

REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER: 06442616 (England and Wales)
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1123017

Report of the Trustees and
Unaudited Financial Statements
for the year ended 31 March 2024
for
Reading Community Learning Centre Ltd

READING COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTRE LTD

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1. CHARITY INFORMATION

Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

The trustees, who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2024. The trustees have adopted the provisions of the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities', effective 1 January 2019.

The Trustees have complied with the duty in section 17(5) of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to public benefit guidance.

Reference and administrative details

Registered Company number
06442616 (England and Wales)

Registered Charity number
1123017

Registered office
94 London Street
Reading RG1 4SJ

Trustees

Clare Furneaux
Hemamalini Sundararajan – resigned 16/11/2023
Jennifer Theron
Karen Rowland
Katharine Sarah del Tufo
Linda Smith – resigned 16/11/2023
Lucy England
Parveen Brar – staff representative
Raya Mohamed
Rosie Chambers
Simran Aul
Aydan Gasimova

Company Secretary

Aisha Malik (Centre Manager)

Independent examiner

Holy Brook Associates

2. STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

Reading Community Learning Centre is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated and registered as a charity. The company was incorporated on 3 December 2007 and registered as a charity on 29 February 2008 under a Memorandum of Association which established the objects and powers of the charitable company and it is governed under its Articles of Association. In the event of the company being wound up its members are required to contribute a sum not exceeding £10 towards any outstanding debts.

We are delighted to announce that Reading Community Learning Centre (RCLC) were awarded a renewal of their Reading Voluntary Action Safe and Sound Good Governance Award. This is our second renewal, following our initial award in 2018 demonstrating that the charity continues to have good charity governance in place for all eight areas, from solid foundations through to protecting their beneficiaries.

The Board of Directors

The directors of the company are also charity trustees for the purposes of charitable law. Under the requirements of the Memorandum and Articles, one third of the directors must retire from office each year but can offer themselves up for re-election at the Annual General Meeting.

Board members provide a wide range of financial, HR, life experience and business and management skills. Board meetings are held at approximately six weekly intervals, currently using Zoom. We hope to have more face-to-face meetings in 2024/2025. The Board is responsible for the strategic direction and policies of the organisation. Sub-groups have been formed to take forward the work on human resources (HR), learner engagement, and fundraising. The Manager and a Tutor representative attend Board meetings in an advisory capacity. Day to day responsibility for the running of the organisation and the provision of services is delegated to the Centre Manager under the direction of the Board.

Recruitment, appointment, and induction of trustees

When an individual is being considered as a potential new Board member they are first invited to a meeting with the Chair and Manager where the work of the organisation and the contribution of the trustees is discussed. If there is mutual agreement that the applicant should continue with their application, they will be provided with appropriate written information about the organisation and the roles and responsibilities of trustees, and they may be invited to provide a CV, and attend a Board meeting as an observer. Their application will be discussed by the trustees and if appropriate they will be formally invited to join the Board. Further induction and training will be organised on an individual basis according to the specific needs of the appointee. Trustee packs are given to all new Trustees.

Members

Reading Community Learning Centre is a membership organisation. There are currently 59 members, mainly longstanding supporters of the work of the Centre. Reading Community Learning Centre's Board is accountable to its members for the operation of the organisation in line with its stated objectives. Members receive a report on the Centre's work and progress at least annually, and they are eligible to vote at general meetings of the organisation.

Risk management

The Directors have a responsibility to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed and to ensure that reasonable steps are taken to manage the finances effectively and guard against fraud. A number of measures and protocols have been established which aim to safeguard the finances of the Centre and to provide satisfactory systems in all areas of work which expose the charity to risk. The Board of Directors has continued to take a conservative approach to financial decisions during this year of the charity's life and has aimed to establish an appropriate reserve of funds as advised by the Charity Commission. A full risk register is maintained and reviewed at Board Meetings and staff are regularly reminded of the operational risks. Since early March 2020, the Manager has developed an additional Covid-19 Risk register and set of protocols.

3. OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objectives and aims

The Centre's objectives are, for the benefit of the public in the Reading area:

1. The relief of poverty and the needs of those who are socially or economically disadvantaged, in particular women and children and those from minority ethnic communities. This is done, for example, by:
 - a. providing general education and training, including language skills and other basic skills, to advance them in life and/or assist them to adapt within a new community; and
 - b. providing or assisting them in the provision of facilities in the interests of social welfare for recreation or other leisure time occupation of individuals who have need of such facilities by reason of their youth, age, financial hardship or social circumstances with the objects of improving their conditions of life and relieving the effects of isolation.
2. To promote racial and religious harmony and raise awareness about, and to promote good relations between, persons of different racial and religious groups.
3. To advance the education of the public about issues relating to migrants, those seeking asylum and/or granted refugee status to help promote knowledge, mutual understanding and mutual and good relations between them.
4. To relieve financial hardship among people living or working in the Reading area by providing information, advice and support.

The Board has referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the aims and objectives and in planning our future activities.

Vision

Marginalised ethnic minority women in Reading achieving their individual hopes and fulfilling their aspirations.

Mission

Reading Community Learning Centre:

- offers marginalised ethnic minority women opportunities for social, educational, integration, and volunteering activities;
- provides services that address barriers to learning;
- supports progression into further education, social and employment opportunities; and
- encourages these women to raise their issues and concerns and engage with agencies.

Aims

Reading Community Learning Centre aims to enable marginalised ethnic minority women to be skilled, confident active citizens who contribute to society.

Overall objectives

1. To provide safe, first step educational opportunities for excluded ethnic minority women- for example:
 - building their confidence and independence;
 - developing language skills;
 - pre-employment skills; and
 - getting them started on journeys towards further education and employment.
2. To support the progression of ethnic minority women onto further education, volunteering or work activities for example:
 - working with other organisations to ensure a clear pathway into further education;

- providing supported volunteering opportunities in the Centre and access volunteering opportunities in other organisations;
 - working with employers; and
 - supporting the development of internal social enterprise within RCLC.
3. Through outreach and research work in communities, engage women who face cultural, religious and social barriers in learning and integration.
 4. To provide holistic women-centred support and advice that focuses on each women's individual needs. This will remove barriers to learning, integration and employment and support progression- for example:
 - free classes at convenient times during school hours
 - access to a free crèche
 - referral onto other organisations
 - help with filling in forms
 - advising how to access services; and
 - Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) on educational and employment progression.
 5. To break down barriers between people from different cultures and to foster mutual support, respect, understanding and friendship. This will contribute to integration and community cohesion.
 6. To provide opportunities for learners to influence the work and direction of the Centre. To allow learners to voice their issues and concerns to external agencies on issues that affect their lives- for example, learner forums, local consultations for health, police and other agencies.
 7. To continue to develop opportunities for learners to volunteer with built in support at the Centre, as well as recruiting host community volunteers, supporting learning, employment friendship and integration, and tracking of progression. This will support learning, friendship, and integration.
 8. To work with marginalised ethnic minority men alongside women when culturally appropriate or a particular need is identified.
 9. To continue to build strategic partnerships with appropriate voluntary, statutory and private sector organisations to provide strengthened services and opportunities for learners.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 2023-25

1. To recruit a consultant to coordinate an organisational review in 2025. This will support the strategic growth of the charity and enable us to provide the best support we can for learners.
2. To work with the Business Development Manager to raise funding and continue to diversify funding incomes, including:
 - a. income generation from the building
 - b. to strengthen the fundraising capacity of the Centre with a focus on strengthening the management resources and
 - c. seeking stable core funding, building on the work of the business development manager.
3. To provide a core programme for a minimum of 270 learners pa, involving recruitment, assessment, delivery, Information Advice and Guidance, signposting, and well-being support to learners and others approaching the Centre for support. (Note, our learner numbers are currently around 360 pa.)

4. To help to overcome isolation by creating a space for women to access information, advice and support, and build friendships, confidence and resilience.
5. To provide mental health support, awareness and referrals to partners and courses at the Centre. To put the women we work with at the heart of what we do by encouraging learners to influence and contribute to the work and direction of the Centre. We aim to do this through participation in the Trustee Board, as volunteers and through learner voice groups. We will also continue to monitor and evaluate our services to continually improve and ~~evolve~~ further develop our services for learners in response to changing needs.
6. To continue promoting and raising awareness of women's issues and rights, that are pertinent to the empowerment of migrant and refugee women who use the Centre. To embed these within the existing courses and maintain links with relevant healthcare organisations and social prescribers in light of the increased demand for support work resulting from the pandemic.
7. To further improve and strengthen the marketing and communication of the Centre as a source of support, advice, and signposting to learners, and other communities and organisations, building on increased awareness of the needs of migrant and refugee ethnic minority women.
8. To continue to develop opportunities for learners to volunteer with built-in support at the Centre. Supporting learning, employment friendship and integration, and tracking of progression.
9. To continue to recruit community volunteers and develop integration opportunities with host community members and groups.
10. To increase cultural awareness and promote friendships creating bilateral benefits for the learners and the community volunteers who support them.
11. To continue to build strategic partnerships with appropriate voluntary, statutory, and private sector organisations to provide strengthened services and opportunities for learners.

4. THE WORK OF THE CENTRE

Reading Community Learning Centre (RCLC) exists to help marginalised women from ethnic minority backgrounds to achieve their individual potential. The majority of the women we support are migrants, refugees or asylum seekers who speak little or no English, and often have limited contact outside of the home. No matter what barriers a woman faces we work alongside her as she overcomes obstacles to realising her aspirations. For many women, this includes improving their English, volunteering locally, gaining qualifications or securing a job.

Based in central Reading, we offer a programme of outreach activities, training classes, workshops and social opportunities at our Centre. These are designed to build confidence, increase skills and reduce the social isolation of local ethnic minority women, many of whom are amongst the most isolated, deprived and vulnerable in our community. In 2023/2024, we ran classes for 507 women from 41 different countries. A total of 1416 women were supported with information, advice and guidance (IAG) with support varying from benefit support, filling in forms, making telephone calls, and translation support, to accompanying them to access services at the Centre from Sep 2023-July 2024. Out of these women 39% were not RCLC learners and had been referred to us from friends, neighbours, other organisations and our partners.

Reading Community Learning Centre provides informal education and support for women who are unable to access more mainstream services because of the educational, social or cultural barriers they face. Some of the women who come to the Centre have had little access to formal education, most do not speak English, and sometimes they are not literate in their own language. Almost all the migrant and refugee learners face cultural and other challenges, and for some the Centre offers their only contact outside their immediate family. Many of the refugees and asylum seekers are living with children in poor hotels. The Centre's unique success has been in making learning accessible to the hardest to reach learners through a community-based approach, built on gaining the trust of often isolated communities and designing courses and services to meet their needs.

RCLC's educational provision creates ways into education for the most tentative and least confident of learners. Women with very limited language and literacy skills can take their first steps into learning here, and women who have gained qualifications in their countries of birth can access support to develop their English skills. This may mean coming to a social activity, joining an English conversation class or learning English through one of several practical creative classes. Learners are drawn from many different ethnic and religious backgrounds. The development of cross-cultural friendships is one of the most important benefits for many RCLC learners. Our model encourages community cohesion, breaks down barriers between cultures, and fosters mutual respect amongst the women. No other service in Reading reaches such a diverse group of women, giving us a unique insight into the needs of local ethnic minority communities.

Since the pandemic, supporting women around their mental health issues has become increasingly important and will remain a key focus.

SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES FROM APRIL 2023

Thanks to grants, donations and contracts from the organisations listed below, we have been able to run a sustained programme of activities throughout the year, for which the trustees are very grateful to:

- Reading Borough Council
- NLDC Grant from New Directions
- The National Lottery
- The DCLG Controlling Migration Grant
- Healthwatch
- WEA Branch
- Garfield Weston Foundation
- Marsh Charitable Trust

- The Gerald Palmer Eling Trust
- Santa Fun Run (Reading Rotary)
- Multiply Project Funding (Funded by New Directions)
- University of Reading (CareWell Research Project) and
- Rental income from WEA and New Directions

RCLC continues to adhere to the government Covid guidelines and has a risk register in place. We no longer need to socially distance ourselves or wear masks but there is hand gel in every room, windows are kept open, and all staff were provided with Covid tests at the start of term to test themselves if they are ill with Covid symptoms.

