



Gifted Women

Trustees Annual Report

Report of the Management Committee for the year ended 30th September 2024

The Management Committee presents its Trustees' report and audited financial statements for the year ended 30th September 2024

Reference and Administrative Information

Charity Name: Gifted Women

Charity registration number: 1195795

Registered Office: 41 Houndiscombe Road, Mutley, Plymouth PL4 6EX

Operational Address: Mutley Baptist Church, Mutley Plain, Plymouth, PL4 6LB

Introduction

Our Trustee Annual Report for 2023-2024 highlights a year of meaningful progress and dedication towards fulfilling Gifted Women's mission: Unlocking doors to employment for women overcoming multiple disadvantage. This report captures our accomplishments, outlines our financial performance, and shares insights into our governance and future aspirations. Together, we have made a tangible impact in the Plymouth area, thanks to the unwavering support of our trustees, staff, volunteers and stakeholders, in addition to the determination and hard work of our beneficiaries.

Our Aims and objectives

Purposes and Aims

Our charity's purposes as set out in the objects contained in the company's articles of association are:

- The relief of unemployment for the benefit of the public amongst unemployed women who are in recovery from addiction and/or have criminal convictions and/or are homeless by the provision of opportunities for work experience placements, personal development and improved employability.

Ensuring our work delivers our aims

We review our aims, objectives and activities each year. This review looks at what we achieved and the outcomes of our work in the previous period. The review looks at the success of each key activity and the benefits they have brought to those groups of people we are set up to help. The review also helps us ensure our aims, objectives and activities remained focused on our stated purposes.

We have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing our aims and objectives and in planning our future activities. In

particular, the trustees consider how planned activities will contribute to the aims and objectives they have set.

Structure, Governance and Management

Governing Document

The organisation is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), registered as a charity on 13th September 2021. The governing document, our constitution, remains unchanged since its original publication.

Organisational Structure

Gifted Women is led by a Management Committee of six trustees who meet every two months. A finance sub-committee also meets separately every two months. The trustees are responsible for setting the charity's strategic direction and policies. The current committee comprises six members with a diverse range of professional and lived experience relevant to the charity's work.

Recruitment and Appointment of the Management Committee

The trustees, known as the Management Committee members, are elected for a three-year term and must be re-elected at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). All trustees serve on a voluntary basis and do not receive any financial benefits from the charity. Any expenses claimed are disclosed in the charity's financial accounts.

The board includes trustees with lived experience of multiple disadvantages and recovery, and 83% of the trustees are women. 33% of the trustees have direct lived experience of multiple disadvantage, and the board also brings substantial professional expertise, including business, commercial, and strategic skills pertinent to the sector and operation.

Responsibilities of the Management Committee

In accordance with charity law, the Management Committee is responsible for preparing the charity's financial statements each year, ensuring they give a true and fair view of the charity's financial position. This includes:

- Selecting appropriate accounting policies and applying them consistently.
- Making reasonable and prudent judgements and estimates.
- Preparing the financial statements on the assumption that the charity will continue operating unless there is evidence to the contrary.

The committee is also responsible for maintaining accurate financial records, ensuring compliance with the Companies Act 1985, and safeguarding the charity's assets. This includes taking reasonable steps to prevent and detect fraud or other irregularities.

Members of the Management Committee

As required by charity law, the trustees confirm the following:

- To the best of our knowledge, there is no relevant audit information that the charity's auditors are unaware of.
- We have taken all necessary steps to ensure that we are aware of any relevant audit information and that the auditors are fully informed.

Members of the Management Committee are:

- Jenny Adjene – Chair of Trustees / Foudner
- Richard Greaves – Treasurer & Trustee
- Dr. Mary Embleton - Trustee & Safeguarding Lead for Gifted Women
- Julie Howes - Trustee
- Katie Sperring - Trustee
- Caroline Danks - Trustee

Risk Management

Effective risk management is essential to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of our organisation.

The Management Committee has started to conduct a review of the major risks to which the charity is exposed. A risk register has been drafted for forthcoming review, and will be updated at least annually.

During 2023-2024, we identified and addressed several key risks:

1. Financial Sustainability:

- **Risk Identified:** A potential shortfall in funding due to economic uncertainties and reduced donor contributions.
- **Mitigation:** We diversified our income streams by introducing new fundraising initiatives, strengthening corporate partnerships, and applying for multi-year grants. Additionally, regular financial forecasting ensured timely adjustments to spending.

2. **Operational Continuity:**

- **Risk Identified:** Disruptions in service delivery caused by staff shortages or increased demand for services.
- **Mitigation:** We implemented a robust recruitment and retention plan, offering professional development opportunities to enhance staff engagement. Additionally, we expanded our volunteer base to provide supplementary support.

3. **Data Security and Privacy:**

- **Risk Identified:** Exposure to cyber threats and non-compliance with data protection regulations.
- **Mitigation:** We adopted secure, cloud-based systems for data storage and communication, ensuring access is restricted to authorised personnel. Our team reviewed and updated internal data handling policies to align with best practices and GDPR requirements. Additionally, we conducted regular internal reviews of sensitive data to identify and address vulnerabilities.

4. **Reputational Risk:**

- **Risk Identified:** Negative public perception due to misunderstandings about our operations or isolated incidents.
- **Mitigation:** We prioritised transparency through consistent communication with stakeholders and maintained a proactive approach to resolving issues promptly.

By addressing these risks proactively, we have safeguarded our ability to deliver on our mission while maintaining the trust of our beneficiaries, donors, and partners.

