

**FIO
Annual Report
2022-23**

**Charity No. 1166193
(Charitable Incorporated Organisation)**

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Objectives and Activities

Fio creates work with people of all ages, religions and backgrounds, using performance techniques to help them tell stories that are as momentous and unique as they are themselves.

- a) To advance the arts, and to encourage and promote involvement in drama and related artistic and creative activities
- b) To act as a resource for people of all abilities and backgrounds, by providing professionally-led activities, programmes, advice and assistance in all aspects of theatre arts and related disciplines.
- c) To provide recreational and leisure time activity in the interests of social welfare for those who have need by reason of their youth, infirmity, disability, poverty or social exclusion with a view to improving the conditions of life of such persons.

Our activities in support of the objects are described in the Trustees' report below.

During the period covered by this report, trustees have had regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.

Organisational aims

In delivering our activities, we seek to achieve the following aims:

- To contribute to the development of and increase opportunities for Welsh Global Majority creatives.
- To provide opportunities for Global Majority people to participate in artistic activities.
- To diversify the stories being platformed and shared in the Welsh cultural sector.
- To attract and captivate new Global Majority audiences.
- To develop our financial and organisational resilience and sustainable business model.

Report of the Chair

Alison sadly stepped down as Chair of the Board in February 2024, but remained an active Trustee. We could not be more grateful for the utterly invaluable work and support that Alison invested in the company and staff throughout her time as Chair. I stepped in as Acting Chair, but we will recruit a new permanent Chair in 2025 once key vacancies on the staff have been filled.

Our Artistic Director, Sita Thomas, continued to make a huge contribution to the work of Fio and our mission of supporting Global Majority people of all ages to shape culture in Wales. Our artistic achievements are described in the Trustees' report below.

After working with Fio for the last year, our Executive Director Emily Carewe moved on to a new role as Executive Director at Theatre 503, a prestigious new writing venue in London. Unfortunately our recruitment to replace her was unsuccessful, placing a considerable burden on the rest of the team, not least Sita.

New joiners included producer, Tumi Williams, and Creative Administrator, Parisa Fouladi.

This year we secured a multi-year investment from Arts Council of Wales. This remarkable achievement signifies a pivotal moment in our journey, as we embark on a transformative path over the initial 3-year term, commencing in April 2024.

By making this award, ACW recognised our unwavering commitment to fostering creativity and inclusivity, and ensuring that people from the Global Majority are embedded and thriving in all aspects of theatre and arts in Wales.

We are deeply grateful to the Arts Council of Wales for their support, and we extend our heartfelt thanks to our Board, dedicated staff, talented freelancers, valued partners, existing funders, and all stakeholders who have been instrumental in our journey thus far. We are exceptionally excited about the next three years, and we will work diligently to realise ACW's investment principles. We are committed to working collaboratively across the sector: together, we will continue to make a positive and lasting impact on the arts, ensuring a brighter and more inclusive future for all.

Following the announcement of ACW's portfolio, Fio was mentioned and included in numerous articles, and **BBC Radio Wales Arts Show** produced a programme dedicated to the Investment Review, featuring a short interview with Sita about what the decision means for Fio.

Remembering our founder, Abdul Shayek

We were shocked and deeply saddened by the unexpected and untimely passing of Fio's founding Artistic Director Abdul Shayek. Abdul's work as a director and leader to further representation and support for Global Majority artists in theatre, both at Fio and at Tara Theatre, will continue to be felt for years to come and is a legacy to be proud of.

Abdul created Fio in 2016 to be a catalyst for change in response to the lack of diverse artists and repertoire in theatre in Cardiff. Fio's first home was in Butetown and our debut original work was *Swarm*, a site-specific production devised by Abdul and the cast, examining migration, identity, empathy and belonging with a professional and community cast. Fio produced a string of exceptional productions, including in 2016 *The Mountaintop* by Katori Hall, a fictional depiction of the Reverend Martin Luther King Junior's last night on earth before his assassination. Fio's production of Athol Fugard's *The Island*, set in Robben Island where Nelson Mandela was notoriously imprisoned, toured in 2018, Mandela's centenary year.

