

2020/2021

ANNUAL REPORT



Supporting children and young people with Down's syndrome and their community.



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

This has been another challenging year for all charities who have had to navigate service provision in a pandemic and also maintain close contact with the communities that they serve. I am very proud and pleased to be able to report that our Charity Manager and the team at 21 Together have worked very hard to overcome these obstacles and have ensured that the charity has continued to support our local Down's syndrome community in Kent throughout this year. The team have managed to not only maintain services, but they have exceeded expectations and delivered better and more innovative provision despite the challenging circumstances. Much of the year has fluctuated between online and face to face provision, and I am delighted to report that the team have all worked very hard to ensure continuity of service and to reevaluate the services that we can offer to allow for the flexibility needed due to the restrictions imposed by the pandemic.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to our many volunteers and, of course, the Trustee board, without whose freely offered time and support, the charity simply could not continue to go from strength to strength.

In the coming year we are seeking to add new staff members to the team and to grow our Trustee board. This will allow us to continue to expand our services and offering both face to face and online. One positive that has come from the changes brought about by the pandemic, is that we can now support our community online in addition to the face to face offering and this allows us to support more families within Kent and especially those for whom distance was a barrier to accessing the charity's services. We will continue to work to provide this expanded and inclusive service into the forthcoming year.

I wish to congratulate and thank the whole team at 21 Together for another successful year and look forward to seeing the progress and growth continue into the next year.

Sarah Wildgoose, Chair of Trustees

THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS























TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT



Objects of the Charity

CIO - Foundation Registered 25 Jan 2016 as amended on 25 Sep 2020. Amendments made in Sept 2020 to allow digital projects to reach a wider audience. The projects remain focused on Kent based families but benefit a national community. Therefore, our Objects were changed to allow us to open up digital projects to a wider audience with great success.

- 1.To relieve the needs of people with Down's syndrome, living particularly but not exclusively in Kent and their families and carers through provision of training, support, education and practical advice, and by such other means as the trustees may determine.
- 2. To advance the education of the public and in particular the parents and carers of people with Down's syndrome and professionals involved in their care and education, in the specific needs and abilities of people with Down's syndrome.

VISION

Everyone has the right to live their lives to the fullest of their potential, regardless of disability or disadvantage.



MISSION

To support children and young people with Down's syndrome and their families to access the right support to live full and vibrant lives.



Enable people with Down's syndrome to be fully included in society by giving them access to the early intervention and skills needed to achieve the best possible outcomes in their lives.

Educate families and professionals to enable them to provide the best possible support for people with Down's syndrome.

Support families through peer networks, parent support groups and online forums.

Advocate and build awareness of the achievements of people with Down's syndrome. Recognising the positive impact of our community on the wider world is key in promoting true inclusion and cohesion.

Promote raised expectations of what is possible within our community and the wider community.

Nothing for us, without us!

OUR WORK IS LED BY OUR COMMUNITY



Our work is rooted in the needs of our community.

We are committed to continuing a cycle of feedback and reform, so our community and stakeholders can see the impact of our work.

It is not enough just to listen, we have to share our findings, and how we use the information to plan for the future. The Trustees and staff have paid due regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit when planning all services and ensure the services delivered are in line with our Objects and Mission Statement.

"Co-production and community engagement lies at the heart of all decision-making at all levels within the organisation." - Charity Manager

"21 Together are doing a great job adapting to this ever-changing and challenging environment, to support our young people and their families. Well done and thanks." - Parent / Carer

COVID-19 IMPACT

In a year of such disruption and change, we are proud to say that 21 Together stepped up. We continued a vast majority of services, either online or through other means. The needs within our community rocketed due to the impacts of the loss of learning, social isolation, and the collapse in access to public services.

The devastating impact on access to government help and support for our community inspired new services, as well as new ways of working. We took all our sessions online as live video conferencing sessions, as well as developing a prerecorded approach to support parents at home in lockdown.