Our mission:

Gifted Women's mission is to unlock doors to employment for women overcoming multiple disadvantage.

This year, our activities have directly supported this mission by creating opportunities for women to build employability skills and confidence. We also focused on fostering relationships with local employers who are committed to offering job opportunities, helping women move towards paid employment and improving their lives. To achieve these goals, we implemented the following strategies:

- **Running 12-week group programmes** for women who have experienced multiple disadvantages, focusing on employability, confidence-building, and fostering community/peer support.
- **Providing one-to-one support** to help women overcome barriers to employment.

- **Collaborating with partner agencies** to ensure a comprehensive range of support is available, tailored to the specific needs of our beneficiaries.
- **Working with employers** to create job opportunities that enable women to move toward and secure paid employment.
- **Hosting weekly employability drop-in sessions** to provide women with dedicated time, space, and support to focus on their goals.
- **Facilitating weekly social groups** where women can grow in confidence and develop a supportive network of peers.

Who used and benefited from our services?

Eligibility for our services is termed as women overcoming ‘multiple disadvantage.’

Multiple disadvantage

The term "multiple disadvantage" refers to individuals facing intersecting inequalities, such as involvement with the criminal justice system, problematic substance use, and homelessness. These challenges are often rooted in trauma, and women working with Gifted Women frequently have experienced domestic abuse, sexual violence, mental ill health, the removal of children into care, and criminal exploitation.

Although women overcoming multiple disadvantage typically encounter many barriers when it comes to entering the workforce, our charity is built on the foundation of certainty that every woman is gifted, unique and has a wealth of skills and experiences to offer the working world. We see employment as one of the ways women can regain their power, break the cycle and build a future which is positive and fulfilling.

The following data shows the specific barriers to employment that women working with us during this period faced:

- 51% of women experienced homelessness
- 57% of women experienced problematic substance use
- 51% of women had experience of the criminal justice system
- 86% of women had experience of domestic abuse
- 18% of women had experience of removal of their children
- 27% of women told us they needed help with reading and writing
- 29% of women told us they needed help with computers

One woman reflected on her mindset before the start of her Gifted Women journey:

“I was just stuck thinking that going back to prison was probably going to be better than what I was living like”

A gendered approach

336,000 adults experience multiple disadvantage each year. Of the 17,000 people who experience the most severe forms of disadvantage each year, 70% are women. (Source: Lankelly Chase, 2020). Women are more likely to have experienced one or more form of primary disadvantage in their adulthood than men. Women are much more likely than men to have faced violence and abuse in their adult lives, and more likely faced violence and abuse in combination with poor mental health and/or homelessness. On top of this, women face unique additional barriers to employment, including gender bias, unequal pay, caregiving responsibilities, limited access to leadership roles, and workplace harassment, which are less frequently encountered or experienced differently by men.

Geographical location

Our objects and funding limit the services we provide to residents in Devon, with a focus on Plymouth and surrounding areas. Plymouth is in the bottom 30% of the index of multiple deprivation with pockets of very high deprivation with five neighbourhoods, including where our site is based, falling into the top 4% of the most deprived areas in England (IMD 2019).

We have within Plymouth fantastic organisations that are supporting women overcome multiple disadvantage and trauma. We are pleased to be part of Plymouth's Trauma Informed Network and continue to build some extremely valuable partnerships with a number of organisations working in this space. We have fostered relationships with a host of services who refer into the Gifted Women programme, as well as those who can support women working with us with areas outside of our remit (for example, specialist debt support, benefits advice, criminal justice guidance and much more).

Plymouth employers also continue to show us that there is an appetite for supporting our work, recruiting people from more diverse backgrounds and having the chance to give back to the community.

Our activities

Our main activities and beneficiaries are described below. All our charitable activities focus on employability and creating pathways for women to access the workplace.

Outreach work

Gifted Women accepts referrals from partners across the city, as well as self-referrals. Taking a trauma-informed approach, our outreach work is relational and informal while we give both parties (the charity and the beneficiaries) to learn more about one another. As well as meeting many women in the community, in cafés and green spaces, this year we visited lots of partners across the city, to share our work with their staff and women. We hosted a workshop for the

probation service, visited Trevi Women, Harbour, Hamoaze House, The Olive Project, Ahimsa, Community Centres, Social Prescribers, Plymouth Hope, Job Centre and many more.

Group work programme

Our employability programme provided services for 50 women during this period which represents a 39% increase from the previous year.

The group work programme was delivered by a team of highly skilled, engaging and experienced facilitators, who deliver our programme with a trauma-informed approach, making it accessible to women for whom other employability initiatives might not be suitable.

We ran 4 courses this year which each took place over 11 weeks and comprised 12 sessions. The completion rate for our course this year was 88% which is a great reflection of the quality of delivery and content..

We co-produced the curriculum with women with lived experience of multiple disadvantage and every time we run the course we take great care in reflective practice, continuously developing sessions based on women's feedback and needs.

Bringing women together in these 4 cohorts enabled women who are pursuing a more positive path to unite without any stigma or judgement. Each woman's unique experiences and background is incredibly valuable in supporting other women's own journey - as a tight knit community working together to build confidence, increase self-esteem, gain life skills and improve wellbeing, with women supporting one another to take their first steps into / back into the workplace after overcoming serious hardships.

Speaking to the sense of community and belonging that is central to Gifted Women, one woman said:

"I have a lot of protected characteristics, I'm female, Mixed Race, queer, autistic person and have a physical disability but I have always felt included, welcome, equal, cared for and valued by everyone at Gifted Women. There are a multitude of women from different backgrounds and I really think that is one of the beauties of Gifted Women."

