

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1189763

**Report of the Trustees and
Unaudited Financial Statements
for the Period Ended 31 December 2024
for
STEPPING STONES COLLABORATION FOR RECOVERY AND WELLBEING
A Charitable Incorporated Organisation**

STEPPING STONES COLLABORATION FOR RECOVERY AND WELLBEING

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for the Period Ended 31 December 2024

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STEPPING STONES COLLABORATION FOR RECOVERY AND WELLBEING

Report of Trustees

for the Period Ended 31 December 2024

The Trustees present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the period ended 31 December 2024. The Trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" (FRS 102) in preparing the annual report and financial statements of the charity.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Registered Charity number

1189763

Principal address

Involve Community Services

The Court House

Broadway

BRACKNELL

Berkshire

RG12 1AE

Trustees

Dr Bernadette Fisher – Chairperson - Appointed 3rd June 2020

George Story – Appointed 8th August 2021

Sarah Gore – Appointed 3rd June 2020

Deborah Workman – Appointed 30th November 2023

Catherine Wilkins – Appointed 10th April 2024

Independent Examiner

Rachel Eden

Holy Brook Associates

Curious Lounge, 1st Floor,

Pinnacle Building,

Tudor Road, Reading,

STEPPING STONES COLLABORATION FOR RECOVERY AND WELLBEING

Report of Trustees (continued)

for the Period Ended 31 December 2024

England,

RG1 1NH

Bankers

THE CO-OPERATIVE BANK PLC

CENTRAL CORPORATE BRANCH

P O Box 250,

WN8 6WT

STEPPING STONES COLLABORATION FOR RECOVERY AND WELLBEING

Report of Trustees (continued)

for the Period Ended 31 December 2024

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

STEPPING STONES COLLABORATION FOR RECOVERY AND WELLBEING, is a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO), registered as a charity on June 3rd, 2021, charity number 1189763. The Charity is controlled by its governing document and the CIO Constitution. The Trustees who served the charity during the period were as follows:

Dr Bernadette Fisher – Chairperson: appointed 13/04/2020.

Sarah Gore – Trustee: appointed 15/04/2020

Catherine Wilkins: appointed 10th April 2024

George Story – Trustee: appointed 23/06/2021.

Deborah Workman - Trustee: appointed 30/11/2023.

Recruitment and appointment of new Directors and Trustees

The Constitution provides for a minimum of 3 Trustees with no stated maximum. Where there is a requirement for new Trustees, these are identified and appointed by the existing Trustees for a term of 3 years by the passing of a resolution at a properly convened meeting of the Trustees. In selecting the new Trustees, the board must have regard for the skills, knowledge and experience needed from the individual in order to provide effective administration of the charity.

Any new Trustee will be provided, on or before their first appointment, with a copy of the previous period's annual report and accounts and a copy of the Charity Constitution.

Risk management

The Trustees have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against fraud and error.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objectives and aims

The principal objective of the charity is to promote the positive health and wellbeing of all adults who live, work or study in the Bracknell Forest area. We offer free education to anyone aged 18 or more, who works, lives or studies in the Borough of Bracknell Forest and who is experiencing problems with their mental, physical, or emotional health and for those that support them. A co created, compassionate learning environment empowers individuals (students) through education about all aspects of wellbeing, highlighting their personal skills and strengths, building self-confidence, inspiring creativity, and unlocking

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Report of Trustees (continued)

for the Period Ended 31 December 2024

potential. Small group work also nurtures stronger peer support networks, reduced social isolation, and increases community connectivity.

Public benefit statement

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the Charities Commission Guidance on public benefit.

Stepping Stones Recovery College (SSRC) is committed to promoting and improving the mental, physical, and emotional wellbeing of all adults who live, work, or study in Bracknell Forest. We are a unique resource within the local community and the college provides an extensive range of free educational and creative courses and workshops within a safe, respectful, and compassionate learning environment. Our holistic and optimistic approach proactively empowers students to rediscover their strengths, build on their skills, and find renewed meaning and purpose, following any life challenge. By moving beyond traditional mental health frameworks, our aim is to inspire hope, personal growth, and long-term wellbeing, rather than just the management or alleviation of symptoms.

