestic abuse recovery services
During the period, VOICES received 107 referrals and made 37 internal referrals for additional services. The most significant referring organisation was Southside Family Project, the commissioned service providing IDVA and family support, from which 24 referrals were received (22% of the total referrals that year).

Stronger together: group programmes
VOICES continued to provide a suite of domestic abuse recovery and peer support programmes through the period from September 2021 to August 2022. Despite the charity's move during the year to new premises, this was an uninterrupted service, free to clients, with travel and childcare costs provided for clients on low incomes, with some group provision arranged at venues in the local community.

For the period of the report, 48 survivors attended the Freedom Programme, 16 clients attended the social and creative group, and 13 attended the Recovery Toolkit.

For the Freedom Programme, three 12-week in-person group programmes took place, together with 2 online programmes. A drop-in programme for the creative & social group ran through the year, while two 12-week in-person programmes of the Recovery Toolkit took place. A drop-out rate of only 4% was recorded across all programmes.

Just over 40% of activities by the services team related to group work, and 50% of service team hours were undertaken with group programme facilitation and related work.

*"The Freedom Project allowed me to understand the abuse and changed my perceptions of my ex. Recovery Toolkit gave me the strength to move on." (*A VOICES client*).*

Individual recovery support work - COVID-19 and the cost of living crisis
Individual recovery support was provided throughout the year by the team, and principally by two recovery support workers, with gateway support into services from VOICES' Referrals and Law Lead, 3 associate counsellors, access to a free legal clinic run with the University of the West of England, and services as a whole managed by VOICES' Head of Services. This involved detailed casework with 89 clients and 1-2-1 gateway support to access group programmes from the Referrals and Law lead for 29 clients, while 44 clients received legal clinic, therapy, advice and consultation support. The largest areas of support need concerned emotional support (<15%), and children & parenting (14%), followed by mental health support (10%). Other regular support needs included finances, family law, housing and physical health issues.

Although VOICES did not provide dedicated services for children, the charity did so indirectly through advocacy and support work, as well as group programmes addressing parenting and impacts of abuse on children. In 2021/22 more than 70 children aged 0-18 were supported in this way, and c. 10-15 young adults 18-25, as adult children living with clients supported by VOICES.

Feedback from recipients of individual support:

"This service has saved my mental health and has provided a safe service whilst helping with coping mechanisms for the future".

"I had benefit support for universal credit, support on 2 tribunals. I honestly would not have appealed and gone through with the tribunals if it had not been for the support of VOICES".

"VOICES is the one place where I feel safe to be my most authentic self".

VOICES supports family members to support their loved ones impacted by domestic abuse. In combination with the range of support services VOICES offers, this can have a profound benefit for the survivor and their wider family, as a mother's feedback testifies:

"As I'm sure you're aware, she has been involved with many other services for a very long time, none of which has made any lasting or significant difference, and yet within a short period of time working with you guys at The Freedom Programme we began to notice a shift/change in her.

The CPR Trauma Informed approach you seem to take of consistency, predictability and reliability has been instrumental in this change, yet more important is the incredible kindness and belief you have in her, which has allowed her to finally believe, and be kind to herself!".

Public Health funding for post-COVID-19 recovery support for DA survivors

VOICES received Public Health funding (from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund- COMF) for the first time, for an expanded recovery service to local people, undertaken by a new staff member with expertise in child and family work with domestic abuse survivors, particularly those where multiple and complex challenges due to domestic abuse impacts were exacerbated by the circumstances of COVID-19 lockdowns and concomitant pressures. Our caseload since the beginning of the pandemic had risen by c. 40% and our staffing levels by 30%, with additional therapist capacity (voluntary therapist on placement) and casework/case admin support (2 placements/year rather than 1 as previously).

This additional funding received during the year (COMF) enabled VOICES to increase access to individual domestic abuse recovery support, while ensuring that existing staff did not face burnout due to the impact of COVID-19 on our charitable activities and beneficiaries. The mental health, physical and logistical impacts of COVID-19 on our clients and their children continued to unfold through the year, as lockdowns eased and the imminent health risks from the virus lessened. For VOICES, this meant that clients often required more intensive and longer-term support to overcome obstacles for themselves and their children. Isolation and anxiety caused by experiences of domestic and post-separation abuse were exacerbated by the constraints and uncertainties of COVID-19.

The cost of living crisis, which intensified in the Spring of 2022 with the Ukraine war as COVID-19 risks diminished, had particularly severe consequences for VOICES' beneficiaries. The long-term health and mental health impacts of DA mean that many clients in recovery from abuse and rebuilding their lives face barriers to returning to or retaining work, as well as housing insecurity and sometimes homelessness. Separated and divorcing survivors who are house-owners often found themselves with trapped assets that created barriers to accessing benefits, and were unable to adapt their circumstances or move to mitigate rising costs. Those facing economic and post-separation abuse e.g. non-payment of child maintenance, also had little ability to absorb rapidly increasing costs for energy, heating, transport, housing and food. The charity faced an additional imperative to source hardship and cost-of-living funding (see below) to support clients as far as possible in the emerging crisis.

The strain and pressure felt by clients also impacted staff in a third sector area of work that is generally not funded as well as commercial or publicly funded positions. Retaining staff and ensuring wellbeing was a priority for VOICES' management and trustees, who immediately undertook consultation and benchmarking to assess the scope for providing supportive measures, a pay uplift and HR support to the staff team, with the HR Committee undertaking a pay and pay policy review. VOICES' membership of Women's Aid and attendance at SafeLives bi-weekly sector meetings were helpful. A 2-stage pay uplift was discussed at the February Finance Committee meeting and agreed by the Board for all staff of 3.1% in April 2022 and 2.3% in September 2022.

Hardship funding - timely and tailored

VOICES pioneered the use of a dedicated DA Hardship Fund and supported the development of the national initiative developed by SafeLives and NatWest, the Circle Fund. After distributing grants to clients from an initial Circle Fund grant of £2,500, VOICES was successful in applying for a further instalment from the Circle Fund of £5,000, enabling VOICES to assess the need for and provide timely and targeted support to clients with e.g. travel, essential items, education and therapy costs that may prove barriers to recovery.

In addition to the tangible benefits to local survivors of domestic abuse, monthly reporting from the fund is helping build a national picture of the economic disadvantage and hardship engendered by experiencing domestic abuse and violence and economic abuse. It is hoped this will raise awareness and improve policy and community responses to survivors' needs across the country.

VOICES / University of the West of England Law Department free legal clinic

VOICES continued to deepen the connections with the University of the West of England Law Department to provide free to access family law advice to clients without representation. The service operated monthly during term time, with the aim of increasing frequency in future years. VOICES' Referrals and Law Lead managed the intake of clients and liaised with law lecturers and students at the University, providing training around domestic abuse for law students, who gain valuable practice insights through their work with the clinic.

Practice education

VOICES continued to provide practice education for Bath University social work students through 2021/22, with two students rather than one, and involving a final year student for the first time. The placements provided valuable practice insights about the whole journey through and beyond domestic abuse for students who will go on to work with families experiencing domestic abuse in their professional careers.

Sector influencing and training work
VOICES' unique position as both a survivor-led DA specialist recovery support provider and a survivor-voice advocate organisation strengthened in 2022. Training enquiries increased (with training by VOICES' staff provided for Metrobank, Specsavers, staff and others) and the potential to work alongside SafeLives with local authorities nationally was developed further.

Research collaboration
VOICES successfully developed survivor voice research consultation through 2021, and began the operating year with 3 current contracts to facilitate survivor consultation (Home Office, SafeLives/Legal Education Foundation, University of Bristol PRECODE project). Interest from researchers grew, with new requests from University of Bristol and UCL in 2022.

In February 2022 senior staff gave a talk to all National Lottery Funding managers about the value of survivor-led community-based services working with women and girls, and our CEO was invited by Lloyds Bank Foundation to take part with a small group of other grassroots charity leaders in setting their new funding strategy (launching in September 2022) and in April supporting the recruitment of their new Chair of trustees.

VOICES' CEO was interviewed in May by researchers commissioned by a consortium of Women's Sector funders (National Lottery, Esmee Fairbairn and the Smallwood Trust) examining what the routes are to power and influence for grassroots charities supporting women & girls.

VOICES' Head of Services attended the quarterly Domestic Abuse Partnership Board and the Task & Finish Group on Survivor Voices for BANES, where the charity advocated for lived experience of services to be included in the local strategy for developing service provision.

VOICES' CEO continued as a lived experience member of the Cafcass' (Children and Families Court Advisory Support Service) Learning & Improvement Advisory Board, which was extended for a further year. VOICES continued to advocate for independent trauma and DA experts to be included and for lived experience representatives to be able to participate safely, as well as for safe feedback and complaints procedures for family members going through family courts and working with Cafcass.

VOICES' CEO was invited to join University of Sheffield's Nuffield Research Advisory Board for a new 2-year research programme "Rethinking Child Protection" in recognition of lived experience insights and VOICES' survivor voice expertise. The project runs from March 2022-March 2024.

In 2021/22, VOICES brought the charity's expertise in survivor consultation and recovery work as members of the following organisations:

- Women's Aid's National Research Policy, Consultation and Campaigns Group (RPCC) and Members' CEO group;
- SafeLives Domestic Abuse Services CEO group, meeting regularly through the pandemic to discuss service delivery and challenge;
- The Violence and Abuse Mental Health Research Network;
- The Mental Health Collaborative for Bath & North East Somerset;
- The LGBTQ+ Action Group for Bath & North East Somerset; and
- The Trauma Informed Network in the South West.

SafeLives/Legal Education Fund & VOICES developing training on domestic abuse for family lawyers

VOICES continues to partner with SafeLives on the LEF family lawyers training development, for which VOICES provided the survivor consultation facilitation. ⅔ members of VOICES staff will receive training to be able to train local professionals either in-person or in remote settings. Bath & Bristol are one of the 3 pilot areas for the LEF training programme. VOICES are also helping to liaise with other local DA organisations and law professionals to boost engagement with the programme.

Report launch at The Old Bailey, March 2022

Two SafeLives reports "…Don't Complain" (https://safelives.org.uk/dont-complain/LEF-report), "Domestic abuse survivors' experiences of family lawyers" (based on consultations with survivors facilitated by VOICES), and "Hit And Miss" a further report into the need for trauma expertise among family law professionals (https://safelives.org.uk/hit-and-miss/LEF-report) were presented at an event hosted at The Old Bailey and supported by the City Bridge Trust on 30 March 2022. Domestic Abuse Commissioner Nicole Jacobs, CEO of SafeLives and a SafeLives Pioneer Suzanne Jacob, as well as HHJ Anuja Dhir, spoke about the need for the family justice system to respond to the trauma of domestic abuse appropriately, and provide access to justice without re-traumatising victims and survivors.

Ursula Lindenberg attended the event, representing VOICES. The lived experience insights of all survivors who gave their time to the consultation will be invaluable in developing new training for family law professionals and inspiring much needed reform. The event was attended by many professionals, including judges and barristers, Cafcass family court advisers, and trainers from the Judicial College.

The domestic abuse training pilot for family law professionals, which VOICES' staff were to receive training to deliver, was scheduled for late 2022/early 2023 in Bristol & Bath.

Local Community support for VOICES

Wells WI invited VOICES' CEO to speak at their AGM on 3 May 2022, and pledged to support VOICES in whatever ways they can through 2022/23.

Specsavers Bath nominated VOICES, who provided DA awareness training to local staff, as their charity of the year.

The Co-op Community Matters Fund nominates VOICES as a charity of the year, raising funds from shoppers throughout the year to support VOICES' group work with DA survivors.

MP for Bath, Wera Hobhouse, invited VOICES to take part in a community conversation she hosted online on 30 June 2022 as part of a panel looking at the impacts of, and response to, domestic abuse and violence against women & girls in the Bath area. Our CEO was able to talk alongside other community representatives about the urgent need for training, healthy relationships education and safe space provision for survivors of domestic and sexual abuse, which VOICES aims to address.

In February 2022, VOICES also received the Bath MP's inaugural Best of Bath award for organisations working to combat violence against women and girls in the city. When giving the award Wera Hobhouse said:

“Violence against women and girls can be lethal and it must be stamped out. Domestic abuse causes trauma that can last a lifetime for everyone it touches. Tragically the incidence of domestic abuse increased significantly during lockdown".

"We were fortunate to have several worthy nominees for this new award. I am delighted to recognise VOICES with the first Best of Bath Award. VOICES is a survivor-led charity. It focuses on recovery, supporting those living with and beyond domestic abuse to recover from their trauma by putting the voice of lived experience at the centre of all service delivery planning."

"During the pandemic, VOICES redoubled their efforts to make sure that no one was forgotten or became invisible. They demonstrated daily small acts of kindness and care and coped with the enormous strains put on them with good humour and care for one another. They are the best of society and we are so fortunate to have them.”

Fundraising targets set for 2021/22:
New grants for salaries, unrestricted and multi-year where possible: £50,000;
Public donations: £25,000; and
Income from room hire: £4,500.

Grant fundraising targets were exceeded by a considerable margin (see 2021/22 accounts), while public donations were negatively affected by COVID-19 and the cost-of-living crisis and room hire income was roughly on target.

Financial Review
The charity ended the 2021/2022 operating year with increased reserves and no unplanned debtors.

It was able to deliver all planned activities without compromise to quantity or quality.

VOICES finished 2021/22 in a strong financial position with net assets of £257,719 compared with £146,026 in 2020/21. This increase of 76% on the previous year reflected an improved income position of £363,602 (2021: £230,582). The strengthened income position allowed the charity to invest in additional clinical support to meet increased service demands.

Reserves Policy
VOICES held general reserves of £88,084 as of 31 August 2022 (2021: £52,024). The stated aim of the charity being to hold unrestricted reserves to cover 3 months’ operating costs (£62,977, based on annual expenditure of £251,909), the amount of unrestricted reserves held is above the target set, at the end of the period.

The board of trustees has considered its reserves policy and set itself the ambition to have reserves at a level that meet the following criteria:

- To sustain the charity's core services supported by unrestricted funds, for a period of three months without detriment to its beneficiaries;
- To support the charity in providing a skeleton service for a further three months (including overheads) to enable emergency funding to be sought and available for use; and
- To meet the winding up costs for the charity should there be no prospect of funding going forward – such costs would be in terms of redundancies and meeting any contractual debts.

