

Merton Centre for Independent Living (Merton CIL)



**MERTON CENTRE FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING
(MERTON CIL)**

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31 2024**

Registered Charity Number 1152825
Registered Company Number 7645926

Merton Centre for Independent Living (Merton CIL)

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Merton Centre for Independent Living (Merton CIL)

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Constitution

Merton Centre for Independent Living (Merton CIL) is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity governed by its memorandum and articles of association.

Charity number 1152825 - Company number 7645926

Directors and Trustees

The directors of the charitable company are its trustees for the purposes of charity law and throughout this report are collectively referred to as the trustees. As set out in the Articles of Association the Management Board comprises the Chair, the Vice Chair and the Treasurer supported by up to nine trustees. At each Annual General Meeting one-third of the directors must retire from office and may be re-elected at the recommendation of the board. The trustees serving during the year and since the year-end are as follows:

Co-Chair: Giovanna Vettese & Amanda Edwards

Vice Chair: Estifanos Habtesellasie

Trustees Claire Benjamin, Sarah Henley, Raheema Olajide, Chris Bull, Kirstin Hellard, Daniel Beglin

Senior Management

Joint CEO's: Charlet Wilson & David Jenkins

Senior Managers: Stuart Butler & Pippa Maslin

Registered Office and Principal Office

Vestry Hall, 336 London Road, Mitcham, CR4 3UD

Independent Examiner

Lesley Cornwell FCCA, Cornwell & Cornwell, 194 Stanley Road, Teddington, TW11 8UE

Principal Bankers

HSBC Bank, 5 Wimbledon Hill Rd, Wimbledon, London, SW19 7NF

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REPORT OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES FOR YEAR END 31 MARCH 2024

The Board presents the report and financial statements of Merton Centre for Independent Living (Merton CIL) for the year ended 31 March 2024. The statements appear in the format required by the Statement of Recommended Practice for Accounting and Reporting by Charities (revised March 2005). The report and statements comply with Companies Act 2006.

Structure, Governance and Management

History

The organisation was originally started as a steering group in 2008, it was incorporated as a company in 2011 and registered as a charity in 2013.

Governing Document

Merton CIL is a company limited by guarantee, having no share capital, governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association dated June 2013 and Special Resolution dated October 2016. The liability of the Trustees is limited to £1 in the event of the charity winding up.

Appointment of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is made up of not less than three and no more than twelve people. Trustees are elected from the membership at the AGM or co-opted during the year by agreement of the Board and confirmed at the AGM. Trustees must be aged 16 years or older. At least 75% of trustees must be Deaf or Disabled. All trustees give their time voluntarily and receive no financial benefits from the organisation. New trustees are given induction on their roles and responsibilities and are offered additional training where necessary.

Organisation

The Board of Trustees administers the charity. The Board meets quarterly. The Joint CEO is appointed to manage the day-to-day operations of the organisation. To facilitate effective operations, the Joint CEO has delegated authority, within the terms of the delegation approved by the Trustees, for operational matters including finance, employment, and operations.

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Risk Management

The Directors have reviewed the risks to which the charity is exposed and maintain a risk register. Risks are ameliorated by the implementation of procedures and policies, with a regular review of these to ensure current good practice.

Objectives and Activities

A summary of the objects as set out in the charity's Governing document:

"To relieve the needs of Disabled persons in Merton and the surrounding areas by providing support and services to enable them to live as full and equal citizens in all aspects of life."

Our Vision: To enable Deaf and Disabled people to take control over their lives and achieve full participation in Merton and wider society.

Our Aims:

- To promote the independence and inclusion of Deaf and Disabled people in Merton.
- To identify and challenge discrimination faced by Deaf and Disabled people in Merton.
- To encourage Deaf and Disabled people and supporters to achieve change locally.

Key Activities:

- Independence and Inclusion: An AQS accredited Information & Advice service supporting issues relating to welfare benefits, debt and low income, social care, concessionary travel, grant applications, aids and adaptations and housing. We also run a small speaking up services that supports Disabled people to navigate barriers to health care and services.
- Challenging Discrimination: Social policy work that aims to improve policies and procedures relating to social care, housing and health. As well as exploring and better understanding the intersectional experiences of Disabled people.
- Achieving Change Locally: Collaborative work with local Disabled people to creatively push for societal change. This includes monthly Craftivism & Chat sessions using disability arts to address isolation and loneliness and increase participation and connection, events, debates, and member led

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policy work on key issues raised by local Disabled people using lived experience to influence positive change within our community.

