

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 2023
for
Reading Community Learning Centre Ltd

READING COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTRE LTD

CONTENTS

1. Charity Information	Page 3
2. Structure, Governance and Management	Page 4
3. Objectives and Activities	Page 5
4. The Work of the Centre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant Activities April 2022 - Mar 2023 • Partnership Work Following the Pandemic • Increased Support Needs & Cost Of Living Crisis 	Page 9
5. Course Programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core Programmes 2022/2023 • Syrian, Afghan and Ukrainian Refugees • Improving Citizen Engagement • Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) • Learner Engagement • Volunteers 	Page 13
6. Achievement and Performance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring and Evaluation • Learner Statistics 	Page 17
7. Quality Assurance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner Feedback and Outcomes – The Difference Our Work Makes • Learner Progression • Learner Evaluation 	Page 19
8. Our Partnerships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing new partnerships • Future partnerships 	Page 22
9. Reading Borough Council Commissioned Work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closing The Gap (CTG) • New Directions 	Page 25
10. RCLC and Research Projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Participatory Action Research Project (CPAR) • CareWell Research Project • New Research Project: Migrant Voices 	Page 28
11. Removing Barriers to Learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner Support • Creche 	Page 31
12. Maintenance of the Centre	Page 34
13. Staffing	Page 35
14. Financial Review	Page 36
15. Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2023	Page 41

1. CHARITY INFORMATION

Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

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 2023. 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
6442616 (England and Wales)

Registered Charity number
1123017

Registered office
94 London Street
Reading RG1 4SJ

Trustees

Clare Furneaux
Hemamalini Sundararajan
Jennifer Theron
Karen Rowland
Katharine Sarah del Tufo
Linda Smith
Lucy England
Parveen Brar - staff representative
Raya Mohamed
Rosie Chambers
Shahanaz Uddin - resigned 6/6/2022
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.

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 2023/2024. 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 Centre 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 Centre 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 Centre 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 2022-2023

The Board's plans for next year are outlined below;

Our 1-Year Strategic Plan

1. We will build financial resilience and continue to diversify funding.
The lasting financial impact of COVID-19 has heavily impacted the charity sector and our ability to generate income so we will need to be more creative than ever in raising funds that we need to deliver our vital work. We will:
 - a. continue to maintain tight control over expenditure throughout 2022/23;
 - b. recruit a part-time business development manager to diversify our funding and promote the Centre's work;
 - c. seek to agree our rental costs with our new landlord to enable us to budget effectively
 - d. build a new strategic vision for 2023-2025 to continue to grow the organisation.
2. We will respond to the urgent need to address isolation and focus on the mental health needs of learners. The COVID-19 crisis has had a devastating impact on ethnic minority migrant and refugee women already experiencing isolation and loneliness. We will address this by providing mental health support and we will:
 - a. recruit one dedicated social prescriber and outreach worker who is mental health first aid trained.

3. To build closer collaboration with partner organisations to help the women we support recover from the crisis. We will:
 - a. Continue to connect and engage with our partner organisations
 - b. Ensure women are referred directly to partner organisations who can provide them with the support they need.
4. We will find the women who are most often invisible to other services and denied the support they need by offering them advice and signposting to other services. This has only been exacerbated by the lasting impact of the pandemic. We will therefore:
 - a. strengthen our existing outreach activity
 - b. recruit one new outreach worker to spread the word of our services at this critical time.
5. To continue to strengthen the Board of Trustees and recruit, if possible, an ethnic minority woman to the role of Chair.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 2023-25

1. To recruit a consultant to coordinate an organisational review in Autumn 2023. 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 newly-appointed 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.
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 our services for learners.
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.

REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER: 06442616 (England and Wales)

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1123017

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 2022/2023, we ran classes for 420 women from 36 different countries. A total of 874 women were supported with information, advice and guidance (IAG) with support varying from benefit support, filling in forms, making telephone calls, translation support to accompanying them to access services at the Centre from April 2022- Mar 2023. Out of these women 48% were not RCLC learners and had been referred to us from friends, neighbours or 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 2022

Thanks to grants 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:

- Reading Borough Council
- NLDC Grant from New Directions
- The National Lottery
- The DCLG Controlling Migration Grant
- The Henry Smith Charity
- Multiply Project Funding (Funded by New Directions)
- The AB Charitable Trust
- Public Health England for the CPAR Project
- The National Academy for Social Prescribing's 'Thriving Communities' fund (Wildbeing Project)

- The Earley Charity
- University of Reading (CareWell Research Project) and
- Rental income from WEA and New Directions

From April 2022 all of our core programme of classes were taught face to face and the creche was fully open from Monday to Friday essentially doubling our provision from the previous year due to increased demand to catch up on the waiting lists from the previous year. This face-to-face contact was vital as many ethnic minority women were isolated and vulnerable over the lockdown period.

RCLC continue 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 took weekly Covid tests. We taught the learners at the Centre not only how to order the test kits but how to use them if they needed them. However, from April 2022 the government stopped giving free test kits so RCLC bought them for the staff but could no longer give any to the learners.

Actions taken to incorporate safe teaching, learning and support at RCLC from April 2022:

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 term, all tutors had a training session, received the Covid-19 risk register training with revised Covid regulations and the online teaching guidelines training for RCLC. 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 at the Warehouse. Friendly phone chats were arranged once a week to support them to reduce loneliness and isolation. These calls provided the latest health information regarding the pandemic and in supporting them to access the services they needed as they were on the shielding list and housebound. 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 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

There is now increasing evidence about the levels of hidden poverty in the migrant and refugee communities, especially amongst Muslim communities, who make up around 60% of our learners. Many of the women we work with cannot access employment, and live in, or at risk of, poverty as a result, especially in the current crisis. For some this is a result of language, low skills, religious or cultural barriers, or due to caring responsibilities, a lack of flexible job opportunities, and low levels of confidence, skills, how they can access services to help improve their life chances and hence many live in, or at risk of, poverty as a result and work experience.

70% 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, 24% 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 also made an additional one-off payment to all staff in 2022/2023. Unlike most charities in the town, we have managed to retain our staff. 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.

Of the 420 women we supported with classes in 2022/2023: a third of our learners came from the 10% most deprived wards in Reading, 91% were unemployed and 24% of our learners are on benefits. However, it is important to remember acknowledge that 32% 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 the percentage on benefits should be much higher.

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.

REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER: 06442616 (England and Wales)

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1123017

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. Our experienced and qualified BAME 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. 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 2022 - 2023

In the academic year 2022/2023, 420 (an increase of 14% since last year) women completed our core programmes which for the first time since the pandemic were all taught face to face at RCLC.

