

People

First

a voice for people with learning difficulties

People First (Self-Advocacy)

A charity and a company limited by guarantee

Annual Report and Financial Statements

**For the Year
Ended
31 March 2017**



Charity number 1057354
Company number 03134827

Contents

Page

Letter from the Chair



3

Part 1.
Legal and Administrative
Information

5

Part 2.
Report of the Management
Committee



7

Part 3.
Main Things we did in
2016/17 and future plans

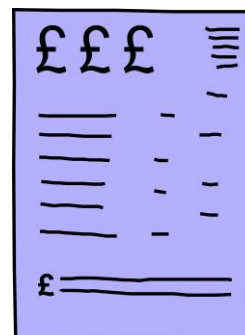


13

Part 4.
Summary Accessible
Accounts

25

Part 5.
Statement of
Financial Activities



29

Part 6.
Balance Sheet and Notes
Forming Part of the
Financial statements

33

**The Management Committee presents its report
and independently examined financial statements
for the year ended 31 March 2017**

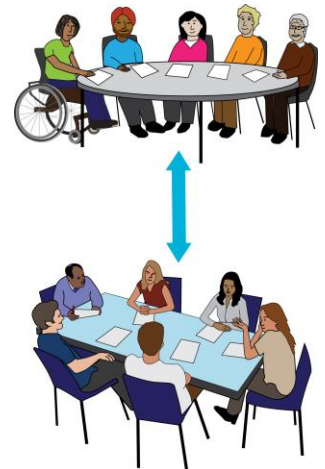
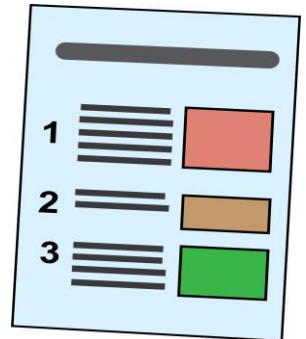
Letter from the chair

Dear Members,

This year has been a very good year for People First after a number of difficult years and I would like to give just a few highlights of the year:

We have worked on building our relationship with members and are starting work with 10 member groups around research into cuts and Easy Read. Working with local organisations is very important in making sure we have as much impact as we can! We have also worked hard on our links with other Disabled People's Organisations, the NHS and Government departments.

A big donation from Simon Raynor, a People First member who sadly passed away has made all of this year's work possible and has put People First (Self Advocacy) in a very strong place.



Finally, we would like to offer our support to people with learning difficulties who are struggling in a time of cuts and less independence, choice and control. As we said at our AGM this year, together we can Speak Up, Get Strong, Be Heard!



Best wishes,

C. P. Spooner

Christine Spooner
Chair

Part 1. Legal and Administrative Information

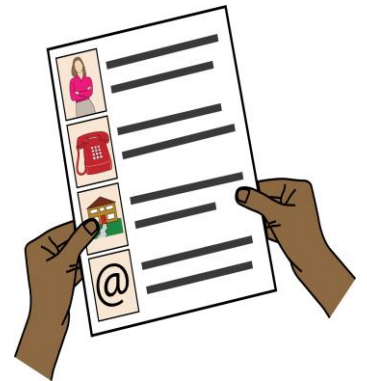
Charity Name: People First (Self Advocacy)

Charity registration number: 1057354

Company registration number: 03134827

Registered Office and operational address:

336 Brixton Road, London, SW9 7AA



Management Committee Members

Michael Brookstein: Treasurer

Derek Stevens: Campaigns Officer

Kate Brackley: Membership Secretary

Christine Spooner: Chair

Marie Emma Claire: Vice Chair

Ruth Caroline Carter: Company Secretary

Bella Edwards: Management Committee Member



John Elliffe: Management Committee Member

Management Team

Andrew Lee, Director



Independent Examiner

Dick Maule, Bristol Community Accountants
12 Picton Street, Bristol BS6 5QA



Bankers

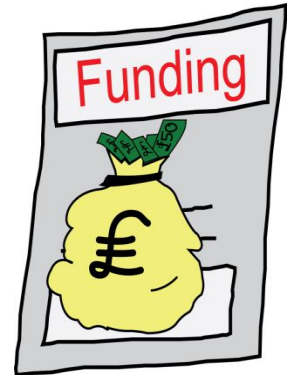
Barclays Bank PLC
Bedford Square Business Centre PO Box 314,
6 Bedford Square, London WC18 3TD



