

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CUMBRIA VICTIMS CHARITABLE TRUST

For the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023

1. THE CHARITY

Cumbria Victims Charitable Trust (CVCT) was registered on 19 March 2015 by the Charity Commission as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), registered number 1160978. Administration is carried out by one of the Trustees (Christopher Armstrong) from his home address, which has been registered with the Charity Commission as the Charity's base.

2. THE OBJECTS OF THE CHARITY

The charitable objectives of the CVCT are:

- To promote, for the benefit of the public, the efficiency of the police and other agencies providing services to victims in Cumbria by working in partnership with them to promote and improve services for victims of crime.
- To promote and improve services for victims of crime.
- To relieve persons who are in conditions of need, hardship and distress or sickness as a result of being a victim, a witness or otherwise being affected by crime.

The Trustees believe that the activities of the Charity during the report period have addressed these objectives.

3. THE TRUSTEES

During the report period, the Trustees of the CVCT were:

Annette Hennessy	Christopher Armstrong
Glenys Marriott	Venetia Young
Marcia Reid Fotheringham	Natalie Bradbury

Since the Charity is registered with the Charity Commission as a Foundation Model, the members of the Charity are the Trustees, whose duties include ensuring that the Board is composed of sufficient suitably qualified people to provide good governance. Under the terms of the governing document, Trustees serve for 3 years before the need for re-election; there is no upper limit.

The agreed terms of office of the current Trustees are:

To 31 March 2023 Christopher Armstrong (who has been re-appointed for a further term commencing 1 April 2023)

To 31 March 2024 Glenys Marriott Marcia Reid Fotheringham

To 31 March 2025 Annette Hennessy Venetia Young Natalie Bradbury

Trustees are drawn from across the county, with the Board continuing to be possessed of a real depth and breadth of knowledge about Cumbria and its communities. All members of the Board are active in making a difference across a broad spectrum of work, in health, mental health, with victims, in domestic violence, with offenders and diversity. Whilst Board meetings do focus on the work of the Trust, they also provide a rich source of intelligence and generative thinking, about all of the work we do in Cumbria, and the wider world.

The Trustees met on 6 occasions, mostly by videoconference, to consider applications for funding and to transact other business. However, to ensure speedy decisions on applications for urgent funding, most applications were dealt with by email between the Trustees, resulting in the majority of decisions being made within 5 days of receipt of the application.

4. THE CHARITY'S VISION AND VALUES

4.1 Our Vision and Values

Through detailed discussions, Trustees have an agreed vision for the Charity, established values and a detailed strategy to achieve our vision, as described in a Development Plan covering the period April 2020 to April 2023. The Plan has been reviewed regularly and objectives have been achieved.

Our vision is:

- To build a lasting, sustainable impact on the lives of persons who are in conditions of need, hardship, distress or sickness as a result of being a victim or witness, or being affected by crime in Cumbria;
- To promote awareness of the impact of crime and improvement in the services for victims of crime;
- By working with others, grant-giving and building a sustainable charity.

Our values can be expressed thus:

CVCT is a county-wide charity that supports a wide range of victims of crime in a way that is timely, effective, compassionate and fair, and which makes a difference to their lives.

5. OUR ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

5.1 Partnerships

The Charitable Trust was formed when the then Police & Crime Commissioner for Cumbria identified a means whereby the scope of victims' services in Cumbria might be enhanced by the involvement of an independent voluntary body, able to operate without the constraints often met by statutory entities. To launch this initiative both he and his successor in office, the current incumbent, allocated funds from the budget devolved by central government for victim care. CVCT commissioned Cumbria Community Foundation to administer a Fund on behalf of the Trustees, although it is the Trustees who make the final decisions on grants. That arrangement continues to work well, with particular thanks to our CCF contact Sarah Thompson, enabling Trustees to ensure that applications are dealt with in accordance with our published criteria and that decisions made are defensible and of benefit to victims of crime.

Given that background, we have always maintained strong links with the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cumbria. Although we are independent, we value the continued links with the current incumbent, meeting regularly both to inform him of the progress of the Charity and also to explore ways in which the Trustees, with their diverse backgrounds, can assist him in his responsibility for commissioning victims' services across Cumbria.

