

CIS'TERS - SURVIVING RAPE AND SEXUAL ABUSE IN CHILDHOOD

England & Wales · Charity number 1184857

Details

Other names CISTERS

Status Registered

Legal form CIO

Registered 2019-08-12

Register [View on the Charity Commission register](#)

Contact

Address CIS'ters
PO Box 119
Eastleigh
SO50 9ZF

Phone 02380338080

Email admin@cisters.org.uk

Website www.cisters.org.uk

Activities

Objects: 1) TO PROMOTE AND PROTECT THE HEALTH OF FEMALE SURVIVORS AGED OVER 18 WHO, BORN AS FEMALE, DURING CHILDHOOD WERE RAPED, SEXUALLY ABUSED OR SEXUALLY EXPLOITED IN PARTICULAR BUT NOT LIMITED TO THOSE WHO WERE RAPED, SEXUALLY ABUSED OR SEXUALLY EXPLOITED BY A MEMBER OF THEIR IMMEDIATE OR EXTENDED FAMILY; EMPOWERING SUCH SURVIVORS IN THEIR OWN PERSONAL HEALING THROUGH THE MUTUAL AFFIRMATION, ACCEPTANCE, RESPECT AND SUPPORT OF OTHER SURVIVORS AND, SUBJECT TO FUNDING, TO ASSIST IN THE PROVISION OR DEVELOPMENT OF SERVICES FOR OTHER PERSONS AFFECTED DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY BY RAPE, SEXUAL ABUSE OR SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AS THE TRUSTEES SHALL THINK FIT. 2) TO ADVANCE THE EDUCATION OF THE PUBLIC, IN PARTICULAR THOSE PROVIDING SERVICES, OF THE IMPACT ON CHILD VICTIMS/ADULT SURVIVORS OF CHILDHOOD RAPE/SEXUAL ABUSE/EXPLOITATION AND THE ASSOCIATED COPING STRATEGIES USED BY SOME VICTIMS; AND TO PROMOTE AN IMPROVED SERVICE RESPONSE TO THE UNMET NEEDS OF SUCH CHILD VICTIMS/ADULT SURVIVORS, AND OTHERS AFFECTED DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY BY EXPERIENCES OF SEXUAL CRIMES.

Activities: CISTers is a survivor led specialist service for females aged 18 or over who, as female children, were sexually abused/exploited by a member of their immediate and/or extended family. We offer female survivors the opportunity to meet other women in a group context and within an empowerment model. Meetings vary in type/focus and include an Annual Residential Weekend Workshop. We meet in Hampshire.

Classification

- **How:** Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information, Other Charitable Activities
- **What:** Education/training, Disability
- **Who:** Other Defined Groups, The General Public/mankind

Geography

- Throughout England And Wales

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£31,108	£56,283	-	-
2024-03-31	£41,582	£70,573	-	-
2023-03-31	£92,784	£63,417	-	-
2022-03-31	£9,351	£52,079	-	-
2021-03-31	£89,531	£53,675	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Samantha Peggy Richley	Chair	2020-08-16
Catherine Handley		2020-11-17
Dr Eileen Ross Gorrod		2020-08-16
Gillian Lynn Finch		2020-08-16
Jude McBride		2024-03-25
Louise Charlotte Bird		2020-08-16
Theresa Stephens		2024-03-25

Accounts



An experience in learning, sharing, growing - Individually and together

Survivors are emotionally alert to the way in which others respond to them.

When someone on our CIS'ters team (comprising females with lived experience) says to a member of the public/others "I am a survivor of sexual abuse within a family" the vulnerability of the survivor is open to being judged.

Time has shown us that it takes a special kind of person to reply "how can I help?"

Trustees' Annual Report

1st April 2024 - 31st March 2025

**CIS'ters was founded in 1995,
the name chosen at that time represents 'who we are'
Childhood Incest Survivors (CIS) and
'ters, for the sisters who had been victims within the same family**

Registered charity number: 1184857

Previously 1123125



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Section one: Reference and administrative details

Charity Name	CIS'ters –surviving rape and sexual abuse during childhood
Registered charity number	1184857 (<i>previously 1123125</i>)
Charity's principal address	CIS'ters Po Box 119 Eastleigh Hampshire SO50 9ZF

Trustees

Trustee Name	Office	Dates
Samantha Richley	Trustee/Chair	12/08/2019 - present
Mary Bridgman	Trustee/Treasurer	12/08/2019 – 28/5/24
Louise Bird	Trustee	12/08/2019 - present
Gillian Finch	Trustee/Founder & Unpaid Manager	12/08/2019 - present
Eileen Gorrod	Trustee	12/08/2019 - present
Catherine Handley	Trustee	17/11/2020 - present
Jude McBride	Trustee	25/03/2024 - present
Theresa Stephens	Trustee	25/03/2024 - present



Section two: Structure, governance, and management

Type of governing document: Charitable Incorporated Organisation - Foundation

The charity migrated from original registration (1123125) to a CIO format and achieved registration on 12th August 2019 (1184857). Funds were transferred from the original registration on 31st March 2020, to the new CIO and 1123125 was formally closed on 19th January 2021.

It is important that when reviewing the Annual Report and Audited Accounts, that consideration is given to the achievements gained whilst previously registered (as 1123125), as they cover a substantial part of the history of our charity since the original set up in 1995 and then the initial registration with the Charities Commission.

Trusteeship – led by and for

CIS'ters is a charity that was set up in 1995 by a biological female who had personally experienced, as a child, sexual abuse within her family. The ethos at that time, and continuing, is that the entity is a self-help/peer-group, survivor-run for females age 18+ who were similarly abused within families, as children, by a member of their immediate/extended family.

It remains important that our constitution stipulates that at a minimum 50% of trustees must be adult female survivors of childhood rape, sexual abuse or sexual exploitation within a familial environment. (i.e. lived experience (LE)).

It is important that there are trustees with LE, who are able to represent direct beneficiaries of the charity, but also demonstrate that survivors are so much more than their childhood experience, and have a wide range of skill sets that can be used professionally to assist the work of the charity at a strategic level.

Trustees are selected following skills gap analysis and are appointed on their knowledge, skills and current abilities and availability. They may be recommended by existing trustees and/or advertisement. During the year being reported upon, one trustee resigned and two more were recruited.

Focus of the work: Due to the recognised prevalence of all sexual abuse within society it was clear from the beginning that the large numbers of victims who might be seeking emotional support, balanced against the limited services available within **CIS'ters** and elsewhere, meant that the potential demand at that time and subsequently would exceed an ability to deliver. On this basis, from the outset, a decision was taken that **CIS'ters** would focus on



delivering emotional support to females age 18+ who had been sexually abused as children/teens by someone who was an immediate/extended member of their family. In addition that the emotional support on offer would be from the lived experience perspective i.e. provided by a peer.

The ethos of the trustees remains the same and continues to remain designated as survivor-led. Constitutionally this is assured by the inclusion of an additional 'shared' vote that trustees with LE can use jointly, should a situation arise where strategic decisions could be over-ridden by a casting vote of the chair if that appointed individual did not have LE.

Conflict of interest

A Conflict-of-Interest Register was initiated at the Trustee meeting on 23rd May 2018 and is now a formal part of each meeting. During the reported period, Trustees confirmed that they had had no conflicts of interest.

Policies

The policy framework was vastly expanded in 2014 and there is a rolling programme of review. During the reporting period of 2024-25, the following policies have been reviewed or developed:

- Participation in Coroners Processes
- Suicide Prevention
- Statement of Financial Viability and Reserves
- Consultancy and Delivery of Training

Financial review

Income received during the year 2024-25 was £31,108 compared with £41,582 during previous financial year.

Expenditure during the year 2024-25 was £56,283 compared with £70,573 during previous financial year. At 31st March 2025, the end of year balance was £41,413 compared with £66,587 which was the prior year balance on 31st March 2024.

Our income remains financially unstable (see Annex A) and therefore the subject of reserves is a standing agenda item for each board meeting, with a protocol for early escalation and reporting to trustees should the need arise. A key feature is that the charity ensures that it can:

- ❖ Meet contractual liabilities should the charity have to close. This includes redundancy pay, amounts due to creditors and commitments under leases.

- ❖ Meet unexpected costs (where these are reasonable and legal)
- ❖ Replace essential equipment/resources as it wears out
- ❖ Provide working capital if and when funding is paid in arrears
- ❖ Ensure the charity can continue to provide a stable and quality service

It is a requirement within our **business continuity plan** that we hold, as part of designated reserves, not less than 4 months funding which could be used to close down the service safely and avoid as much emotional distress as can be to our beneficiaries.

The level of **reserves** is crucial to our charity, in that new funding is never stable and we have 'good', and 'not-so-good' income years. The year under report, 2024-25, is obviously a 'not-so-good year' in terms of new income. We also continue to experience rises in basic running costs, such office rent, electricity and stationery (in common with the rest of the country).

Increased costs and reduced income continues to be a significant challenge and thus, our expenditure is subject to ongoing and particularly robust review.

Expenditure included a vital website software upgrade which presented us with a higher than expected financial outlay. This specific project (which is due to conclude in September 2025) has been partly funded by a donation. The risk to the charity has been minimised (in acknowledgement of the size and limited resources internally) by using an an outsourced project manager to assist with technical aspects of the website upgrade and migration.

Risk management statement

The trustees take responsibility for management of risk within the charity. Major risks are reviewed by the Trustees at their regular quarterly meetings and control systems have been established to predict these (where possible), and manage them. Risk management extends to financial awareness.

With close scrutiny throughout the year, at specified intervals, trustees continued to be satisfied that the charity had sufficient financial resources for the year 2024-2025. In common with the majority of small/medium size charities and particularly those, like ours, who focus on subjects that society would prefer to not so easily acknowledge – future and sustainable funding remains an issue that demands constant attention from a stretched workforce.

In order for board meetings to be quorate, the number of trustees with lived experience need to be equal or higher than remaining trustees. Trustees did acknowledge in mid- 2023 that our board was struggling with resilience, and

agreed a recruitment initiative that commenced in July 2023. Consequently, two new trustees have been recruited who joined the Trust board in March 2024. Attendance and commitment of existing members of the Board continued to be under review.

A designated trustee provides documented supervision sessions on a monthly basis with our current Manager (who is unpaid) during which risks (known and emerging) are subject to ongoing monitoring.

The charity continued to deliver against priorities agreed with funders for key projects.

Public benefit statement

All trustees have complied with their duty to have due regard to guidance on public benefit when exercising their duties.

Audit and banking

Main Account	HSBC	3 Leigh Road, Eastleigh SO50 9YW
Online Current account	Co-op	PO Box 250 Skelmersdale WN8 6WT
Auditor	Fred Bendall	8 Tenby Drive, Chandlers Ford, SO53 4NL

Section three: Objectives

The trustees shall hold the trust fund and its income upon trust to apply them for the following objects ("the objects"):

- a. to promote and protect the health of female survivors aged over 18 who, born as female, during childhood were raped, sexually abused or sexually exploited in particular but not limited to those who were raped, sexually abused or sexually exploited by a member of their immediate or extended family; empowering such survivors in their own personal healing through the mutual affirmation, acceptance, respect and support of other survivors and, subject to funding, to assist in the provision or development of services for other persons affected directly or indirectly by rape, sexual abuse or sexual exploitation as the trustees shall think fit.

- b. to advance the education of the public, in particular those providing services, of the impact on child victims/adult survivors of childhood rape/sexual abuse/exploitation and the associated coping strategies used by some victims; and to promote an improved service response to the unmet needs of such child victims/adult survivors, and others affected directly or indirectly by experiences of sexual crimes.

Section four: Achievements, performance and services



Our workforce (volunteers, trustees, employees)

Feedback from survivors who make contact with us, including those that go on to become Members, consistently tell us what they value, above everything else, is that our team members have lived experiences.

It is pivotal that those they communicate with, within our frontline teams, are also 'like them' i.e. female born, still identify as a female and victim/survivors of sexual abuse (as children) within a familial setting.

The challenges and difficulties currently being experienced by our Members, and 'new-to-us' contacts, is reflected within our Membership and Workforce. We have an unquestionable appreciation of the triggering experienced when attending (or choosing not to attend) a health screening, a visit to the dentist or optician, contact with some family members, or of the million and one other circumstances that can be a reminder of the harm that was caused by being a victim of familial childhood sexual abuse. Survivors are used to professionals/others using the term "trust me", but non-survivors rarely understand that 'trust' usually involved damaging experiences/outcomes for survivors of CSA. It has to be earned.

Based on the consistent feedback and our constitutional agreement – that we were set up by, and are now led by, and delivered by - **survivors** –, trustees have continued to place emphasis on the requirement to build and maintain a workforce with lived experience. This creates a measure of additional work when choosing and maintaining the resilience of individual workers. They are carefully monitored and supported to ensure they remain able to undertake their respective roles.



Strategy & Business Plan

The Trust Board agreed priorities following a Strategy Meeting in January 2024 – attended by our whole workforce i.e. ratio LE to non was 3:1. Topics identified at that time and which continued to be a priority during the year 2024-2025 were:

- Maintaining and upgrading the website
- Maintaining the helpline (voicemail and email)
- Delivery of the Member-Only Annual workshop – to be held in May 2024
- Ongoing development and delivery of the Self Help Toolkit
- Continuing to produce and distribute the Member Newsletter
- Fundraising

Updates as follows:

Our website:
www.cisters.org.uk

We have continued to ensure that feedback from those with LE contribute to the growing content on our **website** www.cisters.org.uk.

The website is a key feature within **CIS'ters** and accessed by existing Members and others who might or might not make direct contact with us via our Helpline.

We rely on external technical support for our website and during the prior year we received notice that the existing software and security features of our existing website needed to be upgraded as it would no longer be technically supportable in current format.

A project commenced to fully determine the scale of the issue and funding implications. The team assigned includes LE individuals and work has now commenced.

Hidden Harm Podcasts:

During the reporting year upon there was continued interest in the podcasts which can be accessed via our website

<https://www.cisters.org.uk/podcastsnewsletterssurvivors-voices/the-hidden-harm-podcasts/> - feedback confirms that these are of interest to existing

Members and also new contacts (who might or might not access Membership Service).

Funding currently prevents us from expanding our portfolio of 33 podcasts, though Members continue to alert us to new subjects they wish to see included.



Helpline: (phone and email):

We continue to receive emails and messages left on our helpline. Ratio of emails to phone messages continues to remain at 8:1. Communicating via emails, therefore, continues to appear to be easier for those seeking contact with us (whether a new contact or existing).

Although our constitutional focus appears limited we continue, as we have from the beginning, to respond with sensitivity and compassion to all those who contact us. Depending on the unique requirements of contacts, and as appropriate, we are able to use the following national websites to signpost to additional specialist support services. The three national umbrella organisations, are: The Survivors Trust (TST (we are an organisational member of TST and are also one of the five founding agencies)), Rape Crisis England and Wales (RCE&W) and Male Survivors Partnership (MSP).

The key umbrella agencies above are important to us providing an ability to highlight pathways for key services, such as counselling which we do not deliver, and also for specific requirements which include: those with learning disabilities, non-English speaking, neuro diversity, gender, domestic violence/abuse, services working with offenders, and those working with child/teen victim/survivors.

