

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

England & Wales · Charity number 1180754

Details

Other names	FIRST STAR ACADEMIES UK
Status	Registered
Legal form	Charitable company
Company number	11067711
Registered	2018-11-19
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

Address	Registered Office (UK) Ltd 167-169 Great Portland Street London W1W 5PF
Phone	07748757278
Email	info@firststaruk.org
Website	www.firststaruk.org

Activities

Objects: THE CHARITABLE PURPOSES OF THE COMPANY ARE:(A) TO PROVIDE RELIEF AND ASSISTANCE TO PEOPLE IN NEED WHO ARE YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM WHO HAVE ENTERED INTO THE SOCIAL CARE SYSTEM IN PARTICULAR BUT NOT EXCLUSIVELY BY PROVIDING THEM WITH ACADEMIC AND LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION AND CAREGIVER ENGAGEMENT. (B) TO ADVANCE THE EDUCATION OF PEOPLE IN NEED WHO ARE YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM WHO HAVE ENTERED INTO THE SOCIAL CARE SYSTEM IN PARTICULAR BUT NOT EXCLUSIVELY BY PROVIDING THEM WITH ACADEMIC AND LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION AND CAREGIVER ENGAGEMENT.

Activities: First Star improves the lives of Looked-after Children and Young People by partnering with universities and working with virtual school heads, schools and their designated teachers, social services, carers, and local authorities to ensure looked-after young people have the academic, life skills, and adult support needed to successfully transition to higher education and adulthood.

Classification

- **How:** Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information
- **What:** Education/training, Disability, Economic/community Development/employment
- **Who:** Children/young People, Other Defined Groups

Geography

- Scotland
- Throughout England And Wales

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£132,127	£142,162	-	-
2024-03-31	£308,125	£337,318	-	-
2023-03-31	£311,780	£230,093	-	-
2022-03-31	£263,600	£269,557	-	-
2021-03-31	£182,072	£114,744	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Robert Gratton	Chair	2025-03-24
Monica Henao-De-Castro		2024-05-13
PETER SAMUELSON		2018-04-16
STUART RICHARD IRVINE		2018-04-16
Teshie Monae		2024-05-01
Tom Brighton		2024-05-01
richard Donnelly		2025-08-19

Accounts

Charity registration number 1180754 (England and Wales)

Company registration number 11067711

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK
ANNUAL REPORT AND UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Trustees

Stuart Irvine	
Peter Samuelson	
Tom Brighton	(Appointed 18 October 2024)
Monica Henao-De-Castro	(Appointed 20 October 2024)
Teshie Monae	(Appointed 18 October 2024)
Richard Donnelly	(Appointed 25 November 2025)
Robert Gratton	(Appointed 15 May 2025)
Caroline Place	(Appointed 24 March 2025)

Secretary

Stuart Irvine

Charity number

1180754

Company number

11067711

Registered office

167-169 Great Portland Street
London
W1W 5PF

Independent examiner

Gravita Audit Oxford LLP
First Floor, Park Central
40-41 Park End Street
Oxford
OX1 1JD

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FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

The trustees present their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the charity's memorandum and articles of association, the Companies Act 2006 and "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).

Review of the Year and Strategic Context (2024–25)

During the year ended 31 March 2025, the Trustees undertook a full, organisation-wide review of First Star Scholars UK's delivery model, funding profile and operating structure. This review considered the charity's historical successes, areas for improvement, and the changing external context in which the charity world operates, including increased financial pressures on philanthropy, universities and the wider education sector.

Since its establishment, First Star Scholars UK has demonstrated strong impact through intensive, high-quality residential programmes delivered in partnership with universities. These programmes have helped care-experienced young people to raise aspirations, strengthen educational engagement and build confidence in navigating academic environments. However, the Trustees recognised that the existing model was comparatively high-cost and reliant on a narrow funding base, making it vulnerable in a period of reduced philanthropic capacity and constrained university budgets.

At the same time, the review identified opportunities to improve recruitment and retention of participants, increase consistency of impact, and reach significantly more young people without compromising programme quality. Evidence from delivery, alumni feedback and external research informed a strategic shift towards a more sustainable and scalable model.

As a result, during 2024–25 the charity implemented a new strategic plan focused on sustainability, cost control and impact. This included moving from a small number of longer, higher-cost residential programmes to a blended model combining shorter, high-quality residencies, anchored provision at national centres of excellence (including the National STEM Centre in York), and enhanced online and place-based delivery. The new approach is centrally designed, evidence-informed and led by a combination of highly experienced senior education leaders and care-experienced people, ensuring both professional rigour and lived-experience insight.

The Trustees also identified the need to reduce reliance on Trust and Foundation funding over time and to increase sustainable income streams. During the year, work began to diversify funding, including a greater focus on Pupil Premium Plus, local authority engagement, and deeper partnership with universities as co-investors rather than sole hosts.

These strategic changes position the charity for a more resilient future. In 2025–26, First Star Scholars UK will, for the first time, begin delivery under its new regional model at University College London and Emmanuel College, Cambridge, marking a significant milestone in the charity's development and its ambition to reach many more care-experienced young people across England.

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Our Mission, Values, Aims and Objectives

Purpose and Aims

The charity's purposes, as set out in the objects contained in the Company's Articles of Association, are:

- To provide relief and assistance to people in need who are young people in the United Kingdom who have entered the social care system, in particular but not exclusively, through the provision of academic and life skills education and engagement with carers and caregivers.
- To advance the education of people in need who are young people in the United Kingdom who have entered the social care system, in particular but not exclusively, through the provision of academic and life skills education and engagement with carers and caregivers.

These purposes guide all aspects of the charity's strategy, delivery and governance.

Mission

First Star Scholars UK exists to improve the life chances of looked-after children and care-experienced young people by ensuring they have the academic preparation, life skills, aspiration and sustained adult support needed to progress successfully through education and into adulthood. The charity works in partnership with universities, Virtual School Heads, schools and Designated Teachers, carers, social services and local authorities to address entrenched educational disadvantage and systemic barriers faced by young people in care.

Strategic progress during 2024–25

During the year ended 31 March 2025, the Trustees led a period of significant organisational development focused on long-term sustainability, leadership capacity, governance strength and impact quality. This work built on the charity's proven delivery record while responding to increasing financial pressures across philanthropy, higher education and statutory systems.

A new strategic plan was implemented during the year, centred on three core priorities: **sustainability**, **scalability**, and **quality of impact**. This included a transition away from a small number of longer, higher-cost residential programmes towards a more centralised and evidence-led delivery model capable of reaching more young people at lower unit cost without compromising safeguarding or outcomes. The revised model combines shorter, high-quality residential experiences, anchored provision at national centres of excellence (including the National STEM Centre in York), and complementary online and place-based activity.

The Trustees also prioritised reducing over-reliance on Trust and Foundation funding. During the year, work progressed to diversify income and strengthen sustainable funding streams, including increased alignment with Pupil Premium Plus, engagement with local authorities, and deeper partnerships with universities as long-term delivery and funding partners rather than solely host institutions.

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Leadership, governance and lived experience

A key area of progress during 2024–25 was the strengthening of both executive and non-executive leadership. The charity deliberately invested in building a leadership team with deep expertise in education, safeguarding, governance and systems change. Senior roles are held by highly experienced professionals with proven track records in school leadership, safeguarding practice, and the delivery of complex services for vulnerable young people.

In parallel, the charity made significant progress in embedding lived experience at the heart of governance and strategic decision-making. Care-experienced alumni of First Star programmes increasingly contribute to programme design, evaluation and delivery. Importantly, alumni have progressed into formal governance roles, including service as Trustees and advisors to the Board. This shift ensures that the charity's strategic direction, priorities and delivery model are informed by both professional expertise and lived experience, strengthening relevance, accountability and impact.

The Board of Trustees was reviewed and refreshed during the year to ensure an appropriate balance of skills, independence and experience, with particular emphasis on safeguarding oversight, financial sustainability and impact evaluation.

Our Values in practice

The charity's values continue to underpin all activity and were actively reviewed and embedded during the year with input from scholars, alumni, staff, trustees and partners.

Belonging

We foster a culture in which every young person feels valued, heard and supported. During 2024–25, the charity strengthened its alumni engagement by recruiting them as Trustees to lead the charity, ensuring that scholars experience a sustained sense of community and continuity of support beyond individual programme participation.

Empowerment

We believe in the potential of every young person we support. The charity provides environments that enable exploration, build confidence and support informed decision-making. Co-design was further embedded during the year, with care-experienced alumni actively shaping programme content, events and communications.

Commitment

We are committed to long-term outcomes rather than short-term intervention. During 2024–25, this commitment was reflected in strategic decisions to redesign delivery for sustainability, improve retention and consistency, and ensure the charity can continue to support young people as they transition into adulthood.

Partnership

We work collaboratively with our partners and communities, holding ourselves to high standards of educational quality, safeguarding and ethical governance. During the year, partnerships with University College London and Emmanuel College, Cambridge were consolidated, alongside deeper engagement with schools, local authorities and Virtual Schools. These partnerships underpin delivery planned for the next financial year under the new regional model.

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Achievements and Performance 2024-2025

First Star Scholars UK continues to demonstrate significant impact on the lives of care-experienced young people by addressing educational barriers, improving life outcomes, and setting a national benchmark for achievement. Below is a summary of key performance outcomes for the year 2023-2024:

1. Educational Achievement

- **68.6% of First Star Scholars** passed GCSE English and Maths at Grade 4+ (compared to the national average of **18%** for care-experienced young people).
- **46% of Scholars** achieved Grade 5+ in GCSE English and Maths (compared to the national average of **12%**).
- These results represent **exponential progress**, demonstrating the effectiveness of our academic interventions and tailored support.

2. Higher Education Pathways

- **50% of First Star Scholars** transitioned to university, compared to just **6% of care-experienced young people nationally**.
- This success highlights First Star's commitment to fostering aspiration, providing academic preparation, and ensuring access to higher education for young people in care.

3. Stability and Housing

- **0% of First Star Scholars** experienced homelessness. Nationally, **40% of care leavers** are at risk of homelessness.
- Our comprehensive alumni support programme, including micro-grants, life skills training, and mentoring, ensures that graduates have the tools to maintain stable housing and independence.

4. Criminal Justice Engagement

- **0% of First Star Scholars** had any involvement with the criminal justice system, compared to a national average of **34%**.
- This result underscores the value of proactive interventions, positive role models, and structured programming that equips scholars with life-affirming opportunities and guidance.

5. Alumni Success

- **45% of First Star Graduates** are in further education, training, or employment.
- **5% of graduates** are identified as NEETs (Not in Education, Employment, or Training), a significant improvement compared to national care-leaver figures.

Through our alumni programme, graduates continue to receive one-on-one support, budget advice, study sessions, and opportunities to network and engage socially, ensuring their continued success.

Conclusion

First Star Scholars UK continues to outperform national benchmarks and transform outcomes for care-experienced young people. Our data-driven approach, holistic support systems, and strong partnerships with educational institutions ensure that scholars achieve their full potential in education, housing, and life skills.

Our 2023-2024 performance demonstrates that with sustained intervention, care-experienced young people can defy expectations, thrive academically, and successfully transition into adulthood.

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

2.1 Income (2024-25)

Total income for the year ended 31 March 2025 dropped 50%, representing a significant reduction compared with the prior year. This decrease had been anticipated and reflected a combination of factors, including the completion of several time-limited grants, a historically narrow philanthropic model that relied heavily on Trust and Foundation funding, and limited income diversification. During the year, the organisation also experienced operational and leadership capacity pressures, which impacted fundraising performance. In response, the Trustees accelerated a strategic shift towards more sustainable income streams. Notably, during the financial year the charity began implementing a diversified funding model, including the issuing of invoices linked to Pupil Premium Plus funding, marking a substantial step towards long-term financial sustainability and reduced reliance on discretionary philanthropic income. All management took significant steps to reduce expenditure in line with projected income, which both operated as planned. There will be an increase in both income and inline but leaner expenditure profile in 2025-26.

2.2 Expenditure (2024-25)

Total Expenditure: £135,563 (2024: £337,318) – a **60% decrease**.

Breakdown of expenditure (key lines):

- **Staff costs: £17,682** (2024: £150,354) – **13%** of total costs.
- **Project costs: £576** (2024: £19,920).
- **Summer residential costs: £6,773** (2024: £12,322).
- **Consulting: £90,174** (2024: £49,220).
- **Travel and subsistence: £1,444** (2024: £19,244).

Other notable support costs: depreciation **£4,875**, IT **£2,206**, independent examination **£3,600**, accountancy/payroll **£2,680**, professional fees **£2,517**.

Analysis:

- Overall expenditure fell significantly, reflecting the charity's shift to a leaner operating model and reduced delivery and travel activity in-year.
- **Staff costs reduced sharply**, consistent with the move to a smaller core team (average employees: **2** vs **6** in 2023-24). Consultancy was the key staffing model for this year.
- **Consulting costs increased** and represented the largest cost area in 2024-25. This reflects reliance on specialist capacity during a period of organisational transition and model redesign, including expertise in education and safeguarding.

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

- **Travel and subsistence reduced materially**, consistent with a more centralised model and a reduced need for in-person travel compared with the previous year.

2.3 Net Movement in Funds (2024–25)

- **Net deficit: £3,436** (2024: deficit £29,193).
- **Unrestricted surplus: £42,653** (2024: unrestricted deficit £78,044).
- **Restricted deficit: £46,089** (2024: restricted surplus £48,851).

Analysis:

- The overall deficit narrowed substantially year-on-year and was only in deficit, due to legacy payments from March 24 when all staff were made redundant.
- Unrestricted funds generated a surplus, reflecting lower operating costs and improved unrestricted income relative to unrestricted expenditure.
- Restricted funds decreased overall because restricted expenditure exceeded restricted income in-year, reflecting delivery against existing restricted balances and the timing of new restricted funding.

2.4 Fund Balances (as at 31 March 2025)

- **Restricted funds: £62,664** (2024: £108,753).
 - Key restricted balances at year-end included:
 - **East of England delivery / regional approach: £35,000**
 - **WCIT Charity: £8,970**
 - **FS2U: £18,694**
- **Unrestricted funds: £58,127** (2024: £15,474).
- **Net assets: £120,791** (2024: £124,227).

Analysis:

- Restricted funds reduced as planned activity drew down prior-year restricted reserves
- Unrestricted reserves strengthened materially, improving operational resilience and flexibility.
- Overall net assets reduced slightly, reflecting the small net deficit for the year.

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

2.5 Assets and Liabilities (as at 31 March 2025)

- **Tangible fixed assets: £6,599** (2024: £11,474) – office equipment after depreciation.
- **Debtors: £39,420** (2024: £6,000) – mainly accrued income.
- **Cash at bank: £79,885** (2024: £164,974).
- **Current liabilities: £5,113** (2024: £58,221).

Analysis:

- The reduction in current liabilities indicates lower outstanding creditors/accruals at year-end compared with the prior year.
- The increase in debtors reflects accrued income due after year-end and should be monitored for collection timing and cashflow forecasting.

3. Qualitative Analysis (updated for 2024–25)

3.1 Achievements and Performance

During 2024–25, the charity progressed a strategic shift towards a more sustainable and scalable delivery model, including work to structure delivery through England's education regions from 2025–26 (initially East of England and London).

Key achievements included securing restricted funding to support digital access (WCIT) and regional delivery preparation (East of England), alongside improving programme development activity through specialist consulting capacity.

3.2 Challenges

1. **Funding profile and timing:** restricted income and delivery timing can create volatility in restricted fund movements year-to-year.
2. **Cost concentration:** consulting represented a significant proportion of total spend, requiring active governance oversight to ensure value for money and appropriate procurement/contract management.
3. **Cashflow management:** increased debtors/accrued income requires careful monitoring to ensure cash is available when delivery costs fall due.

The Trustees review a risk register at each Board meeting, with key risks including funding concentration, cost control, safeguarding and cashflow management. Risk management is further overseen through Chair and Treasurer oversight meetings.

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

3.3 Future Plans

To strengthen sustainability and deliver impact at scale, the charity will focus on:

- **Diversifying income** with an increasing emphasis on sustainable routes including Pupil Premium Plus, aligned local authority engagement and long-term partnerships.
- **Maintaining a lean operating model** while ensuring sufficient safeguarding and educational leadership capacity to deliver safely and consistently.
- **Strengthening impact reporting** to evidence outcomes and support continued funder and partner confidence.

Conclusion

Income

The charity's income is generated through grants, donations, and other minor income streams. Restricted funding supports specific programmes and projects, while unrestricted income provides operational flexibility to deliver the charity's mission and maintain core activities. The vast majority of this was from Trust and Foundations in 2024-25 but moving forward will be much less.

Expenditure

Expenditure is allocated to direct charitable activities, programme delivery, and operational support costs. A significant portion of funds is invested in the provision of academic and life skills education for young people in care, including mentoring, residential programmes, and specialised initiatives. Support costs encompass staff salaries, project consulting, IT, and administrative expenses necessary for programme execution and day-to-day operations.

Contextual situation 2024-25

There were some significant changes at the beginning of the 2024 financial year with all new staff with significant experience and success in both education and charity work which were or are at vice principal or above level. This ensured a system of major changes to strategy, finance, safeguarding and all other areas, leading to a period of noted improvement.

Staffing

The charity operated with a lean and effective workforce in 2024-25 using a mix of consultants and previous staff. The workforce was made up of three headteachers, safeguarding and education experts. A small team now manages the organisation's delivery, supported by consultants where needed. Employee costs in 2024-25 reflect wages, social security contributions, and pension obligations, ensuring compliance with employment standards but had dropped significantly temporarily due to using consultants, two consultants have agreed to become permanent staff members which means employee costs will return. There was a reflection that full time staff members need to have a more rigorous approach to benchmarking of salaries moving forward and a maximum cost set for transport (£100), no international travels and other measures to remain lean.

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Risks, Assets and Liabilities

The charity holds minimal tangible fixed assets, primarily IT equipment, which are maintained and depreciated over their useful life. Short-term liabilities, such as trade creditors and accruals, are managed prudently to ensure financial stability.

During the year, the Trustees reviewed the charity's principal risks as part of regular Board oversight and decision-making. Risks considered included funding and cashflow volatility, delivery capacity and quality assurance, safeguarding, and regulatory compliance. The Trustees manage these risks through active monitoring of budgets and reserves, diversification of income (including increased alignment with sustainable statutory funding streams), and maintaining a lean operating model supported by specialist capacity where required. Safeguarding risk is overseen through clear policies, designated safeguarding leadership and regular scrutiny of practice, with escalation and incident management arrangements reviewed by the Board.

Funds Management

- Restricted Funds: These are used exclusively for the purpose specified by funders, including programme delivery, residential costs, and commissioned projects.
- Unrestricted Funds: These support the charity's core activities and operational sustainability. Trustees oversee their allocation to maximise impact.
- Partnership fees: Usually this is in the form of benefit in kind.

The incoming CEO created a model based on the major issues in both philanthropy across the UK and globally coupled with Universities struggling with finances, that will be sustainable moving forward using Pupil premium funding, which by the end of the financial year has come to fruition.

Governance and Compliance

The Trustees ensure that resources are managed in alignment with the charity's goals. No Trustees received remuneration for their role as Trustees during the year. Trustees may reclaim reasonable expenses incurred in the course of their duties, as disclosed in the financial statements. One individual received consultancy fees for work undertaken outside their role as a Trustee and not during their period of trusteeship, in accordance with the charity's governing document and conflict of interest policy.

The Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees are directors for the purpose of company law and trustees for the purpose of charity law, who served during the year and up to the date of this report are set out in the accompanying document.

In accordance with company law, as the company's directors, we certify that:

"so far as we are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the company's independent examiners are unaware; and as the directors of the company we have taken all the steps that we ought to have taken in order to make ourselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charity's independent examiner is aware of that information."

Public benefit

The Trustees have complied with the duty in Section 17(5) of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission.

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Independent Examiners

Gravita Audit Oxford LLP were re-appointed as the charitable company's Independent Examiners providing unaudited accounts and have expressed their willingness to continue in that capacity.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006. The Independent Examiner is satisfied that the accounts of the company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination. The Independent Examiners Report accompanies this document.

Reserves policy

The Board of Trustees has reviewed the charity's reserve requirements in light of its principal financial and operational risks and has established a reserves policy whereby unrestricted funds not committed to specific purposes should be sufficient to cover a minimum of three months of normal operating expenditure (c.£35,000). At 31 March 2025, the charity's level of unrestricted reserves exceeded this minimum target and is considered appropriate given the seasonal nature of expenditure, with significantly higher costs typically incurred during summer delivery periods when residential programmes take place. The Trustees take a prudent approach to financial management and do not commit to programme delivery unless funding is fully secured in advance, particularly for large-scale programmes such as those delivered in partnership with the University of Cambridge and University College London, which may involve increased participant numbers and higher staffing and residential costs.

Structure, governance and management

The Charity was registered with the charity commission on 19 November 2018.

The charitable company was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee on 16 November 2017.

The governing document of First Star Scholars UK is its Memorandum and Articles of Association. The Board of Trustees appoints any new Trustees.

The trustees, who are also the directors for the purpose of company law, and who served during the year and up to the date of signature of the financial statements were:

Stuart Irvine	
Nawtej Dosanjh	(Resigned 15 April 2024)
Jason Arday	(Resigned 16 May 2025)
Peter Samuelson	
Jade Standley	(Resigned 22 April 2024)
Colette Fletcher	(Resigned 11 April 2024)
Imogen Beecroft	(Resigned 16 April 2024)
Emily Hollis	(Appointed 18 October 2024 and resigned 3 January 2025)
Catherine Dovey	(Resigned 16 April 2024)
Tom Brighton	(Appointed 18 October 2024)
Monica Henao-De-Castro	(Appointed 20 October 2024)
Teshie Monae	(Appointed 18 October 2024)
Richard Donnelly	(Appointed 25 November 2025)
Robert Gratton	(Appointed 15 May 2025)
Caroline Place	(Appointed 24 March 2025)

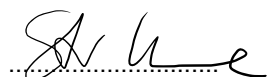
FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

Recruitment and appointment of trustees

The Directors of the company are also charity trustees for the purposes of charity law and under the company's Articles are known as Trustees. All Trustees give their time voluntarily and receive no benefits from the charity. Any expenses reclaimed from the charity are set out in the accounts in the accompanying document. First Star's work focuses upon young people in care. The Board of Trustees seeks to ensure that the needs of this group are appropriately reflected through the diversity of the trustee body. Ongoing recruitment of trustees reflects the Board's focus on breadth of expertise, and lived experience reflecting scholars' lives; and on sustainability and governance. Recruitment reflects the young people in care/care leaver focus of the charity. Two scholar special advisors are nominated annually to attend the Board and represent the newly developed Scholar's Council and the views and ideas of scholars from all programmes. In addition, the strategic plan has been revised and updated to reflect our expansion intent, advocacy activity and sustainability plans. Stakeholder engagement was sought with emphasis on input from scholars and alumni.

The trustees' report was approved by the Board of Trustees.



Stuart Irvine

Trustee

Date: 18 December 2025

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

TO THE TRUSTEES OF FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

I report to the trustees on my examination of the financial statements of First Star Scholars UK for the year ended 31 March 2025.

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

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

Independent examiner's statement

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

- 1 accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 386 of the Companies Act 2006.
- 2 the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
- 3 the financial statements do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the Companies Act 2006 other than any requirement that the financial statements give a true and fair view, which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
- 4 the financial statements have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their financial statements in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

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



Elinor Upjohn ACA

Gravita Audit Oxford LLP

First Floor, Park Central

40-41 Park End Street

Oxford

OX1 1JD

Date: 19 December 2025

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

		Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Restricted funds 2025 £	Total 2025 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £
	Notes						
Income and endowments from:							
Donations and legacies	3	62,456	68,970	131,426	151,066	156,889	307,955
Investments	4	-	-	-	170	-	170
Other income	5	701	-	701	-	-	-
Total income		<u>63,157</u>	<u>68,970</u>	<u>132,127</u>	<u>151,236</u>	<u>156,889</u>	<u>308,125</u>
Expenditure on:							
Charitable activities	6	15,629	115,059	130,688	229,280	108,038	337,318
Other expenditure	9	11,474	-	11,474	-	-	-
Total expenditure		<u>27,103</u>	<u>115,059</u>	<u>142,162</u>	<u>229,280</u>	<u>108,038</u>	<u>337,318</u>
Net income/(expenditure) and movement in funds		36,054	(46,089)	(10,035)	(78,044)	48,851	(29,193)
Reconciliation of funds:							
Fund balances at 1 April 2024		<u>15,474</u>	<u>108,753</u>	<u>124,227</u>	<u>93,518</u>	<u>59,902</u>	<u>153,420</u>
Fund balances at 31 March 2025		<u>51,528</u>	<u>62,664</u>	<u>114,192</u>	<u>15,474</u>	<u>108,753</u>	<u>124,227</u>

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year. All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 MARCH 2025

	Notes	2025 £	£	2024 £	£
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	11		-		11,474
Current assets					
Debtors	12	39,420		6,000	
Cash at bank and in hand		79,885		164,974	
		119,305		170,974	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	13	(5,113)		(58,221)	
Net current assets			114,192		112,753
Total assets less current liabilities			114,192		124,227
The funds of the charity					
Restricted income funds	15	62,664		108,753	
Unrestricted funds	16	51,528		15,474	
		114,192		124,227	

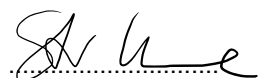
The company is entitled to the exemption from the audit requirement contained in section 477 of the Companies Act 2006, for the year ended 31 March 2025.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 with respect to accounting records and the preparation of financial statements.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year in question in accordance with section 476.

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

The financial statements were approved by the trustees on 18 December 2025.



Stuart Irvine
Trustee

Company registration number 11067711 (England and Wales)

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

1 Accounting policies

Charity information

First Star Scholars UK is a charitable company limited by guarantee incorporated in England and Wales. The registered office is 167-169 Great Portland Street, London, W1W 5PF.

1.1 Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the charity's articles of association, the Companies Act 2006, FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" ("FRS 102") and the Charities SORP "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). The charity is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

The charity has taken advantage of the provisions in the SORP for charities not to prepare a Statement of Cash Flows.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charity. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention. The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below.

1.2 Going concern

At the time of approving the financial statements, the trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus the trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

1.3 Charitable funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of their charitable objectives.

Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors or grantors as to how they may be used. The purposes and uses of the restricted funds are set out in the notes to the financial statements.

1.4 Income

Income is recognised when the charity is legally entitled to it after any performance conditions have been met, the amounts can be measured reliably, and it is probable that income will be received.

Cash donations are recognised on receipt. Other donations are recognised once the charity has been notified of the donation, unless performance conditions require deferral of the amount. Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant is recognised at the time of the donation.

Legacies are recognised on receipt or otherwise if the charity has been notified of an impending distribution, the amount is known, and receipt is expected. If the amount is not known, the legacy is treated as a contingent asset.

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

1.5 Expenditure

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

Expenditure is classified by activity. The costs of each activity are made up of the total of direct costs and shared costs, including support costs involved in undertaking each activity. Direct costs attributable to a single activity are allocated directly to that activity. Shared costs which contribute to more than one activity and support costs which are not attributable to a single activity are apportioned between those activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

1.6 Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are initially measured at cost and subsequently measured at cost or valuation, net of depreciation and any impairment losses.

Depreciation is recognised so as to write off the cost or valuation of assets less their residual values over their useful lives on the following bases:

Office equipment	Straight line depreciation over 4 years.
------------------	--

The gain or loss arising on the disposal of an asset is determined as the difference between the sale proceeds and the carrying value of the asset, and is recognised in the statement of financial activities.

1.7 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts.

1.8 Financial instruments

The charity has elected to apply the provisions of Section 11 'Basic Financial Instruments' and Section 12 'Other Financial Instruments Issues' of FRS 102 to all of its financial instruments.

Financial instruments are recognised in the charity's balance sheet when the charity becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Financial assets and liabilities are offset, with the net amounts presented in the financial statements, when there is a legally enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously.

Basic financial assets

Basic financial assets, which include debtors and cash and bank balances, are initially measured at transaction price including transaction costs and are subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the transaction is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial assets classified as receivable within one year are not amortised.

Basic financial liabilities

Basic financial liabilities, including creditors are initially recognised at transaction price unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial liabilities classified as payable within one year are not amortised.

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

1 Accounting policies (Continued)

1.9 Employee benefits

The cost of any unused holiday entitlement is recognised in the period in which the employee's services are received.

Termination benefits are recognised immediately as an expense when the charity is demonstrably committed to terminate the employment of an employee or to provide termination benefits.

1.10 Retirement benefits

Payments to defined contribution retirement benefit schemes are charged as an expense as they fall due.

