

Gecko Community

Empower, Inspire, Educate

Annual Trustee Report

September 2022 to September 2023

Aims and Description of the charity

Gecko Community is a registered Charity (1195860) providing innovative teaching, therapeutic projects and mentoring. We are a Neurodivergent led Charity and we are uniquely skilled in supporting neurodivergent young people. Our Mentors and Teachers are highly skilled and experienced. We understand our young people from a neurodivergent perspective as most of us are Autistic, ADHD, PDA and/or dyslexic.

We have expertise in:

- Pathological Demand Avoidance/Persistent Drive for Autonomy (PDA)
- Monotropic thinking styles
- Alexithymia
- Autistic Masking
- Autistic Burnout
- Double Empathy Theory
- Trauma/cPTSD

We support young people aged between 5 -25 who are

- ADHD
- Autistic
- experiencing anxiety and mental ill health
- at risk from exclusion or have self-excluded from formal education
- Experiencing bullying and trauma

Young people can be with us because they're out of school, while they wait for a placement or as part of their EOTAS package. We support neurodivergent young people for as long as they need.

We aim to inspire, support and educate young people who have been let down by mainstream education and who need alternative teaching methods.

Referral process

We currently have 92 young people with us who are either in academic sessions or mentoring sessions. Young people can attend online with the choice to be on or off camera, speak or type, email or share communication types through music, film, stories or gaming platforms.

Any student can join us. Referrals come in through Families, Schools, Local authorities or the Third Sector e.g. Social Services.

Staff

Our staffing team has expanded to 17 members, everyone is part time. We believe that Gecko needs to work for us, too. We do not believe in tiers or hierarchies and treat all staff as equals and part of our team. People do not work **for** Gecko Community, they work **with** Gecko Community.

Although all appointments are open to Neurotypicals and Neurodivergents alike, currently almost all our staff members are ND and many are Autistic or ADHD. This means that we truly understand how our brains and our young peoples' brains work and can empathise with their journeys, adapting to a learning style that best suits them. All staff understand that Gecko is entirely student-led.

Supporting our staff

As we grow we are giving thought as to how best to support our staff and their wellbeing. With this in mind almost half our staff have supervision, we are aiming for all our staff to have this. Supervision is 1:1, confidential, monthly support by trained counsellors.

We are also now running weekly teacher meetings and mentor meetings. These may involve discussing young people, teaching methods and supporting one another.

Investments made in our staff and training opportunities:

Autism Awareness - Kieran Rose

PDA - Mel Duncan

Self Harm - Mel Duncan

LBGQT - Mel Duncan / Kim Roberts

Safeguarding Training - CPD Online

Deaf Awareness Training from Swindon Deaf Society

The Nurturing Neurodivergence Conference 2023

Mentoring sessions

Mentor sessions are led by the young person. The aim is to support them in exploring their neurology through a neurodivergent-affirming lens, re-building self-confidence, helping them re-discover their love of learning (on their terms) and act as a positive Neurodivergent role model. Mentors also support young people who are in crisis, have cPTSD and work therapeutically with them to process trauma.

All sessions are student led. Self-discovery and recovery is achieved through the therapeutic relationship between the mentor and the young person. The length of this process is determined by the young person and is organic, not time limited or prescriptive.

All mentors use a trauma informed framework (PACE).

Academic Sessions

With an expanding staff and student profile, we are now able to offer sessions in English Literature and Language, Drama and play therapy, Art, History, Science including Physics, Computer Science and Biology, and Maths.

We offer GCSEs in English Language and Literature, Maths, Computer Science and Biology.

We now have staff members running ASDAN programmes. We offer ASDAN subjects which include short courses in Animal Care, English, Environmental, Expressive Arts, Foodwise, History, Living Independently and Mathematics.

A new member of staff is trained to teach Bronze and Silver Arts Award, and has trained another staff member who is also delivering the project.

Our support and what this means

We are widely recognised and acclaimed within the Autistic community. We are currently oversubscribed with a waiting list and are full this academic year. With us, our students are able to learn about their true selves through a Neurodivergent lens.

We are now a recommended provider in independent Autism assessments.

We have very positive feedback from young people and their adults on our new website. Some examples are:

“Not long after our session with Kim this afternoon, A mentioned that his face felt funny and a bit weird. ‘Oh, why do you think that is,’ I asked. He said, ‘I think it’s because I’ve just spent the last 45 minutes smiling and I don’t normally smile this much!!’ A big thank you from both of us to you and Kim. A has been unable to access any type of provision for such a long time, this feels like a really positive step in the right direction.”

“I want you to know that the hour that we spend with you is the best hour in our week. Before beginning our sessions with you P was suffering from extreme burnout due to trauma experienced at school and she was mute outside of very close relationships. It has been such an enormous shift for me as a parent to work with someone who genuinely wants to nurture P’s interests and isn’t trying to squash her into a box she doesn’t fit in. I am not sure how comfortable you are with praise but I just want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for giving us hope for the future and for giving P a reason to enjoy learning again. I hope you know how amazing you are!!”

“You are all so important and I can’t thank any of you enough for the support you have given C over the past year. We will forever be grateful for the positive impact you all have had on his extremely difficult journey. Please don’t ever think any of you are anything but outstanding, you have been my hero’s. Thank you so much for everything.”

Safeguarding

A significant rise in the number of concerns this year. For the first time, we rang 999. We spoke to the Police more this year too with historic disclosures.