Unrestricted reserves rose in line with the Charity's plans throughout the operating year to the end of August 2022, in order to prepare and support VOICES in a number of significant developments. The Safe Space fundraising initiative achieved sufficient funds to allow the charity to make its planned move to a much larger, new and dedicated premises with a long-term lease in January 2022. In addition, VOICES generated additional new unrestricted grants from grant-giving organisations to support an increase in direct service capacity through additional clinical support and enabling the charity to recruit the two new key roles of an Executive Officer and a Centre Administrator, in late 2022. Of these grants, £55,000 was designated by the charity for salary costs. These changes made in 2022 build the capacity and sustainability of the organisation, but also its commitment to greater core costs which are now available within unrestricted funds for 2022/2023 expenditure.

Principle risks

The principle risks of the charity are:

- Financial pressures resulting from rising demand for specialist domestic abuse services, including mental health sport and existential support for clients, compounded by the cost of living crisis and upward pressure on operating costs; and
- Increasing competition for funds granted by Trusts and Foundations, and public funding made available through central and local government, due to the impact of COVID-19 and the cost of living crisis on smaller charities.

Structure, Governance and Management

Vacancies arising may be filled by the decision of the members at the AGM or by charity trustees “at any time” (clause 13 (4) and (5) of CIO Constitution).

Positions are advertised through local charity networks and appropriate social media. In addition informal personal networks are used.

A written role description is used and prospective trustees present CVs and have discussions with CEO and trustees prior to appointment. Any links with existing trustees are declared at this point.

During 2021/22,VOICES had a board of 7 trustees, including the Chair, Secretary, and Chairs of Finance and HR Sub-Committees. VOICES was led by a CEO assisted by an Administrator, a Head of Services who manages the staff team comprising a Referrals and Law Lead, a Recovery Practitioner, an associate psychotherapist and students on placement.

No paid services were provided by related parties of either staff or trustees during 2021/22.

Public benefit

The objects for which the charity is established are to provide public benefit through the:

- Promotion and protection of the good health of those who are or have been affected by domestic abuse, in particular but not exclusively by: providing advice, support, interventions and recovery programmes; by assisting them to engage with service providers enabling the service providers to adapt services to better meet the needs of those persons; through activities to relieve their mental or emotional distress and which promote their wellbeing such as support groups and networks; and by relieving the needs of people who are or have been affected by domestic abuse and assisting their integration into society; and

- By advancing the education of the public in all issues relating to the subject of domestic abuse, including conducting or supporting research into the factors that may contribute to such abuse and the most appropriate ways to mitigate them, and the publishing of the useful results of such research.

The trustees review the aims, objectives and activities of the charity each year. This report focuses on what the charity has achieved and the outcomes of its work in the reporting period. The trustees report the progress of the activities that underpin each aspect of the charity's objectives and the benefits the charity has brought to those groups of people that it aims to help. The review also helps the trustees ensure the charity's aims, objectives and activities remained focused on its stated purposes. The trustees have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the charity's aims and objectives and in planning its future activities. The trustees also give consideration to how planned activities will contribute to the aims and objectives that have been determined.

Statement of responsibilities of the trustees

The trustees are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102: The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and the incoming resources and application of resources, including the net income or expenditure, of the charity for the year. In preparing those financial statements the trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- State whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and which enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the constitution. The trustees 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 corporate and financial information included on the charity's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

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

Members of the charity have no liability to contribute to the assets of the charity in the event of winding up. The trustees are members of the charity but this entitles them only to voting rights. The trustees have no beneficial interest in the charity.

Independent examiners
Godfrey Wilson Limited were re-appointed as independent examiners to the charity during the year and have expressed their willingness to continue in that capacity.

Approved by the trustees on 27 February 2023 and signed on their behalf by

Brigid Musselwhite
Chair of the trustees

Independent examiner's report

To the trustees of

VOICES

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of VOICES (the CIO) for the year ended 31 August 2022, which are set out on pages 15 to 30.

Responsibilities and basis of report
As the charity trustees of the CIO you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the CIO's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement
Since the CIO's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW), which is one of the listed bodies.

Godfrey Wilson Limited also provides management accounts and payroll services to the CIO. I confirm that as a member of the ICAEW I am subject to the FRC's Revised Ethical Standard 2016, which I have applied with respect to this engagement.

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

(1) accounting records were not kept in respect of the CIO as required by section 130 of the Act; or
(2) the accounts do not accord with those records; or
(3) the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Date: 27 February 2023
Rob Wilson FCA
Member of the ICAEW
For and on behalf of:
Godfrey Wilson Limited
Chartered accountants and statutory auditors
5th Floor Mariner House
62 Prince Street
Bristol
BS1 4QD

VOICES

Statement of financial activities

For the year ended 31 August 2022

	Note	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	**2022 Total £**	2021 Total £
Income from:					
Donations	3	8,500	18,236	**26,736**	74,455
Charitable activities	4	224,814	112,052	**336,866**	156,127
Total income		233,314	130,288	**363,602**	230,582
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds		-	27,898	**27,898**	16,840
Charitable activities		212,681	11,330	**224,011**	201,980
Total expenditure	6	212,681	39,228	**251,909**	218,820
Net income		20,633	91,060	**111,693**	11,762
Transfers between funds		-	-	**-**	-
Net movement in funds	7	20,633	91,060	**111,693**	11,762
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward		94,002	52,024	**146,026**	134,264
Total funds carried forward		114,635	143,084	**257,719**	146,026

All of the above results are derived from continuing activities. There were no other recognised gains or losses other than those stated above. Movements in funds are disclosed in note 13 to the accounts.

VOICES

Balance sheet

As at 31 August 2022

	Note	£	2022 £	2021 £
Current assets				
Debtors due within one year	10	**16,833**		56,360
Cash at bank and in hand		**250,829**		96,868
		267,662		153,228
Liabilities				
Creditors: amounts falling due within 1 year	11	**(9,943)**		(7,202)
Net assets	12		**257,719**	146,026
Funds	13			
Restricted funds			**114,635**	94,002
Unrestricted funds				
Designated funds			**55,000**	-
General funds			**88,084**	52,024
Total charity funds			**257,719**	146,026

Approved by the trustees on 27 February 2023 and signed on their behalf by

Brigid Musselwhite
Chair of the trustees

1. Accounting policies

a) Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities in preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

VOICES meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note.

b) Going concern basis of accounting

The accounts have been prepared on the assumption that the charity is able to continue as a going concern, which the trustees consider appropriate having regard to the current level of unrestricted reserves. There are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern.

c) Income

Income is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the item of income have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

d) Donated services and facilities

Donated professional services and donated facilities are recognised as income when the charity has control over the item, any conditions associated with the donated item have been met, the receipt of economic benefit from the use by the charity of the item, is probable and the economic benefit can be measured reliably. In accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102), general volunteer time is not recognised.

On receipt, donated professional services and donated facilities are recognised on the basis of the value of the gift to the charity which is the amount the charity would have been willing to pay to obtain services or facilities of equivalent economic benefit on the open market; a corresponding amount is then recognised in expenditure in the period of receipt.

e) Interest receivable

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity: this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the bank.

f) Funds accounting

Unrestricted funds are available to spend on activities that further any of the purposes of the charity. Designated funds are unrestricted funds of the charity which the trustees have decided at their discretion to set aside to use for a specific purpose. Restricted funds are donations which the donor has specified are to be solely used for particular areas of the charity's work or for specific projects being undertaken by the charity.

1. Accounting policies (continued)

g) Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

h) Allocation of support and governance costs

Support costs are those functions that assist the work of the charity but do not directly undertake charitable activities. Governance costs are the costs associated with the governance arrangements of the charity, including the costs of complying with constitutional and statutory requirements and any costs associated with the strategic management of the charity's activities. These costs have been allocated between cost of raising funds and expenditure on charitable activities on the basis of staff costs:

	2022	2021
Raising funds	**8.4%**	4.9%
Charitable activities	**91.6%**	95.1%

i) Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

j) Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

k) Creditors

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

l) Financial instruments

The charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value with the exception of bank loans which are subsequently recognised at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

m) Operating leases

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the statement of financial activities as they fall due.

1. Accounting policies (continued)

n) Accounting estimates and key judgements

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

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

There are no key sources of estimation uncertainty that have a significant effect on the amounts recognised in the financial statements.

o) Pension costs

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme for its employees. There are no further liabilities other than that already recognised in the SOFA.

2. Prior period comparatives: statement of financial activities

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	**2021 Total £**
Income from:			
Donations	27,000	47,455	**74,455**
Charitable activities	154,527	1,600	**156,127**
Total income	181,527	49,055	**230,582**
Expenditure on:			
Raising funds	-	16,840	**16,840**
Charitable activities	187,585	14,395	**201,980**
Total expenditure	187,585	31,235	**218,820**
Net income / (expenditure) and net movement in funds	(6,058)	17,820	**11,762**

3. Income from donations

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	**2022 Total £**
Donations	8,500	18,236	**26,736**

Prior period comparative:

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2021 Total £
Donations	27,000	23,672	50,672
Gifts in kind	-	23,783	23,783
	27,000	47,455	74,455

Gifts in kind includes the following items:	**2022 £**	2021 £
Project / session expenses	**-**	1,500
Consultancy	**-**	6,000
Legal and professional fees	**-**	16,283
	-	23,783

4. Income from charitable activities

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	**2022 Total £**
Grants > £5,000			
Avon & Somerset Police & Crime Commissioner	20,583	-	**20,583**
Bath and North East Somerset Council	79,607	-	**79,607**
Circle Fund	7,500	-	**7,500**
Cobalt Trust	-	10,000	**10,000**
Garfield Weston	-	30,000	**30,000**
Legal Education Fund	9,000	-	**9,000**
Lloyds Bank Foundation	24,698	-	**24,698**
Persula Foundation	-	5,000	**5,000**
St John's Foundation	10,000	4,000	**14,000**
The National Lottery Awards for All	9,928	-	**9,928**
The National Lottery Reaching Communities	58,500	-	**58,500**
Tudor Trust	-	42,000	**42,000**
Grants < £5,000	4,998	3,000	**7,998**
Training income	-	18,052	**18,052**
Total income from charitable activities	224,814	112,052	**336,866**

Prior period comparative:

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2021 Total £
Grants > £5,000			
Avon & Somerset Police & Crime Commissioner	27,143	-	27,143
Comic Relief	15,000	-	15,000
Lloyds Bank Foundation	24,565	-	24,565
Quartet Community Foundation	10,000	-	10,000
St John's Foundation	11,025	-	11,025
The National Lottery Reaching Communities	60,794	-	60,794
Grants < £5,000	6,000	-	6,000
	-	1,600	1,600
Total income from charitable activities	154,527	1,600	156,127

5. Government grants

The charity receives government grants, defined as funding from Avon & Somerset Police & Crime Commissioner, Bath & North East Somerset Council and The National Lottery. The total value of such grants during the year ended 31 August 2022 was £168,618 (2021: £87,937). There are no unfulfilled conditions or contingencies attaching to these grants.

6. Total expenditure

	Raising funds £	Charitable activities £	Support and governance costs £	**2022 Total £**
Staff costs (note 8)	7,171	78,516	42,475	**128,162**
Project / session expenses	-	9,267	-	**9,267**
Other staff costs	-	1,716	-	**1,716**
Volunteer expenses	-	291	-	**291**
Provision of charitable services	-	2,260	-	**2,260**
Fundraising expenses	13,859	-	-	**13,859**
Marketing	340	-	-	**340**
Office expenses	-	10,585	6,694	**17,279**
Insurance and premises costs	-	32,493	20,545	**53,038**
Consultancy	-	12,581	-	**12,581**
Legal and professional fees	-	-	5,229	**5,229**
Accountancy	-	4,832	3,055	**7,887**
Sub-total	21,370	152,541	77,998	**251,909**
Allocation of support and governance costs	6,528	71,470	(77,998)	**-**
Total expenditure	**27,898**	**224,011**	**-**	**251,909**

Total governance costs were £2,583 (2021: £2,563).

6. Total expenditure (continued)

Prior period comparative

	Raising funds £	Charitable activities £	Support and governance costs £	2021 Total £
Staff costs (note 8)	3,701	71,338	42,571	117,610
Project / session expenses	-	7,913	-	7,913
Other staff costs	-	2,046	-	2,046
Volunteer expenses	-	340	-	340
Provision of charitable services	-	2,032	-	2,032
Fundraising expenses	8,025	-	-	8,025
Office expenses	490	9,447	5,638	15,575
Insurance and premises costs	400	7,714	4,603	12,717
Consultancy	-	19,745	6,000	25,745
Legal and professional fees	-	-	18,018	18,018
Accountancy	277	5,337	3,185	8,799
Sub-total	12,893	125,912	80,015	218,820
Allocation of support and governance costs	3,947	76,068	(80,015)	**-**
Total expenditure	16,840	201,980	**-**	218,820

7. Net movement in funds

This is stated after charging:

	2022	2021
	£	£
Operating lease payments	**28,333**	Nil
Trustees' remuneration	**Nil**	Nil
Trustees' reimbursed expenses	**260**	Nil
Independent examiners' remuneration:		
▪ Independent examination (including VAT)	**2,340**	1,800
▪ Other services (including VAT)	**5,199**	6,767

Trustee reimbursed expenses were for travel and subsistence for two trustees.

8. Staff costs and numbers

Staff costs were as follows:

	2022	2021
	£	£
Salaries and wages	**120,763**	109,961
Social security costs	**4,922**	3,870
Pension costs	**2,477**	3,779
	128,162	117,610

No employee earned more than £60,000 during the year.

The key management personnel of the charity comprise the Chief Executive Officer and Head of Services. The total employee benefits of the key management personnel were £64,260 (2021: £62,720).

	2022	2021
	No.	No.
Average head count	**6.00**	5.00

9. Taxation

The charity is exempt from corporation tax as all its income is charitable and is applied for charitable purposes.

