

**FREE
TO BE
KIDS**



Trustees' Annual Report

**and Independently
Examined Accounts**

For the year period ending 31st December 2024

www.freetobekids.org.uk



Reference and administrative details

STATUS	Charitable Incorporated Organisation
REGISTERED OFFICE	Living Space 1 Coral Street Lambeth London SE17BE
TRUSTEES	Emma Kendall (Chair) Debbie Boughtflower (Deputy Chair, resigned February 2024) Dr Leila Shepherd-North (Deputy Chair from February 2024) Rosie Macpherson (Secretary) Elena Davies (Treasurer) Dr Gemma Cheney Beulah Antonin Richard Nicholas Olusola Adebisi Theresa Dauncey (appointed May 2024) Joel Campbell-Brazier (appointed May 2024) Amy-Kate Robinson (appointed May 2024)
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS	Mike Gee Rachel Mugan (resigned March 2024)
BANKERS	HSBC plc
INDEPENDENT EXAMINER	Shruti Soni FCCA FCIE Shruti Soni Ltd Chartered Certified Accountants 117A St. John's Hill Sevenoaks TN13 3PE

The trustees present their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2024.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 of the accounts. They comply with the charity's governing document, the Charities Act 2011, and the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice ("SORP"), applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland.



Overview

Free to Be Kids supports some of the most disadvantaged children in London – the majority with no other access to time away from challenging home circumstances, no access to the benefits of the outdoors or, for increasing numbers, to effective mental health support. The majority have had the building blocks of good mental health deeply eroded – reaching us with destroyed confidence and very significant challenges around anxiety, resilience, managing frustration/anger, and with most having extremely limited belief in their capacity to achieve. 2024 has seen us continue to deliver deeply impactful work transforming these children's mental health using joy, adventure and the outdoors.

In 2024, 235 individual children accessed joy and adventure on our programmes and came away reporting vastly improved confidence, increased resilience, gains in the capacity to work together, manage frustration and a reduction in anxiety. Feelings of hopelessness and risk taking behaviour reduced as our projects helped vulnerable children develop their stories about themselves, supported them to achieve beyond their own expectations, increased educational aspirations and unlocked children's belief in the power of their own potential. In total we provided 345 residential programme places constituting just under 20,000 hours of mental health focussed support to this exceptionally vulnerable group of young people.

Financial results for the year have again been strong, producing a surplus of £51,404 (2023:£63,500; 2022:£-£16,000) . – this reflects the investment in staffing and organisational infrastructures designed to help us build our fundraising, volunteer recruitment and other key capacity areas across 2023 and 2024, these being crucial foundations for planned investment in sustainable growth to meet need through 2025–2027 and onwards. The charity remains in a financially stable position, holding free unrestricted reserves of approximately 4.5 months' full expenditure, though as with most charities, reliant upon in-year fundraising to deliver its services.

Our 5 year strategy is focussed on long-term follow on support to the highest need young people of the already deeply vulnerable children we work with, including an eventual aim to significantly increase place numbers built around sustainable and gradual growth of our existing long-term support pathways: our Mentoring, Young Leaders' and Journey Programmes. 2024 again saw significant financial and time investment towards the foundations which will underpin this focus on long-term support.

Throughout the year, Trustees had regard for the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit when overseeing the activities of the charity.



Our model – about Free to Be Kids

Free to Be Kids (colloquially 'Free to Be') supports some of the most vulnerable children in London to rebuild the foundations of positive mental health using the power of nature and the outdoors.

The majority of children referred to us have deeply ingrained negative views of themselves and their potential. Often reinforced by deeply challenging home and school lives, many arrive believing they are different, failing, rejected or alone. The majority have never left their area of London before. Abuse, harm, trauma and neglect characterise the majority of their childhoods. Most families referred to us do not access other mainstream support.

Our residential and mentoring projects support these children to feel proud, brave, adventurous and special, transforming their stories about who they are, and what they can achieve. Using the power of the outdoors, our programmes are carefully designed using key concepts from attachment, narrative and systems theories to support anxiety, rebuild confidence, address challenges managing anger/frustration, develop resilience and increase aspirations.



The objects of the CIO are, for the public benefit, the relief of children and young people residing in London who are in need by reason of their youth, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage via the provision of services that:

- a. support them to develop better emotional health, build inner strengths to overcome challenges within their lives and consequently to manage better within social relationships at home, school or within their communities.
- b. provide practical support, advice or guidance.
- c. increase access to new or enriching experiences that will facilitate social learning and the development of new skills.



“ It gives the children an opportunity to recognise their own self worth and to begin to become more resilient, recognising that they can have control over their feelings. The opportunity inspires them to want to achieve more and be aware that there are more opportunities available to them.

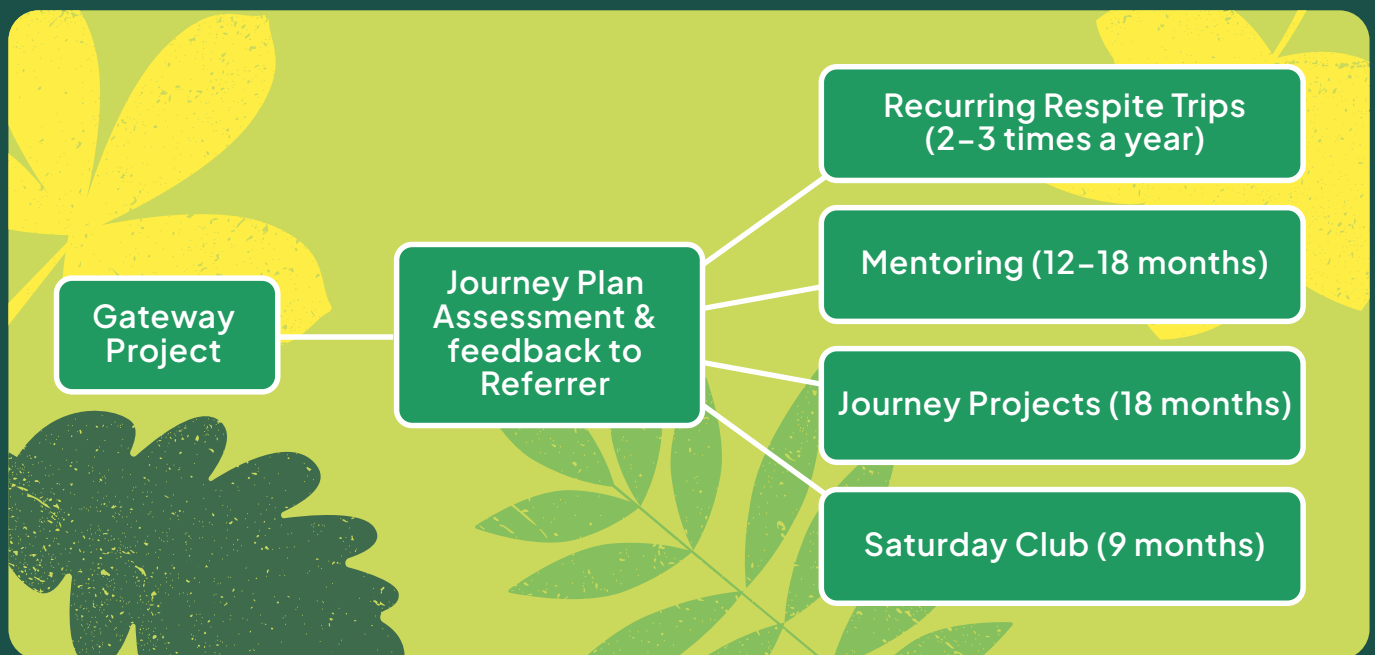
Social Worker of a child on
2024's Journey Programme