2 Critical accounting estimates and judgements

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, the trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised where the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods where the revision affects both current and future periods.

The Trustees do not consider there to be any critical judgements or significant estimates in these financial statements.

3 Donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total
	2025 £	2025 £	2025 £	2024 £	2024 £	2024 £
Grants	39,687	68,970	108,657	53,827	145,038	198,865
Donations	22,769	-	22,769	97,239	11,851	109,090

4 Income from investments

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £
Interest receivable	-	170

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

5 Other income

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £
Other income	701	-

6 Charitable activities

	2025 £	2024 £
Support costs		
Staff costs	17,682	150,354
Depreciation and impairment	-	4,574
Advertising and marketing	320	3,874
Office costs	1,767	10,550
Travel and subsistence	1,444	19,244
Information technology	2,206	8,360
Other costs	330	3,084
Independent examination fees	3,600	3,360
Accountancy and payroll fees	2,680	7,779
Professional fees	2,517	602
Recruitment fees	405	-
Donations given	214	-
Summer residential costs	6,773	12,322
Consulting	90,174	49,220
Project costs	576	19,920
	130,688	293,243

Activities undertaken directly

Provision of academic and life skills education to children in social care	-	44,075
	130,688	337,318

Analysis by fund

Unrestricted funds	15,629	229,280
Restricted funds	115,059	108,038
	130,688	337,318

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

7 Trustees

None of the trustees (or any persons connected with them) received any remuneration or benefits from the charity during the year.

8 Employees

The average monthly number of employees during the year was:

	2025 Number	2024 Number
	2	6
Employment costs	2025	2024
	£	£
Wages and salaries	17,536	138,152
Social security costs	-	7,385
Other pension costs	146	4,817
	17,682	150,354

Redundancy and termination payments totalling £nil (2024: £6,611) were made in the reporting period.

The number of employees whose annual remuneration was more than £60,000 is as follows:

	2025 Number	2024 Number
£70,001 - £80,000	-	1

9 Other expenditure

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Unrestricted funds 2024 £
Net loss on disposal of tangible fixed assets	11,474	-

10 Taxation

The charity is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within section 505 of the Taxes Act 1988 or section 252 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that these are applied to its charitable objects.

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

11 Tangible fixed assets

	Office equipment £
At 1 April 2024	21,117
Disposals	(21,117)
At 31 March 2025	-
Depreciation and impairment	
At 1 April 2024	9,643
Eliminated in respect of disposals	(9,643)
At 31 March 2025	-
Carrying amount	
At 31 March 2025	-
At 31 March 2024	11,474

12 Debtors

	2025 £	2024 £
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Accrued Income	39,420	6,000

13 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2025 £	2024 £
Other taxation and social security	-	4,048
Trade creditors	547	44,926
Other creditors	-	705
Accruals and deferred income	4,566	8,542
	5,113	58,221

14 Retirement benefit schemes

	2025 £	2024 £
Defined contribution schemes		
Charge to profit or loss in respect of defined contribution schemes	146	4,817

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme for all qualifying employees. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the charity in an independently administered fund.

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

15 Restricted funds

The restricted funds of the charity comprise the unexpended balances of donations and grants held on trust subject to specific conditions by donors as to how they may be used.

	At 1 April 2024 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	At 31 March 2025 £
University of Winchester	81,867	-	(81,867)	-
FS2U	26,886	-	(8,192)	18,694
Frank Litchfield	-	5,000	(5,000)	-
Shanly Foundation	-	2,000	(2,000)	-
Peter Harrison	-	8,000	(8,000)	-
Gosling Foundation	-	10,000	(10,000)	-
WCIT Charity	-	8,970	-	8,970
East of England	-	35,000	-	35,000
	<u>108,753</u>	<u>68,970</u>	<u>(115,059)</u>	<u>62,664</u>
Previous year:	At 1 April 2023 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	At 31 March 2024 £
University of Winchester	8,000	117,538	(43,671)	81,867
FS2U	51,014	27,500	(51,628)	26,886
Cambridge Community Foundation	-	11,851	(11,851)	-
The Portal Trust	888	-	(888)	-
	<u>59,902</u>	<u>156,889</u>	<u>(108,038)</u>	<u>108,753</u>

University of Winchester - First Star received funds that were restricted to and expended upon the delivery of the programme at the University of Winchester. The programme aims to improve outcomes for looked-after children by boosting their engagement in higher education and includes two annual residentials on campus.

FS2U - First Star received funds that were restricted to and expended upon the launch and delivery of the FS2U programme

Frank Litchfield – Funds were restricted to the delivery of educational support and enrichment activities for care-experienced young people, supporting academic engagement and progression into further and higher education.

Shanly Foundation – Funds were restricted to the delivery of programmes supporting children in care and care-experienced young people to improve educational engagement, confidence and employability-related skills.

Peter Harrison – Funds were restricted to the delivery of the First Star Scholars programme at the University of Winchester, including residential experiences and academic enrichment activities aimed at improving higher education progression for looked-after children.

Gosling Foundation – Funds were restricted to programme delivery costs supporting care-experienced young people to participate in structured educational and developmental activities designed to improve aspiration and progression outcomes.

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

15 Restricted funds

(Continued)

WCIT Charity – Funds were restricted to improving digital access for care-experienced young people through the provision of IT equipment, including laptops, to support learning and educational engagement.

East of England delivery and regional approach:

During 2024–25, First Star Scholars UK undertook a comprehensive review of its programme model and delivery footprint to strengthen consistency, governance oversight and scalability as the charity grows. As a result of this review, the charity will, from 2025–26 onwards, group its work using the nine education regions of England as its primary geographic framework for planning, delivery and reporting.

This regional approach is intended to support clearer accountability, stronger partnership working, and more transparent reporting of reach and impact by region, while ensuring the charity remains responsive to local need and statutory partners.

In 2025–26, First Star Scholars UK will deliver programmes in two regions: East of England and London, with further regional programmes under exploration. Within the East of England, programme activity will include a residential experience hosted at Emmanuel College and associated delivery activity designed to support care-experienced young people to build aspiration, confidence and skills for progression in education. This approach strengthens the charity's ability to work with local partners, including schools and Virtual Schools, to identify and support young people who can benefit most from sustained, structured intervention.

16 Unrestricted funds

The unrestricted funds of the charity comprise the unexpended balances of donations and grants which are not subject to specific conditions by donors and grantors as to how they may be used. These include designated funds which have been set aside out of unrestricted funds by the trustees for specific purposes.

	At 1 April 2024 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	At 31 March 2025 £
General funds	15,474	63,157	(27,103)	51,528
Previous year:	At 1 April 2023 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	At 31 March 2024 £
General funds	93,518	151,236	(229,280)	15,474

17 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds 2025 £	Restricted funds 2025 £	Total 2025 £
At 31 March 2025:			
Current assets/(liabilities)	51,528	62,664	114,192
	51,528	62,664	114,192

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

17 Analysis of net assets between funds

(Continued)

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £
At 31 March 2024:			
Tangible assets	11,474	-	11,474
Current assets/(liabilities)	4,000	108,753	112,753
	<u>15,474</u>	<u>108,753</u>	<u>124,227</u>

18 Related party transactions

During the year ended 31 March 2025, Trustee expenses were paid one trustees for travel totaling £260 (2024: £8,882 to two trustees).

During the year ended 31 March 2025, one Trustee was paid consultancy fees for work not related to their role as a Trustee totaling £10,400 (2024: £nil).

During the year ended 31 March 2025, total Trustee donations in the year were £nil (2024: £101).

Accounts

Charity registration number 1180754 (England and Wales)

Company registration number 11067711

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK
ANNUAL REPORT AND UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Trustees

Stuart Irvine	
Jason Arday	
Peter Samuelson	
Emily Hollis	(Appointed 18 October 2024)
Tom Brighton	(Appointed 18 October 2024)
Monica Henao-De-Castro	(Appointed 20 October 2024)
Teshie Monae	(Appointed 18 October 2024)

Secretary

Stuart Irvine

Charity number

1180754

Company number

11067711

Registered office

167-169 Great Portland Street
London
W1W 5PF

Independent examiner

Critchleys Audit LLP
First Floor, Park Central
40-41 Park End Street
Oxford
OX1 1JD

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

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FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

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

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the charity's memorandum and articles of association, the Companies Act 2006 and "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).

Our Mission, Values, Aims and Objectives

Purpose and Aims

Our charity's purposes as set out in the objects contained in the company's articles of association are to:

- To provide relief and assistance to people in need who are young people in the United Kingdom who have entered into the social care system in particular but not exclusively by providing them with academic and life skills education and caregiver engagement.
- To advance the education of people in need who are young people in the United Kingdom who have entered into the social care system in particular but not exclusively by providing them with academic and life skills education and caregiver engagement.

First Star Scholars UK Mission

First Star improves the lives of Looked-after Children and Young People by partnering with universities, virtual school heads, schools and designated teachers, social services, carers, and local authorities to ensure looked-after young people have the academic, life skills, and adult support needed to successfully transition to higher education and adulthood. We pursue our mission through innovative university- preparatory programmes, providing professional assistance to stakeholders, and advocating for policy change. To provide a nationally recognised programme that nurtures aspiration and life potential for every care experienced young person.

Our aims and objectives remain rooted in the aspirations we hold for our scholars. During this year we reviewed our original business/strategic plan, and with major goals achieved, undertook a review.

These have been revised and reviewed. Stakeholders including staff, alumni, scholars and carers were consulted and the values of First Star re-established.

Belonging: We are a caring organisation. We nurture the uniqueness of each young person in our programmes. We appreciate their voice, their experiences, beliefs and ambitions and we offer our support and guidance unconditionally, with patience and with kindness.

Empowerment: We believe every young person in our programmes can achieve their potential. We provide an enabling environment that offers them freedom to explore their goals and builds their confidence to achieve them. We support our scholars into adulthood, offering sustaining networks and encouraging them throughout early adult transitions.

Commitment: We continuously support each young person in our programmes to achieve educational and early adulthood success and we will act as their advocates as we seek transformational change for our organisation and our scholars that will improve outcomes for all young people in care.

Partnership: We depend on our partners and the communities in which we work. We seek to work as "one team" with our stakeholders, united in our commitment to support young people in care. In doing so we hold ourselves to the highest standards of educational quality, professional care, and ethical probity.

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Achievements and Performance 2023-2024

First Star Scholars UK continues to demonstrate significant impact on the lives of care-experienced young people by addressing educational barriers, improving life outcomes, and setting a national benchmark for achievement. Below is a summary of key performance outcomes for the year 2023-2024:

1. Educational Achievement

- **68.6% of First Star Scholars** passed GCSE English and Maths at Grade 4+ (compared to the national average of **18%** for care-experienced young people).
- **46% of Scholars** achieved Grade 5+ in GCSE English and Maths (compared to the national average of **12%**).
- These results represent **exponential progress**, demonstrating the effectiveness of our academic interventions and tailored support.

2. Higher Education Pathways

- **50% of First Star Scholars** transitioned to university, compared to just **6% of care-experienced young people nationally**.
- This success highlights First Star's commitment to fostering aspiration, providing academic preparation, and ensuring access to higher education for young people in care.

3. Stability and Housing

- **0% of First Star Scholars** experienced homelessness. Nationally, **40% of care leavers** are at risk of homelessness.
- Our comprehensive alumni support programme, including micro-grants, life skills training, and mentoring, ensures that graduates have the tools to maintain stable housing and independence.

Strategies for achieving aims and objectives

4. Criminal Justice Engagement

- **0% of First Star Scholars** had any involvement with the criminal justice system, compared to a national average of **34%**.
- This result underscores the value of proactive interventions, positive role models, and structured programming that equips scholars with life-affirming opportunities and guidance.

5. Alumni Success

- **45% of First Star Graduates** are in further education, training, or employment.
- **5% of graduates** are identified as NEETs (Not in Education, Employment, or Training), a significant improvement compared to national care-leaver figures.

Through our alumni programme, graduates continue to receive one-on-one support, budget advice, study sessions, and opportunities to network and engage socially, ensuring their continued success.

Conclusion

First Star Scholars UK continues to outperform national benchmarks and transform outcomes for care-experienced young people. Our data-driven approach, holistic support systems, and strong partnerships with educational institutions ensure that scholars achieve their full potential in education, housing, and life skills.

Our 2023-2024 performance demonstrates that with sustained intervention, care-experienced young people can defy expectations, thrive academically, and successfully transition into adulthood.

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

2.2 Expenditure

Total Expenditure: £337,318 (2023: £294,691) – a **14% increase**.

Breakdown of Expenditure:

- **Staff Costs:** £150,354 (2023: £172,134) – 45% of total costs.
- **Project and Programme Costs:** £19,920.
- **Summer Residential Costs:** £12,322.
- **Consulting:** £49,220.
- **Travel and Subsistence:** £19,244.

Analysis:

- Expenditure rose by **£42,627**, reflecting increased program delivery and consulting costs.
- **Staff costs** decreased by **13% (£21,780)**, potentially linked to staff restructuring or reduced salaries.
- **Consulting costs** (£49,220) and **project delivery** reflect the charity's investment in program development, though these areas may warrant review for cost-efficiency.
- Travel and subsistence (£19,244) indicate efforts to maintain program delivery, collaboration, and governance.

2.3 Net Movement in Funds

- **Deficit:** £29,193 (2023: Surplus of £17,710).

Analysis:

- The deficit resulted from increased program and consulting expenditures, exceeding available unrestricted income.
- Despite the deficit, strong restricted income growth supported targeted program delivery, highlighting funder confidence.

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

2.4 Fund Balances

- **Restricted Funds:** £108,753 (2023: £59,902)
 - Major contributors:
 - University of Winchester: £81,867
 - FS2U Programme: £26,886
- **Unrestricted Funds:** £15,474 (2023: £93,518)
- **Net Assets:** £124,227 (2023: £153,420).

Analysis:

- Restricted funds grew by **81%**, reflecting increased program-specific funding.
- Unrestricted funds dropped by **£78,044**, reducing flexibility for operational costs and highlighting the need for further unrestricted income generation.

2.5 Assets and Liabilities

- **Tangible Fixed Assets:** £11,474 (Office Equipment).
- **Current Liabilities:** £58,221 (trade creditors, accruals, and taxes).

Analysis:

- Liabilities are manageable but should be closely monitored to ensure cash flow stability.

3. Qualitative Analysis

3.1 Achievements and Performance

First Star Scholars UK successfully secured significant restricted funding to deliver core programs, including support from the University of Winchester and FS2U Programme. The charity's ability to maintain a steady income of over £300,000 demonstrates strong relationships with funders and donors.

Key highlights include:

- **Program Delivery:** Investment in summer residentials and programs directly supported young people in care, aligning with the charity's mission.
- **Donor Engagement:** Unrestricted donations remained strong, showcasing donor trust.

3.2 Challenges and Risks

1. **Financial Deficit:** The £29,193 deficit highlights a reliance on restricted funds, with fewer resources available for operational costs.
2. **Cost Management:** Increased consulting and program costs contributed to the deficit. Balancing program delivery with cost-efficiency will be key in the upcoming year.
3. **Unrestricted Income:** The decline in unrestricted funds poses risks to flexibility and sustainability.

3.3 Future Plans

To address the financial deficit and ensure long-term sustainability, the charity will focus on:

- **Diversifying Income:** Expanding corporate sponsorship, individual donor campaigns, and exploring grant opportunities for unrestricted funding.
- **Cost Control:** Reviewing consulting and project delivery costs to improve efficiency without compromising impact.
- **Program Impact:** Strengthening reporting on program outcomes to attract new funders and retain existing supporters

4. Conclusion

First Star Scholars UK remains committed to improving the lives of young people in care. While the financial year ended with a deficit, the substantial growth in restricted funds highlights funder confidence in the charity's mission and programs. Moving forward, efforts to rebuild unrestricted funds, control costs, and diversify income will be essential for financial stability and continued impact.

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Income

The charity's income is generated through grants, donations, and other minor income streams. Restricted funding supports specific programmes and projects, while unrestricted income provides operational flexibility to deliver the charity's mission and maintain core activities. The vast majority of this was from Trust and Foundations in 2023-24.

Expenditure

Expenditure is allocated to direct charitable activities, programme delivery, and operational support costs. A significant portion of funds is invested in the provision of academic and life skills education for young people in care, including mentoring, residential programmes, and specialised initiatives. Support costs encompass staff salaries, project consulting, IT, and administrative expenses necessary for programme execution and day-to-day operations.

Contextual situation 2023-24

2023-24 there were numerous programmes that were due to run such as at Emmanuel College in Cambridge. These could not run as the finance could not be secured to finances these and there was a consensus reached that these were to be delayed until finance was secured as once we start the programme, we need to be able to complete it.

Staffing

The staffing model was agreed in early 2024, that it was not appropriate and action would need to be taken. This was due to a mixture of reasons including a model that didn't support the aims and objectives of the charity within the context of our funding, it was agreed that all permanent staff would be made redundant at the end of the 2023-24 financial year, which happened. The charity continued operating with a lean and effective workforce instead. The workforce was made up of two headteachers, safeguarding and education experts. A small team now manages the organisation's delivery, supported by consultants where needed. Employee costs in 2023-24 reflect wages, social security contributions, and pension obligations, ensuring compliance with employment standards. There was a reflection that full time staff members need to have a more rigorous approach to benchmarking of salaries moving forward and a maximum cost set for transport (£100 per scholar), no international travels and other measures to remain lean.

Assets and Liabilities

The charity holds minimal tangible fixed assets, primarily office equipment, which are maintained and depreciated over their useful life. Short-term liabilities, such as trade creditors and accruals, are managed prudently to ensure financial stability.

Funds Management

- **Restricted Funds:** These are used exclusively for the purpose specified by funders, including programme delivery, residential costs, and commissioned projects.
- **Unrestricted Funds:** These support the charity's core activities and operational sustainability. Trustees oversee their allocation to maximise impact.
- **Partnership fees:** Usually £12,000 for the support of our partnership.

Although not for the 2023-24 accounts a full review of finance, the incoming CEO is tasked with creating a model based on the major issues in both philanthropy across the UK and globally coupled with Universities struggling with finances, that will be sustainable moving forward using Pupil premium funding.

Governance and Compliance

The trustees ensure that resources are managed in alignment with the charity's goals. There were some remuneration payments to trustees, and expenses incurred for travel and subsistence are reimbursed. The charity complies with tax regulations and maintains exemption status as a recognised public benefit entity.

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

The Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees are directors for the purpose of company law and trustees for the purpose of charity law, who served during the year and up to the date of this report are set out in the accompanying document.

In accordance with company law, as the company's directors, we certify that:

"so far as we are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the company's independent examiners are unaware; and as the directors of the company we have taken all the steps that we ought to have taken in order to make ourselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charity's independent examiner is aware of that information."

Public benefit

The Trustees have complied with the duty in Section 17(5) of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission.

Independent Examiners

Critchley's were re-appointed as the charitable company's Independent Examiners providing unaudited accounts and have expressed their willingness to continue in that capacity.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006. The Independent Examiner is satisfied that the accounts of the company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination. The Independent Examiners Report accompanies this document.

Reserves policy

Reserves Policy The Board of Trustees considered the charity's requirements for reserves in light of the main risks to the charity. It has established a policy whereby the unrestricted funds not committed by the charity should be a minimum of 3 months of the expenditure. The reserves target agreed by Trustees is three months in general funds.

The present level of reserves available to the charity of £124,227 exceeds this target level which is considered a minimum level. This is considerably higher than our reserves, but reflects the annual build up towards our time of year in the summer when we have the most expenditure. . Some programmes such as the Cambridge programme are not happening due to not receiving the required levels of funding to begin, and we don't begin programmes without being full funded. The advocacy research, the annual lecture and the evaluation and monitoring activity all happened at an event in the House of Commons. The annual lecture has not yet resumed, however in-depth research into the league table of university providers and access to Higher Education has been completed and was published in summer 2023. First Star has given great focus to the evaluation and monitoring of programmes, beyond simple metrics of GCSE outcomes and developed a project with a partner university in the summer of 2023. The charity continues with a work-from-home policy with appropriate online and face-to-face meetings. Face-to-face meetings have been established as a monthly event wherever possible. Reserves available are £164,664. The timing of donations can affect the held reserves throughout the year.

Restricted funds: The board noted that restricted funds of £156,889 were received.

Restricted funds were spent in compliance with the restrictions of the grant-giving funder.

- The University of Winchester – First Star received funds that were restricted to and expended upon the delivery of this programme - £117,538.
- First Star received funds that were restricted to and expended upon the launch and delivery of the FS2U programme - £27,500.
- The Cambridge Community Foundation - First Star received funds that were restricted to and expended upon the delivery of this programme - £11,851.

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Structure, governance and management

The charitable company was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee on 16 November 2017.

The governing document of First Star Scholars UK is its Memorandum and Articles of Association.

The Board of Trustees appoints any new Trustees.

On 12 February a resolution was passed to change the name of the charitable company to First Star Scholars UK.

The trustees, who are also the directors for the purpose of company law, and who served during the year and up to the date of signature of the financial statements were:

Stuart Irvine

Nawtej Dosanjh

(Resigned 15 April 2024)

Jason Arday

Marta Drummond

(Resigned 16 April 2024)

Peter Samuelson

Jade Standley

(Appointed 15 June 2023 and resigned 22 April 2024)

Colette Fletcher

(Appointed 15 June 2023 and resigned 11 April 2024)

Imogen Beecroft

(Appointed 15 June 2023 and resigned 16 April 2024)

Emily Hollis

(Appointed 18 October 2024)

Catherine Dovey

(Resigned 16 April 2024)

Tom Brighton

(Appointed 18 October 2024)

Monica Henao-De-Castro

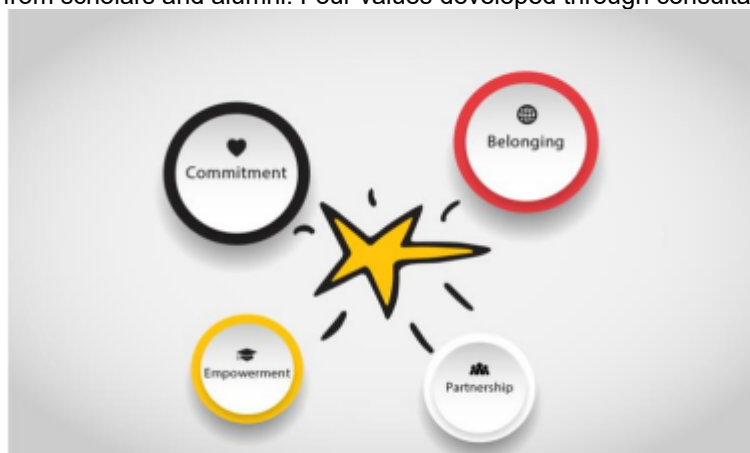
(Appointed 20 October 2024)

Teshie Monae

(Appointed 18 October 2024)

Recruitment and appointment of trustees

The Directors of the company are also charity trustees for the purposes of charity law and under the company's Articles are known as Trustees. All Trustees give their time voluntarily and receive no benefits from the charity. Any expenses reclaimed from the charity are set out in the accounts in the accompanying document. First Star's work focuses upon young people in care. The Board of Trustees seeks to ensure that the needs of this group are appropriately reflected through the diversity of the trustee body. Ongoing recruitment of trustees reflects the Board's focus on breadth of expertise, and lived experience reflecting scholars' lives; and on sustainability and governance. Recruitment reflects the young people in care/care leaver focus of the charity. Two scholar special advisors are nominated annually to attend the Board and represent the newly developed Scholar's Council and the views and ideas of scholars from all programmes. In addition, the strategic plan has been revised and updated to reflect our expansion intent, advocacy activity and sustainability plans. Stakeholder engagement was sought with empathises on input from scholars and alumni. Four values developed through consultation:



FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

TRUSTEES' REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT) (CONTINUED) *FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024*

The trustees' report was approved by the Board of Trustees.



.....
Stuart Irvine

Trustee

Date: 18 December 2024
.....

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

I report to the trustees on my examination of the financial statements of First Star Scholars UK for the year ended 31 March 2024.

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

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

Independent examiner's statement

Since the charity's gross income exceeded £250,000, the independent examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the Charities Act 2011. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, which is one of the listed bodies.

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

- 1 accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 386 of the Companies Act 2006.
- 2 the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
- 3 the financial statements do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the Companies Act 2006 other than any requirement that the financial statements give a true and fair view, which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
- 4 the financial statements have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their financial statements in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

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



Elinor Upjohn ACA
Critchleys Audit LLP

First Floor, Park Central
40-41 Park End Street
Oxford
OX1 1JD

Dated: 19 December 2024

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

		Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total 2023 £
Notes							
Income and endowments from:							
Donations and legacies	3	151,066	156,889	307,955	187,280	124,500	311,780
Investments	4	170	-	170	-	-	-
Other income	5	-	-	-	621	-	621
Total income		<u>151,236</u>	<u>156,889</u>	<u>308,125</u>	<u>187,901</u>	<u>124,500</u>	<u>312,401</u>
Expenditure on:							
Charitable activities	6	229,280	108,038	337,318	230,093	64,598	294,691
Total expenditure		<u>229,280</u>	<u>108,038</u>	<u>337,318</u>	<u>230,093</u>	<u>64,598</u>	<u>294,691</u>
Net income/(expenditure) and movement in funds		(78,044)	48,851	(29,193)	(42,192)	59,902	17,710
Reconciliation of funds:							
Fund balances at 1 April 2023		<u>93,518</u>	<u>59,902</u>	<u>153,420</u>	<u>135,710</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>135,710</u>
Fund balances at 31 March 2024		<u>15,474</u>	<u>108,753</u>	<u>124,227</u>	<u>93,518</u>	<u>59,902</u>	<u>153,420</u>

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year. All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 MARCH 2024

	Notes	2024 £	£	2023 £	£
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	10		11,474		11,171
Current assets					
Debtors	11	6,000		-	
Cash at bank and in hand		164,974		159,380	
		<u>170,974</u>		<u>159,380</u>	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	12	<u>(58,221)</u>		<u>(17,131)</u>	
Net current assets			112,753		142,249
Total assets less current liabilities			<u>124,227</u>		<u>153,420</u>
The funds of the charity					
Restricted income funds	14		108,753		59,902
Unrestricted funds	15		15,474		93,518
			<u>124,227</u>		<u>153,420</u>

The company is entitled to the exemption from the audit requirement contained in section 477 of the Companies Act 2006, for the year ended 31 March 2024.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 with respect to accounting records and the preparation of financial statements.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year in question in accordance with section 476.

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

The financial statements were approved by the trustees on 18 December 2024



Stuart Irvine
Trustee

Company registration number 11067711 (England and Wales)

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

1 Accounting policies

Charity information

First Star Scholars UK is a private company limited by guarantee incorporated in England and Wales. The registered office is 167-169 Great Portland Street, London, W1W 5PF.

1.1 Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the charity's articles of association, the Companies Act 2006, FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" ("FRS 102") and the Charities SORP "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). The charity is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

The charity has taken advantage of the provisions in the SORP for charities not to prepare a Statement of Cash Flows.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charity. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention. The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below.

1.2 Going concern

At the time of approving the financial statements, the trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus the trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

1.3 Charitable funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of their charitable objectives.

Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors or grantors as to how they may be used. The purposes and uses of the restricted funds are set out in the notes to the financial statements.

1.4 Income

Income is recognised when the charity is legally entitled to it after any performance conditions have been met, the amounts can be measured reliably, and it is probable that income will be received.

Cash donations are recognised on receipt. Other donations are recognised once the charity has been notified of the donation, unless performance conditions require deferral of the amount. Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant is recognised at the time of the donation.

Legacies are recognised on receipt or otherwise if the charity has been notified of an impending distribution, the amount is known, and receipt is expected. If the amount is not known, the legacy is treated as a contingent asset.

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

1.5 Expenditure

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

Expenditure is classified by activity. The costs of each activity are made up of the total of direct costs and shared costs, including support costs involved in undertaking each activity. Direct costs attributable to a single activity are allocated directly to that activity. Shared costs which contribute to more than one activity and support costs which are not attributable to a single activity are apportioned between those activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

1.6 Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are initially measured at cost and subsequently measured at cost or valuation, net of depreciation and any impairment losses.

Depreciation is recognised so as to write off the cost or valuation of assets less their residual values over their useful lives on the following bases:

Office equipment	Straight line depreciation over 4 years.
------------------	--

The gain or loss arising on the disposal of an asset is determined as the difference between the sale proceeds and the carrying value of the asset, and is recognised in the statement of financial activities.

1.7 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts.

1.8 Financial instruments

The charity has elected to apply the provisions of Section 11 'Basic Financial Instruments' and Section 12 'Other Financial Instruments Issues' of FRS 102 to all of its financial instruments.