In May 2024 the new Mayor of Reading, Councillor Glenn Dennis (Labour, Kentwood) was sworn in as the first Black Mayor of Reading. RCLC would like to say a huge thank you to the mayor as he has chosen RCLC to be one of his Mayoral Charities for 2024. We are really excited to have been chosen, especially as there are so many amazing charities in Reading.

Actions taken to incorporate safe teaching, learning and support at RCLC from April 2023:

1. All learners were enrolled face to face and were given a detailed induction on health and safety, the current Covid-19 protocols, and where to get support if they had symptoms of Covid-19.
2. At the start of each academic term RCLC Staff received the RCLC Induction training on, current RCLC policies, observations of teaching and learning, quality assurance, teaching paperwork, learner inductions, organisational structure and accredited safeguarding training, with revised Covid regulations. All staff were given Covid test kits and face masks if they still wished to wear them.
3. All enrolled learners were set up with their class WhatsApp group to learn, post homework, use to connect with the tutor and stay in touch with friends from the class.
4. RCLC stayed in contact with the elderly female learners from the Pakistani Community Centre (PCC), and the elderly Nepalese ladies who were enrolled on our ESOL Skills for Health Courses (previously held at the Warehouse) which took place at RCLC from autumn 2023. Our very popular online seated yoga course for the elderly learners from the PCC and Indian Community Association continued throughout the year with learners commenting on how much easier it was for them as they did not need to worry about travelling by bus yet still meet friends and do exercise safely in their own home.

Increased support needs

RCLC continues to experience an increase in demand as we support women and their families through the lasting effects of the pandemic. Many have experienced disproportionate challenges and difficulties around mental and physical health, loss of finance, social isolation and domestic abuse compounded by language barriers and racism. Covid-19 has further exposed some of the health and wider inequalities that persist in our society. The virus itself had a disproportionate impact on certain sections of the population, including those living in most deprived neighbourhoods and people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities.

There is emerging evidence that the pandemic has increased Ethnic minority women's mental health support needs along with increased domestic abuse. Just under four in ten (36%) adults in Britain reported that during the coronavirus crisis and lockdown they have experienced an increase in stress or anxiety. Two in ten (21%) said that they have been finding lockdown difficult to cope with, while 14% said that social isolation was making 'relationships at home more difficult than usual'. This last figure rose to 19% for BME groups. A recent Red Cross Report identifies that following lockdown the situation has worsened for Ethnic minority people. Runnymede Trust report that in their survey over a third of Ethnic minority people (36%) have experienced an increase in stress or anxiety during the coronavirus crisis, with one out of five struggling with social isolation.

Cost of Living Crisis

The cost-of-living crisis in the UK has significantly impacted migrant, refugee, and asylum-seeking women, exacerbating existing vulnerabilities and inequalities around financial income, housing, access to healthcare and support services, and increased discrimination highlighted by the summer 2024 riots.

Increased Financial Hardship

Although 91% of our learners are currently unemployed those who do work are employed in low-wage sectors or rely on government support which has not kept pace with inflation. According to the Refugee Council, women in these groups often work in precarious jobs with low pay and poor working conditions, which means they are less able to cope with rising costs of living.

The Asylum Seekers' Allowance, which many asylum-seeking women rely on, has been criticised for being insufficient to cover basic needs. Women refugee and asylum seekers who are 27% of our learners, are often lone parents and struggle to feed their families. It is also difficult to open a bank account for our learners without having a financial history in the UK, without references and without evidence (often utilities and benefits are under the partner's name) which proves your address. Frequent failure of Asylum Support payments can leave them without any financial support for a period of weeks.

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation has highlighted that the current level of benefits fails to meet the real costs of living. Under current government guidelines;

- Asylum seekers have a legal right to Home Office accommodation and financial support but are not entitled to local authority housing, state benefits, or allowed to work (unless their claim is 1-year outstanding)
- Those in receipt of Section 95 at the hotel receive around £9 per week and those in dispersal receive around £48 pw. Not all asylum seekers are in receipt of Section 95.
- Refused asylum seekers (without an outstanding claim with the home office) are not eligible for Home Office financial support nor public funds.

Housing Instability

Refugee and asylum-seeking women frequently live in temporary accommodation or low-quality housing, which has become more problematic with rising energy and rent costs. Research by Shelter has shown that these groups are particularly at risk of homelessness or eviction due to the combined pressures of inadequate housing and the cost-of-living crisis. The Migrant Rights Network has documented that rising rent and utility costs disproportionately affected migrant women, who may also face barriers to accessing social housing.

Health and Wellbeing

Migrant and refugee women face barriers in accessing healthcare, and financial stress can exacerbate these issues. The Health Foundation's report on health inequalities indicates that economic hardship worsens health outcomes, and this is compounded for women facing both migration-related challenges and financial strain. The stress and anxiety related to financial instability and uncertainty about immigration status have negatively impacted the mental health of migrant and refugee women. Studies by the Mental Health Foundation suggest that economic pressures are a significant factor in the mental health crisis among these groups.

Barriers to Support Services

Language barriers, lack of information, and fear of deportation can prevent migrant, refugee, and asylum-seeking women from accessing support services. Research by the Refugee Women's Strategy Group highlights that these barriers limit their ability to obtain help with financial issues, legal advice, and other forms of support.

There is a shortage of tailored support services that address the specific needs of migrant and refugee women, as noted in various reports by organisations like the Refugee Council and the Migrant Resource Centre.

Employment Challenges

Migrant and refugee women often face workplace discrimination and exploitation, including lower pay and poorer working conditions. The TUC has reported that these women are more likely to be employed in the most insecure and poorly paid jobs, which leaves them especially vulnerable to the impacts of inflation and rising living costs.

Many migrant women have qualifications and skills that are not recognised in the UK, which forces them into lower-paid work. This is evidenced by 25% of RCLC's learners who have a degree or higher qualification from their country but cannot find work. This issue is documented in reports by the Migration Observatory and the Equalities and Human Rights Commission.

Low skills and confidence, a lack of flexible job opportunities and caring responsibilities results in most of our learners living with, or at risk of poverty because they cannot access employment or take part in their local communities. Childcare costs have risen to the point where our beneficiaries can no longer afford to work, as the jobs available to them with limited skills do not pay enough to cover their childcare costs. RCLC'S creche is a huge lifeline for women as the lack of creche places for women locally, wanting to learn and knowledge of where these are and how to access them is a significant barrier to learning.

Accessing English Language and Vocational Programmes

The reduction in government funding, combined with broader austerity measures and shifting priorities, has led to fewer courses and a decline in ESOL enrolment. There has not been a national ESOL Funding strategy in England since 2009. The ESOL strategy for England plays a vital role in supporting non-native English speakers in their integration into society and the workforce. Since the 2009 strategy, there has been no single, overarching ESOL strategy document released by the government which has led to an increasing decline over the years in ESOL places, and funding for the sector. According to the Learning and Work Institute, funding for adult education, including ESOL, was cut by about 45% between 2010 and 2019. This reduction in funding has led to fewer available courses and limited resources for providers.

Legal restrictions (their residency status) prevent many of our learners from working and for some volunteering (especially when there is a DBS is a requirement).

Digital poverty and lack of ESOL places at a time when there is an increasing demand for language programmes which would enable integration, independence, access to healthcare and employment is vital in tackling inequalities for our learners. The number of hours offered by ESOL courses in Reading are limited and not enough for learners especially at the pre-entry level to progress with their English. Our long waiting lists include refused asylum seekers and those who have not been in the country for more than 6 months or those waiting for residency status who are not eligible for formal accredited ESOL programmes.

The cost-of-living crisis has intensified existing challenges faced by migrant, refugee, and asylum-seeking women in the UK. They are experiencing increased financial hardship, housing instability, compromised health and wellbeing, barriers to accessing support, and significant employment challenges. These issues are compounded by systemic barriers and discrimination, making it critical for targeted support and policy interventions to address their specific needs.

84% of the learners on our programmes state they want to work. Gaining confidence, English language skills, an understanding of the job market and basic tools to navigate the world of work (CVs, how to complete an application, where to look for work), and supported volunteering, are therefore essential ways of tackling unemployment, poverty, and health inequalities. RCLC is part of a 7-organisation contract with Reading Borough

Council to tackle poverty, discrimination and disadvantage and promote wellbeing, working in a formal delivery partnership with Refugee Support Group, Communicare, Reading Welfare Rights, Starting Point, Churches in Reading Drop In Centre, Christian Community Action and Readifood. A weekly benefits advisor from Communicare visits the Centre, seeing women on a 1:1 basis. Other than a small registration fee, all of our classes and activities are free of charge, and we know that this helps to increase accessibility as many have no recourse to public funds, 29% of the women are on benefits and 91% of them are unemployed.

Our research on the needs of ethnic minority women in Reading, in partnership with Reading University (2018), reinforced other local and national research into the barriers faced by refugee, migrant and ethnic minority women to achieving their potential and integrating into the community. The research found that limited English language skills impact upon migrant women's ability to integrate with the community around them, further compounding their sense of isolation, impairing their ability to gain employment and reducing their sense of well-being.

Together, with the cost of living, our organisational costs have gone up including the rent and utilities. The crisis is bringing to us women who are seeking help but have not had contact with other agencies and at least initially are not looking for classes. This requires support time from all our staff, including time to actively signpost to other agencies. This often involves staff or volunteers accompanying to support and interpret.

The crisis has had significant effect on our staff, all of whom are paid at Living Wage rates or above. Because of cost-of-living problems they are experiencing, the Board has reviewed staff salaries and increased staff pay due to increased hours worked and pay increases being awarded where appropriate, e.g. in line with National Living Wage levels and to ensure the pay we offer is fair and competitive. Our experienced and qualified BAMER staff team with lived experience must be paid at a rate where we can retain them, as they will not be able to work if their cost-of-living needs are not met. Our ex-teacher volunteers are on pensions and relatively financially secure, but the learner volunteers are in the same serious situation as all our learners.

There is considerable fearfulness at acknowledging financial issues like debt and lack of finance for food, utilities rent etc. There is limited history of using food banks though the mosques and other local charities are helping.

All these factors are further compounded by the fact that the vast majority of the women we support, even if they were highly educated, or if their families and husbands have money, are not free to spend money on themselves to pay for travel to courses, work or volunteering, on clothes, or food for themselves. The family budget has been considerably reduced during the cost-of-living crisis has meant that there is less money than ever in the household budget for the women in the family.

As the cost-of-living soars we are running double the number of creche sessions and classes pre-pandemic but are still struggling to keep up with demand and increasing waiting lists. At the end of the summer term 2024 our waiting list rose to 256 learners, the highest it has ever been (this equates to 50% of the entire learner intake for the academic year 2023/2024). Termly learner evaluation feedback from our learners confirms that the women only, free classes and creche in a friendly local setting for women are one of the many reasons they come to the centre to learn. Engagement and early intervention with the vulnerable women we support is a key strategy in breaking this cycle of poverty, unemployment, despondency, and declining mental health exacerbated by the cost-of-living crisis.

5. COURSE PROGRAMME

Core Programmes run in 2023_2024

In the academic year 2023/2024, 507 (an increase of 20% since last year) women completed our core programmes which for the first time since the pandemic were all taught face to face at RCLC.