Programme Structure

Children are referred by Child Protection Social Workers, schools, domestic violence refuges, Young Carers' groups, and others working with some of the most marginalised children in London. Heavily oversubscribed annually, all projects are provided free of charge to families to prioritise access for families in exceptional need. We specialise in working with families described by others as 'hard to reach'.

Children initially attend 'Thrive Outside', a range of 5 day therapeutically structured residentials designed to rebuild the foundations of positive mental health (confidence, self-esteem, resilience, positive aspirations) via a carefully scaffolded programme of outdoor activities. The projects are characterised by joy, adventure, and belonging and employ high adult:child ratios of 1:2 to ensure every child has the attention, support and care they need to rebuild often deeply damaged narratives about their worth and potential. The highest need children return year on year for as long as they need us.



“ My mentor helped me build back my confidence in school after Dad died.

A 2024 mentee



Thrive Outside intentionally functions as a gateway into our longer term support programmes:

Journey Programme: a series of 6 specialised small group, high-intervention residentials attended by the same cohort of older young people (aged 12–15) with complex needs over 18 months. Designed to deliver deep impact in supporting harder to reach young people to develop their story about themselves, improve their emotional and mental health, and to make healthier life choices.

Mentoring Programme: providing a year's worth of one-to-one support during evenings and weekends to higher need children who've attended Thrive Outside gateway projects and are in need of longer term support to build confidence and aspirations. 30 sessions over a year.

Young Leaders Programme: supports our oldest teenagers (aged 14–17) who, having graduated from our other programmes, are trained and supported to return on Thrive Outside residentials as young volunteers. Further developing responsibility, teamwork and key life and employability skills the programme empowers them to complete their journey from beneficiary to leader as they dedicate their own time to role modelling and leadership of younger peers.

We are deeply committed to evaluation and evidencing impact, publishing a detailed Impact Report annually.



Structure, Governance and Management

Free to Be Kids is a registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation (C.I.O), registered charity number 1165678, and is governed via its constitution and its 'Policy & Procedures' manual. As an organisation built around delivering direct support to vulnerable children, with an emphasis on residential work, Free to Be recognises the special responsibilities it holds in respect of safeguarding and child protection. Robust safer recruitment procedures are in place governing the recruitment of volunteers. All components of all projects are subject to thorough risk assessment. Where external instructors are required, they are selected in line with the relevant standards for accreditation. Policies in these areas are carefully developed in accordance with current legislation and sector best practice and are reviewed every two years.

The Trustees confirm appropriate insurance is in place covering all activities.

The charity is led by a small leadership team with governance provided by the separate Trustee Board. Between them the leadership team have in excess of 30 years' experience leading interventions and residential work with extremely vulnerable young people. The charity's safeguarding provision is led by Mike Gee who is a consultant social worker with 20 year's post-qualifying practice and particular experience working with vulnerable children in non-mainstream settings.

Through the financial year the Board undertook an in-depth skills audit and subsequent recruitment process, culminating in the appointment of three new trustees to the Board. New trustees are appointed by due process led by the current trustees, and trustees serve for a term of three years, after which they may be reappointed. Trustee meetings took place at least termly.

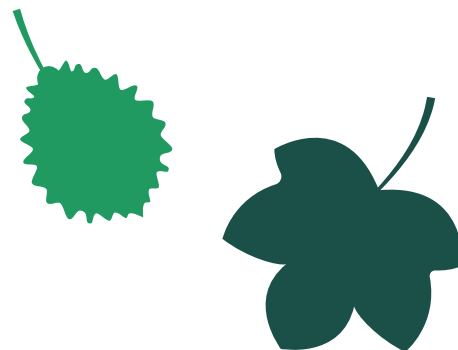
The Board includes senior professionals holding the following areas of expertise:

- Clinical psychology, Looked After Children, Social Care and CAMHS.
- Residential support and outreach therapeutic youth work.
- Finance, investments, and financial controls.
- Charity fundraising.
- Management strategy, growth planning, financial modelling
- Contract & Property law

Free to Be Kids is run by a small staff team, increasing during 2024 from 7 up to 8, keeping core costs to a minimum. All staff work directly with young people as part of their role. The Charity relies upon and benefits immensely from several thousand hours of volunteer support each year. We believe it is the special qualities uniquely brought by volunteers – their particular passion, creativity and commitment to come together to make things work and to do the small things well, which makes what we offer so special.



Achievements and Performance



The Trustee's primary goals for the 2024 financial year were:

- Successfully manage the transition from a co-Founder model to a sole CEO, following co-Founder Rachel Mugan's decision to plan towards moving on from the organisation by Easter 2024.
- Develop and launch a new website and communications strategy built around a revitalised look to better represent the charity we have become, aiming to underpin increased volunteer, funder and stakeholder recruitment.
- Extend rollout of our new database to enhance impact evaluation, reporting, project quality assurance, and safeguarding oversight.
- Continue to invest in our staffing capacity to deliver project place growth that is sustainable, increasing staff numbers to 8–9 FTE in 2024 (2023: 7) with a focus on those areas which underpin sustainable growth – income generation and volunteer recruitment.
- Work towards a strategic plan of eventually doubling place numbers over the next 5 years, with the majority of new places being on our longer-term support pathways for higher need young people.
- Ensure the quality and 'magic' of our existing projects is maintained as we grow.
- Building on previous skills audits, continue to expand the diversity and skillset breadth of our Trustee Board.
- Continue to operate within our reserves policy.

2024 was another successful year and the charity has achieved each of these aims. The headline focus continues to be very much one of 'sustainability' – of staff and volunteer capacity, funding, and project logistics – whilst delivering high quality impactful work to particularly vulnerable young Londoners.