Upon finishing the course, one woman said:

"I wanted to say a huge thank you for Gifted Women. It has been amazing and given me such hope for the future which I thought I'd lost. That's down to the beautiful women who have been running our course. I also cannot believe the gift of a laptop and a phone. Still lost for words..."

Young Women's Pilot Programme

During this year we piloted a special version of the course for young women aged 18-25, with tailored content and more focus on varied activities including outdoor based learning. We partnered with Plymouth City Council funded project Your Future who provided an intensive follow on course for the young women. 100% of the young women who completed the course reported an increase in confidence and said they felt more hopeful for the future. Overall, the pilot provided valuable learning about ways in which young women overcoming multiple disadvantage might like to learn and engage with our service. The pilot also provided valuable opportunity to foster relationships with youth organisations in the city.

1:1 Support

On completion of the Gifted Women programme, women worked with our skilled 1:1 worker to access support in overcoming barriers to employment which might be better addressed in a relational, more private way as opposed to in a group setting. This can include benefits calculations to understand the impact of working on finances, working together to reduce debt, gaining forms of ID which may be needed for employment and much more.

One woman said:

“The support that I have received from this charity is beyond anything I’ve ever had even from my own family. But the challenges that I face are issues to do with myself as every challenge is a chance for me to be able to grow and push myself so it’s scary but in a good way as the fear means I’m doing something that means something, and Gifted Women has given me the support to find my purpose, and you can’t put a price on that.”

Work experience placements

During this period we also partnered with local employers to offer women meaningful work experience placements, enabling them to put what they’re learning into practice and gain valuable insight into the world of work. Work placements were in a range of settings and were arranged to align with women's hopes for their future. A number of the women we worked with had never had the opportunity to gain employment before, due to lack of support, lack of education and qualifications, and other challenges as described above that keep women from reaching their potential.

26% of women this year completed a work experience placement.

Work experience placements start after women had finished the group work programme to retain momentum and provide an exciting next step after the course ends.

Employers understood Gifted Women's ethos and so knew that women have experienced barriers and acknowledged that partaking in a work placement was most often a big step for

women. We strived to coordinate work experience placements that were trauma-informed, meeting women's needs and providing a safe environment for them to build confidence in the workplace. Women were accompanied by staff at Gifted Women, to meet their prospective employer, and the team were also on hand to support for the duration of the work experience placement and help find solutions to any challenges that arose. Work placements were in most cases one day or two days a week for 8 weeks.

The purpose of the placements was for women to build routine, sense of purpose, grow in confidence and build relationships with employers. They also gave something positive for women's CVs and a means of obtaining a reference. On some occasions work placements lead to offers of paid work. Placements did not have any bearings on any benefits women were receiving (e.g. Universal Credit). This encouraged women to feel confident to give them a try and removed a significant barrier, which is the fear of being worse off financially, and disrupting benefits.

One woman texted us after her first day on work placement, saying:

"First day done. It was very busy and I was thrown straight in, but the staff are amazing and the customers really made my day. Thank you for all the support".

Community Drop-In Group

Our social drop-in group continued to be well utilised this year. The weekly drop-in group serves a number of functions including:

- Providing a 'taster' of our services for women who are considering joining our Employability Programme
- Giving women who are yet to start, or have finished the course, the chance to build or maintain access to peer support, routine and a sense of community and belonging.

The group has been designed with a social focus and we have hosted a wide range of activities including games, crafts, mindfulness sessions, empowerment talks, singing sessions, karate, yoga, and more.

One woman commented:

"I come to the drop ins on a Monday as it helps me to have a positive start to the week. It gives me something fun to do to start off what can be a stressful week..."

Our social drop-in group is typically attended by 12-15 women each week.

Employability Drop-In Group

This year we introduced a new weekly employability drop-in group, which enables women to self-direct the pace of their progress, rather than doing waiting for support during 1:1 sessions, which are more limited in frequency. Women can use our weekly employability drop-in group to work on their CV, search for jobs, complete course work, apply for roles or anything else. There are staff and peer mentors on hand to help and we have found that women appreciate this weekly opportunity to get things done in a supportive environment.

Our employability drop-in group is typically attended by 2-5 women each week.

One woman, not long after finishing our Employability Programme, wrote:

“I’m becoming the person I always wanted to be, but never had the opportunity.”

Another woman reflected:

“This has given me a chance at life again.”

Supporting women into paid work

When women are ready, Gifted Women can support them with pursuing and obtaining paid work. This is a personal choice for each woman and we are always careful to be led by her, while gently challenging and encouraging. Rather than securing jobs for women ourselves, our model focuses more on empowering women to take action on their own terms, while staff and volunteers (and indeed the wider community of women) ‘cheer on from the sidelines’. We believe that supporting women to develop these foundational skills of searching and applying for jobs of their own accord, equips them better for the long term, with skills reaching far beyond the scope of the 18 months of Gifted Women can offer.

Illustrating this point, one woman texted her worker in celebration to say:

*“Just wanted to let you know I have been offered a job at (*business name)! So happy! Couldn’t have done it without Gifted Women. I did all the steps to apply myself including filming myself for a video interview. I got all the skills from Gifted Women. Also, I’m 1.5 years sober this month!”*

Overcoming barriers

There is much brilliant support for employability in the city, including many statutory and commissioned services. We understand that we fit into this landscape as a vital piece of the puzzle, because women we work with face many barriers to accessing both support and employment. Removing barriers is at the heart of Gifted Women and one of the reasons women tell us what we do works.

