



CUMBRIA VICTIMS CHARITABLE TRUST

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

For the period ended 31 March 2025

Registered Charity Number 1160978

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ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CUMBRIA VICTIMS CHARITABLE TRUST

For the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025

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 (Chair)	Christopher Armstrong
Glenys Marriott	Venetia Young
Marcia Reid Fotheringham	Natalie Bradbury

As a CIO Foundation Model, the members of the Charity are the Trustees. As well as the usual responsibilities of Trustees, their duties include ensuring that the Board is composed of sufficient suitably qualified people to provide good governance. Trustees serve for 3 years before the need for re-election and there is no upper limit. As of 31 March 2025 current terms of office of the Trustees are:

To 31 March 2026	Christopher Armstrong		
To 31 March 2027	Glenys Marriott	Marcia Reid Fotheringham	
To 31 March 2028	Annette Hennessy	Venetia Young	Natalie Bradbury

Trustees come from across Cumbria, with the Board continuing to have real depth and breadth of knowledge about the County 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 as a Board on 4 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.

In addition to meeting as a Board, Trustees also came together on 4 occasions as an independent Scrutiny Panel assessing the level of care Cumbria Constabulary offers to victims of violence against women and girls (VAWG).

4. THE CHARITY'S VISION AND VALUES

4.1 Our Vision and Values

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.

4.2 Development Plan

Although we are a small Charity, with a very specific and targeted remit, we have agreed a Development Plan to ensure our focus remains on achieving the objectives of the Charity. Each Plan covers a 3 year period, is reviewed annually and has 3 overriding strategies:

- Stability – to demonstrate good governance and accountability,
- Funding – to achieve funding continuity,
- Impact – to develop and grow the impact of the Charity.

The current Plan covers the period 2023 to 2026 and the review at the end of March 2025, the end of the second year of the Plan, indicated that the Charity remained on target and focussed on its objectives

5. OUR ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

5.1 Development Plan Review

5.1.1 Stability

- During the year we undertook a complete and thorough review of all our policies to ensure they were still up-to-date and fit for purpose. We decided that only minor changes were necessary, although we ensure all policies are kept under review.

- We conducted an audit of our governance and organisational practices against CVS and nationally recognised standards. While some of those standards (eg regarding premises and employment) do not apply to a charity such as CVCT, it was gratifying to have confirmation that the Charity had maintained the highest standards.
- Trustees are very conscious of their legal responsibilities and remain sighted on Charity Commission recommendations and guidance. Trustees also ensured that the Annual Return to the Charity Commission was completed and lodged expeditiously.
- Each meeting of Trustees received up-to-date information about the Charity's finances and reviewed any risks the Charity might face.
- We maintained regular contact with key stakeholders such as Cumbria Community Foundation and the Office of the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner to ensure that the important relationships we have fostered remained strong.
- We continued to ensure that the narrative about the work of CVCT remains available to the public via the website, regular use of social media and personal interaction.
- As the 10th Anniversary of the creation of the Charity approaches, we began a major exercise to review the place of CVCT within the wider context of efforts to support victims of crime, both now and in the future. That review will include looking at future funding issues.

5.1.2 Funding

- The funds held on behalf of the Charity by Cumbria Community Foundation had reached a critical point and therefore a further donation was made to top-up the fund and so continue to provide for urgent grants to be made to vulnerable victims of crime to assist in their recovery from the impact of those crimes.
- During the year, Trustees were conscious that the guidance issued on the level of grants available had failed to keep up with inflation. Trustees therefore agreed to amend the guidance by referring to a range of £200 to £700 per application, while making it clear that there was no upper or lower limit and that the figures quoted were for guidance only.

