



MARY WARD CENTRE
REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2024

MARY WARD SETTLEMENT (A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
COMPANY NUMBER 46188 CHARITY NUMBER 223066
TRADING AS MARY WARD CENTRE

MARY WARD CENTRE
REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2024

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MARY WARD CENTRE
REPORT OF THE CHAIR
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2024

Following the completion of its Property Strategy, in September 2023, Mary Ward Adult Education Centre (“the Centre”) finally relocated from Queen Square in Central London, its home for 40 years, to the newly developed Queensway House, now renamed as The Mary Ward Centre, in Stratford, East London. Consequently, despite earlier delays to the construction timetable, the Centre was able to open its doors to students for the first time in this new location, as planned, for the start of the 2023-24 academic year.

The Centre continued to face construction-related challenges during this first year. While the Centre was able to occupy, and the majority of teaching facilities were ready for the delivery of classes, Practical Completion was not achieved until late November 2023, and the construction team remained on-site, finishing off work, for the majority of the autumn term. We were unable to deliver the planned summer taster courses prior to the start of the year, and this, combined with the continued presence of the construction team, impacted enrolments and the Centre’s ability to deliver the learning experience in the way we would have wanted, from day 1. Nevertheless, classes were well attended, with enrolments increasing over the year, and student numbers, total enrolments and tuition fees were all higher than 2022-23.

Provision at Blackfriars was also well-attended - particularly those classes offering fully funded learning options such as ESOL, Literacy and Maths and Work Skills. Provision for these learners was, as in 2022-23, also supported by the Multiply initiative, for which we were granted funding at a more generous rate than the usual AEB funding. The proportion of fully funded learners (those who pay a NIL fee) rose overall from 47% in 2022-23 to 50% in 2023-24 whilst the number of concession fee payers fell by 1% due to more flexibility to fund some learners at Level 3. The percentage of students paying a full fee fell by 2% to 36%.

The Community Outreach team continued to deliver in the community, building on the relationships established in the years before the Centre’s relocation to Stratford. The vast majority of the work of the Community Outreach team took place in Newham and East London, working directly with community partners, including Newham Chinese Association in Beckton, Deafroots in Stratford, Bangladeshi communities with Jubilee Street GP Practice CIC in Shadwell and older communities in Mile End and Wapping. Again this year, the team were also at the ‘Great Get Together’ at the Olympic Park in Stratford, delivering craft workshops and giving information and advice about Mary Ward to around 300 participants as well as raising awareness about our move.

We earned 100% of the total Multiply funding available and successfully achieved the tolerance level of a minimum of 97% against our GLA and ESFA AEB funding allocations and consequently there was no clawback of income from these sources.

Despite the challenges, the Centre was able to support 2,606 (2022-23: 2,355) learners on 5,579 (2022-23: 5,372) course places with their learning throughout the year using a range of face-to-face, distance and online methods. Students on all accredited courses were supported to work towards their assessments and gain their qualifications. As a result of delays to the move the start of term was pushed back to as late as possible and enrolment was slower than expected. Ongoing building works during the first term resulted in the pace of enrolment and recovery being slower than expected. ESOL continues to be the largest proportion of exams taken across the curriculum. The vast majority of courses took place face-to-face. All Visual and Performing Arts, IT, and Literacy and Maths classes now face-to-face. Some ESOL courses continue with a blended approach to support development of digital skills as part of their course. We offered a small number of online courses with subjects including Keep Fit and Italian.

Frances Bates
Frances Bates (Dec 19, 2024 10:22 GMT)

Frances Bates

Chair 19/12/2024

MARY WARD CENTRE
REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2024

REFERENCE DETAILS

Charity number:	223066
Company number:	46188
Address and Registered Office:	The Mary Ward Centre, 275-285 High Street, Stratford London E15 2TF

KEY MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL

Key management personnel are defined as members of the Centre's Senior Management Team and were represented by the following in 2023-24:

Warden, CEO; Accounting Officer	Therese Reinheimer-Jones
Director of Adult and Community Education	Sue Craggs
Director of Finance and Resources	Juliet Woodford

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

A full list of trustees is given on pages 14-15 of these Financial Statements.

Ms. Beverley Campbell acted as Clerk to the Board of Trustees throughout the year under review.

PROFESSIONAL ADVISERS

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AUDITOR AND REPORTING ACCOUNTANTS	Buzzacott LLP 130 Wood Street London EC2V 6DL
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INTERNAL AUDITOR	Validera 30 Camp Road Farnborough Hants GU14 6EW
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BANKERS	The Co-operative Bank plc 3rd floor, St Paul's House 10 Warwick Lane London EC4M 7BP
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MARY WARD CENTRE
REPORT OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2024

NATURE, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

The Board of Trustees (“the Board”) is pleased to present its Annual Report together with the Financial Statements of Mary Ward Centre for the year ended 31st July 2024.

LEGAL STATUS

Mary Ward Centre (“the Centre”) is the trading name of Mary Ward Settlement, a registered charity (number 223066) and company limited by guarantee (number 46188), first registered in December 1895. It provides adult education and community services.

The Financial Statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Companies Act 2006, the Memorandum and Articles of Association, and the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting for Higher and Further Education (FE and HE SORP 2019) in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102).

OBJECTS AND MISSION

The objects for which the Centre is established are the advancement of public education and the promotion of social service for the benefit of the community.

The Centre’s Mission is to develop and provide excellent, innovative and wide ranging adult education and community services.

PUBLIC BENEFIT

In setting and reviewing the Centre’s Strategic Objectives, the Board has had due regard for the Charity Commission’s guidance on public benefit and particularly upon its supplementary guidance on the advancement of education. The guidance sets out the requirement that all organisations wishing to be recognised as charities must demonstrate, explicitly, that their aims are for the public benefit.

In delivering its Mission, the Centre provides the following identifiable public benefits through the advancement of education and community services:

- High quality teaching;
- Advice, information, assistance and representation dealing with housing, debt, welfare benefits and other financial and legal problems;
- Widening participation and tackling social exclusion;
- Strong student support systems, particularly for students with physical and learning difficulties; and
- Vocational support where appropriate.

The effectiveness of the Centre’s delivery of public benefit is covered throughout the Report of the Board of Trustees.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The Centre worked towards the objectives of the Strategic Plan covering the period 2023-2028, of which a key element includes establishing the Centre at its new location in Stratford, in the London Borough of Newham, and achieving long term sustainability with a wider reach of adult education and community support and advisory services across London.

The freehold site originally known as Queensway House now renamed as The Mary Ward Centre, at Stratford was purchased in July 2018 with the aim of redeveloping the site and relocating services from the 2022-23 academic year. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic from March 2020, and its aftermath, was primarily responsible for delays to the planning process, inflation in the construction sector and the consequential uncertainty over funding led, inevitably, to a delay in completion of the project. Instead of, opening to students on site for the start of the 2022-23 academic year, construction was not substantially complete

MARY WARD CENTRE
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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN (continued)

until September 2023. The Centre began its relocation from that date, opening its doors to students just a few weeks later in the autumn of 2023 for the start of the 2023-24 academic year. Practical Completion, however, was delayed until the end of November 2023.

CORE VALUES AND OBJECTIVES

The Centre is guided by the Core Values and Strategic Aims. Acknowledging the imminent completion of the new site at Stratford, at a Strategy Day in June 2023, the Board met to consider the Strategic Plan for the period 2023-28, and subsequently, the following Core Values and Strategic Aims were agreed across the Mary Ward Settlement group.

Core Values

- **PEOPLE:** we ensure the needs of students and service users are at the heart of everything we do
- **COMMUNITY:** we value and contribute positively to the communities we serve
- **LEARNING:** we provide access to learning that enriches people's lives, increases opportunities, and diminishes disadvantage
- **JUSTICE:** we are committed to social justice and provide access to secure legal rights
- **RESPECT:** we value and support staff, teams and volunteers, and develop their talents
- **EQUALITY:** we foster equality, seek to eliminate discrimination and improve inclusion
- **INTEGRITY:** we are honest, fair, accountable and financially responsible
- **SUSTAINABILITY:** we actively seek sustainable practices
- **EXCELLENCE:** we strive for excellence as individuals, teams and as an institution

Strategic Aims

- **Contributing to local and London economies**
We will contribute to social and economic prosperity by extending our work into new areas whilst supporting more vibrant, tolerant, safe and healthy communities where everyone has the opportunity for learning, to build skills and meet personal or professional goals.
- **Enrich and strengthen the communities we serve**
We will strengthen local communities' ability to access support, advice, learning and employment, reducing social isolation and improving life chances.
- **Provide flexible and outstanding, demand-led provision and services**
We will grow and maintain a diverse, agile and adaptable workforce delivering demand-led and co-created provision that can respond to the demands of its users, changing priorities and local needs.
- **Be a visible and valued partner and place**
We will be a well known, trusted and respected partner, a 'go to' for input, development and advice across all of the sectors that our work encompasses.
- **Ensure current and future stability**
We will ensure current and future organisational stability and sustainability through financial health, leadership, governance and a skilled work force.

The Board monitors the performance of the Centre against the plan and reviews and updates the plan annually.

The most significant impact of the delay to the Centre's Property Strategy was the late move of the Centre to its new Stratford site and disruption to plans for the start of term, including the taster courses planned as part of the marketing strategy. The presence of the construction company on-site, completing the last stages of the build during the autumn term disrupted the Centre's ability to provide the full range of

MARY WARD CENTRE
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CORE VALUES AND OBJECTIVES (continued)

classes, and in the way it would have wished, from the start of the year. This impacted on income from fees which, though higher than the previous year, at £561,000 compared to £529,000, did not build as quickly as the Centre would have hoped. At the Blackfriars site, however, provision continued strongly, with fees increasing from £66,000 in 2022-23 to £79,000 for 2023-24, although enrolments and student numbers declined to 1,427 and 615, respectively, compared to 1,522 and 714 in the previous year.

Unlike recent years, when the Centre would have prioritised mitigation of losses by maintaining close control of direct costs, the decision was taken to maintain provision at Stratford where possible, prioritising those classes that contribute most to funders' priorities as well as those where it was believed enrolments would increase, given time.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

The Centre's annual development and improvement plan, arising from its annual Self-Assessment Report, provided focus for targeted actions that assisted in making progress towards meeting the relevant Strategic Objectives.

FINANCIAL OBJECTIVES

The Centre's Financial Objectives are:

- To achieve a minimum annual operating surplus of 1% of income, excluding any pension costs arising from the impact of the Local Government Pension Scheme ("LGPS") costs;
- To provide sufficient courses to ensure that we earn all of the available funding from the Education and Skills Funding Agency ("ESFA") and the Greater London Authority ("GLA");
- To diversify our funding streams, consistent with our Mission and Core Values, in order to maximise our income generating potential;
- To effectively manage costs, keeping any increase in non-pay costs below the prevailing inflation rate;
- To meet banking covenants, maintaining a minimum ESFA Financial Health grade not less than the level defined immediately below 'Good'.

The relocation to Stratford had a significant impact on the Centre's operational results in 2023-24. As a result of the delay to Practical Completion of the site, and the impact on effective marketing and subsequent enrolments, the Centre fell short of its objective in relation to the minimum 1% operating surplus. However all other financial objectives were met.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

A series of performance indicators have been agreed to monitor the successful implementation of the policies.

