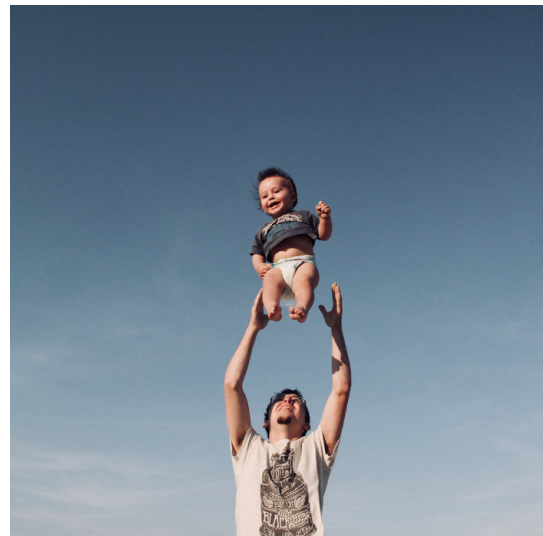


SHARED PARENTING SCOTLAND

Annual Report and Accounts 2019-2020



Supporting separated parents to share parenting

Because children need both parents

formerly Families Need Fathers Scotland.

AIM

Shared Parenting Scotland is a national charity supporting separated parents to both remain fully involved because of the benefits of shared parenting for their children. We work with parents and other family members to deal with contact problems and other related issues. Through our helpline, support group meetings, WhatsApp networking, training and publications we encourage people to move on from past difficulties and seek ways to resolve disputes through discussion and mediation, only going to court if absolutely necessary.

FUNDING

Shared Parenting Scotland is very grateful for the all the support we have received during the past year. The Tudor Trust, the Scottish Government Children and Young Peoples Early intervention Fund administered by the Corra Foundation, The Voluntary Action Fund administered by Impact Funding Partners and the Robertson Trust have all given very welcome ongoing support.

We also very grateful to the following trusts and foundations who have provided grants during 2019/20: Hugh Fraser, W.M.Mann, Isabella Memorial, Tillyloss, Peter & Teresa Harris and Kintore.

We are also grateful to our service users who undertook Kiltwalks in Glasgow, Dundee, Aberdeen and Edinburgh on our behalf, with the funds they raised topped up by the Hunter Foundation.

BACKGROUND

The charity was established as Families Need Fathers Scotland in 2011 and changed to Shared Parenting Scotland in January 2020. This name change reflects the fact that we work with fathers, mothers and other family members.

We remain in close working relations with Families Need Fathers UK and FNF Both Parents Matter Cymru.

We have three staff and eight trustees, operating from office space in Edinburgh and Glasgow.

Our thanks are due to the many volunteers who assist with group meetings, the WhatsApp networks and as Lay Support volunteers.

We are also extremely grateful to the 52 family lawyers across Scotland who take turns to attend our local group meetings and also to the lawyers and advocates who help us on legal topics.



CHANGE OF NAME LAUNCH

In February 2020 we launched our new name - SHARED PARENTING SCOTLAND. This came about for two main reasons.

The name 'Families Need Fathers Scotland' implied wrongly that we only support fathers, and that name was too readily confused with Fathers4Justice, the direct-action campaign.

We have always worked with all parents who support the idea of shared parenting as the best outcome for children.

Our enquiries and attendance at support meetings have always included many women. Grandmothers and new partners of fathers have been involved all along and in recent years we have had increasing support from mothers and also from women who had been in same sex relationships.

The name change signals that we really believe that shared parenting isn't just an issue for fathers - it affects mothers as well as all other family members.

The most important reason for promoting shared parenting is the benefit it can bring for children. They don't lose the support of one of their parents and also don't have to choose between parents or suffer loyalty conflicts.

Alongside promoting full involvement of both parents we recognise that shared parenting isn't easy/ Our support and training programme has been extended to equip parents with the skills and understanding to make it work for them and their children.

"I really appreciate all the help I've been receiving, it's been very worthwhile joining this group."

We invited Sir James Munby to launch our new name in Edinburgh on 10th February. His speech arrived, but bad weather and train disruptions meant that the former President of the Family Division of England and Wales was prevented from actually delivering it. Fortunately Amanda Masson from event sponsor Harper Macleod LLP swiftly transformed her response speech into a main address on shared parenting and we assembled a panel for discussion and questions. The event brought together family lawyers, mediators, parenting and children's organisations and many of the parents who use our services, an impressive turnout given the dreadful weather.



