



Trustees Annual Report 2023-24



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Trustees annual report	3
Objectives	3
A few highlights of our year:	5
Looking Ahead	9
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS	10
Structure, governance and management	11
Statement of Trustees responsibilities	12
Independent Examiners Report to the Trustees	13
Independent examiner's statement	14
Income and Expenditure Account 2023 2024	15

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT

The Trustees present their report along with the financial statements of the Charity for the year ended 31 March 2024. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies and comply with the Charity's Constitution and applicable law.

Objectives

Vision Our vision is a world where all families that have disabled and life limited children have the support that they need, at the time that they need it.

Purpose Our purpose is to help families with disabled children to get the support, information and knowledge that they need to give their children a full and happy childhood.

Mission The Special Lioness uses its expertise and knowledge to ensure families are getting the support they need at the time that they need it. We work in a variety of ways to empower the whole family to take control of their future to ensure that they reach their full potential. We do this by providing:

Activities We provide a variety of activities in order to develop relationships and provide essential social opportunities

Safe spaces Where families can come and be themselves and receive support, advice, comfort and strength in a non-judgemental atmosphere with likeminded parents and carers

Values Reaching families one by one - We recognise the importance and uniqueness of every individual family and the life changing difference which we can make

Available to all Every family that has a child with additional needs, disabilities and/or life limiting conditions are welcome; Integrity is the heart of our service - We create a place

of trust and safety where people can grow in a safe and secure environment; Never boring - We always have a sense of fun, excitement and adventure in all that we do.

Although we started in Sunderland we continue to provide services to the local area and beyond, reaching as far as Birmingham, Manchester and Edinburgh, covering a wide area of the North of England.

Our priorities have altered due to what our families have said they need and by following the current economic difficulties our families face, these can be broadly classified as Support - Training - Play Groups - Family Support - Accessible Events and Parties - Education Support - Emergency Essentials including food and warm accessories.

During 2023-2024 we have provided an extensive list of events and activities, and we are proud to have secured many supporters and funders to allow us to offer these experiences to over 800 families across our region. An example of these are:

Activity	Sponsor / Funder
Easter Bubble Fun	Community Foundation - South Sharpley Wind Farm
Family Black Tie Ball	BGL Insurance
WetWheels Adapted Catamaran - Sensory on the North Sea	SpaceHive & National Lottery community Foundation
SEND Playgroup	Great North Run fundraising
SEND Stars Stay & Play Afterschool Club	Great North Run fundraising
Parent/Carer Coffee Mornings	LS Care LTD
Surf With Santa	Community Foundation - South Sharpley Wind Farm
Summer Party	Anonymous Sponsor
Emergency Services Day	Community Foundation - South Sharpley Wind Farm
Toy are Back in Town - Theatre Show	Community Foundation - South Sharpley Wind Farm
Moonbeam Theatre - Fully Immersive Sensory Show	WellBank Foundation
Halloween Party with The Addams Family	Community Chest Sunderland East
Pre-School Sensory Group	Together for Children

Toys are Back For Christmas - Theatre Pantomime	Anonymous Sponsor
Santa Comes to Tea	Community Foundation - Mackem Money
Tynemouth Aquarium - Family Day out	Great North Swim
Mother's Day Lunch - Parents & Carers	Together for Children
SENDtastic Saturday - Stay and Play Group	Anonymous

A few highlights of our year:



