



# Write Back Trustees' Annual Report 1 September 2020 - 31 August 2021

*Charity name: Write Back  
Charity registration number: 1188293*

## **Objectives and Activities:**

Write Back's vision is for every young person to understand that they have a story to tell and have the capacity to tell it. We work to achieve this by building the confidence and capacity of young people to express themselves creatively through the sharing of their stories. We do this by running collaborative storytelling programmes for marginalised young people which develop their creativity, self-esteem and confidence. The work of every young person on our programmes is published and celebrated.

## **About Write Back**

Write Back started in a History classroom in 2015, working with Year 9 students to publish their stories of immigration. Those students went on to create another book, three exhibitions across East London and pilot workshops for younger students. As those original students headed to university, in September 2019 we began running sessions for young people across the borough of Barking and Dagenham. In early 2020, we registered with the Charity Commission, formalising our status as an independent charity and recruited a board of trustees.

We run 10-week storytelling programmes open to 13 to 16-year-olds identified by their teachers as lacking confidence, self-esteem or a creative outlet. These young people are referred to us by schools in Barking and Dagenham, and are then enrolled in our programmes at the Future Youth Zone, a local youth centre. The programmes are built off three key ideas: that every young person has a story to tell and the capacity to tell it; that a deep connection with the stories of others is often the most powerful way to learn; that young people should tell their stories in the way that they want them to be told. In each session we run confidence-building activities, engage with the writing of young authors and develop the stories of the participating young people. The 10-week project also involves working with writers and artists, and culminates with the celebration of the young people's work in front of their friends, families and teachers at a 'graduation style' book launch event. Through this work we aim to build self-respect, community and independent voices for young people through the sharing of their stories.



The trustees confirm they have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit.

## **The need**

Our work is focused in Barking and Dagenham because this is where our project was created and where demand remains so great. The borough is the 9th most deprived local authority in the country and well over a third of its young people and children live in poverty. Despite this, Barking and Dagenham has the joint fewest charities per head in the country. Research conducted by the local authority revealed that only 37% of young residents felt they had someone to talk to about problems that worry them. The same research found that almost a third of young people felt optimistic 'rarely' or 'none of the time'.

Our programmes have shown the transformative impact storytelling can have. They provide young people with the opportunity to discuss the issues important to them – areas which are increasingly difficult to cover in the curriculum given the growing exam pressures of secondary schools. Quantitative evaluations of our programmes as well as feedback from schools, families and the young people themselves have shown marked improvements for participant self-esteem and perceptions of themselves and their capabilities.

We believe that storytelling can play a crucial role in addressing this situation by building young people's respect for themselves and by developing trust and community amongst young people.

## **Key activities and achievements: September 2020 - August 2021**

Write Back registered as a charity in the same month in which the first lockdown plunged the country - and much of the third sector - into chaos. Despite the changing guidance and uncertainty, from September 2020 - August 2021 we weathered the storms by adapting our programmes to be delivered online or in hybrid format (online and in-person). This meant we could continue supporting young people at a time when youth service provision was imperilled across much of the country.

Over this period, Write Back ran over 100 hours of storytelling programmes and printed and celebrated the stories of 45 young people recruited from 5 local comprehensive secondary schools.



We have run over 40 workshops for young writers on our main programmes and these storytellers produced two anthologies of their writing. The first, published in January 2021 was 2020: Through the Eyes of Young People and offered an insight into youth experiences of the pandemic. The second titled Build Back Better was released in July 2021 and outlined visions of change that the young people wanted to see.

In addition to these workshops, we have hosted two public celebrations of the young people's work. The first was held online in January 2021 in the middle of a lockdown. We also held a socially distanced in person celebration in July 2021 at the Barking Boathouse attended by families, friends and teachers of the young authors.

We have also developed a graduate programme for storytellers that have already completed the 10-week programme. These storytellers released a map co-created with designers from London Metropolitan University; produced a website filled with their stories; worked with artists and academics from the University of Liverpool and the Stay Home Stories Project; and have created a professional film that premiered in the Being Human Festival, the world's largest festival of the humanities.

