

Report of the Trustees and
Unaudited Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024
for
Stepping Stones (Luton)

Hicks and Company
Chartered Accountants
Vaughan Chambers
Vaughan Road
Harpenden
Hertfordshire
AL5 4EE

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for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

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Report of the Trustees
for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

The Trustees who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2024.

The financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Companies Act 2006, the Memorandum and Articles of Association and the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)(effective 1 January 2019).

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objectives and aims

To empower every vulnerable woman that walks through our door with the opportunity and freedom to transform her life and the lives of her children and family.

Vision:

As a direct result of our work we will have built stronger communities by putting systems in place that enable women to thrive and be their best selves.

Mission:

Stepping Stones (Luton) is an innovative woman-centred service that is driven by passion enabling vulnerable women to transform their lives and reach their full potential. We empower and inspire women to make positive choices, creating a better future for themselves, their children, their families and the communities in which they live.

Guiding principles:

Important to Stepping Stones (Luton):

- 1) Gender: A service that acknowledges that gender makes a difference.
- 2) Environment: Safety, respect and dignity.
- 3) Relationships: Policies, practices, and programmes that are relational and promote healthy connections to children, family, significant others and the community.
- 4) Services: Addressing drugs, alcohol, domestic abuse, and antisocial behaviour sometimes demonstrated by the most vulnerable for example, homeless women, and mental health issues through comprehensive, integrated services.
- 5) Socioeconomic status: Providing women with opportunities to improve their socioeconomic conditions.
- 6) Community: To partner with other key lead services in providing support and services to address unmet needs and overcome barriers.

Charitable Objects:

The Charitable Objects of Stepping Stones (Luton) are for the public benefit and are restricted to the following: To relieve physical and mental sickness and financial hardship and to promote and preserve good health through the provision of support services of any kind, for women and their children and families suffering from drug addiction and substance abuse and who may have offended or re-offended or be victims of domestic abuse, living in Luton or such other parts of Bedfordshire or the United Kingdom as the trustees from time to time may think fit.

Public benefit

The Trustees are aware of the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit including the guidance 'public benefit: running a charity'. As explained further in the Achievements and Performance section set out below, the charity has addressed the activities undertaken in relation to its objects and their relationship to addressing the public benefit.

Principal areas of work

Since 2008 Stepping Stones (Luton) has been dedicated to helping women and their children reach their potential and create healthier, happier lives. Through tailored one to one support, group therapy and counselling, our team of experienced practitioners work collaboratively to equip and empower women to make the changes needed to create a better future for themselves, their children, their families and communities. Uniquely, we provide free childcare with Ofsted registered childcare ensuring all women can access our services.

The charity aims to:

- Improve the health and wellbeing of vulnerable women and their children
- Improve the life prospects of vulnerable women and their children
- Create stronger and more cohesive families

2023/24 Summary

This year we supported 263 vulnerable women and delivered 4,258 hours of support which is a decrease in number but a large increase in hours on last year. We saw more diverse and complex referrals into our services and the time spent on each case grew as a result. To meet the complex needs of our service beneficiary community we have diversified our offers of support to include new course programmes, advocacy, and mental health crisis intervention to ensure that we meet the women where they are on their respective journeys to freedom from domestic abuse, substance misuse and offending. To accurately reflect the voices of our service beneficiary community we have increased partnership working and developed our networking potential. We continue to be the only women's service within Luton that is contracted by the Ministry of Justice to support women who are subject to community orders or being discharged from custody to the local area. All services have been fully operational this year and our childcare facility is available five days a week.

Our largest referral source was through self-referral with 41% of our service beneficiaries referring themselves into service. Our second largest number of referrals this year was still from Children's Social Care, 12%, followed by probation services, 9%. The complexity of need presented by our service beneficiary community has risen - 75% were affected by poor mental health, 20% had a physical health need, 26% had alcohol or substance misuse issues and 18% had an offending support need. The majority of the women we supported experienced more than one vulnerability. Emotional and physical abuse and coercive control remained the three most common types of abuse.

