



Free to Be Kids

Registered Charity No: 1165678

Trustees' Annual Report

For the accounting period ending 5th December 2017

Objectives and Activities

Free to Be Kids (colloquially 'Free to Be') supports particularly disadvantaged children and young people in London who are struggling with, or who are at risk of developing, emotional health difficulties. Included within this are many children whose existing difficulties with low confidence or self-esteem, managing social relationships, or otherwise negative views of themselves and their capacity to achieve are preventing them from fulfilling their potential both at school and in their wider lives.

We do this via providing a range of therapeutically structured and nature based residential programmes; afterschool groups; young leaders' projects; and mentoring, which support vulnerable children to change their stories about who they are, and who they can be.

In turn this supports young people to feel and to do better, at school, at home, and in their wider lives. Our projects are educational in the broadest of senses – helping young people who have experienced significant disadvantage to learn about the world, themselves and to further develop their confidence, self-belief and the broader social and emotional skillset needed to thrive.

Our main programme, Thrive Outside, focusses on providing a range of countryside or nature based residential projects and respite breaks, across the year, which are structured in ways to aid access for young people who would otherwise be unlikely to access more mainstream provisions relating to emerging emotional or mental health challenges. Perhaps due to reasons of poverty, the extent of emotional or behavioural difficulties or due to having developed negative views of adults via school, home, or elsewhere.

Our Flourish programme provides support in, or after, school whilst our mentoring programme launching in 2018 provides support during evenings or weekends.

Free to Be aims to work in partnership with organisations offering ongoing work, including work with parents, so that our residential and other projects form part of a wider, multi-organisation package of support that adds up to more than the sum of its parts.

We are committed to continuing to measure the impact of the change we support in young people.

Free to Be is entirely volunteer run, with no paid staff, and benefits from several thousand hours of volunteer support each year. We believe it is the special qualities uniquely brought by volunteers – their particular passion, creativity and commitment to come together to make things work and to do the small things well, which makes what we offer so special.

Model

Free to Be's focus is on children's emotional worlds – helping disadvantaged children to experience pride, exploration and adventure whilst supporting them to feel free to be children during their time with us, away from the weight and challenges of often complex home lives.

We work with schools, housing associations, social services and other organisations to reach the children who need this type of support the most.

Many of the children we support arrive with beliefs about themselves that they are 'unimportant', 'bad', 'failing', 'a problem' or somehow 'broken', 'damaged' or 'different'. Free to Be fundamentally believes that every child deserves to experience joy and adventure within their childhood.

As a result, we structure all of our projects to support children to more often feel special, proud and valued and to provide regular opportunities to feel successful and brave. Nature, the outdoors, creative arts, engaging with animals and cooking are key parts of most projects. Many learn to swim, ride a bike or camp out for the first time and meet adults with backgrounds and perspectives very different from their own. Children come away with memories which last a lifetime.

Our model is built around the concepts of attachment, resilience and working relationally and empathetically to help young people explore who they are and who they want to be in the world. Projects incorporate the concept of the 'safe stretch zone' to support young people to develop and feel safe to explore new beliefs about themselves. Participating in new experiences, overcoming safe challenge and experiencing learning in a space very different to classroom settings, helps children who attend to develop in self-esteem, to build confidence and resilience, to develop social problem solving skills and to identify leadership or other qualities which have perhaps not come to the fore in other settings. For many, it marks a real change in how they think and feel about themselves.

Structure, Governance and Management

Free to Be Kids is a registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation (C.I.O), registered charity number 1165678, and is governed via its constitution and its 'Policy & Procedures' manual. The charity is commonly known as 'Free to Be'. As an organisation built around delivering direct support to vulnerable children, with an emphasis on residential work, Free to Be recognises the special responsibilities it holds in respect of safeguarding and child protection. Safe recruitment procedures are in place governing the recruitment of volunteers to projects and include: enhanced DBS checks on all participants which are renewed at least three yearly, provision of two references, in-person interview, and completion of a training-selection course covering safeguarding, boundaries, behaviour support and other core topics. All components of projects, from use of residential sites and minibuses and covering every activity, are subject to thorough risk assessment. Where external instructors are required, they are selected in line with the relevant standards for accreditation. Policies in these areas are carefully developed in accordance with current legislation and sector best practice and are reviewed every two years.