The performance against the Centre's targets is set out in the table below:

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PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (continued)

Key Performance Indicator	Target 2023-24	Achieved 2023-24	Target 2022-23	Achieved 2022-23
Maximise the number of people who access adult education	2,500	2,606	2,500	2,355
Maximise the number of course enrolments	5,500	5,579	5,500	5,372
Maximise the average number of students per course	10	9	10	9.5
Maintain high average level of student retention; AND Maintain high retention across ALL courses	90%+	96%	90% +	95%
Maintain high level of student satisfaction	95%+	96%	95%+	94%
Maintain high level of average achievement on non-accredited courses; AND Maintain high level of achievement on ALL non-accredited courses	90%+	96%	96% across all levels and lengths	95%
Improved average success rates for students taking accredited courses	90%+	87%	90%+	86%
Improved success rates on ALL non - accredited qualifications	90%+	96%	95%	93%
The % of students reporting additional benefits is increasing	n/a	All students who returned a questionnaire reported at least one additional benefit to learning	n/a	All students who returned a questionnaire reported at least one additional benefit to learning

The Centre is committed to monitoring a range of key sector indicators and is required to complete the Annual Finance Record for the ESFA. The Centre’s financial health grading is expected to be assessed by the ESFA as “Requires Improvement” (2022-23: “Requires Improvement”). This ‘Requires Improvement’ financial health grade arises directly as a result of the execution of the Property Strategy, primarily the drawdown of a commercial mortgage to fund the redevelopment of The Mary Ward Centre at Stratford, and the challenges of a period of high inflation and economic instability seen over the past 12 months which have increased costs and reduced cash balances in the short term.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The Centre had an operating deficit of £33,000 (2022-23: £109,000). This was before the inclusion of a £55,000 (2022-23: £70,000) Local Government Pension Scheme (“LGPS”) service cost; £47,000 LGPS finance credit (2022-23: £18,000 cost); and £1,000 (2022-23: £2,000) LGPS administration cost. The deficit for the year after inclusion of those costs was £42,000 (2022-23: surplus of £19,000). Additionally, an actuarial gain of £9,000 was made by the LGPS (2022-23: £666,000). Overall, the total comprehensive expenditure for the year was £33,000 (2022-23: total comprehensive income of £685,000).

The Centre’s accumulated reserves fell to £9,479,000 (2022-23: £9,512,000). The Centre’s target is to increase reserves, by a minimum of 1% of income, before taking into account the impact of LGPS costs.

The written down value of fixed assets increased to £24,230,000 (2022-23: £23,850,000). Capital expenditure in the year totalled £806,000 (2022-23: £7,840,000), all of which (2022-23: all of which) related to work towards the redevelopment or furnishing and fitting out of The Mary Ward Centre. The Centre moved into The Mary Ward Centre in September 2023 while the redevelopment work was completed, with Practical Completion taking place at the end of November 2023. The depreciation charge for the year includes depreciation on The Mary Ward Centre and the associated new plant and equipment from the date of Practical Completion, and totalled £426,000 (2022-23: £17,000).

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FINANCIAL REVIEW (continued)

The Centre's operational income was £3,908,000 (2022-23: £3,355,000). ESFA funding increased by £496,000 in the period, reflecting an increase in the value of AEB funding, one-off grants for which matched expenditure was incurred during the period and the commencement of release of deferred capital grants used to partially fund the development of The Mary Ward Centre.

Tuition fee income rose by £32,000, a smaller increase than the Centre would have wished, and the result of the later than planned move to The Mary Ward Centre in Stratford, and the delay to Practical Completion, both of which impacted the Centre's plans to market and deliver classes during the first term of 2023-24. Donations and fundraising included one-off grants totalling £142,000 received for the redevelopment of The Mary Ward Centre (2022-23: £75,000). Most other income streams, including the AEB grant, were sustained at or close to, expected levels as the Centre was able to meet the funding targets set by the ESFA.

The value in kind of pro bono donations was £6,000 (2022-23: £54,000).

Costs of the Centre were £3,950,000 (2022-23: £3,336,000), an increase of £614,000, the result of higher level of operational provision during 2023-24 compared with 2022-23 when the Centre was winding down its activity in Central London and aiming to control costs tightly before its relocation. Unlike recent years, when the Centre would have prioritised mitigation of losses by maintaining close control of direct costs, the decision was taken to maintain provision at Stratford where possible, prioritising those classes that contribute most to funders' priorities as well as those where it was believed enrolments would increase, given time.

The 2023-24 Financial Statements and associated notes are set out on pages 28 to 49.

TREASURY MANAGEMENT

Treasury management is the management of the Centre's cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions, the effective control of the risks associated with those activities and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.

Short-term borrowing for temporary revenue purposes is authorised by the Accounting Officer. Such arrangements are restricted by limits in the Centre's Financial Memorandum agreed with the Education and Skills Funding Agency. All other borrowing requires the authorisation of the Board in order to comply with the Financial Memorandum, including the requirements of the Treasury's Managing Public Money (MPM) regulations.

There was a net decrease in the cash held by the Centre of £727,000 to £412,000 (2022-23: increase of £674,000 to £1,139,000). The work towards the redevelopment of The Mary Ward Centre was by far the most significant factor, generating net capital expenditure of approximately £396,000 (2022-23: £2,397,000).

RESERVES POLICY

The Centre recognises the importance of reserves in the financial stability of the organisation and has a stated Reserves Policy to hold a minimum of 1 to 3 month's operating expenditure as unrestricted free reserves. Consequently the Centre continues to ensure that it has adequate reserves to support its core activities.

As at the balance sheet date, the Centre's unrestricted reserves were £9,470,000, (2022-23: £9,503,000) including fixed assets less long term creditors, of which £143,000 (2022-23: £349,000) being net current assets, excluding deferred income and deferred capital grants, represent reserves available to meet the working capital needs of the Centre. This represents around 59% of the lower end of the target (2022-23: 132%). This position was broadly expected following the large investment of the Centre's reserves into The Mary Ward Centre over the period of construction, and it is the Board's intention to restore the Centre's reserves to at least the minimum target level as soon as practical.

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Restricted reserves totalled £9,000 (2022-23: £9,000).

The decrease in reserves at the balance sheet date reflects the reported total comprehensive expenditure for the period.

CURRENT AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

FINANCIAL HEALTH

In 2023-24 the Centre achieved a “Requires Improvement” ESFA financial health grading (2022-23: “Requires Improvement”). This financial health rating was achieved against the backdrop of the strategic activity taken by the Centre to secure its future through implementation of the Property Strategy over the past 6-7 financial years, which has seen the cash balance and free reserves fluctuating, but ultimately falling over the whole of this extended period, as well as the drawdown of a commercial mortgage, needed to fund the development work at The Mary Ward Centre, Stratford.

The Property Strategy was agreed by the Board because the Centre’s primary site at 42 Queen Square was approaching the end of a long lease in July 2022, and had been on beneficial terms for many years. The landlord indicated that if it were to offer a new lease it would be at a considerably higher rent. After careful consideration of the risks and opportunities, the Board adopted a strategy that, once implemented, would help provide for a financially sustainable future for the Centre.

As part of this strategy the Board took the decision to sell the freehold property at 10 Great Turnstile and to lease it back for a period to coincide with the termination of the lease on 42 Queen Square. This sale was completed during 2017-18, and the proceeds of the sale were put towards the purchase of a new building, Queensway House (now known as The Mary Ward Centre) in the London Borough of Newham, which completed in July 2018. A fundraising programme was commenced which, together with a portion of the existing reserves and a commercial mortgage from The Charity Bank Ltd, enabled the redevelopment and refurbishment of this building. Following the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic and its aftermath, the original expectation that most of the Centre’s service offering would operate from the redeveloped Queensway House from the financial year 2022-23 was not realised. As a result, the redevelopment programme experienced delays and was not completed until the start of the 2023-24 academic year.

The premises at 1 Rushworth Street enable the Centre to operate from two permanent sites in two London boroughs.

In the medium to long term, the completion of the redevelopment of The Mary Ward Centre in Stratford completes the Property Strategy, and should ultimately see a return to much stronger operational results and financial sustainability. However it is anticipated that in the short term, the Centre’s relocation to a new area of London will require investment in the curriculum, marketing and resources. We expect this to put pressure on operating surpluses and cash balances and, in turn, on the ESFA financial health grade. This will mean a return to a “Good”, or better, financial health grading is unlikely for a few years following the opening of The Mary Ward Centre.

Based on our forecasts the “Good” and better, financial health grading achieved in recent years was always expected to fall to during the execution of the final phase of the Property Strategy. Consequently, given the challenges faced over 2023-24, the “Requires Improvement” outcome reported for the period is an expected result.

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STUDENT NUMBERS

The Centre is funded according to the levels of activity that it generates. In 2023-24, the Centre generated a funding value of £2,447,267 (2022-23: £2,446,364). The total number of students enrolled onto courses was 2,606 (2022-23: 2,355). Student retention was 96% (2021-22: 95%).

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS

In 2023-24 there were 323 examination entries of which 280 were successful (2022-23: 453 and 407 respectively). Overall success is tbc (2022-23: 95%). Student achievement in non-accredited courses is 96% (2022-23: 94%), which is assessed using the Recognising and Rewarding Progress and Achievement (RARPA) strategy.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENTS

Curriculum planning at the Centre combines a needs analysis of local communities with a broader perspective of its contribution to adult education across London. The Centre has been effective in reviewing and realigning its curriculum to meet changing priorities and funding constraints, whilst retaining the distinctive characteristics of the curriculum and patterns of learning. In 2023-24 the Centre continued to offer courses within the curriculum financed entirely from student fees and successfully ran such courses across the curriculum. In response to funding and community need, the Centre's strategy was to ensure the mix and balance of the curriculum, maximising both the amount of fully funded and paid-for provision that could be delivered within the constraints of space and cost of resourcing. Improvements have been made on the previous year. In 2023-24 enrolments rose by 4% and fee income by 5%.

Community Outreach continue to be successful at providing courses for older people, minority groups and hard to reach communities to reduce social isolation and access to education. The vast majority of this work now takes place in Stratford and East London.

Partnerships with external agencies such as Waltham Forest LA and charities such as Helen Bamber Foundation continue to develop to provide referrals to meet students' needs to learn English and help them get work. In Work Skills and Employability, Level 1 and Level 2 courses continue to be offered; these offer transferrable work skills including Functional Skills, ICT Users, Key Skills for Work as well as non-accredited options such as Excel and MS Office. To support the improvement of digital skills the Centre has introduced Essential Digital Skills, Essentials Digital Skills for Work/Job Seekers. A partnership with Birkbeck University resulting in a co-designed and co-delivered number of Pathways workshops to offer advice and guidance to progress into education and work continues to be offered. Although 24+ Loan provision continues to be offered in Community Interpreting, Counselling and Art and Design, the Centre makes use of funding flexibilities to fully fund individuals on some of these courses at Level 3. Progression routes in Community Interpreting into specialist areas have also been offered, e.g., Level 6 - Preparation for the Diploma in Public Service Interpreting; Law Option.