Summary of Achievements

Independence and Inclusion: Our AQS accredited information & advice service and advocacy pilot (new 'speaking up' service) provided support in 252 cases. We supported 289 service users with 1,210 of person-centred and accessible support sessions. We also supported wellbeing, guidance, signposting and connection in further 288 cases. 61% of service users saw improved resilience, confidence and wellbeing after using our services. Our work over the past year contributed £487,715 to the local economy.

Challenging Discrimination: Our organisation spent 466 hours conducting policy work that identified and challenged discrimination. We saw great outcomes such as supporting the ASC team to develop a new evaluation tool, involvement in the local authorities' new EDI strategy and more. We continued to support members to speak up and use their lived experiences to influence changes to local policies and procedures around social care, housing and health that impact our ability to live independently. We responded to local consultations and shared feedback on the council's budget setting process.

Achieve Change Locally: We now have 415 members – the majority being local Disabled people or individuals with a long-term health condition and an additional 78 being supporters of our work and values. We have a growing group of Access Champions conducting member-led policy work powered by lived experience to make Merton accessible for all. We delivered 22 events, including My Voice Matters and Craftivism & Chat. We engaged with 141 people through events and outreach and a further 3035 people across our social media platforms. 100% of attendees rated our events good or great. Volunteers provided 232 hours of support, and we hosted 3 M&E steering groups where members, volunteers, staff and trustees donated time to help improve the organisation and its work.

Please see our 2023-24 Impact Report for further details of the year's achievements.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The results for the year and financial position of the Charity are shown in the annexed statements. The charity brought forward unrestricted funds of £84,300 and restricted funds of £52,610 from the previous accounting period. During the current accounting period, the net surplus is £152,472 of which £46,027 is unrestricted and £106,445 restricted. This leaves final balances to carry forward of £130,327 unrestricted and £159,055 restricted funds.

EVENTS AFTER THE BALANCE SHEET DATE

The Charity continues to rely on grant applications and fundraising to fund its activities. The Trustees are confident that these grants will continue to be available for the valuable work the charity is doing. During the year, the Charity's Trustees have monitored the financial position of the organisation to ensure that the charity's funds, both restricted and unrestricted, are correctly applied, and accounted for.

PLANS FOR FUTURE PERIODS

Throughout 2023-24, we continued our work with local Disabled people to navigate the complex and growing issues that we faced. Our organisation had limited capacity throughout the year due to staff retention and recruitment issues. We used this struggle to inform learning around developing our staff and to influence internal policy and culture changes. Our team, however, still managed to achieve great outcomes, which you can read about in our impact report. We pulled together feedback from staff, service users, members, supporters and more to help develop our new strategy that will be implemented from April 2024. Over the next year we plan to:

- Launch our new co-produced and evolving strategy.
- Begin work to start an organisational rebrand including a name change.
- To rethink the structure of the organisation to allow for more routes into leadership for Disabled people or individuals with long term health conditions.
- Continue to provide accredited, free and person-centred information and advice to local Disabled people.
- To launch our new 'Speaking Up' service that works with local Disabled people to address barriers in a holistic manner and with the aim of increasing access to health care and services.

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- To conclude our SVRR trainee programme and establish our new propel trainee programme that aims to build skills and knowledge in Disabled people as well as leadership skills.
- To increase our capacity for policy work relating to social care to see improved outcomes for local Disabled people.
- To increase engagement with local council officers, councilors and local partners with the aim of more collaborative approaches and co-production work.
- To begin to explore intersectionality and how our organisation can better understand how social issues care intersect for some Disabled people to improve our work and services.
- To build skills and confidence with our members leading our member led policy work to further strengthen and mobilize our membership to push for change.
- To continue our work improving our strategic communications work to ensure that our aims, values, mission and impact are evident.
- To continue to deliver Craftivism & Chat and support more Disabled people to build skills and confidence to host sessions.
- To reinstate volunteering opportunities for local Disabled people.
- Expand capacity around fundraising to bring in multi-year funding to support sustainability and unrestricted income to allow for growth and creativity.
- Continue work to strength and develop our organisational culture.

