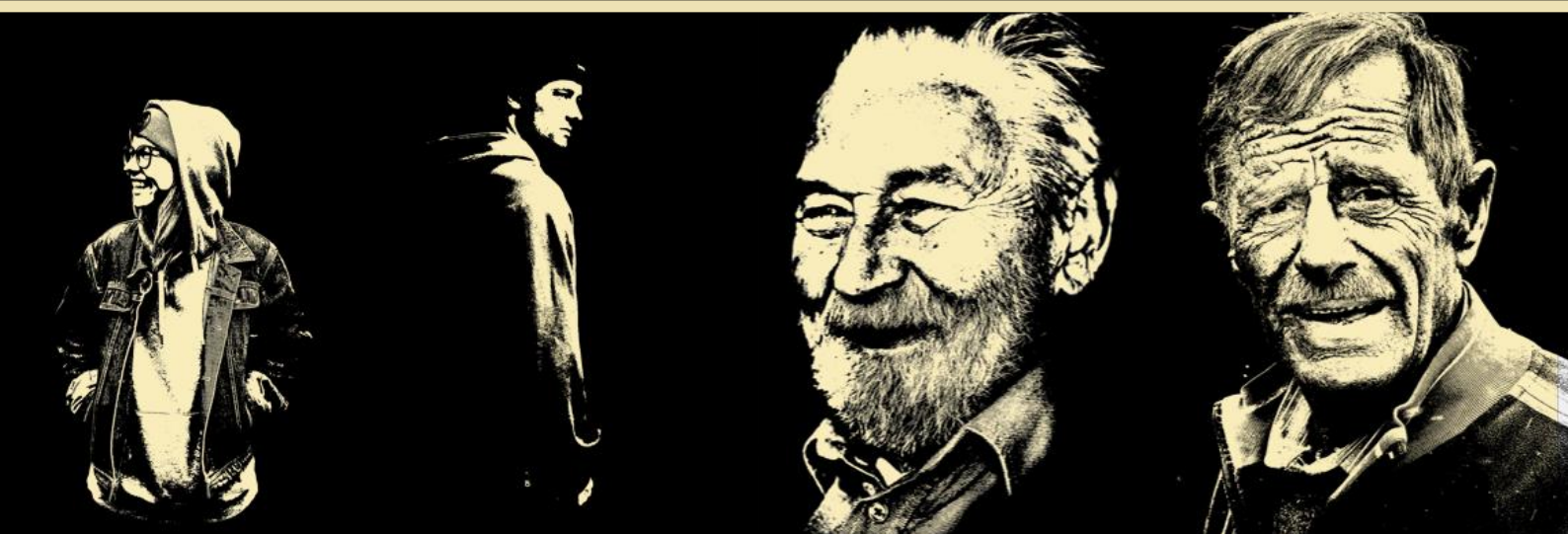




ANNUAL REPORT

2023 – 2024



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Official

Registered charity
number: 1198309

OUR MISSION

Literacy100 campaigns for literacy services in England and Wales that are accessible to adults with a history of complex needs, including homelessness. We believe that all citizens should have the chance to participate in the reading and writing activities the rest of us take for granted.

BACKGROUND

Among the multiple disadvantages that frequently accompany homelessness, low basic skills – literacy, numeracy and digital competencies – are significant barriers to social and economic recovery. It has been long recognised that the outcomes of illiteracy in particular are likely to be inadequate education, persistently low resilience, and restricted opportunities in adult life.¹

How significant a problem is this nationally? Studies in 2010² and 2014³ found that over 50% of adults being supported by the homelessness sector struggle to cope with the literacy demands of daily life. It is unlikely that this situation has improved: by 2021 there were still nine million adults in England with low basic skills, and participation in English courses had decreased by 63% since 2012.⁴ Adults affected by homelessness, particularly those with additional learning needs, have been amongst the group least well served by national literacy programmes.⁵ The reasons are complex, but learning is less likely to be successful if day-to-day life is chaotic, self-esteem is low, and trauma has fuelled deep-seated fears of the classroom.

An effective response to the challenges of individual learners inevitably requires funding. Unfortunately, the halving of the adult education budget since 2012 has been accompanied by an emphasis on accreditation at Level 2 (GCSE-equivalent) and above. It has not

been matched by a sound strategy for adults who lack the earliest foundations of reading and writing. (This despite substantial government funding for numeracy through the Multiply programme.) In the classroom, published teaching resources are inadequate, and teachers have limited flexibility to take a learner-centred approach.

Literacy100 advocates for accessible, appropriate and high quality literacy provision for adults affected by the complexities of homelessness. This could be achieved through political will and by partnerships between sectors. Our recent Charter and Report,⁶ have demonstrated that colleagues from a wide range of professional backgrounds are willing to find solutions. We aim to promote their recommendations, showcase existing good practice, and encourage wider participation.