5.1.3 Impact

- Working closely with Cumbria Community Foundation, which administers the CVCT Fund on behalf of the Charity, we reviewed our published grant criteria and strengthened the guidance to applicants and those who sponsor them in making an application. Trustees wished to ensure that the criteria and guidance were clear and helpful, and to emphasise the importance of making a strong case which addressed the criteria, so as to avoid the possibility of refusal through lack of key information.
- We were pleased to see an up-turn in the number of applications for grants we received. We attribute this to a wider recognition of the existence of the Fund as well as the hard work by our Grants Officer at Cumbria Community Foundation, Sarah Thompson, in promoting and supporting our efforts.
- We would welcome more direct feedback from applicants and their sponsors as to the impact a grant has had on their recovery. However we understand the continuing stresses most victims will still experience, and the workload of those professionals who support them, and so we have to rely largely on word-of-mouth feedback. Nevertheless we do receive written feedback from time to time. The messages are universally positive and speak to the simplicity of the application process and the importance of the timely assistance received at a critical point in victims' lives.

- Trustees have continued to act as an independent Scrutiny Panel to oversee efforts by Cumbria Constabulary to ensure that female victims of violence receive appropriate support and can access the rights to which they are entitled under the Victims Code. This involvement is seen as valuable, not only by Trustees, in extending their understanding of this subject, but also by the Constabulary and the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner.
- In the wider context of victim issues, we continued to look for appropriate opportunities to provide a Cumbrian perspective in national consultations about matters that impact on the services available to victims of crime.
- Expanding victim care is still work in progress but through the work on the VAWG Panel, coupled with the grants made, we believe we are making a significant contribution to victim care in Cumbria.

5.2 Partnerships

Trustees welcome the increasing focus nationally on providing care and support for victims of crime whose lives have been sorely affected by their experiences. For too long comfortable words have not been followed by robust action and it is pleasing to see that this is changing. We therefore welcomed the introduction of the Victims' Code and look forward to it carrying the force of law so that all agencies are made to focus on the care they give to victims as they travel through the criminal justice system and beyond, and are held accountable for their performance.

The Trustees of Cumbria Victims Charitable Trust believe that the best way to effectively deliver any service, particularly in the public and not-for-profit sectors, is generally through committed partnership working - the sum of the whole can be so much more than the sum of the individual parts. That is why, in seeking an enhanced service for victims of crime, CVCT works to foster partnerships with stakeholders who share similar objectives. In this we are aided by the relative smallness of Cumbria, making it easier to build working relationships with key individuals.

We particularly value our partnerships with the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner, Cumbria Police and Cumbria Community Foundation.

CVCT was the brainchild of Cumbria's first Police & Crime Commissioner, who saw an independent body as able to do things that statutory bodies were constrained from doing. He and his immediate successor backed the Trust with money from the funds allocated to them for victim care by central government. It is from this funding that CVCT allocates grants to vulnerable victims to help them to cope with, and recover from, the impact of the crime they have experienced.

The Trustees therefore value the well-established partnership that has developed with successive Commissioners and their staff and hope to build on that firm base with the current Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner, with whom meetings have already taken place. Within his office, a particularly valuable relationship has been established with Sandra Radcliffe, the Victims Quality Champion, with whom we work closely in the VAWG Scrutiny Panel.

An activity that gives Trustees significant satisfaction is the role we play in providing independent scrutiny of the way in which Cumbria Police officers carry out the Constabulary's responsibilities for addressing offences of violence against women and girls (VAWG). This is a national priority but our understanding is that not all police forces have thrown themselves so whole-heartedly into addressing these responsibilities as has Cumbria, and not all have been confident enough to expose themselves to independent scrutiny. As committed Cumbria residents, this impresses us greatly and we are pleased to be entrusted with this role.

We are aware of how much effort, how much resource and how much training has been devoted to this important subject, capably and enthusiastically coordinated by the VAWG Tactical Lead Inspector Mike Taylor, and it is apparent that the leadership from the top has positively impacted on practices throughout the Force.