We believe that, as time has gone on, trust in CVCT has grown, with the result that, for example, an ongoing project has seen the CVCT Board acting as a "critical friend" in a review of how the victim's voice is captured and used. This focusses particularly on offences of Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) and involves scrutiny of the level of victim care provided by Cumbria Police in individual cases against the requirements of the Victims Code. Trustees are very heartened by the willingness of the Police to open their actions to independent scrutiny.

This activity has also led to a positive spin-off for Trustees. We have been able to learn more about the complexities of investigating cases of sexual assault, spiking and hate crimes and we are therefore better equipped to understand the effects on victims.

The background of CVCT Trustees gives the Board an in-depth knowledge and experience of both the criminal justice and health systems, including how those systems impact on victims. Trustees fully support the rationale behind the national Victims Code of Practice and believe that delivery of timely, sensitive and supportive services for victims should be a shared responsibility across the relevant bodies. In responding to the Government's consultation on delivering justice for victims, we advocated this approach and also the need for a strong lead and public accountability to ensure delivery of victims' entitlements.

5.2 CVCT Criteria and Guidance

Every application tells a tale of need, and we see each one as an opportunity to learn. During the year, we again reviewed the criteria used to guide both applicants and our decisions. We came to the conclusion that, in some respect, they were too restrictive and made it too difficult for too many individuals, particularly those seeking to set up a new life away from the source of their distress. We therefore made slight but significant changes. Regrettably there remains plenty of evidence of need in the County, and valiant efforts are being made, especially through the Community Foundation, to address this where possible. However most of it is beyond the remit of the Trust which must, of necessity, focus on helping victims recover from the effects of crime and not of their circumstances.

Overview

Grants for victims of crime who reside in Cumbria to promote the safety of the victim, to relieve urgent need or distress, and to provide essential basic requirements, relating to washing, cooking, sleeping and clothing.

Who can apply?

Any victim of crime who resides in Cumbria and has been affected by crime or anti-social behaviour.

Victims who are in need, distress, hardship or sickness as a result of crime; *and* who are vulnerable; *and* who need help to cope, recover or to avoid re-victimisation, or to replace essential items; *and* who have limited resources with no other funding available to them. Victims must be supported by an independent case worker or professional involved with the case.

What the Fund will support:

Initiatives to assist victims to cope with and recover from their experience.
Initiatives to prevent victims being targeted and/or being repeat victims of crime.

What the Fund will not *normally* support:

Furniture, carpets and household items, other than basic essentials relating to washing, cooking and sleeping.
CCTV.
Damage to motor vehicles.
Uninsured loss.

What the Fund will not support in addition to our normal exclusions:

Debt, whether incurred by the victim or someone else.
Counselling / therapy.
Education / training.
Overseas travel or expeditions.

How much can you apply for?