Amanda Masson



Sir James Munby

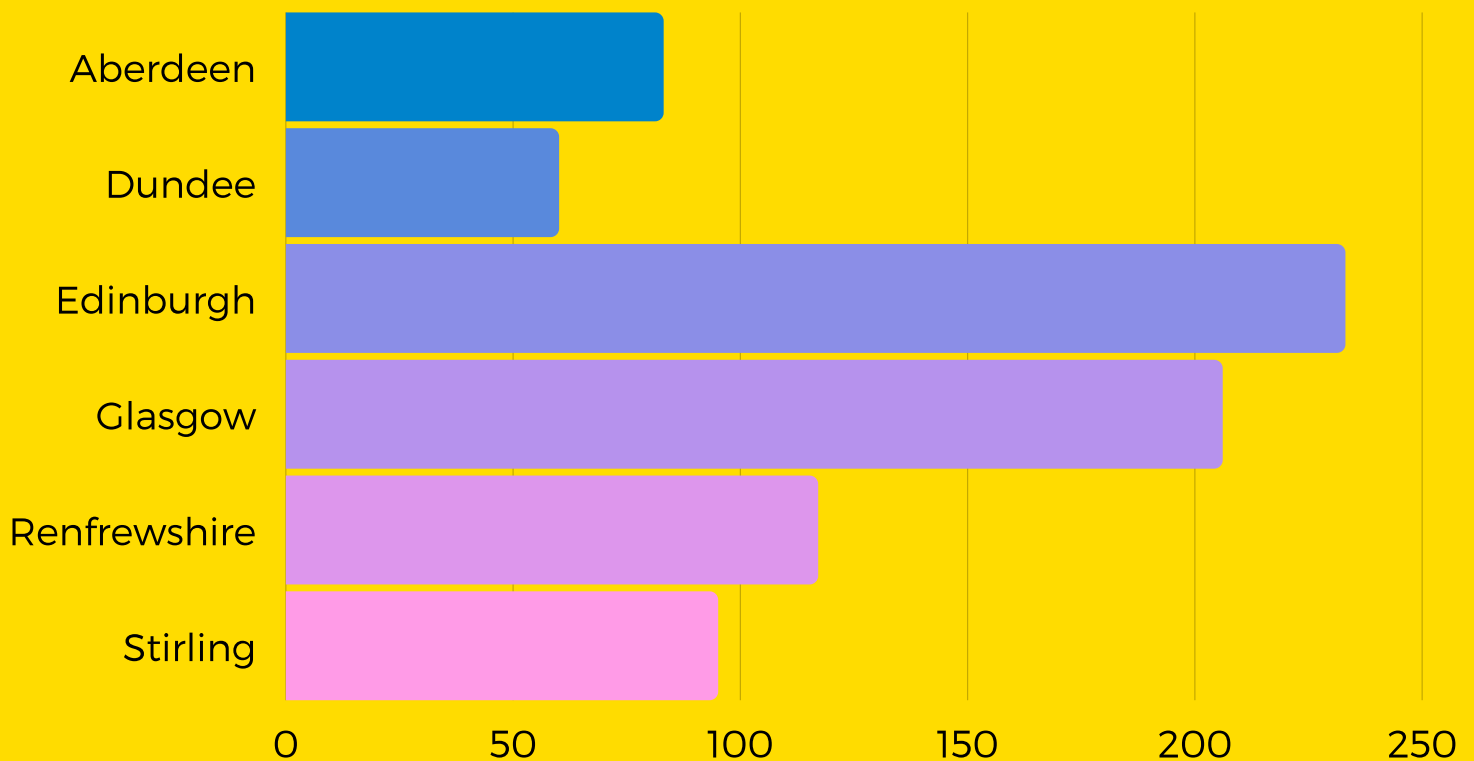
GROUP MEETINGS

Many of the people who seek help from us welcome the chance to share experience with other people who are experiencing similar issues. Evening group meetings have always been an important part of our support. We now hold group meetings every month in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee, Aberdeen, Stirling and Paisley, attended by a total of 794 people during 2019-20. To cater for further flung people and those who cannot attend evening meetings we have also organised online meetings in the past. From late March 2020 all our meetings went online because of the COVID-19 lockdown, and we will continue some online sessions even after we can restart the face-to-face sessions.