Core to our response is that we always do our best to be considerate to the unique needs of each person contacting to us – but within, always, an acknowledgement and appreciation that the explicit offer of **Membership**, is limited to our constitutional criteria of LE i.e. biological female with experience, as children/teen, of sexual abuse by a member of immediate/extended family - a specific community of victim/survivors (whom we have three decades experience of assisting) where we have a unique insight into issues faced during childhood years, and into adulthood.

Our helpline is also used by external professionals/workers who are seeking (in the main) more information about our service in general terms on behalf of their clients. We only accept self-referrals and it is important therefore to be able to explain in detail to external contacts what and how emotional support is provided within the context of 'Membership' and that the contacting worker is then able to pass this information on. In addition, this gives the external worker themselves an opportunity to experience contacting our charity and communicating with someone with LE, who is not their current client. Our approach is that our workforce is able to represent survivors as more than clients..... more than '*only a survivor*'. We model this from the initial point of contact. Run by survivors and for survivors.



Newsletter - We have continued to produce and cascade by email and hard copy (at the preference of the member). Each circulation reaches 700 recipients (Members and others) and is also uploaded to our website for public access. Based on feedback we are aware that the newsletter is valued by our Members, and also used by others as an information source. The topics included are provided by our LE team, and from our Members directly.



Fundraising – remains our biggest ongoing issue in that we are a small team with increasing demands, including fundraising, set against a backdrop of a LE workforce with health inequalities. We continue to seek assistance with fundraising, as we currently have such restricted time or specialist capacity. Thus, income remains unstable (see Annex A).

During 2024/25 we were in receipt of year-3 of a three year grant from Joseph Rank Trust. Their support again was very much appreciated and not least because a *belief* in what our small charity is doing and continues to do, is of equal value to a donation or a grant.

It is a reality that whilst members of the public and others might readily take on a challenge to run in aid of, say, NSPCC or similar – they will more often than not shy away from undertaking a similar event so openly on behalf of charities like ours. It is too close, and leaves them open to being potentially viewed (even if not) as a prior victim or that someone close to them is. This has been our experience over 3 decades.

In action: so when individuals or organisations are willing to step forward, to help us, the warmth derived by their acceptance and understanding – makes a massive difference to us.

Example A: We were encouraged when the Chief Fire Officer for Hampshire and IoW Fire and Rescue Service personally undertook the Vitality 10k in London in 22nd September 2024, accompanied by six of his colleagues/friends/family. Collectively they raised £1,658 for us. Belief in action.

Example B: During February 2025 we were commissioned to deliver a one-day training seminar for NHS Inclusion on the topic of Trauma Aware Services. We had been recommended as a trainer by their Lead Counsellor who had attended prior training we had delivered. Example of feedback from the event in February 2025 includes:

"I found it beneficial to further enhance my current practice. To refresh on past training and hearing the real accounts again, very impactful."

"I think the service is brilliant support for survivors. I've recently worked with a client who was supported by the service, she told me CIS'ters have been such great support for her."

"This training was very relevant to my role. I come across traumatized clients daily in my work and this is a reminder to never, ever become complacent and to keep on top of CPD. The training was thought provoking and had moments of being uncomfortable – which is exactly what trauma training should be! This is tough work myself and the team do and to be given the chance to experience slightly uncomfortable feelings within a safe environment is, I believe, vital to our resilience and our own mental health! The hand outs were comprehensive, well presented and relevant."

Services for core beneficiaries (our Members)



Membership i.e. biological females who meet our constitutional criteria re lived experience are offered 'Membership' (includes signing up to a 'code' of behaviour).

At the end of the year being reported upon i.e. as at 31st March 2025, we had **526** Members. Of these 51% lived within combined Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton local government areas. The remaining 49% of our Members live across England and Wales. Numbers are constantly changing as new contacts translate into new Members, and some existing Members move on.

Over time Members feel more resilient and are able to 'let go' of their Membership, and others join. Our approach is NOT to state a limit on how long an individual should remain a Member, it is their choice as to how long



they feel the need to remain and access, on a needs basis, the emotional peer support offered by our small charity.

Signposting: In recognition of the fact that **CIS'ters** might be part of a survivor/members journey, we have ensured that there is comprehensive information on our website which can be used by survivors and others to find additional services such as counselling.

We signpost to counselling services offered by specialist services, such as those offered by a rape and sexual abuse crisis centre, and often Members will remain in contact with us, accessing emotional support (email and phone) whilst on a waiting list elsewhere – and often return to us once their counselling has concluded (often counselling on offer is time limited so not necessarily reached an 'end'). Plus, life continues to be a roller coaster with peaks and troughs of emotion and the individual may still feel quite isolated.

Our approach is to be part of a journey, encouraging Members to access help across a number of services, as the need arises, rather than to be too reliant upon one. Our contribution is that our workforce is one that 'has lived' experience; and relatable.

Plus, we use databases provided by other specialist services, for those seeking to manage coping strategies such as gambling, drugs, alcohol or other difficulties. This can also include bereavement following the death of an abuser or other family member. All life experiences that have been met within our LE workforce, who are also drawn from within our current Membership i.e. part of our **CIS'ters** community.

Advocacy: Whether they live in Hampshire or elsewhere, many of our Members require advocacy or empowerment in addition to emotional support. This is beyond signposting.

For example, this might be a Member considering whether to make a report to the police, an emotional and difficult step as it often also means confronting the failure of other family members to protect them as a child. If reporting, our advice is to also seek the support of an Independent Sexual Violence Adviser (ISVA). This is a trained specialist who supports an individual pre and post reporting. They usually found within nominated specialist counselling services (such as a rape crisis service) and more often than not funded by local Police and Crime Commissioners. As a national charity we are therefore signposting or referring to ISVA services across multiple police force regions.

ISVA services are under tremendous pressure (which includes the current protracted delays in court processes) and have large caseloads (typically in excess of 100) and that can restrict the time they have available to sustain

emotional support for their clients. Within **CIS'ters** we continue to offer any Member who is going through the criminal justice system process (CJS) additional emotional support, as and when they seek it from us.

Another key feature is that an ISVA service supporting a Member might be in one police area, but the crime and therefore the investigation and any subsequent court case is held in another. Whilst ISVAs do attend court with their clients, they rarely do this if the court is out of area.



Annual Weekend (Residential) Workshop for Members:

In May 2024 we were able to successfully deliver our annual weekend residential workshop. A total of 24 attended.

This has been a regular event since 1999, though in 2020 and 2021 was postponed due to the global pandemic.

Excerpts from participant's feedback:

"This weekend helps me gather the strength to work the years ahead. It's the one weekend I can be truly myself".

"Going to CIS'ters where I am understood by like-minded people is a lifeline"

"It's the one time I can be free to be me".

"There is nothing quite like connecting with others at the residential. A very unique experience... the best thing I have done in my 'healing journey'. There is nothing like it"

"When you spend most of your life feeling the odd on out (at best) and a complete freak, it is so reassuring to find out otherwise".

"The impact it has had on me is immense... To be able to be yourself without having to pretend all the time is priceless".

"This weekend has helped me heal from the past... but also from the difficulty of hiding everything for my whole life".

"If you are not a survivor, I cannot even begin to make you understand what it means to be surrounded by people like me and especially not in a therapeutic/clinical setting".



Tolly's Tool Kit (a self-help resource)

During 2024/25 we have continued with the development of a self-help manual (resource). During the prior financial year NHS England had provided limited funding towards this project.

The importance to our beneficiaries is that whilst other self-help products do exist, none capture the reality and perspective of being a female-born victim/survivor of sexual abuse/rape/ exploitation within a family environment.

This unique resource is being created by an exceptional team of individuals with lived experience; and the participants in the pilot phase are also providing feedback which is further enhancing the product. Work is ongoing (without the benefit of a further grant) as it is taking longer to finalise, not least because of the enriched content being created by the pilot participants as well as the LE development team.

Feedback extract from participants in the Toolkit Pilot Phase:

"This has been helpful to enable me to break down all my experiences into smaller sections rather than getting overwhelmed with too many memories and feelings"

"Window of Tolerance (WoT) was explained a lot better than mental health services did. It makes a lot of sense to help with stress"

(Reflections) "Easy to follow. Great session. Easy to understand"

"What surprised me is the realisation I don't care enough for myself/prioritise my own wellbeing"

"It is good to understand what is happening to me. I am working on developing a good routine of scanning my body"

"It's surprising how well simple things work if I can remember to do them"

"I have more of a sense of relief and calm after realising I have coping strategies"

Member Survey 2024/25: In recognition of the priorities set by Trustees, during the latter part of 2024 we undertook a short survey of Members. It was helpful to find that, of the respondents,

100%	No longer felt so isolated
97%	Felt understood
94%	Felt a sense of belonging
91%	Felt they were not being judged
89%	Were more resilient knowing we were there 'when needed'
91%	Confirmed that it was critical to them that our support workers were individuals with lived experience (and also Members); and that Board remained 'survivor led'.



Messages from Members to Funders

"Surviving CSA is difficult and complicated enough. When the perpetrator was family it just adds another layer of trauma, with its own set of complications. CIS'ters is the only charity that commits to being available for as long as needed ... Being run by biological female survivors means they have a unique understanding of the journey I am going through and the resources that can help people like me become our best selves".

"CIS'ters is a vital service. We need to provide support for future generations who will be affected by incest. It is so little spoken of, one of the last taboos ... There has to be ongoing support for women whose lives are shattered forever..." A Member since 2020:

"If I hadn't found CIS'ters, my life would look very different to how it currently does. Don't underestimate the power of the ongoing emotional support via email and also the weekend event. Being amongst other survivors pulls you through. A Member since 2022:

"Unless you are a female who has experienced CSA within a family you'll never really understand the terror, shame and loneliness that you feel as a child and as an adult. The impact this has on your life is everlasting. To have the opportunity to be part of our small community makes you feel heard, validates your feelings, gives courage and sense of belonging. The feeling of being cared for is so powerful. Unable to have a normal childhood caused so much hardship in my life. Even as an adult, the suffering still continues". A Member since 2024:

Section Five: Consultancy/Commissions

We continue to be part of a number of national, regional and local consultative forums (statutory and non-statutory) including those that are cross government, such as the Advisory Group (administered by NHS England) seeking to improve services for victims of sexual assault and abuse.

CIS'ters continues to provide input to closed and public consultations and participates nationally and regionally in various ongoing initiatives, including those being piloted by the Office of National Statistics, which is seeking to determine greater accuracy in the numbers of those affected by sexual crimes.

In February 2025 we were commissioned to provide a bespoke trauma training for 20 delegates (in person) from NHS Inclusion (based in Hampshire).

Previously, training has been an invaluable source of income and we are keen to re-develop this. However, since the covid pandemic, it is much clearer that the training landscape has changed and majority of employers are not as willing to fund physical face-to-face courses. In addition, the financial pinch is affecting all sectors (statutory and non-statutory) and economies have to be made, including workforce professional development.

Whilst we have an intention to pursue more training commissions in the future, we may need to reconsider how these are actually delivered.

Section Six: Acknowledgements

We wish to give thanks to the individuals and organisations for the emotional and financial support we have received during 2024–2025. It has been a difficult year in a variety of ways.



Set up in 1995, our focus for nearly 30 years is to do what we can (nationally) to emotionally support adult biological females who were victims of sexual abuse as children within a familial setting, from our small centre based in Hampshire.

Our lived experience peer support is a key part of our approach, and this extends to ensuring that our trustees include an equal if not higher ratio of individuals with lived experience.

All of our trustees give their personal time to help and support this small, unique charity which has itself changed and evolved over the past 3 decades.

In a world that is ever more challenging and which continues to present mountains to climb, the professionalism and ability of our trustees is critical to our sustainability. Our thanks are extended to trustees (past and present).

As a small charity we are largely reliant upon others that we meet, to create pathways and be facilitative; to see beyond the label of 'a survivor' and see that 'this person' is so much more than that label. A timely reminder that Survivors are emotionally alert to the way in which others respond to them.

When someone on our CIS'ters team (comprising females with lived experience) says to a member of the public/others "I am a survivor of sexual abuse within a family" they are open to being judged. Time has shown us that it takes a special kind of person to reply "how can I help?"

During the recent financial year and in the past we have had many examples of societal/professional's responses that lacked the sensitivity that is needed.

However, we have also been warmed and encouraged by the way in which other individuals and professionals (across sectors) have stepped towards us, offered help and support, and been part of our journey and that many continue to be part of the 'friends of' support system to our community of CIS'ters.

Without such help and support (emotional, not only financial) we would not have been able to remain open during the period April 2024 - March 2025.

Going into the next financial year (2025/26) we face increasing challenges, some known and others not yet surfaced. We trust that we will have the strength, the courage, and ability to continue – and that others will be available to help and sustain us – together.



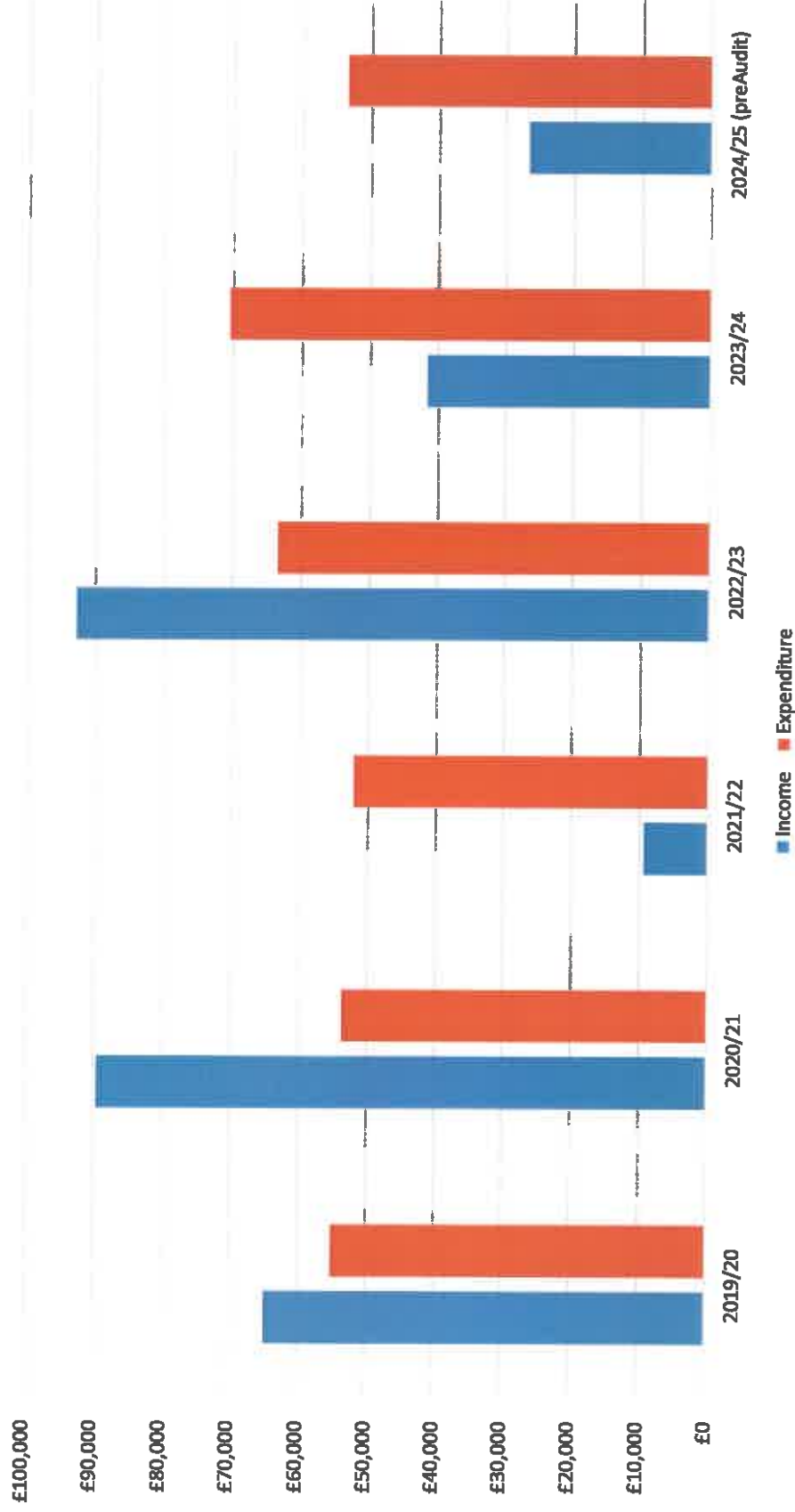
Section Seven: Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above:

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees (as at this date):

Signatures		
Full Names	Samantha Richley <i>In Role as Chair, Trustees</i>	Gillian Finch <i>In Role as a Trustee</i>
Date	30 th July 2025	30 th July 2025

CIS'ters Income/Expenditure



CIS'ters - AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS - 1st April 2024 until 31st March 2025

<u>INCOME BROUGHT FORWARD</u>	
Balance b/f - General Ledger 1	£4,557.42
Balance b/f - General Ledger 2	£59,776.16
Deposit for Office Premises (SEC)	£1,724.00
Cash In Transit	£400.00
Petty Cash	£20.59
Imprest Account (online purchases)	£109.11
	£66,587.28

NEW INCOME 2024/25

Grants:

Joseph Rank Trust (Yr 3 of 3) Grant	£15,000.00	A1.1A
IP Technology (restricted grant)	£2,500.00	

Other Income:

Consultancy and Give Talks etc	£640.00	A1.3
Donations - direct	£5,371.35	
Donations - via online platforms	£2,364.70	A1.1B
Gift Aid - via HMRC (2023/24)	£1,120.63	
Weekend workshop 2024 and 2025	£2,970.00	
Refund - other	£62.88	
Cheques written back (from prior year)	£0.00	
Interest (General Ledger 2)	£1,078.83	A1.6

Income £31,108.39

£97,695.67 £0.00

<u>EXPENDITURE</u>	
Salaries & travel etc (incl contractors & sessional workers)	£24,479.53 A3.1
Awareness Local and National	£33.98
Survivor Meetings/Wksp/Residentials	£6,294.59 A3.22
Volunteers: Recruit, Train, Travel & Food	£2,111.64 A3.2.2
Trustees: Recruit, Train, Travel & Food	£626.90 A3.2.4
Office Rent(s) & Room Hire	£11,725.68 A3.3.2
Electricity	£713.31 A3.3.4
Business Rates	£608.78 A3.3.3
PO Box	£353.40 A3.3
Combined Insurances (12 months policy)	£1,219.02 A3.4
Stamps	£143.41 A3.5
Communications incl domains & software	£3,930.14 A3.5
Stationery	£425.40 A3.6
Photocopying incl Service Charge etc	£946.46 A3.6
Other Advice, DBS Checks, IC etc	£63.57 A3.7
Audit/Accountancy Advice	£1,600.00 A3.7
Prof fees/memberships	£88.00 A3.7
Equipment & Repairs & Purchase Books	£0.00 A3.9
Other: sundries, refreshments etc	£403.64
Bank Charges	£82.00 A3.10
Refunds/Other	£433.50
Expenditure	£56,282.95

Balances as at 1st April 2025:

General Ledger 1	£2,653.78
General Ledger 2	£36,854.99
Imprest Account (online purchases)	£44.35
Petty Cash	£135.60
Deposit for Office Premises (SEC) incl key cards	£1,724.00
Plus:	

£41,412.72

£97,695.67

Statement on Behalf Of CIS'ters:

This is a true and fair record of accounts for year 2024/5

Signature:

Date: 15th June 2025

Name: Gillian L Finch

Trustee

Auditor Opinion:

I have examined the income and expenditure for 2024/25 including miscellaneous income.

I believe this statement to be a true reflection of these transactions.

Signature:

Date: 15th June 2025

Name: F Bendall (C.I.P.F.A.)

External Auditor



Independent examiner's report on the accounts

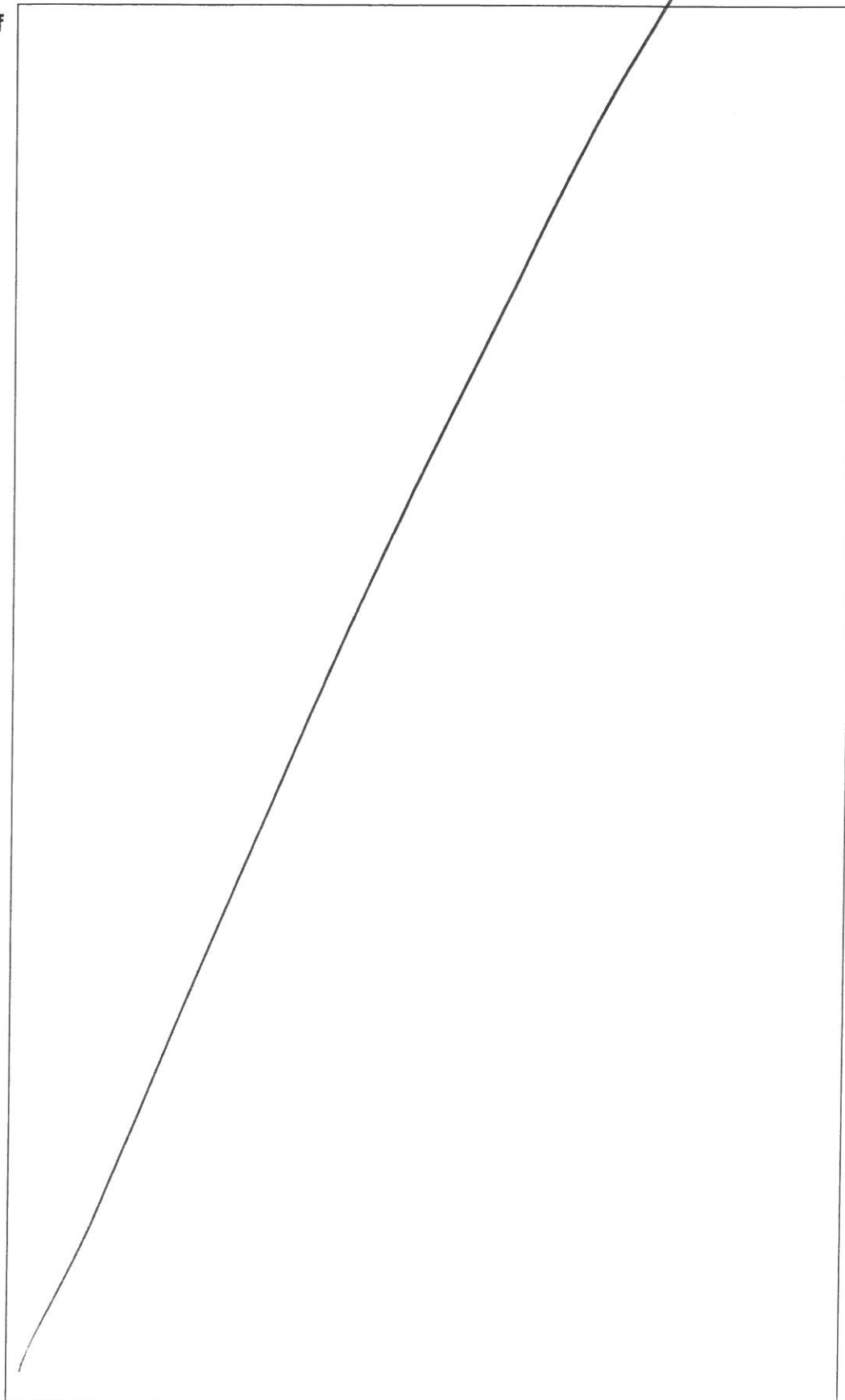
Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/ members of	Charity Name CIS'ters: surviving rape and sexual abuse during childhood		
On accounts for the year ended	31 st March 2025	Charity no (if any)	1184857
Set out on pages	(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)		
Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner	The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed. It is my responsibility to: • examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act, • to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act, and • to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.		
Basis of independent examiner's statement	My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.		
Independent examiner's statement	In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention (other than that disclosed below *) 1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements: • to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and • to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act have not been met; or 2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached. * Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.		
Signed:		Date:	25/6/2025
Name:	F BENDALL		
Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):	C.I.P.F.A		
Address:	8 Tenby Drive Chandlers Ford Hampshire SO53 4NL		

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material problems.

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.



Accounts



An experience in learning, sharing, growing - individually and together

Trustees' Annual Report

1st April 2023 - 31st March 2024

Please note, when **CIS'ters** was founded in 1995,
the name was chosen in 1994 and represents
CIS (childhood incest survivors) and
'ters, for the sisters who had been victims within the same family

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Section one: Reference and administrative details

Charity Name	CIS'ters –surviving rape and sexual abuse during childhood
Registered charity number	1184857 (<i>previously 1123125</i>)
Charity's principal address	CIS'ters Po Box 119 Eastleigh Hampshire SO50 9ZF

Trustees

Trustee Name	Office	Dates
Samantha Richley	Trustee/Chair	12/08/2019 - present
Mary Bridgman	Trustee/Treasurer	12/08/2019 - present
Louise Bird	Trustee	12/08/2019 - present
Gillian Finch	Trustee/Founder Unpaid Manager	12/08/2019 - present
Eileen Gorrod	Trustee	12/08/2019 - present
Catherine Handley	Trustee	17/11/2020 - present
Jude McBride	Trustee	Joined 25/03/2024
Elsa Montgomery	Trustee	12/08/2019 – 12/07/2023
Theresa Stephens	Trustee	Joined 25/03/2024
Shelley Unwin	Trustee	12/08/2019 – 06/02/2024

Section two: Structure, governance, and management

Type of governing document: Charitable Incorporated Organisation - Foundation

The charity migrated from original registration (1123125) to a CIO format and achieved registration on 12th August 2019 (1184857). Funds were transferred from the original registration on 31st March 2020, to the new CIO and 1123125 was formally closed on 19th January 2021.

It is important that when reviewing the Annual Report and Audited Accounts, that consideration is given to the achievements gained whilst previously registered (as 1123125) as they cover a substantial part of the history of our charity since the original set up in 1995 and then the initial registration with the Charities Commission.

TrusteeShip – led by and for

CIS'ters constitution stipulates that at a minimum 50% of trustees must be adult female survivors of childhood rape, sexual abuse or sexual exploitation (i.e. lived experience (LE)). Trustees are selected following skills gap analysis and are appointed on their knowledge, skills and current abilities and availability. They may be recommended by existing trustees and/or advertisement.

It is important that there are trustees with LE, who are able to represent direct beneficiaries of the charity, but also demonstrate that survivors are so much more than their childhood experience, and have a wide range of skill sets that can be used professionally to assist the work of the charity at a strategic level.

CIS'ters is a charity that was set up by a someone with lived experience in 1995 and continues to be led by survivors. The majority of trustees and workforce have lived experience and are representative of the individuals who access the charity. i.e. led by and for adult female survivors who experienced, as female children, sexual abuse within a familial setting.

Policies

The policy framework, developed under the original registration, was adopted in January 2014 and distributed to the trustees and workers in the agency in April 2014. There is a rolling programme of review. During the reporting period of 2023-24, the following policies have been:

finalised following major review commenced year earlier:

- Capability Policy; unsatisfactory standard of work
- Redundancy
- Retirement
- Conflicts of Interest
- Gifts, Hospitality and Gratuities

finalised following major review within financial year:

- Consultation with Service Users

Conflict of Interest

A Conflict-of-Interest Register was initiated at the Trustee meeting on 23rd May 2018 and is now a formal part of each meeting. During the reported period, Trustees confirmed that they had no conflicts of interest.

Financial review

Income received during the year 2023-24 was £41,582, compared with £92,784 during previous financial year. The prior year included a major sponsorship event, plus four grants.

Expenditure during the year 2023-24 was £70,573, compared with £63,417 during previous financial year. The challenges of increased costs accounted for the rise, plus we also hosted a major one-day conference (delegates from other sectors).

At 31st March 2024, the end of year balance was £66,587, compared with £95,395 which was the balance on 31st March 2023. The prior higher total included two grants which did not align with financial years and therefore inflated the end of year balances.

Our **Reserves** policy is kept under constant review as our income is so unstable and volatile. The policy recognises the need to ensure cash reserves to:

- ❖ Meet contractual liabilities should the organisation have to close. This includes redundancy pay, amounts due to creditors and commitments under leases.
- ❖ Meet unexpected costs
- ❖ Replace equipment as it wears out
- ❖ Provide working capital if and when funding is paid in arrears
- ❖ Ensure the charity can continue to provide a stable and quality service

Our **Business continuity plan** requires us to have 4-6 months close down reserves and we achieved this. The level of reserves is crucial to our charity in that new funding is never stable and we have good and not-so-good income years. The year under report, 2023-24, has been designated as a 'not-so-good year' in terms of new income. However, we have experienced a notable rise in basic running costs, such electricity and stationery (in common with the rest of the country). As such, our expenditure is subject to ongoing and particularly robust review. We already have taken note that the forthcoming financial year, 2024-25 is going to be a particularly difficult year financially – putting extra pressure on both trustees and workforce.

Risk management statement

The trustees take responsibility for management of risk within the charity. Major risks are reviewed by the Trustees at their regular quarterly meetings and control systems have been established to predict (where possible) and manage those risks. Risk management extends to financial awareness.

In order for Board meetings to be quorate, number of trustees with lived experience need to be equal or higher than remaining trustees. Trustees did acknowledge in mid 2023 that our Board was struggling with resilience and agreed a recruitment initiative that commenced in July 2023. Attendance and commitment of existing members of the Board continued to be under review and a skills gap undertaken to highlight gaps.

A designated trustee provides documented supervision sessions on a monthly basis with the manager during which risks (known and emerging) are subject to ongoing monitoring.

The charity continued to deliver against priorities agreed with funders for key projects.

With careful monitoring throughout the year, at specified intervals, trustees continued to be satisfied that the charity had sufficient financial resources for the year. In common with the majority of small/medium size charities and particularly those, like ours, who focus on subjects that society would prefer to not so easily acknowledge – future and sustainable funding remains an issue that requires constant attention from within scarce workforce resources.

Public benefit statement

All trustees have complied with their duty to have due regard to guidance on public benefit when exercising their duties.