Report of the trustees for the year ending 31 March 2023

The trustees are pleased to present their annual report, together with the financial statements of the charity, for the year ended 31 March 2024.

Vision, Mission and Values

Vision

Our Vision is that Global Majority people are embedded and thriving in all aspects of theatre and arts in Wales.

Mission

We support Global Majority people of all ages to shape culture in Wales. We do this by providing pathways and opportunities to develop, create and experience exciting theatre and arts. We represent contemporary diverse Welsh culture and identity. We remove barriers and offer inclusive, intersectional visions for the future.

Values

- Committed: We work with drive and determination to create a seismic shift in the Welsh cultural landscape.
- Energetic: We make progress through passion, continual learning and hard work. We bring our best selves to our working hours and contribute our skill sets to making a difference for the company and sector.
- Transparent: We act with truth and accountability. We will be honest about our actions and decisions and share information to build trust.
- Optimistic: We problem-solve and find solutions with positivity, and always look for the best in people. We are hopeful for the future of theatre and arts in Wales, and we conduct ourselves with positivity and courage.
- Nurturing: We treat people with respect, recognising their achievements and potential. We listen to their aspirations and put resources in place to support their development holistically.

Artistic Activity

Our artistic activity is delivered through three interweaving strands: people, projects and productions, and also by advocacy and strategic partnership work within the cultural sector.

People

We invest in Global Majority people and offer pathways for progression in their involvement in the arts. We do this through our year-round offers of our Young Company, Artist Professional Development programme and Creative Associates. We take care of the wellbeing of our staff and encourage them to thrive. We also support creative freelancers to make the work they want to make.

Projects

We co-create projects with people in response to local social, cultural and political issues, needs and desires. Projects are often workshop-based in community settings and will be multidisciplinary. We work in partnership with arts and non-arts organisations, sharing resources and expertise.

Productions

We develop and co-create new work, and co-produce productions that tour across Wales and the UK. Our productions are led by Global Majority artists, and feature narratives centring diverse Welsh contemporary characters and experiences. We will contribute striking, fresh stories to the Welsh theatrical canon.

Artistic Activities 2023-2024

1) People

Creative Associates

We have supported Creative Associates with bursaries, equipment, mentorship, networking opportunities and work to develop their creative practices. Their personal and artistic growth has been significant and has led to them securing further work with other organisations in Wales.

Safyan Iqbal

We funded Safyan to complete an Introduction to Playwriting Short Course with the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama. He had fortnightly writing sessions with Sita working on his first play about his experience growing up in Cardiff and being South Asian, Muslim and deaf.

Tia Camilleri

Tia was appointed as Trainee Assistant Director on Beneatha's Place at the Young Vic in London. We signposted and supported her through the application and interview process. She had a fantastic time and learnt a huge amount, at a larger scale than her previous work with us.

Tia collaborated with Tumi Williams for a week in our Creative/Producer Lab to develop the concept for a new show. She successfully co-directed a new production R&D 'The Don't Teach Boys to Grieve in this Town' with Sita, as part of our partnership with Wales Millennium Centre. This was the largest role and responsibility Tia has had with Fio to date, from developing as a participant, to writer, trainee director, assistant director and now co-director.

Cara Walker

Cara has gone to University in Manchester to study BA Fine Art. We invited her to become an Ambassador Trustee of Fio as part of her ongoing development and work with our company.

Arise – Wales Creatives

Arise - Wales Creatives is our year-long, paid artist development programme. We carried out an evaluation of the pilot year of Arise – Wales Creatives, which ran throughout 2022, and began planning for Year 2 of the programme that will run in 2024/25.

Commissions

Danielle Fahiya

We commissioned Danielle Fahiya to write a new production. After developing a relationship with Danielle earlier this year on our Butetown Audio Drama project 'From May To Etta With Love', Sita supported Danielle to develop the concept for a new play about May, a black woman in living in 1920s Butetown, who dreams of making her way to Broadway, New York. The piece will feature live jazz music and documentary film footage. Danielle had recent success with 'Mattan: 4 Injustice of a Hanged Man', a true crime podcast series she wrote and produced for BBC.