We constantly spoke to our community about the support they needed and updated our approach. As part of these discussions, it became clear that those families with preschool children were really struggling to access any form of structured learning and that families were struggling to cope. Those discussions led to the development of Teach Me Too, a new project to ease the pressure on families and support professionals to keep delivering learning through this time. Teach Me Too was developed as an online video learning library designed for children with Down's syndrome. The response from the national Down's syndrome community was so strong that in January 2021 we were able to open up the digital content to support a wider national and international cohort of children and young people.

We remained Kent Children's charity of the year supported by the Kent Community Foundation and Wards.

"21 Together have been doing great to support the community remotely as best they can over the past months/year! So thank you - as it's not easy!!"

Challenges



Covid -19

Covid-19 mortality incidence in vaccinated individuals is highest for those with Down's syndrome (12.7-fold increase). Many of our children and young adults were considered extremely clinically vulnerable and spent long periods in isolated situations.



Decreased access to education, health and social care

The disintegration of social/health care services for people with learning disabilities, created the perfect storm for additional mental health issues alongside the negative impact on health, education, and social care outcomes.



Remote Working

A team of professionals with no experience in online working or the necessary tech skills needed to re-train and in new ways of working. Keeping our community safe, but still delivering gold standard care is down to the sheer dedication of the staff



Volunteers

Volunteers have been a key part of this successful transition to remote working, with technical expertise hours donated to the charity exceeding 200 hours this year by one individual. Other volunteers took their skills online to provide support and friendship to young adults in isolated situations.



Fundraising

With our key planned events cancelled, we were able to access additional grant funding to go alongside some passionate fundraisers who wouldn't let Covid win! Their sheer tenacity helped ensure we had some community income to continue supporting our work.

WHO DO WE HELP?

USER TYPE	TOTAL
ALL CONTACTS	217
INDIVIDUALS	183
FAMILY GROUPS	130
PROFESSIONALS	34
ESTABLISHMENTS	28
PREVIOUSLY KNOWN INDIVIDUALS	110









EQUAL ACCESS

This year we have continued to support families pursuant to our Financial Support Policy which enables families to apply for financial support to access our services. This is a critical part of the support that the charity provides to ensure that our services are available to everyone within our community, irrespective of means.



Communication for Life Project

Communication for	Total Users	60
Life	Unique Users	40
	Number of sessions offered	21
Communication Groups	Number of Hours	126
	Unique Users	22
	Number of sessions offered	20
Circle Groups	Number of Hours	12
	Unique Users	17
	Number of sessions offered	9
Social connection	Number of Hours	20
	Unique Users	21

Our Communication for Life project continues to provide communication groups, circle groups, and holiday camps, which all focus on building the communication skills you need for real life. This can range from specialised speech therapy to social communication and friendship support.

This year the project has been funded through Children in Need for our 4 – 18-year-olds with additional support from independent donors and corporate donations from Wards to help us deliver this project to the over 18's. Children in Need are supporting the project for three years giving us stability and space to start building a longer-term future and looking at other projects.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic we were unable to run any camps this year. All other services ran online.

To ease isolation and lack of connection – Social Connections sessions were introduced to replace Circle groups in the interim until a new service provision could be created post-pandemic.

Education for Life Project

Education for Life, has progressed significantly. Early intervention groups were due to launch in March 2020, but this was cancelled due to lockdown. In response to this, we built the Teach Me Too project which enabled pre-school children, as well as school-aged children to access specialised learning in their own homes. Over 50 families accessed this resource before Jan 2021 when it became nationally available. Our objects were updated to enable us to deliver this support to a wider audience and maximise the benefit given it was an online resource.

Training continued online with great success. It included sessions like Learning Needs of a pupil with Down's syndrome, Managing Behaviour of a pupil with Down's syndrome, Maths Workshops and Me, My Body, My Friends, My Life (SRE).

Attendance at these training sessions:

- attended by a total of 131 users (145 including staff)
- 98 unique users
- attended by 29 professionals from 20 establishments
- 19 users attended 2 or more training sessions
- The most training sessions attended by one user was 4

"Fantastic course... learnt so much and so thankful to have a much clearer understanding of how my child with DS learns and the tools I can use to help her. Thank you!!"