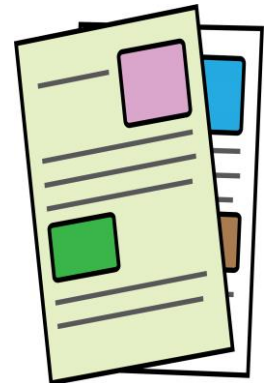
Part 2. Report of the Management Committee

2.1 Fundraising

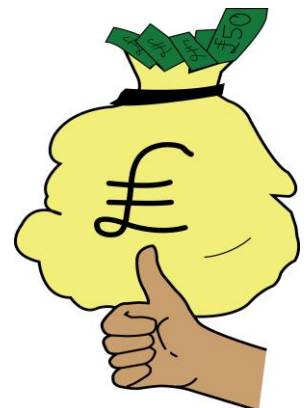
This year we continued to get funds from the John Ellerman Foundation and the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. Just after the year end we found out that we would receive funding from the Big Lottery Foundation for a peer support project in partnership with Lambeth People First and the Social Care Institute for Excellence, totaling approximately £180,000 over 4 years.



A big part of our future fundraising plan is marketing our new Easy Read One-Stop-Shop. With our newly completed picture bank and the launch of the local Easy Read Hubs, this will start to be an important part of our core organisational funding.

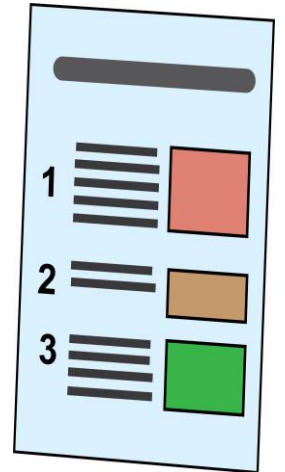


As well as this during this financial year we got a big donation from Simon Raynor, a People First member that unfortunately passed away. His donation has supported the organisation to fund work with local groups as well as this it has put the organisation in a good financial place.



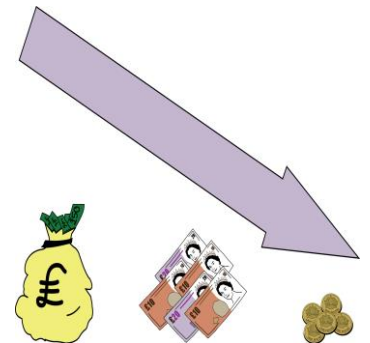
2.2 The Company Rules We Have to Follow

The organisation is a charitable company limited by guarantee, started on 6th December 1985 and registered as a charity on 6th August 1996. The company has a set of rules called the Memorandum of Association, which says what we are set up to do and the Articles of Association which is a set of rules which says how we can go about doing it. If the company has to close down members are required to contribute an amount not exceeding £1.



2.3 Membership

In 2016/17 we saw the number of members drop slightly with the continuation of local groups folding as more advocacy services are being taken over by non-user led organisations. Also many groups are folding because their funding is being cut by local authorities. Many local self-advocacy groups rely on support from their Local authority.



Our plans over the next year are to increase self-advocacy group membership and support groups that have closed to fundraise and reopen.



At the moment we have:
56 Group Members
83 Individual Members



Note: Self advocacy groups may vary in size from 18 members to 250 members.

2.5 Risk Management

The Management Committee has spent time looking at what things can go wrong. We regularly look at systems and procedures to reduce the risks the charity faces.



Risks to funding have been an ongoing problem. However, with the development of the Easy Read One Stop Shop and the donation from Simon Raynor we now have a very secure financial situation.



How the office works and the rules we have for checking things, such as paying bills, also reduces the chance of things going wrong.