This year we have provided / funded:

- 48 brand new laptops for women on our programme, so that women can stay connected,
- access courses, apply for jobs & more.
- Photo ID for 6 women, an essential for accessing employment.
- 1200 'day rider' bus passes, so that women can get to our courses, groups and 1:1 sessions
- Workwear / interview clothes for 21 women, so that they can feel as confident as possible at every step.

One woman wrote:

The bus tickets from Gifted Women have allowed me to access the support they offer. I live in Barne Barton and take 2 buses to get to the Monday group. I am always on a financial knife edge with no savings or money to spare. We live hand to mouth on our benefits and so I could not justify spending £6 on myself as that is the same amount as I spend on feeding a family of 5 in the evening. I feel that I would be depriving them of a meal. Accessing the group has improved my mental health and helped me cope with being made homeless and my mother dying of cancer. I used to be an alcoholic and I fear I could easily fall back into those ways, Gifted Women had given me a reason to be sober... I would not like to let my new friends down as we are all on this journey together. £6 for a day rider bus pass is an investment in the women that want to improve their lives by finding employment."

Peer Mentoring

This year, we have trained another group of women who have accessed our services to become Peer Mentors, empowering them to support women in our community through volunteering in our groups. Peer mentoring offers a unique opportunity for individuals to give back, share their personal experiences, and provide guidance in a safe, supportive environment. The training process not only equips them with valuable skills but also deepens their sense of purpose and connection to the community.

In February 2024 we facilitated Peer Mentor training for 8 women who had been through the Gifted Women employability programme. We commissioned Dr Beverley Gilbert of Cohort 4, to deliver the training, and provide a monthly group supervision thereafter.

One woman said:

'The training was brilliant and inspiring – it's invaluable learning – can & does save lives. It's given me food for thought and I'm looking forward to doing more in-depth work (as a Peer Mentor).'

Another woman reflected:

“The training was amazing, I really felt as if I got an understanding as to why using peer mentors can help a group thrive. It made me feel as if my experiences were valid and important and not something that I had to pretend didn't happen and to be ashamed of. I am looking forward to meeting other women and giving them the support that I have been given by gifted women. I am also honoured to be considered a peer to the brave and amazing women in the group, they are all inspirational and full of positive energy. I hope I can contribute to such a vibrant community of women, thank you for the opportunity.”

This powerful feedback highlights the profound impact that peer mentoring can have, not just on the women receiving support but also on those delivering it. Through peer mentoring, individuals are able to draw on their own experiences to help others, fostering a sense of empowerment, solidarity, and hope. As we continue to expand this programme, we are confident that it will play a vital role in creating a stronger, more resilient community.

Lived Experience Advisory Board

In August 2024 we formed our brand new Lived Experience Advisory Board.

The purpose of the board is to involve women with lived experience of multiple disadvantage, and of our programmes, at a strategic level and in operational design to help shape Gifted Women, providing objective feedback and ideas and ensuring that women's voices are central to decisions made, leading to even better outcomes for women.

The creation of the board supports our increased focus on trauma-informed practice, co-production and sharing power.

9 women have joined our Lived Experience Advisory Board. They have all accessed Gifted Women's services, and are at varying stages on their employability journey, with some already in paid employment and others working towards. Joining the Board is in itself, a positive activity towards employability for women, and something they can add to their CV.

The board is comprised of women with experience of multiple disadvantage including representation from women with experiences of prison, street homelessness, addiction, sex work and a young woman who is care-experienced.

It was important to us to have representation from women with marginalised identities / protected characteristics and as such, we have women who are racially minoritised, women who belong to the LGBTQ+ community, and women with disabilities.

Between the 9 women on our Advisory Board, they have accessed a significant number of services and continue to do so.

One woman wrote:

“It’s really nice to feel listened to, and use my experiences towards making things better for other women.”

Benefits to the individual

Outcomes during this period (01.10.2023 – 30.09.2024)

Throughout this period, we have been steadily improving how we collect data so that we can better evidence our impact and outcomes, ensuring our programmes are continuously responsive to the needs of the women we support.

The results from our entry and exit/progress surveys have shown encouraging signs of progress for the women participating in the Gifted Women employability programme. These outcomes reflect not only the success of the programme but also the transformational impact it has on individuals’ lives:

- 71% of women felt more ready for paid employment
- 89% of women reported an increase in confidence
- 75% of women felt an increased sense of purpose
- 79% of women felt they had more support around them
- 82% of women felt more hopeful for the future
- 26% of women completed a work placement
- 26% of women entered paid employment

These results are a testament to the programme’s success in addressing the complex needs of women facing significant barriers to employment. It is clear that the Gifted Women programme is not just about securing employment; it is about nurturing personal development, building confidence, and creating a supportive community where women can thrive.

In addition to these impressive figures, we have seen a further 7 women from previous cohorts move into paid employment during this period, many of whom found these opportunities through work placements or as a direct result of connections within our employer network. This highlights the lasting value of the support Gifted Women provides, not only during the programme but also in terms of ongoing opportunities and connections within the broader community.

Personal Stories of Transformation

One of the most powerful ways to measure the impact of our work is through the personal stories of the women whose lives are being changed. One participant shared:

"Gifted Women has made me feel accepted, despite everything that has happened in my past. I have been able to be myself and no longer feel afraid of living my best life. Being with women who have experienced difficulties in their lives, and seeing how their lives have improved, has given me the strength and confidence to rebuild my own life, and make it something for which I feel proud. I have completed the employability programme, and now attend the drop-in and other events as often as possible. I recently attended my first ever art exhibition, and belly laughed the afternoon away. Something I've not done in a very long time. I am also looking forward to the Plymouth University creative day, and look forward to much more. Through my attendance at these events I have met some very inspiring and amazing women, and find my social circle building up once again. I do not feel judged. I feel safe. I feel loved. The staff and women who attend Gifted Women have enabled me to see my true worth, and I cannot thank these amazing, inspirational, and strong women for being part of my journey and my new life."