In 2023-24 the Centre continued to receive Multiply Funding from the GLA to support the improvement of maths skills across London. This funding is for 3 years and got underway in January 2023. To date the Centre has met its targets associated with this project and received the funding allocated. Courses have included First Steps into Maths, Maths for ESOL as well as a range of creative programmes where maths skills are embedded such as Hat Making, Aromatherapy, Healthy Eating and Nutrition and Gardening.

PAYMENT PERFORMANCE

The Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998, which came into force on 1st November 1998, requires colleges, in the absence of agreement to the contrary, to make payments to suppliers within 30 days of either the provision of goods or services or the date on which the invoice was received.

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The target set by the Treasury for payment to suppliers within 30 days is 95%. During the accounting period 1st August 2023 to 31st July 2024, the Centre paid 95% of its invoices within 30 days. The Centre incurred no interest charges in respect of late payment for this period.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

The Centre plans to continue to be a distinct and high quality provider of adult and continuing education, to increase its provision for students over the next 3 years and to return to an 'outstanding' financial status with the ESFA within the life of the new strategic plan.

The Centre will continue to diversify its income streams and thereby reduce its dependency on ESFA and GLA and plans to continue to work towards higher tuition fee income, without compromising access to education for those with the greatest needs. It is expected that there will be continuing development of a range of courses funded by using funding flexibilities, student loans and Free Courses For Jobs. The long term impact of Covid-19 as well as the impact of the delay of the building on the habits and expectations of students continues to be a major factor in the immediate plans for the Centre and, consequently, the Centre it's marketing and communications strategy in order to recruit new students in its new area.

The implementation of the Property Strategy sees Queensway House, in the London Borough of Newham, opened as a new centre for the provision of our adult education curriculum, alongside our site at 1 Rushworth St in the London Borough of Southwark. The new site allows for a major review of the curriculum and particular emphasis is being given to the specific needs of the community in this part of East London.

The Centre will continue to manage its costs effectively, mindful that staff costs represent more than two thirds of total expenditure. Greater efforts will be made to make effective use of more volunteers in a more structured and better way.

The public funding environment remains challenging and there is no immediate end in sight to this. Outcomes from the ONS review will bring substantial change to the sector and the organisation will move ahead with its reorganisation plans to minimise the impact of this.

GOING CONCERN

As part of the Centre's plan to establish in Stratford the Centre has developed detailed financial projections which include modelling the impact of its plans for growth, and the impact of risks and uncertainties associated with those plans and those of its ongoing operations. This work has supported the Board's ability to consider the financial impact of the challenges and uncertainties created by the redevelopment project and its plans for the future. As such it considers that the Centre has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future and until at least December 2025. For this reason it continues to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the financial statements.

RESOURCES

The Centre has a variety of resources that it can deploy in pursuit of its Strategic Objectives.

Tangible resources include the freehold of the newly redeveloped Mary Ward Centre on Stratford High Street in the London Borough of Newham, from 2023-24, the Centre's main site for adult education.

Financial

The Centre has £9,479,000 of net assets (2022-23: £9,512,000). At 31st July 2024 the Centre had a long term loan balance of £3,300,000 with The Charity Bank Ltd, secured on the freehold of The Mary Ward Centre and repayable over 23 years from 2025. The balance owing to the Social Investment Business was £214,000 as at 31st July 2024 (2022-23: £327,000).

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RESOURCES (CONTINUED)

People

The Senior Management Team comprises three members of staff and is expected to remain at this level. The staff team of the Centre is settled, with a low turnover. The Centre employs a wide range of sessional tutors, many of whom have taught at the Centre for many years.

Reputation

The Centre has a very well established reputation and draws students and clients from across London and beyond. The Centre is known as ‘the friendly place to learn’. It is also well known for its ability to support students with both physical and learning difficulties.

PRINCIPAL RISKS AND UNCERTAINTIES

The Centre has undertaken work during the year to review and develop the system of internal control, including financial, operational and risk management which is designed to protect the Centre’s assets and reputation.

Based on the strategic plan, the Senior Management Team regularly undertakes a comprehensive review of the risks to which the Centre is exposed. They identify systems and procedures, including specific preventable actions which should mitigate any potential impact on the Centre. The internal controls are then implemented and their effectiveness and progress against mitigating actions is reviewed. In addition to the annual review, the Senior Management Team will also consider any risks that may arise as a result of a new area of work being undertaken by the Centre.

A risk register is maintained at the Settlement level which is reviewed regularly by the Audit and Risk Committee. The risk register identifies the key risks, the likelihood of those risks occurring, their potential impact on the Settlement and its subsidiaries and the actions being taken to reduce and mitigate the risks. Risks are prioritised using a consistent scoring system. The risk register includes a separate section for each business stream, including the Centre and, as needed, for major projects. Outlined below is a description of the principal risk factors that may affect the Centre. Not all the factors are within the Centre’s control:

- Destabilisation as a result of combined and continued unprecedented change
- The ongoing effects of the current economic environment, including difficulties in retaining and recruiting staff as a result of being unable to keep pace with salary inflation
- Risks in connection with the relocation to a new area of London, and the operation of a newly developed site
- Increasing mismatch between work demands and the capacity of staff to deliver
- Risks in relation to the use of ageing IT solutions

STAKEHOLDER RELATIONSHIPS

The Centre has many stakeholders including:

- students;
- clients;
- funding bodies;
- staff;
- local employers (with specific links);
- our local authority;
- the Mayor of London’s office;
- local community and voluntary organisations; and
- other colleges, in particular other AECs.

The Centre recognises the importance of these relationships and is active in their maintenance and development.

MARY WARD CENTRE
REPORT OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2024

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND EMPLOYMENT OF DISABLED PERSONS

The Centre is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all who learn and work there. It respects and values positively differences in race, gender, sexual orientation, ability, class and age. It strives vigorously to remove conditions which place people at a disadvantage and it will actively combat bigotry. This policy will be resourced, implemented and monitored on a planned basis.

DISABILITY STATEMENT

A single Equality Policy is in place and is published on the Centre's website. The Centre also publishes an Annual Equality Report, which includes its equality objectives. This ensures compliance with all of the relevant legislation, including the Equality Act 2010. The Centre also undertakes equality impact assessments on policies and procedures as appropriate.

The Centre considers all applications from disabled persons, bearing in mind the aptitudes of the individuals concerned. Where an existing employee becomes disabled, every effort is made to ensure that employment with the Centre continues. The Centre's policy is to provide training, career development and opportunities for promotion, which are, as far as possible, identical to those for other employees.

The Centre seeks to achieve the objectives set down in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Acts 2001 and 2005 and the Equality Act of 2010 by:

- having a management structure bringing together the support for learners with disabilities and learning difficulties and the provision of additional learning support;
- the continuing investment in resources to support students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities;
- the supply of specialist equipment for use by students with disabilities; and
- the continuing programme of staff development to ensure the provision of a high level of appropriate support for students who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

In 2023-24 23% (2022-23: 23%) of the student body declared a disability or learning difficulty. This remains high in comparison with adult and further education colleges in general which is between 14% and 15%.

FUNDRAISING

The Centre aims to achieve best practice in the way in which it communicates with donors and other supporters. It takes care with both the tone of its communications and the accuracy of its data to minimise the pressures on supporters. It applies best practice to protect supporters' data and never sells or shares data, and ensures that communication preferences can be changed at any time. The Centre manages its own fundraising activities. The Centre undertakes to react to and investigate any complaints regarding its fundraising activities and to learn from them and improve its service.

During 2023-24, the Centre received no complaints about its fundraising activities.

TRADE UNION FACILITY TIME

There were no employees who were relevant union officials during the period, so there was no time or percentage of the pay bill spent on facility time. There were no paid trade union activities during the year.

DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION TO AUDITORS

The members of the Board who held office at the date of approval of this report confirm that, so far as they are each aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the Centre's auditors are unaware; and each member has taken all the steps that he or she ought to have taken to be aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Centre's auditors are aware of that information.

Approved by order of the members of the Board on 10th December 2024 and signed on their behalf by:

Frances Bates 
Chair Frances Bates (Dec 19, 2024 10:22 GMT)

MARY WARD CENTRE
STATEMENT OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND INTERNAL CONTROLS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2024

STATEMENT OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND INTERNAL CONTROL

The following statement is provided to enable readers of the Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Centre to obtain a better understanding of its governance and legal structure. The statement covers the period from 1st August 2023 to 31st July 2024 and up to the date of the approval of the Annual Report and financial statements.

The Centre endeavours to conduct its business:

- in accordance with the seven principles identified by the Committee on Standards in Public Life (selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership);
- in full accordance with the guidance to colleges from the Association of Colleges in The Code of Good Governance for English Colleges; and
- having due regard to the UK Corporate Governance Code (“the Code”) insofar as it is applicable to the further education sector.

The Centre is committed to exhibiting best practice in all aspects of corporate governance and, in particular, the Board has adopted and complied with the Code of Good Governance. The Board has not adopted, and therefore does not apply, the UK Corporate Governance Code. However, we have reported on our Corporate Governance arrangements by drawing upon best practice available, including those aspects of the UK Corporate Governance Code we consider to be relevant to the further education sector and best practice.

In the opinion of the Board, the Centre complies with all the provisions of the Code of Good Governance, and it has complied throughout the year ended 31st July 2024. The Board recognises that, as a body entrusted with both public and private funds, it has a particular duty to observe the highest standards of corporate governance at all times.

The Centre is a registered charity. The Board confirms that it has had due regard for the Charity Commission’s guidance on public benefit and that the required statements appear elsewhere in these financial statements.

STRUCTURE GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The members of the Board, or on the Boards of its subsidiaries, who served during the year and up to the date of signature of this report are as listed in the following table:

Member	Date of appointment	Term of office	Date of leaving	Elected trustees	Position and Committees served
Ms A Akande Pierre-Noel	June 24	4 years			Finance
Ms F Bates	March 2024				Chair, Governance & Nominations (Chair)
Ms N Cartner	Reappointed June 2022	4 years			Quality Improvement Group (Chair), Governance & Nominations, Marketing & Communications
Mr G Collins	May 2018	4 years			Vice Chair, Audit & Risk (Chair), Governance and Nominations
Mr J Collins	September 2020	4 years	July 2024		Quality Improvement Group
Ms C Cryne	May 2021	4 years	February 2024		Chair of Trustees, Governance & Nominations (Chair), Marketing & Communications

MARY WARD CENTRE
STATEMENT OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND INTERNAL CONTROLS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2024

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES (continued)

Member	Date of appointment	Term of office	Date of leaving	Elected trustees	Committees served
Ms K Duong	May 2018	4 years	October 2024		Treasurer; Audit & Risk; Finance (Chair); Governance and Nominations
Ms F Del Guidice	June 2022	4 years		Student	
Ms E Henry	June 2022	4 years		Staff	Quality Improvement Group
Mr T Hucker	June 2022	4 years		Student	Finance, Quality Improvement Group
Mr N Janmohamed	June 2024	4 years			Audit Risk, Governance & Nominations
Ms B Montoya	Reappointed June 2022	4 years			Governance & Nominations, Marketing & Communications
Ms S Selzer	September 2020	4 years	July 2024		Marketing & Communications
Ms S Todd	September 2020	4 years	October 2024		Governance & Nominations, Marketing & Communications (Chair)
Ms B Campbell acts as Clerk to the Board					

In addition to the Board, other people who served on committees during the year and up to the date of signature of this report were as listed in the following table:

Member	Date of Appointment	Date of resignation	Status of appointment	Committees served
Ms F Stormer	February 2019		External representative	Audit & Risk
Ms R Brain	October 2019		MWS Board Representative	Audit & Risk, Quality Improvement Group
Mr F Martins	Re-appointed July 2024		MWS Board Representative	Governance & Nominations
Mr P Nichols	Re-appointed July 2024		MWS Board Representative	Finance
Ms E Wyatt	November 2021		MWS Board Representative	Finance

It is the Board's responsibility to bring independent judgement to bear on issues of strategy, performance, resources and standards of conduct.