Procedures are also in place to make sure we have good health and safety for staff, volunteers and visitors. We look at the way we do things every so often to make sure that we are still doing them right and that they continue to meet our needs.



2.6 Organisational Structure

People First has a Management Committee of up to 12 members who meet a minimum of six times per year and are responsible for the direction and policy of the charity as agreed by the members.



2.7 Day to day Management

The Director of People First is given the authority to carry out the day to day work. They make sure the charity meets its targets and that staff are able to do their jobs and continue to develop their skills and work well together.



2.8 Reserves Policy

The reserves policy has changed, it has gone up from 3 months to 6 months. This is so that we make sure that we have enough money to cover the organisations running costs for 6 months. As a result of a large donation from Simon Raynor we now have very large reserves. In section 3 there is information about how we plan to spend some of this money; however we plan to keep the majority of the donation as reserves.



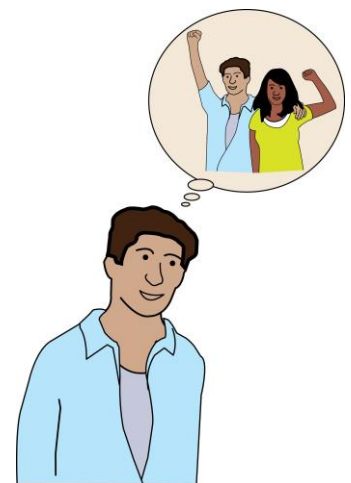
Our unrestricted funds as at 31st March 2016 were (£4068). We were able to have negative reserves as the large donation from Simon Raynor was due in soon after the year end. The balance on our unrestricted reserves as at 31st March 2017 is now £182,538.



2.9 Public benefit Statement

The company's objectives and principal activities are to:

- Support groups and individuals with learning difficulties to speak up about what is important to them
- Raise awareness of the rights of people with learning difficulties



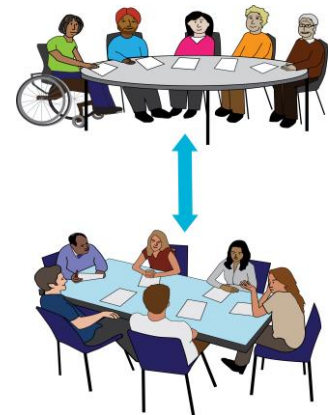
- Develop the skill base of self-advocacy groups and individuals
- Make sure that the voices of people with learning difficulties are heard at local and national government policy level
- Work at a national level providing support, information, advice and training to individuals and user-led self-advocacy groups.



Part 3. Main things we did in 2016/17 and future plans

3.1 Main things we did

People First had a very busy year with policy work, as well as working much more closely with members. We started work with member groups on both the Cuts Impact Action Now project and the local Easy Read Hubs.



We are also looking forward to starting a new project called Supporting Each Other Equals Power! to test run a face to face version of our Advocacy, Signposting and Advice service.

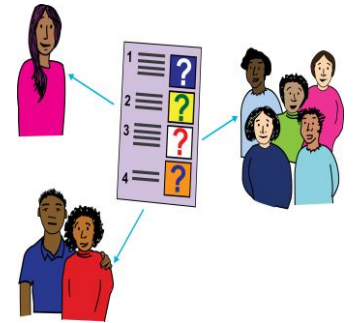


We are glad to be working more closely with other Disabled People's Organisations and the have closer links with both the NHS and the Department for Work and Pensions.



3.1.1 The Cuts Impact Action Now Project (CIAN)

The Cuts Impact Action Now project aims to collect evidence on the impact of local and national cuts on local people with learning difficulties. In September 2013 we started working on this project with People's Choice at Barnet Centre for Independent Living.



In 2014/15 we completed this ground breaking research project. In 2015/16 we launched the report at a local event in Barnet. Someone from Barnet Council came and answered questions from the audience and gave an official response to the report, its findings and the recommendations made.



At the end of 2016/17 we started work with 5 local member self-advocacy groups. We are working with the groups so that they can carry out their own local research into the impact that cuts and changes are having on people in their local areas. We are also talking to seven other groups about whether they would like to take part.