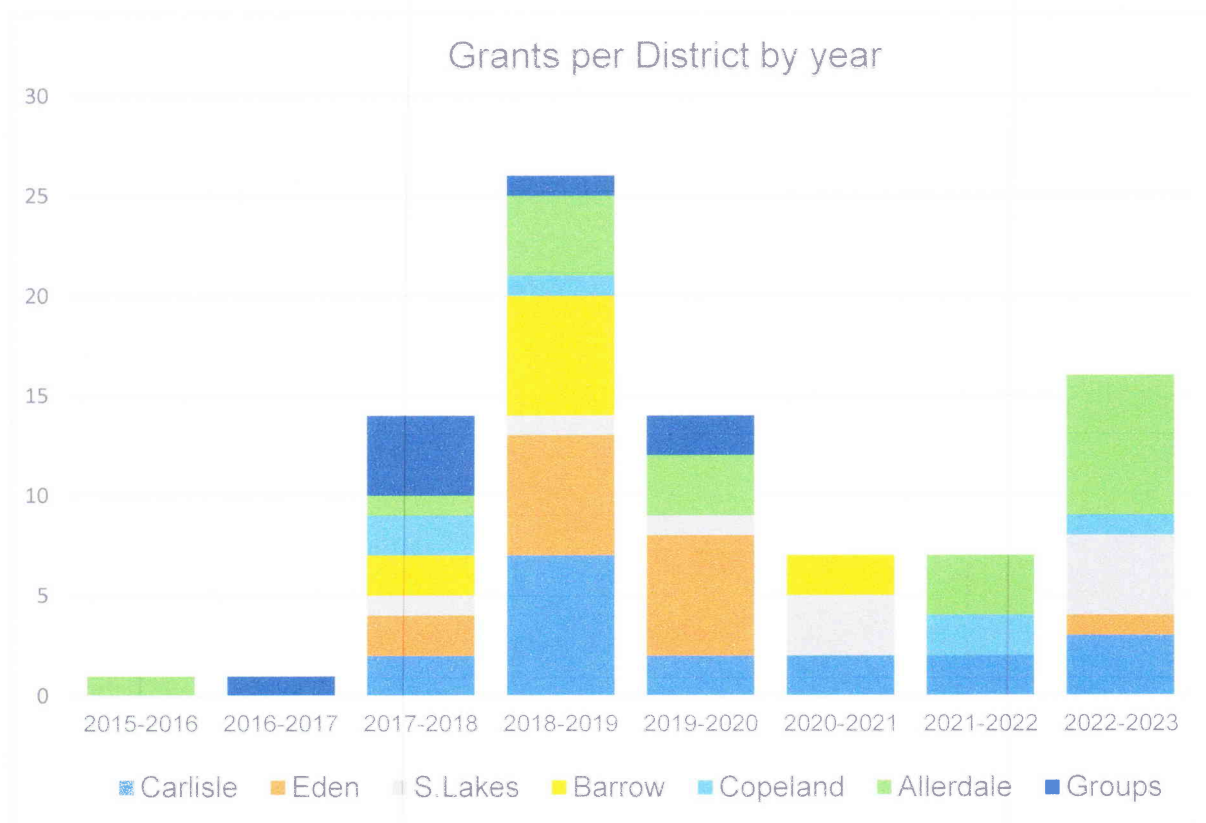
Grants will normally be no more than £500 but CVCT reserves the right to make any award amount it sees fit.

5.3 Grants

Details of the applications received during the year appear in the tables below. Trustees remain puzzled that, despite strenuous efforts to advertise the existence of the Fund across the County, including through our website and active use of our Twitter account (which has nearly 1300 followers), applications still remain relatively low. This is the case even from those areas such as Barrow and Copeland where levels of deprivation might indicate a greater need from victims of crime. It may be that part of the explanation could be the existence of other funds specifically available in those areas.

Applications remain predominantly from victims of domestic violence, where perpetrators have wrecked homes and women and children have had to leave with few, if any, possessions. However Trustees are anxious that the Trust should not be seen as purely a DV funder and it is keen to encourage applications from the vulnerable victims of other types of crime. To this end it continues to make substantial efforts to raise awareness of the Fund among those organisations that are likely to come into contact with victims of crime, including asylum seekers and refugees, and to encourage them to support applications falling within our published criteria.

The Charity remains of the view that providing direct practical help for individual victims is a better use of its funds than providing grants to organisations for their own use, although we have in the past funded organisations to act as agent for CVCT, applying the same criteria, particularly where individual victims may not be able to apply for help in the usual way. We believe this is a new way of supporting victims of crime.



	Carlisle Received /granted	Eden Received /granted	S.Lakes Received /granted	Barrow Received /granted	Copeland Received /granted	Allerdale Received /granted	Groups Received/granted Totals	individuals Received/granted Totals
2015-2016								
Numbers						1/1		1/1
Amount								£1947
								Totals £1947
2016-2017								
Numbers							1/1	8/7
Amount							£2000	£18000
								Totals £20000
2017-2018								
Numbers	2/2	2/2	2/1	3/2	3/2	2/1	4/4	14/10
Amount	£721	£72	£2000	£560	£406	£1340	£9100	£5754
								Totals £14854
2018-2019								
Numbers	9/7	7/6	3/1	8/6	2/1	5/4	1/1	34/25
Amount	£2435	£2018	£250	£2220	£2176	£1756	£1500	£10856
								Totals £12356
2019-2020								
Numbers	2/2	7/6	3/1	13/10	0/0	3/3	2/2	29/21
Amount	£850	£379	£275	£2320	0	£800	£1737	£4424
								Totals £6161
2020-2021								
Numbers	2/2	0/0	3/3	2/2	0/0	0/0	1/0	7/7
Amount	£1219	0	£1520	£850	0	0	0	£3589
								Totals £3589
2021-2022								
Numbers	2/2	0/0	1/0	0/0	2/2	3/3	0/0	8/7
Amount	£1290	0	0	0	£755	£1251	0	£3296
								Totals £3296
2022-2023								
Numbers	4/3	1/1	4/4	1/0	1/1	7/7	0/0	18/16
Amount	£830	£81	£1221	0	£280	£3106	0	£5518
								Totals £5518