Staffing & Volunteering: Following 6 months' careful planning of the departure of one of the Charity's co-founders, we transitioned to a sole CEO model and restructured to build a management team with the skillsets and capacity needed to match our growing delivery. This saw the creation of teams holding volunteer recruitment, training & support; operations and project planning/logistics; services and youthwork; and fundraising, with most incorporating two staff members to better ensure continuity when staff inevitably move on over time for pastures new, whilst also creating better pathways for progression within the charity. Significant time was invested in increasing volunteer engagement, diversity and longevity of volunteering, leading to a significant growth in the number of hours' volunteered. We are proud that the number of former beneficiaries now returning as volunteers has again increased year on year.



As per last year, significant work has been invested in honing our main residential project delivery – both in simplifying key project related work (donation and installation of 2 shipping containers to serve as storage units, meaning we can now store most equipment at our main project base rather than transport it across London for every project). And in the year round organisation of the myriad of complex tasks needed to deliver projects on time with the beginning of work to codify this via Monday.com.

Following last year's extension of our Journey Programme duration from 4 residentials to 6, increasing by 50% the amount of support we were able to offer our most vulnerable cohort of young people, we successfully delivered this extended duration to all Journey Project cohorts. In total, 2024 saw 345 residential places delivered across all programmes (2023: 327; 2022: 319), constituting just under 10% project place growth over the past 2 years. Whilst this is modest compared to earlier years, it is set in the context of almost every project system having been reviewed and honed for efficiency and sustainability during the same period, whilst also inducting multiple new staff, leading to the charity now being much more sustainably resourced than in the rapid growth period immediately pre and post-Covid.

Finally, 2024 also saw us complete the roll-out of our enhanced new look, designed and launched at minimal cost via reduced rate and pro-bono support, to better represent the journey we've been on from micro charity in 2016 to impactful medium sized charity now. This included the successful launch of our new website with targeted information for referrers, families, funders and volunteers, alongside strategies around communications and reach, forming central aspects of our strategy to grow our volunteer numbers and funding base prior to delivering on our 5 year strategy to significantly increase places on our long term programmes for our most vulnerable young people.

“ I have seen happier, more enlivened children who have developed the skills to broaden their relationships and expand their friendship base. They are more confident and willing to participate more in class, share their views and experiences with others and to make suggestions/explore and expand on subjects. They come back different children.

Lambeth teacher



Programmes delivered were:

	Individual young people	Notes
Thrive Outside	188	229 Thrive Outside residential places provided to 188 children (As via our recurring respite ongoing support strand, higher need children attend multiple times to enhance impact.)
Journey Programme	38	As a rolling 18 month programme, 2 cohorts of 8 young people each started their journey in 2024, whilst a separate 3 cohorts finished, some having been extended from previous years. Total residential project places delivered = 87.
Mentoring Programme	10	Figure slightly lower than 2023 (14) due to pausing new intake due to staffing transitions. Significant mentoring growth targeted for 2025–26.
Young Leaders' Programme	11	
Saturday Club	8	

Table refers to individual children participating on each project. Some children attended more than one project/category of project. Total unique children worked with across all projects in 2024 was 235.

Referrals & Need:

As has been the case every year since Covid, all programmes were heavily over-subscribed with the cost of living crisis severely impacted family's mental health, finances, and coping strategies. There were again very many incredibly sad stories, including a 10 year old girl who'd had to change foster placements 3 times this year, leaving her with no friends and losing a year of school, and a 13 year old boy on the 3rd child protection plan of his short life, his mum having suffered with severe trauma and mental health challenges having had her first child aged just 11.

As usual, referring organisations included a wide range of primary and secondary schools operating in deprived areas of London, specialist homelessness charities, Social Services teams, Young Carers' projects, housing associations and a range of other community and charitable organisations. Families referred were often dealing with multiple, often inter-linked, issues of poverty, emotional and behavioural challenges and historical trauma.

Of those referred to us in 2024:

- **100%** were from extremely disadvantaged backgrounds including having experienced housing instability/homelessness; had a parent experiencing mental health problems or addiction issues; acting as Young Carers; recent experiences of loss/trauma; experienced food poverty.
- **66%** would have had no other break from these circumstances or no other safe access to outdoor spaces.
- **60%** had significant involvement from statutory agencies relating to risk (either being at risk of, or having experienced, school exclusion, Social Services, or CAMHS referral within the past year.).

For **99%** these difficulties were impacting mental health, leading to emotional or social difficulties assessed within either their school or home environment. In particular, the majority struggled with issues relating to low self-confidence, low self-esteem and very limited views of their own worth and potential.

Volunteers & staffing:

Volunteers are our most crucial resource and growth of our volunteer pool continued to be a key aim for 2024 as, alongside funding base growth, this is the key catalyst in unlocking future project place growth. In total 2024 saw 239 volunteers support our projects with nearly 19,000 combined volunteering hours, a volunteering hours' increase of nearly 20% from 2022 (16,000), despite only a small increase in volunteer numbers (239, up from 230 in 2023 and 161 in 2022.)

As per last year's report, a core task has been to grow our staff team to prepare for planned growth whilst ensuring sustainability of our work. Full time equivalent staffing grew from 7 FTE to 8.2 by the end of 2024. Further, limited, staffing growth will be required over the next 2 years to ensure planned delivery aims are sustainable with a forecast of circa 9–10 FTE required to deliver the organisation's core work sustainably by end 2025. Securing longer term grants and corporate support to underpin staffing growth, in turn underpinning increased project delivery, remains a key aim.

Impact:

The trustees place a high value on evidencing the value and impact of the services Free to Be provides. At the end of projects young people complete child focussed feedback forms allowing us to gather their stories, drawings and the words they use to describe the growth and change. Adult volunteers complete observation sheets and structured feedback opportunities are provided for referrers and for parents. In 2024:

- **100%** of children attending developed at least one significantly improved social skill including making/keeping friends; resolving frustrations without lashing out; relating better with adults.
- **97%** self-reported improved indicators of self-esteem and/or social confidence.
- **96%** felt brave enough to try something they had never before felt possible.

For our long term Journey Programme, 100% of young people self-assessed themselves as having increased resilience, anger management, confidence or other core social skills. 90% of parents/carers reported that their children had reduced risk in at least 2 key areas following the programme (including risk of school exclusion, becoming involved in criminality and developing mental health problems) with 93% of young people and 100% of parents/carers reporting their child showing improved aspirations and belief that they can achieve more than they had thought by the end of the programme.

Further detail regarding our impact can be found within our [2024 Impact Report](#).

Risk Review

The charity did not experience any major incidents of risk relating to its operations, reputation, finances nor the safeguarding or welfare of participants during the period.

