

CONNECTED LIVES

Report and Accounts

Year ended 31 December 2024

CONNECTED LIVES
LEGAL & ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE	255 Old Marylebone Road London NW1 5QT
GOVERNING DOCUMENT	CIO Constitution dated July 2019
CHARITY REGISTRATION NUMBER	1184376
TRUSTEES RESPONSIBLE FOR MANAGING THE CHARITY	Lindsey Hayward Anita Jones Nicola Morriss Margaret Sandilands Daniel Mogue (appointed February 2024) Jonathan Sercombe (resigned January 2024)
BANKERS	National Westminster Bank Plc
INDEPENDENT EXAMINER	Jaimée Young Stewardship 1 Lamb's Passage LONDON EC1Y 8AB

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CONNECTED LIVES
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

The Trustees have pleasure in submitting the Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2024.

Objects of the charity

Connected Lives is an early intervention charity, governed by a constitution and is constituted as a charitable incorporated organisation. The charity's principal objects, as set out in its governing document is to advance education for the public benefit in areas including parenting, couple relationships, relational well-being, and childcare.

Connected Lives provides groups and courses that create a supportive space for parents/carers and partners to reflect on their relationships, navigate challenges, and develop new approaches to foster thriving family dynamics. We offer targeted support groups for parents and carers with babies and young children, parents of teenagers, and couples. All the programmes we use are attachment-based, trauma-informed, evidence-based and have a strong preventative track record.

Our proven track record of working with parents, children and couples reveals that early intervention helps families thrive.

Our approach involves utilising evidence-based programmes like Circle of Security Parenting, Hold Me Tight, Created for Connection and Connected Teens.

Our trained facilitators offer a secure environment for individuals to explore these connections via groups, courses, trainings, and one-off evening events.

Early help is the most effective intervention, both in relation to the wellbeing of families and society as a whole.

We are passionate about the hands-on work we do with parents and deeply appreciate the support of our partners and donors.

Summary of the charity's main activities and achievements

To further the above objects and vision, the charity's main activities and achievements were as follows:

Core Principles

At Connected Lives, we are committed to providing effective and accessible support for parents and partners. Grounded in six decades of research, our core principles shape every group, course, and support service we offer:

Reflection: Creating space to step back and assess what is working and what isn't, in our relationships.

A Map: Using attachment theory to understand relationship dynamics and the needs of children and partners.

Expert Facilitation: Our trained facilitators provide compassionate listening, helping individuals make sense of struggles while celebrating strengths.

Community Support: Connecting with other parents and partners to share experiences and reinforce that no one is alone.

Open Dialogue: Encouraging honest conversations, curiosity, and the courage to ask questions.

Proven Effectiveness: Every programme we offer has been independently evaluated and shown to make a positive impact.

At the heart of it all is the **Power of Attachment**, fostering stronger, healthier relationships for a thriving future.

On going Programmes

Circle of Security-Parenting (COS-P) Groups

The Circle of Security programme continues to make a significant impact, demonstrating strong engagement among parents. In 2024, we successfully delivered 21 parenting groups across our Central North West London Hub, Battersea, and online platforms, supporting a total of 252 parents.

In our new Battersea hub, we had an extraordinary experience working with a group of mothers from global majority backgrounds. This group was particularly remarkable, creating a space for growth, understanding, and community bonding. Once again, we witnessed how the power of attachment transcends ethnic and cultural differences, fostering deep connections and meaningful support among parents.

Relationship courses

"Hold Me Tight" remains one of our most popular relationship courses, providing couples with the insight, space, and tools to understand why stress and disconnection occur. By equipping them with effective strategies, the course helps couples reconnect, strengthen their bond, and restore intimacy. In 2024, we delivered online "Hold Me Tight" courses, supporting a total of 36 couples. These sessions are guided by Emotionally Focused Couples' Therapists, who are available via Zoom to assist couples when they feel distressed or stuck. This crucial support ensures that couples are not left to navigate challenges alone, fostering deeper connection and lasting relationship growth.