Summer 2022

- English Conversation Pre-Entry and Beginners
- English Conversation Improvers and Intermediate
- English Reading and Writing Beginners
- English Reading and Writing Improvers
- Sewing Beginners, And Improvers
- Looking Good Feeling Good Improvers
- Beginners IT
- ESOL Skills for Health (for elderly Nepali Women taught at the Warehouse)
- Gardening Workshops at the Museum for English Rural Life (MERL)
- Wellbeing Workshops in partnership with Compass Recovery College:
 - Understanding Mental Health Challenges
 - Five Ways to Wellbeing
 - Being Kinder to Yourself
 - Yoga for Self- Care

Autumn 2022

- English Conversation Pre-Entry and Beginners
- English Conversation Improvers and Intermediate
- English Reading and Writing Beginners
- English Reading and Writing Improvers
- Sewing Beginners, And Improvers
- Looking Good Feeling Good Beginners
- Beginners IT
- ESOL Skills for Health (for elderly Nepali Women taught at the Warehouse)
- Mental and Physical Wellbeing Course
- Making Quilts in partnership with Jelly Arts

Spring 2023

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

Alongside our core programme of classes, we also ran;

- a free arts and crafts course in partnership with Jelly Arts (with funding received from RBC Small Grants) where 7 learners produced beautiful quilts reflecting fabrics and colours from their culture;
- a free gardening course at the Museum for English Rural Life for 11 learners and an ESOL with Maths class funded by New Directions (Multiply Project) for 6 learners.

These courses enabled RCLC to provide not only a more diverse range of classes but also more opportunities for our learners to engage in courses outside the centre as many went on to progress onto the Museum for English Rural Life courses for babies and mums and arts and crafts courses at Jelly Arts. These new classes for migrant and refugee ethnic minority women who would not have the means, knowledge or accessibility to any wellbeing, arts or gardening activities outside of their homes also hugely benefitted their mental health.

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. A representative from the Centre regularly attended the Reading Borough Council Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Programme Case Management Group. Although these meetings no longer take place, we still support the refugees and refer our clients as we have a new Closing the Gap Partnership (CTG), funded by RBC.
- RCLC has also regularly attended the Afghan Resettlement Scheme Case Management meetings (ARAP) led by RBC which started in the summer of 2021 following the withdrawal of international forces from Afghanistan in April 2021. Working in partnership with other members on the board we support Afghan women to access the ESOL Classes, 1:1 outreach support and translation support at the Centre.
- 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 RRSB 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 summer term 2023, around 32% of the learners were asylum seekers and refugees. This is an 8% drop in comparison to this time last year when the percentage was 40%. The vast majority of the new arrivals to our Centre in the last two terms have been from the Eritrea, Hong Kong 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 2022/2023

Refugees (total number over 2022/2023 = 42)		Asylum Seekers (total number over 2022/2023 = 93)	
Afghanistan	18	Afghanistan	8
Ethiopia	4	Albania	4
Pakistan	4	Bangladesh	6
Sudan	1	El Salvador	9
Syria	3	Iraq	5
Ukraine	12	Iran	2
		Namibia	2
		Nepal	4
		Pakistan	6
		Sri Lanka	1
		Sudan	1
		Ukraine	6

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

803 learners (an increase of 50% from last year) attended the information sessions at RCLC with guest speakers over the three terms or were supported on enrichment activities as well as outreach sessions outside the Centre. 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;

Autumn 2022

- 48 women attended information session from Maternity Services giving their feedback and experience of using these services
- 30 women attended information sessions given by Lara from Compass Recovery College about their wellbeing and mental health courses and how to enrol onto them
- 15 women from the pre-entry class visited the Museum for English Rural Life as part of their learning and enrichment activity
- 40 women received information sessions from Rosalind (Adviza careers advice)
- 30 women received information from Rhiannon (Reading Voluntary Action) who spoke about Chat Connect Befriend- how learners could think about becoming befrienders for people in the community. RCLC are hoping to grow the number of women who could take part in this as there is a shortage of befriending volunteers from ethnic minority backgrounds in Reading.
- 35 women attended the RCLC Health Day in Nov 2022. A variety of health information stalls which included dementia information, carer support information, diabetes, coping with pain, stroke, weight loss, respiratory and TB service, sexual health and others were at RCLC. Whilst women waited to be seen by a nurse, they were treated to free health massages in the waiting area. The three health nurses were at the Centre to complete BMI, Blood pressure and diabetes checks on the women. This successful health day will be running again in Nov 2023.

Spring 2023

- Thanks to our partnership with CommuniCare through the RBC Closing the Gap, Lynn from CommuniCare joined the RCLC team to give benefit and advice sessions every Tuesday from 10-12pm during time. At the start of each term Lynn, and our outreach workers promote this service so that learners can access this vital support. Since Lynn joined, she has helped women with divorce information and applications, provided legal advice through the CommuniCare legal clinic, ongoing help with the applications, housing advice, help with Homechoice Bidding, fuel vouchers, child benefit, disability benefit and universal credit. Most of the women are those who need regular and extensive support due to the language barriers.
- 100 women 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.
- 20 women attended the session delivered by Anita Donovan from Southern Electricity to talk about how learners could make savings on their fuel costs by making changes to how they use appliances at home
- 7 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.
- 40 learners celebrated International Women's Day at RCLC. Learners and staff brought in food to share together, and certificates were given to learners who have shown outstanding achievement with a box of chocolates.
- 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. Our first Chai and Chat at the centre held at the end of Mar 2023. was really busy, with 20 ladies attending from RCLC and Alana House.
- 40 women received information sessions from Rosalind (Adviza careers advice)

Summer 2023

- 65 women received information about the local elections and how they could vote. Those who were not able to vote were given support by Shaheen on how to register if they were eligible
- Lynn promoted the CommuniCare advice surgeries to all the new learners in the summer term.
- 100 women 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.
- 55 women attended information sessions delivered by Jess Wood (Assistant Psychologist) from Brighter Futures for Children (RBC) informing learner on how to access support for children and young people with emerging, mild or moderate mental health difficulties that may be affecting day to day life.
- 15 learners from the beginners reading and writing class visited the Museum of English Rural Life as part of their learning and enrichment activity
- 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. Due to the pandemic this had to stop but this year in the summer we were able to visit Swallowfield again and in return the volunteers from the village came to our end of term celebrations in July which we held at the Museum of English Rural Life Gardens. Eight learners from the English Conversation class, two staff and 1 volunteer visited Swallowfield Village Coffee Club
- 15 learners attended the Reading Green Wellbeing Session on how nature and gardening can really help to improve mental health
- 30 women received information sessions from Rosalind (Adviza careers advice)
- In partnership with the Holt Secondary School, two year 10 students completed their one week work experience. They received a range of work experience from the classroom, to the creche and also in the office. They particularly enjoyed supporting the women in the classes.
- 45 women attended the summer Chai and Chat sessions in May and June 2023

Mental Health First Aid Courses (MHFA)

In response to the growing need for MHFA courses in Reading during and since the pandemic, RCLC were requested by RBC to run online MHFA Courses over a 2 year period from Mar 2021 for the voluntary, faith-based organisations and statutory sector staff across Reading, Slough, Wokingham, West Berkshire, and Bracknell who were supporting vulnerable men and women in financial crisis over the pandemic. We were given funding from RBC twice following our successful delivery so by the end of July 2022 we had taught MHFA Courses to 122 men and women. In January this year we taught one MHFA Course to 4 men and women. We have a little bit of funding left which we will use to deliver a face-to-face course in Autumn 2023.

