

ANNUAL REVIEW



APRIL 2012 - MARCH 2013



Brighton & Hove
City Council supported

Brighton and Hove City **NHS**
Primary Care Trust

ANNUAL REVIEW 2012-2013

Chair's report

I took over as Interim Chair in May 2013, when our Chair for the last 5 years, Mark Elsworth, left us along with long serving treasurer Derek Cooper. I must start this report by extending appreciation from both our organisation and the wider LGBT community for their loyal and hard work over so many years. Their decision to plan their departures was extremely helpful in ensuring that we retained the strong governance and leadership that the community has come to expect of Switchboard. We were successful in recruiting a new treasurer, qualified accountant Rob Apsey, along with three new trustees with expertise in human resources, fundraising, policy and business development, and we will be recruiting a permanent Chair and additional Trustees over the coming months.

In addition to securing the governance of the organisation, I am pleased to report on a number of achievements for Switchboard during 2012-13. This has been a good year for us despite the ongoing challenges of the economic climate, which have particularly affected small charities such as ours. Thanks to good management, our income level was healthy and we managed to end the year with a small surplus which has allowed us to meet our long held aspiration to start to build towards the small amount of reserve that charities should have. This will provide some stability for 2013-14 and will enable us to continue delivering our vital work.

Our organisation continued to rely on the ongoing support of our core funders: Brighton and Hove City Council and the Primary Care Trust, and also Lloyds TSB, The Big Lottery (Awards for All), the Allen Lane Foundation, the Cooperative Membership Community Fund and West Sussex County Council. We continue to be deeply appreciative of their support and their recognition of the valuable service we deliver to our local LGBT communities. This year, we were also successful in securing a number of local grants and donations including from the Rainbow Fund to develop the counselling service, money raised by volunteers running

the Brighton Marathon on our behalf, and generous support from LGBT businesses and community organisations via several local fundraising events

The most notable achievement in 2012-13 was our work to bring the LGBT HIP project into our organisation. The project was established by a consortium of the city's LGBT organisations and previously jointly managed by Switchboard and the Terrence Higgins Trust. Locating LGBT HIP within Switchboard consolidates our position as the city's only generic LGBT organisation, aiming to serve the diverse range of LGBT people in Brighton & Hove via engagement, identification of need, and delivery of support services.

We have also developed some key partnerships to meet the differing needs in our community, including an emerging partnership with Rise to address the difficult issue of same sex domestic violence, and a partnership with Mind Out which is also outlined in our report.

As we continue to develop the organisation and the range of work we are engaged in, we reviewed our structure and decided to bring Switchboard in line with similar organisations and roles in affording the title of Director to Natalie Woods, previously titled Services and Development Manager.

As a volunteer-led organisation, the wonderful efforts of those who give up their time to answer calls on the helpline, see counselling clients, serve on the Management Committee and help Switchboard in a myriad of other ways, were of course key to delivering our services and were very much appreciated.

As we look ahead, raising funds to support our work remains a key focus of 2013-14, along with developing our services to ensure they remain relevant and useful to LGBT people in the city. Our priorities include engagement and support for more 'marginalised' LGBT people, enhanced support for LGBT people experiencing domestic violence, dedicated counselling support for trans clients, and expanding the range of ways that LGBT people can access the helpline by investigating the potential of new digital technologies. Much of this will entail partnership work with other community organisations which we look forward to.

Overall, Switchboard is in a good position to serve the LGBT community in Brighton & Hove.

Dr. Maria Antoniou
Interim Chair

Executive Summary

Brighton and Hove LGBT Switchboard is a community, generic LGBT organisation working with anyone over the age of 16 who identifies as LGBT or is affected by issues related to gender or sexual identity. We are not age or issue specific, and are here to listen, inform, connect with and support any LGBT person (or family and friends of LGBT people) with any concern that is impacting on wellbeing and health, and to give information including signposting on to other places where needed. We provide LGBT people with opportunities to connect, get information, support and counselling through the following ways:

- Our telephone help-line
- Our face to face counselling service.
- Our engagement and consultation project
- Our various volunteering opportunities

Our help-line and counselling services are provided by volunteers drawn from the community.

This year we celebrated our 38th birthday, responded to over 1000 enquiries via the help-line and delivered an average of 6 counselling sessions each to approximately 40 LGBT people. In those 38 years, we have grown from a small volunteer led community organisation to a registered charity that has over 40 volunteers offering a range of support services to LGBT people in Brighton & Hove and beyond.