Autumn 2023

- English Conversation Pre-Entry and Beginners
- English Conversation Improvers and Intermediate
- English Reading and Writing Beginners and Improvers
- Sewing Beginners, and Improvers
- Looking Good Feeling Good
- Beginners IT
- ESOL Skills for Health (for elderly Nepali Women taught at the Warehouse)
- English for Everyday Maths
- Online Seated Yoga
- Wellbeing Course

Spring 2024

- English Conversation Pre-Entry and Beginners
- English Conversation Improvers and Intermediate
- English Reading and Writing Beginners and Improvers
- Sewing Beginners, and Improvers
- Looking Good Feeling Good
- Beginners IT
- ESOL Skills for Health (for elderly Nepali Women taught at the Warehouse)
- English for Everyday Maths
- Online Seated Yoga
- Wellbeing Course

Summer 2024

- English Conversation Pre-Entry and Beginners
- English Conversation Improvers
- English Reading and Writing Beginners
- Sewing Beginners, and Improvers
- Looking Good Feeling Good
- Beginners IT
- ESOL Skills for Health (for elderly Nepali Women taught at the Warehouse)
- English for Everyday Maths
- Online Seated Yoga
- Wellbeing Course
- Gardening Workshops at the Museum for English Rural Life (MERL)

Supporting Syrian, Afghan and Ukrainian Refugees

- The Centre has worked closely with the Refugee Support Group (RSG) in helping the families, especially the women, access ESOL classes and community resources. Under our current partnership with Refugee Support Group (Reading Borough Council Contract, Closing the Gap Outcome 2) we support the refugees and refer our clients to them to access immigration advice and support.

- RCLC has also regularly attended the Syrian Vulnerable Placement and Relocation (SVPR meetings) and Afghan Resettlement Scheme Case Management meetings (ARAP) following the withdrawal of international forces from Afghanistan in April 2021. Since summer 2023 these meetings no longer take place and a new RBC led group called Sanctuary Partner Forum meetings replaced the Multi Agency Wellbeing Coordination Meeting - Ukrainian Support and Quarterly Refugee and Asylum Support Discussions (for Afghan, Syrian, Ukrainian and Hong Kong nationals), which RCLC attend.
- Since autumn 2021 we have seen a steep increase in the number of refugees and asylum seekers enrolled on courses at the Centre reflecting the global migration trends, but also because we have received more referrals from partners such as RSG and Care 4 Calais. As these women have no recourse to public funding, they cannot access any support from the accredited learning providers in Reading but can from RCLC.
- Sadly, as Russia declared war on Ukraine in 2022, we started to see our first Ukrainian refugees at the Centre in the summer of 2022. However, as Ukrainian refugees can access publicly funded courses, healthcare and other support services, we have seen far fewer Ukrainian nationals come to the Centre. This is reflected in our data with around 4% of our learners coming from the Ukraine. We are continuing to work in partnership with the Council to support any Ukrainian refugee women who need our support.
- By the end of the academic year 2024, 27% of the learners were asylum seekers and refugees. This is a 5% drop in comparison to this time last year when the percentage was 32%. The vast majority of the new arrivals to our Centre in the last two terms have been from Eritrea, Iran and Afghanistan

The statistics below give a breakdown of the number of refugees and asylum seekers who studies on the core programmes at RCLC and which country they came from over the academic year 2023/2024

Refugees (total number over 2023/2024 = 57)		Asylum Seekers (total number over 2023/2024 = 81)	
Afghanistan	28	Afghanistan	12
Syria	8	Bangladesh	7
Turkey	2	Burma	1
Ukraine	7	Cameron	2
El Salvador	1	Columbia	3
Ukraine	6	El Salvador	2
El Salvador	1	Eritrea	14
Ukraine	4	Ethiopia	1
		Iraq	1
		Iran	13
		Morocco	1
		Namibia	3
		Nigeria	4
		Saudi Arabia	1
		Somalia	1
		Sudan	4
		Syria	4
		Turkey	2
		UAE	1
		Ukraine	4

Improving citizen engagement – learners engaging with agencies about issues that affect their lives

Guest speakers are invited to the Centre so that women have the opportunity to engage and access important information in a safe and private environment. The guest speakers are broadly categorised into terms which are themed on women's health, accessing local services, or are linked to women's rights and safety. This year we ran the following sessions and trips over the three terms as part of our enrichment activities for learners at the Centre;

Autumn 2023

- 62 women attended the two Chai and Chat sessions. In Spring 2023, RCLC started a new partnership with the Salama Project (Challenging hidden domestic abuse within Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities through informal chai and chat) running Chai and Chat sessions twice per term at the centre. We have continued with these successful sessions and ran the Chai and Chat sessions twice a term from Autumn 2023. At the sessions women received information on how to report domestic abuse, where to access help and what is defined as domestic abuse in this country. Women from Alana House were also invited to attend.
- Thanks to our partnership with CommuniCare through the RBC Closing the Gap Outcome 1, Lynn (an advice volunteer from CommuniCare) joined the RCLC team to give benefit and advice sessions every Tuesday from 10-12pm during term time. At the start of each term Lynn, and our outreach workers promote this service to learners in the classes so that learners can access this vital support. In autumn Lynne presented information to 60 women about the services. Since Lynn joined, she has helped women with benefit applications, housing advice, utility bills, child benefit, disability benefit, support for carers and universal credit. Most of the women are those who need regular and extensive support due to the language barriers.
- 100 learners in the Centre received information from RCLC's two outreach workers on where and how to access free school uniforms and clothes, food parcels and food banks, furniture and benefit support from our partners but also other local charities.
- 62 women received Hep C tests at RCLC thanks to the Royal Berkshire Hospital Hep C Bus led by Jade Roberts (Royal Berkshire Hospital- Hepatology Team)
- 60 women received information received information from Together Outreach around their mental health services. Our partnership with Together for Wellbeing has enabled one of their outreach workers being based at the Centre once a week to deliver mental health support to our learners to improve their wellbeing, help build resilience and independence to help combat issues that directly impact their mental wellbeing such as experiences of poverty and inequality.
- In partnership with RVA and the NHS MEET PEET Team we started our successful termly health check days. 40 women received their free health checks and were able to receive advice and support around their health concerns. Three NHS health nurses were at the Centre to complete BMI, Blood pressure and diabetes checks on the women. The health check reports are then sent directly to the learners' GPs for follow-up visits, increasing access to healthcare.
- 56 women received information on symptoms and accessing support for breast, lung, bowel and cervical cancer from Cancer Champions.
- 15 women from the pre-entry class visited the Museum for English Rural Life (MERL) as part of their learning and enrichment activity
- 40 women engaged in presentations from Adviza careers advice on how to access their careers services, what they can assist with and how to make 1:1 appointments at the Centre.
- 4 women attended the walking clubs organised by Berks, Bucks & Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust which benefitted the women with enhanced social integration, improved physical and mental health, informal language practice, and increased safety and support. Additionally, it provided a cost-effective and enjoyable way to explore their new environment and build a sense of community.

Spring 2024

- 100 learners in the Centre received information regarding Readifood's food parcels, New Beginnings and First Days Charities (who provide school uniforms) and Whitley CDA who have a school uniform and surplus food pop up on Thursdays as part of our cost-of-living theme for the term.
- 53 women attended the two Chai and Chat sessions.
- 4 women were interviewed by RBC Maternity services at RCLC with translation support provided by RCLC on their experiences of accessing pre pregnancy and post pregnancy care.
- 50 women received information received information from Together Outreach around their mental health services.
- 25 women received their free health checks and were able to receive advice and support around their health concerns with NHS MEET PEET Team
- 100 women received information on symptoms and accessing support for breast cancer and cervical smear tests from the RCLC outreach workers
- 12 women from the pre-entry and beginners reading and writing class visited the Museum for English Rural Life as part of their learning and enrichment activity
- 10 learners from the Intermediate English Conversation class visited Fedcap (a not-for-profit organisation that is delivering the UK Government's new Restart Scheme in Reading.) They help people to find employment, deliver training and personalised 1:1 support for those who are economically inactive and face barriers to work). 2 of these eligible learners were registered onto their programme.

Summer 2024

- 19 women attended the Chai and Chat session held at MERL
- Lynn (an advice volunteer from CommuniCare, and our outreach workers promoted their advice surgery to learners in the classes so that learners can access this vital support. In the summer term 50 women attended this presentation at Centre.
- 100 learners in the Centre received information from RCLC's two outreach workers on where and how to access free school uniforms and clothes, food parcels and food banks, furniture and benefit support from our partners but also other local charities.
- A representative from Fedcap did a presentation about their services to 15 learners in the English Conversation Beginners class, and how learners can access their services.
- 21 women received their free health checks and were able to receive advice and support around their health concerns with NHS MEET PEET Team
- 45 women engaged in presentations from Adviza careers advice on how to access their careers services, what they can assist with and how to make 1:1 appointments at the Centre
- In the summer of 2018 RCLC started a wonderful friendship between the volunteers who ran the Swallowfield Coffee Club and RCLC. This arose when the Coffee Club decided to donate the proceeds of their summer 2018 quarter to RCLC. RCLC in return, invited the volunteers to visit RCLC to thank them for their very generous gift, offering tea, Asian sweets and treats. The experience for the volunteers from Swallowfield and the ladies of RCLC to meet new people, share stories, cultures and food was a very moving one and something we knew we must continue as it helped learners to meet English speaking women as well as practice their English. They also got a chance to see rural life in Swallowfield. This year, 12 women from the English Conversation Classes visited Swallowfield for morning tea, coffee and delicious English cakes and in return the volunteers from the village came to our end of term celebrations in July which we held at RCLC. Our celebrations had music, dance and a cornucopia of world foods to share with the Swallowfield Coffee Club Volunteers.

6. ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Centre continues to collect evidence of its outputs and outcomes through:

- Enrolment forms and attendance records of people attending. These forms record the diversity of people participating in learning opportunities, retention and achievement. We also record data onto an educational management information system database.
- Tracking of progression into further learning, volunteering and work.
- Evidence of outcomes and progression through feedback forms, records of course reviews, regular 1:1 interviews completed by the staff, students and trustees using volunteers as interpreters as required.
- Case studies and individual learning records and diaries of individual learning journeys and evidencing the impact of engagement in informal learning.
- For the children in the crèche: enrolment forms and attendance records, termly reviews, feedback from parents and individual learning journeys for the children.

Learner Statistics

507 learners enrolled on our core programme of courses at RCLC 2023/2024

- 97% of our core programme learners have no UK qualifications or are at an entry level in ESOL
- 25% of learners have a degree or higher from their home country
- 91% of our learners are unemployed
- 29% of our learners are on benefits (it is important to remember that 27% of our learners were asylum seekers and refugees who could not work and were ineligible to claim benefits due to their immigration status so in reality this percentage should be much higher)
- 10% of our learners are retired
- 8% of our learner's work part-time or full-time
- 10% of our learners use the crèche, a lifeline for those who cannot afford childcare costs
- 30% of our learners are aged 51 plus; 27% 31-40; 20% are aged 19-30; 23% are aged 41-50.
- 11% of our learners are refugees and 16% are asylum seekers (this is a reduction by 6% from last year), whilst 61% of the learners had not been living in the UK for more than 3 years (this is an increase of 3% from last year). This year's figures are broadly similar to last years.
- 12% of learners disclosed that they needed additional support. Of this 12%, 35% of the women declared they had additional social and emotional difficulties, 27% had physical disabilities, 13% had mobility issues, 8% had mental health difficulties.
- 5% of the learners progressed into full-time or part-time employment and 2% onto volunteering. These figures are similar to last year as the vast majority of our learners had no qualifications or experience of working in their home country, and over two thirds of learners had not been living here for more than 3 years. It will therefore take them longer to progress onto volunteering or employment. This is also exacerbated by the fact that there are large sectors of the economy which were badly affected by the pandemic, and the lockdown people were furloughed, made redundant or left without any employment. The continued cost of living crisis is also making it harder for women to get into employment due to travel costs and childcare.
- 85% of our learners progressed onto internal courses at RCLC
- 9% of our learners progressed onto accredited courses with the WEA, Reading College or New Directions (this is nearly double the figure from last year) whilst 6% progressed onto other courses in the community.