The advantage of teaching the courses online has meant that RCLC was able to engage with many people across a large area and the course was accessible to those who struggled to travel due to the pandemic guidelines, mental health or physical needs.

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

420 learners enrolled on our core programme of courses at RCLC 2022/2023

- 98% of our core programme learners have no UK qualifications or are at an entry level in ESOL
- 20% of learners have a degree or higher from their home country
- 91% of our learners are unemployed
- 24% of our learners are on benefits (it is important to remember that 32% 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)
- 5% of our learners are retired
- 8% of our learner's work part-time or full-time
- 17% of our learners use the crèche, a lifeline for those who cannot afford childcare costs
- 29% of our learners are aged 31-40; 27% are 51 plus; 25% are aged 19-30; 20% are aged 41-50.
- 10% of our learners are refugees and 22% are asylum seekers, whilst 58% of the learners had not been living in the UK for more than 3 years. This year's figures are broadly similar to last years.
- 15% of learners disclosed that they needed additional support. Of this 15%, 46% of the women declared they had additional social and emotional difficulties and 35% had mental health difficulties.
- 4% of the learners progressed into full-time or part-time employment and 3% onto volunteering. These figures are slightly less than last year but this year the vast majority of our learners had no qualifications or experience of working in their home country. 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.
- 75% of our learners progressed onto internal courses at RCLC
- 11% 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 7% progressed onto other courses in the community.

REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER: 06442616 (England and Wales)

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1123017

- This year learners came from an amazing 36 different countries with the majority from the following; 15% from Afghanistan; 14% from Pakistan; 13% from Hong Kong; 9% from Eritrea, 6% from India; 5% from Nepal, 5% from Sudan; 4% from Ukraine; 3% from Iran; 3% from Bangladesh; 3% from Morocco; 3% from Ethiopia; 3% from El Salvador; 2% from Turkey; 2% from Syria; other countries at 1% and under include Albania, Algeria, France, Chilli, Gambia, Guinea, Hungary, Iraq, Italy, Libya, Moldova, Namibia, Romania, Russia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Spain, Sri Lanka, UK and Venezuela.
- Current learners speak 30 different languages with the majority speaking the following; Pashto 14%, Urdu 14%, Chinese 13%, Arabic 7%, Amharic 6%, Tigrinya 6%, Spanish 5%, Hindi 5%, Nepali 5%, Ukrainian 4%, Bengali 3%, Farsi 2%, Turkish 2%, Tamil 2%. Other languages at 1% and under include, French, Albanian, Wolof, Telugu, Sonilki, Russian, Romanian, Portuguese, Persian, Oshiwambo, Malayalam, Kurdish, Hungarian, Italian, English and Dari.
- Our learners are mostly from the following wards; Abbey 19%, Battle 14%, Katesgrove 13%, Park 8%, Coley 5%, Whitley 5%, Redlands 5%, Southcote 5%, Tilehurst 4%, Hawdon 3%, Maiden Erleigh 3%, Bulmershe 2%. Other wards at 1% and under include, Bradfields, Caversham, Church, Coronation, Emmer Green, Finchampstead, Hillside, Kentwood, Loddon, Norcot, Purley, Shinfield, Southlake, Thames, Twyford, Wescot, Slough and Wokingham.
- 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 31% of our learners came from these specific areas.

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 2022/2023 were undertaken in February, May and June 2023 by the Centre Manager.

In addition to the observations undertaken by the Centre Manager, New Directions observed a sample teaching session. Each tutor also completes a course evaluation after every session.

LEARNER FEEDBACK AND OUTCOMES – THE DIFFERENCE OUR WORK MAKES.

RCLC Learner Feedback 2023 summary

Approximately 10% of learners are interviewed yearly by staff and Trustees. This was the first year that we were able to resume these 1:1 evaluation with our newly appointed outreach/ community development worker. Her post was funded by the National Lottery Funding which we started to receive in December 2022. 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.

Reasons for coming to UK and feelings about Reading: Whilst some families were economic migrants, who were coming for better education for children and/or to join families, many learners had escaped from extremely dangerous countries, and were mainly living in hostels. Some learners had lived here for a long time but had not been able to learn English. All those interviewed liked living in Reading, mentioning how central and close everything was, with some identifying the good schools, and that it was quiet and felt safe.

Learner Needs: Most learners arrive at the Centre with very little English language, even if they had lived in UK for many years, and sought an opportunity to learn. As girls, many of the women had never gone to school and others had only completed Primary School. Whilst some women had families in the UK, many were alone with husbands and/or children and faced isolation, stress, depression and loneliness. A number of women identified a loss of confidence having come to the UK.

How learners discovered the Centre and enrolment: Most learners first found out about the Centre through a friend or family member who introduced them to the outreach/ support worker, or the administrator, though some were referred by other agencies. Learners had often to wait to get on language courses, but were helped to choose an alternative and their names put down for next term's language class. Enrolment was universally seen as very quick and easy

Perceptions of the Centre and classes: There was universal praise for the quality of the teaching, and the friendliness, kindness and helpfulness of tutors:

'I am learning new skills... the teachers are all very good and explain everything well'

'The tutor is very good and so supportive.'

The free courses are really important to some learners.

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

Many of the comments cover the Centre as a whole including the other learners:

'I like coming to the Centre as it feels very cozy like home'.

'I have made friends with everyone in my class- I really love it.'

Outcomes - the difference coming to the Centre has made: Learners identified linked benefits:

- **Increased 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. read letters, fill forms, talk to neighbours, go shopping, get on a bus, visit the doctor or hospital, or visit their children's school on their own. *'Coming to RCLC has given me a lot of confidence, my speaking has improved so much. It has given me more independence as I can now go out on my own and speak to people. I feel more at home here now.'*
- **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 really love coming to RCLC, I am very happy now and have made lots of friends who I go out with outside the Centre'*
- **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 had some depression before coming to the Centre but since coming here it has really helped me, I am less stressed. I am more confident and happier now.'
'It has been so amazing coming here. It has changed my life so much.'

Hopes for the future: Almost all of those interviewed planned to work when their English was improved.

Through regularly analysing our learner data and undertaking learner interviews we have identified the following key outcomes from our work. Information we have collected is given under the following two headings.

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 2022/2023. 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.
- 7% of the learners progressed into employment or volunteering. This figure is lower than last year (14% for 2021/22), which is primarily due to the fact that 98% of our learners in 2022/23 had no qualifications or Entry level ESOL levels.

