

Registered company:  
Registered Charity:

10197205  
1168090

**EARLY CHILDHOOD PARTNERSHIP  
(LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)**

**REPORTS AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

**REPORTS AND ACCOUNTS**

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

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## CORPORATE INFORMATION

### TRUSTEE BOARD

**Chair** Sal Thirlway (resigned 28 September 2023)  
Deborah James (from 29 September 2023)

**Trustees:** Eve Burt (resigned 28 September 2023)  
Deborah James  
Sal Thirlway (resigned 18 October 2023)  
Robert Thompson  
Jennie Bayliss (from 29 September 2023)

**Company Secretary:** Michael Howe

**Business Managers:** Linzi Schier  
Nicola Lee

### CORPORATE INFORMATION

**Registered Charity:** 1168090  
**Registered company:** 10197205  
**Registered office:** 30 Meadway, Bedford, MK41 9HU  
**Website:** [www.ecpbedford.org](http://www.ecpbedford.org)

**Parent Company:** One YMCA, Charter House, Watford, WD17 2RT, [www.oneymca.org](http://www.oneymca.org)

### AUDITORS, BANKERS, INVESTMENT MANAGER AND SOLICITORS

**Auditor (External)** HaysMac LLP, 10 Queen Street Place, London, EC4R 1AG

**Auditor (Internal)** Beever and Struthers, 15 Bunhill Row, London, EC1Y 8LP

**Bankers:** HSBC Plc, 44-52 Lattimore Road, St Albans, Hertfordshire, AL1 3XL

**Solicitors:** Bates Wells Braithwaite LLP, 10 Queen Street Place, London, EC4R 1BE

## **REPORT OF THE TRUSTEE BOARD**

The Trustee Board presents its annual report together with the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024.

### **Organisation**

The Charity operates from a number of centres across Bedfordshire.

The Charity's main activities are to deliver the children's centre contract in Bedford Borough, as well as Therapeutic and Specialist Support Services including Domestic Abuse, Perpetrators and Sexual Violence. The Trustee Board is responsible for the operation of the Charity. Its Business Managers' reports to the Trustee Board and are line managed by the Group Chief Executive. The Trustee Board is supported by a Company Secretary.

The Charity closely works with a number of non-profit organisations. These are:

- FACES Bedford – volunteer management,
- Bedford Nursery Schools– provision of children's centre teaching and educational support
- One YMCA – provision of group and corporate services support.

Given that these organisations work closely with the Charity, a conflict-of-interest policy is in place and all necessary matters are disclosed.

### **Trustee Board**

The Trustee Board is responsible for the overall governance of the Charity. Those who have served during the year are set out on page 3. They hold a dual role of being Trustees of a registered Charity as well as being directors for the purposes of the Companies Act.

In accordance with the Articles of Association, Trustees serve for a three-year term after which they retire. A retiring member of the Trustee Board shall be eligible for re-election for a second and third full-term, but then having served a third term, must stand down as an elected member for a period of one year. Trustees can only serve for a maximum of nine years.

### **Strategic management**

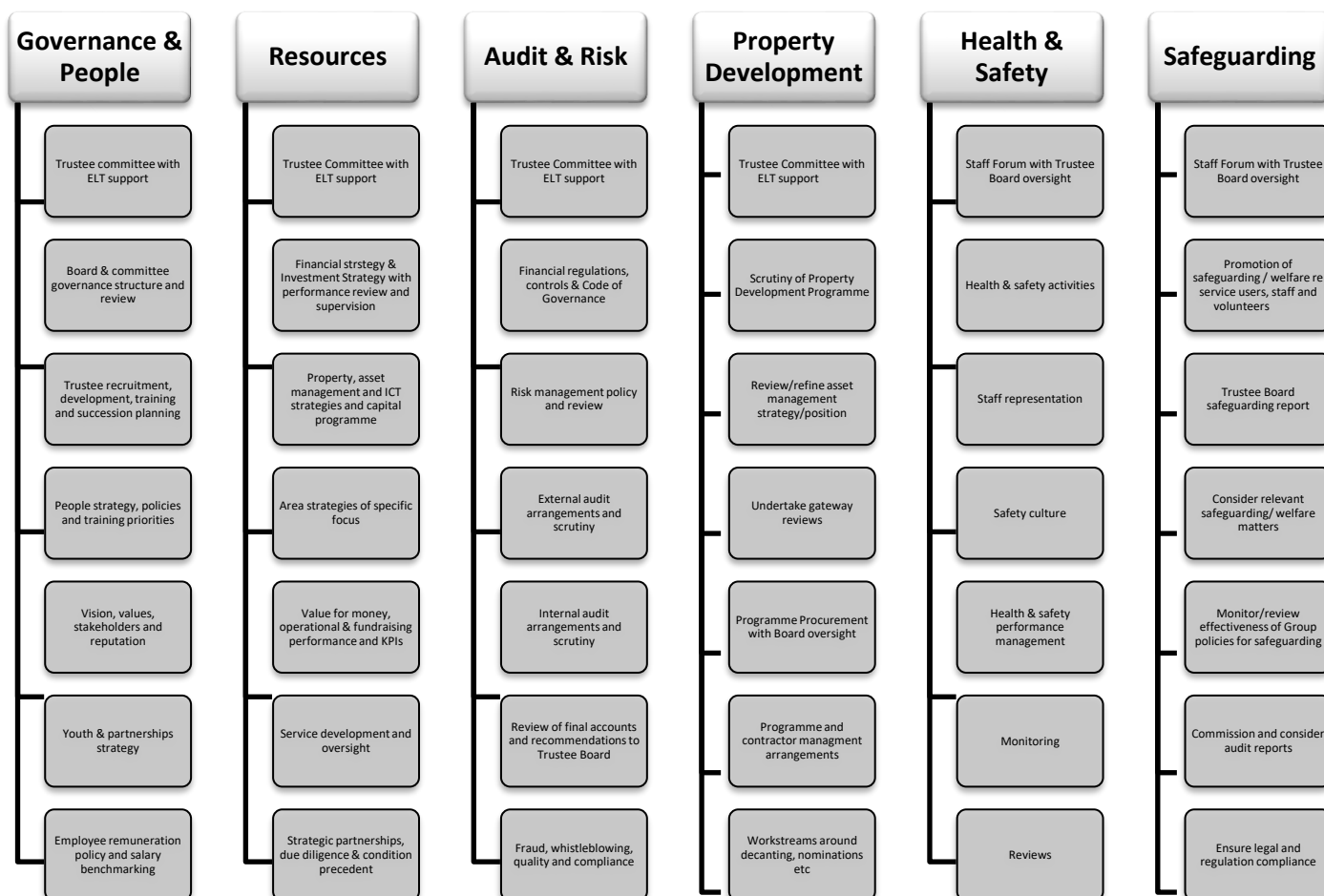
The Trustee Board is responsible for setting an appropriate strategy for the Charity. It also ensures that relevant performance measures are in place.