Free to Be has Public Liability and Personal Accident insurance in place covering all its activities.

As a charity currently with no paid staff, the trustees have been responsible for the day to day running of the organisation. The trustees for the above period have been:

Rachel Nichols
Mike Gee
Madeleine Maxwell

Between them the trustees have in excess of thirty years' experience covering the leading of interventions and residential work with extremely vulnerable young people, charity management and trusteeship. The charity's safeguarding provision is led by Mike Gee who is a consultant social worker with over thirteen year's post-qualifying practice and particular experience working with vulnerable children in non-mainstream settings. Further detail regarding each trustee's background and experience is available via www.freetobekids.org.uk.

The trustees have been supported throughout the year by an experienced Advisory Board. Board meetings have taken place termly and have provided valuable advice and unofficial oversight as

the charity has grown. Advisory Board members include senior professionals qualified in the fields of charity accountancy, clinical psychology, journalism and include a practicing barrister, foster carer and therapeutic well-being practitioner. Between them, the seven advisory members board hold the following areas of expertise:

Chartered accountancy and financial controls.
Clinical psychology, Social Care and CAMHS.
Public and private family law; UK Court system.
Residential support and outreach therapeutic youth work.
Social enterprise strategy; funding; impact and evaluation.
Charity management and strategy. Looked After Children & foster care.
Press, media and employment issues.

As the charity grows the Trustees recognise the need for robust governance and as such has taken the decision that the Advisory Board will merge with the Trustee Board during the early part of the 2017-18 financial year, bringing the total number of trustees to approximately eight.

Additionally in order to fulfil the charity's sustainability goals, the Trustees have identified exploration of whether recruitment of the charity's first paid staff member/s is required in order to support the organisation's long term work. A key aim for the 2017-18 financial period is for the trustees to explore the potential benefits of such a change. Overall responsibility for the effectiveness of the charity's operations will remain with the Trustee Board.

Achievements and Performance

The Trustee's primary goals for the 2016-17 financial year were:

- Increasing summer project participants to over one hundred to meet identified need and referrer demand (split across three summer weeks).
- Offering a range of shorter and higher need projects throughout the year ensuring that support can be offered not just in the summer months but is available to families when they need it.
- Further piloting of different structures for smaller scale residentials to ensure we can reach the most vulnerable children effectively.
- Continue to maintain reserves to cover a year's non-project related running costs.

The charity has achieved each of these aims and in particular has been able to expand the number of residential projects offered from 2 to 9 and non-residential projects from 1 to 3.

The total number of residential places offered was 172 and the total number of individual children attending projects (residential or non-residential) was 133, with many attending multiple projects.

Programmes delivered were:

'Flourish: Create & Cook' (January-March & October-December 2017): An afterschool group operating in Southwark supporting vulnerable children referred by local primary schools to develop confidence and social skills via cooking and eating together.

'Easter Escape' (April 2017): A trial of running larger scale residentials (20 places) during Easter.

'Easter-Summer-Autumn combined programme' (April-October 2017): A trial of a more specialised ongoing structure for providing a sequence of nature orientated residential breaks for children with more complex needs.

'Thrive Outside Programme' (July-August 2017): Four separate week long respite residentials offering safe, adventurous and horizon broadening breaks from home for disadvantaged children from boroughs across London. (One of these breaks was a trial of a camping based structure.)

'Young Leaders Programme' (May 2017): Training and supporting some of our older young people to return on Thrive Outside gateway projects as young leaders, supporting younger peers.

'Thrive Mentoring Programme' (November 2017 onwards): Launch of individual mentoring programme for 2017-18 supporting young people for 6 months after attendance at a Thrive Outside gateway project.

Total participant numbers were:

	Previous Year	2016-17	Notes
Flourish Programme ('Create & Cook')	11	18	
Easter Project trial	0	19	New programme trialled 2016-17.
Easter-Summer-Autumn combined programme	7	10 (30)	Previous year children attended once each; under new programme design in 2016-17 each attended three times.
Thrive Outside Programme	27	118	
Young Leaders Programme	0	4	New programme trialled 2016-17.
Thrive Mentoring	0	1	New programme launched for trial late 2017, full trial 2017-18.

