



Impact Report 2022-23

We want
choice and
control

We hope to see
a more inclusive
society



More Disabled
people involved
in decision making

About Merton CIL

Find out more about what is in our impact report this year...

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Merton Centre for Independent Living

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@MertonCIL

A message from our Co-Chair, Gina

Welcome to our 2022-23 Impact Report.

On behalf of the board of trustees, it is with great pleasure that we present to you our impact report for 2022-23.

This year, we have adapted and began to implement learning from the disruption over the past two years.



1. Promote and increase independence and inclusion

Our information and advice service provided 1228 sessions of in-depth support to 318 unique individuals. We also supported with information, signposting, guidance, and connection in a further 423 cases. Our work throughout the year contributed £876,234 to the local economy. And, 61% of service users saw increased resilience after using our services. You can read more on page 6.

2. Identifying and challenge discrimination

Our pan London disability hate crime work went well. We rounded up a project that provided support to DDPOs across London. We were also involved in a collaborative project with 6 other DDPOs that aims to find better ways to talk about disability to enhance our messaging and improve the reach of our communications.

3. Working with Deaf & Disabled people to achieve change locally

We spent over 605 hours on policy work speaking up with and for Deaf and Disabled people. We delivered Craftivism & Chat sessions, hosted a number of member led policy groups and held consultation events that have helped to develop our new strategy which will be launched in 2024. you can read more from page 14.

Our annual survey found that 82% of people think that we address issues that are important to Deaf and Disabled people. Feedback like this confirms that people value our efforts and continue to support our direction.

We are very grateful for the continued support from funders and donors you can find out more on page 19. This income helps to keep our important work going.

I will finish by thanking staff and volunteers of Merton CIL, whose hard work and dedication to supporting local Deaf and Disabled People is the reason why Merton CIL goes from strength to strength. I would also like to thank my fellow trustees who have supported and guided us so expertly throughout the year.

Let's continue to fight for the rights of Deaf and Disabled People, in Merton and Beyond!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Gina Vettese'. The signature is stylized with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Gina Vettese Co-Chair of Merton CIL

About Merton CIL

Merton Centre for Independent Living (Merton CIL) is a user-led Deaf and Disabled people's organisation based in the London Borough of Merton.

We were set up in 2008 and we are incredibly proud of what we have achieved with Deaf and Disabled people over the past 15 years.

We support Deaf and Disabled individuals across the full spectrum of conditions including physical and sensory conditions, mental health conditions, long term health conditions, learning difficulties and neurodiversity.

We are run and controlled by and for Deaf and Disabled people. We work hard to address the marginalisation of Disabled people and make a real difference in Merton and the wider community.



We want a society where Deaf & Disabled people can take control over their lives and achieve full participation

We work within the social model of disability and an independence charter, co-designed with Disabled people to ensure we can influence key issues affecting our lives in a variety of ways. We provide a holistic service, with all work feeding into our three aims:

1. To promote the **independence and inclusion** of Deaf & Disabled people.
2. To identify and **challenge discrimination** faced by Deaf & Disabled people.
3. To encourage Deaf & Disabled people and supporters to **achieving change locally**.

Headlines 2022-23

In 2022/23, our team was

50%



Disabled and Black & Asian

82%



of people that took our annual survey agree that we address the issues important to Disabled people.¹

£876,234



Contributed to the local economy through our work.²

1228

Sessions of in-depth support delivered



Advice & Advocacy support provided in

342 cases



318

Unique individuals supported through casework services

Information, signposting, guidance and connection provided in a further

423 cases

to people who Merton CIL could not support indepth.



100%

of attendees rated Craftivism & Chat good or great.

427

members



78% are Deaf and Disabled people.³

605 hours

spent working on policy issues with and on behalf of Disabled people.



"Merton CIL works in a genuinely disability friendly way. I would recommend the service to anybody needing help navigating systems".

AGM & My Voice Matters

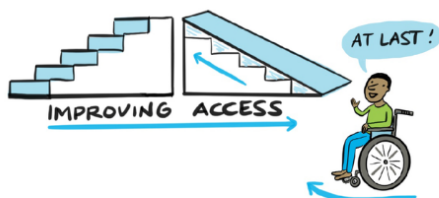


26

events held including My Voice Matters & Outreach

264

hours donated by volunteers and trustees.



648

hours spent supporting Disabled people to build skills.⁵

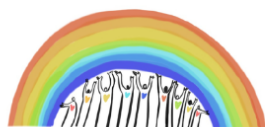
61%

of service users have increased resilience after using our services.⁶



5 in 10
People

have increased confidence after using our services.⁷



2906

people engaged with at events and across social media platforms.



Launch of:



5

Consultation responses, reports & statements on behalf of Deaf and Disabled People.

86%

of service users agree that we listen.⁸



15



years of supporting Deaf & Disabled people in Merton.



49,565

unique website visits in 2022/23.

