



CHRN Trustees' Annual Report for the period April 2023 to March 2024.

Charities HR Network (CHRN)

Charity Number: 1193540

Registered Address:

First Floor, 10 Queen Street Place,
London. EC4R 1BE

[Welcome and Foreword](#)

Peter Reeve – Interim CEO

The last year has been a significant one for the Charities HR Network (CHRN). Following our incorporation in 2022 we were committed to two key goals:

- Increasing the range of exclusive services and products for members, to help grow our membership numbers,
- Diversify the board and increase the resilience of the Network as an organisation.

I'm delighted to report that we have been able to make great progress in both of these areas. We have been able to create a new Special Interest Group for our larger charity members, which recognises the unique challenges faced by larger and more complex organisations. I'm delighted that this group will be joined by the headline partner – PTHR. We are also looking into other areas including supporting HR colleagues who have a volunteering responsibility as part of their role. We have also introduced arrangements with new partners Brightmine and Croner-I, making their products available at a significant discount to our members. One of the challenges facing many charity HR functions is the need to deliver with significantly constrained budgets compared to colleagues in other sectors. For that reason, we will continue to look for opportunities to create partnerships that will support members.

As highlighted in this report we have also increased the resilience of our board with a number of new trustees. For the first time this includes colleagues who do not have an HR background. These new trustees are already adding huge value to the board as we look to grow the Network. Martyn Dicker has also stepped into the role of chair vacated by our colleague and friend Kerry Smith (post March 2024). Whilst Kerry will be a massive loss, we are delighted to welcome Martyn and look forward to working with him going forward.

Trustees during 2023/2024

As result of the changes to our constitution in 2022 we now have the option to recruit trustees to the board that come from outside the HR profession. With a really ambitious agenda to grow the Network we were keen to bring in new and different voices to our board. We conducted an external recruitment process and pleasingly there was a lot of interest in the role. After a selection process, the following appointments were made to the board:

- Gareth Elwin – Chief Executive Morgan Law
- Sarah Lomax – Deputy CEO Charity Finance Group

We were also joined by the following trustees who were recommended to the board

- Martyn Dicker DoP Unicef
- Woosh Raza – DoP NCVO (during reporting period)
- Tiger D'Souza (Tiger is seconded to the Board) – DoP Samaritans

The following trustees retained their role on the Board:

- Kerry Smith (Chair)
- Jane Gould (appointed Treasurer)
- Rhian Cooke

The following associate member remains seconded onto the Board in 2023/24:

- Fiona Evans

The following trustees stepped down from their roles on the Board in 2023/24:

- Karen Hailes
- Vicky Greig

We believe this board gives an incredible range of talent and experience to take the Network forward.

iCEO and Co-ordinator details

Interim CEO - Peter Reeve

Co-ordinator – Lisa Lavender

During the year we have been supported at peaks periods such as the conference by Max Lavender

Structure, Governance and Management

The CIO Foundation Constitution of the Charities HR Network details all structure, governance and management requirements.

Public benefit disclosures (Why are we here)?

The objects of the Charity are, for the public benefit, to advance the education in and to promote improved standards of human resources (HR) management in charities and not for profit organisations with the aim of increasing employee engagement and their effectiveness and efficiency, including but not limited to:

- Acting as a representative of charities and not-for-profit organisations in relation to improving the standards of HR in the sector
- Providing a network of communication, training services and support to facilitate the improvement of HR management standards in charities and not for profit organisations.

We increasingly understand that supporting individual charities and HR practitioners is only part of our role. We are committed to working with partners such as the CIPD, NCVO, ACEVO and other infrastructure bodies to improve the overall employment landscape in the sector. In 2024/5 we will be actively supporting the work to develop a strategic workforce plan for the sector.

Objectives and activities

In the promotion of improved standards of HR practices, CHRN offers the following support.

Events currently available to members include:

- General meetings (including an opportunity to network), addressed by an invited speaker or workshop led by members on key topics facing HR professionals in the sector.
- An annual conference, providing a range of sessions on new ideas, case studies and a keynote speaker.
- An annual employment law update
- An annual update on pay and reward in the sector
- Three meetings per year for each of our special interest groups.
- Ad hoc workshops/Q&A/skills sessions on topics with a timely relevance to HR professionals in the sector. In that last year these have included updates on immigration, workshops on managing disputes and a highly popular mock employment tribunal.

Additional benefits:

- An opportunity to seek advice from within the diverse membership of organisations. In the last year we introduced an app platform for members to ask questions of peers. This has proved to be extremely popular with very high levels of engagement.
- Active support from our commercial partners
- We have arrangements to discounted services such as employment surveys from Agenda Consulting. In 2023/4 we added offerings from Brightmine(Cendex) and Croner-I (HR-inform) to the offers available to members.
- A members-only area on the CHRN website for event booking, raising queries and further resources.