Financial instruments are recognised in the charity's balance sheet when the charity becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Financial assets and liabilities are offset, with the net amounts presented in the financial statements, when there is a legally enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously.

Basic financial assets

Basic financial assets, which include debtors and cash and bank balances, are initially measured at transaction price including transaction costs and are subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the transaction is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial assets classified as receivable within one year are not amortised.

Basic financial liabilities

Basic financial liabilities, including creditors are initially recognised at transaction price unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial liabilities classified as payable within one year are not amortised.

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

1 Accounting policies (Continued)

1.9 Employee benefits

The cost of any unused holiday entitlement is recognised in the period in which the employee's services are received.

Termination benefits are recognised immediately as an expense when the charity is demonstrably committed to terminate the employment of an employee or to provide termination benefits.

1.10 Retirement benefits

Payments to defined contribution retirement benefit schemes are charged as an expense as they fall due.

2 Critical accounting estimates and judgements

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, the trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised where the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods where the revision affects both current and future periods.

3 Donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total
	2024 £	2024 £	2024 £	2023 £	2023 £	2023 £
Grants	53,827	145,038	198,865	91,948	9,500	101,448
Donations	97,239	11,851	109,090	95,332	115,000	210,332

4 Income from investments

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Unrestricted funds 2023 £
Interest receivable	170	-

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

5 Other income

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Unrestricted funds 2023 £
Other income	-	621

6 Charitable activities

	2024 £	2023 £
Support costs		
Staff costs	150,354	172,134
Depreciation and impairment	4,574	2,994
Advertising and marketing	3,874	891
Office costs	10,550	8,814
Travel and subsistence	19,244	17,460
Information technology	8,360	6,215
Other costs	3,084	9,302
Independent examination fees	3,360	3,168
Accountancy and payroll fees	7,779	4,854
Professional fees	602	4,159
Recruitment fees	-	7,704
Donations given	-	21,112
Summer residential costs	12,322	-
Consulting	49,220	-
Project costs	19,920	-
	293,243	258,807

Activities undertaken directly

Provision of academic and life skills education to children in social care	44,075	35,884
	337,318	294,691

Analysis by fund

Unrestricted funds	229,280	230,093
Restricted funds	108,038	64,598
	337,318	294,691

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

7 Trustees

None of the trustees (or any persons connected with them) received any remuneration or benefits from the charity during the year.

8 Employees

The average monthly number of employees during the year was:

	2024 Number	2023 Number
	6	6
	<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>
Employment costs	2024	2023
	£	£
Wages and salaries	138,152	154,487
Social security costs	7,385	11,910
Other pension costs	4,817	5,737
	<u>150,354</u>	<u>172,134</u>
	<u>150,354</u>	<u>172,134</u>

Redundancy and termination payments totalling £6,611 (2023: £Nil) were made in the reporting period.

The number of employees whose annual remuneration was more than £60,000 is as follows:

	2024 Number	2023 Number
£70,001 - £80,000	1	1
	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>

9 Taxation

The charity is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within section 505 of the Taxes Act 1988 or section 252 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that these are applied to its charitable objects.

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

10 Tangible fixed assets

	Office equipment £
Cost	
At 1 April 2023	16,240
Additions	4,877
At 31 March 2024	21,117
Depreciation and impairment	
At 1 April 2023	5,069
Depreciation charged in the year	4,574
At 31 March 2024	9,643
Carrying amount	
At 31 March 2024	11,474
At 31 March 2023	11,171

11 Debtors

	2024 £	2023 £
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Accrued Income	6,000	-

12 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2024 £	2023 £
Other taxation and social security	4,048	3,801
Trade creditors	44,926	10,507
Other creditors	705	243
Accruals and deferred income	8,542	2,580
	58,221	17,131

13 Retirement benefit schemes

	2024 £	2023 £
Defined contribution schemes		
Charge to profit or loss in respect of defined contribution schemes	4,817	5,737

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme for all qualifying employees. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the charity in an independently administered fund.

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

14 Restricted funds

The restricted funds of the charity comprise the unexpended balances of donations and grants held on trust subject to specific conditions by donors as to how they may be used.

	At 1 April 2023 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	At 31 March 2024 £
University of Winchester	8,000	117,538	(43,671)	81,867
FS2U	51,014	27,500	(51,628)	26,886
Cambridge Community Foundation	-	11,851	(11,851)	-
The Portal Trust	888	-	(888)	-
	<u>59,902</u>	<u>156,889</u>	<u>(108,038)</u>	<u>108,753</u>
Previous year:	At 1 April 2022 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	At 31 March 2023 £
University of Winchester	-	38,000	(30,000)	8,000
FS2U	-	55,000	(3,986)	51,014
FSS Summer School staffing	-	9,500	(9,500)	-
The Portal Trust	-	22,000	(21,112)	888
	<u>-</u>	<u>124,500</u>	<u>(64,598)</u>	<u>59,902</u>

University of Winchester - First Star received funds that were restricted to and expended upon the delivery of the programme at the University of Winchester. The programme aims to improve outcomes for looked-after children by boosting their engagement in higher education and includes two annual residentials on campus.

FS2U - First Star received funds that were restricted to and expended upon the launch and delivery of the FS2U programme

FSS Summer School staffing - First Star received funds that were restricted to and spent on staffing the FS2U programme

The Portal Trust - First Star received a restricted grant from the Portal Trust for the commissioning of our Report Card and League Table. These funds were spent commissioning CIVITAS to undertake this report.

Cambridge Community Foundation - First Star received funds that were restricted to and expended upon the delivery of the programme at Emmanuel College, Cambridge. The programme is dedicated to academic enrichment, year-round mentoring and life skill workshops including a three-week summer campus immersion experience.

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

15 Unrestricted funds

The unrestricted funds of the charity comprise the unexpended balances of donations and grants which are not subject to specific conditions by donors and grantors as to how they may be used. These include designated funds which have been set aside out of unrestricted funds by the trustees for specific purposes.

	At 1 April 2023 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	At 31 March 2024 £
General funds	93,518	151,236	(229,280)	15,474
Previous year:	At 1 April 2022 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	At 31 March 2023 £
General funds	135,710	187,901	(230,093)	93,518

16 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £
At 31 March 2024:			
Tangible assets	11,474	-	11,474
Current assets/(liabilities)	4,000	108,753	112,753
	15,474	108,753	124,227
	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total 2023 £
At 31 March 2023:			
Tangible assets	11,171	-	11,171
Current assets/(liabilities)	82,347	59,902	142,249
	93,518	59,902	153,420

17 Related party transactions

During the year ended 31 March 2024, trustee expenses were paid two trustees for travel and subsistence totaling £8,882 (2023: £4,977 to one trustee).

Total trustee donations in the year were £101 (2023: £3,767).

Accounts

First Star Scholars UK

(A company limited by guarantee)

Report and Financial Statements For the
Year Ended 31 March 2023

Charity number 1180754
Company number 11067711

(A company limited by guarantee)

Financial Statements
For the Year Ended 31 March 2023
Accompanying document of unaudited
accounts

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First Star Scholars UK

Report of the Board of Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2023

The Board of Trustees presents its report and unaudited financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023.

Reference and Administrative Information

Charity Name:	First Star Scholars UK
Charity registration number:	1180754
Company registration number:	11067711
Registered Office	c/o Critchleys LLP Beaver House 23-28 Hythe Bridge Street Oxford OX12EP
Operational address:	37 Deerhurst Close Hanworth Park Middlesex TW13 7HS

Board of Trustees

Mr P Samuelson	Chair
Mr S Irvine	
Ms M Drummond	
Dr J Arday	
Dr N Dosanjh	
Ms C Dovey	

Ex Trustees
Mr F Young
Ms AM Bird

Trustees appointed 15 June
2023
Dr C Fletcher
Ms I Beecroft
Rev'd J Standley

Senior Management

Dr L Goodwin	Executive Director
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Independent Examiners -

Critchleys Audit LLP
Beaver House, 23-28 Hythe Bridge Street Oxford. OX12EP

NatWest

Bank-

Legal advisors -

Gibson, Dunn and Crutcher

Our Mission, Values, Aims and Objectives

Purposes and Aims

Our charity's purposes as set out in the objects contained in the company's articles of association are to:

- To provide relief and assistance to people in need who are young people in the United Kingdom who have entered into the social care system in particular but not exclusively by providing them with academic and life skills education and caregiver engagement.
- To advance the education of people in need who are young people in the United Kingdom who have entered into the social care system in particular but not exclusively by providing them with academic and life skills education and caregiver engagement.

First Star Mission

First Star improves the lives of Looked-after Children and Young People by partnering with universities, virtual school heads, schools and designated teachers, social services, carers, and local authorities to ensure looked-after young people have the academic, life skills, and adult support needed to successfully transition to higher education and adulthood. We pursue our mission through innovative university- preparatory programmes, providing professional assistance to stakeholders, and advocating for policy change. To provide a nationally recognised programme that nurtures aspiration and life potential for every care experienced young person.

Our aims and objectives remain rooted in the aspirations we hold for our scholars. During this year we reviewed our original business/strategic plan, and with major goals achieved, undertook a review.

These have been revised and reviewed. Stakeholders including staff, alumni, scholars and carers were consulted and the values of First Star re-established.

Belonging: We are a caring organisation. We nurture the uniqueness of each young person in our programmes. We appreciate their voice, their experiences, beliefs and ambitions and we offer our support and guidance unconditionally, with patience and with kindness.

Empowerment: We believe every young person in our programmes can achieve their potential. We provide an enabling environment that offers them freedom to explore their goals and builds their confidence to achieve them. We support our scholars into adulthood, offering sustaining networks and encouraging them throughout early adult transitions.

Commitment: We continuously support each young person in our programmes to achieve educational and early adulthood success and we will act as their advocates as we seek transformational change for our organisation and our scholars that will improve outcomes for all young people in care.

Partnership: We depend on our partners and the communities in which we work. We seek to work as “one team” with our stakeholders, united in our commitment to support young people in care. In doing so we hold ourselves to the highest standards of educational quality, professional care, and ethical probity.

First Star's three-year goal (2023-2026) is to

First Star is widely recognised as the leading expert, offering the most robust pathway for young people in care to gain the benefit of a university education.

In order to achieve these goals we have established aims with annual action plans to monitor and evaluate progress.

1. Nationally recognised, accredited, innovative, and young person-centred programmes.
2. Expert in evidenced-based advocacy validated by data analysis and publication.
3. Effective governance at all levels of the charity and its programmes.
4. Robust sustainable infrastructure.
5. Passionate and embedded culture of high aspiration and collaboration throughout the organisation.

Underpinning our goals are the aims for our young people, enabling us to measure outcomes. We intend that:

- *Mental Health* - all First Star scholars and graduates be able to access the support and advice they need to sustain their mental health.
- *Education* – First Star scholars continue education and training until ageing out of care.
- *Accommodation* - no First Star graduate becomes homeless. First Star scholars are supported in maintaining placement stability.
- *Civil engagement* - no First Star scholar or graduate is drawn into the criminal justice systems.
- *GCSE transition* - 50% of scholars achieve 5 + GCSEs at grade 4+. 40% of scholars pass GCSE Maths and English at grade 5.
- *Aspire to HE* - for more than 28% of scholars to transition to HE (exceeding / double the 14% of care leavers progressing to HE aged 19-23 nationally).
- *Secure further training, education, or employment* - for 100% of scholars to transition to adulthood with none being NEETS (Not in Education, Employment or Training).

Our original (2018) five-year plan held the aims of

1. Expansion of Board of Trustees and addition of Patrons
2. 6 academies by 2024. *Develop virtual academy / programme by 2021 (covid response).*
3. UK wide expansion to include Home Countries and Ireland
4. To ensure sustainability of First Star UK
5. Advocacy and engagement at national and local level

The focus of our work

Main objectives for the year 2022-2023

- Establish a new cohort/ programme.
- Develop trustee roles and appoint additional trustees.
- Establish new university partner- programme provider for 2022/3 start.
- Re-engage with our proposed annual lecture series.
- Develop staff training programme.
- Sustain advocacy with DFE and other organisations. Develop Virtual / online provision.

Outcomes

- We have recruited our cohort 4 – our first FS2U cohort. This programme draws scholars from all across England – from Newcastle to Brighton.
- Our pilot cohort graduated from First Star in summer 2021 - 50% progressed to HE and all have remained in HE. 72% of scholars completed the 4 years programme. Our 2nd cohort graduates in summer 2023 with 59% having UCAS places at higher education institutions. Our Alumni programme support for our graduates now includes micro grants, budget, and study advice and 1-1 sessions, networking events and social engagement. Our data indicates that no graduate scholars (guardian) are homeless. 5% of guardian scholars (graduates) are NEETS, 45% of guardian scholars are in further education, training, or employment.
- 100% of scholars who completed the programme remained in full-time education until the end of compulsory schooling.
- Over 80% of cohort 3 and 100% of cohort 4 continue with their programmes.

Alumni provision

November 2022 saw the development of the newly created post of Alumni and Projects Manager. This role emphasises the importance of support as our scholars' transition to HE and through their degree programmes. Microgrants have been introduced – alumni support for guardian scholars now has a formalised offer to up to £500 support available in two cycles of up to £250 each. These grants can be used for a range of services including buying suitcases, books, equipment (eg. microwave; kettle; bedding; clothing/specialist equipment for interviews) and travel. Funding can also be put towards new laptops. Other events include continued get-togethers at Christmas meals.

Alumni don't all progress to higher education and this support is also available for all our alumni, offering care packages as they transition to new accommodation, supporting interviews, job transitions, budgeting and other personal development.

The take up of this offer now formalised through our scholars and graduates' platform 'FS2U' is growing. This reflects the need but also helps alumni stay in touch.

Alumni have been invited to apply for youth coach/ graduate scholar positions within our residential programmes. Several have been appointed for summer residentials at St Mary's programme and FS2U programme.

Develop trustee roles and appoint additional trustees.

Three additional trustees have been recruited. The appointment of these additional three trustees will also be recorded in the Report 2023-24.

Establish new programme for 2022 start.

Our fourth cohort (FS2U cohort 1) attended their first residential at the University of Sussex with scholars travelling from as far afield as Newcastle, Bury, Southampton and Brighton. The Programme Director established and directed a 7-day residential programme in August 2022. A unique programme within our unique programmes, FS2U is delivered through online provision during term time, and this has been led exceptionally well by our English and Maths tutors, through our partnership with Villiers Educational Trust and the commitment of key staff. Our scholars were baseline assessed in English and Maths and tutors wrote cohort specific programmes to meet the needs of our young people. For example, individual scholars attending different schools are studying different Shakespeare texts – some sessions focus on text and others on the more general aspects of studying Shakespeare with scholars attending as appropriate. Similarly, scholars are entered for higher or foundation maths and grouped and taught accordingly.

Support for the residential was also led by the widening participation team at the University of Sussex and enabled us to provide a very personalised, detailed and hugely beneficial programme. Residential provision is 7 days each year with summer 2022 being the first residential.

Additional recruitment of scholars continued after the residential with collaboration from Aspire 2Us programme at Wolverhampton University, and virtual school headteachers across a number of local authorities.

Annual lecture

This continues to be on hold until a more favourable moment as many other organisations also bring back live events. It is our intention to hold/organise this during the 2024 year.

Safeguarding and staff training.

First Star safeguarding policy and protocols now embrace both our campus and online provision. Increasingly attention is also focused on training with regard to trauma-informed behaviours and support alongside safeguarding and prevent training. Each year sees new programmes and the recent addition of our online programme provision of FS2U, led and staffed by FSSUK employees has added emphasis to the online safety protocols. To support the annual recruitment of residential staff, directors undertake safer recruitment training and administration tracks all training and DBS certification. Staff training for residentials and First Saturdays, online delivery and other activities includes safeguarding. Key staff also undertake online safety training and protocols for delivery of online aspects of FS2U. Protocols for online delivery are established including two staff/instructors on each session and no engagement if scholars are home alone. All scholars are provided with a laptop and this is done through carers with the intent of ensuring no inappropriate online activity takes place. Increasingly emphasis is being placed on developing scholars' online safety awareness including use of social media. Group and 1-1 sessions with carers support their understanding of the programme and provision. Scholars on the online programme are provided with a First Star email identified by number to enhance safeguarding (e.g. firststarscholar001)

Safeguarding policy and procedures are updated annually. This takes place before each summer residential season - 2023 update has been received. Our external HR support - RISE HR undertook this with the Safeguarding lead. All staff (full and part-time) undertake annual safeguarding training. Trustees undertake NSPCC trustee safeguarding training. Programme Directors are trained as Designated Safeguarding Leads, and each programme / university setting has additional safeguarding leads. Annual reviews are undertaken by the Programme Directors which include any safeguarding events and the management of these ensuring lessons are learned and shared across the programmes. For residential settings on campus, our halls / hall floor access are sole user and we employ night staff to patrol and secure the well-being and safety of our young people. Our protocols are shared and posted for reminders for staff, and staff well-being checked on regularly. Records and actions of incidents and disclosures are undertaken and maintained in line with our safeguarding policy. All incidents are shared with the appropriate social worker and there were no issues or young person occurrences during First Star sessions and residentials that required external action.

Several scholars have experienced incidents (in school or their foster setting) and First Star Directors support scholars and carers wherever possible.

Equality

First Star programmes are open to all young people in care in the age range offered by individual programmes. We do not cherry pick the scholars; scholars can self-nominate or be nominated by their carers, teachers, virtual school, or other engaged adult. We do not make a judgment on current academic progress or attendance at school as these are often symptomatic of other issues faced by young people in care. We are careful to engage those with the potential to progress to higher education, even where it is not an aspiration or expectation at this time in their lives.

First Star does not discriminate on the basis of religion and the programmes will not include any religious training or ceremony. First Star Scholars UK is dedicated to encouraging a supportive and inclusive culture amongst the whole workforce and the young people we work with.

Our Equality and Diversity Policy reinforces our commitment to providing equality and fairness to all in our employment and for scholars and to not provide less favourable facilities or treatment on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, ethnic origin, colour, nationality, national origin, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. We are opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination.

We do not ask or collect data regarding health, disability or other employment factor except to establish that the applicant can perform a necessary part of the job (or if reasonable adjustments need to be made), or where positive action is required to recruit an applicant with a disability. We undertake voluntary equality and diversity monitoring (which will not form part of the job selection or decision-making process). First Star provides staff with training relevant to their jobs and training needs will be assessed through regular staff reviews. Part-time employees and fixed-term employees are treated the same as those who are full-time or permanent. The FSSUK equality and diversity policy is reviewed every two years (last in 2023).

Sustaining advocacy

Engagement with a range of organisations continues, including the overarching strategy group of the Fair Education Alliance, the National Association of Virtual School Heads and the National Network for the Education of Care Leavers. First Star has received excellent opportunities and support for staff through the youth network of the Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

The follow up League Table to our 12by24 Report (Centre for Social Justice, 2019) has been put in motion with grant funding for a new Report secured from The Portal Trust. The project is commissioned through Civitas, a Westminster think tank. The project will embrace a state of the nation summary of current care contexts, an analysis of ongoing barriers and challenges for Higher Education access and a league table of how many care leavers go to university at UK Universities.

[STEAM lecture series which initially launched in autumn 2021.](#)

Provision has been established with a collaborative partner delivering our programme of STEAM sessions. Our first sessions (monthly) included further sessions on sustainability, with attendees awarded certificates of engagement. Other sessions have included wellbeing, introduction to HE and science projects. Further into the programme delivery will be managed, arranged and led by our Alumni and Projects Manager and be open to all young people in care in GCSE years.

How our activities benefit stakeholders.

Our main activities and who we try to help are described below. All our charitable activities continue to focus on the provision of the First Star programme and advocacy for young people in care and care leavers. Supporting young people to be heard is a focal point with the introduction of our Scholars' Council giving representation to all programmes and electing representatives to join the Board of Trustees as special advisors. Each programme cohort elects 2-3 representatives to the council.

Advocacy

The commissioning of the Centre for Social Justice research and report on Care Leavers' transition to and progression at Higher Education (HE) resulted in the **12by24 Report** published by the Centre for Social Justice in May 2019. With funding support from the Portal Trust secured, we commissioned the research for and writing of our League Table Report Card 'Breaking Care Ceiling'. The final report will be available in the summer early autumn of 2023, launched in Parliament with the support of our Patron, The Baroness Floella Benjamin.

Our advocacy continues to be informed by our own data. That this is valued is evidenced by the commissioning of research with our programmes by the University of Roehampton as part of a project supported by the Office for Students. The outcomes of this research will be published after the 2023 summer residential where the main data and scholar voice will be captured.

The Pandemic has left its mark on the young people on our programmes, as it has with young people across the nation. While our scholars' attendance remains stable, and all our young scholars sustain their engagement in education throughout their compulsory school years this is not without challenge and bumps along the way. Comparison with national data highlights the significance of the First Star programmes in sustaining educational engagement (a key objective). 100% of scholars across our programmes are currently still engaged with their education. First Star has taken on greater tuition and mentoring roles beyond our formal programme provision. Our directors are engaging more and more with other adults around the child to secure the best possible outcomes for our young people. This includes actions such as attending PEPs meetings, advocating for young people in their educational provision - GCSE rather than functional skills, opposing exclusions and the provision of mental health support. All of this is above and beyond the programme provision and increasingly becoming a feature of scholar - programme engagement.

Children Looked After continue to fare less well and the indicators are that the gap will have increased when the 2023 GCSE data is released. Our Report Card research is indicating that non-looked-after children are disadvantaged in their progress between primary school and Key Stage 4, with their average Attainment 8 score being just 20.3 compared to 48.8 (2021/2) for non-looked after children. The latest cohort of First Star scholars to complete their GCSEs have an average attainment 8 score of 47.1 with 32% of scholars passing GCSE English and mathematics at grade 5 and above compared to 10% of young people in care nationally and 50% of all pupils nationally. Of great concern is the data from Professor Lee Majors suggesting that 20-30% of young people leave the school system without a formal qualification. First Star does not cherry pick scholars, nor do we base recruitment on current academic progress and attendance at school. Nevertheless, 100% of First Star Scholars pass GCSEs. What we do well is personalise and create a family of scholars and our staff.

Revised DfE data suggests that only Irish Traveler children and those of Gypsy/Roma communities fare less well in our education system than those in care. Most recent (and using revised metrics) Department for Education (DfE) data indicates that just 14% of care leavers aged 19-23 go on to higher education, compared to 47% of 19-23-year-olds in the general population. First Star data shows 50% of our first graduating cohort progressed to university, with a further 45% in further education, training, or employment.

Only 5% of our graduates are NEETS (compared to 39% of care leavers nationally). This matters a great deal, because access to higher education can be a powerful gateway to opportunity, particularly for those who have started with so little in life. The First Star programme recognises that not all our scholars will progress to higher education, and we ensure provision prepares them for employment, for apprenticeships and new education opportunities provision including T levels.

The self-advocacy and opinions of those who have lived experience of foster care continue to demonstrate the impact and the need for interventions such as First Star programme. Our Scholars tell us:

'First Star is a place where you'll be praised rather than tolerated and people actually care about you'

'One day one of the mentors said shoot higher and now I'm at a Russell group university'

'First Star is a place which always helps me find my best even when I feel down or lost. There are so many people that help you here'

First Star continues to demonstrate the impact of GCSE outcomes – often as a significant barrier to progression. Nevertheless, the impact of the Pandemic is still evident throughout through our education system and data indicates that under sourced pupils are more than 18 months behind their more advantaged peers by age 16. The narrative, not well explored, also needs to include access and aspiration:

"If you create a more supportive system (counselling, access to educational materials, access to extra-curricular and so forth) for care leavers within universities as well as in their education beforehand, you'd probably find more children in care seeing it as being worth going to university. It doesn't matter that you're 'in care', you can make it if you get the grades" First Star graduate.

First Star continues to advocate for support for young people in care through the overarching strategy committee of the Fair Education Alliance, NNECL and NAVSH conferences and staff are keenly involved in the Learning Networks of the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. Collaborations with other charities PYE Global aid our programme provision for Scholars. Charities such as mybnk and Become continue to contribute to programme provision. Our latest collaboration with Villiers Park Education Trust is supporting our First Star2U provision as well as carer engagement and leadership challenges for scholars.

Who used and benefited from our services?

First Star Scholars UK was established in 2017 with the pilot programme at St Mary's University, Twickenham, graduating our first scholars in 2021. First Star Scholars UK is based on the model successfully established in the US by Peter Samuelson in 2011 and there are 18 programmes across nations with three in the UK. As we know there are a record number of looked-after children in the UK, with 90 entering the care system every day and a projected 100,000 children in care by 2025. First Star is reflecting the national Leveling up or 'catching up' agenda and focusing provision for years 1 and 2 on GCSE and individual scholars' missed education.

First Star programmes develop this theme to a much a deeper level and build long-term pathways based on scholars' own aspirations. The outcomes for our first graduating cohort authenticates the longevity of the programme through continued engagement with our alumni programme ensuring scholars and alumni are never alone in their personal and educational journey. 50% of graduating Alumni were awarded places at HE, while only 5% are NEETs. Retention remains high across cohorts with our

University of Winchester cohort sustaining 100% retention. Cohort two at St Mary's was impacted by an outbreak of Covid-19 in the summer of 2021, a further residential was offered at Easter and well received by scholars and staff. Despite the challenges of Covid-19 most scholars remained consistent in their attendance through the First Saturday programme.

Our Alumni have positively engaged with First Star, and we are building this programme. Opportunities to develop networking skills have been enhanced by alumni presence at events in Liverpool, Stoke and Brighton engaging with and launching new university partners. Our alumni support has offered support for course fees, course materials and resources including specialist dance equipment. We continue to offer support in terms of personal items such as microwaves. We know that the numbers entering care reportedly increased by 44% during Covid -19 (Barnardo's, 2020) and the gap in learning between disadvantaged young people and their peers is now an estimated 18 months; we also know that 50% of care experienced students have considered withdrawing from HE due to financial circumstances, physical and mental health issues and stress of academic and First Star is working to support scholars into and through their HE and post-graduation experience, providing mentors, equipment and financial support.

Our 2021 GCSE results bucked the attainment trends for Looked After Young People, with scholars' average EBacc score was 5.28 compared to 4.38 for all pupils (2020) and 1. 7 for CLA (2020). First Star scholars' overall pass rate (grade 4+) was 89% compared to 79.7% (England) and 76.9% (London). Scholars overall pass rate (grade 5+) also exceeded their peers at 62.8%.

In a busy year after cohort 1 graduates entered HE and work and cohort 2 completed GCSEs in 2021 and transitioned to further education and post 16 courses. All cohort 2 scholars continue their education pathway but several also experienced upheavals in placement, social workers, and education settings. Of concern is that some of our scholars are being placed in unregulated residential settings in less than suitable circumstances and First Star Directors are supporting them through these challenges. Our First Star 2U programme is up and running. Our new programme Director was appointed and we recruited scholars nationally. Our initial FS2U residential took place in summer 2022 at Sussex University.

We remain committed to principles of not 'cherry picking', a concept even more important with the education attainment gap increasing and absence and missing for education numbers rising among school populations (140,000 children currently missing school). We are enhancing our evaluation and monitoring of scholars' progress with baseline assessments include in new programmes, regular reporting to schools, carers, virtual heads and social workers is now included in our planned provision for FS2U. Our University of Winchester Director has led the way in holistic engagement in the provision and monitoring of scholars' development including attendance at PEPs.

Selection and recruitment expanded nationwide with the launch of FS2U. Scholars are being recruited from as far afield as Newcastle, Manchester, Leeds, and Sussex. Scholars can self-nominate, and nominations can be made by an adult as well as their virtual school heads and schools. Eligible scholars should have a care plan; be in kinship care; have been identified by children's services as on the edge of care or have appropriate refugee status. Each application is reviewed upon its own merits, but we do not judge potential on current academic progress or school attendance as these can already be barriers to success for those in care.

Programme provision has been impacted by the Covid - 19 pandemic. St Mary's programme had to close in the summer of 2021 after a week and a half for cohort 1 (now alumni) and in the first week of the cohort 2 residential. Cohort 3 at Winchester successfully ran the whole 3-week provision. Both programmes are running a First Saturday programme each month to sustain engagement and support scholars, and both also offered a four-day Easter residential to enhance scholars' First Star engagement.

Impact

Our pilot cohort graduated in the summer of 2021 having done so well at GCSE and with 50% progressing to HE and most others to FE and employment. We have developed a staff alumni role and are striving to keep links with as many alumni as possible. We aim to provide support through the challenges of year one at university where we know that care leavers are 38% more likely to give up - this provision includes seeking mentors for alumni - someone to share highs and lows with; 18% of alumni at HE institutions have a mentor through this project.