During the year, the Trustee Board:

- Undertook the necessary legal and governance steps to maintain the work of the Charity,
- Reviewed key policies,
- Scrutinised the service delivery plans and targets,
- Received reports on performance,
- Reviewed strategic risk,
- Ensured that policies and control frameworks were in place.

As the Charity is a subsidiary of One YMCA, it benefits from a broader committee structure that operates on a Group basis and ensures that detailed governance arrangements are established and monitored. The structure is set out in the following matrix.

## ONE YMCA - TRUSTEE BOARD



## EARLY CHILDHOOD PARTNERSHIP, SIGNPOST & HAVEN FIRST TRUSTEE BOARDS

### ONE YMCA DEVELOPMENT COMPANY

One YMCA subsidiary company, responsible for delivering the strategic requirements of the YMCA Trustee Board, supported by an Independent Director

### **Recruitment of members of the Trustee Board**

Members of the Trustee Board were recruited from partner organisations and comprise the following skill sets:

- Head Teacher,
- Head of Early Years,
- Corporate Strategy,
- Project Management.

New Trustees are inducted into the governance arrangements by the Company Secretary using an agreed framework and ongoing training is provided through a combination of trustee updates, attendance at Charity conferences / training events and bespoke training. A number of the Trustees also serve or have served as Trustees of other charities, which broadens the available skills base and the exposure to training and best practice of the Charity sector. On a periodic basis, the Trustee Board reviews its skills mix to ensure that any recruitment exercises are targeted at areas of need.

### **Management arrangements**

The role of the Business Manager is provided jointly by the Head of Family Services and Head of Therapeutic Specialist Support Services for the Group and reports to the Group Chief Executive. The Company Secretary supports the Board and provides governance and corporate services advice. They act within the authority delegated by the Trustee Board.

Salary levels are reviewed annually and uses agreed NJC pay scales (local government pay scales which are extensively used in the voluntary sector) as a guideline for identifying pay scales and banding, including those for key management posts. Any proposed amendments to salary scales or remuneration of key staff is taken to the Board for final decision.

### **Employees**

The strength of the Charity lies in the quality of all its employees and their contribution to achieving the goals of the objectives set for each department. The Charity shares information on its objectives, progress and activities through regular management and staff departmental meetings.

The Charity is committed to equal opportunities both in recruitment and retention of employees.

### **Gender pay reporting**

The Charity has adopted the Living Wage Foundation's Living Wage as the baseline for all employees who are engaged on a permanent contract of employment and are not apprentices. Moreover, the Charity has utilised an established job evaluation scheme to ensure that all job roles are properly assessed against an equal pay criteria. The overall workforce is 100% female.

The gender pay reporting principles demonstrate the following position as a snapshot on 5 April 2024 was:

- Mean gender pay gap – None
- Median gender pay gap – None
- Mean bonus gender pay gap – None
- Median bonus gender pay gap – None
- Proportion of males receiving a bonus payment - None
- Proportion of females receiving a bonus payment – None
- Proportion of males and females in each quartile pay band – All Quartiles – 100% female

As at the date of this report, the Charity was not required to submit gender pay statistics due to its size.

### **Indemnity insurance**

The Charity's insurance policies indemnify the Trustee Board and Officers against liability when acting for the Charity providing their actions are not reckless or fraudulent.

**Health and Safety**

The Trustees are aware of their responsibilities on all matters relating to health and safety. The Charity has prepared detailed health and safety policies and provides staff training and education on health and safety matters. During the year, the Parent Charity's health and safety committee met on three occasions comprising of representatives of all service areas including this Charity. The meetings were chaired by the Director of Operations and one of the Charity's children's centre Managers is a permanent Committee member.