Lauren Morais and Nia Ghandi

We commissioned Lauren Morais and Nia Ghandi to write a play about queer friendship and lesbian vampires. Following their fantastic work and writing chemistry together during our R&D of Landing Bolts, we felt that there was huge potential for a new play by the pair. They launched their process with an intensive writing week with dramaturgical support from Sita.

2) Projects

From May to Etta with Love

We partnered with Applied Stories to deliver a series of six short audio dramas inspired by an extraordinary photo collection held by Glamorgan Archives.

The scripts were recorded with a mixed cast of professional actors and contemporary young people from the Butetown area. The six plays were launched online with a free Zoom listening party at the end of November, before being printed and displayed in Glamorgan Archives foyer, and at other locations around Cardiff.

Creative/Producer Lab

Throughout October and November, we supported a collective of six creatives plus their own group collaborators with time, space and resource to explore their own creative ideas. Sita mentored them to develop their skills, ideas and confidence in creative producing and their own individual creative practices.

The groups included

- Tia Camilleri and Tumi Williams who developed the concept for a new piece of Hip-Hop theatre about fatherhood and cultural lineage;
- Mehdi Razi who worked with actors and a movement director to direct scenes from Persian novel 'The Blind Owl';
- Tony Cordoba who wrote, recorded and film a new Latin American song featuring bachata dancers;
- Tijesunimi Olakojo who wrote and performed a monologue from the perspective of a successful yet currently out of work black actor;
- Elicia Axon developed a multimedia immersive space exploring self-worth, resilience and healing with soundscapes and digital projection.

We filmed some of the process of the project as well as performance material for sharing online.

Junction/Cyffordd: Queer and Welsh Global Majority Short Film Collection

In 2023 we commissioned five Queer Welsh and Wales-based directors to write and direct their own short (2 min) spoken word poetry films. They were filmed in April and May 24 with production company RedBrck. The directors were all part of the Directing cohort of Arise-Wales Creatives, and one of Arise's producing cohort who has been working in TV/Film produced the project.

The films, which premiered in July 24, explored the intersections of Welsh, LGBT+, and Global Majority identities. They were not only a means of self-expression but also an important opportunity for the directors to develop and hone their filmmaking skills, build their portfolios, and contribute to diversifying the stories represented in the Welsh film industry.

To support these directors, we facilitated a range of creative and professional development activities, including personalised mentorship guiding the directors through concept development, dramaturgy sessions, and the refinement of scripts. We ran workshops focused on storyboarding, shot lists, and filmmaking techniques.

The directors attended a masterclass with RedBrck, providing practical insights to filmmaking and storyboarding. We collaborated with AM Cymru who platformed the films and supported the directors in building their own online digital channels to continue showcasing and sharing their portfolios.

We are particularly proud of the personal and professional growth demonstrated by the directors and their work and of the inclusive and diverse nature of the project itself.