First Star Scholars GCSE results in 2021 reflected the increased emphasis on 1-1 provision, albeit driven by the pandemic and lockdowns. This has helped generate First Star templates for FS2U provision. FS2U classes are staged for different abilities, including those taking higher and foundation GCSEs and we provide 1-1 support with tutors on a termly basis. First Star GCSE outcomes are keeping pace with or exceeding national expectations.

First Star aims:

- o Progression to HE by age 21 = more than 34%.
- o 5+ GCSE passes before ageing out of care = more than 54% (national average pre covid).
- o 0% NEETs = less than 39% which is the national figure for care leavers generally.
- o 0% homeless = whereas 25% of care leavers are likely to become homeless in the first two years of ageing out.

50% of graduates have earned places in HE; compared to the national care leaver average of 13%. NEETS among First Star graduates = 5% of graduates; 0% of our alumni are homeless yet they have experienced numerous moves since reaching the age of 18.

First Star programmes have a significant focus on GCSE preparation, exam techniques and revision in the first two years of the academic component of each First Star programme, particularly English, Maths and Science. This focus is impacting scholars' outcomes with our young people doing well in GCSEs.

Scholars' voice

... continues to be important to First Star and annually two scholars are elected each year as special advisors on the board of trustees. With the advent of new programmes, a scholars' council was being established to give a voice to all scholars.

'It's given me belief I can do everything'

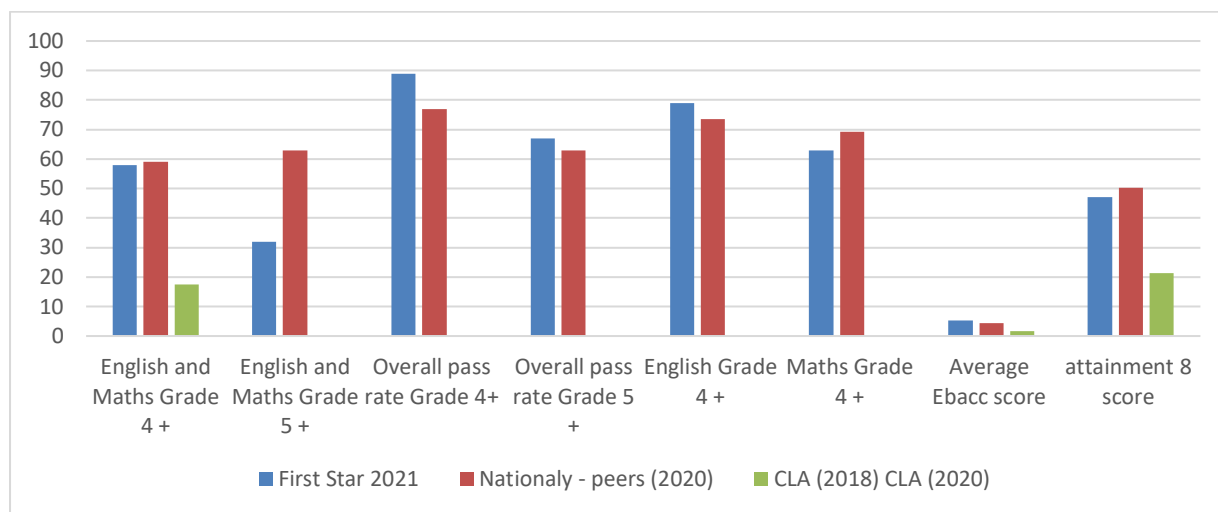
'People here have given me so much confidence I was able to overcome my fears'

'I wasn't sure what to expect but now I'm here it was the best decision I made'

Overall GCSE results improved despite the impact of the Pandemic. As the data shows the second cohort GCSE results improved upon previous years - despite being the Covid GCSE generation - success was facilitated through a hybrid approach, perpetuating the efficacy of the First Star provision.

GCSE OUTCOMES COHORT 1 AND COHORT 2	First Star Cohort 1	First Star Cohort 2	National Average (2021)	Average for Children in Care (2018-2020)
Percentage getting GCSEs in English & Maths grade 4+)	48%	58%	72.2%	18%
Percentage getting GCSEs in English & Maths grade 5+)	Not measured in 2019	32%	50%	7.2%
% Getting 5 GCSEs grade 4 & above	48%	74%	75%	19.5%
% Getting grade 4 or above in Maths	61%	63%	69%	Data not available
% Getting grade 4 or above in English	65%	79%	74%	Data not available

Despite the challenges of the pandemic our cohorts continue to do well.



The average disadvantaged student is now educationally over 18 months behind their peers. 48% of children in care in mainstream schools are not entered for GCSEs while only 30.6% of children in care obtain a GCSE pass. With 100% of First Star cohorts exceeding the national average of entry to 3 GCSEs (and obtaining better than national average outcomes) the impact of First Star interventions and the progress of First Star young people is demonstrated.

First Star data signposts that:

- Our programmes succeed in creating a *'family'* atmosphere. The notion of the First Star family underpins our education and learning activities, and the young people feel safe, welcome, valued, and have a sense of belonging.
- What proves particularly valuable is building relationships with other foster children; making friends with, and being encouraged by, their peers and mentors and being supported by educational staff who really care.
- That the residential summer school aspect of our programmes serves an important function in enriching close relationships, but also giving young people a taste of independent living. It also provides time for very intensive academic support.
- Our programmes are successful in giving students a 'taste' of university life in a way that is subtle and uncontrived. FS2U aims to emulate this provision within the online and shorter residential

provision - this is a pivotal element of provision.

Impact of Covid-19 is ongoing.

Our website is supplemented by an in-house database linking scholars and alumni to the care provision at their chosen university.

Learning and support was transferred to a second learning platform (website) at the same time as our main site was updated and www.firststar2U.org was established. This is a secure learning website.

Unfortunately, COVID-19 continues to have a knock-on effect on the progress of scholars and the efficacy of programmes in the summer. The St Mary's programme particularly suffered from the outbreak in the summer of 2021 and staff have worked with resilience and diligence to maintain scholar engagement and progress. Scholars returned in the summer of 2022 with all university and local health protocols in place at all three of our residential locations. Programme plans continue to support those unable to attend sessions or aspects of the residential to ensure they remain part of the First Star family.

Our cohort at the University of Winchester have led the way in their flexible response to the challenges of covid and supporting scholar engagement through a shorter summer residential, supported by the Easter residential. The attendance has remained strong with over 85% attendance at First Saturdays and increasing to nearly 100% attendance at the residentials. This has been supported by the continued engagement of staff who have returned, both throughout the year to support learning and for the residentials.

First Star Directors worked from home during the pandemic and continue to do so as appropriate and in line with the return-to-work provision of their university – this is matched by the approach for FS2U. Our focus continues to ensure the online provision (FS2U) and face to face support for scholars supports their progress and this has been revised and increased – both directors and tutors now offer 1 -1 interventions, online support for revision and career support as well as group and cohort sessions. Directors are invited to more and more PEPs meetings with this becoming embedded in the First Star provision. We have found scholars really engaged with Directors both during and after this support, appreciating that Directors are able to fully support scholars without explanation - supporting progress and challenge and offer innovative and sustained support.

First Star alumni provision continues to grow as we anticipate our second graduating cohort in summer 2023. Several alumni have been employed as youth coaches and we foresee expanding this provision across multiple residentials.

FS2U

First Star developed this new provision to provide support for scholars and carers beyond the geographical locations of our campus programmes. First Star is successfully giving access to scholars from multiple regions and schools / local authorities. Currently, 20 local authorities are represented among the scholars reflecting increased engagement among virtual school heads, fostering agencies and universities across England - signifying our determination to support Children Looked After in any setting. The essential ingredient of the First Star Family remains at the core of provision. This cohort is completing their first year online and approaching their second summer residential in the summer of 2023. The Programme Director - appointed in December 2021 has moved on (Easter 2023) and our new Director is refining and expanding the summer schedule while getting to know the scholars as the summer approaches.

The challenges of education, some stemming from life circumstances and from the aftermath of the pandemic continues to impact scholars increasing the need for support and online platform/provision.

Our Scholars

Our scholars' placements continue to display the vulnerability we saw during covid, placement instability continues to be an issue. The stability and support, including financial support to secure attendance, offered by First Star continues to have an impact on the lives as well as the educational progress of our scholars. Online 1-1 support has been offered to more scholars this year to help them over the breach between schools and placements, absences, and gaps in learning. The trend experienced immediately post covid – in terms of increasing numbers of young people entering the care system continues with a 4.6% increase in those in care from 2020 - 2023. 1 in 4 children entering the care system is now aged 16 or 17 and we seek to make virtual schools and colleges aware of opportunities to join First Star wherever spaces make this possible. First Star Programme Directors continue to monitor our scholars' placements. Nationally placement stability has improved marginally since 2020 (33% experienced 2 or more placements in the year 2021 with 31% experiencing 2 or more placements in the year 2022). Nevertheless, anecdotally we have seen an increase in the trend to move young people into residential, at times unregulated, homes. With almost as many 16+ young people in care in unregulated settings as those in fostered or regulated settings the concern for post GCSE educational progress is becoming acute. Currently, all our scholars remain in education until 18 and 95% progress to higher education, further education or training, employment, or apprenticeships. First Star is enhancing our diploma offer to support our post-16 cohorts in future years as we anticipate that the knock-on effect of these statistics is likely to see more of our scholars being lost to their education provision. Offering 1-1 support to carers and scholars and involvement in PEPs meetings supports this ambition to ensure our scholars remain in education.

Financial Review

First Star continues to secure new funders despite the challenges of the economic crisis, including restricted funding for programmes (university-led). First Star had a net increase in funds of £17,710. First Star reports to donors in an annual cycle determined by the timing of funded donations and donor requirements. Restricted Funds – those designated for our campus/university led programmes or specific research/projects is also reported through First Star where donors require this. Campus/university programme partners also secure funding directly from donors and are solely responsible for reports and audits in relation to these funds. This year restricted funds for university partners have been secured and these are noted in the accompanying accounts - First Star Scholars Unaudited Accounts for the Year Ended 31st March 2023.

Principal Funding Sources

The principal funders for First Star Scholars UK are:

The MariaMarina Foundation; The Peter Cundill Foundation; the National Lottery Community Fund, the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, The Considered Ask and the Portal Trust.

For our university partner programmes, funders include The Linbury Trust, The Paul Hamlyn Foundation, the Dulverton Foundation, the MariaMarina Foundation, KPMG, The Religious of the Assumption, The Peter Harris Foundation, Sussex University.

Investment Policy

First Star does not currently invest funds received.

Reserves Policy

The Board of Trustees considered the charity's requirements for reserves in light of the main risks to the charity. It has established a policy whereby the unrestricted funds not committed by the charity should be a minimum of 3 months of the expenditure. The reserves target agreed by Trustees is three months in general funds.

The present level of reserves available to the charity of £153,420 exceeds this target level which is considered a minimum level. This continues to show the impact of Covid-19 and is reflective of the timing of specific grants and funds. New staff employees were employed and included the programme director for the FS2U provision and a head of development (fundraising). Other events, having been delayed, were planned for 2022-23 - these include advocacy research, the annual lecture and evaluation and monitoring activity. the annual lecture has not yet resumed, however in-depth research into the league table of university providers and access to Higher Education is now under way and due for publication in summer 2023. First Star has given great focus to evaluation and monitoring of programmes, beyond simple metrics of GCSE outcomes and is developing a project with a partner university for the summer of 2023. The charity continues with a work from home policy with appropriate online and face to face meetings. Face to face meetings have been established as a monthly event wherever possible. A conference is planned for May 2023 bringing together staff and directors from across all our programmes. Reserves available are £153,420. The timing of donations can affect the held reserves throughout the year.

Restricted funds: The board noted that restricted funds of £124,500 were received.

Restricted funds were spent in compliance with the restrictions of the grant-giving funder.

- The University of Winchester – First Star received funds that were restricted to and expended upon the delivery of this programme - £38,000.
- First Star received funds that were restricted to and expended upon the launch and delivery of the FS2U programme - £55,000.
- First Star received funds that were restricted to and spent on staffing this new FS2U programme - £9,500.
- First Star received a restricted grant from the Portal Trust for the commissioning of our Report Card and League Table - £22,000. These funds were spent commissioning CIVITAS to undertake this report.

Plans for Future Periods

First Star development continues with the successful provision of the second summer residential at our University of Winchester partner and the third provision of a residential for the 2nd cohort with our St Mary's partner. First Saturday programmes also continue and attendance rates at over 85% for the former. Attendance at the St Mary's programme has lagged as the scholars moved through post-16 education and bore the brunt of cancelled face to face residentials and First Saturdays during the Covid Pandemic. The efforts of the staff have ensured regular engagement using a flexible, online model which has paved the way for the FS2U development. The First Summer residential for this new programme was held at Sussex University and offered both academic and creative and challenging activities to the scholars. The feedback from scholars was extremely positive with the next year already being planned. Scholars were able to access this FS2U programme from across the county – coming from as far afield as Newcastle, Bury, Southampton, and Sussex our programmes from a greater geographical area in England. Such expansion is essential to ensure access to, quality and sustainability of our programmes. The launch of the STEAM lecture series was less successful initially, but with revision of the approach is now starting to develop its online potential. We anticipate opening the provision to all GCSE age young people in care (not just First Star scholars as at present). First Star continues to review staffing plans and responded to changes within the year, conserving resources as more staff changes took place this year. The Director of FS2U left for pastures new at the end of the financial year and we have yet to appoint a new Director. This has not impacted the programme delivery with other staff stepping in. First Star recognised the issues of the economic crisis offering support in the form of salary rises to staff. The appointment of the Head of Development was less successful with the post holder leaving within their probationary period. The charity plans to engage a bid writer in the new financial year. First Star has developed an alumni programme of support, both for those who have progressed to higher education and for all our other graduates, offering financial support, budgeting and employment advice and mentoring support. The development of the STEAM programme and the Scholars Council and the Alumni Programme has led to the provision of a new post – Alumni and Project Manager which was filled in November.

Key Performance Indicators over the first 5 years (established 2019):	2022- 2023 meeting KPIs
1. Expansion of Board of Trustees and addition of Patrons	Board has expanded from 3 to 5 with 3 more trustees joining board in 2023-24
2. 6 academies by 2024. <i>Develop virtual academy / programme by 2021</i>	2 cohorts at St Mary's 1 cohort at University of Winchester 1 FS2U cohort Agreement from SLT at Staffordshire New partner to be announced in summer 2023 for 2024 start. 2 nd cohort planned for UoW summer 2024
3. UK wide expansion to include Home Countries and Ireland	Discussion with Ireland partners under way
4. To ensure sustainability of First Star UK through	
o fundraising,	Ongoing and all programmes have been funded – fundraising events with university partners
o corporate partnerships,	Under development
o office and staff expansion,	Staffing expanded – alumni manager; director for Fs2U – admin staff
o marketing	Marketing through social media; TES;
o event/project management	Events to launch 12by24; annual lecture planned by postponed – covid;
5. Advocacy and engagement at national and local level	12by24 Report published by Centre for Social Justice

	Report Card/League table commissioned with Civitas
6. Development projects to focus on	
o Annual lecture series (2020 inaugural) <i>postponed until 2021</i>	Postponed at the moment – covid and other projects – plans and discussion with sponsors under way
o First Star Awards linking curriculum across programmes	Awards being developed with Directors – UoW scholars all taking an award. Fs2U session linked to diploma throughout setting new models of delivery
o Staff training programmes developed in collaboration with Partners in Youth Empowerment and Street Games	Staff training for all developed to embrace safeguarding, prevent, and expanded to include all in trauma informed behaviours. Trustees undertake safeguarding certificate; key staff trained a DSL and safer recruitment leads

First Star has made considerable advances to completing these KPIs including our 4th programme in recently partnering with the University of Sussex as the provider of the residential setting for the Summer residential for FS2U. First Star continues to develop new university partners and expects to announce a new partner in summer 2023. We continue to develop our plans for a Midlands programme.

The addition of the FS2U programme has seen the recruitment of excellent teachers/tutors, and the introduction of baseline assessments and a curriculum that focuses on scholars needs. This is a challenge because of the geographical reach of the programme engaging with scholars not able to access a physical campus programme while offering the same support, and development through our diploma curriculum and GCSE / post-16 academic development as well as a hybrid campus residential of 1 week. Planning has taken account of the different examination boards and levels (foundation/higher) that scholars are entered for. Provision has included the online STEAM lectures with a focus on Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths to reflect the employment and academic opportunities at HE that scholars can aspire to.

First Star's continued engagement with funders and stakeholders includes local authorities (virtual school heads especially), current and potential programme (University) providers and the university sector, youth fund network with the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, NNECL, the Fair Education Alliance, the Beacon Collaborative, The Portal Trust and Philanthropy Impact. Presentations have been given with the Westminster Events programme and sessions undertaken with Access HE.

Structure, Governance and Management

Governing Document

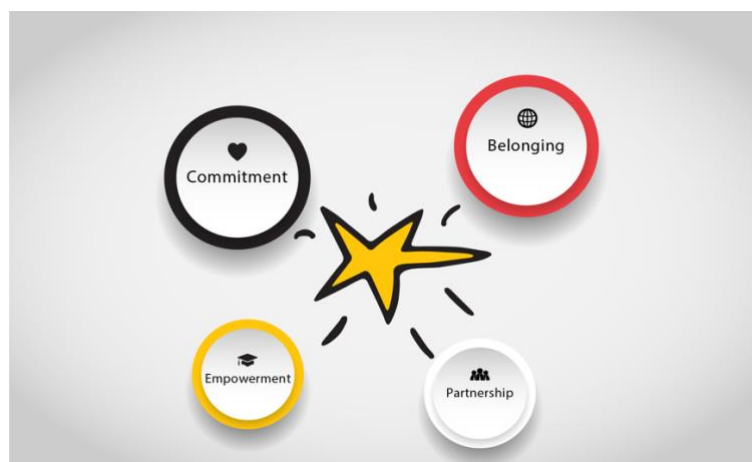
First Star Scholars UK is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 1st November 2017 and registered as a Charity on 19th November 2018. The company was established under a Memorandum of Association which established the objects and powers of the charitable company and is governed under its Articles of Association. Originally established as First Star Academies UK; on 12th February 2020 a resolution was passed to change the name of the charitable company to First Star Scholars UK. This change was confirmed at Companies House and the Charities Commission. In the event of the company being wound up members are required to contribute an amount not exceeding £10.

Recruitment and Appointment of Trustees

The Directors of the company are also charity trustees for the purposes of charity law and under the company's Articles are known as Trustees. All Trustees give their time voluntarily and received no benefits from the charity. Any expenses reclaimed from the charity are set out in the accounts in the accompanying document.

First Star's work focuses upon young people in care. The Board of Trustees seeks to ensure that the needs of this group are appropriately reflected through the diversity of the trustee body. Ongoing recruitment of trustees reflects the Board's focus on breadth of expertise, and lived experience reflecting scholars lives; and on sustainability and governance. Recruitment reflects the young people in care/care leaver focus of the charity.

Two scholar special advisors are nominated annually to attend the Board and represent the newly developed Scholar's Council and the views and ideas of scholars from all programmes. In addition, the strategic plan has been revised and updated to reflect our expansion intent, advocacy activity and sustainability plans. Stakeholder engagement was sought with emphasises on input from scholars and alumni. Four values developed through consultation:



Trustee engagement

Most trustees are already familiar with the work of First Star and are encouraged to visit programmes, join events and are keen to offer their expertise for specific projects, challenges, and activity. Trustees are encouraged to engage with scholars through meetings and via visits to a First Saturday or a summer programme. We continue to review and revise our selection and interview process ensuring potential trustees are introduced to the roles and responsibilities of trustees, including the importance of safeguarding.

Trustees review and update our safeguarding policy and their training annually and undertake a DBS check upon appointment. Policies and planning enable trustees to familiarise themselves with the workings of charity. To this end we hold quarterly strategic reviews/meetings to encourage blue sky thinking – these are separate from but lead into the quarterly Trust Board meetings. All materials are securely shared via our online HUB and include an annual

- Register of interests
- Code of conduct and Nolan principles of public life

Trustees review policies on a cyclical basis and we have engaged an HR consultant to undertake a complete review ensuring we are compliant and up to date.

Risk Management

The Trustees are responsible for the overseeing of the risks faced by First Star. Detailed considerations of risk are delegated to the Executive Director of First Star Scholars UK. Risks are identified, assessed and controls established throughout the year. A formal review of the charity's risk management processes is undertaken on an annual basis with reporting by exception at quarterly board meetings. Risk is managed under the headings of Governance, External Risk/Covid-19 Risk, Regulatory and Compliance Risk, Financial Risk and Operational Risk. These risk categories are under review following the strategic planning/review that has taken place and risks will be aligned to the objectives in the new plan for 2023.

Policies are reviewed on an annual/biannual cycle as appropriate to each policy.

The main risks that the Trustees have identified and the plans to manage those risks are:

Governance: First Star's aim is for continued expansion with clear robust strategic governance.

We manage this risk through the use and development of sub-committees - recruitment, budget, and strategic. Quarterly strategic trust meetings, where wider discussion takes place, enable the exploration of specific developments - discussed, reviewed and planned for. The protocols for recruitment are continually reviewed, and developed and recruitment is led by a founding trustee, ensuring consistency of approach and robust recruitment procedures. The introduction of an HR partner has added review and compliance checks to our policy reviews. All policies have been reviewed and updated by this external agency and protocols for staff management, governance and trustee oversight enhanced.

External Risk/ Post Covid -19 Impact risk: Expansion of our programmes and new projects requires the appointment of new staff; and engagement of university partners in provision leading to successful outcomes for scholars. Risks Include: Programme closure; new programmes not starting; stewardship with donors; changing government policy; safeguarding concerns; online issues including scholars not engaging or getting zoom fatigue. The impact of Covid 19 remains a risk in relation to outcomes – current cohorts are all survivors of lockdown, school closures, school strikes and high levels of absence among returning pupils (post covid).

We manage these risks by - collaborating closely with university partners in programme development, delivery and in fund-raising activities; developing our national advocacy and national profile; increased social media engagement with twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn having regular weekly and monthly posts; increased engagement with local government agencies including attendance at PEPs meetings; engagement with national groups such as the Fair Education Alliance, Virtual School Heads and NNECL. Our engagement includes attending PEP meetings with young people and the team surrounding them; increased offer of small group and 1-1 support for GCSE preparation; clear safeguarding policies and expanding training opportunities and activities for staff.

Regulatory and compliance risks: security of documents; compliance with government, company and charity law is essential and we seek the well-being of staff and those we benefit. Risks include: Non-return of compliance documents; report issues to donors; security of documents, staff wellbeing concerns.

We manage these risks through the use of a secure Hub; the support of our legal advisers; the engagement of an external accountancy firm to reconcile expenditure and process salaries each month; through annual financial examination; reporting and stewardship with donors – new employee roles to

secure fundraising activities including reporting; agreements and contracts detailing securing timelines with donors and university partner/programmes providers.

Financial risk: sustainability of First Star Scholars UK is essential if our ambitious regional and national expansion is to continue. Risks include: Poor budgetary control; inadequate reserves; lack of fund raising.

We manage these risks by maintain sufficient reserves to ensure staff sustainability and core activity; programme expansion is only assured if sufficient funds are secured for each individual cohort. We undertake monthly and quarterly budget monitoring at trustee and operational levels; we include strategic fundraising for First Star and university programmes in our annual plans; the planned appointment of fundraiser/head of development was made although the post holder left within year. Focus is now on appointing a specific fundraiser/bid writer to support sustainability in 2023 onwards.

Operational Risk: expansion brings some additional risk including as additional staff and volunteers are engaged and new partners sought. These risks include - lack of staff capacity and capability; lack of resources to support staff for projects and for new initiatives; lack of attention to staff well-being and health and safety; volunteer issues, whistleblowing.

We manage these risks through consideration of budget for staff resources to support expansion; regular review of policies; a head of development – fundraising was appointed in year but left without impact – a bid writing/fundraising role is being re-established for 2023; a whistleblowing action activated a review panel which the Board of Trustees, and an independent HR specialist consultant undertook the review. After due process, support for the staff, and trustee inquiry, the review recommended HR developments with additional HR provided across the charity and reinforcement for admin/comms; policy review and protocol are ensuring this maturation of provision and new collaborations promote workforce support and provision to match the programme expansion. Programme expansion is secured for the benefit of scholars, and we emphasise ensuring all operational aspects are sustainable for each four-year programme.

Organisational Structure

First Star Scholars UK Board of Trustees – at the year beginning April 2022 8 trustees were members of the Board. Trustees and the Executive Director meet quarterly and are responsible for the strategic direction and policy of the charity. Two trustees stepped down in year and three new trustees are in the process of reinforcing the board through their appointment. Within the financial year 2023-2024 these three new trustees joined the Board and are noted on the list of Trustees signing this document. In addition, legal representatives, and scholars' representatives attend board meetings.

Day to day responsibility for the provision of the services rests with the Executive Director. The Executive Director is responsible for ensuring that the charity delivers the services specified and that key performance indicators are met along with ensuring the charity continues to develop working practices in line with good practice.

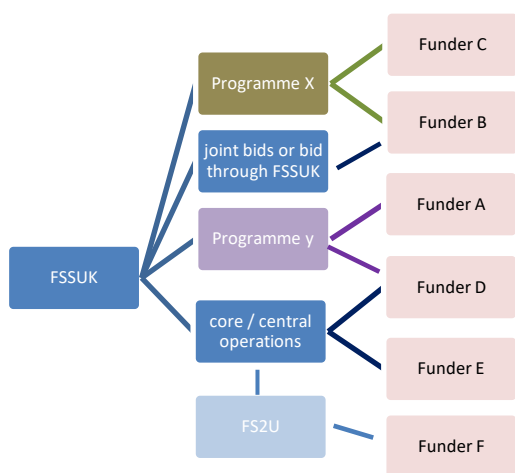
Related Parties

First Star works closely with the university partners who provide the setting and support for programmes to enable them to be established and ensure scholars become integrated into the Higher Education experience. Scholars are associated with a particular programme and in the campus model to a particular university, or in the case of FS2U with First Star central. Each university campus programme has a full-time Director appointed by the University who works closely with the Executive Director (FSSUK) to ensure the programme runs according to the curriculum, safeguarding and budget expectations of First Star as established through each Memorandum of Agreement.

This year we have three live programmes and an alumni programme active across the UK. Our campus programmes started in London and are gradually expanding outwards

– south and west, with the prospect of a midlands/north programme in the next 12-18 months. Each programme needs the support of very senior leadership in the university to commence and works best with an enthusiastic champion high up in the staff. It takes between 18-24 months to establish each programme – moving from leadership agreement, legal agreement, fundraising, staffing appointments, scholar recruitment and programme delivery. While the Programme Director is usually appointed and employed by the university there remains a dotted line of responsibility and reporting to the Executive Director of First Star to ensure financial and programme delivery remain consistent with the Agreements and the values of First Star. Monthly directors' meetings are supplemented by monthly team meetings and where possible these are face to face. Director's meetings and conferences are expanding to include programme specific staff such as tutors and mentors. These facilitate the sharing of best practice and resources, recruitment and offer support for Directors I programmes.

Reports from each programme detail progress, issues, as well as metrics and both hard and soft data on our scholars. These assist in planning and budget monitoring. All funding for each programme is accounted in fiscal reviews. This ensures, financially and reputationally, that the budget and Agreements between First Star and each partner university are adhered to. Reports for funders/donors are prepared and presented as requested/agreed - some aspects of stewardship for programme funding run through First Star and for specific funders programmes report directly to their donor/s. The university Programme Directors are responsible for reports, providing data and narrative either direct to donors or for funder reporting via FSSUK. The reporting process is negotiated with each donor separately, with some funds channeled through First Star and some funds provided directly to the university for each programme.



Funding relationships:

- FSSUK has a funding / delivery relationship with each programme.
- Funder A funds Programme Y directly.
- FSSUK central has a relationship with Funder B and Programme X (a joint funding request or a donor funding through FSSUK).
- Funder C funds programme x directly.
- FSSUK has a direct relationship with Funder D for core / central funding while. Funder D also funds programme Y which is included in the fiscal review and Funder reports.
- FSSUK has a direct relationship with Funder E for core / central funding.
- Funder F funds FS2U through FSSUK as our core programme
- Programmes report quarterly to FSSUK including funding for that programme.

First Star maintains its own core costs and secures the FS2U budget and funding – both remaining separate from the Programmes at different university providers. University providers are responsible for auditing their own accounts.

Responsibilities of the Board of Trustees

Company law requires the Board of Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of the affairs of the charitable company as at the balance sheet date and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including income and expenditure, for the financial year.