As well as extending the geographic range of these meetings, we have built up a support team of more than 50 family lawyers across these locations who take turns to attend each meeting and offer legal information pro bono. Almost every major Scottish family law firm is now involved with this support work and we are fortunate to be able to draw upon this pool of expertise both at meetings and when tricky legal issues are raised on the helpline.

794 total attended group meetings

Number attending meetings in 2019/20



TRAINING SESSIONS

Training parents to build up their own skills and also help others has become a key part of our operation. Working with Civicos Training and with financial support from the Robertson Trust and the Volunteering Fund we have run training sessions on stress management, communication skills and Lay Support volunteering.

Working with Parent Network Scotland we ran an 8-session training course for separated fathers in Edinburgh. We have also been developing a range of online training courses in order to reach a wider audience across Scotland. Some of these courses will cover topics that have already been delivered face-to-face, but we are also in discussion with the High Conflict Institute in the USA.

Megan Hunter their CEO spoke at meetings in Edinburgh and Glasgow about their New Ways for Families programme of online training supported by on-to-one coaching. We are now working on launching this training programme in Scotland.

50 total completed training

Training completed



I do not feel without your help and advice I could have been so composed and confident with the situation

WHATSAPP

To enable people to support each other and communicate between our monthly group meetings, we have started local WhatsApp groups for each of the areas of Scotland. Activity has grown steadily with some groups posting more than 2000 items per month. Discussion ranges from exchanging ideas on what to feed fussy children to legal tips.

Group members rally round when someone hits a rough patch and celebrate when something good happens like restarting contact. As with any forum, there are ground rules and limits to what is discussed, but within these parameters lies a lot of solidarity and friendship.

NEW WEBSITE

New name – new web site. Working with the Form and Function Coop, we launched a completely new website in February 2020. Features include an FAQ section based on enquiries received on our helpline, and personal blog posts relating to campaign issues

www.sharedparenting.scot

Big thanks for some great advice the other day on the phone

3280

total enquiries

Email received	901
Email sent	1241
External meeting	6
Facebook message	46
Face-to-Face Meeting	104
Letter received	4
Letter sent	7
Telephone call from FNFS	79
Telephone call into FNFS	733
Text received	27
Text sent	20
Thank you letter	112

SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT CROSS PARTY GROUP ON SHARED PARENTING

Cross Party Groups bring MSPs and organisations together to share experience on topics. Shared Parenting Scotland acts as secretary to the Shared Parenting CPG.

Recent meetings have focused on the Children (Scotland) Bill, with speakers including Relationships Scotland talking about contact centres, Scottish civil servants talking about the Bill and Belgian Judge Marie-France Carlier talking about how family law in Belgium was amended in 2006 to include a rebuttable presumption of shared parenting.

Juliet Harris of Together Scotland talked about another impending law change, the implementation of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child into Scottish law.



Fulton
MacGregor MSP
Chair of the CPG



Judge
Marie-France
Carlier

CHILDREN (SCOTLAND) BILL

During progress of the Children (Scotland) Bill through the Scottish Parliament in 2019-2020, Shared Parenting Scotland lobbied for various changes which we felt would improve the legislation. National Manager Ian Maxwell presented evidence to the Justice Committee in January 2020 alongside June Loudon from Grandparents Apart and child psychologist Sue Whitcombe.

Despite the fact that none of our amendments survived into the final legislation, our lobbying work has ensured intense discussion of how the courts work at the moment to resolve contact disputes.

Within the new law there is plenty of scope for speeding up decisions, reducing the adversarial nature of court hearings, increasing the likelihood that more disputes will be settled through mediation and not in court and better processes for court reporting.

Justice Committee hearing



SCOTTISH LEGAL AWARDS

For the second year running Shared Parenting Scotland has been shortlisted as a finalist in The Scottish Legal Awards in the Community Contribution category for our work involving lawyers at group meetings. Because of the impending COVID-19 lockdown the award ceremony was postponed from March 2020 to the Autumn, so we await the news of whether we have won anything this year.



