

# REGISTRAR OF COMPANIES

**Coram Voice**  
**(formerly Voice for the Child**  
**in Care)**

## **Annual Report and Financial** **Statements**

31 March 2015

Company Limited by Guarantee  
Registration Number 3050826 (England and Wales)

Charity Registration Number  
1046207



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## Reference and administrative details

<b>Trustees</b>	Judith Trowell (Chair) Simon Greenhalgh (Treasurer) Selina Anderson Vivien Cochrane Mike Lauerman Rosemary Mayes Paula Reid Tim Sharp
<b>Secretary</b>	Dr Carol Homden CBE
<b>Managing Director</b>	Andrew Radford (resigned 13 July 2015)
<b>Deputy Director</b>	Brigid Robinson
<b>Company Registration Number</b>	3050826 (England and Wales)
<b>Charity Registration Number</b>	1046207
<b>Registered office</b>	41 Brunswick Square London WC1N 1AZ
<b>Auditor</b>	Buzzacott LLP 130 Wood Street London EC2V 6DL
<b>Bankers</b>	HSBC Bank plc The Angel Branch 25 Islington High Street London N1 9LJ
<b>Investment Managers</b>	Rathbone Investment Management Limited 1 Curzon Street London W1J 5FB

## **Report of the Trustees Year to 31 March 2015**

The Trustees, who are the directors for company law purposes, present their report and financial statements of Coram Voice (formerly Voice for the Child in Care) for the year ended 31 March 2015.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out on pages 21 to 22 and comply with the charity's constitution, applicable law and requirements of the revised Statement of Recommended Practice "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" (SORP 2005) issued in March 2005.

The report has been prepared in accordance with Part VIII of the Charities Act 2011.

### **Scope of the financial statements**

The annual report and financial statements are in respect to Coram Voice as a stand-alone charity only.

Coram Voice is part of a larger group and its ultimate controlling party, The Thomas Coram Foundation for Children (Coram), Registered Charity No. 312278, consolidates the financial statements of Coram Voice with its own and those of other group members. Coram is the sole member of Coram Voice.

### **Core purpose, vision and mission**

Coram Voice works with and for a range of children and young people who have a particular reliance on the state or its agencies for their rights and wellbeing, including children and young people who are looked after by the state, care leavers, young offenders, and children in need or who have severe and complex mental health problems.

We exist to enable and equip those children and young people to hold to account the system that is responsible for their care, to challenge and support it to do its job well and to uphold the rights of children and young people to participate actively in shaping their own lives.

Coram Voice strives for a society which recognises and willingly accepts its responsibilities to children and young people, where the inequalities and discrimination they currently face have been eradicated, where they are fully engaged in all decisions made about their lives, and where their views, needs and feelings are at the core of those decisions.

We listen to children's and young people's individual experiences and we work alongside them to address the issues that are important to them. We pool those experiences with our professional expertise to amplify their voices in order to challenge and change the policies and practices that discriminate against them and to develop services that support them.

### **Why we are needed**

In the UK today there are over 68,800 children and young people reliant on the state for their care and wellbeing, with 397,000 more needing some level of support from children's services. They are in this situation because something terrible has happened, because their families cannot safely care for them, or they have been abused or neglected.

**Why we are needed (continued)**

The care system exists to improve lives and should be a positive experience; for many it is, but for an increasing number the very system that has been put there to protect them lets them down time after time. Unaware of their rights and unsure who to turn to, the complexities and inconsistencies of the system mean many struggle to access support they are legally entitled to, such as safe housing, benefits, education or advice.

As a result, many become mistrustful of the system and its professionals. They become excluded and alienated from society and exposed to harmful situations, including homelessness, crime, exploitation and abuse. Because they get let down, they fail to realise their full potential and struggle far more than children from stable backgrounds. For example:

- ◆ Those who have been in care are twice as likely to have their own children taken into care;
- ◆ They are five times more likely to develop mental health problems;
- ◆ 37% of care leavers are not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET);
- ◆ 22% of care leavers are in unsuitable accommodation, homeless, or have lost contact with Children's Services;
- ◆ One third of care leavers experience homelessness during the first two years of leaving care; and
- ◆ Just 6% of children who have been in care proceed to higher education (compared with a national average of 40%).