At the heart of our ethos is working together as equals and, in keeping with the traditional recovery college model, our way of working is to use collective problem solving, democratic decision-making and to provide free, open access to all our resources. Students, staff, facilitators, and volunteers all work together as equals, and we have learned that our in-person interactions in workshops and courses often activate natural peer support systems which can then be instrumental in helping many to overcome social anxieties and reconnect with their local community. Offering choice and building personal autonomy are central to the way we work, and students select for themselves the courses that most align with their needs, interests, and personal goals, thereby giving them a sense of ownership in their own recovery. Anonymous student feedback guides us in ensuring that we always maintain a welcoming, respectful, and safe space for everyone and provide the kinds of courses that will inspire hope and nurture personal growth.

In the last two years we have also been focusing on the specific needs and aspirations of young adults and following extensive in-depth research, we launched two new websites in 2024, specifically designed to support these. Our Young Adults website now outlines a new and varied programme of courses and workshops, designed to equip 16 to 25 years with the knowledge and practical skills to help them navigate their transition into adulthood and our ichooseme offers an interactive information hub where they, and anyone else, can easily search for and identify the kind of support that will meet their personal needs.

ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

In our third year of operation (September 2023 to July 2024), by the end of September 2024, SSRC had 961 online students and a further thirty registered as offline students, i.e. with no email access and/or address. The rate of new student intake has been steady since

STEPPING STONES COLLABORATION FOR RECOVERY AND WELLBEING

Report of Trustees (continued)

for the Period Ended 31 December 2024

we opened in September 2021, and we are now observing some possible seasonality in our registrations which have generally been lower in the spring terms and higher in the summer terms. We continue to monitor where new students originally hear about Stepping Stones and, in 2023/24, over half (56.5%) were signposted from various local, mental health services, a further quarter had heard of SSRC via word of mouth from friends, family, or carers and other key sources were Social Prescribers and the Job Centre. Maintaining and further building on our partnerships with these and many other local statutory, voluntary, and business partners will remain a priority for us in 2024/25.

The current student population of SSRC ranges in age from 18 to over 80 years of age and in the last three years, there has been a steady increase in male students who now comprise almost a third (27%). This is a significant increase on our first year (2021/22) when male students were less than a fifth (17%) of the total. Student representation from non-white and LGBTQ groups has also continued to increase and in 2023/24, 18% of SSRC students identified as having non-white ethnicities and 5% as transgender/nonbinary.

Over the last three years, our booking rate has averaged 84% of availability and across all terms, available spaces and bookings follow similar trends, with bookings generally reaching close to the maximum capacity, which suggests efficient utilisation of our resources. A very positive trend this past year has been a 68% increase in unique student participation rates each term or the number of different students who have booked onto a course. I.e. in 2022/23 just 34% of all SSRC registered students booked onto a course but this increased to 42% - of a substantially larger student population - in 2023/24. This suggests that SSRC is becoming more effective at engaging an even larger proportion of our expanding student body with courses and workshops that are perceived relevant and appealing.

At the end of each course and workshop, we ask for anonymous quantitative and open-ended feedback from students and in 2023/24, saw a significant increase in students giving the highest positive ratings for all dimensions of SSRC courses and their experience of them. More specifically, this has included students rating SSRC courses as 10/10 in terms of their helpfulness to their recovery, increasing knowledge and us providing somewhere that they feel safe, respected, included, and able to contribute. The creative arts and nature-focused courses have been notable for their popularity and for helping students relax, socialise, and engage with their surroundings, in a meaningful way while courses such as Foundations of Recovery and Depression and Low Mood seem to have resonated especially deeply with students who had struggled with mental health issues for extended periods. Encouragingly, over 99% of all course attendees in 2023/24 said they would recommend SSRC to others, an increase over the previous year's 98%.

STEPPING STONES COLLABORATION FOR RECOVERY AND WELLBEING

Report of Trustees (continued)

for the Period Ended 31 December 2024

COSTS AND FUNDING

In 2024, SSRC received £150,000 in annual funding from private donors and £40,000 from BF Public Health. Additionally, we secured an extra £62,797 in funding, most notably, £40,000 from BFC Public Health to support our Young Adults Programme and a further £22,797 from a range of sources. Over the past year, we have also received continued support from most of our parish councils and regular invitations to their meetings, to formally accept grants, has provided excellent opportunities to promote the college and expand our local partnerships. Based on our current annual budget of around £200,000 (per our most recent Charity Commission Annual Financial Report), our cost per registered student is just £200—a 32% reduction compared to last year. Nationally, recovery college costs per student average between £300 and £1,000 annually, with a median of £665. For the 399 students attending SSRC in 2023/24, the per-student cost is £501, still 25% below the national median of £665.