"I loved the course being online as it's always really difficult to attend training days in person.

"The passion from the tutors really showed through which I loved. Their knowledge & experience was fantastic."

"Amazing course and only hope that anyone who has or involved with a child with Down syndrome has access to this course. It is a real eye opener as to how our beautiful little girls mind works"

"It is a lifeline to be able to learn, discuss, compare notes with others in the same situation, and improves the children's lives by helping their carers feel more together and capable."

"I have never been so engrossed in an online workshop! But I am a bit of a maths nerd too!

It was excellent"

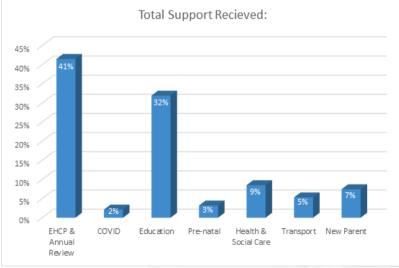
Community Support

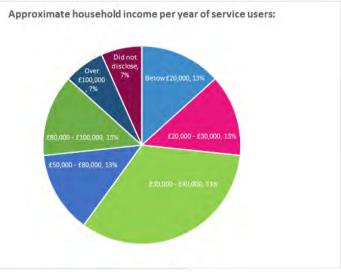
Community Support has been busy with a change in how the service is delivered. Due to Covid-19 the service was delivered solely by phone and via online video calls. We also increased the service available on our closed social media pages answering questions and supporting individuals to improve ease of access. In addition to our usual service, we also developed additional advice pages on our website that guided families through the everchanging complex legal changes to SEN law during lockdown. Colyer Fergusson Charitable Trust continues to support this service for the second year and we are looking at additional support to enable specialist teacher support for schools where needed.

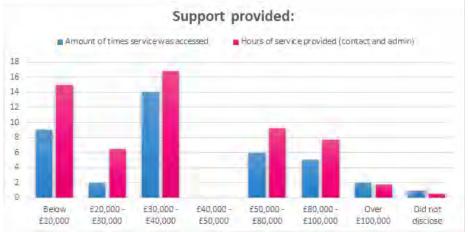
The Community Support Service has been accessed 109 times by 44 unique users. Total time spent on the service was 172.75 hours separated as:

- 125.75 hours on direct service support split as:
- 95 hours contact time
- 30.75 hours admin time
- 15 hours on social media
- 11 hours on support groups
- 11 hours on training and research
- 10 hours on service review

Support was provided in 7 different areas and accessed as detailed in the chart below:







Community Support

Service quality, importance, and impact

- ·100% rated the quality of the service as very high (maximum rating).
- ·100% found it extremely important to have a syndrome specific service (maximum importance).
- ·100% thought the service was definitely needed (maximum importance).
- ·100% found the level of impact the service have on them and their family was extremely positive (maximum rating).

"The advice was very clear and helpful and the encouragement to persevere with our approach to social services to try and access social care support was valuable too, intellectually and emotionally"

"I was feeling desperate after the antenatal diagnosis. Two people from 21 Together listened to me over the phone and talked to me in a way that calmed me down and made the situation more normal, easier to accept. After that, a video conference was organised in order for me and my wife to get introduced to other parents and hear their stories. They made us feel in good company and a lot less alone."

"Access to expertise and talking to a person who has been in similar situations and being able to TALK not just write."

"To have somebody who understands the profile (of T21) and who is independent from KCC to offer guidance/advice on the process."

"I received valuable advice and support in pressing for our daughter to receive help from the Disabled Children's Service which encouraged us to persevere and has resulted in substantial support being promised despite the Social Services' initial misgivings about our daughter's eligibility"



Family Support Groups

Supporting the people who are caring for the person with Down's syndrome is just as important as the person with Down's syndrome. We create a space where we can come together to share our stories, share our lives, and sometimes not share at all. A place where we can talk about our loved ones, or simply time to listen. A time that can be whatever the community needs it to be.