Marriage Preparation course is another relationship course we offer. "In 2024, we had the privilege of helping 20 couples through our Marriage Foundation Course, designed specifically for marriage preparation and newlyweds. This course equips couples with essential tools to build a strong, lasting foundation for their relationship."

Drop-in Groups

We run bi-weekly Stay and Play toddler groups, with over 300 families attending our sessions. These sessions, designed for babies, toddlers, parents, and carers, serve a dual purpose. They offer a safe space for children to play, fostering the development of gross motor skills, social skills, and imagination. At the same time, they provide a lifeline for families, offering a supportive environment where parents and carers can share challenges and receive guidance. Research shows that regularly connecting with others who understand our experiences is a key protective factor against maternal ill-health.

Connected Teens Programme

We also run Connected Teens groups for parents and carers of 12–18-year-olds. In 2024, we finalised the visuals and training materials for the programme. We successfully delivered 4 groups, supporting 35 parents. Connected Teens is a proven, impactful programme with plans for expansion. Its effectiveness has been demonstrated, and the programme's originators agree that the content delivers positive results.

Welcome Baby Boxes

The Central NW London Hub delivers Welcome Baby Boxes to families within their communities. These boxes are given to local families with babies under 16 weeks and contain gifts for both parents and babies, as well as a 'mum-to-mum' pamphlet with helpful tips for thriving in the first few weeks. These visits provide us with an opportunity to connect with local families, encouraging them to engage with our various activities. Evaluation suggests that this initiative boosts parental confidence to join groups and helps reduce social isolation. In 2024, we distributed boxes to 6 new parents, further strengthening community ties.

Existing Hubs:

- 1. Central and North West London (CNWL):** Our first hub, covering Westminster, Brent, Harrow, Kensington, and Chelsea.
- 2. Cambridgeshire:** Our second hub supports families across the Cambridge region, offering a range of services and activities to help strengthen community ties and provide valuable resources.
- 3. Lewisham (Brockley):** Our first franchise hub supports families across the region, offering a range of services and activities to foster community connections and provide essential resources.

New Hubs & Expansion

Derbyshire (High Peaks): Our first COS-P group was launched in 2024 with a waiting list, reflecting strong demand and the program's positive impact.

Battersea Hub- This hub, launched in 2024, and is run in partnership and collaboration with Battersea Fields Practice, S.T.O.R.M, Katherine Low Settlement, the Community Empowerment Network, St George's NHS Trust Perinatal Team, and the Mother and Child Welfare Association. In Battersea, we are working together to create a strong, supportive network for local families.

Haringey – In 2024, Haringey commissioned our director to provide wrap-around support for COS-P training. We successfully completed the first session and trained their team in January 2025.

Brent – Despite the ending of the funding we had secured for Brent, we continued to run COS-P groups in 2024 at the Three Trees Family Wellbeing Centre. We remained committed to supporting families because we know the transformative impact these groups have. The need for guidance, connection, and community is too important to overlook, and we were determined to ensure that families still had access to the support they deserve. Our dedication to empowering parents and fostering stronger communities pushed us to keep these groups running, no matter the challenges.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE HUB

Ongoing programmes

HonC! (Hands on the Circle) Stay-and-Play Group

The Hub runs bi-weekly Stay and Play toddler groups, offering a dual purpose for babies, toddlers, parents, and carers. These sessions provide a safe, supportive space where children can develop essential skills, gross motor, social, and imaginative skills and give families a vital opportunity to connect, share parenting challenges, and receive valuable support. Studies show that regularly meeting with others who truly understand our experiences is a key protective factor against maternal ill-health, making these sessions not only beneficial for children but also a lifeline for parents.

Trumpington Meadows Community Hub (TM Hub)

The Hub is an intergenerational community space in Trumpington, supporting local residents aged 1 to 99 years. It offers a range of services, including a weekly brunch, free clothing for children aged 0-2 years, mental health and wellbeing advice, arts and crafts for all ages, wellbeing singing sessions, and therapeutic storytelling. This vibrant hub operates through a three-way partnership between Connected Lives, the NHS social prescriber, and the local housing association (BPHA). Additionally, the Hub signposts participants to food banks and housing resources, ensuring that everyone has access to the support they need.