Commercial partnerships

We recognise the importance for members of having access to resources and expertise that might not be possible within their organisations. This has led to the creation of a number of partnerships with commercial organisations and thought leaders. These primarily support our special interest groups and our full member events. They provide an insight into best practice both within and outside the sector. Our current Partners:

- Bates Wells – our headline legal partner
- Conor (Now NFP) – Partner to our learning and development SIG
- Diverse Matters – Partner to our D,E&I SIG
- TPP – Partner to our Recruitment SIG
- Talex - Partner to our Reward SIG

We also have a relationship with Agenda Consulting (now aWorkBuzz company) and Perry Timms HR (PTHR). Agenda support with insights on employee surveys and conduct primary research on behalf of the Network. Perry Timms is a long-standing supporter and advocate of the Network. As the no.1 HR Magazine thought leader we are delighted that Parry actively supports the Network. In 2023 he was able to secure a number of high profile speakers for our annual conference.

Achievements and performance

Membership of the network has continued to grow, with strong engagement across an increasing number of activities and events.

The Charities HR Network had 138 members at the close of the 2023/24 financial year, an increase of 13 from 125 at the close of 2022/23.

The following activities and events took place in 2023/24:

With a number of new trustees coming on board and other changes in the Network we have taken the time this year to reflect on our purpose and our vision going forward. We were delighted to be supported in this work by Perry Timms (no.1 Most influential thinker in HR Magazine 2023) who spent a brilliant day with us reflecting both on our history but most importantly our vision for the future. Coming out of this work is our vision for the future of the CHRN:

“Supporting charity sector people professionals to engage with what matters now, and to influence and shape the future of our sector and our profession.”

We believe this captures our ambition both to grow and develop HR practice in the sector but also as a result of that to develop the sector as a whole.

Special Interest Groups:

SIGs are at the heart of our aspiration to support the whole of the HR teams within our members organisations. Initially introduced in 2020 these have expanded to include:

- Recruitment and retention
- Reward
- Diversity, equity and inclusion
- Learning and Development

There are plans to expand this in 2024 to include a SIG for our larger charity members. The SIGs provide opportunities for the specialists in the larger HR functions to come together to consider topical content. The groups are also open to other member practitioners to join on an ad-hoc basis.

2023 Conference:

In October 2023 we were delighted to welcome over 80 colleagues to our first face to face conference event since the pandemic. This was a fantastic event and members were very positive about it, particularly enjoying the opportunity to connect with peers. The theme for the event was **HR at its best: attracting, developing and retaining talent in the third sector** and the keynote speaker was Adam Stanbury from the CIPD. Adam was joined by a number of our partners (PTHR, TPP, Agenda) and Wavelength, speaking on key issues.

Other events:

This year we also launched a series of events from our partners Bates Wells supporting mid-level and single-handed practitioners with their core HR skills. The highlight of this was a face a to face mock employment tribunal that was attended by 34 of our members and the feedback was so positive that it is being repeated in 2024.

The following 27 member events took place in 2023/24, with dates and attendance figures included:

Date	Event	Attendance
04/05/2023	L&D group	22
16/05/2023	BW skills - managing performance and absence	64
17/05/2023	DEI group	35
24/05/2023	Members meeting	25
07/06/2023	Recruitment group	21
29/06/2023	Reward group	27
04/06/2023	BW skills - managing redundancies and restructures	17
11/06/2023	DEI group	14
27/07/2023	L&D group	13
12/09/2023	Recruitment group	16
14/09/2023	Reward group	21
05/10/2023	L&D group	20
17/10/2023	BW skills - TUPE	12
18/10/2023	DEI group	23
09/11/2023	Reward group	20
14/11/2023	BW Mock Employment Tribunal - in person	34
16/11/2023	Recruitment group	15
21/11/2023	Members Meeting - Charity Interns project	16
16/01/2024	BW skills - Immigration	12
23/01/2024	Employment Law Update	50
25/01/2024	L&D group	26
01/02/2024	Recruitment group	14
19/02/2024	AI meeting	26
21/02/2024	DEI group	26
28/02/2024	Reward group	30
14/03/2024	CIPD Lunch & Learn	12
19/03/2024	Members Meeting Pay & Reward	36

Financial Review

A 3% increase in membership was approved for the year beginning 1st April 2023.

Growing our revenue is critical to the longer-term sustainability of the Network. We are keen to grow our revenue by growing our membership and by targeted commercial partnerships. We recognise that although we believe they offer exceptional value some organisations may struggle to retain membership if the fees increase too much. We will continue to monitor this but to date we have managed to maintain over 90% of our members year on year and have continued to grow absolute member numbers.