Footnotes:

1. Based on our responses to our 2022-23 annual survey.
2. Amount obtained directly for Deaf and Disabled people through benefit awards and social care packages, also including social value and net salaries of local Disabled staff and local staff.
3. This was correct as of 3/11/2023.
4. This was feedback received from a service user using our Information & Advice service.
5. This includes time invested in the trainee caseworker programme and volunteering programme.
6. Based on the ladder outcomes 'I can access the services I want and need', 'I feel listened to' 'My finances are secure and 'I feel safe' for people whose cases ended in 2022-23
7. Based on the ladder outcomes 'I am confident talking to professionals', 'I can speak up for myself' and 'I am aware of my rights' for people whose case ended in 2022-23 &Based on the ladder outcomes 'I am satisfied with my life, 'I am optimistic about my life' and 'I am confident taking control in the future' for people whose cases ended in 2022-23
8. From in-depth feedback collected covering 2022-23

Promoting Independence & Inclusion

Our Information & Advice Service



We provide an independent and free AQS accredited information & advice service that supports on issues relating to:

- Welfare Benefits.
- Social Care.
- Concessionary Travel.
- Grant applications.
- Health.
- Housing.

We are the only pan disability specialist service in the London borough of Merton.

Delivered
1228 sessions
of support

£876,234
contributed to the
local economy

318
unique service
users

Our Health and Wellbeing Advocacy Pilot

The past few years have exacerbated health issues within our community. We saw an increased need for support accessing health care and services. Our learning from the pandemic and thereafter, led to the launch of a health and wellbeing advocacy pilot.

We aimed to provide holistic support at early stages to stop the manifestation of complex and interlinked issues which can manifest as or impact health conditions. Our work so far has supported local Disabled people to access health care and services, stay connected and we have delivered successful self-advocacy workshops to support the development of independent living skills. Over the next year we aim to secure funding to establish this pilot as a new Merton CIL service.



To find out more about our services or to book an appointment or refer (if you are a professional) please contact us on **0203 397 3119** or **info@mertoncil.org.uk** or visit **www.mertoncil.org.uk/services**

Nadia's Story: Promoting Independence Through support with Benefits

Nadia is an Disabled adult, who lives in Merton. Nadia studied a Masters but one day shortly after, she woke up and was unable to walk. She has since been diagnosed with chronic pain and has been unable to pursue the career for which she studied.

During Nadia's studies she worked for a care agency. However, after many years of service, she was a victim of an assault whilst at work. After this, Nadia was also diagnosed with PTSD and depression, leaving her unable to work.

Nadia came to Merton CIL for help after being unsuccessful in applying for Personal Independence Payment (PIP). She had tried to find support with the process but had been unsuccessful. Nadia was delighted when she was allocated a caseworker to support her with the PIP tribunal process.

The DWP decided that they would not award Nadia PIP and she was unhappy with this decision. Nadia and her caseworker pulled together relevant medical evidence to build a strong argument as to why they believed she should have been awarded PIP. This included engaging with local hospitals in relation to pain management so that they could gather all the relevant information make her case stronger.

Nadia attended the tribunal to appeal the negative PIP decision that she received. She spoke up and shared her experiences with the support of her caseworker.

After the case was completed Nadia shared the following comment "My caseworker was patient, kind and calm. She was knowledgeable, extremely professional and totally dedicated to helping others. Her care and concern for my wellbeing enabled me to develop a trusting relationship. She made the process easier by providing the necessary support in a non-judgmental way. Sometimes one person can make a huge difference in another person's life and my caseworker made a difference in my life."



Outcome: Following Merton CIL's support, Nadia was awarded PIP following a successful tribunal decision. Nadia received a £14,576 back payment for PIP arrears and ongoing monthly payments of £628 which is made up of daily living and mobility payments.

*Nadia is not their real name and posed by a model.

Promoting Independence & Inclusion

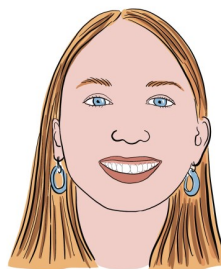
Our Trainee Caseworker Programme

This programme is funded by Trust for London until 2024.



Our trainee caseworker programme has evolved since its launch in 2018 and now aims to build advice skills and confidence around employment in Deaf and Disabled people or people with long term health conditions. The programme will conclude in March 2024 with 8 people having passed through the scheme.

648* hours of coaching and support.



4 trainees in 2022/23.

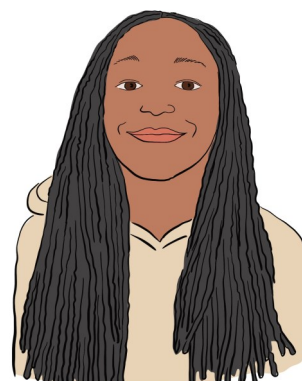
In 2022-23, four individuals were on our trainee caseworker programme where they received specialist training, coaching, and practical work based learning. Trainees begin supporting service users with benefit and concessionary application forms. And as their skills progress they begin to move into advice around social care and housing.

As the programme draws to a close, we are keen to use all the learning from this project to develop something even better for local Deaf and Disabled people. We want to continue to provide person-centred training options and look at ways we can build skills and confidence within our community to ensure that more Deaf and Disabled people are in leadership position.

"I enjoy building skills in a space that is accessible."



"I liked having access to training & open discussions with others involved."



Ali's Story: Increasing Choice & Control with Social Care Advice

Ali is Disabled and living in Merton. Ali needed support to better manage his conditions so that he could live more independently and was keen to explore reassessing his social care support through a needs assessment. After using Merton CIL in the past Ali got in contact to explore this and was allocated a specialist caseworker.