The Board is provided with regular and timely information on the overall financial performance of the Settlement together with other information such as performance against funding targets, proposed capital expenditure, quality matters and personnel related matters such as health and safety and environmental issues.

MARY WARD CENTRE
STATEMENT OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND INTERNAL CONTROLS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2024

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES (continued)

The Board conducts some of its business through a number of committees. Each committee has terms of reference which have been approved by the Board. These committees are Governance and Nominations, Remuneration, Finance, Audit and Risk, Marketing and Communications and Quality Improvement.

Full minutes of all meetings except those deemed to be confidential are available from the Clerk at the address below.

ATTENDANCE

The table below summarises the attendance at Board and sub-committee meetings for the year to 31st July.

Member	Board	Strategy days	Finance	Audit & Risk	Marketing & Communications	Quality & Improvement	Governance & Nominations
Ms A Akande Pierre-Noel	1 of 1	0 of 0					
Ms F Bates	2 of 2	0 of 0	1 of 1	1 of 1		1 of 1	
Ms R Brain	3 of 4	0 of 0		4 of 4		4 of 4	
Ms N Cartner	1 of 4	0 of 0			2 of 3	4 of 4	2 of 3
Mr G Collins	3 of 4	0 of 0		3 of 4			2 of 3
Mr J Collins	4 of 4	0 of 0				2 of 3	
Ms C Cryne	2 of 2	0 of 0			3 of 3		2 of 3
Ms F DelGuidice	2 of 4	0 of 0				1 of 1	
Ms K Duong	1 of 4	0 of 0	4 of 4	2 of 4			3 of 3
Ms E Henry	3 of 4	0 of 0				2 of 4	
Mr T Hucker	3 of 4	0 of 0	1 of 4			2 of 4	
Mr N Janmohamed	1 of 1	0 of 0				1 of 1	
Mr F Martins	4 of 4	0 of 0				1 of 4	2 of 3
Ms B Montoya	2 of 4	0 of 0			3 of 3		
Mr P Nichols	4 of 4	0 of 0	4 of 4				
Ms S Selzer	0 of 4	0 of 0			3 of 3		
Ms S Todd	4 of 4	0 of 0			3 of 3		1 of 3
Ms E Wyatt	1 of 4	0 of 0	2 of 4				
Ms F Stormer				2 of 4			

The Remuneration Committee did not meet during the year.

In addition to the committees shown above, the following working groups operated during the year:

- Friends & Alumni - overseeing relationships with friends and alumni, reviewing and seeking fundraising opportunities
- Restructure - tasked with reviewing the group structure of the Mary Ward Settlement group following the ONS Reclassification of Colleges in November 2022
- Chair Recruitment - tasked with the appointment of the new, permanent Chair of Trustees

The above working groups were not operated as formal committees with registers of attendance, nor were they formally clerked. However all significant discussions were reported back to the full Board, and a record of any decisions taken by the Board was formally noted as part of the full board minutes.

MARY WARD CENTRE
STATEMENT OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND INTERNAL CONTROLS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2024

ATTENDANCE (continued)

The Clerk maintains a register of financial and personal interests of the members of the Board. The register is available from the Clerk at the address below:

The Mary Ward Centre
275-285 High Street
Stratford
London
E15 2TF

All trustees are able to take independent professional advice in furtherance of their duties at the Centre's expense and have access to the Clerk to the Board, who is responsible to the Board for ensuring that all applicable procedures and regulations are complied with. The appointment and removal of the Clerk are matters for the Board as a whole.

Formal agendas, papers and reports are supplied to members in a timely manner, prior to board meetings. Briefings are also provided on an ad-hoc basis.

The Board has a strong and independent non-executive element and no individual or group dominates its decision-making process. The Board considers that each of its non-executive members is independent of management and free from any business or other relationship which could materially interfere with the exercise of their independent judgement.

There is a clear division of responsibility in that the roles of the Chair and the Warden, the Accounting Officer, are separate.

APPOINTMENTS TO THE BOARD

With the exception of ex-officio appointments, trustees hold office for a period of four years. Elected trustees currently on the Board will serve the term to which they were elected. Appointed trustees may be re-appointed for a second term of four years on the recommendation of the Governance and Nominations Committee. Third and further terms of four years may exceptionally be approved by the Board on recommendation of the Governance and Nominations Committee if it is considered that this would produce a better balance of knowledge, skills, commitment and experience amongst the trustees.

Student and staff trustees are eligible to stand for re-election at the end of their term. Staff members are not eligible to serve if they cease to be a member of staff of the Centre. Student trustees may continue to the end of their elected term of office even if they cease to be students of the Centre during their term.

The Board is responsible for ensuring that appropriate training is provided as required.

TRUSTEE INDUCTION AND TRAINING

Each new trustee has an induction programme designed to meet their needs as a trustee. The content of the programme will vary depending on their level of experience as a charity trustee and their knowledge and understanding of the Centre.

The programme will include spending time with each of the key management personnel. They are also encouraged to attend appropriate external training events where these will facilitate the undertaking of their role.

MARY WARD CENTRE
STATEMENT OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND INTERNAL CONTROLS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2024

BOARD PERFORMANCE

As part of its annual self assessment process for the year ended 31st July 2024 the Centre commissioned an external review of its governance practices following which a report and plan of action was agreed. In addition to the strategy days held during the year, the Chair has held one-on-one reviews with individual trustees as well as induction sessions with new trustees.

ORGANISATION

The Board of Mary Ward Settlement is also the Board of the Centre.

Day-to-day operational management of the Centre is delegated to the Warden who is supported by a small Senior Management Team who include the Director of Adult and Community Education and the Director of Finance and Resources.

The Warden and her Senior Management Team oversee the smooth running of the Centre and its staff who are divided into teams in accordance with Centre activities and projects.

RELATED PARTIES AND CO-OPERATION WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

None of the trustees receive remuneration or other benefit from their work with the Centre, unless they are separately employed by the Centre as a member of staff. For the year under review, no trustees received remuneration in the year for their role as a trustee. There were no expenses and no related party transactions for the year ended 31st July 2024 (2022-23: none).

Any connection between a trustee or senior manager of the Centre and any organisation associated with the Centre must be disclosed to the Board in the same way as any contractual relationship with a related party. In the current year no such related party transactions were reported.

The Centre has built up strong positive relationships over many years with a range of agencies in both the public, private and charity sector. The Centre continues its outreach activities to financially and socially excluded communities within London boroughs. As such, the Centre enjoys good co-operative working relations with an ever-growing number of partners and stakeholders in relation to a range of borough-based projects and activities that meet core charitable objectives.

PAY POLICY FOR KEY MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL

The trustees and the Senior Management Team comprise the key management personnel of the Centre in charge of directing and controlling, running and operating the Centre on a day to day basis.

The pay of the Senior Management Team is reviewed by the Remuneration Committee, which then makes recommendations to the full Board. The employment costs of the Senior Management Team for their work in relation to the Centre are allocated to the Centre.

INTERNAL CONTROL

SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY OF INTERNAL CONTROL

The Board is ultimately responsible for the Centre's system of internal control and for reviewing its effectiveness. The Board has delegated the day to day responsibility to the Warden, as Accounting Officer, for maintaining a sound system of internal control that supports the achievement of the Centre's policies, aims and objectives, whilst safeguarding the public funds and assets for which she is personally responsible, in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to her in the financial memorandum/financial agreement between the Centre and the Education and Skills Funding Agency. She is also responsible for reporting to the Board any material weaknesses or breakdowns in internal control.

MARY WARD CENTRE
STATEMENT OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND INTERNAL CONTROLS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2024

THE PURPOSE OF THE SYSTEM OF INTERNAL CONTROL

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives; it can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of Centre policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically. The system of internal control has been in place at the Centre for the year ended 31st July 2024 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and financial statements, and following the reclassification of colleges by the ONS as notified in the “Dear accounting officer” letter of 29th November 2022, was updated to ensure policies, procedures and approval processes are compliant with the Treasury’s Managing Public Money requirements.

RISK MANAGEMENT

CAPACITY TO HANDLE RISK

The Board has reviewed the key risks to which the Centre is exposed, together with the operating, financial and compliance controls that have been implemented to mitigate those risks. The Board is of the view that there is a formal ongoing process for identifying, evaluating and managing the Centre’s significant risks that has been in place for the year ended 31st July 2024 and up to the date of approval of the Annual Report and Financial Statements. This process is regularly reviewed by the Board.

THE RISK AND CONTROL FRAMEWORK

The system of internal financial control is based on a framework of regular management information, administrative procedures including the segregation of duties, and a system of delegation and accountability. In particular, it includes:

- comprehensive budgeting systems with an annual budget which is reviewed and agreed by the Board;
- regular reviews by the Board of periodic and annual financial reports which indicate financial performance against forecasts;
- setting targets to measure financial and other performance;
- clearly defined capital investment control guidelines; and
- the adoption of formal project management disciplines where appropriate.

The Centre has an internal audit service, which operates in accordance with the requirements of the ESFA’s *Post 16 Audit Code of Practice*. The work of the internal audit service is informed by an analysis of the risks to which the Centre is exposed, and annual internal audit plans are based on this analysis. The analysis of risks and the internal audit plans are endorsed by the Centre’s governing body on the recommendation of the Audit and Risk Committee. At least annually, the internal audit service provides the Board with a report on internal audit activity in the Centre. The report includes the internal audit service’s independent opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Centre’s system of risk management, controls and governance processes.

THE REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS

As Accounting Officer, the Warden has responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of the system of internal control. Her review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control is informed by:

- the work of the internal auditors;
- the work of the executive managers within the Centre who have the responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework; and
- comments made by the Centre’s financial statements auditors and the regularity auditors in their management letters and other reports.

MARY WARD CENTRE
STATEMENT OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND INTERNAL CONTROLS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2024

THE REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS (CONTINUED)

The Warden has been advised on the implications of the result of her review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control by the Audit and Risk Committee which oversees the work of the internal auditor and other sources of assurance, and a plan to address weaknesses and ensure continuous improvement of the system is in place.