Referrals & Need:

Children were referred from 22 organisations across 12 London Boroughs. Referring organisations included a wide range of primary and secondary schools operating in deprived areas of London, specialist homelessness charities, Social Services teams, housing associations and a range of other community or charitable organisations. Families referred were often dealing with multiple, often inter-linked, issues of poverty, emotional and behavioural challenges and historical trauma. Referrer's primary goals were: for children referred to grow in confidence and self-esteem by being supported to take on and overcome new challenges; to have a fresh/neutral safe space to practice social skills; to make lasting happy memories and experience growth in feelings of pride, value and adventure amidst what for many were exceptionally challenging circumstances.

Of those referred to us in 2017:

- **99%** were from extremely disadvantaged backgrounds including having experienced housing instability/homelessness; had a parent experiencing mental health problems or addiction issues; acting as Young Carers; recent experiences of loss/trauma; experienced food/material poverty.
- **74%** would have had no other break from these circumstances or no other safe access to outdoor spaces.
- **51%** had significant involvement from statutory agencies relating to risk: either being at risk of, or having experienced, school exclusion or a Social Services referral within the past year.
- **33%** had been the subject of concerns regarding abuse/neglect within the past twelve months.

For 89% these difficulties were impacting emotional health, leading to emotional or social difficulties assessed within either their school or home environment. In particular the majority struggled with issues relating to low self-confidence and self-esteem.

Volunteers & staffing:

Free to Be recruited and trained 54 new project volunteers during 2016-17, with an additional 21 returning to us from 2015-16. A further 11 volunteers provided non-project based support.

The organisation has to date not employed any paid staff and has been entirely reliant upon the efforts of volunteers. Increasingly the scale and depth of the support offered to young people of significant need has made it clear to the trustees that this may need review. The trustees will consider within the 2017-18 financial year whether employment of one or more core staff is required to ensure the services provided to young people remain sustainable and can grow in line with presenting need.

Impact:

The trustees place a high value on evidencing the value and impact of the services Free to Be provides. At the end of projects young people complete child focussed feedback forms allowing us to gather their stories, drawings and the words they use to describe themselves. Adult volunteers complete observation sheets and structured feedback opportunities are provided for referrers and for parents. Of those attending residential projects in 2016-17:

- **99%** self-reported improved indicators of self-esteem and/or social confidence.
- **96%** had developed at least one significantly improved social skill including making/keeping friends; resolving frustrations without lashing out; relating better with adults.

- **86%** had felt brave enough to try something they had never before felt possible.

In subsequent follow up with referrers (largely school SENCOs but also including social-workers/youth-workers) 100% of those responding reported change in emotional health/social skills which had endured into the new school term including better peer interactions; managing better when things go wrong; having greater belief in their own potential.

Further detail regarding the specific performance and impact of the charity's main programme, Thrive Outside, can be obtained within the Impact report specific to that programme, accessible here: https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/02c029_8d3dcde29423444ebc5246d073c88a4d.pdf

Risk

The charity did not experience any major incidents of risk relating to its operations, reputation, finances nor the safeguarding or welfare of participants during the period.

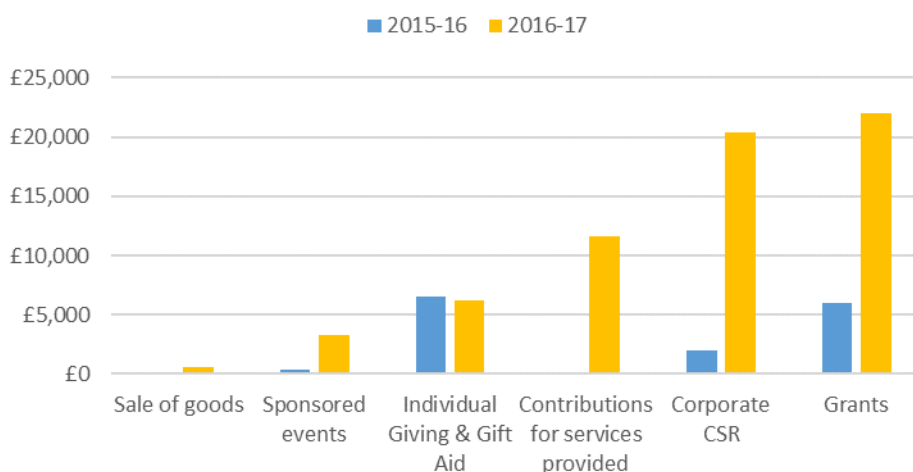
The trustees continued to maintain, review and update a register of significant risks to the charities operation and ongoing effectiveness. The trustees confirm that the major risks to which the charity may be exposed, as identified by the above risk register, continue to be kept under review and that systems are in place and functioning effectively to manage any such risks.