6. STRATEGIES

The end of the 2022-2023 financial year sees the end of the current Development Plan. Trustees adopted three key strategies for the 3 year period 2020 – 2023, each underpinned by ensuring the right processes, financial capability, communications and relationships. Those strategies (which have been reviewed against delivery each year) were:

- To demonstrate good governance and accountability
- To achieve funding continuity
- To develop and grow the impact of the Charity.

6.1 Good governance and accountability

Outcome: Good governance and accountability - 2023

- The Board has continually reviewed its processes, particularly in the light of feedback from CCF and other victims' organisations. We have worked in partnership with CCF to make amendments to simplify the processes where we can.
- The development plan has served the Trust well, its simplicity and clarity standing the test of time.
- Funds continue to be monitored at each meeting. At the close of 2022-23, after 8 years of data, the Trust has allocated an average of £568 to 94 families and victims of crime. We have also allocated £14,336 to groups working with victims, asking them to work to our published criteria, so the number of victims we have supported will be much higher.
- Our narrative has developed during 2022-23 and over the last few years. This is the result of a number of factors merging. All Trustees are significantly involved with the fabric of Cumbria in a variety of ways, which gives opportunities for the CVCT message to become more widespread. In turn it means that our work and narrative have become the richer, for the intelligence and information we gather. The relationship with CCF is one we continue to value and it brings a critical friend perspective to the process of grant making. It is also the case that our work with the Constabulary and OPCC on the Violence Against Women and Girls Scrutiny Panel is helping to develop and refine our narrative. It is the consistency and persistency of our message - that we want to be more central to victim care in Cumbria - that has allowed this to happen.
- We have effective productive relationships with the key organisations responsible for commissioning and ensuring victim care.
- We have an effective Board, one where the members engage, bring fresh perspectives, are adaptable, add value and are not afraid to challenge each other and the decisions we make

The evidence of the past three years is that we do demonstrate good governance and accountability

6.2 Funding continuity

Outcome: Funding continuity - 2023

- There is little to report on the approach to future funding as, to date, we still have over £60,000 remaining to distribute, the result of fewer than anticipated applications for qualifying grants. Trustees consider it unlikely that additional external funding would come forth given the amount in hand. Consequently we have prioritised other work, such as increasing the number of individual grants, strengthening our relationships, and the work with Violence Against Women and Girls Scrutiny Panel.

As of April 2023 the Trust continues to manage the fund set up in 2015 with £150,000 from money allocated to the Trust by the PCC from money devolved by Government for witness care in Cumbria.

6.3 Impact

Outcome: Impact of the charity's resources leading to Trust continuity - 2023

- At the end of its eighth year in existence, and nearly five years with the current PCC, OPCC and CCF arrangements, we are seeing the benefit of the relationships that have been built over these years. Evidence of this is the way in which the Trustees have now been part of developing the review process with the Constabulary for the Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy.

- The number of applications received has increased in 2022-23. Whilst more referrals are welcome, this year we have asked for feedback from CCF (via sponsors such as Victim Support) and the OPCC about what more we can do. Where we can we have improved our processes. For now we are content that awareness of CVCT is as good as it can be without investing in expenditure which would deplete funds available for grants.
- We have gathered feedback this year on some of the grants made, which has been most welcome, and evidences that the funds provide much needed items at a time of distress. We continue to debate how we might improve this, but we are aware that our grants form only a small part of the work of CCF and victim care in Cumbria.
- Some quotes from recipients of CVCT grants:

"The grant removes a large weight off my shoulders. It means I can get essential items for my house which would have taken me months to afford. It was a lifeline when I needed it the most. I'm really grateful to have been helped by the Trust".

"The grant was very much appreciated and enabled (me) to move into the property quicker than expected".

"That's absolutely amazing. I'm so happy and grateful. Thank you again".

