

# Gecko Community

*Empower, Inspire, Educate*

## **Annual Trustee Report**

**September 2023 to September 2024**

### **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 work 1:1 online with our students.

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 98 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**

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, either fortnightly or monthly and support by trained counsellors.

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

## **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 now offer sessions in English Literature and Language, Drama and play therapy, Art, History, Science including Physics, Computer Science, Biology, and Maths.

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

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

We have 2 staff members trained to teach Bronze and Silver Arts Award.

## **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.

## **Safeguarding**

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).

## **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 £2000 in Spring each year, from the Ingles Foundation which is used for staff training.
- We gave all staff a 2% pay rise in July 2024 to continue supporting the rise in the cost of living.

## **Rivers**

In September 2024, we opened an alternative provision site for six to eight neurodivergent children in years four and five. This is in addition to our current provision. The location is in the Frome area, Somerset. We run for 16.5 hours over three days a week, 9:30 – 3 Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, term-time only (38 weeks). We took on 3 new members of staff to help run this facility.

The children who have joined us are neurodivergent and have EOTAS or an EHCP because they are unable to access mainstream education. Some may also have had previous traumatic experiences in school such as bullying or feeling unable to cope with what was expected. They may be experiencing anxiety or mental ill-health.

This site provides the innovative educational and emotional support that people have come to expect from Gecko, as well as the opportunity for children to meet teachers and peers face-to-face in a warm, welcoming and safe environment.

The hub is run by expert and highly experienced teachers and provides lessons based around English, Maths and Science, in a style that meets the individual needs of each child. Alongside these core subjects, we also run an Arts Award and the Neurobears program. Neurobears is a neurodivergent-affirming course which allows children to explore what neurodivergence means for them, boosting not only self-understanding but also confidence in who they are.

This hub supplements the main learning a child receives elsewhere, as it is not in place of the child's main education. The hub is registered with Ofsted on the voluntary childcare register. The children do not need to attend for the full 16.5 hours, and we are aware that children may need transitional support to build up to attending a new provision. Each child initially has a bespoke timetable as they build up their attendance to what is right for them.

We have experienced a high level of demand for this service, but unfortunately have limited places to offer. We will have a waiting list for any students who wish to join us after the initial places have filled.

In Summer term 1 we offered one day a week for potential pupils to get to know the team and other young people.

### **Going forwards**

Our focus is on our Rivers project and making this sustainable and supportive.

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

23rd March 2025



Gecko Community CIO		1195860		
Annual accounts for the period				
Period start date	10/1/2023	To	Period end date	9/30/2024

## Section A Statement of financial activities

Recommended categories by activity	Guidance Notes	Unrestricted funds	Restricted income funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Prior year funds
		£ F01	£ F02	£ F03	£ F04	£ F05
<b>Incoming resources (Note 3)</b>						
<b>Income and endowments from:</b>						
Donations and legacies	S01	-	-	-	-	-
Charitable activities	S02	-	349,590	-	349,590	281,814
Other trading activities	S03	57,001	-	-	57,001	-
Investments	S04	-	-	-	-	-
Separate material item of income	S05	-	-	-	-	57,574
Other	S06	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	S07	57,001	349,590	-	406,591	339,388
<b>Resources expended (Note 6)</b>						
<b>Expenditure on:</b>						
Raising funds	S08	-	-	-	-	-
Charitable activities	S09	57,001	318,494	-	375,495	289,085
Separate material item of expense	S10	-	-	-	-	-
Other	S11	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	S12	57,001	318,494	-	375,495	289,085
<b>Net income/(expenditure) before investment gains/(losses)</b>						
	S13	- 0	31,096	-	31,096	50,303
Net gains/(losses) on investments	S14	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Net income/(expenditure)</b>	S15	- 0	31,096	-	31,096	50,303
<b>Extraordinary items</b>	S16	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Transfers between funds</b>	S17	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Other recognised gains/(losses):</b>						
Gains and losses on revaluation of fixed assets for the charity's own use	S18	-	-	-	-	-
Other gains/(losses)	S19	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	S20	- 0	31,096	-	31,096	
<b>Reconciliation of funds:</b>						
Total funds brought forward	S21	32,285	50,303	-	82,588	
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>	S22	32,285	81,399	-	113,684	82,588

Charity No:  
1195860

## Gecko Community CIO

### Balance Sheet

Year Ending September 2024

	2024 £	2023 £
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Debtors	1,095	9706
NEST Refund Due	16,132	
Bank	96,932	73347
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Accrual	475	465
<b>Total Funds</b>	113,684	82,588

Funds on 30/09/2024

Restricted	81,399
Unrestricted	32,285
<b>Total funds</b>	113,684

Charity No:  
1195860

**Gecko Community CIO**

**Year Ending September 2024**

Income and expenditure			
	Reserved	Unreserved	Total spent
<b>Income</b>	349,590	57,001	
<b>Expenses</b>			
EXPENSES			
WAGES - Contract	187460	57,001	244461.00
WAGES - Self Employed	9619		9619
Hiscox/MM Insurance	5992		5992
Go Daddy Internet	340		340
Louise Poor - PAYE	1650		1650
NEST Pension	33004		33004
Aaron Department, DBS	751		751
Access to Work	10707		10707
ASDAN	522		522
Item Purchases	4559		4559
Parent Support	300		300
Supervision	400.00		400
Training	2859.00		2859
Venue Hire	1898.00		1898
Welfare	98.00		98
HMRC Payroll	52163.00		52163
Professional	370.00		370
Reimbursements	5702.00		5702
Software	100.00		100
<b>Total Spent</b>	<b>318494</b>	<b>57,001</b>	<b>375495</b>
<b>Reserved Funding Left</b>	<b>31096</b>		

**Total income**

406,591



## **Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees Gecko Community CIO**

We report on the accounts of the Trust for the year ended 30 September 2024, which are set out on the attached pages.

### **Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner**

The Charity's Trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The Charity's Trustees consider that an audit is not required for this period (under section 144 of The Charities Act 2011 (The Charities Act), and that an independent examination is needed. It is our responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts (under section 145 of The Charities Act),
- To follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by The Charity commission (under section 145(5)(B) of The Charities Act, and
- To state whether particular matters have come to our attention.


### **Basis of Independent Examiner's 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 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**

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 requirements:
  - To keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of The Charities Act
  - To prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the account requirements of The Charities Act have not been met
- (2) to which, in our opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

  
R.J. Fry, F.C.A.  
Pryor, Begett, Fry & Co  
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT

97 Meneage Street,  
Helston,  
Cornwall.  
TR13 8RE

Dated .....15.04.2025