Play and Stay

Our Play and Stay sessions are specifically for those with younger children and expecting families. We have a new programme planned with regular speakers and expert guidance, as well as time to connect with families. When we are back together there will be areas for the little ones to engage in toys, books, and sensory play!



Wellbeing

As parents and carers life is always busy - They rarely have time to focus themselves! Therefore, 21 Together's Wellbeing Sessions are specifically aimed at those parents/carers/family members who deserve a little time to recharge and regroup. These sessions allow the opportunity to take a break from caring and focus on their well-being. Activities led by instructors/speakers trained to build resilience and provide stress-relieving techniques.



Empowerment

Our Empowerment sessions are there to provide the knowledge and tools to best support their children and young people. Aimed at those with children of school age and beyond we will have regular speakers to provide expert guidance on various areas of social care and support. Trained 21 Together staff are available at all these sessions to provide individualised and tailored support to families that need it.

Overall statistics

- 58 unique users of the service (data on parents/carers only)
- 181 total users attended Family Support Groups. Of these users:
- 47 users were children
- 134 users were parents/carers
- 32 users attended two or more Family Support Group sessions
- 21 users attended three or more Family Support Group sessions
- The greatest number of Family Support Groups sessions attended by one user was 8

Family Support Groups

Parent Views



"I think this is a fantastic service which allows parents and carers to have a space where they can talk about their concerns with other parents without feeling judged."



"I've thoroughly enjoyed the wellbeing sessions. There's been a great mix of activities and I've attempted things i would have never done and found I really enjoy them. its great opportunity to do something for myself. I close the door and let the chaos continue the other side of it. Thank you"



"Really great to be able to discuss a topic such as transport in detail with the expert and to have my questions answered. Such a great resource!"





Volunteers

OUR UNSUNG HEROS



This year our work with volunteers was limited by Covid-19. We are very thankful for those volunteers working in the background to help build more efficient IT systems and help with building maintenance and equipment. We were able to utilise some new volunteers through our online programmes. This gave us access to regular individuals who developed peer support sessions and enabled projects like "Take Over" week, which saw our young adults with Down's syndrome taking over our social media to showcase their lives. Having a volunteer of a similar age to the young people to support them goes a long to improving confidence and ensuring age-appropriate interactions.



"This year we have loved seeing our young people continuing their volunteering online and outside. They do a fantastic job, supporting us at events, while simultaneously being the role models that our younger children need and deserve." - Charity Manager

About The Finances

The financial year 20/21 saw a significant growth of our charity income due to the planned increase in services funded by grants and trusts, such as the 'Communication for life' project funded by Children in Need. This saw an income of £33,454 from Children in Need to provide vital support services within this financial year. We secured grants from The National Lottery totaling over £53,700, including £36,200 dedicated to core running costs and liquidity cover. Multiple other grant makers with grant values of between £1000-£5000 have also had a significant impact. This has led to a big jump in restricted funds as we move into the next financial year. Our unrestricted reserves stay within our reserve policy guidelines and currently sits at £66,289. Our reserve policy considers the stability of forecasted income, economic factors, as well as the complex needs of our beneficiaries and the impact of gaps in provision of services.

As the charity has continued to expand, the Board of Trustees has undertaken an entire organisation restructure and staff review. We have also accessed resilience funding from Kent County Council via the Kent Community Foundation to work with a professional fundraising consultant who helped us produce and start to action a robust fundraising strategy to secure the charity's financial future. Restricted funding in core costs will enable us to deliver on that strategy, increase the number of staff responsible for fundraising, and relieve pressure on the current Charity Manager. Alongside this decision-making, the board also agreed to fund a full-time admin role to support the projects and teams. This allows charity leaders to spend more time on strategic planning, resilience building, and quality assurance.

In April 2021, it appears we have a very high level of funds available in core costs. However, this money is already assigned to support these new staff and restructure its first year. We anticipate that this fund will be depleted by the end of March 2022, and we will need to ensure the team we have in place are supported to find new funding to support further projects and cover the cost of their employment.