Key risks and uncertainties disclosures

CHRN's risk exposure is very low as no staff are employed, services provided are not subject to IR35 regulations and a full financial audit is not required for our level of income/expenditure. The main financial risk would relate to unexpected falling membership or corporate sponsorship contributions.

A full risk register will be produced during 2024/5 and will be available for members to review.

Plans for 2024/5

A full programme of members meetings, special interest groups, ad hoc meetings and annual conference are planned for 2024/25, with meetings anticipated to remain online, with the exception of the conference.

2024/5 will see the introduction of:

- A new Special Interest group for larger charities, supported by PTHR,
- An offering (to be confirmed) for HR colleagues who have volunteering as part of their portfolio

With the new board members in place we will be undertaking two strategic reviews of our ways of working. These are:

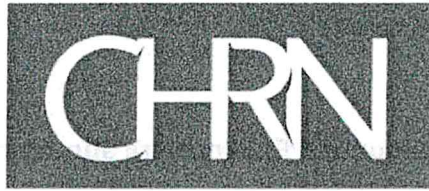
- **Our employment model.** Knowing that we have enough resource to support and grow the network is critical. Clearly, as a small charity ourselves we are looking to deliver this in the most cost-effective way possible.
- **Our commercial partnership approach.** Over the last 4 years we have grown our commercial partnerships from a base of effectively zero in 2019/20. This year we will be looking to see how we can maximise revenue for the Network (to achieve the above) whilst securing new and exceptional products and offers for members. One key focus will be our annual conference event which following 2020 is now the only charity specific HR event.

Reserves

The agreed level of reserves was set at a minimum of 3 months expenditure (infrastructure, CEO and Co-ordinator costs) in the eventuality of closing the network, up to 6 months, at which point the Finance Committee would scrutinise the networks financial position.

Material items

The only material item owned by CHRN is a laptop used by the Co-ordinator. This is 4 years old, depreciating in value and now out of an extended warranty.



Statement of Financial Activities

Income and Expenditure for year ended 31st March 2024

Income	
Associate membership fees * see note 1	29828.00
Corporate associates * see note 2	11550.00
Total income	41378.00
Expenditure	
Trustee insurance * see note 3	372.07
Website hosting	288.00
Office 365 and zoom licenses * see note 4	393.48
Guild licenses	588.00
Membership of Charity Finance Group	106.00
Co-ordinator fees (Lisa Lavender)	15632.10
CFG/other training	25.00
Interim CEO fees (Peter Reeve)	10933.20
Additional administration support	1705.32
Travel expenses	1183.86
Event expenses	5279.77
Bates Wells – registered address	330.00
Bates Wells – trademarks registry	3458.24
Strategic planning and infrastructure development projects	3240.00
Total expenditure	43535.04
Income over expenditure for the year	
Balance brought forward from 2022-23	16296.77
Total funds carried forward to 2024/25	14139.73

Co-ordinator: Lisa Lavender

Treasurer: Jane Gould

Independent examiner: *William Lewis AS*

Examiner's signature: *[Signature]*

Date: *25/10/24*

Chair of CHRN Board of Trustees: *MARTYN DICKER*

Chair's signature: *[Signature]*

Date: *5/11/24*

Notes for the Independent Examiner.

Relating to sections of the Income & Expenditure summary.

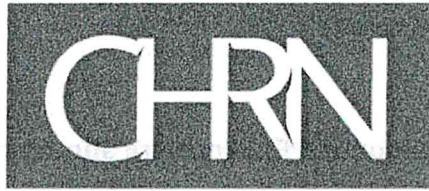
1. The associate membership fee income includes a number of early renewal payments made by members before 01/04/2023. This amounted to £6,713.00 (from 15⁻³⁰ March 2023, excluding those marked as 'correct year') and is highlighted in the relevant bank statements.
Two members also made payments in error – see additional comments below.
2. Two corporate sponsors (Agenda Consulting and Connor) paid their sponsorship fees early (on 27/03/2023 and 30/03/2023 respectively) amounting to £2,000.00. These have been included in the 2023/24 income.
3. The invoice for our Trustee Insurance had been calculated incorrectly, but we were not notified of the error until after the invoice had been paid (13 Feb 2024). A cheque for £222.98 was received to reimburse CHRN for the difference in March.
4. The increase in the monthly Microsoft 365 license fees from November 2023 reflects the purchase of additional Business-Pro licenses for an administrator and CEO, to support improved infrastructure.

Additional comments.

Two member organisations made payments in error that were reimbursed during the year. The amounts below have not been included in the income and expenditure totals.

Terence Higgins Trust paid their membership renewal in duplicate on 31/05/2023. £212 was subsequently reimbursed to them on 09/11/2023.

Ripple Effect made a payment in error of £280.02 on 10/11/2023, unrelated to their membership fee. The amount was reimbursed on 21/11/2023.



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