



**Free to Be Kids**

*Registered Charity No: 1165678*

## **Trustees' Annual Report**

For the accounting period ending 5<sup>th</sup> December 2016

### **Objectives and Activities**

Free to Be Kids provides respite holidays, therapeutic adventures, afterschool support and a range of year round residentials for children who are struggling with social or emotional difficulties, significant disadvantage or who are otherwise in need. Without our projects, many would not have support or a break from often extremely difficult home circumstances.

Our core focus is on providing a range of residential projects across the year structured in ways which can be accessed by children who would be unlikely to access similar provision due to reasons of poverty, the extent of emotional or behavioural difficulties or other vulnerabilities. We work with schools, housing associations, social services and other organisations to reach some of London's most disadvantaged children. We believe that every child deserves to experience joy and adventure within their childhood.

Many of those we work with grow up feeling rejected, excluded or as if they are 'failing'. Our work helps these children feel wanted, special, valued and successful, helping alter how they think and feel about themselves. Some projects focus on respite and providing crucial breaks when children need them the most. Others are more specialised and are designed to support the most vulnerable children to believe in themselves and access new experiences. All aim to bring a level of lasting therapeutic benefit and to bolster often fragile emotional health via increasing young people's self-esteem, confidence, resilience and social skills.

Our focus is on children's emotional worlds – helping them to experience pride, exploration and adventure and supporting them to feel free to be children during their time with us, away from the weight and challenges of complex home lives. 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. Nature, the outdoors, creative arts, engaging with animals and cooking are key parts of most projects. The way we work is built around the concepts of attachment, resilience and working relationally, empathetically and without judgement to help young people explore who they are and who they want to be in the world.

We want our work to make a long term difference to young people that lasts far beyond our own intervention. To this end we aim to work in partnership with organisations offering ongoing work, including work with parents, so that our residentials 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 working to design and implement effective ways of measuring the impact of this work.

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.

## **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' handbook. 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, interview by one of the trustees and completion of a training-selection course covering safeguarding, boundaries, behaviour support and other relevant skills. All components of our 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 current public liability insurance in place which covers all of our projects.

As a charity with no paid staff, the trustees are 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 twelve 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](http://www.freetobekids.org.uk).

The trustees recognise that they may need to increase the number of trustees as the organisation grows but believe that the current size of the trustee group has provided for excellent joint working and communication during the charity's founding year. To supplement their experience and provide external scrutiny, the trustees have brought together an experienced Advisory Board. Board meetings have taken place termly throughout the charity's first year 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 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.

All trustees and advisory board members will continue in their roles into the next financial year.

## Achievements and Performance

The Trustee's primary goal for the charity's first year was delivering at least one week of respite residentials during the summer of 2016, along with commencing the afterschool club programme. These aims were achieved and the charity also piloted a very successful smaller scale therapeutic residential in the autumn.

Free to Be'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. Our first year has seen us spend considerable time embedding this concept throughout our projects and volunteer base.

Children who have experienced multiple adversities often struggle with their sense of who they are and where they fit in the world, and this can make life particularly hard on a holiday project, where children find themselves in a new place, doing new things and surrounded by new people. The project structure has been designed with this in mind and allows us to support more vulnerable children who would struggle with these challenges on more mainstream projects and thereby help them access the benefits these kind of breaks can provide, usually for the first time.

### **Projects delivered were:**

April-June 2016: *'Create & Cook'* - An afterschool group operating in Lambeth supporting vulnerable children referred by local primary schools to develop confidence and social skills via cooking and eating together.

August 2016: *'Thrive Outside'* – A week long respite residential offering safe, adventurous and horizon broadening breaks from home for disadvantaged children from a range of boroughs across south London.

October 2016: *'Autumn Adventure'* – A trial of a more specialised structure for providing nature orientated residential breaks for children with more complex needs and aiming to provide lasting therapeutic benefits.

