



Annual
Review
2023/2024

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Our Vision

A world where
domestic abuse
no longer exists



Our Mission

For all victims
and survivors of
domestic abuse to
receive the support
they need, when
they need it

Our Values

Respect
Inclusion
Trust
Empowerment



Our Aim For Survivors To

Have control over their own
lives and the opportunity to
make informed choices

~

Be involved in decisions
about every aspect of the
service they receive

~

Be treated with respect,
compassion and dignity

~

Have their diversity respected
and have equal rights and
opportunities

Chair of Trustees Report

Unfortunately, the need for refuge for survivors of domestic abuse has not decreased over the past year with I Choose Freedom still having to turn away on average eight survivors and their families for each refuge space available and once again I have witnessed the remarkable resilience of our staff and volunteers and their unwavering support for the adults and children we are here to help.

After 14 years, Charlotte Kneer MBE stepped down from her role as I Choose Freedom's Chief Executive in March. We are all grateful to Charlotte for her commitment to helping survivors of domestic abuse and for the vital role she played in building the organisation. I am delighted to share that Emma Armstrong is I Choose Freedom's new Chief Executive. Emma has worked at the charity for many years bringing a wealth of experience and a commitment to continue to develop a strong and strategic organisation and a drive for diversity and equality. Her passion, and outstanding leadership has already been noted by the staff and Board and we are very excited to have her lead the way in next phase of I Choose Freedom's journey. As we step into our 40th year, we are evaluating our strategy and priorities for the coming years ahead. After having almost tripled in size over the past four years, we are focused on continuing to deliver safe accommodation and a high quality service to all survivors who come into the refuge and to help facilitate their onward journey. Everyone at I Choose Freedom remains committed to ensure that every survivor and child who needs our help gets it and that survivors' voices are listened to.



Sally Stimpson
Chair of Trustees

Given the challenges that many charities are facing I would also like to recognise the amazing response of our supporters this year. Their financial support has been vital in allowing us to deliver the high level of service we take great pride in.

Following a skills audit the Board has successfully recruited three new members, each bringing different knowledge and experience. This ensures we have a broad range of expertise to lead our diverse and growing organisation. The Board also continues to reflect the community we serve. We always ensure we have a Board Member who has lived experience with an I Choose Freedom refuge.

Their insight enables us to really understand the journey of being a survivor in refuge accommodation and how we can continue to improve.

For now, I want to celebrate the incredible progress that I Choose Freedom has made this year and thank our Chief Executive, staff, volunteers, fundraisers, donors and fellow trustees who have helped make it happen.

CEO Report

I'm Emma Armstrong the new CEO of I Choose Freedom. I started working at I Choose Freedom in 2013 as a play therapist providing therapeutic intervention to the children in refuge. Over the following years I moved into management, being responsible for service delivery and safeguarding. As a survivor myself I've always had a passion for tackling domestic abuse. It is important to me that survivors know that there is help available and, more importantly, light at the end of the tunnel. We play a critical role in providing that hope in a time of need. Having worked at the charity for

11 years, I am excited to be stepping into the role of CEO.

I work alongside the most amazing team who work tirelessly every day to make a difference and help those who come through our doors. We pride ourselves on creating a welcoming homely environment for our survivors and their children. Over the next year we plan on using the voices of survivors to continue to shape and improve the service we run going forward, with a hope to identify and bridge the gap between any unmet needs and reduce the challenges survivors of domestic abuse face.



Emma Armstrong
CEO
I Choose Freedom

Everyone has a part to play in tackling domestic abuse and reducing domestic homicides. I'm proud to be leading the next chapter of I Choose Freedom's journey, and will do it with the enthusiasm, commitment, and dedication it deserves with the voice of our survivors at the heart of what we do.

I would like to thank the Board, our volunteers and our donors who play a critical role in our success and make the work we do possible.



Campaigning

I Choose Freedom regularly appear on national mainstream media; We continue to have a strong media presence via national platforms including TV, radio, and newspaper articles, raising awareness of the need for refuges and the challenges that survivors of domestic abuse face. This media coverage helps drive change and ultimately improves the outcomes for survivors.

Training

I Choose Freedom have provided training to companies, government agencies and third sector organisations. We create bespoke packages to raise awareness of domestic abuse, the signs to look out for and how employers can support their employees. We can assist with writing policies and creating internal processes. Domestic abuse is a topic that has risen up the HR agenda and we are able to assist companies to ensure they are meeting the needs of their employees.

Support for women

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Support for children

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Refuge accommodation for all

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Resettlement

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Campaigning

.....

Training



Nicola Dawes DL
Chief Executive



At Stripecy Stork, we see firsthand how deeply domestic abuse affects families and children within our community.

It is both heartwrenching and motivating, driving us to do more. We are proud to partner with the incredible team at I Choose Freedom. Their passion, dedication, and ability to bring together services to support families in crisis is truly inspiring. Together, we are making a difference for those who need it most.



I Choose Freedom deliver their vital role for survivors and families with compassion, professionalism, and clarity.

They provide hope, dignity and respect in the darkest times imaginable and a practical pathway to ongoing freedom. I have enormous gratitude and admiration for Emma and all of her team and am incredibly proud to support their essential work.



Mary Creswell DL
His Majesty's Vice
Lord-Lieutenant
of Surrey



Women in refuge

We received 816 referrals in total for our services between the 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024. On average we had to turn away eight survivors and their families for each room space that became available. We helped 114 adults and 154 children this year.

When a woman arrives at the refuge, they are welcomed by the team and shown around by their Domestic Abuse Refuge Advocate (DARA). Their DARA will talk them through safety precautions in and around the property such as CCTV and door codes. We will help make safe any technology including mobile phones, laptops etc.

All rooms are set up with a welcome pack which includes new bedding, towels, cooking items, toiletries, cleaning products and toys for the children. Each room has a food cupboard stocked with some essentials including tea, coffee, milk, tinned foods and cereal. Women are often overwhelmed when they see all that has been provided and it can be a big relief helping ease the pressure to go to town to purchase items as well as the financial burden to pay for the items.

The first 48 hours are crucial to ensuring the women's immediate

needs are met, to feel supported and that we understand what it has taken for them to seek help and get to the refuge.

All women are assigned a 'buddy' when they arrive, a current resident who can show them around the local town, to the supermarkets and provide guidance in the house during the first few evenings when staff are not on site.

DARAs check on the physical and mental health needs of the women and will meet with them daily during their first week. Following the initial weeks of induction, they will meet with their advocate every week.

These meetings offer a safe space for the women to talk freely, for their advocate to offer emotional and practical advice and offer a space to get to know the women better, allowing an opportunity to personalise their support at refuge. Depending on their mental health needs, their DARA will create a support plan with them solely around their wellbeing needs which include helpline numbers, text services, local hubs and phone apps as points of reference. DARAs support with securing immigration advice and applying for all necessary benefits,



provide help to set up a new bank account, registering with a local GP and referring to Community Debt Advice team. All women are supported in approaching their council of choice for housing assistance.

A Domestic Abuse Stalking and Harassment Assessment (DASH) is completed to explore their domestic abuse history, and this enables the advocate to ensure they have a better understanding of the abuse they have experienced and help assess their risk factors to ensure all action has been taken to guarantee their safety. This information helps to inform the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) which DARAs attend with the consent of their survivor. Women attend a weekly house meeting which is led by the advocates to encourage and support the women whilst living in refuge, this session includes building on skills that empower our survivors to find their voice and confidence again.

Advocates also facilitate the Freedom Programme which provides women with a deeper understanding of the tactics used by their perpetrators to control them. Weekly counselling is also provided by an independent counsellor.

DARAs will support the process of seeking counselling in an alternative language, if required. We also offer personal trainer sessions, art classes and learning English. This all contributes to supporting the women's mental health and wellbeing.

Towards the end of their six-month stay, advocates support the women to move to the next chapter of their journey. It can be a difficult time, adjusting to change again after having found safety at the refuge.

When clients leave the refuge, advocates will continue to support the women and their families as they move on with their lives. The future is bright and positive for survivors



showing a life after abuse is possible. On leaving the refuge 90% of women reported that they felt more empowered.

Throughout the year DARAs and volunteers host events for the women to celebrate with each other such as International Women's Day, Mother's Day as well as seasonal events such as summer parties, and to celebrate Diwali and Christmas. Everyone enjoys the activities that are arranged, from decorating tote bags with their own inspirational messages to making festive wreaths to hang on their doors.



I really enjoyed the tote bag making, as someone who enjoys arts and crafts, I found it a really mindful and enjoyable especially at the time my anxiety and worry levels are high it gave me distraction and I felt relaxed.



Children in refuge

This year we helped 154 children. This is a nearly 20% increase from last year

Advocacy is at the heart of working with children in refuge. With a compassionate and empathetic approach, we work closely with the children the moment they walk through the door. It's important to create a safe, warm and inclusive refuge where the children can begin to heal.

The children will come with a range of challenges and trauma-related behaviours. Although they have stepped out of crisis, they are still in a major transitional phase. They are safe but the environment is very different to all they have known and so they feel unsafe and confused.

Welcome packs are placed in their room upon arrival, with a cuddly toy to provide a little comfort and games bring a welcome distraction. It shows that they are cared about and they will be excited to unpack their bags or boxes of goodies, especially since many come with very little, leaving their toys behind.

