

WE ARE FAMILY

England & Wales · Charity number 1163318

Details

Other names	WAF
Status	Registered
Legal form	CIO
Registered	2015-08-26
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

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Activities

Objects: THE OBJECTS OF WE ARE FAMILY, AS A PARENT-LED, PEER-TO-PEER ADOPTION SUPPORT COMMUNITY, ARE, FOR THE PUBLIC BENEFIT, TO PROMOTE THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF PROSPECTIVE ADOPTERS AND ADOPTIVE PARENTS AND THE PARTNERS OF ADOPTIVE PARENTS WHO WERE NOT PARTY TO THE ORIGINAL ADOPTION ORDER (THESE THREE GROUPS BEING REFERRED TO TOGETHER AS 'ADOPTIVE PARENTS' IN THESE OBJECTS) THROUGHOUT THE UNITED KINGDOM, AND IN PARTICULAR THE RELIEF OF THE PREDICTABLE STRESS, STRAIN AND SENSE OF ISOLATION THAT COMES WITH BECOMING AN ADOPTIVE PARENT AND IN PARENTING TRAUMATIZED CHILDREN. THESE OBJECTS SHALL BE ACHIEVED IN PARTICULAR BUT NOT EXCLUSIVELY BY : (A) ADVOCATING AND ADVANCING PEER-TO-PEER SUPPORT FOR ADOPTIVE PARENTS, BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER PLACEMENT AND ADOPTION; (B) ADVOCATING, ESTABLISHING, SUPPORTING, RUNNING AND PROMOTING PARENT-LED COMMUNITIES OF ADOPTIVE PARENTS, CONSISTING OF LOCALLY AND CENTRALLY MANAGED NETWORKS WHICH ALLOW FOR PARTICIPATION BY WAY OF BOTH IN-PERSON AND ONLINE MEETINGS AND FORUMS; (C) OFFERING LOCAL AND REGULAR MEETING PLACES AND ACTIVITIES FOR ADOPTIVE PARENTS WHICH REFLECT THEIR PARTICULAR NEEDS, WITH OR WITHOUT THEIR CHILDREN, IN PARTICULAR BUT NOT EXCLUSIVELY BY RUNNING SUCH ACTIVITIES AS UNDER-5S PLAYGROUPS AND FAMILY EVENTS (WITH CHILDREN) AND PARENT SUPPORT GROUPS (WITHOUT CHILDREN); (D) PROMOTING AND ADVANCING THE NEED FOR PARENTAL SELF-CARE WHILE RAISING CHILDREN WHO HAVE SUFFERED EARLY TRAUMA (SELF-CARE MEANING LOOKING AFTER ADOPTIVE PARENTS' OWN EMOTIONAL AND PHYSICAL NEEDS TO ALLOW THEM TO BETTER CARE FOR AND SUPPORT THEIR ADOPTED CHILDREN, INCLUDING BY HELPING THEM REMAIN EMOTIONALLY REGULATED AND STABLE IN THEIR INTERACTIONS WITH THEIR CHILDREN); (E) PROVIDING PLATFORMS FOR ADOPTIVE PARENTS TO SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCES, FOR EXAMPLE THROUGH PARENT SUPPORT FORA AND ONLINE BLOGS; (F) DISSEMINATING INFORMATION ABOUT PRACTICAL ADOPTION SUPPORT AND RELATED TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES (SUCH AS WAYS OF RELIEVING STRESS AND REDUCING ISOLATION); AND (G) SUPPORTING, INFLUENCING, ADVOCATING FOR, AND CONTRIBUTING TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF RELEVANT ADOPTION SUPPORT SERVICES AND ADVANCING PARENTAL SUPPORT THROUGHOUT THE ADOPTION PROCESS AND BEYOND.

Activities: We Are Family is a parent-led, peer-to-peer adoption support community, that promote the health and well-being of prospective adopters and adoptive parents mainly in the London area, and in particular the relief of the predictable stress, strain and sense of isolation. Our members meet regularly through core activities such as playgroups for under-fives, parent support groups or family outings.

Classification

- **How:** Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information, Acts As An Umbrella Or Resource Body
- **What:** General Charitable Purposes, The Advancement Of Health Or Saving Of Lives
- **Who:** Other Charities Or Voluntary Bodies, Other Defined Groups

Geography

- Throughout England

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£170,652	£149,808	-	-
2024-03-31	£125,438	£114,557	-	-
2023-03-31	£99,294	£103,107	-	-
2022-03-31	£100,290	£76,062	-	-
2021-03-31	£88,555	£62,762	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Elizabeth Jayne Davenport	Chair	2021-02-08
Amy Jane Burns-Thomson		2023-06-01
Andrew Taylor-Dawson		2020-06-08
Anita Antoinette Goveas		2023-06-01
Anna Willow		2022-03-01
Barabara Diane McGrath		2020-09-14
Claire Walsh		2024-07-16
Michael Clarke		2022-03-01
Miranda Kelly		2026-03-17
Ros Croker-Ahmed		2026-03-17

WE ARE FAMILY

England & Wales - Charity number 1163318

Accounts

Annual Report and Accounts 2024 - 2025

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Chair's Introduction

[1st April 2024 - 31st March 2025]

In many ways, this year has been one of transitions. Firsts and lasts. Both internally as a staff and trustee team, but perhaps also reflective of many of our members' journeys from tweens to teenhood, to early adulthood and beyond.

As at March 2025, we are a 1,700-strong membership, from across over 100 local authorities, with post-placement members with children in age ranges from early years to early adulthood. This wealth and depth of adoption experience extends into all of our services, especially our Peer Support, which you can read further about in the report that follows.

We would not be able to run the programmes we do, without our dedicated volunteers - some of whom have been with us from the start, and some of whom have had to step away to make space for other commitments, as the transitional demands ebb and flow. I want to thank all of our volunteers for the hours, months or years of dedication you have given to our community.

Enormous gratitude is also due to our staff team. This year, we bid a fond farewell to our first ever paid staff member, Lisa Barker, who stepped down from her role as Director after five years working for We Are Family. Lisa's seminal contributions to growing our charity will continue to have a lasting impact and we want to thank her for her visionary leadership and exceptional organisational talents. This in turn, marks the beginning of a new chapter with a new Director, who we plan to have in post by Summer 2025.

And soon I will also be passing the baton on to a new Chair of Trustees, as my six year term comes to an end in November 2025. I continue to chair the board of trustees of the charity in the meantime, including through a Chair recruitment and training phase in Autumn 2025, however this does mark my final Annual Report and Introductory Letter.

Which brings us to legacy. What impact do we want We Are Family to have? What changes do we want to see in the sector? How do we best equip our children to thrive? I am proud of the charity's many achievements, however for now, I would like to draw your attention to our highlights from 2024-25:

- *Members self-reported improvement in confidence, resilience and wellbeing in our annual survey*
- *Our groups delivered over 125 face-to-face events across 50 physical locations*
- *We offered over 50 online meeting opportunities*
- *We ensured user-led services were maintained, that information was regularly sent to volunteers and that the volunteer strategy and programme delivery continued to be developed through co-production*
- *We delivered 2 x 12 hour bespoke peer facilitator training courses to volunteers*
- *We secured new multi-year grant/s and diversified our funding base*
- *WAF evolved the staff team and secured two annual paid internship programmes in partnership with the University of Reading, building on a long-standing relationship.*
- *We successfully piloted 'pay what you can' WAF Talks webinars*
- *We launched the Education Support Programme consisting of a Peer Support Group, Mini Talks Programme and Digital Toolkit for resources and signposting.*
- *We also launched WAF Plus, our unique cultural connections programme & our bespoke Events Feature which makes booking onto events easier than ever.*
- *We leveraged our partnerships to raise the profile of member issues and influence policy development, particularly through appointment to sit on the Adopter Reference Group at the Department for Education.*

Looking ahead, we will continue to expand the range of peer support groups with the offering of identity and interest-based communities, such as Teens & Tweens; Global majority and dual heritage adopters; and other groups as requested via our feedback channels. We will also build on the important work of the Education Support Programme for both our members, and professionals that would benefit from further understanding on the need for trauma-informed approaches.

We will also continue to deliver our year-round digital programme of WAF Talks and the next season of our Podcast, both funded by Adopt London, and now in their sixth year. This season of the Adoption Shared podcast is a theme chosen by our members - "Exploring Adoption, Identity, Belonging and Literature" - and will have a focus on helping adoptive parents have meaningful conversations with their children.

On the horizon, we also have plans for our first WAF Big Day Out which will be held this summer, in person, at ZSL London Zoo. Combining a family-friendly workshop, with a community picnic, and free tickets to the Zoo, this is set to be our biggest gathering of WAF members (circa 200!) since our inception. We hope to programme more opportunities for families to connect and forge networks as both parents and children / young people.

In our members' own words:

"I'd like all adopters to join WAF :) I think one of the best resources for me has been meeting other adopters and learning about their experiences. I tend to be more open now about adopting the girls, and it's incredible the number of adopters and adoptees I meet randomly, who then have amazing stories to share. There is an awesome community out there, and it would be great to make sure as many as possible have access to WAF's expertise and resources."

We will also continue to utilise our collaborative approach to working with partners, and leverage our influence at policy tables, to amplify the adopter voice, champion investment, and inspire our vision for a well-resourced, suitably informed, connected adoption community that supports the whole family to thrive.

By the time the next annual report comes around, we will have a new Director and Chair of Trustees in post and - along with support from our Board of Trustees, staff team and volunteers - I have no doubt there will be many more milestones to celebrate and ambitions achieved. Thank you for your continued contributions to building our community.

You can read more details about many of the points above in the following formal trustees' report.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Hoult-Allen', is centered within a faint, light-grey circular watermark that contains the text 'WAF'.

Mark Hoult-Allen
Chair

The trustees of We Are Family CIO present their tenth annual report, covering the twelve months ended 31 March 2025 ('the year').

Reference and Administrative Details

The charity, We Are Family, is a charitable incorporated organisation which was registered with the Charity Commission of England and Wales on 26th August 2015. The charity's registration number is 1163318. The charity does not have any offices or other premises; its registered address is 27 Old Gloucester Street, London WC1N 3AX.

The names of all those who served as the charity's trustees during the year, and subsequently, are given below (in alphabetical order by surname), with the start and end dates of the term of office of each given, where relevant:

Name	Start	End
Amy Burns-Thomson	01.06.23	
Esi Cathline	01.03.22	
Mike Clarke	01.03.22	
Liz Davenport (previously Hocter)	08.02.21	
Pauline Gillbanks	14.05.24	
Anita Goveas	01.06.23	
Mark Hoult-Allen	18.11.19	
Diane McGrath	14.09.20	
Sophie Miller	01.09.23	01.04.24
Sobia Shamim	08.02.21	01.04.24
Andrew Taylor-Dawson	08.06.20	
Claire Walsh	16.07.24	
Anna Willow	01.03.22	

Governance and Management

We Are Family existed as an unincorporated organisation before its registration as a charitable incorporated organisation in August 2015. It was originally founded in 2013 by a small group of adoptive parents to provide locally based peer-to-peer support for adoptive parents. From one group in Hackney and Islington, the organisation grew to seven groups in just over two years. Registration as an incorporated charity was sought to support the organisation's growth, facilitate future fundraising and consolidate its existing reputation within the adoption field.

The charity's constitution provides for the appointment of trustees by the board of trustees, having regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective

administration of the charity. The charity's trustees from time to time are its only legal members (to be distinguished from adopters and prospective adopters who have joined one of the charity's groups and who are referred to elsewhere in this report as 'members').

During the year, the board maintained an ongoing trustee recruitment process with the appointment of two new trustees. The trustees wish to thank Anne-Marie Strong and Sophie Miller who left the board during the year.

The board has four regular board meetings a year whilst also constituting two Away Days each year as board meetings, which means the board meets formally at least six times a year. Meetings during the year continued to be focussed on overseeing the strategy and operations of the charity and the provision of services to members, setting up and reviewing policies and systems for running the charity; and securing funding to ensure the sustainability of the charity.

The work of the board is supported by one standing committee; the Finance, Fundraising and Resources Committee. The previous Programmes and Strategy Committee has been dissolved and the workstreams have been incorporated into the Director role and ongoing Board responsibilities.

Objectives and Activities

We Are Family's objects are to promote the health and wellbeing of prospective adopters and adopters. This covers the predictable stresses, strain and sense of isolation that comes with being an adoptive parent and in parenting traumatised children. There is a lack of targeted and tailored peer support for adoptive parents during the adoption journey and so We Are Family's key objective is the improved wellbeing of adopters through regular peer support opportunities both online and in person.

The charity's vision is: "We want to see a world in which adoptive parents and prospective adopters feel connected, benefit from peer support and are part of a community which enables them to thrive." Its mission is to work "to ensure that adoptive parents and prospective adopters are part of a community, offering each other support, from a place of lived experience, through the highs and lows of parenting".

The activities of We Are Family fall into the following areas:

- Connection & Relationship - Creating opportunities for connection between adopters
- Information & Inspiration - An extension of direct peer support, gathering member recommendations and experience
- Amplifying voices - Using the voice of the community to support calls for improved support for adoptive parents/families

Our strategic plan for 2023-26 are shown below in Figure 1.

Figure 1

SA1: Build & maintain strong foundations "A strong organisation"
SA2: Deepen & expand reach and engagement "More members who are engaged and co-producing"
SA3: Grow targeted service offer "Getting more stuff relevant to them"
SA4: Become a known voice on adopter issues "Sharing their experiences to effect change"

Achievements and Performance

Infrastructure and Governance

Staffing - In December 2024, we welcomed back our Head of Operations from parental leave and were delighted to have raised funds to retain our Operations Assistant cover, in the new role of Development & Partnerships Manager, working alongside our Community Development & Engagement Manager and Programme & Content Manager. We also retained our summer intern - originally funded via the University of Reading - in a fixed-term part-time role of Marketing & Communications Manager.

This year marked a period of many transitions, as we bid a fond farewell to our Director - and the charity's first ever paid staff member - who had been with We Are Family since 2019. The first few months of 2025, saw us settle into our new team configuration and begin the recruitment process for our incoming Director, who will join the team in Spring / Summer 2025.

We want to take this opportunity to extend our heartfelt gratitude to Lisa Barker for her seminal 5.5 years of service with We Are Family.

System upgrades - This year's Member Hub developments included launching our Event page feature. This provides a simple way for members to see and book events; and for our staff team to more easily promote opportunities and track engagement and attendance. In turn, this has released our volunteers to focus more on delivering peer support and hosting events. We have also begun work on integrating our Education Support Programme, including a digital toolkit with downloadable templates, advice and signposting.

Scaling model development - Building on our pilot work with a Regional Adoption Agency in the South East, we have further developed a framework for partnership working and are delighted to be extending our digital and in-person offers further North, through our partnership with Yorkshire Adoption Agency and most recently Adoption in Merseyside. Our attendance and presentation at the Consortium of Adoption Agencies Conference in November 2024, strengthened our position as an organisation that delivers excellent peer support within the sector and has led to multiple dialogues with potential stakeholders.

Volunteers - Learning from feedback from our volunteers (who are primarily also adoptive parents and therefore time-restricted) we have continued to evolve WAF's volunteer programme to:

- a) Reallocate all admin tasks to our staff team, allowing our volunteers to focus on delivering 'on the day' support.
- b) Expand our range of 'volunteer profiles' to encourage ad-hoc support through roles such as seasonal and / or occasional volunteer.
- c) Provide additional support and gratitude initiatives, alongside our ongoing Peer Support Training & Supervision, to further nurture and celebrate our dedicated team of volunteers.

Service Delivery

Our in-person and online peer support offer remains at the heart of We Are Family. We remain true to our roots, by providing talking groups, coffee mornings, and social meet-ups alongside enhancing our provision to include more playgroups, walk and talk sessions, and an array of family-friendly events.

Introducing WAF Plus

This year, we formalised our cultural connections programme, branding this as 'WAF Plus'. Through WAF Plus, we partner with local organisations to host free or heavily discounted experiences for our members. Activities have included football matches, dance classes, National Trust experiences, pantomimes, planetarium shows and climbing. Such opportunities create safe, fun and relaxed environments for adoptive families to connect with one another.

- Feedback from our members who attended WAF Plus events, 2024-25:

"What a superb evening! This was our first WAF event - you have started with a high bar!! My son was thrilled - his first panto but a safe environment to figure this out!"

"The match experience was amazing, my son was ecstatic, he had a very good time!! Many thanks for the opportunity, we really appreciated it!!"

"I have never made bread on a campfire and it was so much fun! Great for the kids to try new experiences - all 3 elements they had never done before (or me!) and they laughed and had fun and it was great to be in the outdoors."

Launching the Education Support Programme

In late 2024, we launched a new provision, for the benefit of all of our members across the range of stages and localities. The Education Support Programme has been created following many years of member feedback about the challenges the education system can present for care-experienced children. Funded by the Educational Opportunity Foundation, this is a multi-faceted project comprising bespoke webinars, support group sessions, podcasts, mini talks, articles and resources published throughout the year. Together they form a digital toolkit, designed to empower and equip members with the knowledge and tools to help families navigate the education system.

By the end of March 2025, we reached the half-way point of the Education Support Programme, and our provision included:

- 5 mini talks:
 - *Talking To Your Children About Boundaries* with Anna Linde
 - *Race, Identity, and the Search for Belonging in Adoption* with Dr Alexandra Evans O'Neal
 - *Navigating School as Both Adoptee and Adoptive Parent* with Fiona Myles
 - *Navigating Education as an Adoptee* with Anthony Lynch
 - *Helping Your Adopted Child Feel Safe* with Simon Benn
- Season 5 of the *Adoption Shared* podcast, produced in partnership with Adopt London. This 8-episode season focused on Education support, covering topics including:
 - Building Trauma-Informed classrooms
 - Preparing for school

- Managing emotional and behavioural challenges within education settings
- Tips for supporting home-learning
- 2 webinars covering EHCPs, attachment, and trauma-informed approaches
- 2 blog posts sharing lived experiences and practical strategies
- A Monthly Education Peer Support Group, launched in March and hosted by long-time WAF volunteer and now paid associate, providing a peer led space to discuss EHCPs, transitions, school training, and education challenges
- Feedback from members who have engaged with our Education Support Programme so far includes:

"I've grown in confidence, as a parent and as an adoption/education advocate. Through WAF links we've managed to get real change and training going at our school."

"This was a fantastic presentation. The speaker has shared from the heart and shared valuable strategies."

"I would like to try and listen in to more WAF talks because each time I do, it reaffirms to me the value of being an adoptive parent and the joy it brings along the way."

"Wow! Very relevant and timely information. It's good to know you are not alone and to hear strategies that have helped others."

The continuation of this programme will see us build on the above, covering topics, such as understanding trauma and attachment, accessing the support you may be entitled to and navigating identity and heritage discussions. We hope this curation of thematic content will serve as a blueprint for future areas of focused support i.e. Contact with birth / first families; Life story work; Teens & Tweens etc.

We are also proud of the following achievements this year:

Peer Support Opportunities & Family Friendly Events

Adopters/prospective adopters connect across various groups. We train and supervise our Peer Support Group Facilitators via our bespoke programme, and they go on to deliver a variety of support via:

- 12 adopter led peer support groups across London, the South East, and developing into the North West.
- 3 identity and / or interested based-groups (Singles, Prospectives & Early Permanence, Education) with a further 3 developing
- Over 125 Face to face meet-ups across 20 physical locations
- Over 50 online meeting opportunities offered annually
- Parent-only meetings with an average attendance of 12 members
- Family-friendly meet-ups with an average attends of 25
- 2 x 12 hour bespoke peer facilitator training courses benefiting 10 volunteers, and 8 Supervision sessions available to our volunteer cohort. Feedback included:

- Feedback from our Peer Support Training Participant & Volunteers, 2024-25

"This is training that I have truly valued and has benefited me personally as well as within the volunteer role"

"[The volunteer training] is certainly one of the best things I've done in the last couple of years in terms of personal and professional development".