The Senior Management Team receives reports setting out key performance and risk indicators and considers possible control issues brought to their attention by early warning mechanisms, which are embedded within the departments and reinforced by risk awareness training. The Senior Management Team and the Audit and Risk Committee also receive regular reports from the internal audit and other sources of assurance, which include recommendations for improvement. The Audit and Risk Committee's role in this area is confined to a high-level review of the arrangements for internal control. The Committee's agenda includes a regular item for consideration of risk and control and it receives reports thereon from the Senior Management Team. The emphasis is on obtaining the relevant degree of assurance and not merely reporting by exception. At its December meeting, the Audit and Risk Committee carried out the annual assessment for the year ended 31st July 2024 by considering documentation from the Senior Management Team and internal audit, and taking account of events since 31st July 2024.

GOING CONCERN

As part of the Centre's plan to establish in Stratford the Centre has developed detailed financial projections which include modelling the impact of its plans for growth, and the impact of risks and uncertainties associated with those plans and those of its ongoing operations. This work has supported the Board's ability to consider the financial impact of the challenges and uncertainties created by the redevelopment project and its plans for the future. As such it considers that the Centre has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future and until at least December 2025. For this reason it continues to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the financial statements.

Approved by order of the members of the Board on 10th December 2024 and signed on their behalf by:


Frances Bates (Dec 19, 2024 10:22 GMT)

Frances Bates
Chair


Therese Reinheimer-Jones (Dec 19, 2024 17:55 GMT)

Therese Reinheimer-Jones
Accounting Officer

MARY WARD CENTRE
STATEMENT OF REGULARITY, PROPRIETY AND COMPLIANCE
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2024

As accounting officer I confirm that the Centre has had due regard to the framework of authorities governing regularity, priority and compliance, and the requirements of grant funding agreements and contracts with ESFA, and has considered its responsibility to notify the ESFA of material irregularity, impropriety and non-compliance with those authorities and terms and conditions of funding.

I confirm on behalf of the Centre that after due enquiry, and to the best of my knowledge, I am able to identify any material irregular or improper use of funds by the Centre, or material non-compliance with the framework of authorities and the terms and conditions of funding under the Centre's grant funding agreements and contracts with ESFA, or any other public funder. This includes the elements outlined in the 'Dear accounting officer' letter of 29th November 2022 and ESFA's bite size guides.

I confirm that no instances of material irregularity, impropriety, funding non-compliance, or non-compliance with the framework of authorities have been discovered to date. If any instances are identified after the date of this statement, these will be notified to ESFA.


Therese Reinheimer-Jones (Dec 19, 2024 17:55 GMT)

Therese Reinheimer-Jones
Accounting Officer
10th December 2024

Statement of the Chair of the Board of Trustees

On behalf of the Board, I confirm that the accounting officer has discussed their statement of regularity, propriety and compliance with the Board and that I am content that it is materially accurate.


Frances Bates (Dec 19, 2024 10:22 GMT)

Frances Bates
Chair
10th December 2024

MARY WARD CENTRE
STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2024

The Board of Trustees is required to present audited financial statements for each financial year.

Within the terms and conditions of the grant funding agreements and contracts with ESFA, the Board is required to prepare financial statements which give a true and fair view of the financial performance and position of the Centre for the relevant period. The Board must also prepare a strategic report which includes an operating and financial review for the year. The bases for the preparation of the financial statements and strategic report are:

- the Statement of Recommended Practice - Accounting for Further and Higher Education,
- ESFA's college accounts direction; and
- UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice

In preparing the financial statements, the Board of Trustees is required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- assess whether the Centre is a going concern, noting the key supporting assumptions, qualifications or mitigating actions as appropriate (which must be consistent with other disclosures in the accounts and auditor's report); and
- prepare financial statements on the going concern basis, unless it is inappropriate to assume that the Centre will continue in operation.


The Board is also required to prepare a strategic report, in accordance with paragraphs 3.23 to 3.27 of the FE and HE SORP, that describes what it is trying to do and how it is going about it, including information about the legal and administrative status of the Centre.

The Board is responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose, with reasonable accuracy at any time, the financial position of the Centre and which enable it to ensure that the financial statements are prepared in accordance with relevant legislation including the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 and Charities Act 2011, and relevant accounting standards. It is responsible for taking steps that are reasonably open to it to safeguard its assets and to prevent and detect fraud and other irregularities.

The Board is responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the Centre's website; the work carried out by auditors does not involve consideration of these matters and, accordingly, the auditors accept no responsibility for any changes that may have occurred to the financial statements since they were initially presented on the website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

The Board is responsible for ensuring that expenditure and income are applied for the purposes intended by Parliament and that the financial transactions conform to the authorities that govern them. In addition, they are responsible for ensuring that funds from the ESFA and any other public funds are used only in accordance with the ESFA's grant funding agreements and contracts and any other conditions that may be prescribed from time to time by the ESFA or any other public funder, including that any transactions entered into by the Centre are within the delegated authorities set out in the 'Dear accounting officer' letter of 29th November 2022 and ESFA's bite size guides. The Board of Trustees must ensure that there are appropriate financial and management controls in place to safeguard public and other funds and ensure they are used properly. In addition, the Board of Trustees are responsible for securing economic, efficient and effective management of the Centre's resources and expenditure so that the benefits that should be derived from the application of public funds from the ESFA and other public bodies are not put at risk.

Approved by order of the members of the Board on 10th December 2024 and signed on its behalf by:


Frances Bates (Dec 19, 2024 10:22 GMT)
Frances Bates, Chair

MARY WARD CENTRE
INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF MARY WARD CENTRE
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2024

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Mary Ward Centre (the 'Centre') for the year ended 31st July 2024 which comprise the statement of comprehensive income, the statement of changes in reserves, the balance sheet, the statement of cash flows, the principal accounting policies, and the notes to the financial statements. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) and the College Accounts Direction 2023 to 2024 issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency ('ESFA').

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the Centre's affairs as at 31st July 2024 and of its deficit of income over expenditure for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice; Accounting for Further and Higher Education (the 2019 FE HE SORP) and the Accounts Direction 2023 to 2024 issued by the ESFA; and
- In all material respects, funds from whatever source administered by the Centre for specific purposes have been properly applied to those purposes and managed in accordance with relevant legislation.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the Centre in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the Centre's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

MARY WARD CENTRE
INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF MARY WARD CENTRE
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2024

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the Centre and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the report of the board of trustees, including the strategic report. We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Post 16 Code of Practice issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us;
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- all the information and explanations required for the audit were not received; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made.

Responsibilities of the trustees

As explained more fully in the trustees' statement of responsibilities, the trustees are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the Centre's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the Centre or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

Our approach to identifying and assessing the risks of material misstatement in respect of irregularities, including fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations, was as follows:

- the engagement partner ensured that the engagement team collectively had the appropriate competence, capabilities and skills to identify or recognise non-compliance with applicable laws and regulations;
- we identified the laws and regulations applicable to the Centre through discussions with management, and from our knowledge and experience of the sector;
- we focused on specific laws and regulations which we considered may have a direct material effect on the financial statements or the operations of the Centre, including the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, funding agreements with the ESFA and associated funding rules, ESFA regulations, data protection legislation, anti-bribery, safeguarding, employment, health and safety legislation;
- we assessed the extent of compliance with the laws and regulations identified above through making enquiries of management and inspecting legal correspondence; and
- identified laws and regulations were communicated within the audit team regularly and the team remained alert to instances of non-compliance throughout the audit.

MARY WARD CENTRE
INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF MARY WARD CENTRE
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2024

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements (continued)

We assessed the susceptibility of the Centre's financial statements to material misstatement, including obtaining an understanding of how fraud might occur, by:

- making enquiries of management as to where they considered there was susceptibility to fraud, their knowledge of actual, suspected and alleged fraud; and
- considering the internal controls in place to mitigate risks of fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations.

To address the risk of fraud through management bias and override of controls, we:

- performed analytical procedures to identify any unusual or unexpected relationships;
- tested journal entries to identify unusual transactions; and
- assessed whether judgements and assumptions made in determining the accounting estimates set out in the accounting policies were indicative of potential bias.

In response to the risk of irregularities and non-compliance with laws and regulations, we designed procedures which included, but were not limited to:

- agreeing financial statement disclosures to underlying supporting documentation;
- reading the minutes of trustee meetings;
- enquiring of management as to actual and potential litigation and claims; and
- reviewing available correspondence with HMRC and the Centre's legal advisors.

There are inherent limitations in our audit procedures described above. The more removed that laws and regulations are from financial transactions, the less likely it is that we would become aware of non-compliance. Auditing standards also limit the audit procedures required to identify non-compliance with laws and regulations to enquiry of the trustees and other management and the inspection of regulatory and legal correspondence, if any.

Material misstatements that arise due to fraud can be harder to detect than those that arise from error as they may involve deliberate concealment or collusion.

A further description of our responsibilities is available on the Financial Reporting Council's website at www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the trustees, as a body, in accordance with the Centre's Articles of Government. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Centre and the trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



Date: 19 December 2024

Buzzacott LLP
Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditor
130 Wood Street
London
EC2V 6DL

Buzzacott LLP is eligible to act as an auditor in terms of section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

MARY WARD CENTRE
REPORTING ACCOUNTANT'S ASSURANCE REPORT ON REGULARITY
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2024

To: The Trustees of Mary Ward Centre and Secretary of State for Education, acting through Education and Skills Funding Agency (the ESFA)

In accordance with the terms of our engagement letter and further to the requirements and conditions of funding in the ESFA's grant funding agreements and contracts, or those of any other public funder, we have carried out an engagement to obtain limited assurance about whether anything has come to our attention that would suggest, in all material respects, the expenditure disbursed and income received by Mary Ward Centre ('the Centre') during the period 1st August 2023 to 31st July 2024 have not been applied to the purposes identified by Parliament and the financial transactions do not conform to the authorities which govern them.

The framework that has been applied is set out in the Post-16 Audit Code of Practice (the Code) issued by the ESFA and in any relevant conditions of funding concerning adult education notified by a relevant funder.

In line with this framework, our work has specifically not considered income received from the main funding grants generated through the Individualised Learner Record data returns, for which the ESFA has other assurance arrangements in place.

This report is made solely to the Board of Trustees of the Centre and the ESFA in accordance with the terms of our engagement letter. Our work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Board of Trustees of the Centre and the ESFA those matters we are required to state in a report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept, or assume, responsibility to anyone other than the Board of Trustees of the Centre and the ESFA for our work, for this report, or for the conclusion we have formed.

Respective responsibilities of the trustees and the reporting accountant

The trustees are responsible, under the requirements of the Further & Higher Education Act 1992, subsequent legislation and related regulations and guidance, for ensuring that expenditure disbursed, and income received, are applied for the purposes intended by Parliament, and the financial transactions conform to the authorities that govern them. Our responsibilities for this engagement are established in the United Kingdom by our profession's ethical guidance and are to obtain limited assurance and report in accordance with our engagement letter and the requirements of the Code. We report to you whether anything has come to our attention in carrying out our work which suggests that in all material respects, expenditure disbursed and income received, during the period 1st August 2023 to 31st July 2024 have not been applied to purposes intended by Parliament or that the financial transactions do not conform to the authorities which govern them.