**Safeguarding**

The Charity takes the protection of its service users, staff and volunteers very seriously. As a result, along with the Parent Charity, it has implemented a robust suite of Safeguarding measures, including comprehensive Policies and Procedures, as well as a clear Safeguarding reporting flowchart and a Safeguarding Link Trustee, who is also the chair of the ECP Board. There is also an active Safeguarding Leads Group, which meets regularly to review trends and learning from the range of safeguarding issues raised within the period. This Group is chaired by the Group Chief Executive and is attended by senior ECP staff members.

**Safeguarding Data**

The Charity takes the view that a key method of safeguarding people is to safeguard their data. As a result, it makes use of the external Data Protection Officer services of the Group, which are led by a specialist lawyer. The Charity holds a great deal of personal and sensitive data about children and their families, so it takes care to map where data is held and to undertake Data Protection Impact Assessments where appropriate. The Charity's senior staff also participate in the Data Group along with the Parent Charity, which, among other things, also considers cyber security and protection from external attacks.

**Public Benefit**

The Trustee Board held service users at the heart of its approach to formulating the strategic objectives and associated strategies. In doing so, the Trustee Board referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when planning for the future. Through the work that the Charity undertakes in its service areas, it delivers public benefit and serves a wide range of people, many of whom are vulnerable.

**Complaints**

There is a clear and simple complaints policy available to all service users. All complaints received are reported to the relevant Manager and are monitored by the Company Secretary to help ensure an appropriate and timely resolution and also to help identify any recurring issues that may require a different approach.

**Donations**

No charitable or political donations were made by ECP during the year.

**Going Concern**

The Executive has modelled income and expenditure as well as cashflows over the foreseeable future and demonstrated that both are resilient. The main contract with Bedford Borough Council was renewed for a 5-year term from October 2021 which gives greater financial certainty.

Accordingly, the Trustees have a reasonable expectation that the Charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future, being a period of twelve months after the date on which the report and financial statements are signed. Consequently, they continue to support the going concern basis in preparing financial statements.

**Reserves Policy**

Reserves that are unrestricted funds held by the Charity should be sufficient to meet all payment obligations and to contribute to the Charity fulfilling its aims and purposes. The target level of free reserves is determined annually by the Trustees.

## EARLY CHILDHOOD PARTNERSHIP

### Report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024

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

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements. The reserves as at 31 March 2024 were as follows:

<u>Reserves</u>	<u>£</u>
Revenue reserve	£351,545
Restricted funds	£181,530
<b>Total funds</b>	<b><u>£533,075</u></b>

The revenue reserve amounted to £351,545 which are classed as free reserves. In determining the level of unrestricted funds held as free reserves to cover working balances and payment obligations without any designation or subject to earmarking for particular purposes, the Trustees have taken into account the following matters:

- Three months of salary and running costs are approximately £476k.
- Bedford Borough Council have a fixed monthly payment plan embedded in the Charity's largest contract which ensures timely cash flow.
- Bedford Borough Council's payments are being received on a timely basis in advance of meeting expenditure.
- There is an inter-company loan and debenture in place with One YMCA for short-term cash flow support if required (2023: £Nil), and
- Group business interruption insurance cover is in place with a two-year indemnity period.

Accordingly, the Trustees consider it prudent to retain working balances of £60-100k in cash at each month end that are not designated or earmarked in order to meet unforeseen risks or obligations. This is an ongoing objective which is currently being met.

### Risk Management

The Trustee Board is responsible for ensuring that an active risk management process is in place and forms part of the ongoing organisational activity. During the year, the Parent Charity reviewed the group risk management policy. The strategic risk register is a standing item at each Group Trustee Board meeting and was reviewed four times. The register identifies the types of risks the Charity faces and prioritises them in terms of potential impact and likelihood of occurrence. The Trustees are satisfied that the internal financial controls comply in all material respects with the guidelines issued by the Charity Commission and has established a separate internal audit function (carried out by an independent internal audit firm) to review risks on a rotational basis.

The principal risks affecting the Charity relate to loss of contract income or mismanagement of a Safeguarding issue. We undertake regular strategic meetings with Bedford Borough Council to monitor the service level agreement. We have received positive feedback and work internally to ensure that our services are well managed and exceed expectations. The management of the safeguarding risks are detailed in the Risks and Uncertainties section on page 13.

The Trustees confirm that they have identified and understand the risks to which the Charity is subject and that they are being actively managed.

### Internal Controls Assurance

The Trustees acknowledge their overall responsibility for establishing and maintaining the whole system of internal control and for reviewing its effectiveness.



## **EARLY CHILDHOOD PARTNERSHIP**

### **Report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024**

The system of internal control is designed to manage, rather than eliminate, the risk of failure to achieve business objectives, and to provide reasonable, and not absolute, assurance against material misstatement or loss.

The process for identifying, evaluating and managing the significant risks faced by the Charity is ongoing. The Trustee Board reviews the strategic risk register at every meeting.

Key elements of the control framework include: -

- Board-approved terms of reference,
- Clearly defined management responsibilities for the identification, evaluation and control of significant risks,
- Formal recruitment, retention, training and development policies for all staff,
- Established authorisation and appraisal procedures for significant new initiatives and commitments,
- Regular review of cash flow,
- Regular reporting on key business objectives, targets and outcomes,
- Board approved Code of Conduct,
- Board approved safeguarding, health & safety, whistleblowing, anti-fraud and corruption policies,
- Board approved fraud policies, covering prevention, detection and reporting, together with recoverability of assets.

