

## Trustees' Annual Report for the period

From	Period start date			To	Period end date		
	19	12	2019		31	3	2021

### Section A Reference and administration details

Charity name ACFA: The Advice Network

Other names charity is known by ACFA

Registered charity number (if any) 1187070

Charity's principal address 146 Grosvenor Road

Bristol

Postcode

BS2 8YA

#### Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity

	Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
1	Fran Begley			
2	Drew Huskisson			
3	Andy King			
4	Penny Walster			
5	Steve Woodcock			
6	Kate Thomas		Appointed 13.3.2020	
7	Mike Harris		Appointed 13.3.2020	
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				

## Section B Structure, governance and management

### Description of the charity's trusts

Type of governing document (eg. trust deed, constitution)	Constitution
How the charity is constituted (eg. trust, association, company)	Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)
Trustee selection methods (eg. appointed by, elected by)	Under the requirements of the charity's constitution, members of the charity or the charity trustees may at any time decide to appoint a new charity trustee, whether in place of a charity trustee who has retired or has been removed, or as an additional charity trustee, provided that the maximum number of 12 trustees is not exceeded.

### Additional governance issues

#### Governing Document

ACFA: The Advice Network is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. It was established on 19.12.2019 under a constitution which established the objects, powers and governance of the charity.

#### Trustee Induction

Most trustees are already familiar with the practical work of the charity having been working or volunteering for a Member organisation. They therefore possess some familiarity with the advice sector locally and nationally. Additionally, all new trustees will be provided with a copy of the constitution of the CIO, a strategic plan and previous minutes of trustee meetings. All trustees are encouraged to attend training related to the obligations and responsibilities of charity trustees.

#### Organisational Structure

ACFA: The Advice Network has a trustee board of up to 12 members who meet quarterly and are responsible for the strategic direction and policy of the charity. Membership of the CIO is open to anyone who is interested in furthering its purposes. Usually, membership is sought by advice giving agencies working in Bristol or the surrounding local authority areas. There are two categories of membership: Full membership is for non-statutory, not for profit organisations who provide free social welfare advice and information – for example, advice centres, law centres and Citizens Advice services. Full members receive all member benefits and have the right to vote on ACFA business or policy, such as at ACFA meetings and at our AGM. Affiliate membership is for statutory services, private companies, educational establishments, housing associations who provide free social welfare advice and information. For example, local authority services, private practice, university student advice and housing association advice services. Affiliate members receive all member benefits but do not have the right to vote on ACFA business or policy, such as at ACFA meetings and at our AGM.

#### Risk Management

The Trustee Board has conducted a review of the major risks to which the charity is exposed. Where appropriate, systems or procedures have been established to mitigate the risks the charity faces. Significant external risks to sustainability have led to the development of a strategic plan that considers options for development and diversification. Internal control risks are minimised by the implementation of procedures for authorisation of transactions and projects.

**Summary of the objects of the charity set out in its governing document**

The charities purpose is set out in the objects of the organisations constitution:

The promotion of the voluntary advice service sector in Bristol and the surrounding areas for the public benefit by: -

- Supporting advice service organisations;
- Encouraging closer working relationship amongst all advice providing organisations;
- Sharing information with members and providing training on a range of issues including technical updates and wider social policy issues;
- Representing the advice sector in Bristol to external bodies and in both local and national issues.

**Summary of the main activities undertaken for the public benefit in relation to these objects (include within this section the statutory declaration that trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit)**

**The focus of our work**

ACFA is not just for specialist organisations that provide advice to the public on social welfare law issues; it is for all voluntary sector and community organisations that provide advice, information and/or support. We are keen to ensure that organisations work together effectively to ensure people get the help they need, when they need it.

Our mission is to work in partnership to combat poverty and promote social justice by improving the quality & provision of free, Independent advice.

ACFA supports advice agencies based in and around Bristol who provide free, independent and confidential advice services. Individually and collectively, ACFA members will be more effective and efficient in order to provide great advice services

**Activities**

ACFA has five key priorities that have guided its activity throughout the year:

**One: Voice**

We represent and express the collective views and opinions of the advice sector on matters that are important to them and promote the advice sector to a wide audience.

**Two: Sustainability**

We work towards ensuring that the advice sector and ACFA enjoy a sustainable future.

**Three: Partnership**

We encourage and facilitate a collaborative and strategic approach to the funding and delivery of advice services and provide a platform for sharing best practice, exchanging information, knowledge and experience.

**Four: Evidence**

We facilitate the collating of evidence which illustrates the impact advice has on the communities we serve and the social policy issues the sector has identified through its work.

**Five: Support**

We provide resources and services that help member agencies deliver high quality advice services, and enable sector wide support for common goals.