Audit and banking

Main Account	HSBC	3 Leigh Road, Eastleigh SO50 9YW
Online Current account	CoOp	PO Box 250 Skelmersdale WN8 6WT
Auditor	Fred Bendall	8 Tenby Drive, Chandlers Ford, SO53 4NL

Section three: Objectives

The Trustees shall hold the trust fund and its income upon trust to apply them for the following objects (“the objects”):

- to promote and protect the health of female survivors aged over 18 who, born as female, during childhood were raped, sexually abused or sexually exploited in particular but not limited to those who were raped, sexually abused or sexually exploited by a member of their immediate or extended family; empowering such survivors in their own personal healing through the mutual affirmation, acceptance, respect and support of other survivors and, subject to funding, to assist in the provision or development of services for other persons affected directly or indirectly by rape, sexual abuse or sexual exploitation as the trustees shall think fit.
- to advance the education of the public, in particular those providing services, of the impact on child victims/adult survivors of childhood rape/sexual abuse/exploitation and the associated coping strategies used by some victims; and to promote an improved

service response to the unmet needs of such child victims/adult survivors, and others affected directly or indirectly by experiences of sexual crimes.

Section four: Achievements, performance and services

Our Workforce (Volunteers, Trustees, Paid)



Feedback from survivors who make contact with us, including those that go on to become Members, consistently give us feedback that they value above everything else that our team members have lived experiences.

Consistently they assert that the greatest value in their contact with us, is that those they communicate with, within our frontline teams, are also 'like them' i.e. female born, still identify as a female and victim/survivors of sexual abuse (as children) within a familial setting.

The challenges and difficulties currently being experienced by our Members, and 'new-to-us' contacts, is reflected within our Membership and Workforce. We have an unquestionable appreciation of the triggering experienced when attending (or choosing not to attend) a health screening, a visit to the dentist or optician, contact with some family members, or of the million and one other circumstances that can be a reminder of the harm that was caused by being a victim of familial childhood sexual abuse. Survivors are used to professionals/others using the term "trust me", but non-survivors rarely understand that 'trust' involved damaging experiences/outcomes for survivors of CSA. It has to be earned.

Based on the consistent feedback and our constitutional agreement – that we are set up by, and led by, and delivered by survivors – Trustees have continued to place emphasis on the requirement to build a workforce with lived experience, despite the additional work that this requires to choose and maintain resilience of individuals.



Pandemic Update

The pandemic has continued to impact on our small organisation, in terms of funding but also the resilience of the workforce.

The compromised resilience of our workforce, due to the pandemic, has been an ongoing limiting factor on how services are now being delivered and on the resources (workforce being the most critical) available. Individuals with trauma backgrounds, as is the case of our members & workforce drawn from within the membership, experienced significant affects due to the pandemic. The majority of our workforce had underlying health issues (physical and emotional) prior to the pandemic and these were exacerbated thereafter. This impacted on their ability to remain resilient and remain part of the front line work

streams. In common with other organisations we have also found that many within our workforce also took the opportunity to rethink their lives going forward and to choose less stressful careers or volunteer roles. Thus as a small charity we lost some team members due to health issues, or a decision to step back. In both cases, the majority of these team members were 'members' and continued to be so, even after leaving the workforce. At a time when membership numbers were increasing, our workforce was withering and needing additional support.



Emotional Resilience of Workforce:

The majority of our workforce are members (i.e. survivors with lived experience of sexual abuse during childhood within a familial environment). They are carefully monitored to ensure that they are sufficiently resilient individuals, in order to undertake their respective roles.



Strategy & Business Plan

During 2023 we took the opportunity to review what we delivered and how, and whether it was feasible to return to the 'way it had been done', or not. There had been an expectation that time would bring a return to resilience of our prior workforce, but this has proved not to be the case.

In July 2023 we embarked on a trustee recruitment process, and in January 2024 we held a strategy day, which was externally facilitated by one of our long-term Patrons (Professor Sir Jonathan Montgomery).

In addition to trustees, our remaining workforce were invited to attend, providing an opportunity for all of our workforce with lived experience to be able to express their opinion on our future pathway.

The output from the Strategy event was taken to the February 2024 Trustee meeting and it was agreed that as a priority the charity would focus on the following strands:

- Maintaining and upgrading the website
- Maintaining the helpline (voice mail and email)
- Delivery of the Member Only Annual workshop
- Ongoing development and delivery of the Self Help Toolkit
- Continuing to produce and cascade the Member Newsletter
- And fundraising

Services for Core Beneficiaries

Membership (i.e. service users): As of 31st March 2024, we had 518 Members. Of these 50% live within combined Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton local government areas. The remaining 50% of our Members live across England and Wales.

Throughout the year some Members feel resilient and able to 'let go' of their Membership, and others join. Our approach is NOT to state a limit on how long an individual should remain a Member, it is their choice as to how long they feel the need to remain and access, on a needs basis, the emotional peer support offered by our small charity.

We signpost to counselling services offered by specialist services, such as those offered by a rape and sexual abuse crisis centre, and often Members will remain in contact with us, accessing emotional support (email and phone) whilst on a waiting list elsewhere.

Our approach is to be part of a journey, encouraging Members to access help across a number of services, as the need arises, rather than to be too reliant upon one. Our contribution is that our workforce is one that 'has lived' experience; and relatable.



Helpline: (phone and email):

We continue to receive higher numbers of emails from new contacts versus phone calls.

Communicating via emails therefore appears easier for the initial contact being made by the individual i.e. any hour of any day.

In addition, we often receive emails and calls from professionals/others who are seeking more

information about our service in general terms. They may also be seeking an affirmation that the way in which they are working with a specific client (anonymous to us) is an approach that is helpful rather than creating boundaries. Non abusing family members also reach out to us.

Our website:
www.cisters.org.uk

We have ensured that there is a wealth of content on our [website www.cisters.org.uk](http://www.cisters.org.uk) which enables and empowers victim/survivors to find a suitable pathway, that does not necessarily include making direct contact with us.



Annual Weekend (Residential) Workshop for Members:

In May 2023 we were able to successfully deliver our annual weekend residential workshop. A total of 24 attended.

This has been a regular event since 1999, though in 2020 and 2021 was postponed due to the global pandemic.



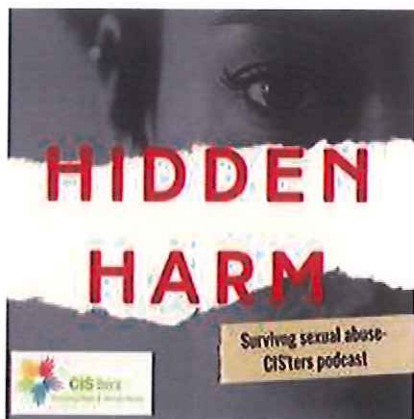
Signposting: In recognition of the fact that **CIS'ters** might be part of a survivor/members journey, we have ensured that there is comprehensive information on our website which can be used by survivors and others to find additional services such as counselling.

Within **CIS'ters**, when responding to emails and phone calls we continue to highlight the existence of additional services so that individuals have the widest choices open to them.



Advocacy: Increasingly we are finding that many of our members, whether they live in Hampshire or elsewhere, require advocacy or empowerment in addition to emotional support. Currently this is an under resourced area and will need sustainable funding if we were to promote it as a service.

We are currently undertaking the task on a case by case basis, which is very much dependent on how time/people resources allow, and continue to signpost to other services that might be more appropriate geographically or have required specific skill sets.



Hidden Harm Podcasts:

During the reporting year upon there was continued interest in the podcasts which can be accessed via our website

<https://www.cisters.org.uk/podcastsnewslettersurvivors-voices/the-hidden-harm-podcasts/>

We have a list of other topics which have yet to be developed into new podcasts, which have been suggested by our key beneficiaries and colleagues.



Tolly's Tool Kit (a self-help resource)

During 2023/24 we have continued with the development of a part NHS England funded resource. Whilst other products do exist elsewhere, none capture the reality of being a female-born victim/survivor of sexual abuse/rape/exploitation within a family environment.

This unique resource is being created by an exceptional team of individuals with lived experience; and the participants in the pilot phase are also providing feedback which is

further enhancing the product. Work is ongoing into the next financial year (without the benefit of a further grant) as it is taking longer to finalise, not least because of the enriched content being created by not only the development team, but also pilot participants.

Feedback extract from participants in the Toolkit Pilot Phase:

"I was surprised at how much I do find helpful and didn't realise until I wrote it all down"

"Understanding my resilience and why I have struggled with this for so long has helped me to realise I need to be kinder to myself, as I didn't have anyone to show me or be a positive influence"

"This has been helpful to enable me to break down all my experiences into smaller sections rather than getting overwhelmed with too many memories and feelings"

"Window of Tolerance (WoT) was explained a lot better than mental health services did. It makes a lot of sense to help with stress"

"Less apprehensive and avoidant"

"It's made me realise I need to do more mindfulness to help keep me in the WoT. When I fluctuate I think I need to give myself some breathing space"

(Reflections) "Easy to follow. Great session. Easy to understand"

"What surprised me is the realisation I don't care enough for myself/prioritise my own wellbeing"

"It is good to understand what is happening to me. I am working on developing a good routine of scanning my body"

"Getting better at noticing if I am in a child or adult state. Makes me feel hopeful that things are moving forward"

"It's surprising how well simple things work if I can remember to do them"

"I have more of a sense of relief and calm after realising I have coping strategies"



Conference

On 12th October 2023 we hosted an 'in-person' conference at the Holiday Inn, Eastleigh, Hampshire, UK.

The event was organised and delivered primarily by our team of individuals with lived experience of the core issue under discussion i.e. sexual abuse of female children within a family environment.

In addition to presenters with lived experience, from within CIS'ters Membership, we were joined by external presenters:

Kate Davies CBE, Director of Health and Justice, Armed Forces and Sexual Assault Services Commissioning, NHS England



Anna Glinski, Deputy Director (Knowledge and Practice Development) Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse

Lorna Jane O'Doherty, Professor of Abuse, Trauma and Health, Coventry University

A grant from Hampshire and IoW Community Fund provided a major financial contribution towards the event, and we were appreciative that their CEO, Jacqui Scott, gave the opening presentation.

Though fewer attendees than we were used to prior to pandemic, trustees made a decision to proceed. Delegate feedback supported this decision, as they stated that they valued not only the content, but also its physical nature as a refreshing change from 'on-line'. However, trustees will be mindful that whilst in-person events are able to provide dynamic settings and networking, 'On-line' options are more attractive to organisations who prefer staff to access cheaper training with no travel costs.

Feedback extract from delegates who attended the professionals conference 12/10/23

"Really enjoyable event – Face-2-Face helps everyone. Venue well organised". *NHS Commissioner*

"Absolutely brilliant, everyone introduced themselves and were really good in sharing experiences" *MoD Victim support*

"Fantastic organisation for the day." *NHS SARC*

"The whole day was really insightful and a great learning opportunity. The openness was amazing." *Statutory Children's Specialist Service*

"I felt inspired by the Lived Experience presentations. It highlighted that there is a need for further training and development of services". *NHS Commissioner*

"Very engaging, open and honest." *Statutory Children's Specialist Services*

"All speakers contributed to my learning. Very useful update re NHS, great to hear about the research projects, reminders from Gillian always reassuring and great to hear about Tolly's Toolkit – look forward to receiving more information." *Therapist*

"All excellent and helpful. Learnt something valuable from each. Good balance of policy/research/frontline experiences/National perspective." *CEO Voluntary Sector Specialist Service*

"All presenters have been excellent. Have very much enjoyed the conference and found it very informative." *Ambulance Service*

"To encourage others to ask the question if appropriate. Mandy, Gillian and Julies presentations I thought were brilliant." *Witness Support*

"It was inspiring to see professionals and our survivor community working as equals, presenting key issues and explaining them in a language that was accessible to all." *Trustee, CIS'ters*

"In our sector, CIS'ters presents the reality that behind the words 'incest survivor' is a real person, and that they are so much more than this title and that we need to acknowledge and affirm the whole person and not limit them to that aspect of their life". *Counsellor Specialist Sexual Violence and Abuse Sector*



From CIS'ters – as a community:

Messages to Funders from Members (i.e. service users)

From Marie, who joined in 2021:

As survivors of sexual abuse within our family, as children, we live as dark isolated secrets that society sees as 'ick'. I had to wait for over forty years before I felt safe to talk and that was only possible with the emotional support of CIS'ters. Sexual abuse is complex, and society needs to understand how common it is and how to improve safeguarding.

From Louise, who joined in 2016:

Being part of CIS'ters, led and delivered by females with lived experience has helped me so much. I have previously been supported by other charities for survivors, but there is nothing quite like CIS'ters. It is unique and a lifeline.

From Alex, who joined in 2023:

Unless you have experienced sexual abuse as a child, where the offender is part of your family, you will never really understand the terror, shame and loneliness that you feel as a child and still as an adult. The impact on your life is everlasting. The past cannot be changed.

To be part of CIS'ters and then to attend the weekend workshop made me feel heard, it validated my feelings, it gave me courage and it made me feel as if I belong. The feeling of being cared for, about, is so powerful.

Unable to have a normal childhood cause so much hardship in my life. Even as an adult the suffering still continued. Being able to connect with other female survivors of sexual abuse within a family, is invaluable – and it enables you to let go of all that you try to forget on a day to day basis. CIS'ters helps people like me, and I hope you can see that too.

From Caitlin, who joined in 2021:

If you are not a survivor of sexual abuse as a child, within a family, I cannot even begin to make you understand what it means to be surrounded by people 'like me' and especially being set NOT in a therapeutic/clinical setting – but where we are free to share in laughter, tears, joy and sadness, and learning (such as the Window of Tolerance, a model from Dan Siegel to help gain emotional resilience).

Maybe if you have ever experienced feeling isolated and then finding your 'tribe' you may understand. Being a survivor and getting to share a beautiful female only safe space with other female survivors is that times a million.

In 2023 I arrived at the weekend workshop with depression and left without depression and it hasn't been back since. Such is the power of a deep connection and being seen and loved, as a member of the community which is CIS'ters.

If I have a blip during the year, I know I can email the office and someone will respond. So far I haven't needed to do that. Being part of CIS'ters means that I belong.

You may think funding the weekend supports us, the survivors, and you would be correct. But in helping our healing, our resilience, you also contribute to a ripple effect which touches the lives of those around us, as individuals.

Many survivors, like me, have been drawn into healthcare professions. Prior to my attending the 2023 residential I had many episodes of illness due to mental and physical health. I am still not 'fixed'. I never will be but I have had no further absences from work due to mental health.

When funders/others invest in supporting survivors, through CIS'ters, you are helping a group of amazing and resilient people who when helped to be well can do amazing things. It helped me to connect with not only delegates (who are all members of CIS'ters) but also the team members who are 'like me' too i.e. females with lived experience who are (like me) members of CIS'ters who now 'help others'.

As someone who has previously spent (elsewhere) many hours in every therapy I could try, and engaged in anything research said would be good for my well-being I can honestly say that weekend offered by CIS'ters to members, is the most healing thing I have ever done.

Section Five: Consultancy/Commissions

We continue to be part of a number of national, regional and local consultative forums (statutory and non-statutory) including those that are cross government, such as the Advisory Group (administered by NHS England) seeking to improve services for victims of sexual assault and abuse.