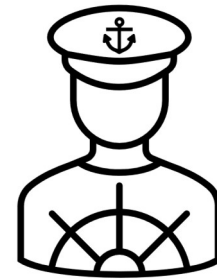
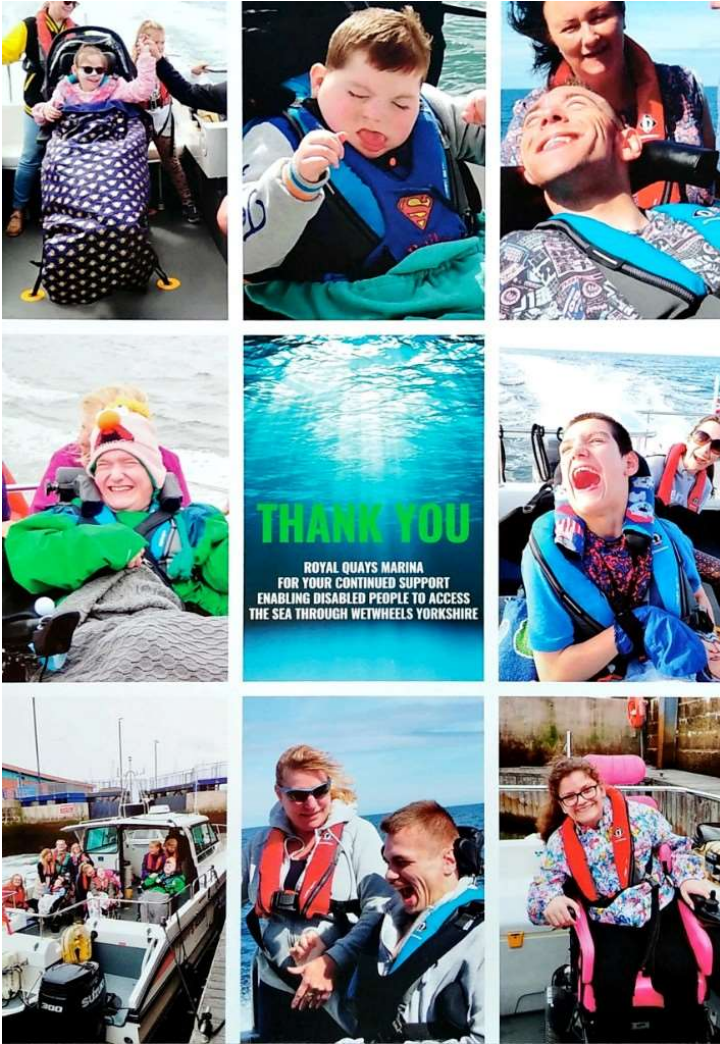
Easter Bubble Fun

Children, siblings and friends enjoyed an afternoon earning and exploring the art of a bubble-ologist from making their own bubbles to making bubble hats, smelling the fragrant soap mix to exploring the equipment.

Emergency Services Day

Our Emergency Services Day was held at North East Land Sea and Air Museum, we had services from Northumbria Police community and dog unit, Tyne & Wear Fire Service with an active engine and the education department to give families a lesson on fire with a jaw dropping example of a chip pan fire. Families had open access to the museum to explore all the museum had to offer, from jet planes to military trucks and much, much more.





WetWheels Sensory on the North Sea

Our annual WetWheels trips, carried out from Amble and North Shields, whereby we have provided 300 little Captains the trip of a lifetime on board the WetWheels Catamaran this year, which is a 328% increase in places provided and funded by our crowd funding with SpaceHive.

Pre-School Sensory Group

Our Pre-School Sensory Group aims to reach families in the early days of diagnosis to give families a safe a stimulating group to attend. Where parents and carers can gain much need support, advise, signposting and children can start to build social circles and along with their parents and carers learn, grow and celebrate their milestones no matter how big or small that may be.

We are very proud to work alongside Together for Children to provide this much needed and vital service for young children and their families.



Toys are Back for Christmas - Theatre Show

For Christmas we brought our families a fully accessible and inclusive Christmas show, with music, songs and dancing for all to enjoy. All designed and performed specifically for our children to engage with, all performed at a reduced volume level to enable the children with sensory needs to manage. During the show the children were able to enjoy the show in any way they felt comfortable, whether they needed to walk around sit on the floor, we provided soft matted sitting area at the front along with space for children and family members to dance. A high percentage of children with additional needs struggle to sit through a theatre show, or the environment is just too stimulating. With our adapted performances we aim to enable and encourage children to enjoy what most of us take for granted, but in a way, they can manage and a way they can enjoy the experience with siblings, family and friends.

Moonbeam

We were very proud to be the first community provider in the North East to host a specialist performance by Moonbeam Theatre. Moonbeam design and perform shows specifically for children with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities (PMLD), the most medically fragile and vulnerable children. These specific children require up close intensive interaction and highly stimulating activities, which requires highly skilled performers with bespoke equipment and resources. We were thrilled to be able to host 3 sessions over 1 day, giving 36 PMLD children and their parents/carers this opportunity as possible. The interaction, smiles and responses from these families was heart-warming and incredible, to be able to give these families this unique opportunity to make special memories was an honour.





Santa Grotto

A fantastic accessible and inclusive family Christmas Event and visit from Santa, for 50 children With Gifts provided by Build a Bear Foundation and the event funded by Community Foundation.

A Royal Celebration - Black Tie Ball

This event holds a special place in our hearts at The Special Lioness. Our goal is to bring families together to create cherished memories. More importantly, we want children with life-limiting conditions to experience the moments we often take for granted. Sadly, they might not get to enjoy milestones like prom, graduation, or marriage, so we aim to encapsulate all that magic into one extraordinary event.