An initial outcome was that Ali needed to engage with his GP and pain consultants as care staff 'could not wait around for him to address his pain'. There were extra care hours offered, but Ali was not sure if the suggested hours and frequency of care visits would improve his quality of life.

Ali's caseworker emailed the Adult Social Care First Response Team to request a copy of his care plan, which the caseworker identified as containing some inaccuracies.

With the support of his caseworker, Ali agreed to the outcome of the reassessment and the caseworker worked hard with Adult Social Services over a number of months to make sure that the additional hours were used in a way that worked for him.



Outcome: With Merton CIL's support, Ali received a revised care plan with extended hours. His package was increased by 25%. Ali now receives in home support each morning throughout the week, including weekends. Ali was happy with this outcome and the increased support has helped to improved his quality of life.

*Ali is not their real name and posed by a model.

"I am thankful to Merton CIL for being there to support those who need your services as we manage our disability/health conditions and the issues they present. I think you provide an invaluable service and every staff member involved is so precious. I am so grateful and hope the good work can continue and expand. I am also very appreciative of the support my caseworker provided during a difficult time, with filling in forms and attending PIP assessments with me." - **Merton CIL Service User**

Challenging Discrimination



Pan London Disability Hate Crime Project

We continued to work with Inclusion London and Stay Safe East on the pan London disability hate crime project. The project aims to increase support for Deaf and Disabled people in London around disability hate crime and raise awareness. We identify relevant Deaf and Disabled Peoples Organisations (DDPOs) across London and work with them to build and develop their hate crime projects. We do this by providing a seconded hate crime

advocate and developing their recording, evaluation and monitoring approaches. We hope that this will provide them with strong evidence to secure funding to keep their hate crime services going.

This project ended on 31st March 2023, due to the funding cycle coming to an end.

Talking About Disability

In April 2022, Inclusion London & Inclusion Barnet, were awarded funding by The City Bridge Trust's Cornerstone fund to work with six DDPO's to find better ways to talk about disability to enhance our messaging and improve the reach of our communications.



Over the past year, we have worked together to explore the attitudes that people have towards disability and are now creating new ways of talking about ourselves and our organisations. Our aim is to help change the way people think about disability so that more people feel motivated to help make society more inclusive and accessible.

We also want Disabled and non-disabled people to know more about DDPO's and our role in helping to create more equitable communities.

"Communication is a tool that possesses immense power. Language and messages shape us and our communities. It has been interesting to understand our current thinking and develop ideas around working together to use strategic communications to power the fight for equity and inclusion for Deaf and Disabled people".

Charlet Wilson and David Jenkins, Joint CEO's of Merton CIL.

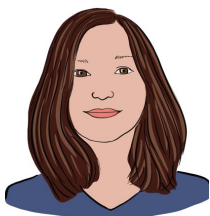
Pippa's Story: From Trainee Caseworker to Policy Manager at Merton CIL

After thirteen years of school teaching, Pippa undertook a Master's and then a Ph.D., whilst helping to care for her father. After completing her doctoral thesis, she was at a crossroads, unsure about academia, but clear that she wanted to help people who were at the sharp end of welfare reforms and cuts to public services. She decided to become a trainee caseworker at Merton CIL.

Over the next three years, Pippa would take part in our new trainee caseworker programme. The programme provided her and others with internal and external training, and development opportunities, via a network managed by Inclusion London. In 2020, she was promoted to caseworker.



During this time, Pippa expanded her expertise in welfare benefits to include housing and social care. She also took advantage of the Week of Creativity offered by Merton CIL to its staff. This project offers staff one working week across a year to take part in work which falls outside the remit of their role, allowing for the exploration of issues in which they are interested or about which they are passionate, and for the opportunity to build their skills in certain areas. She spent her Week of Creativity becoming involved in our social policy and community engagement work. During this time, she was fundamental in developing relationships with the Council's adult social care team and starting conversations around making housing application processes more accessible, as well as raising the profile of our organisation more generally. The Week of Creativity also helped her to focus on developing skills which would help her in a policy manager role.



"My central aim is to help to amplify the voices of Deaf and Disabled people in Merton. Lived experience should inform decision making around local and national policies and practices."

In late 2023, Pippa was promoted to Policy and Campaigns Manager. She is motivated to bring about systemic change for Deaf and Disabled people due to her increased understanding of the structural inequalities that she gained through her casework.

Outcome: Pippa is now in a role which allows her to combine the skills she has developed at Merton CIL with those that she has built externally, to pursue work which she is passionate about and excited to grow within.

Achieving Change Locally

Our Social Policy Work in Merton



Our social policy work is interlinked with all services at Merton CIL. For example, we use our advice casework as evidence to push for improved support and services for local Disabled people. We work together to ensure that our community is informed about our rights, has the confidence to be involved in decision making that affects our lives and that we collectively see our lived experience as expertise in the push for a more inclusive society. We also support our members to lead on policy and campaigning work, which you can read more about on page 18.

Find out more about our policy work in 2022-23 below:

605 hours spent on policy work

82% agree we speak about issues important to Disabled people

Speaking up about trends noticed in our work.

Our social policy work is integrated with our services. This means that we use real life examples and lived experience of our service users as evidence when pushing for change. In 2022-23, continued this work.