Approach

We conducted our engagement in accordance with the Code issued by the ESFA. We performed a limited assurance engagement as defined in that framework. The objective of a limited assurance engagement is to perform such procedures as to obtain information and explanations in order to provide us with sufficient appropriate evidence to express a negative conclusion on regularity. A limited assurance engagement is more limited in scope than a reasonable assurance engagement and consequently does not enable us to obtain assurance that we would become aware of all significant matters that might be identified in a reasonable assurance engagement. Accordingly, we do not express a positive opinion. Our engagement includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the regularity of the Centre's income and expenditure.

The work undertaken to draw to our conclusion includes:

- An assessment of the risk of material irregularity and impropriety across all of the Centre's activities;
- Further testing and review of the areas identified through the risk assessment including enquiry, identification of control processes and examination of supporting evidence across all areas identified as well as additional verification work where considered necessary; and
- Consideration of evidence obtained through the work detailed above and the work completed as part of our financial statements audit in order to support the regularity conclusion.

MARY WARD CENTRE
REPORTING ACCOUNTANT'S ASSURANCE REPORT ON REGULARITY
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2024

Conclusion

In the course of our work, nothing has come to our attention which suggests that in all material respects the expenditure disbursed and income received during the period 1st August 2023 to 31st July 2024 has not been applied to purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions do not conform to the authorities which govern them.

Buzzacott LLP

Buzzacott LLP
Chartered Accountants
130 Wood Street
London
EC2V 6DL

Date: 19 December 2024

MARY WARD CENTRE
STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2024

	Notes	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
INCOME			
Funding body grants	2	3,156	2,660
Tuition fees and education contracts	3	561	529
Other income	4	28	8
Donations and fundraising	5	163	158
Total income		3,908	3,355
EXPENDITURE			
Staff costs	6	2,156	2,022
Other operating expenses	7	1,127	1,108
Depreciation	9	426	17
Interest and other finance costs	8	241	189
Total expenditure		3,950	3,336
(Deficit) / Surplus before tax		(42)	19
Taxation		-	-
(Deficit) / Surplus for the year		(42)	19
Actuarial gain in respect of pension schemes	20	9	666
Total Comprehensive (Expenditure) / Income for the year		(33)	685
Represented by:			
Unrestricted comprehensive (expenditure) / income		(33)	685
		(33)	685

MARY WARD CENTRE
STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN RESERVES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2024

	Unrestricted Income and expenditure Account	Restricted Income and expenditure Account	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Balance as at 31st July 2022	8,818	9	8,827
Surplus from the income and expenditure account	19	-	19
Other comprehensive income	666	-	666
Total comprehensive income for the year	<u>685</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>685</u>
Balance as at 31st July 2023	9,503	9	9,512
Deficit from the income and expenditure account	(42)	-	(42)
Other comprehensive income	9	-	9
Total comprehensive expenditure for the year	<u>(33)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(33)</u>
Balance as at 31st July 2024	<u>9,470</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>9,479</u>

MARY WARD CENTRE
BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 JULY 2024

	Notes	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Non current assets			
Tangible fixed assets	9	24,230	23,850
		<u>24,230</u>	<u>23,850</u>
Current assets			
Trade and other receivables	10	437	729
Cash and cash equivalents		412	1,139
		<u>849</u>	<u>1,868</u>
Less: Creditors - amounts falling due within one year	11	(1,245)	(1,735)
Net current (liabilities) / assets		<u>(396)</u>	<u>133</u>
Total assets less current liabilities		23,834	23,983
Creditors - amounts falling due after more than one year	12	(14,355)	(14,471)
Provisions			
Defined benefit obligation	16	-	-
Total net assets		<u>9,479</u>	<u>9,512</u>
Restricted reserves		9	9
Unrestricted reserves		9,470	9,503
Total reserves		<u>9,479</u>	<u>9,512</u>

The Financial Statements on pages 28 to 49 were approved and authorised for issue by the Board on 10th December 2024 and signed on its behalf by:

Frances Bates
Frances Bates (Dec 19, 2024 10:22 GMT)

Frances Bates
Chair

Therese Reinheimer-Jones
Therese Reinheimer-Jones (Dec 19, 2024 17:55 GMT)

Therese Reinheimer-Jones
Accounting Officer

MARY WARD CENTRE
STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2024

	Notes	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Cash flow from operating activities			
(Deficit) / surplus for the year		(42)	19
Adjustment for non-cash items			
Depreciation	9	426	17
Decrease in debtors	10	292	1,613
Decrease in other creditors due within one year	11	(698)	(287)
Pension costs less contributions payable (including administration cost and interest)	16	9	90
Adjustment for investing activities			
Interest payable	8	287	171
Net cash flow from operating activities		<u>274</u>	<u>1,623</u>
Cash flows from investing activities			
Capital Grants received	11,12	141	3,872
Payments made to acquire fixed assets	9	(742)	(7,841)
		<u>(601)</u>	<u>(3,969)</u>
Cash flows from financing activities			
Interest paid	8	(287)	(171)
Drawdown of new borrowings		-	3,300
Repayments of amounts borrowed	11,12	(113)	(109)
		<u>(400)</u>	<u>3,020</u>
(Decrease) / Increase in cash and cash equivalents in the year		(727)	674
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		<u>1,139</u>	<u>465</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year		<u>412</u>	<u>1,139</u>

MARY WARD CENTRE
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2024

1 ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Statement of accounting policies and estimation techniques

The following accounting policies have been applied consistently in dealing with items which are considered material in relation to the Financial Statements.

Basis of preparation

These Financial Statements have been prepared in accordance with the *Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting for Further and Higher Education 2019* (the 2019 FE HE SORP), the *College Accounts Direction for 2023 to 2024* and in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard 102 - “*The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS102)*”. The Centre is a public benefit entity and has therefore applied the relevant public benefit requirements of FRS102.

The preparation of Financial Statements in compliance with FRS102 requires the use of certain critical accounting estimates. It also requires management to exercise judgement in applying the Centre’s accounting policies.

The Financial Statements are presented in sterling and are rounded to the nearest thousand.

Basis of accounting

The Financial Statements are prepared in accordance with the historical cost convention as modified by the use of previous valuations as deemed cost at transition for certain non-current assets.

Going concern

The activities of the Centre, together with the factors likely to affect its future development and performance are set out in the Report of the Board of Trustees. The financial position of the Centre, its cash flow, liquidity and borrowings are described in the Financial Statements and accompanying notes.

As part of the Centre’s plan to establish in Stratford the Centre has developed detailed financial projections which include modelling the impact of its plans for growth, and the impact of risks and uncertainties associated with those plans and those of its ongoing operations. This work has supported the Board’s ability to consider the financial impact of the challenges and uncertainties created by the redevelopment project and its plans for the future. As such it considers that the Centre has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future and until at least December 2025. For this reason it continues to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the financial statements.

Recognition of income

Revenue grant funding

Government revenue grants, including funding body recurrent grants and other grants, are accounted for under the accrual model as permitted by FRS102. Funding body recurrent grants are measured in line with best estimates for the period of what is receivable and depend on the particular income stream involved. Any under or over achievement for the Adult Skills Budget is adjusted for and reflected in the level of recurrent grant recognised in the income and expenditure account.

The final grant income is normally determined with the conclusion of the year end reconciliation process with the funding body at the end of November following the year end, and the results of any funding audits.

MARY WARD CENTRE
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2024

Revenue grant funding (continued)

Grants from non-government sources are recognised in income when the Centre is entitled to the income and any performance related conditions have been met. Income received in advance of performance related conditions being met is recognised as deferred income within creditors on the Balance Sheet and released to income as the conditions are met.

Capital grant funding

Government capital grants are capitalised, held as deferred income and recognised in income over the expected useful life of the asset, under the accrual method permitted by FRS102. Other non-governmental, capital grants are recognised in income when the Centre is entitled to the funds, subject to any performance related conditions being met.

Fee income

Income from tuition fees is stated gross of any expenditure which is not a discount and is recognised in the period for which it is received and includes all fees payable by students or their sponsors, for example the National Health Service.

Investment income

All income from short term deposits is credited to the income and expenditure account in the period in which it is earned on a receivable basis.

Rental income is stated gross of any expenditure and is recognised in the period for which it is payable.

Agency arrangements

The Centre acts as an agent in the collection and payment of various discretionary support funds. Related payments received from funding bodies and subsequent disbursements to students are excluded from the income and expenditure of the Centre, where the Centre is exposed to minimal risks or enjoys minimal economic benefit related to the transactions.

Accounting for post-employment benefits

Post-employment benefits to employees of the Centre are provided by the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) and the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). These are defined benefit schemes, which are externally funded and contracted out of the State Second Pension (For men born on or before 6th April 1951 and women born on or before 6th April 1953).

Teachers' Pension Fund

The TPS is an unfunded scheme. Contributions to the TPS are calculated so as to spread the cost of pensions over employees' working lives with the Centre in such a way that the pension cost is a substantially level percentage of current and future pensionable payroll. The contributions are determined by qualified actuaries on the basis of valuations using a prospective benefit method.

The TPS is a multi-employer scheme and there is insufficient information available to use defined benefit accounting. The TPS is therefore treated as a defined contribution scheme and the contributions recognised as an expense in the income statement in the periods during which services are rendered by employees.

MARY WARD CENTRE
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2024

Accounting for post-employment benefits (continued)

The London Pension Fund Authority

The LGPS is a funded scheme. The assets of the LGPS are measured using closing fair values. LGPS liabilities are measured using the projected unit credit method and discounted at the current rate of return on a high quality corporate bond of equivalent term and currency to the liability. The actuarial valuations are obtained at least triennially and are updated at each balance sheet date. The amounts charged to operating surplus are the current service costs and the costs of scheme introductions, benefit changes, settlements and curtailments. They are included as part of staff costs as incurred.

Net interest on the net defined benefit liability/asset is also recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Income and comprises the interest cost on the defined obligation and interest income on the scheme assets, calculated by multiplying the fair value of the scheme assets at the beginning of the period by the rate used to discount the benefit obligations. The difference between the interest income on the scheme assets and the actual return on the scheme assets is recognised in interest and other finance costs.

Actuarial gains and losses are recognised immediately in the Statement of Comprehensive Income.

Short term Employment benefits

Short term employment benefits such as salaries and compensated absences (holiday pay) are recognised as an expense in the year in which the employees render service to the Centre. Any unused benefits are accrued and measured as the additional amount the Centre expects to pay as a result of the unused entitlement.

Non-current assets - Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost less accumulated depreciation and accumulated impairment losses.

Land and buildings

Freehold buildings are depreciated on a straight-line basis over their expected useful economic life of 40 years.

Freehold land is not depreciated as it is considered to have an infinite useful life.

A review of impairment of a fixed asset is carried out if events or changes in circumstances indicate that the carrying amount of any fixed asset may not be recoverable.

On adoption of FRS102, the Centre followed the transitional provision to retain the book value of land and buildings, which were revalued in 1996, as deemed cost but not to adopt a policy of revaluation of these properties in the future.

MARY WARD CENTRE
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2024

Tangible fixed assets (continued)

Subsequent expenditure on existing fixed assets

Where significant expenditure is incurred on tangible fixed assets after initial purchase, it is charged to income in the period it is incurred, unless it increases the future benefits to the Centre, in which case it is capitalised and depreciated on the relevant basis.