Boys arrived in their suits and tuxedos, and girls in their ball gowns and tiaras, accompanied by their families and friends. They all had the opportunity to enjoy a grand celebration with live music, entertainment, and a very special parent/carer and child first dance.

This year's theme aligned with the Coronation of King Charles III, offering an experience truly fit for royalty.



Looking Ahead

Our priorities going forward are to continue to be a lifeline and source of support and resources to our current families but to grow our reach further to support as many families as possible and help to create special memories with those special families.

Our focus for 2024-25 is to create our very own sensory room. We have secured new premises to relocate our office together with having our own private facilities, designed by ourselves in collaboration with some very skilled craftsmen. Its an exciting time ahead, and we are ready to launch our new sensory room; The Roaring Rainforest, on 1st April 2024. We have exciting plans ahead for growth, development and opportunities.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024

The Trustees for The Special Lioness, are pleased to present their financial statements of the charity for the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024

1. Reference and Administrative details of the Charity, its trustees and advisors.

Charity Name	The Special Lioness
Registered Charity No.	1187356
Registered Office and Operational address	Unit 1QA North Sands Business Centre Sunderland SR6 0QA
Trustees	Claire Stewart Chair Sarah Anne Hendricks Justine Miller Amy Howes
Independent Examiner	Julie Maxwell 11 Edith Street Jarrow NE32 5HS
Bankers	Lloyds Bank PO Box 1000 BX1 1LT

Structure, governance and management

Governing documents

The organisation is a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO), registered on the 14th January 2020.

Appointment of Trustees

Trustees are appointed by existing trustees.

2. Financial Review

The total income for the year was £64,639. This income is allocated across respective funds on the accruals account. The net income across all funds is £64,639

The statement of assets and liabilities as at 31st March 2024 shows total funds carried forward of £19,404 comprising of £1964 unrestricted funds, £17441 Restricted Funds.

3. Public Benefit Statement

The trustees have referred to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit when reviewing the charity's objectives and planning its future activities. The annual report will aim to demonstrate the link between our charitable activity and how this benefits our service users

4. Objectives and activities

Objectives

THE OBJECTS OF THE CIO ARE TO RELIEVE THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES BASED IN THE NORTH EAST OF ENGLAND AND THEIR PARENTS AND CARERS BY PROVIDING WEEKLY SUPPORT GROUPS AND HOLIDAY PLAY GROUPS FOR SOCIAL INTERACTION AND COMMUNICATION. NOTHING IN THIS CONSTITUTION SHALL AUTHORISE AN APPLICATION OF THE PROPERTY OF THE CIO FOR THE PURPOSES WHICH ARE NOT CHARITABLE IN ACCORDANCE WITH [SECTION 7 OF THE CHARITIES AND TRUSTEE INVESTMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT 2005] AND [SECTION 2 OF THE CHARITIES ACT (NORTHERN IRELAND) 2008].

Activities

The CIO provides a variety of activities in order to develop relationships and provide essential social opportunities. Safe Spaces where families can come and be themselves and receive support, advice and comfort and strength through non-judgmental atmosphere with likeminded parents and carers.

Statement of Trustees responsibilities

The trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Annual Report and the Financial Statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice). In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently.
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements.
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Approved by the Board on:

and are signed on their behalf by:

Claire Stewart - Trustee

Signature

On

Independent Examiners Report to the Trustees

I report on the financial statements of The Special Lioness for the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024, which are set out on pages 15 to 19.

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 the year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act,
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 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:

(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 2011 Act;
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 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.



Julie Maxwell MICB

Date: 12/12/2024

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT 2023 2024

Income	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Grants				
National Lottery		5,450	5,450	2,315
Community Foundation – Moonbeam		2,000	2,000	0
Sunderland City Council			0	7,827
BISL			0	10,000
Durham Com Wind Farm Grant			0	4,330
Spice Hive Ltd			0	5,214
Freemasons & SJP Foundation		13,300	13,300	
Community Foundation - Mackem		1,913	1,913	
Money				
Foyle Foundation		7,000	7,000	
Together for Children		2,940	2,940	
Well bank Foundation		1,500	1,500	
Other unrestricted Grants	11,600		11,600	
From Charitable Activities	11,600	34,103	45,703	27,431
Other Income	18,936		18,936	288
Total Income	30,536	34,103	64,639	57,405
Expenditure				
Play Group Materials	1,687	2,821	4,509	115
Marketing and Advertising		492	492	4,548
Activities	5,844	16,144	21,987	1,256
Subscriptions	156	1,045	1,200	12,987
Events / Competition	287	450	737	1,019
Training		214	214	661
Gifts	93	175	268	0
Office Equipment and Furniture	8,796	791	9,586	0
Office Supplies / Rent	1,542	361	1,903	2,399
Travel and Expenses	12,014	445	12,459	4,959
Fundraising Expenses	4,020	999	5,019	4,592
Sundry Expenses	247	118	366	5,440
Hospitality	1,051	365	1,416	169
Utilities	4,666	6,325	10,992	911
Contracts		150	150	0
Accounts			0	0
Depreciation			0	150
			0	0
Total Expenditure	40,403	30,894	71,297	39,206
Surplus/(deficit) for year	-9,867	3,209	-6,658	18,199
Adjustments	-133	133	0	0
Opening Reserves	11,963	14,099	26,062	6,863
Closing Reserves	1,963	17,441	19,404	25,062