10. Debtors

	2022	2021
	£	£
Accrued income	**8,333**	56,360
Deposits	**8,500**	-
	16,833	56,360

11. Creditors : amounts due within 1 year

	2022	2021
	£	£
Trade creditors	**1,629**	1,473
Accruals	**6,252**	3,819
Other taxation and social security	**1,509**	1,447
Pension	**553**	464
	9,943	7,202

12. Analysis of net assets between funds

	Restricted funds	Unrestricted funds	**Total funds**
	£	£	**£**
Current assets	114,635	153,027	**267,662**
Current liabilities	-	(9,943)	**(9,943)**
Net assets at 31 August 2022	**114,635**	**143,084**	**257,719**

Prior year comparative	Restricted funds	Unrestricted funds	**Total funds**
	£	£	**£**
Current assets	95,821	57,407	**153,228**
Current liabilities	(1,819)	(5,383)	**(7,202)**
Net assets at 31 August 2021	**94,002**	**52,024**	**146,026**

13. Movements in funds

	At 1 September 2021 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers between funds £	**At 31 August 2022 £**
Restricted funds					
Circle Fund	-	7,500	(2,331)	-	**5,169**
Avon & Somerset Police & Crime Commissioner	4,123	20,583	(20,269)	-	**4,437**
Allen Lane Foundation	453	-	(453)	-	**-**
Quartet Community Foundation	10,000	-	(10,000)	-	**-**
The National Lottery Awards for All	-	9,928	(9,804)	-	**124**
The National Lottery Reaching Communities	-	58,500	(58,500)		**-**
Group Costs Various Funders	1,227	-	(1,227)	-	**-**
Renishaw	-	3,500	(2,615)	-	**885**
Quartet Express	-	4,998	(4,998)	-	**-**
Lloyds Bank Foundation	18,516	24,698	(21,803)	-	**21,411**
Care Forum Health Watch BANES	774	-	(774)	-	**-**
St John's Foundation (Freedom)	686	-	(686)	-	**-**
St John's Foundation (Admin, Comms & Marketing)	10,000	15,000	(15,000)	-	**10,000**
Counselling Pot Various Funders	3,966	-	(3,966)	-	**-**
St John's Foundation (Programme)	12,463	-	(6,378)	-	**6,085**
The National Lottery (New Premises)	31,794	-	(20,803)	-	**10,991**
BANES COMF	-	56,000	(21,694)	-	**34,306**
Legal Education Fund	-	9,000	(940)	-	**8,060**
BANES CIL	-	23,607	(10,441)	-	**13,166**
Total restricted funds	94,002	233,314	(212,681)	-	**114,635**
Unrestricted funds					
Designated funds:					
Salaries	-	-	-	55,000	**55,000**
Total designated funds	-	-	-	55,000	**55,000**
General funds	52,024	130,288	(39,228)	(55,000)	**88,084**
Total unrestricted funds	52,024	130,288	(39,228)	-	**143,084**
Total funds	146,026	363,602	(251,909)	-	**257,719**

13. Movements in funds (continued)

Purposes of restricted funds

Circle Fund	Hardship payments for clients, administered by VOICES and monitored by SafeLives via monthly reports.
Avon & Somerset Police & Crime Commissioner	COVID-19 emergency funding to go towards the core operations of the charity and to cover the costs of the referrals support coordinator.
Allen Lane Foundation	To go towards core costs of the charity up until November 2021.
Quartet Community Foundation	To go towards the costs of a new premises.
The National	Associate counsellor costs, management and overheads.
The National Lottery Reaching Communities	To go towards core costs up until 30 September 2021.
Group Costs Various Funders	To cover the costs of refreshments and other group services costs.
Renishaw	For Creche costs for group programmes over 12 months.
Quartet Express	Towards group programmes and salary costs.
Lloyds Bank Foundation	To cover the costs of the recovery practitioner up until 31 March 2022.
Care Forum Health Watch BANES	To cover the costs associated with the Healthwatch survey.
St John's Foundation (Freedom)	Project costs for Freedom group work.
St John's Foundation (Marketing)	To go towards expenses relating to our new premises.
Counselling Pot Various Funders	To go towards the cost of counselling services for clients.
St John's Foundation (Programme)	To cover the salary for the head of services and costs associated with group work.
The National Lottery (New Premises)	Uplift funding as part of existing Reaching Communities grant. Designated for premises project costs.
BANES COMF	Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) - Recovery work salary and overheads grant.

13. Movements in funds (continued)
Purposes of restricted funds (continued)

Legal Education Fund	LEF funding was provided for the facilitation of survivor consultation groups by SafeLives.
BANES CIL	Grant for Core Costs for new premises.

Purposes of designated funds

Salaries	The trustees have designated £55,000, received from unrestricted grants in 2021-22, towards future salary costs which would not have been possible without this support.

13. Movements in funds (continued)

Prior year comparative	At 1 September 2020 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers between funds £	**At 31 August 2021 £**
Restricted funds					
Hardship Various Funders	5,390	-	(1,890)	(3,500)	**-**
Persula Foundation	185	-	(185)	-	**-**
Avon & Somerset Police & Crime Commissioner	20,652	27,143	(43,672)	-	**4,123**
Allen Lane Foundation	1,262	3,500	(4,309)	-	**453**
Quartet Community Foundation	4,183	10,000	(4,184)	-	**10,000**
National Lottery Corona Virus Community Support	9,840	-	(9,840)	-	**-**
The National Lottery Reaching Communities	262	56,000	(56,262)	-	**-**
Group Costs Various Funders	2,439	-	(1,212)	-	**1,227**
Lloyds Bank Foundation	20,057	24,565	(26,106)	-	**18,516**
Care Forum Health Watch BANES	2,500	2,500	(4,226)	-	**774**
St John's Foundation (Freedom)	2,195	1,025	(2,534)	-	**686**
St John's Foundation (Admin, Comms & Marketing)	-	10,000	-	-	**10,000**
Counselling Pot Various Funders	6,500	-	(2,535)	-	**3,966**
St John's Foundation (Programme)	28,095	-	(15,632)	-	**12,463**
Comic Relief Women's Aid	-	15,000	(15,000)	-	**-**
The National Lottery (New Premises)	-	31,794	-	-	**31,794**
Total restricted funds	103,560	181,527	(187,585)	(3,500)	**94,002**
Unrestricted funds					
General funds	30,704	49,055	(31,235)	3,500	**52,024**
Total unrestricted funds	30,704	49,055	(31,235)	-	**52,024**
Total funds	134,264	230,582	(218,820)	-	**146,026**

14. Operating lease commitments

The charity had operating leases at the year end with total future minimum lease payments as follows:

	2022	2021
	£	£
Amount falling due:		
Within 1 year	**34,000**	-
Within 1 - 5 years	**136,000**	-
	170,000	-

15. Related party transactions

There were no related party transactions in the year.

VOICES

England & Wales - Charity number 1159445

Accounts

Charity no. 1159445

VOICES

Report and Unaudited Financial Statements

31 August 2021

VOICES

Reference and administrative details

For the year ended 31 August 2021

Charity number	1159445
Registered office	PO Box 5184 Bath BA1 0RZ
Trustees	The trustees who served during the year and up to the date of this report were as follows: Peter Brandt Sarah Crayford-Brown (resigned 1 October 2021) Brigid Musselwhite Farha Rasul Jo Silver Dr Helen Wehner
Chief executive officer	Ursula Lindenberg
Bankers	HSBC UK 62 George White Street Cabot Circus Bristol BS1 3BA
Independent examiners	Godfrey Wilson Limited Chartered accountants and statutory auditors 5th Floor Mariner House 62 Prince Street Bristol BS1 4QD

VOICES

Report of the trustees

For the year ended 31 August 2021

Reference and administrative information set out on page 1 forms part of this report. The financial statements comply with current statutory requirements, the Constitution and the Statement of Recommended Practice - Accounting and Reporting by Charities (effective from January 2019).

Objectives and activities
To promote and protect the good health of those affected by domestic abuse. To advance the education of the public in all issues relating to domestic abuse.

Group recovery programmes, running weekly in term-time:
- The Freedom Programme, a nationally recognised programme identifying domestic abuse and enabling survivors to make safe choices in moving out of abusive relationships;
- The Recovery Toolkit, a psycho-educational group recovery programme building resilience and promoting well-being while recovering from abusive relationships; and
- A social and creative group (Meeting And Talking Empowering Survivors, or MATES) combatting social isolation and promoting peer support and sustained recovery from domestic abuse.

Individual support sessions for survivors within Bath & North East Somerset, based on a Personal Recovery Plan designed in consultation with individual clients.

Telephone advice and signposting, and the provision of information for victims and survivors, family members, friends, and the wider public, via the charity's website and social media.

The provision of combined specialist counselling and therapeutic support for survivors of domestic and sexual abuse.

The provision of free legal advice and signposting relating to domestic abuse and family law through a regular clinic for VOICES clients.

The provision of survivor consultation and/or training to local agencies, services, researchers and local and national charity partners.

The charity operates a hardship fund to which individuals can apply. Applications are considered using a fixed set of criteria, and granted once approved by the CEO.

Contribution made by volunteers
Volunteers with lived experience and those without direct experience of domestic abuse make a valuable contribution to the work of VOICES, modelling the benefits of recovery work and peer support, and are provided with appropriate management, support and training if working directly with clients.

Our role in development and research alongside academic and strategic partners offers our clients the opportunity to turn their lived experiences into valuable insights for policy makers and researchers. The contribution of volunteers through consultation and in feedback to VOICES about our own services confirms that effective change and successful services can only happen through co-creation.

VOICES' founding mission was to ensure survivors are at the heart of the conversation locally and nationally around how best to prevent and respond to domestic abuse. Volunteers with lived experience contributed to consultations in family law (family law professionals and training needs, Cafcass, and child contact), health and mental health (through consultations with researcher members of the Violence and Abuse Mental Health Network), and local government (advocating for survivors to be creating, not rating services at local area level).

Continuing lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic meant that there was less opportunity in 2020/21 for volunteers to take part in mentoring/peer support activities. This is expected to grow again in 2021/22.

Other contributions by volunteers in 2020/21 included:

- Design of marketing/communications materials for VOICES, with voluntary support from students at Bath Spa and Bristol Universities;
- Sponsored walks and other fundraising activities;
- Development of digital safety resources with students from the University of the West of England in Bristol; and
- Significant pro bono support was provided to VOICES by volunteer law professionals at Withers LLC in London during 2020/21.

Achievements and performance

Stronger together: group programmes

"I am a single mother in my twenties, unemployed but looking to join the Women's Work Lab (my support worker is helping me apply). I am healthy and finally making a recovery from a lifetime of abuse and neglect. I still have my ups and downs but now, the ups feel safer, and the downs don't take months away from me any more. I have learned the skills from VOICES to pick myself up and dust myself off. I have gained confidence in my abilities to be an adult and a mother. I have a social life, where no-one calls me crazy or puts me down. I am so much happier now that my situation has changed so drastically".

Although individual support needs grew through the COVID-19 pandemic, most of VOICES' new referrals during the year (63%) were for the Freedom Programme and a further 14% were for the Recovery Toolkit. Most (68%) were from Bath and 21% from Midsomer Norton, Radstock and Paulton area. The total number receiving a full support service during the period from VOICES was 110 and of these, most were aged between 26 and 50, with a broad overall age range from 16-75 years.

Among clients with a disability, 53% had a mental health condition, 31% had a physical disability, 8% had a learning disability, 6% a long-term disability and 2% a hearing disability.

Despite the challenges of the continuing pandemic lockdown, VOICES continued to run groups for clients through 2020/21, including the Freedom Programme, the Recovery Toolkit and a social/drop-in group for clients at an outdoor, therapeutic location. 50% of all specialist support staff time was spent providing group programmes to our clients.

A mixed approach of remote and direct support continued throughout the year, and there was no period in which the charity stopped delivering direct support entirely. A small number of clients with acute mental health or other challenges were supported throughout in liaison with other services, to ensure their safety and wellbeing. The model allowed staff to be responsive and flexible, and to support women to leave relationships safely even during lockdown conditions and achieve safe housing or relocation, while adhering to the Government's rules on lockdown and social distancing.

Remote delivery of trauma-informed working practices were piloted during the summer with a social and creative evening group running through July-August and the learning from this group enabled a remote Freedom Programme to be designed based on survivor feedback about the benefits and challenges of remote support, running from September 2020 and continuing throughout the year.

Face-to-face group work resumed from September 2020 when it became possible to resume the delivery of the Freedom Programme and the Recovery Toolkit, a follow-on programme to support recovery of people no longer in abusive relationships. These programmes were delivered at COVID-safe venues sourced and funded by VOICES in the community in Bath.

VOICES provided the only face-to-face group programmes for domestic abuse survivors during the COVID-19 pandemic in Bath & Northeast Somerset.

VOICES' approach to continuing direct and tailored support for clients and resuming group programmes as soon as possible ensured that an increased number of local people could access the life-changing benefits of the Freedom Programme despite the pandemic, and meant that face-to-face support for domestic abuse victims and survivors did not stop entirely in the Bath area as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. A number of clients stated that face to face opportunities for support were vital for their physical and psychological safety during this period.

"I was sceptical at first that the Freedom programme would suit me. However, from the very first session I felt very at ease in the women-only environment. We were all from different walks of life, with slightly different experiences, but we all had something in common. We had all been victims of abuse, and we all needed a safe and kind place to be able to meet and deal with what we were going through. Some were still in their relationships, some had left, but meeting other women and hearing about some of their experiences made me realise that what I was going through wasn't just in my head. I felt believed, listened to and cared about. I started to feel stronger and more confident in my own thoughts and feelings."

"It felt great to be in a women-only environment as I needed to be around other women who understood and because of my mental health struggles (PTSD) due to the abuse, it felt safe. I have also done the Recovery Toolkit, which was very useful."

"The Freedom Project allowed me to understand the abuse and changed my perceptions of my ex. Recovery Toolkit gave me the strength to move on."

Individual recovery support

Individual case work grew as a proportion of VOICES' activities during the year. Among areas of support provided, emotional and mental health support was highest (42%), followed by parenting support and support for children, then housing, finance and physical health support.

No client was turned away from VOICES who sought support during the pandemic. The charity continued to offer whole-picture support on an individual basis, supporting people either remotely if wished or directly with safety and safeguarding, family court proceedings, education and child contact issues, statutory services involvement, housing & refuge, financial abuse, debt and benefits advocacy work. While fewer groups were running, the VOICES team focused on individual support, ensuring capacity existed to meet the increased complexity of clients' situations.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, clients continually told us how much they appreciate the fact they can still engage with VOICES support at this time in a way that suited them. The charity provided intensive support to those most at risk, and continued to also facilitate counselling sessions either in person, on phone or by zoom. An individual strategy for each woman rather than a blanket policy allowed us to maintain the support of our most vulnerable clients, reducing the risk of statutory services having to become involved and safeguarding their mental health, and stabilising recovery and personal safety.

"My child and I were left without shelter, I moved into a homeless hostel with my son. I had little to no money, the only furniture I had was a high chair & a crib for my baby. I was also left scared and alone. I didn't know who was safe and who wasn't. I didn't know how to go about claiming benefits, I also didn't trust my own intelligence to fill out the forms correctly. I would often go without eating so that my child could. I became very afraid of being alone, of going out with my son alone, I felt as if I was a child, caring for a baby. I had no confidence in my abilities as a mother. I lost my home to my ex-partner, I had no income, I had to quit my job to take care of our sick child. I was completely dependent on my ex-partner. I needed to start claiming benefits. VOICES helped me claim UC and PIP. I was offered the Freedom programme, the Recovery Toolkit, 1-to-1 long-term therapy, MATES social and outdoor groups, financial support to help access white goods, support to claim benefits. I have been offered access to the Law Clinic & a staff member has come to solicitor appointments with me. A member of staff offered to come to crown court with me."