Financial Review

The charity's ordinary financial year commences on 6th December each year, that being the anniversary of the signing of the draft governing document and the date the charity began charitable activity.

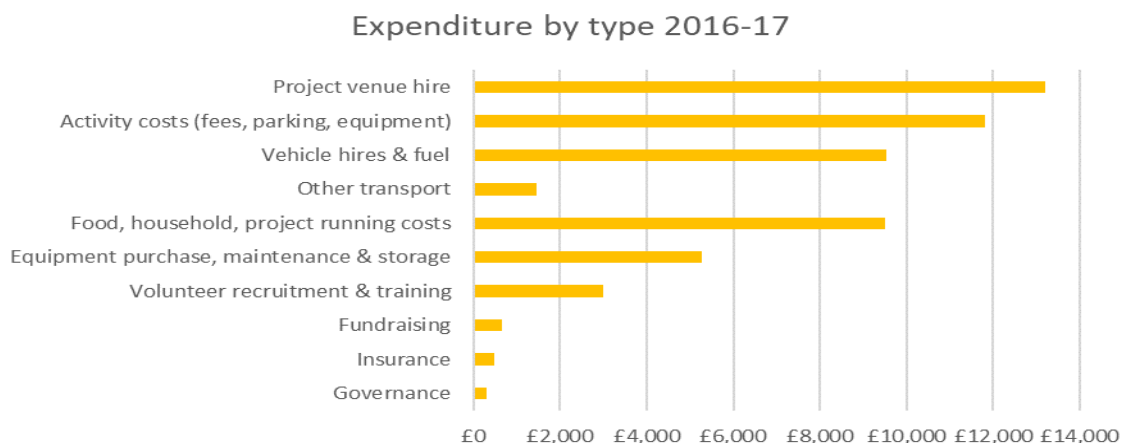
The charity was anticipating and experienced significant growth during the financial year. Income grew nearly fourfold from £16,881 in the previous year to £64,048 this year. The charity was particularly successful in securing very significant donations in kind (to the value of £12,266) in terms of storage space, key infrastructure requirements (phone services, email), equipment costs and accommodation rates allowing it to provide very significant additional value against the direct funds donated. Grant funding was predominantly restricted and related to core projects. The charity delivered a small Local Authority contract which contributed significantly to funds raised via provision of charitable services. Individual donations held steady following this being the charity's main source of income the previous year. The trustees are particularly grateful to those individual donors whose donations recur monthly via Direct Debit, over half of individual donations to the charity occurring via this route in 2016-17.

Income levels 2015-16 to 2016-17



Programmes and projects were delivered on budget. Due to the level of need for the charity's services, participant numbers also grew approximately fourfold leading to a total expenditure of £55,255 which was in line with projections.

Core costs continue to relate to hire of premises and vehicles to run residential projects, residential work being key to the charity's model of operations. Activities on residential, equipment and food costs are also amongst the charity's major expenditure. Insurance costs increased in line with participant numbers.



In excess of 98% of expenditure related directly to projects and provision of support to young people with circa 1.75% relating to the governance and cost of raising funds.

Funds raised slightly exceeded amounts required to deliver the projects above, although also included funds towards projects to be delivered within the 2018 financial year. Including reserves of £1,086 held over from the previous financial year, the charity ended the period with £9,879 in cash funds, with approximately £5,000 of that figure reserved for expenditure on projects in the first half of 2018.