- This year learners came from an amazing 41 different countries with the majority from the following; 14% from Afghanistan, 13% from India, 13% from Hong Kong, 11% from Pakistan, 7% from Nepal, 4% from Ukraine, 4% from Algeria, 4% from Sudan, 4% from Bangladesh, 3% from Syria, 3% Iran, 3% from Eritrea, 2% from Albania, 2% from Libya, 1% from Turkey, 1% from Kenya, 1% from Morocco, 1% from Iraq and under 1% from each of the following countries such as Ecuador, Columbia, Guinea, Russia, Spain, El Salvador, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Romania, Somalia, Saudia Arabia, Algeria, Namibia, Italy, Ivory Coast, Ghana, France, Ethiopia, China, Cameroon, Burma.
- Current learners speak 31 different languages with the majority speaking with the majority of learners speaking Urdu 13%, Chinese 13%, Arabic 10%, Pashto 8%, Nepali 7%, Hindi 6%, Dari 5%, Spanish 4%, Ukrainian 4%, French 4%, Farsi 3%, Bengali 3% , Tamil 3% and Amharic 2%,
- Our learners are mostly from the following wards; Abbey (17%), Katesgrove (12%), Battle (10%), Park (8%), Redlands (7%) Whitley (3%), Coley (4%), Norcot (3%), Church (2%), Tilehurst (3%), Southcote (2%)
- Data from the Indices of Deprivation 2019 showed the five most deprived areas in and around Reading were located within Whitley; The Meadway in Tilehurst (RG30 4 postcodes); the Honey End Lane area of Tilehurst (RG30 3 postcodes); Norcot (RG30 1 - RG30 6 area) and the Northumberland Avenue area (RG27). This year 24% of our learners came from these specific areas.

However, the poverty levels of ethnic minority groups can be obscured by the postcodes they live in. Postcodes aggregate data across a range of socio-economic conditions. For instance, a postcode with a diverse range of housing and income levels can mask disparities within ethnic minority groups, so a postcode may include both affluent and less affluent households, which makes it difficult to determine the specific economic conditions of the ethnic minority populations within that area. As many of the RCLC learners live in temporary accommodation, refuges or hotels in central Reading, this also can mask this data.

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation in the UK has reported that certain areas with high levels of deprivation might have significant ethnic minority populations, but poverty is not uniformly experienced. They note that while some postcodes are associated with high deprivation, the experiences of different ethnic groups within those postcodes can vary.

Research by The Equality Trust has demonstrated that economic disparities between ethnic groups are sometimes hidden by aggregate postcode data. For example, poverty rates among ethnic minorities might be higher than what is suggested by the overall data for the postcode area in which they live.

In summary, while postcodes can provide a broad sense of economic conditions, they can obscure the specific poverty levels experienced by ethnic minority groups within those areas. Detailed demographic and socio-economic research are often required to uncover the full extent of poverty and economic disparity within these communities.

7. QUALITY ASSURANCE

Following initial interviews to identify learning needs, the Centre records achievement, recruitment and retention to check that quality learning is taking place, and that it has met the learners' needs. Progression opportunities are discussed termly by tutors and information advice and guidance advisors.

As part of the quality assurance procedures, regular teaching observations are undertaken which monitor methods of delivery, assessment, management of diversity, and equal opportunities, e-learning contributions and learners' comments. All tutors and crèche staff are qualified and supervised. Observations for the academic year 2023/2024 were undertaken in February, May and June 2024 by the Manager.

In addition to the observations undertaken by the Manager, New Directions observed a sample teaching session from the ESOL for Everyday Maths class which they funded. Each tutor also completes a course evaluation after every session.

LEARNER FEEDBACK AND OUTCOMES – THE DIFFERENCE OUR WORK MAKES

RCLC Learner Feedback 2024 summary

Approximately 10% of learners are interviewed yearly by staff and Trustees. This year a combination of various RCLC staff and a trustee completed these 1:1 evaluations. Learners and tutors also complete teaching and learning evaluation forms and a collection of case studies are also collated at the end of each term. A summary of the feedback is below.

These 26 interviews, covering 9 core classes interviewing in 4 languages were completed by staff and a trustee not involved with teaching. The interviews represent around 15% of the learners that term, and 7% of the learners for the year, a smaller number than usual because of time pressures. However, the findings mainly reflect those of previous years.

1. Reasons for coming to UK and feelings about Reading

Whilst some families were economic migrants, who were coming for improved living conditions, for better education for children and/or to join husbands or families, many learners had escaped from extremely dangerous countries. Whilst some learners were new to the UK coming as refugees or asylum seekers or on spouse visas, some learners had lived here for a long time but had not been able to learn English, mainly because of multi-generational family caring responsibilities, or lack of knowledge of the Centre's existence. Almost all those interviewed liked living in Reading, mentioning how central and close everything was, with some identifying the good schools and transport. Some felt it was quiet, but others felt the town centre was crowded. Many mentioned the high cost of housing. A number mentioned that people are kind and helpful and its multicultural nature is valued.

2. Learner Needs

Most of the learners interviewed wanted to improve their spoken English so they could better communicate in everyday situations like shopping or visiting the doctor or helping their children with homework. Many identified a loss of confidence having come to the UK and their wish to gain confidence and get out and meet new people. Others wanted to learn English, so they were not dependent on their husbands for translation. Most wanted to learn English to get a job in the future. Most women arrive at the Centre with very little English language, even if they had worked in their countries of origin, or lived in UK for years, and sought an opportunity to learn. Some of the women had never gone to school in their countries of origin or had only completed Primary School studies. Whilst some women had families in the UK, many were alone with husbands and/or children and faced isolation, stress, boredom and loneliness. Others specifically mentioned mental health issues.

3. How learners discovered the Centre and enrolment

Most learners first found out about the Centre through a friend who introduced them to the outreach/ support workers, or the administrator, though some were referred by other agencies. After visiting the centre and their needs assessed, learners often had to wait to get on language courses. The choice of classes was often not what was originally requested as that class (mainly English language or sewing) was full. They were helped to choose an alternative and their names put down for a future class.

4. Perceptions of the Centre and classes

There was universal praise for the quality and style of the teaching, and the friendliness, kindness and supportiveness of tutors and volunteers:

The best thing about RCLC is the support it provides. For example, the language classes have really helped me. The staff is very understanding and patient, which makes learning easier.

The staff and tutors are very helpful and understanding. They make learning enjoyable and accessible. RCLC is a good place for women who do not have confidence to go to other educational institutes. It provides friendly and supportive environment to learn.

A number of the learners valued particularly the Centre being a women only safe space, really valued the diversity of learners from many countries, and the importance of free courses.

The administrator and the outreach/ support workers and creche are also greatly valued, the phrases *kind, helpful supportive* and *friendly* were used in most interviews:

It feels like a second home where I can connect with others who share similar experiences.

5. Changes or improvements requested

Few changes were identified by learners in beginners or pre-entry conversation courses:

I like everything about RCLC and can't think of anything which can be improved.

However, far more suggestions were made for improvements or changes than in other years. The resounding request from the learners in other classes was for more language classes, especially conversation classes and sewing, as learners had to be on a waiting list for up to 2 terms. This was at a time when the number of language classes had been doubled but learners wanted more frequent classes and suggested a variety of options which will be considered by staff and Board members.

6. Outcomes- the difference coming to the Centre has made

The outcomes/ benefits for the learners cover a number of linked themes:

- **Almost all Learners reported increasing their skills, including English language skills, confidence and independence, allowing them to be more resilient, active and empowered members of their community, and better prepared for living and working in the UK, e.g. able to talk to neighbours, go shopping, get on a bus, visit the doctor or hospital, help with children's homework, or visit their children's school on their own. Learners also report benefits to their families of attending RCLC:**

The best thing about learning at RCLC is that now I don't feel shy. I feel confident when speaking even when my English isn't good...I never went to medical appointments alone before but two weeks ago I went with my daughter to her hospital appointment – no husband, no interpreter. I could not have done this without RCLC.

I can now complete paperwork alone. We have the same issues, so I don't feel shy...I feel supported in Reading, there are people that I know here and it's my home. My family like me coming here – it makes them happy because it makes me happy.

Looking at the feedback from pre beginners and beginners English language classes, many learners report how long it takes to get proficient, their struggles with confidence in speaking and writing, but do identify improved understanding of the English language.

- **Almost all learners report making new friends with women from different backgrounds, thus feeling less isolated and lonely and more connected by building stronger social networks and improved wellbeing:**

I have made new friends at RCLC, which makes me feel more connected, and we go to group study sessions.

- **Most learners report feeling happier, less isolated, with reduced stress and depression, improved mental health and feeling more supported and able to ask for help if needed:**

I felt lonely and depressed before coming to RCLC because I had no friends and family members, was not able to communicate in English, did not know who and where to go for an advice and information...I cannot explain how happy I feel since I started coming to RCLC. My English is improving, I have made new friends and my confidence is improved... the most important factor is that my health is improved, I don't feel depressed now.

A number of learners mentioned enjoying helping other learners whilst others spoke of taking steps towards employment by starting volunteering or starting online courses:

I have been getting help with job search and volunteering and now found volunteering role at the (hospital). My language skills and confidence improved since coming to RCLC. I can visit places myself when looking for a volunteering or paid role.

Learner Progression

- An incredible 100% of all our learners progressed on to either internal courses at RCLC, jobs, volunteering or external courses both accredited and non-accredited in the academic year 2023/2024. This figure highlights the importance of the Centre as an important steppingstone in the journey for our learners to be able to aspire and grow their skills, confidence and become active participants of the community in which they live.
- 5% of the learners progressed into employment or volunteering. This figure is 1% higher than last year (4% for 2022/23), which is primarily due to the fact that 97% of our learners in 2023/2024 had no qualifications, were at an Entry level ESOL level and over two thirds of learners had not been living here for more than 3 years

Learner Evaluation Forms Feedback

At the end of each course every learner completes a learner evaluation form. The statistics below outline the learners' feedback from their classes over the academic year 2023/2024

- 77% of learners felt their learning experience had been excellent whilst 23% said it was good.
- 73% said that the course level and content was excellent whilst the remaining 27% said it was good.
- 84% said that the way the course was taught was excellent whilst 16% said it was good.
- 82% said that the information and support which they received was excellent whilst 18% said it was good.
- 100% said that they felt they had improved their confidence and language skills.
- 98% felt that their health had improved since coming to the classes.

- 90% said that they would like to do more courses, volunteering or get a job after finishing their classes at RCLC.
- 94% said that they had made new friends since coming to the Centre.
- 96% said that they now knew who to go to, to ask for help and support.
- 98% said that they felt happier since coming to the Centre to learn.
- 98% said that they had learnt new skills.
- 96% said they felt they were now more confident to go out and do other activities since joining the classes.
- 99% said that they felt more confident in their everyday lives.

Learner Engagement

Learner evaluations are held at the end of each term during which learners of the Centre evaluate their learning programmes and raise any issues, concerns, improvements or just highlight what they enjoyed most about their time at the Centre.

In autumn 2016 we started our Learner Voice Forum to engage the learners more deeply in planning and decision making about the running of the Centre. We held a series of meetings to engage learners from the classes and talk to them about what a learner forum is, how they could be involved, who would like to be a part of it and why it was important for them to be involved. A group of 12 learners formed the learners' forum group and from their discussions we were able to discuss their ideas at our strategic business plan day. It was their idea to raise money for the Centre by running pampering sessions at the Centre, selling food and other items. We implemented this by running a termly Women's Day where we raise money for the Centre by selling international food made by the learners, selling beauty treatments by the learners and tutor of the beauty class as well as a bric-a-brac sale.

Sadly, since the pandemic we have been unable to run any of fundraising activities which had been proposed by the learners, but the learner voice group will hopefully restart in 2024/2025

Volunteers

Some learners have chosen to undertake additional voluntary activities at the Centre. As a small organisation with only a small number of part-time paid staff, volunteering is central to the success of our work. For the volunteers, being able to contribute to the community provides satisfaction and enables them to develop and practice skills they may not otherwise be able to use. For some volunteers it has also provided a basis from which to move into paid employment.