Plant, Fixtures and Fittings and Equipment

Plant and equipment costing less than £1,000 per individual item is recognised as expenditure in the period of acquisition. All other equipment is capitalised at cost.

Plant and equipment is depreciated as follows:

Fixtures and fittings	over 5 years on a straight line basis
IT equipment	over 10 years on a straight line basis
Mechanical Plant	over 20 years on a straight line basis

Treatment of Government Capital Grants

Where land and buildings or other assets are acquired with the aid of specific government grants, they are capitalised and depreciated as above. Government grants used in the acquisition of a combination of capital asset categories are amortised in proportion with the total capital spend to which the grant contributed. The related government grants are credited to a deferred income account within creditors, and are released to the income and expenditure account over the expected useful economic life of the related asset on a systematic basis consistent with the depreciation policy. The deferred income is allocated between creditors due within one year and those due after more than one year. Non-government grants are recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Income when the Centre becomes entitled to them.

Borrowing costs

Borrowing costs are recognised as expenditure in the period in which they are incurred.

Leased assets

Costs in respect of operating leases are charged on a straight-line basis over the lease term.

Investments

Listed investments held as non-current assets and current asset investments, which may include listed investments, are stated at fair value, with movements recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Income. Investments comprising unquoted equity instruments are measured at fair value, estimated using a valuation technique.

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash includes cash in hand, deposits repayable on demand and overdrafts. Deposits are repayable on demand if they are, in practice, available within 24 hours without penalty.

Cash equivalents are short term, highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash with insignificant risk of change in value. An investment qualifies as a cash equivalent when it has a maturity of 3 months or less from the date of acquisition.

MARY WARD CENTRE
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2024

Financial liabilities and equities

Financial liabilities and equity are classified according to the substance of the financial instrument's contractual obligations, rather than the financial instrument's legal form.

All loans, investments and short term deposits held by the Centre are classified as basic financial instruments in accordance with FRS102. These instruments are initially recorded at the transaction price less any transaction costs (historical cost). FRS102 requires that basic financial instruments are subsequently measured at amortised cost, however the Centre has calculated that the difference between historical cost and amortised cost basis is not material and so these financial instruments are stated on the balance sheet at historical cost. Loans and investments that are payable or receivable within one year are not discounted.

Taxation

The Centre is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes. Accordingly, the Centre is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income and capital gains received within categories covered by sections 478-488 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992, to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

The Centre is partially exempt in respect of Value Added Tax, so that it can only recover a minor element of VAT charged on its inputs. Irrecoverable VAT on inputs is included in the costs of such inputs and added to the cost of tangible fixed assets as appropriate, where the inputs themselves are tangible fixed assets by nature.

Provisions and contingent liabilities

Provisions are recognised when the Centre has a present legal or constructive obligation as a result of a past event, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefit will be required to settle the obligation and a reliable estimate can be made of the amount of the obligation.

Where the effect of time value of money is material, the amount expected to be required to settle the obligation is recognised at present value using a pre-tax discount rate. The unwinding of the discount is recognised as a finance cost in the Statement of Comprehensive Income in the period that it arises.

A contingent liability arises from a past event that gives the Centre a possible obligation whose existence will only be confirmed by the occurrence, or otherwise, of uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the Centre. Contingent liabilities also arise in circumstances where a provision would otherwise be made but either it is not probable that an outflow of resources will be required or the amount of the obligation cannot be measured reliably.

Contingent liabilities are not recognised in the balance sheet but are disclosed in the notes to the financial statements.

Judgements in applying accounting policies and key sources of estimation uncertainty

In preparing these Financial Statements, management have made the following judgements:

- To determine whether leases entered into by the Centre, either as a lessor or a lessee are operating or finance leases. These decisions depend on an assessment of whether the risks and rewards of ownership have been transferred from the lessor to the lessee on a lease by lease basis.
- To determine whether there are indicators of impairment of the Centre's tangible assets. Factors taken in to consideration in reaching such a decision include the economic viability and expected future financial performance of the asset and, where it is a component of a larger cash-generating unit, the viability and expected future performance of that unit.

MARY WARD CENTRE
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2024

Judgements in applying accounting policies and key sources of estimation uncertainty (continued)

- To estimate the proportion of TPS grant income to recognise where that grant income is received or receivable in relation to specific categories of costs.
- To estimate future income and expenditure flows of the Centre and on its short to medium term financial stability in assessing going concern.

Other key sources of estimation uncertainty

- **Tangible fixed assets**

Tangible fixed assets, other than investment properties, are depreciated over their useful lives, taking into account residual values where appropriate. The actual lives of the assets and residual values are assessed annually and may vary depending on a number of factors. In re-assessing asset lives, factors such as technological innovation and maintenance programmes are taken into account. Residual value assessments consider issues such as future market conditions, the remaining life of the asset and the projected disposal values.

- **Local Government Pension Scheme**

The present value of the LGPS defined benefit liability depends on a number of factors that are determined on an actuarial basis using a variety of assumptions. The assumptions used in determining the net cost (income) for pensions include the discount rate. Any changes in these assumptions, which are disclosed in note 20, will impact the carrying amount of the pension liability. Furthermore, a roll forward approach which projects results from the latest full actuarial valuation performed at 31st March 2022, has been used by the actuary in valuing the pension liability at 31st July 2024. Any difference between the figures derived from the roll forward approach and a full actuarial valuation would impact on the carrying amount of the pension liability.

- **Gifts in Kind**

Donated professional services are recognised as income when the Centre has control over them, any conditions associated with the donated service having been met, the receipt of economic benefit from the use by the Settlement of the item is probable and that the economic benefit can be measured reliably. In accordance with the FE/HE SORP (FRS102), the time of general volunteers is not recognised.

On receipt, donated professional services are recognised on the basis of the value of the gift to the Settlement which is the amount that the Centre would have been willing to pay to obtain those services on the open market; a corresponding amount is then recognised in expenditure in the same period as the receipt.

2 FUNDING BODY GRANTS

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
GLA/ESFA recurrent grant	2,700	2,591
GLA/ESFA non recurrent grants	249	69
Releases of deferred capital grants	207	-
Total	3,156	2,660

MARY WARD CENTRE
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2024

3 TUITION FEES AND EDUCATION CONTRACTS

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Adult education fees	517	475
Fees for FE loan supported courses	44	54
Total	561	529

4 OTHER INCOME

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Rent receivable	28	8
Total	28	8

5 DONATIONS AND FUNDRAISING

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Income from general fundraising and donations	9	18
Income from capital fundraising	147	75
Income from fundraising and donations for bursary fund	1	11
Value in kind donations	6	54
Total	163	158

6 STAFF COSTS

The average number of persons (including key management personnel) employed by the Centre during the year, described as both individuals and full-time equivalents was:

	2024		2023	
	No.	fte	No.	fte
Teaching staff	126	22	74	20
Non-teaching staff	30	23	34	23
	156	45	108	43

The difference between the number of teaching staff and the full-time equivalent is the large number of part-time tutors employed by the Centre.

MARY WARD CENTRE
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2024

6 Staff costs (continued)

Staff costs for the above persons	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Wages and salaries	1,691	1,578
Social security costs	136	119
Other pension costs (including LGPS adjustments of £55,000 (2022-23: £70,000))	<u>329</u>	<u>325</u>
Total payroll costs	<u>2,156</u>	<u>2,022</u>

Key management personnel

Key management personnel are those persons having authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of the Centre and are represented by the Senior Management Team, which comprises the Warden (who is also the Accounting Officer), the Director of Community and Adult Education and the Director of Finance and Resources.

	2024	2023
	No.	No.
The number of key management personnel	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>

The number of key management personnel and other staff who received annual emoluments, excluding pension contributions but including benefits in kind, in the following ranges was:

	2024	2023
	No.	No.
£75,001 to £80,000 p.a.	-	1
£80,001 to £85,000 p.a.	1	1
£85,001 to £90,000 p.a.	2	-
£90,001 to £95,000 p.a.	<u>-</u>	<u>1</u>
	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>

There were no other members of staff whose earnings exceeded £60,000 in the period.

Key management personal emoluments excluding recharges to group entities are made up as follow:

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Salaries	237	265
Employers National Insurance	29	33
Pension contributions	<u>35</u>	<u>51</u>
Total key management emoluments	<u>301</u>	<u>349</u>

MARY WARD CENTRE
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2024

6 STAFF COSTS (continued)

Key management personnel (continued)

The above emoluments include amounts payable to the Accounting Officer (who is also the highest paid officer in 2024) of:

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Salaries	87	90
Pension contributions	<u>7</u>	<u>17</u>

In 2023 the above amounts related to 2 individuals, one of whom was the highest paid officer for the period and whose emoluments totalled £90,000 with pension contributions of £21,000 for the full year.

Relationship of Accounting Officer/Warden /Chief Executive pay and remuneration expressed as a multiple:

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Accounting Officer's basic salary as a multiple of median of all staff	1.8	2.0
Accounting Officer's total remuneration as a multiple of median of all staff	<u>1.7</u>	<u>2.0</u>

The multiple is based on total staff costs divided by the median full time equivalent number of staff.

No other trustees received any payment from the Centre, making no claims for travel and subsistence or any other expenses (2022-23: none).

7 OTHER OPERATING EXPENSES

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Teaching costs	202	127
Non-teaching costs	392	404
Premises costs	<u>533</u>	<u>577</u>
Total	<u>1,127</u>	<u>1,108</u>

Other operating expenses include:

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Auditor's remuneration:		
Financial statements audit	29	35
Regularity audit	3	3
Internal audit	6	5
TPS audit	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>

MARY WARD CENTRE
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
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8 INTEREST AND OTHER FINANCE COSTS

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
On bank and government agency loans	287	171
Pension finance (income) / costs (note 16)	(46)	18
Total	241	189

9 TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Freehold land and buildings	Assets Under Construction	Plant	Equipment	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Cost					
As at 1 st August 2023	7,252	16,547	-	90	23,889
Additions	-	650	-	156	806
Transfers	14,981	(17,197)	2,044	172	-
As at 31st July 2024	22,233	-	2,044	418	24,695
Depreciation					
At 1 st August 2023	-	-	-	39	39
Charge for the year	303	-	88	35	426
At 31st July 2024	303	-	88	74	465
Net book value as at 31st July 2024	21,930	-	1,956	344	24,230
<i>Net book value as at 31st July 2023</i>	<i>7,252</i>	<i>16,547</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>51</i>	<i>23,850</i>

10 TRADE AND OTHER RECEIVABLES

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Trade receivables	97	51
Amounts owed by group undertakings	137	91
VAT recoverable	-	88
Prepayments and accrued income	196	495
Other debtors	7	4
Total	437	729

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11 CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Bank loans and overdrafts	160	113
Trade payables	39	616
Amounts owed to group undertakings	41	-
Bursary creditor (note 18)	70	91
VAT creditor	6	-
Other taxation and social security	40	77
Accrual for untaken annual leave	59	55
Other payroll creditors	50	-
Other accruals and deferred income	469	568
Deferred income - government capital grants	311	215
Total	<u>1,245</u>	<u>1,735</u>

12 CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE AFTER ONE YEAR

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Bank loans	3,354	3,514
Deferred income - government capital grants	11,001	10,957
Total	<u>14,355</u>	<u>14,471</u>

13 MATURITY OF DEBT

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
In one year or less	160	113
Between two and five years	357	442
After five years	2,997	3,072
Total	<u>3,514</u>	<u>3,627</u>

The Centre has two loans, repayable by instalments, both secured by a fixed charge on a freehold property, as follows:

With the Social Investment Business, with interest payable at 5%, falling due by March 2026.