A fraud register is maintained and is reviewed by the Group CFO on a regular basis. During the year there were no findings of fraudulent activity.

The Board benefits from internal controls work undertaken by the Parent Charity on corporate services activities. The Parent Charity monitored the internal audit plan for the Group throughout the year.

#### **Code of Governance**

The Parent Charity complies with the National Housing Federation's Code of Governance (2020) on a Group basis which incorporates the activities of the Charity. During the year, the compliance framework has been reviewed. As an evolving organisation, the Charity will continue to review and develop its governance in order to best serve its beneficiaries.

### **STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TRUSTEE BOARD FOR THE REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

#### **General Financial Responsibilities**

The Trustee Board is responsible for preparing the Report of the Trustee Board, Operating and Financial Review and Strategic Report and financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the Trustee Board to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the Trustees have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable laws). Under company law, the Trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Charity and the surplus or deficit of the Charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- make judgements that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Charity will continue in business; and
- observe the methods and principles of the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the Charity's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Charity enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. The Trustees are also

## **EARLY CHILDHOOD PARTNERSHIP**

### **Report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024**

responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

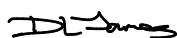
The Trustees confirm that:

- so far as each Trustee is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the Charity's auditors is unaware; and
- the Trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken as Trustees in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditors is aware of that information.

The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the Charity's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

### **Approval**

The Report of the Trustee Board was approved by the Trustees on 16 December 2024 and signed on their behalf by:



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Deborah James  
Chair and Trustee

## **OPERATING & FINANCIAL REVIEW AND STRATEGIC REPORT**

### **Introduction**

The report and accounts for the financial year ending on 31 March 2024 are set out in this document.

### **Principal Activity**

The Charity's principal activity is to improve outcomes for young children and their families and reduce inequalities between families in greatest need and their peers in:

- Child development and school readiness;
- Parenting aspirations and parenting skills;
- Child and family health and life changes;
- Improving the wellbeing of young children;
- Making arrangements to secure that early childhood services are provided in an integrated manner to facilitate access to services, maximising the benefit of those services to parents, prospective parents and young children.

These activities are delivered from a number of Centres, virtual platforms and additional outreach sites in the Bedfordshire area.

### **Partners**

Early Childhood Partnership works in close partnership with three not-for-profit organisations:

- FACES Bedford (registered Charity),
- Peter Pan Training Partnership (not-for-profit),
- One YMCA (registered Charity).

The Charity is led by its Trustee Board and Co-Business Managers with governance support from its Company Secretary.

## **BUSINESS AND FINANCIAL REVIEW**

During the year, the Charity has worked in a strategic manner so that it:

- Operates the children's centre service on behalf of Bedford Borough Council for the benefit of service users,
- Delivers excellent Therapeutic Support Services to families in need,
- Acts as the Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA) to the Local Authority,
- Ensures that effective governance arrangements are in force,
- Works across the Bedfordshire area,
- Improves the outcomes for parents and children who are benefitting from the services provided,
- Operates within a leaner and more efficient funding framework.

The Trustee Board supports these measures and the ways that they can maximise the resources available for delivering the Charity's objectives and serving beneficiaries.

### **Financial review**

The financial statements are prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) for Charities. The Charity returned an operating surplus of £64,466 (2023: £59,593). On an ongoing basis, the Trustee Board is committed to operating a balanced operating budget.

During the 2023/24 financial year, the Trustee Board has focused the staff team upon delivering a programme to improve underlying effectiveness of the children's centre operations and the development of new Therapeutic and Specialist Support Services so that the Charity is well placed for the future. This included:

- Delivering an improved level of performance against Bedford Borough Council's key performance indicators,
- Securing a variety of contracts and funding to extend and develop work with the most vulnerable children and families, including Independent Sexual Violence Advisory Service, Play Therapy, perpetrator programmes and Domestic Abuse Support.

### **Objectives and Strategy**

The Charity's objects are to:

- to provide parents, expectant parents and carers with education to assist them to develop their parenting, social and personal skills and capabilities to enable them to enhance the outcomes for young children;
- to promote and preserve the health of parents, expectant parents, carers and young people; and
- to relieve and give support and assistance to parents, expectant parents, carers and young children who are in conditions of need, hardship or distress by reason of their social, physical, emotional or economic circumstances.

The strategies employed to achieve the Charity's objectives are to:

- Operate children's centre services so that operations take place through two main work-streams:
  - Family support targeted services,
  - Children's centre universal services.
- Align and monitoring contract and partner key performance indicators (KPI);
- Deliver the service delivery plan that aligns the contract and the needs of beneficiaries; and
- Develop and deliver a range of Therapeutic and Support Services to children and families who need it most.

### **Achievements and performance**

In relation to the strategic objectives, the Charity has made a positive impact upon many lives during the year.

#### Service delivery plan developed to deliver KPIs and new operating model.

- The Council Contract and Partner service level agreements have been delivered.
- The contract KPIs have been delivered.
- The Service delivery plan has continued to develop the Charity's operating model.
- The Charity's staff deliver the core services via two work streams of: Family support, Universal services.
- The standard of service delivery has been rated as "Good" by Bedford Borough Council.
- New Therapeutic and Specialist Support Service established and working effectively.
- New Contracts and grant funding secured for future years.