Our track record, experience and knowledge of the unique needs of LGBT people continues to ensure that Brighton's LGBT community is supported via the services that we provide, as well as via the partnership work and connections that we make within and beyond the city's LGBT community. As the only generic LGBT organisation in this area, our expertise and specialist knowledge of the needs and experiences of the LGBT community is frequently called upon by other agencies seeking to develop their knowledge and skills in responding to and supporting LGBT service users, so that there is a cascade of our work to reach much more than those that have direct contact with us. We are well regarded by our partners and statutory agencies, as evidenced by the number of those regularly approaching us for advice, consultation, training and representation at community events.

Building on this strong foundation, we have approached our 38th years and seen some significant successes and challenges that are detailed in this annual review.

2. Introduction

Thanks to our staff and volunteers, in the financial year 2012/13, we directly helped over 1000 people via the help-line and counselling service, as well as indirectly helping people via our partnership work including the LGBT Health and Inclusion (HIP) LGBT engagement project.

Following the financial turbulence of the previous year (2011-2012), the support of our funders and reduction in our running costs from our move to Community Base premises meant that we started this in a much more financially stable position. However, we knew that we had a number of new challenges to face including ensuring that we retained strong governance as we worked towards the planned departure from our Management Committee of long standing chair and treasurer Mark Elsworth and Derek Cooper. We also wanted to increase staff and volunteer capacity to maintain coordinated service provision responding to service users in a consistent and timely way. To meet the challenges, two key priorities for the year were management committee recruitment and securing funds to increase staff capacity.

By the end of this financial year we had a strong management committee of 6 members with including a new treasurer and an interim chair. Savings we had secured in our operating costs from reviewing our fixed costs meant that we were finally able to increase the temporarily decreased Director's capacity from 18.5 to 26 hours per week.

3. Key achievements

- Provision of help-line services to over 1000 callers
- Provision of counselling sessions to 40 clients
- Secured a comfortable suitable dedicated space for counselling
- Brighton + Hove City Council grant secured for the next 3 year term (2013-2016)
- Significant funds raised from community fundraising activities
- Reduced financial overheads as a result of the premises move
- A review of the charity's management committee and governance arrangements and recruitment of 5 management committee members including recruitment of an interim chair and treasurer.
- Development of a fundraising strategy to strengthen sustainability
- Recruitment of 4 counsellors
- Continued Co-management of LGBT Health and Inclusion Project (HIP) in partnership with the Terrence Higgins Trust and management of the transition process including securing funding for the project to be owned and managed solely by Switchboard from April 2013.
- In partnership with MindOut, we secured a health contract for the delivery of out of hours telephone information and support to support LGBT people's mental health and wellbeing
- Entered into a partnership with Rise domestic violence charity to start to address the needs of victims of same sex domestic violence.

4. LGBT Switchboard staff, trustees and volunteers

Staff: At the beginning of this financial year Switchboard's staff team comprised of a half time Services and Development Manager and a part-time administrator. The reduction in the manager's working hours had been a concession to financial concerns some years ago, and has been a struggle for organisation. Our healthier financial position and more significantly, the reduction achieved in our running costs from the move to Community Base meant that in August 2012, we able to increase her hours to 26 hours per week. Later in the year, we reviewed our structure and how we are developing and decided to bring Switchboard in line with similar organisations and roles in affording the title of Director to Natalie Woods.

Trustees: We started the financial year with 4 trustees, and with the knowledge that our chair and treasures would be leaving as planned in May 2013. A trustee recruitment process was planned, informed by a skills audit of the board in order to identify gaps and enable us to develop and strengthen the Board to lead us through the next stage of our development. One trustee left during this year but we recruited 5 new trustees including a new treasurer, Rob Apsey, and one of our new trustees, Maria Antoniou, agreed to act as interim chair until we could recruit someone. By the end of the year, the management committee was made up of 7 members with a wide variety of skills including third sector experience, fundraising, business planning, policy development, finance, marketing, HR and strategic vision.

Volunteers: In April 2012 a total of 20 volunteers delivered the help-line service, and 5 counsellors delivered counselling. Developing the capacity of the counselling service was a key priority for the year and by the end of the year we had managed to increase the counsellor team to 7.