This testimony highlights the profound emotional and social impact of the programme. For many women, being part of Gifted Women is not just about improving employment prospects; it's about regaining a sense of belonging, safety, and self-worth. The support provided goes far beyond the workplace and extends into areas of emotional healing, personal development, and the rebuilding of social connections.

Another participant, who has now been employed for over 6 months, shared:

"Without the ongoing support of Gifted Women, I probably would have gone back to offending. Thank you so much for believing in me and inspiring me to be more like you."

This powerful statement reflects the life-changing role that Gifted Women plays in breaking cycles of adversity. The ongoing support, belief, and encouragement from the charity have helped this individual to turn her life around and make long-term, positive changes. It highlights the importance of sustained, personalised support in helping individuals rebuild their lives and gain the confidence to overcome past challenges.

Benefits to the employer community

A more diverse workforce

Employers who have worked with us during this period came on board under the notion that everyone deserves a chance to contribute positively to society. Women in our community have acquired valuable skills and experiences during their lifetime, often shaped by experience of surviving in prison, completing rehabilitation and building their way out of homelessness. Women who work with us are motivated to rebuild their lives. By hiring them, employers can tap into a diverse talent pool, promote rehabilitation, and make a meaningful impact on society. Furthermore, providing employment opportunities to women who access our services can lead

to a more inclusive workforce and demonstrate a commitment to social responsibility and second chances.

After a work experience placement, we received this message from one employer:

“Having a gifted woman on work placement was an excellent experience for the team, allowing us to approach training from a slightly different angle. It was also wonderful to see the woman's growth and their confidence grow over their time with us.”

We have found new ways of working with employers this year, including through hosting interview course and mock interviews for women, in collaboration with a local construction firm, Ian Williams Ltd. The firm also supported us through team fundraising days and events, donating a generous £2000 in total over the period.

We have had a wide range of employers join our courses and workshops for our popular ‘Employers Panel’ session, as well as coming in to speak about wellbeing in the workplace, equality, diversity and inclusion and sector-specific talks. Bringing employers into our space has been a powerful exercise in breaking barriers for women and giving them confidence in speaking with a range of people they may not ordinarily come into contact with.

Training

This year our staff and volunteers have attended a number of varied training courses on topics including

- Trauma Informed Practice
- Adult Safeguarding
- Anti-racism
- Trauma-Informed Policy Making
- Resilience
- Shame Competence Training
- Information, Advice or Guidance
- Food hygiene
- Emergency First Aid at Work
- Mental Health First Aid

Staff and Volunteer Wellbeing

We acknowledge that working with communities who have experienced trauma and often have multiple unmet needs can be emotionally demanding. Our staff access clinical supervision to promote well-being, competence, and effectiveness in their roles. Clinical supervision provides a structured space for reflection, guidance, and support, enabling workers to process challenging

experiences, enhance their understanding of women's needs, and refine their working practices. This ongoing professional development fosters resilience, prevents burnout, and ultimately enhances the quality of care provided to vulnerable populations.

Furthermore, we have continued to work hard this year to foster a supportive and caring working environment, creating space for reflection, group supervision, and open discussion about vicarious trauma.

We are immensely grateful and proud to have a team who are so committed to seeing the best possible outcomes for women.

Financial Review

This year, the charity has continued to demonstrate resilience and growth despite the challenging financial landscape. Total income for the year reached £193,222, an 84% increase compared to the previous period (2022-2023 - £104,905). This growth was largely driven by successful applications for major grants, with the National Lottery Reaching Communities fund contributing £65,000 (the first installment of a 3-year commitment). Other notable contributions came from the Rank Foundation (£27,000 for a Time to Shine leader salary, and £10,340 for our social drop-in group), the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (£10,000), in addition to a range of smaller, but equally important, grants and donations from a variety of trusts and foundations.

Our total expenditure for the year was £124,779. While this represented a 39% increase compared to the previous year (£89,940, 2022-2023), the rise in expenditure reflects our expanding activities and the direct investment into programmes and services that support our mission. The charity has strategically invested in increasing its impact and outreach, which has resulted in greater operational costs, but these were carefully managed through sound financial oversight and planning.

The principal funding sources for the charity during this period were as follows:

- National Lottery Reaching Communities: £65,000
- Rank Foundation: £37,340
- Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner: £10,000
- Plymouth City Council Changing Futures: £10,000
- The Newby Trust: £5,000
- KFC Foundation: £2,500

Other grants and donations came from a diverse range of funders, including the Norman Family Charitable Trust (£1,000), the David Gibbons Foundation (£1,000), and the Noel Buxton Trust

(£2,000), as well as local supporters such as the Plymouth Ladies Charity Club (£500) and the Plymouth Public Dispensary (£1,000).

The charity continues to benefit from the generous support of our funders, and we are deeply grateful for their trust and partnership in helping us deliver vital services to the community.

Looking ahead, we are focused on sustaining and diversifying our income streams, ensuring that we can continue to meet the growing demand for our services. The financial health of the charity remains strong, and we remain committed to achieving our mission with fiscal responsibility, transparency, and accountability.