In 2023 the Trust will have been in place for over 8 years, with evidence that it has grown and developed to have an influence and an impact on victim care in Cumbria. This can be seen through our work with the Constabulary and the OPCC and the numbers of victims and families we have supported through grants

6.4 In summary

We remain of the view that the combination of small amounts of funding, at the right time, in quick time, provides the most valuable support to victims. We aim to communicate a decision on each application within 5 days of receipt and at times we have done so within 24 hours. This pragmatic, practical intervention provides much more than the money, it also indicates kindness and hope, at a very grim, hard time for individuals.

***"No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted"* Aesop**

An unanticipated outcome has been that these small grants can also support the frontline workers, in what can be a relentless struggle to help victims to recover from the impact of crime and (at times) the criminal justice system.

7. FUTURE THINKING

As we look to the future for the Trust our priorities remain to:

- Increase referrals from vulnerable victims of all kinds of crime;
- Continue to collect feedback from recipients to evidence the impact of grants;
- Further develop the Trust's scope.

We remain keen to work with partners across Cumbria, both statutory, such as the PCC and the Police, and the Third Sector, to collaborate and share understanding about victim care in Cumbria. We are also committed to monitoring the provision of victims' services and to making informed comment, based on our combined experience, where that is appropriate.

The Trustees have considered their activities in the light of the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and believe that those activities have complied with the guidance.

8. THE CHARITY'S FINANCES AND RESERVES

The Charity was established as an independent charitable trust by the Cumbria PCC to provide additional services for victims and, in time, generate additional income to supplement the funding provided by the Ministry of Justice for victims' services. The aspiration is that funding from the Charity will assist in expanding existing services and supporting the needs of victims of crime and anti-social behaviour who reside in Cumbria.

The Trustees of CVCT acknowledge with thanks the support of the Cumbria Police and Crime Commissioner and also that of the Cumbria Community Foundation.

Other income streams continue to be sought and donations have been received from time to time. The Charity continues to seek to raise its profile as a means of generating both additional income and further appropriate applications for funding.

In view of the fact that the Charity is largely a grant-making body, and carries no overheads, the Trustees have decided that it is not necessary at this stage to have a Reserves Policy. However, this matter will be kept under regular review.

Signed on behalf of Cumbria Victims Charitable Trust



Trustee



Trustee

Date: 12 July 2023

Independent Examiner's Report

to

The Trustees of Cumbria Victims Charitable Trust

I report on the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2023.

Respective responsibilities of the Trustees and the Independent Examiner

The Charity's Trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts and consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

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

Basis of Independent Examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission.

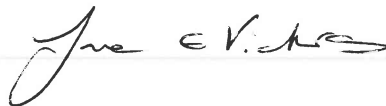
An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the Charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as Trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the accounts.

Independent Examiner's statement

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

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

Signed:



Name in Full:

JANE ELIZABETH VICKERS, CIPFA

Address:

**11 The Nurseries
Linstock
CARLISLE
CA6 4RR**

Date:

5th June 2023

CUMBRIA VICTIMS CHARITABLE TRUST

Receipts and Payments Account 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023

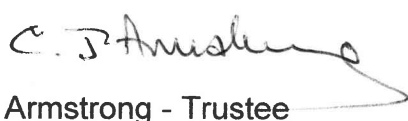
Registered Charity Number 1160978

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total
Receipts			
Bank interest	898.82		898.82
Donations	<u>48.54</u>		<u>48.54</u>
	<u>947.36</u>		<u>947.36</u>
Payments			
Website	49.00		49.00
Professional fee	50.00		50.00
Publicity banner	82.80		82.80
Trustees' expenses	159.45		159.45
Videoconference licence	<u>143.88</u>		<u>143.88</u>
	<u>485.13</u>		<u>485.13</u>
Net Receipts	462.23		462.23
Cash funds brought forward	<u>69160.46</u>		<u>69160.46</u>
Cash funds at 31 March 2023	<u>69622.69</u>		<u>69622.69</u>

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES as at 31 March 2023

Cash at Bank	69622.69
Cash fund at 31 March 2023	<u>69622.69</u>

Approved by the Trustees on 26 April 2023 and signed on their behalf by


C. J. Armstrong - Trustee