Trustees continued to maintain, review and update a register of significant risks to the charity's operation and ongoing effectiveness. The trustees confirm that the major risks to which the charity may be exposed continue to be kept under review and that systems are in place and functioning effectively to manage any such risks.



Financial Review

2024 was again a strong fundraising year with income increasing just under 6% to £701,056 (2023:£663,991; 2022:£412,030), albeit cost increases, driven largely by increased staffing spend, rose at a slightly higher rate at just over 8% to £649,652 (2023:£600,461; 2022:£428,031). At year end this generated an in-year surplus income over costs of £51,404 although this is expected to be spent out through 2025 and 2026 on increased staffing costs to deliver both sustainability and underpin future growth.

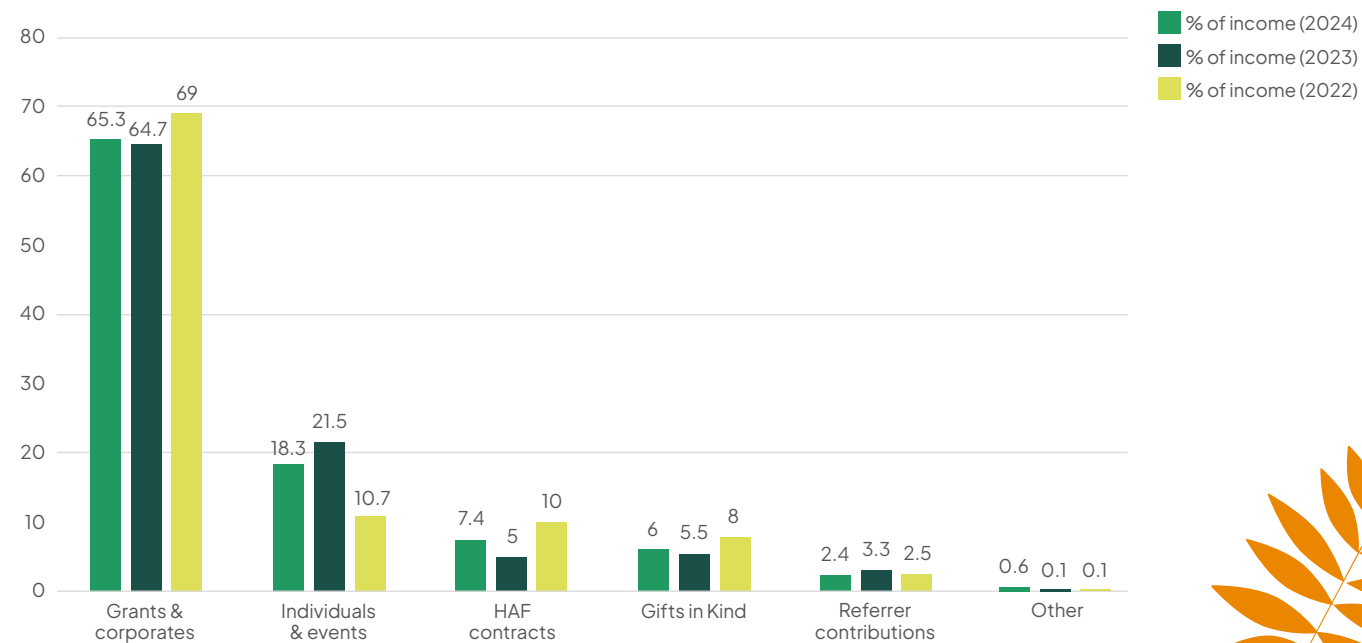
Income from Trusts, Foundations and Corporates remained the largest stream, at £457,715 accounting for approximately 65% of income (2023: £429,261, 65%; 2022: £283,832, 69%), followed by Individual Giving & Events at £128,128, constituting 18% of income (2023: £142,700, 21%. 2022: £44,000, 11%).

Raised Trust and Corporate income through the latter half of 2023 and this year was driven principally via the mid-2023 investment in our first ever fundraising officer, significantly increasing fundraising capacity to keep pace with the need to maintain higher income to match the post-Covid extensive increase in delivery.

Successful delivery of local Government contracts under the Government’s ‘Holiday activity and food programme’ (HAF) brought in £52,200 (7.4%), increased from £33,700 in 2023 (2022: £41,000) with the increase driven through strong relationship building with commissioners and consistently strong performance against past contracts. The balance of income came from Gifts/Services in Kind (£42,465, 6%) and referrer contributions (£16,620, 2.4%).

Significant successes included our annual Fundraising gala event, led by our wonderful corporate partners Higson Consulting, again raising circa £35,000. Proceeds from participation in the Childhood Trust’s summer ‘double your donation’ match funded campaign increased significantly to £106,000 from 2023’s £85,000 (2022: £23,000) Both events were again key areas of focus as we worked hard to diversify our reliance on Trusts and Foundations amidst a continuing deeply challenging national climate for Foundation led giving. The trustees remain incredibly grateful to all the individual donors who ran marathons; sky dived from planes; undertook triathlons, and donated via birthday, wedding, funeral collections and more throughout the year.