Section Six: Acknowledgements

We wish to give thanks to the countless individuals and organisations for the exceptional emotional and financial support we have received during 2023–2024. It has been a difficult year in a variety of ways.

Set up in 1995, our focus for nearly 30 years is to do what we can (nationally) to emotionally support adult biological females who were victims of sexual abuse as children within a familial setting, from our small centre based in Hampshire. Our lived experience peer support is a key part of our approach, and this extends to ensuring that our trustees include an equal if not higher ratio of individuals with lived experience.

As a small charity we are largely reliant upon others that we meet, to create pathways and be facilitative; to see beyond the label of 'a survivor' and see that 'this person' is so much more than that label.

Survivors are emotionally alert to the way in which others respond to them. When our team members with lived experience say to a member of the public/others "I am a survivor" the vulnerability of the survivor is open to being judged. Time has shown us that it takes a special kind of person to reply "how can I help?".

During the recent financial year and in the past we have had many examples of societal/professional's responses that lacked the sensitivity that is needed. **BUT we have also been warmed and encouraged** by the way in which other individuals and professionals (across sectors) have stepped towards us, offered help and support, and been part of our journey and that many continue to be part of the 'friends of' support system. **Without such help and support (emotional, not only financial) we would not be able to remain open.**

All of our trustees give their personal time to help and support this small unique charity which has itself changed and evolved over the past 3 decades. In a world that is ever more challenging and which continues to present mountains to climb, the professionalism and ability of our trustees is critical to our sustainability. Our thanks are extended to trustees (past and present).

Section Seven: Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above:

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees (as at this date):

Signatures		
Full Names	Samantha Richley <i>In Role as Chair, Trustees</i>	Gillian Finch <i>In Role as a Trustee</i>
Date	19 th August 2024	19 th August 2024

CIS'ters - AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS - 1st April 2023 until 31st March 2024

<u>INCOME BROUGHT FORWARD</u>		
Balance b/f - General Ledger 1	£8,808.28	
Balance b/f - General Ledger 2	£86,373.17 (Note 1)	
Deposit for Office Premises (SEC)	£1,724.00	
Petty Cash	£489.09	
Adjustment of written back cheque	£184.35	
	<u>£95,578.89</u>	

Note 1: Includes restricted grants that end during 2023

<u>NEW INCOME 2023/24</u>	<u>WITHIN YEAR</u>	
<u>Grants:</u>		
Joseph Rank - 2nd year of 3 year grant	£15,000	A1.1A
<u>Other Income:</u>		
Conference 2023 (12 October)	£2,080.00	A1.3
Consultancy and Give Talks	£1,345.00	
Donations (Including online Gift Aid)	£6,288.49	A1.1B
Gift Aid - via HMRC (4 years)	£6,498.95	
Vitality 10k September 2023	£654.74	A1.5
Weekend workshop 2023 & 2024	£2,765.00	
Refund - external payroll service	£5,546.65	(Note 2)
Cheques written back (from prior year)	£0.00	
Interest (General Ledger 2)	£1,402.99	A1.6
Income	£41,581.82	

<u>EXPENDITURE</u>		
Salaries & travel etc (including contractors & seasonal workers)	£38,169.35	A3.1
Conference - October 2023	£2,577.70	A3.21
Awareness Local and National	£550.00	
Survivor Meetings/Wkaps/Residentials	£6,622.77	A3.22
Volunteers: Recruit, Train, Travel & Food	£1,793.45	A3.2.2
Trustees: Recruit, Train, Travel & Food	£36.00	A3.2.4
Office Rent(s) & Room Hire	£11,263.08	A3.3.2
Electricity	£1,236.65	A3.3.4
Business Rates	£623.64	A3.3.3
PO Box	£330.00	A3.3
Combined Insurances (12 months policy)	£1,135.11	A3.4
Stamps	£458.44	A3.5
Communications incl domains & software	£1,796.29	A3.5
Stationery	£445.41	A3.6
Photocopying incl Service Charge etc	£1,382.52	A3.6
Other Advice, CRB Checks, IC etc	£142.00	A3.7
Audit/Accountancy Advice	£1,500.00	A3.7
Prof fees/memberships	£50.00	A3.7
Equipment & Repairs & Purchase Books	£51.28	A3.9
Other: sundries, refreshments etc	£323.36	
Bank Charges	£86.40	A3.10
Refunds	£0.00	
	<u>Expenditure</u>	
	<u>£70,573.43</u>	

Balances as at 1st April 2024:

General Ledger 1	£4,557.42
General Ledger 2	£59,776.16
Imprest Account (online purchases)	£109.11
Petty Cash	£20.59
Deposit for Office Premises (SEC) incl key cards	£1,724.00
Plus:	
cash in transit	£400.00
	<u>£66,587.28</u>
	<u>£137,160.71</u>

Statement on Behalf Of CIS'ters:

This is a true and fair record of accounts for year 2023/24

Signature: 

Date: 13th May 2024

Name: Mary Bridgman
Treasurer

Auditor Opinion:

I have examined the income and expenditure for 2023/24 including miscellaneous income.

I believe this statement to be a true reflection of these transactions.

Signature: 

Date: 13th May 2024

Name: F Bendall (C.I.P.F.A.)
External Auditor



Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

On accounts for the year
ended

Set out on pages

Respective responsibilities
of trustees and examiner

Charity Name

CIS'ters: surviving rape and sexual abuse during childhood

31st March 2024

Charity no
(if any)

1184857

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act, and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of Independent
examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent
examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention (other than that disclosed below *)

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements:
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act have not been met; or
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

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

Signed:

F Bendall

Date:

13th May 2024

Name:

F BENDALL

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

C.I.P.F.A

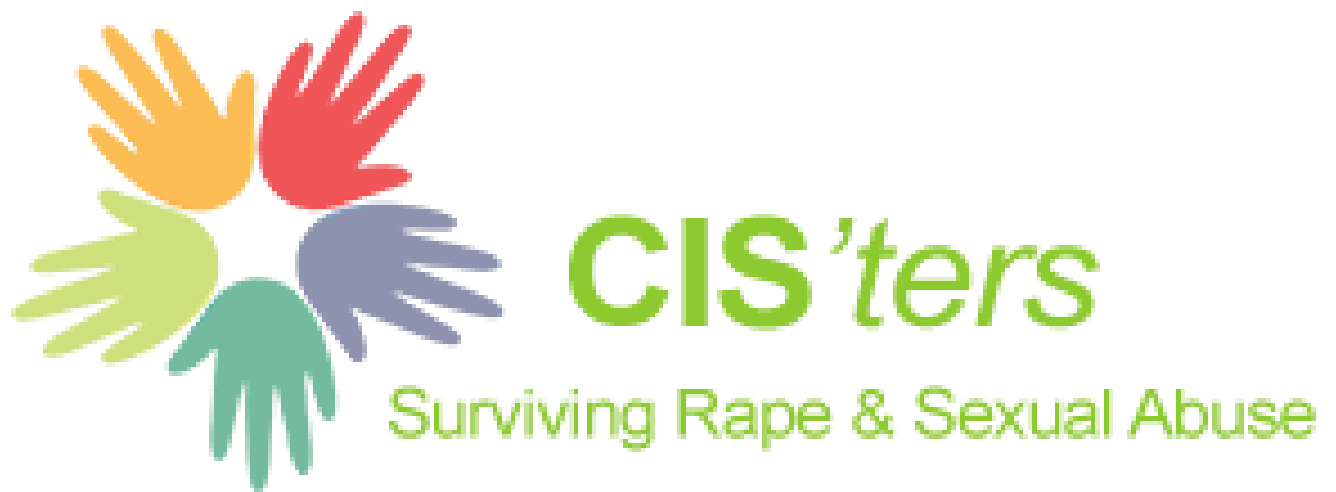
Address:

8 Tenby Drive
Chandlers Ford
Hampshire
SO53 4NL

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material problems.

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

Accounts



An experience in learning, sharing, growing - individually and together

Trustees' Annual Report

1st April 2022 - 31st March 2023

Please note, when **CIS'ters** was founded in 1995, the name was chosen in 1994 and represents CIS (childhood incest survivors) and 'ters, for the sisters who had been victims within the same family

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Section one: Reference and administrative details

Charity Name	CIS'ters –surviving rape and sexual abuse during childhood
Registered charity number	1184857 (<i>previously 1123125</i>)
Charity's principal address	CIS'ters Po Box 119 Eastleigh Hampshire SO50 9ZF

Trustees

Trustee Name	Office	Dates	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee
Samantha Richley	Trustee/Chair	12/08/2019 - present	CIS'ters Board of Trustees
Elsa Montgomery	Trustee/Secretary	12/08/2019 - present	CIS'ters Board of Trustees
Mary Bridgman	Trustee/Treasurer	12/08/2019 - present	CIS'ters Board of Trustees
Louise Bird	Trustee	12/08/2019 - present	CIS'ters Board of Trustees
Gillian Finch	Trustee Unpaid Manager Founder	12/08/2019 - present	CIS'ters Board of Trustees
Eileen Gorrod	Trustee	12/08/2019 - present	CIS'ters Board of Trustees
Catherine Handley	Trustee	17/11/2020 - present	CIS'ters Board of Trustees
Shelley Unwin	Trustee	12/08/2019 - present	CIS'ters Board of Trustees

Section two: Structure, governance, and management

Type of governing document: Charitable Incorporated Organisation - Foundation

The charity migrated from original registration (1123125) to a CIO format and achieved registration on 12th August 2019 (1184857). Funds were transferred from the original registration on 31st March 2020, to the new CIO and 1123125 was formally closed on 19th January 2021.

It is important that when reviewing the Annual Report and Audited Accounts, that consideration is given to the achievements gained whilst previously registered (as 1123125) as they cover a substantial part of the history of our charity since originally set up and then initial registration.

Trustees are selected following skills gap analysis. They may be recommended by existing trustees, and selection is by unanimous vote of the Board of Trustees. Trustees are appointed on their abilities and skills. In appointing trustees **CIS'ters** aims to ensure a majority of trustees are adult female survivors of childhood rape, sexual abuse or sexual exploitation and are therefore representative of those using the primary service. Where no such majority is possible the survivor trustees (i.e. those with lived experience) have a joint casting vote.

Policies

The policy framework, developed under the original registration, was adopted in January 2014 and distributed to the trustees and workers in the agency in April 2014. There is a rolling programme of review every three years. During the reporting period of 2022-23, the following policies have been reviewed and updated:

- Conflict of Interest
- Covid
- Gifts, Hospitality & Gratuities
- Redundancy
- Retirement
- Support Supervision & Appraisal
- Unsatisfactory Standard of Work
- Volunteer Grievance/Complaints Procedure

Conflict of Interest

A Conflict-of-Interest Register was initiated at the Trustee meeting on 23rd May 2018 and is now a formal part of each meeting. During the reported period, Trustees confirmed that they had no conflicts of interest.

Risk management statement

The trustees take responsibility for management of risk within the charity. Major risks are reviewed by the Trustees at their regular meetings and control systems have been established to manage those risks. A designated trustee provides documented supervision sessions on a monthly basis with the manager during which risks (known and emerging) are subject to ongoing monitoring. Risk management extends to financial awareness.

The charity continued to deliver against priorities agreed with funders for key projects. We were successful in securing a new three-year grant from The Joseph Rank Trust.

Prior to covid pandemic we had been chosen by BIZPEDIA, a local business network, to raise funds for during 2020 – which proved not to be possible. During July 2022 they were able to honour their previous promise to raise funds – and they and we were staggered at their success.

On this basis trustees were satisfied that the charity had sufficient financial resources for the year. In common with the majority of small/medium size charities and particularly those, like ours, who focus on subjects that society would prefer to not so easily acknowledge – future and sustainable funding remains an issue that requires constant attention from within scarce workforce resources.

Public benefit statement

All trustees have complied with their duty to have due regard to guidance on public benefit when exercising their duties.

Financial review

Income received during the year 2022-23 was £92,784. The end of year balance for the prior financial year (2021/22) was £66,027. Expenditure for 2022-23 totalled £63,417 compared with £52,079 in the prior year. The main reason for the increase was increased delivery of services (notably the weekend workshop).

As of 31st March 2023, the balance carried forward into the next financial year i.e. 2023-24 was £95,395 which included restricted grants linked to ongoing projects (as grants periods did not strictly align with our financial years).

Our Reserves policy recognises the need to ensure cash reserves to:

- ❖ Meet contractual liabilities should the organisation have to close. This includes redundancy pay, amounts due to creditors and commitments under leases.
- ❖ Meet unexpected costs
- ❖ Replace equipment as it wears out
- ❖ Provide working capital if and when funding is paid in arrears
- ❖ Ensure the charity can continue to provide a stable and quality service

CIS'ters Business Continuity Plan requires us to have 4-6 months close down reserves and we achieved this. The level of reserves is crucial to our charity in that new funding is unstable with good and not so good years – whilst expenditure remains reasonably static. Expenditure costs are subject to ongoing and robust review.

Additional reference and administrative information

Bank	HSBC	3 Leigh Road, Eastleigh SO50 9YW
Auditor	Fred Bendall	8 Tenby Drive, Chandlers Ford, SO53 4NL

Section three: Objectives and activities

Summary of the objects of the charity set out in its governing document	The Trustees shall hold the trust fund and its income upon trust to apply them for the following objects (“the objects”): - to promote and protect the health of female survivors aged over 18 who, born as female, during childhood were raped, sexually abused or sexually exploited in particular but not limited to those who were raped, sexually abused or sexually exploited by a member of their immediate or extended family; empowering such survivors in their own personal healing through the mutual affirmation, acceptance, respect and support of other survivors and, subject to funding, to assist in the provision or development of services for other persons affected directly or indirectly by rape, sexual abuse or sexual exploitation as the trustees shall think fit. - To promote and protect the health of
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Summary of the objects of the charity set out in its governing document (continued)	female survivors aged over 18 who, born as female, during childhood were raped, sexually abused or sexually exploited in particular but not limited to those who were raped, sexually abused or sexually exploited by a member of their immediate or extended family; empowering such survivors in their own personal healing through the mutual affirmation, acceptance, respect and support of other survivors and, subject to funding, to assist in the provision or development of services for other persons affected directly or indirectly by rape, sexual abuse or sexual exploitation as the trustees shall think fit. c. to advance the education of the public, in particular those providing services, of the impact on child victims/adult survivors of childhood rape/sexual abuse/exploitation and the associated coping strategies used by some victims; and to promote an improved service response to the unmet needs of such child victims/adult survivors, and others affected directly or indirectly by experiences of sexual crimes.
Summary of the main activities in relation to these objects	As our primary workforce are (in the main) volunteers and those with lived experience we continue to be affected by their resilience as they move forward post pandemic. This has had a limiting factor on how services are being now delivered and in some areas re-configured. a. Production of our newsletter has continued without being affected by the pandemic. It was available to our 500+ Members (ie service users/clients) via hard copy or email and to the public via our website.

	b. Continued to provide a national helpline (answer phone and call back or email response), to offer support to adults who have been affected by such abuse, signposting where appropriate to other services/agencies. c. Social media was used to promote awareness raising with the general public, so that they better understand core issues including prevalence of such abuse. d. Continued to network with key professionals in other agencies (local and national), including the statutory sector, to highlight the unmet needs of child victims and adult survivors. e. Undertook fundraising activities to raise income needed to sustain the agency; recognising the impact that restrictions would have on those already accessing our charity; and those that might reach out to us. f. During this financial year we managed to increase the number of physical face to face meetings that were available, plus responded to phone and emails, and offered limited zoom calls. g. In May 2022 we were able to successfully deliver our annual weekend residential workshop.
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Section four: Achievements and performance



Maintaining existing services

Membership: As of 31st March 2023, we had 517 Members (a slight reduction on the 547 members as at 31/3/22). Of these 51% live within combined Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton local government areas. The remaining 49% of our Members live across England and Wales. The reduction is due to undertaking an administrative initiative to contact Members to ensure that their contact listings were up to date. The pandemic has had an impact, in that there were a number of individuals who we had either lost complete contact with, were now deceased, or confirmed that they no longer needed our support.