Support for families

Almost everything VOICES does in terms of individual recovery and education/group work is crucially influential in the lives of the children whose parents we support.

Due to COVID-19, home schooling and mental health of children has been a new area of support for VOICES – connecting women with resources and guidance to reassure and advise them in this area, and liaising with schools around expectations and places for children in vulnerable situations.

In the Freedom Programme the sections on the Bad Father and Effects of Violence on Children are instrumental in helping mothers identify the effects on them and on their children of their situations. As they move forward with their lives, they are better informed and more able to avoid similar situations.

Younger children benefit from future relationships which are hopefully healthier. Older children have mothers who have tools to teach them about moving into their adult life in a responsible and respectful way and this will have an effect on any children they may go on to have, thus benefiting future generations. Because the mothers of pre-teen children who come to us receive help in terms of practical and emotional support around housing/debt/benefits/social aspects/education etc. we are instrumental in providing a stronger and more reliable foundation than there may have been for the children.

"Sue"- a case study (name changed to protect confidentiality)
Sue has a young child who was born with physical difficulties. Starting school, because of his physical difficulties there were many problems that were causing the child extreme anxiety and this was affecting their relationship with peers, mum and learning.

The school was not to blame, as staff were unaware of some of the difficulties the child had. It was with support from VOICES that Sue was able to ask for a meeting with the school. During the meeting, Sue was supported and able to explain the situation, as was the school. A plan was put in place to support the child in a way that was wholly appropriate.

The child's future is now much brighter – they have begun to enjoy school, their learning, relationship with teachers and with friends has improved hugely, and Sue trusts the school and feels able to communicate with them.

Without timely support from VOICES we believe this young child would have begun to behave in a way that would have caused disruption and despair for both the school and for Sue, but most importantly for the child and their future relationships with adults and education.

Family work during 2020/21
VOICES' whole-picture approach to domestic abuse involves a strong focus on family, and particularly children. Parenting challenges included the effects of lockdown on traumatised parents and children and ongoing abuse and harassment by abusive ex-partners, which often centred on child contact and home schooling arrangements. Most of our clients received support during lockdown with parenting and 65% reported improvements in this area of concern to them.

Although VOICES was established to help adult survivors first and foremost, the team also extended their activities to provide direct support to children impacted by domestic abuse, including access to mental health support and advocacy on their behalf at multi-agency meetings. Almost a quarter (24.5%) of clients had children directly supported by VOICES.

Examples of outcomes benefiting parents and children during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020/21 include:

- Securing safe housing by getting them on the housing priority list (Band A) for 3 women with under 12s;
- Liaising with schools in at least 5 cases over issues such as contact arrangements, homeschooling, school meals and pupil premium awards;
- Supporting a mother to apply for an assessment for her child to address her special educational needs;
- Providing a bridge into other services including Southside Family Support and children's centres;
- Liaising with midwives and health visitors to help them understand the domestic abuse a mother is suffering and the impact on the baby/ child;
- Being an active partner in child protection conferences for the same reason;
- Accessing safe accommodation (refuge) for one woman and her teenager who are now recovering from 15 years of post-separation abuse;
- Supporting a client throughout lockdown to access the right education setting for her son and to obtain a job in healthcare;
- Enabling a client we have been supporting for 2 years through separation, family abuse and care proceedings to begin her medical career with St Johns Ambulance;

- Ensuring a client of 3 years can move home, away from toxic neighbours, by securing her priority band A status on the housing register. This had been delaying her recovery process as she felt unable to completely escape the abuse, she turned to the perpetrator for protection;
- Supporting 2 mothers of under-5s through Care proceedings in court. There is no other service providing this level of support. Both women had IDVAs (Independent Domestic Violence Advisors) but they were not able to provide support with this; and
- Our outdoor group welcomed 15 children under 12 from January-March 2021, providing their only social/ educational contact while schools were shut. We provided a childcare worker to take them on nature walks and play outdoors safely together whilst their mothers (all lone parents) were able to have a break from their 24/7 childcare responsibilities. One woman told us without this group to look forward to, she wasn't sure if she would have survived the second lockdown without a mental health crisis.

"Together through VOICES and a solicitor, my son gets to have safe visits with his dad now once a week. (I chose to let him see his father, as long as contact is safe at all times, VOICES helps me enforce this regularly)."

"I don't have a lot of healthy family members, but I do have VOICES, and I can honestly say that all the members of staff are always there for me in a time of crisis. I don't know where I would be today without them. My life could have gone the other way very easily with my family history. I genuinely feel like VOICES saved me from so much pain and heartache…and I cannot thank them enough."

Retaining an accessible service through 2020/21

The charity was able to obtain Ministry of Justice COVID-19 funding via Avon & Somerset PCC to take on an experienced Referrals Coordinator and Law Lead, with legal and Mackenzie Friend expertise and experience of chairing MARACs and operating refuge provision, in September 2020. This new role ensured that we were able to provide an accessible DA specialist gateway service into support at a time when many survivors had only been able to access helpline or remote advice from services, if any.

This enabled VOICES to respond to referrals and assess women quickly through 2020/21 and ensured a smoother pathway into the right VOICES service for survivors referring themselves or referred by others, and improved multi-agency working. A flexible approach has meant clients can still receive support in a way they choose and feel safe with during the pandemic. This has reduced the risk of harm for women and children, prevented crises and the need for statutory support and resources to be involved. We have maintained support and contact with all existing clients and increased our caseload also without having to resort to a "one size fits all" approach.

It also meant that VOICES was better able to "hold" the situations facing people who were coming to the charity, even when they were not able to immediately access a service, or not able to safely make changes at that point.

"VOICES have been so important to me from the first contact I made with them and throughout the past year and a half. They have been kind and caring, and enabled me to see that things that were happening in my married life were not normal nor acceptable. I was still living with my husband during the beginning of the pandemic, and the situation at home became even worse during this time. The Freedom Programme that I had started attending had stopped due to lockdown, and my husband was making it practically impossible for us all to leave the house at all. Even through all this, VOICES were there for me and I felt supported. I felt that someone knew what was going on in my life and cared about whether I was OK or not. I was able to grab a phone call with my support worker whenever I could sneak away from the house, and it was so comforting to talk things over. They helped me have the confidence and strength to plan to leave my home, and the abuse."

Domestic and sexual abuse counselling

VOICES was able to sustain specialist support for both domestic and sexual abuse for our clients throughout 2020/21, with the support of COVID-related funding from the National Lottery Awards for All and Comic Relief/Womens Aid.

Domestic and sexual abuse often coexist, and the traumatic impacts of these experiences are often misunderstood or go unrecognised while survivors receive interventions or find themselves in court processes. Yet the harm caused to mental health and wellbeing is profound and widespread: recent research published in the British Journal of Psychiatry revealed that women who have been abused by a partner are 3 times more likely to suffer depression or severe conditions such as schizophrenia or bipolar disorder than other women. Generic approaches that are not trauma informed or specialist in nature may fail to address or even worsen a client's trauma and PTSD.

Being able to continue with domestic and sexual abuse counselling both face to face and remotely through the pandemic provided a critical service to stabilise and improve psychological wellbeing for clients who were particularly badly affected by lockdown. In response to people's needs, VOICES provides specialist psychotherapy support addressing both domestic abuse and often co-existing sexual abuse, or childhood abuse experiences. This is long-term, trauma-informed and person-centred psychotherapy with a focus on stabilisation and recovery. It provides added value to group work, as women are able to attend while receiving support with embedded trauma.

We use trauma informed psychotherapy (TIP) and psychoeducation. Most forms of counselling and psychotherapy use self-reflection for better understanding, however a traumatised person, especially one who has been repeatedly blamed in abusive relationships, can experience psychotherapy as a spiral into greater depths of self-blame, and if the practitioner is not trauma informed the client can be re-traumatised, deepening the harm caused in the DA relationship. It is innovative to use TIP alongside group work, the Freedom Programme and recovery work, allowing the person to grow in the therapeutic relationship and within the VOICES community, being seen and validated, which consolidates progress while reducing the risk of being re-traumatised.

The teamwork is innovative and very successful in stabilising clients as they progress. Many organisations compartmentalise different needs, mental health, physical health, and practical services, but clients can feel invisible and misunderstood. VOICES uses this approach to integrate their response. The impact in terms of local community benefit is that women who don't meet different services' criteria can access support at VOICES and recover from the impact of Domestic Abuse, mentally and physically. Many service users are mothers; recovery means they are able to care for their children, meaning the children are less often in care and are better equipped to cope with their own recovery. Well mothers and children save the state a vast amount of financial support, together with the intrinsic value of people's well-being contributing to a positive society.

Free legal clinic for VOICES clients

VOICES' family law advice service continued throughout the pandemic, despite the temporary closure during 2020 of our free Law Clinic because of the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown affecting our partner, the University of the West of England Law Department. With some pro bono family law support and individual support from the VOICES team, women were able to continue to gain advice and support to attend remote court hearings at a safe space with a support worker or at home if preferred. There is strong uptake of this service, which is provided free of charge by VOICES, and over 40% of our clients accessed our family law support, achieving positive outcomes to legal issues due to working with the VOICES team and partners.

Funding support meant that from September 2020 VOICES had a dedicated member of staff to manage referrals, assessments and legal support (running our online Law Clinic).

"After leaving, my husband remained living in the family home and refused to vacate this to allow me to return with the children. I applied for an occupation order, however the court was unable to deal with this at the first hearing and I did not have the financial resources to pursue this further. The children and I lived with my parents for 4 and a half months, with my daughter and me sharing a bedroom. Then in December 2020 we moved into rented accommodation. The abuse caused a lot of financial strain. Whilst in the marriage, financial threats were made on regular occasions, with him threatening to withhold money from me. This financial abuse continued after I left as he refused to provide any financial support. I have had to borrow £14,000 to date to pay for legal fees. I have now reached the point where I cannot afford legal representation and so I have represented myself through child arrangement order hearings and shortly will start on the financial settlement alone also. I have never claimed any benefits before, but now I receive Universal Credit to top up my salary, meaning we can afford to rent a house, pay for food and bills etc. I have used the Law Clinic on 3 occasions."

VOICES as a provider of practice education

VOICES provides annual practice education to social work students from the University of Bath between September and February each year. Students have the opportunity to learn in a practice setting from VOICES' team about trauma-informed approaches to domestic abuse support and the importance of involving survivors in the design of their own service. This provides expertise and insight, which they can take into their own working practice as they begin their professional lives. In return, VOICES benefits from their engagements and support with group work, individual client support and administration for the support staff team.

Financial abuse support

VOICES hardship fund

VOICES' Hardship Fund proved crucial to clients who were victims of financial abuse and coercive control through 2020/21. Crucial, small-scale financial and practical help at the right time can be instrumental in helping survivors make significant progress towards recovery and a productive and fulfilled life after domestic abuse.

Clients subject to coercive control and financial abuse are particularly vulnerable to short-term debts and problems caused by a perpetrator. This can restrict access to other forms of financial support, and evidence of income/outgoings is particularly hard for many domestic abuse victims to provide. Specialist advocacy from VOICES and elsewhere is critical in understanding the whole picture around finances, debt and need that together create hardship for adult and child victims of domestic abuse.

12% - almost 1 in 8 of VOICES clients - received Hardship funding during the pandemic lockdown to overcome barriers at transition points in their recovery.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Hardship Fund has proven an innovative and flexible way to address unexpected expenses over lockdown for women who have had a drop in income or needed to update tech in order to homeschool children.

Examples are as varied as the individual circumstances of our clients, and include:

- Fresh food and heating costs, together with budgeting support, for a client with complex PTSD and a young child;
- Health monitoring equipment for an unwell client with anxiety, living alone;
- A replacement mobile phone for isolated client with depression/anxiety, enabling them to keep in touch with family in her country of origin;
- A mattress for a client denied access to family home and belongings by ex-partner;
- UCAS application fee for a client wishing to access higher education;
- A replacement mobile phone for a teenage child at risk of harm and isolated by the need to move to safe accommodation;
- Removal costs to enable a client to leave accommodation and cut ties with abuser, until a refuge place became available; and
- Travel costs to out-of-area family court hearings.

This approach has delivered new knowledge about the nature of financial/economic abuse, about gaps in provision of short-term crisis funding for abuse survivors, and about the barriers hindering recovery for survivors and their families. Targeted crisis funding such as this has recently been recognised nationally as an effective approach, through the Circle Fund run by SafeLives and NatWest, involving specialist services around the country. VOICES' CEO is a member of the steering group for this national project.

Whole system change through survivor voice

Mission priority

To create whole-system change through putting survivor voice at the heart of policy & research - develop VOICES as a platform for the unmediated voice of experience, providing opportunities for clients to contribute to research and policy, sharing learning and recovery expertise as a national resource for achieving system change in relation to domestic abuse.

To enable survivors to contribute to knowledge about domestic abuse, support to recover sufficiently must be provided. VOICES set out to fund and provide this kind of recovery support, so that whole-system learning, and change, becomes possible. Despite the pandemic, this work expanded in 2020/21.

VOICES' founding mission was to ensure survivors are at the heart of the conversation locally and nationally around how best to prevent and respond to domestic abuse. After 7 years of building relationships in the research world, as well as among national partners including SafeLives and Women's Aid, the spectrum of VOICES' consultation work has grown to include family law (family law professionals and training needs, Cafcass and child contact), health and mental health (Violence and Abuse Mental Health Network), and local government (advocating for survivors to be creating, not rating services at local area level).

Women's voices at the centre

The involvement of survivor's voices via VOICES in developing strategies for the prevention of domestic abuse testifies to the reach a small, local, survivor-led charity can have, through its focus on long-term recovery work and advocacy for survivors to help create services. The UK Government's current move towards developing a Women's Health Strategy points to a similar focus: A consultation is now open via a call for evidence which lists six core themes, the first of which is "Placing women's voices at the centre of their health and care."