Our young people have been through traumatic experiences in their school time. Some have a diagnosis of PTSD. Some of our young people self-harm and some young people have tried to commit suicide. All our staff are Level 2 Safeguard trained and we have one Designated Safeguarding Lead (Level 3 trained) and one Deputy (Level 2 trained).

Partnerships and support

Our previous partnerships remain.

This year we have a new partnership with Beacon Family Services. They have fund raised to support four of our parents with one-to-one parent listening support.

Finances

- We have a three tier payment system for our fees. We receive donations which we use to support our low income families, they pay £15 or £20 a session. For high income families, they pay £35 a session. For schools and LAs, they pay £50 or £60 a session. When schools and LAs are involved we send weekly or half termly reports and attendance data. We also attend monthly or half termly meetings and attend Annual Reviews.
- We have received a donation of £15,000 each year from Wrenlabs. We use this to support our grant funded spaces.
- We receive £1,000 each year from the Singer Foundation. This supports our staff Supervision costs.
- We receive approximately £1,500 in Spring each year, from the Ingles Foundation which is used for staff training.
- We gave everyone a 5% pay rise in July 2023 to try and support the rise in the cost of living due to higher than normal inflation rates.

Breakdown of student numbers, in relation to finances

We have 92 students to date. Of these, 60% are school or LA supported and 40% are family funded. All our family spaces are part-grant funded. This ranges from low income to high income families. (A low income family might be a single parent family, a family whose key wage earner has had to stop working to support their child or a family on benefits.)

Going forwards

Again, we are not planning to recruit anymore staff this academic year, or for a few years. We are now focusing on improving what we already do.

We want to fundraise more to support our low income families.

Signed by the Chair of Trustees

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vikki Mead', enclosed within a large, loopy, hand-drawn oval shape.

Vikki Mead

30th October 2023

Gecko Community CIO

30th September 2023

Income and Expenditure

	Restricted	Unrestricted
Income	281814	57574
Total	339387	
Expenses		
WAGES - Contract	243,456	
WAGES - Self Employed	11,840	
Ansvar Insurance	1,535	
Go Daddy Internet	249	
Accounting	1,425	
NEST Pension	5,945	
Aaron Department, DBS	267	
Access to Work	5,347	
Annual Audit	270	
ASDAN	626	
Family Therapy	768	
Er's NI	12,486	
Software	39	
Supervision	3,150	
Training	1,682	
Total Expenditure	289,084	
Reserves	50,303	

INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS REPORT
TO THE TRUSTEES OF GECKO COMMUNITY CIO

We report on the accounts of the charity for the year ended 30th September 2023 which are appended.

RESPECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRUSTEES AND EXAMINERS

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts; you consider that the audit requirement of section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Act) does not apply. It is our responsibility to state, on the basis of procedures specified in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners under section 145(5)(b) of the Act, whether particular matters have come to our attention.

BASIS OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS REPORT

Our examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. 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 disclosure in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence required by an audit and consequently, we do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

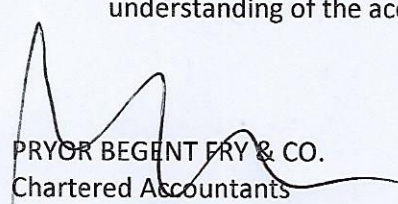
INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS STATEMENT

In connection with our examination, no matter has come to our attention;

1. Which gives us reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirement
to keeping accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Act, and
to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and to comply with the
accounting requirements of the Act

have not been met, or;

2. To which, in our opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper
understanding of the accounts to be reached.



PRYOR BEGENT FRY & CO.
Chartered Accountants
13-15 Commercial Road
Hayle
Cornwall
TR27 4DE

18th December 2023

Gecko Community CIO		Charity No	1195860	
		Company No		
Period start date	01/10/2022	To	Period end date	30/09/2023

Section A Statement of financial activities (including summary income and expenditure account)

Guidance Note

Recommended categories by activity	Unrestricted funds £ F01	Restricted income funds £ F02	Endowment funds £ F03	Total funds £ F04	Prior year funds £ F05
Income (Note 3)					
Income and					
Donations and	S01	281,814		281,814	38,468
Charitable activities	S02		-		171,488
Other trading	S03	57,574	-	57,574	-
Investments	S04		-		-
Separate material	S05		-		10,000
Other	S06		-		1,558
Total	S07	57,574	-	339,388	221,514

Expenditure (Notes 6)

Expenditure on:

Raising funds	S08				
Charitable activities	S09	57,574	231,511	289,085	188,029
Separate material	S10				1,200
Other	S11				
Total	S12	57,574	231,511	289,085	189,229

income/(expenditure)	S13	-	50,303		50,303	32,285
Tax payable	S14					
Net	S15	-	50,303	-	50,303	32,285
Net gains/(losses) on investments	S16	-			-	-
Net	S17	-	50,303	-	50,303	32,285
Extraordinary items	S18					
Transfers between	S19	-		-	-	-
Other recognised						
Gains and losses	S20	-		-	-	-
Other gains/(losses)	S21	-			-	-
Net movement in	S22	-	50,303	-	50,303	32,285
Reconciliation of funds:						
forward	S23	-	32,285	-	32,285	-
carried forward	S24	-	82,588	-	82,588	32,285

Gecko Community CIO

Charity Number: 1195860

30th September 2023

Balance Sheet

	£ 2023	£ 2022
Current Assets		
Debtors	9,706	3,259
Bank	73,347	29,490
Liabilities		
Creditor	465	465
Funds on 30th September 2023	£82,588	

Restricted Funds £82,588