

**Trustees' Annual Report for the period
19th August 2021 – 31st March 2022**

**International Institute for Psychiatric Drug Withdrawal (IIPDW)
Registered Charity 1195569**

This Trustees' Report covers the period starting on the day of registration with the Charity Commission of England and Wales (19th August 2021) to the end of the financial year (31st March 2022).

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Purposes of the Charity:

IIPDW aims to address the current lack of knowledge about psychiatric drug withdrawal among the public and in clinical and therapeutic settings, and the lack of services to support people to safely stop these medications. It also aims to encourage evidence-based informed consent to patients as they decide to start or stop taking a psychiatric drug.

The aims stated in our governing document are:

- Support research and practice-based knowledge that will facilitate safe reduction of and withdrawal from psychiatric drugs.
- Contribute to evidence-based practices for reduction of and withdrawal from psychiatric drugs, and facilitate their inclusion in general practice guidelines.
- Support the human right to informed choice with regard to psychiatric drugs.
- Promote practices that help families, friends, and practitioners support safe reduction of and withdrawal from psychiatric drugs, and take into account relational and social aspects essential to this process.

Main activities:

This year IIPDW was focused on our application to register as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) with the Charity Commission of England and Wales. Due to the impact of the covid pandemic this application took some time and we received our certificate on 19th August 2021.

Prior to this, IIPDW's work was carried out by a registered non-profit foundation in Sweden with identical name and aims. It was founded in 2017 and its Board shared many of the same members as IIPDW in the UK. In early 2021, after losing its only Swedish-speaking board member, the board voted to relocate to the UK for language reasons and because the UK is making progress in the field of psychiatric drug withdrawal.

As soon as IIPDW was registered with the Charity Commission and its UK bank account opened, the funds from the pre-existing Swedish foundation were transferred to the UK and the Swedish foundation was closed according to its governing document.

Once registered with the Charity Commission, IIPDW recruited for a new Trustee within England and Wales. In November 2021 Stevie Lewis joined the Board. Stevie Lewis is a campaigner and author with lived experience of withdrawal.

Throughout the process of settling in the UK, IIPDW continued to facilitate a quarterly Network Meeting on Zoom to enable researchers, practitioners, clinicians and other experts around the world to share their knowledge, experience and latest developments in their countries. Over 60 experts from 20 countries have attended one or more of these meetings. We call them Associates.

These quarterly meetings were also an opportunity for the Board and Associates to collaborate on IIPDW's ongoing work and generate ideas for future projects.

IIPDW also continued with its work in pursuit of its aims: contributing to local and national clinical guidelines, hosting a series of informative public events, and creating an information video about antidepressant withdrawal aimed at prescribers.

Statutory Declaration:

Our Trustees have done their duty in having due regard for the Charity Commission's Guidance on Public Benefit (PB1-3), and all activities undertaken have been for the public benefit by directly furthering the stated purposes of IIPDW.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Contribution made by volunteers:

IIPDW is grateful to its volunteers who gave their time and expertise for free to further IIPDW's aims, in particular those who contributed to IIPDW's submission to the NICE Guideline consultation and expert panellists at our public online events.

Many of our volunteers have personal experience of psychiatric drug withdrawal. A core value of IIPDW is that knowledge gained by personal experience is as valuable as professional or academic knowledge.

Statement of Anti-Oppression:

IIPDW is committed as an organisation to pursuing and embodying the values of social justice. As part of our work to support, research, and educate about psychiatric drug withdrawal, we see it as integral to uphold the values of anti-racism, gender equity, and support of civil rights for people who identify as LGBTQ+.

ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

NICE Clinical Guidelines

IIPDW was a registered stakeholder for the draft NICE Guidelines 'Medicines associated with dependence or withdrawal symptoms: Safe prescribing and withdrawal management for adults', published April 2022.

Associates Dr Mark Horowitz and Adele Framer, on behalf of IIPDW, put together a submission, submitted to the NICE Committee in December 2021.

Council of Europe Report

IIPDW Trustees Professor John Read and Stevie Lewis co-wrote a response on behalf of IIPDW to the draft report by the Council of Europe, titled 'Addiction to Prescribed Medicines'.

Our response highlighted the need for the Council of Europe to pay more attention to antidepressants as dependence-forming drugs, and to distinguish between addiction and dependence. It also highlighted the need for *careful* and *safe* withdrawal.

Our comments were accepted by the Council and a new draft report was published in February 2022, whereby Councillor Joseph O'Reilly was seeking signatures in agreement with the following amendment:

In paragraph 2.2. of the draft recommendation, replace "of addiction to prescribed medicines" with: "of addiction to/dependence on prescribed medicines, including support to withdraw carefully and safely"

The final report was due to be published in March 2022 but was delayed due to the outbreak of war in Ukraine.