We continue to be identified as a volunteering organisation with a volunteering ethos at our core, and we provide a range of volunteering opportunities to members of the LGBT community in both service delivery and office based work.

We appreciate the dedication and loyalty that our volunteers demonstrate in their work for us and we invest in them through the provision of support and training. All help-line volunteers are given an initial 2 day training, peer mentoring practical training during an induction period as well as attending a programme of 7 mandatory training courses. These cover the areas of HIV, general sexual health, trans awareness, mental health awareness, counselling skills, LGBT hate crime supporting and reporting, and suicide interventions skills training. Counsellors can access the same training programme and we aim to meet any additional training needs that the counselling team may have. All volunteers attend regular team meetings that allow them to share knowledge of the wider work that we undertake as well as giving an opportunity to volunteers to contribute to our development.

The following testimonials illustrate the benefits our volunteers get from their work:

'I feel a sense of achievement albeit somewhat intangible but also a sense that I can be there to listen, give a sense of understanding and where required am able to pass on pertinent information to the caller enabling them to access professional help. I also gain indirectly through gaining a greater understanding of the diversity within the community, people who are different from me but of equal worth. Overall what might be described as a "win win" situation?' Help-line volunteer 2013

'When I moved to Brighton I wanted to volunteer for Switchboard so that I could meet other queer people, and I wanted to do something that would make a positive contribution to the LGBT community here. Volunteering for the helpline is both varied and rewarding. I feel like I help people in a really concrete way, and that constantly motivates me.' Help-line volunteer 2013

5. Service Reports

5.1 Counselling

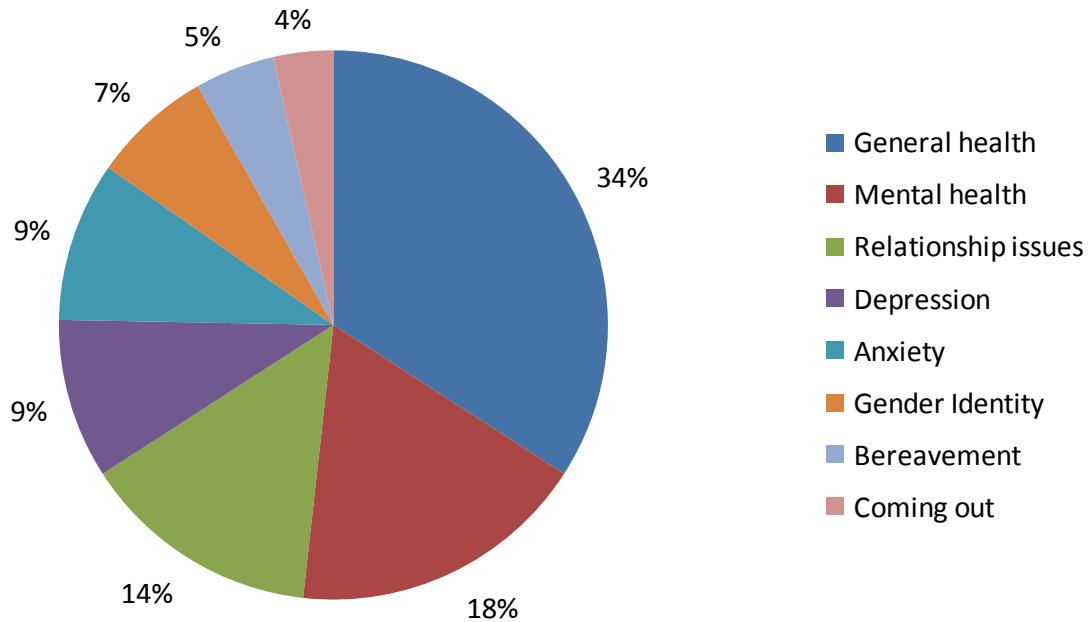
During the year 2012-2013, the waiting list for counselling was on average between four and five months – an inevitable consequence of reducing staff capacity and the counselling team in the previous year due to the financial difficulties. By March 2013, whilst demand for our service remained strong, there were 20 people waiting for counselling with an average wait time of five months. We have taken action to address and reduce this by:

- A focus to increase capacity which enabled us to recruit additional counsellors by January 2013
- Deciding to recruit a counselling coordinator for one day a week to start in April 2013.