The HONC and TM hubs worked with a total of 292 families, providing vital support and resources to strengthen the community.

Circle of Security-Parenting Groups

The Circle of Security programme continues to make a significant impact, demonstrating strong engagement among parents. In 2024, we successfully delivered 10 parenting groups across at our Cambridgeshire hub. Groups were delivered both in person and via online platforms, supporting a total of 120 parents.

Welcome Baby Boxes

We continue to deliver boxes to local families and these help to establish early conversations and encourage families to participate in other events. A total of 27 boxes were delivered in 2024 making a total of 127 baby boxes delivered by the hub to date.

Body Mind Connection

The 1.5-hour sessions combine therapeutic storytelling and body movement, offering parents and carers opportunities for deeper reflection, exercise, and relaxation to foster personal growth and well-being. The group serves as a helpful addition to Circle of Security Parenting groups or as a standalone session. These groups continue to be well received, with sessions focusing on self-care and reflection for parents. Looking ahead, we've made plans for future sessions to better meet community needs, including a stronger focus on relaxation during busy times.

New Developments

Wellbeing Café

This café offers an informal space for people to connect, share their struggles, and reduce isolation while fostering a strong sense of belonging. In addition to providing support, it focuses on promoting healthy lifestyles and addressing poor diet, helping to improve overall wellbeing within the community.

Collaboration with Westminster Theological College

A theological student from Westminster College joined the team on placement, gaining valuable hands-on experience while helping to strengthen our connection with the college.

Church Schools of Cambridge

The Hub developed strong relationships with a local church school, with plans to deliver a COS-P group to strengthen the school-church connection. This partnership will not only enhance the support for families but also enrich the programmes we run at Connected Lives, creating additional opportunities for engagement, building stronger community ties, and offering parents and carers access to vital resources and support.

Circle of Security Impact Analysis

We measure our impact through pre-and post-programme assessments, as well as a parental evaluation form completed at the end of each program. Using these measures, we have seen a substantial positive impact. Parents who participated in a Circle of Security Group between 2022-2024 reported an 85% reduction in parental stress, a 95% improvement in parent-child relationships, and a 93% increase in understanding their children's emotional needs. By helping parents understand these needs in a non-blaming way, we promote secure attachment, which plays a vital role in healthy child development. Babies who experience 'good enough' parenting are more likely to form a secure attachment with their parents, which acts as a psychological immune system. This secure foundation fosters greater resilience, confidence, and improves their social, emotional, physical, and educational outcomes.

Meta-analysis shows that 60% of parents in a community sample develop secure attachments with their children, while 30% develop insecure attachments. Unfortunately, 10% of babies are exposed to multiple adversities early in life, which puts them at risk of developing a disorganised attachment. Insecurely attached children are more likely to struggle with anxiety, confidence, empathy, and maintaining friendships. Children with disorganised attachments face elevated risks of aggressive behaviour, mental health issues, and school-related challenges.

To further measure and support our impact, we offer Circle Clinics and parenting talks. These clinics provide a space for parents to discuss parenting dilemmas with someone who understands their challenges. We offer 45-minute Circle Clinics for parents who have completed the Circle of Security Parenting group, alongside one-off, termly parenting talks and workshops. These sessions provide additional guidance and support during tricky parenting moments when parents may feel stuck.

Volunteers

Since 2022, the Central NW London Hub has maintained a successful partnership with the University of Westminster to recruit volunteers who assist with various activities, including administrative tasks, running the crèche for COS-P groups, evaluating course data, conducting area scoping, and outreach to families. Meanwhile, the Cambridgeshire Hub draws volunteers from the local community, fostering strong connections and support within the area. The Central NW London and Cambridgeshire hubs have built a dedicated team of approximately 38 volunteers who support us with Stay and Play sessions, community hub outreach, Welcome Baby Box deliveries, and the crèche for Circle of Security Groups. Over the past year, our volunteers contributed a total of 880 hours of invaluable help, making a significant impact on the families and communities we serve.