**Summary of the main achievements of the charity during the year****Main Achievements**

Much of the year has been affected by the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. We worked with members to map how services were adapting to the new environment. This began by collecting, collating and sharing information about changes to services members were providing. This included reductions of face-to-face services and the move towards phone and digital advice services as well as the closing of offices and staff working remotely. By sharing this information we were able to help coordinate services at an early stage of the pandemic.

ACFA also established a Communications Project. Its aim was to coordinate a joint marketing campaign to promote the changes to advice services due to the pandemic and advertise their availability to the general public. The project worked with members to deliver communications relevant to the geographical areas in which they work and targeted towards demographic profiles. This included the use of door-to-door leaflet distribution to target those who were isolated and did not have access to the internet. Local community media was also used to promote services to those most in need. The project was able to pull together a key resource for members including a database of media contacts, resources, materials, designs.

ACFA's training program was already ongoing as lockdown was imposed in March 2020. We were able to adapt quickly and moved towards delivering training sessions virtually using Zoom. This enabled members to continue to access quality training on welfare benefits issues, which was even more necessary given the impact of Covid-19. We continued to deliver a range of training opportunities throughout the year.

Member meetings continued to be held approximately every month. Due to Covid-19 these were quickly adapted and held on a virtual basis over the year. These enabled members to share how the pandemic had affected their organisations, the limitations of services offered and the sharing of potential solutions.

**Brief statement of the charity's policy on reserves**

The trustee board has examined the charity's requirements for reserves in light of the main risks to the organisation. It has established a policy whereby the unrestricted funds not committed or invested in tangible fixed assets held by the charity should be between 6 and 12 months of the expenditure. The reserves are needed to meet the working capital requirements of the charity and the trustees are confident that at this level they would be able to continue the current activities of the charity in the event of a significant drop in income.

**Details of any funds materially in deficit**

Not applicable

**Further financial review details****Sources of funds**

ACFA's income is predominantly self-generated via membership and training fees.

**Investment Policy**

The charity has maintained a prudent amount in its reserves each year and have previously not invested surplus cash. Trustees are currently reviewing whether there are any suitable opportunities for investment of cash balances held.

**Public Benefit**

The Trustees have had due regard to the Charity Commission guidance on public benefit in deciding what activities the organisation should undertake and confirm that all the organisation's activities are undertaken to further our charitable purposes for the public benefit.

## Section F

## Other optional information

### Plans for Future Periods

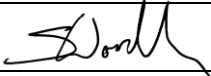
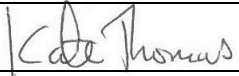
- Deliver a training program that reflects the needs of members
- Provide opportunities to share and exchange information between members
- Provide opportunities for members to collaborate on social policy work
- Coordinate responses to fundraising opportunities
- Continue to enable members to share their responses and tactics in dealing with the ongoing pandemic
- Investigate alternative meeting structures for members
- Redevelop the ACFA website
- Review the membership criteria and structure
- Enable alternative payment options for membership or training.
- Investigate future funding to enable ACFA's longer term sustainability.

## Section G

## Declaration

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

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature(s)		
Full name(s)	Steve Woodcock	Kate Thomas
Position (eg Secretary, Chair, etc)		Treasurer
Date	28.1.2022	



Charity Name	No (if any)
ACFA: The Advice Network	1187070

## Receipts and payments accounts

For the period from	Period start date	To	Period end date
	20/12/2019		31/03/2021

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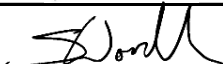
### Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Last year
	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £
<b>A1 Receipts</b>					
Savings interest	13	-	-	13	-
Quartet Community Foundation Grant	4,930	-	-	4,930	-
Easy Fundraising	150	-	-	150	-
Training Income	6,910	-	-	6,910	-
Membership Fees	2,200	-	-	2,200	-
Test Payments	5	-	-	5	-
<b>Sub total (Gross income for AR)</b>	<b>14,207</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>14,207</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).</b>					
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>14,207</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>14,207</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>A3 Payments</b>					
Policy Library updates	1,500	-	-	1,500	-
Payment Processing charges	130	-	-	130	-
Website Design & Maintenance	3,144	-	-	3,144	-
Software (Zoom)	264	-	-	264	-
Training Expenses	3,679	-	-	3,679	-
Publicity	900	-	-	900	-
Communications Project	4,710	-	-	4,710	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>14,327</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>14,327</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>14,327</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>14,327</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Net of receipts/(payments)</b>	<b>- 119</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>- 119</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>A5 Transfers between funds</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>A6 Cash funds last year end</b>	<b>15,766</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>15,766</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Cash funds this year end</b>	<b>15,647</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>15,647</b>	<b>-</b>

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	Current Account balance	3,783	-	-
	Savings Account balance	11,864	-	-
		-	-	-
	<b>Total cash funds</b>	<b>15,647</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
B2 Other monetary assets	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
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 asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B5 Liabilities	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

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

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
	Katharine Thomas	28.1.2022
	Stephen Woodcock	28.1.2022