Making Care Fair

We want a society where everyone has choice and control. In 2022, we began a collaborative project with 5 other London based DDPO's to push for local authorities to scrap or reduce social care charging. This project came to an end in 2023, but we continue pushing to ensure that social care in Merton is fair and promotes independence.



Issue around social care mean that some Deaf and Disabled people are unable to live independent lives. We would like the local authority to work with local Disabled people to develop ways that that we can reduce social care charging together. This would help to create a borough that is more inclusive for all and Deaf and Disabled people would be able to achieve full participation.



A push for more accessible housing in Merton

We continued our work to push for more accessible housing in Merton and to make housing policies and procedures more accessible for all.

The Local Elections 2022

Merton CIL contacted the Conservatives, Green Party, Labour and Liberal Democrat parties and Merton Park Independent candidates asking them to pledge to 6 actions if they are successful in the council elections. We were delighted to receive positive responses from all parties. You can read the full responses and actions on our website.



I am pledging to support Deaf and Disability Issues in Merton
#DisabilityMattersMerton



A push for clearer pavements in Merton

We began conversations with the council asking that they consider how granting licences to sell and promote goods on pavements create access barriers for many groups within our community. We also wrote a letter objecting to a licence for a free standing advertisement board on a pavement in Wimbledon, along with others. This was later denied on the grounds of accessibility. We also continued to speak up about pavement parking.

Disability Poverty Action Group Campaigning around the Cost Of Living

We are a member of the Disability Poverty Action Group. We wrote to Merton's two MPs asking them to encourage the government to act on key issues to reduce the poverty experienced by many Deaf and Disabled people. The group then wrote to the prime minister issuing a stark warning that Deaf and Disabled people in the UK faced "devastating, intensifying levels of poverty" if robust and immediate action was not taken.

IF YOU WERE ME...

If you were me,
 What would you do?
 I'm on a scooter
 But I'm just like you!
 I fill my bladder
 And I need the loo
 I watch my intake
 Not to require no 1 or 2
 Because of you
 I struggle to get through

Mitcham Sibthorpe road
 Disabled access you say
 Toilet is filthy
 And so dark and grey
 The Door is a pull
 So I have to wait all day
 To Ask for help
 It takes my independence
 away

Poem by
 A Merton CIL member



A call for better toilet provision for a more #IncLOOsive borough.

In 2022, Merton CIL were disappointed when Merton Council did not apply for the governments changing places funding scheme. However, it was great to see a review into the boroughs toilet provision take place in early 2023.

Our access champions fed into the consultation and Merton CILs response was included as an appendix in the final report. Over the next year, we will work with the local authority, councillors and relevant local partners to push to achieve some of the recommendations in the report.

If you have any stories, ideas and experiences that you would like to share to help us work together to push for a borough that is inclusive for all, please get in touch!

Achieving Change Locally

Craftivism & Chat

Our Craftivism (craft + activism) and Chat project supported local Disabled people to reduce isolation and loneliness through connection with other Disabled people and Merton residents. As well as, build confidence and skills to encourage speaking up and sharing of lived experiences to ensure that our voices are heard in decision making and conversations that affect our lives. We aim to use creativity to speak up and share our stories in impactful ways.



The group (usually) meets on the first Thursday of the month and the agenda is shaped by our members. We also allow space for local organisations and partners to connect with Deaf and Disabled people and hear our perspectives or share information on services that can support us.



5 sessions were hosted by or developed with Disabled Members, leaders and artists. In Jan 2023, we hosted a money workshop with a Disabled leader to explore issues around the increased cost of living. Members feedback also created a list of top tips to save money.

Photo: members at a Craftivism & Chat session planned and hosted by Merton CIL member/ Local Disabled person.