"The training really is something I'd advocate everybody doing. It has equipped me with skills that I use in the whole of my life, not just with WAF"

Digital WAF Talks programme and The Member Hub

We continue to host our regular programme of online webinars / workshops, Podcasts, Blogs resource recommendations and articles via our WAF Member Hub.

'WAF Talks' webinar programme - connecting thought-leaders with our members

- 107 WAF Talks available 'on-demand' in the Hub
- Over 8,000 views of Talks live and on-demand since we began [in 2021]
- Over 900 members engage with the Hub each quarter

'Adoption Shared' Podcast - engaging the extended adoption community with personal stories of adoption that inform, support and amplify the 'adopter voice'.

- 19,413 downloads to 31st March 2025; a 50% growth YOY
- 34 episodes released, with most recent 'Season 5 - focusing on Education as part of our Education Support Programme.'

An inspiring and informative blog, regularly written by adoptive parents, with standout pieces including:

- Educator and award-winning author Robin D. Stevens contributed to our Education Support Programme, exploring identity, learning, and the emotional challenges adopted children may face in school through the story of 'Ezra and the Great Bin Jah Meen'.
<https://wearefamilyadoption.org.uk/blog/adopted-and-neurodiverse-the-importance-of-representation-in-childrens-literature/>
- Teacher and adoptive parent Jody Tranter shared practical strategies for managing homework as part of our Education Support Programme.
<https://wearefamilyadoption.org.uk/blog/oh-no-not-homework-by-jody-tranter/>

Influencing and promotion of adopter voices

We continue to advocate for change through our relationships with service providers on key issues such as the lack of trauma-informed training in schools, the complexity of the adoption process and the particular systemic disadvantages for Black children in care and the issues facing Black adopters. This year, we handed over the coordination of the WAF working group as part of Adopt London's Black Adoption Project, to allow for non-members and non-adopters to join and propel this movement. We Are Family remain in close connection with the project and outcomes, which can be found here:

<https://adoptlondon.org.uk/want-to-adopt/our-children/black-adoption-project/>

We continue to champion the voice of adoptive families through our seat on the Adopter Reference Group (ARG) at the Department for Education. This forum enables us to share best practice, raise concerns, and bring the lived experiences of our members directly into the heart of policy development. Over the past year, we've contributed to key discussions on improving post-qualification training for social workers through the Early Career Framework, as well as shaping updates to the Adoption Support Plan.

In addition, we are invited to attend and inform the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Adoption and Permanence (APPG); a group of MPs and Peers dedicated to raising awareness about adoption issues, improving policies for adopted children and families, and supporting best practices across the sector. This year, our members have contributed to the *Adoptee Voices Inquiry* to gather insights from Young Adoptees aged 13 - 25 to ensure their experiences help shape future policies on adoption.

Looking ahead, significant updates to the level of government investment into the Adoption & Special Guardianship Support Fund look to be on the horizon. We will continue to signpost, represent and advocate for our members, whilst remaining politically neutral in order to best work with, and affect, long-term change and policy-making level.

Membership & Impact

In both 2019 (original database launch) and 2021 (database v2 launch) there were significant system changes which meant that member totals dropped down and then up again, as some current members did not rejoin the new system but new people joined. We have also periodically cleaned up data and removed accounts, so our membership totals go up and down, rather than just up. However, our growth is clearly shown in the table below (Figure 2).

Figure 2

Year Ended	Membership Numbers
31st Dec 2019	449
31st Dec 2020	735
31st Dec 2021	637
31st Dec 2022	1054
To 31st July 2023	1252
To 31st May 2024	1479
To 31st March 2025	1697

In 2024/25, our volunteer numbers grew by 14%, slightly under our annual target of 20% year on year growth.

In terms of Impact, this year we have evolved how we collect membership data. Historically, we have invited our members to complete an Annual Members' Survey, to gather feedback across our services, communications and to help shape the next season of programmes and support. However, to boost engagement, we have moved to offer monthly 'Pulse Surveys'. These involve asking 1-2 simple questions, via email, which provide an accurate and efficient monitoring mechanism based around a key ask.

From our Pulse Surveys across 2024-25, we have received the following feedback across our mission pillars as below:

Connection & Relationship highlights

- 15 adopter led peer support groups, with a further 3 developing
- 250+ hours of in-person meet up opportunities taking place across over 20 physical locations
- 100+ hours of online meet up opportunities
- 40 hours of peer support training & supervision delivered to our cohort of 40+ volunteers

- 50% of members said they had made a connection with another adopter through We Are Family.
- 59% of members felt more confident in their parenting knowledge and abilities since joining WAF.

- Member feedback across 2024-25 includes:

"The friends that I have made are my true support and family to my family! I could not do this without them!"

"WAF parent peer support groups have been a lifeline to many in our group".

"Monthly single adopter groups have been the best support to keep me sane, during and after the legal process of adopting. In the longer term, I think it is more beneficial than the ASF funded therapy. They helped to normalise my experience in a gently empathic way."

Information & Inspiration highlights

- Our digital library of WAF Talks content has now been viewed over 8000 times
- 34 Podcast episodes have now been released reaching almost 20,000 total downloads
- Almost 1,000 members engage with our Hub each quarter
- 82% said they had access to more information and resources about adoption since joining
- 50% said they have listened to the Adoption Shared podcast

- Member feedback across 2024-25 includes:

"[The Adoption Shared] podcasts cover a variety of topics and are genuinely insightful. The webinars are excellent as well. I find comfort in knowing our situation is not unique, especially after hearing some of the shared stories and experiences."

"Absolutely everything was unbelievably helpful! My 'tree of supporters' at the start was in full bloom- 5 years down the line it's more like a twig with only a couple of very precious baubles. Honestly I feel less alone from listening to you all. THANK YOU!!"

Amplifying Voices

Through the Adopter Reference Group (ARG) at the Department for Education, We Are Family has played an active role in addressing ongoing challenges in adopter recruitment, highlighting both barriers and examples of effective practice. Our advocacy has also extended to cross-departmental work with the Department of Health, ensuring the health and wellbeing - both physical and mental - of adopted children remains a central consideration in policy discussions.

We have also brought back regular updates from the Department for Education and Adoption England to ensure our members remain informed, plus contributions from relevant studies, including the findings from the POTATO Group on the long-term impact of trauma on adoptive families, and observations from Al Coates' Churchill Foundation work offering a broader perspective on support strategies for adoptive, kinship, and foster families caring for children with complex needs.

- Feedback from our Deputy Chair and Member, 2024-25:

"As an adoptive parent, I see first-hand how our advocacy work makes a real difference, turning lived experiences into changes that improve support for families like mine. As a Trustee, I'm proud that we bring our members' voices right to the table where policies are shaped."

We continue to ask our membership how we can best serve our community and are guided by these responses. Recent examples include:

When asked: "What do you feel is the biggest challenge you currently face in relation to adoption?" the repeated themes (in order of number of mentions) includes:

- 1. Education support
- 2. Teens & Tweens Years
- 3. Young Adults / Transitions
- Plus:
- Funding limitations
- Contact challenges
- Transracial challenges
- Sibling challenges
- Child to Parent Violence (CPV)
- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)

In turn, this has led to We Are Family:

> 1. Creating and launching the Education Support Programme (as detailed previously)
> 2. Beginning a peer support offering for parents of Teens & Tweens (currently focused on single parents), and programming more WAF Plus events that cater to this age group i.e. skate parks, rockclimbing, stadium tours etc).

> 3. Nurturing volunteer appetite via our Peer Support Training Programme, to host a pilot peer group for parents of young adults.

Plus:

> We Are Family invested in a 1-year subscription for all of our members to Identity Learning; a startup focused on rethinking post-placement support for adoptive and foster families, especially in transracial families.

> We are in early talks with our partners, Yorkshire Adoption Agency, about creating a working group to better understand the experience of dual ethnicity and Black adopters.

In addition, we continue to ensure our Digital Programme represents the myriad of topics and perspectives across the adoption experience, including the remaining themes as listed above.

Fundraising and Partnerships

We acknowledge that one organisation alone cannot change adoption support, advocate and inform. We believe a whole system approach is needed. We are committed to sharing knowledge, learning and lessons beyond our own context. To this end, we work to build strategic partnerships with key stakeholders, including Regional Adoption Agencies (RAAs), Voluntary Adoption Agencies (VAAs), other charities in the sector and policy decision-makers, to share our members' voices and promote the critical importance of peer connections.

We Are Family is also very grateful to various trusts and foundations, organisations and individuals who provided funds to support the continued development of the charity.

- Adopt London (RAA) continued to fund peer support groups and digital resource development in 2024-25 as part of our grant agreement which extends to 2027. Adopt London also generously supports the Adoption Shared podcast and seasonal activity for our groups across London.
- A partnership with Yorkshire Adoption Agency (Voluntary Adoption Agency - VAA) is now in its second year. Beginning with digital access, and now including in-person activities via our WAF Plus programme, we hope to grow peer support activity in this area.
- We are in the final stages of forming a new partnership with Adoption in Merseyside (Regional Adoption Agency - RAA) which, along with digital membership, will see us nurture existing volunteers and grow additional peer support activity in the area.
- Adoption Partnership South East (RAA) made a contribution to supporting our peer support activity across the region of Bexley, Kent and Medway, following their initial investment across 2022-24.
- We are in receipt of a grant for Garfield Weston to support our core cost; and are in the second year of a substantial 3-year grant with City Bridge Trust (2023-26), allowing us to advance our service delivery year on year.
- A grant from the Educational Opportunity Foundation has allowed us to pilot our Education Support Programme, benefiting all member stages.
- We were delighted to receive additional grants from Beacon Lodge, Colyer-Fergusson Charitable Trust, Gillian Stevenson, Heathrow Community Fund, Henry Smith and the Lyles Local Fund.
- Our fourth crowdfunding effort via the Big Give Christmas Challenge saw us raise just over £4,536 (£2,500 of which was received via a pledge from Adopt London).
- University of Reading has funded a paid internship for another talented student, for the third consecutive year.
- We received the final instalment of The Tudor Trust Development Fund which marks the end of our funding period, for the near future. We are extremely grateful for the transitional support the Tudor Trust has given We Are Family since its early days.
- Partnership discussions continue with various other charities, Regional Adoption Agencies and Voluntary Adoption Agencies.

Public Benefit Statement

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with their duty to have due regard to the guidance on public benefit published by the Charity Commission in exercising their powers or duties and in offering peer-to-peer adopter-led support, through its local and cross-London groups and online service provision.

We Are Family supports the well-being of both adoptive parents and prospective adopters. This is of benefit to both individual adopters, in reducing the stresses and strains of adopting, and their families. Membership of We Are Family, and access to its support network and other services, is offered on an open basis, the only requirement being verification of adopter status by a social worker (at Stage 2 of the adoption process or further).

The charity offers its services free and arranges activities so that they can be accessible to as many parents as possible, and to those with children of a variety of ages. We Are Family strives to be open to all sections of the community and sees developing this as a key aspect

of its work. We Are Family continued to reimburse parents attending the single parent support groups for childcare costs, so that those members could more easily attend. The charity also continues to explore how to meet the needs of specific communities, such as those from the global majority and trans-racial adopters.

Financial Review

Summary

During the year ended 31 March 2025, We Are Family raised £170,652 (prior year: £125,438) and spent £149,808 (prior year: £114,557).

Sources of income

£47,325 of restricted funding was received from the Adopt London consortium of regional adoption agencies, £21,000 from City Bridge Trust, £10,750 from the Educational Opportunity Foundation and £7,000 from Heathrow Community Fund amongst other restricted grants and donations.

£29,150 of unrestricted income was received from The Tudor Trust, £20,000 from Garfield Weston and other smaller amounts were raised through The Big Give amongst other sources, including individual giving.

Unrestricted funds

£54,026 (prior year: £47,010) of unrestricted funding was raised during the year. Expenditure was £59,897 (prior year: £33,676). Total unrestricted reserves at the year-end were £33,561 (prior year: £39,433).

Restricted funds

£116,626 (£78,428) of restricted funding was raised during the year. Expenditure of £89,911 (£80,881) was offset against this. Total restricted reserves at the year-end were £65,811 (£39,096).

The £65,811 left in restricted reserves at the end of the year is due to be spent on staff and project costs in the 2025/26 financial year.

Basis of Preparation

The accounts for the year are drawn up on an accruals basis. Further details are noted in the accounting policies note (1) appended to the accounts. No funds were or are held as a custodian on behalf of others.

Independent Review

The accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025 have been independently reviewed with the independent examiner confirming that accounting records have been adequately kept, the submitted accounts correspond with those accounting records and that there are no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts.

Reserves Policy

The Board of Trustees has agreed an increased reserves policy whereby the unrestricted funds not committed should provide sufficient funding for an orderly wind down of the charity if necessary at some future date. The policy aims to keep reserves equivalent to three months of general operating expenses plus one to two months' worth of staff costs, currently calculated in total at £18,125.

Total unrestricted reserves at the end of the year were £33,561 of which £18,125 has been earmarked in accordance with the reserves policy, leaving £15,436* in general unrestricted reserves which is due to be spent on core and project costs in 2025/26. (* Less £12k spent on fixed assets)

Funding received since the year end

Since the year end the following significant funding has been gratefully received by We Are Family:

- Adopt London | £40,750
- City Bridge Foundation | £42,000
- Educational Opportunity Foundation | £10,750
- Adoption In Merseyside | £5,000
- University of Reading | £3,419
- Yorkshire Adoption Agency | £2,500

Independent Examiner's Report

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of We Are Family

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the We Are Family (the Charity) for the year ended 31st March 2025

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Charity you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

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

Independent examiner's statement

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

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

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

Signed:



Name: Tracey Skates

Fellow Chartered and Certified Accountant

Address: 15 Menmarsh Road, Worminghall, HP18 9JT

Date: 28th October 2025

Statement of Financial Activities

For the Year Ended 31 March 2025

£	Notes	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	2025	2024
Income from Endowments					
From:					
Donations and Legacies		54,026	116,626	170,652	125,438
Fundraising Events		-	-	-	-
Trading Income		-	-	-	-
Interest Received		-	-	-	-
Total		54,026	116,626	170,652	125,438
Expenditure On:					
Raising Funds		-	-	-	-
Charitable Activities		59,897	89,911	149,808	114,557
Total		59,897	89,911	149,808	114,557
Net Income / Expenditure	3, 4	(5,872)	26,715	20,843	10,881
Transfer Between Funds		-	-	-	-
Reconciliation of Funds					
Total Funds Brought Forward		39,433	39,096	78,529	67,647
Total Funds Carried Forward		33,561	65,811	99,372	78,529

Statement of Financial Position

For the Year Ended 31 March 2025

£	Notes	2025	2024
Tangible Assets – Member Hub Software & Website	2	20,586	23,858
Cash at bank and in hand		79,274	61,658
Other debtors		40,750	-
Prepayments and accrued income		-	-
Creditors: Amounts Falling Due Within One Year		(41,238)	(6,987)
Net Current Assets (Liabilities)		78,786	54,671
Total Assets less Current Liabilities		99,372	78,529
Accruals and deferred income		-	-
Net assets		99,372	78,529
The Funds of the Charity			
Restricted Income Funds		22,501	39,096
Unrestricted Income Funds		76,871	39,433
Total Funds		99,372	78,529

Notes to the Financial Statements For the Year Ended 31 March 2025

1. Accounting Policies

Basis of Accounting

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, except for investments which are included at market value and the revaluation of certain fixed assets and 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 2015)'. Financial reporting Standard 102 the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), and the Charities Act 2011.

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

Tangible assets and depreciation

Tangible assets are included at cost less depreciation and impairment. Depreciation has been provided at the following rates in order to write off the assets over their estimated useful lives:

We Are Family made a significant investment towards the construction of a database and a website, both of which are expected to have a useful economic life of 10 years.

Software & Websites	10% straight line
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2. Tangible Assets

	Software & Websites	Total
Cost or Valuation	At cost	At cost
At 1 April 2024	32,729	32,729
Additions	-	-
At 31 March 2025	32,729	32,729
Depreciation		
At 1 April 2024	8,871	8,871
Charge for the period	3,272	3,273
At 31 March 2025	12,143	8,871
Net book value		
At 1 April 2024	23,858	22,393
At 31 March 2025	20,586	23,858

3. Income and allocated expenditure by donor/fund

	BROUGHT FORWARD 23/24	Income in 24/25	Spent in 24/25	CARRIED FORWARD 25/26
Restricted				
Adopt London Core	11,381	28,750	13,462	26,669
Adopt London Hub Access	665	-	-	665*
Adopt London Picnics	427	-	-	427
Adopt London Podcast	1,759	6,575	8,293	41
Adopt London Talks	6,838	12,000	12,977	5,861
<i>Adopt London - Sub Total</i>	<i>21,071</i>	<i>47,325</i>	<i>34,732</i>	<i>33,663</i>

Adoption Partnership South East	2,216	1,500	3,055	661
Alex Timpson Foundation	1,848	-	1,848	-
Beacon Lodge	-	5,000	5,000	-
City Bridge Trust	617	21,000	16,371	5,246
Colyer Fergusson Charitable Trust	-	5,000	2,500	2,500
Educational Opportunity Foundation	-	10,750	8,368	2,382
Gillian Stevenson Trust	-	4,000	1,078	2,922
Heathrow Community Fund	-	7,000	1,811	5,189
Henry Smith Charity	-	5,000	3,210	1,790
Lyle's Local Fund	-	4,454	2,854	1,600
Magic Little Grants	(139)	-	(139)	-
Prior Year Operating Balance	13,412	-	5,557	7,855*
Tudor Trust Wellbeing Fund	(313)	-	(313)	-
Tudor Trust Development Fund	56	1,995	2,051	-
University of Reading	328	1,602	1,930	-
Yorkshire Adoption Agency	-	2,000	-	2,000
Total Restricted	39,096	116,626	89,911	65,811
Unrestricted				
Barnardo's	18,000	-	18,000	-
Big Give	373	2,284	99	2,558
Forrester Family Trust	571	-	-	571
Garfield Weston Foundation	379	20,000	10,442	9,937
Individual Giving	2,294	2,041	5,476	(1,141)
Other/Earned income	(5,969)	551	(5,468)	50
Pears Foundation	571	-	-	571

Prior Year Operating Balance	20,269		2,199	18,070*
Tudor Trust	1,943	29,150	29,150	1,943
Woodward Trust	1,000	-	-	1,000
Total Unrestricted	39,433	54,026	59,898	33,561

From 1 April 2021, We Are Family moved from receipts and payments accounting to accruals accounting, where additional tracking was established. The Prior Year Opening Balance represents in part brought forward funds We Are Family has accrued before this tracking was established.