"We had so many exciting things on our beds when we arrived - toys, books, pencils, things for school. It filled me with happiness."

Boy, 9 and half years old

We are very fortunate to be able to provide vouchers for local entertainment, the leisure centre and soft play. These vouchers are given to the families on arrival and enable them to do some fun activities while they wait for school places and settle into refuge life.

"I'm really looking forward to going to *. Mum has booked it for Saturday, and we are going to go to the arcades and cinema."**

Girl, 8 years old

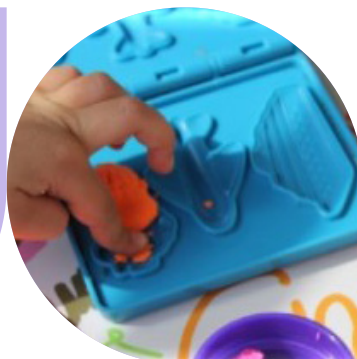
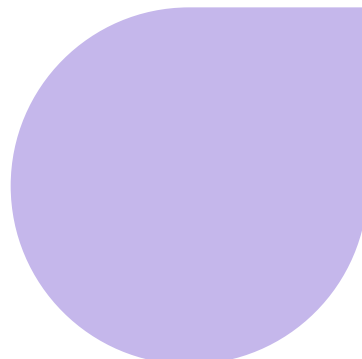
When life is unpredictable, the children live in constant fear and will be on high alert - on guard, nervous or worried. It is therefore important to reassure them with routines and boundaries that support a safe environment. When the mothers are in their meetings with their DARA, the children come to the playroom. There can be a range of behaviours displayed; some have separation anxiety and are easily distressed when leaving mum, others will bound into the room, seeking connection, and looking for a distraction.

The playroom is often full of fun and laughter, different games, and activities. The joy of squishing Play Doh or getting messy is important developmentally for younger children as well as for self-esteem building.

"It is exciting and happy in the playroom; I like making new friends."

Girl, 8 years old

It's important that we celebrate the children's birthdays. We support mothers with gifts for their



Thank you for looking after me when my mum has her talks with her DARA. I love coming into the playroom and colouring and playing with the playdoh. Playing UNO with my friend is great too."

Children in refuge (cont.)

children's birthdays through a charity partner and a present will also be given from the staff team which we fundraise for.

"Birthday gifts really took a weight off me and stopped me worrying he would feel like his birthday was different this year."

Over the summer, we have had trips to Chessington World of Adventures and Butlins, made possible from the support of donations and charitable partners. Seasonal parties are always great fun, bringing the children and women together for craft activities and food.

"I loved eating fish and chips at Bognor."

"Santa came! He found us!"

Girl, 6 years old

Garden activities and pizza parties during the school holidays are not only for the children but for their mothers too, helping to support attachment and bonding.

A parenting support group is regularly run to support mothers to learn and overcome struggles together. Sharing their stories with no judgement helps them to feel understood and less alone. Introducing parenting skills and techniques within the group helps them to learn together, enabling them to support each other in turn.

Children Advocates will work closely with outside agencies to support not only the child but the mother too. Health concerns and appointments are clarified and supported whether with GP, Health Visitor or Midwife. Our Children Advocates also support with applications to nursery, school or college and when needed, the correct uniform found so children do not

feel out of place on their first day. Partnership working is vital when advocating and supporting the child. Mothers are encouraged to book dental and optician appointments, perhaps something they have never done before.

"I was so happy when I got my new school, I made friends and had someone to play football with."

Boy, 9 years old

Helping Hands sessions are offered to increase a child's understanding of feeling safe, exploring feelings and emotions, and helping to develop their self-esteem. The session addresses challenging issues around personal space, safety planning and awareness of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours, not only in others but also in themselves.

Therapeutic interventions are offered to the children from 4 to 18 years old. Children and young people may struggle to find the words to explore and explain what has happened to them. Play and creative arts therapy is used to work through muddled thoughts and feelings in a creative way. It provides a safe outlet to explore their experiences which have brought them to refuge. By drawing a place where they feel safe, helping them to find a quote which has strong meaning for them or sculpting in clay, these can all have a powerful connection to their unconscious. Teenagers may have missed poignant developmental milestones

and can regress safely in the therapy room, sometimes playing at a much younger level or with younger toys that may not seem appropriate outside the therapy room. By playing and creating, our children and young people can let themselves go, to be free, without judgement.

"Therapy has really helped, I'm more confident and can see hope in the future. Although I still have some anxiety, I know this is normal and I know how to deal with this"

Girl, 18 years old.

The future is unknown for the children who arrive with us and those who have experienced domestic abuse have a greater risk of harm in the future, whether it maybe physical, emotional, neglect or harm. We aim to empower these families to improve their wellbeing, so that when they move out of the refuge, they are able to take newly learnt skills with them to support their safe transition into a new life.

"I love coming to play therapy, I play and * watches and helps me find a way when I can't do something "**

Girl, 7 years old

Refuge Accommodation for All (RAFA) Report

The Refuge for All service, also known as RAFA, supports survivors of domestic abuse who face barriers to accessing shared single-sex refuge accommodation. This includes men, the LGBTQ+ community and Gypsy Roma Traveller communities. After recognising that there is limited provision across the country for survivors that face barriers to shared accommodation, I Choose Freedom approached Surrey County Council for support in providing self-contained accommodation for these survivors.

I Choose Freedom's RAFA service has grown from four units at the end of March 2023 to eight units by the end of March 2024. These units include six units for single service users and two further units; one providing accommodation for an adult and one child and a further property that can accommodate an adult and up to five children.

The RAFA service team have worked throughout the year to establish and strengthen links with external agencies who are able to provide specialist support for survivors. This includes, but not limited to, Gallop, Mankind, outreach services, local community wellbeing services, religious communities, specialist debt support agencies, and health professionals.

The RAFA team work to raise awareness in the communities that we support; we maintained our presence at Pride in Surrey,

and RAFA were shortlisted for the 'Support or Health Service of the Year' at the Pride in Surrey Awards in February.

In addition, we have delivered awareness-raising presentations at local Job Centres and councils, and attended thirdsector networking events throughout the year. We have supported clients to access gyms, college courses, apprenticeships, and employment, and are forging strong links with schools and nurseries in areas of Surrey that are new to I Choose Freedom.

I Choose Freedom have staff in the RAFA team who identify as LGBTQ+, which enables us to provide a 'by and for' service for survivors from those communities. We also have a RAFA LGBTQ+ professionals forum which meets quarterly and provides a platform for LGBTQ+ professionals across Surrey to share ideas for networking/linking services together to improve outcomes for our service users.

This year the RAFA service team took 125 referrals, and 17 clients were accepted. This included four men (one being a 16 year old boy in refuge with his mother) and six survivors from the LGBTQ+ community.



"Maybe words won't help me express what's in my heart, because of your support, assistance and good humane treatment and good constructive communication you make the best staff ever at I Choose Freedom RAFA, in order to ensure my protection and support in all aspects especially since I was in dire need of this after my very bad circumstances I went through.

Thank you from my heart for your help, support and giving words of praise. I don't have words fulfil or expressions of thanks to describe how grateful I am to you. Now I am now feeling safe and look forward to the future with optimism."

Resettlement Report

Our resettlement service has played a significant part of our support package over the past year. The service was created to support survivors resettling in Surrey after leaving one of our refuges. Prior to the conception of this service, many of our survivors faced numerous difficulties despite having a successful stay at refuge. These struggles at times derailed the journey of our clients and in some cases could have resulted

in them returning to their danger area because of the need for familiarity and the uncertainty they faced in their new environments without adequate support. Barriers and complications they faced included financial instability, housing insecurity, unresolved immigration, ongoing family court cases, difficulties with managing bills or paying debts, social isolation, and an overwhelming uncertainty of how to settle into their

new environment without the support they had become used to while at refuge.

The resettlement service continues to tackle these issues to support our former clients and their children in making the transition from refuge life to independent living smoother. Innovative methods have been used to combat many of these barriers which include practical support,

supporting survivors into employment by providing funds for appropriate interview clothes, helping their children into local schools, support with debt matters and advocating for survivors in relation to permanent housing. The resettlement service also offers emotional support in various forms – this includes face to face check-ins, weekly phone check-ins and attending local social clubs with clients to help them build community ties.

Case study

V resettled in the local community earlier this year and was supported through the resettlement service. She was supported with applying for jobs and gained employment as a Personal Assistant for a director of a local organisation.

V felt so encouraged by her advocate that she began to offer peer-led support to other clients leaving refuge. Creating safe social connections plays a vital role in the success of a survivor's journey to freedom. It creates stability and eliminates feelings of isolation. V has been patient, kind, reassuring them about their journey, supporting with them becoming accustomed

to independent living and providing a listening ear where possible. She is now in the process of applying to volunteer with us in her free time as she would like to build up her advocacy and support skills as this is what she would like to do in the future.

This highlights how beneficial the resettlement service has been. The experience of leaving refuge and no longer having daily support with an assigned support worker can provide challenges for survivors, which is why the aim of this service is to alleviate any potential or further barriers they may face in their journey to freedom.

The resettlement service has supported 10 women and 17 children this year. On leaving the resettlement service 93% of survivors reported improved ability to hold a tenancy. 93.75% of survivors reported improved mental health. 100% of survivors reported being more confident/more empowered.