The charity is in solid financial health at the end of the 2016-17 year and has been able to place advance deposits for project accommodation and other activities for some of the following year's projects.

Reserves statement:

Free reserves at the end of the previous financial year were £1,086 and this figure was retained throughout 2016-17. Reserve policy during the period aimed to ensure the charity held free reserves to cover core running costs for one year and was based on the principle that should funds not be available for a specific project, that project will not run. In the event of a funding crisis, trustees would focus on fundraising activities with ongoing operating costs covered by reserves.

However in line with the charity's growth and move to provide ongoing work, the trustees have adopted an altered reserves policy aiming to ensure funds are held in reserve sufficient to cover the full cost of at least a ten child based residential project, with an aspirational level of a twenty child based residential project, in addition to three month's non-project related running costs. For 2017-18 this would constitute reserves of a minimum of £3,300, with an aspirational level of £5,500. Free reserves currently stand at £4,879 which is therefore in accordance with reserves policy.

The trustees undertake to keep reserves policy under review in line with the organisation's development, particularly should the charity move to employ any level of paid staff.

Future development

The charity's core aim is not only to offer new experiences and respite for children who need it, but also to ensure projects are structured in ways which support children to develop longer lasting benefits to emotional health and resilience. The trustees are committed above all else to helping

children seen by others as failing or marginalised, to believe in themselves, to feel valued, to grow in self-worth and confidence, and to experience a sense of pride, adventure and possibility within their childhoods. As such, the charity's second year has seen the trustees spend considerable time developing models to increase capacity to support the most in need young people over longer periods of time than can be offered via respite breaks.

Accordingly during the year the charity has developed and will transition to a model for the 2017-18 financial year whereby these therapeutically structured and engaging respite breaks will act as 'gateway projects'. For those who need longer term support, a longer term 'Journey Plan' is identified which could consist of recurring respite, individual mentoring, or residential follow on 'journey projects'. Journey projects are sequenced series of follow-on projects consisting of smaller numbers of young people (always less than twelve) who attend the same series of projects together over a six month period. The Journey Projects have a strengthened focus on developing confidence, relational skills and self-belief in young people who schools or other referrers see as particularly at risk and have an adult to child ratio approaching one to one. 2017-18 will see the current Easter-Summer-Autumn sequenced projects move to fit inside the Thrive Outside Programme as 'Journey Projects', with the Easter Project also moving inside the Thrive Outside Programme to broaden the programme's approach to become more year round. The status of the Mentoring programme re/the Thrive Outside Programme will be reviewed during the year.

Core aims for the 2017-18 operating period are:

- Maintaining easter and summer project participants to over 120 to meet identified need and referrer demand. (Split across at least 3 summer project weeks and at least 1 easter project.)
- Fully incorporating the Gateway & Journey Project structure within the Thrive Outside Programme creating a range of shorter and higher need projects throughout the year ensuring support can be offered on a longer term and more intensive basis to the most in need of our cohort.
- Launch of the Thrive Mentoring Programme to support the onward journeys of some of those attending Thrive Outside projects.
- Focus on development of infrastructure, potential staffing, longer term funding, review of policies and procedures and exploration of new funding streams and other sustainability features to secure the organisation's work over the longer term.
- Continue to maintain reserves in line with the reserves policy.

Registered Address & Contact details

The charity will move registered address from the conclusion of the 2016-17 financial year. From January 2018 the charity's registered address will be:

C/o CAN Mezzanine

7-14 Great Dover Street

Southwark

London

SE1 4YR

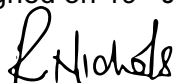
0203 778 0323; hello@freetobekids.org.uk; www.freetobekids.org.uk

Free to Be holds no formal relationship with CAN Mezzanine beyond the provision of registered address services.

Declarations

The trustees declare that they have approved the contents above as a true reflection of the charities activities, operations and financial position within the 2016-17 operating period.

Signed on 19th January 2018:



Rachel Nichols (Chair)



Mike Gee (Treasurer)



Madeleine Maxwell (Secretary)

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Free to Be Kids

I report on the accounts of the charity for the year ended 5 December 2017, which are set out on pages 10 to 12.