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 2022/2023

- 75% of learners felt their learning experience had been excellent whilst 25% said it was good.
- 73% said that the course level and content was excellent whilst the remaining 27% said it was good.
- 82% said that the way the course was taught was excellent whilst 18% said it was good.
- 85% said that the information and support which they received was excellent whilst 15% said it was good.
- 98% said that they felt they had improved their confidence and language skills.
- 99% felt that their health had improved since coming to the classes.
- 99% 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.
- 91% said that they now knew who to go to, to ask for help and support.
- 92% said that they felt happier since coming to the Centre to learn.
- 93% said that they had learnt new skills.
- 92% said they felt they were now more confident to go out and do other activities since joining the classes.

- 93% 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 Autumn 2023.

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 2022/2023

This year we had 15 learner volunteers (in comparison to only 7 last year) of whom:

- 6 were classroom volunteers.
- 3 were admin volunteer.
- 1 was a creche volunteer.
- 3 were volunteer translators.
- 2 were outreach volunteers.

We also had 2 long-term classroom volunteers who were ex-teachers, 2 were volunteers from Vodafone and 1 was a volunteer who used to work for Healthwatch Reading. In total we had 20 volunteers in 2022/2023.

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 sharing good practice and knowledge as well as means informing health and wellbeing action plans Reading Borough Council. These partnerships include;

- Reading Voluntary Action's (RVA) Voluntary Community Sector Together; Reading Voluntary Action / RBC VCS Leaders' meetings and Hub; Hate Crime, Mental health, and Loneliness and Isolation forums.
- Working with Utulivu and Action for Cohesion and Racial Equality ACRE on mental health issues and RCLC is part of ACRE's community champion group.
- RCLC also regularly attended many Reading Borough Council and VCS led steering groups such as the Berkshire West Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, The Reading COVID-19 Outbreak Engagement Board, The Reading and West Berkshire Employment Forum, Reading Voluntary Action Readifriends Forum, The Reading Voluntary Action Social Prescribing Forum, The Loneliness and Social Isolation Steering Group, The RBC Health Inequalities Meeting (linking into the Health and Wellbeing Board strategy), The RBC led Mental Wellbeing group, The RBC Led Older Peoples Working Group Meetings, The One Reading Hub VCS Leaders Meetings and The Volunteer Development Group Meetings.

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 Reading Refugee Group and Communicare and 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 2022/2023;

- RBC Narrowing the Gap Meetings and CTG Meetings
- Wellbeing Health Forum Meetings
- Mental Wellbeing Meetings
- Health Inequalities
- Quarterly subcontractor's meetings with New Directions
- Local Strategic Partnership meetings such the Loneliness and Isolation Steering Group
- Working in partnership with GPs meeting (social prescribing, hosted by Reading Voluntary Action)
- RBC Older peoples working group meetings and Physical Disability and Sensory Needs Network (PDSN)
- Readifriends
- Vaccine Support Group Meetings
- Reading Voluntary Action Thriving Communities
- Volunteer Development Group Meetings
- VCS Prevention Forum/ Voluntary Leaders Meetings
- West Berkshire Employability Forum
- 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)
- RBC Afghan Refugee Resettlement Meetings
- RBC Syrian Vulnerable Person Relocation Meetings (SVPR)

DEVELOPING NEW PARTNERSHIPS

A number of new partnerships which started out in 2021/2022 have developed this year and we are grateful for the opportunities they have offered:

Thriving Communities Wildbeing Project:

- In the summer of 2021, RCLC started their new partnership with Reading Voluntary Action (RVA), The Museum of English Rural Life (MERL), The Reading Museum, Sport in Mind and the Reading Green Wellbeing Network (Nature Nurture, British Islamic Gardens (BIG) and ReadiFood) with funding from The National Academy for Social Prescribing's 'Thriving Communities' fund. This fund was set up to support local voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise projects to improve and increase the range and reach of available social prescribing community activities – especially for those people most impacted by COVID-19 and health inequalities.
- RCLC received referrals from the RVA social prescribers onto our programmes but also through access to our 1:1 outreach support. We also referred and signposted clients as well as encouraged our learners to engage in external enrichment activities at the Museum Of English Rural Life, at RISC and at the Reading Museum. These activities helped to build their confidence, social networks, mental wellbeing, independence, and language skills.
- In summer 2022 there were three trips to the Reading Museum for the 35 learners. Learners walked to the museum with their teachers, received a tour, took part in workshops and were able to practice their English.
- One of the RCLC learners on the gardening workshop is a carer and had a lot of issues with arranging carers to support her son's condition and was so stressed and despondent that she gave up and ended up doing everything herself, rarely leaving the house. She likes gardening and was very happy to join with one of her friends. It was only a 3-week project which was convenient for her to attend. She learnt new skills and shared her skills with others.
She said:
"I really enjoyed the experience! I have been living in Reading for many years and was not aware of Museum of English Rural Life"
- Feedback indicates that even with these short, micro-opportunities at the museums, there was an average increase in wellbeing with over half of participants remarking that they felt happier by the end of the session compared to how they felt at the outset. 76% of attendees felt that they had learnt something new, 70% enjoyed the company of others, and 58% of attendees said that they felt better during the session.
- What was heartening too was that the taster opportunities, for some, inspired a keenness to return to the museums with their families. This was evident in feedback with some attendees saying that they would like to 'come back' or 'having longer in museum'. In turn, the enthusiasm to return had the potential to connect them with other programmes and opportunities.
- In total 112 women took part in the activities from RCLC, and some returned to the Museum of English Rural Life with their families to visit whilst others joined the Babies Yoga at the Museum of English Rural

Life. The project came to an end in Aug 2022, but links are maintained with the Museum of English Rural Life.

NEW PROJECTS

Promoting friendships, Reducing Loneliness and Isolation

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 will receive training and how to set up the befriending programme for RCLC through Engage Befriending (Mustard Tree). Mustard Tree provide training to the newly recruited bilingual, female befriending volunteers. Regular trainings will be received through Engage.

However, in agreement with RBC RCLC transferred this funding to Mustard Tree and utilise this funding towards their current Befriending Work 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.

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. 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. The beautiful quilts were displayed by the learners at Jelly Art and two out of the 7 learners progressed onto new courses with Jelly Arts.

Food for Families and RCLC

In partnership with Food 4 Families and the Museum of English Rural Life, RCLC ran a 5-week course linking health and wellbeing with gardening in the summer term. The aim of the project was for learners to learn how to grow their own food with or without a garden and on a budget and improve their wellbeing through a new community garden which will be built over the summer. A total of 11 learners completed this course.

9. READING BOROUGH COUNCIL COMMISSIONED WORK

Reading Borough Council's (RBC) Narrowing The Gap (NTG II) partnership moved to supporting service users and others experiencing stress, loneliness social isolation. Our two-service level agreement lots with RBC, 12.1 (titled, Facilitating Peer Support and Reducing Social Isolation For Adults At Risk Because of Language and Cultural Barriers in partnership with CommuniCare and Reading Refugee Support Group) and Lot 1.3 (titled, Steps Towards Employment in partnership with CommuniCare and Reading Refugee Support Group) continued to run online and later as government guidelines changes face to face over the pandemic. The NTG partnership came to an end in Sep 2022. At this point a new partnership was negotiated for RCLC under the Council's Closing The Gap (CTG) over the next 3 years.