3.1.2 Accessible Information and our Easy Read Services

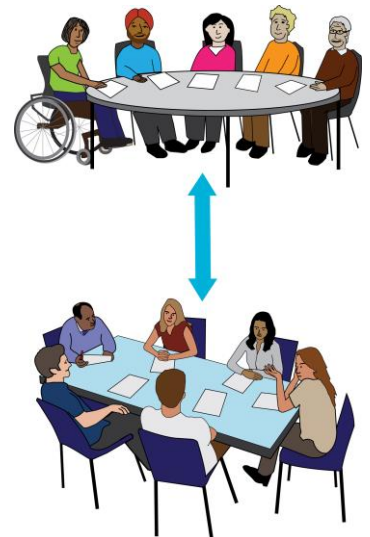
The Easy One Stop Shop is made up of Easy Read training, a translation service, a picture bank and general support for organisations wanting to make their service and information more accessible for people with learning difficulties.



We know that most of the information that people get and need in Easy Read comes from their local area and their local organisations. This means that to get more people putting information into Easy Read, it needs to be done more at a local level.



After our research, we realised that many member local self-advocacy organisations are doing Easy Read and offer different services. We could start working with local authorities; we needed to be working directly with our member self-advocacy organisations. When we realised this it meant that we had to rethink our Easy Read One Stop Shop Strategy and decide on a new plan for moving forward to push for wider use of Easy Read in local areas.



We decided that to roll out the Easy Read One Stop Shop, we would start working initially with 5 local self-advocacy groups to support them to set up Easy Read hubs in their local areas. We would work together to:



- Look at which organisations give information in Easy Read and which don't
- Get in touch with the organisations to invite them to the hub, this could be day centres, supported living, health organisations, leisure centres and the local authority itself
- Set up a big event in the local area where we talk about what Easy Read is, why it is needed, how they can do it using our support and the One Stop Shop
- Work together to give organisations training and advice on making their organisations and services accessible



Nationally, we were invited to join the Accessible Formats Task Force at the Department for Work and Pensions. We have planned training and support on Easy Read and accessible information to make sure that the Department can better meet the access needs of people with learning difficulties.



This is a great achievement in terms of pushing for more use of Easy Read, it will also give us more power when working with local authorities.

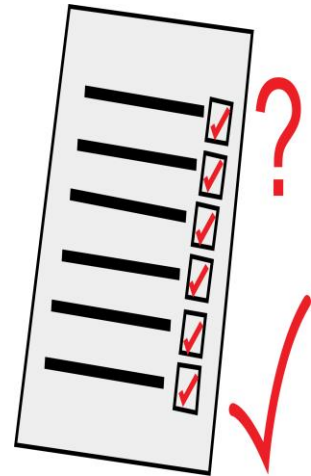


3.1.3 Advocacy, Signposting and Advice telephone service and Supporting Each Other Equals Power!

We now give support to over 500 people each year. We use the experiences of callers to feed into policy and campaigning work.



We carried out an evaluation of this service at the end of last year and one of the main things that we found out was that people were very happy with the service however they would like a face to face version of this service. For this reason last year we applied for funding from the Big Lottery Fund together with the Social Care Institute for Excellence and Lambeth People First to pilot this sort of peer support service in Lambeth called Supporting Each Other Equals Power!



During this year we got through to the second round in the application process and in June 2017 we were told that we got the funding. We are very excited about being able to test run a face to face local service that, if it works, could be used in place of the ASA service. Through the Social Care Institute for Excellence's national links with local authorities and commissioners, we will be able to push for this peer support model being used nationally.

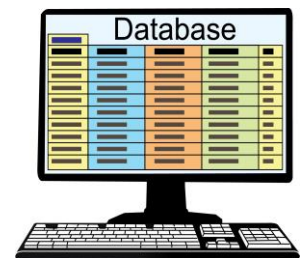


3.1.4 Policy and Campaigning in 2016/17

One of the main ways that we campaign for change is through our work with members and member organisations. In order to create stronger links with our members we organised our AGM event, Speak Up, Get Strong, Be Heard!