Yet this isn't and shouldn't be inevitable. Those who have been in care do not have low aspirations. They do not want to struggle academically. They know they can make a valuable contribution to society, and want to lead happy and fulfilling lives.

At Coram Voice, our mission is to ensure these children get the same opportunities as those from more stable family backgrounds, so that they can live the lives they want and reach their full potential.

**What we do**

We deliver high quality advice and support. If someone in authority fails to fulfil their obligations to a child, we support the child to have their opinions taken into account, make complaints and access what is rightfully theirs, improving their lives and their experience of the care system. Our advocates offer direct support, through our free national helpline and at face-to-face meetings. Specialist advocates offer expertise on more complex topics, including problems faced by care leavers, unaccompanied refugees, and those with disabilities or mental health issues.

## Report of the Trustees Year to 31 March 2015

### **What we do (continued)**

We seek out the hardest-to-reach and most vulnerable; those who need us the most are often the least likely to contact us. We go to places where children in care and care leavers are highly represented, such as centres for homeless young people. As well as tackling specific problems, we support young people to know their rights and how to advocate for themselves, and we provide training and resources for our staff and other childcare professionals.

We engage young people in all aspects of our work. Care-experienced young people help to shape our strategy, drive campaigns, recruit staff and design and deliver training.

We campaign to fix the system so that future children do not face similar problems. By learning from the individual stories and experiences of those we support, Coram Voice lobbies and supports government, both nationally and locally, to change policies and practices so that children and care leavers have a better experience of being in care, and to adopt a more child-friendly approach to Children's Services.

We provide and share expertise. Coram Voice supports and encourages Children's Services departments to improve practices, so that all children in care are fully supported by the system, reducing their need for our work. We run highly regarded training programmes for professionals working with children in care, to encourage child-centred practices and raise awareness of the problems.

### **Objectives for the year 2014/15**

In our 2013 – 2016 Strategic Framework, we identified three mutually complementary goals around which all our work should be focused in order to make the greatest progress towards our vision:

- ◆ **A Voice for all Children:** To increase the number of children and young people we help until we are confident that we are reaching all the children who need us;
- ◆ **Fixing the Problem:** To work to reduce the number of children and young people who need us by tackling the causes of the problems that they face: challenging the practices - local and national - that have a harmful impact on their lives; and
- ◆ **Being a high-performing organisation:** To ensure that Coram Voice develops new and better ways of seeking and supporting the children and young people who need us; to make the organisational and cultural changes needed to ensure that we are optimally attractive and responsive to our donors and other supporters, achieving long-term financial sustainability so that we can help the greatest number of children and young people; and to continually improve our high quality, people-oriented approach to team management and quality assurance.

**Objectives for the year 2014/15 (continued)**

Rather than setting annual targets which we are certain we can hit, Coram Voice sets highly aspirational step change goals. In setting such ambitious goals, we know that we will miss some of them but we believe that missing a step change goal should deliver better results for children than hitting an easier target. Our goals for 2014-15 were to:

- ◆ Help over 4,800 children and young people, including more than 2,500 through our helpline, and supporting 300 homeless young people;
- ◆ Continue the successful development of our Bright Spots programme to ensure that children in care get the best service possible from those responsible for their care. The programme aims to do this by identifying evidence for best practice, finding 'bright spots' where this good practice is being adopted, and by supporting local authorities to meet the standards achieved by the best;
- ◆ Recruit and engage over 170 new children and young people from diverse backgrounds and geographical areas to make meaningful contributions across all aspects of our work, ensuring that we are truly child-driven;
- ◆ Begin a series of reports to tell the stories of and highlight the issues faced by the children and young people we serve. This will be supported by new mechanisms to record and report the impact of our work; and
- ◆ Build on our recent amalgamation to increase our fundraising success, streamline our services, achieve financial stability, and seek synergies with other parts of the Coram group in order to help more children and young people.