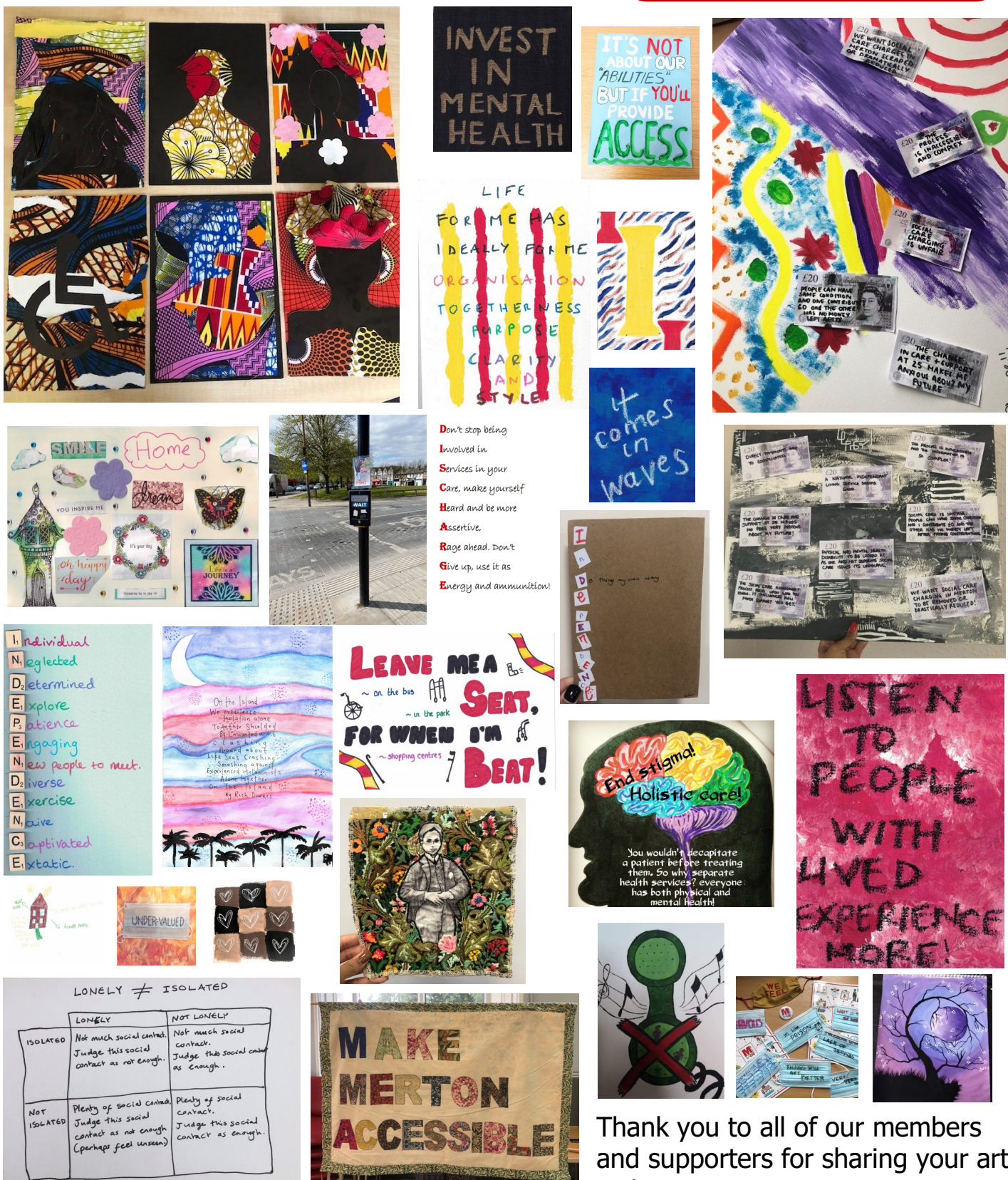
12 sessions in 2022/23

Getting involved with Craftivism and Chat - If you are a Disabled artist (do not have to be Merton based), A Merton based artist or art group, creative or have a skill/hobby you would like to share with people, please get in touch! We can organise for you to run a paid supported session. We are also keen for Deaf and Disabled People to come together, socialise and share experiences. If there is a topic that you wish to speak about at the group, please also get in touch.

Craftivism created by Merton CIL Members

Take a look at some of the Craftivism created by our members and supporters below and by visiting this link - <https://bit.ly/3X5p2iS>

100% of attendees rated the sessions good or great.



Thank you to all of our members and supporters for sharing your art with us.

#MakeMertonAccessible



We want a community that is fully accessible and inclusive for all.

Issues around accessing local train and tube stations, limited changing places facilities, pavement clutter and more stop some residents of Merton being able to fully enjoy local spaces.

Our group of access champions are keen to work with the local authority, organisations and partners to make places and spaces easy to navigate for all.

This would help to create a borough that allows Disabled people amongst other groups to achieve full participation.

You can read more about the group below and how to get involved on the right.

Our #MakeMertonAccessible campaign featured in The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents safety journal.

The article is based on the four videos that our members created about the access issues they face when travelling around the borough. The article highlights the safety issues that arise from access barriers like cars parked on pavements forcing wheelchair users into the road.

Communications in Merton

Our Access Champions met with Crown Lane studies to share their thoughts on how local communications could be made more accessible for all. Their feedback helped to shape the 'meet the cabinet' series released by the local authority.



Pushing for a more accessible shopping Centre in Wimbledon

In 2019, we met with the manager of then Centre Court to share our ideas on how he could make the shopping facilities more accessible for all. We collaborated on a Purple Tuesday event but further plans were thrown off by the pandemic and transfer of ownership. Support from the council helped us to secure a meeting with Romulus in 2022. We pushed for more accessible toilets including a changing places facility and more.



Sharing our experiences of London transport

We met with Transport for all to share our experiences when using trains, tubes, buses and dial-a-ride to help push for local and national improvements.

Join our Access Champions Group

Do you want to live in a society that is inclusive for all?

Join our Access Champions group to support work and campaigning to make Merton more accessible for all.

You can find out more about the group, how we support members and more on our website.

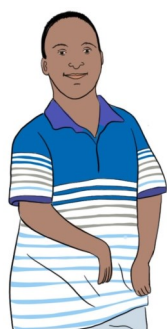


Our Board win Equality & Diversity Award



Over the past few years, our board have been taking part in annual governance workshops, training and development (including sessions around leadership) and working with the senior management team in new ways. In early 2023, we nominated our board for the UK Charity Governance Award for the great work they do to ensure Merton is inclusive for all.

Photo: Trustees and consultant/trainer Alex Hendra at Good Governance Workshop.