We managed to reach groups that had not been in touch for quite some time and we have now been able to completely update our membership database.



Over the last 5 years we have seen a lot of organisations closing, with around 40% of local self-advocacy organisations closing. During this year we have gained 4 new member self-advocacy groups.



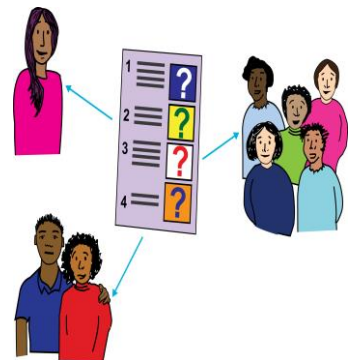
We are just starting a piece of work with Portsmouth Social Services, supporting a group of people to set up a local user led self-advocacy group. We will be doing around 10 sessions with the group to support them to set up and manage the organisation.



We will then use this training nationally in areas that either do not have self-advocacy groups or in areas where the groups have closed down. We were reminded by members at our AGM how much self-advocacy organisations are valued and needed and how upset people are when they close.

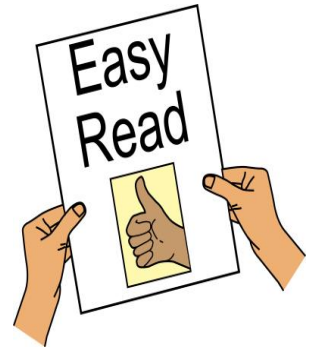


We have made sure that we get important information out to our members, which is now much easier with an updated membership database. We send out important information about national changes that are happening, consultations and information about events taking place.



We have supported members to speak up on a number of issues this year and below is more information about the Directors policy work:

The Director has supported members to speak through consultations, meetings and attending events. Firstly, at the beginning of 2016, we did a lot of campaign work with the Department for Work and Pensions around Access to Work and employment for people with learning difficulties.



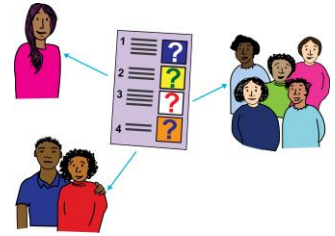
We have carried on with this work through giving information in consultations and attending All Party Parliamentary Group meetings on employment.



We are still working on this, and all of this work is what has led to the training and support that we will be giving to the Department for Work and Pensions on Easy Read and accessible information



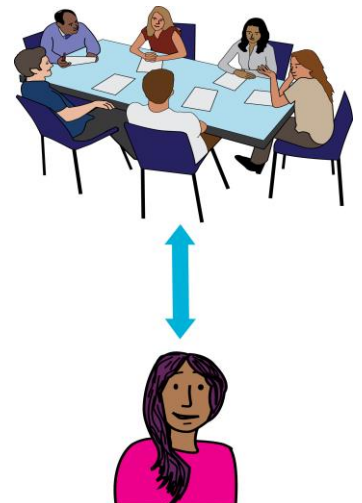
Secondly along with many member groups who supported us to give information we could write responses to lots of different consultations, such as:



- The Home Office Inquiry into Hate crime
- The Lords Select Committee Inquiry into Financial Exclusion
- All Party Parliamentary Group Inquiry into Employment
- Women and Equalities Committee Inquiry into how easy it is to access homes, buildings and outside spaces
- We also gave information for the Reclaiming Our Futures Alliance List of Issues for the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)



We have kept strong links with all Disabled People's Organisations (DPO's), larger third sector organisations and government departments. As well as the organisations that we are already working with, through networking and consultation responses, we were invited onto the Independent Living Strategy Group. This group is made up of disabled people from a range of organisations.



It is brought together by Baroness Jane Campbell. It is an excellent place for dealing with issues and for finding out about important changes that will affect disabled people with learning difficulties.



We have also been able to work with partner organisations on a range of different campaign areas. We have been working with the Reclaiming Our Futures Alliance in preparation for some of the member organisations attending the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities meeting in Geneva in March.