### **Total participant numbers were:**

Create & Cook: 11

Thrive Outside: 27

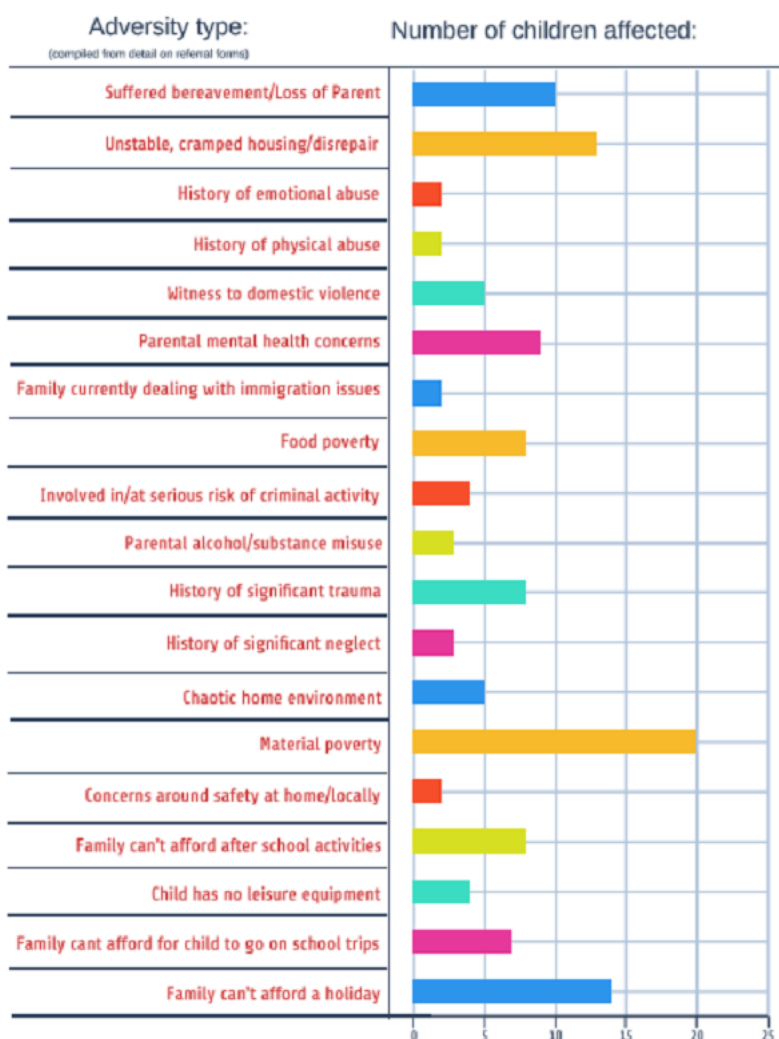
Autumn Adventure: 7

Children were referred to the charity from a range of primary and secondary schools operating in deprived areas of London, two specialist homelessness charities, social services and a range of other community organisations. Referrers told us that the families they were most concerned about particularly struggled during holiday periods when schools were closed. These families were often dealing with multiple, often inter-linked, issues of poverty, emotional and behavioural challenges and historical trauma. Many wanted to find a safe space for children to practice social skills and opportunities for them to grow their confidence and self-esteem by being supported to take on and overcome new challenges.

Statistical information was gathered from referrers in relation to children's backgrounds and needs with the aim of helping us refine the support we offer and measure the impact of our work over time. Of the children referred to the Thrive Outside residential:



## Background & Home Circumstances (as identified by referrers)



The trustees place a high value on evidencing the value and impact of the services Free to Be provides and have partnered with the Anna Freud Centre to offer a placement for a masters research student who will conduct further research into this area during 2016-17.

In common with most organisations in their first year of operation, very significant amounts of trustee time have been invested in creating infrastructure and a secure base from which to operate from going forwards. Particular achievements have been:

- Recruitment and training of thirty-two project volunteers (five further volunteers due to undergoing training and commence volunteering early 2017).
- Formed referral relationships with seven schools, four charity/community organisations, one social services department and two housing associations.
- Recruitment and implementation of the Advisory Board.
- Made a charity partner at ABC Self-Storage, thus acquiring free of charge equipment storage for the year.
- Design and implementation of all policy structure including safeguarding and child protection policies.
- Creation of website, social media, online giving platforms and phone/email infrastructure.

Free to Be has also been commissioned by a London Local Authority to provide a programme of specialist respite breaks in 2016-17 for children whose foster care placements require additional support.

Financially, Free to Be has benefitted from the dedicated efforts of a large number of volunteers, in addition to the efforts of the trustees themselves. Funds raised slightly exceeded amounts required to deliver the projects above, allowing the charity to end its first year with reserves of just over £1000. Please see 'Financial Review' for discussion of reserves policy and fundraising breakdowns.

Over the year, Free to Be has also benefitted from significant donations in kind in terms of storage space, activity instruction, entrance/admission fees, equipment costs and accommodation rates allowing it to provide very significant additional value against the direct funds donated.