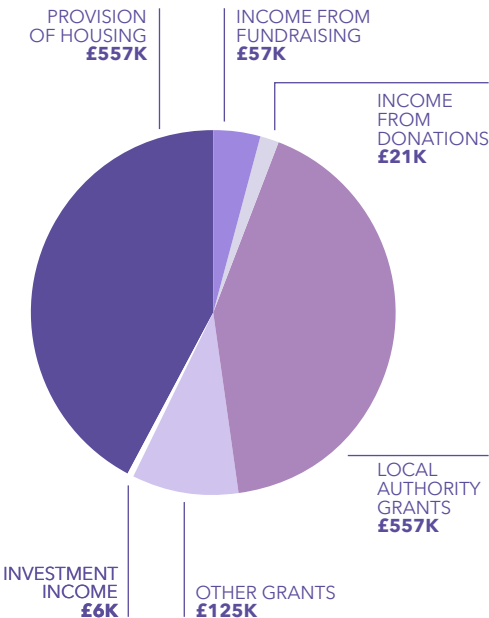


Donations, Grants and Fundraising

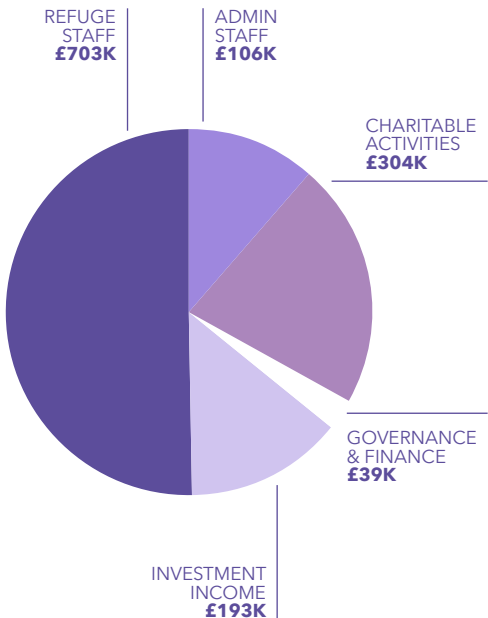
To enable I Choose Freedom to continue supporting as many survivors of domestic abuse as possible, as a charity we are dependent on the organisations and individuals who support us.

Our major funders are Surrey County Council, Reigate and Banstead Council, the Department for Levelling Up, The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. Without their support we would not be able to deliver our current services and the continued growth of the organisation. We are enormously grateful to them.

Breakdown of income
in the financial year 2023 – 2024:



Breakdown of costs associated
in the financial year 2023 – 2024:



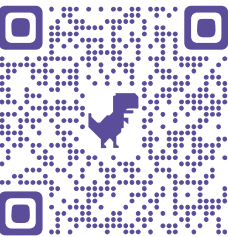
We would also like to thank everyone who has raised funds or donated, no matter how large or small. Every penny we receive helps to further our efforts to support survivors of domestic abuse and provide opportunities for them to have greater control over their lives. Our supporters and donors from the past year include those shown below and many more.

- Surrey County Council (SCC) and Individual Councillors
- Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Reigate & Banstead Borough Council (RBBC)
- Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey
- Women's Aid
- Shanly Foundation
- Wisley Foundation
- Community Foundation for Surrey

- Charles Lewis Foundation
- Lifetime Chances
- Farnham Parochial Charity
- Pauline Bourne
- Kerslake Robshaw Foundation
- The Worshipful Company of Pattenmakers
- Kids Out
- Farnham Round Table
- Reigate Rotary Club
- Epsom College
- Next Step Nursing

- A Bourne & P Jackson
- St Faiths Trust
- The Bob Trust
- Caroline Elliss
- Farnham Round Table
- Raven Housing Education Project
- Bryden Johnson
- Dischma Charitable Trust
- Diversity Project
- Farnham Masonic Lodge
- Friends of the Garibaldi
- Linkam

- Loseley Christian Trust
- Martin Firmo
- Reigate Evening WI
- Royal Albert Edward Masonic Lodge
- S K Preston
- Soroptimists International of East Grinstead
- South Surrey Masters Lodge
- WM Castle Lodge Farnham



Scan to donate or use the donate button on our website:
www.ichoosefreedom.co.uk
For larger donations, please contact us at info@ichoosefreedom.co.uk



A day in the life of... a Senior Children's Advocate and Play and Creative Arts Therapist.

I am in a unique position that I hold a dual role within the organisation. I am a therapist alongside being a children's advocate. From the moment a child or young person arrives I am dedicated to supporting them and guiding them to my best ability, always advocating for their needs. It's a new day, I enter the security gate and I'm met with some mums who are supporting each other to walk into town for some shopping. They are jostling prams and buggies and talking about the weather and what they could cook together later.

Walking into the main house, I punch in the access code, and I'm greeted by a mum and child who are waiting outside my playroom door with some queries about school applications. My desk sits in the playroom, and I make my way through toys and games kindly donated by well-wishers. An ex-client had popped by and dropped off some items her child has grown out of as they want to give back.

I scan my emails looking for any safeguarding priorities, which may have come in since yesterday. An email from the Inclusion Officer from a child's previous school has come in with the safeguarding information. I take time to read this, highlighting important risk assessing information. There is time to make a phone call, and I speak with the

designated safeguarding lead at the local school where the child is currently attending, updating her on information she requires to be able to fully safeguard the child while at school.

I check my calendar and there is a child protection conference with Children Services later in the day that I am required to attend. I make sure that my notes are up to date and that I have the relevant information, together with the achievements and difficulties the family are currently going through.

A Health Visitor is coming in to see a family who

arrived last week, I need to meet with them to give them an update and overview on the health needs of the children. As I close my calendar, there is a knock at the door and the children flood in for crèche as the women's house meeting is taking place. There is a toddler who is upset about leaving their mum for the first time, so I hold them to provide comfort. Other children go straight to their favorite toys and the Play Doh is being passed around. There are some older teenagers who are still waiting for their school place who

sit at one of the bigger tables, playing Uno together talking about the evening before and what they watched together on TV.

The meeting finishes and a mum stays behind with me when collecting her child, she's worried about their behavior and doesn't know what to say to them about why they are at the refuge. Their child keeps asking about dad, along with hitting out at mum. Mum struggles to finish her sentence as she begins to cry.



To my ever proactive support worker, I can't thank you enough for your unwavering support. Your belief in me has given me the strength to keep pushing forward.

A Day in the life of... (cont.)

She is offered a chair; we sit down and spend some time talking about how she can talk to her daughter. I offer some techniques and coping strategies. I speak to her about therapy and mum is keen for her daughter to start. We agree a time to chat again about this.

It's time to head to the therapy room as its time for individual play therapy. First, I see a 6 year old boy, who chooses to do some painting. He pours all the colors together making a gloopy dark mixture. He talks about anger and sadness as he pushes the paint around the paper.

Once his session is over, it's a quick turnaround before a 14 year old girl comes in, she goes over to the sand and picks out some symbols to represent how she's feeling and her family dynamic. She talks about hating her dad for putting them "here" and not wanting to start a new school.

The sessions are finished and as I pack up to leave for the day, a child appears asking me to help her with shoelace, another asks when the playroom will be open again and shares a sweet with me. I move through the house saying my goodbyes. The lounge is full of children while the mums prepare their dinner, there is chatting and laughter.

I think about when I first met some of these families and how they've grown over their time with us. Finding their voices, no longer scared of making noise. I walk to my car remembering to make sure all doors are closed

and locked behind me. I'm already thinking about tomorrow. There's a fancy dress party in the house and I'll be coming as a frog! There's also a house move tomorrow, and we'll have one family move out and a new family move in. No two days are the same and I embrace the busy and ever-changing environment.

**I'm honored
to be a little part
of our families'
healing journey.**



Every support the organisation supported me with was superb; the good accommodation, weekly allowance, voucher, bus pass, gifts, counselling session, drop in session, Freedom programme, food club, Immigration support, mention but a few, has empowered me and given me the second chance to strive."

My journey during and after the refuge.

I vividly remember the evening I fled to refuge. On that day, I arrived at the refuge carrying nothing but the heavy burden of uncertainty. I was 15 weeks pregnant and accompanied by my two boys, aged 10 and 15. At that time, the future seemed daunting and unclear, and the fear of the unknown gripped me.

Upon our arrival, the refuge provided us with extensive support. They ensured we had food for the first week, clothing for all of us, and preparations for the arrival of my unborn baby. The refuge also supported us through the Immigration process, which was particularly challenging for our future. Their emotional support was extraordinary. I was treated as a person in need of compassion and understanding, rather than just a case number. The staff and volunteers were our pillars of strength, guiding us through those initial turbulent months. When it was time for my baby to be born, a staff member even acted as my birth partner, which meant the world to me. The refuge provided everything my baby needed, making our recovery much easier.

After six months, we moved to temporary accommodation. However, the transition wasn't easy, and about a year after the move, my mental health began to suffer. It was then that I sought support from Emma, who became a beacon of assistance to me.

Through the refuge, I was able to receive 14 counselling sessions, which played a crucial role in my healing journey.

I expressed a desire to return to school and pursue a career in social work, but I lacked the necessary resources, such as a laptop. Once again, Emma and the refuge provided laptops for both me and my children, opening doors to education and future opportunities.