RBC Lot 12.1

Lot 12.1 titled, "Facilitating peer support and reducing social isolation for adults at risk because of language or cultural barriers" is a partnership between RCLC, CommuniCare and Reading Refugee Support Group. We were unable to run any classes for the elderly Pakistani, Indian and Nepali women who were on the shielding list with underlying health conditions and were housebound from March 2020 to November 2021. However, from Nov 2021 our yoga tutor was able to run an online seated yoga class for elderly Pakistani and Indian women. Over the academic year 2021/2022 we ran three hugely successful online seated yoga classes for a total of 60 Indian and Pakistani women.

From Nov 2021 our yoga tutor was able to run an online seated yoga class for elderly Pakistani and Indian women. Over the academic year 2021/2022 we ran three hugely successful online seated yoga classes for a total of 60 Indian and Pakistani women.

For the academic year 2022/2023 although there was no longer any shielding or social distancing needed the elderly learners on this course wanted and preferred the seated yoga classes to be delivered online. We have therefore continued to deliver the classes online as the learners prefer online learning as it means that they can still meet up every week, make new friends and get some exercise without having to worry about using public transport, arrange travel and it is easier due to their health requirements. The following classes were delivered in 2022/2023:

- 3 Seated yoga classes (from summer 2022- summer 2023) for elderly Pakistani and Indian women with underlying and long-term health conditions for a total of 49 women online

Some comments from the learners:

"I like the way (the tutor) Simran guides about the exercises & the benefits. It will be great to have classes continued on Zoom since it makes me feel safe to learn at home"

"I really enjoy the sessions. It has helped me to improve the stretching. Zoom allows me to exercise at the comfort of my home & save travel. Please continue these classes."

"Many thanks for providing for such a valuable exercised. I have learned how to move my body. Chair yoga is appropriate for me considering my age. Please continue the classes online."

In January 2022 we were able to run our popular ESOL Skills 4 Health Classes for elderly Nepali women at the Warehouse face to face again. The course content included healthy eating, how to make an appointment at the GP surgery, form filling, giving medical information, making a medical info card, a visit to the health centre, women's health, how to get a prescription and a visit to the pharmacy, health checks, diabetes and blood pressure. The following courses were run from Summer 2022- Autumn 2022:

- 2 ESOL Skills 4 Health Classes for 31 elderly Nepali women.

RBC Lot 1.3

Lot 1.3 titled, "Supporting steps towards employment" was a partnership between RCLC, CommuniCare and Reading Refugee Support Group. This partnership not only allowed the charity to extend its core programme and outreach work but also helps us to achieve a long-term ambition of starting courses to support men and women into work.

Working with a wide range of referral partners, this partnership bid focussed on employability, up-skilling, and employment support for people with complex or longer-term support needs which affect their ability to gain employment - in particular, language acquisition, cultural restrictions, trauma, and exclusion from statutory support through ineligibility. Gaining confidence, English language skills, understanding of the job market and basic tools (CVs), and supported volunteering, are evidenced ways of tackling poverty, unemployment, and health inequalities

Over 2021/ 2022 371 learners enrolled and completed our core programmes of courses. An incredible 96% of all our learners progressed on to either internal courses, jobs, volunteering or external courses both accredited and non-accredited in the academic year 2021/2022. This partnership ended in October 2022 and a new partnership under Closing the Gap (NTG) was formed from November 2022 (please see below)

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), ReadFood (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 Reading Refugee Support Group for outcome 2 and were also successful with this focusing on work with refugee, migrant and asylum-seeking families in Reading. These new partnerships started in November 2022.

Since this partnership was forged, we have delivered the following under each of the 2 outcomes from November 2022- Mar 2023 (Year 1 quarters 1-2). 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

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

Outcome 2

- 39 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)
- 28 Elderly Nepali women to complete the ESOL Skills 4 Health course per year (our target is 30 per year)
- 330 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 third and fourth quarter which will cover the months Apr- Oct 2023.

New Directions College

RCLC is 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 receives is 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 to give them a joy of learning promoting lifelong learning. In the academic year 2022/2023 RCLC achieved its target of 120 learners

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 looking at all of our teaching paperwork, CPD, meetings agenda, safeguarding, prevent, observations of teaching, RCLC Business plan and learning and induction paperwork. They were very happy with our quality checks and assessments and have no recommendations regarding our quality.

Our contract with New Directions College will come to an end at the end of this academic year in 2023 and will not be renewed as the funding criteria from NLDC has changed. However, we may look to work on other things and will continue with our math class (Multiply Project) funded by New Directions College.

New Directions College (ND) will also be continuing this partnership by using the Centre as one of their community teaching venues. This academic year they hired the classroom on Mondays and Thursdays and will continue with this format into 2023/2024. 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 ex-learners and staff who trained to become 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 three research projects listed below.

Community Participatory Action Research Project (CPAR)

- Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, inequalities in health have become magnified amongst some Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) groups disproportionately affected. Public Health England's (PHE) report, *COVID-19: Understanding The Impact On BAME Communities*, demonstrates the widening of existing health inequalities and makes 8 recommendations.
- Community Participatory Action Research puts the community and community experiences at the heart of the research project and empowers the community to set a research agenda. The project was led by 5 community volunteers from each of the partner organisations who were trained by the Scottish Community Development and used a variety of research methods to look into the impact of the pandemic on BAME communities in Reading.
- Aim of the CPAR Research was to;
 - Train individuals from organisations drawn from BAME communities in CPAR to tackle health issues related to COVID-19
 - Equip the BAME community researchers with the skills to later deliver CPAR to help in addressing wider inequalities.
 - Share learning from CPAR across networks in the Southeast and beyond
- This CPAR project is a follow up of PHE report. The Focus is on the Impact of Covid-19 on ethnic minority communities in Reading. It was a partnership project between Reading Voluntary Action, RCLC, Alliance for Cohesion and Racial Equality (ACRE), RBC & The University of Reading (UoR) funded by the Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC)
- 5 local researchers focusing on 4 Key areas:
 - The Impact of Covid19 on Mental Health of Ethnic Minority Men in Reading (ACRE)
 - Maternal services and the impact of digital inclusion (ACRE)
 - Investigating the impact of Covid-19 among Nepalese community groups in Reading, Berkshire, UK (Reading Voluntary Action)
 - Impact of Covid-19 on ethnic minority migrant and refugee women in accessing healthcare services (RCLC)
- The RCLC researchers explored inequalities in accessing health services and identifying needs. They completed 104 questionnaires. Key findings were that over 50% of the women interviewed did not know of the 119 Covid helpline and could not access healthcare services on their own largely due to the language barrier, or access to a translator. More than 20% reported a deterioration in their mental and physical health.