We consider the amendment to the draft as a significant step towards antidepressant withdrawal being properly addressed in clinical guidelines and policy across Europe, potentially laying the foundation for the provision of relevant services by European governments.

Online Public Events

We've continued to co-host a series of public online 'Town Hall' panel discussions which each focus on a specific area of psychiatric drug withdrawal. These events give a platform for a range of experts to share knowledge, with opportunity for audience questions.

These Town Halls are co-hosted with Mad in America, an organisation with a large online following allowing IIPDW to reach a far greater number of people in the UK and internationally. They also generate income as there is a suggested donation for each ticket, however free access is available to all.

These Town Halls promote a greater level of knowledge about safe psychiatric drug withdrawal amongst the public, supporting patients to become better informed and their friends and family to support them better in withdrawal and in making decisions about psychiatric drugs.

Anonymised feedback from these Town Halls includes:

14th May 2021 Post-Withdrawal Experiences (488 attendees)

"I am beyond grateful to you all for this seminar. It has been so helpful, informative and important for individuals who plan to try a future taper. I cannot thank you all enough for what you are doing."

"Thank you so much for your expertise and sharing your stories! And thank you even more for discussing protracted withdrawal. I am 15 years clean off of Xanax/alprazolam (and all other chemicals that affect me from the neck up including alcohol) and benzo withdrawal symptoms still occasionally pop up - and sometimes can last up to a month. And it makes it even more difficult when people around me don't understand what I'm going through (at times I wonder if they even believe me). So I am grateful to be here with you all who may also have similar struggles. Makes me feel less alone. Thank you."

"Thank you so much all of you for this amazing discussion, sharing, witnessing, informing which has been done with so much respect and so much understanding for all the people, doctors, patients, family, all of us who in a way are being part of this journey!"

"Thankyou for this important discussion. I think there are absences and gaps in knowledge, experience and practice that need to be voiced and included in the global debate. I have shared this discussion widely amongst my contacts as I spend the day at home resting, having made the deeply personal decision in collaboration with my doctor to halve the dose. We do not need to suffer. All the best. Kind regards."

13th August 2021 Children and Psychiatric Drugs (293 attendees)

“Thank you so much for deepening my understanding of what happened to me esp. Laura - ditto!”

“Thanks to the entire panel for sharing such a great discussion. I was put on Paxil when I was 10 years old and now at 33, I'm tapering off with the help of meditation, supplements, clean diet, etc. I feel tricked and betrayed in many ways but I'm looking forward and am eager to heal.”

“Thank you everyone for your contribution to this very fascinating and urgent social and medical issue. And thank you, especially Laura for your very inspirational and extraordinary story. Thank you so much for your honest and absolutely comprehensive vision for the future of this messy business.”

“A wonderful discussion. Such a relief to know this community exists. I thank you all deeply.”

Information Video on Antidepressant Withdrawal Syndrome

Board Member Stevie Lewis and Associate Dr Mark Horowitz co-created an hour-long information video on antidepressant withdrawal syndrome and its management, which was finished in March 2022 and has since been shared with the public.

The video can be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PSjYH044-2Q>

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Review of Financial Position:

Our Charity Registration number was received on 19th August 2021. It was only then that we could apply for a charity bank account with Natwest bank, an application process that took several months. Hence our UK bank account was opened in February 2022.

All financial activity for our charity during this financial year took place in February and March 2022.

We received two significant donations from overseas non-profit organisations with allied aims, plus a small donation from a member of the public via the online donation form on our website.

This left us at the end of the financial year with £4876 cash funds in our bank account, which is enough to support IIPDW's operations for just over five months. This allows time to develop new sources of income and fundraise.

Moving into the next financial year, foreseen outgoings will be a monthly fee of £850 for our Administrator, a monthly charge of £18.40 for our Gmail account and an annual charge in August 2022 for our Zoom account of £143.88. This will be covered by the cash funds remaining in our bank account, plus public donations and income from online events.

Reserves Policy:

IIPDW will retain where possible £5400 of unrestricted funds in its only bank account which represents 6 months of the Administrator's fee. This allows 6 months for IIPDW to fundraise to continue its basic operations, and therefore its wider work in pursuit of its aims.

Principle Sources of Funds:

This financial year, the principle source of funds has been two large donations from allied non-profit organisations internationally:

£2474 on 17th March 2022 from ANIMA, a non-profit NGO in Greece

£3195 on 23rd March from IIPDW in Sweden, a non-profit foundation with the same name and aims as our UK charity, as explained above.

The funds from Sweden originally came from private donations and a grant from US-based grant-making body Open Excellence. This grant was for the costs of making the information video about antidepressant withdrawal, and for providing a number of free tickets to our upcoming conference in May 2022 for people with lived experience of taking psychiatric drugs. As the grant made up a large part of the Swedish donation, the donation is entered as restricted funds in our annual accounts.