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees followed best practice and:

Selected an accounting firm and adopted their accounting policies applying them consistently to provide monthly reconciling and reports, quarterly reports and provide annual unaudited accounts;

made judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent; and
prepared financial statements on a going concern basis.

The Board of Trustees is responsible for maintaining proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 1985. The monthly accounting records are delegated to the Executive Director and regular reports are provided for trustees. The trustees prepare a quarterly update scrutinised at the quarterly Board meetings.

The Board of Trustees is also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees are directors for the purpose of company law and trustees for the purpose of charity law, who served during the year and up to the date of this report are set out in the accompanying document.

In accordance with company law, as the company's directors, we certify that:

“so far as we are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the company's independent examiners are unaware; and as the directors of the company we have taken all the steps that we ought to have taken in order to make ourselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charity's independent examiner is aware of that information.”

Independent Examiner

Critchley's were re-appointed as the charitable company's Independent Examiners providing unaudited accounts and have expressed their willingness to continue in that capacity.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006. The Independent Examiner is satisfied that the accounts of the company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination. The Independent Examiners Report accompanies this document.

Agreed by the Board of Trustees

Peter Samuelson
Marta Drummond
Stuart Irvine
Jason Arday
Nawtej Dosanjh
Cath Dovey

Trustees appointed in 2023-2024

Colette Fletcher
Imogen Beecroft
Jade Standley

and signed on their behalf by:

Mr Peter Samuelson. Chair of Trustees



Date 13th December 2023

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT
TO THE TRUSTEES OF FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the financial statements of First Star Scholars UK for the year ended 31 March 2023.

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

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

Independent examiner's statement

Since the charity'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 , which is one of the listed bodies.

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

- 1 accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
- 2 the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
- 3 the financial statements do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
- 4 the financial statements have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

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

Robert Kirtland FCA
Critchleys Audit LLP

Beaver House
23-38 Hythe Bridge Street
Oxford
OX1 2EP

Dated:

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total 2023 £	Unrestricted funds 2022 £
<u>Income and endowments from:</u>					
Donations and legacies	3	187,280	124,500	311,780	263,600
Other income	4	621	-	621	-
Total income		<u>187,901</u>	<u>124,500</u>	<u>312,401</u>	<u>263,600</u>
<u>Expenditure on:</u>					
Charitable activities	5	<u>230,093</u>	<u>64,598</u>	<u>294,691</u>	<u>269,557</u>
Net (expenditure)/income for the year/ Net movement in funds		(42,192)	59,902	17,710	(5,957)
Fund balances at 1 April 2022		<u>135,710</u>	-	<u>135,710</u>	<u>141,667</u>
Fund balances at 31 March 2023		<u><u>93,518</u></u>	<u><u>59,902</u></u>	<u><u>153,420</u></u>	<u><u>135,710</u></u>

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

The statement of financial activities also complies with the requirements for an income and expenditure account under the Companies Act 2006.

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 MARCH 2023

	Notes	2023 £	£	2022 £	£
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	9		11,171		2,840
Current assets					
Cash at bank and in hand		159,380		143,516	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	10	<u>(17,131)</u>		<u>(10,646)</u>	
Net current assets			142,249		132,870
Total assets less current liabilities			<u>153,420</u>		<u>135,710</u>
Income funds					
Restricted funds	11		59,902		-
Unrestricted funds			93,518		135,710
			<u>153,420</u>		<u>135,710</u>

The company is entitled to the exemption from the audit requirement contained in section 477 of the Companies Act 2006, for the year ended 31 March 2023.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 with respect to accounting records and the preparation of financial statements.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year in question in accordance with section 476.

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

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees on ...13th December 2023



Stuart Irvine
Trustee

Company registration number 11067711

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

1 Accounting policies

Charity information

First Star Scholars UK is a private company limited by guarantee incorporated in England and Wales. The registered office is C/O Critchleys LLP, Beaver House, 23-38 Hythe Bridge Street, Oxford, Oxfordshire, OX1 2EP.

1.1 Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the charity's articles of association, the Companies Act 2006, FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" ("FRS 102") and the Charities SORP "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). The charity is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

The charity has taken advantage of the provisions in the SORP for charities not to prepare a Statement of Cash Flows.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charity. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention. The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below.

1.2 Going concern

At the time of approving the financial statements, the trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus the trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

1.3 Charitable funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of their charitable objectives.

Restricted funds are subject to specific conditions by donors as to how they may be used. The purposes and uses of the restricted funds are set out in the notes to the financial statements.

1.4 Income

Income is recognised when the charity is legally entitled to it after any performance conditions have been met, the amounts can be measured reliably, and it is probable that income will be received.

Cash donations are recognised on receipt. Other donations are recognised once the charity has been notified of the donation, unless performance conditions require deferral of the amount. Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant is recognised at the time of the donation.

Legacies are recognised on receipt or otherwise if the charity has been notified of an impending distribution, the amount is known, and receipt is expected. If the amount is not known, the legacy is treated as a contingent asset.

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

1 Accounting policies

(Continued)

1.5 Expenditure

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

Expenditure is classified by activity. The costs of each activity are made up of the total of direct costs and shared costs, including support costs involved in undertaking each activity. Direct costs attributable to a single activity are allocated directly to that activity. Shared costs which contribute to more than one activity and support costs which are not attributable to a single activity are apportioned between those activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

1.6 Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are initially measured at cost and subsequently measured at cost or valuation, net of depreciation and any impairment losses.

Depreciation is recognised so as to write off the cost or valuation of assets less their residual values over their useful lives on the following bases:

Office equipment

Straight line depreciation over 4 years.

The gain or loss arising on the disposal of an asset is determined as the difference between the sale proceeds and the carrying value of the asset, and is recognised in the statement of financial activities.

1.7 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts.

Basic financial assets

Basic financial assets, which include debtors and cash and bank balances, are initially measured at transaction price including transaction costs and are subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the transaction is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial assets classified as receivable within one year are not amortised.

Basic financial liabilities

Basic financial liabilities, including creditors are initially recognised at transaction price unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial liabilities classified as payable within one year are not amortised.

1.8 Employee benefits

The cost of any unused holiday entitlement is recognised in the period in which the employee's services are received.

Termination benefits are recognised immediately as an expense when the charity is demonstrably committed to terminate the employment of an employee or to provide termination benefits.

1.9 Retirement benefits

Payments to defined contribution retirement benefit schemes are charged as an expense as they fall due.

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

2 Critical accounting estimates and judgements

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, the trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised where the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods where the revision affects both current and future periods.

3 Donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total	Unrestricted funds
	2023 £	2023 £	2023 £	2022 £
Grants	91,948	9,500	101,448	251,574
Donations	95,332	115,000	210,332	12,026

4 Other income

	Unrestricted funds	Total
	2023 £	2022 £
Other income	621	-

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

5 Charitable activities

	2023 £	2022 £
Support costs		
Staff costs	172,134	115,170
Depreciation and impairment	2,994	725
Advertising and marketing	891	2,222
Office costs	8,814	12,355
Travel and subsistence	17,460	8,971
Information technology	6,215	9,906
Other costs	9,302	3,795
Independent examination fees	3,168	2,709
Accountancy and payroll fees	4,854	5,284
Professional fees	4,159	-
Recruitment fees	7,704	-
Donations given	21,112	-
	<u>258,807</u>	<u>161,137</u>
Activities undertaken directly		
Provision of academic and life skills education to children in social care	35,884	108,420
	<u>294,691</u>	<u>269,557</u>
Analysis by fund		
Unrestricted funds	230,093	269,557
Restricted funds	64,598	-
	<u>294,691</u>	<u>269,557</u>

6 Trustees

None of the trustees (or any persons connected with them) received any remuneration or benefits from the charity during the year.

7 Employees

The average monthly number of employees during the year was:

2023 Number	2022 Number
<u>6</u>	<u>2</u>

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

7 Employees (Continued)

Employment costs	2023 £	2022 £
Wages and salaries	154,487	103,775
Social security costs	11,910	7,373
Other pension costs	5,737	4,022
	<u>172,134</u>	<u>115,170</u>

The number of employees whose annual remuneration was more than £60,000 is as follows:

2023 Number	2022 Number
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>

8 Taxation

The charity is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within section 505 of the Taxes Act 1988 or section 252 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that these are applied to its charitable objects.

9 Tangible fixed assets

	Office equipment £
Cost	
At 1 April 2022	4,915
Additions	<u>11,325</u>
At 31 March 2023	<u>16,240</u>
Depreciation and impairment	
At 1 April 2022	2,075
Depreciation charged in the year	<u>2,994</u>
At 31 March 2023	<u>5,069</u>
Carrying amount	
At 31 March 2023	<u>11,171</u>
At 31 March 2022	<u>2,840</u>

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

10 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2023 £	2022 £
Other taxation and social security	3,801	4,044
Trade creditors	10,507	3,729
Other creditors	243	293
Accruals and deferred income	2,580	2,580
	<u>17,131</u>	<u>10,646</u>

11 Restricted funds

The income funds of the charity include restricted funds comprising the following unexpended balances of donations and grants held on trust for specific purposes:

	Movement in funds		Movement in funds		
	Incoming resources £	Balance at 1 April 2022 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Balance at 31 March 2023 £
University of Winchester	-	-	38,000	(30,000)	8,000
FS2U	-	-	55,000	(3,986)	51,014
FSS Summer School staffing	-	-	9,500	(9,500)	-
The Portal Trust	-	-	22,000	(21,112)	888
	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>124,500</u>	<u>(64,598)</u>	<u>59,902</u>

Details of the restricted funds are included in the trustees report.

12 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total 2023 £	Unrestricted funds 2022 £
Fund balances at 31 March 2023 are represented by:				
Tangible assets	11,171	-	11,171	2,840
Current assets/(liabilities)	82,347	59,902	142,249	132,870
	<u>93,518</u>	<u>59,902</u>	<u>153,420</u>	<u>135,710</u>

13 Related party transactions

During the year ended 31 March 2023, trustee expenses were paid to one trustee for travel and subsistence totaling £4,977 (2022: £3,679 to two trustees).

Total trustee donations in the year were £3,767 (2022: £nil)

Accounts

First Star Scholars UK

(A company limited by guarantee)

Report and Financial Statements For the Year Ended 31 March 2022

**Charity number 1180754
Company number 11067711**

First Star Scholars UK
(A company limited by guarantee)

Financial Statements
For the Year Ended 31 March 2022
Accompanying document of unaudited
accounts

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First Star Scholars UK
Report of the Board of Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2022

The Board of Trustees presents its report and unaudited financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2022.

Reference and Administrative Information

Charity Name:	First Star Scholars UK
Charity registration number:	1180754
Company registration number:	11067711
Registered Office	c/o Critchleys LLP Beaver House 23-28 Hythe Bridge Street Oxford OX12EP
Operational address:	37 Deerhurst Close Hanworth Park Middlesex TW13 7HS

Board of Trustees

Mr P Samuelson	Chair
Mr F Young	Vice Chair
Mr S Irvine	
Ms M Drummond	
Ms AM Bird	
Dr J Arday	
Dr N Dosanjh	
Ms C Dovey	

Senior Management

Dr L Goodwin	Executive Director
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Independent Examiners -	Critchleys Audit LLP Beaver House 23-28 Hythe Bridge Street Oxford OX1 2EP
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Bank-	NatWest
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Legal advisors -	Gibson, Dunn and Crutcher
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Our Aims and Objectives

Purposes and Aims

Our charity's purposes as set out in the objects contained in the company's articles of association are to:

1. To provide relief and assistance to people in need who are young people in the United Kingdom who have entered into the social care system in particular but not exclusively by providing them with academic and life skills education and caregiver engagement.
2. To advance the education of people in need who are young people in the United Kingdom who have entered into the social care system in particular but not exclusively by providing them with academic and life skills education and caregiver engagement

Core Values

Aspiration: Young People in Care to enter higher education.

Support: Young People in Care to succeed in GCSE and post 16 education

Challenge: Involve universities, STEAM mentors, educators, social services and carers.

Collaboration: Leverage collective intent and aspiration - political, educational, technological and philanthropic.

Accountability: challenge universities, companies, society, schools, local authorities and our programmes to be accountable for progress of young people.

Make a difference: To the lives of Young People in Care/ Care leavers.

Aims and Objectives - the Scholars

Mental Health - for all First Star graduates to be able to access the support and advice they need to sustain their mental health.

Accommodation - no First Star graduate becomes homeless.

Civil engagement - no First Star graduate drawn into crime and incarcerated.

GCSE transition - for 50% of scholars to achieve 5 + GCSEs at **grade 4+**.

Aspire to HE -for 34% of scholars to transition to HE {in line with % of all peers}.

Secure further training, education or employment-for 100% of students to transition to adulthood with none being NEETS (Not in Education, Employment or Training).

Ensuring our work delivers our aims

We review our strategic plan and the aims, objectives, and activities in this plan each year. This review looks at progress made towards objectives, the impact of what we achieved in the previous 12 months. The review of our strategic plan helps us ensure our aim, objectives and activities remained focused on our stated purposes and that we respond to current events, notably the Corona virus pandemic and programme expansion. In particular, the trustees consider how objectives are progressed through planned activities and how these contribute to the aims and objectives set.

The focus of our work

Our strategic themes (2019 - 2024) are

- Programme provision throughout the Home Countries
- Sustainability of First Star UK
- Programme development
- Board of Trustees development
- Advocacy and engagement

Main objectives for the year 2021-2022

- Establish new cohort / programme
- Develop trustee roles and appoint additional trustees
- Establish new university partner- programme provider for 2021 start
- Develop annual lecture series, if possible, under COVID-19 restrictions
- Develop staff training programme
- Sustain advocacy with DFE and other organisations
- Develop Virtual / online provision

Outcomes

- Established new programme and recruiting FS2U cohort
- First cohort graduated summer 2021

50% progressed to HE. 72% of scholars completed the 4 years programme, no guardian scholars (graduates) are homeless. 5% of guardian scholars (graduates) are NEETS, 45% are in further education, training or employment.

- Alumni provision

Guardian scholars (Alumni) support has included financial support, equipment (eg. microwave; kettle; clothing/specialist equipment for interviews); travel. Networking events have been supported by guardian scholars traveling to Liverpool, Stoke and Brighton for launch and engagement events and joining webinars and online events to raise awareness of the impact of First Star. Celebratory events have included a graduation certificate presentation and a Christmas meal.

- Develop trustee roles and appoint additional trustees

Skills audit and review of roles has been instrumental in guiding our careful development of the Board of Trustees with potential new trustees approached. A new trustee with experience and expertise in

fundraising was appointed in March 2022. Trustees also agreed the formation of a fundraising oversight committee (March '22)

- Establish new programme for 2022 start

A fourth cohort with support from a new university partner – Our First Star 2U programme started in 2022 – funding well established, with new funder support specifically for this FS2U programme and a programme director appointed. Partnership with University of Sussex for residential provision has been established and the support of this new partner for the residential provision is hugely beneficial for the development of this programme. Residential provision is 7 days each year with summer 2022 being the first residential.

- Accredited diplomas under way

Level 3 diploma and level 4 diploma awards delivered through First Saturday and summer residentials. For the FS2U programme monthly provision will continue online with experienced tutors to be appointed for academic provision.

- Annual lecture

Venue retained – Due to ongoing covid restrictions in 21-22 this is planned for next 22-23 - guest speaker – to be confirmed

- Develop staff training in conjunction with additional staff for FS2U – initial training focuses on staff for residential (this will expand to include tutors and mentors in following year)
- Sustain advocacy with DFE and other organisations

Engagement with a range of organisations continues, including the Fair Education Alliance, National Association of Virtual School Heads and the National Network for the Education of Care Leavers

- Developed Online provision

FS2U programme with a cohort to start in 22-23 – with central team director appointed and planned 7 night residential - with new university provider – University of Sussex

- Developed plans for STEAM lecture series which initially launched in autumn 2021.

This 2021 provision proved to be a false start and a revived provision in partnership with Villiers Park Education Trust is planned for 2022-23. We are establishing provision with this collaborative partner to secure an annual programme of lectures (10-12 annually). Initial lectures will include climate change and sustainability as themes.

How our activities benefit stakeholders.

Our main activities and who we try to help are described below. All our charitable activities focus on the provision of the First Star programme and advocacy for young people in care and care leavers

Advocacy

First Star has advocacy at its heart. The commissioning of the Centre for Social Justice research and report on Care Leavers transition to and progression at Higher Education (HE) resulted in the **12by24 Report** published by the Centre for Social Justice in May 2019. With funding support from the Portal Trust secured, we are planning, researching and will produce a follow up report in 2022 on the progress

of care leaver access to HE provision.

Our advocacy can now be informed by our own data. Children Looked After continue to fare less well than non-looked-after children in their progress between primary school and Key Stage 4, with their average Attainment 8 score being just 21.4 compared to 50.2 (2020) for non-looked after children. The latest cohort of First Star scholars to complete their GCSEs have an average attainment 8 score of 47.1 with 32% of scholars passing GCSE English and mathematics at grade 5 and above compared to 10% of young people in care nationally and 50% of all pupils nationally.

Revised DfE data suggests that only Traveler children and those of Gypsy/Romany communities fare less well in our education system than those in care. Most recent (and using revised metrics) Department for Education (DfE) data indicates that just 13% of care leavers aged 19-23 go on to higher education, compared to 44% of 19-23-year-olds in the general population. First Star data shows 50% of our first graduating cohort progressed to university, with a further 45% in further education, training, or employment. Only 5% of our graduates are NEETS (compared to 39% of care leavers nationally). This matters a great deal, because access to higher education can be a powerful gateway to opportunity, particularly for those who have started with so little in life. The First Star programme recognises that not all our scholars will progress to higher education, and we ensure provision prepares them for employment, for apprenticeships and new education opportunities provision including T levels.

The self-advocacy and opinions of those who have lived experience of foster care illustrate the impact and the need for such a programme. Our Scholars tell us:

- *'First Star is a place where you'll be praised rather than tolerated and people actually care about you'*
- *'One day one of the mentors said shoot higher and now I'm at a Russell group university'*
- *'First star is a place which always helps me find my best even when I feel down or lost. There are so many people that help you here'*

The impact of the Pandemic is still being played out through our education system and data indicates that disadvantaged pupils are educationally 18 months behind their more advantaged peers by age 16. While the accepted metrics fluctuate with both 6% (19-21yrs old) compared to 34% of peers and 13% (18-23yrs old) compared to 44% of peers being used as measures of progression into HE, the gap between care leavers and their peers remains significant. First Star believes that GCSE outcomes are a significant barrier to progression (eventually HE) and have placed additional resources throughout covid and into programmes post covid with the aim of increasing the numbers of scholars passing 5 or more GCSEs. With the launch of the NNECL Quality Mark for Universities developed through the advocacy of the DfE Advisory Board supported by the DfE and First Star, has given impetus to the creation of the Report Card initiative which will examine, annually, the progress HE institutions have made in their intake, Access and Participation Plans and widening participation engagement

As in the previous year, 2021-2022 has seen Covid-19 significantly impact our advocacy engagement through some events including a proposed roundtable with donors and political voices, Care Leavers and First Star Scholars remaining on hold; our inaugural First Star lecture with special guest Stephen Fry is similarly (temporarily) postponed until 2023.

Scholar advocacy reflects our mission and each year two scholars join the Board of Trustees as special advisors. This has remained the case throughout lockdowns and scholars remain articulate and engaged sharing with Trustees educational and social issues being faced by them and their peers. A scholar's council is being developed as we engage with new cohorts, to ensure voice and advocacy includes all scholars.

First Star continues advocate for support for young people in care through the overarching strategy committee of the Fair Education Alliance, NNECL and NAVSH conferences and staff are keenly involved in the Learning Networks of the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. Collaborations with other charities including

PYE Global aid our programme provision for Scholars. Charities such as *mybnk* and *Become* continue to contribute to programme provision. Our latest collaboration with Villiers Park Education Trust will support our First Star2U provision as well as carer engagement and leadership challenges for scholars.

Who used and benefited from our services?

First Star Scholars UK was established in 2017 with the pilot programme at St Mary's University, Twickenham, graduating our first scholars in 2021. First Star Scholars UK is based on the model successfully established in the US by Peter Samuelson in 2011 and there are 18 programmes across nations with three in the UK. As we know there are a record number of looked-after children in the UK, with 90 entering the care system every day and a projected 100,000 children in care by 2025. First Star is reflecting the national *Leveling up* or 'catching up' agenda and focusing provision for years 1 and 2 on GCSE and individual scholars' missed education.

First Star programmes develop this theme to a much a deeper level and build long-term pathways based on scholars' own aspirations. The outcomes for our first graduating cohort authenticates the longevity of the programme through continued engagement with our alumni programme ensuring scholars and alumni are never alone in their personal and educational journey. 50% of graduating Alumni were awarded places at HE, while only 5% are NEETs. Retention remains high across cohorts with our University of Winchester cohort sustaining 100% retention. Cohort two at St Mary's was impacted by an outbreak of Covid-19 in the summer of 2021, a further residential was offered at Easter and well received by scholars and staff. Despite the challenges of Covid-19 scholars remain consistent in their attendance through the First Saturday programme.

Our Alumni have positively engaged with First Star, and we are building this programme. Opportunities to develop networking skills have been enhanced by alumni presence at events in Liverpool, Stoke and Brighton engaging with and launching new university partners. Our alumni support has offered support for course fees, course materials and resources including specialist dance equipment. We continue to offer support in terms of personal items such as microwaves. We know that the numbers entering care reportedly increased by 44% during Covid -19 (Barnardo's, 2020) and the gap in learning between disadvantaged young people and their peers is now an estimated 18 months; we also know that 50% of care experienced students have considered withdrawing from HE due to financial circumstances, physical and mental health issues and stress of academic and First Star is working to support scholars into and through their HE and post-graduation experience, providing mentors, equipment and financial support.

Our 2021 GCSE results bucked the attainment trends for Looked After Young People, with scholars' average EBacc score was 5.28 compared to 4.38 for all pupils (2020) and 1.7 for CLA (2020). First Star scholars overall pass rate (grade 4+) was 89% compared to 79.7% (England) and 76.9% (London). Scholars overall pass rate (grade 5+) also exceeded their peers at 62.8%.

In a busy year, cohort 1 graduates entered HE and work; cohort 2 completed GCSEs in 2021 and transitioned to further education and post 16 courses. All cohort 2 scholars continue their education pathway but several also experienced upheavals in placement, social workers, and education settings. Of concern is that some of our scholars are being placed in unregulated residential settings in less than suitable circumstances and First Star Directors are supporting them through these challenges. Our First Star 2U programme is up and running. Our new programme Director has been appointed and we are busy recruiting scholars nationally. Our initial FS2U residential is planned for summer 2022 at Sussex University. For 2022/3 new cohorts are being explored and fundraising and university partners already engaged.

We remain committed to principles of not 'cherry picking', a concept even more important with the education attainment gap increasing and absence and missing for education numbers rising among school populations. We are enhancing our evaluation and monitoring of scholars' progress with baseline assessments include in new programmes, regular reporting to schools, carers, virtual heads and social workers included in our planned provision for FS2U. Our University of Winchester Director has led the way in holistic engagement in the provision and monitoring of scholars' development including attendance at PEPs.

Selection and recruitment has expanded nationwide with the launch of FS2U. Scholars are being recruited from as far afield as Newcastle, Manchester, Leeds, and Sussex. Scholars can self-nominate, and nominations can be made by an adult as well as their virtual school heads and schools. Eligible scholars should have a care plan; be in kinship care; have been identified by children's services as on the edge of care or have appropriate refugee status. Each application is reviewed upon its own merits, but we do not judge potential on current academic progress or school attendance as these can already be barriers to success for those in care.

Programme provision has been impacted by the Covid – 19 pandemic. St Mary's programme had to close in the summer of 2021 after a week and a half for cohort 1 (now alumni) and in the first week of the cohort 2 residential. Cohort 3 at Winchester successfully ran the whole 3-week provision. Both programmes are running a First Saturday programme each month to sustain engagement and support scholars, and both also offered a four day Easter residential to enhance scholars First Star engagement.

First Star 2U saw the appointment of the programme director, and confirmation of the host university for summer 2022. The STEAM lecture series commenced in autumn 2021 but was not overly successful with very limited engagement. A review with our partners Villiers Park Education Trust has taken place and plans for relaunch in conjunction with the online provision for FS2U have been made. The planned STEAM lecture programme will support the First Star aim to enhance career ideas and aspirations, will support GCSE provision and is targeted towards any teen in care studying GCSEs.

Impact

Our pilot cohort graduated in the summer of 2021 having done so well at GCSE and with 50% progressing to HE and most others to FE and employment. We have developed a staff alumni role and are striving to keep links with as many alumni as possible. We aim to provide support through the challenges of year one at university where we know that care leavers are 36% more likely to give up - this provision includes seeking mentors for alumni – someone to share highs and lows with; 18% of alumni at HE institutions have a mentor through this project.

St Mary's First Star Scholars GCSE results in 2021 reflected the increased emphasis on 1-1 provision, albeit driven by the pandemic and lockdowns. This has helped generate First Star templates for FS2U provision. Future FS2U classes will be staged for different abilities, including those taking higher and foundation GCSEs and we will provide 1-1 support with tutors on a termly basis. First Star GCSE outcomes are keeping pace with or exceeding national expectations.

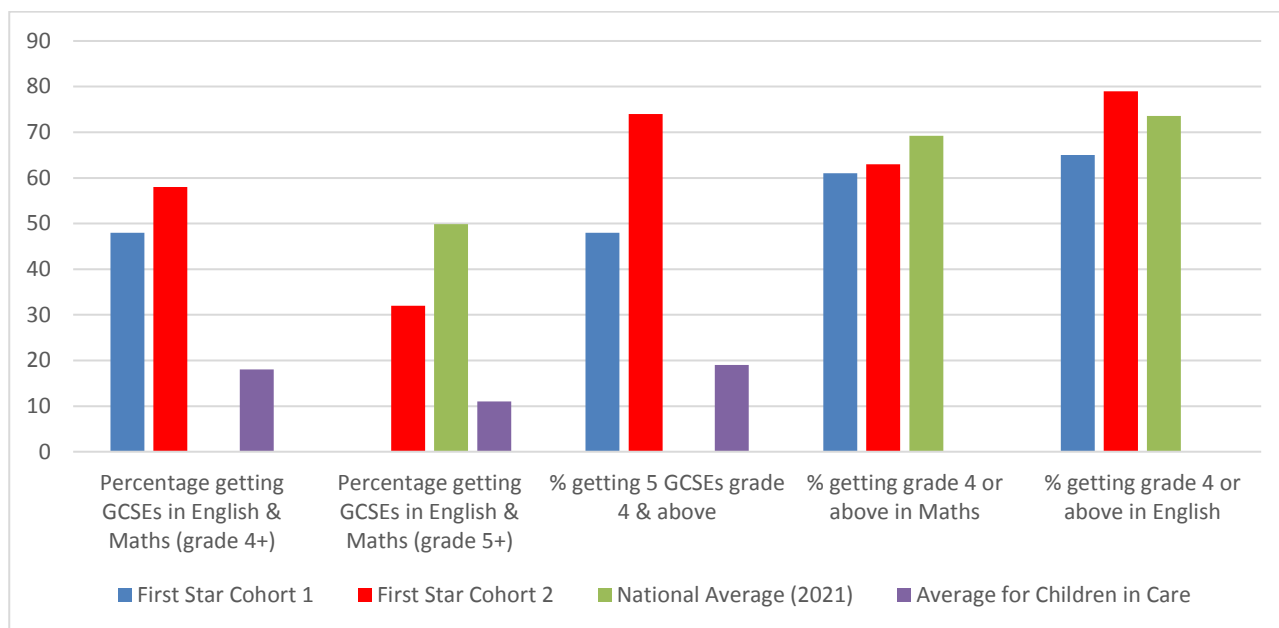
First Star aims

- Progression to HE = more than 34%
- 5+ GCSE passes = more than 54% (national average pre covid)
- 0% NEETs = less than 39% which is national figure for care leavers generally
- 0% homeless = whereas 25% of care leavers likely to become homeless in the first two years of aging out

50% of graduates have earned places in HE; compared to the national care leaver average of 13. NEETS among First Star graduates = 5% of graduates; 0% of our alumni are homeless yet they have experienced numerous moves since reaching the age of 18.

First Star programmes have a significant focus on GCSE preparation, exam techniques and revision in the first two years of the academic component of each First Star programme, particularly English, Maths and Science. This focus is impacting scholars' outcomes with our young people doing well in GCSEs.