RCLC'S CPAR research on, Access to Healthcare services for ethnic minority women and the impact of Covid, evidenced that out of 104 ethnic minority migrant, refugee and asylum seeking women interviewed, 21% reported that their physical health had become worse during the pandemic whilst (26%) said that their mental health had become worse during the pandemic. Our findings highlighted:

- In terms of mental health, many found lockdown and social distancing measures difficult, with little social contact with friends and even family. This was particularly difficult for some ethnic minority women who

described how they already felt isolated in the UK due to living alone with no English language skills or due to close family members living in other countries.

- Our research showed that another layer of stress and anxiety was created due to increased financial pressures. Many respondents and others in their households had been put on the UK Government's furlough scheme and had less income as a result. Some had lost their jobs, with one respondent reporting that it took 4 months to receive universal credit. Financial hardship created tension at home, made worse by being stuck indoors. One person also described how difficult it had been following the death of her father from Covid-19.
- A few people mentioned positive impacts of the pandemic on health and wellbeing, including being able to find more time to exercise at home and go for walks, feeling loved and supported by family and friends and appreciating health more than before the pandemic.
- The detrimental experience of racism has continued to be a strong theme throughout this pandemic, with Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Black African, Black Caribbean and Chinese groups reporting either an increase in racial attacks or abuse, or 'being treated unfairly because of their ethnicity', since the start of the coronavirus crisis.
- The CPAR Research also highlighted that translation support and language barriers were still a key in accessing medical care. Out of the 103 respondents, 38% said that they were able to access a translator for their doctor's appointments through the NHS or themselves. 15% would have liked to have had an interpreter as they found relying on translation by a family member could cause a lot of inconvenience. Some also commented on the service and said it was, "Poor quality of translation service: imperfect and inaccurate".

The project has now finished but the lessons learnt from this CPAR project and others undertaken by the University of Reading have resulted in a new [Research Toolkit](#) for community researchers, community organisations, students and academics who want to reflect on and better understand the principles and everyday practices of Participatory Action Research (PAR), how to build community research teams and how to use PAR to understand local issues.

CareWell Research Project

This 2-year research project is in partnership with The University of Reading (UoR) and Reading Refugee Support 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 want 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 this summer the analysis of this data will take 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. In the autumn term further interviews will be conducted with the children of the families.

New Research Project - Migrant Voices

- In partnership with the University of Reading and RRSRG (funded by the John Sykes Foundation and the University) RCLC will produce a collection of published Women's Stories using the RCLC peer researchers and Reading University Students to collect and write up case studies in the next academic year.
- The Migrant Women's Voices and Sanctuary Conference led by Reading Community Learning Centre and Reading Refugee Support Group will raise awareness of the lived experiences and needs of sanctuary seekers and other migrants in our local community and foster social cohesion, diversity and inclusion. The

REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER: 06442616 (England and Wales)

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1123017

project will share the amazing life stories of migrant and refugee minority ethnic women in Reading, who came to the UK and became learners at Reading Community Learning Centre, in a collection of stories and celebration event in 2023.

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 and through telephone calls. 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 and giving vital health information in regard to the pandemic, 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 40-50% of our learners require additional support.

Building on the Centre's current support work with around 70 vulnerable ethnic minority women per month (this figure has more than doubled since last year) 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, government guidelines on the pandemic, how to do lateral flow tests and where to get them, identifying and supporting women to get vaccinations and encouraging them to take part in online group chats about COVID-19;
- 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 2022/2023 RCLC has referred learners and non-learners to the following organisations;

- 27 women to CommuniCare
- 16 women to Readifood
- 15 women to WEA
- 12 women to Together
- 11 women to RSG
- 7 women to RVA Social Prescribers
- 6 women to Adviza
- 5 women to Reading College
- Other referrals were made to New Directions College, the local GP, DWP, RBC, Talking Therapies, Age UK Berkshire, the local mosque, Mencap, local solicitors and NHS 111.

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

A total of 874 women were supported with information, advice and guidance (IAG) with support varying from benefit support, filling in forms, making telephone calls, translation support to accompanying them to access services at the Centre from April 2022- Mar 2023. Out of these women 48% 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 493 women came to the Centre through this route. Care 4 Calais has been our largest referrer, referring 76 women over the academic year 2022/2023 to RCLC. Other referrals to RCLC over the academic year are listed below;

- 26 women were referred by the Pakistani Community Centre (PCC)
- 26 women were referred by Refugee Support Group (RSG)
- 13 women were referred by Alana House
- 9 women were referred by RVA Social Prescribers
- 19 women found us through the RCLC website
- Other referrals were from Age UK Berkshire, Launchpad, Macmillan Cancer, Royal Berkshire Hospital, the Walk in Health Centre, RBC Social Services, Together, WEA, RBC, Job Centre, New Directions College, DWP AND Berkshire Women's Aid (BWA), Thames Valley Police, Brighter Future's for Children, Ukrainian Community Centre, Networking events, local schools and CommuniCare.

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 (mental health and wellbeing organisation based in Reading, Berkshire, UK, commissioned by Reading Borough Council) and our trained mental health tutor a programme of health and wellbeing courses was developed to take place each term. It was important to address this increased need around mental and physical health by delivering workshops and programmes which used graded language and had translation support to meet learner needs. We knew that these courses had to be taught face to face where additional outreach, signposting to specialist services and 1:1 support could be provided in private at the Centre rather than online where women could not talk in private.

Following these successful workshops in 2022, 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 taught every term also had simple yoga sessions built into each lesson.

Crèche

Alongside its other activities, the Centre provides a crèche which offers important support for children from 4 months to 5 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 currently employ two crèche workers and a crèche supervisor. In the academic year 2022/2023, 71 children were able to access the creche.

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

- 98% of the children were very happy in the creche and thought that the creche was excellent.
- 92% of the parents thought that their child had learnt new things and that their knowledge had improved.
- 98% said that the care their child received in the creche was excellent whilst 2 said it was good.
- 100% of the parents/ carers thought that their children were safe in the creche.
- 60% found that the information they received on their child's development in the creche was excellent and 40% said it was good.

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.

As a result of the changing government guidelines regarding safe working and learning environments meant that 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.

The Centre has been fully open for the academic year 2022/2023 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 and boiler
- computer equipment, software, back up clouds and virus protection.
- Covid-19 PPE equipment, signage and lateral flow tests for staff and volunteers

Sadly, in September 2021 the charity SmartWorks (interview coaching and dressing support to help women get into employment) who rented the top floor at the Centre, moved out to new premises across the road as they needed more space and lift access. Due to the increase in the number of learners wanting face to face to classes and to reduce waiting lists we added an extra English intermediate conversation class and a mental health and wellbeing class and moved the sewing class to the top floor so that we could free up the 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 small room on the top floor is used by CommuniCare for weekly benefit advice 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.

13. STAFFING

During 2022/23 we continued to employ a Centre Manager who has worked tirelessly to manage the team and, with the Trustees, promote and develop the work of the Centre and building new partnerships. In addition, we now to employ two part-time Support and Outreach Workers, 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. 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 5 sessional tutors: a sewing tutor (for the sewing beginners and improvers classes), one beauty tutor for Looking Good Feeling Good, two English conversation tutors, one IT Tutor and ESOL with Maths tutor and one reading and writing tutor. We sadly lost one of our long-standing Reading and Writing/ IT tutors in the spring term 2023 who had been with the charity for four years. We wish her every success on her new journey ahead.