Principal Risks Facing the Charity:

In March 2022 we lost £800 to financial fraud when we opened our new bank account. Natwest posted a debit card to our registered London address, from where it was stolen, despite our request for it to be sent to the cardholder's home.

Our Registered Address is a paid mail-forwarding service. We use this service as we are required to publish an address on the Charity Commission's public database and we choose not to publish our home address.

The debit card was used to make cash withdrawals at a cash point nearby to the registered address. We reported this incident immediately to the police and to Natwest's fraud department. We were fully reimbursed by Natwest on 22nd April 2022.

We cancelled our subscription to the registered address, employed a new mail-forwarding service, and provided a home address for Natwest correspondence.

Review of Internal Financial Controls:

Our bank account requires two signatures for every payment, and we have three possible signatories. Each signatory has a debit card stored safely in their homes, and access to online banking which uses biometric identification via the app.

All payments are also authorised by two signatories on email, which provides a record of authorisation, and all invoices are filed in date order.

At our monthly Board Meeting the Treasurer reports all income and outgoings. Any new spending decisions are voted on by the Board.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing Document: Constitution (Foundation Model)

Constitution: Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)

Trustee Appointment: when looking for new Trustees, the Board advertises this at our quarterly 'Network Meeting' with our informal, non-voting membership called 'Associates' who are invited to apply or suggest relevant people to apply.

Once a prospective Trustee has applied in writing by sharing a bit about their experience, skills and knowledge, the Trustee Board votes to appoint them.

Once appointed, Trustees must read through the Trustee Welcome Pack which includes:

- the Governing Document
- our Conflict of Interest Policy
- our Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy
- our Board Code of Conduct document which they're required to sign
- our organisation's Statement of Anti-Oppression
- a written overview of the Trustee Role, Public Benefit, Charity Accounting and Reporting with links to relevant guidance
- CC4 What Makes a Charity in PDF

They must also sign the Trustee Declaration created by the Charity Commission.

This process is compliant with the terms of our Governing Document:

10. Appointment of charity trustees

- (1) Apart from the first charity trustees, every trustee must be appointed for a term of 3 years by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the charity trustees.
- (2) In selecting individuals for appointment as charity trustees, the charity trustees must have regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the CIO.

Associates: The Board of Trustees work closely with an international network of about 60 Associates (an informal non-voting membership). For specific areas of work, a Board Member will lead a delegation of Associates.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

International Institute for Psychiatric Drug Withdrawal (commonly abbreviated to IIPDW)

Charity number: Registered Charity 1195569

Website: <https://iipdw.org>

Address: 5 Brayford Square, London E1 0SG

Trustees:

Professor John Read, Chair
Dr Ruth Cooper, Treasurer
Olga Runciman
Dr Swapnil Gupta
Kleonike Giannakopoulou
Stevie Lewis, from 2nd November 2021

Senior Staff Member: Administrator, Lucy Fernandes

Additional info: We are a registered UK Institute approved by Companies House.

EXEMPTIONS FROM DISCLOSURE

None

OTHER OPTIONAL INFORMATION

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy:

IIPDW has a Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy and considers the welfare of any vulnerable adults volunteering for IIPDW.

Conflict of Interest Policy:

IIPDW has a Conflict of Interest policy, and there are no conflicts between the interests of IIPDW and any personal, professional or business interest of Trustees.

Medical information:

At times IIPDW shares information and resources of a medical nature, to enable patients and families to have more informed conversations with their prescribers. IIPDW does not ever give individual medical advice.

Campaigning and Political Activity

IIPDW may at times seek to influence decisions made by government or public bodies such as NHS Trusts. Although this work doesn't amount to campaigning, IIPDW Trustees follow Charity Commission guidance on 'Campaigning and Political Activity'.

DECLARATIONS

The Trustees declare that they have approved the trustee's report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature(s)



Full name(s) Professor John Read

Position(s) Chairperson, IIPDW

Date 19.1.2023



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

International Institute for Psychiatric Drug Withdrawal

1195569

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period
from

Period start date
19/08/2021

To

Period end date
31/03/2022

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Donation from Swedish Foundation	-	3,195	-	3,195	-
Donation from ANIMA	2,474	-	-	2,474	-
Stripe Online Donations	7	-	-	7	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	2,481	3,195	-	5,676	-
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	2,481	3,195	-	5,676	-
A3 Payments					
Miscellaneous	800	-	-	800	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	800	-	-	800	-
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	800	-	-	800	-
Net of receipts/(payments)	1,681	3,195	-	4,876	-
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	-	-	-	-	-
Cash funds this year end	1,681	3,195	-	4,876	-

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	Natwest	1,681	3,195	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	1,681	3,195	-

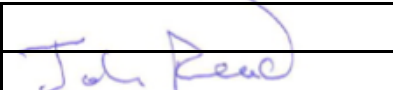
	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
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 liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

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

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
	Professor John Read	19th January 2023