With this newfound support, I began my educational journey, beginning with studies in mathematics and English. I then went on to college

to pursue a Level 3 Access to Higher Education Diploma in Social Work. Today, I am proud to say that I am in my second year of university, working towards a degree in Social Work. This past summer was particularly transformative, as we moved into our permanent home, a place that feels like a dream come true, a sanctuary where my children and I can thrive. During the summer, I successfully applied for



a job as a Housing Support Officer. I thoroughly enjoy working in this role, as it allows me to help others in need and bring hope to their lives. Additionally, I am a member of the board of trustees at the refuge, which enables me to support other women walking a similar path, offering them the empathy and encouragement that once liked me.

As for my children, they have flourished beyond my expectations. My eldest son, G, adapted to a new school under

difficult circumstances and achieved remarkable GCSE results with five 7s. Despite starting his A-levels under such unique circumstances, he excelled in college, earning a distinction and merit, and is now preparing to study Occupational Therapy at university.


My second son benefited greatly from the refuge's play therapy, which helped him process the emotions tied to our past experiences a year after leaving the refuge. Now in

Year 10, he enjoys playing basketball and football and continues to be a source of joy for his friends and teachers alike.

Then there's my little girl, H, who was born while we were still at the refuge. She started reception this September with the kind of optimism only a child can possess, proud to be a big, brave girl.

Reflecting on our journey, the transition from fear to a secure future feels nothing short of miraculous. The refuge was the anchor that held us steady amidst the

storm, and I am ever grateful for their unwavering support. Today, our future is bright and filled with endless possibilities. The refuge not only provided us with safety but also empowered us to rebuild our lives with dignity and hope.



As I look forward, I am filled with gratitude and excitement for what lies ahead, confident that whatever challenges come our way, we will face them together, stronger than ever. The future for me and my cubs is looking bright, and we are very optimistic. The fear of the unknown, when we were seeking refuge away from my perpetrator, has been very kind to us.

Future Plans

Our intention is to continue to enable any adult and child to begin the recovery process from their experience of domestic abuse, by offering a high standard of refuge accommodation which provides:

- A safe and welcoming place for all survivors of domestic abuse
- Good standards of accommodation and on-site facilities for families, and especially children
- Individual support plans
- Emotional support
- Therapeutic intervention
- Assistance in applying for re-housing
- Practical help for survivors
- Assistance in claiming benefits
- Support to get into employment/education

- Liaison with health services
- Advice regarding activities within the area, including faith organisations, clubs, groups, paid or voluntary work, etc.
- Structured group work to allow service users to understand domestic abuse, regain their self-esteem and avoid a similar situation in the future.
- To ensure our service is inclusive and diverse and supports every survivor regardless of age, gender, sexuality, race, disability or religion



Financial Review

During the year total income was £1,322,624 (2023: £1,539,426); the final result of the year was a deficit of £75,433 (2023:£398,303 surplus).

Reserves policy

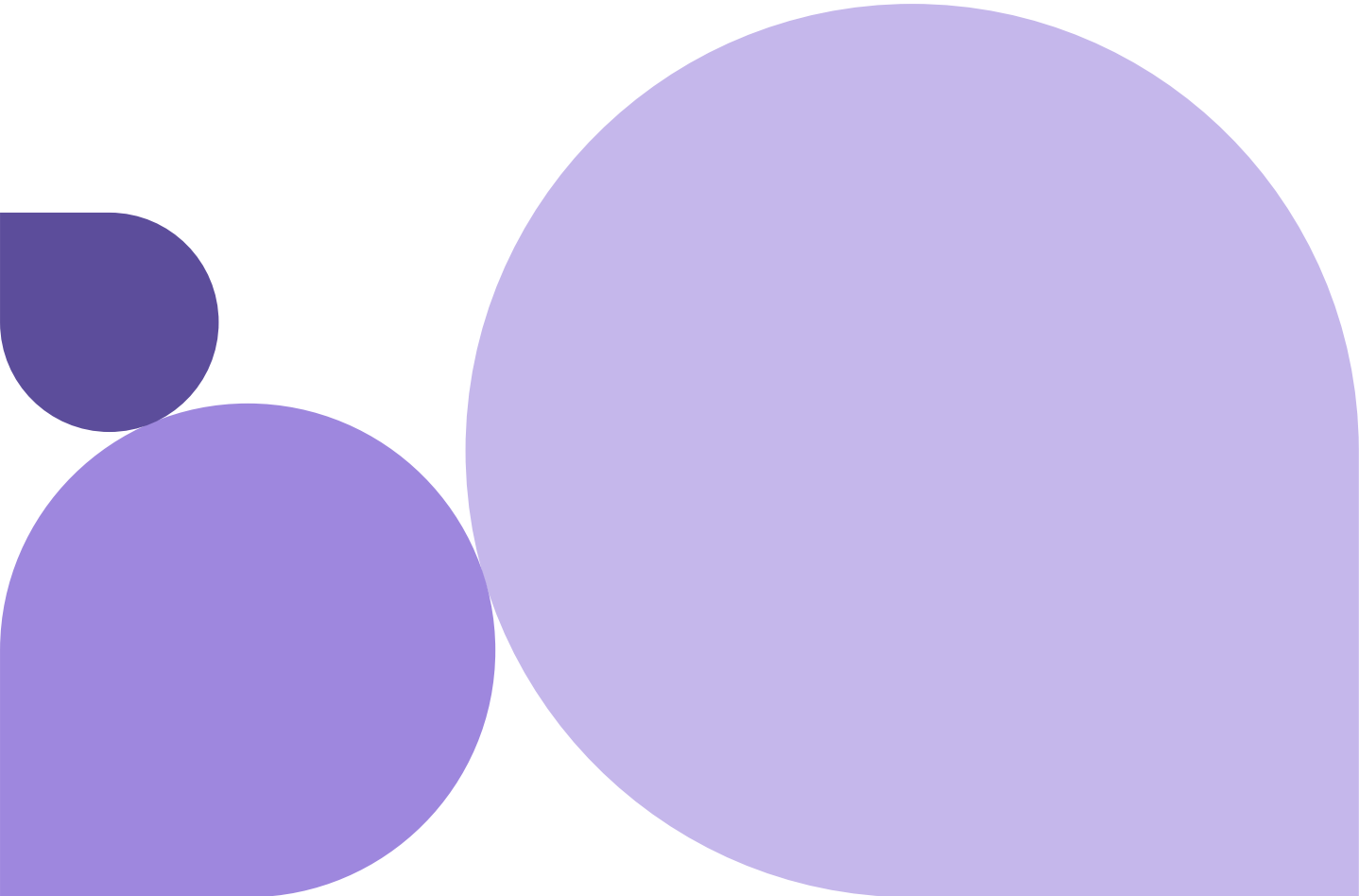
The Board of Trustees has examined the charity’s requirements for reserves in light of the main risks to the organisation. It has established a policy whereby the unrestricted funds not committed or invested in tangible fixed assets held by the charity should be equal to six months operating costs. The trustees are mindful of their responsibilities, in particular with the recent expansion of the refuge accommodation.

Unrestricted reserves are held for the following purposes:

- 1. To maintain services through periods of reduced funding and cash flow;
- 2. To develop new projects;
- 3. To pay redundancy and recruitment costs; and
- 4. To respond to adverse incidents.

At the year end the charity held total reserves of £984,163 (2023: £1,059,596) of which £340,262

(2023: £326,819) were unrestricted general funds; £400,000 (2023: £300,000) were designated general funds and £243,901 (2023: £432,777) were restricted funds. ICF holds reserves to protect against drops in income and to allow ICF to take advantage of new opportunities.



Structure & Governance

Governing document

The charity is controlled by its governing document, a deed of trust, and constitutes a limited company, limited by guarantee, as defined by the Companies Act 2006.

I Choose Freedom (ICF) is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity. It is governed according to the Memorandum of Association and the Articles of Association.

Recruitment and appointment of new trustees

Directors are recruited from those who have supported the organisation or through recognised channels such as the Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) and Reach which undertakes national recruitment for voluntary organisations. Personal contacts and local organisations are also sources of directors.

The induction programme for directors (trustees) includes information from directors and staff, trustee training courses, as well as Surrey DA awareness and safeguarding training. Relevant printed material is also given including ICF documentation and national publications.

All members of the committee give their time voluntarily and receive no benefits from the charity. Any expenses claimed from the charity are set out in note 9 to these financial statements. ICF recognises that a diverse, skilled and committed group of directors is essential for the effective governance and management of the charity. Recruitment of new directors is the responsibility of existing directors.

Organisational Structure

The management committee meets on ten occasions during the year and is responsible for the strategic direction and policies of the organisation. They also monitor performance and compliance with requirements of stakeholders. The CEO attends each meeting on a non-voting basis, with input from other staff members as requested.

The CEO assumes responsibility for the provision of service, and for meeting the monitoring and evaluation requirements of stakeholders. The Head of Services assumes responsibility for the day to day operations and reports to the CEO. The lines of accountability, support and supervision are well established within the organisation ensuring good practice in delivering a high-quality service.

ICF is a member of the Women's Aid Federation of England and is part of the Surrey Domestic Abuse Management Board which links with the Surrey Domestic Abuse Commissioning Group.

Key management personnel

The directors comprise the Board of Directors, who are the charity's Trustees, and the senior management team comprise the key management personnel of the charity in charge of directing and controlling, running and operating the charity on a day to day basis. All directors give of their time freely and no director received remuneration in the year. Details of the remuneration of key management personnel and trustees' expenses are disclosed in note 9 to the accounts.