It was apparent from an early stage of its existence that CVCT Trustees, all busy people, would be unable to make the background enquiries that grant applications require. Consequently a fund was established with Cumbria Community Foundation (CCF), whereby those enquiries – often extensive - are made by our dedicated CCF Grants Officer Sarah Thompson who then reports to Trustees for them to make the final decision on whether or not to grant an application. All subsequent administration of payments also falls to CCF. It is a highly successful partnership, with valuable advice on all aspects of grant-making readily available to Trustees. CCF also provides important support, via its website and networks, to CVCT's own efforts to publicise the help available to victims of crime from the Trust.

CVCT is open to developing other partnerships where these can benefit victims of crime. In the past we have worked with Safety Net (UK) and the Birchall Trust, both of which support victims of rape and sexual abuse, by providing funds, subject to the condition that the funds be used for individual victims rather than for organisational expenditure. We have also funded Victim Support to provide mobile telephones to vulnerable victims, to enable them to contact support services in an emergency.

5.3 Grants

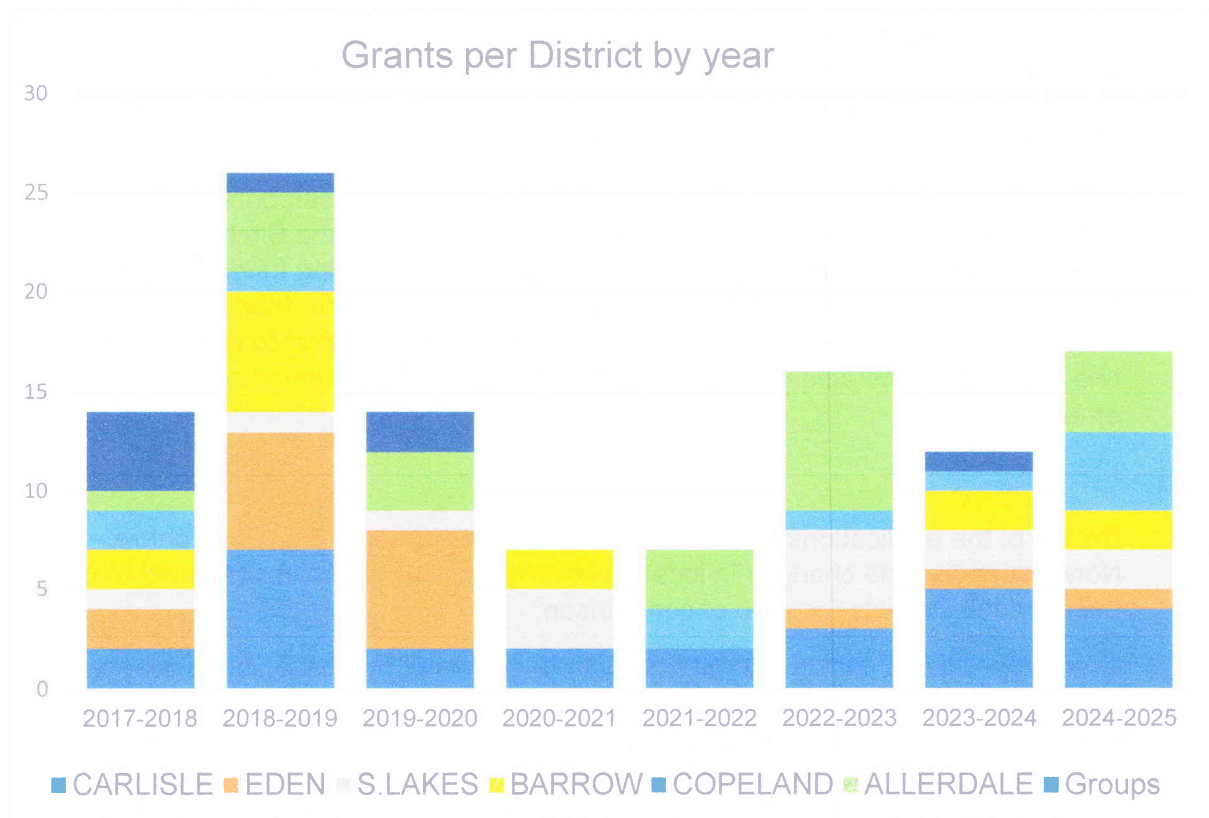
Details of the applications received during the year appear in the tables below. Notwithstanding the changes in local government areas, we have continued to use the previous Districts for ease of comparison.