Income by percentage 2024

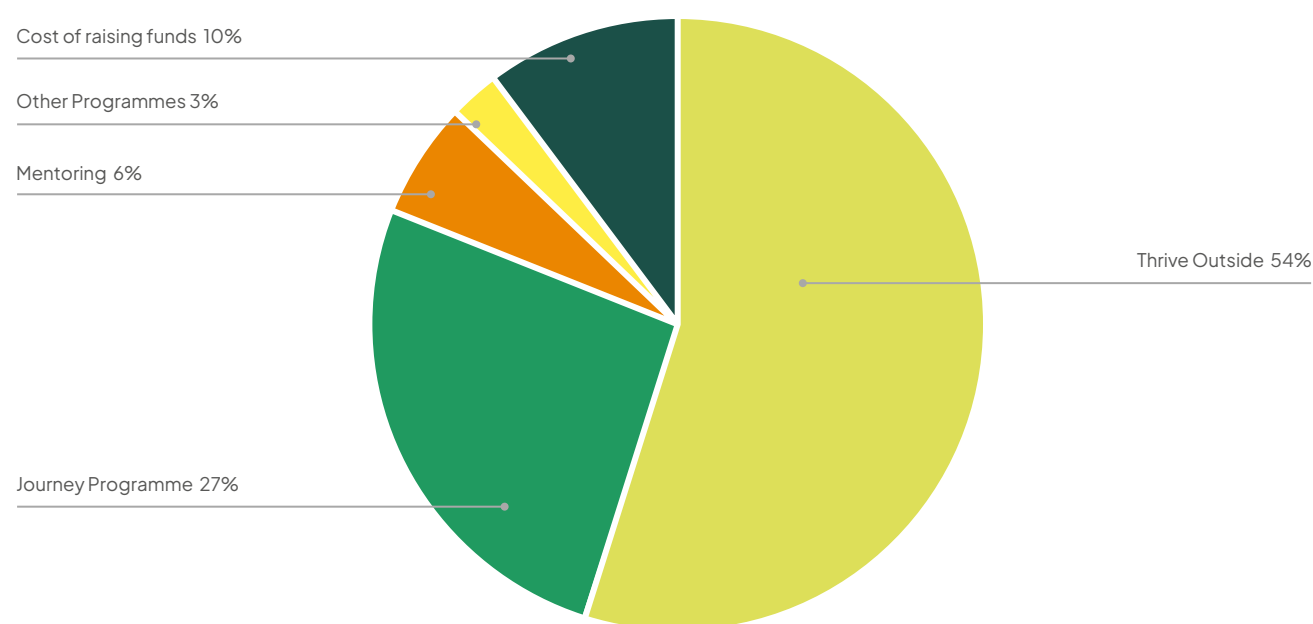


Costs: in line with our on-going strategic plan to invest in our infrastructure to both ensure sustainability following post-Covid rapid growth and prepare solid foundations for planned gradual future growth, overall costs have risen 8% to £649,652 (2023: £600,461, 2022: £428,031). Our principal cost remains staffing – the complex needs of the children Free to Be support requires projects are planned and then led on the ground by experienced and skilled staff. As participant project places grow, and as we invest to ensure workloads are sustainable, consequently so does the organisation’s salary needs. Salary and employment related costs increases slowed to 13.5% following 2023’s significant jump in staffing investments (2024: £341,164; 2023: £300,444; 2022: £202,457). This was slightly under budget (£350,000), due to some staff changes having vacancy gaps before new hires started. Staff costs are projected to rise to c.£425,000 in 2025 and c.£490,000 in 2026 before stabilising from 2026–27 as staff numbers grow to support significantly increased project delivery to vulnerable young people.

Just under 90% of the charity’s expenditure in 2024 (2023: 90%) related to delivery and management of projects and provision of support to young people, including project support costs, with the remaining relating to the cost of raising funds, infrastructure costs, and governance. Inevitably as the organisation grows to support more young people, the associated fundraising task will require further staffing support, but the trustees remain committed that all staff regardless of role will always spend time working directly on projects with vulnerable children as this ensures the charity remains orientated entirely around the needs of the children we support.

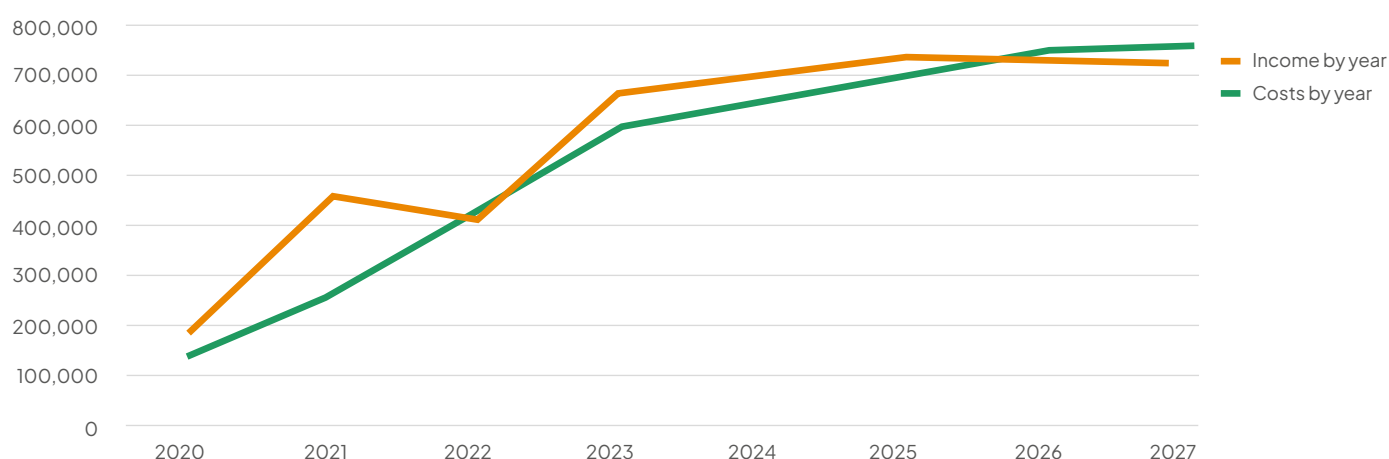
Other principal costs were again accommodation hire for residential programmes, outdoor activity instructor fees, food, fuel and other consumables directly related to residential project delivery.

Costs by percentage 2024



2024’s figures again present a strong set of financial results – a surplus of c£51,000, continuation of our focus on diversification of income, and planned cost growth managed in line with projections. The charity continues to grow steadily but sensibly and has continued to deliver strong donor confidence whilst doing so. Despite a surplus for the second year running following 2022’s small loss, projections show future income tracking within 3–5% of costs through 2025 to 2027, with an aim to have built the capacity (fundraising and volunteer numbers) to grow more rapidly through 2027 onwards.

Projected Income & Costs 2024–2027, showing 5 year history



Key aims for 2025 remain to further imbed sustainability whilst managing steady growth, before a potential step change in the amount of long-term follow-on beneficiary support (mentoring, Young Leaders, Journey Programmes) from 2026 onwards, though this stage of the growth plan is reliant upon first achieving funding stability at the current level of operations and will not proceed until the Trustees assess the charity is ready. In order to support these sustainability and growth goals, the charity continues to need the support of longer-term grant funding and corporate donors, and will reach out to funders particularly interested in supporting the sustainable growth of high promise small charities.

Reserves statement:

The Board have kept the charity's reserves policy and position under review throughout the year. Free to Be's reserves policy requires we hold a minimum of three, and maximum of six, months' full costs, excluding one off capital costs, as free unrestricted reserves.

During the year the Board created a designated fund of £100,000 to underwrite investment in staffing sustainability and growth.

At the end of the 2024 financial year, projected full costs for 2025 were calculated at £705,209, therefore requiring a free reserves position of £176,302 to £352,604. Free unrestricted reserves stood at £266,167 with a further £100,000 in designated funds with £4,206 restricted reserves. (2023: Free unrestricted reserves £318,696, nil designated funds, nil restricted reserves.)

Reserves held were therefore in accordance with the charity's reserves policy.