In addition to our main programmes, we have been supporting many of the young people who originally helped to 'found' Write Back to publish a new book based on their experiences of race. This was launched at Toynbee Hall in August 2021

As a charity our primary goals are to build self-esteem among disadvantaged young people, to foster community among diverse participants and to help them develop techniques for telling their stories with confidence.

We have seen this realised through our programmes and through the feedback we've received from young people, parents and schools. We have professionally printed the work of every enrolled young person, maintaining the 100% completion rate of our 10-week-long programmes. At our 'book launch' events we've had further evidence of the increase of confidence that comes from young people having their work publicly celebrated.

We also use the Rosenberg survey to measure changes in self-esteem and, through it, have seen a marked increase in the self-belief and resilience of young people on our programmes. 8 in 10 participants have shown a marked improvement in the self-esteem, on average by 24%. 100% of storytellers have rated their experience as 'positive' or 'very positive'.

A secondary objective was to increase the connections of Write Back to develop the opportunities available to the storytellers. We have made progress towards this through establishing new connections with London Metropolitan University, University of Liverpool, Stay Home Stories, Queen Mary, Being Human festival and Pen to Print.



## **Financial review**

As a small charity founded in March 2020, Write Back does not have any fixed costs and therefore does not have a policy on reserves. However we will seek to develop a risk-based reserves policy as the charity grows and its financial commitments increase.

Write Back's principal source of income in the 18 month accounting period to August 2021 has been a £10,000 grant received from the Shackleton Foundation in November 2020. Write Back also received £2,600 from schools who refer students to Write Back's storytelling programmes, holiday club workshops and a one-off training course.

## **Future plans: Write Back's expansion in 2022 - 2023**

We intend to turn Barking and Dagenham into a storytelling hub for young people. Building on our existing projects with half the secondary schools in the borough, we aim to expand to work with all secondary schools in Barking and Dagenham, running 11 storytelling programmes and over 110 hours of storytelling intervention for more than 120 young people in the academic year starting September 2022, overseen and delivered by a dedicated local coordinator. The work of all participating young people will be professionally printed, published and celebrated at local ceremonies, putting Barking and Dagenham on the map as a place where the stories of young people matter.

## **List of trustees**

Alex Newton, Chair of Trustees  
Daven Hindocha, Treasurer  
Sam Norwood, Trustee  
Grace Selley, Trustee

## **Registered address**



Write Back, Flat 21 Dethick Court, Ford Road, London, E3 5PQ

## **Declarations**



The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above. Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

**Signature(s)**

	
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**Full name(s)**

**Samuel Norwood**

**Alexander Newton**

**Position (eg  
Secretary, Chair, etc)**

**Trustee and Founder**

**Chair of Trustees**

**Date** **24.05.2022**



CHARITY COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Write Back

Charity no:  
1188293

## Receipts and payments accounts

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For the period  
from

02-Mar-20

To

31-Aug-21

### 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>					
Grants and donations	10,020	-	-	10,020	-
Charitable activities - workshops & programmes	2,610	-	-	2,610	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total (Gross income for AR)</b>	12,630	-	-	12,630	-
<b>A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total receipts</b>	12,630	-	-	12,630	-
<b>A3 Payments</b>					
Session resources	1,377	-	-	1,377	-
Student publications	1,344	-	-	1,344	-
End of programme events	640	-	-	640	-
Advertising and publicity	361	-	-	361	-
Printing & Postage	321	-	-	321	-
Website	296	-	-	296	-
Guest speakers	151	-	-	151	-
Insurance	136	-	-	136	-
Sundry expenses	65	-	-	65	-
<b>Sub total</b>	4,691	-	-	4,691	-
<b>A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total payments</b>	4,691	-	-	4,691	-
<b>Net of receipts/(payments)</b>	7,939	-	-	7,939	-
<b>A5 Transfers between funds</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>A6 Cash funds last year end</b>	£1,402	-	-	1,402	-
<b>Cash funds this year end</b>	9,342	-	-	9,342	-

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

Account(s)	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
<b>B1 Cash funds</b>	Cash at bank	9,342	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	<b>Total cash funds</b>	<b>9,342</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))

[illegible]

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

[illegible]

	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
<b>B5 Liabilities</b>			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

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

Signature

Print Name

Date of approval

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02-May-22

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SAM NORWOOD

12/5/22