Speaking at the Malaga Conference



MALAGA CONFERENCE

An International Scientific Conference on Best Interests of the Child and Shared Parenting was held at Malaga University in December 2019. Ian Maxwell gave a paper on Putting Shared Parenting into Scottish Family Law. Papers from the conference will be published in the Routledge International Handbooks Series.

WAY FORWARD FOR SCOTTISH FAMILY COURTS

We published wide-reaching critique of where the present system falls short and our proposals for a radical change of approach in November 2019.

The Way Forward For Scotland urged the Scottish Government to take a radical approach to its task, seeking a paradigm shift in attitudes and practice towards supporting coparenting of children when their parents do not live together. Copies were delivered to every MSP and a wide range of other stakeholders.



AGM

The last Annual General Meeting of Families Need Fathers Scotland in November 2019 heard a powerful presentation from child safety campaigner Jan James about the UK Parental Alienation Study looking at how Parental Alienation affects parents, children and the wider family.

This large-scale survey shows the psychological manipulation of children that forces them to reject an otherwise loving parent & grandparent as significantly harmful to children, in both the short and long term. It also has a detrimental effect on the physical and mental health of all victim parents, grandparents and step-parents.



Thanks a lot for your reply. I wouldn't have been able to stand that alone.

LOCATIONS

We were fortunate to have the opportunity in 2019 to lease space in Cadogan Square, Glasgow. As well as an office this gives us space to hold our monthly meetings and other training sessions. Our main address remains in Edinburgh, and we are grateful to Palmerston Place Church for the continuing use of their premises at 10 Palmerston Place.

SHARED PARENTING SCOTLAND

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0131 557 2440

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www.sharedparenting.scot

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Facebook: [@sharedparentingscotland](https://facebook.com/sharedparentingscotland)

**Scottish Charitable Incorporated
Organisation SC042817**

ATTITUDES TO SHARED PARENTING

Anna Staples conducted interviews with parents and children about their experience of shared parenting during her internship with us in early 2019. She also conducted a Google poll on attitudes to shared parenting.



One weekend a fortnight is enough time for a child to spend with their mum or dad.

70% disagree

Sharing parental duties equally takes pressure off both parents; allowing them to balance work, family, and social lives.

90% agree

The sex of a parent should be a relevant factor when courts are making determinations about custody.

76% disagree

Ideally, when parents separate, children should spend have their time with each parent.

89% agree

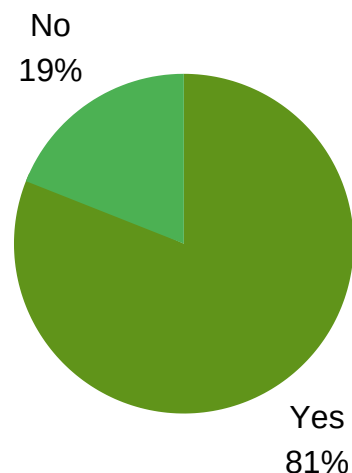
In the event of separation, the long-term well-being of children should be prioritised over what is easiest for either of their parents.

88% agree

Mothers and fathers should have equally important roles in supporting their child emotionally, socially, and financially.

91% agree

Would you support a change in the law to create a presumption of shared parenting, meaning children spend half their time with each parent unless there is good reason not to?



COVID-19

The lockdown caused by the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated many of the contact problems in separated families, even though children going between the homes of their parents were exempted from the movement restrictions.

We received 48% more enquiries during the start of the pandemic than in the same months in 2019. Most concerned contact arrangements breaking down although a few parents did react positively and actually worked together to ensure that children were supported properly and were reassured by seeing that both their parents were well.

Shared Parenting Scotland arranged recording of a morale booster poem for children and adults who weren't seeing each other during the lockdown.

The Ballad of Janitor Mackay by Margaret Green was recited separately by 12 of the parents and grandparents who take part in our groups.

The video was edited together by Grant MacFarlane who also provided the accordion accompaniment.

INVOLVING BOTH PARENTS

We continue to be involved in issues around communication between schools and separated parents. Most schools do their best to work within the guidance of the **Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act** of 2006 and its obligations to treat separated parents equally. However, there are regular issues which arise when a particular school doesn't understand how it should conduct itself.

We supported one separated father who had good involvement with his child but the council repeatedly refused to acknowledge him because his name wasn't on the birth certificate and therefore didn't have parental rights.