Core aims for the 2016-17 operating period are:

- 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.

## Financial Review

The charity's ordinary financial year commences on 6<sup>th</sup> December each year, that being the anniversary of the signing of the draft governing document and the date the charity began charitable activity. However, Charity Commission guidance requires accounts commence from the date the charity's name was entered on the register rather than the date charitable activities began and therefore the first year's accounts have been produced short and cover the dates 22<sup>nd</sup> February-5<sup>th</sup> December 2016. Funds generated 6<sup>th</sup> December 2015 to 21<sup>st</sup> February 2016 are shown under "balance brought forward".

Free reserves at year end were £1086. Free to Be's reserve policy aims to ensure the charity holds free reserves to cover core running costs of the charity for one year and is 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, the trustees would focus on fundraising activities for other projects with ongoing operating costs covered by reserves. The above amount exceeds core running costs at the charity's current size but will need to increase in line with future growth.

The charity is in solid financial health at the end of year one and has been able to place advance deposits for project accommodation and vehicle hire for some year two projects.

Principle sources of funds for this accounting period were:

Donations from individual giving (predominantly via online giving campaigns): £5467

(Plus a further £1053 in Gift Aid)

Grants: £6000

Corporate/Business donations: £1966

Fundraising events: £378

Charitable services: £150

Additionally, a further grant of £3500 was pledged in 2015-16 but has been deferred to 2016-17 due to the grant award decision arriving too late to be used for 2016 summer projects due to internal factors within the grant giving body.



The trustees are particularly grateful to those donors who have mandated direct debits. Approaching a fifth of year one's total costs were covered by ongoing direct debit donations, providing increased financial stability into year two.

## Registered Address & Contact details

The charity's registered address is:

c/o Youth Development Trust  
Enterprise Centre, 639 High Road  
Tottenham  
London  
N17 8AA

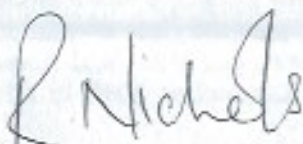
0203 778 0323  
hello@freetobekids.org.uk  
www.freetobekids.org.uk

Free to Be holds no formal relationship with the Youth Development Trust beyond the provision of registered address services.

## Declarations

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above


Signed:



Rachel Nichols (Chair)



Mike Gee (Treasurer)



Madeleine Maxwell (Secretary)

On date:

4 January 17 4th Jan 2017

4th Jan 2017



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

For the period from	22 02 2016	To	05 12 2016 (*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 £
<b>A1 Receipts</b>					
Balance brought forward on registration as CIO	1			1	
Donations and legacies	10,730	6,000	-	16,730	-
Fees for charitable services	150	-	-	150	-
		-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total (Gross income for AR)</b>	<b>10,881</b>	<b>6,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>16,881</b>	
<b>A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).</b>					
Nil	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>10,881</b>	<b>6,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>16,881</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>A3 Payments</b>					
Delivering charitable services: (*See note 2)	-	-	-	-	-
Flourish afterschool groups	1,173	-	-	1,173	-
Thrive Outside' summer respite residential	4,218	6,000	-	10,218	-
Autumn Adventure' autumn therapeutic residential	2,501	-	-	2,501	-
Advance deposits for 2017 projects (*See note 4)	1,447	-	-	1,447	-
Fundraising costs	20	-	-	20	-
Governance costs (*See note 5)	435	-	-	435	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>9,795</b>	<b>6,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>15,795</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)</b>					
Nil	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>9,795</b>	<b>6,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>15,795</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Net of receipts/(payments)</b>	<b>1,086</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,086</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>A5 Transfers between funds</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>A6 Cash funds last year end</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Cash funds this year end</b>	<b>1,086</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,086</b>	<b>N/A</b>

### 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 £
<b>B1 Cash funds</b>	Available cash funds at Year End	1,086	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	<b>Total cash funds</b>	<b>1,086</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
		Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
<b>B2 Other monetary assets</b>	Monies outstanding from charitable services provided	550	-	-
CCXX R1 accounts (SS)	1			11/01/2017

	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-

### B3 Investment assets

Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
NI	N/A	-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-

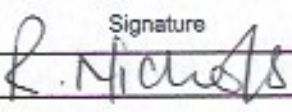
### B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use

Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
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	-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-

### B5 Liabilities

Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
Invoices awaiting payment	Unrestricted funds	312	
		-	
		-	
		-	
		-	

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

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
	Rachel Nichols	11/1/2017