Future development

Core aims for the 2025 operating period:

- Continue to work towards a strategic plan of significantly increasing place numbers on our longer-term support pathways targeted to higher need young people.
- Specifically, aim to double mentoring numbers from 10 to 20 in 2025, and to 30 in 2026, thereby building out enhanced support for larger numbers of young people between projects.
- Continue to build the sustainable infrastructure needed to deliver our existing work over the long term for young people. In particular, complete work on Monday.com to systemise all project, volunteering and service delivery logistics; work with schools and Social Care to evaluate and hone our referrals process; expand opportunities for seasonal residential staffing, in particular to former beneficiaries.
- Continue to invest in our staffing capacity to deliver project place growth that is sustainable, increasing staff numbers to 9–10 FTE in 2025 (8 currently) with a focus on residential project staffing and youthwork, as well as on the fundraising resources to ensure project delivery staffing growth is sustainable.
- Invest in growing our volunteer base whilst creating new pathways for longer term volunteers to stay involved outside of residential project/mentoring related volunteering.
- Ensure the quality and ‘magic’ of our existing projects is maintained as we grow.
- Continue to operate within our reserves policy.

Registered Address & Contact details

The charity’s registered address is:

Free to Be Kids, Living Space, 1 Coral Street,
Lambeth, London SE1 7BE

0203 778 0323

hello@freetobekids.org.uk | www.freetobekids.org.uk



Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in England & Wales requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- a) select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- b) observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- c) make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- d) state whether applicable UK accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- e) prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Trust will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the Trust's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Trust and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the trust deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Trust and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities

Declarations

The trustees declare that they have approved the contents above as a true reflection of the charity's activities, operations and financial position within the 2024 operating period.

Signed on 23rd October 2025 on behalf of the trustees:

Emma Kendall

Elena Davies

Miss Emma Kendall (Chair)

Mrs Elena Davies (Treasurer)

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Free To Be Kids

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2024 which are set out on page 14 to 25.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees 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 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

Since the company's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of Association of Chartered Certified Accountant, which is one of the listed bodies.

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 did 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.

Shruti Soni

Shruti Soni FCCA FCIE

Date:

Shruti Soni Ltd • Chartered Certified Accountants
117a St. John's Hill, Sevenoaks TN13 3PE

Statement of financial activities (incorporating an income and expenditure account)

For the period ended 31 December 2024

		Unrestricted	Restricted	2024 Total	Unrestricted	Restricted	2023 Total
	Note	£	£	£	£	£	£
Income from:							
Donations and legacies	3	407,227	273,282	680,509	328,124	313,547	641,671
Charitable activities							
Thrive Outside Gateway	5	14,360	2,160	16,520	22,250	-	22,250
Other trading activities		-	-	-	-	-	-
Investments		4,027	-	4,027	70	-	70
Total income		<u>425,614</u>	<u>275,442</u>	<u>701,056</u>	<u>350,444</u>	<u>313,547</u>	<u>663,991</u>
Expenditure on:							
	6						
Raising funds		62,084	5,084	67,168	54,751	5,128	59,879
Charitable activities		316,332	266,152	582,484	177,475	363,107	540,582
Total expenditure		<u>378,416</u>	<u>271,236</u>	<u>649,652</u>	<u>232,226</u>	<u>368,235</u>	<u>600,461</u>
Net income / (expenditure) for the year	7	47,198	4,206	51,404	118,218	(54,688)	63,530
Transfers between funds		-	-	-	(7,482)	7,482	-
Net movement in funds		47,198	4,206	51,404	110,736	(47,206)	63,530
Reconciliation of funds:							
Total funds brought forward		318,969	-	318,969	208,233	47,206	255,439
Total funds carried forward		<u><u>366,167</u></u>	<u><u>4,206</u></u>	<u><u>370,373</u></u>	<u><u>318,969</u></u>	<u><u>-</u></u>	<u><u>318,969</u></u>

All of the above results are derived from continuing activities. There were no other recognised gains or losses other than those stated above. Movements in funds are disclosed in Note 16 to the financial statements.

Balance sheet

As at 31 December 2024

			2024	2023
	Note	£	£	£
Fixed assets:				
Tangible assets	11		<u>14,260</u>	<u>5,923</u>
			14,260	5,923
Current assets:				
Debtors	12	8,553	44,710	
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>401,818</u>	<u>293,977</u>	
		410,371	338,687	
Liabilities:				
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	13	<u>54,258</u>	<u>25,641</u>	
Net current assets / (liabilities)			<u>356,113</u>	<u>313,046</u>
Total assets less current liabilities			<u>370,373</u>	<u>318,969</u>
Total net assets / (liabilities)	15		<u>370,373</u>	<u>318,969</u>
The funds of the charity:	16			
Restricted income funds			4,206	-
Unrestricted income funds:				
Designated funds		100,000	-	
General funds		<u>266,167</u>	<u>318,969</u>	
Total unrestricted funds			<u>366,167</u>	<u>318,969</u>
Total charity funds			<u>370,373</u>	<u>318,969</u>

Approved by the trustees on 23rd October 2025

and signed on their behalf by *Emma Kendall*

Name: Emma Kendall, Chair of Trustees

Statement of cash flows

For the year ended 31 December 2024

	2024	2023
	£	£
Net income / (expenditure) for the reporting period	51,404	63,530
Depreciation charges	8,153	5,924
Dividends, interest and rent from investments	(4,027)	(70)
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	36,157	(32,524)
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	28,617	(56,061)
Net cash from /(used in) operating activities	120,304	(19,201)
Cash flows from investing activities:		
Dividends, interest and rents from investments	4,027	70
Purchase of fixed assets	(16,490)	-
Net cash provided by / (used in) investing activities	(12,463)	70
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year	107,841	(19,131)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year	293,977	313,108
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year	401,818	293,977
Analysis of cash and cash equivalents	At 31 December 2024	At 31 December 2023
	£	£
Cash in hand and at bank	401,818	293,977
Total cash and cash equivalents	401,818	293,977
Analysis of changes in net debt	At start of year	Cashflows
	£	£
Cash in hand and at bank	293,977	107,841

Notes to the financial statements

For the period ended 31 December 2024

1. Accounting policies

a. Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019) – (Charities SORP FRS 102), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy or note.

b. Public benefit entity

The charitable meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

c. Going concern

The trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern.

The trustees do not consider that there are any sources of estimation uncertainty at the reporting date that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next reporting period.

d. Income

Income is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the income have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and that the amount can be measured reliably.

Income from government and other grants, whether 'capital' grants or 'revenue' grants, is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the grants have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably and is not deferred.

Income received in advance of the provision of a specified service is deferred until the criteria for income recognition are met.

e. Donations of gifts, services and facilities

Donated professional services and donated facilities are recognised as income when the charity has control over the item or received the service, any conditions associated with the donation have been met, the receipt of economic benefit from the use by the charity of the item is probable and that economic benefit can be measured reliably. In accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102), volunteer time is not recognised so refer to the trustees' annual report for more information about their contribution.