RESERVES POLICY

Merton CIL will maintain sufficient reserves to allow it to cover known liabilities and contingencies, absorb setbacks and take advantage of change and opportunity.

Merton CIL will hold unrestricted funds to meet at least 2 month's running costs and aims to hold 5 months running costs by 2025. This will enable Merton CIL to provide reliable services over the long term, and to provide a safety net against dramatic swings in income or costs, and sufficient time to replace lost income, through fundraising.

TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

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

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company and of the profit or loss of the company for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently; make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent and prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the 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 organisation 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 organisation and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD

Amanda Edwards Amanda Edwards (Co-Chair/Secretary)

Giovanna Vettese Giovanna Vettese (Co-Chair)

Date: 31 10 2024

Merton Centre for Independent Living (Merton CIL)

INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE MERTON CENTRE FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

I report on the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024 set out on pages 13 and 14 which have been prepared under the accounting policies set out on page 16.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The Charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 (2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- Follow the procedures laid down in the general directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145 (5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- State whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiners' report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general directions given by the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and the seeking of explanation from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently, no opinion is view given as to whether the accounts present a "true and fair" view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

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Registered Charity No. 1152825

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Independent examiners' statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention to indicate that:

- accounting records have not been kept in accordance with section 386 of the Companies Act 2006;
- the accounts do not accord with such records:
- where accounts are prepared on an accruals basis, whether they fail to comply with relevant accounting requirements under section 396 of the Companies Act 2006, or are not consistent with the Charities SORP (FRS102)
- any matter which the examiner believes should be drawn to the attention of the reader to gain a proper understanding of the accounts apart from that set out below:

.....
Lesley Cornwell for Cornwell + Cornwell

Lesley Cornwell FCCA of Cornwell & Cornwell 194 Stanley Road Teddington
TW11 8UE

Date...*10 October 2024*

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**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR YEAR ENDED MARCH
31 2024^{2a}**

	Note	Un- restricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £	Total Funds 2023 £
Incoming Resources	2b				
Incoming Resources from Charitable Activities	3a	27,970	420,712	448,682	325,843
Voluntary income	3b	5,280	-	5,280	6,863
Other Income	3c	12,645	-	12,645	2,063
Interest	3d	1,400	-	1,400	-
Total Incoming Resources		47,295	420,712	468,007	334,769
Resources Expended	2c				
Charitable Activities	4d	1,268	305,449	306,717	318,221
Governance Costs	4l	-	8,014	8,014	9,072
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED		1,268	314,267	315,535	327,293
Net Incoming / (Outgoing) Resources		46,027	106,445	152,472	7,476
Total Funds Brought Forward	3d	84,300	52,610	136,910	129,434
Total Funds Carried Forward	3e	130,327	159,055	289,382	136,910

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 form part of these accounts.

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BALANCE SHEET AT 31 MARCH 2024

	Note	2024 £	2023 £
CURRENT ASSETS:			
Cash at bank and in hand		316,200	151,222
Debtors and prepayments		5,922	28,312
		322,122	179,534
LIABILITIES:			
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	4k	32,740	42,624
		289,382	136,910
NET CURRENT ASSETS			
		289,382	136,910
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES			
		289,382	136,910
RESERVES			
Unrestricted Funds	5	130,327	84,300
Restricted Funds		159,055	52,610
		289,382	136,910

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 October 31st 2024 and signed on its behalf by:

Amanda Edwards (Co-Chair/Secretary)

Amanda Edwards

Giovanna Vettese (Co-Chair)

G. Vettese

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The notes on pages 16-19 form part of these accounts.

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

1. These Notes form part of the financial statements.

2. Accounting Policies

2a Basis of Accounting: The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, in accordance with the Companies Act 2006, and in compliance with 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice (FRS 102) ("the SORP").

2b Income: from grants, donations and contributions represents the amounts receivable in respect of the year.

2c Expenditure: is recognised in the year in which it is incurred.

2d Fixed Assets should be capitalised and written off over their useful lives on a straight line basis if their purchase value is over £1,000.

2e Voluntary Help: No amounts have been included in these financial statements to reflect the value of services provided free of charge to the charity by volunteers.

2f Pension Costs and other post-retirement benefits: The Company contributes to NEST on behalf of eligible employees.