* Of which, £20,586 in in Fixed Asset values as per Balance sheet

4.Detail of income and expenditure

£	Unrestricted	Restricted	2025	2024
Restricted grants	-	116,626	116,626	78,428
Other revenue	-	-	-	18,000
Unrestricted donations	4,576	-	4,576	6,010
Unrestricted grants	49,450	-	49,450	23,000
Donations and Legacies	54,026	116,626	170,652	125,438
Fundraising Costs	-	-	-	-
Fundraising Activities	-	-	-	-
Advertising & Marketing	(1,337)	-	(1,337)	(1,046)
Accountancy fees	-	(4,920)	(4,920)	(2,316)
Bank Fees	(98)	(21)	(21)	(49)
Childcare Costs - /Trustee/Parents	-	(80)	(80)	(54)
Consulting	(3,728)	(6,931)	(10,659)	(6,283)
Depreciation Expense	(6)	(3,266)	(3,272)	(3,273)
Direct Expenses	-	-	-	(178)
Employers National Insurance	-	(1,116)	(1,116)	(549)
Event Entertainment	-	-	-	(270)
General Expenses	(59)	-	(59)	(546)

Guest Speaker Fees	-	(7,364)	(7,364)	(4,451)
Insurance	(1,116)	-	(1,116)	(826)
IT Consultancy	(4,299)	(13,627)	(17,926)	(4,822)
Interest paid	(2)	-	(2)	-
IT Equipment Expense	-	-	-	(571)
IT Software and Consumables	(1,160)	(2,282)	(3,442)	(4,057)
Other Event Expenses	-	(1,495)	(1,495)	(491)
Pensions Costs	-	(1,774)	(1,774)	(1459)
Postage, Freight & Courier	(20)	(98)	(118)	(25)
Printing & Stationery	(27)	-	(27)	(7)
Recruitment Fees	-	(370)	(370)	(787)
Refreshments	(177)	(152)	(329)	(510)
Salaries	(45,170)	(41,239)	(86,409)	(74,569)
Small Gifts	-	(313)	(313)	(241)
Staff Training	-	(397)	(397)	(325)
Staff WFM Expense	-	(1,326)	(1,326)	(1,222)
Strategy and Training Days	-	-	-	(235)
Subscriptions	(201)	(30)	(231)	(160)
Telephone & Internet	-	(40)	(40)	(96)
Travel - National	(869)	(1,047)	(1,916)	(1,462)
Venue Hire	(1,628)	(1,150)	(2,778)	(2,492)
Volunteers	-	(841)	(841)	(841)
Website costs	-	(344)	(344)	(344)
Charitable Activities	(59,897)	(89,911)	(149,808)	(114,557)
Net Income / Expenditure	(5,872)	26,715	20,843	10,881

5a Fees for the Examination of the Accounts

The Accountancy fees include the cost for the independent examination of the charities accounts.

5b Staff Costs

No employees received employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) for the year of more than £60,000

5c	Average Staff Headcount	This Year	Last Year
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	Average number of staff employed in the year	6	4
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5d	Contributions to Pension Scheme	This Year	Last Year
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Contributions made to a defined contributions scheme all relating to the Unrestricted Fund activities

	£	1,774	1,459
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Basis of Accounting

The accounts were prepared on an accruals basis. The accounts were prepared on a going concern basis.

This report was signed on behalf of the Trustees of We Are Family CIO on 3rd November 2025.



Mark Hoult-Allen, Chair

WE ARE FAMILY

England & Wales - Charity number 1163318

Accounts



Annual Report and Accounts 2023 - 2024

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Chair's Introduction

[1st April 2023 - 31st March 2024]

Over the last year We Are Family (WAF) has continued to provide increasingly varied and regular opportunities for peer connection for adoptive families and prospective adopters. Our delivery of in-person services has grown to include the South East of England (as well as London), and we have increasing digital engagement across the UK, with growing numbers of members in around 110 local authorities, due to the accessibility of our online support provision. Our members, partners and their children add up to a reach of approximately 3500 people. Through building solidarity and connection for adopters, we have contributed to improved wellbeing, improved understanding of how to respond to the potential challenges adopters face, improved strength and resilience in the family. Throughout the year we have advocated for access to the right services at the right time.

It has been over 10 years since we began as a grassroots adoption support community, and only 5 years since we took on our first staff member. We now have the privilege of having 5 members of staff, including dedicated personnel to develop our peer support groups and digital content. We have focussed attention on expanding our volunteer base and ensuring they are well supported through facilitating a volunteer forum and lounge, peer support training, and supervision sessions with a psychotherapist to discuss the joys and challenges stemming from their peer supporter roles. We now have over 50 volunteers supporting the work of WAF in various ways. WAF would not exist without the extraordinary commitment of our volunteers and I must extend the greatest of thanks to them for continuing to keep peer support going for so many families.

I am delighted to share some of the following highlights from this year:

- Members self-reported improvement in confidence, resilience and wellbeing in our annual survey
- Our groups delivered over 100 face-to-face events across 14 physical locations
- We offered over 50 online meeting opportunities
- We ensured user-led services were maintained, that information was regularly sent to volunteers and that the volunteer strategy and programme delivery continued to be developed through co-production
- We delivered 2 x 12 hour bespoke peer facilitator training courses to volunteers
- We secured new multi-year grant/s and diversified our funding base
- WAF grew the staff team and secured an annual paid internship programme in partnership with the University of Reading
- We successfully piloted 'pay what you can' WAF Talks webinars
- A selection of adoption stage relevant content was developed
- We leveraged our partnerships to raise the profile of member issues and influence policy development, particularly through appointment to sit on the Adopter Reference Group at the Department for Education.

In the coming months, we will be releasing our new "Events" feature in our database which will continue to ease administrative pressures from our volunteers who run support groups, will enable us to more effectively promote groups and will greatly improve the accuracy of our attendance data. We are also in the process of developing an app interface to enable our membership to access the Hub from their mobile devices.

Later this year, we are going to focus our content development on the topic of education, which we know provides challenges for all of our members at some point in their adoption journey. We also plan to develop our cultural and sporting connections offer.

Alongside these specific projects we are also hoping to continue to expand the number of in-person peer support groups available to our membership through exploring new and existing relationships with RAAs and VAAs across the country.

Ultimately, we have ambition to create large-scale improvement to the well-being of adoptive parents and their children, improved understanding of how to respond to the challenges they face and improved strength and resilience in the family. These outcomes reduce the need for families to resort to professional support, reducing pressure on local authorities and generating positive narratives about adoption. Thank you for being part of our incredible support community as we continue this journey.

You can read more details about many of these points in the following formal trustees' report.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Hoult-Allen', is centered within a faint, light-grey circular watermark. The watermark features a stylized illustration of a family (two adults and a child) holding hands in a circle.

Mark Hoult-Allen
Chair

The trustees of We Are Family CIO present their ninth annual report, covering the twelve months ended 31 March 2024 ('the year').

Reference and Administrative Details

The charity, We Are Family, is a charitable incorporated organisation which was registered with the Charity Commission of England and Wales on 26th August 2015. The charity's registration number is 1163318. The charity does not have any offices or other premises; its registered address is 27 Old Gloucester Street, London WC1N 3AX.

The names of all those who served as the charity's trustees during the year, and subsequently, are given below (in alphabetical order by surname), with the start and end dates of the term of office of each given, where relevant:

Name	Start	End
Amy Burns-Thomson	01.06.23	
Esi Cathline	01.03.22	
Mike Clarke	01.03.22	
Liz Davenport (previously Hocter)	08.02.21	
Anita Goveas	01.06.23	
Mark Hault-Allen	18.11.19	
Diane McGrath	14.09.20	
Stuart Meek	08.02.21	07.02.24
Sophie Miller	01.09.23	
Sobia Shamim	08.02.21	
Anne-Marie Strong	01.07.23	07.02.24
Andrew Taylor-Dawson	08.06.20	
David Tickner	01.06.23	16.10.23
Anna Willow	01.03.22	
Stephanie Wong	08.02.21	07.02.24

Governance and Management

We Are Family existed as an unincorporated organisation before its registration as a charitable incorporated organisation in August 2015. It was originally founded in 2013 by a small group of adoptive parents to provide locally based peer-to-peer support for adoptive parents. From one group in Hackney and Islington, the organisation grew to seven groups in just over two years. Registration as an incorporated charity was sought to support the organisation's growth, facilitate future fundraising and consolidate its existing reputation within the adoption field.

The charity's constitution provides for the appointment of trustees by the board of trustees, having regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the charity. The charity's trustees from time to time are its only legal members (to be distinguished from adopters and prospective adopters who have joined one of the charity's groups and who are referred to elsewhere in this report as 'members').

During the year, the board maintained an ongoing trustee recruitment process with the appointment of five trustees. The trustees wish to thank Stuart Meek, Sobia Shamim, Anne-Marie Strong, David Tickner and Stephanie Wong, who left the board during the year.

The board has four regular board meetings a year whilst also constituting two Away Days each year as board meetings, which means the board meets formally at least six times a year. Meetings during the year continued to be focussed on overseeing the strategy and operations of the charity and the provision of services to members, setting up and reviewing policies and systems for running the charity; and securing funding to ensure the sustainability of the charity.

The work of the board is supported by two standing committees, the Finance, Fundraising and Resources Committee and the Programmes and Strategy Committee.

Objectives and Activities

We Are Family's objects are to promote the health and wellbeing of prospective adopters and adopters. This covers the predictable stresses, strain and sense of isolation that comes with being an adoptive parent and in parenting traumatised children. There is a lack of targeted and tailored peer support for adoptive parents during the adoption journey and so We Are Family's key objective is the improved wellbeing of adopters through regular peer support opportunities both online and in person.

The charity's vision is: "We want to see a world in which adoptive parents and prospective adopters feel connected, benefit from peer support and are part of a community which enables them to thrive." Its mission is to work "to ensure that adoptive parents and prospective adopters are part of a community, offering each other support, from a place of lived experience, through the highs and lows of parenting".

The activities of We Are Family fall into the following areas:

- Connection & Relationship - Creating opportunities for connection between adopters
- Information & Inspiration - An extension of direct peer support, gathering member recommendations and experience
- Amplifying voices - Using the voice of the community to support calls for improved support for adoptive parents/families

Our strategic plan for 2023-26 are shown below in Figure 1.

Figure 1

SA1: Build & maintain strong foundations "A strong organisation"
SA2: Deepen & expand reach and engagement "More members who are engaged and co-producing"
SA3: Grow targeted service offer "Getting more stuff relevant to them"
SA4: Become a known voice on adopter issues "Sharing their experiences to effect change"

Achievements and Performance

Infrastructure and Governance

Staffing - We had been operating a flat staffing structure until 2023, with the oversight conducted by the Chair and Board of Trustees which was not sustainable in the longer term for the charity's growth. A restructuring process took place, with the internal appointment of a Director, promotion of the Operations Manager to the Head of Operations and all other staff roles managed by the Head of Operations. We appointed an Operations Assistant to support cover for the parental leave of the Head of Operations in 2024.

System upgrades - We further developed our Member Hub to improve feedback mechanisms, promote events and reduce the admin burden on staff and volunteers, which was growing as the organisation's activities grew.

Scaling model development - We have used the work we did with a Regional Adoption Agency in the South East as a pilot to develop a framework through which we can develop more partnerships and funding relationships, which has made commencing partnership conversations much clearer.

Volunteers - With the growth of We Are Family, has come the need to scale our volunteer base and resources accordingly. Given the challenging landscape for adopters - their children have experienced early childhood trauma and are likely to have some form of Special Educational Needs (SEN) - adoptive parents experience higher than average pressure on their families, meaning their capacity to volunteer can be challenging. In response, we have continued to develop a quality package of support for our volunteers, including regular supervision with our Community Engagement and Development Manager (CDEM).

Service Delivery

From in-person and online peer support groups, to playgroups, picnics and our developing programme of creative sessions; providing opportunities for our members to connect and forge friendship and community remains at the heart of We Are Family. We are proud of the following achievements this year:

Peer Support Opportunities & Family Friendly Events

Adopters/prospective adopters connect across various groups. We train and supervise our Peer Support Group Facilitators via our bespoke programme, and they go on to offer parent meet-ups, playgroups, walking groups, creative workshops, park meetups, picnics, and more. This year we have delivered:

- 14 adopter led peer support groups across London & the South East
- 3-4 additional groups in early development
- Over 100 Face to face groups across 14 physical locations
- Over 50 online meeting opportunities offered annually
- Ensured user-led services were maintained, information was regularly sent to volunteers and that the volunteer strategy and programme delivery continues to be developed through co-production
- 2 x 12 hour bespoke peer facilitator training courses for volunteers. Feedback included:

"Simply the act of taking part in a series of sessions has provided me with a sense of momentum for starting a peer support group from scratch – I couldn't visualise it before the training."

"I have always found it hard to make time for self-care, and it dawned on me that the [peer support training] course wasn't so much about running a group, or even about self-care, but that the course was self-care." WAF Peer Support Attendee

Digital WAF Talks programme and The Member Hub

We offer regular webinars, workshops hosted by expert speakers, member resource recommendations and articles.

- 90 WAF Talks available 'on-demand' in the Hub
- Over 6500 views of Talks live and on-demand since we began
- Over 900 members engaging with the Hub each quarter

'Adoption Shared' Podcast - engaging the extended adoption community with personal stories of adoption that inform, support and amplify the 'adopter voice'.

- 11,380 downloads to 31st March 2024
- 24 episodes released, with most recent 'Season 4: Adopting Children with Additional Needs'

An inspiring and informative blog, regularly written by adoptive parents.

Influencing and promotion of adopter voices through our relationships with service providers on key issues such as the lack of trauma-informed training in schools, the complexity of the adoption process and the particular systemic disadvantages for black children in care and the issues facing Black adopters. We also have a seat on the Adopter Reference Group at the Department for Education where we share the experiences of our members to directly influence policy development.

Membership & Impact

In both 2019 (original database launch) and 2021 (database v2 launch) there were big system changes which meant that member totals dropped down and then up again, as some current members did not rejoin the new system but new people joined. We have also periodically cleaned up data, removed accounts, and fixed bugs so our membership totals go up and down, rather than just up. However, our growth is clearly shown in the table below (Figure 2).

Figure 2

Year Ended	Membership Numbers
31st Dec 2019	449
31st Dec 2020	735
31st Dec 2021	637
31st Dec 2022	1054
To 31st July 2023	1252
To 31st May 2024	1479

We ran a survey in September 2023, to gather member feedback across our services, communications and to help shape the next season of programmes and support. Key learnings from this survey include:

Connection & Relationship

From in-person and online peer support groups, to playgroups, picnics and our developing programme of creative sessions; providing opportunities for our members to connect and forge friendship and community remains at the heart of We Are Family.

- 57% have attended PEER SUPPORT GROUPS, citing highlights as the ability to share openly about challenges (73%) and the opportunity to meet / connect with other adopters (71%). The majority of those that have yet to, report lack of time / lack of childcare / clash with bedtimes as the reason.
- 44% have attended PARENT SOCIALS, citing highlights as the ability to share openly about challenges (61%) and the opportunity to meet / connect with other adopters (85%). The majority of those that have yet to, report lack of time as the reason.
- 45% have attended FAMILY FRIENDLY EVENTS, citing highlights as the opportunity to meet / connect with other adopters (76%) and likewise for their children (82%).

In terms of our outcomes and impact in this area,

- 82% of members agree or strongly agree that since joining WAF, they have opportunities to engage with a variety of experience on adoption.
- 56% of members agree or strongly agree that since joining WAF, they have increased their networks of contact and / or friends within the adoption community.
- 58% of members agree or strongly agree that since joining WAF, they feel supported and more confident in their parenting abilities.

We regularly receive feedback such as this from our members:

"It's given me deep and lasting friendship, a sense of belonging, a place to go. I don't know where I would be without it."

Information & Inspiration

Our digital Member Hub now holds over 93 recorded WAF Talks offering information and support across a vast range of subjects; alongside articles, books, training opportunities and much more. We continue to offer inspiration within our member-generated blog featuring candid, hopeful and authentic accounts of adoption and related subjects; and also via the new addition of our podcast, Adoption Shared (23 podcast episodes, over 12.5k downloads).

- 89% have watched a WAF TALK, citing highlights as the information / support provided (82%) and it feeling like parent self care. The majority of those that have yet to, report lack of time / tech fatigue.
- 40% have listened to a PODCAST EPISODE citing highlights as being able to listen on-the-go (79%) and the opportunity to hear about a range of personal adoption experiences (71%). The majority of those that have yet to, report lack of time (50%) and not knowing about the podcast series (35%).
- 72% have read a BLOG POST citing highlights as the opportunity to hear about a range of personal adoption experiences (80%) and the information / support provided (48%). The majority of those that have yet to, report lack of time (50%).
- 37% engage with the MEMBER HUB occasionally (every few months) and 19% engage regularly (monthly+). citing highlights as the resources shared (68%) and the ability to catch up with WAF Talks (64%). The majority of those that have yet to, report lack of time (52%) and tech fatigue (33%).

The impact of these programmes has been that 83% of members agree or strongly agree that since joining WAF, they have access to more resources, information and support to manage the challenges of adoptive parenting.

"I felt very alone dealing with the challenges of adopting children that experienced so much trauma, meeting experienced adopters gave me more confidence and helped me feel I was not a rubbish parent. The support provided by other adopters was inspiring." WAF member

"I've been lucky enough to hear from some hugely knowledgeable people who have given me a lot of resources and insight for my parenting journey." Podcast Listener

Amplifying Voices

WAF sits on the Adopter Reference Group (ARG) at the Department for Education. It's a direct route for providing adopter feedback to policy makers. WAF has also contributed to a number of research initiatives over the past few years, including a study into the experiences of adoptive parents with birth children led by the Rees Centre, Department of Education, University of Oxford. We have also established a working group to focus on the needs of adoptive families within the education system, and we continue to work closely with Adopt London to support their *Black Adoption Project* to better understand and evolve the experiences of Black adopters.

We know our members have messages they would like to communicate the the relevant authorities on the issues they experience:

- 64% of members disagree or strongly disagree that the government [and adoption agencies] understand the potential challenges of adoption and provide appropriate levels of resource. 0% of members agree or strongly agree with the reverse.
- When given the opportunity to complete the following statements, members responses broadly fell into the following categories:
'The key message that I would like to send to the government and / or adoption agencies is...' More / Improved Post-adoption support (32.7%) Education settings (12%) Faster / more accessible interventions (10.3%) jointly with Sector / care system limitations (10.3%)
- 'My biggest challenge in terms of my adoption journey currently is...' (Lack of) support networks (13.8%) Education (13.8%) Parent self care / wellbeing (12%).

"I've grown in confidence, as a parent and as an adoption/education advocate. Through WAF links we've managed to get real change and training going at our school." WAF member

Fundraising and Partnerships

We acknowledge that one organisation alone cannot change adoption support, advocate and inform. We believe a whole system approach is needed. We are committed to sharing knowledge, learning and lessons beyond our own context. To this end, we work to build strategic partnerships with key stakeholders, including Regional Adoption Agencies (RAAs), Voluntary Adoption Agencies (VAAs), other charities in the sector and policy decision-makers, to share our members' voices and promote the critical importance of peer connections.

We Are Family is also very grateful to various trusts and foundations, organisations and individuals who provided funds to support the continued development of the charity.

- Adopt London (RAA) continued to fund peer support group and digital resource development in 2023/24. A new partnership agreement for 2024-27 has been confirmed.
- Adoption Partnership South East funded a second year of peer support groups development in 23/24 across the region of Bexley, Kent and Medway.
- A partnership with Yorkshire Adoption Agency (VAA) was agreed in 2024. We hope to grow the membership in the Yorkshire area as a result of this partnership
- A partnership is emerging with adopter groups in the South West of England.. We will be working on a roadmap for this across the summer of 2024.
- Partnership discussions continue with various other charities, Regional Adoption Agencies and Voluntary Adoption Agencies.

- A 3-year grant with City Bridge Trust was secured to support our work with adoptive families (2023-26)
- The Tudor Trust supported us with the final year of our two year continuation grant. Tudor Trust also indicated a final continuation grant for 24/25 would be available.
- The Tudor Trust also supported the latest phase of our database development with a separate Development Grant.
- We were delighted to receive further grants from the Pear Foundation and The Forrester Family Trust
- Our third crowdfunding effort via the Big Give Christmas Challenge saw us raise just over £5500.
- Finally, we raised funds through selling a copy of our database codebase to another charity.

Public Benefit Statement

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with their duty to have due regard to the guidance on public benefit published by the Charity Commission in exercising their powers or duties and in offering peer-to-peer adopter-led support, through its local and cross-London groups and online service provision.

We Are Family supports the well-being of both adoptive parents and prospective adopters. This is of benefit to both individual adopters, in reducing the stresses and strains of adopting, and their families. Membership of We Are Family, and access to its support network and other services, is offered on an open basis, the only requirement being verification of adopter status by a social worker (at Stage 2 of the adoption process or further).

The charity offers its services free and arranges activities so that they can be accessible to as many parents as possible, and to those with children of a variety of ages. We Are Family strives to be open to all sections of the community and sees developing this as a key aspect of its work. We Are Family continued to reimburse parents attending the single parent support groups for childcare costs, so that those members could more easily attend. The charity also continues to explore how to meet the needs of specific communities, such as BAME and trans-racial adopters.