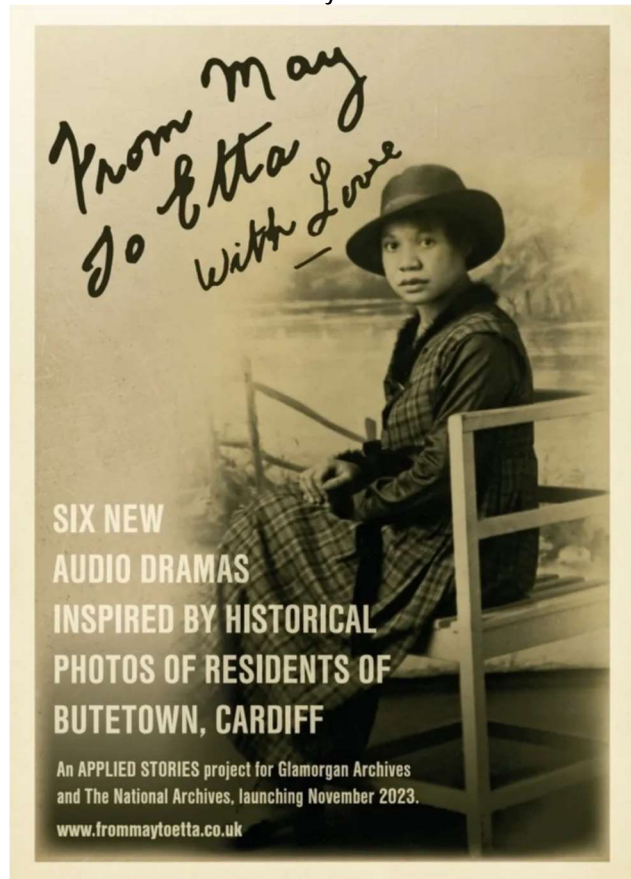
3) Productions

Dal Gafael/Hold On

Our partnership with National Youth Theatre of Wales and Theatr Genedlaethol deepened, as we announced plans for a production directed by Sita, to take place in the summer of 2024.

From May to Etta with Love: Background

The pictures which inspired our project *From May to Etta with Love* are from the studio of Fred Petersen, an early portrait photographer who had a business at 232 Bute Street, Cardiff from 1910-1920. Fred's beautifully intimate and intriguing pictures are notable for portraying black and mixed heritage children and families from Cardiff's historically diverse docks community.



The collection was donated to Glamorgan Archives in the 1970s with no contextual detail. Despite numerous public appeals over the years, almost all the subjects of the photos remain unidentified.

In 2023, The National Archives in London commissioned Applied Stories to visit Cardiff and meet with Glamorgan Archives specialists, to see what could be done to bring these images to life. Applied Stories, a company specialising in audio drama, worked with two professional writers with Butetown links, Danielle Fahiya and Kyle Lima, to script six imagined scenes from the moment the photo was taken.

From May to Etta with Love is the extraordinary result. Each play sends listeners back in time, to eavesdrop on the conversation between Fred Petersen and his subjects.

Academy: They Don't Teach Boys How To Grieve In This Town

Sita was invited to direct a pilot production for WMC's future Hip-Hop Academy. She decided to co-direct with Fio's Creative Associate Tia Camilleri. Weekly skills sessions were held from November – March 2024, followed by 7 days of intensive devising and rehearsals, a day of masterclasses and our showcase performance in Wales Millennium Centre's Weston Studio in April.



Show poster designed and created by participants

Advocacy and strategic partnership work

Some of the extensive advocacy and partnership work carried out by Sita is listed below:

- We joined the collective of Hijinx, Disability Arts Cymru and Learning Disability Wales on their Neurodiversity and Anti-racism in Welsh Arts (NAWA) project. Hijinx, Disability Arts Cymru and Learning Disability Wales are working together to identify the issues faced by learning disabled and neurodivergent people who are from communities that experience racism, when accessing or engaging in the arts. Supported by the Welsh Government Anti-racist Wales Culture, Heritage and Sport Fund. Sita and Tia Camilleri joined the Advisory Panel for the project.
- We attended Trustee Bernie Davies' inaugural Mastering Diversity Conference at City Hall. It was a superb and well-attended event, with a vast array of inspirational speakers sharing ideas and addressing a plethora of issues.
- We attended this year's Edinburgh Fringe Festival, connecting with companies, producers, and Global Majority creatives, as well as scoping out potential venues for future Fio productions.

- Sita delivered a talk about diverse leadership at Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama for MA Arts Management Students
- Sita continued to advocate on S4C's Diversity Panel.