**Achievements 2014/15**

***A Voice for all Children***

Over the last year, Coram Voice continued to provide high quality services to children and young people. We helped 3,719 children nationally through our contracted services (a 4.5% increase from last year) and our 'No Child Turned Away' service approach, which ensures no child or young person seeking our help is turned away without advice or support from the Coram Voice advocacy service.

Coram Voice holds 52 contracts reaching from Newcastle in the North to Devon in the South. We are now contracted by local authorities to provide advocacy for 39,940 children and young people (compared to 40,935 in 2013/14).

Our services to local authorities ensure that children's wishes and feelings are central to decisions and plans made regarding their future. This is through direct advocacy support, age assessments and specialist child protection advocacy as well as by providing independent persons, independent visitors and participation services for children in care. In addition, we are delivering a Department for Education contract to run a national helpline, ensuring children and young people can access advocacy on demand.

**Achievements 2014/15 (continued)**

***A Voice for all Children (continued)***

We extend our much needed service to some of the most vulnerable young people through our visiting advocacy services to secure children's homes, adolescent mental health settings and specialist residential units. Over the last year, Coram Voice supported 845 children across 25 locations (up from 755 in 2013/14). These services are crucial in enhancing safeguarding for young people and enabling the development of good practice that responds not just to the individual needs of young people, but also to them as a group.

At the heart of our services to children and young people is our national advocacy helpline.

In 2014/15, the helpline worked with 1,257 children and young people (1,457 in 2013/14), as well as 322 adults seeking help on their behalf (470 in 2013/14). Thanks to the intervention of helpline advocates, children were removed from harm or homelessness, were able to access education, were helped to stop poorly planned placement moves, and supported to resolve many other problems affecting their wellbeing.

Throughout the year, we have been routinely told by other advocacy providers that children seeking their help are not eligible for their support, due to limits set by their commissioning local authorities. Eligibility restrictions include denying services to children in need, to children living outside the local authority area, to children who are under certain ages (between 5 and 8 years old is typical) or to care leavers aged over 18 or 21 years. Alongside these barriers, other obstacles prevent children from receiving locally commissioned advocacy. These include extended waiting lists or delays in response times which means children who need to make urgent complaints to freeze decisions, or need to be urgently assisted with safeguarding or crisis issues (such as homelessness), are left unsupported. Similarly, where local authorities provide advocacy via in-house children's rights services, children and young people are commonly denied advocacy for similar reasons, while young people sometimes refuse to use an in-house service because of the lack of independence.

Coram Voice does not turn away any child who needs our help. Our advocates will not only provide intensive advocacy support where we are the contracted provider, but also to other children under our 'safety net' initiative while we have funds to do so – and we seek to raise as much money as possible in order to help as many children as we can in this way. All children who contact us will also receive support in one or more ways: information on their rights and entitlements, advice and tools to help them to self-advocate, and/or signposting to their contracted advocacy service. If a child is at risk, we will take immediate action and make a safeguarding alert to their local authority.

***Homelessness***

Despite only 1% of the UK's population spending time in local authority care during childhood, over 30% of homeless people have a care background. Their problems are normally multiple and complex, and many find that their local authorities attempt to deny them entitlements or refuse to acknowledge their care leaver status. We have been supporting young people to challenge and overturn these decisions, holding social services accountable for their care and removing many from homelessness in the process. Last year we supported 365 children and young people who were homeless or facing homelessness.



**Achievements 2014/15 (continued)**

***A Voice for all Children (continued)***

***Homelessness (continued)***

In March 2013 we started our innovative outreach project at the New Horizons Youth Centre, proactively seeking out children and young people who we can help. In the past year we have extended this service to a second homeless centre, Alone in London. Through fortnightly one-to-one sessions and information giving, 266 young people have received support at the two centres; 107 of those were supported by Coram Voice advocates to move into safe accommodation and to access their other rights and entitlements, including help in setting up home and obtaining bursaries to support their continued education.