The pan-county Survivor's Group continued to ensure that the current issues facing local women and their children affected by domestic abuse are accurately reflected in the services provided by both the statutory and voluntary sector. We have been consistently advocating for our service beneficiary community locally and ensuring that the voices of this marginalised collective are heard and acknowledged through system changes and process modification. We have continued to train our staff team to understand and respond effectively to the needs of women directly affected by FGM, honour-based violence, gang violence and sexual exploitation.

Report of the Trustees
for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

During this reporting period, 4,460 hours of childcare were delivered to 130 children with the increase on last year due to more women with young children being supported by the charity and the acceptance of non-client children, at a fixed cost. Our childcare facility continues to provide a thorough learning curriculum cognition appropriate to the children we support and retains its Ofsted rating. Children are encouraged to learn, play, and socialise appropriately with their peers taking part in a calendar of events. We advocate for the women we support; many of whom are struggling to navigate the complexities of social care and family court procedures. We make sure their voice is heard regardless of their background and we actively challenge discrimination within statutory institutions and the community.

Our Luton hub is a place that women feel safe and can benefit from food, clothes and toiletries donations as well as access to specialist employment support. We have strong partnerships with other agencies including social services, drugs and alcohol services, probation and sexual health services.

Previous informal partnerships to support specific mental health interventions with our clients was formalised in 2022/23 and Azalea, a charity which supports men and women caught in sex trafficking provided a fully qualified Mental Health practitioner who works with both Stepping Stones clients and those from Signposts charity which provide homelessness services via outreach and residential services. The funding for the programme was due to end by April 2024 but further funding has been granted from the NHS to ensure that this vital work can continue.

52% of our service users are from a black or minoritized group. We speak some of the main local languages, access translator services and have strong links to organisations who work with marginalised groups such as the British Red Cross and Luton Roma Trust. 70% of the women and families that we supported were claiming benefits and 7% had no recourse to public funds.

The women supported ranged from 20 to 78 years old. Following an initial assessment, all women receive 1:1 support and the majority attend one or more groups, particularly the Own my Life and Parenting programmes. With services tailored to meet individual needs, we find that support lasts between 6 months and 2 years. For younger women, needs centre on understanding healthy relationships; exploitation through gang membership; self-harm; anxiety; drug dependency; parental pressures; leaving care and securing safe accommodation; cultural expectations. There can be an increased frequency/intensity of support for younger women, particularly offenders and we provide significant levels of support to sustain education. Our ETE provision continues to provide a positive exit from our support and includes and budgeting advice. Older women accessing our support also benefit from both group and individual ETE support including CV writing, interviewing skills and sourcing appropriate work/volunteering) and often need support to understand and overcome long-standing abusive relationships (increasingly by their children). All women are given a support plan to guide them through their support and a safety plan.

ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

During 2023/24 the following services were provided:

Intervention / services	No. of women
One to one support (Luton)	201
One to one support (Central Beds)	30
Probation	39
Group programmes (incl Own My Life, Serenity)	173
Education, Training and Employment support	25
Counselling	19
Mental Health support (Healthy mind)	18

Services:

One-to-one support:

Following an initial assessment, our trained Women's Support Practitioners (WSPs) work collaboratively with the client to identify and develop an appropriate and dynamic support plan which accurately reflects and meets the client's immediate and longer-term needs. One-to-one support continues to be the most commonly offered service, which is underpinned by a holistic, therapeutic approach to building the client's mental, physical, emotional, and psychosocial wellbeing. A typical support plan would include the following:

- Enabling the client to understand and move beyond domestic abuse
- Fostering positive and healthy relationships and support networks
- Support and advocacy to navigate statutory services such as Probation, Social Services, Local Authority housing and the DWP
- Acknowledging and addressing substance misuse
- Education and empowerment around parenting

Group programmes: The charity offers an increased number and variety of programmes to our client community which are designed to inform, empower, and support clients experiencing specific issues. A summary of our groups (many of which can be delivered by a fully trained WSP on a one-to-one basis dependent on the client's needs) are as follows:

Own My Life - a 12-week course to support clients, who have suffered abuse, regain ownership of their lives. It looks at sexism, rape culture, violence, misogyny, disrespect in relationships and abusive behaviour. All practitioners are trained to deliver this programme.

Beyond Anger - explores anger and violence in different areas of the client's lives, focussing on strengths and how clients can express strong emotions in a safe and appropriate manner and make positive changes to their lives.