IT'S CHANGED MY LIFE – COLIN'S STORY

"I was brought up in the early 70s and knew I was different. I found it hard to read and write and struggled to remember things. At school, I would often get headaches and lose concentration. There was no system in place for supporting children with dyslexia then. I was either left in the corner or caned. I was bullied by teachers and pupils. I was told I was "thick and stupid" and started to believe that. I completed school but didn't get any qualifications. I spent the last two years at school in the library not doing anything.

After school, I spent two years on the dole, and then moved into a cleaning job. A friend applied for me. I couldn't go for office jobs because I couldn't read or write. I didn't tell anyone at work because I didn't want to be treated differently. I thought if people knew about my dyslexia they wouldn't trust me.

I worked in this role for 20 years and was then made redundant. I spent 10 years out of work and had a breakdown. I couldn't get a job as every role I went for required me to read and write, even small jobs. I had no self-confidence and didn't want to attempt anything. I wouldn't even open my post. I couldn't understand what the letters said and ended up in debt. I was too embarrassed to ask for help.

In 2022, I got some help from a homelessness charity, and that gave me access to their literacy service. I had to build myself up for the first appointment with my tutor, Gary. I was so nervous. Gary assessed me and said, "We'll have to start at the beginning". He taught me the alphabet. He explained that I wasn't stupid or thick, that he could teach me to read and write. I was so surprised! Gary was nice to me and treated me as an equal. It's been hard work, but I feel I'm improving step by step.

The charity supported me to get a dyslexia assessment in 2023. The results were a revelation. I've suffered with anxiety and depression for 50 years because I was always told I couldn't do anything. But there was a reason why: I've got dyslexia. Literacy support has changed my life and has given me confidence. Now I think, "Yes, I could try that," whereas in the past I wouldn't even try.

Whatever happens in the future I will have more confidence around what I'm doing."

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

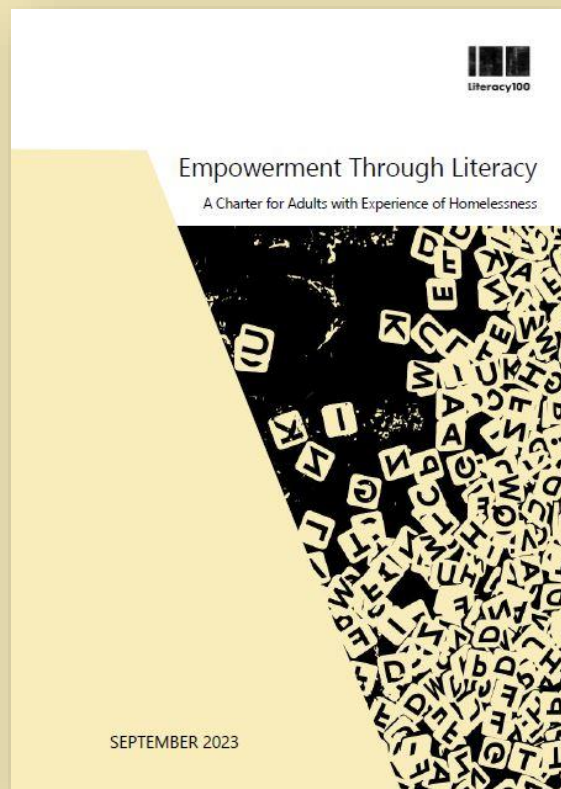
The launch of the Literacy100 Charter and Report in September 2023 was a milestone for our charity. We were joined at Connections at St Martin's in central London by Lord John Bird, whose life story illustrates the crucial role of literacy in an individual's life chances. Three adults previously supported by the homelessness sector described their sense of empowerment when, after years of struggle, they finally acquired reading and writing skills.



Forty-five professionals from a range of sectors are acknowledged in the report for their insightful contributions. They analysed a number of key issues underpinning engagement in adult literacy learning in the context of homelessness:

- Organisational policy in the homelessness sector to identify and support clients with literacy needs.
- Measures to encourage participation, planned in partnership between literacy providers and frontline homelessness workers.
- The role of literacy charities and libraries in offering alternative choices and gateways to formal learning.
- Technology as a practical aid and learning tool.
- A curriculum and its resources more fully informed by further research into adult literacy acquisition.

Advice from members of the Advocacy working group was also invaluable as we steered the report towards publication and successful launch.



In our 2022–2023 Annual Report, we proposed that a substantial number of recommendations made by the Charter and Report should be achievable during a period of stretched financial resources for public and charity-funded sectors. Nonetheless, we acknowledge that some changes cannot be cost-free.