We gave the dad chapter and verse of the definition of parent in the 1980 Education Act but the council refused to back down. In the end with pro bono support from a solicitor and pro bono counsel's opinion the council was given 7 days to sort it or go to judicial review.

They backed down the next day.



PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

John Forsyth has been involved in the working group revising the statutory guidance to the 2006 Act. It was put out to consultation in the spring but because of COVID-19 the closing date was extended to June 2020 and we await the emergence of the final version that will be issued to schools.

COVID-19 has raised a number of issues during the closure of schools with some deciding they would only communicate with one parent. It shows that the system and individuals within it still have real problems with the concept of equal involvement of separated parents.

The ParentsPortal is being developed to replace the school bag run. Some schools/councils are already using it but again in some local authorities it seems not to allow easy communication with both parents. It is intended to roll out to all authorities by next year.

We have been in touch with the Education and Skills Committee of the Scottish Parliament and will be pressing them to pick up a series of issues about parental involvement.

Court representation at 12 hearings and appeals

Attended 2 CMS tribunals

Lay Support provided at 13 court hearings

SPEAKERS

The president of the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts Dr Matthew Sullivan gave a talk for us in Edinburgh in February 2020.

Dr Sullivan is a licensed psychologist in private practice in California and is the founder of the Californian Coparenting Clinic. He talked about how child-centred interventions, co-parenting and parenting coordination can all play a part in dealing with the breakdown of ties between children and their parents.

AFCC is the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts – the premier interdisciplinary and international association of professionals dedicated to the resolution of family conflict. For nearly half a century AFCC and its members have served as catalysts for generating major reforms. Dispute resolution processes such as child custody mediation, parenting coordination and divorce education are just a few of the innovative ideas developed by AFCC members.

Dr Matthew Sullivan



Accounts for period ending 31 March 2020

Charity no. SC 042817

Principal Place of Business:

10 Palmerston Place, Edinburgh, EH12 5AA

Tel: 0131 557 2440

Email: info@sharedparenting.scot

Board members:

Margaret Ashman (secretary)

Sumit Ghosh (chair)

Mark Downie

Jane Cooper

Gavin Watson

Guy Holloway (appointed 7/11/2019)

Julie Bills (appointed 7/11/2019)

Ameë Hood (appointed 7/11/2019)

Banker:

TSB

Independent Examiner:

A.W. Scotland CA

10 Craighall Crescent

Edinburgh

EH6 4RY

The board presents the accounts for the period from 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020. The comparative figures cover the year ended 31st March 2019.

The accounts show a surplus of £5609 including a restricted amount of £5000 which related to activity supported by the Robertson Trust which extends into 2020/21. The launch of the new name for the charity and work on a completely new web site meant that expenditure increased during this year. These one-off costs will not occur in subsequent years. The policy of the charity is to have reserves of 3 months expenditure and we will work to rebuilding this reserve in 2020-2021.

The charity will continue current activity during 2020-21, holding meetings online and providing new online training courses in order to meet Covid-19 related requirements that limit face-to-face contact with service users.

STATEMENT OF RISK

The board continues to assess the major risks to which the charity is exposed and will continue to establish procedures and policies to mitigate those that are identified as a result.

STATEMENT OF BOARD'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The Board will prepare financial statements for each financial year and give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and the surplus or deficit of the charity for the period. In preparing these financial statements, the Board is required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently.
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- State whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements.
- Prepare financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The Board is responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Accounts (Scotland) regulations 1992. It is responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking responsible steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities. These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (effective 2015).

Independent Examiner

The management committee have appointed A.W. Scotland CA as Independent Examiner of the charity. A resolution to continue this appointment will be proposed at the Annual General Meeting.

BY THE ORDER OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE



Margaret Ashman, Secretary, 3/9/20

Independent Examiner's Report to the members of Shared Parenting Scotland SCIO for the period ended 31st March 2020 set out in pages 16-18.

Respective Responsibilities of the Board and Examiner

The Charity's Board are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the terms of the Charities and Trustees Investment (Scotland) 2005 Act and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. The Board considers that the audit requirement of Regulation 10(1) (d) of the Accounts Regulations does not apply. It is my responsibility to examine the accounts as required under section 44(1) (c) of the Act and to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of Independent Examiner's Statement

My examination is carried out in accordance with Regulation 11 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the Charity and a comparison of the accounts represented with these records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seek explanations from the Trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and, consequently, I do not express an opinion on the accounts.