Grant applications continue to be mainly from victims of domestic abuse, where perpetrators have wrecked homes and women have had to leave with few, if any, possessions. Trustees are anxious, however, that the Trust should not be seen as purely a DA / DV funder and it is keen to encourage applications from the vulnerable victims of other types of crime. We also wish to extend help to members of minority groups which are less likely to engage with "officialdom", including asylum seekers and refugees. We want to encourage organisations which come into contact with such groups to support applications falling within our criteria.

We would also comment that the bare number of applications received does not reflect the number of victims benefitting from CVCT grants as, in most cases, vulnerable victims have responsibilities for equally vulnerable children.

This year has seen an increase in the number of applications received, a feature which is welcome in one way but which still probably represents only the tip of the iceberg of those who need help. Along with our key partner Cumbria Community Foundation, we put significant effort into raising awareness of the Fund through our website (<https://cumbriavictimstrust.org>), our X account (@CumbriaVictimsCT – which has over 1300 followers) and through networking by Trustees.

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. As already stated, 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 our emphasis on the individual and their needs is the most effective way of supporting vulnerable victims of crime.



	CARLISLE	EDEN	S.LAKES	BARROW	COPELAND	ALLERDALE	Groups	Individuals
	Received /granted	Received /granted	Received /granted	Received /granted	Received /granted	Received /granted	Received/granted Totals	Received/granted Totals
2015-2016								
Numbers						1/1		1/1
Amount								£1947
								Total £1,947
2016-2017								
Numbers							1/1	8/7
Amount							£2000	£18000
								Total £20,000
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
								Total £14,854
2018-2019								
Numbers	9/7	7/6	3/1	8/6	2/1	5/4	1/1	34/25
Amount	£2,435	£2,018	£250	£2,220	£2,176	£1,756	£1,500	£10,855
								Total £12,355
2019-2020								
Numbers	2/2	7/6	3/1	13/10	0/0	3/3	2/2	29/21
Amount	£850	£379	£275	£2,320	£0	£800	£1,737	£4,624
								Total £6,361
2020-2021								
Numbers	2/2	0/0	3/3	2/2	0/0	0/0	1/0	7/7
Amount	£1,219	£0	£1,520	£850	£0	£0	£0	£3,589
								Total £3,589
2021-2022								
Numbers	2/2	0/0	1/0	0/0	2/2	3/3	0/0	8/7
Amount	£1,290	£0	£0	£0	£755	£1,251	£0	£3,296
								Total £3,296
2022-2023								
Numbers	4/3	1/1	4/4	1/0	1/1	7/7	0/0	18/16
Amount	£830	£81	£1,221	£0	£280	£3,106	£0	£5,518
								Total £5,518
2023-2024								
Numbers	5/5	1/1	2/2	4/2	1/1	0/0	1/1	13/11
Amount	£1,785	£500	£725	£654	£500	£0	£1,500	£4,164
								Total £5,664
2024-2025								
Numbers	5/4	1/1	3/2	4/2	4/4	6/4	0/0	23/17
Amount	£2,450	£592	£1,025	£1,470	£1,960	£1,651	£0	£9,148
								Total £9,148

5.4 CVCT Criteria and Guidance

Behind every application there is a tale of need and much careful thought goes into the deliberations of Trustees, in each and every case, in coming to grant decisions. It is often a heart-wrenching task. 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. Our criteria and guidance have been carefully crafted in an attempt to assist applicants and those who support them to make the strongest case possible for a successful outcome.

