

COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRE ESSEX

A charitable incorporated organisation

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED

31 MARCH 2021

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER : 1180884

Community Legal Centre Essex

A charitable incorporated organisation

Charity number: 1180884

Trustees' Report for the period from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021

The trustees submit their annual report and the financial accounts of the charity for the year ending 31 March 2021.

Objectives and Activities

The objects of the charity are:

1. The relief of financial hardship by the provision of free legal advice and assistance to persons who through lack of means would otherwise be unable to access such services; and
2. The advancement of the education of the public by increasing knowledge and understanding of the law.

The charity funds lawyers to provide expert advice and assistance.

The charity has funded free legal advice to members of the Armed Services, to members of various Facebook Groups including Dadsnet and Essex Coronavirus Action and to individuals contacting the charity direct. The advice has been in the areas of family law, employment and housing.

The trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit. All our charitable activities focus on the provision of legal advice to those who cannot afford high street prices and are undertaken to further our charitable purposes for the public benefit.

Achievements and Performance

During the year to 31 March 2021, the charity has delivered legal advice remotely by telephone, email or Facebook group. Some clients have their issues resolved within one or two short sessions. In other cases, the charity provides a full legal service including representation at hearings and mediation. In 2020-21, the charity advised over 300 individuals and families on a range of legal matters. These clients were unable to afford the prices of high street legal firms and were not entitled to legal aid.

Family Law: Many cases handled by the charity involve access to children where one party has financial resources or has been granted legal aid, whereas our client has no money to fund

legal advice. We have assisted clients gain direct or indirect contact with children, sometimes after several years.

Employment Law: Cases cover various employment issues. For example, the charity advised a client on a potential constructive dismissal claim, resulting in a settlement of £3,500

Housing Law: The charity advised a client, who had three children and two adults living in potentially overcrowded conditions, on their entitlement to housing assistance from their local authority and on how to put in an application for that assistance.

An ancillary benefit of the charity's work is reducing the time cases take to be heard in court. If one party has legal representation while the other is forced to represent themselves, cases can take much longer to process than if both parties are represented.

A further such benefit is that the parties are more likely than not to settle their case through negotiation where there is an "equality of arms". The presence of representation on both sides makes that a possibility because clients who usually would not be able to afford representation, feel able to protect their interests and fight their corner.

The delivery of pro bono advice through the Facebook platform remains unique. Unlike any other legal service, the charity supports the delivery of free, timely legal advice, delivered by a lawyer, to any question posted on Central Law Group's Facebook groups. The numbers in each group rise year on year and they are manned through usually fallow periods such as Christmas and Easter – vital for child contact matters.

The charity also makes it possible for Central Law Group be to be able to say that we are the only resource in the country who provide legal advice, support and representation for the Armed Forces based in Essex. Through this initiative, we have supported members of every battalion in the Parachute Regiment and news of our work has spread entirely organically because Army Welfare Services at Colchester all but shut down during the Pandemic.

Financial Review

At the end of March 2021, the charity had a surplus for the year of £10,258 (2020: deficit of £9,332). Income for the year included a grant for the work with the Armed Services from the Men's Mental Health Community Fund, and a donation from Central Law Group CIC, which provides reduced fee legal advice to people who can afford some but not all of full price fees charged by high street firms.

The charity's policy is to hold sufficient reserves to cover 3 months expenditure. Reserves at the year end were £926 (2020: £-£9,332), which will be used to continue the service in 2021-22.

The financial statements

- Have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in notes to the financial statements;

- Comply with the charity's governing document, the Charities Act 2011, and the Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK (the "Charities SORP").

Structure, Governance and Management

The charity is a Foundation Charitable Incorporated Organisation, governed by its constitution. Its only voting members are its trustees.

Trustees are selected on the basis of their skills and experience. New trustees are appointed for a term of three years by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the trustees.

The charity works closely with Citizens Advice Chelmsford and with Central Law Group CIC.

Reference and Administrative details

The charity's name: Community Legal Centre Essex.

Registered charity number: 1180884.


Charity's principal address: Burgess Well House, Coval Lane, Chelmsford, CM1 1FW.

Bankers: Unity Trust Bank, Nine Brindleyplace, Birmingham, B1 2HB.

Trustees

Trustees serving since April 2020 have been as follows:

	Resigned
Mr R C Mynott (Chair)	
Ms I W Bainbridge	September 2020
Ms E R Eisenberg	
Mr A M John	
Ms M Musson	June 2020
Ms M Uddin	
Mr P R A Wilson	

Signed 
 Date 25th January 2022

COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRE ESSEX

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Community Legal Centre Essex

I report to the trustees on my examination of the financial statements of Community Legal Centre Essex ('the charity') for the year ended 31 March 2021 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet and related notes.

This report is made solely to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with section 145 of the Charities Act 2011. My work has been undertaken so that I might state to the charity's trustees those matters I am required to state to them in this report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, I do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's trustees as a body, for my work, for this report, or for the opinions I have formed.

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

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

An independent examination does not involve gathering all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently does not cover all the matters that an auditor considers in giving their opinion on the financial statements. The planning and conduct of an audit goes beyond the limited assurance that an independent examination can provide. Consequently I express no opinion as to whether the financial statements present a 'true and fair' view and my report is limited to those specific matters set out in the independent examiner's statement.

Independent examiner's statement

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

- accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
- the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
- the financial statements 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 financial statements to be reached.