Remuneration for CEO is set by the trustees using a benchmarking process and is reviewed annually.

The trustees have undertaken governance training to ensure a clear understanding of their responsibility to the Refuge and its stakeholders. The NCVO's Code of Governance and Charity Commission's Essential Duties of a Trustee were discussed in detail.

Induction and training of new trustees

The Committee comprises directors of the company, who are also trustees under charity law. Committee members are elected at a Board meeting and normally serve for three years.

A committee member may serve for three years, and then be available for re-election for a further three years. They would not normally be eligible for re-election after two full terms until one year has elapsed, but this may be waived if it would not be in the interests of the Company for the services of the member to be lost by requiring the member to stand down.

Committee members are required to disclose all relevant interests and register them with the secretary and in accordance with the charity's policy withdraw from decisions where a conflict of interest arises. Neither the charity nor any of the directors presently have such interests but any such interests would be disclosed should they arise.

Structure & Governance (cont.)

Risk management

The trustees have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against fraud and error. The Committee has considered the risks to which the charity is exposed. Systems and procedures have been established to mitigate the risks the charity faces. We recognise the importance of effective risk management and have developed a risk management plan to identify, assess and manage risks to ensure the charity's resilience and continued success. This will be reviewed quarterly at the Trustee Meetings.

Procedures are in place to protect staff, volunteers and service users. These procedures are regularly reviewed

to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the charity. The Committee has assessed the relevant safeguarding risks and have decided that all Directors undergo a DBS check every three years.

Statement of trustees' responsibilities

The trustees (who are also the directors of I Choose Freedom Charity for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Report of the Trustees and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which

give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charity SORP;
- 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 charitable company will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose

with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In so far as the trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditors are unaware; and
- the trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditors are aware of that information.

Auditors

The auditors, Williams & Co Epsom LLP, will be proposed for re-appointment at the January 2025 Trustee Meeting

This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Approved by order of the Board of Trustees on

.....
and signed on its behalf by:

.....
Mrs S J Stimpson
Trustee

Trustees

- Mrs K E Halliwell**
Solicitor
(resigned 01/03/24)
- Mrs S P A Renaut**
Accountant
(resigned 19/09/23)
- Mrs S Sengupta**
Management Consultant
(resigned 23/04/23)
- Mrs S J Stimpson**
Nurse
- Mrs H A Edwards**
Project Director
Corporate Events
- Ms C N Kinyanjui**
Ex-Service User

- Ms C Booth**
Senior Project Manager
(appointed 10.12.22)
- Ms S Gregory**
Consultant
(appointed 10.12.22)
- Ms M King**
Head Of Risk
(appointed 10.12.22)

Company secretary

- Mrs K Halliwell**
Ms C.N. Kinyanjui
(appointed 01/03/24)

Registered office

Po Box 54, Reigate,
Surrey RH2 0AZ

Registered

- company number**
01806055
(England & Wales)
- Registered charity number**
289508
- Auditors**
Williams & Co
Epsom LLP
8-10 South Street
Epsom, Surrey
KT18 7PF
- Bankers**
Lloyds Bank Plc
11 High Street
Horley, Surrey
RH6 7BJ

Independent Auditors Report

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of I Choose Freedom charity (the 'charitable company') for the year ended 31 March 2024

which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2024 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditors' responsibilities for the audit

of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to ongoing concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report, other than the

financial statements and our Report of the Independent Auditors thereon.

Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Report of the Trustees for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Report of the

Trustees has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Report of the Trustees.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- the trustees were not entitled to take advantage of the small companies exemption from the requirement to prepare a Strategic Report or in preparing the Report of the Trustees.

Independent Auditors Report (cont)

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the Statement of Trustees’ Responsibilities, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company’s ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue a Report of the Independent Auditors that includes our opinion.

Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

- Our assessment of the financial statements susceptibility to material misstatement, including how fraud may occur, included a review of the sales process and ensuring timing of income was in accordance with accounting standards. The audit engagement team identified the risk of management override of controls as the area where the financial statements were most susceptible to material misstatement due to fraud. Audit

procedures performed included but were not limited to testing manual journal entries and other adjustments and evaluating the rationale in relation to any significant, unusual transactions and transactions entered into outside of the normal course of business.

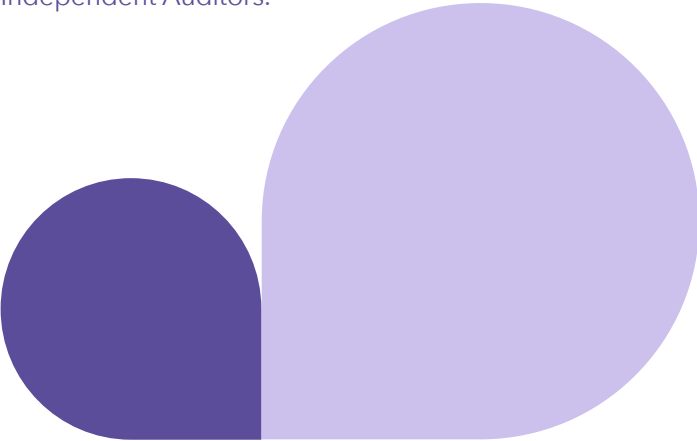
- Our tests were designed to ensure income was correctly reported in the correct accounting period and at the right level with significant testing of deferred income. In addition, given the significant balances held at bank, we sought third party verification of bank balances and carried out testing of these balances against pre and post balance sheet entries.
- We have tested controls over payment authorisations and sample payments from the bank to ensure all major items are properly accounted for.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council’s website at www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our Report of the Independent Auditors.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company’s members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company’s members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditors’ report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company’s members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Henry Williams
(Senior Statutory Auditor)
for and on behalf of
Williams & Co Epsom LLP
8-10 South Street
Epsom
Surrey
KT18 7PF
Date:



Statement of Financial Activities

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	31.3.24 Total funds £	31.3.23 Total funds £
Income and endowments from					
Donations and legacies	2	21,104	-	21,104	17,493
Charitable activities	4				
Supporting & accommodating victims of domestic abuse		15,000	666,470	681,470	1,009,788
Investment income	3	6,128	-	6,128	502
Other income		613,922	-	613,922	511,693
Total		656,154	666,470	1,322,624	1,539,476
Expenditure on					
Charitable activities	5				
Supporting & accommodating victims of domestic abuse		539,880	858,177	1,398,057	1,141,173
Net income /(expenditure)		116,274	(191,707)	(75,433)	398,303
Transfers between funds	15	(2,828)	2,828	-	-
Net movement in funds		113,446	(188,879)	(75,433)	398,303
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward		626,816	432,780	1,059,596	661,293
Total funds carried forward		740,262	243,901	984,163	1,059,596

Balance Sheet

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	31.3.24 Total funds £	31.3.23 Total funds £
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	12	12,647	53,145	65,792	77,480
Current assets					
Debtors	13	36,150	-	36,150	20,097
Cash at bank and in hand		785,571	190,755	976,326	989,834
		821,721	190,755	1,012,476	1,009,931
Creditors					
Amounts falling due within one year	14	(94,105)	-	(94,105)	(27,815)
Net current assets		727,616	190,755	918,371	982,116
Total assets less current liabilities		740,263	243,900	984,163	1,059,596
Net assets		740,263	243,900	984,163	1,059,596
Funds					
	15				
Unrestricted funds				740,263	626,816
Restricted funds				243,900	432,780
Total funds				984,163	1,059,596

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:

.....
Mrs S J Stimpson - Trustee

Cash Flow Statement

		31.3.24 £	31.3.23 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Cash generated from operations	1	(17,602)	88,702
Net cash (used in)/provided by operating activities		(17,602)	88,702
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(2,034)	(31,856)
Interest received		6,128	502
Net cash provided by/(used in) investing activities		4,094	(31,354)
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period			
		(13,508)	57,348
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period			
		989,834	932,486
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period			
		976,326	989,834

Notes to the Cash Flow Statement

1. Reconciliation of net income to net cash flow from operating activities

	31.3.24 £	31.3.23 £
Net (expenditure)/income for the reporting period (as per the Statement of Financial Activities)	(75,433)	398,303
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation charges	13,722	15,401
Interest received	(6,128)	(502)
Increase in debtors	(16,053)	(2,327)
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	66,290	(322,173)
Net cash (used in)/provided by operations	(17,602)	88,702

2. Analysis of changes in net funds

	At 1.4.23 £	Cash flow £	At 31.3.24 £
Net cash			
Cash at bank and in hand	989,834	(13,508)	976,326
	989,834	(13,508)	976,326
Total	989,834	(13,508)	976,326

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

1. Accounting policies

Basis of preparing the financial statements

The financial statements of the charitable company, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019)', Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Companies Act 2006. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

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) effective 1 January 2015 and with the

Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

The accounts have been prepared to give a 'true and fair' view and have departed from the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 only to the extent required to provide a 'true and fair view'. This departure has involved following 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) effective 1 January 2015 rather than the Accounting and Reporting Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice effective from 1 April 2005 which has since been withdrawn.

The Charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102.

The Trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the Charity's ability to continue as a going concern.