Category	First Star Cohort 1	First Star Cohort 2	National Average	Average for Children in Care
Percentage getting GCSEs in English & Maths (grade 4+)	48%	58%	N/A for 2021	17.5% (2018)
Percentage getting GCSEs in English & Maths (grade 5+)		32%	49.9% (2020)	10.9% (2019)
% getting 5 GCSEs grade 4 & above	48%	74%	N/A for 2021	19% (2018)
% getting grade 4 or above in Maths	60.8%	63%	69.2%	
% getting grade 4 or above in English	65.4%	79%	73.6%	



Scholars' voice

...continues to be important to First Star and annually two scholars are elected each year as special advisors on the board of trustees. With the advent of new programmes a scholars' council is being established to give a voice to all scholars.

'It's given me belief I can do everything'

'People here have given me so much confidence I was able to overcome my fears'

'First Star is a place which always helps me find my best even when I feel down or lost. There are so many people that help you here'

'I wasn't sure what to expect but now I'm here it was the best decision I made'

- Overall GCSE results improved despite the impact of the Pandemic. As the data shows the second cohort GCSE results improved upon previous years – despite being the Covid GCSE generation – success was facilitated through a hybrid approach, perpetuating the efficacy of the First Star provision.

The context of Covid – 19 national data and issues

The average disadvantaged student is now educationally 18 months behind their peers. 48% of children in care in mainstream schools are not entered for GCSEs while only 30.6% of children in care obtain a GCSE pass. With 100% of First Star cohorts exceeding the minimum national average of entry to 3 GCSEs (and obtaining better than national average outcomes) the impact of First Star interventions and the progress of First Star young people is demonstrated.

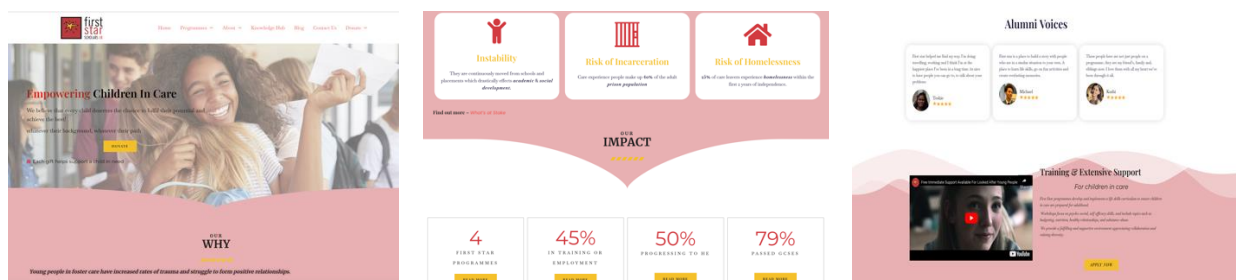
First Star data signposts that:

- Our programmes succeed in creating a 'family' atmosphere. The notion of the First Star family underpins our education and learning activities, and the young people feel safe, welcome, valued, and have a sense of belonging.
- What proves particularly valuable is building relationships with other foster children; making friends with, and being encouraged by, their peers and mentors and being supported by educational staff who really care.
- That the residential summer school aspect of our programmes serves an important function in enriching close relationships, but also giving young people a taste of independent living. It also provides time for very intensive academic support
- Our programmes are successful in giving students a 'taste' of university life in a way that is subtle and uncontrived. FS2U aims to emulate this provision within the online and shorter residential provision – this is a pivotal element of provision

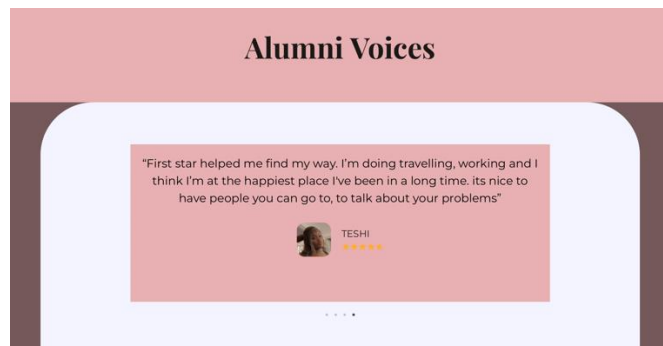
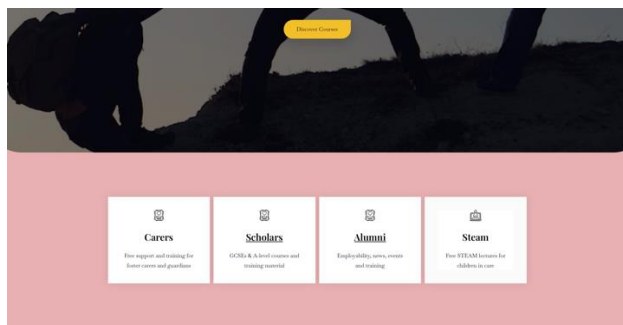
Impact of Covid-19

At FSSUK we have redeveloped our web site and FSSUK continues to provide a resources section developing a hub of care experience knowledge.

Our new web site provides a renewed platform for donations and knowledge



Learning and support was transferred to a second learning platform (website) at the same time as our main site was updated and www.firststar2U.org established. This is a secure learning website



Unfortunately, Covid - 19 continues to have a knock-on effect on the residential programmes in the summer, impacting through a summer outbreak of the virus at our St Mary's Programme. All university and local health protocols were in place and plans to return scholars to their placements and carers activated. Furthermore, programme plans supported those unable to attend due to Covid and continue to ensure they remain part of the First Star family. The response to the challenges of covid included shortened summer residentials and these were supported with an Easter residential making up the time. Each aspect of change has been supported through plans and activities and shared with supporters and other programmes as activities progress –ensuring that the programme may need to be delivered differently to maintain safety and safeguarding.

First Star Programme

University First Star Directors worked from home during the pandemic and continue to do so as appropriate and in line with the return-to-work provision of their campus. Our immediate focus has been on ensuring the online provision and face to face support for scholars continues and this has been revised and increased – offering 1 -1 revision and career support as well as group and cohort sessions. First Star programme protocols support '*keeping in touch*' and the First Star alumni provision has extended this beyond programmes keeping care leavers engaged.

Staff and scholar recruitment, and staff training has continued despite during the impact of covid – 19 and people's ongoing concerns with social distancing – long-term issues are being considered and planned for.

The First Star 2U programme

First Star developed this new provision to provide support for scholars and carers beyond the geographical locations of our campus programmes. Our campus model stands as the principal offer for First Star programmes. First Star 2U is a stand-alone provision that expands access for scholars and raises awareness among virtual school heads, schools, MATs, fostering agencies, organisations, charities, and universities across England – reflecting our determination to support Children Looked After in any setting. The essential ingredient of the First Star Family remains at the core of this provision. Each cohort will undertake a four-year programme mirroring our campus provision with a 7-night condensed residential each year. The Programme Director – appointed in December 2021 will manage both the FS2U and the STEAM provision

The challenges of education and growth through the pandemic and the excellent outcomes of our scholars at GCSE level and beyond have demonstrated that there is scope to increase the use of online learning platforms. The inaugural First Star STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths) lecture was due to take place in autumn 2021 – this launch had limited success, not

achieving the intended outcome of leading more young people to our provision. Following a reevaluation through our partnership with Villiers Park Education Trust this provision has been reviewed and relaunched in 2022.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding remains a key consideration with annual updates of policies. The risks are several for our young people. First Star policy and procedures reflect updated guidance, including Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021); to ensure compliance and best practice is maintained. The issues of online provision, Peer to Peer abuse, radicalisation and FGM are all included and updated in our annual policy review. New staff undertake NSPCC (or equivalent) training and annual updates in training are included for staff. As our provision expands additional advice and safety protocols are introduced to manage new activities including more live online lessons and new partnerships. We continue to review our protocols to ensure our provision complies with advice and legislation

Our Scholars

Our scholars' placements continue to display the vulnerability we saw during covid, indeed post covid placement instability has increased. It is also clear that more children have entered the care system and that both they and those already in care may experience placement breakdown for several reasons - First Star programme directors continue to monitor our scholars' placements carefully, offering support to carers and scholars and are now getting involved in attending PEPS meetings helping to secure pupil voice and ensuring LAC are not lost to education. Community engagement with carers and others is becoming stronger with programme staff maintaining contact with scholars and their carers.

Financial Review

First Star has secured new funders despite the challenges of Covid-19 and in addition has secured restricted funding for programmes (university led). First Star had a net increase in funds of £5,957. First Star reports to donors in an annual cycle determined by the timing of funded donations and donor requirements. Restricted Funds - University led programmes report to First Star where restricted funding from donors requires this. University programme providers also secure funding directly from donors and are solely responsible for reports and audits in relation to these funds. This year restricted funds for university partners have been secured and these are noted in the accompanying accounts - First Star Scholars Unaudited Accounts for the Year Ended 31st March 2022 - see accompanying document.

Principal Funding Sources

The principal funders for First Star Scholars UK are:

The MariaMarina Foundation; The Peter Cundill Foundation; the National Lottery Community Fund. For our university-based programmes funders include The Linbury Trust, The Paul Hamlyn Foundation, the Dulverton Foundation.

Investment Policy

First Star does not currently invest funds received

Reserves Policy

The Board of Trustees considered the charity's requirements for reserves in light of the main risks to the charity. It has established a policy whereby the unrestricted funds not committed by the charity should be a minimum of 3 months of the expenditure. The reserves target agreed by Trustees is three months in general funds.

The present level of reserves available to the charity of £135,710 exceeds this target level which is considered a minimum level. This is in the main due to the impact of Covid-19 – the pandemic has slowed key activities and developments. New staff employees include the programme director for the FS2U/STEAM provision and a head of development (fundraising) – planned for summer 2022). Other events have been delayed still further but are planned for 2022-23 - these include the research and lecture / advocacy activity. The charity continues with a work from home policy with appropriate online and face to face meetings. The proposed acquisition of office space /hot seats within an office setting has been ended and the appointment of additional staff now focuses on expansion plans with the Board of Trustees settled upon a high-level engagement with fundraising and the development of our financial and funding activities, including stewardship. Reserves available are £135,710. The timing of donations can affect the held reserves throughout the year.

Plans for Future Periods

First Star expansion has continued with the opening of a third cohort at the University of Winchester in the summer of 2021. The development and imminent launch of the FS2U Programme ensures that greater numbers of scholars can access our programmes from a greater geographical area in England. Such expansion is essential to ensure access to, quality and sustainability of our programmes. The launch of the FS2U programme and the associated STEAM lecture series are made possible by the increase in reserves at the end of the past financial year which bore the brunt of covid restrictions. First Star reviewed staffing plans and husbanded resources to focus on expansion this year. The appointment of a Director at the University of Winchester programme paralleled and preceded the appointment of the Director of FS2U – a direct FS employee.

Key Performance Indicators over the first 5 years (established 2019):

1. Expansion of Board and the development of an advisory group
2. 6 programmes by 2024
3. UK (and beyond) wide expansion to include Home Countries and Ireland
4. To ensure sustainability of First Star Scholars UKs 3-5-year business plan includes fundraising, corporate partnerships, office and staff expansion, marketing and event management.
5. Development projects continue to focus on
 - o Annual lecture series (2022/23 revised plan for inaugural lecture)
 - o First Star Diploma Awards linking curriculum across programmes
 - o Training and support for directors, mentors, youth coaches, tutors and volunteers

First Star Scholars UKs 5-year strategic plan, approved in November 2019, focuses on meeting these KPIs. First Star has made considerable advances to completing these KPIs including our 4th programme in recently partnering with the University of Sussex as the provider of the residential setting for the Summer residential for FS2U. First Star is in various stages of discussions with a new university partners and has established initial plans for a Midlands programme – including financial targets, philanthropic plans, stakeholder groups and organisations' engagement. New university partners involved in discussions reflect the national aims of First Star to move beyond our original regional setting. Discussion and contacts have taken place at over 16 universities in England.

The addition of the FS2U programme focuses on scholars not able to access a physical campus setting programme while offering the same support, development through our diploma curriculum and GCSE / post 16 academic development and a hybrid campus residential of 1 week. Plans include lectures with a focus on Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths to reflect the employment and academic opportunities at HE that scholars can aspire to.

Current cohorts continued online until lockdown eased, and while we still respond to covid issues in each setting, programmes have returned to face to face provision. Residentials for our campus programmes included 4 days at easter and three weeks in the summer - as hoped we saw a return to our full residential programme for easter/summer 2021.

Some advocacy activity including our planned Annual Lecture series have once again been postponed following the extended impact of the pandemic and we plan that these will go ahead at some point in 2022-2023/24 reflecting the prevailing sense of public interest in physical engagements. First Star continues engagement with stakeholders including local authorities (virtual school heads especially), programme (University) providers and the university sector, the Government through the Department of Education, NNECL, the Fair Education Alliance and other charities and funders to support our scholars.

Structure, Governance and Management

Governing Document

First Star Scholars UK is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 16th November 2017 and registered as a charity on 19th November 2018. The company was established under a Memorandum of Association which established the objects and powers of the charitable company and is governed under its Articles of Association. Originally established as First Star Academies UK; on 12th February 2020 a resolution was passed to change the name of the charitable company to First Star Scholars UK. This change was confirmed at Companies House and the Charities Commission. In the event of the company being wound up members are required to contribute an amount not exceeding £10.

Recruitment and Appointment of Trustees

The Directors of the company are also charity trustees for the purposes of charity law and under the company's Articles are known as Trustees. All Trustees give their time voluntarily and received no benefits from the charity. Any expenses reclaimed from the charity are set out in note 9 to the accounts in the accompanying document.

First Star's work focuses upon young people in care. The Board of Trustees seeks to ensure that the needs of this group are appropriately reflected through the diversity of the trustee body. Recent recruitment of trustees reflects the attention of the Board on sustainability and governance

Two scholar special advisors are nominated to the Board each year and represent the view and ideas of the cohorts. In addition, the strategic plan continues to drive our recruitment with potential new trustees in roles related to Marketing/ PR; Finance/ accountancy; Media; Fundraising and development; Political Advocacy; Care experienced or Care Leaver with HE experience.

Trustee Induction and Training

Most trustees are already familiar with the practical work of the charity and are encouraged to visit a First Saturday / summer programme. During the interview and selection process new trustees are introduced to the obligations and roles of trustees, including the importance of safeguarding.

All trustees are updated and engage with safeguarding policy and training. An induction pack for new trustees is under review as per our strategic planning to enable trustees to familiarise themselves with the charity and the context within which it operates. All materials are securely shared through our online HUB and include:

- The code of conduct and Nolan principles of public life
- The main documents which set out the operational framework for the charity including the Memorandum and Articles.
- Resourcing and the current financial position as set out in the latest published accounts.
- Strategic plans and objectives.
- Reporting to and stewardship of funders
- Board records and minutes
- Policies and procedures

Information is also shared in relation to information from the various Charity Commission publications signposted through the Commission's guide "the Essential Trustee". This is distributed to all new trustees through the HUB.

Risk Management

The Trustees are responsible for the overseeing of the risks faced by First Star. Detailed considerations of risk are delegated to the Executive Director of First Star Scholars UK. Risks are identified, assessed and controls established throughout the year. A formal review of the charity's risk management processes is undertaken on an annual basis with reporting by exception at quarterly board meetings. Risk is managed under the headings of Governance, External Risk/Covid- 19 Risk, Regulatory and Compliance Risk, Financial Risk and Operational Risk.

Policies are reviewed on an annual/biannual cycle as appropriate to each policy.

The main risks that the Trustees have identified and the plans to manage those risks are:

- Governance: First Star's aim is for continued expansion with clear robust strategic governance.

We manage this risk through trustee access to trust material and support through the HUB which is to be supplemented by an induction programme under development; a review of trustee engagement is also planned.

- External Risk/ Covid -19 risk. Our sustainability is reliant on raising funds; in addition expansion and new projects required the appointment of new staff; engagement of university partners in provision leading to successful outcomes for scholars. Risks Include: Programme closure; new programmes not starting; deteriorating relationships with donors; changing government policy; safeguarding concerns; online issues including scholars not engaging or getting zoom fatigue.

We manage these risks by collaborating closely with university partners in programme development and fund-raising activities; national and local marketing; social media engagement; working with local and central government agencies and departments including attending PEP meetings with young people and the team surrounding them; clear safeguarding policies and regular training for staff and good communication with donors regarding the impact of any restrictions.

- Regulatory and compliance risks; security of documents; compliance with government, company and charity law is essential to our reputation and the well-being of staff and those we benefit. Risks include : Non return of compliance documents; incomplete and late reports to donor's; security of documents.

We manage these risks through a secure Hub; the support and advice of our legal advisors; the engagement

of accountancy firm to reconcile expenditure and process salaries each month; through annual financial audit; reporting and stewardship with donors and contracts securing timeline's with donors and university programmes.

- Financial risk: sustainability of First Star Scholars UK is essential if the programme is to expand nationally. Risks include : Poor budgetary control; inadequate reserves; lack of fund raising

We manage these risks ensuring sufficient reserves to ensure sustainability; financial procedures; monthly and quarterly budget monitoring; strategic fund raising for First Star and university programmes; the planned appointment of fundraiser/head of development.

- Operational Risk: expansion brings some additional risk including as additional staff and volunteers are engaged and new partners sought. These risks include : Lack of staff capacity; lack of resources for projects and initiatives; lack of attention to staff well-being and health and safety; volunteer issues

We manage these risks through consideration of budget for staff resources to support expansion; regular review of policies; a fundraiser to be appointed in 2021-2022; expansion is secured for the benefit of scholars and sustainable for their four-year programme

Organisational Structure

First Star Scholars UK has a Board of Trustees of 8 trustees and the Executive Director who meet quarterly and are responsible for the strategic direction and policy of the charity. In addition, legal representatives and scholar's' representatives attend board meetings.

Day to day responsibility for the provision of the services rests with the Executive Director. The Executive Director is responsible for ensuring that the charity delivers the services specified and that key performance indicators are met along with ensuring the charity continues to develop working practices in line with good practice.

Related Parties

First Star works closely with the university providers offering the First Star programme. Scholars are associated with a particular programme and university, or in the case of FS2U with First Star. Each university programme has a full time Director appointed by the University who works with the Executive Director (FSSUK) to ensure the programme runs according to the curriculum, safeguarding and budget expectations of First Star as established through the Memorandum of Agreement.

With the increase in programmes and providers, Director's meetings and conferences have been introduced in 2021-2022. These facilitate the sharing of best practice and resources, recruitment and offer support for Directors / programmes.

Biannual reports from each programme are presented the Executive Director from Programme Director/s and – each quarter the Executive Director presets an update on programmes to the Board. Six monthly and annual reports to funders/donors are prepared and presented as requested – some aspects of stewardship for programme funding run through First Star and in some cases for specific funders programmes report directly to their donor. The University Programme Directors are responsible for reports to direct donors. The reporting process is negotiated with each donor separately, with some funds channeled through First Star and some funds provided directly to the university for each programme.

First Star maintains its own core costs and secures the FS2U budget and funding – both

remaining separate from the Programmes at different university providers. University providers are responsible for auditing their own accounts.

Responsibilities of the Board of Trustees

Company law requires the Board of Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of the affairs of the charitable company as at the balance sheet date and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including income and expenditure, for the financial year.

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees followed best practice and:

- ▶ Selected an accounting firm and adopted their accounting policies applying them consistently to provide monthly reconciling and reports, quarterly reports and provide annual unaudited accounts;
- ▶ made judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent; and
- ▶ prepared financial statements on a going concern basis.

The Board of Trustees is responsible for maintaining proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 1985. The monthly accounting records are delegated to the Executive Director and regular reports are provided for trustees. The trustees prepare and ensure a quarterly update is scrutinised at the quarterly Board meetings.

The Board of Trustees is also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees are directors for the purpose of company law and trustees for the purpose of charity law, who served during the year and up to the date of this report are set out in the accompanying document.

In accordance with company law, as the company's directors, we certify that:

- ▶ *so far as we are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the company's independent examiners are unaware; and as the directors of the company we have taken all the steps that we ought to have taken in order to make ourselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charity's independent examiner is aware of that information.*

Auditors / Independent Examiner

Critchley's were re-appointed as the charitable company's Independent Examiners providing unaudited accounts and have expressed their willingness to continue in that capacity.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006. The Independent Examiner is satisfied that the accounts of the company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination. The Independent Examiners Report accompanies this document.

Agreed by the Board of Trustees

Peter Samuelson

Frank Young

Marta Drummond

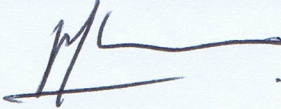
Stuart Irvine

Jason Arday

Nawtej Dosanjh

Cath Dovey

and signed on their behalf by:

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'P. Samuelson', written over a horizontal line.

Mr Peter Samuelson. Chair of Trustees

Date 15th December 2022

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT
TO THE TRUSTEES OF FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the financial statements of First Star Scholars UK for the year ended 31 March 2022.

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

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

Independent examiner's statement

Since the charity'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 , which is one of the listed bodies.

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

- 1 accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
- 2 the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
- 3 the financial statements do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
- 4 the financial statements have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

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



Robert Kirtland FCA
Critchleys Audit LLP

Beaver House
23-38 Hythe Bridge Street
Oxford
OX1 2EP

Dated: 19/12/2022

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2022 £	Unrestricted funds 2021 £
<u>Income from:</u>			
Donations and legacies	3	263,600	182,072
<u>Expenditure on:</u>			
Charitable activities	4	269,557	114,744
Net (expenditure)/income for the year/ Net movement in funds		(5,957)	67,328
Fund balances at 1 April 2021		141,667	74,448
Fund balances at 31 March 2022		135,710	141,776

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

The statement of financial activities also complies with the requirements for an income and expenditure account under the Companies Act 2006.

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 MARCH 2022

	Notes	2022 £	£	2021 £	£
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	7		2,840		268
Current assets					
Cash at bank and in hand		143,516		147,130	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	8	(10,646)		(5,622)	
Net current assets			132,870		141,508
Total assets less current liabilities			135,710		141,776
Income funds					
Unrestricted funds			135,710		141,776
			135,710		141,776

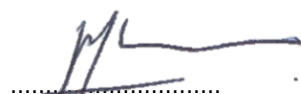
The company is entitled to the exemption from the audit requirement contained in section 477 of the Companies Act 2006, for the year ended 31 March 2022.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 with respect to accounting records and the preparation of financial statements.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year in question in accordance with section 476.

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

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees on 15 December 2022



Mr Peter Samuelson
Chair of Trustees

Company registration number 11067711

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

1 Accounting policies

Charity information

First Star Scholars UK is a private company limited by guarantee incorporated in England and Wales. The registered office is Beaver House, 23-38 Hythe Bridge Street, Oxford, OX1 2EP.

1.1 Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the charity's articles of association, the Companies Act 2006, FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" ("FRS 102") and the Charities SORP "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). The charity is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

The charity has taken advantage of the provisions in the SORP for charities not to prepare a Statement of Cash Flows.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charity. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention. The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below.

1.2 Going concern

At the time of approving the financial statements, the trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus the trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

1.3 Charitable funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of their charitable objectives.

1.4 Income

Income is recognised when the charity is legally entitled to it after any performance conditions have been met, the amounts can be measured reliably, and it is probable that income will be received.

Cash donations are recognised on receipt. Other donations are recognised once the charity has been notified of the donation, unless performance conditions require deferral of the amount. Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant is recognised at the time of the donation.

Legacies are recognised on receipt or otherwise if the charity has been notified of an impending distribution, the amount is known, and receipt is expected. If the amount is not known, the legacy is treated as a contingent asset.

1.5 Expenditure

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

Expenditure is classified by activity. The costs of each activity are made up of the total of direct costs and shared costs, including support costs involved in undertaking each activity. Direct costs attributable to a single activity are allocated directly to that activity. Shared costs which contribute to more than one activity and support costs which are not attributable to a single activity are apportioned between those activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

1 Accounting policies (Continued)

1.6 Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are initially measured at cost and subsequently measured at cost or valuation, net of depreciation and any impairment losses.

Depreciation is recognised so as to write off the cost or valuation of assets less their residual values over their useful lives on the following bases:

Office equipment	Straight line depreciation over 4 years.
------------------	--

The gain or loss arising on the disposal of an asset is determined as the difference between the sale proceeds and the carrying value of the asset, and is recognised in the statement of financial activities.

1.7 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts.

Basic financial assets

Basic financial assets, which include debtors and cash and bank balances, are initially measured at transaction price including transaction costs and are subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the transaction is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial assets classified as receivable within one year are not amortised.

Basic financial liabilities

Basic financial liabilities, including creditors are initially recognised at transaction price unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial liabilities classified as payable within one year are not amortised.

1.8 Employee benefits

The cost of any unused holiday entitlement is recognised in the period in which the employee's services are received.

Termination benefits are recognised immediately as an expense when the charity is demonstrably committed to terminate the employment of an employee or to provide termination benefits.

1.9 Retirement benefits

Payments to defined contribution retirement benefit schemes are charged as an expense as they fall due.

2 Critical accounting estimates and judgements

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, the trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised where the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods where the revision affects both current and future periods.

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

3 Donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds	Unrestricted funds
	2022	2021
	£	£
Grants	251,574	174,392
Donations	12,026	7,680
	<u>263,600</u>	<u>182,072</u>

4 Charitable activities

	Charitable Expenditure	Charitable Expenditure
	2022	2021
	£	£
Support costs		
Staff costs	115,170	77,810
Depreciation and impairment	725	405
Advertising and marketing	2,222	819
Office costs	12,355	5,340
Travel and subsistence	8,971	-
Information technology	9,906	7,500
Other costs	3,795	885
Independent examination fees	2,709	2,580
Accountancy and payroll fees	5,284	4,345
	<u>161,137</u>	<u>99,684</u>
Activities undertaken directly		
Provision of academic and life skills education to children in social care	108,420	15,060
	<u>269,557</u>	<u>114,744</u>

5 Trustees

None of the trustees (or any persons connected with them) received any remuneration or benefits from the charity during the year.

Travel and subsistence expenses amounting to £3,679 were paid to 2 trustees during the year (2021: nil).

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

6 Employees

The average monthly number of employees during the year was:

2022 Number	2021 Number
2	1
<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>

Employment costs

	2022 £	2021 £
Wages and salaries	103,775	70,385
Social security costs	7,373	4,610
Other pension costs	4,022	2,815
	<u>115,170</u>	<u>77,810</u>

The number of employees whose annual remuneration was more than £60,000 is as follows:

2022 Number	2021 Number
1	1
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>

7 Tangible fixed assets

	Office equipment £
Cost	
At 1 April 2021	1,618
Additions	3,297
	<u>4,915</u>
At 31 March 2022	
Depreciation and impairment	
At 1 April 2021	1,350
Depreciation charged in the year	725
	<u>2,075</u>
At 31 March 2022	
Carrying amount	
At 31 March 2022	<u>2,840</u>
At 31 March 2021	<u>268</u>

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

8 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2022 £	2021 £
Other taxation and social security	4,044	2,422
Trade creditors	3,729	38
Other creditors	293	582
Accruals and deferred income	2,580	2,580
	<u>10,646</u>	<u>5,622</u>

9 Related party transactions

During the year ended 31 March 2022, trustee expenses were paid totalling £3,679.
During the year ended 31 March 2021, there were no related party transactions.

Accounts

First Star Scholars UK

(A company limited by guarantee)

Report and Financial Statements For the Year Ended 31 March 2021

Charity number 1180754
Company number 11067711

First Star Scholars UK
(A company limited by guarantee)

Financial Statements
For the Year Ended 31 March 2021
Accompanying document of unaudited
accounts

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Financial Review	12
Structure, governance and management	13
Risk Management	14
Statement of Financial Activities	unaudited accounts
Balance Sheet	unaudited accounts

First Star Scholars UK
Report of the Board of Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2021

The Board of Trustees presents its report and unaudited financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2021.

Reference and Administrative Information

Charity Name:	First Star Scholars UK
Charity registration number:	1180754
Company registration number:	11067711
Registered Office	c/o Critchley's LLP Beaver House 23-28 Hythe Bridge Street Oxford OX12EP
Operational address:	37 Deerhurst Close Hanworth Park Middlesex TW13 7HS

Board of Trustees

Mr P Samuelson	Chair
Mr F Young	Vice Chair
Mr S Irvine	
Ms M Drummond	
Ms AM Bird	
Dr J Arday	
Dr N Dosanjh	

Senior Management

Dr L Goodwin	Executive Director
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Independent Examiners -	Critchley's Beaver House 23-28 Hythe Bridge Street Oxford OX12EP
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Bank-	NatWest,
Legal advisors -	Gibson, Dunn and Crutcher

Our Aims and objectives

Purposes and Aims

Our charity's purposes as set out in the objects contained in the company's articles of association are to:

1. To provide relief and assistance to people in need who are young people in the United Kingdom who have entered into the social care system in particular but not exclusively by providing them with academic and life skills education and caregiver engagement.
2. To advance the education of people in need who are young people in the United Kingdom who have entered into the social care system in particular but not exclusively by providing them with academic and life skills education and caregiver engagement

Core Values

Aspiration: Young People in Care to enter higher education.