Financial Review

Summary

During the year ended 31 March 2024 We Are Family raised £125,438 (prior year: £99,294) and spent £114,557 (prior year: £103,107).

Sources of income

£47,000 of restricted funding was received from the Adopt London consortium of regional adoption agencies, £12,000 from City Bridge Trust, £8,375 from Adoption Partnership South East and £5,365 from Tudor Trust amongst other restricted grants and donations.

£17,000 of unrestricted income was received from The Tudor Trust, £5000 from the Pears Foundation and other smaller amounts were raised through The Big Give and Magic Little Grants, amongst other sources, including individual giving.

£18,000 was raised through the sale of our digital Hub codebase.

Unrestricted funds

£47,010 (prior year: £39,189) of unrestricted funding was raised during the year. Expenditure was £33,676 (prior year: £43,042). Total unrestricted reserves at the year-end were £39,433 (prior year: £26,098).

Restricted funds

£78,428 (£60,105) of restricted funding was raised during the year. Expenditure of £80,881 (£60,065) was offset against this leaving a deficit of -£2,454. Total restricted reserves at the year-end were £39,096 (£41,550).

The £39,096 left in restricted reserves at the end of the year is due to be spent on staff and project costs in the 2024/25 financial year.

Basis of Preparation

The accounts for the year are drawn up on an accruals basis. Further details are noted in the accounting policies note (1) appended to the accounts. No funds were or are held as a custodian on behalf of others.

Independent Review

The accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024 have been independently reviewed with the independent examiner confirming that accounting records have been adequately kept, the submitted accounts correspond with those accounting records and that there are no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts.

Reserves Policy

The Board of Trustees has agreed an increased reserves policy whereby the unrestricted funds not committed should provide sufficient funding for an orderly wind down of the charity if necessary at some future date. The policy aims to keep reserves equivalent to three months of general operating expenses plus one to two months' worth of staff costs, currently calculated in total at £13,100.

Total unrestricted reserves at the end of the year were £39,433 of which £13,100 has been earmarked in accordance with the reserves policy, leaving £26,333 in general unrestricted reserves which is due to be spent on core and project costs in 2024/25.

Funding received since the year end

Since the year end the following significant funding has been gratefully received by We Are Family:

- Adopt London | £40,750
- Tudor Trust | £29,150
- Garfield Weston Foundation | £20,000
- City Bridge Foundation | £6,000
- Adoption Partnership South East | £1,500
- Beacon Lodge | £5,000
- Magic Little Grants | £500

Independent Examiner's Report

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of We Are Family

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the We are Family (the Charity) for the year ended 31st March 2024

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Charity, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

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

Independent examiner's statement

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

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

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

Signed:



Name: Tracey Skates

Fellow Chartered & Certified Accountant

Address: 15 Menmarsh Road, Worminghall, HP18 9JT

Date: 9th September 2024

Statement of Financial Activities

For the Year Ended 31 March 2024

£	Notes	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	2024	2023
Income from Endowments					
From:					
Donations and Legacies		47,010	78,428	125,438	99,294
Fundraising Events		-	-	-	-
Trading Income		-	-	-	-
Interest Received		-	-	-	-
Total		47,010	78,428	125,438	99,294
Expenditure On:					
Raising Funds		-	-	-	-
Charitable Activities		33,676	80,881	114,557	103,107
Total		33,676	80,881	114,557	103,107
Net Income / Expenditure	3, 4	13,335	(2,454)	10,881	(3,813)
Transfer Between Funds		-	-	-	-
Reconciliation of Funds					
Total Funds Brought Forward		26,098	41,550	67,647	71,461
Total Funds Carried Forward		39,433	39,096	78,529	67,647

Statement of Financial Position

For the Year Ended 31 March 2024

£	Notes	2024	2023
Tangible Assets – Member Hub Software & Website	2	23,858	22,393
Cash at bank and in hand		61,658	47,864
Other debtors		-	727
Prepayments and accrued income		-	-
Creditors: Amounts Falling Due Within One Year		(6,987)	(3,336)
Net Current Assets (Liabilities)		54,671	45,254
Total Assets less Current Liabilities		78,529	67,647
Accruals and deferred income		-	-
Net assets		<u>78,529</u>	<u>67,647</u>
The Funds of the Charity			
Restricted Income Funds		39,096	41,550
Unrestricted Income Funds		<u>39,433</u>	<u>26,098</u>
Total Funds		<u>78,529</u>	<u>67,647</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 31 March 2024

1. Accounting Policies

Basis of Accounting

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, except for investments which are included at market value and the revaluation of certain fixed assets and 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 2015)'. Financial reporting Standard 102 the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), and the Charities Act 2011.

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

Tangible assets and depreciation

Tangible assets are included at cost less depreciation and impairment. Depreciation has been provided at the following rates in order to write off the assets over their estimated useful lives:

We Are Family made a significant investment towards the construction of a database and a website, both of which are expected to have a useful economic life of 10 years.

Software & Websites	10% straight line
---------------------	-------------------

2.Tangible Assets

	Software & Websites	Total
Cost or Valuation	At cost	At cost
At 1 April 2023	27,991	27,991
Additions	4,738	4,738
At 31 March 2024	32,729	32,729
Depreciation		
At 1 April 2023	5,598	5,598
Charge for the period	2,799	3,273
At 31 March 2024	8,871	8,871
Net book value		
At 1 April 2023	22,393	22,393
At 31 March 2024	23,858	23,858

3. Income and allocated expenditure by donor/fund

	BROUGHT FORWARD 22/23	Income in 23/24	Spent in 23/24	CARRIED FORWARD 24/25
Restricted				
Adopt London Core	341	30,500	19,460	11,381
Adopt London Hub Access	(70)	-	(735)	665
Adopt London Picnics	1,190	-	763	427
Adopt London Podcast	744	4,500	3,485	1,759
Adopt London Talks	5,816	12,000	10,978	6,838
<i>Adopt London - Sub Total</i>	<i>8,021</i>	<i>47,000</i>	<i>33,950</i>	<i>21,071</i>
Adoption Partnership South East	2,568	8,375	8,727	2,216
Alex Timpson Foundation	2,000	-	152	1,848
City Bridge Trust		12,000	11,383	617
Magic Little Grants		500	639	(139)
Prior Year Operating Balance	28,693	-	15,281	13,412
Tudor Trust Wellbeing Fund	268	3,000	3,581	(313)
Tudor Trust Development Fund		5,365	5,308	56
University of Reading	-	2,188	1,860	328
Total Restricted	41,550	78,428	80,881	39,096
Unrestricted				
Barnardo's		18,000	-	18,000
Big Give	2,670	3,952	6,249	373
Forrester Family Trust	5,000	-	4,429	571
Garfield Weston Foundation	3,882	-	3,503	379
Individual Giving	940	1,357	2	2,294
Other	(6,663)	701	7	(5,969)
Pears Foundation		5,000	4,429	571
Prior Year Operating Balance	20,269			20,269
Tudor Trust		17,000	15,057	1,943
Woodward Trust		1,000	-	1,000
Total Unrestricted	26,098	47,010	33,676	39,433

From 1 April 2021, We Are Family moved from receipts and payments accounting to accruals accounting, where additional tracking was established. Detailed tracking on activity by donor has been established from this date on, explaining the discrepancy in brought forward reserves versus the balance sheet.

The Prior Year Opening Balance represents in part brought forward funds We Are Family has accrued before this tracking was established. This balance should gradually diminish as future income and expenditure is recorded against the appropriate donors going forward.

4.Detail of income and expenditure

£	Unrestricted	Restricted	2024	2023
Restricted grants	-	78,428	78,428	60,105
Other revenue	18,000	-	18,000	-
Unrestricted donations	6,010	-	6,010	9,189
Unrestricted grants	23,000	-	23,000	30,000
Donations and Legacies	47,010	78,428	125,438	99,294
Fundraising Costs	-	-	-	-
Fundraising Activities	-	-	-	-
Advertising & Marketing	(186)	(860)	(1,046)	(998)
Audit & Accountancy fees	(2,316)	-	(2,316)	(2,139)
Bank Fees	(2)	(46)	(49)	(44)
Childcare Costs - Parent Reimbursement	-	(54)	(54)	(100)
Consulting	-	(6,283)	(6,283)	(7,188)
Depreciation Expense	(1,151)	(2,122)	(3,273)	(2,799)
Direct Expenses	-	(178)	(178)	-
Employers National Insurance	(212)	(337)	(549)	-
Event Entertainment	-	(270)	(270)	(976)
General Expenses	-	(546)	(546)	(131)
Guest Speaker Fees	-	(4,451)	(4,451)	(6,375)
Insurance	-	(826)	(826)	(789)
IT Consultancy	-	(4,822)	(4,822)	(8,905)
IT Equipment Expense	-	(571)	(571)	(49)
IT Software and Consumables	-	(4,057)	(4,057)	(177)
Member Resources (inc Zoom)	-	-	-	(2,463)
Other Event Expenses	-	(491)	(491)	(150)
Pensions Costs	(563)	(896)	(1,459)	(1,319)
Postage, Freight & Courier	-	(25)	(25)	(70)
Printing & Stationery	-	(7)	(7)	(134)
Recruitment Fees	-	(787)	(787)	-
Refreshments	-	(510)	(510)	-
Rent	-	-	-	(272)
Salaries	(28,774)	(45,795)	(74,569)	(63,382)
Small Gifts	-	(241)	(241)	(75)
Staff Training	-	(325)	(325)	(389)
Staff WFM Expense	(472)	(750)	(1,222)	-
Strategy and Training Days	-	(235)	(235)	-
Subscriptions	-	(160)	(160)	(167)
Telephone & Internet	-	(96)	(96)	(96)
Travel - National	-	(1,462)	(1,462)	(355)
Venue Hire	-	(2,492)	(2,492)	(1,418)
Volunteers	-	(841)	(841)	(583)
Website costs	-	(344)	(344)	(1,564)
Charitable Activities	(33,676)	(80,881)	(114,557)	(103,107)
Net Income / Expenditure	13,335	(2,454)	10,881	(3,813)

5a Fees for the Examination of the Accounts

The Accountancy fees include the cost for the independent examination of the charities accounts.

5b Staff Costs

No employees received employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) for the year of more than £60,000

5c Average Staff Headcount

	This Year	Last Year
Average number of staff employed in the year	4	3

5d Contributions to Pension Scheme

Contributions made to a defined contributions scheme all relating to the Unrestricted Fund activities

	This Year	Last Year
£	1459	1319

Basis of Accounting

The accounts were prepared on an accruals basis. The accounts were prepared on a going concern basis.

This report was signed on behalf of the Trustees of We Are Family CIO on 26.09.2024



Mark Hoult-Allen, Chair

WE ARE FAMILY

England & Wales - Charity number 1163318

Accounts

Annual Report and Accounts 2022 - 2023

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Chair's Introduction

[1st April 2022 - 31st March 2023]

Incredibly, it has been almost 10 years since We Are Family began as a grassroots adoption support community, and just four years since we took on our first staff member. So much of our work and rapid growth in this time has been possible because of the generosity and commitment of our incredible volunteers. I want to take this opportunity to thank them all for their resilience and commitment to supporting other adopters, through running events and activities in person and online and fostering and nurturing crucial friendships. So much of their work goes unseen but it is the lifeblood of We Are Family - thank you.

Offering free parent-led support, connection and community remains at the heart of We Are Family. We are proud that through volunteer input and staff time we have also been able to grow our work in the digital space to offer multifaceted support to our membership and beyond. This includes our ever-popular and topical WAF Talks webinar series and the Adoption Shared podcast which now has over 8,500 downloads!

This year, 57% of our members (2022 member survey) attended peer support groups, citing highlights as the ability to share openly about challenges (73%) and the opportunity to meet / connect with other adopters (71%). 44% attended parent socials, citing highlights as the ability to share openly about challenges (61%) and the opportunity to meet / connect with other adopters (85%) and 45% attended family friendly events, citing highlights as the opportunity to meet / connect with other adopters (76%) and likewise for their children (82%).

As well as delivering the services we have outlined above, through our volunteers and local groups, we have continued to grow in other areas. We have:

- Grown our membership, including expanding into the South East
- Built significant partnerships and collaborations with statutory bodies to deliver adoption support e.g. Adopt London, APSE
- Seen team growth from 3 to 4 staff members (as of June/July 23) plus continuation of our paid internship programme. This development includes the appointment of a Director for the first time, along with our Head of Operations, Programme and Content Manager and Community Development & Engagement Manager.
- Developed a more robust and diverse funding base, with repeat funders (Tudor Trust, Adopt London)
- Embedded a strong operations systems ready for scale - new database, restructured membership programme, solid governance structure, with a trustee recruitment campaign in spring 2023.
- Proved our ability to respond to changing member needs e.g. developing quality online services during Covid in direct response to member feedback

As a membership organisation, We Are Family have also contributed to a number of research initiatives over the past year, including a study into the experiences of adoptive parents with birth children led by the Rees Centre, Department of Education, University of Oxford. We established a working group to focus on the needs of adoptive families within the education system, and we continue to work closely with Adopt London to support the Black Adoption Project to better understand and evolve the experiences of Black adopters.

We have dreams of becoming a household name in the homes of adoptive families. We want to be somewhere they know they can go to make connections, receive important support and information and also add their voice to the issues adopters are experiencing.

We have reached a pivotal point in our evolution as we begin the early stages of planning to scale from a primarily London-based membership supporting around 1,250 members (though we know our reach and impact is closer to 3,100 once you factor in partners and children), to a UK-wide support network and platform, aiming to reach thousands¹ of adopters and their families within the next few years.

Our peer support provision has always been a cornerstone of We Are Family, however what has become increasingly clear over the last decade is that what truly unites our members, is the desire for connection. Delivering connection opportunities is critical. Sometimes our members connect to work through challenges, concerns and fatigue; and sometimes to share joy. They celebrate the milestones that non-adopters may not appreciate; laugh about the good (and the hard!); and have fun as an integrated family whether that be through picnics, park meetups, football clubs, trips to the theatre / museums and so much more. We are working hard to enable more of this, for more adopters and their families, for years to come.

Thank you for being part of our incredible support community.

You can read more details about many of these points in the following formal trustees' report.



Mark Hoult-Allen
Chair

¹ 2870 children were adopted in 2021. [Children looked after in England including adoptions, Reporting Year 2021](#)

The trustees of We Are Family CIO present their eighth annual report, covering the twelve months ended 31 March 2023 ('the year').

Reference and Administrative Details

The charity, We Are Family, is a charitable incorporated organisation which was registered with the Charity Commission of England and Wales on 26th August 2015. The charity's registration number is 1163318. The charity does not have any offices or other premises; its registered address is 27 Old Gloucester Street, London WC1N 3AX.

The names of all those who served as the charity's trustees during the year, and subsequently, are given below (in alphabetical order by surname), with the start and end dates of the term of office of each given, where relevant:

Name	Start	End
Esi Cathline	01.03.22	
Mike Clarke	01.03.22	
Liz Hocter	08.02.21	
Mark Hoult-Allen	18.11.19	
Diane McGrath	14.09.20	
Stuart Meek	08.02.21	
Sobia Shamim	08.02.21	
Andrew Taylor-Dawson	08.06.20	
Jody Tranter	20.03.18	31.12.22
Anna Willow	01.03.22	
Stephanie Wong	08.02.21	

Governance and Management

We Are Family existed as an unincorporated organisation before its registration as a charitable incorporated organisation in August 2015. It was originally founded in 2013 by a small group of adoptive parents to provide locally based peer-to-peer support for adoptive parents. From one group in Hackney and Islington, the organisation grew to seven groups in just over two years. Registration as an incorporated charity was sought to support the organisation's growth, facilitate future fundraising and consolidate its existing reputation within the adoption field.

The charity's constitution provides for the appointment of trustees by the board of trustees, having regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the charity. The charity's trustees from time to time are its only legal members (to be distinguished from adopters and prospective adopters who have joined one of the charity's groups and who are referred to elsewhere in this report as 'members').

During the year, the board maintained an ongoing trustee recruitment process with the appointment of one trustee. The trustees wish to thank Jody Tranter, who left the board during the year.

The board has four regular board meetings a year whilst also constituting two Away Days each year as board meetings, which means the board meets formally at least six times a year. Meetings during the year continued to be focussed on overseeing the strategy and operations of the charity and the provision of services to members, setting up systems for running the charity; and securing funding to ensure the sustainability of the charity.

The work of the board is supported by two standing committees, the Finance, Fundraising and Resources Committee and the Programmes and Strategy Committee.

Objectives and Activities

We Are Family's objects are to promote the health and wellbeing of prospective adopters and adopters. This covers the predictable stresses, strain and sense of isolation that comes with being an adoptive parent and in parenting traumatised children. There is a lack of targeted and tailored peer support for adoptive parents during the adoption journey and so We Are Family's key objective is the improved wellbeing of adopters through regular peer support opportunities both online and in person.

The charity's vision, which was refined and agreed by the board in 2021, is: "We want to see a world in which adoptive parents and prospective adopters feel connected, benefit from peer support and are part of a community which enables them to thrive." Its mission is to work "to ensure that adoptive parents and prospective adopters are part of a community, offering each other support, from a place of lived experience, through the highs and lows of parenting".

The activities of We Are Family fall into the following areas:

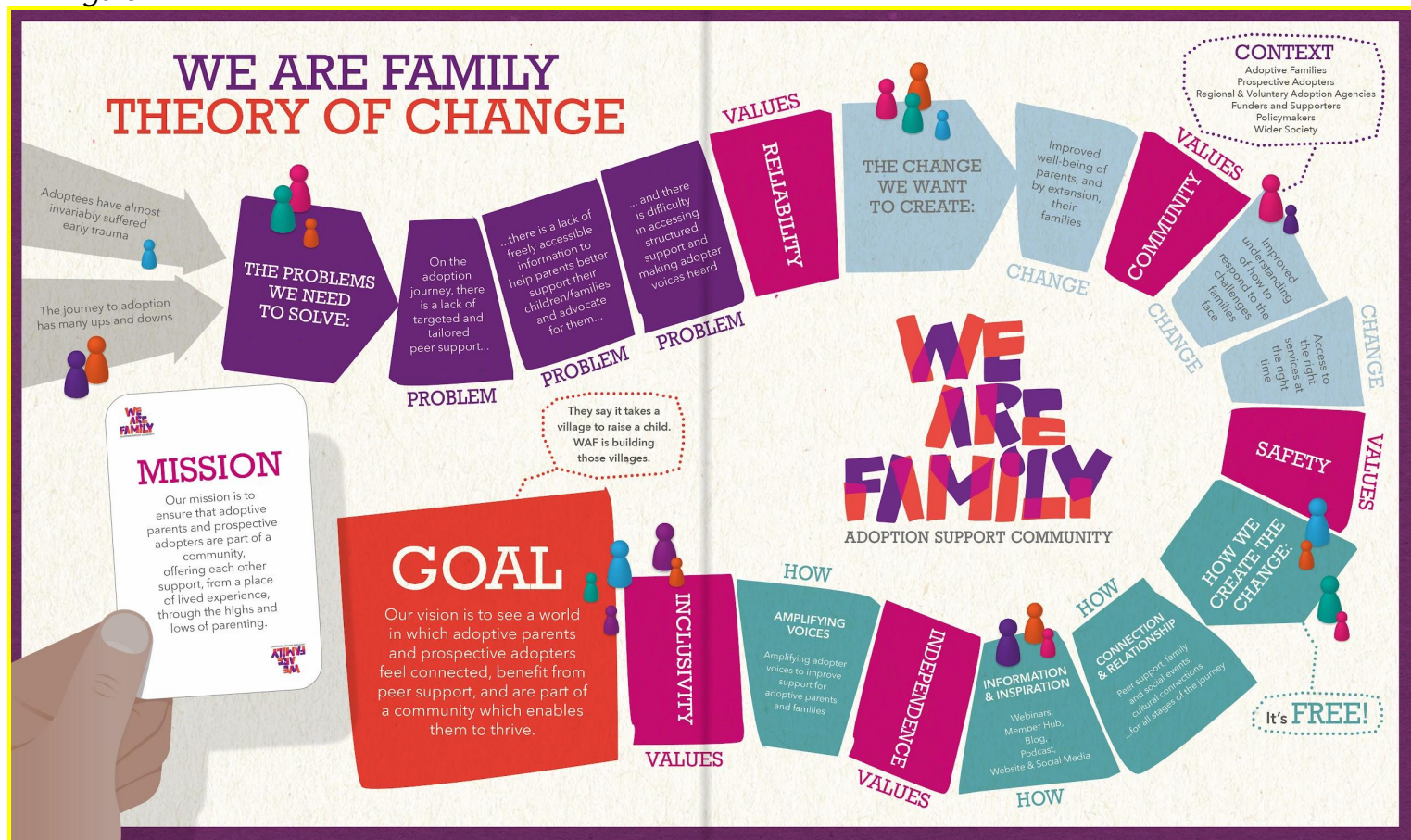
Connection & Relationship Creating opportunities for connection between adopters. • Local groups (face-to-face activities and online meetings) • Online groups • Thematic Groups (face-to-face and online meet ups) • Specific status groups (Single/Prospective)	Information & Inspiration An extension of direct peer support, gathering member recommendations and experience. • WAF Talks • Adoption Shared podcast series • Member Resources Platform • Website & social media • Blog
Amplifying voices Using the voice of the community to support calls for improved support for adoptive parents/families. • Collating views of the We Are Family members through our own surveys • Providing opportunities for the We Are Family membership to contribute to research initiatives • Using We Are Family membership's views to inform policy influencing	Structured support • Peer Support Training • Signposting to other services

Achievements and Performance

Infrastructure and Governance

- Creation of our new 3-year strategy (2023-26), solidifying our ambitious plan to expand both our services and our reach, and to update our volunteering programme and mechanisms for connection.
- Alongside this, further development of our impact framework plus a visual representation of our Theory of Change (figure 1).