Resilience Parenting - enables and empowers clients to understand parenting and how to move towards safe, appropriate, and responsive parenting. Building strong bonds between parent and child.

Serenity - authored by the charity to support clients affected by anxiety and stress; enables clients to understand and recognise stress and to respond to distressing environs and panic in a proactive, meaningful manner.

Non-Violent Resistance - NVR is designed specifically for parents who are experiencing abusive behaviour from their child (or children). It enables parents to respond to these challenges in a proven, peaceful way that seeks to improve the parent/child relationship.

Love Languages - this was developed to enable clients to understand the way they give and receive love in both intimate and familial relationships. It identifies ways to navigate and respond to possible red flags in relationships that have the potential to become harmful.

Other achievements in the year

We continue to take part in community activities around International Women's Day to celebrate and share knowledge and skills around women's services within our local community. During 16 days of Action against gender-based violence, we also hosted an event for our own clients to celebrate and share their successes focussing on strength and hope in the future.

Partnership working

Working in partnership with complementary organisations both within Luton and across Central Bedfordshire remains critical to ensure effective service delivery (linking to housing, drug and alcohol and other complementary services) and to maximise resources. We continue to enjoy strong working relationships with Women's Aid Luton, Luton All Women's Centre and Victim Support to name but a few within the voluntary women's sector. We also work very closely with both Luton Council and Central Bedfordshire Council, as well as the Police and Probation services, all of which form a significant proportion of our referrals. We have an important presence on many of the local forums at a strategic and operational level

Volunteering

The trustees wish to record thanks to the many volunteers without whom the charity would be unable to maintain the quality of service at the level of funds that is currently received. In 2023/24 we benefited from the work of 5 volunteers who supported paid staff in various ways including administrative support functions, IT and social networking. Externally training volunteer counsellors also support the service users.

Organisation Structure

Management Team

Denise March-Palmer (Interim CEO)
Shazia Shah (Manager Women's Services)
Linda Rogers (Manager Children's Services)

The new Women's Services Manager joined in April 2023 increasing the management team to three and mitigating some of the extra workload on the CEO and Office Manager. There were 15 staff members - 6 full time and 9 part-time. All our staff are highly trained and regularly refresh and expand their learning through both accredited and non-accredited courses and webinars. Two Women's Support Practitioners are qualified IDVAs. Mandatory training is refreshed annually or if legislation changes.

Operational challenges during 2023/24

The CEO unexpected left the charity at the beginning of July 2023 and the Office Manager stepped up as Interim CEO. It was a very difficult time and unsettling for the staff. The Trustees needed to provide more day-to-day management support than previously and this increased demand led to the resignation of 3 Trustees in August as they struggled with full-time employment and the Charity's demands. There was a short interruption to services but this was quickly resumed in late August. Unfortunately during this somewhat confused time the Charity Commission Account filing was overlooked and finally filed 105 days late along with directors' resignations. One director left in July 2023 and two others in August 2023. These 3 were filed along with the final resignation in February 2024.

Funding: There has been continuing uncertainty around funding. The ending of several larger multi-year funding streams in this year and previous years has significantly impacted our funding sustainability. We are actively identifying different routes to fund raising as well as different funders.

Remote working: Remote working practices were adopted during the Covid pandemic and although the offices are open 5 days per week there are still staff supporting clients from home over the phone and via video calls.

Business Development, Fundraising and Income Generation

The loss of the Business Development Manager in 2022 had been mitigated against by the CEO investing time in this vital area. The Interim CEO was unable to take this role on and Trustees were drafted in to help with funding applications while she concentrated on providing relevant reports to funders to ensure continuity of payments. It became clear that this was a skill area lacking on both the Board and management team. The recruitment of a new CEO was put on hold until further finance could be confirmed. In October several cost-saving decisions were made, including to stop providing hot meals for childcare and the cook was made redundant.

Report of the Trustees
for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

The award in 2022 by the Ministry of Justice was due to end on 31/03/25. Further funding from the National Lottery for cost-of-living increases in early 2024 helped to ease the burden of constantly rising energy, telephony, IT costs. Funding from Bedfordshire and Luton Community Foundation was due to end 31/03/2024. A new 3-year funding grant from them for £127,883, (Apr 24 - Mar 25), £121,489 (Apr 25 - Mar 26) and £115,095 (Apr 26 - Mar 27). The recruitment of a new CEO successfully identified a candidate who would start in May 2024. The Board will continue to support the management team with funding applications until the new Business Development Manager joins the Charity later in 2024.