We have also made stronger links with NHS England, especially around Transforming Care and making sure that people with learning difficulties are not sent away to hospitals and units and left there for a long time.



3.2 The Simon Raynor Legacy

We received a big donation from Simon Raynor when he passed away last year. This money has changed a lot of things in the organisation and means that we are in a much better place now. We plan to keep most of the money as reserves. However, there are some things that we have done this year using the money:

- We are paying 10 local self-advocacy groups to support us on the Cuts Impact Action Now project and the Easy Read Hub Project.
- As we are growing with the new Supporting Each Other Equals Power! project, we have spent money on a server and computers
- We have put staff salaries back up. After a difficult year we had to bring salaries down. We are now able to bring them back up

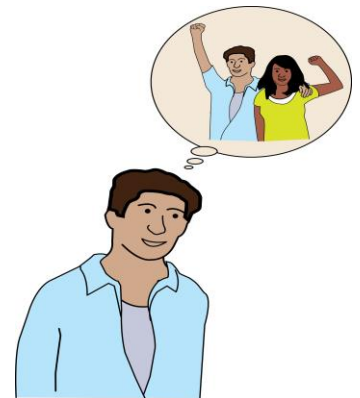


3.3 Future Plans

Over the next year we will work with groups on the national roll out of the Cuts Impact Action Now Project. We will be supporting local self-advocacy organisations to carry out their own evidence collection of the impact of the cuts in their local area. We will also work with groups on the Easy Read Hubs and promoting wider use of Easy Read.



We will keep on building strong links with local self-advocacy groups through working together and supporting each other's work and campaigns. We will again be having a big push on getting more members, this is so that we can all work together to make change happen for people with learning difficulties.



We will also start work on the joint Big Lottery Funded project Supporting Each Other Equals Power! to test run a face to face version of the Advocacy, Signposting and Advice telephone service.



We will also work to make sure that we are a channel for the voice of people with learning difficulties to reach government and decision makers. Especially the quietest voices such as those locked up in units and hospitals around the UK.

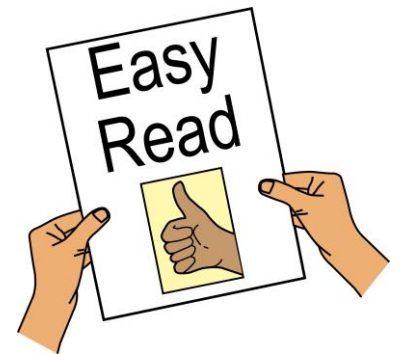


Part 4. Summary Accessible Accounts for the year 2016/17

Accessible Accounts report by:
The Treasurer

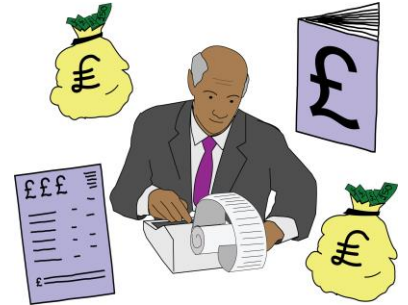
The full independently examined accounts for 2016/17 are shown at the end of this report. They are not very easy to understand so I have made an easy read version.

The next few pages explain the money information in a different way to make it clearer.

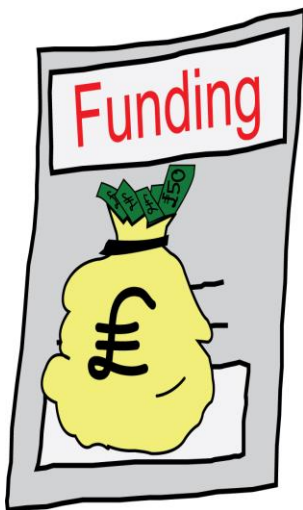


What the Independent Examiner Thought of the full Accounts!

Because we are a company we have had our finances independently examined. They said we kept good records and that we spent money correctly



Where we got our money from!