Independent Examiner's Statement

In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention.

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with Section 44(1) (a) of the 2005 Act and Regulation 4 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations, and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with Regulation 9 of the 2006 Accounts Regulations

Have not been met, or

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



A.W. Scotland CA
10 Craighall Crescent
Edinburgh

3/9/20

Income and Expenditure Accounts and Statement of Financial Affairs

for the year ended 31st March 2020

2018-19	Incoming Resources		Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	2019 - 2020 TOTAL
	From Charitable Activities				
	Grants				
30,000	The Tudor Trust		£30,000		£30,000
33,000	Scottish Government		£33,000		£33,000
7,500	Voluntary Action Fund		£9,902		£9,902
15,000	Roberston Trust			£10,000	£10,000
85,500			£72,902	£10,000	£82,902
	Other Income - Bank Interest		£271		£271
	From Generated Funds				
34,025	Donations - trusts		£9,100		£9,100
8,318	Donations - general		£10,478		£10,478
42,343			£19,578		£19,578
127,843	Total Incoming Resources		£92,751	£10,000	£102,751

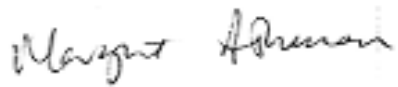
Resources Expended				
Charitable Expenditure				
69,839	Staff costs	£76,552	£6,000	£82,552
6,438	Office rent	£4,868		£4,868
1,558	Phone, stationery etc.	£1,706		£1,706
377	Insurance	£377		£377
2,785	IT and web site	£15,493		£15,493
1,593	Staff travel	£1,874		£1,874
1,385	Travel to groups	£1,173		£1,173
2,578	Local group costs	£1,411		£1,411
6,901	Events, training, subscriptions	£4,648	£4,000	£8,648
	Bank Charges	£20		£20
93,454	Total	£108,122	£10,000	£118,122
Fundraising Expenditure				
11,114	Fund-raising costs	£342		£342
Governance Expenses				
113	Board Expenses	£202		£202
300	Independent Examiners Fee	£300		£300
104,891	Total Resources Expended	£108,966	£10,000	£118,966

22,862	Deficit for the period and net incoming resources before and after transfers	(£16,215)	£0	(£16,215)
	Funds at 1st April 2019	£16,824	£5,000	£21,824
	Funds at 31st March 2020	£609	£5,000	£5,609

Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2020

Current Assets	2019	2020
Debtors - Prepayments and other debtors	£830	£377
Cash at Bank	£22,927	£7,307
	<u>£23,757</u>	<u>£7,684</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year (note 3)	£1,933	£2,075
Net Current Assets - Net Assets	<u>£21,824</u>	<u>£5,609</u>
Represented by		
Unrestricted Funds	£16,824	£609
Restricted Funds	£5,000	£5,000
	<u>£21,824</u>	<u>£5,609</u>

The accounts were approved by the Board at their meeting on 3/9/20



Margaret Ashman, Secretary

Notes to the Accounts for the period ended 31st March 2020

1. Accounting Policies

Accounting Convention

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles FRS 106, the historical cost convention and the guidelines laid down in the Statement of Recommended Practice – Accounting and Reporting by Charities (2015).

Income:

Income is accounted for when received.

Expenditure:

Expenditure is accounted for on accruals basis and includes unrecoverable value added tax.

Period of accounts:

The accounts cover the year ended 31st March 2020.

The comparative figures cover the year ended 31st March 2019.

2. Board Expenses

Board members received no remuneration but the members were reimbursed a total of £202 (2018/19 £113) for travel and other expenses.

3. Creditors - amounts failing due within one year.

	2019	2020
Accruals	£405	£300
Taxation	£1528	£1775
	<u>£1933</u>	<u>£2075</u>

4. Restricted Fund

A grant was received from the Robertson Trust during the year to pay for training and support activities. This was held in a restricted fund with the balance brought forward, and the unspent balance is carried forward to 2020/21.

5. Staff Costs

The charity had an average of three employees during the year.

Salaries	£76930
National Insurance	£3662
Pension costs	£1672
Processing costs	£288
	<u>£82552</u>