The Charity continues to receive financial support from Community fundraising events and will continue to work on its increasing media presence. The continued cost of living crisis which has affected both service users and the Charity has prompted us to consider more diverse funding streams and continue with partnership funding applications where appropriate.

Partnership working, particularly for the provision of mental health services has been an area which has strengthened the charity's offering. It will continue to actively pursue other appropriate partnerships and continue to build stronger professional networks.

As members of the VARAC Strategic Board, Luton Borough Council's Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board, Central Bedfordshire Council's Bedfordshire Domestic Abuse Partnership, Luton New Migrant Partnership and the Vulnerable Women's Group, we continue to ensure that the needs of our service users are accurately reflected at regional level. The charity continues to work closely with other third sector providers within the local community as well as statutory agencies with the statutory care remit for many of our service users. We work in partnership with the relevant NHS Trust, Social Services directorate (both adult and child) and the local Criminal Justice System.

Principal risks and uncertainties

Financial sustainability of the organisation continues to be our focus and we will seek continued diversification of our funding streams and an increase in partnership working. We have reviewed the main areas of risk and are working on a revised Business Continuity Plan. The main areas of risk for the charity are:

- Loss of workspace - building damage, unexpected structural faults, heating / plumbing failure and/or loss of utilities.
- Loss of IT / data - failure of computer hardware and/or IT systems, hacking or security breach, damage to phone lines / internet access.
- Loss of key staff - inability of staff to attend workplace or permanent / temporary loss of staff.
- Loss of income - inability to secure sufficient funding for the year, not receiving expected funding on time, not receiving funding at all.

Plans for future periods

For the 2024/25 period we will be focusing on;

- Promoting our childcare services through a series of open mornings for referring agents, the resumption of providing a hot meal for attendees, the publication of newly developed promotional materials and outsourcing these services at cost where the caregiver is not a client of the charity.
- Looking to further develop our offer to potential clients including those outside the Luton area and living in rurally isolated areas of Central Bedfordshire.
- Looking to further develop and innovate our services by considering how these may be offered to external fee-paying organizations
- Repositioning the charity as the region's leading provider of services to women

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Financial position

The detailed figures for the year ended 31 March 2024 are set out in the financial statements that follow this Trustees' Report. During the year, the Company received £415,902 (2023: £418,661) and spent £476,744 (2023: £557,207) leaving a deficit of £60,842 (2023: deficit of £138,546).

The primary sources of income were from a service agreement contract with Advance (probation) and grants from Luton Rising, National Lottery, Ministry of Justice and The Henry Smith Charity. Expenditure for the year was within budget due to cost savings during the year made whilst still maintaining service provision.

Reserves policy

The current reserves policy is to keep at least 25% of operating costs as reserves (excluding those relating to restricted income funds, endowment funds, tangible assets held for the Company's use and amounts designated for essential future spending) to ensure that the Company can continue to operate in the short term should it suffer an unexpected fall in incoming funds. At the balance sheet date, the Company held £179,535 (2023: £200,330) in reserves under the above definition, which represents 37.6% (2023: 36.0%) of operating costs for the year.

Investment policy

The trustees have decided to maintain a low risk investment strategy. The main purpose of the Company is to provide support services to vulnerable women and their children and families and because of the uncertainty of income streams, it is necessary to ensure that funds are readily available to ensure that services are not adversely affected by short term income falls. As such the trustees choose not to risk funds in potentially higher return investments.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

Stepping Stones (Luton) is a company limited by guarantee governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association dated 8 June 2015 (amended 11 January 2017). It is registered as a charity with the Charity Commission. The maximum contribution required by members of the company is an amount not exceeding £1 in the event of the company being wound up. The Company was originally incorporated on 8 May 2008 as a Community Interest Company and passed a special resolution on 8 June 2015 to convert to a Charitable Company.