Testimonies

Creative/Producer Lab: Feedback from Participants

- It was a wonderful experience, I felt I had the freedom to do what I wanted and when whilst also having the support of some amazing creatives - I was given the opportunity to try something new without fear of failing.
- The freedom to explore ideas in a safe, comfortable space.
- My favourite part of the process was seeing my vision come to life, it has been an idea in my head for months but having the opportunity to realise it was so rewarding.
- I have discovered that there's more I can offer in terms of my skills and abilities. I also believe more in myself now. My level of self confidence has definitely increased.
- It gives people a voice, it gives them an opportunity to feel seen and validated in their craft.
- It connects different people together, the final product gives a meaningful message to its audience through a very creative process and helps people connect more to their personal emotions/experiences.
- This is an incredible platform that has given me an opportunity to showcase my skills, talent and ability in a society that constantly overlooks us because of our race, gender, skin colour, immigration status, etc. I'm forever thankful.
- It is very difficult to get your foot on the door as an under-represented artist. Residencies like this gives us the chance to produce professional work that really represent us; our talent, our vision and our stories. It is not just inclusion, it also gives us the creative control that we need in an industry that sometimes overlooks or use our experiences as a creative token.

Testimony from Creative Associate Tia Camilleri



“

TIA CAMILLERI MY EXPERIENCE AT FIO

In actuality, I owe my entire theatre directing journey to Fio and the real tailored investment from Sita Thomas. Growing from Trainee Director to Assistant Director to, now, co-directing this production for Next Up, have allowed me to take the necessary steps to be able to hold my own as a director.

What has been so great about this Next Up production, as well as all the productions I have been involved with through Fio, is how the stories genuinely connect with me. There is a lack of diverse theatre in Wales so working on this hip-hop theatre production allowed me to fully harness my all my skills. Part of me carries when going into leadership roles as a young person due to the fear of not being taken seriously or being a secondary voice. However, I recognised a real commitment to ensuring my voice was just as important as any others in the space. I feel this was massively helped by the external work I did with Sita to not only work on the production, but to use this as a chance for me to learn about process. Creating a 'way of working' document was incredibly useful for my development as I understood my roles and responsibilities better as well as how to navigate a 'co-creation'. As with any production, 'They don't teach boys to grieve in this town' came with its various challenges and, at this stage in my career, I would've found it incredibly difficult to manage this alone so it was essential to have both Tumi Williams and Sita Thomas to support me. In the difficulties, however, I learnt a massive amount about stage management, production and more technical sides of things. It also gave me experience working with various groups of young people who aren't necessarily professionals or trained actors.

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Structure, Governance and Management

Fio is a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO) controlled by its Trustees. Its governing document was registered on 23 Mar 2016 and amended on 12 Jul 2019.

Trustees during the period of this report

- Alison Woods (Chair, until February 2024)
- Edward Wood (Acting Chair, from February 2024)
- Chantal Harrison-Lee
- Bernie Davies
- Valerie Synmoie
- Joe Redmond
- Jason Camilleri
- Fiona Peet
- Samuel Jolapamo (from October 2023)

Potential new Trustees are generally identified through word of mouth and confirmed by a vote of the Trustees. Open recruitment was trialled previously but was not successful, but we are open to trying this again in the future.

To facilitate effective operations, the Artistic Director and Executive Director have delegated authority for operational matters including finance, employment and artistic performance related activity.

Thanks to the Arts Council of Wales' investment in Fio through the Creative Steps programme, Fio has been able to build upon its infrastructure and stability as an organisation, and therefore strengthen the offering we make to the people we work with. Throughout this year, we focused on enhancing internal systems, including HR, policy management and finance.

Staff

- **Sita Thomas** - Artistic Director
- **Emily Carewe** - Executive Director (April – September)
- **Ndidi John** – Wellbeing Associate
- **Tumi Williams** – Producer (December onwards)
- **Parisa Fouladi** – Creative Administrator (March onwards)
- **Jo West** - Social Media/Digital Communications
- **Wendy Hii** - Finance

Registered Address

W2, Wellington House
Wellington St
Cardiff CF11 9BE

Bank

The Co-operative Bank
PO Box 250
Skelmersdale WN8 6WT

Independent Examiners

Llewellyns Certified Chartered Accountants
1st Floor Brook House,
Brook Road, Cardiff CF14 1DU

Financial Review

ACW Portfolio

As noted in the Chair's report, we secured a multi-year investment of £220,000 per year from Arts Council of Wales over the next three years. This was a remarkable achievement, and using the award we will dedicate ourselves to transforming ourselves and making an even greater contribution to the cultural sector in Wales.