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 £57,000 for 2022/23 (£23,000 for 2021/22). We have been able to make use of reserves such as the “DCLG 2022-24” funds to meet the shortfall. See the “Reserves Policy” section below for further details.

While the Centre’s income has remained largely the same year-on-year, the increase in shortfall since 2021/22 is due to rising costs and demand for the Centre’s services. 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.

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. A number of applications have been submitted during 2023 so far and we expect to welcome our new Business Development Manager into her role in early 2024. The Business Development Manager will be tasked with ensuring the long-term financial security of the Centre, e.g. by diversifying income streams. This role is funded by the National Lottery grant (see below).

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 (Closing the Gap outcomes 1 and 2) under employment and adult social care themes. From November 2022, the basis of our contracts with RBC changed, although the two new strands of commissioned work are under similar themes as before. 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 will continue for two years. 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 Development Worker (appointed February 2023) and a part time Business Development Manager (starting in early 2024).

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 is part funded by New Directions for those learners who meet the enrolment eligibility criteria and complete 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 2022/23 have been given below:

- The Henry Smith Charity has provided funding towards certain salaries, rent and other building costs.
- AB Charitable Trust provided unrestricted funding towards running costs and salaries.
- Earley Charity has provided funds for salaries.
- CPAR and Carewell Research projects have 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 3 months' running costs, which with the current rent and salary levels now requires an amount of £56,000 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). This has reduced since 31 March 2022 since a higher proportion of the coming year's staffing costs are covered by restricted funds at 31 March 2023.
- A premises reserve (£19,500) has also been set up to cover redecoration costs under our lease, plus other premises costs for 2023/24 that are not covered by restricted or other designated funds. This is unchanged since 31 March 2022.
- 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 and £22,275 remains in this reserve at 31 March 2023.

Report of the Trustees and
Unaudited Financial Statements
for the year ended 31 March 2023

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 30 October 2023 and signed on the Board's behalf by:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "K. Sarah del Tufo". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'K' and a stylized 'T' at the end.

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**

31st March 2023

**Charity no
(if any)**

1123017

Set out on pages

39 and 40

**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:** 19th September 2023

Name: Rachel Eden

Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any): ACMA (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 2023

for

Reading Community Learning Centre Ltd

Statement of Financial Activities
(Incorporating an Income and Expenditure Account)
for the year ended 31 March 2023

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2023 Total Funds £	2022 Total Funds £
INCOME FROM					
Charitable activities					
	2				
Grants – Core programme		15,600	109,921	125,521	104,453
Grants – Research projects		-	13,388	13,388	8,715
Grants – Covid-19 costs		-	-	-	11,500
Courses		3,478	530	4,008	3,250
Crèche		-	-	-	5,000
Total charitable activities		19,078	123,839	142,917	132,918
Donations and legacies		3,768	-	3,768	8,057
Other income	3	4,263	-	4,263	11,544
Total income		27,110	123,839	150,949	152,519
EXPENDITURE ON					
Charitable activities					
Building costs		50,397	14,322	64,719	63,829
Office costs		3,027	2,411	5,439	3,176
Programme costs		17,244	40,289	57,534	45,066
Staffing		5,567	74,342	79,909	62,691
Independent examination		480	-	480	380
Total expenditure		76,715	131,365	208,081	175,142
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)		(49,606)	(7,526)	(57,132)	(22,623)
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		168,011	58,887	226,898	249,521
Movements between restricted and unrestricted funds		1,562	(1,562)	-	-
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		119,968	49,799	169,766	226,898

Balance Sheet
at 31 March 2023

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2023 Total Funds £	2022 Total Funds £
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible assets	8	6,592	-	6,592	3,372
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors	9	468	722	1,190	15,422
Cash at bank		118,302	78,252	196,554	248,151
Total current assets		118,770	78,974	197,744	263,573
CREDITORS					
Amounts falling due within one year	10	(5,395)	(29,176)	(34,571)	(40,048)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		113,375	49,798	163,173	223,524
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		119,967	49,798	169,765	226,896
NET ASSETS		119,967	49,798	169,765	226,896
FUNDS	12				
Unrestricted funds				119,968	168,011
Restricted funds				49,797	58,886
TOTAL FUNDS				169,765	226,898

Balance Sheet
at 31 March 2023 – continued

The charitable company is entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 for the year ended 31 March 2023.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023 in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

The Trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for:

- a) Ensuring that the charitable company keeps accounting records that comply with Section 386 and 387 of the Companies Act 2006; and
- b) Preparing financial statements, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company as at the end of each financial year and of its surplus or deficit for each financial year in accordance with the requirements of Sections 394 and 395 and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the charitable company.

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 30 October 2023 and were signed on its behalf by:



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

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

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% on reducing balance
Computer equipment	33% on cost

Taxation

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

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the Year Ended 31 March 2023 – 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	2023	2022
		£	£
Grants	Core programme	125,521	104,453
Grants	Crèche	-	5,000
Grants	Research projects	13,388	8,715
Registration fees	Courses	3,478	3,250
MHFA courses	Courses	530	-
Grants	Covid-19 costs	-	11,500
		<u>142,917</u>	<u>132,918</u>

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

	2023	2022
	£	£
Reading Borough Council	38,104	36,750
Reading Borough Council – Building Closure	-	10,000
Reading Borough Council – Covid-19	-	-
Reading Borough Council – Zumba	-	1,470
New Directions (NLDC)	12,000	12,000
Henry Smith	10,800	32,233
Garfield Weston	-	15,000
National Lottery	34,412	-
AB Charitable Trust	15,000	-
Healthwatch Reading	10,000	-
Earley Charity	-	5,000
BWCCG and RVA grant	-	5,000
Berkshire Community Foundation grants	-	3,500
CPAR Research Project	600	4,452
Carewell Research Project	12,788	4,263
	<u>133,705</u>	<u>129,668</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the Year Ended 31 March 2023 – continued

3. OTHER INCOME

	2023	2022
	£	£
Rent receivable	-	9,720
Room and facilities hire	3,648	1,824
Gain on disposal of laptops	420	-
Interest income	195	-
	<u>4,263</u>	<u>11,544</u>

4. NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)

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

	2023	2022
	£	£
Depreciation – owned assets	2,334	1,536
Other operating leases	825	720
Accounts and independent examination	480	380
	<u>3,639</u>	<u>2,636</u>

5. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

During the year to 31 March 2023 three of the trustees were paid for work they did outside of their trustee duties.

Hemamalini Sundharajan was paid a total of £2,066 (£4,159 2021/22). This is for her work as an outreach worker (£1,568) and as a researcher (£498). A laptop worth £400 was provided for conducting this work during the year to 31 March 2021. This laptop has been returned to the Centre. Hemamalini's outreach work was funded by the BWCCG and RVA grant and the Berkshire Community Foundation grant. Her work as a researcher was funded by the CPAR Research Project grant.