The increase in staffing costs was a vital exercise carried out to build future fundraising capacity and resilience, whilst ensuring the skills of the current staff are utilised effectively, and the charity sees good value in the tasks completed by each team member.

We remain confident that our current levels of both restricted and unrestricted funds put us in a position where we can continue to build resilience for the difficult years ahead while growing and enabling more families to access our services. We need to make use of this year to fully diversify and explore other fundraising options by delivering our fundraising strategy. We are aware that the next few years will be challenging, and we have planned to ensure we maintain safe financial levels and excellent services.

Not only that, but we ended the year with exceptional news in March 2021 that the National Lottery have awarded us three years of funding to allow us to design, implement and evaluate a much wider education for life programme including groups from birth through to age seven, alongside delivering our training and learning programmes. We are hugely grateful for this support, and we have great plans for the future. As we come out of lockdown, we will have a generation of children with even less access to early interventions. This programme will help us provide the much-needed support those families who need it.



INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF 21 TOGETHER

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of 21 Together

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of 21 Together for the year ended 31 March 2021.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the Trustee's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- 1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by section 130 of the Act
- 2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

I have no concerns and 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.

S.R. Sampson BFP FCA FCIE DChA Ashdown Hurrey Auditors Limited 20 Havelock Road Hastings East Sussex TN34 1BP

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Date:			 																									 				

21 TOGETHER
RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Year Ended 31.03.2021 Total funds £	Year Ended 31.03.2020 Total funds £
RECEIPTS					
Grants	2	8,522	129,599	138,121	24,456
Donations	3	20,869	54,613	75,482	25,796
Fundraising	4	3,247	5	3,252	2,107
Charitable Activities	5	5,333	13,016	18,349	9,854
Total		37,971	197,233	235,204	62,213
PAYMENTS					
Costs of Generating Funds	6	775	-	775	4,002
Charitable Activities	7	24,794	81,959	106,753	83,165
Management and Administration Costs	8	8,291	4,398	12,689	6,254
Other Expenditure	9	1,333	1,614	2,947	2,218
Total		35,193	87,971	123,164	95,639
NET RECEIPTS / (PAYMENTS)		2,778	109,262	112,040	(33,426)
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		63,511	12,750	76,261	109,687
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD)	66,289	122,012	188,301	76,261

STATEMENTS OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds £	31.03.2021 Total funds £	31.03.2020 Total funds £
Monetary Assets				
Cash at Bank and in Hand	66,289	122,012	188,301	76,261
	66,289	122,012	188,301	76,261
Debtors				
Accounts Receivable	20	-	20	3,215
	20		20	3,215
Current Liabilities				
Accounts Payable	180	-	180	-
	180		180	
Other Assets			31.03.2021 Cost £	31.03.2020 Cost £
Computer Equipment			2,916	2,055
			2,916	2,055
The financial statements were appliand were signed on its behalf by: S Wildgoose - Trustee	roved by the Bo	oard of Trustees	s on	
S Ainsworth - Trustee				

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of preparing the financial statements

The financial statements have been prepared on a receipts and payments basis.

2	GRANTS
1.	UKANIS

2.	GRANTS		
		31.03.2021	31.03.2020
		£	£
		Ľ	Ľ
	Grants	138,121	_
	Training Income / Grant	-	22,248
	=	_	
	Speech Camps Grant / Revenue	-	2,208
		138,121	24,456
3.	DONATIONS		
		31.03.2021	31.03.2020
		£	£
	Donations	75,482	-
	Direct Public / Corporate Support	-	536
	Virgin Money Gving	_	8,532
	Other Donations	-	16,728
		75,482	25,796
4.	FUNDRAISING INCOME		
		31.03.2021	31.03.2020
		£	£
	Fundraising	2,565	2,107
	Christmas Cards	590	-
	Shop	97	-
	•		
		3,252	2,107