Whilst we are already beginning to see the benefits of this capacity building, our counselling coordinator will also continue to review our service and strive to find ways to provide more counselling to more people and reduce our waiting list. This year, we have re-established our links with local counselling training institutes and are currently providing three training placements to LGBT identified counsellors in training, which will be an investment in our capacity for the future.

During this 12 months period, the counselling service responded to 50 requests for counselling, 40 people received counselling and a total of 242 counselling hours were provided to clients. Illustrated below is a breakdown of the nature of issues that people presented to counselling with, but it should be remembered that for many clients, a number of complex issues were interrelated. The chart below records the key presenting issue for the clients we supported:

COUNSELLING PRESENTING ISSUES



But critically for us, behind the figures are the people, and we gain a lot more insight about the way we are helping our clients through our feedback questionnaires which have included comments including the following:

'I understand the loss of the father figure I never had, but wanted. I now accept that he could not understand my sexuality as it was a generation thing. I now feel content and at one with my sexuality and have let go of past hurt.'

'It was a helpful safe space to talk through difficulties.'

'I'm so impressed my counsellor understands everything.'

'I felt the 12 sessions have improved my self development and given me a clear understanding to my insecurities. The counsellor being male served well for my issues and has built my trust in men'.

'Very helpful and beneficial. The sessions were always very insightful and always gave me a lot to work with post session'.

'Counselling helped me get through the coming out process and deal with it well.'

The counselling service will continue to be at the heart of our support to the LGBT community.

5.2 Helpline

The help-line continues to operate weekdays 5-9pm and weekends 5-7pm, and during this year was covered by an average team of 20 volunteers. A particular challenge for us was covering all of the shifts at advertised opening hours. In response we introduced a ring-back service. Callers can now leave a message and receive a call back if they are unable to make immediate contact with a volunteer. We recognise that lack of cover at advertised opening hours is an issue that we continue to address through the recruitment of new help-line volunteers as well as increasing staff capacity to coordinate the help-line and volunteers to support service delivery and volunteer retention.

Additional plans for the help-line include developing new ways in which people can make contact with us, such as via social media and website chat rooms. This has been a key strategic aim during this year and has been and continues to be a focus for our fundraising activity.

We have worked closely with MindOut in our help-line provision and development to support people with their mental health 'out of hours' service, complementing their new web chat and peer mentoring service.

During this year the Helpline has received 1048 calls – illustrated below is a breakdown of the nature of issues callers have been supported with.

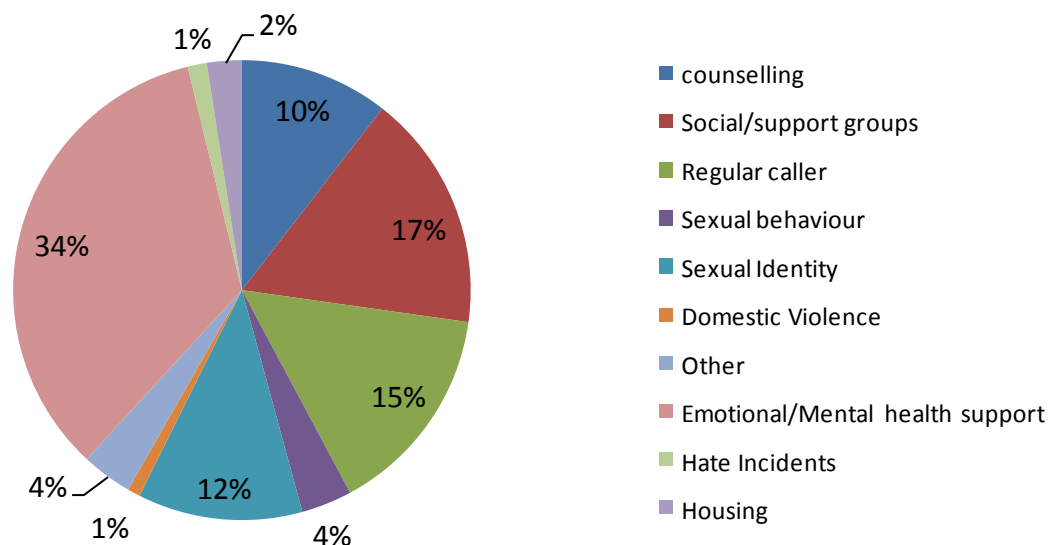
The following feedback we have received from callers to the help-line illustrate how helpful and valuable the service has been to them:

(Calling today) has 'made a huge difference, I have felt isolated and now feel hopeful'

'Calling has given me the feeling that I am not alone'

'Thank you for listening, it has felt good to talk'

ISSUES CALLERS PRESENTED TO THE HELPLINE



6. Networking, partnerships, community engagement and representation

Throughout 2012-2013 we developed and strengthened our relationship with other agencies in the city and the wider community. A consultation carried out in the autumn of 2011 highlighted the need for us to improve community engagement and strengthen our community connections, and we have acted upon this by working with our volunteers to increase the level of representation at community events, developed our social media interactions, and we prioritised this in our strategic business plan for 2012-15.

A key achievement during this year has been planning for the transition of the LGBT Health and Inclusion engagement and consultation project (LGBT HIP) to become a Switchboard project from April 2013. During the year the groundwork for the transition has been done including consultation with commissioners and the LGBT community and voluntary sector, bidding for contracts with Brighton and Hove City Council and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) (who have taken over from the Primary Care Trust) to continue providing this LGBT engagement structure and preparations for the transfer under TUPE regulations of the project coordinator. By the end of this year, the transition process was completed so that LGBT HIP became part of the Switchboard organisation on the 1st April 2013.

We have continued to work closely with our key partner agencies including MindOut, Allsorts, The Clare Project, FTMB, and Sussex Police. We have strengthened our partnership work with Rise working closely with and supporting their LGBT Domestic Violence project.

MindOut

This year we began to develop a closer working relationship with MindOut, exploring how we can work together to support the mental health needs of local LGBT people, including the sharing of each organisation's resources and expertise. During the year we worked

collaboratively, bidding for a local contract to provide out of hours community mental health services to the LGBT community. By the end of the year, MindOut were awarded a contract with a sub-contracting agreement with Switchboard to provide telephone help-line mental health support to LGBT people from April 2013-March 2016.

Rise

This year we began working more closely with Rise supporting their LGBT Domestic Violence project to be more rooted in the LGBT community by facilitating some shared working spaces as well as partnership meetings to explore the operational and strategic development needs of the project.

7. Priorities and Areas for Development in 2013–14

The year 2012/2013 was one of consolidation following the previous year's financial difficulties, and our focus has been on setting strategic objectives to manage the challenges that we faced as a consequence of reduced capacity in recent years, and to develop the service in response to feedback from our clients and users.

Building and strengthening the management committee and agreeing realistic and achievable organisational objectives enabled us to begin 2013 with clarity about our priorities and areas for development. These priority areas are:

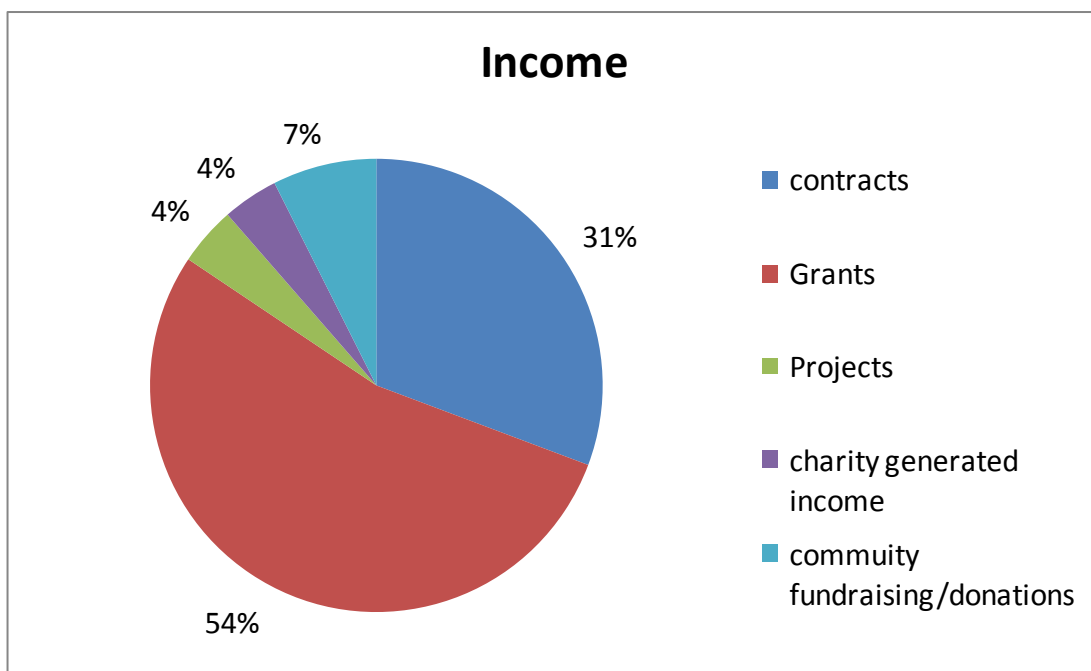
- Review Switchboard's advice service delivery to improve access to the service and make best use of volunteer resources and commitment, including a review of the potential to provide the information and support through other channels using new technologies and reaching more people
- Increase staff hours to increase organisational capacity and coordination of service delivery and volunteers
- Increase our volunteering capacity to increase our level of resources
- Develop the counselling team in order to see more clients and reduce the waiting list
- Develop existing partnership work and explore new partnership work to meet unmet needs of the LGBT community
- Transfer, integrate, manage and develop the LGBT HIP engagement and consultation project and Increase community engagement activity strengthening community connections
- To continue the review of governance and recruit a permanent chair for the organisation.
- Develop service user involvement initiatives
- Improve outcome based monitoring and evaluation systems
- Develop the website and develop the use of social media