Figure 1



- The first in a series of in-person co-production workshops with our volunteers; exploring experiences of adoption so far and how we can develop our volunteer strategy as part of our 3-year plans, as above.
- Ongoing enhancement of our online Member Hub to share more member resource recommendations and webinar recordings. There are currently over 1,200 resources and over 90 hours of webinar recordings on the Member Hub.
- Building out our membership offer to those at Stage 1 of the assessment process as part of our commitment to share with our members 'the right information at the right point in their adoption journey'. For Stage 1 members, this currently includes quarterly newsletters with bespoke content and quarterly digital 'member events' connecting fellow members and our team and trustees.

- Recruitment and ongoing engagement of trustees in 2022/23, to replace those retiring by rotation, 75% with experience across social care, and / or with lived experience of adoption. The current board stands at 10 trustees. This leaves us with up to six Trustees spaces which we plan to fill in 2023.
- Continued employment of a part-time Operations Manager who joined in 2021 as temporary parental leave cover; and our original Operations Manager who returned in the part-time role of Partnerships & Development Manager; plus continued employment of a part-time Community Development Manager; this configuration remained in place from Aug 22 - April 23. We also hosted our first paid intern via the University of Reading for a two-month part-time role focused on supporting our marketing and communications efforts.

Service Delivery

From in-person and online peer support groups, to playgroups, picnics and our developing programme of creative sessions; providing opportunities for our members to connect and forge friendship and community remains at the heart of We Are Family. We are proud of the following achievements this year:

- Further nurtured our 9 established groups (seven geographical groups and two thematic; single and prospectives) and laid the foundations for three new groups across Bexley, Kent and Medway, following our collaboration with Adoption Partnership South East. The groups continue to be the cornerstone of delivering face to face support, and offer a huge array of opportunities for connection, designed and delivered by adopters.
- Laid the foundations for scaling geographically, through the success of our ongoing collaboration with our first Regional Adoption Agency outside of London, Adoption Partnership South East. At the end of March 2023, we had onboarded over 150 APSE adopters and piloted peer support sessions via family friendly-meet ups and parent coffee mornings. With more promising connections with RAAs, VAAs and other organisations on the horizon, We Are Family are set to widen our reach across the UK in the coming years.
- Following the success of our pilot in 2021, this year we delivered a further round of Peer Support training alongside ongoing bi-monthly group supervision. Our bespoke Peer Support training programme, led by a consultant Social Worker and Psychotherapist, ensures that our volunteers are equipped to create a safe and welcoming space for members to share and support one another. As at March 2023, we had delivered 24 hours of peer support training and 12 hours of group peer supervision to 10 volunteers.
- We still have plans to deliver online Thematic Support Groups, including being in the early stages of establishing support for parents of tweens and teens alongside Adopt London; and creating an Education group. However, limited resources have meant we haven't been able to advance these further; we have used our resources to focus on growing our Black adoption working group (see below).
- We Are Family have contributed to The Independent Care Review and established a working group to focus on the needs of adoptive families within the education system. We continue to work closely with Adopt London to support the Black Adoption Project to better understand and evolve the experiences of Black adopters. Most immediately, this will involve the ongoing development of a Theory of Change for the project, co-created via a series of workshops; one with community leaders with no background in adoption work, one with adopted young people, and one with WAF steering committee members.

- Following the launch in 2021, this year we produced and released two additional podcast seasons of Adoption Shared, resulting in a total of 17 episodes. In each episode, our host Eddie Elliott meets adopters and professionals who share their insight and experiences of the adoption journey from a variety of different perspectives. As of March 2022, Adoption Shared has achieved over 6,000 downloads with its top episodes including: 'Five Questions [a compilation episode of adoptive parents answer what they would do differently]', 'Family Dynamics - adopting with a birth child', 'Contact with your adopted child's birth family'.
- Our digital Member Hub now holds over 60 recorded WAF Talks (over 90 hours of content) offering information and support across a vast range of subjects; alongside articles, books, training opportunities and much more. We continue to offer inspiration within our member-generated Blog featuring candid, hopeful and authentic accounts of adoption and related subjects; and also via our podcast, Adoption Shared (as above).

Membership

- Grown the membership

In both 2019 (original database launch) and 2021 (database v2 launch) there were big system changes which meant that member totals dropped down and then up again, as some current members did not rejoin the new system but new people joined. We have also periodically cleaned up data, removed accounts, and fixed bugs so our membership totals go up and down, rather than just up. However, our growth is clearly shown in the table below (Figure 2).

Figure 2

Year Ended	Membership Numbers
31st Dec 2019	449
31st Dec 2020	735
31st Dec 2021	637
31st Dec 2022	1054
To 31st July 2023	1252

As at the end of July 2023, We Are Family had 1252 fully validated members (1067 fully validated members at end of March 2022). We also acknowledge that although we encourage individual applications - i.e. for those in a couple each join as individual members - we are aware that this does not happen consistently; therefore the actual number of membership beneficiaries, including adopted children is likely to be closer to 3,100. Future work with our IT consultants will see us introducing a 'partner linking' mechanism to allow validated members to most efficiently invite their counterparts to become members.

We ran a survey in September 2022, to gather member feedback across our services, communications and to help shape the next season of programmes and support.

Key learnings from this survey include -

In relation to in-person support:

- 57% have attended PEER SUPPORT GROUPS, citing highlights as the ability to share openly about challenges (73%) and the opportunity to meet / connect with other adopters (71%). The majority of those that have yet to, report lack of time / lack of childcare / clash with bedtimes as the reason.
- 44% have attended PARENT SOCIALS, citing highlights as the ability to share openly about challenges (61%) and the opportunity to meet / connect with other adopters (85%). The majority of those that have yet to, report lack of time as the reason.
- 45% have attended FAMILY FRIENDLY EVENTS, citing highlights as the opportunity to meet / connect with other adopters (76%) and likewise for their children (82%). The majority of those that have yet to, report lack of time and this not matching their stage of journey.

In terms of our outcomes and impact in this area,

- 82% of members agree or strongly agree that since joining WAF, they have opportunities to engage with a variety of experience on adoption.
- 56% of members agree or strongly agree that since joining WAF, they have increased their networks of contact and / or friends within the adoption community.
- 58% of members agree or strongly agree that since joining WAF, they feel supported and more confident in their parenting abilities.

In relation to our digital support:

- 89% have watched a WAF TALK, citing highlights as the information / support provided (82%) and it feeling like parent self care. The majority of those that have yet to, report lack of time / tech fatigue.
- 40% have listened to a PODCAST EPISODE citing highlights as being able to listen on-the-go (79%) and the opportunity to hear about a range of personal adoption experiences (71%). The majority of those that have yet to, report lack of time (50%) and not knowing about the podcast series (35%).
- 72% have read a BLOG POST citing highlights as the opportunity to hear about a range of personal adoption experiences (80%) and the information / support provided (48%). The majority of those that have yet to, report lack of time (50%).
- 37% engage with the MEMBER HUB occasionally (every few months) and 19% engage regularly (monthly+). citing highlights as the resources shared (68%) and the ability to catch up with WAF Talks (64%). The majority of those that have yet to, report lack of time (52%) and tech fatigue (33%).

The impact of these programmes has been that 83% of members agree or strongly agree that since joining WAF, they have access to more resources, information and support to manage the challenges of adoptive parenting.

We also used this opportunity to ask members about the messages they would like to communicate to the relevant authorities on the challenges they experience:

- 64% of members disagree or strongly disagree that the government [and adoption agencies] understand the potential challenges of adoption and provide appropriate levels of resource. 0% of members agree or strongly agree with the reverse.
- When given the opportunity to complete the following statements, members responses broadly fell into the following categories:
 - ❖ 'The key message that I would like to send to the government and / or adoption agencies is...' More / Improved Post-adoption support (32.7%)
Education settings (12%) Faster / more accessible interventions (10.3%)
jointly with Sector / care system limitations (10.3%)

- ❖ *'My biggest challenge in terms of my adoption journey currently is...' (Lack of) support networks (13.8%) Education (13.8%) Parent self care / wellbeing (12%).*

Testimonials include:

"WAF is a great support for me. I have met lovely parents who understand my situation and children without judgement."

- WAF Member, Sep 2022

"I love WAF and what it does for adopters."

- WAF Member, Sep 2022

"[Although] I haven't engaged much with WAF yet - we had our child placed in February and life has been busy - we see it as a resource that is likely to be useful in the future as we encounter different issues in our adoption journey. It is good to know support and advice is out there if we need it."

- WAF Member, Sep 2022

"The peer support training has been amazing."

- WAF Member and attendee of Peer Support Training, Sep 2022

"I have gained so much from being a We Are Family volunteer. As well as making new contacts and meeting people from different walks of life, I get the chance to use my professional skills from my previous working life in education to run activities."

- WAF Volunteer, 2022

"This was such a rich session as it offered multiple perspectives. I will definitely listen to the recording later as a refresher of all the great tips offered."

- WAF Member and WAF Talks viewer, 2022

"I found it to be the most lovely process, connecting me into WAF with the kind, supportive and inspirational Jay and Eddie. It offered me quality time to share, process, digest and reflect on my own story."

- WAF Member and Podcast guest, 2022

Fundraising and Partnerships

We Are Family is very grateful to various trusts and foundations, organisations and individuals who provided funds to support the continued development of the charity.

- Adopt London awarded a grant of £40,000 per year (2022-25); this figure includes annual support towards the WAF Talks programme.
- Adopt London continue to also fund us for discreet projects including £6,000 for the Podcast pilot (two seasons); £900 for our annual Summer family picnics).
- Adoption Partnership South East (APSE) committed £13,500+ across 2022-2024 to co-develop peer support groups across the region of Bexley, Kent and Medway.
- APSE have also invested in team licences to access our Member Hub, providing us with a further £875 annually.
- Our second crowdfunding effort via the Big Give Christmas Challenge saw us raise just under £1850 to support the creation of the next series of the Adoption Shared podcast.

The charity also further developed partnerships with external organisations to the benefit of the membership. This included:

- Sitting on the London Adoption and Special Guardianship Board to represent the needs of prospective adopters and adopters around support services.
- Fortnightly meetings with the Adopt London key contacts, quarterly meetings with the Adopt London Heads of Service, twice-yearly meetings with the Adopt London Practice Leads.

Plans for 2023/24: Planning and Transforming

We have an ambitious plan to expand both our services and our reach. We also want to update our volunteering programme and mechanisms for connection.

Our peer support provision has always been a cornerstone of We Are Family, however what has become increasingly clear over the last decade is that what truly unites our members, is the desire for connection. Delivering connection opportunities is critical. Sometimes our members connect to work through challenges, concerns and fatigue; and sometimes to share joy. They celebrate the milestones that non-adopters may not appreciate; laugh about the good (and the hard!); and have fun as an integrated family whether that be through picnics, park meetups, football clubs, trips to the theatre / museums and so much more. We want to enable more of this.

Our strategic plan for 2023-26 are shown below in Figure 3.

Figure 3

SA1: Build & maintain strong foundations "A strong organisation"
SA2: Deepen & expand reach and engagement "More members who are engaged and co-producing"
SA3: Grow targeted service offer "Getting more stuff relevant to them"
SA4: Become a known voice on adopter issues "Sharing their experiences to effect change"

Public Benefit Statement

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with their duty to have due regard to the guidance on public benefit published by the Charity Commission in exercising their powers or duties and in offering peer-to-peer adopter-led support, through its local and cross-London groups and online service provision.

We Are Family supports the well-being of both adoptive parents and prospective adopters. This is of benefit to both individual adopters, in reducing the stresses and strains of adopting, and their families. Membership of We Are Family, and access to its support network and other services, is offered on an open basis, the only requirement being verification of adopter status by a social worker (at Stage 2 of the adoption process or further).

The charity offers its services free and arranges activities so that they can be accessible to as many parents as possible, and to those with children of a variety of ages. We Are Family strives to be open to all sections of the community and sees developing this as a key aspect of its work. We Are Family continued to reimburse parents attending the single parent support groups for childcare costs, so that those members could more easily attend. The charity also continues to explore how to meet the needs of specific communities, such as BAME and trans-racial adopters.

Financial Review

Summary

During the year ended 31 March 2023 We Are Family raised £99,294 (prior year: £100,290) and spent £103,107 (prior year: £76,062).

Substantial grants from the Tudor Trust, Adopt London and APSE have enabled WAF to expand the support we offer to adopters, offer more online services to help adopters manage the impact of the pandemic and perhaps most significantly, grow our membership throughout the year despite the impact of the pandemic on the operation of face-to-face support groups.

Sources of income

£46,900 of restricted funding was received from the Adopt London consortium of regional adoption agencies, £6875 from Adoption Partnership South East, £3000 from Tudor Trust and £2,000 from the Alex Timpson Trust amongst other restricted grants and donations.

£30,000 of unrestricted income was received from The Tudor Trust, £5000 from the Forrester Family Trust and other smaller amounts were raised through The Big Give and Magic Little Grants, amongst other sources, including individual giving.

Unrestricted funds

£39,189 (prior year: £46,179) of unrestricted funding was raised during the year. Expenditure of £43,042 (prior year: £35,825) was offset against this leaving a small deficit of £3,853 which was covered from brought forward unrestricted reserves. Total unrestricted reserves at the year-end were £26,098 (prior year: £29,951) of which approx. £13,100 was earmarked in accordance with our reserves policy (see further details below).

The bulk of unrestricted funding came from the Tudor Trust (£30,000) and was used to fund our Operations Manager costs.

Restricted funds

£60,105 (£54,111) of restricted funding was raised during the year. Expenditure of £60,065 (£40,236) was offset against this leaving a surplus of £40. Total restricted reserves at the year-end were £41,550 (£41,510).

Expenditure against restricted funds predominantly related to staff and project costs (continuing work on our member platform, WAF Talks and the Adoption Shared Podcast).

The £41,550 left in restricted reserves at the end of the year is due to be spent on staff and project costs in the 2023/24 financial year.

Basis of Preparation

The accounts for the year are drawn up on an accruals basis. Further details are noted in the accounting policies note (1) appended to the accounts.

No funds were or are held as a custodian on behalf of others.

Independent Review

The accounts for the year ended 31 March 2023 have been independently reviewed with the independent examiner confirming that accounting records have been adequately kept, the submitted accounts correspond with those accounting records and that there are no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts.

Reserves Policy

The Board of Trustees has agreed an increased reserves policy whereby the unrestricted funds not committed should provide sufficient funding for an orderly wind down of the charity if necessary at some future date. The policy aims to keep reserves equivalent to three months of general operating expenses plus one to two months' worth of staff costs, currently calculated in total at £13,100.

Total unrestricted reserves at the end of the year were £26,098 of which £13,100 has been earmarked in accordance with the reserves policy, leaving £12,998 in general unrestricted reserves.

Funding received since the year end

Since the year end the following significant funding has been gratefully received by We Are Family:

- Adopt London | £40,000
- Tudor Trust | £20,000
- Barnardos - Sale of Member Hub Code | £18,000
- Adoption Partnership South East | £7,500
- University of Reading | £2,188.20
- The Woodward Trust | £1,000
- Magic Little Grants | £500

Independent Examiner's Report

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of We Are Family

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the We are Family (the Charity) for the year ended 31st March 2023

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Charity, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

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

Independent examiner's statement

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

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

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

Signed: 

Name: Tracey Skates

Fellow Chartered & Certified Accountant

Address: 15 Menmarsh Road, Worminghall, HP18 9JT

Date: 19/12/2023

Statement of Financial Activities**For the Year Ended 31 March 2023**

£	Notes	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	2023	2022
Income from Endowments					
From:					
Donations and Legacies		39,189	60,105	99,294	100,290
Fundraising Events		-	-	-	-
Trading Income		-	-	-	-
Interest Received		-	-	-	-
Total		39,189	60,105	99,294	100,290
Expenditure On:					
Raising Funds		-	-	-	2,100
Charitable Activities		43,042	60,065	103,107	73,962
Total		43,042	60,065	103,107	76,062
Net Income / Expenditure	3, 4	(3,853)	40	(3,813)	24,228
Transfer Between Funds		-	-	-	-
Reconciliation of Funds					
Total Funds Brought Forward		29,951	41,510	71,461	47,233
Total Funds Carried Forward		26,098	41,550	67,647	71,461

Statement of Financial Position**As At 31 March 2023**

£	Notes	2023	2022
Tangible Assets – Member Hub Software & Website	2	22,393	25,192
Cash at bank and in hand		47,864	41,367
Other debtors		727	727
Prepayments and accrued income		-	5,698
Creditors: Amounts Falling Due Within One Year		(3,336)	(226)
Net Current Assets (Liabilities)		45,254	47,566
Total Assets less Current Liabilities		67,647	72,758
Accruals and deferred income		-	1,296
Net assets		67,647	71,461
The Funds of the Charity			
Restricted Income Funds		41,550	41,510
Unrestricted Income Funds		26,098	29,951
Total Funds		67,647	71,461

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 31 March 2023

1. Accounting Policies

Basis of Accounting

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, except for investments which are included at market value and the revaluation of certain fixed assets and 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 2015)'. Financial reporting Standard 102 the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), and the Charities Act 2011.

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

Tangible assets and depreciation

Tangible assets are included at cost less depreciation and impairment. Depreciation has been provided at the following rates in order to write off the assets over their estimated useful lives:

We Are Family made a significant investment towards the construction of a database and a website, both of which are expected to have a useful economic life of 10 years.