“It’s important to be Black & Disabled leading a DDPO because I bring a different perspective to an organisation/movement as well as making it more representative of the community that it serves”

We were delighted to find out in mid 2023, that our board of trustee won in the equality, equity, diversity & inclusion category!

Photo: David (Joint CEO) & Estifanos (Vice Chair) with other winners at the Charity Governance Awards.



Achieve Change Locally Continued

My Voice Matters 2022



Our organisation is user-led and the views, perspectives and lived experiences of local Disabled people shape all that we do. Our annual consultation event 'my Voice Matters' took place in the summer of 2022 and we hosted interactive discussions focused on a number of areas and we used the feedback generated to help further shape our new strategy. You can read some of the feedback in the illustration above.

Volunteering

**264 hours
donated by
volunteers**

Throughout 2022/23, Merton CIL provided limited volunteer opportunities. Our volunteering service was put on hold in and plans to reopen after a period of review to ensure we can offer programme that helps to build skills in an accessible way. A huge thank you to the volunteers who donated time and expertise to support our work. Your contribution to the organisation is invaluable.



Our User Led Monitoring and Evaluation Steering Group

We would like to thank the members who volunteer to develop and contribute to the monitoring and evaluation steering group. This group aims to help improve Merton CIL both internally and externally. The M&E group has been responsible for the development of Craftivism and Chat, staff surveys, and much more. If you would like to join the group, you can find out more here - <https://bit.ly/3o1ZBPZ>

Thank You to our Funders & Supporters

We would not be able to provide our services without the support from funders, supporters, the local community and volunteers. We would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who supported us financially in 2022-23. Your money helps us continue to our important work supporting local Deaf and Disabled people and pushing for a more fair and equal society.



Thank you to the following organisations: City Bridge Trust, Trust for London, Henry Smith, The London Community Foundation, Wimbledon Foundation, Merton Giving, Edward Gostling Foundation, NHS ICB, Merton Connected, and Inclusion London.



INMAN CHARITY



A special thank you to everyone who made generous donations throughout the year. And to all who voted for us in the Tesco Bags of Help scheme - we received a generous donation to support our work in 2023. and thank you to the individuals who donated craft supplies to Craftivism & Chat.

Also a big thank you to; Our hard-working staff, trustees and all our enthusiastic volunteers who have supported us at events, consultations and on the front line. Our committed trustees who have steered the organisation. Our service users, members, supporters and partners. We appreciate you all! We are achieving our aims due to your continued support.



..and £2,063 in other income which is made up of things like contributions for consultation involvement, service fees and more.

Meet our Trustees

Hello, I am Amanda



Merton CIL has expanded quickly and now needs to sustain that growth and good reputation.

I am keen to use my experience of how organisations work gained from my time at SCIE and the Department of Health to give an independent view.

I enjoy being on the board of Merton CIL because I share the values of inclusion and equality

Amanda Edwards
Co-chair of Merton CIL

Hi I'm Gina



I am vice chair of Merton CIL and have been involved in the organisation since it was a steering group.

I have been disabled since I was 13 years old. I use a mobility scooter and I live in Merton. I am very passionate about speaking up about accessibility in Merton and on transport.

I am also a talented seamstress and I enjoy creating wedding dresses in my spare time.

I enjoy being vice chair at Merton CIL because it gives me a voice and I feel like I am being of service to Disabled people.

Gina Vettese
Co-chair of Merton CIL

Hello, my name is Raheema



I am a Disabled Merton resident. I joined Merton CIL to fight for the rights of Disabled people and help to make things better.

I worked as a Civil Servant for many years and was on the Disability Advisory Group in my department.

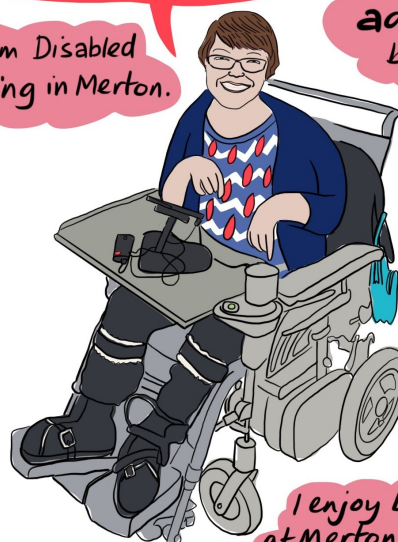
I am also a founding member of Merton CIL's monitoring and evaluation Steering group, which improves our services.

I enjoy being on the board at Merton CIL because I want to help make things better for Disabled people.

Raheema Olajide
Trustee of Merton CIL

Hi, I'm Sarah

I am Disabled living in Merton.



I try to bring my sense of fun and adventure to every board meeting.

I have been very involved with developing our Craftivism & Chat project as I love to paint and speak up about issues that affect Disabled people.

I enjoy being on the board at Merton CIL because I can use my own lived experiences to help others and feel my learning impairment brings a unique perspective.

Sarah Henley
Trustee of Merton CIL

Hallo, I'm Estifanos

I joined the board at Merton CIL in 2017. I began volunteering and getting involved at Merton CIL in 2015. I am disabled and I live in Merton.

I have grown to represent Merton CIL at a number of community engagement meetings and forums. I am also a founding member of our monitoring and evaluation group which improved our services.