Appointment of trustees

New Trustees are appointed by a majority ballot of the existing Trustees or by ordinary resolution of the members in general meeting. New Trustees appointed by the existing Trustees only hold office until the next AGM at which time they may seek re-appointment. One third of the Trustees retire from office by rotation at each AGM following the first AGM and may seek re-appointment.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Registered Company number

06588338 (England and Wales)

Registered Charity number

1162349

Registered office

9a George Street West
Luton
Bedfordshire
LU1 2BW

Report of the Trustees
for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

Company Trustees and Directors

The directors of the charitable company are its trustees for the purpose of charity law. The trustees and officers serving during the year and since the year end were as follows:

Sandra Brown (Chair)
Sara Miles (resigned 26.2.24)
Rosemary Hughes (Vice Chair)
Manoj Jain (resigned 4.5.23)
Claire McNally
Sarita Jain (resigned 8.8.23)
Letitia Winston (resigned 31.8.23)
Charlotte Philip (resigned 13.7.23)
Aimee Clarke

Independent Examiner

Philip Dean, FCA (Member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England & Wales)
Hicks and Company
Chartered Accountants
Vaughan Chambers
Vaughan Road
Harpenden
Hertfordshire
AL5 4EE

Patron

Meryl Dolling

Bankers

CAF Bank Ltd
25 Kings Hill Avenue
Kings Hill
West Malling
Kent ME19 4JQ

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The trustees (who are also the directors of Stepping Stones (Luton) for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Report of the Trustees and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law 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 charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. 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 Charity SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Stepping Stones (Luton) (Registered number: 06588338)

Report of the Trustees
for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Approved by order of the board of trustees on 16 September 2024 and signed on its behalf by:

Sandra Brown

Sandra Brown (Chair) - Trustee

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Stepping Stones (Luton) ('the Company')

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Company for the year ended 31 March 2024.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees of the Company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the Company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your charity's accounts as carried out under Section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under Section 145(5) (b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

Since your charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a listed body. I can confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the ****ERROR - relevant professional body must be completed****, which is one of the listed bodies.

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

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Company as required by Section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of Section 396 of the 2006 Act 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; or
4. the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities (applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)).

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.

Philip Dean

Philip Dean, FCA (Member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England & Wales)

Hicks and Company
Chartered Accountants
Vaughan Chambers
Vaughan Road
Harpenden
Hertfordshire
AL5 4EE

16 September 2024

Stepping Stones (Luton)

Statement of Financial Activities
for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted funds £	31.3.24 Total funds £	31.3.23 Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM					
Donations and legacies	2	10,187	-	10,187	28,395
Charitable activities	4				
Support services for vulnerable women		56,887	348,475	405,362	389,722
Investment income	3	<u>353</u>	-	<u>353</u>	<u>544</u>
Total		<u>67,427</u>	<u>348,475</u>	<u>415,902</u>	<u>418,661</u>
EXPENDITURE ON					
Charitable activities	5				
Support services for vulnerable women		<u>86,954</u>	<u>389,790</u>	<u>476,744</u>	<u>557,207</u>
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)		(19,527)	(41,315)	(60,842)	(138,546)
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		<u>200,374</u>	<u>46,309</u>	<u>246,683</u>	<u>385,229</u>
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		<u><u>180,847</u></u>	<u><u>4,994</u></u>	<u><u>185,841</u></u>	<u><u>246,683</u></u>

The notes form part of these financial statements

Statement of Financial Position
31 March 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted funds £	31.3.24 Total funds £	31.3.23 Total funds £
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible assets	11	1,313	-	1,313	44
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	12	23,551	15,733	39,284	16,771
Cash at bank and in hand		164,424	13,870	178,294	289,961
		187,975	29,603	217,578	306,732
CREDITORS					
Amounts falling due within one year	13	(8,440)	(24,610)	(33,050)	(60,093)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		179,535	4,993	184,528	246,639
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		180,848	4,993	185,841	246,683
NET ASSETS		180,848	4,993	185,841	246,683
FUNDS	15				
Unrestricted funds:					
General fund				180,848	200,374
Restricted funds:					
Support services for vulnerable women				4,993	46,309
TOTAL FUNDS				185,841	246,683

The charitable company is entitled to exemption from audit under Section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 for the year ended 31 March 2024.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024 in accordance with Section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

The trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for

- ensuring that the charitable company keeps accounting records that comply with Sections 386 and 387 of the Companies Act 2006 and
- preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company as at the end of each financial year and of its surplus or deficit for each financial year in accordance with the requirements of Sections 394 and 395 and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the charitable company.