Statement of Assets and Liabilities as of 31st March 2024

		2024	2023
ASSETS			
Fixed Assets			
Office equipment and IT	£4,278		
Office equipment and IT (depreciation)	-£150		
Total Fixed Assets		£4,128	£4,278
Current Assets			
Trade Debtors	£739		
Lloyds Bank	£14,789		£21,934
Cash			
Total Current Assets		£15,528	£21,934
TOTAL ASSETS		£19,656	£26,212
LIABILITIES			
Current Liabilities			
Trade Creditors	£250		
Total Current Liabilities		£250	£150
TOTAL LIABILITIES		£250	£150
TOTAL NET ASSETS		£19,404	£26,062
EQUITY			
Unrestricted Funds		£1,964	£11,963
Restricted Funds		£17,441	£14,099
TOTAL EQUITY		£19,404	£26,062

Signed on their behalf by:

Amy Howes - Trustee

Signature:

On:

1. Basis of Accounting

The accounts have been prepared using the accruals method. An audit is not required by the Charity's constitution and has not been requested by the Trustees.

2. Grants

The following funding was received during the period:

Grants	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total 2024
National Lottery - Community Fund			£0
Community Foundation – Moonbeam		2,000	£2,000
Sunderland City Council			£0
BISL			£0
Durham Com Wind Farm Grant			£0
Spice Hive Ltd			£0
Freemasons		13,300	£13,300
Community Foundation - Mackem Money		1,913	£1,913
Foyle Foundation		7,000	£7,000
Together for Children		2,940	£2,940
Well bank Foundation		1,500	£1,500
Wet Wheels Grant		5,450	£5,450
Other unrestricted Grants (National Lottery)	11,600		£11,600
Total	11,600	34,103	45,703

3. Trustee Expenses

4. Guarantee

There have been no guarantees given by The Special Lioness at 31st March 2023.

5. Debt

There is no debt outstanding which is owed by The Special Lioness and which is secured by an excess charge on any of the assets of The Special Lioness at 31st March 2024

6. Governing Document

The organisation is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation - Foundation registered on 14th January 2020 as a body corporate under part 11 of the Charities Act 2011.

7. Going Concern

We have big plans for the coming year and we have proven that we can adapt to the current climate and listen to what our families need and are seeking support with and we endeavour to be the support they desperately need. Our brand new bespoke sensory room to be launched next year is securing our place within the local community and giving our beneficiaries a place to call home and giving them daily access to our support services and skills. We are excited to share our plans and look forward to continued growth.

8. Risks

The trustees have examined the major risks which the charity faces in relation to external factors, governance and management, internal operations and business. The trustees have considered the likelihood and the impact of risks, and continually review the systems in place to reduce those risks. The systems are being designed to provide reasonable assurance against material loss.

9. Depreciation

Depreciation has been calculated as a flat line based on 33.3%

10. Movement of Major Funds

	2023 Fund Balances b/fwd £	Receipts £	Payments £	Adjustments £	2024 Fund balances C/fwd £
Restricted Funds					
Community Foundation	0	3,913	1,909		2,004
County Durham Wind Farm	1,938		3,551		-1,613
BISL	8,809		8,731		78
FOYLE		7,000	5,717		1,283
Freemasons		13,300	1,644		11,656
Together for Children		2,940	3,129		-189
Well bank Foundation		1,500	1,218		282
National Lottery Grant		5,450	1,510		3,940
Space hive Ltd	3,352		3,485	133	0
Total	14,099	34,103	30,894	133	17,441
Unrestricted Funds					
General Funds	11,963	30,536	40,403	-133	1,963
Total Funds	26,062	64,639	71,297	0	19,404

“There is no stronger mother than the Lioness, until you meet The Special Lioness”