However, as a recent letter in the BMJ notes:
"A strategy that aims to place women's voices at the centre of their health and care must not simply require women to carry on shouting into a void. It should require system leaders to start taking patient experience more seriously: treating it as evidence, and building it into practice."
https://blogs.bmj.com/bmj/2021/05/13/placing-womens-voices-at-the-centre-of-their-care/

In 2020/21, VOICES brought the charity's expertise in survivor consultation and recovery work as members of the following organisations:

- The Domestic Abuse Partnership Board in Bath & North East Somerset (the only non-commissioned specialist service and survivor voice organisation on the Board);
- Women's Aid's national Research Policy, Consultation and Campaigns Group (RPCC) and Members' CEO group;
- SafeLives Domestic Abuse Services CEO group, meeting regularly through the pandemic to discuss service delivery and challenges;
- The Violence and Abuse Mental Health Research Network;
- The Mental Health Collaborative for Bath & North East Somerset;
- The LGBTQ+ Action Group for Bath & North East Somerset; and
- The Trauma Informed Network in the South West.

A key outcome of VOICES' whole-picture support model and survivor consultation was the development of the VOICES Plan on a Page as a planning tool for holistic DA service commissioning and delivery. This was:

- Offered to the Domestic Abuse Partnership board ahead of the new Domestic Abuse Bill becoming law and bringing with it new obligations and recommendations for Local Authorities ("Supporting the development of an integrated domestic violence and abuse care pathway for BANES");
- Provided a whole-picture DA service delivery model to the Mental Health Transformation partnership leads for BANES, as part of advocating for Domestic Abuse to be included in the initial MH Transformation delivery plan; and
- Used as a framework for a whole-picture and long-term Domestic Abuse response by organisations and local areas to inform a presentation by the charity's CEO about the importance of supporting meaningful consultation with survivors to over 500 participants from local authorities across the UK in a DA Bill Ready workshop organised by SafeLives in March 2021.

National consultation by VOICES during 2020/21

Cafcass

VOICES' CEO Ursula Lindenberg with other members of the Cafcass Learning & Improvement board took part in the first independent Cafcass case moderation audit chaired by Professor Eileen Munro. The team assessed case records and moderation. She subsequently contributed to an independent Cafcass Complaints Review process, and to the development of the Cafcass Learning & Improvement Plan, due to cover all aspects of training, practice and feedback from 2021. She is a member of the Cafcass Family Forum, established in 2021.

Ministry of Justice (MoJ)

The MoJ research unit looking at Repeated Returns to Court in family justice settings consulted directly with VOICES staff and clients to compile a report provided directly to the Justice Minister.

SafeLives

VOICES CEO Ursula Lindenberg is a Safelives Pioneer, who featured in the podcast https://safelives.org.uk/reach-in as part of the national Reach In campaign to raise community awareness of domestic abuse and bystander support. In September 2020, Ursula also spoke to researcher Dr. Alison Gregory at Bristol University for a SafeLives podcast about how family, friends and neighbours can support someone living with domestic abuse during the current lockdown: https://soundcloud.com/domestic-abuse-podcast/how-can-family-and-friends-help-someone-experiencing-domestic-abuse

Home Office - Ask for ANI scheme

VOICES CEO also supported the development with SafeLives of the Home Office's Ask for Ani campaign, launched in January 2021 allowing people at risk from domestic abuse to seek confidential support in thousands of pharmacies across the country. The service was available in 5,000 pharmacies and was being used once every 30 hours by April 2021, with the need predicted to rise.

National Perpetrator Strategy

VOICES was a signatory to the national Call to Action for a DA Perpetrator Strategy for England & Wales in January 2020 http://driveproject.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Call-to-Action-Final.pdf. This led to a UK Government commitment to include perpetrator strategy in overall measures published in relation to the new Domestic Abuse Act 2021, and to invest £10 million in tackling perpetrator behaviour in 2020/21 and £25 million in 2021/22.

Survivor voice in national health strategy

On 10 December 2020, VOICES' CEO provided a keynote presentation to a national conference, "Identifying and Supporting People Who Are Experiencing Domestic Violence and Abuse: Improving Practice during Covid-19", speaking alongside Kenny Gibson, NHS Head of Safeguarding.

From December 2020, VOICES staff and lived experience volunteers took part in the research steering group for PRECODE, a COVID-19 research project with Professor Gene Feder and Bristol University Medical School to assess GP responses to DA survivors through remote consultations during lockdown. Researchers said the input from VOICES had resulted in significant changes to their research approach. The project will inform national guidelines on remote consultation for GPs working with people at risk from domestic abuse.

Violence & Abuse Mental Health Research Network (VAMHN) VOICES are working with Claire Powell at UCL, facilitating survivor feedback on research design and questionnaires on a project looking at mental health outcomes for mothers and children after domestic abuse. The 2-year project began in January 2020 and consultation continued with survivor reviewers in March 2021.

Recognition for VOICES work and impact in 2020/21

Co-authoring a paper published in the BMJ
VOICES' work with health researchers led to a request to provide lived experience insights to a research project looking at education of medical doctors in identifying and responding to domestic abuse among their patients, and to co-authorship of a paper published in the British Medical Journal (BMJ) in May 2021. The BMJ, which has a circulation of 80,000 is a leading international medical journal, and the article highlighted concerns about medical professionals listening and responding to survivor's needs for care and safety.

Providing a platform for survivor voice nationally
"VOICES' plays a unique role working alongside SafeLives and with our stakeholders in our mission to end domestic abuse. VOICES is a highly trusted, valued and respected organisation and CEO and SafeLives Pioneer Ursula, courageously leads staff and clients to use their lived experience as expertise to authentically inform and influence our work, playing an important part in transforming the national response to domestic abuse. This has spanned 6 years and their expertise, bravery and influence keeps growing.

They have guided and worked alongside us by challenging the response to survivors and children in the Family Justice system, influencing the whole family response to domestic abuse and child safeguarding, to supporting local areas to be DA Bill ready. Challenging the accountability and responsibility of those in positions of power and elevating the role of survivor voice and expertise.

From 2018 and a meeting called by Jess Philips MP and Cafcass, to the 2020 review of Cafcass' Domestic Abuse Pathway, to most recently participating in national training of Cafcass practice staff, VOICES have brought their unique perspective of lived expertise to how processes, tools and structures impact on child and adult victims of domestic abuse.

VOICES critical, expertise and solution focused approach has influenced Cafcass' improvement framework and gained their trust to be invited to join the Learning and Improvement Board established as a result of the Harm Report and participate in the Moderation Panel led by Dr Eileen Munro.

Cafcass' Assistant Director of Policy said: "Ursula from VOICES has been a member of the Cafcass Learning and Improvement Board since it was established in September 2020 to oversee an improvement programme for Cafcass' work with children and families who have experienced domestic abuse. Ursula's input has been invaluable and has ensured that the voice of those with lived experience of domestic abuse has been at the heart of our improvement plans. We hope that the improvements will have a long lasting impact on the experiences of the children and families that Cafcass works with."

Other key moments include in 2021 staff and clients participating in a Ministry of Justice Review to understand the causes of repeat cases. VOICES provided client expertise and challenged the approach the MOJ team were taking to their research. Results included paying survivors for their time, an expectation VOICES lead on, to demonstrate the value and equality of lived expertise.

Legal Education Foundation funding, which we secured in 2020, was almost entirely down to VOICES and Ursula who've pushed us for over 5 years to pay attention to what is happening in Family Court and the impact this is having on children and adult victims/survivors of domestic abuse. This uniquely collaborative project will train lawyers/barristers in family courts, shaped by understanding survivors' perspectives to get better, safer judicial outcomes for adults and children. VOICES will lead the transformation of system reform and the impact on survivors of domestic abuse having faith in the system, in believing their safety and that of their child is paramount and better, safer social justice outcomes are achieved.

VOICES are a trusted specialist service whose expertise and insight we need as a second tier organisation to influence national media, Government bodies, statutory organisations and even Royalty – through our patron the Duchess of Cornwall, and to reach out to survivors nationally We cannot do this as authentically or powerfully without the lived expertise that VOICES brings to these conversation."
Michelle Phillips, Director of Practice, SafeLives, July 2021.

Achievements against objectives set
Despite the challenges of 2020/21 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, VOICES achieved all of the objectives set for the organisation for this operating year:

- Sustainable growth - VOICES has grown in terms of capacity and income, while maintaining its core activities and ensuring that clients were not turned away where capacity was a challenge;
- Increased partnership working - VOICES has developed partnerships not only around direct support for clients but also consultation and survivor voice work, through connections with researchers and national DA organisations, and locally, achieving greater connection with health/mental health commissioners and preparing the ground for co-located services with services working in the sexual violence and criminal justice/rehabilitation sectors;
- Diversifying income - Research and consultation are beginning to develop as new income streams for VOICES, raising the prospect, along with room hire and training, of increasing our unrestricted income and improving VOICES' financial position going forward;
- Safe working spaces - VOICES took a step further towards the development of a new Safe Space Centre for Bath and began raising funds for this purpose, scoping premises options and finding partner organisations with expertise in trauma informed working. This work will continue in 2021/22; and
- Increasing VOICES' influence, both through consultation and social media/website development - VOICES achieved funding and pro bono support to create a new website for the charity in 2021, and developed a partnership with specialist social media consultants 92MinutesLtd.

The Covid-19 pandemic caused significant strain for VOICES as both community and corporate support was severely hampered by lock-down (community events) and working from home (corporate events). Unfortunately this meant that VOICES was not able to benefit from being Charity of the Year for a local business or from local Rotary Club fund-raising events.

Whilst this deficit was addressed through success in gaining a number of emergency Covid related grants these came with strict spending timescales and did not provide funding that supported longer-term investment in staff and services.

VOICES position has been safeguarded by the Five Year NLF grant.

Further difficulties facing the charity included a breach in confidentiality which required us to spend unrestricted money on sourcing other working locations through lockdown and beginning the project to bring a Safe Space Centre to Bath.

Finally, the loss of a significant local funder due to changing priorities in funding strategy, means the charity is seeking additional multi-year funding for core activities and to secure the continued work and development of the organisation as a centre of excellence for domestic abuse recovery work and lived experience consultation.

Financial review
The charity ended the 2020/2021 operating year with increased reserves and no unplanned debtors.

It was able to deliver all planned activities without compromise to quantity or quality.

VOICES finished 2020/21 in a strong financial position with net assets of £146,026 compared with £132,264 in 2019/20. This increase of 10% on the previous year reflected an improved income position, benefiting from the second year of the 5 year National Lottery Reaching Communities grant of £319,000. In addition, the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in a number of ad-hoc, non-recurrent grants being available to address short-term pressures resulting from restrictions in community fundraising and demand for services. The strengthened income position allowed the charity to invest in additional clinical support to meet increased service demands. VOICES has also strengthened its financial governance arrangements and secured the services of an independent book-keeping and accountancy firm as planned. Between June and August 2021, the charity worked with Modula Digital to develop a trauma-informed website designed to provide digital services to beneficiaries and the general public around domestic abuse recovery support. During the same period, VOICES identified and fundraised towards a move to new and larger premises to enable the activities of the charity to develop and expand, and to create increased partnership opportunities with other organisations addressing violence against women and girls.

Reserves policy
VOICES held unrestricted reserves of £52,024 as of 31 August 2021 (2020: £30,704). The stated aim of the charity being to hold unrestricted reserves to cover 3 months' operating costs (£54,705, based on annual expenditure of £218,820), the amount of unrestricted reserves held is 24% of the annual expenditure and close to the target set at the end of the period.

The board of trustees has considered its reserves policy and set itself the ambition to have reserves at a level that meet the following criteria:

- To sustain the charity's core services supported by unrestricted funds, for a period of three months without detriment to its beneficiaries;
- To support the charity in providing a skeleton service for a further three months (including overheads) to enable emergency funding to be sought and available for use; and
- To meet the winding up costs for the charity should there be no prospect of funding going forward – such costs would be in terms of redundancies and meeting any contractual debts.

Principle risks
The principal risks facing the charity are:
- Financial pressures resulting from rising demand for specialist domestic abuse services, including mental health support and existential support for clients, compounded by the continuing pandemic, the additional upheaval for corporate charity supporters created by Britain exiting the European Union in January 2021, and the loss of a multi-year core funder;
- Continued access to appropriate working premises that can facilitate the delivery of VOICES services; and
- Workload increases both in direct service delivery and demand for fundraising and partnership working cannot be met by existing staff without risk of burn-out and/or resignations.

Structure, governance and management
Vacancies arising may be filled by the decision of the members at the AGM or by charity trustees "at any time" (clause 13 (4) and (5) of CIO Constitution).

Positions are advertised through local charity networks and appropriate social media. In addition informal personal networks are used.

A written role description is used and prospective trustees present CVs and have discussions with CEO and Trustees prior to appointment. Any links with existing Trustees are declared at this point.

During 2020/21, VOICES had a board of 6 trustees, including the Chair, Secretary, and Chairs of Finance and HR Sub-Committees. VOICES was led by a CEO assisted by an Administrator, a Head of Services who manages the staff team comprising a Referrals and Law Lead, a Recovery Practitioner, an associate psychotherapist and students on placement.

No paid services were provided by related parties of either staff or trustees during 2020/21.

Public benefit
The trustees have had due regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit in their oversight of the main activities undertaken by VOICES during the year referred to in this report.

Statement of responsibilities of the trustees
The trustees are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102: The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and the incoming resources and application of resources, including the net income or expenditure, of the charity for the year. In preparing those financial statements the trustees are required to:
- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- state whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and which enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the constitution. The trustees 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 corporate and financial information included on the charity's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Members of the charity have no liability to contribute to the assets of the charity in the event of winding up. The trustees are members of the charity but this entitles them only to voting rights. The trustees have no beneficial interest in the charity.

Independent examiners
Godfrey Wilson Limited were re-appointed as independent examiners to the charity during the year and have expressed their willingness to continue in that capacity.

Approved by the trustees on 28 February 2022 and signed on their behalf by

Brigid Musselwhite
Chair of the trustees

Independent examiner's report

To the trustees of

VOICES

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of VOICES (the CIO) for the year ended 31 August 2021, which are set out on pages 19 to 32.

Responsibilities and basis of report
As the charity trustees of the CIO you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the CIO's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement
Godfrey Wilson Limited also provides management accounts and payroll services to the CIO. I confirm that as a member of the ICAEW I am subject to the FRC's Revised Ethical Standard 2016, which I have applied with respect to this engagement.