Software & Websites 10% straight line

2. Tangible Assets

	Software & Websites	Total
Cost or Valuation	At cost	
At 1 April 2022	27,991	27,991
Additions	-	-
At 31 March 2023	27,991	27,991
Depreciation		
At 1 April 2022	2,799	2,799
Charge for the period	2,799	2,799
At 31 March 2023	5,598	5,598
Net book value		
At 1 April 2022	25,192	25,192
At 31 March 2023	22,393	22,393

3. Income and allocated expenditure by activity

£	BROUGHT FORWARD 21/22	Income in 22/23	Spent in 22/23	CARRIED FORWARD 23/24
Restricted				
Adopt London - Core	4,525	28,000	32,184	341
Adopt London - Member Hub Access	4,620	-	4,690	-70
Adopt London - Picnics	680	900	390	1190
Adopt London - Podcast	-941	6000	4315	744
Adopt London - Talks	4,646	12,000	10,830	5,816
<i>Adopt London - Sub Total</i>	<i>13,530</i>	<i>46,900</i>	<i>52,409</i>	<i>8,021</i>
Alex Timpson	-	2000	-	2000
APSE	75	6875	4382	2568
Tudor Trust Wellbeing Grant	-788	3000	1944	268
University of Reading	-	1330	1330	-
Total Restricted	12,817	60,105	60,065	12,857
Unrestricted				
The Big Give	1,058	1,850	238	2,670
Forrester Family Trust	-	5000	-	5000
Individual Giving	-	940	-	940
Garfield Weston	9,891	-	6,009	3,882
Magic Little Grants	-	500	417	83
OTHER	-5,964	899	1,598	-6,663
Tudor Trust	6,427	30,000	34,779	1,648
Total Unrestricted	11,412	39,189	43,042	7,559

From 1 April 2021, We Are Family moved from receipts and payments accounting to accruals accounting, where additional tracking was established. Detailed tracking on activity by donor has been established from this date on, explaining the discrepancy in brought forward reserves versus the balance sheet.

4. Detail of income and expenditure

£	Unrestricted	Restricted	2023	2022
Restricted grants	-	60,105	60,105	54,111
Unrestricted donations	9,189	-	9,189	1,179
Unrestricted grants	30,000	-	30,000	45,000
Donations and Legacies	39,189	60,105	99,294	100,290
Fundraising Costs	-	-	-	-2,100
Fundraising Activities	-	-	-	-2,100
Advertising & Marketing	-	-998	-998	-524
Audit & Accountancy fees	1,296	-3,435	-2,139	-1,440
Bank Fees	-	-44	-44	-17
Charitable and Political Donations	-	-	-	-5
Childcare Costs - Parent Reimbursement	-	-100	-100	-40
Consulting	-3,706	-3,482	-7,188	-7,770
Depreciation	-2,799	-	-2,799	-2,799
Employers National Insurance	-238	-	-	-90
Event Entertainment	-279	-697	-976	-287
General Expenses	-	-131	-131	-450
Guest Speaker Fees	-	-6,375	-6,375	-5,520
Insurance	-	-789	-789	-781
IT Consultancy	-	-8,905	-8,905	-126
IT Equipment Expense	-	-49	-49	-475
IT Software and Consumables	-	-177	-177	-875
Legal Expenses - Support	-	-	-	-420
Member Resources (incl Zoom)	-2,303	-160	-2,463	-2,822
Other Event Expenses	-	-150	-150	-100
Pensions Costs	-712	-607	-1,319	-1,081
Postage, Freight & Courier	-	-70	-70	-237
Printing & Stationery	-	-134	-134	-
Rent	-	-272	-272	-
Salaries	-34,068	-29,076	-63,382	-45,035

Small Gifts	-	-75	-75	-748
Staff Training	-	-389	-389	-38
Subscriptions	-	-166	-167	-150
Telephone & Internet	-	-96	-96	-80
Travel - National	-	-355	-355	-20
Venue Hire	-	-1,418	-1,418	-34
Volunteer Training	-233	-350	-583	-1,400
Website costs	-	-1,564	-1,564	-600
Charitable Activities	-43,042	-60,065	-103,107	-73,964
Net Income / Expenditure	-3,853	40	-3,813	24,226

5a Fees for the Examination of the Accounts

The Accountancy fees include the cost for the independent examination of the charities accounts.

5b Staff Costs

No employees received employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) for the year of more than £60,000

5c Average Staff Headcount

This Year	Last Year
--------------	--------------

Average number of staff employed in the year	3	3
--	---	---

5d Contributions to Pension Scheme

This Year	Last Year
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Contributions made to a defined contributions scheme all relating to the Unrestricted Fund activities

£	1319	1081
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Basis of Accounting

The accounts were prepared on an accruals basis.

The accounts were prepared on a going concern basis.

This report was signed on behalf of the Trustees of We Are Family CIO on 16th October 2023

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Houlton-Allen', is centered within a faint, light grey circular stamp. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Mark Houlton-Allen, Chair

WE ARE FAMILY

England & Wales - Charity number 1163318

Accounts



We Are Family Annual Report and Accounts 2021 - 2022

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Chair's Introduction

Emerging from the pandemic and exploring our collective future [31st March 2021 - 1st April 2022]

The previous year 2020/21 will be remembered globally as an historic year due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent distress and disruption that this caused. And yet at We Are Family, we are struck at how significant the year following (2021/22) has been for so many - including our families.

Much like the aftermath of trauma - adoption included - if the support that follows is compassionate, considered and relevant, it has the potential to shape and strengthen our experience. This is how We Are Family will remember 2021/22; a year of collective listening, responding and exploring in order to best support our families in both the short and long term.

This year saw us continue to develop our now blended offer, including:

- Peer support groups: both online and in-person
- Family-friendly meetups
- Bi-weekly Blog posts written by our members
- Alongside continuing our digital Member Hub and WAF Talks programme

We also launched new programmes, including:

- Peer Support Training
- A podcast, 'Adoption Shared'
- A pilot programme of cultural events and collaborations with practical parent and family sessions taking place at venues including The National Maritime Museum (Greenwich) and The Marlowe Theatre (Canterbury).

The evolution in service delivery has been paralleled by our evolving team of trustees, staff and volunteers. Whilst we continue to benefit from the contributions of long-standing team members, this year has also seen us gain skills, talents and lived experience from new personnel.

Our committees and working groups - consisting of trustees, staff, volunteers, members and relevant professionals - have consequently further developed, including the introduction of a timely new working group: 'The Black adoption working group'. Working in conjunction with Adopt London's Black Adoption Project - a commitment to look beyond short-term solutions and to genuinely understand the many complex factors that impact the adoption of Black children - We Are Family have formed our own working group to represent and advance our members' experience. We have plans to launch a Podcast season focusing on the Black experience within adoption in the autumn of 2022.

Diversification of services and voices has been further reflected in our fundraising and partnerships. This year we are proud to have the continued support of key partners such as Adopt London, and key funders such as The Tudor Trust, whilst collaborating with new organisations including the RAA Adoption Partnership South East, and new funders including The Garfield Weston Foundation.

As well as delivering all of the services we have outlined above, we have continued to grow in other areas:

- Grown our membership, including expanding into the South East, and reaching the 1,000¹ member milestone.

¹ WAF membership was at 1,067 as at 31st March 2022

- Team growth from 1 to 2 (plus 1 on parental leave) alongside a developing paid internship programme
- More robust funding base, with repeat funders (Tudor Trust, Adopt London)
- Strong operations systems ready for scale - new database, restructured membership programme, solid governance structure
- Proven ability to respond to changing member needs e.g. developing quality online services during Covid in direct response to member feedback
- Launched new branding for We Are Family and redesigned the website.

Following the launch of the new We Are Family logo, we have successfully registered it as a trademark - an important step in protecting our brand. Registering the trademark was a complex project and I would like to extend the trustees thanks to Verity Ellis, Thomas Coop and their teams at FieldFisher LLP, for their pro bono legal advice and support and to Paul Meadows (our own ex-Chair) for his leadership of the project and so generously giving his time and expertise.

Looking ahead, we have an ambitious plan to expand both our services and our reach. We also want to work alongside our members to review and reshape our volunteering programme and mechanisms for connection.

Our peer support provision has always been a cornerstone of We Are Family, however what has become increasingly clear over the last decade is that what truly unites our members, is the desire for connection. Delivering connection opportunities is critical. Sometimes our members connect to work through challenges, concerns and fatigue; and sometimes to share joy. They celebrate the milestones that non-adopters may not appreciate; laugh about the good (and the hard!); and have fun as an integrated family whether that be through picnics, park meetups, football clubs, trips to the theatre / museums and so much more. We plan to enable more of this.

The above growth, exploration and aspiration has been made possible in no small part because of the generosity of our incredible volunteers. Over 40 volunteers and participants continued to run our local groups and contribute to our WAF Talks, Podcast and Blog programmes, providing vital support across London and beyond to 1000 adoptive and prospective adoptive member families. Our annual member survey (see below for details) again demonstrated just how valuable We Are Family is to its members.

Thank you for being part of our incredible support community.

You can read more details about many of these points in the following formal trustees' report.



Mark Hoult-Allen
Chair

The trustees of We Are Family CIO present their seventh annual report, covering the twelve months ended 31 March 2022 ('the year').

Reference and Administrative Details

The charity, We Are Family, is a charitable incorporated organisation which was registered with the Charity Commission of England and Wales on 26th August 2015. The charity's registration number is 1163318. The charity does not have any offices or other premises; its registered address is 27 Old Gloucester Street, London WC1N 3AX.

The names of all those who served as the charity's trustees during the year, and subsequently, are given below (in alphabetical order by surname), with the start and end dates of the term of office of each given, where relevant:

Name	Start	End
Struan Campbell	18.11.19	30.03.22
Esi Cathline	01.03.22	
Mike Clarke	01.03.22	
Samantha Fletcher	20.03.18	19.03.22
Rami Hassouna	08.02.21	30.11.21
Liz Hocter	08.02.21	
Mark Hoult-Allen	18.11.19	
Diane McGrath	14.09.20	
Libby McVeigh	17.03.20	30.09.21
Stuart Meek	08.02.21	
Miranda Mercado Gregory	26.08.15	19.03.22
Klayre Rogers	20.03.19	02.10.21
Sobia Shamim	08.02.21	
Andrew Taylor-Dawson	08.06.20	
Jody Tranter	20.03.18	
Anna Willow	01.03.22	
Stephanie Wong	08.02.21	

The Board was supported by its secretary, Charlotte Bois-Pursey, until her resignation on 19th April 2022. We would like to thank Charlotte for her support across the years.

Governance and Management

We Are Family existed as an unincorporated organisation before its registration as a charitable incorporated organisation in August 2015. It was originally founded in 2013 by a small group of adoptive parents to provide locally based peer-to-peer support for adoptive parents. From one group in Hackney and Islington, the organisation grew to seven groups in just over two years. Registration as an incorporated charity was sought and to support the organisation's growth, facilitate future fundraising, and consolidate its existing reputation within the adoption field.

The charity's constitution provides for the appointment of trustees by the board of trustees, having regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the charity. The charity's trustees from time to time are its only legal members (to be distinguished from adopters and prospective adopters who have joined one of the charity's groups and who are referred to elsewhere in this report as 'members').

During the year, the board maintained an ongoing trustee recruitment process with the appointment of three trustees during the year. The trustees wish to thank the trustees who

left the board during the year: Struan Campbell, Samantha Fletcher, Rami Hassouna, Libby McVeigh, Miranda Mercado Gregory, Klayre Rogers.

The board have four regular board meetings a year whilst also constituting two Away Days each year as board meetings, which means the board meets formally at least six times a year. Meetings during the year continued to be focussed on overseeing the strategy and operations of the charity and the provision of services to members, setting up systems for running the charity; and securing funding to ensure the sustainability of the charity.

The work of the board is supported by two standing committees, the Finance, Fundraising and Resources Committee and the Programmes and Strategy Committee.

Objectives and Activities

We Are Family's objects are to promote the health and wellbeing of prospective adopters and adopters. This covers the predictable stresses, strain and sense of isolation that comes with being an adoptive parent and in parenting traumatised children. There is a lack of targeted and tailored peer support for adoptive parents during the adoption journey and so We Are Family's key objective is the improved wellbeing of adopters through regular peer support opportunities both online and in person.

The charity's vision, which was refined and agreed by the board in 2021, is: "We want to see a world in which adoptive parents and prospective adopters feel connected, benefit from peer support and are part of a community which enables them to thrive." Its mission is to work "to ensure that adoptive parents and prospective adopters are part of a community, offering each other support, from a place of lived experience, through the highs and lows of parenting".

The activities of We Are Family fall into the following areas:

Connection & Relationship Creating opportunities for connection between adopters. • Local groups (face-to-face activities) • Online groups • Thematic Groups • Specific status groups (Single/Prospective)	Information & Inspiration An extension of direct peer support, gathering member recommendations and experience. • WAF Talks • Adoption Shared podcast series • Member Resources Platform • Website & social media • Blog
Amplifying voices Using the voice of the community to support calls for improved support for adoptive parents/families. • Collating views of the We Are Family members through our own surveys • Providing opportunities for the We Are Family membership to contribute to research initiatives • Using We Are Family membership's views to inform policy influencing	Structured support • Peer Support Training • Signposting to other services

Achievements and Performance

Infrastructure and Governance

- Further development of a 3-year strategy (2020-23), restating WAF's vision and mission and setting clear objectives and actions for the next phase of development.
- Further development of our Impact framework and Theory of Change
- Further development of our online Member Hub to share more member resource recommendations and webinar recordings. There are currently 1,164 resources and webinar recordings on the Member Hub.
- Extended the membership offer to those at Stage 1 of the assessment process. We are now collecting member's Assessing Authority and can email our members by stage, laying the foundations for our content strategy to contact members with 'the right information at the right point in their adoption journey'.
- 70% of current members updated their details as part of this campaign which is very encouraging and a good indicator of members' engagements with WAF. Note: industry standard for a re-engagement campaign is 25%.
- Design and delivery of volunteer training and a toolkit for delivering WAF services from April 2021 and beyond.
- Recruitment of new trustees in 2022, to replace those retiring by rotation, with experience across social care, 75% and / or with lived experience of adoption. The current board stands at 11 trustees.
- Continued employment of a part-time Operations Manager (temporarily replaced by a parental leave cover) and a part time Community Development Manager; both joining from June 2021.
- We also redeveloped our brand and website to better represent the organisation and reflect the services we offer with members commenting on the improvements as 'bright, welcoming, bold and recognisable'. This launched in April 2021 and our analytics show the growth in direct traffic to the website, member hub and the blog since the relaunch.
- During the year the WeAre Family logo was registered as a trademark, an keystone in protecting our important brand.

Service Delivery

From in-person and online peer support groups, to playgroups, picnics and our developing programme of creative sessions; providing opportunities for our members to connect and forge friendship and community remains at the heart of We Are Family. We are proud of the following achievements this year:

- Grown the membership from 781 adopters in 31st March 2021 to over 1,067 as of 31st March 2022. (See full note below).
- Continued to run 7 geographical groups and 3 pan-London (2 for single adopters and 1 for prospective adopters) groups providing activities and events according to member need. Following group activity moving online in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic in the summer of 2021, face to face family meet up events restarted and all of the We Are Family groups held family picnics in September 2021, attended by more than 70 families, which will be repeated again in September 2022.
- In 2021, we launched a pilot of Peer Support training for volunteers including provision of regular group supervision. Following this successful pilot, we have since run a second programme in June 2022, supporting an additional 6 volunteers to train to become Peer Support Facilitators, and in late 2022 we started to offer ongoing bi-monthly supervision with a clinical social worker and psychotherapist. In addition a programme

of development workshops for volunteers commenced in November with a self care workshop 'Knowing ourselves, caring for ourselves'.

- We have begun to deliver online Thematic Support Groups, the first of which is a regular group for parents of tweens and teens; and are in the early stages of establishing an Education group.
- In late 2021, we began a new collaboration with a Regional Adoption Agency outside of London: Adoption Partnership South East. This has the potential for upwards of 600 adopters joining We Are Family membership over the next few years. In early 2022 we were commissioned by APSE to co-develop peer support groups with and for their adopters, across the region of Bexley, Kent and Medway which will play a key part in our next year.
- In the Autumn of 2021, we launched our pilot podcast series, Adoption Shared. In each episode, our host Eddie Elliott meets adopters and professionals who share their insight and experiences of the adoption journey from a variety of different perspectives. Adoption Shared received 200 downloads in its first 48 hours of release and is reported as a valued, accessible, platform for those within and beyond the adoption community. We have plans for a second and third season of the podcast in 2022.
- As a membership, We Are Family have contributed to a number of research initiatives over the past year, including a study into the experiences of adoptive parents with birth children led by the Rees Centre, Department of Education, University of Oxford. We are also establishing a working group to focus on the needs of adoptive families within the education system, and we continue to work closely with Adopt London to support their Black Adoption Project to better understand and evolve the experiences of Black adopters.
- Our digital Member Hub now holds over 50 recorded WAF Talks (over 76 hours of content) offering information and support across a vast range of subjects; alongside articles, books, training opportunities and much more. We continue to offer inspiration within our member-generated blog featuring candid, hopeful and authentic accounts of adoption and related subjects; and also via the new addition of our podcast, Adoption Shared (12 podcast episodes in the past 6 months, resulting in almost 5,000 downloads).

Membership

As at the end of March 2022, We Are Family had 1067 fully validated members (781 fully validated members at end of March 2021), which is a growth of 37% year on year. Membership is growing at an approximate rate of 100 people per quarter. We also acknowledge that although we encourage individual applications - i.e. for those in a couple up each join as individual members - we are aware that this does not happen consistently; therefore the actual number of membership beneficiaries is likely to be closer to 2,000. Future work with our IT consultants will see us introducing a 'partner linking' mechanism to allow validated members to most efficiently invite their counterparts to become members.

PLEASE NOTE: There is a drop in membership growth (50% YOY from 19/20 to 20/21) due to a compulsory 're-engagement campaign' that we had to run in Autumn 2021, in response to a change from the Information Commissioner's Office. This resulted in those members who use our service regularly and proactively to 'opt-in' to continue their membership: this was 70% of original membership and over 900 members in total; three times as high as industry standard.

Membership Stats in a snapshot:

2022	98 new members, <u>1067</u> cumulative (as of 31st March 2022)
2021	201 new members, 969 cumulative
2020	290 new members, 768 cumulative
2019	478, 478 cumulative

- 1,164 resources and webinars in the Member Hub
- 1,309 lifetime peer support hours²
- 66% of members feel better equipped to parent their children
- 61% report they can talk to people who understand the challenges of adoptive parenting

We ran a survey in July 2021, to gather feedback on We Are Family's recent rebranding, website / hub changes and our members' experience as we emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic. It aimed to discover what forms of support might help our members in the short and longer term, and how members access these services.

The majority of comments about the new website were positive (77%), commenting on the professionalism and clarity of the website. The majority of comments about the new logo were positive (72%), commenting on how bright, welcoming, bold and recognisable the new logo is.

Common themes that responding members requested featuring across our Blog posts and Member Hub resources included (from highest): school / education, contact, teenagers, transracial adoption, parent self-care / wellbeing, policy updates and wider research, and age-specific resources i.e. for early years, through to adopting older children. This corresponded with member responses to the biggest challenges with members reporting (from highest): School / education, [lack of] support network / services, frustrations with the adoption process, teenagers, and siblings

Other feedback included:

- As anticipated, 50% of the surveyed members have joined since the pandemic (February 2020) and therefore have not had a chance to participate in a face to face event.
- 68% of members that have attended an online peer support group during the pandemic thoroughly enjoyed the session.
- 60% of members have accessed the Member Hub, and 52.3% have watched a Talk on-demand. When asked why those that had not attended a live talk or watched on-demand - as anticipated - the most common reason was lack of time.
- 22% of members were not aware of the on-demand feature and / or the Member Hub demonstrating that communication and signposting improvements can be made. We Are Family have plans to action this via the introduction of New Member Events; the new membership campaign and corresponding membership tips; and our improved communications strategy.
- The majority of members chose WAF Talks and Webinars as their most beneficial service across the next 12 months, followed by face to face events for the family. Online resources and face to face peer support groups are the second highest choices.

² As at 31st March 2022

- A clear majority (61%) identify the ability to find other members in their area as their first choice for service development. An online notice board and thematic groups are the second highest priority.

Testimonials include:

"I don't believe we would have the relationship with our children that we have now if it were not for the help, support and understanding that other WAF members gave to me."