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 report

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:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

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

Name: Mrs Amy Gutcher MA FCA DChA

Relevant professional qualification or body: Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales

Address: 92 Clock House Road, Beckenham BR3 4JT

Date: 31 January 2018



Charity Name Free to Be Kids	No (if any) 1165678
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Receipts and payments accounts

For the period from	06.12.17	To	05 12 2017 (*See note 1)
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Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Donations and legacies	23,040	29,080	-	52,120	16,731
Fees for charitable services	11,320	-	-	11,320	150
Other trading income	608	-	-	608	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	34,968	29,080	-	64,048	16,881

A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
Nil	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	34,968	29,080	-	64,048	16,881

A3 Payments					
Adjustments to 2015-16 accounts	1	-	-	1	-
Delivering charitable services: (*See notes 2 & 3)	-	-	-	-	-
Flourish afterschool programme	347	1,679	-	2,026	1,173
Easter project trial	4,092	475	-	4,567	-
Easter Escape-Fun in the Sun-Autumn Adventure combined programme	8,814	1,666	-	10,481	2,501
Thrive Outside' residential programme	9,365	23,619	-	32,984	10,218
Young Leaders Programme	1,559	389	-	1,948	-
Mentoring Programme trial	26	-	-	26	-
Advance deposits for 2018 projects (*See note 4)	1,495	-	-	1,495	1,447
Governance costs (*See note 5)	308	752	-	1,060	435
Fundraising costs	667	-	-	667	20
Sub total	26,675	28,580	-	55,255	15,795

A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
Nil	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	26,675	28,580	-	55,255	15,795

Net of receipts/(payments)	8,293	500	-	8,793	1,086
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	1,086	-	-	1,086	-
Cash funds this year end	9,379	500	-	9,879	1,086

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Available cash funds at Year End:			
	Bank account:	9,344	500	-
	Held on project card:	35	-	-
	Total cash funds	9,379	500	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK



		Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets	Details			
	Monies outstanding from charitable services provided (See Note 6)	4,730	-	-
	Monies outstanding pending payment of final grant installments relating to 2016-17 projects. (See Note 7)	-	700	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

		Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment assets	Details			
	Nil	N/A	-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

		Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use	Details			
	Residential, arts, cooking and craft materials including tents, sleeping bags, pillowcases, cooking & baking equipment, outdoor games equipment, office supplies (Equivalent cash resale value = £0)	General - unrestricted	-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

		Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities	Details			
	Nil		-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
	Rachel Nichols	16.01.18
	Mike Gee	16.01.18

Notes to the accounts

Note 1: The charity's ordinary financial year commences on 6th December, that being the anniversary of the start of charitable activity.

Costs shown are total project costs including volunteer recruitment and training for that project/programme. These figures also include an attributed percentage of year round project related costs (See note 3), This breaks down as follows:

	Direct Project expenditure	Attributed costs	Total
Note 2:			
Flourish afterschool programme	£1,897	£261	£2,158
Easter project trial	£4,107	£521	£4,628
Easter Escape-Fun in the Sun-Autumn	£9,525	£1,159	£10,684
Thrive Outside' residential programme	£29,704	£3,563	£33,268
Young Leaders Programme	£1,725	£284	£2,009
Mentoring Programme trial	£20	£6	£26

Note 3: "Year round project related costs" are those costs paid out throughout the year in relation to the running of projects but which ordinarily apply to all/most projects that year. For 2016-2017 these consisted of insurance (£450.45), equipment storage (£3,380), communication/phone/email software (£672) and some items of frequently used equipment (£1291.61). For 2016-2017 these were attributed according to a programme's relative size in terms of direct project expenditure.

Note 4: These fees are paid in advance to secure project sites, vehicle hire and similar on the dates we require and for the best possible price.

Note 5: Costs the charity would necessarily incur regardless of whether we ran projects. Principally made up of website, registered address, phone services and similar costs.

Note 6: Monies owed to the charity for provision of charitable services within the 2016-17 financial year. Not yet received but reasonably expected to be received in the three months after financial year end.

Note 7: Final installment of a grant payment relating to the 2016-17 Thrive Outside Programme. Payment agreed by the funder and expected to be received January 2018.