#### Matrix management and partnership working in action

- Family Support Practitioners are aligned to early year providers as link-workers and liaison arrangements established.
- School and educational support being provided by Peter Pan Teaching School Alliance is driving up the standards of service delivery and offering effective peer support.
- The Charity's website, Facebook and bookings portal are in full use by beneficiaries.

#### General

- Providing children's centre services to children and supporting vulnerable children with targeted support;
- Making excellent progress in developing the Bedford Borough children's centres with a "Good" assessment being maintained throughout the year;
- Continuing to foster close partnerships and working relationships with social care and health services for the benefit of the families who are cared for;
- Developing new, much-needed services that respond to local needs.

The services provided are subject to Commissioner review and the suite of outcomes and key performance indicators agreed in the Council's contract. Performance against these is monitored on a regular basis.

### **Strategic developments on new activities**

The Charity has worked hard to incorporate and deliver services in a compressed timescale. It will seek to expand its operations when it is prudent and sensible to do so and where there is a need to expand the delivery of services to beneficiaries.

### **Looking to the future**

The Charity is committed to developing a strong and vibrant organisation in order to serve its beneficiaries and the local community. In doing so, it will

- Develop existing service delivery,
- Build upon the foundations established in the incorporation to attract new business in areas of strength,
- Improve value for money,
- Challenge expenditure levels,
- Ensure that all service areas are exceeding performance targets.

### **Risks and uncertainties**

Risks that may prevent the Charity achieving its objectives are considered and reviewed by the Group Trustee Board on a periodic basis as part of the corporate planning processes. The risks are recorded and assessed in terms of their impact and probability. Major risks, presenting the greatest threats to the Charity are reported to the Group Trustee Board at every meeting. The Charity's major risks relate to:

- Loss of contract income,
- Safeguarding / service user reputational incident,
- Key performance indicator compliance,
- Partner effectiveness,
- Property legislative compliance relating to local authority buildings.

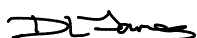
One of the principal risks relates to safeguarding given the beneficiary group that is being worked with. Whilst the Trustee Board reviews controls and standards, One YMCA provides extensive safeguarding support through its Safeguarding Leads Meeting which operates on a Group basis to challenge, support and review the protection and prevention arrangements in force. ECP's Head of Family Support attends the Safeguarding Leads meeting as well as advising on any concerns for the Charity. The Safeguarding Policy is regularly reviewed by One YMCA, the Business Managers and Partners to ensure that it meets the needs of the services being provided.

On an annual basis, the Group reviews its key policies and controls frameworks. These included the financial regulations as well as the Code of Governance, committee terms of reference, code of conduct, safeguarding, fraud, whistleblowing, health & safety and equal opportunities policies.

The risk management and internal controls arrangements are described in more detail in the Report of the Trustee Board on pages 8 and 9.

### **Approval**

In approving the Operating and Financial Review, the Trustees are also approving the Strategic Report in their capacity as directors of the Charity. The Operating and Financial Review and the Strategic Report were approved by the Trustee Board on 16 December 2024 and signed on their behalf by:



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Deborah James  
Chair and Trustee

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD PARTNERSHIP**

**Opinion**

We have audited the financial statements of Early Childhood Partnership for the year-ended 31 March 2024 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Statement of Cash Flows and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 *The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland* (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2024 and of the charitable company's net movement in funds, including the income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

**Basis for opinion**

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charity in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

**Conclusions relating to going concern.**

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

**Other information**

The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Report of the Trustee Board, and the Operating and Financial Review and Strategic Report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

**Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006**

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Report of the Trustee Board, the Operating and Financial Review and the Strategic Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the directors' report contained within the Report of the Trustee Board and the Operating and Financial Review and Strategic Report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

**Matters on which we are required to report by exception**

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Report of the Trustee Board (which incorporates the director's report), the Operating and Financial Review or the Strategic Report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept by the charitable company; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

**Responsibilities of trustees for the financial statements**

As explained more fully in the Statement of Responsibilities of the Trustee Board set out on page 9, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

**Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements**

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

Based on our understanding of the charitable company and the environment in which it operates, we identified that the principal risks of non-compliance with laws and regulations related to Charity Law, Safeguarding regulations, Ofsted and Health and Safety regulations, and we considered the extent to which non-compliance might have a material effect on the financial statements. We also considered those laws and regulations that have a direct impact on the preparation of the financial statements such as the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Act 2011, and we considered other factors such as taxation compliance.

We evaluated management's incentives and opportunities for fraudulent manipulation of the financial statements (including the risk of override of controls) and determined that the principal risks were related to areas of estimation uncertainty and manual accounting journals. Audit procedures performed by the engagement team included:

## EARLY CHILDHOOD PARTNERSHIP

### Report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024

- Inspecting correspondence with regulators and tax authorities;
- Discussions with management including consideration of known or suspected instances of non-compliance with laws and regulation and fraud;
- Evaluating management's controls designed to prevent and detect irregularities;
- Identifying and testing a sample of manual journals; and
- Challenging assumptions and judgements made by management in their accounting estimates

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: [www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities](http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities). This description forms part of our auditor's report.

#### Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an Auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's members, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



Tracey Young (Senior Statutory Auditor)  
For and on behalf of HaysMac LLP, Statutory Auditor  
Date 18 December 2024

10 Queen Street Place  
London  
EC4R 1AG



**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES****(Incorporating the income and expenditure account)****FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

		<u>Unrestricted Funds</u>	<u>Restricted Funds</u>	<u>Total Funds</u>	<u>Unrestricted &amp; Total Funds</u>
	<u>Notes</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
		<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
<b>Income</b>					
Donations and legacies	3	7,014	-	7,014	4,031
Charitable activities	3	1,734,967	227,642	1,962,609	1,813,849
<b>Total income</b>		<b>1,741,981</b>	<b>227,642</b>	<b>1,969,623</b>	<b>1,817,880</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Charitable activities	4	1,673,010	232,147	1,905,157	1,758,287
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<b>1,673,010</b>	<b>232,147</b>	<b>1,905,157</b>	<b>1,758,287</b>
<b>Net income</b>		<b>68,971</b>	<b>(4,505)</b>	<b>64,466</b>	<b>59,593</b>
Transfers between funds		(24,775)	24,775	-	
<b>Net movement in funds</b>		<b>44,196</b>	<b>20,270</b>	<b>64,466</b>	<b>59,593</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>					
Total funds at start of period		307,349	161,260	468,609	409,016
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>	11	<b>351,545</b>	<b>181,530</b>	<b>533,075</b>	<b>468,609</b>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

**EARLY CHILDHOOD PARTNERSHIP**  
**Report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024**

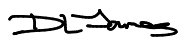
**BALANCE SHEET**  
**AS AT 31 MARCH 2024**

Registered company 10197205

	<u>Notes</u>	<u>2024</u> £	<u>2023</u> £
<b>Current assets</b>			
Debtors	8	137,958	81,404
Cash at bank and in hand		1,148,152	647,005
<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>1,286,110</b>	<b>728,409</b>
 <b>Liabilities</b>			
Creditors: falling due within one year	9	724,335	231,100
<b>Total current liabilities</b>		<b>724,335</b>	<b>231,100</b>
 <b>Net current assets</b>		<b>561,775</b>	<b>497,309</b>
 Provisions for liabilities and charges	10	28,700	28,700
<b>Total Net Assets</b>		<b>533,075</b>	<b>468,609</b>
 <b>The funds of the Charity</b>			
Unrestricted funds		351,545	307,349
Restricted funds		181,530	161,260
<b>Total Charity funds</b>	11	<b>533,075</b>	<b>468,609</b>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

The accounts were approved by the Trustee Board on 16 December 2024 and were signed on its behalf by:



Deborah James  
Chair and Trustee

**STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS**  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

	<u>2024</u> £	<u>2023</u> £
<b>Net cash inflow /(outflow) from operating activities</b>	<b>501,147</b>	<b>(56,509)</b>
<b>Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the period	647,005	703,514
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period	<u><b>1,148,152</b></u>	<u><b>647,005</b></u>
<b>Reconciliation of net income to net cash inflow from operating activities</b>		
Net income for the year	64,466	59,593
(Increase) in debtors	(56,554)	(44,898)
Increase /(decrease) in creditors and provisions	493,235	(71,204)
<b>Net cash inflow /(outflow) from operating activities</b>	<u><b>501,147</b></u>	<u><b>(56,509)</b></u>
<b>Analysis of cash and cash equivalents</b>		
Cash	1,148,152	647,005
Cash equivalents	-	-
<b>Total cash and cash equivalents</b>	<u><b>1,148,152</b></u>	<u><b>647,005</b></u>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

**NOTES TO THE REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

**1. Status**

The Company is limited by guarantee, registered under the Companies Act 2006 registration number 10197205 and a registered Charity number 1168090. The Charity meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

The registered office is 30 Meadway, Bedford, MK41 9HU.

The sole corporate member is One YMCA.

The Member of the Company undertakes to contribute such amount as may be required (not exceeding £1.00) to the assets of the Company in the event of the same being wound up while it is a member for payment of the debt and liabilities of the Company contracted and of the costs, charges and expenses of winding up. If upon the winding up or dissolution of the Company there remains, after the satisfaction of all its debts and liabilities, any property whatsoever, shall transferred to the Member (One YMCA) or if the Member no longer exists or declined to receive the assets, then to the National Council of Young Men's Christian Association (Incorporated) or, in the event that these routes are inoperable, as directed by the Charity Commission.

**2. Principal accounting policies**

The financial statements are prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities second edition, effective 1 January 2019, preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102).

In the view of the trustees in applying the accounting policies adopted, the only area of judgement relates to the provision for dilapidations as disclosed in 10. No other judgements were required that have a significant effect on the amounts recognised in the financial statements nor do any estimates or assumptions made carry a significant risk of material adjustment in the next financial year. No complex financial instruments are held.

**(a) Basis of accounting**

Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction values unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy notes. Those assets measured at fair value are re-measured at each balance sheet date.

**(b) Going concern**

The Charity's business activities, its current financial position and factors likely to affect its future development are set out within the Operating and Financial Review. On this basis, the Trustee Board has a reasonable expectation that the Charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future, being a period of twelve months after the date on which the report and financial statements are signed. As a consequence, they continue to support the going concern basis in preparing financial statements. No material uncertainties exist.

**(c) Recognition of income**

These are included in the Statement of Financial Activities when:

- a) the Charity becomes entitled to the resources,
- b) it is more likely than not that the Charity will receive the resources,
- c) the monetary value can be measured with sufficient reliability.