During 2022 we welcomed our volunteers back into the classroom following the end of social distancing and we built up our volunteer group again over the academic year 2023/2024

This year we had 15 learner volunteers of whom:

- 6 were classroom volunteers.
- 4 were admin volunteer.
- 4 were volunteer translators.
- 1 was an outreach volunteer.

We also had 2 long-term classroom volunteers who were ex-teachers. Sadly, we said goodbye to both of these volunteers, Rita Parr who started volunteering at the Centre from 2015 and Sylvia Cox (who was shortlisted for the Senior Changemakers, Volunteering Champions for volunteers over 65 years old in 2024). Rita had worked as a classroom assistant in the English conversation classes for 9 years at RCLC and Sylvia had supported pre-entry learners for the last 3 years. We also had 1 volunteer who used to work for Healthwatch Reading and another who later joined the board in 2023. In total we had 19 volunteers in 2023/2024

RCLC want to extend their heartfelt gratitude to each of our amazing volunteers for their incredible support and dedication. Their efforts in the classroom have made a significant impact, and RCLC truly appreciate their hard work and commitment. Their willingness to contribute their time and skills is invaluable, and it has greatly enriched our community. Thank you for making a difference and helping RCLC to achieve our goals.

Work Experience Students from The Holt Secondary School

In Summer 2024 RCLC opened its doors to a pair of talented work experience students from the Holt 6th Form in Wokingham. As an educational charity, we have always believed in the power of education to transform lives, and this exciting initiative reflects our commitment to providing opportunities for all, especially those from Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic, Refugee, and Asylum Seeker (BAMER) communities.

Our work experience program aims to offer valuable insights and hands-on experience to young individuals who are passionate about making a difference in the world. We understand that access to opportunities can sometimes be limited, especially for those facing various challenges, and we are dedicated to breaking down those barriers. The students joined us to support learners in the classrooms, administration, creche and policy research.

8. OUR PARTNERSHIPS

During the pandemic RCLC was a part of various local steering groups and forums which we continued to be a part of following the pandemic. Some of these partnerships have evolved so that they are a means of building new partnerships for funding, and sharing good practice and knowledge, as well as means informing health and wellbeing action plans of Reading Borough Council and health. These partnerships include attending many Reading Borough Council and VCS led (Reading Voluntary Action RVA) steering groups listed below;

- Reading Borough Council (RBC) Narrowing the Gap Meetings and CTG Meetings
- Mental Wellbeing Health Forum Meetings
- Health Inequalities
- Local Strategic Partnership meetings such the RBC Led Loneliness and Isolation Steering Group
- RBC Older Peoples Working Group Meetings (OPWG)
- Reading Voluntary Action (RVA) led Readifriends Meetings and Forums
- RVA led Volunteer Development Group Meetings
- Reading Voluntary Action (RVA) led VCS Leaders Meetings
- VCS Intelligence Network meeting (VIN)
- RBC led Physical Disability and Sensory Network Meetings (PDSN Meetings)
- RBC led Sanctuary Partner Forum Meetings (these replaced the Multi Agency Wellbeing Coordination Meeting - Ukrainian Support and Quarterly Refugee and Asylum Support Discussions for Syrian and Afghan nationals)

We are building strategic partnerships with voluntary, statutory and other organisations whose work affects our learners, to provide appropriate and stronger services and opportunities for them. We raise awareness of the issues and needs of the women we serve, wherever possible using their own voices. We sit on many panels influencing policy in Reading, and act as a source of expertise on the issues facing the women we serve for other organisations.

We have formal partnerships with RefugeeGroup, and Communicare, Christian Community Action (CCA), Starting Point (Mustard Tree), ReadiFood (Faith Christian Group), Reading Welfare Rights, and CIRDIC (Churches in Reading Drop In Centre). We have informal partnerships with Social Prescribers (Reading Voluntary Action), Reading Voluntary Action Schools and Parent Engagement Officer, ACRE, Berkshire Women's Aid, Alafia, Oxford Road FGM, City of Sanctuary, Welfare Rights, Citizens Advice Reading (CAR), Readifriends, Adviza, Indian Community Association (ICA), Pakistani Community Centre (PCC), Nepali groups such as SSFA, REGBA, Local CCGs, South Reading Patients Forum and Healthwatch

Through attendance at many meetings (RBC led and RVA led) we have been promoting the work of the Centre and this year engaged in new and exciting partnerships promoting the work of the Centre, increasing referrals both to RCLC and from RCLC as well as providing more opportunities for the women to engage in new activities since the pandemic. Please see below a list of the regular meetings and panels RCLC contributes to locally over 2023/2024 in addition to the above listed RBC and VCS led ones.

- Reading Integration Board (RIB) Health Inequalities
- Quarterly subcontractor's meetings with New Directions
- New Directions led Reading ESOL Providers Network
- Working in partnership with GPs meeting (social prescribing, hosted by Reading Voluntary Action)
- RAN (Reading Advice Network) meetings
- CPAR Partnership Meetings (Research project with Alliance for Cohesion and Racial Equality, Reading Voluntary Action, RCLC, RBC)
- CareWell Research Project Meetings (University of Reading, Refugee Support Group)
- Migrant Women's Voices and Sanctuary Conference Meetings (Reading University, Refugee Support Group)
- Berks Oxford and Bucks (BOB) VCS Health Alliance Meetings

DEVELOPING NEW PARTNERSHIPS

NEW PROJECTS

Promoting friendships, Reducing Loneliness and Isolation: Engage Befriending and RCLC

RCLC successfully applied for the RBC Covid-19 Small Grant for £10,000 towards the RCLC Befriending Facilitator post and Reading Voluntary Action also gave £10,000 to RCLC from its Ageing Well Fund to match the RBC funding, to start the small befriending programme for a year. This new funding was to be used to fund a 2 day per week facilitator who would receive training on how to set up the befriending programme for RCLC through Engage Befriending (Mustard Tree). Mustard Tree would provide training to the newly recruited bilingual, female befriending volunteers. Regular trainings would be received through Engage.

However, in agreement with RBC, RCLC transferred this funding to Mustard Tree to utilise this funding towards their current Befriending Work focussing on minority ethnic befriending volunteers instead. This was because RCLC were successful with their Lottery Application which required setting up 2 new posts, in addition to a new IT Tutor post within the space of 6 months. Hence starting another new Befriending Project would have been very difficult to deliver in light of all of the other new posts.

Engage Befriending, in partnership with RCLC identified 15 learners who wanted to become Befriending Volunteers. The RCLC outreach workers supported them to complete their volunteer application forms to join Engage Befriending as bilingual befrienders. They also completed DBS checks and their Befriending Safeguarding training. At present we have 6 learners who are being matched to people for befriending.

Jelly Arts and RCLC

A new partnership project between Jelly Arts and RCLC started in the autumn of 2022. This involved a programme of eight sessions (six at RCLC and two at Jelly Arts in Broad Street Mall) teaching hand sewing techniques on scrap fabrics to create a small quilt. The course focused on building new friendships to reduce loneliness and isolation, as well as learn new sewing skills. A total of 7 learners attended this course in 2023. The sessions were drop ins, open to all ethnic minority women to come together, have a cup of tea and make friends whilst also produce a piece of artwork to display at RCLC. The course was funded by Reading Borough Council's Small Grants Programme.

Following on from this successful programme Jelly Arts received funding to start a new course in Autumn 2024. RCLC will be running another 10-week course with Jelly Arts which will look at heritage and stories from fabrics, knitting and crochet which learners will bring to the class. The classes will also take place at the Museum of English Rural Life (MERL) where the learners' work will be displayed in 2025.

Food for Families, Museum of English Rural Life (MERL) and RCLC

In partnership with Food 4 Families and MERL and following on from the successful gardening programme in Summer 2023 for 11 learners, RCLC ran a 5-week course linking health and wellbeing with gardening in the Summer 2024 term. A total of 9 learners completed this course. The aim of the project was for learners to

- Share knowledge about their favourite plants (from their country of origin) and how to grow them
- Growing and harvesting fresh English vegetables and herbs on a budget
- Growing flowers for picking and improving their mental and physical wellbeing
- Helping to care for The MERL garden and its wildlife.

REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER: 06442616 (England and Wales)
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1123017

Dadima's Walks, (Museum of English Rural Life (MERL) and RCLC.

RCLC are looking forward to a new project which will start in Autumn 2024 to develop a Chai and Chat group at the MERL where women will walk to the MERL and share stories over different teas and how they make them from their countries. This will be in partnership with another organisation called [Dadima's Countryside Walks](#)

9. READING BOROUGH COUNCIL COMMISSIONED WORK

Closing the Gap Overview (Reading Borough Council)

Closing the Gap (CTG), which was previously commissioned under the Narrowing the Gap II framework, is an established programme within Reading for the commissioning of services to:

- tackle poverty, discrimination and disadvantage.
- promote wellbeing; and
- support thriving communities.

CTG brings together funding from Public Health, Adult Social Care, Housing and Neighbourhoods and the Resources Directorate along with additional funding from the Clinical Commissioning Group to continue support for these causes and further the good work already undertaken to date. Tenders are invited from organisations to enable people in Reading to overcome disadvantage and achieve better outcomes which have been divided into three tender areas listed below;

- Outcome 1: To support people to get out and stay out of poverty
Indicative Funding £270,300 per annum
- Outcome 2: To build resilience, independence and wellbeing, connect people to support and focus on individual and community strengths
Indicative Funding £551,700 per annum
- Outcome 3: To invest in VCS infrastructure support
Indicative Funding £158,000 per annum

RCLC successfully applied in partnership with 6 local charities Communicare, Christian Community Action (CCA), Starting Point (Mustard Tree), ReadiFood (Faith Christian Group), Reading Welfare Rights, and CIRDIC (Churches in Reading Drop In Centre) for a partnership tender for outcome 1, and were successful.

RCLC also applied in partnership with Refugee Support Group for outcome 2 and were also successful with this tender, focusing on work with refugee, migrant and asylum-seeking families in Reading. These new 3 year partnerships started in November 2022 and will end in Nov 2025.

Since this partnership was forged, we have delivered the following under each of the 2 outcomes. The funding from both outcomes contributes to the core work of the Centre. The numbers listed below are those learners and women funded through RBC funding.

Outcome 1 (over 4 quarters Year 1 Nov 2022-Jul 2024)

- 600 women provided with advice and outreach by Reading Community Learning Centre per year (our target is 250 per year)
- 246 women attended courses at RCLC (our target is 102 per year)
- 42 children accessing the creche at the Reading Community Learning Centre (our target is 18 children per year)

Outcome 2 (over 4 quarters Year 1 Nov 2022-July 2024)

- 121 Elderly Pakistani and Indian women with pre-existing health conditions to complete the online seated yoga class per year (our target is 30 per year)
- 93 Elderly Nepali women to complete the ESOL Skills 4 Health course per year (our target is 30 per year)
- 1,015 Number of BAME women that have received outreach support and IAG (our target is 45 per month)

As can be seen from the above figures, RCLC has already reached the majority of its yearly targets before even adding the figures for the fourth quarter which will cover the months Sep- Nov 2024 for the end of year 2.

New Directions College

RCLC was in a 2-year partnership with New Directions College (ND). As a subcontractor for New Directions, we have delivered non accredited learning programmes for 120 migrant ethnic minority women over the academic year 2022/2023.