Support: Young People in Care to succeed in GCSE and post 16 education

Challenge: Involve universities, STEAM mentors, educators, social services and carers.

Collaboration: Leverage collective intent and aspiration - political, educational, technological and philanthropic.

Accountability: challenge universities, companies, society, schools, local authorities and our programmes to be accountable for progress of young people.

Make a difference: To the lives of Young People in Care/ Care leavers.

Aims and Objectives - the Scholars

Mental Health - for all First Star graduates to be able to access the support and advice they need to sustain their mental health.

Accommodation - no First Star graduate becomes homeless.

Civil engagement - no First Star graduate drawn into crime and incarcerated.

GCSE transition - for 50% of scholars to achieve 5+ GCSEs at **grade 4+**.

Aspire to HE - for 34% of scholars to transition to HE {in line with % of all peers}.

Secure further training, education or employment - for 100% of students to transition to adulthood with none being NEETS (Not in Education, Employment or Training).

Ensuring our work delivers our aims

We review our strategic plan and the aims, objectives, and activities in this plan each year. This review looks at progress made towards objectives, the impact of what we achieved in the previous 12 months. The review of our strategic plan helps us ensure our aim, objectives and activities remained focused on our stated purposes and that we respond to current events, notably the Corona virus pandemic. In particular, the trustees consider how objectives are progressed through planned activities and how these contribute to the aims and objectives set.

The focus of our work

Our strategic themes (2019 - 2024) are

- Programme provision throughout the Home Countries
- Sustainability of First Star UK
- Programme development
- Board of Trustees development
- Advocacy and engagement

Main objectives for the year 2020-2021

- Establish. 2nd London cohort
- Develop trustee roles and appoint additional trustees
- Establish new university partner- programme provider for 2021 start
- Develop annual lecture series, if possible, under COVID-19 restrictions
- Develop staff training programme
- Sustain advocacy with DFE and other organisations
- Develop Virtual / online provision

Outcomes

- Establish. 2nd London cohort

2nd cohort completed GCSEs with outstanding results

- First cohort graduates summer 2021

Projected 30% will progress to HE (actual data shows 41% progressed to HE). 72% retention rate over 4 years, no scholars expected to be homeless

- Alumni programme recognised as next project –

attached to JD of new Programme Director

support for transition's offered for those going to HE

alumni events being organised (Christmas lunch)

soft touch to those less engaged also under way

- Develop trustee roles and appoint additional trustees

Skills audit and review undertaken and roles and protocols for trustees revised. New trustees approached and advertised for. New Trustees with experience and expertise in widening participation and care leaver education / University academic and Black Lives Matter expert / online education provision and delivery

- Establish new university programme provider for 2021 start

A third cohort and new provider – University of Winchester First Star programme started in 2021 – funding well established and programme director appointed

- Accredited diplomas under way

Level 3 diploma and level 4 diploma awards delivered through First Saturday and summer residentials

- Annual lecture

venue retained – re launch once Covid-19 allows - guest speaker - Mr Stephen Fry

- Develop staff training programme

A comprehensive training programme including mental health first aid; leadership and mentoring; safeguarding; and creative engagement accredited by Transcend Awards and supported by PYE – diploma status to be sought – First Star Youth Empowerment Diploma level 3.

- Sustain advocacy with DfE and other organisations

Engagement with a range of organisations continue, funding plans have been impacted by Covid-19 but the development of programmes continue with a number of partners.

- Developed Online provision

Virtual programme with a cohort to start in 21-22 – with central team director appointed and planed 7 nights residential - in discussion with new university provider

- Developed plans for STEAM lecture series which commences in autumn/spring of 21/22

Working with potential collaborative partner to establish this programme of lectures (10-12 annually)

How our activities benefit stakeholders.

Our main activities and who we try to help are described below. All our charitable activities focus on the provision of the First Star programme and advocacy

Advocacy

First Star has advocacy at its heart. The commissioning of the Centre for Social Justice research and report on Care Leavers transition to and progression at Higher Education (HE) resulted in the **12by24 Report** published by the Centre for Social Justice in May 2019. With the support of the Portal Trust, we plan a follow up report in 2022 on the progress of care leaver access to HE provision.

Our advocacy can now be informed by our own data. Children Looked After progress far less well than non-looked-after children between primary school and Key Stage 4, and their average Attainment 8 score is just 21.4 compared to 50.2 (2020) for non-looked after children. The latest cohort of First Star scholars to complete their GCSEs have an average attainment 8 score of 47.1. The widely recognised DfE data suggests that care experienced young people are also much less likely than average to move into higher education. The Department for Education (DfE) calculates that just 6% of care leavers aged 19-21 go on to higher education, compared to 34.1% of 19-21-year-olds in the general population. Other research using slightly different metrics indicates that 13% of care experienced young people under the age of 23 enter HE – First Star data shows 41% of our first graduating cohort progress to university, with a further 19-20% aiming to do so after a gap year or further education. This matters a great deal, because access to higher education can be a powerful gateway to opportunity, particularly for those who have started with so little in life.

The self-advocacy and opinions of those who have lived experience of foster care illustrate the impact and the need for such a programme. Our Scholars tell us:

K: these people here are not just people on a programme, they are my friends, family and siblings now. I love them with all my heart. We've been through it all, they've seen me laugh, they've seen me cry, we've seen each other cry. Being here is all about knocking down walls, building

bonds.

M: I've always had the idea that I wanted to go to Uni even before I came to First Star, I was quite lucky to have that idea planted early into my head. But it opened my horizons and made me look further. Peter often talks about the ladder up and I wanted to just go to any Uni. One day one of the First Star mentors said to me - shoot higher go to a Russell group - do it and now I'm there

It remains clear that progression to HE is still a bigger challenge for Care Leavers than for many of their peers. This reflects First Stars' advocacy role with First Star continuing on the Advisory Board supported by the DfE and led by NNECL leading to the development of the Quality Mark for Universities, to identify good practice and raise standards (a key recommendation of the 12 by 24 Report) and launched in 2021 by NNECL (National Network for the Education of Care Leavers).

In 2020-2021 Covid-19 has significantly impacted our advocacy engagement with some events including a proposed roundtable with donors and political voices, Care Leavers and First Star Scholars remaining on hold; our inaugural First Star lecture with special guest Stephen Fry is similarly (temporarily) postponed.

Scholar advocacy reflects our mission and each year two scholars join the Board of Trustees as special advisors. This has remained the case throughout Lockdowns and scholars have been able to alert the Trustees to educational and social issues being faced by them and their peers.

First Star continues to expand networking opportunities to advocate for support for young people in care including through the Fair Education Alliance, Philanthropy Impact, the Care Leavers Covenant, NNECL, NAVSH. Collaborations with other charities including PYE Global, Sister Systems aid our programme provision for Scholars. Charities such as mybnk also contribute to programme provision.

Who used and benefited from our services?

First Star Scholars UK was established in 2017 with its first pilot programme at St Mary's University, Twickenham, and is based on the model established in the US by Peter Samuelson in 2011. There are a record number of looked-after children in the UK, with 90 entering the care system every day and over 100,000 passing through the system each year. *Leveling up* or 'catching up' on missed educational progress is also now an established national intervention through the national tutoring programme.

First Star programmes develop this theme to a much a deeper level and build long-term pathways based on scholars' own aspirations. These pathways include HE (41%); FE (5%); apprenticeships (5%); work (5%) unknown (17%); undecided and not yet on a course (13%). Early intervention pre-GCSE and through the GCSE and post 16 educational pathway of our scholars has ensured they are never alone in their personal and educational journey. In the pilot programme 72% of scholars stayed with the programme and graduate from First Star in 2021. Retention in cohort two in 2020-21 was over 85%. Session for carers are included in our programme and youth coach training / staff training and development is also a focus in. enabling effective support for our young people. A significant number of mentors and youth coaches (university students for the host university) have progressed in careers and voluntary work with young people.

For the first time the development of an alumni aspect of our provision recognises that our engagement with scholars does not end with their graduation. Financial support, surety for course fees, materials and resources and personal items from everyday items such as kettles to support for social engagement in fresher's week are all being offered to graduating scholars. While we know that the numbers entering care reportedly increased by 44% during Covid -19 (Barnardo's, 2020) and the gap in learning between disadvantaged and peers grew by 36% during Covid -19 (Education Endowment Fund, 2020), we also know that care experienced students are 38% more likely than peers to not complete their degree course (Harrison, 2021) – First Star is working to support scholars into and through their HE and post-graduation experience, providing mentors and financial support, among others.

This year's GCSE results lend advocacy to our virtual programme plans, with scholars' engagement almost wholly through online provision – 1-1, small group and whole group sessions ensuring they kept up, in touch and supported through the GCSEs. Looked-after Children in the UK achieve below average outcomes at GCSE with only 17.5% achieving a pass in English and Mathematics compared to 58.8% of all pupils (2018 data) while in 2021 58% of First Star scholars passed both. 79% of First Star Scholars passed English (grade 4+) compared to 73.6% of all pupils; 63% passed maths (69.2% of all pupils), while their average EBacc score was 5.28 compared to 4.38 for all pupils (2020) and 1.7 for CLA (2020). First Star scholars overall pass rate (grade 4+) was 89% compared to 79.7% (England) and 76.9% (London). Scholars overall pass rate (grade 5+) also exceeded their peers at 62.8%.

In a busy year, cohort 1 graduate in 2021; cohort 2 undertake GCSEs in 2021 and cohort 3 join the programme in 2021. For 2022/3 new cohorts are being planned at two campus programmes – London and the Midlands and through our virtual programme. Our programme retains the model of 30 Scholars per cohort recruited at age 14 = year 9. Scholars commit to the 4-year programme and are supported by carers, referred by an adult – often their virtual school head and there is no 'cherry picking' of the brightest and best.

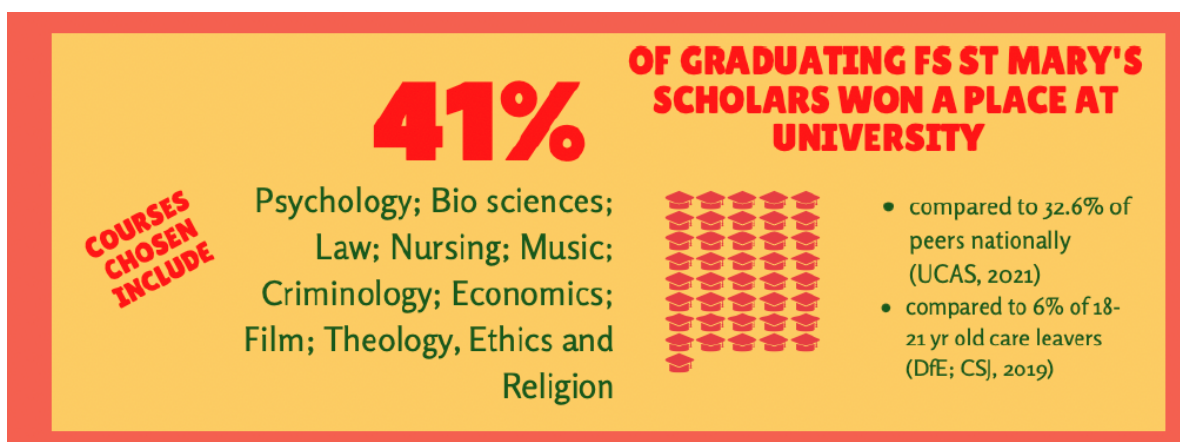
Selection is made through conversations with the young person in question to make sure they are willing to commit, as well as with teachers, Virtual School Heads, carers and social workers to make sure that a young person would benefit from a First Star academic programme. Eligible scholars have a care plan; a CAMHS referral; are in kinship care; have been identified by children's services as on the edge of care or have appropriate refugee status.

First Star Scholars UK expansion in 2021 includes two cohorts plus the first alumni group – cohort 2 at St Mary's University and cohort 3 at University of Winchester. The programme runs a First Saturday programme each month to sustain engagement and support scholars and offers a three to four-week residential each summer on campus at the University of Winchester and St Mary's. One impact of the Pandemic has led to a more flexible model of provision – some programmes are adopting a weekly residential with weekend breaks to support the university provider in keeping the facilities Covid secure and supporting mental health for young people sustaining relationship the carers. In addition, a further residential weeks are planned for Easter 2022 to complete the annual programme. Evaluations in 2022 will review the provision (albeit it within the context of Covid 19) and ensure the flexible models continue to meet scholars' needs. Cohort 2 and 3 recruitment has been affected by the Covid-19 lockdown, but referrals were significantly higher than the pilot Cohort and full cohorts will be recruited for 2021/22.

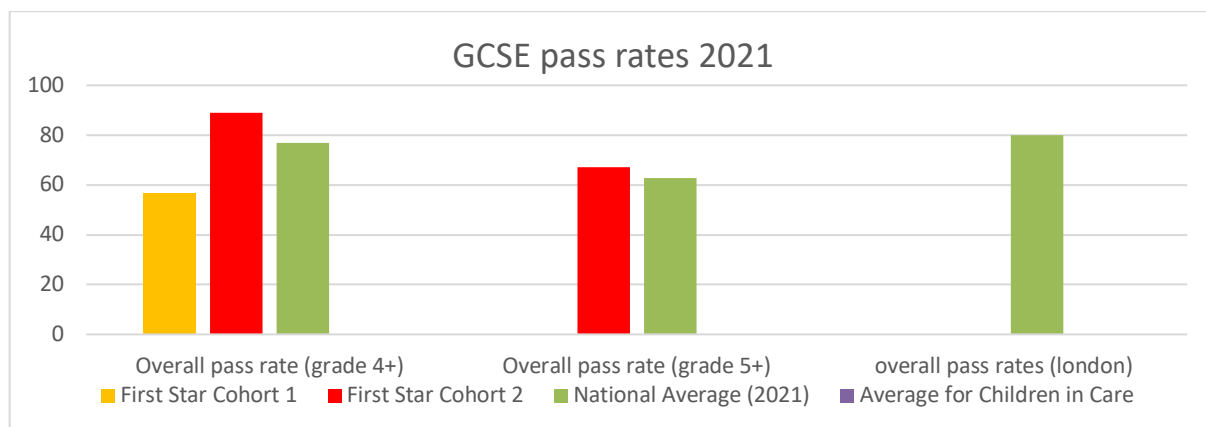
Preparation for the Virtual programme is ongoing with the appointment of the programme director, and discussion with a host university for summer 2022 under way. The STEAM lecture series commences in autumn/spring 2021/22. The STEAM lecture programme will support GCSE provision and is targeted towards any teen in care studying GCSEs. With a view to widening horizons and introducing young people to the potential of a wider range of roles and jobs as well as their academic engagement the STEAM programme offers a pre and post lecture engagement to support learning.

Impact

Our pilot cohort graduate summer 2021 with superb outcomes. We remain in contact with a significant proportion of scholars after graduation and are supporting those who have graduated through their transition to University, but also for those working towards a UCAS tariff and those pursuing employment and educational pathways

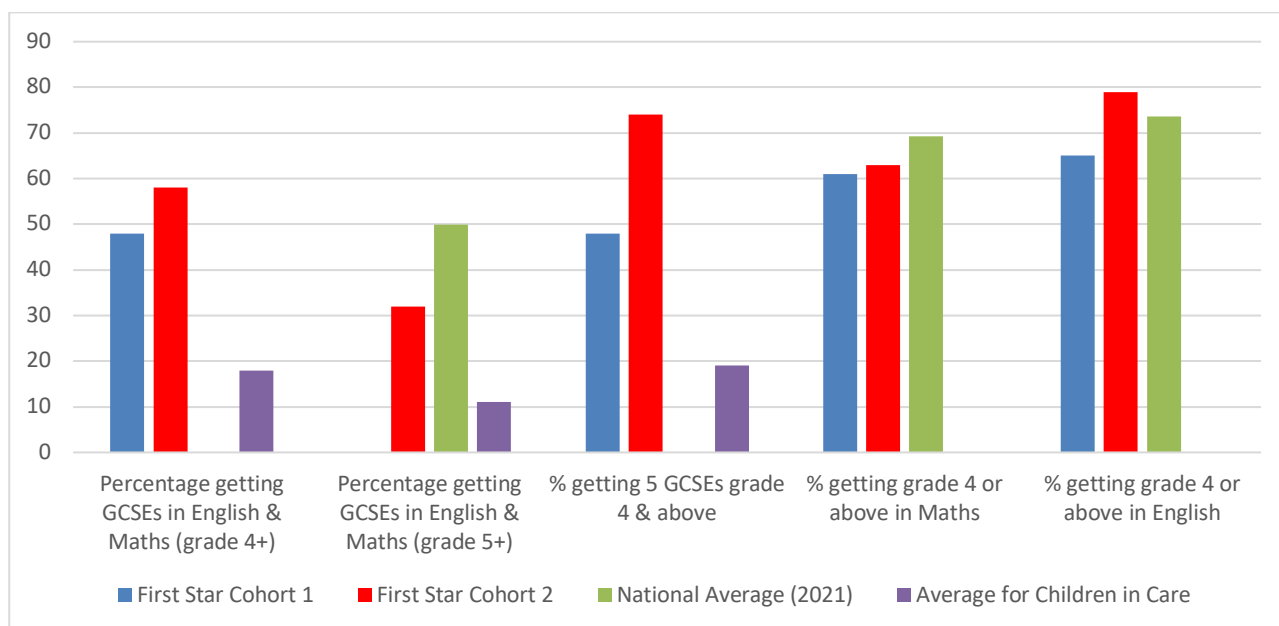


St Mary's University's First Star Scholars GCSE results have improved despite the challenges of Covid-19 and repeated Lockdowns; with 58% of students achieving 5 or more GCSEs compared to 19% of looked-after children nationally. In relation to overall (grade 4+) pass rates First Scholars in 2021 (89%) exceeded both London (80%) and national (77%) previous pass rates. With grade 5+ pass rate (5 or more passes) becoming the national criteria for success, First Star scholars (32%) performed well in comparison with peers (63%), nationally.



A significant focus of the first two years of the academic component of the First Star programme is preparation and support for GCSEs, particularly English, Maths and Science.

Category	First Star Cohort 1	First Star Cohort 2	National Average	Average for Children in Care
Percentage getting GCSEs in English & Maths (grade 4+)	48%	58%	N/A for 2021	17.5% (2018)
Percentage getting GCSEs in English & Maths (grade 5+)		32%	49.9% (2020)	10.9% (2019)
% getting 5 GCSEs grade 4 & above	48%	74%	N/A for 2021	19% (2018)
% getting grade 4 or above in Maths	60.8%	63%	69.2%	
% getting grade 4 or above in English	65.4%	79%	73.6%	



Commonly, pupils take between 2 and 9 GCSEs while 100% of both the pilot cohort (2019) and the second cohort (2021) of the St Mary's First Star Programme took between 3 and 11 GCSEs.

Scholars' voice

..is important to First Star and two scholars are elected each year as special advisors on the board of trustees. In addition, the independent research undertaken at St Mary's University (unpublished) (Hollingsworth, 2020) gave a summary of the impact and scalability of the programme and made helpful suggestions, noting the impact on the pilot cohort – this research has been supplemented by outcomes and programme activity since and the responses indicate how First Star continues to go further in impacting young peoples' lives; suggesting that:

- GCSE results for the cohort far exceed averages of looked after children nationally, and post-16 enrolments show promise that the longitudinal aspect of the programme is necessary and has been successful so far in building and maintaining stable relationships that last through key educational transitions relationships - central to the success of St Mary's First Star Programme.
- *As the data shows the second cohort GCSE results have surpassed this pilot cohort – developed through a hybrid approach to meet the issues of Covid-19, but sustaining the efficacy of the First Star provision. With increasing evidence (Fair Education Alliance, Report Card 2021) that the gap between disadvantaged young people and their more advantaged peers remains a significant concern the impact of the support of First Star for cohort 2 is reassuring.*

The context of Covid – 19 national data and issues

The average disadvantaged student is the equivalent of around three A-Level grades behind their non-disadvantaged peers when taking A-Levels and more privileged students are 25 times more likely to progress to HE than disadvantaged peers. In this context 18% of (all) disadvantaged young people gained places at university in 2020 (compared to over 48% of advantaged peers)

First Star data indicates that:

- The programme has succeeded in creating a family' atmosphere, which is one in which education and learning is celebrated collectively, and the majority of foster youth feel safe, welcome, valued, and a sense of belonging.
- M: Why did you join First Star?
C: I joined for a better education, a better start and that's what the programme has given me.

S: I learned to be an advocate from First Star, which fights on my behalf for any difficulties I face as a foster child, and I didn't know I had that right.

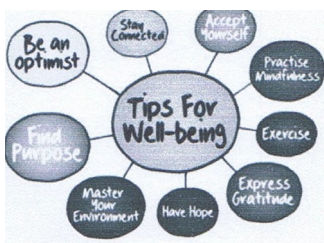
M: What would you say to a young person that wanted to join?

K: Join because these people here are not just people on a programme, they are my friends, family and siblings now. I love them with all my heart. We've been through it all. They've seen me laugh, they've seen me cry, we've seen each other cry. Being here is all about knocking down walls, building bonds, mental health - it helped everything for me.

- What proves particularly valuable is building relationships with other foster children; making friends with, and being encouraged by, 'relatable role models' in the form of students as 'youth coaches'; and being supported by educational staff who really care.
 - 59% of the First Star 2021 graduates are training to become our next Youth Coaches – passing on the opportunity, experience, empathy and opportunity to other young people in care.
- That the residential summer school aspect serves an important function in catalysing close relationships, but also giving young people a taste of independent living. It also provides time for very intensive academic support
 - T: I think First Star still helped me find my way. I'm doing travelling, working and I think I'm at the happiest place I all been in a long time, and I think it's kind of nice to have people you can go to to talk about your problems. When you're with other friends no one really understands where you came from. Everyone has had their own situation their own problems and we see each other as one; we don't look at each other as if we are above anyone else. So I think we should open more programmes because there's so much more people you can help and you don't know how much you're going to help them.
- In its campus-based model - which draws on expertise of students and staff within the university and extra-curricular social activities - the programme is successful in giving students a 'taste' of university life in a way that is subtle and uncontrived.
 - M: I'm studying psychology and education, the reason I picked that course is because I want to know why people do certain things and I picked education because the way people learn is really different. Being at First Star made that really apparent.
 - T: how has First Star helped you get to University?
 - M: it opened my horizons and made me look further. Peter often talks about the ladder up and I wanted to just go to any Uni. One day one of the First Star mentors said to me - shoot higher - go to a Russell group university - do it and now I'm there

Impact of Covid-19

In response to the challenges of Covid-19 FSSUK continues to develop our web site and FSSUK keeps up to date with events in relation to Department for Education and the ongoing advice and plans for covid jabs and being in school safely. FSSUK is reviewing our model to ensure we continue to support those who have to isolate or who have missed schooling and those who are struggling to attend school for a variety of reasons.



Our web site also still includes tips to help if scholars are worried about corona virus

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/coronavirus-covid-19-anxiety-tips/>

Covid - 19 continues to have a knock-on effect on the residential programmes in the summer, with some impact on these due to a recent outbreak of the virus. All university and local health protocols are in place and our Covid plans support those unable to attend due to Covid and ensure they remain

part of the First Star family. In response to the challenge of providing Covid safe environments as much as possible. Over the last 18 months First Star shortened summer programmes for each cohort while keeping options open. We are mindful of the funders in all this, and any plans and activities are shared with them as activities progress- our donors and funders have offered support and understanding in that the programme may need to be delivered differently.

First Star Programme

The University providers were closed to some residential provision and have all reopened and First Star follows their Covid-19 protocols while also ensuring regular additional cleaning and testing as appropriate. University First Star Directors worked from home where appropriate and in line with the return-to-work provision of their campus – the exception being the summer residentials and we plan (Covid permitting) to return to face to face First Saturday programme in the autumn. Our immediate focus has been on ensuring the online provision and support for scholars continues and this has been revised and increased – offering 1 -1 revision and career support as well as group and cohort sessions. The directors have well established protocols for keeping in touch and keeping young people engaged as much as possible. Staff and scholar recruitment, and staff training has continued with increasing number of scholars on cohort 2 and recruitment to cohort 3 at the University of Winchester all undertaken during lockdowns and social distancing - all eventualities are being considered and planned for.

The Virtual Learning Environment

First Star developed this to provide support for scholars and carers and is now expanding provision and resourcing for teachers and youth workers. Our focus in developing a staff training diploma (First Star Diploma in Youth Empowerment) reflects increasing need and opportunity to impact workers in different spheres of educational and support whose training lacks focus on looked after young people – reflecting our determination to support those supporting Children Looked After in any setting.

There is scope to increase the use of the learning platform and the inaugural First Star STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths) lecture is due to take place in autumn 2021 – this will lead many more young people to our site and resources as well as engaging them in career enhancement and learning opportunities.

While the VLE development is still ongoing we are reviewing new staffing opportunities to respond robustly to current and long term Covid-19 issues. In line with the concept of *Levelling UP* being brought forward by the government through the national tutoring programme - First Star already preparing to recruit mentors for our scholars who will support them beyond their graduation from First Star. This is being undertaken with Safeguarding, including for graduates, at the forefront of our plans.

The Virtual Programme

First Star is bringing forward plans for a virtual version of our programme – mainly resources online and drawing scholars from across the country. The essential ingredient of the First Star Family remains at the core of this provision. Each cohort (new cohorts proposed for each year) will undertake a four-year programme mirroring our campus provision with a 7-night condensed residential each year. While this offers a different experience First Star aims to engage reach a wider scholar network, and linked with the STEAM lectures, engage many more young people in their education potential. This development has been made possible by the husbanding of resources during the pandemic and a change of direction in appointments allowing First Star to appoint a full time director to manage and run both the virtual programme and the STEAM lectures

Safeguarding

Safeguarding continues to be viewed by the Trustees as an ongoing risk as we continue to expand our activities in the provision of online learning and support. The risks are several for our young people. First Star policy and procedures reflect updated guidance, including Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021); to ensure compliance and best practice is maintained. The issues of online provision, Peer to Peer abuse, radicalisation and FGM are all included and updated in our annual policy review. New staff and trustees undertake NSPCC training and annual updates in training are included in our staff development. As our online provision expands additional advice and safety protocols are introduced to manage new activities including more live lessons. We continue to review our protocols to ensure our provision complies with advice and legislation

Our Scholars

Our scholars' placements have been more vulnerable during the pandemic with anecdotal evidence suggest an increase of placement breakdowns by over 30%. It is also clear that more children have entered the care system and may experience placement breakdown for a number of factors - First Star programme directors continue to monitor our scholars' placements carefully, offering support to carers and scholars. Furthermore, there is a real risk that some LAC may be lost to education. Programme staff are maintaining contact with scholars and their carers.

Financial Review

First Star has secured new funders despite the challenges of Covid-19 and in addition has secured restricted funding for programmes (university led). First Star had a net increase in funds of £67,328. First Star reports to donors in an annual cycle determined by the timing of funded donations and donor requirements. Restricted Funds - University led programmes report to First Star where restricted funding from donors requires this. University programme providers also secure funding directly from donors and are solely responsible for reports and audits in relation to these funds. This year restricted funds for university partners have been secured and these are noted in the accompanying accounts - First Star Scholars Unaudited Accounts for the Year Ended 31st March 2021 - see accompanying document.

Principal Funding Sources

The principal funders for First Star Scholars UK are:

The MariaMarina Foundation; The Peter Cundill Foundation; the National Lottery Community Fund
For our university-based programmes funders include The Linbury Trust and the Paul Hamlyn Foundation

Investment Policy

First Star does not currently invest funds received

Reserves Policy

The Board of Trustees considered the charity's requirements for reserves in light of the main risks to the charity. It has established a policy whereby the unrestricted funds not committed by the charity should be a minimum of 3 months of the expenditure. The reserves target agreed by Trustees is £27,000 in general funds.

The present level of reserves available to the charity of £141,776 exceeds this target level which is considered a minimum level. This is in the main due to the impact of Covid-19 – the pandemic has slowed key activities and developments – these include the research and lecture / advocacy activity, delayed appointment of admin/social media staff (appointed feb 2021), the acquisition of office space /hot seats within an office setting and the appointment of additional staff. Staffing proposals have been reviewed during the pandemic and is now being increased in line with the change in focus to incorporate virtual, alumni and fundraising roles. Reserves available are £141,776. The timing of donations can affect the held reserves throughout the year.