**NOTES TO THE REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

Contractual income is included in the Statement of Financial Activities once the Charity has delivered its obligations.

**(d) Volunteer help**

The value of any voluntary help received is not included in the accounts but is described in the Report of the Trustee Board

**(e) Expenditure**

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

The Charity has incurred expenditure on support costs. Support costs have been allocated between governance costs and other support. Governance costs comprise all costs involving public accountability of the Charity and its compliance with regulation and good practice.

Support costs include central functions and have been allocated on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Liabilities are recognised where it is more likely than not that there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the Charity to pay out resources and the amount of the obligation can be measured with reasonable certainty.

**(f) Debtors and creditors**

Short term debtors are measured at transaction price, less any impairment and short-term creditors are measured at the transaction price.

**(g) Deferred income**

Where income has been received in respect of service to be provided in a future period, the relevant income has been deferred as a creditor.

**(h) Operating leases**

Rentals payable under the operating leases are charged on a straight-line basis over the lease term. The benefits of lease incentives are recognised in income and expenditure over the lease period.

**(i) Pensions**

**Group Personal Pension Plan (defined contribution)**

The Charity makes contributions to a group personal pension plan (defined contribution) provided by Aviva which is open to all employees.

**(j) Provisions for Liabilities**

Provision has been made for expected property costs at the end of the leases based on the lease terms, management's assessment of the property condition and external evidence supporting the likely costs. The estimation involves a level of judgment and will be reassessed annually.

**(k) Fund Accounting**

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

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

**NOTES TO THE REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024****3. Income**

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Total Funds
	<u>2024</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
	£	£	£	£
<b>Donations and legacies</b>				
Donations	7,014	-	7,014	4,031
<b>Charitable activities</b>				
Bedford Borough Council children's centres	1,139,935	-	1,139,935	992,597
Therapeutic and specialist support services	-	227,642	227,642	275,798
Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA)	221,018	-	221,018	242,128
Perpetrator	54,461	-	54,461	76,871
Counselling and Play Therapy	73,729	-	73,729	91,032
Play Therapy	29,510	-	29,510	29,510
Community Link Worker	27,252	-	27,252	-
Family Hubs	41,374	-	41,374	-
Chrysalis Victim Care Support	29,997	-	29,997	-
Other	117,691	-	117,691	105,913
<b>Total income</b>	<b>1,741,981</b>	<b>227,642</b>	<b>1,969,623</b>	<b>1,817,880</b>

Restricted income received in 2024 relating to charitable activities totalled £227,642 (2023: £275,798).

**4. Expenditure**

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Total Funds
	<u>2024</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
	£	£	£	£
<b>Charitable activities</b>				
Children's centre service delivery	975,103	-	975,103	906,158
Programme delivery by partner organisations	58,110	-	58,110	58,110
Therapeutic and specialist support services	282,115	232,147	514,262	647,365
Support costs	357,682	-	357,682	146,654
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>1,673,010</b>	<b>232,147</b>	<b>1,905,157</b>	<b>1,758,287</b>

Restricted expenditure relating to charitable activities in 2024 totalled £232,147 (2023: £260,941.)

**NOTES TO THE REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024****5. Support costs**

	<u>Children's Centre</u>	<u>Therapeutic Services</u>	<u>Total funds</u>	<u>Total funds</u>
	<u>2024</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
Auditors' remuneration (excluding VAT) for audit services	5,940	3,960	9,900	6,583
Company secretarial	3,000	2,000	5,000	5,000
<b>Governance costs</b>	<b>8,940</b>	<b>5,960</b>	<b>14,900</b>	<b>11,583</b>
Finance, human resources, property & safety (inc. VAT)	239,851	102,931	342,782	135,071
<b>Total support costs</b>	<b>248,791</b>	<b>108,891</b>	<b>357,682</b>	<b>146,654</b>

Support costs and governance costs are apportioned between the children's centres and Therapeutic Services based upon the time spent on each activity.

**6. Trustee Board**

The Trustees are the non-executive directors of the Company and are also the Trustee Board. None of the Trustee Board received emoluments. No expenses were reimbursed during the financial period (2023: nil).

**7. Employee information**

<b>Average monthly number of employees</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>
Children's centres	24.8	26.1
Therapeutic Support Services	20.9	27.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>45.7</b>	<b>53.9</b>
<b>Staff costs (for the above persons)</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Wages and salaries	957,629	1,058,990
Social security costs	85,523	95,683
Other pension costs	34,886	41,599
	<b>1,075,038</b>	<b>1,196,272</b>

There were no employees earning more than £60,000 per annum (2023: nil).

The aggregate emoluments of key management personnel were £13,362 (2023: £44,619).

**NOTES TO THE REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024****8. Debtors**

	2024 £	2023 £
Trade debtors	84,016	37,000
Amount owed by One YMCA	27,606	1,240
Prepayments and accrued income	26,336	43,164
	<b>137,958</b>	<b>81,404</b>

**9. Creditors****Amounts falling due within one year**

	2024 £	2023 £
Trade creditors	14,632	18,907
Accruals	176,671	99,829
Deferred income	156,520	91,143
Other taxes and social security costs	18,430	10,951
Other creditors	10,300	10,270
Amounts owed to One YMCA	347,782	-
	<b>724,335</b>	<b>231,100</b>

**10. Provisions for liabilities and charges**

	2024 £	2023 £
<b>At 1st April</b>	28,700	28,700
Arising / (used) during the year	-	-
<b>At 31 March</b>	<b>28,700</b>	<b>28,700</b>

A provision for dilapidations to premises is being held to cover the costs of any necessary reinstatement and repairs to the properties at the termination of the leases.