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MACRH 2021

5.	CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES INCOME		
		31.03.2021	31.03.2020
		£	£
	Communication Groups	5,922	5,796
	Circle Groups	1,975	3,498
	Courses	3,153	560
	Education Services	236	-
	Early Intervention Fees	1,415	-
	Early Years Resource Packs	583	-
	TMT 1st Edition Pack	5,065	-
		18,349	9,854
6.	COST OF GENERATING FUNDS		
		31.03.2021	31.03.2020
		£	£
	Fundraising Events	-	4,002
	Products for Fundraising	432	-
	50/50 Winners	343	-
		775	4,002
7.	CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES EXPENDITURE		
		31.03.2021	31.03.2020
		£	£
	Summer Camp	-	4,224
	General Training Costs	-	12,597
	Staff Traning	620	3,376
	Venues	(99)	7,447
	Travel	1	1,154
	Groups	636	4,507
	Rent	10,678	7,844
	Wages	52,380	42,016
	Symbol Costs	1,000	-
	Speakers / Trainers	6,633	-
	Bought-in Services	30,990	-
	Supervision Farly Years Intervention	3,748	-
	Early Years Intervention	140 21	-
	Cleaning Easter Fun Day 19 Resources	31 (5)	-
		106,753	83,165
		100,700	03,103

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MACRH 2021

8.	MANAGEMENT AND ADMINIS	TRATION COS	TS		
•				31.03.2021	31.03.2020
				£	£
	Website			595	2,248
	Advertising			223	520
	Office Costs			-	1,097
	Insurance			69	426
	Printing, Postage & Stationery			2,579	383
	Computer Expenses			2,191	-
	Accountancy			1,380	1,344
	Bank Charges			233	236
	Legal and Professional			3,450	-
	Payroll, Recruitment and Staff Cos	sts		856	-
	Subscriptions			609	-
	Telephone and Internet			504	-
	·				
				12,689	6,254
9.	OTHER EXPENDITURE				
				31.03.2021	31.03.2020
				£	£
				_	_
	Trustee and Volunteer Expenses			66	135
	Sundry Expenses			166	2,083
	General Resources			2,715	-
				_,	
				2,947	2,218
10.	RESTRICTED FUNDS				
		A. 04 00 0000	Б	Б	AL 04 00 0004
	5 IN	At 31.03.2020	•	Payments	At 31.03.2021
	Fund Name	£	£	£	£
	Communication for Life	_	44,713	(36,951)	7,762
	Core Costs	638	76,448	-	77,086
	Training	9,527	3,098	(5,429)	7,196
	Early Years Full Project	2,572	-	-	2,572
	Community Support Service	13	6,200	(6,443)	(230)
	FSG	-	7,000	(4,717)	2,283
	Teach Me Too	-	59,774	(34,431)	25,343
				\- · / · - · /	- 1

12,750

197,233

(87,971)

122,012

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Charity Registration Number: 1165305

Trustees during reporting period:

Sarah Wildgoose (Chair) Sinead Ainswoth (Treasurer) Katerina Pollard Barbara Makie (Dec 2020 – Feb 2021)

Trustees joined after the reporting period:

Rachel Butcher 16/06/2021 Diane Jenner 16/06/2021 Rebecca Clark 16/06/2021 Jemma Kemp 16/06/2021 Melissa Jones 16/06/2021

The Key Management Personnel are the Trustees and the Charity Manager:

Johanna Aiyathurai – Charity Manager

Registered Office & Operational Addresses:

Registered Office: MCSC, 39-48 Marsham Street, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1HH

Independent Examiner:

S R Sampson BFP FCA FCIE DChA, Ashdown Hurrey Auditors Limited, 20 Havelock Road, Hastings, East Sussex, TN34 1BP

Bank:

CAF Bank, 25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent ME19 4TA

Governance and Structure:

Type of governing document Foundation Registered 25 Jan 2016 as amended on 25 Sep 2020

How the charity is constituted

Foundation CIO

Trustee selection methods

Trustees are appointed by the existing Trustees



DECLARATION:

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with their duty to have due regard to the Charity Commission's public benefit guidance when exercising any powers or duties to which the guidance is relevant.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees:

Sarah Wildgoose Chairman

Signature

Date

Sinead Ainsworth Treasurer

Signature

Date