We also recognise that to lobby central and local government during a period of political uncertainty is unlikely to be fruitful. Therefore, our focus in the medium-term is to promote the Report's recommendations to the homelessness and education sectors by developing models of manageable good practice. Progress has already been made. Since the Charter launch:

- Two homelessness/housing organisations in London have made policy commitments to address the literacy needs of their clients.
- Discussions have been held with a large, city-centre library to identify pathways to literacy for apprehensive learners.
- We have explored new strategies for learner-engagement in three educational institutions: a college of further and higher education in the East Midlands; the functional skills team of a London borough; and an adult education college, also in London.
- City Lit adult education college in London has created a new, unaccredited literacy course to meet the needs of people with experience of homelessness. Referrals to this pilot course will be

made by three local charities. If outcomes to its evaluation are positive, the college will:

- seek funding to repeat the course
- expand at scale by promoting the model to adult education colleges around the country.

The greatest current challenge for Literacy100 lies in sustaining sufficient manpower to continue this work. Our trustees and team are all volunteers. Since most have worked in the homelessness sector, they have a strong understanding of the central problem we aim to address. We thank them for their time and goodwill. Unfortunately, the team has reduced significantly during the last two years, and it has been difficult to recruit suitable replacements. The trustees will endeavour to resolve this issue before publication of the 2024-2025 Annual Report.

Julia _____

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Bank balance at 26 June 2023	3461.92	
Incoming resources		
<i>Donations</i>		
Luke Bateley (£500 - Bank fee £15)	485.00	
Chris Viney (£600 - Bank fee £18)	582.00	
Chris Viney (£150 - Bank fee £4.50)	145.50	
Mr Arthur Vestey (£1000 - Bank fee £30.00)	970.00	
	2182.50	
<i>Interest</i>		
CAF ICS BACS 00002 (TBC)	5.00	
CAF Bank 26/09/2023	1.89	
CAF Bank 23/12/2023	1.63	
CAF Bank 26/03/2024	1.56	
CAF Bank 27/03/2023	0.00	
CAF Bank 26/06/2023	0.00	
CAF Bank 26/06/2024	1.50	
	11.58	
Resources expended		
Bank Charges Jul 23 to June 24 @£5 per month	(60.00)	
Wix website Hosting costs Feb 24	(144.00)	
Wix website Hosting costs June 24	(133.24)	
Homeless.Org.UK subscription Feb 24	(57.00)	
Google Domains (Jul 23)	(10.00)	
Travel reimbursement J Casey (26/10/23)	(117.30)	
Charter Launch	(1,312.86)	
POS Squarespace	(12.00)	
	-1846.40	
Bank balance at 27 June 2024	3809.60	

Charter Launch Costs	Product	Number	
Nuisance Drinks	-159.92 Mixed soft drinks	120	
Amazon MarketPlace	-130.95 Cano still water	24	£14.65
	Cano sparkling water	24	£15.28
	Straws	200	£6.62
	Serving trays	4	£47.96
	Paper towel rolls	6	£10.48
Amazon Lady J Olisa (Refund)	35.96		
Arctic Ice	-60.00 Ice 12kg bags @ £10	6	
Amazon Lady J Olisa	-9.99 Bin bags roll	1	
Amazon Lady J Olisa	-25.98 Paper table cloths	25	£10.99
	Tumblers for straws	4	£14.99
Amazon Lady J Olisa	-36.98 42L Buckets	4	
Crown Litho (Printing)	-618.00 Charter Printing	100	
Elinor Olisa Barikor	-100.00 Catering staff		
POS Connection Natstmitf	-200.00 Connections at St Martin's donation	1	
Amazon MarketPlace	-7.00		
	-1312.86		

WITH THANKS TO THE TEAM

Julia Olisa	Chair Dyslexia specialist Literacy and homelessness	Appointed trustee
Hilary Stevens	Finance Officer Business and development	Appointed trustee
Alessy Beaver	Communications Homelessness, education and sustainable employment	Appointed trustee
Gary Chambers	Literacy100 Ambassador	
Linda Constable	Libraires consultant	
Kat Goodacre	Research consultant	
Tasa Hendrix	Website consultant	
Audrey Mitchell	Homelessness consultant	

Literacy100 is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation ('Foundation' Model)
Date of Constitution: 1st March 2022

REFERENCES

¹ Department for Education and Employment (1999). *A Fresh Start: Improving Literacy and Numeracy [The Moser Report]*. DfES Reference CMBS 1.

² Dumoulin, D. & Jones, K. (2014). *Reading counts: Why English and Maths skills matter in tackling homelessness*. London: St Mungo's Broadway/The Work Foundation

³ Olisa, J, Patterson, J & Wright, F (2010) *Turning the Key: Portraits of low literacy amongst people with experience of homelessness*. London. Thames Reach. Available from:

⁴ Learning and Work Institute (2021). *Getting the basics right: The case for action on adult basic skills*.

<https://learningandwork.org.uk>

⁵ London Development Agency (2006). *The London Skills for Life Strategy*.

[www.lda.gov.uk/upload/rtf/The_London_Skills_for_Life_Strategy_November_2006.rtf -]

⁶ *Empowerment Through Literacy: A Charter for Adults with Experience of Homelessness*. September 2023. Available from: www.literacy100.org and <https://homeless.org.uk/knowledge-hub/literacy-100-charter-and-report>