Statement of Financial Position - continued
31 March 2024

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to charitable companies subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on 16 September 2024 and were signed on its behalf by:

Sandra Brown

Sandra Brown (Chair) - Trustee

Rosemary Hughes

Rosemary Hughes - Trustee

Stepping Stones (Luton)

Statement of Cash Flows
for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

	Notes	31.3.24 £	31.3.23 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Cash generated from operations	1	(109,826)	(158,337)
Interest paid		<u>(92)</u>	<u>(54)</u>
Net cash used in operating activities		<u>(109,918)</u>	<u>(158,391)</u>
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		<u>(1,749)</u>	<u>-</u>
Net cash (used in)/provided by investing activities		<u>(1,749)</u>	<u>-</u>
		<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period		(111,667)	(158,391)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		<u>289,961</u>	<u>448,352</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period		<u><u>178,294</u></u>	<u><u>289,961</u></u>

The notes form part of these financial statements

1. RECONCILIATION OF NET EXPENDITURE TO NET CASH FLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES

	31.3.24 £	31.3.23 £
Net expenditure for the reporting period (as per the Statement of Financial Activities)	(60,842)	(138,546)
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation charges	480	49
Interest paid	92	54
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	(22,513)	4,274
Decrease in creditors	(27,043)	(24,168)
Net cash used in operations	<u>(109,826)</u>	<u>(158,337)</u>

2. ANALYSIS OF CHANGES IN NET FUNDS

	At 1.4.23 £	Cash flow £	At 31.3.24 £
Net cash			
Cash at bank and in hand	<u>289,961</u>	<u>(111,667)</u>	<u>178,294</u>
	<u>289,961</u>	<u>(111,667)</u>	<u>178,294</u>
Total	<u>289,961</u>	<u>(111,667)</u>	<u>178,294</u>

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of preparing the financial statements

The financial statements of the charitable company, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019)', Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Companies Act 2006. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

Income

All incoming resources are included in the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy. The following specific policies are applied to particular categories of income:

Voluntary income is received by way of grants, donations and gifts and is included in full in the Statement of Financial Activities when receivable. Grants, where entitlement is not conditional on the delivery of a specific performance by the charity, are recognised when the charity becomes unconditionally entitled to them.

Donated services and facilities are included at the value to the charity where this can be quantified. The value of services provided by volunteers has not been included in these accounts.

Investment income is included when receivable.

Incoming resources from grants, where related to performance and specific deliverables, are accounted for as the charity earns the right to consideration by its performance.

Expenditure

Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Costs of generating funds comprise the costs associated with attracting voluntary income.

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them.

The charity has one main activity being the provision of support services for vulnerable women.

Allocation and apportionment of costs

Costs have either been directly allocated or have been allocated on the basis of the proportion of income to which they relate. Where depreciation is properly chargeable to restricted fund activities, this has also been allocated on the basis of the proportion of income between restricted and unrestricted activities.

Tangible fixed assets

Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life.

Short leasehold	- 10% on cost
Fixtures & equipment	- 25% on cost

Taxation

The charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES - continued

Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

Pension costs and other post-retirement benefits

The charitable company operates a defined contribution pension scheme. Contributions payable to the charitable company's pension scheme are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities in the period to which they relate.

2. DONATIONS AND LEGACIES

	31.3.24	31.3.23
	£	£
Donations	10,187	26,729
Gift aid	-	1,666
	<u>10,187</u>	<u>28,395</u>

3. INVESTMENT INCOME

	31.3.24	31.3.23
	£	£
Interest received	<u>353</u>	<u>544</u>

4. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	Activity	31.3.24	31.3.23
		£	£
Service agreement	Support services for vulnerable women	56,384	38,740
Sundry income	Support services for vulnerable women	503	-
Grants	Support services for vulnerable women	348,475	350,779
Childcare services	Support services for vulnerable women	-	203
		<u>405,362</u>	<u>389,722</u>

Grants received, included in the above, are as follows:

	31.3.24	31.3.23
	£	£
Luton Rising	143,200	143,200
Tudor Trust	-	25,000
Lloyds Bank Foundation	-	34,250
Ministry Of Justice	60,746	9,986
The Henry Smith Charity	32,500	26,900
Bedfordshire Luton Community Foundation (emergency Covid)	-	8,000
Pilgrim Trust	-	3,750
Steel Charitable Trust	-	12,500
	<u>236,446</u>	<u>263,586</u>
Carried forward		

4. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES - continued

	31.3.24	31.3.23
	£	£
Brought forward	236,446	263,586
Masonic Charitable Foundation	-	24,731
Awards For All (Lottery)	-	600
National Lottery	54,729	56,862
B&Q	-	5,000
National Lottery Cost Of Living Fund	57,300	-
	<u>348,475</u>	<u>350,779</u>

5. CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES COSTS

	Direct Costs £	Support costs (see note 6) £	Totals £
Support services for vulnerable women	<u>371,817</u>	<u>104,927</u>	<u>476,744</u>

6. SUPPORT COSTS

	Other £
Support services for vulnerable women	<u>104,927</u>

7. NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)

Net income/(expenditure) is stated after charging/(crediting):

	31.3.24	31.3.23
	£	£
Depreciation - owned assets	480	49
Independent Examiner's remuneration	<u>3,300</u>	<u>3,000</u>

8. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 31 March 2024 nor for the year ended 31 March 2023.

Trustees' expenses

During the year ended 31 March 2024, £115 (2023: £Nil) expenses was paid in connection with two Trustees.

9. STAFF COSTS

	31.3.24	31.3.23
	£	£
Wages and salaries	325,653	406,861
Social security costs	19,422	19,032
Other pension costs	5,346	6,861
	<u>350,421</u>	<u>432,754</u>

Pension costs are allocated to activities in proportion to the related staffing costs incurred.

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	31.3.24	31.3.23
	18	20
Support services for vulnerable women		

No employees received emoluments in excess of £60,000.

The employee benefits of key management personnel for the company were £102,426 (2023: £84,618).

10. COMPARATIVES FOR THE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM			
Donations and legacies	28,395	-	28,395
Charitable activities			
Support services for vulnerable women	38,943	350,779	389,722
Investment income	<u>544</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>544</u>
Total	<u>67,882</u>	<u>350,779</u>	<u>418,661</u>
EXPENDITURE ON			
Charitable activities			
Support services for vulnerable women	<u>103,210</u>	<u>453,997</u>	<u>557,207</u>
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)	(35,328)	(103,218)	(138,546)
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS			
Total funds brought forward	<u>235,702</u>	<u>149,527</u>	<u>385,229</u>
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	<u>200,374</u>	<u>46,309</u>	<u>246,683</u>

11. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Short leasehold £	Fixtures & equipment £	Totals £
COST			
At 1 April 2023	129,248	46,085	175,333
Additions	-	1,749	1,749
At 31 March 2024	129,248	47,834	177,082
DEPRECIATION			
At 1 April 2023	129,247	46,042	175,289
Charge for year	-	480	480
At 31 March 2024	129,247	46,522	175,769
NET BOOK VALUE			
At 31 March 2024	1	1,312	1,313
At 31 March 2023	1	43	44

12. DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	31.3.24	31.3.23
	£	£
Trade debtors	28,762	6,457
Prepayments	10,522	10,314
	39,284	16,771

13. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	31.3.24	31.3.23
	£	£
Trade creditors	6,380	3,570
Social security and other taxes	3,075	22,013
Other creditors	20,786	28,353
Accruals and deferred income	2,809	6,157
	33,050	60,093

14. LEASING AGREEMENTS

Minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases fall due as follows:

	31.3.24	31.3.23
	£	£
Within one year	20,000	20,000
Between one and five years	80,000	80,000
In more than five years	55,000	75,000
	155,000	175,000

15. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

	At 1.4.23 £	Net movement in funds £	At 31.3.24 £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	200,374	(19,526)	180,848
Restricted funds			
Support services for vulnerable women	46,309	(41,316)	4,993
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>246,683</u>	<u>(60,842)</u>	<u>185,841</u>