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

(1) accounting records were not kept in respect of the CIO as required by section 130 of the Act; or
(2) the accounts do not accord with those records; or
(3) the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Date: 28 February 2022
Rob Wilson FCA
Member of the ICAEW
For and on behalf of:
Godfrey Wilson Limited
Chartered accountants and statutory auditors
5th Floor Mariner House
62 Prince Street
Bristol
BS1 4QD

VOICES

Statement of financial activities

For the year ended 31 August 2021

	Note	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	**2021 Total £**	2020 Total £
Income from:					
Donations	3	27,000	47,455	**74,455**	56,445
Charitable activities	4	154,527	1,600	**156,127**	138,246
Total income		181,527	49,055	**230,582**	194,691
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds		-	16,840	**16,840**	8,767
Charitable activities		187,585	14,395	**201,980**	121,732
Total expenditure	6	187,585	31,235	**218,820**	130,499
Net income / (expenditure)		(6,058)	17,820	**11,762**	64,192
Transfers between funds		(3,500)	3,500	**-**	-
Net movement in funds	7	(9,558)	21,320	**11,762**	64,192
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward		103,560	30,704	**134,264**	70,072
Total funds carried forward		94,002	52,024	**146,026**	134,264

All of the above results are derived from continuing activities. There were no other recognised gains or losses other than those stated above. Movements in funds are disclosed in note 13 to the accounts.

VOICES

Balance sheet

As at 31 August 2021

	Note	£	2021 £	2020 £
Current assets				
Debtors	10	**56,360**		-
Cash at bank and in hand		**96,868**		151,036
		153,228		151,036
Liabilities				
Creditors: amounts falling due within 1 year	11	**(7,202)**		(16,772)
Net assets	12		**146,026**	134,264
Funds	13			
Restricted funds			**94,002**	103,560
Unrestricted funds			**52,024**	30,704
Total charity funds			**146,026**	134,264

Approved by the trustees on 28 February 2022 and signed on their behalf by

Brigid Musselwhite
Chair of the trustees

1. Accounting policies

a) Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities in preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

VOICES meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note.

b) Going concern basis of accounting

The accounts have been prepared on the assumption that the charity is able to continue as a going concern, despite the impact of the continuing COVID-19 pandemic. The charity holds unrestricted, general reserves of £52,024 and a cash balance of £96,868. The trustees therefore consider that the charity has sufficient cash reserves to continue as a going concern for a period of at least 12 months from the date on which these financial statements are approved.

c) Income

Income is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the item of income have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

d) Donated services and facilities

Donated professional services and donated facilities are recognised as income when the charity has control over the item, any conditions associated with the donated item have been met, the receipt of economic benefit from the use by the charity of the item, is probable and the economic benefit can be measured reliably. In accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102), general volunteer time is not recognised.

On receipt, donated professional services and donated facilities are recognised on the basis of the value of the gift to the charity which is the amount the charity would have been willing to pay to obtain services or facilities of equivalent economic benefit on the open market; a corresponding amount is then recognised in expenditure in the period of receipt.

e) Interest receivable

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity: this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the bank.

f) Funds accounting

Unrestricted funds are available to spend on activities that further any of the purposes of the charity. Designated funds are unrestricted funds of the charity which the trustees have decided at their discretion to set aside to use for a specific purpose. Restricted funds are donations which the donor has specified are to be solely used for particular areas of the charity's work or for specific projects being undertaken by the charity.

1. **Accounting policies (continued)**

g) Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

h) Allocation of support and governance costs

Support costs are those functions that assist the work of the charity but do not directly undertake charitable activities. Governance costs are the costs associated with the governance arrangements of the charity, including the costs of complying with constitutional and statutory requirements and any costs associated with the strategic management of the charity's activities. These costs have been allocated between cost of raising funds and expenditure on charitable activities on the basis of staff costs:

	2021	2020
Raising funds	**4.9%**	4.7%
Charitable activities	**95.1%**	95.3%

i) Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

j) Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

k) Creditors

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

l) Financial instruments

The charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value with the exception of bank loans which are subsequently recognised at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

m) Accounting estimates and key judgements

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

1. Accounting policies (continued)

m) Accounting estimates and key judgements (continued)

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

There are no key sources of estimation uncertainty that have a significant effect on the amounts recognised in the financial statements.

n) Pension costs

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme for its employees. There are no further liabilities other than that already recognised in the SOFA.

2. Prior period comparatives: statement of financial activities

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	**2020 Total £**
Income from:			
Donations	6,500	49,945	**56,445**
Charitable activities	138,246	-	**138,246**
Total income	144,746	49,945	**194,691**
Expenditure on:			
Raising funds	-	8,767	**8,767**
Charitable activities	95,260	26,472	**121,732**
Total expenditure	95,260	35,239	**130,499**
Net income and net movement in funds	49,486	14,706	**64,192**

3. Income from donations

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	**2021 Total £**
Donations	27,000	23,672	**50,672**
Gifts in kind	-	23,783	**23,783**
Total income from donations	27,000	47,455	**74,455**

Prior period comparative:

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2020 Total £
Donations	6,500	45,045	51,545
Gifts in kind	-	4,900	4,900
	6,500	49,945	56,445

Gifts in kind includes the following items:	**2021 £**	2020 £
Project / session expenses	**1,500**	400
Office expenses	**-**	2,500
Consultancy	**6,000**	2,000
Legal and professional fees	**16,283**	-
	23,783	4,900

4. Income from charitable activities

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2021 Total £
Grants > £5,000			
Avon & Somerset Police & Crime Commissioner	27,143	-	**27,143**
Quartet Community Foundation	10,000	-	**10,000**
Lloyds Bank Foundation	24,565	-	**24,565**
St John's Foundation	11,025	-	**11,025**
The National Lottery Reaching Communities	60,794	-	**60,794**
Comic Relief	15,000	-	**15,000**
Grants < £5,000	6,000	-	**6,000**
Training income	-	1,600	**1,600**
Total income from charitable activities	154,527	1,600	**156,127**

Prior period comparative:

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2020 Total £
Grants > £5,000			
Avon & Somerset Police & Crime Commissioner	24,771	-	24,771
Quartet Community Foundation	9,928	-	9,928
National Lottery Corona Virus Community Support Fund	9,913	-	9,913
Lloyds Bank Foundation	24,565	-	24,565
St John's Foundation	30,630	-	30,630
The National Lottery Reaching Communities	27,000	-	27,000
Grants < £5,000	11,439	-	11,439
Total income from charitable activities	138,246	-	138,246

5. Government grants

The charity receives government grants, defined as funding from Avon & Somerset Police & Crime Commissioner and The National Lottery. The total value of such grants during the year ended 31 August 2021 was £87,937 (2020: £61,684). There are no unfulfilled conditions or contingencies attaching to these grants.

6. Total expenditure

	Raising funds £	Charitable activities £	Support and governance costs £	**2021 Total £**
Staff costs (note 8)	3,701	71,338	42,571	**117,610**
Project / session expenses	-	7,913	-	**7,913**
Other staff costs	-	2,046	-	**2,046**
Volunteer expenses	-	340	-	**340**
Provision of charitable services	-	2,032	-	**2,032**
Fundraising expenses	8,025	-	-	**8,025**
Office expenses	490	9,447	5,638	**15,575**
Insurance and premises costs	400	7,714	4,603	**12,717**
Consultancy	-	19,745	6,000	**25,745**
Legal and professional fees	-	-	18,018	**18,018**
Accountancy	277	5,337	3,185	**8,799**
Sub-total	12,893	125,912	80,015	**218,820**
Allocation of support and governance costs	3,947	76,068	(80,015)	**-**
Total expenditure	**16,840**	**201,980**	**-**	**218,820**

Total governance costs were £2,563 (2020: £3,091).

6. Total expenditure (continued)

Prior period comparative

	Raising funds £	Charitable activities £	Support and governance costs £	2020 Total £
Staff costs (note 8)	2,606	52,820	26,626	82,052
Project / session expenses	-	3,291	-	3,291
Other staff costs	-	-	623	623
Volunteer expenses	-	217	887	1,104
Provision of charitable services	-	2,132	-	2,132
Fundraising expenses	3,704	-	-	3,704
Marketing	-	1,914	-	1,914
Office expenses	259	5,242	2,643	8,144
Insurance and premises costs	409	8,296	4,181	12,886
Consultancy	-	11,558	-	11,558
Legal and professional fees	-	-	619	619
Accountancy	-	-	2,472	2,472
Sub-total	6,978	85,470	38,051	130,499
Allocation of support and governance costs	1,789	36,262	(38,051)	-
Total expenditure	8,767	121,732	-	130,499

7. Net movement in funds

This is stated after charging:

	2021	2020
	£	£
Trustees' remuneration	**Nil**	Nil
Trustees' reimbursed expenses	**Nil**	Nil
Independent examiners' remuneration:		
▪ Independent examination (including VAT)	**1,800**	1,740
▪ Other services	**6,767**	732

8. Staff costs and numbers

Staff costs were as follows:

	2021	2020
	£	£
Salaries and wages	**109,961**	75,153
Social security costs	**3,870**	2,609
Pension costs	**3,779**	4,290
	117,610	82,052

No employee earned more than £60,000 during the year.

The key management personnel of the charity comprise the Chief Executive Officer and Head of Services. The total employee benefits of the key management personnel were £62,720 (2020: £53,114).

	2021	2020
	No.	No.
Average head count	**5.00**	4.00

9. Taxation

The charity is exempt from corporation tax as all its income is charitable and is applied for charitable purposes.

10. Debtors

	2021	2020
	£	£
Accrued income	**56,360**	-

11. Creditors : amounts due within 1 year

	2021	2020
	£	£
Trade creditors	**1,473**	-
Accruals	**3,819**	8,591
Other taxation and social security	**1,447**	848
Pension	**464**	7,333
	7,202	16,772

12. Analysis of net assets between funds

	Restricted funds	Unrestricted funds	**Total funds**
	£	£	**£**
Current assets	95,821	57,407	**153,228**
Current liabilities	(1,819)	(5,383)	**(7,202)**
Net assets at 31 August 2021	**94,002**	**52,024**	**146,026**

Prior year comparative	Restricted funds	Unrestricted funds	**Total funds**
	£	£	**£**
Current assets	110,979	40,057	**151,036**
Current liabilities	(7,419)	(9,353)	**(16,772)**
Net assets at 31 August 2020	**103,560**	**30,704**	**134,264**

13. Movements in funds

	At 1 September 2020 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers between funds £	**At 31 August 2021 £**
Restricted funds					
Hardship Various Funders	5,390	-	(1,890)	(3,500)	**-**
Persula Foundation	185	-	(185)	-	**-**
Avon & Somerset Police & Crime Commissioner	20,652	27,143	(43,672)	-	**4,123**
Allen Lane Foundation	1,262	3,500	(4,309)	-	**453**
Quartet Community Foundation	4,183	10,000	(4,184)	-	**10,000**
National Lottery Corona Virus Community Support	9,840	-	(9,840)	-	**-**
The National Lottery Reaching Communities	262	56,000	(56,262)	-	**-**
Group Costs Various Funders	2,439	-	(1,212)	-	**1,227**
Lloyds Bank Foundation	20,057	24,565	(26,106)	-	**18,516**
Care Forum Health Watch BANES	2,500	2,500	(4,226)	-	**774**
St John's Foundation (Freedom)	2,195	1,025	(2,534)	-	**686**
St John's Foundation (Admin, Comms &	-	10,000	-	-	**10,000**
Counselling Pot Various Funders	6,500	-	(2,535)	-	**3,966**
St John's Foundation (Programme)	28,095	-	(15,632)	-	**12,463**
Comic Relief Women's Aid	-	15,000	(15,000)	-	**-**
The National Lottery (New Premises)	-	31,794	-	-	**31,794**
Total restricted funds	103,560	181,527	(187,585)	(3,500)	**94,002**
Unrestricted funds					
General funds	30,704	49,055	(31,235)	3,500	**52,024**
Total unrestricted funds	30,704	49,055	(31,235)	3,500	**52,024**
Total funds	134,264	230,582	(218,820)	-	**146,026**

13. Movements in funds (continued)

Purposes of restricted funds

Hardship Various Funders	For clients who need emergency funding which they can not get anywhere else or within the required time constraints. Funders have agreed to transfer funds to unrestricted due to a new hardship funding source from the Circle.
Persula Foundation	To go towards core costs and counselling services for clients.
Avon & Somerset Police & Crime Commissioner	COVID-19 emergency funding to go towards the core operations of the charity and to cover the costs of the referrals support coordinator.
Allen Lane Foundation	To go towards core costs of the charity up until November 2021.
Quartet Community Foundation	To go towards the costs of a new premises.
The National Lottery Reaching Communities	To go towards core costs up until 30 September 2021.
Group Costs Various Funders	To cover the costs of refreshments and other group services costs.
Lloyds Bank Foundation	To cover the costs of the recovery practitioner up until 31 March 2022.
Care Forum Health Watch BANES	To cover the costs associated with the Healthwatch survey.
St John's Foundation (Freedom)	Project costs for Freedom group work.
St John's Foundation (Marketing)	To go towards expenses relating to our new premises.
Counselling Pot Various Funders	To go towards the cost of counselling services for clients.
St John's Foundation (Programme)	To cover the salary for the head of services and costs associated with group work.
Comic Relief Women's Aid	This was a one off COVID grant to go towards our new website development, communications consults and survivor consultation.
The National Lottery (New Premises)	Uplift funding as part of existing Reaching Communities grant. Designated for premises project costs.

13. Movements in funds (continued)

Prior year comparative	At 1 September 2019 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers between funds £	**At 31 August 2020 £**
Restricted funds					
Hardship Various Funders	3,373	3,000	(983)	-	**5,390**
Persula Foundation	185	-	-	-	**185**
Avon & Somerset Police & Crime Commissioner	-	24,771	(4,119)	-	**20,652**
Allen Lane Foundation	-	3,500	(2,238)	-	**1,262**
Quartet Community Foundation	1,608	9,928	(7,353)	-	**4,183**
National Lottery Corona Virus Community Support	572	9,913	(645)	-	**9,840**
The National Lottery Reaching Communities	-	27,000	(26,738)	-	**262**
Group Costs Various Funders	-	2,439	-	-	**2,439**
Bath Building Society	-	-	-	-	**-**
Lloyds Bank Foundation	14,965	24,565	(19,473)	-	**20,057**
Care Forum Health Watch BANES	-	2,500	-	-	**2,500**
St John's Foundation (Freedom)	6,439	-	(4,244)	-	**2,195**
St John's Foundation (Admin, Comms & Counselling Pot Various Funders	2,914	-	(2,914)	-	**-**
	-	6,500	-	-	**6,500**
Rosa Fund for Women	-	-	-	-	**-**
St John's Foundation (Programme)	24,018	30,630	(26,553)	-	**28,095**
Total restricted funds	54,074	144,746	(95,260)	-	**103,560**
Unrestricted funds					
General funds	15,998	49,945	(35,239)	-	**30,704**
Total unrestricted funds	15,998	49,945	(35,239)	-	**30,704**
Total funds	70,072	194,691	(130,499)	-	**134,264**

14. Related party transactions

There were no related party transactions in the year.