Reserves Policy

The trustees of Gifted Women have carefully examined the charity's requirements for reserves, considering the primary risks to the organisation and its operational sustainability. Guided by the Charity Commission's Charity Reserves: Building Resilience (CC19) framework, the trustees have adopted a robust reserves policy to ensure the charity's financial resilience while maintaining its commitment to delivering impactful services.

Gifted Women's reserves policy establishes that the charity will hold reserves equivalent to three months of running costs, plus the costs of meeting its statutory obligations in the event of closure. These funds are maintained in a separate savings account with a minimum 30-day notice for withdrawals, ensuring they remain accessible yet safeguarded for essential needs.

This approach balances the necessity of financial prudence with the flexibility to meet the needs of service users. The trustees have specifically considered the following factors in determining the reserves level:

- Organisational maturity: As a charity founded in 2021, Gifted Women is in the early stages of building long-term relationships with funders. A conservative reserves policy supports the charity as it establishes these connections.
- Operational experimentation: The organisation is still refining its model to provide the best opportunities for women to transition into employment, requiring financial agility.
- External funding challenges: The current funding environment is marked by instability, including reduced government contracts and an oversaturated trusts and foundations sector.

The reserves policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains fit for purpose, evolving alongside changes in the funding landscape and as the charity strengthens its funding partnerships.

Future plans

The charity plans to continue the activities outlined above in the forthcoming years, subject to securing satisfactory funding arrangements, ensuring the sustainability and ongoing impact of our work in supporting the communities we serve.

The charity plans to strengthen its network by building more relationships with partner organisations operating in this space, as well as engaging with local employers, to collaboratively create more meaningful opportunities for women participating in our programmes, supporting their pathways to employment, personal growth, and community integration.

The charity plans to focus on diversifying our income streams by exploring a range of opportunities, including building strategic corporate partnerships, expanding community fundraising initiatives, and evaluating the potential for commercial trading ventures to create sustainable and resilient financial support for our mission.

The charity plans to conduct a comprehensive policy review during the financial year of 2024/2025, aiming to ensure all policies remain up-to-date, align with current legislation and best practices, and effectively support the evolving needs of our beneficiaries and stakeholders.

The charity plans to further develop its anti-racism policy and strategy, ensuring they are embedded across all levels of the organisation. We will enhance our anti-racism training and engage with partners to promote equity, ensuring our services are inclusive and responsive to the diverse needs of our beneficiaries. Additionally, we will explore the possibility of creating and resourcing a protected space for women of colour within our community, fostering support through a sense of shared identity and empowerment.

Closing remarks

As we reflect on the successes of the past year, we are reminded of the positive impact we have made on individuals and communities alike. We are continually inspired by the strength and resilience of the women we support, who work tirelessly to overcome barriers and progress towards employment, breaking the cycle of disadvantage. We are deeply grateful to our staff, volunteers, partners, and supporters for their unwavering commitment. Looking ahead, we remain steadfast in our mission to unlock doors to employment for women overcoming multiple disadvantage, and we are excited for the opportunities the future holds.

Charity Registered number
1195795

Gifted Women

Annual Accounts

30 September 2024

Gifted Women
Legal and Administrative Details

Constitution

The charity was created as Charitable Incorporated Organisation on 13 September 2021.

Trustees

Jenny Adjene	Chairperson	Appointed 13/09/2021
Caroline Danks	Trustee	Appointed 01/02/2024
Katie Sperring	Trustee	Appointed 05/07/2023
Sarah Mackay	Trustee	Resigned February 2024
Julie Howes	Trustee	Appointed 02/01/2022
Richard Greaves	Trustee	Appointed 13/09/2021
Dr Mary Embleton	Trustee	Appointed 13/09/2021

Independent reviewers

Harold Duckworth & Co Ltd
41 Houndiscombe Road
Mutley
Plymouth
PL4 6EX

Charity number

1195795 Registered in England and Wales

Gifted Women
Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities
for the year ended 30 September 2024

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the terms of the Charities Act 2011 and the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008. Notwithstanding the explicit requirement in the extant statutory regulations, the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008, to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the SORP 2005, in view of the fact that the SORP 2005 has been withdrawn, the Trustees determined to interpret this responsibility as requiring them to follow current best practice and prepare the accounts according to the FRS 102 SORP (Statement of Recommended Practice for Accounting and Reporting by Charities) 2015 (as amended by the Bulletin issued in February 2016) .

In particular, charity law requires the Trustees, if they prepare accounts on an accruals basis, to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity as at the end of the financial year and of the surplus or deficit of the charity. In preparing those financial statements the Trustees are required to :-

- to prepare the accounts in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law).
- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business;
- state whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;

The law requires that the trustees must not approve the accounts unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the surplus or deficit of the charity for the year.

The Trustees are also responsible for maintaining adequate accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and which are sufficient to show and explain the charity's transactions and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with regulations made under the Charities Act 2011. 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.

The Trustees are also responsible for the contents of the Trustees' report, and the statutory responsibility of the Independent Examiner in relation to the Trustees' report is limited to examining the report and ensuring that , on the face of the report, there are no material inconsistencies with the figures disclosed in the financial statements.

Approved by the Trustees on:

Signed by
In capacity as chair

On

Gifted Women

Report of the Independent Examiner to the Trustees of the charity on the accounts for the period ended 30 September 2024

Respective responsibilities of the Trustees and the Independent Examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Act and that an independent examination is needed. The charity's gross income did not exceed £250,000 and I am qualified to undertake the examination.