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	67,427	(86,953)	(19,526)
Restricted funds			
Support services for vulnerable women	348,475	(389,791)	(41,316)
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>415,902</u>	<u>(476,744)</u>	<u>(60,842)</u>

Comparatives for movement in funds

	At 1.4.22 £	Net movement in funds £	At 31.3.23 £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	235,702	(35,328)	200,374
Restricted funds			
Support services for vulnerable women	149,527	(103,218)	46,309
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>385,229</u>	<u>(138,546)</u>	<u>246,683</u>

15. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

Comparative net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	67,882	(103,210)	(35,328)
Restricted funds			
Support services for vulnerable women	350,779	(453,997)	(103,218)
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>418,661</u>	<u>(557,207)</u>	<u>(138,546)</u>

Purpose of restricted funds:

The restricted funds are held and applied for the overall objects of the company. Due to the complex needs of all service users, it is not possible to allocate income and costs to specific services provided by the company.

16. RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

There were no transactions with related parties during the year ended 31 March 2024.

17. ULTIMATE CONTROLLING PARTY

In the opinion of the trustees, there was no controlling party during the year.

18. GENERAL INFORMATION

The company is a private company registered in England and Wales. It is limited by guarantee and has no share capital. In the event of a winding up, every member has undertaken to contribute a sum not exceeding £1. The company's registered number and registered office address can be found in the Report of the Trustees.

Detailed Statement of Financial Activities
for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	31.3.24 Total funds £	31.3.23 Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS				
Donations and legacies				
Donations	10,187	-	10,187	26,729
Gift aid	-	-	-	1,666
	10,187	-	10,187	28,395
Investment income				
Interest received	353	-	353	544
Charitable activities				
Service agreement	56,384	-	56,384	38,740
Sundry income	503	-	503	-
Grants	-	348,475	348,475	350,779
Childcare services	-	-	-	203
	56,887	348,475	405,362	389,722
Total incoming resources	67,427	348,475	415,902	418,661
EXPENDITURE				
Charitable activities				
Salaries	55,361	270,292	325,653	406,861
Social security	3,302	16,120	19,422	19,032
Pensions	909	4,437	5,346	6,861
Staff training	2,217	-	2,217	2,814
Agency staff	-	-	-	1,000
Recruitment costs	340	1,659	1,999	8,217
DBS costs	90	440	530	520
Refreshments & canteen expenses	444	2,162	2,606	4,673
Travel expenses	548	-	548	278
Supervision costs	989	4,830	5,819	7,815
Materials	103	499	602	891
Service user support expenses	191	-	191	106
Accountancy	3,973	2,796	6,769	5,683
Trustee expenses	115	-	115	-
	68,582	303,235	371,817	464,751
Support costs				
Other				
Fundraising and promotion	10	-	10	304
Rent & parking payable	3,400	16,600	20,000	26,608
Rates & water rates	338	1,645	1,983	626
Carried forward	3,748	18,245	21,993	27,538

Stepping Stones (Luton)Detailed Statement of Financial Activities
for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	31.3.24 Total funds £	31.3.23 Total funds £
Other				
Brought forward	3,748	18,245	21,993	27,538
Insurance	1,075	5,244	6,319	10,447
Telephone	2,033	9,922	11,955	9,488
Printing, postage & stationery	330	1,613	1,943	3,112
Repairs, renewals & alterations	556	2,714	3,270	3,104
Light & heat	1,200	5,859	7,059	6,063
Computer & software expenses	4,722	23,046	27,768	18,722
Subscriptions	466	2,270	2,736	2,857
Professional fees	2,992	14,605	17,597	5,889
Volunteer expenses	21	-	21	125
Refuse collection & cleaning	623	3,038	3,661	4,431
Sundry expenses	33	-	33	577
Depreciation of fixtures & equipment	480	-	480	49
Bank charges & interest	92	-	92	54
	<u>18,371</u>	<u>86,556</u>	<u>104,927</u>	<u>92,456</u>
Total resources expended	<u>86,953</u>	<u>389,791</u>	<u>476,744</u>	<u>557,207</u>
Net (expenditure)/income	<u>(19,526)</u>	<u>(41,316)</u>	<u>(60,842)</u>	<u>(138,546)</u>