**11. Fund analysis - 2024**

<b>Fund</b>	<b><u>Funds b/f</u></b>	<b><u>Income</u></b>	<b><u>Expenditure</u></b>	<b><u>Transfer</u></b>	<b><u>Funds c/f</u></b>
<b>Unrestricted - general purposes</b>	<b>307,349</b>	<b>1,741,981</b>	<b>1,673,010</b>	<b>(24,775)</b>	<b>351,545</b>
<b>Restricted Funds:</b>					
Big Lottery - Horizons Project	-	123,672	144,288	51,277	30,661
Children In Need	2,958	-	-	(2,958)	-
Male Victims	2,179	-	-	(2,179)	-
Violence & Exploitation Reduction Unit	11,741	-	-	(11,741)	-
ISVA LGBTQ	12,398	40,759	31,878	(16,874)	4,405
Community Link Worker	6,658	25,349	23,119	(8,888)	-
Steele Charitable Trust	-	30,000	25,000	-	5,000
Harpur Trust	-	7,862	7,862	16,138	16,138
One YMCA	125,326	-	-		125,326
<b>Restricted funds</b>	<b>161,260</b>	<b>227,642</b>	<b>232,147</b>	<b>24,775</b>	<b>181,530</b>
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>468,609</b>	<b>1,969,624</b>	<b>1,905,157</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>533,075</b>



**NOTES TO THE REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024****Big Lottery Fund – Horizons Project**

A project working with families affected by domestic abuse, parental substance misuse and parental mental health issues.

**Children In Need**

A grant funding the provision of a full-time therapist supporting children affected by domestic abuse in Bedford.

**Harpur Trust**

A grant funding the provision of a full-time play therapist supporting children affected by domestic abuse in Bedford.

**Violence and Exploitation Reduction Unit**

A project delivering targeted play therapy for children across Bedfordshire.

**Steele Charitable Trust**

A grant funding the provision of a full-time play therapist supporting children affected by domestic abuse in Luton.

**ISVA LGBTQ**

This project delivers independent sexual violence advocacy for victims from the LGBTQ community.

**Community Link Worker**

This project delivers community development work through our network of children's centres, linking in with volunteer led sessions to encourage engagement in additional activities for families.

**One YMCA**

Funds of £131,301 from One YMCA were brought forward from the previous year with expenditure of £5,975. The donation was made to ECP for its existing and new activities

**Fund analysis - 2023**

<b>Fund</b>	<b>Funds b/f</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Transfer</b>	<b>Funds c/f</b>
<b>Unrestricted - general purposes</b>	<b>277,715</b>	<b>1,542,082</b>	<b>1,497,346</b>	<b>(15,102)</b>	<b>307,349</b>
<b>Restricted Funds:</b>					
Big Lottery - Horizons Project	-	134,054	136,907	2,853	-
Children In Need	-	9,578	6,620	-	2,958
Male Victims	-	10,041	7,862	-	2,179
Violence & Exploitation Reduction Unit	-	12,360	619	-	11,741
ISVA LGBTQ	-	33,890	21,492	-	12,398
Community Link Worker	-	25,349	18,691	-	6,658
Steele Charitable Trust	-	30,000	41,855	11,855	-
Harpur Trust	-	20,526	20,920	394	-
One YMCA	131,301	-	5,975	-	125,326
<b>Restricted funds</b>	<b>131,301</b>	<b>275,798</b>	<b>260,941</b>	<b>15,102</b>	<b>161,260</b>
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>409,016</b>	<b>1,817,880</b>	<b>1,758,287</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>468,609</b>

**NOTES TO THE REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

**12. Taxation**

The Company is a registered Charity qualifying for relief from income and capital gains taxes on its Charitable activities.

**13. Related party transactions**

One YMCA

For the financial period under review, one of the Trustees was also a Trustee of One YMCA, Sal Thirlway. One YMCA provides central services to the Charity such as finance, human resources, safety & compliance and company secretarial work on an arm's length basis. A charge was made for these services amounting to £347,782 (inclusive of VAT) (2023: £140,071).

The Charity benefits from an inter-company loan facility for short term cash flow purposes. It was not used in 2023/24. When used, interest is chargeable, it is subject to a debenture deed and One YMCA has a registered charge in respect of it. There is currently a nil balance (2023: £Nil).

Others

For the financial year under review:

1. A charge of £28,140 (2023: £28,140) was paid in respect of Peter Pan Training Partnership for services during the financial year. Deborah James, a trustee, was a member of the strategic governing board of Peter Pan Training Partnership which provides teaching and education support.
2. A charge was made by FACES Bedford for services amounting to £29,970 (2023: £29,970). Eve Burt and Jennie Bayliss, trustees, were trustees of Faces Bedford who provide volunteering support.

Conflicts of interest

A conflicts of interest policy is in force and all interests are declared. Where appropriate, conflicted trustees do not participate in decisions.

**14. Operating lease commitments**

There are a number of leases in place for children's centre properties. The rent at each property is £1.