I am keen to contribute to Merton CIL's future direction. I like being able to contribute more to Merton CIL's work and feed into Merton CIL's strategic direction.



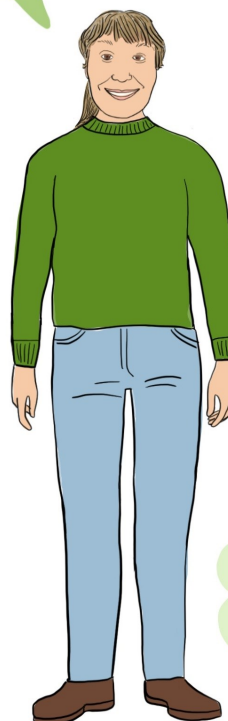
Estifanos Habtesellasi
Vice-chair of Merton CIL

Hi, I'm Claire

I am a visually impaired mum of two Disabled children. I have lived in Merton for over 15 years

I have worked passionately for the past 20 years in the public sector, promoting the involvement of Disabled people in decisions that affect their lives

I like being a trustee of Merton CIL because it gives me a sense of **empowerment** and **achievement** to work with other disabled people in order to promote **equality** and **independence**.



Claire Benjamin
Trustee of Merton CIL

Hi, I'm Chris

I've been involved with Merton CIL since it was a steering group

I am a Disabled Merton Resident, living in the east of the borough

I have a physical disability and use an electronic wheelchair

I am an active member of Merton CIL - part of our monitoring and evaluation steering group and regularly attend Craftivism & Chat.

I am also an access champion

I am keen to work to improve the lives of local Deaf and Disabled people by sharing my lived experience.



Would you like to support work pushing for a more equal society?

Do you have skills which could be useful in supporting the governance of our organisation? Including lived experience of discrimination faced by our service users, HR or Finance?

Why not become a trustee at Merton CIL? Find out more on our website.

The Year Ahead

Throughout 2022/23, we continued our work supporting local Deaf and Disabled people. The increasing cost of living and cost of disability, combined with the lasting effects of the pandemic required us to think about wellbeing, purpose, and growth in a more multi-faceted way. We are rethinking how we deliver services and working to strengthening our internal environment/culture to help us achieve our aims. Struggles around recruitment have led us to think about how we develop people and build roles for those keen to get involved at Merton CIL.



Over the next year, we plan to:

- Continue working to develop our new strategy. The pandemic, lockdowns and current cost of living crisis have changed a lot for local Deaf and Disabled. We will work to ensure that our strategic priorities meet our new, evolving, and interlinked needs in accessible ways.
- Provide support to local Disabled people with issues arising from the cost-of-living crisis/cost of disability and the effects of the pandemic.
- Continue delivering information and advice around welfare benefits, low income, health, grant applications, housing, and social care.
- Continue the advocacy pilot and explore ways to address the needs of Deaf and Disabled people outside of an advice framework.
- Increase our policy capacity and work to identify and challenge discrimination.
- Increase engagement with the local authority and councilors to work towards more local co-production work.
- Continue campaigning for reduced social care charges.
- Conclude our trainee caseworker programme that is funded until 2024 and establish new ways to build advice skills in local Deaf and Disabled people.
- Continue to work with Deaf and Disabled people to achieve change locally and speak up about issues affecting our community.
- Increase our capacity to facilitate more member led social policy work.
- Improve our strategic communications work to increase engagement with members and supporters and make our messaging clearer.
- Better connect craftivism & chat with our strategic policy work to increase impact and purpose for attendees.
- Conduct a review of our volunteering programme to ensure that it's meeting the needs of local Disabled people, and the organisation.
- Expand capacity around fundraising and bringing in unrestricted income.
- Aim to secure multi-year funding to provide security for services and allow for growth.
- Strengthen our internal culture and embed learning and innovate ways to manage change based on learning from previous years. Also, focus on staff wellbeing.
- Use learning from previous years around hiring and retention of staff to rethink organisational approach to recruitment and career development.

Get Involved

Help us to grow our membership

Sign up as a member or help us spread the word and get more Disabled people and supporters to get on board. It's free and we are stronger together.

Come along to Craftivism & Chat

Get to know members of Merton CIL and share your lived experience to help make our work together more impactful.

Join our access champions and push to #MakeMertonAccessible

Let's work together to ensure that our community is welcoming and inclusive for all.

Get involved with our monitoring and evaluation work

Join our quarterly meetings to share your thoughts on our work and services and ideas for improvement to ensure that our work is directed by local Deaf & Disabled people.

Making a donation - Help us Raise £ to keep our important work going

Merton CIL relies upon the generosity of donors and we are extremely grateful for any support that we receive. You can make a donation online here -

<https://wonderful.org/charities/1152825>

We understand that not everyone can afford to make a financial donation. We have developed a list of activities which you could carry out to raise funds on our behalf. Find out more by visiting our website.

Follow us on social media @MertonCIL

Share and support our content online to help us extend our reach. Please follow us on social media **@MertonCIL**.

All of our work and services are provided through funding which we have to raise. We are extremely grateful for all of the support we receive that helps us to keep our important work going!

Scan the QR code to the right to find out more about getting involved At Merton CIL.



