

BOSTON WOMEN'S AID

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

The trustees present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2023. The trustees have adopted the provisions of Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objectives and activities

The overall objective of Boston Women's Aid is to provide advice, support and temporary accommodation for victims of abuse and their children. The term domestic abuse embraces the physical, mental, emotional, financial or sexual abuse of one person by another with whom they have or have had a close or intimate relationship.

The objective is achieved through the following:

The provision of temporary refuge on request for victims and their children who have suffered domestic abuse.

Encouraging the development of facilities that offer advice, support and practical help to any victim that seeks it, whether or not they are resident of the refuge, and which gives continuing support and aftercare to victims and children after they have left the Boston Women's Aid accommodation.

Research into and promotion of the provision of facilities which meet the emotional and educational needs of children of victims who seek refuge.

Providing information to and working with other organisations for the exchange of information and ideas on all aspects of Women's aid and domestic abuse issues.

Educating and informing the public, the media, the police, the courts, Social Services and other statutory and non-statutory organisations, with respect to the abuse victims suffer.

Reporting for the public benefit

In compliance with Section 17 of the Charities Act 2011, Boston Women's Aid trustees have consulted the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on operating the Charity for the public benefit and are satisfied that the Charity meets the requirements on public benefit as follows.

Boston Women's Aid has continued to provide safe accommodation through refuge and dispersed units on request for victims and their children, who have suffered domestic abuse.

Provision of continuing support to victims and children after they have left the accommodation has been available, as has advice and support to members of the public, male and female, who make contact through the helpline, with support at our Rural Community Hubs in Holbeach, Spalding, Boston & Sutton Bridge.

Awareness raising talks are given within schools in Boston & South Holland, this work gives children of school age the opportunity to learn about the effects of Domestic Abuse and the meaning of a Healthy Relationship.

Talks given to organisations and groups of the public, who request them, together with statements to the media, have educated and informed on the effects of Domestic Abuse.

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ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

BWA have continued to provide refuge and other support services in Boston and South Holland. The Rural Community Hub service has expanded across Boston & South Holland with the financial support of The Holbeach United Charity, Platform Housing & Longhurst Housing. The Make A Change Survivor Support Service has continued supporting partners or ex partners of perpetrators that are accessing the group support work, this service ended on the 31/3/23 due to the funding expiring, talks are ongoing for a new Perpetrator programme in Lincolnshire.

In 2022/23, BWA have continued to operate as a viable provider of refuge accommodation and services, in the face of a challenging financial environment. The safe houses are in Boston and South Holland where we accept women, men and children from all areas of the UK. During the financial year we have operated 12 units of shared refuge and 3 dispersed properties.

In the refuges 66 women were admitted, the total number of children admitted was 127 during 2022/23. Three Freedom Programmes were delivered along with four Confidence Building courses.

Over the year the team have given numerous talks to statutory and voluntary organisations and attended events, raising awareness of domestic abuse and the services provided by BWA. Training was also given to outside agencies for example the Police and Health Visitors. It is the view of the Board of Trustees that all services provided by BWA were effective in terms of both input and output and adhered to the Trustees' aims to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the charity in line with the Strategic Business Plan.

Working with Platform Housing BWA opened a brand-new purpose-built refuge in June 2022, the accommodation consists of 12 units with full facilities for women and children. We are also able to offer facilities for victims with some disabilities and larger families.

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FINANCIAL REVIEW

Reserves policy

A reserves policy is recommended by the Charities Commission as part of financial management and strategic planning to explain to interested parties (both donors and beneficiaries) why money is withheld from beneficiaries. It is part of being transparent and accountable to funders and lessens the risk of the accusation of hoarding. It is also necessary so that the charity can meet its obligations even if intended funding sources fail to meet targets. Ongoing risk assessment has identified an increased risk of reduction in available funds for Boston Women's Aid from statutory bodies. National and local financial constraints have made it increasingly hard to obtain new sources of funding, and other income sources may be less reliable and less able to predict. There is increased risk of existing contracts not being renewed even if they have been performed satisfactorily, they may go out to tender and may be awarded to other providers.