Other fundraising activities

Sita's application to Diverse Cymru was successful. We received £12,000 to be spent this financial year (predominantly on commissions).

Sita's first stage application to Esmée Fairbairn for continuation funding was selected after a highly competitive round to go through to a final round for consideration for a multi-year grant. At the time of writing, our application is on hold until key vacancies are filled.

Applications for a large grant for a final stage R&D for our production of Landing Bolts and a small grant for our Queer film project were unsuccessful.

Approved by the trustees and signed on their behalf by:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Edward Wood". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Edward Wood
(Acting Chair)
24 January 2025

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of FIO



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

Charity Name
FIO

On accounts for the year
ended

31 March 2024

Charity no
(if any)

1166193

Set out on pages

1-2

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

Responsibilities and
basis of report

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above
charity ("the Trust") for the year ended DD / MM / YYYY.

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 Trust'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 which gives me
cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130
of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- 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.

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

Signed: MIKE TANN

Date: 05/12/2024

Name: MIKE TANN

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

ACCA

Address:

Llewellyns Chartered Certified Accountants, Brook House, Brook Road,
Cardiff CF14 1DU

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Oct 2018

Profit and Loss Account

Income and Expenditure

	<u>Unrestricted Funds</u>	<u>Unrestricted Funds</u>	-	<u>Restricted Funds</u>	<u>Restricted Funds</u>
	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>	-	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
ACW Lottery	£0	£0		£78,572	£162,343
Darkling Trust	£0	£0		£3,100	
Diverse Cymru	£0	£0		£12,600	
Esmée Fairbairn	£0	£0			£55,183
Austin & Hope Pilkington Trust	£0	£0			£1,000
Community Renewal Fund	£0	£0			£2,300
Moondance Foundation	£0	£0			
National Lottery Fund	£0	£0			
Postcode Community	£0	£0			£25,000
WMC	£2,700	£25,000			
Cardiff Third Sector Council	£0	£0			£5,000
Aritchoke Trust	£0	£0			£2,300
Other	£80	£0			£8,189
	£2,780	£25,000		£94,272	£261,295
Expenditure					
	<u>Unrestricted Funds</u>	<u>Unrestricted Funds</u>	-	<u>Restricted Funds</u>	<u>Restricted Funds</u>
	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>	-	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
Sessional Workers	£0	£0			£0
Grant repaid	£0	£0			£0
Rent	£0	£99		£11,960	£10,448
Performers costs	£0	£10,450		£32,374	£68,558
Production/Project costs	£0	£11		£12,677	£9,923
Depreciation	£1,251	£1,134		£0	
Staff Salaries	£0	£0		£74,682	£73,892
Advertising/Publicity	£0	£0		£11,946	£13,554
Accountancy	£0	£0		£6,700	£5,296
Travel	£0	£1,190		£4,111	£6,185
Consultancy	£0	£0		£1,928	£4,872
Sundries	£0	£57		£7,409	£8,477
	£0	£0			
	£1,251	£12,942		£163,787	£201,184
Net income/(expenditure)	£1,529	£12,058		-£69,515	£60,111
Funds Brought Forward	£22,807	£10,749		£152,143	£92,032
Funds Carried Forward	£24,336	£22,807		£82,628	£152,143

Balance Sheet

Fio		
Balance sheet		
Year ended 31st March 2024		
	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
Fixed Assets	£3,048	£3,384
Current Assets		
Cash in hand	£105,837	£157,790
Debtor		£15,000
Accrued income		£9,175
Prepayments	£798	£3,079
	£106,435	£185,044
Current Liabilities		
Accounts payable	£93	£10,787
Other creditors	£1,726	£2,477
Accruals	£700	£214
	£2,519	£13,478
Net Current Assets	£103,916	£171,566
Total Assets Less Total Liabilities	£106,964	£174,950
Funds and Reserves		
Unrestricted Funds	£24,336	£22,807
Restricted Funds	£82,628	£152,143
	£106,964	£174,950