It is my responsibility to:-

- a) examine the accounts under Section 145 of the Act;
- b) follow the procedures in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act and;
- c) 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, Report and Opinion

In connection with my examination, no material matters have come to my attention which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.
- the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities (applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102))

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Harold Duckworth & Co Ltd
41 Houndiscombe Road
Mutley
Plymouth
PL4 6EX

Gifted Women**Profit and Loss account and Statement of financial activities
for the year ended 30 September 2024**

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	Total funds 2023 £
Incoming resources					
Income from:					
<i>Donation:</i>					
Donations and gifts	3	27,208	165,493	192,701	104,905
Interest receivable		521	-	521	-
Total income		<u>27,729</u>	<u>165,493</u>	<u>193,222</u>	<u>104,905</u>
Expenditure on:					
Cost of operating the charity	4	(15,324)	(109,455)	(124,779)	(89,940)
Other expenditure and support cost	5	-	-	-	-
Total expenses		<u>(15,324)</u>	<u>(109,455)</u>	<u>(124,779)</u>	<u>(89,940)</u>
Net income/expenditure		12,405	56,038	68,443	14,965
Net movement in funds for the year		<u>12,405</u>	<u>56,038</u>	<u>68,443</u>	<u>14,965</u>
<i>Reconciliation of Funds</i>					
Total funds at 30 September 2023		2,709	54,329	57,038	42,073
Total funds at 30 September 2024		<u>15,114</u>	<u>110,367</u>	<u>125,481</u>	<u>57,038</u>

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year

All incoming resources and resources expended derive from continuing activities.

**Gifted Women
Balance Sheet
as at 30 September 2024**

	Notes	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	8	774	1,161
		<u>774</u>	<u>1,161</u>
Current assets			
Debtors	9	795	11,863
Cash at bank and in hand		125,083	44,109
		<u>125,878</u>	<u>55,972</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	10	(1,171)	(95)
Net current assets		<u>124,707</u>	<u>55,877</u>
Total assets		<u>125,481</u>	<u>57,038</u>
Unrestricted funds		15,114	2,709
Restricted funds		110,367	54,329
		<u>125,481</u>	<u>57,038</u>

The charitable company is entitled to exemption from audit under Section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 for the year ended 30 September 2024.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year ended 30 September 2024 in accordance with Section 476 of the Companies Act 2006

The trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for

- (a) ensuring that the charitable company keeps accounting records that comply with Sections 366 and 367 of the Companies Act 2006 and
- (b) preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company as at the end of each financial year and of its surplus or deficit for each financial year in accordance with the requirements of Sections 394 and 395 and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the charitable company.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to charitable companies subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on and were signed on its behalf by:

.....
Jenny Adjene
Chair

Gifted Women
Statement of cash flows
as at 30 September 2024

	Total Funds £	Prior year funds £
Cash flows from operating activities:		
Net cash provided by operating activities	A <u>80,453</u>	<u>3,185</u>
Cash flows from investing activities		
Interest and dividends received	521	-
Purchase of property plant and equipment	<u>-</u>	<u>(1,548)</u>
Net cash used in financing activities	<u>521</u>	<u>(1,548)</u>
Cash flows from financing activities		
Repayments of borrowing	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Net cash used in financing activities	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Change in cash and cash equivalents in reporting period	80,974	1,637
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period	<u>44,109</u>	<u>42,472</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period	B <u>125,083</u>	<u>44,109</u>

A Reconciliation of net income to net cash flow from operating activities

Net income for the year (as per the statement of financial activities)	68,443	14,965
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation charges	387	387
Interest and dividends from investments	(521)	-
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	11,068	(11,863)
Increase/(decrease) in creditors (excluding loans)	1,076	(304)
Net cash provided by operating activities	<u>80,453</u>	<u>3,185</u>

B Analysis of cash and cash equivalents

Cash in hand	<u>125,083</u>	<u>44,109</u>
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Gifted Women
Notes to the Accounts
for the year ended 30 September 2024

1 Accounting policies

Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared under the historic cost convention, with the exception of investments which are included at fair value.

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) issued on 16 July 2014 and the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011 and UK Generally Accepted Practice as it applies from 1 January 2015.

Recognition of liabilities and expenditure

A liability, and the related expenditure, is recognised when a legal or constructive obligation exists as a result of a past event, and when it is more likely than not that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement, and when the amount of the obligation can be measured or reliably estimated.

Liabilities arising from future funding commitments and constructive obligations, including performance related grants, where the timing or the amount of the future expenditure required to settle the obligation are uncertain, give rise to a provision in the accounts, which is reviewed at the accounting year end. The provision is increased to reflect any increases in liabilities, and is decreased by the utilisation of any provision within the period, and reversed if any provision is no longer required. These movements are charged or credited to the respective funds and activities to which the provision relates.

Debtors

Short term debtors are measured at transaction price (which is usually the invoice price), less any impairment losses for bad and doubtful debts. Loans and other financial assets are initially recognised at transaction price including any transaction costs and subsequently measured at amortised cost determined using the effective interest method, less any impairment losses for bad and doubtful debts.

Provisions

Provisions (i.e. liabilities of uncertain timing or amount) are recognised when there is an obligation at the reporting date as a result of a past event, it is probable that economic benefit will be transferred to settle the obligation and the amount of the obligation can be estimated reliably.

Cash and bank balances

Cash held by the charity is included at the amount actually held and counted at the year end. Bank balances, whether in credit or overdrawn, are shown at the amounts properly reconciled to the bank statements.

Incoming resources

Donations

All donations are recorded in the statement of financial activities in the year in which they are received. Assets donated to the charity are capitalised at the cost it is estimated the charity would have incurred if the asset were purchased.