With The Charity Bank Ltd, repayable over 23 years from February 2025. Interest is payable at 2.45% above base.

MARY WARD CENTRE
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JULY 2024

14 CAPITAL AND OTHER COMMITMENTS

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Commitments contracted for at 31 st July	<u>170</u>	<u>857</u>

On 19th January 2022 the Centre entered into a Design and Build contract for the redevelopment of Queensway House in the London borough of Newham. Practical Completion was reached in November 2023 and at 31st July 2024 all sums due under the contract, with the exception of the retention sum of £170,000 falling due on the anniversary of Practical Completion, had been paid.

15 LEASE OBLIGATIONS

At 31st July the Centre had minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Land and buildings		
Not later than one year	-	9
Equipment		
Not later than one year	16	-
Between 1 and 5 years	<u>16</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>32</u>	<u>9</u>

16 DEFINED BENEFIT OBLIGATIONS

The Centre's employees belong to two principal post-employment defined benefit plans: the Teachers' Pension Scheme England and Wales (TPS) for academic and related staff; and the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) for non-teaching staff, which is managed by the London Pensions Fund Authority. Both are multi-employer defined-benefit schemes.

The pension costs are assessed in accordance with the advice of independent qualified actuaries. The latest formal actuarial valuation of the TPS was 31st March 2020 and of the LGPS 31st March 2022.

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Total pension cost for the year		
Teachers' Pension Scheme: contributions paid	227	210
Local Government Pension Scheme:		
Contributions paid	45	66
FRS102 (s28) adjustment	<u>55</u>	<u>70</u>
Charge to the Statement of Comprehensive Income	100	136
Defined Contribution costs	<u>26</u>	<u>15</u>
Total Pension Cost for year within staff costs	<u>353</u>	<u>361</u>

MARY WARD CENTRE
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
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16 DEFINED BENEFIT OBLIGATIONS (CONTINUED)

The total pension cost for the year includes £24,000 recharged to group entities (2022-23: £36,000). There were no outstanding or prepaid contributions at either the beginning or the end of the financial year. All contributions due for the year had been paid.

Teachers' Pension Scheme

The Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) is a statutory, contributory, defined benefit scheme, governed by the Teachers' Pension Scheme Regulations 2014. These regulations apply to teachers in schools, colleges and other educational establishments. Membership is automatic for teachers and lecturers at eligible institutions. Teachers and lecturers are able to opt out of the TPS.

The TPS is an unfunded scheme and members contribute on a 'pay as you go' basis - these contributions, along with those made by employers, are credited to the Exchequer under arrangements governed by the above Act. Retirement and other pension benefits are paid by public funds provided by Parliament.

Under the definitions set out in FRS 102 (28.11), the TPS is a multi-employer pension plan. The Centre is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities of the plan.

Accordingly, the Centre has taken advantage of the exemption in FRS 102 and has accounted for its contributions to the scheme as if it were a defined-contribution plan. The Centre has set out above the information available on the plan and the implications for the Centre in terms of the anticipated contribution rates.

The valuation of the TPS is carried out in line with regulations made under the Public Service Pension Act 2013. Valuations credit the teachers' pension account with a real rate of return assuming funds are invested in notional investments that produce that real rate of return.

The actuarial review of the TPS which applied during the year ended 31st July 2023 was carried out as at 31st March 2016. The valuation report was published by the Department for Education (DfE) in April 2019. The valuation reported total scheme liabilities (pensions currently in payment and the estimated cost of future benefits) for service to the effective date of £218 billion, and notional assets (estimated future contributions together with the notional investments held at the valuation date) of £196 billion, giving a notional past service deficit of £22 billion.

The report of the latest actuarial valuation dated March 2020 was released in October 2023. As a result employer contribution rates were increased from 23.68% of pensionable pay to 28.68% from 1st April 2024. The Department for Education had previously agreed to pay a teacher pension employer contribution grant to cover the additional costs of the previous actuarial valuation up to 23.68% during the 2023-24 academic year, however no such grant has been confirmed for the additional costs arising from the March 2020 valuation.

A full copy of the valuation report and supporting documentation can be found on the Teachers' Pension Scheme website.

The employer's pension costs paid to TPS in the period amounted to £227,000 (2022-23: £129,000).

FRS102 (Section 28)

Under the definitions set out in FRS102 (28.11), the TPS is a multi-employer pension plan. The Centre is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities of the scheme.

MARY WARD CENTRE
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
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16 DEFINED BENEFIT OBLIGATIONS (CONTINUED)

Accordingly, the Centre has taken advantage of the exemption in FRS102 and has accounted for its contributions to the scheme as if it were a defined-contribution scheme. The Centre has set out above the information available on the scheme and the implications for the Centre in terms of the anticipated contribution rates.

Local Government Pension Scheme

The LGPS is a funded defined-benefit scheme, with the assets held in separate funds administered by the London Pension Fund Authority. The total contribution made for the year ended 31st July 2024 was £94,000 (2022-23: £110,000), of which employer's contributions totalled £45,000 (2022-23: £66,000) and employees' contributions totalled £49,000 (2022-23: £44,000). The agreed contribution rates for future years are 8.9% for employers and range from 5.5% to 12.5% for employees, depending on salary.

Principal Actuarial Assumptions

The following information is based upon a full actuarial valuation of the fund at 31st March 2022 updated to 31st July 2024 by a qualified independent actuary.

	At 31st July	At 31st July
	2024	2023
Rate of increase in salaries	3.85%	3.80%
Rate of increase for pensions in payment / inflation	2.85%	2.80%
Discount rate for scheme liabilities	5.05%	5.15%
Inflation assumption (CPI)	3.20%	2.30% - 3.20%

The current mortality assumptions include sufficient allowance for future improvements in mortality

	At 31st July	At 31st July
	2024	2023
Retiring today		
Males	20.1	20.1
Females	23.8	23.7

Retiring in 20 years

	At 31st July	At 31st July
	2024	2023
Males	20.9	20.9
Females	24.5	24.5

Sensitivity analysis

	At 31st July	At 31st July
	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Present value of defined benefit obligation		
Discount rate +0.1%	3,830	3,618
Discount rate -0.1%	3,950	3,730
Mortality assumption - 1 year increase	3,997	3,774
Mortality assumption - 1 year decrease	3,784	3,575

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
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16 DEFINED BENEFIT OBLIGATIONS (CONTINUED)

Local Government Pension Scheme (continued)

The Centre's share of the assets and liabilities in the plan at the balance sheet date and the expected rates of return were:

	Value as at 31st July 2024 £'000	Value as at 31st July 2023 £'000
Equities	2,892	2,685
Target Return Portfolio	785	815
Infrastructure	515	571
Property	429	433
Cash	155	69
Total fair value of plan assets	4,776	4,573
Weighted average expected long term rate of return	5.0%	5.0%

The amount included in the balance sheet in respect of the defined benefit pension plan is as follows:

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Fair value of plan assets	4,776	4,573
Present value of plan liabilities	(3,889)	(3,673)
	887	900
Asset restriction (see note below)	(887)	(900)
Net pensions asset / (liability) (Note 15)	-	-

As the LGPS asset is irrecoverable, recognition of the its value on the balance sheet has been restricted to £nil by limiting the value of the actuarial gain.

Amounts recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Income in respect of the plan are:

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Amounts included in staff costs:		
Employer service cost (net of employee contributions)	100	136
Total operating charge	100	136
Amounts included in interest and other finance costs:		
	(47)	18
Administrative charge	1	2
Pension finance costs	(46)	20

MARY WARD CENTRE
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
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16 DEFINED BENEFIT OBLIGATIONS (CONTINUED)

Local Government Pension Scheme (continued)

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Amounts recognised in Other Comprehensive Income		
Return on assets	62	(19)
Other actuarial losses on assets	-	(4)
Experience gain / (loss) arising on defined benefit obligations	16	121
Changes in assumptions	(82)	1,468
Asset restriction	13	(900)
Amounts recognised in Other Comprehensive Income	9	666

Movement in net defined liability during the year

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Deficit in scheme at 1 st August	-	(576)
Movement in year:		
Employer service cost (net of employee contributions)	(100)	(136)
Employer contributions	45	66
Net interest on liabilities	47	(18)
Administration charge	(1)	(2)
Actuarial gain / (loss)	9	666
Deficit in scheme at 31st July	-	-

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Asset and liability reconciliation		

Changes in the present value of defined benefit obligations

Defined benefit obligations at start of period	3,673	5,004
Current service cost	100	136
Interest cost	186	169
Contributions by Scheme participants	49	44
Experience (gain) / loss on defined benefit obligations	(16)	(121)
Change in financial assumptions	89	(1,202)
Change to demographic assumptions	(7)	(266)
Estimated benefits paid	(185)	(91)
Defined benefit obligations at end of period	3,889	3,673

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16 DEFINED BENEFIT OBLIGATIONS (CONTINUED)
Local Government Pension Scheme (continued)

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Changes in the fair value of plan assets		
Fair value of plan assets at start of period	4,573	4,428
Interest on plan assets	233	151
Return on plan assets	62	(19)
Other actuarial losses	-	(4)
Administration cost	(1)	(2)
Employer contributions	45	66
Contributions by Scheme participants	49	44
Benefits paid	(185)	(91)
Fair value of plan assets at end of period	4,776	4,573

17 RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

Owing to the nature of the Centre's operations and the composition of the board being drawn from local public and private sector organisations, it is inevitable that transactions will take place with organisations in which a member of the board may have an interest. All transactions involving such organisations are conducted at arm's length and in accordance with the Centre's financial regulations and normal procurement procedures.

The only related party transactions during the year took the form of recharges to group entities for services provided, totalling £340,838 (2022-23: £389,101) and for services received, totalling £100,000 (2022-23: £100,000).

As disclosed in note 7, no expenses were paid to or on behalf of the trustees during the year (2022-23: £nil).

No trustee has received any remuneration or waived any payments from the Centre, except in their capacity as a member of staff (2022-23: £nil).

18 AMOUNTS DISBURSED AS AGENT

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Funding body grants - hardship support	30	30
Funding body grants - 24+ advanced learning loans	40	40
	70	70
Disbursed to students	(59)	(39)
Administration costs	(1)	(1)
Balance unspent as at 31st July, included in creditors	10	30

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
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18 AMOUNTS DISBURSED AS AGENT (CONTINUED)

Funding body grants are available solely for students. In the majority of instances, the Centre only acts as a paying agent. In these circumstances, the grants and related disbursements are therefore excluded from the Statement of Comprehensive Income.

19 CONTINGENT LIABILITIES

There are no contingent liabilities.