3. Income

3a Incoming Resources from Charitable Activity means grants and fees received on the understanding that they will be used to undertake activities to further the charity's objects.

3b Voluntary Income means donations or grants given with no expectation of a specific service in return.

3c Other income is funds received for consultation contributions, co-production work and compensation for involvement in meetings.

3d Interest earned on cash deposits

3e Funds brought forward means funding retained from 2022-23 for use during 2023-24.

3f Funds carried forward means funding reserved for 2024-25.

3g The organisation has taken advantage of the exemption in FRS 102 from producing a cash flow statement on the grounds that it is an exempt entity.

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	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2024 £
Charitable Activities				
Henry Smith Charity	3h	-	60,000	60,000
Henry Smith Covid Fund	3i	-	39,200	39,200
City Bridge Trust	3j	2,970	49,500	52,470
The London Community Foundation	3k	-	9,775	9,775
Lloyds Banking Foundation	3l	25,000	-	25,000
NHS SW London	3m	-	37,200	37,200
London B of Merton	3n	-	49,416	49,416
Wimbledon Foundation	3o	-	12,490	12,490
Evening Standard	3p	-	31,250	31,250
Trust for London	3q	-	76,148	76,148
TFL SVRR	3r	-	27,029	27,029
Inclusion Barnet	3s	-	28,704	28,704
Total Income from Charitable Activities	3a	27,970	420,712	448,682
Voluntary Income	3b	5,280	-	5,280
Other income	3c	12,645	-	12,645
Interest	3d	1,400	-	1,400
Total Incoming Resources	2b	47,295	420,712	468,007

3h Henry Smith Charity - core funding to support the organisation.

3i Henry Smith Covid Funding – funding to help us increase our capacity in response to needs emerging from the pandemic.

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3j City Bridge Trust - funding to support the information and advice service.

3k The London Community Foundation – funding to support the running of our organisation.

3l Lloyds Banking Foundation – funding to support the running of our organisation.

3m NHS SW London - funding to support with a health advocacy pilot.

3n London Borough of Merton – funding to support our information and advice service.

3o The Wimbledon Foundation - funding to support with a health advocacy pilot.

3p Evening Standard – funding to support our work achieving change locally.

3q Trust for London – funding to support our policy and campaigns work.

3r Trust for London SVRR - funding to support our trainee caseworker programme.

3s Inclusion Barnet – funding to support the development of our trainee programmes.

4. Expenditure

4a No trustee or any other person related to a trustee had any personal interest in any contract or transaction entered into by the Charity during the year.

4b The Trustees have complied with the duty in Section 4 of the Charities Act 2006 to have regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charities Commission.

4c Salaries and associated costs of £243,324 includes: Salaries and Employers' NIC £212,767, Pensions £9,839, HR Costs £10,200, Other (DBS checks, Travel, Development, Recruitment) £10,518.

The number of employees whose emoluments amounted to over £60,000 during the year was nil.

4d Costs Allocated to Activities 2024

	Note	£
Cost of Charitable Activities		
Independence and Inclusion	4e	209,563
Challenging Discrimination	4f	38,185
Achieving Change Locally	4g	67,787
Total Cost of Charitable Activities		<u>£315,535</u>

4e Independence and Inclusion Project – Information and Advice support for local Disabled people to resolve issues around benefits and low income, social

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care, housing, concessionary travel, and grant applications. In 23-24, an advocacy pilot supporting Disabled people to navigate issues around health care and services.

4f Challenging Discrimination Project – Social policy work relating to social care, housing and health.

4g Achieve Change Locally Project - Member led policy work, Craftivism and Chat group, events, consultations, and voice activity with local Disabled people.

4k Liabilities on balance sheet relates to income received in advance, expenses accrued and accounting fees.

4l Governance costs include accounting and audit costs, Annual General Meeting costs, insurance, trustee expenses.

5. Reserves

These funds have been designated to cover future running costs in the event of lack of funding, in accordance with the reserves policy. According to the business continuity plan £13,600 of reserves is designated to secure immediate business continuity and the Board has approved this to be set aside in a Designated Fund.

		2024		2023
RESERVES	£	£	£	£
Designated Funds	13,600		13,600	
General Funds	<u>116,727</u>		<u>70,700</u>	
Unrestricted Funds		130,327		84,300
Restricted Funds		159,055		52,610
TOTAL RESERVES		289,382		136,910