Approximately three-quarters of our annual budget is to meet staff and facilitator cost which aligns with other English recovery colleges and reflects our commitment to having professionals in mental health together with those with lived experience, involved in the design and delivery of courses. To provide a broader context, the cost of mental health services per adult in the UK has risen markedly in recent years, driven by growing demand and a shift toward more comprehensive support. In Bracknell Forest, annual spending on adult mental health services reached approximately £14.5 million for 2022-23, representing nearly one-third of the council's adult social care budget. Based on the conservative estimate that one in six adults faces mental health challenges, this equates to an annual per capita cost of at least £2,832 per person in Bracknell Forest. By comparison, even our most conservative per capita cost assumptions (£501) fall below 20% of this. Bearing in mind that our focus is on making sustained improvements in students' well-being and self-management skills, we are potentially providing a very efficacious and cost-effective route to achieving long-term reductions in our local mental health costs. Furthermore, by promoting greater self-awareness and resilience among those with undiagnosed mental health conditions, we may also be helping to minimise future statutory mental health service costs.

Overall, during this last year our very encouraging student attendance trends and course evaluations suggest that what SSRC offers is continuing effectively to support the recovery and wellbeing of an expanding student population. It also suggests that SSRCs current programme of courses seems well suited to local population needs and is being effective in addressing and alleviating both their short and longer-term needs.

STEPPING STONES COLLABORATION FOR RECOVERY AND WELLBEING

Report of Trustees (continued)

for the Period Ended 31 December 2024

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Financial Review

The charity held reserves of £122,886 at year end (2023 - £86,700). This was equivalent to around 7 months' worth of operating costs. The Trustees have determined that the Charity must hold a minimum level of liquid reserves equivalent to 5-6 months' worth of operating costs, as set out in our Financial Policy.

ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD

Bernadette Fisher: Trustee

Date: July 14th, 2025

STEPPING STONES COLLABORATION FOR RECOVERY AND WELLBEING

Independent Examiner's Report for the Period Ended 31 December 2024

I report on the accounts of the charity for the period ended 31 December 2024 which are set out on pages 11 to 17.

Respective responsibilities of directors and examiner

The charity's directors are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's directors consider that an audit is not required for this Period 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.
- follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the 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 you as 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.

Other matters

Your attention is drawn to the fact that the charity has prepared the accounts (financial statements) in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) issued on 16 July 2014 in preference to the Accounting and Reporting Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice issued on 1 April 2005 which is referred to in the extant regulations but has since been withdrawn.

We understand that this has been done in order for the accounts to provide a true and fair view in accordance with the Generally Accepted Accounting Practice effective for reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2015.

STEPPING STONES COLLABORATION FOR RECOVERY AND WELLBEING

Independent Examiner's Report (continued)

for the Period Ended 31 December 2024

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; and
- 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.



Rachel Eden, FCMA
Holy Brook Associates
Curious Lounge, 1st Floor,
Pinnacle Building,
Tudor Road, Reading,
England,
RG1 1NH

DATE : 27th August 2025

STEPPING STONES COLLABORATION FOR RECOVERY AND WELLBEING

Financial Statements

for the Period Ended 31 December 2024

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2024 Total funds £	2023 Total funds £
INCOMING RESOURCES					
Incoming resources from generated funds					
Grants and Donations	2	264,717	-	264,717	208,356
Total incoming resources		264,717	-	264,717	208,356
RESOURCES EXPENDED					
Costs of raising funds	3	6,651	-	6,651	6,843
Charitable activities	4	217,744	-	217,744	191,755
Legal and administrative costs	5	4,136	-	4,136	3,380
Total resources expended		228,531	-	228,531	201,978
NET INCOME		36,186	-	36,186	6,378
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		86,700		86,700	80,326
		122,886		122,886	86,700
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD					