Illustrated Financial Statement 22/23

HOW WE HAVE KEPT COUNT OF, SPENT A

The board of trustees presents the report and financial statement of Merton CIL at year end 31st March 2023



Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements to give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of Merton CIL, and the surplus or deficit each year



We received money from:



Cost of Charitable Activities:

	NOTE	£
Independence & Inclusion	4e	211,155
Challenging Discrimination	4g	59,003
Achieving Change Locally	4f	57,135
Total Cost of Charitable Activities		£ 327,293

Total reserves:



This includes £86,269 unrestricted funds and £52,611 restricted funds

AND RAISED MONEY IN 2022-2023

Lesley Cornwell of Cornwell & Cornwell → independently examined our accounts for 2022-23



We brought forward



from the previous accounting period.

Final balances to carry forward on 31st March 2023: £138,880

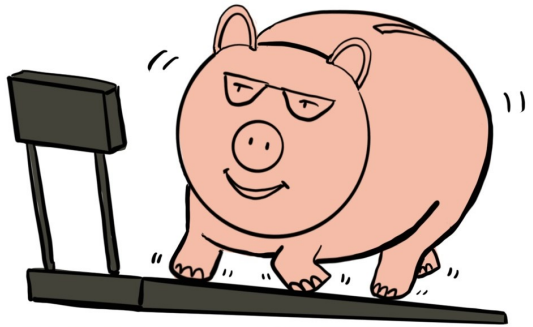


..and £2,063 in other income which is made up of things like contributions for consultation involvement, service fees and more.

Total expenditure for 2022-2023 is:

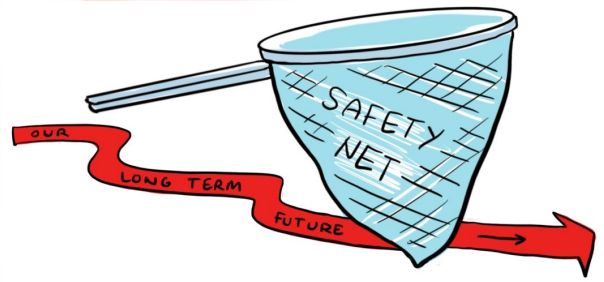


Reserves help to cover future running costs in the event of lack of funding.



The board has set aside £13,600 to secure immediate business continuity

Merton CIL will hold unrestricted funds to meet at least 3 months running costs and aim towards holding 4 months by 2023-24.



This will enable provision of services over the long term as well as a safety net

Finance

Statement of Financial Activities for year ended 31st March 2023 2a

	Note	Un-restricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2023 £	Total Funds 2022 £
Incoming Resources	2b				
Incoming Resources from Charitable Activities	3a	65,669	260,174	325,843	333,093
Voluntary income	3b	6,863	-	6,863	1,243
Other Income	3c	2,063	-	2,063	9,477
Total Incoming Resources		74,595	260,174	334,769	343,813
Resources Expended	2c				
Charitable Activities	4d	91,682	226,539	318,221	351,664
Governance Costs	4l	-	9,072	9,072	9,745
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED		91,682	235,611	327,293	361,409
Net Incoming / (Outgoing) Resources		(17,087)	24,563	7,476	(17,596)
Total Funds Brought Forward	3d	103,356	28,048	131,404	149,000
Total Funds Carried Forward	3e	86,269	52,611	138,880	131,404

There are no recognised gains and losses other than those in the statement of financial activities. Therefore, no statement of total recognised gains and losses has been prepared. All the above amounts relate to continuing activities. The notes on pages 16-19 of the full financial statement available on our website - form part of these accounts.

Finance

Balance Sheet at year ended 31st March 2023

	Note	2023 £	2022 £
CURRENT ASSETS:			
Cash at bank and in hand		150,558	145,276
Debtors and prepayments		28,312	13,987
		178,870	156,293
LIABILITIES:			
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	4k	39,990	27,858
NET CURRENT ASSETS		138,880	131,404
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		138,880	131,404
RESERVES	5		
Unrestricted Funds		86,269	103,356
Restricted Funds		52,611	28,048
TOTAL RESERVES		138,880	131,404

For the year ending 31 March 2023 the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of Companies Act 2006. The members have not required the company to obtain an audit in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006. The Directors' acknowledge their responsibility for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and for the preparation of accounts. The financial statements were approved by the Board on 26th October 2023 and signed on its behalf by:

 (Giovanna Vettese, Co-Chair)

 (Amanda Edwards, Co-Chair/Secretary)

Merton CIL - Impact Report 2022 - 23



Thank you to our team in 2022-23:

David Jenkins - Joint CEO

Charlet Wilson - Joint CEO

Stuart Butler - Information & Advice Service Manager

Michael Turner - Policy & Strategy Manager (Until Nov 2022)

Pippa Maslin - Caseworker

Maddie Cowey - Caseworker (Until May 2023)

Adrienne Di Rizzio-Palmer - Trainee Caseworker

Paula Brown - Trainee Caseworker

Sarah Jones-Nash - Trainee Caseworker

Lisa Dors - Advice & Office Administrator/Advocate (Until June 2023)





Website: www.mertoncil.org.uk **Social Media:** @MertonCIL

Telephone: 0203 397 3119 **WhatsApp & SMS:** 0779 671 2502

Email: info@mertoncil.org.uk

Registered Charity Number: 1152825 **Registered Company Number:** 7645926