

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	<p>The trustees who served during the year and up to the date of this report were as follows:</p> <table><tr><td>Peter Brandt</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Joanna Hole</td><td>appointed 28 February 2022</td></tr><tr><td>Brigid Musselwhite</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Pedro Nunes</td><td>appointed 28 February 2022</td></tr><tr><td>Farha Rasul</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Jo Silver</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Dr Helen Wehner</td><td></td></tr></table>	Peter Brandt		Joanna Hole	appointed 28 February 2022	Brigid Musselwhite		Pedro Nunes	appointed 28 February 2022	Farha Rasul		Jo Silver		Dr Helen Wehner	
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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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, Esmée 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.

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For the year ended 31 August 2022

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. 2/3 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 Dhira, 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:

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"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.

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For the year ended 31 August 2022

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 support 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

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- 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.

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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

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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	<u>224,814</u>	<u>112,052</u>	336,866	156,127
Total income		<u>233,314</u>	<u>130,288</u>	363,602	230,582
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds		-	27,898	27,898	16,840
Charitable activities		<u>212,681</u>	<u>11,330</u>	224,011	201,980
Total expenditure	6	<u>212,681</u>	<u>39,228</u>	251,909	218,820
Net income		20,633	91,060	111,693	11,762
Transfers between funds		<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Net movement in funds	7	20,633	91,060	111,693	11,762
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward		<u>94,002</u>	<u>52,024</u>	146,026	134,264
Total funds carried forward		<u>114,635</u>	<u>143,084</u>	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		<u>250,829</u>		<u>96,868</u>
		267,662		153,228
Liabilities				
Creditors: amounts falling due within 1 year	11	<u>(9,943)</u>		<u>(7,202)</u>
Net assets	12		<u>257,719</u>	<u>146,026</u>
Funds	13			
Restricted funds			114,635	94,002
Unrestricted funds				
Designated funds			55,000	-
General funds			<u>88,084</u>	<u>52,024</u>
Total charity funds			<u>257,719</u>	<u>146,026</u>

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

Brigid Musselwhite
Chair of the trustees

VOICES

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 August 2022

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.

VOICES

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 August 2022

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.

VOICES

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 August 2022

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	<u>154,527</u>	<u>1,600</u>	<u>156,127</u>
Total income	<u>181,527</u>	<u>49,055</u>	<u>230,582</u>
Expenditure on:			
Raising funds	-	16,840	16,840
Charitable activities	<u>187,585</u>	<u>14,395</u>	<u>201,980</u>
Total expenditure	<u>187,585</u>	<u>31,235</u>	<u>218,820</u>
Net income / (expenditure) and net movement in funds	<u>(6,058)</u>	<u>17,820</u>	<u>11,762</u>

VOICES

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 August 2022

3. Income from donations

	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	2022 Total £
Donations	<u>8,500</u>	<u>18,236</u>	<u>26,736</u>

Prior period comparative:

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

Gifts in kind includes the following items:

	2022 £	2021 £
Project / session expenses	-	1,500
Consultancy	-	6,000
Legal and professional fees	<u>-</u>	<u>16,283</u>
	<u>-</u>	<u>23,783</u>

VOICES

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 August 2022

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.

VOICES

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 August 2022

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).

VOICES

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 August 2022

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

VOICES

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 August 2022

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
	<u>128,162</u>	<u>117,610</u>

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 No.	2021 No.
Average head count	<u>6.00</u>	<u>5.00</u>

9. Taxation

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

VOICES

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 August 2022

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

VOICES

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 August 2022

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					
<i>Designated funds:</i>					
Salaries	-	-	-	55,000	55,000
<i>Total designated funds</i>	-	-	-	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

VOICES

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 August 2022

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.

VOICES

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 August 2022

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.
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BANES CIL	Grant for Core Costs for new premises.
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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.
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VOICES

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 August 2022

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

VOICES

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 August 2022

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	<u>136,000</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>170,000</u>	<u>-</u>

15. Related party transactions

There were no related party transactions in the year.