Helpline: (phone and email): We have ensured that there is a wealth of content on our website www.cisters.org.uk which enables and empowers victim/survivors to find a suitable pathway, that does not necessarily include making direct contact with us. We receive higher numbers of emails from new contacts than phone calls – as this appears easier for the initial contact being made by the individual ie any hour of any day.

We do still receive direct contact from individuals who meet the criteria for our core service, and are enquiring about Membership. In addition, we continue to receive calls from professionals/others who are seeking affirmation that they are providing help and support for their clients, in a way which is helpful rather than creating boundaries.

Annual Weekend (Residential) Workshop for Members: In May 2022 we were able to successfully deliver our annual weekend residential workshop. This has been a regular event since 1999, though in 2020 and 2021 was postponed due to the global pandemic.

Due to the continued health risks during May 2022 and the acknowledged vulnerability (health) of our lived experience workforce, we undertook additional safeguards to ensure that they, and our equally vulnerable delegates (who had travelled some distance to attend the event) were protected. The event was well received and provided a much needed emotional boost to all those who took part, and to the charity as a whole.



Referrals/Signposting: In recognition of the fact that **CIS'ters** might be part of a survivor/members journey, we have ensured that there is comprehensive information on our website which can be used by survivors and others to find additional services such as counselling.

Within **CIS'ters**, when responding to emails and phone calls we continue to highlight the existence of additional services so that individuals have the widest choices open to them.

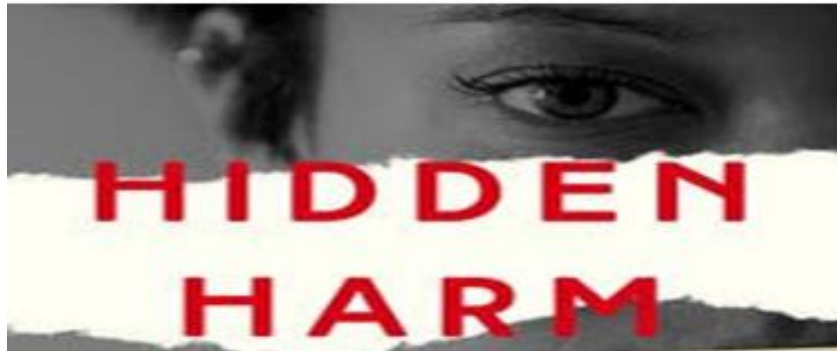
Advocacy: Increasingly we are finding that many of our members, whether they live in Hampshire or elsewhere, require advocacy or empowerment in addition to emotional support.

Currently this is an under resourced area and will need sustainable funding if we were to promote it as a service. We are currently undertaking the task on a case by case basis, which is very much dependent on how time/people resources allow.

Emotional Resilience of Workforce: The supervisor appointed in 2020 continues to provide support for our workforce, in addition to that provided by both our Manager and Senior Administrative Support Officer.

The majority of our workforce are members (i.e. survivors with lived experience of sexual abuse during childhood within a familial environment). They are carefully monitored to ensure that they are sufficiently resilient individuals, in order to undertake their respective roles.

Achievements



Hidden Harm Podcasts: A further 4 were recorded during the year 2022-23. A complete list of episodes as at 31st March 2023 is shown below:

- 1 - Introducing **CIS'ters** - 'You Are Not Alone'
- 2 - What Do Survivors Talk About?
- 3 - Hurdles to Telling as a Child
- 4 - Disclosing as an Adult
- 5 - Telling Partners, Family & Friends
- 6 - Disclosing to Your Family of Origin
- 7 – Coping Strategies
- 8 – The Pressure to Forgive
- 9 – Loss
- 10 – Collaborative Working
- 11 – The Power of Music
- 12 - Isolation Through the Eyes of Survivors
- 13 - Learning Something New
- 14 - Through the Eyes of a Midwife'
- 15 - Self Neglect/Self Harm
- 16 - Everyone's Invited
- 17 - Domestic Abuse
- 18 - When an Abuser Dies
- 19 - Interview with Fay Maxted
- 20 - Reflections on the Past Few Months
- 21 - Counselling & Therapy
- 22 - Mind Your Language
- 23 - Trauma & Physical Health

- 24 - Abusers Can Be Female
- 25 - Institutional CSA Cover-Ups
- 26 - ISVA's (Independent Sexual Advisor Service)
- 27 - You Think I'm Alright. You Are Wrong
- 28 – ACE's - Adverse Childhood Experiences
- 29 -The Window of Tolerance
- 30 – The Importance of NHS England to Victims/Survivors of Sexual Assault & Abuse
- 31 Using Self Help Materials
- 32 The Sensitivity of Raising Awareness of Sexual Abuse & Sexual Violence
- 33 A Heartfelt Thank You to Bizpedia

The podcast channel can be found via our website: [The 'Hidden Harm' Podcasts | CIS'ters \(cisters.org.uk\)](https://www.cisters.org.uk). Further editions are to be recorded during the next and future financial years, with topics being added at the suggestion of Members and of emerging issues.

Peer Support Group Sessions: The weekday booked telephone support sessions continued and the Saturday support session was replaced with physical meetings, as this was what was being sought from Members who contacted us at that time.



Toolkit development: This had been a new initiative and reflected that Members who lived remotely to our physical base in Hampshire, needed something more practical to use as a self-help guide, or toolkit. As at the end of March 2023, five of the anticipated 12 modules had been created in outline, and appropriate content is being developed. Our intention is to pilot the product as we develop it, with 5-6 individual members (of varying abilities). We can then capture their feedback which will be used to build into individual modules, as they continue to be mapped out and content created. Once fully assessed and operational we will be able to use it as a bespoke physical resource for our whole national membership.

Workforce: Our pre-pandemic workforce has been adversely affected by covid in that the majority of our volunteers had underlying physical and emotional health conditions (in common with other victim/survivors of sexual abuse during childhood). Care has been taken, and continues to be taken, to slowly rebuild the team and monitor the resilience of existing team members. Victim/survivors who become Members of **CIS'ters** continue to give feedback that: they find the greatest value in their contact with us, is that those they communicate with, within our frontline teams, are also victim/survivors. Thus, we continue to see merit in choosing a workforce with lived experience, despite the additional work that this requires to choose and maintain resilience individuals.

Section Five: Consultancy/Commissions

- ❖ Our Founder was a key member of the team that NHS England consulted during its development of a Sexual Assault and Abuse Services Strategy (SAAS) which was published in 2016. Our Founder was then appointed as the Chair of the Lived Experience Group that met within the framework of NHSE, monitoring the delivery of the SAAS. In addition, she attended the NHSE SAAS Advisory Group in that capacity, which is a cross government forum, with representatives from other national leads.
<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/strategic-direction-sexual-assault-and-abuse-services.pdf>
- ❖ Our Founder is also a member of a Lived Experiences Group for the NIHR-funded MESARCH project, based at Coventry University. This study is evaluating Sexual Assault Referral Centres across England and is also exploring the experiences of survivors of sexual abuse & violence and their long-term support needs. <https://www.coventry.ac.uk/research/areas-of-research/centre-for-intelligent-healthcare/mesarch/>
- ❖ She also joined a recently set up Lived Experience Group established by CSA Centre of Expertise <https://www.csacentre.org.uk>, to develop care pathways for child victims.
- ❖ We continue to be part of a number of national consultative forums, and also some that are within Hampshire where our office is located.

Section Six: Acknowledgements

We wish to give thanks to the following for their exceptional help and support during 2022-2023 which has continued to be a difficult year for so many charities and their service users:

- ❖ Bizpedia – for their fundraising on our behalf and generous unrestricted donation
- ❖ Joseph Rank Trust – for their approval of a three-year grant

- ❖ NHS England – for their ongoing Covid-19 grant towards improvement in digital services.

Trustees, on behalf of all of those who access our small charity, wish it to be known that we are hugely grateful to all those who donated directly or raised funds through sponsored events.

The total sum donated during 2022-23 was £36,731 of which £31,741 was the exceptional and unexpected amount raised by Bizpedia in July 2022. In the prior year all new income received by the charity was £9,351 of which £8,782 was from donations.

Section Seven: Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above:

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees (as at this date):

Signatures		
Full Names	Samantha Richley In Role as Chair, Trustees	Gillian Finch In Role as a Trustee
Date	2 nd October 2023	2 nd October 2023

Notes:

1 - this grant period is Aug 22 > Jul 23

2 - this grant period is Nov 22 > Oct 23

3 - this grant is towards Weekend Workshop May 2023

4 - The Gift Aid element to be claimed in early April 2023

5 - Total of £1885.02 is early receipt for May 2023 event

Statement on Behalf Of CIS'ters:	Auditor Opinion:
This is a true and fair record of accounts for year 2022/23	I have examined the expenditure and grant income and reviewed the miscellaneous income.
Signature: 	I believe this statement to be a true reflection of these transactions.
Date: 14-6-2023	Signature: 
Name: Mary Bridgman	Date: 14-6-2023
Treasurer	Name: F Bendall (C.I.P.F.A.)
	External Auditor



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Charity Name

CIS'ters: surviving rape and sexual abuse during childhood

No (if any)

1184857

Receipts and payments accounts (link to prior registration 1123125)

CC16a

For the period from

Period start date

01-Apr-22

To

Period end date

31-Mar-23

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Grants and Donations	4,859	84,041		88,900	8,782
Training Awareness Events/Wksp etc	1,980			1,980	-
Refunds	878			878	230
Interest Reserves		373		373	7
Commissions and Consultancy	635			635	285
Gift Aid				-	-
Other	18			18	47
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	8,370	84,414	-	92,784	9,351
A2 Asset and Investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	8,370	84,414	-	92,784	9,351
A3 Payments					
Paid Worker/Sessional Workers/Contractors	27,871	-	-	27,871	29,225
Office rent, rates electricity and PO Box	12,374	-	-	12,374	12,033
Covid Related equipment/purchases		-	-	-	3,004
Comms: Web, Stamps, Phones	1,731	-	-	1,731	2,423
Governance etc Incl Insurances	4,006	-	-	4,006	1,843
Stationery and Photocopying	1,418	-	-	1,418	1,418
Volunteer Training and Travel	1,799	-	-	1,799	1,591
Equip etc plus sundries	1,901	6,393	-	8,294	356
Training and Awareness Events	5,924	-	-	5,924	189
Sub total	57,024	6,393	-	63,417	52,079
A4 Asset and Investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	57,024	6,393	-	63,417	52,079
Net of receipts/(payments)	- 48,654	78,021	-	29,367	-
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	-	-	-	-	-
Cash funds this year end	- 48,654	78,021	-	29,367	-

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	General Ledger	6,808		-
	Reserves; Restricted and Contingency	23,488	62,885	
	Petty Cash	489		-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	30,785	62,885	-

	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets	Deposit - for premises	-	1,724	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment assets			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities	Annual Healing Weekend Deposits	Reserves	1,885	31 May 2023
	Annual Weekend Grant - Enterprise	Reserves	2,000	31 May 2023
	NHSE Grant (elements April - July 2023)	Reserves	12,000	30 July 2023
	HIWCF Grant Conference October 2023	Reserves	2,500	30/10/2023
	Ongoing Service Development	Reserves	14,500	31/03/2024
	Contingency Planning	Reserves	30,000	31/03/2024

Signed by one or two trustees
on behalf of all the trustees

Trustee / Treasurer

Signature

Print Name

Date of approval

Trustee / Unpaid Manager

CCXX R2 accounts (SS)

M BRIDGMAN

14/6/23

G FINCH

14/6/23

24/04/2023



Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

**Report to the trustees/
members of**

**On accounts for the year
ended**

Set out on pages

**Respective responsibilities
of trustees and examiner**

**Basis of Independent
examiner's statement**

**Independent
examiner's statement**

Charity Name

CIS'ters: surviving rape and sexual abuse during childhood

31st March 2023

Charity no
(if any)

1184857

(Remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets.)

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act, and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention (other than that disclosed below *)

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements:
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act
 have not been met; or
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

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

Signed:

F BENDALL

Date:

14-6-2023

Name:

F BENDALL

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

C.I.P.F.A

Address:

8 Tenby Drive
Chandlers Ford
Hampshire
SO53 4NL



Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

**Report to the trustees/
members of**

**On accounts for the year
ended**

Set out on pages

**Respective responsibilities
of trustees and examiner**

**Basis of independent
examiner's statement**

**Independent
examiner's statement**

Charity Name

CIS'ters: surviving rape and sexual abuse during childhood

31st March 2023

**Charity no
(if any)**

1184857

(ENTRUSTED TO INCLUDE THE PAGE NUMBER OF REVISIONS/REVISED)

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

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 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act
 have not been met; or
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

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

Signed:

F BENDALL

Date:

14-6-2023

Name:

F BENDALL

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

C.I.P.F.A

Address:

8 Tenby Drive
Chandlers Ford
Hampshire
SO53 4NL

Accounts

CIS'ters

An experience in learning, sharing, growing - individually and together



Trustees' Annual Report

1st April 2021 - 31st March 2022

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Section one: Reference and administrative details

Charity Name	CIS'ters –surviving rape and sexual abuse during childhood
Registered charity number	1184857
Charity's principal address	CIS'ters Po Box 119 Eastleigh Hampshire SO50 9ZF

Trustees

Trustee Name	Office	Dates	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee
Gillian Finch	Trustee/ Manager	12/08/2019 - present	CIS'ters Board of Trustees
Louise Bird	Trustee	12/08/2019 - present	CIS'ters Board of Trustees
Samantha Richley	Trustee/Chair	12/08/2019 - present	CIS'ters Board of Trustees
Mary Bridgman	Trustee/Treasurer	12/08/2019 - present	CIS'ters Board of Trustees
Catherine McEwing	Trustee	12/08/2019 – 10/11/2020	CIS'ters Board of Trustees
Elsa Montgomery	Trustee/Secretary	12/08/2019 - present	CIS'ters Board of Trustees
Shelley Unwin	Trustee	12/08/2019 - present	CIS'ters Board of Trustees
Eileen Gorrod	Trustee	12/08/2019 - present	CIS'ters Board of Trustees
Catherine Handley	Trustee	17/11/2020 - present	CIS'ters Board of Trustees

Section two: Structure, governance, and management

Type of governing document: Charitable Incorporated Organisation - Foundation

The charity migrated from original registration (1123125) to a CIO format and achieved registration on 12th August 2019 (1184857). Funds were transferred from the original registration on 31st March 2020, to the new CIO and 1123125 was formally closed on 19th January 2021.