The reserves must be able to cover any challenges and opportunities in the medium to long term which includes the costs to safeguard current services and the costs of closure. Such costs include: -

- Likely staff costs in the event of redundancy
- Fees for legal and financial advice in the event of possible insolvency
- Rents on the refuge properties and other property costs
- Any income restricted to specific projects which may need to be repaid.
- Funds for emergencies or to keep the charity's work going if difficulties arise

Funds need to be easily accessible for day to day spending but will be invested in interest bearing accounts where possible, they are currently held with Lloyds Bank in high interest deposit bonds and also instant access savings accounts and 32 notice savings accounts.

There is a regular review of cash flow projections for income and expenditure to ensure that the level of available reserves remains adequate and that the charity can meet all its commitments. There is ongoing risk assessment to ensure policies and systems are in place to meet any potential risks identified and consider any significant change in the charity's financial circumstances.

Our current unrestricted reserve level is £ ? (as at 31 March 2023). Our minimum target for the level of unrestricted funds as at 31 March 23 is £100,000 and therefore we are meeting this requirement at this present time.

The charity has again had a very pro-active year trying to secure future funding for the medium to long term it has been instrumental in seeking new lines of funding from varied funders.

The net surplus for the year ended 31st March 2023 was £ ?, this on face value is a satisfactory set of results, the Charity has worked hard to control expenditure during the year and because of the surplus the cumulative restricted and unrestricted reserves have grown to £ ? for 2023.

FUTURE PLANS

We are looking to secure two properties for Move On Accommodation to progress families from the refuge with continued support, this will be before they then move into their own tenanted property.

Following the success of the Rural Community Hubs we are looking to expand into the Long Sutton area.

Following feedback from external stakeholders and service users we are looking to re-brand the charity during 23/24.

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STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

The charity is controlled by its governing document, a deed of trust and constitutes an unincorporated charity.

Organisational structure

Boston Women's Aid was established as a Registered Charity in 1987 and its current Constitution was approved in 2003 and amended in July 2009, with a further amendment agreed in October 2010 to allow for support to male victims of abuse and male membership of the Board of Trustees. Two further amendments were made in June 2012 to alter the numbers required for meetings to be quorate and for numbers allowed to sign grants and contracts.

The core activity of Boston Women's Aid is to provide safe, temporary accommodation for victims (and their children) who have suffered from domestic abuse. This core business is achieved by the provision of four refuge spaces and three dispersed accommodation units. These core activities are funded through rental income, housing benefit payments, donations and funding from statutory agencies and grant making bodies.

Risk management

The trustees have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against fraud and error.

Membership

Membership of Boston Women's Aid is open to all people who subscribe to the aims as set out in the Constitution, subject in each case to approval by the Board of Trustees.

Management

The policy and management of the organisation is vested in the Board of Trustees. The recruitment and election of Trustees is carried out at Boston Women's Aid AGM each year. Trustees can also be nominated and co-opted during the year by The Board of Trustees, subject to the restrictions on numbers within the Constitution.

The training of new trustees is determined based on individual needs.

The Management Committee

Mrs S Coates - Chair
Mrs V R Robinson - Secretary
Mr W Herbert - Treasurer

Ms J Warnes

Ms Marie Chapman

Linzi Elliott – resigned 26/6/2022

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Registered Charity number

519445

BOSTON WOMEN'S AID

**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023**

Principal address

P O Box 5
Boston
Lincolnshire
PE21 8JP

Trustees

Mrs V R Robinson
Mr W Herbert
Mrs S Coates
Ms J Warnes
Ms M Chapman
Ms L Elliott – resigned 26/6/22

Independent Examiner

Mr T G Godson FCA
ICAEW
Duncan & Toplis Limited
5 Resolution Close
Endeavour Park
Boston
Lincolnshire
PE21 7TT

Approved by order of the board of trustees on 27th September 2023 and signed on its behalf by:

This page does not form part of the statutory financial statements