GRANT CRITERIA AND GUIDANCE

WHO WILL WE HELP?

Victims of crime or anti-social behaviour **who reside in Cumbria** and who

- are in urgent need, distress, hardship or sickness as a result of crime; *and*
- are vulnerable; *and*
- need help to cope, to recover, or to avoid re-victimisation; *and*
- have limited resources and little or no other funding available to them.

PRIORITIES

The priorities of the Trustees are:

- To promote the **safety** of the victim;
- To relieve **urgent** need or distress;
- To provide essential **basic** requirements, eg relating to washing, cooking and sleeping.

GENERAL CONDITIONS

- The application must be supported by an independent case worker or professional involved with the case. The role of the sponsor is to ensure the application contains all relevant information and meets the CVCT guidelines, and to help the applicant to prioritise need.

To provide CVCT Trustees with the information necessary to enable them to make a decision, and thus to maximise the possibility of a successful outcome, it is strongly recommended that, in completing a grant application, the starting point should be what are the victim's basic requirements (bearing in mind these criteria) rather than focussing on the prima facie maximum grant.

- Proof of a conviction is not essential, nor is reporting the crime to the police. In the absence of such proof, a reasonable belief by the sponsor that the applicant is the victim of a crime is acceptable.
- There should be a close connection, both as to cause and in time, between crime and application.
- Where a grant is made, CVCT, via CCF, will usually pay suppliers / contractors direct.
- Payments will not be made to, or on behalf of, third parties who are not direct victims.

- There is no minimum or maximum award amount and CVCT reserves the right to make any award it sees fit. However, as a guide, grants typically range from £200 to £700, depending on the applicant's needs.
- CVCT Trustees have complete discretion and reserve the right to consider any factors they deem relevant.

CVCT WILL NOT NORMALLY FUND

- Furniture, carpets and household items, other than basic essentials relating to washing, cooking and sleeping. These must represent best quality low budget items – premium models will not be supported.
- CCTV.
- Damage to motor vehicles.
- Uninsured loss.

Trustees may be willing to consider such matters if the applicant can establish that exceptional circumstances justify an award.

CVCT WILL NOT FUND

- Debt, whether incurred by the victim or someone else.
- Counselling / therapy.
- Education / training.
- Overseas travel, expeditions.
- Statutory agencies, or administrative equipment or general expenses for other bodies.

5.5 Feedback

Although we encourage feedback on the impact a grant has made on a victim's recovery and to enable us to hear how our processes are perceived, the direct responses we receive are restricted by the work pressures on the professionals who deal with victims. Nevertheless the messages that we do receive are positive and speak to the fact that the grants provide much needed items at a time of distress and, perhaps more importantly, a feeling that someone cares.

Here are some quotes received over the last couple of years:

Context: *Applicant needed to move due to high risk domestic abuse. She needed beds and bedding for the children plus help with removal costs.*

Quote: *"(The grant) reduced the stress of moving when there was little money. It also made a big impact to the children's lives to get a new bed and bedding. Thank you for being so helpful and for being so generous".*

Context: *Grant provided for purchase of camera to enable victim of on-line child grooming to engage in a positive activity as a means of recovering from severe emotional and mental impact.*

Quote: *"X will enrol on the level 2 photography course at college. (X is) very grateful for such a great camera to start her photographic education."*

Context: CVCT provided funds to Victim Support to purchase basic mobile telephones, to be given to victims of domestic or sexual abuse.

Quote (from Victim Support (Cumbria):

The award:

- enables our clients to have a means of summoning help from the Police should they need it/should further abuse happen. This is very important as so often abusers smash or confiscate the survivor's phone to isolate them from summoning help or assistance during an abusive incident.
- Enables our clients to continue accessing family/friends support where they can as so often the abuser distances & isolates the survivor from their friends & family as a means of exerting power & control over them.
- Enables our clients to maintain regular contact with their IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advisor) so they can jointly focus on promoting and maintaining the survivor's safety in the form of ongoing safety planning, risk assessment and risk management. Frequently the IDVA is the only person a survivor can turn to for support, advice & guidance.
- Enables our clients to access online apps to promote their safety such as the Hollie Guard app, Bright Sky app, WEPROTECT app etc.