Through this unique programme, we are supporting a particularly vulnerable group of young people to access services and support, and to move off the streets and into safe housing. By continuing to support them beyond this process, we can help them to re-engage with the system and to access financial, housing and education benefits they are entitled to. Our aim is to remove the disadvantages they face, so giving them the opportunity to realise their full potential and achieve better life outcomes.

In the past year:

- ◆ Advocates visited the centres 29 times and supported 266 homeless young people;
- ◆ 107 were helped to move into safe accommodation and to access their other rights and entitlements, including help in setting up home and obtaining bursaries to support their continued education; and
- ◆ 159 were given information about their rights and entitlements as care leavers.

Next year we intend to start working with other partners in order to help even more homeless young people.

***Independent Services***

We are a leading provider of Independent Persons and Investigating Officers for the Children Act complaints, and of Independent Persons, who review whether children are legally being held in secure accommodation under the Children Act 1989. Over the last year, we have provided Independent Persons and Investigating Officers for 52 complaints (79 in 2013/14) and Independent Persons for 274 secure accommodation reviews (318 in 2013/14). All Independent Persons for secure accommodation reviews received 'very good' as their feedback, the highest possible rating on our feedback forms.

**Achievements 2014/15 (continued)**

***A Voice for all Children (continued)***

***Feedback***

A survey of satisfaction was held during the annual Snapshot Feedback week (in November 2014) among 52 children and young people using our Independent Visitor, community advocacy, visiting advocacy & helpline services. This found that 90% were happy or very happy with the service, 87% said we could not have done anything better, and 98% would recommend us to a friend.

***Fixing the problem***

***Bright Spots***

Our Bright Spots project, in partnership with the Hadley Centre for Adoption and Fostering at the University of Bristol, aims to ensure that children in care get the best possible service from those responsible for their care. It does this by identifying evidence for best practice, finding 'bright spots' where this good practice is being adopted, and by supporting local authorities to meet the standards achieved by the best.

We produced two international literature reviews supporting the aims of the Bright Spots project; one looked at children and young people's experiences of being in care, and the other looked at international approaches to well-being.

Following focus groups where we heard from 133 children and young people, a set of indicators of a good care journey was established. A questionnaire was then produced focusing on the indicators that children and young people told us were important to them. The questionnaires asked children what they thought about their life, carer, social worker, family, friends and the activities they take part in.

We tested the questions out on three consultation groups of children and young people (6 to 10 years old; 11 to 15 years; and 16 and over) from some of our participating local authorities. Using this feedback from the consultation groups, we were able to streamline the questions and develop a secure online survey.

We then developed and trialled a visually appealing online survey with one of our participating local authorities, to capture the views of their looked after children. Children and young people completed the survey anonymously according to the three age groups (4-7 years; 8-11 years; 11 years plus) and were supported by a trusted adult if necessary.

The results from the survey will be generated automatically and local authorities will be able to view the answers via a dedicated portal. This is where local authorities will be able to track where they are doing well (the 'bright spots') and where some improvement is needed. The results will also allow local authorities to measure their results against comparator authorities and seek to help their looked after population.

The survey pilot generated an encouraging 40% return rate and we are now excited for other local authorities to participate in the Bright Spots project and the survey.

**Achievements 2014/15 (continued)**

***Fixing the problem***

*The Door is Closed*

In December 2014 Coram Voice launched the report, 'The Door Is Closed', highlighting the failure of many local authorities to comply with their legal duties to protect homeless children and young people. The report detailed the experiences of children who were homeless and approached their local authority's Children's Services department but were turned away with no support, or too little - some without having been assessed. The overarching recommendation was that Central and Local Government fundamentally change their approach to child and youth homelessness, recognising that homelessness is a situation of risk that affects all aspects of a child's life and that it can significantly undermine their personal development, physical and mental health.

The report was well received and media interest was high, with the report featuring on Channel 4 News, BBC News, in The Independent and creating quite a buzz on social media.

Local Authorities and Children's Services departments are being approached to explore opportunities to work together and use the findings of the report to bring about much needed change. We are also looking for examples of good practice that can be emulated and disseminated. Additionally, Coram Voice is running training for professionals to provide them with the skills and knowledge they need to support this vulnerable group.