On receipt, donated gifts, professional services and donated facilities are recognised on the basis of the value of the gift to the charity which is the amount the charity would have been willing to pay to obtain services or facilities of equivalent economic benefit on the open market; a corresponding amount is then recognised in expenditure in the period of receipt.

f. Interest receivable

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the bank.

g. Fund accounting

Restricted funds are to be used for specific purposes as laid down by the donor. Expenditure which meets these criteria is charged to the fund.

Unrestricted funds are donations and other incoming resources received or generated for the charitable purposes.

Designated funds are unrestricted funds earmarked by the trustees for particular purposes.

Notes to the financial statements

For the period ended 31 December 2024

1. Accounting policies (continued)

h. Expenditure and irrecoverable VAT

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Expenditure is classified under the following activity headings:

- Costs of raising funds relate to the costs incurred by the charitable company in inducing third parties to make voluntary contributions to it, as well as the cost of any activities with a fundraising purpose
- Expenditure on charitable activities includes the costs of offering residentials and delivering related services undertaken to further the purposes of the charity and their associated support costs
- Other expenditure represents those items not falling into any other heading.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

i. Allocation of support costs

Resources expended are allocated to the particular activity where the cost relates directly to that activity. However, the cost of overall direction and administration of each activity, comprising the salary and overhead costs of the central function, is apportioned on the basis of estimated staff time attributable to each activity.

j. Tangible fixed assets

Items of equipment are capitalised where the purchase price exceeds £500. Depreciation costs are allocated to activities on the basis of the use of the related assets in those activities. Assets are reviewed for impairment if circumstances indicate their carrying value may exceed their net realisable value and value in use.

Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write down the cost of each asset to its estimated residual value over its expected useful life. The depreciation rates in use are as follows:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------|
| • Motor Vehicles | 4 years |
| • Temporary storage structures | 5 years |
| • Equipments | 3 years |

k. Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered.

Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

l. Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account. Cash balances exclude any funds held on behalf of service users.

m. Creditors and provisions

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

The charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value with the exception of bank loans which are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

n. Pensions

The charity contributes towards the employees' personal pension schemes. The cost of the contribution is charged to the statement of financial activities on an accrual basis.

Notes to the financial statements

For the period ended 31 December 2024

3. Income from donations and legacies

	Unrestricted	Restricted	2024 Total	2023 Total
	£	£	£	£
Grants and donations	407,227	230,817	638,044	605,431
Donation in kind (note 4)	-	42,465	42,465	36,240
	<u>407,227</u>	<u>273,282</u>	<u>680,509</u>	<u>641,671</u>

4. Donation in kind

	Unrestricted	Restricted	2024 Total	2023 Total
	£	£	£	£
Donation in kind includes				
Venue room hire	-	20,726	20,726	20,726
Vehicle maintenance	-	-	-	220
Equipment & consumables	-	974	974	2,477
Temporary storage structure	-	13,993	13,993	-
Training	-	-	-	1,214
Software	-	3,200	3,200	3,190
Food & household	-	1,772	1,772	2,913
Office IT equipment	-	1,500	1,500	2,350
Project phones, comms, systems	-	300	300	3,150
	<u>-</u>	<u>42,465</u>	<u>42,465</u>	<u>36,240</u>

5. Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted	Restricted	2024 Total	2023 Total
	£	£	£	£
Thrive Outside Gateway	<u>14,360</u>	<u>2,160</u>	<u>16,520</u>	<u>22,250</u>
Total income from Charitable activities	<u>14,360</u>	<u>2,160</u>	<u>16,520</u>	<u>22,250</u>

Charity has awarded subsidies of £49,040 to the participating schools and organisations. This has been netted off against the receipt of Referrer contributions £65,560.

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 December 2024

6. Analysis of expenditure	CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES					Support costs	2024 Total	2023 Total
	Cost of raising funds	Thrive Outside Gateway	Journey Programme	Mentoring Programme	Other programmes			
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Staff costs (Note 8)	56,601	166,980	84,984	24,526	8,073	-	341,164	300,444
Recruitment, training and retention	66	-	-	-	-	5,367	5,433	17,302
Travel	320	1,831	1,486	687	439	1,337	6,100	5,099
Programme costs	4,450	28,822	13,040	2,109	1,664	3,433	53,518	53,392
Food & Household	1,921	15,982	5,891	1,518	1,319	3,658	30,289	32,435
Equipment & consumables	780	6,667	1,901	23	61	6,011	15,443	16,067
Rent and Insurance	-	-	-	-	-	15,157	15,157	12,082
Office cost and Admin expenses	156	6	3	-	-	4,136	4,301	831
Professional fees	-	-	10	22	-	33,420	33,452	20,117
Telephone, IT systems and software	634	1,666	471	-	132	12,256	15,159	15,991
Vehicle costs	-	9,724	7,913	42	1,973	3,881	23,533	30,089
Venue Hire	2,240	33,772	17,986	-	-	23,663	77,661	74,379
Depreciation	-	-	-	-	-	8,155	8,155	5,924
Accounting fees and charges	-	-	-	-	-	2,408	2,408	1,911
Other Staff cost	-	8,141	-	-	-	9,738	17,879	14,398
	67,168	273,591	133,685	28,927	13,661	132,620	649,652	600,461
Support costs	-	77,821	39,607	11,430	3,762	(132,620)	-	-
Total expenditure 2024	67,168	351,412	173,292	40,357	17,423	-	649,652	600,461
Total expenditure 2023	59,879	296,594	147,534	38,354	58,100	-	600,461	

Of the total expenditure, £378,416 was unrestricted (2023: £232,226), and £271,236 was restricted (2023: £368,235).

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 December 2024

7. Net incoming resources for the year

This is stated after charging / crediting:	2024	2023
	£	£
Depreciation	8,153	5,924
Trustees' remuneration	Nil	Nil
Trustees' expenses	Nil	Nil

8. Analysis of staff costs, trustee remuneration and expenses, and the cost of key management personnel

Staff costs were as follows:	2024	2023
	£	£
Salaries and wages	300,116	263,980
Social security costs	25,644	22,950
Employer's contribution to defined contribution pension schemes	15,404	13,514
	341,164	300,444

No employees earned more than £60,000 during the year (2023: none).

The total employee benefits including pension contributions of the key management personnel were £84,558 (2023: £131,488).

The charity trustees were not paid or received any other benefits from employment with the charity in the year (2023: £nil). No charity trustee received payment for professional or other services supplied to the charity (2023: £nil).

9. Staff numbers

The average number of employees (head count based on number of staff employed) during the year was as follows:

	2024	2023
	No.	No.
Charitable activities	8.2	6.7
	8.2	6.7

10. Related party transactions

There are no related party transactions to disclose for 2024 (2023: none).