Quote from a victim of high-risk domestic abuse who was allocated a mobile phone:

My mobile was smashed/broken during the incident I reported to the Police. I needed a phone to access support, contact the housing team & call the Police if required. (It has) improved my safety and support network. I'd like to thank the CVCT for providing me with the phone as it has made a big difference to me. I now feel safe.

Context: Grant used to purchase replacement bed for victim of rape who was suffering psychologically and who could not face using the bed on which the offence took place.

Quote: "The financial support greatly improved the client's physical and psychological wellbeing".

Context: Victim of domestic violence had to move, with her children, to another part of the County to avoid further violence.

Quote: "The recipient is very pleased with the support provided by the grant. She would have struggled without it".

Since it was established in 2015, the Trustees believe that the Charity has grown and developed to have an influence and a positive impact on victim care in Cumbria. This can be seen through our work with the Constabulary and the OPFCC on VAWG and the numbers of victims and families we have supported through grants.

5.6 In summary

CVCT Trustees 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

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.

6. THE CHARITY'S FINANCES AND RESERVES

The Charity is an independent charitable trust formed to help provide additional services for victims of crime in Cumbria and, over time, to generate additional income where possible to supplement the funding provided by the Ministry of Justice for victims' services. The Charity continues to seek to raise its profile as a means of generating both additional income and further appropriate applications for funding.

The aim is that funding from the Charity is timely, effective, compassionate and fair, and that it makes a difference to the lives of individual victims of crime and anti-social behaviour who reside in Cumbria.

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

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 formal Reserves Policy. In reality, the sums outlined in the Charity's year-end accounts are Reserves since grants are made from the Fund established with Cumbria Community Foundation, which is topped up from sums in hand as and when required. However, this matter will be kept under regular review.

7. THE FUTURE

As outlined earlier in this Report, as the Charity completes a decade of work on behalf of victims, Trustees have instigated a major review of CVCT, its activities and its place in the overall provision of support for victims of crime in Cumbria. That review will include discussions with partners and other stakeholders.

While the review is in progress, it will be business as usual. We will remain committed to our objects, providing timely relief to vulnerable victims at a time of great need, monitoring the provision of victims' services and making informed comment, based on the combined varied experience of Trustees, where that is appropriate.

Signed on 4 JUNE 2025 on behalf of Cumbria Victims Charitable Trust

Trustee

Trustee

Independent Examiner's Report

to

The Trustees of Cumbria Victims Charitable Trust

I report on the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025.

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 Charity 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:

7th May 2025

CUMBRIA VICTIMS CHARITABLE TRUST

Receipts and Payments Account 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025

Registered Charity Number 1160978

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total
Receipts			
Bank interest	2248.35		2248.35
Donations	<u>100.00</u>		<u>100.00</u>
	<u>2348.35</u>		<u>2348.35</u>
Payments			
Website	99.00		99.00
Professional fee	50.00		50.00
Trustee expenses	55.00		55.00
Grant – CVCT Fund	10000.00		10000.00
Videoconference licence	<u>155.88</u>		<u>155.88</u>
	<u>10359.88</u>		<u>10359.88</u>
Net Receipts (Payments)	(8011.53)		(8011.53)
Cash funds brought forward	70145.51		70145.51
Cash funds at 31 March 2025	62133.98		62133.98

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES as at 31 March 2025

Cash at Bank	Deposit account	55920.65	
	Current account	<u>6213.33</u>	62133.33
Cash fund at 31 March 2025			62133.98

Approved by the Trustees on 4 JUNE 2025 and signed on their behalf by


C. J. Armstrong - Trustee