It is important that when reviewing the Annual Report and accounts, that consideration is given to the achievements gained whilst registered as 1123125 – as they cover a substantial part of the history of our charity.

Trustees are selected following skills gap analysis. They may be recommended by existing trustees, and selection is by unanimous vote of the Board of Trustees. Trustees are appointed on their abilities and skills. In appointing trustees **CIS'ters** aims to ensure a majority of trustees are adult female survivors of childhood rape, sexual abuse or sexual exploitation and are therefore representative of those using the primary service. Where no such majority is possible the survivor trustees have a casting vote.

Policies

The policy framework, developed under the original registration, was adopted in January 2014 and distributed to the trustees and workers in the agency in April 2014. There is a rolling programme of review every three years. During the reporting period of 2021-22, the following policies have been reviewed and updated:

- ❖ Lone working
- ❖ Visitors to Our Centre
- ❖ Media

The following new policies were written:

- ❖ Provision for Non-Members - including Male and Trans Survivors
- ❖ Reserves
- ❖ Promotion and Publicity
- ❖ Services and Users
- ❖ Statement of Equality and Diversity

Conflict of Interest

A Conflict-of-Interest Register was initiated at the Trustee meeting on 23rd May 2018 and is now a formal part of each meeting. The Trustees confirmed that they had no conflicts of interest.

Risk management statement

The trustees take responsibility for management of risk in **CIS'ters**. Major risks are reviewed by the Trustees at their regular meetings and control systems have been established to manage those risks. Risk management extends to financial awareness. Although there was a major drop for in-year income, trustees were aware that the charity was continuing to deliver against funding that had been received in the prior financial year that was not yet fully expended. In addition, the charity was in contact with a key sponsor who was committed to raising funds during the next financial year. On this basis trustees were satisfied that the charity had sufficient financial resources for the year. Ongoing risks relate to securing sustainable funding.

Public benefit statement

All trustees have complied with their duty to have due regard to guidance on public benefit when exercising their duties.

Financial review

Income received during the year was £9,351. The end of year balance for the prior financial year (2020/21) was £108,757. Expenditure for 2021/22 totalled £52,079 which was £1,596 less than the prior financial year. As of 31st March 2022, the balance carried forward into the next financial year i.e. 2022/23 was £66,027. The end of year balance includes monies for our Digital Strategy and a COVID-related grant from NHSE&I which we were authorised to carry forward from 2020-21.

The Reserves policy recognises the need to ensure cash reserves to:

- ❖ Meet contractual liabilities should the organisation have to close. This includes redundancy pay, amounts due to creditors and commitments under leases.
- ❖ Meet unexpected costs
- ❖ Replace equipment as it wears out
- ❖ Provide working capital if and when funding is paid in arrears
- ❖ Ensure the charity can continue to provide a stable and quality service

CIS'ters Business Continuity Plan requires us to have 4-6 months close down reserves. As we had 6 months reserves at the end of 2021, we achieved our aim again this year.

Additional reference and administrative information

Bank	HSBC	3 Leigh Road, Eastleigh SO50 9YW
Auditor	Fred Bendall	8 Tenby Drive, Chandlers Ford, SO53 4NL

Section three: Objectives and activities

Summary of the objects of the charity set out in its governing document	The Trustees shall hold the trust fund and its income upon trust to apply them for the following objects ("the objects"): - to promote and protect the health of female survivors aged over 18 who, born as female, during childhood were raped, sexually abused or sexually exploited in particular but not limited to those who were raped, sexually abused or sexually exploited by a member of their immediate or extended family; empowering such survivors in their own personal healing through the mutual affirmation, acceptance, respect and support of other survivors and, subject to funding, to assist in the provision or development of services for other persons affected directly or indirectly by rape, sexual abuse or sexual exploitation as the trustees shall think fit. - to advance the education of the public, in particular those providing services, of the impact on child victims/adult survivors of childhood rape/sexual abuse/exploitation and the associated coping strategies used by some victims; and to promote an improved service response to the unmet needs of such child victims/adult survivors, and others affected directly or indirectly by experiences of sexual crimes.
---	--

Summary of the main activities in relation to these objects	The COVID-19 pandemic continued to impact the way some of our services were delivered April 2021-March 2022. a. Production of our newsletter, available to survivors; professionals working within the specialist sexual violence and abuse sector, or allied professions, and to members of the general public, continued with increased circulation. b. Continued to provide a national helpline, to offer support to adults who have been affected by such abuse, signposting where appropriate to other services/agencies. c. Awareness work was conducted via social media with the general public, so that they better understand core issues including prevalence of such abuse. d. Continued to network with key professionals in other agencies, including the statutory sector, to highlight the unmet needs of child victims and adult survivors. e. Undertake fundraising activities to raise funds to sustain the agency; recognising the impact that restrictions would have on those already accessing our charity; and those that might reach out to us. f. Some physical face to face meetings took place, however most meetings were either conducted via phone or Zoom.
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Section four: Achievements and performance

Maintaining existing services

Membership: As of 31st March 2022, we had 547 members (compared with 524 members in prior financial year) of whom 50% live within combined Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton local government areas.

Helpline: (phone and email): Between 1st April 2020 and 31st March 2022, the helpline service received 219 phone calls and 4309 emails. Of these 73% were from survivors that the charity was already supporting. We also received in excess of 8,000 emails to our admin team, including from professionals and other support services seeking help and advice. We are aware that many survivors do not directly access our helpline as they are able to access initial support and information via our website www.cisters.org.uk

Annual Weekend (Residential) Workshop for members: this event was postponed for 2021-22, but we are working towards hosting a weekend workshop in May 2022. Due regard to the on-going risks of COVID-19 will be taken.

Referrals/Signposting: In recognition of the fact that **CIS'ters** might be part of a survivor/members journey we have ensured that there is comprehensive information on our website which can be used by survivors and others to find additional services such as counselling. Within **CIS'ters** when responding to emails and phone calls we continue to highlight the existence of additional services so that individuals have the widest choices open to them.

Advocacy: Increasingly we are finding that many of our members, whether they live in Hampshire or elsewhere, require advocacy or empowerment in addition to emotional support. Currently this is an under resourced area and will need sustainable funding.



Emotional Resilience of Workforce: The supervisor appointed in 2020 continues to provide support for our workforce, in addition to that provided by both our Manager and Senior Administrative Support Officer. The majority of our workforce are members (i.e. survivors) and are carefully monitored to ensure that they are sufficiently resilient to undertake their respective roles.

Achievements

Hidden Harm: A further 25 podcasts were recorded during the year 2021-22. A complete list of episodes produced by the end of March 2022 is shown below:

- ❖ 1 - Introducing **CIS'ters** - 'You Are Not Alone'
- ❖ 2 - What Do Survivors Talk About?
- ❖ 3 - Hurdles to Telling as a Child
- ❖ 4 - Disclosing as an Adult
- ❖ 5 - Telling Partners, Family & Friends
- ❖ 6 - Disclosing to Your Family of Origin
- ❖ 7 – Coping Strategies
- ❖ 8 – The Pressure to Forgive
- ❖ 9 – Loss
- ❖ 10 – Collaborative Working
- ❖ 11 – The Power of Music
- ❖ 12 - Isolation Through the Eyes of Survivors
- ❖ 13 - Learning Something New
- ❖ 14 - Through the Eyes of a Midwife'
- ❖ 15 - Self Neglect/Self Harm
- ❖ 16 - Everyone's Invited
- ❖ 17 - Domestic Abuse
- ❖ 18 - When an Abuser Dies
- ❖ 19 - Interview with Fay Maxted
- ❖ 20 - Reflections on the Past Few Months
- ❖ 21 - Counselling & Therapy
- ❖ 22 - Mind Your Language
- ❖ 23 - Trauma & Physical Health
- ❖ 24 - Abusers Can Be Female
- ❖ 25 - Institutional CSA Cover-Ups
- ❖ 26 - ISVA's (Independent Sexual Advisor Service)
- ❖ 27 - You Think I'm Alright. You Are Wrong
- ❖ 28 – ACE's - Adverse Childhood Experiences
- ❖ 29 -The Window of Tolerance

The podcast channel can be found via our website: [The 'Hidden Harm' Podcasts | CIS'ters \(cisters.org.uk\)](https://cisters.org.uk).

Peer support sessions: as part of our response to COVID-19, Peer Support Sessions (PSS) were piloted from September 2021. These were initially offered via booked telephone appointments on Saturdays and a team of three members was recruited for the purpose. Based on the success of these sessions, up to two weekday sessions have also been introduced. By the end of March 2022, 16 PSS had been held on Saturday and a further 11 weekday sessions had taken place. Feedback was sought from all those who accessed Peer Support Sessions. Other than one comment, the responses were all positive and appreciative. The one comment was followed up and no further action was required.

Toolkit development: a self-help product for members, the toolkit will consist of twelve modules which users will work through at their own pace. Modules 1-8 have currently been outlined. Once all modules are complete, the toolkit will be written up and piloted. There will be a toolkit guide which will include direction to our portfolio of podcasts. Anyone needing help will have a Peer Support Session allocated. The Toolkit could be used as a physical resource in the future.

Review of police force websites: Our manager undertook a review of 39 police force websites in February 2022 and discovered that the majority of them were missing important information on the help and support available for victims of sexual crimes. She has shared her findings with the Association of Police & Crime Commissioners, the National Police Chiefs Council, and the Crown Prosecution Service. She is in the process of setting up meetings to take issues further.

The impact of COVID

The lack of in-person face to face meetings due to COVID has taken an emotional toll on members. As described above, **CIS'ters** has adapted to the needs of its members through the development of Peer Support Sessions and the toolkit. Ensuring the emotional resilience of our workforce remains a priority. We are planning to resume other physical meetings during the financial year 2022/23.

The impact of COVID on individual members is summed up by the poem 'I miss', written by Gillian (00).

I MISS

I miss the warmth of others around me
Who know me, do not judge me, comfort me, accept me
I miss the warmth of others around me
Who see me as I am, without my mask, without my defences
I miss the warm of others around me
But draw on the inspiration of others
Who multiply in number
To the drum beat of survivors, reaching out

Section Five: Consultancy/Commissions

- ❖ Our manager has been Chair of NHSE Survivors and Public Voice Group, linked to the NHSE Strategy on Sexual Assault and Abuse Services (SAAS), and in that capacity attended the NHSE-led Cross Government SAAS Advisory Group.
- ❖ Our manager is also a member of a Lived Experiences Group for the NIHR-funded MESARCH project, based at Coventry University. This study is evaluating Sexual Assault Referral Centres across England and is also exploring the experiences of survivors of sexual abuse & violence and their long-term support needs.
- ❖ She also joined a recently set up Lived Experience Group established by CSA Centre of Expertise <https://www.csacentre.org.uk>, to develop care pathways for child victims.
- ❖ We continue to be part of a number of national consultative forums, and also some that are within Hampshire where our office is located.

Section Six: Acknowledgements

We wish to give thanks to the following for their exceptional help and support during this difficult year:

- ❖ Lloyds Bank Foundation – for their ongoing support via their Enable Grant and Covid-19 grant
- ❖ NHS England – for their ongoing Covid-19 grant towards improvement in digital services.

Trustees, on behalf of all of those who access our small charity, wish it to be known that we are hugely grateful to all those who donated directly or raised funds through sponsored events. The total sum donated is £8,782 and is a demonstratable and clearly visible effort during another difficult year.

Section Seven: Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above:

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees (as at this date):

Signatures			
Full Names	Samantha Richley	Gillian Finch	Elsa Montgomery
Date	6 th January 2023	6 th January 2023	6 th January 2023

		EXPENDITURE			INCOME
A3.1	Salaries & travel etc (including contractors)	£28,297	Balance b/f - Bank Current Account		£21,073
	External Supervision plus volunteer development	£929	Balance b/f - Reserves & Restricted		£85,791 ***
A3.21	Awareness Events (non ACE)	£0	Deposit for Office Premises (SEC)		£1,724
	ACEs - specific (non payroll element)	£0	Petty Cash		£168
	Entry Fee for London Marathon	£0	Bal Bfwd from prior year 2019-2020		£108,757
A3.22	Survivor Meetings/Wkps/Residentials	£189	Grants Financial Year 2021-22	WITHIN YEAR	
A3.2.2	Volunteers: Recruit, Train, Travel & Food	£1,591	nil in year grants during 21/22	£0	A1.1A
A3.2.4	Trustees: Recruit, Train, Travel & Food	£130			
A3.3.2	Office Rent(s) & Room Hire	£10,504	<u>Grants - COVID related</u>		
A3.3.4	Electricity	£652	ongoing/unused grant income from		
A3.3.3	Business Rates	£594	2020/21 was taken forward into 21/22		
A3.3	PO Box	£284	and reflected within ** total brought		
A3.4	Combined Insurances (12 months policy)	£0 *	forward and shown above		
A3.5	Stamps	£2 **			
A3.5	Communications incl domains & software	£2,421			
A3.6	Stationery	£264	<u>Other Income:</u>		
A3.6	Photocopying incl Service Charge etc	£1,152	Bespoke Training	£0	A1.3
A3.7	Other Advice, CRB Checks, IC etc	£93	Consultancy	£285	
A3.7	Audit/Accountancy Advice	£1,300	Pins & Ribbons (Awareness)	£0	
A3.7	Prof fees/memberships	£289	Donations (including online Gift Aid)	£8,782	A1.1B
A3.9	Equipment & Repairs & Purchase Books	£0	Gift Aid - via HMRC	£0 ****	
	Other: sundries, refreshments etc	£355			
	Covid specific additional equipment etc	£3,004	Refund - London Marathon	£230	A1.5
	Pat Testing	£0	Cheques written back	£46	
A3.10	Bank Charges	£31	Interest	£7	A1.6
	Refunds	£0			
	Expenditure	£52,079	Income	£9,351	
Balances Carried Forward:			Notes:		
	Current Account ie General Ledger	£4,154	* insurance for FY 21-22 was paid in March 2021		
	Reserves (Restricted and Unrestricted)	£60,000	** stamps purchased in March 2021 were sufficient for FY 21-22		
	Deposit for Office Premises (SEC) incl key cards	£1,724	*** includes restricted grants from prior year where work was not yet completed		
	Cash	£149	**** Gift Aid due for 21-22 not yet claimed		
		£66,027			
		£118,107			£118,107

Statement on Behalf Of CIS'ters: This is a true and fair record of accounts for year 2021/22. Signature:  Date: 14-6-2022 Name: Mary Bridgman Treasurer	Auditor Opinion: I have examined the expenditure and grant income and reviewed the miscellaneous income. I believe this statement to be a true reflection of these transactions. Signature:  Date: 14-6-2022 Name: F Bendall (C.I.P.F.A.) External Auditor
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Accounts

CIS'ters

An experience in learning, sharing, growing - individually and together



Trustees' Annual Report

1st April 2020 - 31st March 2021

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Section one: Reference and administrative details

Charity Name	CIS'ters –surviving rape and sexual abuse during childhood
Registered charity number	1184857
Charity's principal address	CIS'ters Po Box 119 Eastleigh Hampshire SO50 9ZF

Trustees

Trustee Name	Office	Dates	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee
Gillian Finch	Trustee/ Manager	12/08/2019 - present	CIS'ters Board of Trustees
Louise Bird	Trustee	12/08/2019 - present	CIS'ters Board of Trustees
Samantha Richley	Trustee/Chair	12/08/2019 - present	CIS'ters Board of Trustees
Mary Bridgman	Trustee/Treasurer	12/08/2019 - present	CIS'ters Board of Trustees
Catherine McEwing	Trustee	12/08/2019 – 10/11/2020	CIS'ters Board of Trustees
Elsa Montgomery	Trustee/Secretary	12/08/2019 - present	CIS'ters Board of Trustees
Shelley Unwin	Trustee	12/08/2019 - present	CIS'ters Board of Trustees
Eileen Gorrod	Trustee	12/08/2019 - present	CIS'ters Board of Trustees
Catherine Handley	Trustee	17/11/2020 - present	CIS'ters Board of Trustees

Section two: Structure, governance, and management

Type of governing document: Charitable Incorporated Organisation - Foundation

The charity migrated from original registration (1123125) to a CIO format and achieved registration on 12th August 2019 (1184857). Funds were transferred from the original registration on 31st March 2020, to the new CIO and 1123125 was formally closed on 19th January 2021

This is, therefore, the first set of annual accounts produced for the CIO under the registration of 1184857. It is important that when reviewing the Annual Report and accounts, that consideration is given to the achievements gained whilst registered as 1123125 – as they cover a substantial part of the history of our charity.