Interest receivable

Interest is included when received by the charity.

Charitable activities

All other income from Charitable Activities is recorded in the statement of financial activities in the year in which they are received.

Gifted Women
Notes to the Accounts
for the year ended 30 September 2024

Resources expended

Costs of operating the charity

These are the direct costs of running the charity.

Fund accounting

Funds held by the charity are either:

Unrestricted general funds

These are funds which can be used in accordance with the charitable objects at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted funds

These are funds that 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 purposes.

Reassessment of Fund Structure and Allocation Policy

During the year, the charity conducted a review of its fund structure to improve clarity and ensure alignment with its strategic objectives. Following this reassessment, it was agreed that all future income and expenditure would be allocated across three primary funds:

1. Employment Programme - Restricted funds designated for programmes supporting employment initiatives
2. Restricted Overheads - Restricted funds allocated towards specific overhead costs as determined by funders
3. Unrestricted - General funds available to support the charity's overall objectives and operational needs.

2 Legal status of the charity

The charity is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. The liability of each member in the event of winding up is limited to £1.

3 Donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Donations	27,208	165,493	192,701	104,905
	<u>27,208</u>	<u>165,493</u>	<u>192,701</u>	<u>104,905</u>

Gifted Women
Notes to the Accounts
for the year ended 30 September 2024

4 Cost of operating the charity

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Salaries and wages	-	57,794	57,794	39,072
DBS Checks	-	-	-	332
Resources	-	2,760	2,760	3,789
External facilitation	-	573	573	15,089
Other direct costs	491	17,730	18,221	9,035
Venue hire	-	2,962	2,962	3,102
Rent	-	3,690	3,690	836
Insurance	-	670	670	556
	<u>491</u>	<u>86,179</u>	<u>86,670</u>	<u>71,811</u>
Administration costs (see note 5)	14,833	23,276	38,109	18,129
	<u>15,324</u>	<u>109,455</u>	<u>124,779</u>	<u>89,940</u>

Gifted Women
Notes to the Accounts
for the year ended 30 September 2024

5 Other expenditure and support costs

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Wages and salaries	11,669	-	11,669	7,000
Staff training	427	758	1,185	1,765
Staff welfare	207	2,200	2,407	800
Pension costs	1,787	-	1,787	836
Telephone and internet	-	1,675	1,675	723
Entertainment	-	7	7	349
Subscriptions	79	50	129	50
Bank charges and interest	-	521	521	82
Independent examiner	-	1,240	1,240	756
Travel and refreshments	83	2,061	2,144	2,576
Advertising and marketing	-	3,389	3,389	1,040
Depreciation	387	-	387	387
Printing, postage and stationery	-	9	9	40
Repairs and maintenance	-	235	235	35
IT software and consumables	95	1,531	1,626	463
Motor expenses	-	-	-	289
Legal and professional	99	9,600	9,699	938
	<u>14,833</u>	<u>23,276</u>	<u>38,109</u>	<u>18,129</u>
Applied to charitable activities (See note 4 above)	(14,833)	(23,276)	(38,109)	(18,129)
	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>

-

6 Staff costs

	2024 £	2023 £
Staff costs	69,463	46,072
Pension costs	1,787	836
Other staff costs	3,592	2,565
	<u>74,842</u>	<u>49,473</u>

No staff are paid more than £60,000.

Gifted Women
Notes to the Accounts
for the year ended 30 September 2024

7 Trustees' remuneration and benefits

There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 30 September 2024 nor for the year ended 30 September 2023

There were no trustees' expenses paid for the year ended 30 September 2024 nor for the year ended 30 September 2023

8 Tangible fixed assets

	Computer Equipment	Total
	£	£
Cost		
At 1 October 2023	1,548	1,548
Additions	-	-
Disposals	-	-
At 30 September 2024	<u>1,548</u>	<u>1,548</u>
Depreciation		
At 1 October 2023	387	387
Charge for the year	387	387
Surplus on revaluation	-	-
Withdrawn	-	-
At 30 September 2024	<u>774</u>	<u>774</u>
Net book value		
At 30 September 2024	<u>774</u>	<u>774</u>
At 30 September 2023	<u>1,161</u>	<u>1,161</u>

9 Debtors

	2024	2023
	£	£
Trade debtors	-	10,795
Other debtors	795	1,068
	<u>795</u>	<u>11,863</u>

10 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2024	2023
	£	£
Trade creditors	-	2
Other taxes and social security costs	742	-
Other creditors	429	93
	<u>1,171</u>	<u>95</u>

Gifted Women
Notes to the Accounts
for the year ended 30 September 2024

11 Movement in funds

	At 1.10.23	Income	Expenditure	At 30.09.24
	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted	2,709	27,729	15,324	15,114
Restricted:				
Tampon Tax Fund (via Trevi House)	1,809	-	1,809	-
Project Co-Ordinator	3,371	-	3,371	-
Employability Programme	39,595	101,452	74,670	66,377
Time 2 Shine 2023	9,185	-	9,185	-
ACTS 435	14	-	14	-
Warm Space Funding	355	-	355	-
Restricted overhead	-	64,041	20,051	43,990
	<u>57,038</u>	<u>193,222</u>	<u>124,779</u>	<u>125,481</u>

12 Independent Examiner's Remuneration

The appointed accountants fees in relation to the preparation of accounts and indepent examination were £605 (2023 £605).

13 Controlling party

The charity is controlled by the trustees.

14 Related party disclosure

There were no related party transactions for the year ended 30 September 2024.