Grant Money that we got from funders:

John Ellerman
Esmée Fairbairn

Total Grants – £55,000



Access to Work: Money for workers' support

Total - £60,840



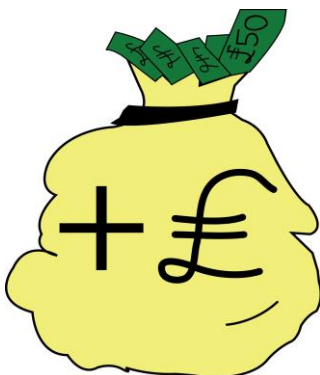
**By selling things, giving
training, making
documents accessible**

Total - £2,830

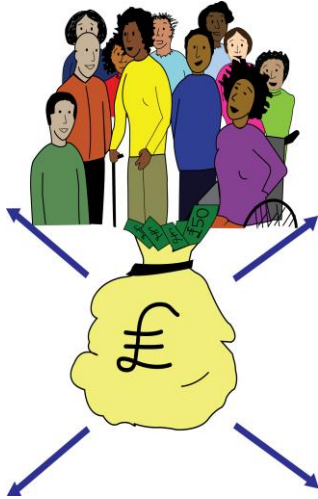


Donations

Total - £240,000



**Total money coming in:
£358,670**



What did we spend the money on?

Money was spent mainly on wages for staff, rent and running costs for the office and funding local self-advocacy group projects.

**Total money going out:
£172,060**



Did we have any money left over at 31st March 2017?

**Yes, we had:
£182,540**

Part 5. Statement of Financial Activities

Responsibilities of the Management Committee

The Management Committee, who are also known as the Trustees, are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which show clearly, at any time how we are doing with our money and to make sure that the financial statements follow the rules of the Companies Act **2006**.



The Management Committee is also responsible for looking after the assets of the charitable company, such as computers and furniture, and for taking reasonable steps to stop or prevent anyone from stealing or cheating.



The names of the Members of the Management Committee who served during the year and up to the date of this report are set out on pages 3 and 4.



The next part is a statement of the Trustees responsibilities for the purposes of Company Law and is declaring that that we have met these responsibilities.

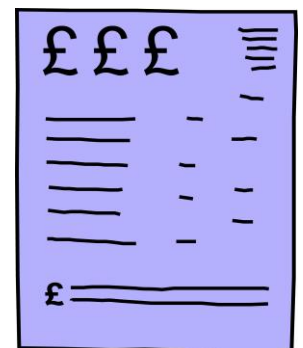


Trustees' responsibilities statement - Charitable Company

The trustees (who are also directors of People First Self Advocacy for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

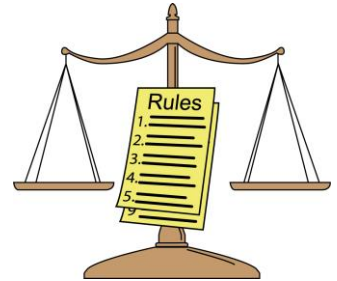


Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for the year.



In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- 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;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in operation.

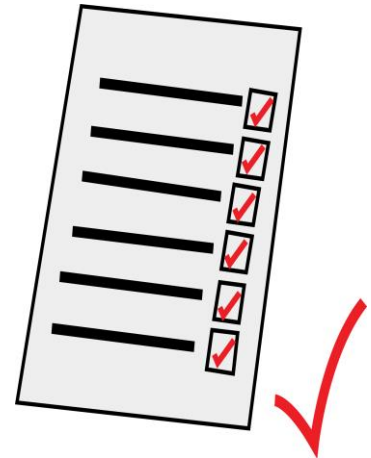


The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.



In so far as the trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant information of which the charitable company's independent examiner is unaware; and
- the trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant information and to establish that the examiner is aware of that information.



Dick Maule from Community Accountants will continue as independent examiner

This report has been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities 2015 (FRS 102) issued on the 16th July 2014, as updated by update bulletin 1 issued on 2nd February 2016 and in accordance with the **special provision of the Companies Act 2006** relating to small entities.



Approved by the Management Committee on
18 August 2017

and signed on its behalf by: *C. P. Spooner*