STEPPING STONES COLLABORATION FOR RECOVERY AND WELLBEING

Financial Statements

for the Period Ended 31 December 2024

		Unrestricted Funds	Restricted funds	2024 Total funds	2023 Total funds
	Notes	£	£	£	£
Tangible assets	6	133	-	133	920
CURRENT ASSETS					
Cash in bank and in hand		128,077		128,077	90,549
Prepayments		-	-	-	-
		128,077		128,077	90,549
CREDITORS					
Amounts falling due within one year	7	5,324	-	5,324	4,768
NET CURRENT ASSETS		122,753		122,753	85,780
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		122,886	-	122,886	86,700
NET ASSETS	8	122,886	-	122,886	86,700
FUNDS	9				
Restricted funds		-	-	-	-
Unrestricted funds		122,886	-	122,886	86,700
		122,886	-	122,886	86,700
TOTAL FUNDS					

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on 14th July 2025 and were signed on its behalf by:

Bernadette Fisher -Trustee

July 14th, 2025

STEPPING STONES COLLABORATION FOR RECOVERY AND WELLBEING

Notes to Accounts

for the Period Ended 31 December 2024

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES continued

Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

2. DONATION AND LEGACIES

	2024	2023
	£	£
Donations	25,335	2,856
Grant	239,382	205,500
	<u>264,717</u>	<u>208,356</u>

3. COST OF RAISING FUNDS

	2024	2023
	£	£
Promotion and public relations costs	6,651	6,843
	<u>6,651</u>	<u>6,843</u>

STEPPING STONES COLLABORATION FOR RECOVERY AND WELLBEING

Notes to Accounts (continued)

for the Period Ended 31 December 2024

4. CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	2024	2023
	£	£
Cost of services	63,946	89,426
Cleaning	1,835	2,923
Consulting	1,772	3,546
Depreciation Expense	786	1,489
Entertainment	50	-
Equipment less than £100	-	80
General Expenses	-	-
Interest paid	-	102
Insurance	1,798	1,806
IT Software and Consumables	3,786	346
Office costs (rent and utilities)	8,816	9,150
Pensions Costs	1,812	1,009
Printing & Stationery (and postage)	384	636
Repairs & Maintenance	24	1,101
Salaries	124,369	76,975
Staff Training	3,319	1,487
Subscriptions	-	-
Telephone & Internet	1,651	1,531
Travel - National	3,396	3,147
	<u>217,744</u>	<u>191,755</u>

5. LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS

	2024	2023
	£	£
Accountancy and payroll	3,752	3,020
Independent examiner's fee	384	360
	<u>4,136</u>	<u>3,380</u>

STEPPING STONES COLLABORATION FOR RECOVERY AND WELLBEING

Notes to accounts (continued)

for the Period Ended 31 December 2024

6. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Computer Equipment	Total 2024	Total 2023
	£	£	£
COST			
At 31 December 2023	4,468		4,468
Additions	-		-
At 31 December 2024	4,468		4,468
DEPRECIATION			
At 31 December 2023	(4,335)	(3,548)	(2,509)
Charge for the Period	(1,489)	(1,489)	(1,489)
At 31 December 2024	(5,037)	(5,037)	(3,548)
NET BOOK VALUE			
At 31 December 2023	920	920	2,409
AT 31 December 2024	133	133	920

7. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE PERIOD

	2024	2023
	£	£
Accruals	1203	936
Payroll related creditors	4052	2,161
Accounts payable	69	1,671
	5324	4,768

8. ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

	Unrestrict ed Funds	Restricted Funds	2024 Total Funds	2023 Total Funds
	£	£	£	£
Fixed Assets	133	-	133	920
Current Assets	128,077	-	128,077	90,548
Current liabilities	(5,324)	-	(5,324)	(4,768)
	122,886	-	122,886	86,700

STEPPING STONES COLLABORATION FOR RECOVERY AND WELLBEING

Notes to accounts (continued)

for the Period Ended 31 December 2024

9. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

	Net Movements in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 31.12.2024 £	At 31.12.2023 £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	35,251	-	122,886	86,700
TOTAL FUNDS		-	122,886	86,700

10. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

The charity received grants and donations totalling £77,801 from related parties (trustees and close relatives) for the period ended 31 December 2024 (2023 – £150,000). None of these transactions had conditions attached.

11. ULTIMATE CONTROLLING PARTY

The Board of Trustees are considered to be the ultimate controlling party.

12. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the period ended 31 December 2024 (2023 – none).

13. EMPLOYEE REMUNERATION

	2024 £	2023 £
Salaries	124,368	77,776
National Insurance	-	-
Employers Pension	1,812	1,009
Total	126,180	78,785

The average number of employees in 2024 was 10 (2023 – 10). No employee was paid total remuneration in excess of £60,000 (2023 – none)