VOICES

England & Wales - Charity number 1159445

Accounts

Charity no. 1159445

VOICES

Report and Unaudited Financial Statements

31 August 2020

VOICES

Reference and administrative details

For the year ended 31 August 2020

Charity number	1159445
Registered office	PO Box 5184 Bath BA1 0RZ
Trustees	The trustees who served during the year and up to the date of this report were as follows: Peter Brandt — appointed 23 September 2019 Sarah Crayford-Brown — appointed 23 September 2019 Brigid Musselwhite — appointed 23 September 2019 Farha Rasul Jo Silver Mark Spoors — resigned 20 April 2020 Dr Helen Wehner
Chief executive officer	Ursula Lindenberg
Bankers	HSBC UK 62 George White Street Cabot Circus Bristol BS1 3BA
Independent examiners	Godfrey Wilson Limited Chartered accountants and statutory auditors 5th Floor Mariner House 62 Prince Street Bristol BS1 4QD

VOICES

Report of the trustees

For the year ended 31 August 2020

Reference and administrative information set out on page 1 forms part of this report. The financial statements comply with current statutory requirements, the Constitution and the Statement of Recommended Practice - Accounting and Reporting by Charities (effective from January 2019).

Objectives and activities
To promote and protect the good health of those affected by domestic abuse. To advance the education of the public in all issues relating to domestic abuse.

Group recovery programmes, running weekly in term-time:
- The Freedom Programme, a nationally recognised programme identifying domestic abuse and enabling survivors to make safe choices in moving out of abusive relationships;
- The Recovery Toolkit, a psycho-educational group recovery programme building resilience and promoting well-being while recovering from abusive relationships; and
- A social and creative group (Meeting And Talking Empowering Survivors, or MATES) combatting social isolation and promoting peer support and sustained recovery from domestic abuse.

Individual support sessions for survivors within Bath & North East Somerset, based on a Personal Recovery Plan designed in consultation with individual clients.

Telephone advice and signposting, and the provision of information for victims and survivors, family members, friends, and the wider public, via the charity's website and social media.

The provision of combined specialist counselling and therapeutic support for survivors of domestic and sexual abuse.

The provision of free legal advice and signposting through a monthly clinic for VOICES clients.

The provision of survivor consultation to local agencies, services and local and national charity partners.

The unique value of VOICES' work derives from its foundation in survivor- and peer-led services, developing trauma informed support for victims and survivors of domestic abuse, and supporting those with lived experience to contribute to the design and delivery of domestic abuse support locally and nationally.

Volunteers with lived experience and those without direct experience of domestic abuse make a valuable contribution to the work of VOICES, modelling the benefits of recovery work and peer support, and are provided with appropriate management, support and training if working directly with clients.

Volunteers have been involved in the following activities with VOICES:
- Contribution to consultations on survivor experience and the design of services, from mental health to legal advice services;
- Providing feedback on local/national domestic abuse policy and strategy;
- Provision of therapeutic support with appropriate professional qualifications;
- Provision of sporting, creative or therapeutic sessions to social group participants;
- Provision of mentoring/peer support; and
- Design of marketing/communications materials.

Achievements and performance

Practice education and training

From October 2019 to February 2020, VOICES had a further social work student on placement from Bath University. The successful placement augmented the student's understanding of domestic abuse as a future social work professional, learning about the long-term and complex impacts of domestic abuse on clients and their children, and impacts of other factors, such as housing, court processes and mental health challenges for clients and their children. VOICES gained greatly from having their input, enthusiasm and sensitivity working with clients both individually and in support of group programmes.

As part of the charity's partnership with the University of the West of England Law Department, VOICES also provided training around domestic abuse to law students from the department participating in the VOICES free legal clinic in Bath.

During November 2019, VOICES also provided support for the student-led Bristol University Law Clinic to develop accessible information for clients attending the pro bono law clinic pertaining to domestic abuse and legal support.

VOICES' staff provided group training to Social Care children's services social workers in October 2019 and support throughout the year to local professionals working in key areas of social care, health and mental health around individual cases and triaging clients who might benefit from specialist domestic abuse support.

Community-based awareness-raising

VOICES partnered the University of Bath women's group, the Minervas, providing healthy relationships training for students on campus, while the group and others within the Students Union raised funds and awareness for VOICES and local domestic abuse support organisations.

In November 2019, VOICES partnered with Bath Spa University to run a local 16 Days of Action campaign against violence against women and girls, with a film event at the University, live poetry by Naomi Donald, educator and founder of PODS (Protect Our Daughters and Sons) and creative work from VOICES clients.

Strengthening the financial position of VOICES through fundraising

VOICES was extremely grateful to our funders during the year, for enabling the delivery of our integrated services to over 160 local people and their families. Funders included St John's Foundation, Lloyds Bank Foundation, National Lottery Corona Virus Community Support Fund, The National Lottery Reaching Communities, The Tampon Tax/Quartet Community Foundation, Allen Lane Foundation, The Souter Charitable Trust, Bath Building Society, Rotary Club Bath, Bath Boules, McGreevy No 5 Settlement, Leonard Laity Stoate Charitable Trust, 90 Degrees South, Sir Jules Thorne Charitable Trust and The Blakemore Foundation. VOICES were fortunate to receive a major donation from ZEDRA, which was a stabilising factor for the charity in a challenging fundraising environment, and enabled us to continue and grow services.

Funding from St John's Foundation ensured the continued development of services and group programmes. Lloyds Bank Foundation provided support in the form of both our Invest grant for ground-breaking domestic abuse recovery work, and Enhance support for organisational development involving work with consultants, which has proven invaluable in strengthening processes and procedures and developing a business and partnerships strategy for the charity.

In March 2020, VOICES was awarded a Reaching Communities grant totalling £319,000 over 5 years by The National Lottery towards core costs of the charity. This is a key step towards further sustainability of the charity and enables VOICES to develop both direct services to clients and lived experience consultation over the coming years.

Service delivery

From September 2019 to March 2020, VOICES continued to expand group programmes, individual recovery work, specialist counselling, legal and debt management advice to clients, providing an integrated service at the charity's premises. The charity worked with c. 140 clients and their families' needs over the period.

Group programmes

VOICES' weekly Freedom Programme was full to capacity until lockdown in March 2020, with continuing support of creche facilities from Bath Area Play Project. The Recovery Toolkit, a trauma-informed psycho-educational follow-on programme, also generated strong participation from clients having completed the Freedom Programme, while participation in both programmes was strengthened by access to specialist counselling through VOICES and individual recovery support.

Individual support

VOICES' recovery practitioner and counsellor supported clients throughout the year, with the recovery practitioner having a full caseload by March 2020. Significant successes were recorded for clients who achieved transitions to safe housing, successful outcomes for child contact and other cases involving child/parent relationship concerns, as well as reductions in anxiety, risk levels, mental and physical health challenges for adult clients and children.

Law clinic

VOICES law clinic for local people impacted by domestic abuse continued successfully on a face-to-face basis until lockdown in March 2020.

Lived experience advocacy

VOICES has continued to represent and advocate for lived experience involvement in policy and services, through the local Domestic Abuse Partnership Board, through survivor consultations organised with the Violence and Abuse Mental Health Research Network, and through consultation work with national charities SafeLives and Women's Aid. The charity organised consultations with survivors and researchers, journalists and national organisations, and ran a 2019 pilot drama group exploring survivors' experience of family court proceedings. VOICES' Director also championed the value of lived experience through her work as a SafeLives lived experience trustee and Pioneer. This included talking about lived experience at the "Top 100" learning development event for public sector leaders organised by the Home Office in December 2019, presenting the work of VOICES to the Duchess of Cornwall in London in February 2020, and talking about the health response to domestic abuse at a Domestic Abuse Healthcare Summit in London in January 2020, alongside Nicole Jacobs, the Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales.

VOICES also attended the Legal Policy Forum on the Family Court system in London in January 2020, at which our Director was a keynote speaker, advocating for lived experience involvement in reform of the Family Court system.

Later in 2020, our Director was involved in a SafeLives steering group developing a system for hardship payments to domestic abuse survivors on behalf of NatWest bank.

COVID-19 impact and response

When the COVID-19 pandemic led to a national lockdown situation in March 2020, VOICES entered a period of huge change and potential threat, along with clients and the entire community.

The charity was able to respond in an agile and rapid way, in part due to the scale and nature of working relationships, and the high level of trust already established between staff and clients.

Staff conducted individual risk assessments for all clients, and agreed a support plan with each, ranging from occasional to intensive support by telephone and Zoom. As a result, all clients who wished to, continued to receive VOICES support on an individual basis.

VOICES continued to receive new referrals, albeit initially at a low level, but building more rapidly as lockdown eased in June/July.

Challenges for clients

Many clients had complex and escalating levels of mental health need and many with child contact responsibilities faced increasing levels of harassment and threats of legal action by ex-partners. Due to isolation and anxiety about both public health and potential risks from perpetrators, several women and families faced additional barriers to accessing support, including food and medicines. VOICES were able to partner with Sporting Family Change, local community groups and supermarkets to provide what people said they most needed: fresh food supplies for families with children, arts and crafts materials, school uniforms and shoes, and individual items through our Hardship Fund, including IT for children having to use mobile phones to access school work.

VOICES piloted a Zoom social and creative group through the summer to combat isolation and rebuild some social cohesion, and is now well-placed to return to online group delivery should that be required by the public health situation.

Challenges for the organisation

The pandemic mandated that staff work from home for several weeks, meaning that VOICES had to source new resources for staff, ensure that the building was secured and deep cleaned, and that risk assessments for both home working and an eventual return to office spaces were undertaken. Normal fundraising sources were in some cases no longer accessible, and community fundraising all but impossible. Anticipated income as Bath Building Society's Charity of the Year and through their and other charity events in the community was not forthcoming and students were unable to support VOICES after March 2020.

The charity not only had increased costs in providing more and different kinds of support to clients and through an increasing caseload, but also through the additional work needed to maintain and increase funding to ensure VOICES' continued services and sustainability, in an unprecedented situation where planning proved extremely difficult.

VOICES were involved in work to advocate that public messaging for domestic abuse support locally and nationally should be effective and accessible. VOICES worked with the local Domestic Abuse Partnership Board and the local authority to contribute to their responses to the pandemic, and worked as members of the Covid-19 Domestic Abuse Taskforce to share information and insights with others in the sector.

VOICES' position by August 2020

By August 2020, VOICES had achieved emergency Covid-19 funding from the Ministry of Justice / Avon & Somerset Police & Crime Commissioner fund of £24,771 and from National Lottery Corona Virus Community Support Fund of £9,913, enabling the charity to employ a clinical referrals coordinator to manage the increased level of demand for VOICES services and ensure effective triage and gateway services to specialist support. The charity is now in a position to be able to reposition itself as a remote provider of services alongside direct support, and to improve its use of social media and web-based resources to benefit the wider community and reach a larger number of people in need due to the impact of domestic abuse on their lives and those of their children.

The charity was able to plan and prepare group programmes at new locations ready for delivery from September 2020, ensuring that interrupted programmes could be resumed and new programmes started. Despite a brief closure to new referrals in August, the charity was able to maintain an uninterrupted (albeit transformed) service to local people in Bath and surrounding area.

Financial review

VOICES finished 2019/20 in a strong financial position with net assets of £134,264 compared with £70,072 in 2018/19. This increase of 92% on the previous year reflected an improved income position, in large part due to the success of the Charity in securing a five year National Lottery Reaching Communities grant of £319,000. In addition, the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in a number of ad-hoc, non-recurrent grants being available to address short-term pressures resulting from restrictions in community fundraising and demand for services. The strengthened income position allowed the Charity to invest in additional clinical support to meet increased service demands. VOICES also recognised the need for it to strengthen its financial governance arrangements and secured the services of an independent book-keeping and accountancy firm to assist in this regard.

Reserves

VOICES held unrestricted reserves of £30,704 as of 31 August 2020. This was an increase of 92% from the previous year when this figure was £15,998. The stated aim of the charity being to hold unrestricted reserves to cover 3 months' operating costs (£27,935, based on annual expenditure of £111,741), this figure is 10% higher than the target set for unrestricted reserves at the end of this period.

The Board of Trustees has, during 2020 considered its reserves policy and set itself the ambition to have reserves at a level that meet the following criteria:

- To sustain the charity's core services supported by unrestricted funds, for a period of three months without detriment to its beneficiaries;
- To support the charity in providing a skeleton service for a further three months (including overheads) to enable emergency funding to be sought and available for use; and
- To meet the winding up costs for the charity should there be no prospect of funding going forward – such costs would be in terms of redundancies and meeting any contractual debts.

An annual review of this ambition will support the Trustees in working to meet the criteria over the next three-year period.

The principal funding sources of the charity in the reporting period were charitable foundations and grant-making trusts. The grants awarded by these sources (as detailed above) enabled VOICES to provide trauma-informed tailored support to clients, to address the needs of domestic abuse survivors not covered by commissioned and statutory services, and support the involvement of people with lived experience in the development of domestic abuse policy and practice.

The principal risks facing the charity arise from the constrained funding environment and rising level of demand for specialist domestic abuse services, including mental health support and existential support for clients, compounded by the pandemic and the expected additional upheaval of Britain exiting the European Union in January 2021. A further key risk concerns continued access to appropriate working premises that can facilitate the delivery of VOICES services.

Structure, governance and management
Trustees are appointed or reappointed at quarterly trustee meetings.

Public benefit
The trustees have had due regard to the guidance issues by the Charity Commission on public benefit in their oversight of the main activities undertaken by VOICES during the year referred to in this report.

Statement of responsibilities of the trustees
The trustees are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102: The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and the incoming resources and application of resources, including the net income or expenditure, of the charity for the year. In preparing those financial statements the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- state whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and which enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the constitution. The trustees 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 corporate and financial information included on the charity's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Members of the charity have no liability to contribute to the assets of the charity in the event of winding up. The trustees are members of the charity but this entitles them only to voting rights. The trustees have no beneficial interest in the charity.

Independent examiners
Godfrey Wilson Limited were appointed as independent examiners to the charity during the year and have expressed their willingness to continue in that capacity.

Approved by the trustees on 25 January 2021 and signed on their behalf by

Brigid Musselwhite

Brigid Musselwhite
Chair of the trustees

Independent examiner's report

To the trustees of

VOICES

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of VOICES (the CIO) for the year ended 31 August 2020, which are set out on pages 10 to 22.

Responsibilities and basis of report
As the charity trustees of the CIO you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the CIO's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement
Godfrey Wilson Limited also provides bookkeeping/payroll services to the CIO. I confirm that as a member of the ICAEW I am subject to the FRC's Revised Ethical Standard 2016, which I have applied with respect to this engagement.