Plans for Future Periods

In planning for expansion, the board recognises that programme expansion is not linear and should be viewed over years. Despite the onset of the pandemic, First Star expansion has continued with the opening of a third cohort at the University of Winchester. The development and imminent launch of the Virtual Programme ensures that staff expansion is essential to ensure quality and sustainability of expanding programme. The launch of the new virtual programme and the associated STEAM lecture series are made possible by the increase in reserves at the end of this reporting period. The appointment of a Director at the University of Winchester is being undertaken by the UoW while for the virtual programme this post will be directly appointed to FSSUK staff.

Key Performance Indicators over the next 3-5 years:

1. Expansion of Board and Patrons
2. 6 programmes by 2024
3. UK (and beyond) wide expansion to include Home Countries and Ireland
4. To ensure sustainability of First Star Scholars UKs 3-5-year business plan includes fundraising, corporate partnerships, office and staff expansion, marketing and event management.
5. Development projects to focus on
 - o Annual lecture series (2022 revised plan for inaugural)
 - o First Star Diploma Awards linking curriculum across academies
 - o Training and support for directors, mentors, youth coaches, tutors and volunteers

First Star Academies UK 3-5-year strategic plan, approved in November 2019, focuses on meeting these KPIs. First Star is moving forward with expansion plans for 2021 and 2022. These include a new university-led programme established each year. Discussion have been held with over 15 universities in England initially. A third cohort launches in 2021 and further new providers are in discussion with First Star to launch programmes in 2022.

The addition of a Virtual Programme that focuses on scholars not able to access a physical university led campus setting while offering the same support, access to our diploma curriculum and academic development and a hybrid campus residential of 1 week. Plans include a focus on Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths to reflect the employment and academic opportunities at HE that scholars can aspire to.

Current cohorts continued online until lockdown eased, and still responds to Covid alerts in each setting. This allows face to face provision, and for reduced residential in 2020 and revised plans for 2021 - we hope a return to our full residential programme either summer 2021 or summer 2022

Advocacy and our planned Annual Lecture series will go ahead at some point in 2021-2022 depending on covid restrictions and the prevailing sense of public interest in physical engagements. First Star continues engagement with stakeholders including local authorities (virtual school heads especially), programme (University) providers and the university sector, the Government through the Department of Education, NNECL, other charities and funders to support our scholars.

Structure, Governance and Management

Governing Document

The organisation is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 16th November 2017 and registered as a charity on 19th November 2018. The company was established under a Memorandum of Association which established the objects and powers of the charitable company and is

governed under its Articles of Association. Originally established as First Star Academies UK; on 12th February 2020 a resolution was passed to change the name of the charitable company to First Star Scholars UK. This change was confirmed at Companies House and the Charities Commission. In the event of the company being wound up members are required to contribute an amount not exceeding £10.

Recruitment and Appointment of Trustees

The Directors of the company are also charity trustees for the purposes of charity law and under the company's Articles are known as Trustees.

All Trustees give their time voluntarily and received no benefits from the charity. Any expenses reclaimed from the charity are set out in note 9 to the accounts in the accompanying document.

First Star's work focuses upon young people in care. The Board of Trustees seeks to ensure that the needs of this group are appropriately reflected through the diversity of the trustee body. Recent recruitment of trustees has included trustees from the university sector, online and HE provision and a Black Lives Matters expert

Two scholar special advisors are nominated to the Board each year and represent the view and ideas of the cohorts. In addition, the strategic plan continues to drive our recruitment now aimed potential new trustees in roles related to Marketing/ PR; Finance/ accountancy; Media; Fundraising and development; Political Advocacy; Care experienced or Care Leaver with HE experience.

Trustee Induction and Training

Most trustees are already familiar with the practical work of the charity and are encouraged to visit a First Saturday / summer programme (Covid-19 permitting). During the interview and selection process new trustees are introduced to the obligations and roles of trustees, including the importance of safeguarding.

All trustees are updated and engage with safeguarding policy and training. An induction pack for new trustees is under review as per our strategic planning to enable trustees to familiarise themselves with the charity and the context within which it operates. All materials are securely shared through our online HUB and include:

- The code of conduct and Nolan principles of public life
- The main documents which set out the operational framework for the charity including the Memorandum and Articles.
- Resourcing and the current financial position as set out in the latest published accounts.
- Strategic plans and objectives.
- Reporting to and stewardship of funders
- Board records and minutes
- Policies and procedures

Information is also shared in relation to information from the various Charity Commission publications signposted through the Commission's guide "the Essential Trustee". This is distributed to all new trustees through the HUB.

Risk Management

The Trustees are responsible for the overseeing of the risks faced by First Star. Detailed considerations of risk are delegated to the Executive Director of First Star Scholars UK. Risks are identified, assessed and controls established throughout the year. A formal review of the charity's risk management processes is undertaken on an annual basis with reporting by exception at quarterly board meetings. Risk is managed under the headings of Governance, External Risk/Covid- 19 Risk, Regulatory and Compliance Risk, Financial Risk and Operational Risk.

Policies are reviewed on an annual/biannual cycle as appropriate to each policy.

The main risks that the Trustees have identified and the plans to manage those risks are:

- Governance: First Star's is successfully expanding, and clear robust strategic governance is essential to this expansion and our ongoing success.

We manage this risk through trustee access to trust material and support through the HUB which is to be supplemented by an induction programme to be developed in spring 2022 and a review of trustee engagement 2021-2022.

- External Risk/ Covid -19 risk. Our ability to continue is reliant on raising funds and appointing appropriate staff plus successful outcomes for scholars. Risks Include: Programme closure; new programmes not starting; deteriorating relationships with donors; changing government policy; safeguarding concerns; lockdown issues including scholars not engaging or getting zoom fatigue.

We manage these risks by collaborating closely with university partners in programme development and fund- raising activities; national and collaborative marketing and advertising of posts across provision.

We manage these risks by maintaining awareness and advocacy with local and central government agencies and departments; raising awareness through the use of *Foster Boy* events; clear safeguarding policies and regular training for staff and good communication with donors regarding the impact of Covid restrictions.

- Regulatory and compliance risks; security of documents; compliance with government, company and charity law is essential to our reputation and the well-being of staff and those we benefit. Risks include: Non return of compliance documents; incomplete and late reports to donor's; security of documents.

We manage these risks through a secure Hub; the support and advice of our legal advisors; the engagement of accountancy firm to reconcile expenditure and process salaries each month; through annual financial audit; reporting and stewardship with donors and contracts securing timeline's with donors and university programmes.

- Financial risk: sustainability of First Star Scholars UK is essential if the programme is to expand nationally. Risks include: Poor budgetary control; inadequate reserves; lack of fund raising

We manage these risks ensuring sufficient reserves to ensure sustainability; monthly, quarterly budget monitoring; strategic fund raising for First Star and in collaboration with university programmes; supported by external reviewer to develop strategic and sustainable budget plans; the planned appointment of fundraiser

- Operational Risk: expansion brings some additional risk including as additional staff and volunteers are engaged and new partners sought. These risks include: Lack of staff capacity; lack of resources for projects and initiatives; lack of attention to staff well-being and health and safety; volunteer issues

We manage these risks through consideration of budget for staff resources to support expansion; HR policies under review ongoing; a fundraiser to be appointed in 2021-2022; recruitment protocols for volunteers; new projects considered as *would like to* in budget plans; ensuring expansion is secured for the benefit of scholars and sustainable for their four-year programme

Organisational Structure

First Star Scholars UK has a Board of Trustees of 7 trustees and the Executive Director who meet quarterly and are responsible for the strategic direction and policy of the charity. In addition, legal representatives and scholar's' representatives attend board meetings.

Day to day responsibility for the provision of the services rests with the Executive Director. The

Executive Director is responsible for ensuring that the charity delivers the services specified and that key performance indicators are met along with ensuring the charity continues to develop working practices in line with good practice.

Related Parties

First Star works closely with the university providers offering the First Star programme. Scholars are associated with a particular programme and university. With the advent of the Virtual Programme this association will be with FSSUK and key university partners providing residentials each year. Each university programme has a full time Director appointed by the University who works with the Executive Director (FSSUK) to ensure the programme runs according to the curriculum, safeguarding and budget expectations of First Star as established through the Memorandum of Agreement.

With the increase in programmes and providers, Director's meetings and conferences will be introduced in 2021-2022. The sharing of best practice and resources and support for new Directors / programmes will be supported by this group.

Biannual reports from each programme are presented to the Executive Director from Programme Director/s and – each quarter the Executive Director presents an update on programmes to the Board. Annual Reports to funders/donors and each Programme's financial report are presented in November. The University Programme Directors are also responsible for reports to direct donors. The reporting process is negotiated with each donor separately, with some funds channeled through First Star and some funds provided directly to the university for each programme. First Star maintains its own budget separate from the Programmes at different university providers. University providers are responsible for auditing their own accounts.

Responsibilities of the Board of Trustees

Company law requires the Board of Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of the affairs of the charitable company as at the balance sheet date and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including income and expenditure, for the financial year.

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees followed best practice and:

- ▶ Selected an accounting firm and adopted their accounting policies applying them consistently to provide monthly reconciling and reports, quarterly reports and provide annual unaudited accounts;
- ▶ made judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent; and
- ▶ prepared financial statements on a going concern basis.

The Board of Trustees is responsible for maintaining proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 1985. The monthly accounting records are delegated to the Executive Director and a monthly report provided for trustees. The trustees prepare and ensure a quarterly update is scrutinised at the quarterly Board meetings.

The Board of Trustees is also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees are directors for the purpose of company law and trustees for the purpose of charity law, who served during the year and up to the date of this report are set out in the accompanying document.

In accordance with company law, as the company's directors, we certify that:

- ▶ *so far as we are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the company's independent examiners are unaware; and as the directors of the company we have taken all the steps that we ought to have taken in order to make ourselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charity's independent examiner is aware of that information.*

Auditors / Independent Examiner

Critchley's were re-appointed as the charitable company's Independent Examiners providing unaudited accounts and have expressed their willingness to continue in that capacity.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006. The Independent Examiner is satisfied that the accounts of the company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination. The Independent Examiners Report accompanies this document.

Agreed by the Board of Trustees (electronic confirmation)

Peter Samuelson

Frank Young

Marta Drummond

Stuart Irvine

Anne-marie Bird

Jason Arday

Nawtej Dosanjh

and signed on their behalf by:



Mr Peter Samuelson. Chair of Trustees

Date 09 DECEMBER 2021.

Company number: 11067711

Charity number: 1180754

**FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK
(FORMERLY FIRST STAR ACADEMIES UK)**

UNAUDITED ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

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**FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK
(FORMERLY FIRST STAR ACADEMIES UK)**

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES

ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Charity Registration number:	1180754
Company Registration number:	11067711
Registered Office:	Beaver House 23-38 Hythe Bridge Street Oxford OX1 2EP
Trustees/Directors:	Stuart Irvine Marta Drummond Peter Samuelson Francis Young Anne-Marie Bird (Appointed 25/08/2020) Dr Jason Arday (Appointed 25/08/2020)
Independent examiners:	Critchleys Audit LLP Beaver House 23-38 Hythe Bridge Street Oxford OX1 2EP

**FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK
(FORMERLY FIRST STAR ACADEMIES UK)**

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES (CONTINUED)

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The charitable company was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee on 16 November 2017.

The governing document of First Star Scholars UK is its Memorandum and Articles of Association.

The Board of Trustees appoints any new Trustees.

On 12 February a resolution was passed to change the name of the charitable company to First Star Scholars UK.

OBJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

The objects of the Charity (Articles of Association clauses 2.1(a) and 2.1(b)) are:

- To provide relief and assistance to people in need who are young people in the United Kingdom who have entered into the social care system in particular but not exclusively by providing them with academic and life skills education and caregiver engagement.
- To advance the education of people in need who are young people in the United Kingdom who have entered into the social care system in particular but not exclusively by providing them with academic and life skills education and caregiver engagement.

In order to further the objects the charity expends money directly on relevant projects.

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The Trustees have complied with the duty in Section 17(5) of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

During the year resources were expended on activities as detailed in notes 4 and 5 of the financial statements.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The results are shown in detail on page 5 of the financial statements. During the year to 31 March 2021 the charity had a net increase in funds of £67,328 (2020: 20,306).

RESERVES

The charity retained reserves to allow for fluctuations in income. At the year ended 31 March 2021 unrestricted reserves of £141,776 is considered adequate for this purpose (2020: £74,448).

The trustees have considered the sustainability of the charity and believe that a minimum reserves of £27,000 should be retained.

**FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK
(FORMERLY FIRST STAR ACADEMIES UK)**

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES (CONTINUED)

FUTURE PLANS

In planning for expansion, the board recognise academy expansion is not linear and should be viewed over years. Staff expansion is essential to ensure quality and sustainability of expansion programme.

Key Performance Indicators over the next 3-5 years:

1. Expansion of Board and Patrons
2. 6 academies by 2024
3. UK wide expansion to include Home Countries and Ireland
4. To ensure sustainability of First Star Scholars UKs 3-5 year business plan includes fundraising, corporate partnerships, office and staff expansion, marketing and event management.
5. Development projects to focus on
 - o Annual lecture series (2020 inaugural)
 - o First Star Awards linking curriculum across academies
 - o Training and support for directors

First Star Academies UK 3-5-year business plan, of which was approved in November 2019, focuses on meeting these KPIs.

This report is prepared in accordance with the small companies' regime under the Companies Act 2006.

On behalf of the Trustees



Stuart Irvine
Trustee

Date...14th July 2021.....

**REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT EXAMINER
TO THE TRUSTEES OF FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK
(FORMERLY FIRST STAR ACADEMIES UK)**

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of First Star Scholars UK (the company) for the period ended 31 March 2020 which are set out on pages 5 to 9.

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

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

Independent examiner's report

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

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

Name of examiner:	Robert Kirtland
Name of firm:	Critchleys Audit LLP
Relevant professional body:	Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales
Address:	Beaver House, 23-38 Hythe Bridge Street, Oxford, OX1 2EP
Date:	

**FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK
(FORMERLY FIRST STAR ACADEMIES UK)**

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
(including Income and Expenditure Account)**

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

	Note	Unrestricted 2021 £	Unrestricted 2020 £
Income from:			
Donations and grants	3	<u>182,072</u>	<u>351,715</u>
Total income		<u>182,072</u>	<u>351,715</u>
Expenditure on:			
Charitable activities			
Provision of academic and life skills education to children in social care	4	<u>114,744</u>	<u>331,409</u>
Total expenditure		<u>114,744</u>	<u>331,409</u>
Net income for the year		67,328	20,306
Reconciliation of funds			
Fund balances brought forward at 31 March 2020		<u>74,448</u>	<u>54,142</u>
Fund balances carried forward at 31 March 2021		<u>141,776</u>	<u>74,448</u>

All activities are continuing.

The notes on pages 7 to 9 form part of these financial statements

**FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK
(FORMERLY FIRST STAR ACADEMIES UK)
(REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER: 11067711)**

**BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 MARCH 2021**

	Note	2021 £	£	2020 £	£
Fixed Assets					
Tangible fixed assets	7		268		673
Current Assets					
Debtors		-		-	
Cash at bank		147,130		79,667	
Current Liabilities					
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	8	<u>(5,622)</u>		<u>(5,892)</u>	
Net current assets			<u>141,508</u>		<u>73,775</u>
Total assets less current liabilities			<u>141,776</u>		<u>74,448</u>
Represented by:					
Unrestricted funds			<u>141,776</u>		<u>74,448</u>

The trustees consider that for the year ended 31 March 2020 the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies. No member or members have deposited a notice requesting an audit for the current financial year under section 476 of the Act.

The trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for ensuring that the company keeps accounting records which comply with section 386 and preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company as at the end of the financial period and of its surplus or deficit for the financial year in accordance with the requirements of sections 394 and 395, and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the company.

These financial statements are prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

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

.....
Stuart Irvine
Trustee/Director

The notes on pages 7 to 9 form part of these financial statements.

**FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK
(FORMERLY FIRST STAR ACADEMIES UK)**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021**

1 CHARITY INFORMATION

The company is limited by guarantee, not having a share capital. However every member undertakes to contribute to the assets of the company such amount as may be required, but not exceeding £1.

It is incorporated in the United Kingdom with its registered office at Beaver House, 23-38 Hythe Bridge Street, Oxford OX1 2EP

2 ACCOUNTING POLICIES

a) Basis of preparation

The financial statements of the charity (which is a public benefit entity) comply with the Companies Act 2006 and the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities (FRS 102) applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102). They have been prepared under the historical cost convention except that investments are valued at market value. They have also been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

There are no uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern.

b) Income

All monetary donations, gifts and grants are included in full in the Statement of Financial Activities when receivable.

Interest income is recognised when received.

c) Expenditure

Expenditure is charged on an accruals basis and includes irrecoverable VAT. It is all allocated to the company's charitable activity. Direct costs are included in the relevant charitable activity and support costs are those costs that are not direct to one activity.

d) Fund accounting

Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by the donors or which have been raised by the charity for particular purposes. The aim and use of each restricted fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements. Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the general objects of the charity. As all income during the year is unrestricted the trustees took the decision to not prepare a funds note.

e) Depreciation

Depreciation is charged on a straight line basis over four years on fixed assets.

**FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK
(FORMERLY FIRST STAR ACADEMIES UK)**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021 (continued)**

3 INCOME FROM DONATIONS AND GRANTS

	2021	2020
	£	£
Grants	174,392	328,000
Donations	<u>7,680</u>	<u>23,715</u>
	<u>182,072</u>	<u>351,715</u>

4 CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	2021	2020
	£	£
Activities undertaken directly		
Provision of academic and life skills education to children in social care	15,060	230,000
 Support costs		
Wages and salaries (see note 5)	77,810	74,343
Advertising and marketing	819	1,941
Office costs	5,340	5,755
Travel and subsistence	-	5,689
Information technology	7,500	5,102
Other costs	885	1,365
Depreciation	405	405
Governance costs:		
Independent examination fees	2,580	2,475
Accountancy and payroll fees	<u>4,345</u>	<u>4,334</u>
	<u>114,744</u>	<u>331,409</u>

5 WAGES AND SALARIES

	2021	2020
	£	£
Wages and salaries	70,385	66,667
Social security costs	4,610	5,009
Pension costs	<u>2,815</u>	<u>2,667</u>
	<u>77,810</u>	<u>74,343</u>

1 employee (2020: one) earned over £60,000 per annum.

The average number of employees was one person (2020: one) during the year.

**FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK
(FORMERLY FIRST STAR ACADEMIES UK)**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021 (continued)**

6 TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND EXPENSES

No Trustee received any remuneration in the year (2020: nil).

No travel and subsistence expenses were paid during the year (2020: £4,360 paid to 3 trustees).

7 TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Office Equipment	Total
	£	£
Cost:		
At 31 March 2020	1,618	1,618
Additions	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
At 31 March 2021	<u>1,618</u>	<u>1,618</u>
Depreciation:		
At 31 March 2020	945	945
Charge for the year	<u>405</u>	<u>405</u>
At 31 March 2021	<u>1,350</u>	<u>1,350</u>
Net book value:		
At 31 March 2021	<u>268</u>	<u>268</u>
At 31 March 2020	<u>673</u>	<u>673</u>

8 CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2021	2020
	£	£
Trade Creditors	38	38
Other tax and social security	2,422	2,391
Accruals and deferred income	2,580	3,015
Other creditors	<u>582</u>	<u>448</u>
	<u>5,622</u>	<u>5,892</u>

9 RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

During the year ended 31 March 2021, there were no related party transactions.

During the year ended 31 March 2020, trustee expenses were paid totalling £4,360.

Company number: 11067711

Charity number: 1180754

**FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK
(FORMERLY FIRST STAR ACADEMIES UK)**

UNAUDITED ACCOUNTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

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**FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK
(FORMERLY FIRST STAR ACADEMIES UK)**

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES

ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Charity Registration number:	1180754
Company Registration number:	11067711
Registered Office:	Beaver House 23-38 Hythe Bridge Street Oxford OX1 2EP
Trustees/Directors:	Stuart Irvine Marta Drummond Peter Samuelson Francis Young Anne-Marie Bird (Appointed 25/08/2020) Dr Jason Arday (Appointed 25/08/2020)
Independent examiners:	Critchleys Audit LLP Beaver House 23-38 Hythe Bridge Street Oxford OX1 2EP

**FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK
(FORMERLY FIRST STAR ACADEMIES UK)**

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES (CONTINUED)

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The charitable company was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee on 16 November 2017.

The governing document of First Star Scholars UK is its Memorandum and Articles of Association.

The Board of Trustees appoints any new Trustees.

On 12 February a resolution was passed to change the name of the charitable company to First Star Scholars UK.

OBJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

The objects of the Charity (Articles of Association clauses 2.1(a) and 2.1(b)) are:

- To provide relief and assistance to people in need who are young people in the United Kingdom who have entered into the social care system in particular but not exclusively by providing them with academic and life skills education and caregiver engagement.
- To advance the education of people in need who are young people in the United Kingdom who have entered into the social care system in particular but not exclusively by providing them with academic and life skills education and caregiver engagement.

In order to further the objects the charity expends money directly on relevant projects.

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The Trustees have complied with the duty in Section 17(5) of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

During the year resources were expended on activities as detailed in notes 4 and 5 of the financial statements.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The results are shown in detail on page 5 of the financial statements. During the year to 31 March 2021 the charity had a net increase in funds of £67,328 (2020: 20,306).

RESERVES

The charity retained reserves to allow for fluctuations in income. At the year ended 31 March 2021 unrestricted reserves of £141,776 is considered adequate for this purpose (2020: £74,448).

The trustees have considered the sustainability of the charity and believe that a minimum reserves of £27,000 should be retained.

**FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK
(FORMERLY FIRST STAR ACADEMIES UK)**

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES (CONTINUED)

FUTURE PLANS

In planning for expansion, the board recognise academy expansion is not linear and should be viewed over years. Staff expansion is essential to ensure quality and sustainability of expansion programme.

Key Performance Indicators over the next 3-5 years:

1. Expansion of Board and Patrons
2. 6 academies by 2024
3. UK wide expansion to include Home Countries and Ireland
4. To ensure sustainability of First Star Scholars UKs 3-5 year business plan includes fundraising, corporate partnerships, office and staff expansion, marketing and event management.
5. Development projects to focus on
 - o Annual lecture series (2020 inaugural)
 - o First Star Awards linking curriculum across academies
 - o Training and support for directors

First Star Academies UK 3-5-year business plan, of which was approved in November 2019, focuses on meeting these KPIs.

This report is prepared in accordance with the small companies' regime under the Companies Act 2006.

On behalf of the Trustees



Stuart Irvine
Trustee

Date...14th July 2021.....

**REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT EXAMINER
TO THE TRUSTEES OF FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK
(FORMERLY FIRST STAR ACADEMIES UK)**

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of First Star Scholars UK (the company) for the period ended 31 March 2020 which are set out on pages 5 to 9.

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

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

Independent examiner's report

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

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

Name of examiner:	Robert Kirtland
Name of firm:	Critchleys Audit LLP
Relevant professional body:	Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales
Address:	Beaver House, 23-38 Hythe Bridge Street, Oxford, OX1 2EP
Date:	

**FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK
(FORMERLY FIRST STAR ACADEMIES UK)**

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
(including Income and Expenditure Account)**

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

	Note	Unrestricted 2021 £	Unrestricted 2020 £
Income from:			
Donations and grants	3	<u>182,072</u>	<u>351,715</u>
Total income		<u>182,072</u>	<u>351,715</u>
Expenditure on:			
Charitable activities			
Provision of academic and life skills education to children in social care	4	<u>114,744</u>	<u>331,409</u>
Total expenditure		<u>114,744</u>	<u>331,409</u>
Net income for the year		67,328	20,306
Reconciliation of funds			
Fund balances brought forward at 31 March 2020		<u>74,448</u>	<u>54,142</u>
Fund balances carried forward at 31 March 2021		<u>141,776</u>	<u>74,448</u>

All activities are continuing.

The notes on pages 7 to 9 form part of these financial statements

**FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK
(FORMERLY FIRST STAR ACADEMIES UK)
(REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER: 11067711)**

**BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 MARCH 2021**

	Note	2021 £	£	2020 £	£
Fixed Assets					
Tangible fixed assets	7		268		673
Current Assets					
Debtors		-		-	
Cash at bank		147,130		79,667	
Current Liabilities					
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	8	<u>(5,622)</u>		<u>(5,892)</u>	
Net current assets			<u>141,508</u>		<u>73,775</u>
Total assets less current liabilities			<u>141,776</u>		<u>74,448</u>
Represented by:					
Unrestricted funds			<u>141,776</u>		<u>74,448</u>

The trustees consider that for the year ended 31 March 2020 the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies. No member or members have deposited a notice requesting an audit for the current financial year under section 476 of the Act.

The trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for ensuring that the company keeps accounting records which comply with section 386 and preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company as at the end of the financial period and of its surplus or deficit for the financial year in accordance with the requirements of sections 394 and 395, and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the company.

These financial statements are prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

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

.....
Stuart Irvine
Trustee/Director

The notes on pages 7 to 9 form part of these financial statements.

**FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK
(FORMERLY FIRST STAR ACADEMIES UK)**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021**

1 CHARITY INFORMATION

The company is limited by guarantee, not having a share capital. However every member undertakes to contribute to the assets of the company such amount as may be required, but not exceeding £1.

It is incorporated in the United Kingdom with its registered office at Beaver House, 23-38 Hythe Bridge Street, Oxford OX1 2EP

2 ACCOUNTING POLICIES

a) Basis of preparation

The financial statements of the charity (which is a public benefit entity) comply with the Companies Act 2006 and the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities (FRS 102) applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102). They have been prepared under the historical cost convention except that investments are valued at market value. They have also been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

There are no uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern.

b) Income

All monetary donations, gifts and grants are included in full in the Statement of Financial Activities when receivable.

Interest income is recognised when received.

c) Expenditure

Expenditure is charged on an accruals basis and includes irrecoverable VAT. It is all allocated to the company's charitable activity. Direct costs are included in the relevant charitable activity and support costs are those costs that are not direct to one activity.

d) Fund accounting

Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by the donors or which have been raised by the charity for particular purposes. The aim and use of each restricted fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements. Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the general objects of the charity. As all income during the year is unrestricted the trustees took the decision to not prepare a funds note.

e) Depreciation

Depreciation is charged on a straight line basis over four years on fixed assets.

**FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK
(FORMERLY FIRST STAR ACADEMIES UK)**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021 (continued)**

3 INCOME FROM DONATIONS AND GRANTS

	2021	2020
	£	£
Grants	174,392	328,000
Donations	<u>7,680</u>	<u>23,715</u>
	<u>182,072</u>	<u>351,715</u>

4 CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	2021	2020
	£	£
Activities undertaken directly		
Provision of academic and life skills education to children in social care	15,060	230,000
 Support costs		
Wages and salaries (see note 5)	77,810	74,343
Advertising and marketing	819	1,941
Office costs	5,340	5,755
Travel and subsistence	-	5,689
Information technology	7,500	5,102
Other costs	885	1,365
Depreciation	405	405
Governance costs:		
Independent examination fees	2,580	2,475
Accountancy and payroll fees	<u>4,345</u>	<u>4,334</u>
	<u>114,744</u>	<u>331,409</u>

5 WAGES AND SALARIES

	2021	2020
	£	£
Wages and salaries	70,385	66,667
Social security costs	4,610	5,009
Pension costs	<u>2,815</u>	<u>2,667</u>
	<u>77,810</u>	<u>74,343</u>

1 employee (2020: one) earned over £60,000 per annum.

The average number of employees was one person (2020: one) during the year.

**FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK
(FORMERLY FIRST STAR ACADEMIES UK)**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021 (continued)**

6 TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND EXPENSES

No Trustee received any remuneration in the year (2020: nil).

No travel and subsistence expenses were paid during the year (2020: £4,360 paid to 3 trustees).

7 TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Office Equipment	Total
	£	£
Cost:		
At 31 March 2020	1,618	1,618
Additions	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
At 31 March 2021	<u>1,618</u>	<u>1,618</u>
Depreciation:		
At 31 March 2020	945	945
Charge for the year	<u>405</u>	<u>405</u>
At 31 March 2021	<u>1,350</u>	<u>1,350</u>
Net book value:		
At 31 March 2021	<u>268</u>	<u>268</u>
At 31 March 2020	<u>673</u>	<u>673</u>

8 CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2021	2020
	£	£
Trade Creditors	38	38
Other tax and social security	2,422	2,391
Accruals and deferred income	2,580	3,015
Other creditors	<u>582</u>	<u>448</u>
	<u>5,622</u>	<u>5,892</u>

9 RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

During the year ended 31 March 2021, there were no related party transactions.

During the year ended 31 March 2020, trustee expenses were paid totalling £4,360.