Simran Aul received £530 (£750 2021/22) for teaching online seated exercises classes during the year. These costs were funded by Reading Borough Council Lot 12.1 "Outreach & Community Education" and Reading Borough Council "Closing the Gap" outcome 2.

Raya Mohamed was paid £504 (£587 2021/22) for working in the creche during the year. This was to provide cover for regular creche staff. This was funded by Reading Borough Council Lot 12.1 "Outreach & Community Education", Earley Charity and AB Charitable Trust.

Trustees' expenses

Simran Aul was reimbursed a total of £102 during the year ended 31 March 2023 (£173 2021/22). 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 Lot 12.1 "Outreach & Community Education" and Reading Borough Council "Closing the Gap" outcome 2.

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the Year Ended 31 March 2023 – continued

6. STAFF COSTS

	2023	2022
	£	£
Wages and salaries	128,718	103,611
Social security costs	2,596	1,127
Other pension costs	3,524	2,680
	<u>134,838</u>	<u>107,418</u>

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

	2023	2022
Crèche	3	3
Tutor	7	6
Outreach and Support Worker	2	2
Manager	1	1
Administrator	1	1
	<u>14</u>	<u>13</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 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 is being used towards the Centre's running costs for years 2022/23 and 2023/24. Just over half of this reserve was used during 2022/23. See note 12 for further details.

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the Year Ended 31 March 2023 – continued

8. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Improvements to property £	Furniture, fixtures & fittings £	Computer & other equipment £	Totals £
COST				
At 1 April 2022	9,224	4,760	11,882	25,866
Additions	-	159	5,395	5,554
Disposals	-	-	(4,701)	(4,701)
At 31 March 2023	9,224	4,919	12,576	26,719
DEPRECIATION				
At 1 April 2022	9,224	3,222	10,048	22,494
Disposals	-	-	(4,701)	(4,701)
Charge for year	-	388	1,946	2,334
At 31 March 2023	9,224	3,610	7,293	20,127
NET BOOK VALUE				
At 31 March 2023	-	1,310	5,283	6,592
At 31 March 2022	-	1,538	1,834	3,372

9. DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2023 £	2022 £
Trade debtors	698	4,220
Accrued income	-	1,584
Prepayments	491	9,618
	1,190	15,422

10. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE TO WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2023 £	2022 £
Social security and other taxes	1,919	1,586
Other creditors	12,481	10,619
Deferred Income	18,608	25,732
Accrued expenses	1,563	2,112
	34,571	40,048

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the Year Ended 31 March 2023 – continued

11. LEASING AGREEMENTS

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

	2023	2022
	£	£
Within one year	39,600	36,000
Between one and five years	112,200	-
	<u>151,800</u>	<u>36,000</u>

12. 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 2023-24)	48,000	(25,725)	-	22,275
	<u>168,011</u>	<u>(49,606)</u>	<u>1,562</u>	<u>119,968</u>
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
	<u>58,886</u>	<u>(7,526)</u>	<u>(1,562)</u>	<u>49,797</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>226,898</u>	<u>(57,132)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>169,765</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the Year Ended 31 March 2023 – 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	27,110	(50,990)	(23,880)
Designated Reserve (DCLG 2022-24)	-	(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)
BWCCG 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)

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the Year Ended 31 March 2023 – continued

12. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS – continued**2021/22 Comparatives for movement in funds**

	At 01/04/2021	Net movement in funds	Transfer between funds	At 31/03/2022
	£	£	£	£
Unrestricted funds				
General Fund	18,398	(26,695)	20,809	12,511
General Reserve	53,000	-	2,000	55,000
Designated Reserve (SmartWorks)	1,578	(1,578)	-	-
Designated Reserve (Staffing)	42,000	-	(9,000)	33,000
Designated Reserve (Premises)	33,000	-	(13,500)	19,500
Designated Reserve (DCLG 2022-24)	48,000	-	-	48,000
	195,976	(28,273)	309	168,011
Restricted funds				
Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities	5,338	(5,338)	-	-
RBC – Narrowing the Gap (Lot 1.3)	11,524	(192)	-	11,331
RBC – Outreach & Community Education (Lot 12.1)	26,735	2,524	-	29,260
Reading Borough Council – Zumba	-	-	-	-
Inner Wheel	2,567	(2,566)	-	-
Henry Smith	(2,531)	7,676	-	5,145
Awards4All	2,450	(2,450)	-	-
Earley Charity	-	1,773	-	1,773
BWCCG and RVA grants	871	3,100	-	3,971
Berkshire Community Foundation	-	309	(309)	-
CPAR Research Project	-	315	-	315
Carewell Research Project	-	3,721	-	3,721
MHFA courses	6,592	(3,221)	-	3,370
	53,545	5,651	(309)	58,886
TOTAL FUNDS	249,521	(22,623)	-	226,898

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the Year Ended 31 March 2023 – continued

12. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS – continued

2021/22 comparative net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds			
General Fund	47,851	(74,546)	(26,695)
Designated Reserve (SmartWorks)	-	(1,578)	(1,578)
	47,851	(76,124)	(28,273)
Restricted funds			
Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities	12,000	(17,338)	(5,338)
RBC – Narrowing the Gap (Lot 1.3)	23,500	(23,692)	(192)
RBC – Outreach & Community Education (Lot 12.1)	13,250	(10,726)	2,524
Reading Borough Council – Zumba	1,470	(1,470)	-
Inner Wheel	-	(2,566)	(2,566)
Henry Smith	32,233	(24,558)	7,676
Awards4All	-	(2,450)	(2,450)
Earley Charity	5,000	(3,227)	1,773
BWCCG and RVA grants	5,000	(1,900)	3,100
Berkshire Community Foundation	3,500	(3,191)	309
CPAR Research Project	4,452	(4,136)	315
Carewell Research Project	4,263	(542)	3,721
MHFA courses	-	(3,221)	(3,221)
	104,668	(99,017)	5,651
TOTAL FUNDS	152,519	(175,142)	(22,623)

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 £56,000 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 Reserve to cover future staffing costs. We have been able to reduce this reserve compared to 2021/22 since restricted funds cover most of our expected 2023/24 staffing costs.

Designated Reserve (Premises)

An amount of £19,500 has been put aside to cover general premises costs for 2023/24 that are not covered by restricted funds or the DCLG designated reserve.

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the Year Ended 31 March 2023 – continued

12. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS – continued

Designated Reserve (SmartWorks)

A small designated reserve was held to show the deposit paid by SmartWorks Reading on their rental of premises. This reserve was no longer required as at 31 March 2022, since SmartWorks moved out in October 2021 and the deposit was returned.

Designated Reserve (DCLG 2023-24)

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. The designated reserve of £48,000 has been set up to use during financial years 2022/23 and 2023/24. We have used just over half of this reserve in 2022/23 and will use the rest during 2023/24.

13. RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

There are no related party transactions for the year ended 31 March 2023.