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

(1) accounting records were not kept in respect of the CIO as required by section 130 of the Act; or
(2) the accounts do not accord with those records; or
(3) the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Rob Wilson

Date: 25 January 2021
Rob Wilson FCA
Member of the ICAEW
For and on behalf of:
Godfrey Wilson Limited
Chartered accountants and statutory auditors
5th Floor Mariner House
62 Prince Street
Bristol
BS1 4QD

VOICES

Statement of financial activities

For the year ended 31 August 2020

	Note	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	**2020 Total £**	Restated 2019 Total £
Income from:					
Donations	3	6,500	49,945	**56,445**	13,080
Charitable activities	4	138,246	-	**138,246**	103,614
Total income		144,746	49,945	**194,691**	116,694
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds		-	8,767	**8,767**	8,858
Charitable activities		95,260	26,472	**121,732**	105,584
Total expenditure	6	95,260	35,239	**130,499**	114,442
Net income and net movement in funds		49,486	14,706	**64,192**	2,252
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward		54,074	15,998	**70,072**	67,820
Total funds carried forward		103,560	30,704	**134,264**	70,072

All of the above results are derived from continuing activities. There were no other recognised gains or losses other than those stated above. Movements in funds are disclosed in note 12 to the accounts. The 2019 comparatives have been restated from accounting on a receipts and payments basis to an accruals basis and to include pension costs, as detailed in note 14 to the accounts.

VOICES

Balance sheet

As at 31 August 2020

	Note	£	2020 £	Restated 2019 £
Current assets				
Cash at bank and in hand		**151,036**		77,545
Liabilities				
Creditors: amounts falling due within 1 year	10	**(16,772)**		(7,473)
Net assets	11		**134,264**	70,072
Funds	12			
Restricted funds			**103,560**	54,074
Unrestricted funds			**30,704**	15,998
Total charity funds			**134,264**	70,072

Approved by the trustees on 25 January 2021 and signed on their behalf by

Brigid Musselwhite

Brigid Musselwhite
Chair of the trustees

1. Accounting policies

a) Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities in preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

VOICES meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note.

b) Going concern basis of accounting

The accounts have been prepared on the assumption that the charity is able to continue as a going concern. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the global economy, and may in turn affect the charity. The trustees have considered the impact of this issue on the charity's current and future financial position. The charity holds unrestricted, general reserves of £37,695 and a cash balance of £151,036. The trustees consider that the charity has sufficient cash reserves to continue as a going concern for a period of at least 12 months from the date on which these financial statements are approved.

c) Income

Income is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the item of income have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

d) Donated services and facilities

Donated professional services and donated facilities are recognised as income when the charity has control over the item, any conditions associated with the donated item have been met, the receipt of economic benefit from the use by the charity of the item, is probable and the economic benefit can be measured reliably. In accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102), general volunteer time is not recognised.

On receipt, donated professional services and donated facilities are recognised on the basis of the value of the gift to the charity which is the amount the charity would have been willing to pay to obtain services or facilities of equivalent economic benefit on the open market; a corresponding amount is then recognised in expenditure in the period of receipt.

e) Interest receivable

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity: this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the bank.

f) Funds accounting

Unrestricted funds are available to spend on activities that further any of the purposes of the charity. Designated funds are unrestricted funds of the charity which the trustees have decided at their discretion to set aside to use for a specific purpose. Restricted funds are donations which the donor has specified are to be solely used for particular areas of the charity's work or for specific projects being undertaken by the charity.

1. Accounting policies (continued)

g) Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

h) Allocation of support and governance costs

Support costs are those functions that assist the work of the charity but do not directly undertake charitable activities. Governance costs are the costs associated with the governance arrangements of the charity, including the costs of complying with constitutional and statutory requirements and any costs associated with the strategic management of the charity's activities. These costs have been allocated between cost of raising funds and expenditure on charitable activities on the basis of staff costs:

	2020	2019
Raising funds	**4.7%**	4.7%
Charitable activities	**95.3%**	95.3%

i) Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

j) Creditors

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

k) Financial instruments

The charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value with the exception of bank loans which are subsequently recognised at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

l) Accounting estimates and key judgements

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

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

1. Accounting policies (continued)

l) Accounting estimates and key judgements (continued)

There are no key sources of estimation uncertainty that have a significant effect on the amounts recognised in the financial statements.

m) Pension costs

The company operates a defined contribution pension scheme for its employees. There are no further liabilities other than that already recognised in the SOFA.

2. Prior period comparatives: statement of financial activities

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	**Restated 2019 Total £**
Income from:			
Donations	-	13,080	**13,080**
Charitable activities	96,644	6,970	**103,614**
Total income	96,644	20,050	**116,694**
Expenditure on:			
Raising funds	-	8,858	**8,858**
Charitable activities	91,669	13,915	**105,584**
Total expenditure	91,669	22,773	**114,442**
Net income / (expenditure) and movement in funds	4,975	(2,723)	**2,252**

3. Income from donations

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	**2020 Total £**
Donations	6,500	45,045	**51,545**
Gifts in kind	-	4,900	**4,900**
Total income from donations	6,500	49,945	**56,445**

Prior period comparative:	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2019 Total £
Donations	-	13,080	13,080

Gifts in kind includes the following items:	**2020 £**	2019 £
Project / session expenses	**400**	-
Office expenses	**2,500**	-
Consultancy	**2,000**	-
	4,900	-

4. Income from charitable activities

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	**2020 Total £**
Grants > £5,000			
Avon & Somerset Police & Crime Commissioner	24,771	-	**24,771**
Quartet Community Foundation	9,928	-	**9,928**
National Lottery Corona Virus Community Support Fund	9,913	-	**9,913**
Lloyds Bank Foundation	24,565	-	**24,565**
St John's Foundation	30,630	-	**30,630**
The National Lottery Reaching Communities	27,000	-	**27,000**
Grants < £5,000	11,439	-	**11,439**
Total income from charitable activities	138,246	-	**138,246**

Prior period comparative:

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2019 Total £
Grants > £5,000			
Lloyds Bank Foundation	24,965	-	24,965
St John's Foundation	58,813	-	58,813
Grants < £5,000	12,866	6,970	19,836
Total income from charitable activities	96,644	6,970	103,614

5. Government grants

The charity receives government grants, defined as funding from Avon & Somerset Police & Crime Commissioner and The National Lottery. The total value of such grants during the year ended 31 August 2020 was £61,684 (2019: £nil). There are no unfulfilled conditions or contingencies attaching to these grants.

6. Total expenditure

	Raising funds £	Charitable activities £	Support and governance costs £	**2020 Total £**
Staff costs (note 8)	2,606	52,820	26,626	**82,052**
Project / session expenses	-	3,291	-	**3,291**
Other staff costs	-	-	623	**623**
Volunteer expenses	-	217	887	**1,104**
Provision of charitable services	-	2,132	-	**2,132**
Fundraising expenses	3,704	-	-	**3,704**
Marketing	-	1,914	-	**1,914**
Office expenses	259	5,242	2,643	**8,144**
Insurance and premises costs	409	8,296	4,181	**12,886**
Consultancy	-	11,558	-	**11,558**
Legal and professional fees	-	-	619	**619**
Accountancy	-	-	2,472	**2,472**
Sub-total	6,978	85,470	38,051	**130,499**
Allocation of support and governance costs	1,789	36,262	(38,051)	-
Total expenditure	**8,767**	**121,732**	**-**	**130,499**

Total governance costs were £3,091 (2019: £Nil)

Prior period comparative

	Raising funds £	Charitable activities £	Support and governance costs £	Restated 2019 Total £
Staff costs (note 8)	2,468	50,026	25,217	77,711
Project / session expenses	-	4,452	-	4,452
Volunteer expenses	-	856	3,422	4,278
Provision of charitable services	-	1,100	-	1,100
Fundraising expenses	4,157	-	-	4,157
Marketing	-	3,553	-	3,553
Office expenses	138	2,870	1,412	4,420
Insurance and premises costs	461	9,338	4,707	14,506
Consultancy	-	265	-	265
Sub-total	7,224	72,460	34,758	114,442
Allocation of support and governance costs	1,634	33,124	(34,758)	**-**
Total expenditure	8,858	105,584	**-**	114,442

7. Net movement in funds

This is stated after charging:

	2020	2019
	£	£
Trustees' remuneration	**Nil**	Nil
Trustees' reimbursed expenses	**Nil**	Nil
Independent examiners' remuneration:		
▪ Independent examination (including VAT)	**1,740**	-
▪ Other services	**732**	-

8. Staff costs and numbers

Staff costs were as follows:

	2020	2019
	£	£
Salaries and wages	**75,153**	69,821
Social security costs	**2,609**	5,189
	77,762	75,010

No employee earned more than £60,000 during the year.

The key management personnel of the charitable company comprise the Chief Executive Officer and Head of Services. The total employee benefits of the key management personnel were £53,114 (2019: £51,663).

	2020	2019
	No.	No.
Average head count	**4.00**	3.00

9. Taxation

The charity is exempt from corporation tax as all its income is charitable and is applied for charitable purposes.

10. Creditors : amounts due within 1 year

	2020	Restated 2019
	£	£
Accruals	**8,591**	3,889
Other taxation and social security	**848**	883
Pension	**7,333**	2,701
	16,772	7,473

11. Analysis of net assets between funds

	Restricted funds £	Unrestricted funds £	**Total funds £**
Current assets	110,979	40,057	**151,036**
Current liabilities	(7,419)	(9,353)	**(16,772)**
Net assets at 31 August 2020	**103,560**	**30,704**	**134,264**

Prior year comparative	Restricted funds £	Unrestricted funds £	**Total funds £**
Current assets	55,894	21,651	**77,545**
Current liabilities	(1,820)	(5,653)	**(7,473)**
Net assets at 31 August 2019	**54,074**	**15,998**	**70,072**

12. Movements in funds

	At 1 September 2019 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers between funds £	**At 31 August 2020 £**
Restricted funds					
Hardship Various Funders	3,373	3,000	(983)	-	**5,390**
Persula Foundation	185	-	-	-	**185**
Avon & Somerset Police & Crime Commissioner	-	24,771	(4,119)	-	**20,652**
Allen Lane Foundation	-	3,500	(2,238)	-	**1,262**
Quartet Community Foundation	1,608	9,928	(7,353)	-	**4,183**
National Lottery Corona Virus Community Support Fund	572	9,913	(645)	-	**9,840**
The National Lottery Reaching Communities	-	27,000	(26,738)	-	**262**
Group Costs Various Funders	-	2,439	-	-	**2,439**
Bath Building Society	-	-	-	-	**-**
Lloyds Bank Foundation	14,965	24,565	(19,473)	-	**20,057**
Care Forum Health Watch BANES	-	2,500	-	-	**2,500**
St John's Foundation (Freedom)	6,439	-	(4,244)	-	**2,195**
St John's Foundation (Admin, Comms & Marketing)	2,914	-	(2,914)	-	**-**
Counselling Pot Various Funders	-	6,500	-	-	**6,500**
Rosa Fund for Women	-	-	-	-	**-**
St John's Foundation (Programme)	24,018	30,630	(26,553)	-	**28,095**
Total restricted funds	54,074	144,746	(95,260)	-	**103,560**
Unrestricted funds					
General funds	15,998	49,945	(35,239)	-	**30,704**
Total unrestricted funds	15,998	49,945	(35,239)	-	**30,704**
Total funds	70,072	194,691	(130,499)	-	**134,264**

Purposes of restricted funds

Hardship Various Funders	For clients who need emergency funding which they can not get anywhere else or within the required time constraints.
Persula Foundation	To go towards core costs and counselling services for clients.
Avon & Somerset Police & Crime Commissioner	COVID-19 emergency funding to go towards the core operations of the charity and to cover the costs of the referrals support
Allen Lane Foundation	To go towards core costs of the charity up until November 2020.
Quartet Community Foundation	To go towards the cost of counselling support for clients.

12. Movements in funds (continued)

Purposes of restricted funds (continued)

National Lottery Corona Virus Community Support Fund	To go towards the costs of counselling and clinical referral services up until March 2021.
The National Lottery Reaching Communities	To go towards core costs up until 31 September 2020.
Group Costs Various Funders	To cover the costs of refreshments and other group services costs.
Bath Building Society	To go towards core costs.
Lloyds Bank Foundation	To cover the costs of the recovery practitioner up until 31 March 2021.
Care Forum Health Watch BANES	To cover the costs associated with the Healthwatch survey.
St John's Foundation (Freedom)	Project costs for Freedom group work.
St John's Foundation (Admin, Comms & Marketing)	Used towards the costs of developing and running the website.
Counselling Pot Various Funders	To go towards the cost of counselling services for clients.
Rosa Fund for Women	To cover the costs of counselling and 1-to-1 work with clients.
St John's Foundation (Programme)	To cover the salary for the head of services.

12. Movements in funds (continued)

Prior year comparative	At 1 September 2018 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers between funds £	**At 31 August 2019 £**
Restricted funds					
Hardship Various Funders	-	4,500	(1,127)	-	**3,373**
Persula Foundation	3,000	-	(2,815)	-	**185**
Allen Lane Foundation	-	3,500	(3,500)	-	**-**
Quartet Community Foundation	-	4,866	(3,258)	-	**1,608**
National Lottery Corona Virus Community Support Fund	6,865	-	(6,293)	-	**572**
Lloyds Bank Foundation	-	24,965	(10,000)	-	**14,965**
St John's Foundation (Freedom)	410	8,183	(2,154)	-	**6,439**
St John's Foundation (Admin, Comms & Marketing)	16,431	-	(13,517)	-	**2,914**
St John's Foundation (Salary)	343	20,000	(20,343)	-	**-**
St John's Foundation (Programme)	22,050	30,630	(28,662)	-	**24,018**
Total restricted funds	49,099	96,644	(91,669)	-	**54,074**
Unrestricted funds					
General funds	18,721	20,050	(22,773)	-	**15,998**
Total unrestricted funds	18,721	20,050	(22,773)	-	**15,998**
Total funds	67,820	116,694	(114,442)	-	**70,072**

13. Related party transactions

There were no related party transactions in the year.

14. Prior year adjustment

The opening funds have been restated from accounting on a receipts and payments basis to accounting on an accruals basis to include £4,772 of accrued expenditure and payroll taxes and pension costs of £2,701.

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	**Total £**
At 31 August 2019 as originally stated	56,378	21,167	**77,545**
Accrued expenditure and payroll taxes	(2,304)	(2,468)	**(4,772)**
Pension costs	-	(2,701)	**(2,701)**
Restated at 31 August 2019	54,074	15,998	**70,072**