The funding RCLC received was from the Neighbourhood Learning In Deprived Communities (NLDC Fund) which supports local Voluntary and other third sector organisations to develop their capacity to deliver learning opportunities for the residents of disadvantaged neighbourhoods. RCLC engages with some of the most vulnerable learners from Reading and were commissioned by New Directions College to continue to successfully widen participation, engage learners who were traditionally hardest to reach, and promoting lifelong learning. In the academic year 2022/2023 RCLC achieved its target of 120 learners

Our contract with New Directions College came to an end at the end of Summer 2023 because of a change in government focus for these funds. However, from Spring 2023 RCLC was given new funding as part of the New Directions Multiply Project to run ESOL embedded maths classes for our learners. This new 10-week course has been part of our core programme of classes since Spring 2023. The funding for this project will come to an end in Dec 2024. The ESOL for Everyday Maths course aims to develop the numeracy skills of improvers ESOL learners and to build their confidence in recognising and using numbers in their everyday lives. The course covers important numeracy skills such as;

- Maths for cooking
- Maths for understanding simple bills
- Maths for shopping
- Helping children with maths
- Simple budgeting
- Maths to read transport timetables and buying tickets

As part of this partnership, RCLC reported on the courses being delivered with subcontractor's reports every month, had quarterly review meetings, attended New Directions College trainings, and had quality review meetings which included observations of teaching and learning. In addition they looked at all of our teaching paperwork, CPD, meeting agendas, safeguarding, prevent, RCLC Business plan and learning and induction paperwork. New Directions were very happy with our quality checks and assessments and have no recommendations regarding our quality. In the academic year 2023/2024 a total of 24 learners have completed this course

New Directions College (ND) will also be continuing this partnership by continuing to use the Centre as one of their community teaching venues. This academic year they hired the classroom on Tuesdays and Thursdays and will continue with this format into 2024/2025. Not only will this generate some additional rental income for the centre but also provide in house progression opportunities for RCLC Learners onto accredited courses.

10. RCLC AND RESEARCH PROJECTS

We aim to influence policy and service development across Reading, by advocating for our learners, and wherever possible supporting them to voice their concerns and ideas to agencies and organisations directly. Over this past year we have worked with researchers, including at universities, on the issues and barriers faced by ethnic minority and refugee women in our community. This year RCLC have taken part in the following research project listed below which will end in Nov 2024.

CareWell Research Project

This 2-year research project is in partnership with The University of Reading (UoR) and RefugeeSupport Group. RCLC has employed 3 community researchers with lived experience of migration and/or seeking sanctuary as a refugee or asylum seeker to find out about the care experiences of families who have relatives in different countries and how caring responsibilities affect their wellbeing and opportunities for education, employment, social activities. We also wanted to find out about how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected families with their caring responsibilities and accessing services. The three researchers have just completed their interviews of families both here and abroad, and the analysis of this data is taking place. In addition to these interviews with 9 families, two of our RCLC staff who care for their own families both here and abroad have also been interviewed.

Over 2023/2024 the interviews have been transcribed and translated for data analysis. In June 2024 RCLC were proud to have been part of the interdisciplinary symposium which aimed to explore the relationship between migration, care and intersecting inequalities within the post-pandemic geopolitical landscape of immobility regimes, crisis-driven displacement, care deficits and ageing populations. The symposium reflected on how paid and unpaid caring arrangements are shaped by intersecting inequalities in diverse migration and transnational contexts. Paper and plenaries addressed issues of caring practices across the life course, intersectionality and inequalities in access to formal care and social protection globally. These highly politicised and emotive issues pose key challenges and dilemmas for policymakers, practitioners and family members, as well as researchers and academics interested in transnational migration, care and social protection.

11. REMOVING BARRIERS TO LEARNING

To achieve our strategic objective that focuses on removing barriers to learning, we offer excellent learner support and crèche facilities.

Learner and non-learner Information, Advice and Support

The Centre provides hands-on support, advice and encouragement, as many of the people we work with face difficulties that go well beyond their learning needs. Several of our learners have been through very traumatic experiences due to war or becoming refugees or are isolated from their families. The Centre is often seen as a first port of call for help by learners and others with a wide variety of problems and difficulties including accessing benefits, experiencing domestic violence, and dealing with immigration issues. Dealing with a complex society like ours is daunting for women with few language skills and little experience outside the home, or for those who have been traumatised by their current situation or recent history. For many women a simple referral to another agency is not enough. This work has become even more important during the Cost-of-Living Crisis.

This year our informal drop-in sessions have been mostly face to face (70%) and through telephone calls (27% and 3% through emails). RCLC has continued supporting women to access local services and getting expert help when they needed it, e.g., by making appointments, acting as a link between the user and the service, explaining what letters or forms are about, befriending telephone calls, translating, giving vital health information and sometimes acting as an advocate for a vulnerable user. Our evaluation work shows that the Centre's work breaks down isolation of the women and their families and helps them link into the wider community. In addition, there is evidence from the literature on global maternal literacy that shows that mothers who can speak, read and write in the language of the country they live in have healthier children who are more able to thrive in education themselves. Around 30-40% of our learners require additional support.

Building on the Centre's current support work with around 70 - 90 vulnerable ethnic minority women per month, RCLC applied and successfully received grant funding from The National Lottery for an additional Outreach Worker/ Social Prescriber to employ a new member of staff for 14 hours per week to offer a listening ear and active signposting and referral service to those who with less extreme mental health issues, especially those requiring weekly support calls. This released the current outreach and support worker to further develop work with people, mainly women, with more extreme examples of stress, depression, and mental ill health from February 2023. By adding a new member of staff to the team we were able to engage with double the number of women per month (as can be seen from our data). The support for clients consisted of:

- Information, advice and guidance on progression, RCLC Courses, Covid, vaccines, accessing health care services, identifying and supporting women to get vaccinations
- Providing Information and supporting them to access services such as food parcels, benefits, housing, clothes for their children, mental and physical health support from the NHS and direct referrals to our partner organisations part of the CTG Contract.
- Translation support, form filling, supporting refugees and asylum seekers based in the local hotels and accompanying learners to appointments.
- In house referrals to CommuniCare, who as part of the partnership have a weekly benefit surgery at RCLC on Tuesdays
- Referrals to Reading Voluntary Action Social Prescribers; and

- Providing mental health support over the phone by our trained mental health first aider and referring learners onto Talking Therapies, Adult Social Care, Together (an outreach service for refugees and asylum seekers and the Intercultural Psychological Clinic.

Over the academic year 2023/2024 RCLC has referred learners and non- learners to the following organisations;

- 109 women to CommuniCare
- 22 women to NHS Health Check Service
- 12 women to Workers Education Association (WEA)
- 8 women to Together Outreach
- 7 women to Readifood
- 3 Mustard Tree
- 2 New Directions College
- 3 women to RVA Social Prescribers
- 3 women to Talking Therapies
- 1 woman to RBC Social Services
- 1 woman to Reading Welfare Rights
- 1 woman to Refugee Support Group (RSG)
- Other referrals were made to Adviza, Age Uk, Mencap, the local Mosque on Oxford Rd, NHS 111, MacMillan Cancer, Newbury College and SmartWorks

The largest number of referrals were made to RCLC (42%) as the majority of women were interested in courses or needed further support and advice from RCLC.

A total of 1416 information, advice and guidance sessions for women were carried out at the Centre over the academic year 2023/2024. Out of these women 39% of these were not RCLC learners and had been referred to us from friends, neighbours or other organisations and our partners.

New learners mostly come to the centre through word of mouth from a friend, relative, previous learner, a relative or through RCLC outreach work. Around 174 women came to the Centre through this route. Refugee Support Group has been our largest referrer this year (last year it was Care 4 Calais), referring 68 women over the academic year 2023/2024 to RCLC. Other referrals to RCLC over the academic year are listed below;

- 66 women were referred by Job Centre Plus
- 53 women were referred by Care 4 Calais
- 50 women were referred by the Pakistani Community Centre (PCC)
- 29 women were referred by RVA Social Prescribers
- 17 women were referred by Reading Borough Council
- 24 women were referred by RBC Adult Care and Social Services
- 7 women were referred by Reading College
- 7 women were referred by WEA
- 6 women were referred by CommuniCare
- 3 women were referred by Together Outreach
- 2 women were referred by New Directions College
- 2 Women were referred by Berkshire Women's Aid

Other referrals were from Age UK Berkshire, Launchpad, Macmillan Cancer, Royal Berkshire Hospital, the Walk in Health Centre, Thames Valley Police, Brighter Future's for Children, Ukrainian Community Centre, Networking events and local schools.

Responding to learners' mental health needs

In response to the learner feedback and an increase in mental health concerns during the pandemic, RCLC in partnership with Compass Recovery College and our trained mental health tutor, delivered a termly programme of health and wellbeing courses in 2022-23.

Following these successful workshops, RCLC developed their own mental and physical wellbeing courses with graded language so that women with low levels of English could still understand, follow and implement the simple wellbeing techniques they were taught in class. These five-week courses, called Wellbeing Courses were taught every term and had simple yoga sessions built into each lesson. A total of 33 women completed these courses from Autumn 2023- Summer 2024

Crèche

Alongside its other activities, the Centre provides a crèche which offers important support for children from 4 months to 4 years old.

Many of these children have had little social contact outside their family and almost all have no English language when they arrive. Some are unfamiliar with toys or have no experience of playing with other children. Others are living in, or have already lived through, extremely difficult circumstances, including as refugees or asylum seekers in hotels.

Through the crèche, children learn to speak English, to be confident separated from their mothers, and to take part in educational play which stimulates social, emotional, physical and intellectual development, in the care of a multicultural team of well-trained, loving workers. The crèche also helps to develop language skills and the ability to socialise and provides informal parenting advice and support. This provides crucial school readiness skills.

We employ two crèche workers and a crèche supervisor. In the academic year 2023/2024, 103 children were able to access the creche.

Evaluations from parents/ carers of children in the creche showed that;

- 100% of the children were very happy in the creche and thought that the creche was excellent.
- 93% of the parents thought that their child had learnt new things and that their knowledge had improved.
- 83% said that the care their child received in the creche was excellent whilst 17% said it was good.
- 100% of the parents/ carers thought that their children were safe in the creche.
- 66% found that the information they received on their child's development in the creche was excellent and 34% said it was good.

RCLC would like to say a huge thank you to Ellen Law (RCLC Carewell Project Researcher) and her wonderful group, The HongKongers Youth Team (aged 11-17) who as part of their charitable Christmas activities collected and donated some beautiful presents for the children in the RCLC Creche in November 2023.

Thank you so much from all the children and parents in the crèche for your generous gifts for the festive period. We had some presents left over so we will be giving some more presents out to the children in Nov 2024 as well.

12. MAINTENANCE OF THE CENTRE

The Centre continues to be a comfortable and well-maintained environment for learners to attend. We have ensured that our IT equipment and software is kept up-to-date and we maintain robust security software. Considerable funds have been spent on maintaining security, fire equipment and alarms, safety lighting, electrical testing and gas heating maintenance in the building.

The Centre has been fully open for the academic year 2023/2024 as we have gone back to pre-pandemic opening times and regulations. Maintenance of the building includes the annual checks for;

- fire alarms and carbon monoxide alarms
- PAT testing and electrics
- emergency lighting
- fire extinguishers
- cleaning
- heaters, carbon monoxide alarms and boiler
- computer equipment, software, back up clouds and virus protection.
- Covid-19 hand sanitisers, and lateral flow tests for staff and volunteers

As a result of the changing government guidelines regarding safe working and learning environments, the robust Covid-19 Risk register was updated and reviewed before the start of each term. All staff and volunteers also receive inductions on the risk register before the start of each term. Learners coming into the Centre were and still are given inductions on how to keep themselves and others safe at the Centre.

Since the charity SmartWorks, moved out to new premises across the road we have not rented out the top floor. Due to the increase in the number of learners wanting face to face classes and learner numbers increasing to a record high this year we added an extra English intermediate conversation class, a maths class and a mental health and wellbeing class, and moved the sewing class to the top floor so that we could free up the accessible ground floor classroom for room hire for New Directions College. The front room on the top floor has been converted into the outreach office for staff and the smallest office on the top floor is used by CommuniCare and Together Outreach for weekly benefit advice and mental health support surgeries.