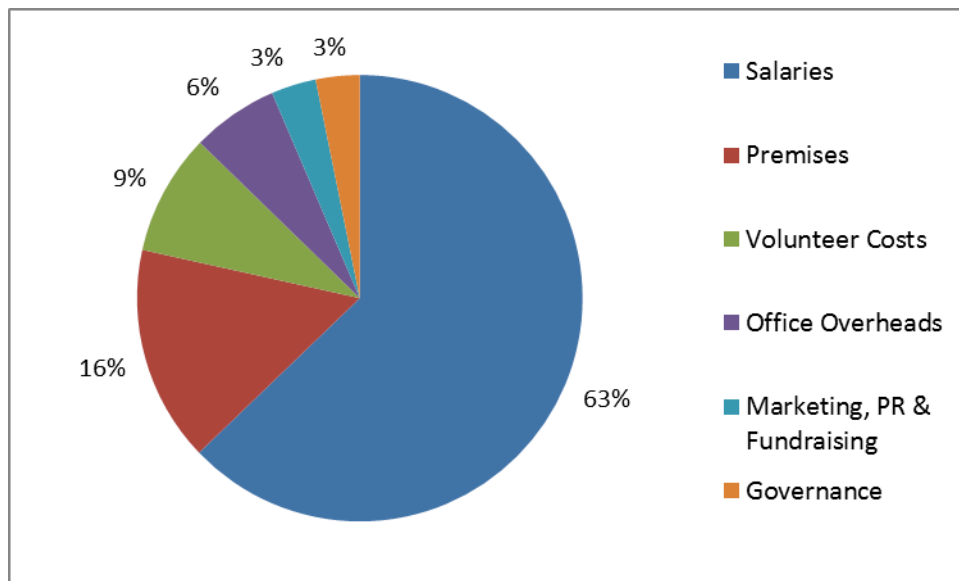
8. Financial report

During this year, our activities were made possible by funding from the following who have made our work to support the local LGBT community possible, and we remain extremely grateful for all this support:

- Brighton & Hove City Council
- Brighton & Hove Primary Care Trust
- West Sussex County Council
- Lloyds TSB Foundation
- The Big Lottery (Awards for All)
- The Allen Lane Foundation
- The Cooperative Community Membership Fund
- Community fundraising events and individual donations

Total income for the year was £79238, whilst expenditure was £54196, and our annual report provides a more detailed breakdown of the contributions of our funders and our areas of expenditure.





Reserves

The financial difficulties faced by the organisation over the last few years have highlighted the need to hold a sensible level of reserves. Our reserve policy has been reviewed by the Management Committee and aims to strike a balance between financial prudence and ensuring funding is used to meet the charities objectives.

We aim to hold in reserve between 3-6 months operating costs, to enable us to bridge any short term funding issues, and to ensure that the company can meet all of its legal and moral obligations should the worst happen. Our success in securing additional funding this year, combined with reducing operational costs, has made it possible for us to create a small financial reserve to put the organisation on a more stable financial footing.