- WAF Member, 2021

"I've grown in confidence, as a parent and as an adoption/education advocate. Through WAF links we've managed to get real change and training going at our school."

- WAF Member, 2022

"Simply the act of taking part in a series of sessions has provided me with a sense of momentum for starting a peer support group from scratch – I couldn't visualise it before the training."

- WAF Member and attendee of Peer Support Training, 2022

"I have gained so much from being a We Are Family volunteer. As well as making new contacts and meeting people from different walks of life, I get the chance to use my professional skills from my previous working life in education to run activities."

- WAF Volunteer, 2022

"This was such a rich session as it offered multiple perspectives. I will definitely listen to the recording later as a refresher of all the great tips offered."

- WAF Member and WAF Talks viewer, 2022

"I found it to be the most lovely process, connecting me into WAF with the kind, supportive and inspirational Jay and Eddie. It offered me quality time to share, process, digest and reflect on my own story."

- WAF Member and Podcast guest, 2022

Fundraising and Partnerships

We Are Family is very grateful to various trusts and foundations, organisations and individuals who provided funds to support the continued development of the charity.

- Adopt London awarded a grant of £50,000 over 2 years (2020-22) to support the growth of WAF and provision of more services to more adopters. We have also secured a 5-year partnership agreement at £40,000 per year (2022-25); this figure includes annual support towards the WAF Talks programme.
- Adopt London continue to also fund us for discreet projects including £6,900 for the Podcast pilot (two seasons); £900 for our annual Summer family picnics; £5,700 to support the enhanced functionality of the Member Hub to enable social worker / staff member access (and a 5-year access licence for 150 of their staff members).
- The Fore awarded a grant of £30,000 over 2 years (2020-22) to support the new Community Development Manager post.
- The Garfield Weston Foundation awarded a grant of £15,000 over 12 months to support our core costs (2021).
- Adoption Partnership South East (APSE) have committed initial funding (£3,000) as part of our new collaboration to onboard their adopters. We have since secured a further

£6,000+ across 2022-2024 to co-develop peer support groups across the region of Bexley, Kent and Medway.

- APSE have also invested in team licences to access our Member Hub, providing us with a further £625 annually.
- In April 2021 we began a soft launch of our new Individual Giving campaign on our new website and building on this, participated in the 2021 Big Give Christmas Challenge, crowdfunding just under £4,000 for matched funds to support the creation of the next series of the Adoption Shared podcast.

The charity also further developed partnerships with external organisations to the benefit of the membership. This included:

- Sitting on the London Adoption and Special Guardianship Board to represent the needs of prospective adopters and adopters around support services.
- Monthly meetings with the Adopt London Heads of Service
- Attending the Regional Adoption Agencies (RAA) and Voluntary Adoption Agencies (VAA) regular meeting

In our partner's own words: *"As an adopter-led organisation, WAF are uniquely able to support fantastic adopter peer support networks in a way which is most helpful for parents and responsive to their needs. Through We Are Family our adoptive parents are connected to social networks of other adoptive parents from the earliest stages of adoption, providing parents with a place to seek advice, normalise parenting challenges, and reduce the potential for isolation."* Adopt London, Partner

Plans for 2022/23: Continuing to Grow

We Are Family are committed to becoming a household name in the homes of adoptive families. We want to be somewhere they know they can go to make authentic connections, access important support and information and also add their voice to the issues adopters are experiencing.

Although we have grown exponentially since our inception; taking on our first staff member in 2019, our second in 2020 and a third role in 2022, we still operate on the equivalent of just 1.7 FTE. Our 3-strong staff team are focussed on strategic, operational and administrative duties, the sheer volume of which limits our current potential for growth. By introducing further resource in the form of extended hours for the core team, the introduction of an Administrator, and more technical support, we will be able to achieve We Are Family's potential of becoming a nationally known support network.

Our current delivery and learning has led us to understand that:

- There is a need for simplification of connection and engagement methods for members and for members to be able to control when and how they engage with others in order to make the connections that matter most to them
- Volunteering needs to be an easier proposition to enable scaling and we want to work alongside our members to co-produce a volunteering programme that works for them
- We may need an improved mechanism to deliver existing services and to make them easier to access i.e. an App available on mobile devices
- We need routes to reach more adopters organically through dynamic partnership building with organisations (marketing WAF outside of RAAs)
- We need to continue to develop our work with RAAs to ensure adopters have access to peer support at the earliest possible stage in their journey.
- We need a strengthened and enhanced staff team to deliver our ambitious plans
- We need more capacity to enable us to effectively speak out on behalf of our members

The next year will see We Are Family developing our Strategic Plan 2023-26 to respond to the above.

We are committed to extending the family. In doing so, the impact will be far reaching across our beneficiaries as we extend - and sustain - the breadth and depth of our engagement.

Public Benefit Statement

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with their duty to have due regard to the guidance on public benefit published by the Charity Commission in exercising their powers or duties and in offering peer-to-peer adopter-led support, through its local and cross-London groups and online service provision.

We Are Family supports the well-being of both adoptive parents and prospective adopters. This is of benefit to both individual adopters, in reducing the stresses and strains of adopting, and their families. Membership of We Are Family, and access to its support network and other services, is offered on an open basis, the only requirement being verification of adopter status by a social worker (at Stage 2 of the adoption process or further).

The charity offers its services free and arranges activities so that they can be accessible to as many parents as possible, and to those with children of a variety of ages. We Are Family strives to be open to all sections of the community and sees developing this as a key aspect of its work. We Are Family continued to reimburse parents attending the single parent support groups for childcare costs, so that those members could more easily attend. The charity also continues to explore how to meet the needs of specific communities, such as BAME and trans-racial adopters.

Financial Review

Summary

During the year ended 31 March 2022 We Are Family raised £100,290 (prior year: £88,555) and spent £76,062 (prior year: £62,762).

Substantial grants from the Tudor Trust, The Fore, Adopt London and APSE have enabled WAF to expand the support we offer to adopters, offer more online services to help adopters manage the impact of the pandemic and perhaps most significantly, grow our membership throughout the year despite the impact of the pandemic on the operation of face-to-face support groups.

Sources of income

£49,560 of restricted funding was received from the Adopt London consortium of regional adoption agencies, £3,000 from Adoption Partnership South East, and £1,551.01 (£1800 less fees) via the Big Give Christmas Campaign.

£15,000 of unrestricted income was received from each The Tudor Trust, The Fore and The Garfield Weston (all Trusts and Foundations).

The remaining funding was from cash donations.

Unrestricted funds

£46,179 (prior year: £35,562) of unrestricted funding was raised during the year. Expenditure of £35,825 (prior year: £32,136) was offset against this leaving a surplus of £10,353 which was allocated to unrestricted reserves. Total unrestricted reserves at the year-end were £29,951 (prior year: £19,598) of which approx. £13,100 was earmarked in accordance with our reserves policy (see further details below).

The bulk of unrestricted funding came from the Tudor Trust (£15,000), The Fore (£15,000) and Garfield Weston (£15,000) and was used to fund our Operations Manager and Community Development manager positions, plus contributions to core costs, respectively.

During the year, funds were spent on the creation of a new website and a member database, which are expected to provide benefit for many years. It has therefore been agreed to amortise the spend on these assets over a period of 10 years (see note 1, Accounting Policies).

Restricted funds

£54,111 (£52,993) of restricted funding was raised during the year. Expenditure of £40,236 (£30,626) was offset against this leaving a surplus of £13,875. Total restricted reserves at the year-end were £41,510 (£27,635).

Expenditure against restricted funds predominantly related to IT consultancy and project management costs related to continuing work on our member platform, new We Are Family branding, Zoom licences for taking the provision of We Are Family services online and 'WAF Talks' guest speaker fees.

The surplus at the end of the year was due to the timing of spend within the financial year. Of the £41,510 left in restricted reserves at the end of the year, £13,875 is due to be spent towards 2021/22 projects during the 2022/23 financial year.

Basis of Preparation

The accounts for the year are drawn up on an accruals basis. Further details are noted in the accounting policies note (1) appended to the accounts.

Since the year end, in addition to the post year end restricted reserves related expenditure noted above, expenses relating to the year have been paid to staff totalling £168. These relate to reimbursement of home working expenses.

No funds were or are held as a custodian on behalf of others.

Independent Review

The accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022 have been independently reviewed with the independent examiner confirming that accounting records have been adequately kept, the submitted accounts correspond with those accounting records and that there are no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts.

Reserves Policy

The Board of Trustees has agreed an increased reserves policy whereby the unrestricted funds not committed should provide sufficient funding for an orderly wind down of the charity if necessary at some future date. The policy aims to keep reserves equivalent to three months of general operating expenses plus one to two months' worth of staff costs, currently calculated in total at £13,100.

Total unrestricted reserves at the end of the year were £29,951 of which £13,100 has been earmarked in accordance with the reserves policy, leaving £16,851 in general unrestricted reserves.

Funding received since the year end

Since the year end the following significant funding has been gratefully received by We Are Family:

- Adopt London | £46,900
- Adoption Partnership South East | £6,875
- Tudor Trust | £33,000

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of We Are Family

I report on the accounts of We Are Family for the year ended 31 March 2022,

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. You consider that the audit requirement of section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) does not apply and that an independent examination is needed. I am sufficiently skilled to undertake that examination as a part-qualified Chartered Accountant. It is my responsibility to:

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

Basis of independent examiner's report

This examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. 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 no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a "true and fair view" and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In carrying out my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

(1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the trustees have not met the requirements

to ensure that proper accounting records are kept in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act, and accounts have been prepared which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Act and the Regulations, or:

(2) to which in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached

Shelley Tebbutt

49 Bryant Way, Toddington, Bedfordshire, LU5 6EY

27th January 2023

Statement of Financial Activities

For the Year Ended 31 March 2022

£	Notes	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	2022	2021
Income from Endowments					
From:					
Donations and Legacies		46,179	54,111	100,290	88,555
Fundraising Events		-	-	-	-
Trading Income		-	-	-	-
Interest Received		-	-	-	-
Total		46,179	54,111	100,290	88,555
Expenditure On:					
Raising Funds		2,100	-	2,100	1,800
Charitable Activities		33,725	40,236	73,962	60,962
Total		35,825	40,236	76,062	62,762
Net Income / Expenditure	5, 6	10,353	13,875	24,228	25,794
Transfer Between Funds		-	-	-	-
Reconciliation of Funds					
Total Funds Brought Forward		19,598	27,635	47,233	21,439
Total Funds Carried Forward		29,951	41,510	71,461	47,233

Statement of Financial Position

As At 31 March 2022

	Notes	2022	2021
Tangible Assets - Software & Website	2	25,192	-
Cash at bank and in hand		41,367	47,233
Other debtors		727	-
Prepayments and accrued income	3	5,698	-
Creditors: Amounts Falling Due Within One Year		(226)	-
Net Current Assets (Liabilities)		47,566	47,233
Total Assets less Current Liabilities		72,758	47,233
Accruals and deferred income	4	1,296	-
Net assets		<u>71,461</u>	<u>47,233</u>
The Funds of the Charity			
Restricted Income Funds		29,951	19,598
Unrestricted Income Funds		<u>41,510</u>	<u>27,635</u>
Total Funds		<u>71,461</u>	<u>47,233</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 31 March 2022

1. Accounting Policies

Basis of Accounting

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, except for investments which are included at market value and the revaluation of certain fixed assets and 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 2015)'. Financial reporting Standard 102 the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), and the Charities Act 2011.

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

Prior to 2022, We Are Family CIO's accounts were prepared on a receipts and payments basis.

Tangible assets and depreciation

Tangible assets are included at cost less depreciation and impairment. Depreciation has been provided at the following rates in order to write off the assets over their estimated useful lives:

We Are Family made a significant investment towards the construction of a database and a website, both of which are expected to have a useful economic life of 10 years.

Software & Websites 10% straight line

2. Tangible Assets

	Software & Websites	Total
Cost or Valuation	At cost	
At 1 April 2021	-	-
Additions	27,991	27,991
At 31 March 2022	27,991	27,991
Depreciation		
At 1 April 2021	-	-
Charge for the period	2,799	2,799
At 31 March 2022	2,799	2,799

Net book value

At 1 April 2021

-

-

At 31 March
2022

25,192

25,192

3. Prepayments and accrued income

£	2022	2021
Prepayments – website costs	168	-
Accrued Income	5,530	-
	<u>5,698</u>	<u>-</u>

4. Accruals and deferred income

£	2022	2021
Accountancy Fees	1,296	-
	<u>1,296</u>	<u>-</u>

5. Income and allocated expenditure by activity

Restricted	Income in 21/22	Spent in 21/22	To be spent in 22/23
Adopt London - Core	25,000	20,475	4,525
Adopt London - WAF Talks	11,060	6,414	4,646
Adopt London - Podcast S1	6,900	7,841	(941)
Adopt London - Picnics	900	220	680
Adopt London - Member Hub Access	5,700	1,080	4,620
<i>Adopt London Sub Total</i>	<i>49,560</i>	<i>36,030</i>	<i>13,530</i>
Adoption Partnership South East	3,000	2,925	75
The Big Give	1,551	493	1,058
Tudor Trust Wellbeing Grant	-	788	(788)
Total Restricted	54,111	40,236	13,875
		-	
Unrestricted			
The Tudor Trust	15,000	8,573	6,427
The Fore	15,000	15,000	-
Garfield Weston	15,000	5,109	9,891
Donations & other overheads	1,179	7,143	(5,964)
Total Unrestricted	46,179	35,825	10,353

6. Detail of income and expenditure

£	Unrestricted	Restricted	21/22	20/21
Gifts in kind	-	-	-	7,960
Restricted grants	-	54,111	54,111	45,033
Unrestricted donations	1,179	-	1,179	562
Unrestricted grants	45,000	-	45,000	35,000
Donations and Legacies	46,179	54,111	100,290	88,555
Fundraising Costs	(2,100)	-	(2,100)	(1,800)
Fundraising Activities	(2,100)	-	(2,100)	(1,800)
Advertising & Marketing	(479)	(45)	(524)	(5,614)
Audit & Accountancy fees	(1,440)	-	(1,440)	(216)
Bank Fees	(17)	-	(17)	(3)
Charitable and Political Donations	-	(5)	(5)	-
Childcare Costs - Parent Reimbursement	-	(40)	(40)	(280)
Compliance and Legal Expenses - Governance	-	-	-	(2,336)
Consulting	(1,980)	(5,790)	(7,770)	(8,898)
Depreciation	(2,799)	-	(2,799)	-
Employers National Insurance	(90)	-	(90)	-
Event Entertainment	(167)	(120)	(287)	-
General Expenses	(287)	(163)	(450)	(142)
Guest Speaker Fees	-	(5,520)	(5,520)	(3,154)
Insurance	(781)	-	(781)	(712)
IT Consultancy	-	(126)	(126)	(4,244)
IT Equipment Expense	(182)	(293)	(475)	(694)
IT Software and Consumables	-	(875)	(875)	(251)
Legal Expenses - Support	-	(420)	(420)	-
Member Resources (incl Zoom)	-	(2,822)	(2,822)	(2,737)
Other Event Expenses	-	(100)	(100)	-
Pensions Costs	(546)	(534)	(1,081)	(569)
Postage, Freight & Courier	(116)	(120)	(237)	(47)
Printing & Stationery	-	-	-	(8)
Recruitment Fees	-	-	-	(1,735)
Refreshments	-	-	-	(36)
Salaries	(22,770)	(22,266)	(45,035)	(28,852)
Small Gifts	-	(748)	(748)	(48)
Staff Training	(38)	-	(38)	-
Subscriptions	(150)	-	(150)	-
Telephone & Internet	(80)	-	(80)	(60)
Travel - National	(20)	-	(20)	(41)
Venue Hire	(34)	-	(34)	-
Volunteer Training	(1,400)	-	(1,400)	-
Website costs	(350)	(250)	(600)	(286)
Charitable Activities	(33,725)	(40,236)	(73,962)	(60,961)
Net Income / Expenditure	10,353	13,875	24,228	25,794

7a Fees for the Examination of the Accounts

The Accountancy fees include the cost for the independent examination of the charities accounts.

7b Staff Costs

No employees received employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) for the year of more than £60,000

7c	Average Staff Headcount	This Year	Last Year
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Average number of staff employed in the year	3	1
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7d	Contributions to Pension Scheme	This Year	Last Year
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Contributions made to a defined contributions scheme all relating to the Unrestricted Fund activities

£	1,081	569
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Basis of Accounting

The accounts were prepared on an accruals basis.

The accounts were prepared on a going concern basis.

This report was signed on behalf of the Trustees of We Are Family CIO on 31st January 2023.



Mark Houlton-Allen, Chair

WE ARE FAMILY

England & Wales - Charity number 1163318

Accounts

We Are Family

Annual Report and Accounts 2020 - 2021

Contents

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Reference and Administrative Details
Governance and Management
Objectives and Activities
Achievements and Performance
Public Benefit Statement
Financial Review
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Chair's Introduction

A year of service change and development due to COVID-19

We Are Family is a young charity which works hard to develop and grow its much-needed support offer to its expanding community of members. The year 2020/21, however, will go down as a year of particularly significant challenge, change and success.

Our model of providing connection and relationship through face-to-face events across London was severely affected by the Covid-19 lockdown which began in March 2020 and with the subsequent restrictions, all such events were cancelled for the foreseeable future. We conducted a survey of members in early April 2020, asking them about the impact of lockdown on their lives and what they needed by way of support at this time.

We found the challenges faced by members, due to the lockdown measures, were varied and in most cases significant. The main themes that emerged in the qualitative feedback from our survey were increased anxiety and depression for parents, dealing with trauma resurfacing and behaviour regression in adopted children, parents being exhausted, changes to routines and uncertainty about the adoption process for prospective adopters and parents who were pre-adoption order.

In response to the pandemic and our members' needs, we quickly adjusted the way our support was delivered. This was possible through the flexibility of We Are Family's volunteers to adjust the way we as an organisation offer support and three successful emergency funding applications to Adopt London, the Adoption Support Fund (made in partnership with Adopt London) and The City Bridge Trust.

We developed a new programme of webinars and workshops, called WAF Talks, which invites speakers from various disciplines to tackle topics of relevance to members and these have been run on at least a fortnightly basis. We also developed a new online platform, called the 'Member Hub' to share more member resource recommendations and the WAF Talks webinar recordings.

We have been in many ways surprised by some of the positive effects of the pandemic on our services and reach, as members have reported feeling more connected than before and having better access to our support now it is also online, as opposed to a primarily face-to-face offer.

Looking forward, we are acutely aware of the need to review the balance between face-to-face and online programmes, and activities developed locally and centrally, to meet the needs of as many adopters and prospective adopters as possible. The need for local networks and community has not disappeared, and our local groups are integral to delivering this service but we also need to provide more online support and information from the centre, which all members can engage with irrespective of geography and specific time constraints. We must, of course, ensure that we stay relevant to the needs of adopters and that we can grow and change to reflect the needs of a growing membership.

Over forty volunteers continued to run our local groups, albeit online throughout the year, and provide support across London to our hundreds of adoptive and would-be adoptive member families. Our annual member survey (see below for details) again demonstrated just how valuable We Are Family is to its members.

Credit must, of course, go to We Are Family's dedicated volunteers, trustees and staff for maintaining support to our members across the year and we would like to thank them for their continued support.

You can read more details about many of these points in the following formal trustees' report.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Hoult-Allen', is centered within a faint, circular, textured watermark.

Mark Hoult-Allen
Chair

The trustees of We Are Family CIO present their sixth annual report, covering the twelve months ended 31 March 2021 ('the year').

Reference and Administrative Details

The charity, We Are Family, is a charitable incorporated organisation which was registered with the Charity Commission of England and Wales on 26th August 2015. The charity's registration number is 1163318. The charity does not have any offices or other premises; its registered address is 27 Old Gloucester Street, London WC1N 3AX.