Safeguarding

The charity has a robust safeguarding policy in place, and it is mandatory that all individuals we partner with or bring under our umbrella adhere to a similarly rigorous safeguarding policy. We are committed to nurturing, protecting, and safeguarding everyone we work with, particularly children and young people. Connected Lives ensures proper care in our recruitment and selection processes, training, work practices, and procedures. All employees and volunteers undergo DBS checks before they are allowed to engage in any paid or unpaid work with us, ensuring the safety and wellbeing of those we serve.

In planning the activities the Trustees have applied the guidance on public benefit issued by the Charity Commission.

Financial review

During the year income increased from £203,100, to £205,200, and expenditure increased from £181,510, to £219,820. As a result the cash held by the charity decreased from £42,820, to £28,210, of which £20,600 is unrestricted and can be used for any charitable purpose.

Reserves policy

The trustees have determined that the charity should aim to hold unrestricted cash of no less than three months salary expenditure (approximately £37,000) so that the charity could continue to operate should income and / or expenditure vary drastically. In light of delays in receiving pledged funding, the trustees approved the use of a portion of these reserves to cover essential overhead and operational expenses. This decision was made in line with the reserves policy and to ensure the continued delivery of the charity's services. At the year end, the charity held unrestricted cash of £20,600.

Governance

Responsibility for setting policy and for making operating decisions rest with the trustees who meet regularly to monitor the activities of the charity. Responsibility for the day to day operation of the charity has been delegated to a senior management team led by Jenny Peters. New trustees are recruited and appointed by the existing trustees, by a majority vote.

Relationships with other charities and related parties

We have an existing relationship with St Mary's Church Bryanston Square, where we originally started as a family project and we are grateful for their continued support and relationship.

Risk statement

The charity is exposed to various risks - be they operational, financial or reputational. The trustees review the charity's activities regularly to identify significant risks and, where possible, they take appropriate measures to mitigate those risks.

Responsibilities of trustees

Charity law requires us as Trustees to prepare financial statements for each accounting year which record the receipts and payments of the charity for the year.

We are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable us to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011.

We also have a responsibility to safeguard the assets of the charity and to take reasonable steps to prevent fraud or any other irregularities.

Approval

This report was approved by the trustees and signed on their behalf by:

M. Sandilands

M. Sandilands (Jun 9, 2025 22:59 GMT+1)

Margaret Sandilands

Date: Jun 9, 2025

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT
TO THE TRUSTEES OF
CONNECTED LIVES

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Connected Lives ('the charity') for the year ended 31 December 2024 on pages 9 to 11 following.

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

I report in respect of my examination of the charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

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

1. accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with the accounting records.

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

J. Young

J. Young (Jun 10, 2025 09:03 GMT+1)

Jaimée Young
Stewardship
1 Lamb's Passage
LONDON
EC1Y 8AB

Date: Jun 10, 2025

CONNECTED LIVES
RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

		Unrestricted Funds		Restricted Funds	2024	2023
	Notes	General Funds £	Designated Funds £	£	£	£
Income receipts						
Donations		92,240	-	12,673	104,913	102,573
Gift Aid		8,488	-	466	8,954	6,805
Grants		14,780	-	51,872	66,652	80,708
Income from Charitable Activities		20,183	-	4,505	24,688	13,013
Total receipts		<u>135,691</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>69,516</u>	<u>205,207</u>	<u>203,099</u>
Payments						
Payments in relation to charitable activities undertaken directly	2	161,551	-	58,270	219,821	181,512
Total payments		<u>161,551</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>58,270</u>	<u>219,821</u>	<u>181,512</u>
Net of receipts / (payments) before transfers	-	25,860	-	11,245	- 14,615	21,587
Transfers between funds	5	- 1,340	-	1,340	-	-
Net movement in funds	-	27,200	-	12,585	- 14,615	21,587
Cash funds as at last year end		47,822	-	- 5,000	42,822	21,235
Cash funds at this year end	A	<u>20,623</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>7,585</u>	<u>28,208</u>	<u>42,822</u>

The notes on page 11 form part of these accounts.