From Dec 2022, RCLC also gained a new landlord, Richard Sharples, who is really interested in our charity work and has visited a couple of times. We had an increase in rent from £36,000 per annum to £39,600 per annum. We have a break clause in the summer of 2026 and a rent review in January 2027.

ProvenWorks and RCLC

In Summer 2024, the incredible staff of ProvenWorks gave up their time and energy on one of the hottest days of the year in August, to paint our creche and one classroom at RCLC. The enthusiastic, strong team of 14 led by their CEO Joel, rolled up their sleeves and freshened up the centre to make it bright and welcoming. Their enthusiasm and commitment to giving back to the community have truly made a difference and has enabled the charity to use the funding which they would have spent on labour and materials on providing free classes for migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women. RCLC would like to say a big thank you to everyone who participated in this wonderful initiative.

Other repairs over 2023/2024

- The gutters at the front of the building were fixed in Mar 2024.
- The water cylinder had to be replaced at RCLC. This cost £1674. The landlord kindly contributed £500 towards this cost.
- Verisure are our new security alarm providers this service includes
 - video doorbell,
 - door sensor alarms, monitored front door and security if we are broken into
 - Direct connection to the police and 24 hours service support
 - Wi-Fi and wireless systems (we will have a sim card, app and a battery powered system) so if we have a power cut or our wifi goes down the security systems will still work
 - Panic alarms

13. STAFFING

During 2023/2024 we continued to employ a Manager who has worked tirelessly to manage the team and, with the Trustees, promote and develop the work of the Centre and build new partnerships. In addition, we now employ two part-time Outreach Workers, Shaheen Kausar and our newest addition to the team, Noreen Khan (this post is funded by the National Lottery) whose work has been invaluable in spreading the word about our service, supporting women on the phone and face to face with advice and guidance including referrals and signposting. Noreen sadly had to resign due to family commitments, but we are pleased to welcome our new outreach worker, Rohama Kanwal to the team in June 2024. Rohama has a background of working for local charities giving advice and guidance to vulnerable people in the community. We also employ a part-time reception worker and data administrator who records, inputs and analyses our learner data in addition to giving advice and guidance to new learners.

We currently employ 7 sessional tutors: a sewing tutor (for the sewing beginners and improvers classes), one beauty tutor (for Looking Good Feeling Good), three English tutors (one of them also teaches the wellbeing course), one IT Tutor and ESOL with Maths tutor and 1 online seated yoga tutor. We sadly lost one of our long-standing English Conversation tutors in Dec 2023 as she found new employment, but we are thrilled to be welcoming her back to the Centre again in Autumn 2024. She has a wealth of experience and knowledge in teaching ESOL and supporting learners.

In the summer of 2024, our current creche supervisor, Premalatha Sudarshan sadly handed in her resignation, so that she could spend more time caring for her parents. She has been with the Centre since 2015. She will continue to be a bank crèche worker to support the Centre until we have found a replacement. We also welcomed a new creche worker to the Centre in the summer of 2024, Sumera Rashid who will add invaluable support to the creche team. At present we employ 3 creche workers and will have Premalatha as a bank creche worker.

14. FINANCIAL REVIEW

Despite continuing to keep a tight control over our expenditure during the year, we are reporting a net expenditure in the region of £27,000 for 2023/24 (£57,000 for 2022/23). We have been able to make use of reserves such as the “DCLG 2022-24” funds to meet the shortfall, however this reserve has now been completely used up. See the “Reserves Policy” section below for further details.

The Centre’s income was £198,000 in 2023/24, which is significantly higher than the £151,000 income recorded in 2022/23. Despite this, our costs have also increased to £225,000 in 2023/24 from £208,000 in 2022/23. Most significantly, staff pay has increased due to increased hours worked and pay increases being awarded where appropriate, e.g. in line with National Living Wage levels and to ensure the pay we offer is fair and competitive. The rent for our town centre premises is high, but the learners need to be able to reach the Centre using one bus or walking, as many of them need to pick up their children from school after classes. We continue look for shared, less expensive premises.

While we secured some new funding from National Lottery and Reading Borough Council during Summer 2022, which greatly improved the Centre’s financial security, we are aware of the need to diversify our funding. The current climate in the charitable sector is extremely challenging. However, we have tirelessly worked on funding applications during 2024 so far and we have been successful with some of these.

We are continuing to work to diversify our income into 2024/25 and beyond. Our Business Development Manager, a position paid for by our National Lottery funding, unfortunately left in August 2024, however we are very grateful to have been able to agree an extended period for this project with National Lottery. We have also been able to negotiate a 10% variance on our original grant, which is an enormous help to us.

Income and expenditure figures are monitored monthly against the annual budget and reviewed by the Board at each meeting. We produce detailed cash flow forecasts every month, as we are aware of the importance of closely monitoring our financial position. When contracts are due for review, every effort is made to ensure services are purchased from the most cost-effective source.

Reading Borough Council

Between 2018/19 and 2021/22, funding from RBC consisted of two strands of commissioned work under employment and adult social care themes. From November 2022, the basis of our contracts with RBC changed, with two new strands of commissioned work. These have themes of supporting people to get out and stay out of poverty; build resilience, independence and wellbeing; connect people to support; and focus on individual and community strengths. This money has and will continue to provide a valuable base, as it makes a substantial contribution towards our costs.

National Lottery

Funding from National Lottery started in December 2022 and was to continue for two years, although we have recently agreed an extension for some of this funding into summer 2025.

This funding contributes towards the costs of the Centre’s rent, utilities and existing staff. In addition to this, the funds provide for an additional part time Community Outreach Worker, a part time Business Development Manager and a Strategic Consultant.

New Directions

Throughout 2022/23, we maintained our partnership work with New Directions and continued to receive Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities (NLDC) funding from them until July 2023. Our core programme of first steps courses was part funded by New Directions for those learners who met the enrolment eligibility criteria and completed the course.

Other Income

The Centre received other income in the form of room hires and regular donations. We also continue to charge learners a small enrolment fee for each course and for the use of places in the crèche.

Some of our other sources of income received during 2023/24 have been given below:

- Garfield Weston provided unrestricted funding, which went towards salaries.
- Healthwatch provided unrestricted funding, which went towards salaries for staff concerned with supporting learners to express their views.
- A WEA Branch donation provided funds towards English Conversation classes.
- The Multiply Project (funded by Reading Borough Council and New Directions) provided funds for the Everyday Maths courses.
- The Carewell Research project funded the costs of peer researchers.

As in previous years, other funding applications were made but were unsuccessful.

Reserves Policy

The Board has examined the Charity Commission's requirements for reserves in the light of the main risks to the organisation. Originally, the Board had established a policy whereby the unrestricted funds not committed or invested in tangible assets would be held to cover three months' running costs, which with the current rent and salary levels now requires an amount of £59,000 to be held. We have been able to reach this level in the General Reserve.

Funds are also being held in designated reserves as follows:

- One has been set up for the designated purpose of staff costs (£15,000). We have been able to keep this at the same level as at 31 March 2023 as the majority of our staff costs are expected to be covered by restricted funds in 2024/25.
- A premises reserve (£19,500) has also been set up to cover premises costs for 2024/25 that are not covered by restricted or other designated funds. This is unchanged since 31 March 2023.
- Finally, when unspent funding from DCLG was moved to unrestricted funds in August 2020, the Board decided to spread this funding over the following three years rather than spend it all during 2021/22. A reserve of £48,000 was set up to reflect the portion of these funds we are planning to spend in 2022/23 and 2023/24. Around half of this was spent during 2022/23, leaving £22,275 at 31 March 2023. The rest of this reserve was spent during 2023/24.

Report of the Trustees and
Unaudited Financial Statements
for the year ended 31 March 2024
for
Reading Community Learning Centre Ltd

Report of the trustees, incorporating a strategic report, approved by order of the Board of Trustees, as the company directors on 29 October 2024 and signed on the Board's behalf by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K. Sarah del Tufo". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

K. Sarah del Tufo (Chair of the Board of Trustees)



**CHARITY COMMISSION
 FOR ENGLAND AND WALES**

**Independent examiner's report on
 the accounts**

Section A Independent Examiner's Report

**Report to the trustees/
 members of** Reading Community Learning Centre

On accounts for the year ended	31 st March 2024	Charity no	1123017

Set out on pages 1-2

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 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act, and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's statement My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. 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 seeking 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 no opinion is 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.

Independent examiner's statement In connection with my examination, no material matters have come to my attention which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect,:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:  **Date:** 16th October 2024

Name: Rachel Eden

Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any): FCMA (Chartered Institute of Management Accountants)

Address: Holy Brook Associates, Curious Lounge, 1st Floor, Pinnacle Building,
Tudor Road, Reading, England,
RG1 1NH

Section B Disclosure

NONE

REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER: 06442616 (England and Wales)
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1123017

Unaudited Financial Statements
for the year ended 31 March 2024
for
Reading Community Learning Centre Ltd

Statement of Financial Activities
(Incorporating an Income and Expenditure Account)
for the year ended 31 March 2024

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2024 Total Funds £	2023 Total Funds £
INCOME FROM					
Charitable activities					
	2				
Grants – Core programme		15,000	165,236	180,236	125,521
Grants – Research projects		-	-	-	13,388
4,010 - 4,010 4,008 Courses		4,010	-	4,010	4,008
Total charitable activities		19,010	165,236	184,246	142,917
Donations and legacies		5,652	-	5,652	3,768
Other income	3	7,711	-	7,711	4,263
Total income		32,373	165,236	197,609	150,949
EXPENDITURE ON					
Charitable activities					
Building costs		27,693	40,734	68,427	64,719
Office costs		5,955	1,044	6,999	5,439
Programme costs		14,082	40,120	54,202	57,534
Staffing		9,051	85,925	94,976	79,909
Independent examination		504	-	504	480
Total expenditure		57,284	167,823	225,107	208,081
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)		(24,911)	(2,587)	(27,498)	(57,132)
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		119,968	49,799	169,766	226,897
Movements between restricted and unrestricted funds		1,240	(1,240)	-	-
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		96,297	45,971	142,268	169,764

Balance Sheet
at 31 March 2024

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2024 Total Funds £	2023 Total Funds £
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible assets	8	3,871	-	3,871	6,592
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	9	6,411	5,388	11,799	1,190
Cash at bank		94,073	80,347	174,419	196,554
Total current assets		100,484	85,735	186,218	197,744
CREDITORS					
Amounts falling due within one year	10	(8,059)	(39,764)	(47,823)	(34,571)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		92,425	45,971	138,396	163,173
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		96,296	45,971	142,267	169,765
NET ASSETS		96,296	45,971	142,267	169,765
FUNDS	12				
Unrestricted funds				96,297	119,968
Restricted funds				45,971	49,797
TOTAL FUNDS				142,268	169,765

Balance Sheet
at 31 March 2024 – continued

The charitable company is entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 for the year ended 31 March 2024.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024 in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

The directors acknowledge their responsibility for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to charitable companies subject to the small companies' regime.

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on 29 October 2024 and were signed on its behalf by:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "K. Sarah del Tufo". The signature is written in a cursive style with some loops and flourishes.

K. Sarah del Tufo (Chair of the Board of Trustees)

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

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of preparing the financial statements

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

Pension costs and other post-retirement benefits

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

Going Concern

The board of trustees considers that the use of the going concern basis of accounting is appropriate because there are no material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the ability of the charity to continue as a going concern.

Income

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

Expenditure

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings, they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

Tangible fixed assets

Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life. In the year of acquisition, depreciation is recorded based on the number of months the asset is in service.

Improvements to property	Straight line over 1 year
Furniture, fixtures & fittings	25% reducing balance
Computer equipment	33% of cost

Taxation

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

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

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the board of trustees. Designated funds are unrestricted funds which have been allocated by the Board for particular purposes.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes. Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes.