Elaine

Elaine Oddie OBE MA FCA FCCA
NSO Associates LLP
75 Springfield Road
Chelmsford
CMJ2 6JB

Date: 27 January 2022

COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRE ESSEX**Financial Statements 2020-21****Statement of Financial Activities for year to 31 March 2021**
(Prior period November 2018 to March 2020)**Incoming resources (Note 3)****Income from:**

Donations and legacies

Charitable activities

Other trading activities

Total**2021****£**

32,000

4,000

1,306

37,306**2020****£**

1,000

5,000

920

6,920**Resources expended (Note 4)****Expenditure on:**

Charitable activities

Total27,04827,04816,25216,252**Net movement in funds**10,258-9,332**Total funds brought forward**-9,3320**Total funds carried forward**926-9,332

COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRE ESSEX

Financial Statements 2020-21

Balance Sheet at 31 March

	2021 £	2020 £
Current assets		
Debtors (Note 7)	1,306	0
Cash at bank and in hand (Note 9)	18,372	668
Total current assets	<u>19,678</u>	<u>668</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year (Note 8)	-8,752	0
Net current assets/(liabilities)	<u>10,926</u>	<u>668</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due after one year (Note 8)	-10,000	-10,000
Total net assets or liabilities	<u>926</u>	<u>-9,332</u>
Funds of the Charity		
Unrestricted funds	926	-9,332
Total funds	<u>926</u>	<u>-9,332</u>

Signed by a trustee on behalf of all the trustees



R. MYNOTT

Date: 26th January 2022

COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRE ESSEX

Financial Statements 2020-21

Notes to the Financial Statements

1 Accounting policies

1.1 Basis of accounting

These accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant note(s) to these accounts.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland FRS102 effective 1 January 2015 - Charities SORP (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

The charity meets the definition of a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102.

1.2 Going concern

The accounts have been prepared on a going concern basis.

The charity continues to seek donations and grants. It funds free legal advice only when funds are available to do so.

Note 2 Accounting Policies

2.1 Income

Recognition of income

Income is included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SoFA) when:

- the charity becomes entitled to the resources;
- it is more likely than not that the trustees will receive the resources; and
- the monetary value can be measured with sufficient reliability.

Grants

In the case of performance related grants, income is only recognised to the extent that the charity has provided the specified goods or services as entitlement to the grant only occurs when the performance related conditions are met (5.16 FRS 102 SORP).

2.2 Expenditure and Liabilities

Liability recognition

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

Governance and support costs

Support costs have been allocated between governance costs and other support. Governance costs comprise all costs involving public accountability of the charity and its compliance with regulation and good practice.

2.3 Assets

Debtors

Debtors (including trade debtors and loans receivable) are measured on initial recognition at settlement amount after any trade discounts or amount advanced by the charity. Subsequently, they are measured at the cash or other consideration expected to be received.

COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRE ESSEX**Financial Statements 2020-21****Note 3 Analysis of income**

	Analysis	2021 £	2020 £
Donations and legacies:	Donations and gifts	32,000	1,000
Charitable activities:	Grants	4,000	5,000
Other trading activities:		1,306	920
TOTAL INCOME	Total	37,306	6,920

Other information:

All income in the prior year was unrestricted.

Note 4 Analysis of Expenditure**Expenditure on charitable activities**

	2021 £	2020 £
Lawyers' fees for pro bono legal advice and assistance	9,852	1,000
Legal Case management system and reference material	11,230	13,351
Other office, admin and support costs	5,966	1,901
Total expenditure on charitable activities	27,048	16,252
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	27,048	16,252

Note 5 Details of certain items of expenditure**Fees for examination of the accounts**

	2021 £	2020 £
Independent examiner's fees	600	0

Note 6 Paid Employees

The charity has no paid employees.

COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRE ESSEX

Financial Statements 2020-21

Note 7 Debtors and prepayments

		2021	2020
		£	£
Other debtors		1,306	0
	Total	1,306	0

Note 8 Creditors and accruals

	Amounts falling due within one year	
	2021	2020
	£	£
Trade creditors	8,152	0
Accruals	600	0
	8,752	0

	Amounts falling due after more than one year	
	2021	2020
	£	£
Interest free loan from Saxon Advice Services Ltd	10,000	10,000

Note 9 Cash at bank and in hand

	2021	2020
	£	£
Cash at bank and in hand	18,372	668

COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRE ESSEX

Financial Statements 2020-21

Note 10 Charity funds

10.1 Details of material funds held and movements during the current reporting period to 31 March 2021

Community Legal Centre Essex holds unrestricted funds for the provision of free legal advice

	2021 £	2020 £
Fund balances brought forward	-9,332	0
Income	37,306	6,920
Expenditure	-27,048	-16,252
Fund balance carried forward	926	-9,332

Note 11 Transactions with related parties

None of the trustees has been paid any remuneration or received any other benefits from an employment with the charity or a related entity in the year to 31 March 2021 or in the previous period to 31 March 2020.

Creditors due in more than one year includes an amount due to the following related party

	2021 £	2020 £
Saxon Advice Services Limited	10,000	10,000
Transactions with Central Law Group CIC		
Income		
Donations	32,000	0
Grant	4,000	0
Other income	1,306	920
Expenditure		
Fees for legal advice for pro bono cases	6,452	1,195
Transactions with Citizens Advice Chelmsford		
Grant	0	5,000