CONNECTED LIVES
STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds		Restricted funds	2024	2023
		General funds	Designated funds			
		£	£	£	£	£
A Cash funds						
Cash at bank with immediate access		20,623	-	7,585	28,208	42,823
		<u>20,623</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>7,585</u>	<u>28,208</u>	<u>42,823</u>
B Other monetary assets						
Gift aid due to charity		-	-	-	-	885
Other debtors		-	-	-	-	200
Promised grant funding	Note 5	-	-	-	-	5,000
Cambridge Fund raiser	Note 5	-	-	3,400	3,400	-
		<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>3,400</u>	<u>3,400</u>	<u>6,085</u>
C Liabilities						
Falling due within one year						
Trade creditors		-	-	2,368	2,368	960
PAYE/NIC due		2,350	-	1,027	3,377	4,624
Pension due		840	-	639	1,479	499
Unspent grant funding	Note 5	-	-	10,985	10,985	-
Fee for Independent Examination		1,200	-	-	1,200	1,200
		<u>4,390</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>15,019</u>	<u>19,409</u>	<u>7,283</u>
D Assets retained for charity's own use						
The charity owns minimal assets.						
E Guarantees and secured debts						
The charity has not given any guarantees and has not provided its assets as security for any liabilities.						

The accounts were approved by the trustees and signed on their behalf by:

M. Sandilands
M. Sandilands (Jun 9, 2025 22:59 GMT+1)

Margaret Sandilands

Date: Jun 9, 2025

The notes on page 11 form part of these accounts.

CONNECTED LIVES
NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

1 Accounting policies

The accounts have been prepared on a receipts and payments basis and comprise a statement that shows the charity's receipts and payments, a statement that summarises the charity's assets and liabilities and related notes. The accountancy profession have determined that only accounts prepared in accordance with applicable accounting standards present a 'true and fair' view and, as these receipts and payments accounts have not (and cannot) be prepared in accordance with accounting standards, these accounts do not present (and are not intended to present) a 'true and fair' view of the charity's financial activities and state of affairs.

General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity. Designated funds comprise unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the trustees for particular purposes. Restricted funds are donations which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors; they include donations received from appeals for specific activities or projects.

		<u>Unrestricted Funds</u>		Restricted Funds £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
		General funds £	Designated funds £			
2 Payments in relation to charitable activities undertaken directly						
Employment costs	Note 3	111,019	-	43,718	154,737	131,893
Direct project costs		45,230	-	10,847	56,077	42,261
Rent		-	-	3,705	3,705	2,734
Insurance		554	-	-	554	580
Professional fees and subscriptions		2,467	-	-	2,467	845
IT software and consumables		843	-	-	843	1,999
Governance		1,439	-	-	1,439	1,200
		<u>161,551</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>58,270</u>	<u>219,821</u>	<u>181,512</u>

3 Transactions with related parties

The wife of Daniel Mogues, a trustee, served as a COSP facilitator and was paid £1920 (2023: £0) for serving in that capacity, not for serving as a trustee; these payments are permitted by the charity's governing document.

4 Acting as agent

During the year, the charity received money on behalf of St Mary's Church. This income was received as agent for the café run during Toddlers group the receipts totalling £1,283.61 and the subsequent payment was made to St Marys On the 23rd of December 2024. No money was Owed to St Marys as at year end.

5 Movement of funds

	Opening balance £	Receipts £	Payments £	Transfers £	Closing balance £
General funds	47,822	135,691	- 161,551	- 1,340	20,623
Restricted funds					
Cambridge Hub [Hands on the Circle]	- 5,000	47,516	- 47,203	1,287	- 3,400
Connected Teens	-	10,000	- 10,052	52	-
Wellbeing café	-	12,000	- 1,015	-	10,985
	<u>- 5,000</u>	<u>69,516</u>	<u>- 58,270</u>	<u>1,340</u>	<u>7,585</u>
Total funds	<u>42,822</u>	<u>205,207</u>	<u>- 219,821</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>28,208</u>

The restricted funds deficit balance was due to a delayed fundraiser one off gift pledged of £3,400 that was later paid in January 2025.