Trustees are selected following skills gap analysis. They may be recommended by existing trustees, and selection is by unanimous vote of the Board of Trustees. Trustees are appointed on their abilities and skills. In appointing trustees **CIS'ters** aims to ensure a majority of trustees are adult female survivors of childhood rape, sexual abuse or sexual exploitation and are therefore representative of those using the primary service. Where no such majority is possible the survivor trustees have a casting vote.

Policies

The policy framework, developed under the original registration, was adopted in January 2014 and distributed to the trustees and workers in the agency in April 2014. There is a rolling programme of review every three years. During the reporting period of 2020-21, the following policies have been reviewed and updated:

- ❖ Needs and Risk Assessment of Members
- ❖ Visitors to Our Centre

The following new policy was written:

- ❖ Virtual and Physical Meetings

Conflict of Interest

A Conflict-of-Interest Register was initiated at the Trustee meeting on 23rd May 2018 and is now a formal part of each meeting. The Trustees confirmed that they had no conflicts of interest.

Risk management statement

The trustees take responsibility for management of risk in **CIS'ters**. Major risks are reviewed by the Trustees at their regular meetings and control systems have been established to manage those risks. Ongoing risks relate to securing sustainable funding. A workshop on the strategic direction for **CIS'ters** took place 11th May 2019. This was attended by Trustees and chaired by one of our patrons, Professor Sir Jonathan Montgomery. Work on the development of a Business Plan and Funding Strategy, funded by a Lloyds Enable Grant, initially experienced COVID-related delays, but work has recommenced and is reported on p9 of this report. We have reviewed contractual arrangements for staff during the year due to COVID-19. We were able to maintain delivery using flexible arrangements.

Public benefit statement

All trustees have complied with their duty to have due regard to guidance on public benefit when exercising their duties.

Financial review

Income received during the year was £89,530.96, which included COVID-related grants of £58,800. Expenditure totalled £53,675. We therefore had an overall surplus for the year of £35, 855.96 (which includes restricted income rolled forward from 2020/21 into 2021/22 financial years).

The Reserves policy recognises the need to ensure cash reserves to:

- ❖ Meet contractual liabilities should the organisation have to close. This includes redundancy pay, amounts due to creditors and commitments under leases.
- ❖ Meet unexpected costs
- ❖ Replace equipment as it wears out
- ❖ Provide working capital if and when funding is paid in arrears
- ❖ Ensure the charity can continue to provide a stable and quality service

CIS'ters aims to have a minimum reserve amounting to seven months running costs for the organisation as a whole. We achieved our aim this year.

Additional reference and administrative information

Bank	HSBC	3 Leigh Road, Eastleigh SO50 9YW
Auditor	Fred Bendall	8 Tenby Drive, Chandlers Ford, SO53 4NL

Section three: Objectives and activities

Summary of the objects of the charity set out in its governing document	The Trustees shall hold the trust fund and its income upon trust to apply them for the following objects (“the objects”): a. to promote and protect the health of female survivors aged over 18 who, born as female, during childhood were raped, sexually abused or sexually exploited in particular but not limited to those who were raped, sexually abused or sexually exploited by a member of their immediate or extended family; empowering such survivors in their own personal healing through the mutual affirmation, acceptance, respect and support of other survivors and, subject to funding, to assist in the provision or development of services for other persons affected directly or indirectly by rape, sexual abuse or sexual exploitation as the trustees shall think fit. b. to advance the education of the public, in particular those providing services, of the impact on child victims/adult survivors of childhood rape/sexual abuse/exploitation and the associated coping strategies used by some victims; and to promote an improved service response to the unmet needs of such child victims/adult survivors, and others affected directly or indirectly by experiences of sexual crimes.
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Summary of the main activities in relation to these objects	April 2020 – March 2021, delivery of the service was adversely affected by restrictions linked to the COVID-19 pandemic. a. Production of our newsletter, available to survivors; professionals working within the specialist sexual violence and abuse sector, or allied professions, and to members of the general public, continued with increased circulation. b. Continued to provide a national helpline, to offer support to adults who have been affected by such abuse, signposting where appropriate to other services/agencies. c. Awareness work was conducted via social media with the general public, so that they better understand core issues including prevalence of such abuse. d. Continued to network with key professionals in other agencies, including the statutory sector, to highlight the unmet needs of child victims and adult survivors. e. Undertake fundraising activities to raise funds to sustain the agency; recognising the impact that restrictions would have on those already accessing our charity; and those that might reach out to us. f. Planned physical peer group meetings were cancelled due to social distancing requirements.
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Section four: Achievements and performance

Maintaining existing services

Helpline: (phone and email): During the financial year 2020-21 there was a marked increase in demand for support. New contacts numbered 854 compared with 489 in the previous year. In addition, a total of 3583 support contacts were for individuals who were known to us, compared with 724 in prior year. These combined totals represent an increase of 366% on prior year. At some point, the increase reached 700% but reduced as lockdowns eased. Email provides more flexibility to those making contact, and it is therefore not surprising that these have risen at a faster rate, and calls reduced. All callers are treated with due respect regardless of gender, age, background. Those who meet our primary criteria of female, age 18+, who as a female child, were sexually abused within a family environment are offered 'membership' (a term we prefer to that of client or service user).

As of 31st March 2021, we had 524 members (compared with 508 members in prior financial year) of whom 52% live within combined Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton local government areas.

Group meetings: Core group and Drop-in sessions have been on hold this year due to COVID-19. As reported in last year's annual report, review of group sessions to ensure they are meeting the needs of members was planned for 2020-21. Core group has been disbanded and focus groups with members are planned to develop the approach for Drop-in going forward. A weekly Zoom meeting for volunteers was instigated to ensure that they still feel part of the team during the pandemic. This is led by our external emotional (clinical) supervisor. The Volunteer Coordinator has provided one-to-one support emotional support as required.

The Annual Weekend (Residential) Workshop for members was postponed.



Referrals/Signposting: In recognition of the fact that **CIS'ters** might be part of a survivor/members journey we have ensured that there is comprehensive information on our website which can be used by survivors and others to find additional services such as counselling. Within **CIS'ters** when responding to emails and phone calls we continue to highlight the existence of additional services so that individuals have the widest choices open to them.

Advocacy: Increasingly we are finding that many of our members, whether they live in Hampshire or elsewhere, require advocacy or empowerment in addition to emotional support. Currently this is an under resourced area and will need sustainable funding.

Emotional Resilience of Workforce: The supervisor appointed last year continues to provide support for our workforce, in addition to that provided by both our Manager and Volunteer Coordinator. The majority of our workforce are members (i.e. survivors) and are carefully monitored to ensure that they are sufficiently resilient to undertake their respective roles.

Achievements

A COVID-19 related grant from NHSE&I has enabled us to work on a digital strategy which is being led by an external contractor, Jenni Bevis-Lacey. A new venture as part of this work has been the production of a podcast channel, Hidden Harm which can be accessed via our website (<https://cisters.org.uk>). Four podcasts had been recorded by the end of March 2021 and will continue on a weekly basis during 2021-22. The first of these was launched to coincide with International Women's Day. Each one ends with a message to go away with:

- ❖ Episode 1 - Introducing **CIS'ters** - 'You Are Not Alone' (8th March 2021)
- ❖ Episode 2 - What Do Survivors Talk About? (15th March 2021)
- ❖ Episode 3 - Hurdles to Telling as a Child (22nd March 2021)
- ❖ Episode 4 - Telling as an Adult (29th March 2021)

We have conducted a survey of members and external stakeholders, including Trustees, as part of the work on our Business Plan and Funding Strategy. Analysis is in progress.

Highlights of the year

Our manager, volunteer Gillian Finch, was nominated by the Crown Prosecution Service for a 'Safer Award' which was part of an event organised by the Police and Crime Commissioner (Hampshire, IoW, Portsmouth and Southampton).

Section Five: Consultancy/Commissions

- ❖ We were commissioned by The Survivors Trust to be part of a task and finish group, reviewing/updating operational standards for organisational members. The Survivors Trust is a national umbrella organisation for specialist services providing emotional support/counselling for victim/survivors of sexual violence and abuse.
- ❖ Our Manager has been Chair of NHSE Survivors and Public Voice Group, linked to the NHSE Strategy on Sexual Assault and Abuse Services (SAAS), and in that capacity attended the NHSE-led Cross Government SAAS Advisory Group.
- ❖ Our Manager is also a member of a Lived Experiences Group for the NIHR-funded MESARCH project, based at Coventry University. This study is evaluating Sexual Assault Referral Centres across England and is also exploring the experiences of survivors of sexual abuse & violence and their long-term support needs.
- ❖ She also joined a recently set up Lived Experience Group established by CSA Centre of Expertise <https://www.csacentre.org.uk>, to develop care pathways for child victims.
- ❖ We continue to be part of a number of national consultative forums, and also some that are within Hampshire where our office is located.



Section Six: Acknowledgements

We wish to give thanks to the following for their exceptional help and support during this difficult year:

- ❖ Charities Aid Foundation – COVID grant
- ❖ Esmée Fairbairn Foundation – COVID grant
- ❖ Lloyds Enable and COVID Grant
- ❖ NHSE&I COVID Grant
- ❖ Police and Crime Commissioner (Hampshire, IoW, Portsmouth and Southampton)
- ❖ Indigo Trust

Given the personal and financial pressures on individuals, we were unsure whether we would receive donations during 2020-2021. Trustees, on behalf of all of those who access our small charity, wish it to be known that we are hugely grateful to all those who donated directly or raised funds through sponsored events. The total sum donated is £15,522 and is a demonstratable and clearly visible effort during such a difficult year.

Section Seven: Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above:

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees (as at this date):

Signatures			
Full Names	Samantha Richley	Gillian Finch	Elsa Montgomery
Date	23/11/2021	24/11/2021	23/11/2021

EXPENDITURE			INCOME	
A3.1	Salaries & travel etc (including contractors)	£23,050	Balance b/f - Bank (General Ledger)	£25,190.79
	External Supervision plus volunteer development	£1,600	Balance b/f - CASH	£222.63
A3.21	Awareness Events (non ACE)	£230	Balance b/f - Reserves	£45,762.65
	ACEs - specific (non payroll element)	£0	Deposit for Office Premises (SEC)	£1,724.00
	Entry Fee for London Marathon	£0	Bal Bfwd from prior year 2019-2020	£72,900.07
A3.22	Survivor Meetings/Wksps/Residentials	£0	Grants Financial Year 2020-21	WITHIN YEAR
A3.2.2	Volunteers: Recruit, Train, Travel & Food	£1,409	OPCC (SCF 1035 - 2nd stage)	£7,500
A3.2.4	Trustees: Recruit, Train, Travel & Food	£0	Indigo Trust	£2,000
A3.3.2	Office Rent(s) & Room Hire	£10,310	<u>Grants - COVID related 20-21</u>	
A3.3.4	Electricity	£526	OPCC (SCF 1035 - covid extension)	£7,500
A3.3.3	Business Rates	£594	Esmee Fairbairn Foundation	£5,000
A3.3	PO Box	£278	NHSE&I	£32,600
A3.4	Combined Insurances (12 months policy)	£1,004	Lloyds Bank Foundation	£7,700
A3.5	Stamps	£2,985	CAF Bank	£6,000
A3.5	Phone(s) & Broadband & Domains/Web	£1,529		
A3.6	Stationery	£479	<u>Other Income:</u>	
A3.6	Photocopying incl Service Charge etc	£1,443	Bespoke Training	£0.00
A3.7	Other Advice, CRB Checks, IC etc	£183	Consultancy	£1,230.00
A3.7	Audit/Accountancy Advice	£1,100	Pins & Ribbons (Awareness)	£16.00
A3.7	Prof fees/memberships	£321	Donations (including online Gift Aid)	£15,696.00
A3.9	Equipment & Repairs & Purchase Books	£0	Gift Aid - via HMRC	£1,154.39
	Other: sundries, refreshments etc	£105	HMRC - Job Retention Scheme	£2,867.32
	Covid specific additional equipment etc	£5,600	Refunds	£223.33
	Pat Testing	£0	Cheques written back	£15.50
A3.10	Bank Charges	£0	Interest	£28.42
	Refunds - cancelled weekend workshop	£929		
	Expenditure	£53,675	Income	£89,530.96
Balances Carried Forward:				
	<i>General Ledger</i>	£21,073.19		
	<i>Reserves (Restricted and Unrestricted)</i>	£85,791.07		
	<i>Deposit for Office Premises (SEC) incl key cards</i>	£1,724.00		
	<i>Cash</i>	£168.28		
	£108,756.54			
	£162,431			£162,431

Statement on Behalf Of CIS'ters:

This is a true and fair record of accounts for year 2020/21

Signature:

Date: 5-7-2021

Name: Mary Bridgman

Treasurer

Auditor Opinion:

I have examined the expenditure and grant income and reviewed the miscellaneous income.

I believe this statement to be a true reflection of these transactions.

Signature:

Date: 5-7-2021

Name: F Bendall (C.I.P.F.A.)

External Auditor

CIS'ters - Registered CIO = 1184857

funds brought forward from prior year were from earlier registration 1123125 which has now been closed down



Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

On accounts for the year
ended

Set out on pages

Respective responsibilities
of trustees and examiner

Basis of independent
examiner's statement

Independent
examiner's statement

Charity Name

CIS'ters: surviving rape and sexual abuse during childhood

31st March 2021

Charity no
(if any)

1184857

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act, and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention (other than that disclosed below *)

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements:
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act
 have not been met; or
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

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

Signed:

F Bendall

Date:

5th July 2021

Name:

F BENDALL

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

C.I.P.F.A

Address:

8 Tenby Drive
Chandlers Ford
Hampshire
SO53 4NL

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material problems.

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