During the year unrestricted donation of £16,000 was received from one trustee (2023: £46,350). There are no donations from related parties which are outside the normal course of business and no restricted donations from related parties.

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 December 2024

11. Tangible fixed assets

	Equipments	Temporary storage structure	Motor Vehicles £	Total £
Cost or valuation				
At the start of the year	-	-	23,695	23,695
Additions in year	2,497	13,993	-	16,490
At the end of the year	<u>2,497</u>	<u>13,993</u>	<u>23,695</u>	<u>40,185</u>
Depreciation				
At the start of the year	-	-	17,772	17,772
Charge for the year	831	1,399	5,923	8,153
At the end of the year	<u>831</u>	<u>1,399</u>	<u>23,695</u>	<u>25,925</u>
Net book value At the end of the year	<u>1,666</u>	<u>12,594</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>14,260</u>
At the start of the year	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>5,923</u>	<u>5,923</u>

All of the above assets are used for charitable purposes.

12. Debtors

	2024 £	2023 £
Trade debtors	1,460	4,740
Other debtors	-	2,065
Prepayments	7,093	5,065
Accrued income	-	32,840
	<u>8,553</u>	<u>44,710</u>

13. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2024 £	2023 £
Trade creditors	3,135	5,121
Accruals	1,020	1,020
Deferred income	48,967	19,500
Other creditors	<u>1,136</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>54,258</u>	<u>25,641</u>

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 December 2024

14. Deferred income

Deferred income comprises grant funding received in advance that relates to future years:

	2024	2023
	£	£
Balance at the beginning of the year	19,500	80,682
Amount released to income in the year	(19,500)	(80,682)
Amount deferred in the year	48,967	19,500
Balance at the end of the year	48,967	19,500

15. Analysis of net assets between funds

	General unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	Total funds 2024
	£	£	£	£
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	14,260	14,260
Net current assets	266,167	100,000	(10,054)	356,113
Net assets at the end of the year	266,167	100,000	4,206	370,373

	General unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	Total funds 2023
	£	£	£	£
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	5,923	5,923
Net current assets	318,969	-	(5,923)	313,046
Net assets at the end of the year	318,969	-	-	318,969

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 December 2024

16. Movements in funds

	At the start of the year 2024	Incoming resources & gains	Outgoing resources & losses	Transfers	At the end of the year 2024
	£	£	£	£	£
Restricted funds:					
Programme funds					
Thrive Outside Gateway	-	144,093	(144,093)	-	-
Journey Programme	-	38,489	(36,683)	-	1,806
Other programmes	-	19,330	(16,930)	-	2,400
Project support – staffing	-	41,636	(41,636)	-	-
Project support – other	-	25,310	(25,310)	-	-
Non project costs	-	1,500	(1,500)	-	-
Fundraising	-	5,084	(5,084)	-	-
Total restricted funds	-	275,442	(271,236)	-	4,206
Unrestricted funds:					
Designated funds:					
Staffing and staffing sustainability	-	-	-	100,000	100,000
Total designated funds	-	-	-	100,000	100,000
General funds	318,969	425,614	(378,416)	(100,000)	266,167
Total unrestricted funds	318,969	425,614	(378,416)	-	366,167
Total funds	318,969	701,056	(649,652)	-	370,373



Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 December 2024

16. Movements in funds (continued ...)

	At the start of the year 2023	Incoming resources & gains	Outgoing resources & losses	Transfers	At the end of the year 2023
	£	£	£	£	£
Restricted funds:					
Programme funds					
Thrive Outside Gateway	35,359	138,434	(173,793)	-	-
Journey Programme	-	74,490	(74,490)	-	-
Other programmes	-	22,651	(30,133)	7,482	-
Project support - staffing	-	32,573	(32,573)	-	-
Project support - other	11,847	40,866	(52,713)	-	-
Non project costs	-	2,350	(2,350)	-	-
Fundraising	-	2,183	(2,183)	-	-
Total restricted funds	<u>47,206</u>	<u>313,547</u>	<u>(368,235)</u>	<u>(7,482)</u>	<u>-</u>
Unrestricted funds:					
Designated funds:					
Developing future sites	100,000	-	-	(100,000)	-
Total designated funds	<u>100,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(100,000)</u>	<u>-</u>
General funds	<u>108,233</u>	<u>350,444</u>	<u>(232,226)</u>	<u>92,518</u>	<u>318,969</u>
Total unrestricted funds	<u>208,233</u>	<u>350,444</u>	<u>(232,226)</u>	<u>(7,482)</u>	<u>318,969</u>
Total funds	<u>255,439</u>	<u>663,991</u>	<u>(600,461)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>318,969</u>



Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 31 December 2024

Purposes of restricted designated funds

Within Unrestricted funds are designated funds of £100,000 – towards staffing to source sustainability.

Thrive Outside Gateway – Costs of delivering our Thrive Outside gateway and recurring respite programme. These are 5 day residential projects with high staffing ratios catering to particularly vulnerable children. Based around a carefully designed programme of outdoor activities the key aim is to rebuild the foundations of positive mental health via using adventure activities and youthwork techniques to build confidence, self-esteem, teamwork, social problem solving, resilience and aspirations. Ultimately leading to improved mental health, improved social relationships and key social/life skills, and key engagement with education. Children referred by schools/social workers and the highest need return for as often as they need us throughout their childhood. Includes all venue, transport, food, activity, equipment and staffing costs.

Journey Programme – A follow-on intensive support programme for the highest need of our Thrive Outside attendees. Built around 6 small group, high intervention residential spread over 18 months and designed for 13 – 15 year olds with complex emotional, social or behavioural needs. The key aim is around improving mental health, rebuilding aspirations, helping young people at risk of 'going off the rails' to find a positive path through adolescence. Includes all venue, transport, food, activity, equipment and staffing costs.

Other Programmes – Covers our smaller follow-on programmes for medium-high need Thrive Outside attendees. Includes our Mentoring Programme: a year's worth of London based 1:1 mentoring matched to a volunteer who's also attended our projects. Young Leaders Programme: a training and support programme for our older teenagers 15–17 who are supported to return on projects as young volunteers, going full circle from former beneficiary to now being a positive role model for the next generation of attendees. Includes wraparound support around life skills and employability. Saturday Adventure Club: A Saturday group project for 9–12 year olds assessed to need additional intervention in between Thrive Outside projects. For all 3 Programmes cost totals include all venue, transport, food, activity, equipment and staffing costs.

Project Support – Covers staffing and operational costs incurred for running the programmes and activities of the organisation.

“ Words are not enough to say how grateful we are for the care you give Jekari. You have helped him come out of his shell, and now he is beginning to have the social interactions he never knew how to.

Parent of a child attending Thrive Outside