Incoming resources

All income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities once the charity has entitlement to the funds, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Income (including rents and contributions) is recognised when the charity has entitlement

to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the item(s) of income have been met, it is probable that the income will be received, and the amount can be measured reliably.

Income from grants, whether 'capital' grants or 'revenue' grants, is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the grants have been met, it is probable that the income will be received, and the amount can be measured reliably and is not deferred.

Bank and Building Society interest are accounted for on the basis of monies receivable in the year.

Resources expended

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular

headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Resources expended are allocated to the particular activity where the cost relates directly to that activity.

Governance costs

Governance costs comprise the costs of running the charity including amounts paid to the independent examiner.

Tangible fixed assets

Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 (cont)

1. Accounting policies (cont)

Tangible fixed assets

Improvements to property	10% on cost
Fixtures and fittings	25% on cost

Taxation

The charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.

Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted funds 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 restricted purposes.

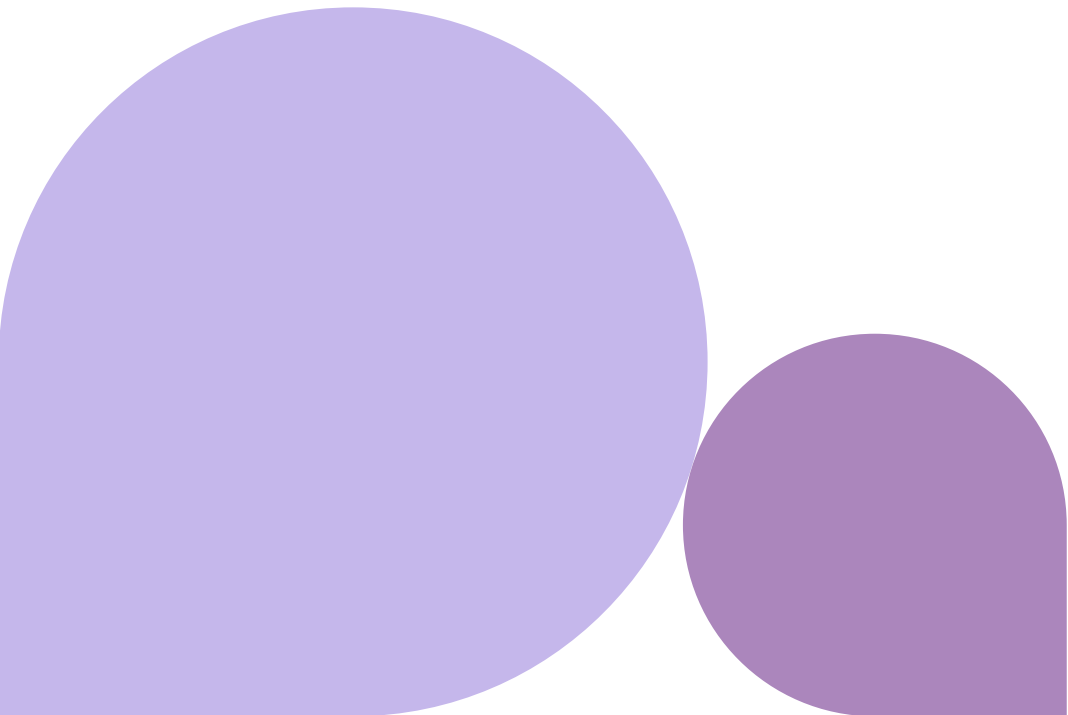
Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

Hire purchase and leasing commitments.

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities on a straight line basis over the period of the lease.

Pension costs and other post-retirement benefits

The charitable company operates a defined contribution pension scheme. Contributions payable to the charitable company's pension scheme are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities in the period to which they relate.



Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 (cont)

		31.3.24 £	31.3.23 £
2. Donations and legacies			
Donations		21,104	17,493
3. Investment income			
Deposit account interest		6,128	502
4. Income from charitable activities			
Grants	Activity		
	Supporting & accommodating victims of domestic abuse	681,470	1,009,788
Grants received, included in the above, are as follows:			
	Local Authority Grants	30,240	49,000
	Housing Related Support Grant	526,445	805,312
	Optivo Grant	15,000	15,000
	St Faiths	1,500	-
	Wisley	11,200	10,000
	Leather Sellers	-	15,000
	Community Foundation	5,000	-
	PCC Grants	14,546	36,285
	Caterham School	-	1,500
	Farnham Round Table	400	750
	C Elliss	21,250	45,000
	Christopher Critchlow	-	850
	Linda Bywaters	-	1,400
	Monique King	-	1,000
	Rotary Club	300	320
	Charles Safapour	625	2,500
	D & K Vanrenen	-	365
	John Lewis Partnership	-	1,000
	Kids Out	465	140
	Mrs H Williams	-	20
	Surrey Provincial Archmasons	-	5,000
	Georgia Treweek	-	10,343
	Astellas	-	6,000
	Lifetime Chances	3,199	2,973
	Anonymous	-	30
	Raven Housing	1,000	-
	Next Step Nursing	1,500	-
	Pauline Bourrne	25,200	-
	Meryl Gray	2,600	-
	The Worshipful Company of Pattenmakers	2,000	-
	Epsom College	5,000	-
	Shanly Foundation	2,000	-
	The Bob Trust	10,000	-
	The Charles Lewis Foundation	2,000	-
		681,470	1,009,788

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 (cont)

5. Charitable activities costs

	Direct Cost £	Support cost See note 6 £	Totals £
Supporting & accommodating victims of domestic abuse	1,357,154	40,903	1,398,057

6. Support costs

	Finance £	Governance costs £	Totals £
Supporting & accommodating victims of domestic abuse	741	40,162	40,903
31.3.24 <i>Supporting & accommodating victims of domestic abuse</i> £			31.3.23 <i>Total activities</i> £
Support costs, included in the above, are as follows:			
Bank charges		741	1,057
Auditors' remuneration		4,620	1,890
Accountancy and legal fees		33,108	29,683
Subscriptions		2,434	1,745
		40,903	34,375

7. Net income/(expenditure)

	31.3.24 £	31.3.23 £
Net income/(expenditure) is stated after charging/(crediting):		
Depreciation - owned assets	13,722	15,401
Other operating leases	71,382	50,630

8. Auditors' remuneration

Fees payable to the charity's auditors for the audit of the charity's financial statements	4,620	1,890
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9. Trustees' remuneration and benefits

There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 31 March 2024 nor for the year ended 31 March 2023.

Trustees' expenses

There were no trustees' expenses paid for the year ended 31 March 2024 nor for the year ended 31 March 2023.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 (cont)

10. Staff costs

	31.3.24	31.3.23
	£	£
Wages and salaries	781,338	625,712
Social security costs	64,075	49,750
Other pension costs	16,986	12,596
	<u>862,399</u>	<u>688,038</u>

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follows:

Administration	5	6
Refuge Workers	22	17
	<u>27</u>	<u>23</u>

The number of employees whose employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) exceeded £60,000 was:

£60,001 - £70,000	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
-------------------	----------	----------

11. Comparatives for the statement of financial activities

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds
	£	£	£
Income and endowments from			
Donations and legacies	17,076	417	17,493
Charitable activities			
Supporting & accommodating victims of domestic abuse	25,000	984,788	1,009,788
Investment income	502	-	502
Other income	511,581	112	511,693
Total	554,159	985,317	1,539,476
Expenditure on charitable activities			
Supporting & accommodating victims of domestic abuse	412,546	728,627	1,141,173
Net income	141,613	256,690	398,303
Transfers between funds	(67,177)	67,177	-
Net movement in funds	74,436	323,867	398,303
Reconciliation of funds			
Total funds brought forward	552,383	108,910	661,293
Total funds carried forward	626,819	432,777	1,059,596

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 (cont)

12. Tangible fixed assets

	Improvements to property £	Fixtures & fittings £	Totals £
Cost			
At 1 april 2023	101,138	57,132	158,270
Additions	-	2,034	2,034
At 31 march 2024	101,138	59,166	160,304
Depreciation			
At 1 april 2023	48,548	32,242	80,790
Charge for year	6,990	6,732	13,722
At 31 march 2024	55,538	38,974	94,512
Net book value			
At 31 march 2024	45,600	20,192	65,792
At 31 march 2023	52,590	24,890	77,480

13. Debtors: amounts falling due within one year

	31.3.24 £	31.3.23 £
Trade debtors	9,474	4,059
Accruals	11,222	6,524
Prepayments	15,454	9,514
	36,150	20,097

14. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	31.3.24 £	31.3.23 £
Trade creditors	30,735	13,712
Social security and other taxes	25,172	-
Other creditors	13,607	8,650
Accrued expenses	8,249	4,561
Deferred government grants	16,342	892
	94,105	27,815

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 (cont)