The names of all those who served as the charity's trustees during the year, and subsequently, are given below (in alphabetical order by surname), with the start and end dates of the term of office of each given, where relevant:

Name	Start	End
Struan Campbell	18.11.19	
Andrew Taylor-Dawson	08.06.20	
Samantha Fletcher	20.03.18	
Todd Foy	20.03.18	02.12.20
Rami Hassouna	08.02.21	
Liz Hocter	08.02.21	
Mark Hoult-Allen	18.11.19	
Ian Jacobs-Dean	20.03.18	31.07.20
Natalie Kavanagh-Clarke	18.11.19	28.08.20
Diane McGrath	14.09.20	
Libby McVeigh	17.03.20	
Stuart Meek	08.02.21	
Miranda Mercado Gregory	26.08.15	
Jay Nicol	21.09.15	19.03.21
Klayre Rogers	20.03.19	
John Rolls	20.03.18	19.03.21
Sobia Shamim	08.02.21	
Andrew Taylor-Dawson	08.06.20	
Jody Tranter	20.03.18	
Stephanie Wong	08.02.21	

The Board was supported by its secretary, Charlotte Bois-Pursey. We would like to thank her for her support throughout the year.

Governance and Management

We Are Family existed as an unincorporated organisation before its registration as a charitable incorporated organisation in August 2015. It was originally founded in 2013 by a small group of adoptive parents to provide locally based peer-to-peer support for adoptive parents. From one group in Hackney and Islington, the organisation grew to seven groups in just over two years. Registration as an incorporated charity was sought and to support the organisation's growth, facilitate future fundraising, and consolidate its existing reputation within the adoption field.

The charity's constitution provides for the appointment of trustees by the board of trustees, having regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the charity. The charity's trustees from time to time are its only legal members (to be distinguished from adopters and prospective adopters who have joined one of the charity's groups and who are referred to elsewhere in this report as 'members').

During the year, the board maintained an ongoing trustee recruitment process with the appointment of six trustees during the year. The trustees wish to thank the trustees who left the board during the year: Todd Foy, Ian Jacobs-Dean, Natalie Kavanagh-Clarke, Jay Nicol and John Rolls.

The board have four regular board meetings a year whilst also constituting two awaydays each year as board meetings, which means the board meets formally at least six times a year. Meetings during the year continued to be focussed on overseeing the strategy and operations of the charity and the provision of services to members, setting up systems for running the charity; and securing funding to ensure the sustainability of the charity.

The work of the board is supported by two standing committees, the Finance, Fundraising and Resources Committee and the Programmes and Strategy Committee.

Objectives and Activities

We Are Family's objects are to promote the health and wellbeing of prospective adopters and adopters. This covers the predictable stresses, strain and sense of isolation that comes with being an adoptive parent and in parenting traumatised children. There is a lack of targeted and tailored peer-to-peer support for adoptive parents during the adoption journey and so We Are Family's key objective is the improved wellbeing of adopters through regular peer support opportunities both online and in person.

The charity's vision, which was agreed by the board during the year, is: "We want to see a world in which adoptive parents and prospective adopters feel connected, benefit from peer support and are part of a community which enables them to thrive." Its mission is to work "to ensure that adoptive parents and prospective adopters are part of a community, offering each other support, from a place of lived experience, through the highs and lows of parenting".

The activities of We Are Family fall into the following areas:

Connection & Relationship Creating opportunities for connection between adopters. • Local groups (face-to-face activities) • Online groups • Thematic Groups • Specific status groups (Single/Prospective)	Information & Inspiration An extension of direct peer support, gathering member recommendations and experience. • WAF Talks • Member Resources Platform • Website & social media • Blog
Amplifying voices Using the voice of the community to support calls for improved support for adoptive parents/families. • Collating views of the We Are Family members through our own surveys • Providing opportunities for the We Are Family membership to contribute to research initiatives • Using We Are Family membership's views to inform policy influencing	Structured support • Clinical psychology support (provided by Adopt London) • Signposting to other services

Achievements and Performance

Governance and Strategy

During the year, the trustees continued to focus on building the sustainability of the organisation (SA1) as well as looking at developing new programmes (SA4) and programme accessibility (SA2) in the light of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Key achievements this year include:

- Development of a Theory of Change and Impact Model.
- Restructure of Board Committees and introduction of Working Groups to increase efficiency.
 - There are two committees of the board: the Programmes and Strategy Committee and the Finance, Fundraising and Resources Committee. All board members sit on at least one committee. During the year the Board also established Working Groups to take forward distinct project work. These groups have at least one trustee taking part but do not have formal agendas or minutes and are designed to workshop ideas, take actions forward and progress very specific activity. Working groups report into the committees of the board. This year they have comprised the Communication Working Group and the Advocacy Working Group. Since the year end, a Local Groups Working Group has been convened.
- The Operations Manager (employed part-time - 0.6FTE April 20 -June 20, 0.4FTE July 20 -April 21 due to Covid issues) took forward the implementation of much of the organisation's strategic plan, along with managing the day to day running of the charity.
- Development of numerous policies in the areas of HR, information governance, and finance.
- Recruited 6 new trustees with experience in data, operations, fundraising and marketing, HR and finance.
- Established a quarterly volunteer forum to ensure volunteers from We Are Family's local and cross-London groups can share best-practice and collectively input into the organisation's strategic and operational direction.
- Designed new approaches to membership (open model as opposed to through local groups, and more inclusive of all those on the adoption journey from the early stages) and began implementation of related infrastructure redevelopment (for June 2021 launch)
- Recruitment of a Community Development Manager who was with us from September 2020 - March 2021. They resigned the post due to personal reasons but were able to lay some foundations for their replacement (who joined in June 2021).

Membership

As at the end of March 2021, We Are Family had 781 fully validated members (542 fully validated members at end of March 2020), which is a growth of 44% year on year. A further 76 adoptive or prospective adopters were in the process of completing their member registration.

Referral pathways into We Are Family have improved hugely, as shown by the 44% growth in membership (YOY). The next steps for We Are Family are to look beyond the London RAA and work with other RAAs in the South East to start to extend our reach and consolidate our model.

We ran two surveys during the year. Our first, in April 2020 was in direct response to the national lockdown and asked parents what they needed from us in the coming months. This proved instrumental to our ability to design new services quickly and well, and also resulted in We Are Family providing evidence to both the Department for Education and the Parliamentary Petitions Committee on the impacts of the pandemic on Adoption and Maternity/Paternity leave.

The second survey in November 2020 gave us some valuable feedback on the impact of our services: The feedback demonstrates our intended project outcomes, delivered through our WAF Talks webinar programme, local groups and provision of psychotherapy support (via Adopt London).

We aimed for adoptive parents to connect with people in the same situation, share experiences and seek advice from peers:

"I am just so hugely grateful to not feel alone. Have been working remotely at home with 3 children under 5 and the webinars have been a godsend"

"As a single adopter I am so grateful to COVID-19, as I've never been able to attend a session like this before. Please don't give up on webinars"

"I feel like everyone in our group understands when we have tricky times with our son. We all share stories and are non-judgemental. Everyone offers advice with behaviour and having access to webinars has been amazing. I don't think I could have coped without the organisation and scaffolding it gives to an adoptive parent"

"I've only just joined but it feels reassuring to speak to people in the same situation and I've gained new strategies from the webinars"

"Just knowing the group is there, feeling validated, feeling amongst like minds, feeling supported, knowing supportive people are there if we need it, a great source of ongoing training with peers!!"

We aimed to support adoptive families to develop practical strategies to support children's health and well-being during the pandemic and associated restrictions and changes to children's lives. As part of this, we provided a range of content supporting the return to school and managing anxieties.

"I have heard Stuart Guest before, but he never fails to be inspiring and incredibly helpful. So pleased I signed up for this. I feel much better prepared for September now"

We aimed to support adoptive parents to feel more able to cope with their caring role and build resilience so they can manage the challenges of coronavirus in order to reduce the risk of placement breakdown and longer-term difficulties.

"All I can say is Thank you. This has been hugely helpful. I have only recently heard of NVR and will now ask our Post Adoption Support to organise a course through ASF ASAP"

"I can't begin to tell you how much the webinars have helped me to get through this difficult year. My daughter has an incredibly complex background and it's been so helpful to have access to these amazing speakers from the comfort of my home. My daughter was delighted to see her (former) therapist leading one of the talks and it helped open a discussion about therapy, her life story and other children and parents being in the same situation as us. It also really helped her to see me spending time thinking about her needs. This is just one example of how these talks have helped. I have learned something valuable from every single session and I'm so, so grateful to have this fantastic resource so easily available and accessible. Thank you so much"

Services

We are proud that we have managed to grow our volunteer base during the last year, despite the challenges of the pandemic for our volunteers and their families. We are aware that volunteer engagement will continue to be a key issue for We Are Family as we must be user-led in terms of service delivery. Our training and support to volunteers over the next year and beyond are critical to sustaining our model.

Local Support

- We were able to fund Zoom licences for our 7 local groups (East London, Hackney & Islington, Havering, Richmond, Shepherd's Bush, Southwark and Thurrock) and 2 pan-London (single adopters and prospective adopters) groups so they could run online support sessions for members throughout the year.
- We provided two sessions for each local group with a Clinical Psychotherapist, provided by Adopt London, covering themes of their choosing.

Information and Resources

- We quickly produced a new service in response to the pandemic called WAF Talks, which invites speakers from various disciplines to tackle topics of relevance to members. These are offered on at least a fortnightly basis. We received funding for this programme through a partnership with Adopt London. This service has been exceptionally well attended and received routinely glowing feedback.
- We started to develop online Thematic Support Groups, the first of which is a regular group for parents of tweens and teens. We have plans to further develop such services over the next year.
- We developed a new online Member Hub to share more member resource recommendations and webinar recordings.
- Our popular blog continued to have regular posts until December 2020 and was relaunched in April 2021.
- Our education team developed several resources for members, including a Summer newsletter in 2020 with lots of helpful tips and guidance for parents.
- We redeveloped our brand and website to better represent the organisation and reflect the services we offer. This launched in April 2021.

Fundraising Success

We Are Family is very grateful to various trusts and foundations, organisations and individuals who provided funds to support the continued development of the charity.

- Adopt London awarded a grant of £50,000 over 2 years (2020-22) to support the growth of We Are Family and the provision of more services to more adopters.
- The Fore awarded a grant of £30,000 over 2 years (2020-22) to support the new Community Development Manager post.

We also secured emergency funding from three organisations to allow us to deliver programmes and activities differently in response to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- A bid to the DfE/Adoption Support Fund, made in partnership with Adopt London, secured a grant of £2,400 for the WAF Talks webinar programme. A further £7,200 was secured, and managed by Adopt London, to pay for a Clinical Psychotherapist to run specific support sessions for local groups.
- Adopt London granted £7,960 for the design and build of a digital Member Hub, though the funds were paid directly to We Are Family's contractors by Adopt London.
- The City Bridge Trust awarded £13,220 to support digital service development in response to Covid-19 as part of their 'Delivering Differently' grant scheme.

We have started to think about diversification of our funding streams and in April 2021 we began a soft launch of our new individual giving campaign on our new website.

Partnerships

The charity also further developed partnerships with external organisations to the benefit of the membership. This included:

- Sitting on the London Adoption and Special Guardianship Board to represent the needs of prospective adopters and adopters around support services.
- Monthly meetings with the Adopt London Heads of Service
- Attending the Regional Adoption Agencies (RAA) and Voluntary Adoption Agencies (VAA) regular meeting

Plans for 2021/22: Impact of Covid-19 and emerging from restrictions

Some practical things we are doing to achieve our objectives in 21/22 are:

- Focussing on building the funding base to support the growth in services and staff. We are making applications to new trusts and foundations and looking for continuation funding from our existing partners.
- Appointing a new Community Development Manager with a broader remit to focus on strategic service development, as well as nurturing the existing volunteers and groups as well as building up new groups and services.
- Appointing both an Operations Assistant and an Advocacy and Communications Manager (subject to successful fundraising).
- We will work to bring on board another RAA as a partner to increase membership and service provision to more adopters.
- Launch our refined membership offer, offering open membership and more targeted messaging and opportunities to members based on their adoption stage.

- Launching a pilot programme of We Are Family podcasts called 'Adoption Shared', as part of our plan to develop new services,
- Continuing to develop our working groups within the Board to tackle our data strategy, marketing and communications strategy and resourcing of local groups.
- Working on the implementation of our impact model, enabling us to report more fully on our short, medium and long terms impacts for adopters.

Public Benefit Statement

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with their duty to have due regard to the guidance on public benefit published by the Charity Commission in exercising their powers or duties and in offering peer-to-peer adopter-led support, through its local and cross-London groups and online service provision.

We Are Family supports the well-being of both adoptive parents and prospective adopters. This is of benefit to both individual adopters, in reducing the stresses and strains of adopting, and their families. Membership of We Are Family, and access to its support network and other services, is offered on an open basis, the only requirement being verification of adopter status by a social worker (at Stage 2 of the adoption process or further).

The charity offers its services free and arranges activities so that they can be accessible to as many parents as possible, and to those with children of a variety of ages. We Are Family strives to be open to all sections of the community and sees developing this as a key aspect of its work. We Are Family continued to reimburse parents attending the single parent support groups for childcare costs, so that those members could more easily attend. The charity also continues to explore how to meet the needs of specific communities, such as BAME and trans-racial adopters.

Financial Review

Summary

During the year ended 31 March 2021 We Are Family raised £88,555 (prior year: £45,363) and spent £62,762 (prior year: £45,282).

Substantial grants from the Tudor Trust, The Fore, Adopt London and City Bridge Trust have enabled WAF to expand the support we offer to adopters, offer more online services to help adopters manage the impact of the pandemic and perhaps most significantly, grow our membership throughout the year despite the impact of the pandemic on the operation of face-to-face support groups.

Sources of income

£29,813 of restricted funding was received from the Adopt London consortium of regional adoption agencies along with £7,960 of Gifts in Kind.

£13,220 of restricted funding was also received from the City Bridge Trust which was specific to the provision of online services as a result of the pandemic.

£20,000 of unrestricted income was received from the Tudor Trust along with a further £2,000 of restricted income and £15,000 of unrestricted income was received from The Fore.

The remaining funding was from cash donations.

Unrestricted funds

£35,562 (£40,863) of unrestricted funding was raised during the year. Expenditure of £32,136 (£32,858) was offset against this leaving a surplus of £3,426 which was allocated to unrestricted reserves. Total unrestricted reserves at the year-end were £19,598 (£16,171) of which approx. £9,000 was earmarked to cover salaries until the next set of unrestricted funding was due to be received with the remainder covering our reserves requirement (see further details below).

The bulk of unrestricted funding came from the Tudor Trust (£20,000) and The Fore (£15,000) and was used to fund both our Operations Manager role and a new Community Development manager position.

Restricted funds

£52,993 (£4,500) of restricted funding was raised during the year. Expenditure of £30,626 (£12,424) was offset against this leaving a surplus of £22,367. Total restricted reserves at the year-end were £27,635 (£5,268).

Expenditure against restricted funds predominantly related to IT consultancy and project management costs related to continuing work on our member platform, new We Are Family branding, Zoom licenses for taking the provision of We Are Family services online and 'WAF Talks' guest speaker fees.

The surplus at the end of the year was due to the timing of spend within the financial year. Of the £27,635 left in restricted reserves at the end of the year, just under £18,000 was spent in the first 3 months of the new financial year and related to website and platform development and fundraising costs.

Basis of Preparation

The accounts for the year are drawn up on a cash (ie receipts and payments) basis. The charity had no amounts due to it or owed by it at the year end.

Since the year end, in addition to the post year end restricted reserves related expenditure noted above, expenses relating to the year have been paid to staff totalling £116. These relate to reimbursement of homeworking expenses.

No funds were or are held as a custodian on behalf of others.

Independent Review

The accounts for the year ended 31 March 2021 have been independently reviewed with the independent examiner confirming that accounting records have been adequately kept, the submitted accounts correspond with those accounting records and that there are no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts.

Reserves Policy

The Board of Trustees has agreed a reserves policy whereby the unrestricted funds not committed should provide sufficient funding for an orderly wind down of the charity if necessary at some future date. The policy aims to keep reserves equivalent to three months of general operating expenses plus one to two months' worth of staff costs, currently calculated in total at £9,300.

Total unrestricted reserves at the end of the year were £19,598 of which £9,000 was earmarked to cover salaries until the next set of unrestricted funding is received, leaving £10,598 in general unrestricted reserves.

Funding received since the year end

Since the year end the following significant funding has been gratefully received by We Are Family:

- £15,000 unrestricted funding from the Tudor Trust, the third and final instalment of this three year grant funding. This income is being used to part fund our Operations Manager post.
- £15,000 unrestricted funding from The Fore which is the final part of a two year package of £30,000. This funding is being used to part fund the Community Development Manager post.
- £22,730 from Adopt London. £12,500 of this is the third instalment of a £50,000 two year grant. £5,530 is a contribution towards the running of our 'WAF Talks' programme and £4,700 is funding towards 'proof of concept' work around our 'WAF podcast' proposals.

This report was approved by the Trustees of We Are Family CIO on 6th December 2021

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Hoult-Allen', is centered within a faint, circular, dotted-line border.

Mark Hoult-Allen, Chair



**CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES**

**Independent examiner's
report on the accounts**

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

**Report to the trustees/
members of**

We Are Family

**On accounts for the year
ended**

31 March 2021

**Charity no
(if any)**

1163318

Set out on pages

16-17

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended **31/03/2021**.

**Responsibilities and
basis of report**

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

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

**Independent
examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention (other than that disclosed below *) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

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

** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed:

Date:

11/12/2021

Name:

Simon Freeman

**Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):**

Institute of Chartered Accountants in England & Wales

Address:

37 Frys Hill

Oxford

OX4 7GW

Section B	Disclosure
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Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

Nothing to disclose.

	We Are Family		1163318		
CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES					
Receipts and payments accounts					CC16a
For the period from		April 1 2020	To	March 31 2021	
Section A Receipts and payments					
	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Trusts & Foundations	35,000	15,220	-	50,220	35,500
Local Authorities	-	37,773	-	37,773	7,134
Individual Giving	562	-	-	562	2,729
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	35,562	52,993	-	88,555	45,363
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	35,562	52,993	-	88,555	45,363
A3 Payments					
Accountancy fees	216	-	-	216	95
Childcare Costs - Parent	-	280	-	280	2,410
Childcare Expenses - Trustees	-	-	-	-	192
Compliance and Legal Expenses	176	2,160	-	2,336	1,682
3rd party consultants	400	12,742	-	13,142	7,100
Fundraising Costs	-	1,800	-	1,800	188
Insurance	712	-	-	712	343
IT Software and Consumables	944	-	-	944	8,535
Advertising & Marketing	-	5,614	-	5,614	-
Printing & Stationery	55	-	-	55	12
Recruitment Fees	1,215	520	-	1,735	-
Repairs & Maintenance	-	-	-	-	-
Small Gifts to volunteers	48	-	-	48	31
Training	-	-	-	-	2,596
Venue Hire	-	-	-	-	925
Website costs	30	256	-	286	30
WAF Group Events	36	3,154	-	3,190	403
Member resources	-	2,737	-	2,737	1,628
Payroll costs incl pension	28,200	1,363	-	29,563	18,737
Travel	41	-	-	41	316
Subscriptions	63	-	-	63	60
Sub total	32,136	30,626	-	62,762	45,282
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	32,136	30,626	-	62,762	45,282
Net of receipts/(payments)	3,426	22,367	-	25,794	81
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	16,171	5,268	-	21,439	21,358
Cash funds this year end	19,598	27,635	-	47,233	21,439

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Unrestricted funds	9,911	-	-
	Trusts and Foundations	9,687	10,251	-
	Local Authorities	-	17,384	-
	Total cash funds	19,598	27,635	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
B2 Other monetary assets	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
B3 Investment assets	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

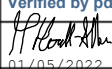
4 Assets retained for the charity's own use

Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-

5 Liabilities

Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
		-	
		-	
		-	
		-	
		-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
 Verified by pdfFiller 01/05/2022	Mark Hoult-Allen	6th December 2021