Hire purchase and leasing commitments

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

2. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

Activity		2024	2023
		£	£
Grants	Core programme	180,236	125,521
- 13,388 Grants	Research projects	-	13,388
Registration fees	Courses	4,010	3,478
MHFA courses	Courses	-	530
		<u>184,246</u>	<u>142,917</u>

Grants received, included in the above, are as follows:

	2024	2023
	£	£
Reading Borough Council	40,000	38,104
New Directions (NLDC)	6,000	12,000
Multiply Project (RBC and NLDC)	5,607	-
WEA branch donation	5,000	-
Henry Smith	-	10,800
Garfield Weston	10,000	-
National Lottery	108,629	34,412
AB Charitable Trust	-	15,000
Healthwatch Reading	-	10,000
Rotary - Santa Fun Run	2,500	-
Gerald Palmer Eling Trust	2,500	-
CPAR Research Project- 600 Carewell Research Project- 12,788	-	600
Carewell Research Project	-	12,788
	<u>180,236</u>	<u>133,705</u>

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

3. OTHER INCOME

	2024	2023
	£	£
Room and facilities hire	5,581	3,648
Gain on disposal of laptops	30	420
Interest income	2,100	195
	7,711	4,263
	7,711	4,263

4. NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)

Net income / (expenditure) is slated after charging / (crediting):

	2024	2023
	£	£
Depreciation – owned assets	2,860	2,334
Other operating leases	759	825
Accounts and independent examination	504	480
	4,123	3,639
	4,123	3,639

5. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

During the year to 31 March 2024, two of the trustees were paid for work they did outside of their trustee duties.

Simran Aul received £795 (£530 2022/23) for teaching online seated exercises classes during the year. These costs were funded by Reading Borough Council "Closing the Gap" Outcome 2.

Raya Mohamed was paid £496 (£504 2022/23) for working in the creche during the year. This was to provide cover for regular creche staff. This was funded by Reading Borough Council "Closing the Gap" Outcome 1 and Garfield Weston.

During the year to 31 March 2023, Hemamalini Sundharajan was paid a total of £2,066 for her work as an outreach worker (£1,568) and as a researcher (£498). During year to 31 March 2024, Hemamalini resigned from her trustee role in November 2023 in order to take on a paid role as Administrator. There was no overlap between her roles as Trustee and Administrator.

Trustees' expenses

Simran Aul was reimbursed a total of £140 during the year ended 31 March 2024 (£102 2022/23). These expenses cover her monthly Zoom subscriptions, which are required for her to teach online seated exercise classes. These costs were funded by Reading Borough Council "Closing the Gap" Outcome 2.

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

6. STAFF COSTS

	2024	2023
	£	£
Wages and salaries	145,688	128,718
Social security costs	3,403	2,596
Other pension costs	3,090	3,524
	<u>152,181</u>	<u>134,838</u>

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

	2024	2023
Crèche	3	3
Tutor	7	7
Outreach and Support Worker	2	2
Manager	1	1
Administrator	1	1
	<u>14</u>	<u>14</u>

No member of staff was paid more than £60,000 in the year.

Key management personnel

The charity considers its key management personnel to comprise the trustees and Aisha Malik, the office manager.

7. FUNDING FROM DCLG CONTROLLING MIGRATION

During the year 2020/21, the charity received a grant of £38,340 from DCLG Controlling Migration and also had carried forward grant of £45,252 from 2019/20. Some of this funding was used towards the running costs of the Centre during 2020/21, however it was clear that there would be an underspend of this grant. It was confirmed in August 2020 that the remaining grant could be transferred to unrestricted funds and used towards the running costs of the Centre.

£48,000 of the DCLG underspend was put in a designated reserve titled "DCLG (2022-24)" and this reserve was used towards the Centre's running costs for years 2022/23 and 2023/24. As at 31 March 2024, this reserve has been fully spent.

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

8. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Improvements to property £	Furniture, fixtures & fittings £	Computer & other equipment £	Totals £
COST				
At 1 April 2023	9,224	4,919	12,576	26,719
Additions	-	139	-	139
Disposals	-	(48)	-	(48)
At 31 March 2024	9,224	5,010	12,576	26,810
DEPRECIATION				
At 1 April 2023	9,224	3,610	7,293	20,127
Disposals	-	(48)	-	(48)
Charge for year	-	331	2,529	2,860
At 31 March 2024	9,224	3,892	9,823	22,939
NET BOOK VALUE				
At 31 March 2024	-	1,118	2,753	3,871
At 31 March 2023	-	1,310	5,283	6,592

9. DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2024 £	2023 £
Trade debtors	456	698
11,343 491 Prepayments	11,343	491
	11,799	1,190

10. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE TO WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2024 £	2023 £
Social security and other taxes	1,699	1,919
Other creditors	14,664	12,481
Deferred Income	29,337	18,608
Accrued expenses	2,123	1,563
	47,823	34,571

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

11. LEASING AGREEMENTS

Minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases fall due as follows:

	2024	2023
	£	£
Within one year	39,600	39,600
Between one and five years	72,600	112,200
	<u>112,200</u>	<u>151,800</u>

12. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

	At 01/04/2023	Net movement in funds	Transfer between funds	At 31/03/2024
	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds				
General Fund	7,193	(3,454)	(942)	2,797
General Reserve	56,000	-	3,000	59,000
Designated Reserve (Staffing)	15,000	-	-	15,000
Designated Reserve (Premises)	19,500	-	-	19,500
Designated Reserve (DCLG 2024-24)	22,275	(21,457)	(817)	-
	<u>119,968</u>	<u>(24,911)</u>	<u>1,240</u>	<u>96,297</u>
Restricted funds				
Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities	5,197	(5,197)	-	-
111111RBC – Outreach & Community Education (Lot 12.1)	11,769	(10,770)	(999)	-
RBC – Closing the Gap Outcome 1	(3,018)	1,430	-	(1,589)
RBC – Closing the Gap Outcome 2	5,013	1,458	-	6,472
RBC and New Directions – Multiply Project	1,481	(2,498)	-	(1,017)
National Lottery	6,235	33,486	-	39,721
1Healthwatch	10,000	(10,000)	-	-
Carewell Research Project	11,850	(9,467)	-	2,384
MHFA courses	1,270	(1,029)	(241)	-
WEA branch donation	-	-	-	-
	<u>49,798</u>	<u>(2,587)</u>	<u>(1,240)</u>	<u>45,971</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>169,766</u>	<u>(27,498)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>142,268</u>

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

12. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS – continued

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

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General Fund	32,373	(35,827)	(3,454)
Designated Reserve (DCLG 2022-24)	-	(21,457)	(21,457)
	<u>32,373</u>	<u>(57,284)</u>	<u>(24,911)</u>
Restricted funds			
Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities	6,000	(11,197)	(5,197)
RBC – Outreach & Community Education (Lot 12.1)	-	(10,770)	(10,770)
RBC – Closing the Gap Outcome 1	25,000	(23,570)	1,430
RBC – Closing the Gap Outcome 2	15,000	(13,542)	1,458
RBC and New Directions – Multiply Project	5,607	(8,105)	(2,498)
National Lottery	108,629	(75,143)	33,486
Healthwatch	-	(10,000)	(10,000)
Carewell Research Project	-	(9,467)	(9,467)
MHFA courses	-	(1,029)	(1,029)
WEA branch donation 5,000 (5,000)-	5,000	(5,000)	-
Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities 6,000 (11,197) (5,197) RBC – Outreach & Community Education (Lot 12.1)- (10,770) (10,770) RBC – Closing the Gap Outcome 1 25,000 (23,570) 1,430 RBC – Closing the Gap Outcome 2 15,000 (13,542) 1,458 RBC and New Directions – Multiply Project 5,607 (8,105) (2,498) WEA branch donation	<u>165,236</u>	<u>(167,823)</u>	<u>(2,587)</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u><u>197,609</u></u>	<u><u>(225,107)</u></u>	<u><u>(27,498)</u></u>

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

12. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS – continued**2022/23 Comparatives for movement in funds**

	At 01/04/2022	Net movement in funds	Transfer between funds	At 31/03/2023
	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds				
General Fund	12,511	(23,880)	18,562	7,193
General Reserve	55,000	-	1,000	56,000
Designated Reserve (Staffing)	33,000	-	(18,000)	15,000
Designated Reserve (Premises)	19,500	-	-	19,500
Designated Reserve (DCLG 2022-24)	48,000	(25,725)	-	22,275
	168,011	(49,606)	1,562	119,968
Restricted funds				
Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities	-	5,197	-	5,197
RBC – Narrowing the Gap (Lot 1.3)	11,331	(10,849)	(482)	-
RBC – Outreach & Community Education (Lot 12.1)	29,260	(17,339)	(151)	11,769
RBC – Closing the Gap Outcome 1	-	(3,018)	-	(3,018)
RBC – Closing the Gap Outcome 2	-	5,013	-	5,013
RBC and New Directions – Multiply Project	-	1,481	-	1,481
National Lottery	-	6,235	-	6,235
Henry Smith	5,145	(5,144)	-	-
Earley Charity	1,773	(1,773)	-	-
BWCCG and RVA grants	3,971	(3,571)	(400)	-
Compass Recovery College	-	-	-	-
Jelly Arts	-	-	-	-
Healthwatch	-	10,000	-	10,000
CPAR Research Project	315	214	(529)	-
Carewell Research Project	3,721	8,129	-	11,850
MHFA courses	3,370	(2,100)	-	1,270
	58,886	(7,526)	(1,562)	49,798
TOTAL FUNDS	226,898	(57,132)	-	169,766

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

12. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS – continued

2022/23 comparative net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General Fund	27,110	(50,990)	(23,880)
Designated Reserve (SmartWorks)	-	(25,725)	(25,725)
	27,110	(76,715)	(49,606)
Restricted funds			
Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities	12,000	(6,803)	5,197
RBC – Narrowing the Gap (Lot 1.3)	13,709	(24,558)	(10,849)
RBC – Outreach & Community Education (Lot 12.1)	7,729	(25,068)	(17,339)
RBC – Closing the Gap Outcome 1	10,417	(13,435)	(3,018)
RBC – Closing the Gap Outcome 2	6,250	(1,237)	5,013
RBC and New Directions – Multiply Project	2,804	(1,323)	1,481
National Lottery	34,412	(28,178)	6,235
Henry Smith	10,800	(15,944)	(5,144)
Earley Charity	-	(1,773)	(1,773)
CWCCG and RVA grants	-	(3,571)	(3,571)
Compass Recovery College	1,000	(1,000)	-
Jelly Arts	800	(800)	-
Healthwatch	10,000	-	10,000
CPAR Research Project	600	(386)	214
Carewell Research Project	12,788	(4,659)	8,129
MHFA courses	530	(2,631)	(2,100)
	123,839	(131,365)	(7,526)
TOTAL FUNDS	150,949	(208,081)	(57,132)

There were a number of transfers between funds during the year. All were approved by the trustees and, where appropriate, the funder. More details are given below.

General Reserve

The Board has set aside £59,000 in order to cover three months' working capital requirements and three months' rent payments. This is in line with the Centre's reserving policy.

Designated Reserve (Staffing)

An amount of £15,000 has been set aside from the General Fund to cover future staffing costs. We have been able to keep this reserve at the same level as at 31 March 2023 as the majority of our staff salaries are covered by restricted funds.

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

12. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS – continued

Designated Reserve (Premises)

An amount of £19,500 has been put aside to cover general premises costs for 2024/25 that are not covered by restricted funds. We have been able to keep this reserve at the same level as at 31 March 2023 as the majority of our rent (the most significant building cost) is covered by restricted funds.

Designated Reserve (DCLG 2022-24)

During the year to 31 March 2021 we were allowed to take underspent restricted funds of around £62,500 from DCLG into unrestricted funds, with the permission of DCLG. The Board decided to spread this unrestricted funding over a number of years rather than spend it all during 2021/22. A designated reserve of £48,000 called "DCLG 2022-24" was set up to use during financial years 2022/23 and 2023/24. We finished using this reserve in 2023/24 as planned.

13. RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

There are no related party transactions for the year ended 31 March 2024.