15. Movement in funds

	At 1.4.23 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfer between funds £	At 31.3.24 £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	199,618	116,815	20,978	337,411
Contingency Reserve	300,000	-	100,000	400,000
New House Fund	123,806	-	(123,806)	-
Renewals Fund	3,392	(540)	-	2,852
	626,816	116,275	(2,828)	740,263
Restricted funds				
Surrey County Council	258	48,840	1	49,099
PCC Victim Transition Fund	5,704	(2,364)	-	3,340
Psychotherapy Fund	2,240	(2,240)	-	-
Children's Fund	1,419	(1,782)	363	-
Masons Shed	2,562	(366)	-	2,196
Therapy Cabin	33,561	(4,794)	-	28,767
SCC HH Support Grant	1,147	(286)	-	861
PCC IT Grant	1,303	(326)	-	977
Douglas Bradley Residents Tech	1,580	(1,580)	-	-
Caterham School Transition	1,500	(1,439)	-	61
Optivo internal decorating	-	(1,296)	1,296	-
Vinci CCT fund	4,267	(1,067)	-	3,200
Wisley Foundation	2,877	(719)	-	2,158
C Elliss Equipment	15,897	(3,232)	-	12,665
Giv fund	285	(215)	-	70
NRPF	17,729	19,220	-	36,949
SCC Inclusion Refuge restricted	282,807	(282,650)	-	157
Leathersellers IT Security	48	-	(48)	-
HH Masons Play Area	3,058	(517)	19	2,560
Georgia Treeweek transition fund	6,944	(6,941)	(3)	-
Diversity and Inclusion Fund	4,813	(1,795)	-	3,018
Creating Healthy Communities Community support programme	6,393	(7,562)	1,169	-
RBBC Household Support Fund	1,388	900	-	2,288
Wisley Welcome Pack Fund	10,000	917	31	10,948
Caroline Ellis Court Fund	25,000	1,371	-	26,371
Mildred Jackson Fund	-	22,758	-	22,758
Kerslake PT Fund	-	2,175	-	2,175
Pattenmakers Shoe Fund	-	1,282	-	1,282
Caroline Ellis 2024	-	25,000	-	25,000
Children's Advocate Salary	-	5,000	-	5,000
Charles Lewis Foundation TV fund	-	2,000	-	2,000
	432,780	(191,708)	2,828	243,900
TOTAL FUNDS	1,059,596	(75,433)	-	984,163

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 (cont)

15. Movement in funds (cont)

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	656,154	(539,339)	116,815
Renewals Fund	-	(540)	(540)
	656,154	(539,879)	116,275
Restricted funds			
Surrey County Council	457,323	(408,483)	48,840
RBBC	21,000	(21,000)	-
PCC Victim Transition Fund	-	(2,364)	(2,364)
Psychotherapy Fund	-	(2,240)	(2,240)
Children's Fund	1,045	(2,827)	(1,782)
Masons Shed	-	(366)	(366)
Therapy Cabin	-	(4,794)	(4,794)
PCC Childrens Grant	14,546	(14,546)	-
SCC HH Support Grant	1	(287)	(286)
PCC IT Grant	-	(326)	(326)
Douglas Bradley Residents Tech	-	(1,580)	(1,580)
Caterham School Transition	-	(1,439)	(1,439)
Optivo internal decorating	-	(1,296)	(1,296)
Vinci CCT fund	-	(1,067)	(1,067)
Wisley Foundation	-	(719)	(719)
C Elliss Equipment	-	(3,232)	(3,232)
Giv fund	3,625	(3,840)	(215)
NRPF	29,120	(9,900)	19,220
SCC Inclusion Refuge restricted	-	(282,650)	(282,650)
HH Masons Play Area	-	(517)	(517)
Georgia Treeweek transition fund	-	(6,941)	(6,941)
Diversity and Inclusion Fund	120	(1,915)	(1,795)
Creating Healthy Communities Community support programme	-	(7,562)	(7,562)
SCC Fuel costs	30,000	(30,000)	-
RBBC Household Support Fund	20,241	(19,341)	900
Lifetime Chances	3,199	(3,199)	-
Wisley Welcome Pack Fund	11,200	(10,283)	917
Caroline Ellis Court Fund	6,250	(4,879)	1,371
Mildred Jackson Fund	25,200	(2,442)	22,758
Kerslake PT Fund	2,600	(425)	2,175
Pattenmakers Shoe Fund	2,000	(718)	1,282
Epsom College Advocate salaries	5,001	(5,001)	-
Shanly Children's Advocate Salary	1,999	(1,999)	-
Caroline Ellis 2024	25,000	-	25,000
Children's Advocate Salary	5,000	-	5,000
Charles Lewis Foundation TV fund	2,000	-	2,000
	666,470	(858,178)	(191,708)
Total funds	1,322,624	(1,398,057)	(75,433)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 (cont)

15. Movement in funds (cont)

Comparatives for movement in funds

	At 1.4.22	Net movement in funds	Transfer between funds	At 31.3.23
	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	174,145	142,650	(117,177)	199,618
Contingency Reserve	250,000	-	50,000	300,000
New House Fund	123,806	-	-	123,806
Renewals Fund	4,432	(1,040)	-	3,392
	552,383	141,610	(67,177)	626,816
Restricted funds				
Surrey County Council	28,465	(55,477)	27,268	256
RBBC	-	(1,995)	1,995	-
PCC Victim Transition Fund	-	5,704	-	5,704
Psychotherapy Fund	3,110	(870)	-	2,240
Children's Fund	3,529	(2,110)	-	1,419
Masons Shed	2,928	(366)	-	2,562
Therapy Cabin	38,356	(4,795)	-	33,561
PCC Childrens Grant	5,155	(9,737)	4,582	-
SCC HH Support Grant	1,530	(383)	-	1,147
PCC IT Grant	1,737	(434)	-	1,303
Douglas Bradley Residents Tech	1,694	(114)	-	1,580
Caterham School Transition	-	1,500	-	1,500
Nationwide Transition Fund	116	(419)	303	-
PF Charitable Transition	7,000	(6,932)	(68)	-
Optivo internal decorating	-	(1,318)	1,318	-
Vinci CCT fund	5,689	(1,422)	-	4,267
Wisley Foundation	4,193	(1,441)	125	2,877
C Elliss Equipment	-	15,897	-	15,897
Giv fund	-	285	-	285
Household Support fund RBBC	305	-	(305)	-
SCC White Goods HH	657	(604)	(53)	-
NRPF	-	48,556	(30,827)	17,729
RBWA Name change fund	4,446	(6,581)	2,135	-
SCC Inclusion Refuge restricted	-	222,103	60,706	282,809
Leathersellers IT Security	-	48	-	48
HH Masons Play Area	-	3,058	-	3,058
Georgia Treeweek transition fund	-	6,949	(5)	6,944
Diversity and Inclusion Fund	-	4,813	-	4,813
Creating Healthy Communities Community support programme	-	6,393	-	6,393
RBBC Household Support Fund	-	1,388	-	1,388
Lifetime Chances	-	(3)	3	-
Wisley Welcome Pack Fund	-	10,000	-	10,000
Caroline Ellis Court Fund	-	25,000	-	25,000
	108,910	256,693	67,177	432,780
Total funds	661,293	398,303	-	1,059,596

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 (cont)

15. Movement in funds

Comparative net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	554,159	(411,509)	142,650
Renewals Fund	-	(1,040)	(1,040)
	554,159	(412,549)	141,610
Restricted funds			
Surrey County Council	411,807	(467,284)	(55,477)
RBBC	21,000	(22,995)	(1,995)
PCC Victim Transition Fund	16,891	(11,187)	5,704
Psychotherapy Fund	-	(870)	(870)
Children's Fund	4,320	(6,430)	(2,110)
Masons Shed	-	(366)	(366)
Therapy Cabin	(1)	(4,794)	(4,795)
PCC Childrens Grant	19,393	(29,130)	(9,737)
SCC HH Support Grant	(1)	(382)	(383)
PCC IT Grant	-	(434)	(434)
Douglas Bradley Residents Tech	-	(114)	(114)
Caterham School Transition	1,500	-	1,500
Nationwide Transition Fund	-	(419)	(419)
PF Charitable Transition	-	(6,932)	(6,932)
Optivo internal decorating	-	(1,318)	(1,318)
Vinci CCT fund	-	(1,422)	(1,422)
Wisley Foundation	(1)	(1,440)	(1,441)
C Elliss Equipment	20,001	(4,104)	15,897
Giv fund	4,055	(3,770)	285
SCC White Goods HH	-	(604)	(604)
NRPF	58,240	(9,684)	48,556
RBWA Name change fund	111	(6,692)	(6,581)
SCC Inclusion Refuge restricted	312,286	(90,183)	222,103
Leathersellers IT Security	5,000	(4,952)	48
HH Masons Play Area	5,000	(1,942)	3,058
Georgia Treeweek transition fund	10,343	(3,394)	6,949
Diversity and Inclusion Fund	6,000	(1,187)	4,813
Creating Healthy Communities Community support programme	8,000	(1,607)	6,393
SCC Fuel costs	23,400	(23,400)	-
RBBC Household Support Fund	20,000	(18,612)	1,388
Lifetime Chances	2,973	(2,976)	(3)
Wisley Welcome Pack Fund	10,000	-	10,000
Caroline Ellis Court Fund	25,000	-	25,000
	985,317	(728,624)	256,693
Total funds	1,539,476	(1,141,173)	398,303

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 (cont)

15. Movement in funds (cont)

A current year 12 months and prior year 12 months combined position is as follows:

	At 1.4.22 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfer between funds £	At 31.3.24 £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	174,145	259,465	(96,199)	337,411
Contingency Reserve	250,000	-	150,000	400,000
New House Fund	123,806	-	(123,806)	-
Renewals Fund	4,432	(1,580)	-	2,852
	552,383	257,885	(70,005)	740,263
Restricted funds				
Surrey County Council	28,465	(6,637)	27,269	49,097
RBBC	-	(1,995)	1,995	-
PCC Victim Transition Fund	-	3,340	-	3,340
Psychotherapy Fund	3,110	(3,110)	-	-
Children's Fund	3,529	(3,892)	363	-
Masons Shed	2,928	(732)	-	2,196
Therapy Cabin	38,356	(9,589)	-	28,767
PCC Childrens Grant	5,155	(9,737)	4,582	-
SCC HH Support Grant	1,530	(669)	-	861
PCC IT Grant	1,737	(760)	-	977
Douglas Bradley Residents Tech	1,694	(1,694)	-	-
Caterham School Transition	-	61	-	61
Nationwide Transition Fund	116	(419)	303	-
PF Charitable Transition	7,000	(6,932)	(68)	-
Optivo internal decorating	-	(2,614)	2,614	-
Vinci CCT fund	5,689	(2,489)	-	3,200
Wisley Foundation	4,193	(2,160)	125	2,158
C Elliss Equipment	-	12,665	-	12,665
Giv fund	-	70	-	70
Household Support fund RBBC	305	-	(305)	-
SCC White Goods HH	657	(604)	(53)	-
NRPF	-	67,776	(30,827)	36,949
RBWA Name change fund	4,446	(6,581)	2,135	-
SCC Inclusion Refuge restricted	-	(60,547)	60,706	159
Leathersellers IT Security	-	48	(48)	-
HH Masons Play Area	-	2,541	19	2,560
Georgia Treeweek transition fund	-	8	(8)	-
Diversity and Inclusion Fund	-	3,018	-	3,018
Creating Healthy Communities Community support programme	-	(1,169)	1,169	-
RBBC Household Support Fund	-	2,288	-	2,288
Lifetime Chances	-	(3)	3	-
Wisley Welcome Pack Fund	-	10,917	31	10,948
Caroline Ellis Court Fund	-	26,371	-	26,371
Mildred Jackson Fund	-	22,758	-	22,758
Kerslake PT Fund	-	2,175	-	2,175
Pattenmakers Shoe Fund	-	1,282	-	1,282
Caroline Ellis 2024	-	25,000	-	25,000
Children's Advocate Salary	-	5,000	-	5,000
Charles Lewis Foundation TV fund	-	2,000	-	2,000
	108,910	64,985	70,005	243,900
Total funds	661,293	322,870	-	984,1636

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 (cont)

15. Movement in funds (cont)

A current year 12 months and prior year 12 months combined net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General fund	1,210,313	(950,848)	259,465
Renewals Fund	-	(1,580)	(1,580)
	1,210,313	(952,428)	257,885
Restricted funds			
Surrey County Council	869,130	(875,767)	(6,637)
RBBC	42,000	(43,995)	(1,995)
PCC Victim Transition Fund	16,891	(13,551)	3,340
Psychotherapy Fund	-	(3,110)	(3,110)
Children's Fund	5,365	(9,257)	(3,892)
Masons Shed	-	(732)	(732)
Therapy Cabin	(1)	(9,588)	(9,589)
PCC Childrens Grant	33,939	(43,676)	(9,737)
SCC HH Support Grant	-	(669)	(669)
PCC IT Grant	-	(760)	(760)
Douglas Bradley Residents Tech	-	(1,694)	(1,694)
Caterham School Transition	1,500	(1,439)	61
Nationwide Transition Fund	-	(419)	(419)
PF Charitable Transition	-	(6,932)	(6,932)
Optivo internal decorating	-	(2,614)	(2,614)
Vinci CCT fund	-	(2,489)	(2,489)
Wisley Foundation	(1)	(2,159)	(2,160)
C Elliss Equipment	20,001	(7,336)	12,665
Giv fund	7,680	(7,610)	70
SCC White Goods HH	-	(604)	(604)
NRPF	87,360	(19,584)	67,776
RBWA Name change fund	111	(6,692)	(6,581)
SCC Inclusion Refuge restricted	312,286	(372,833)	(60,547)
Leathersellers IT Security	5,000	(4,952)	48
HH Masons Play Area	5,000	(2,459)	2,541
Georgia Treeweek transition fund	10,343	(10,335)	8
Diversity and Inclusion Fund	6,120	(3,102)	3,018
Creating Healthy Communities Community support programme	8,000	(9,169)	(1,169)
SCC Fuel costs	53,400	(53,400)	-
RBBC Household Support Fund	40,241	(37,953)	2,288
Lifetime Chances	6,172	(6,175)	(3)
Wisley Welcome Pack Fund	21,200	(10,283)	10,917
Caroline Ellis Court Fund	31,250	(4,879)	26,371
Mildred Jackson Fund	25,200	(2,442)	22,758
Kerslake PT Fund	2,600	(425)	2,175
Pattenmakers Shoe Fund	2,000	(718)	1,282
Epsom College Advocate salaries	5,001	(5,001)	-
Shanly Children's Advocate Salary	1,999	(1,999)	-
Caroline Ellis 2024	25,000	-	25,000
Children's Advocate Salary	5,000	-	5,000
Charles Lewis Foundation TV fund	2,000	-	2,000
	1,651,787	(1,586,802)	64,985
Total funds	2,862,100	(2,539,230)	322,870

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 (cont)

15. Movement in funds (cont)

Transfers between funds

Transfers represent amounts transferred to the individual restricted funds from general funds to provide additional funding for the particular project(s) in the year.

The purpose of the individual restricted funds is set out below:

Unrestricted Funds

General Purpose Fund

This represents the working capital of the Refuge.

Contingency Reserve

Although some insurance is in place, the Directors regard it as essential to hold a contingency reserve should the above revenue be curtailed.

Renewals Fund

There is a continuing need for replacement furnishings and garden equipment which will be financed by this reserve.

Restricted Funds

Children's fund

This fund has been set up to provide activities and facilities for the children during their stay in the refuge. It is funded from donations and fundraising.

Psychotherapy Fund

This fund has been set up to provide Adolescent Therapy sessions.

Caterham School - Transition

This grant was given to help purchase items when a woman and her children arrive at the refuge.

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government of the United Kingdom

KingdomThe Ministry has granted three funds to contribute to the setng up of the new refuge, and salary costs and therapy for the residents.

Vinci CCTV Fund

This grant was given to set up a CCTV system for security.

C Elliss Equipment

This grant was given to provide new play equipment at the refuge.

Gift fund

This fund was set up to provide Christmas givs and support items to the women and children at the refuge.

Household Support fund RBBC

This grant was given to help purchase items when a woman and her children arrive at the refuge.

HH Masons Play Area

This grant was given to make improvements to the children's play area at the refuge.

Georgia Treeweek Transition Fund

This grant was given to help purchase items when a woman and her children arrive at the refuge.

Diversity and Inclusion Fund

This grant was given to help make the refuge and its activities more inclusive for its residents

Wisley Welcome Pack Fund

This grant was given to help purchase items when a woman and her children arrive at the refuge.

Creating Healthy CommuniHes Community Support Programme

This grant was given to provide supportive drop in sessions available to the local community

SCC Fuel costs

This grant was provided to support residents with housing costs during the cost of living crisis

RBBC Household Support Fund

This grant was provided to support residents with housing costs during the cost of living crisis

Caroline Ellis Court Fund

This grant was given to support residents in court proceedings

Lifetime Chances

This grant is provided to meet one-off expenses for residents' personal development and life achievement.

Mildred Jackson Fund

This grant is provided to support residents travel costs.

Kerslake PT Fund

This grant was given to provide physical therapy and wellness services for residents

Pattenmakers Shoe Fund

This grant is given to purchase shoes for residents

Epsom College Advocate Salaries

This grant is provided to support the cost of the DA advocate roles within the refuge

Shanly Children's Advocate Salaries

This grant is provided to support the cost of the DA advocate roles within the refuge

Caroline Ellis 2024

This grant is provided to support the cost of the DA advocate roles within the refuge

Children's Advocate Salaries

This grant is provided to support the cost of the DA advocate roles within the refuge

Charles Lewis Foundation TV Fund

This grant was provided to buy new TV's at one of the refuge sites

RBBC DA Funding

This grant is provided to support residents of Reigate and Banstead who are experiencing or at risk of domestic abuse, to include those in refuge support.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 (cont)

16. Related party disclosures

There were no related party transactions for the year ended 31 March 2024.	31.3.24 £	31.3.23 £
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Set up a regular donation!

£10



For £10 a month you can help ensure we have enough toiletries to put in our Welcome Packs for our new survivors! This makes huge transition of coming to refuge a little bit easier

£15



For £15 a month you can help us give each survivor a voucher for the local supermarket so that every new resident can have a hot meal on their first night in refuge

£20



For £20 a month you can help us treat our survivors to exciting days out! Trips to the cinema, to the leisure centre, maybe even a theme park!

You can set up a monthly gift via our JustGiving page

www.justgiving.com/ichoosefreedom



@IChooseFreedom_



Ichoosefreedomcharity



I Choose Freedom

"The refuge was the anchor that held us steady amidst the storm, and I am ever grateful for their unwavering support. Today, our future is bright and filled with endless possibilities. The refuge not only provided us with safety but also empowered us to rebuild our lives with dignity and hope"





How to get in touch?

For any queries email us on:
info@ichoosefreedom.co.uk

How do I get help?

For general help and advice call
the National Domestic Abuse
Helpline on: 0808 2000 247

www.ichoosefreedom.co.uk