*Responses to Government consultations*

In addition to the publication of 'The Door is Closed' report, Coram Voice has submitted responses to the following consultations:

- ◆ Department for Education (DFE) consultation on Children's Homes regulations: high expectations and aspirations.
- ◆ Consultation on the revised Mental Health Code of Practice.
- ◆ DFE consultation on the draft regulations and statutory guidance for local authorities on the care of unaccompanied asylum seeking and trafficked children.
- ◆ Education Select Committee's inquiry into the provision of accommodation and care for looked after young people aged 16 and above (contributed to the submission from the Coram Group).
- ◆ NSPCC consultation on gaps in Child Protection research.
- ◆ Children's Rights Alliance for England's (CRAE's) call for evidence for their UNCRC 2015 Civil Society Submission for UN evaluation on how England is protecting the rights of children.

All consultation responses drew on the views and experiences of children and young people through our advocacy case work and, where time permitted, involved direct participation from young people.

**Achievements 2014/15 (continued)**

***Engaging children and young people in shaping and delivering our work***

During 2014/15, Coram Voice continued to expand and diversify the number and range of opportunities for children and young people to directly inform our work. 192 children and young people have made meaningful contributions to the work of Coram Voice over the past year (203 in 2013/14).

Highlights of the participation programme during the year include:

- ♦ *Participation Internship:* young people were involved in writing the job description and person specification for a three-month internship at Coram Voice. Two interns were recruited and did an amazing job. They both went on to be Youth Advisors to the Board of Trustees.
- ♦ *Participation Meetings:* four successful meetings for young volunteers and care experienced champions were held. They started discussions and gathered information about where and when young care leavers thought they could have been better supported by local authorities. These meetings had the themes of Personal Development (happiness), Halloween (the In Care/Leavers experience), Music in Care, Careers and Finance.
- ♦ *Recruitment and training:* young people continue to be involved in the recruitment of all operational staff as well as co-delivering our training sessions. Last year, 10 young people co-delivered 12 courses for professionals. We consistently receive positive feedback from course participants on the impact that the young trainers have on their training experience.
- ♦ *Focus groups:* Coram Voice organised a focus group of care experienced champions to take part in a session delivered by the Office of the Children's Commissioner on independent advocacy. We also took part in a second focus group run by Coram looking at how Coram supports vulnerable young people.
- ♦ *Tender meetings:* young people attended two tender meetings alongside Coram Voice staff, helping to bring our tenders alive by telling their story in person and sharing both the impact of issues on young people and our resolve and support as an organisation.
- ♦ *Homelessness campaign:* young people were involved in the media work surrounding the release of 'The Door is Closed' report. Five young people undertook media training: two young people subsequently sat on the panel at our launch event, two took part in a Channel 4 TV debate and one was interviewed on BBC Radio 4.
- ♦ *All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) meetings:* APPG meetings are held in the House of Commons and provide a political platform for young people to be heard and make changes to national or local policy. Young people from our participation programme attended the APPG for Looked After Children and Care Leavers meetings on subjects including 'Empowering children to make decisions', 'The Entitlement Inquiry – One year on' and 'Helping children to aspire in education'.

**Achievements 2014/15 (continued)**

***Engaging children and young people in shaping and delivering our work (continued)***

- ◆ *City Rocks Concert:* a high profile fundraising event was held at The Royal Albert Hall in April 2014 to raise funds for the Coram family group. Coram Voice was offered 10 spaces for young people to attend the concert as a reward for participating. All tickets were allocated to young people and subsequently the daughter of a care experienced champion was invited on stage with singer and celebrity Lilly Allen.
- ◆ *Miss World and Miss UK Visit:* One of the Youth Advisors to the Board met with Miss World and Miss UK to collect a cheque on behalf of the Coram family group.

***Fundraising and business development***

Income from Trusts and Foundations provided the greatest contribution (£487,690; 2014 - £407,970) and we would like to thank The Allan Charitable Trust, The Beatrice Laing Trust, Children England (The Amos Fund), City Bridge Trust, Comic Relief, The Drapers' Charitable Fund, Emerton-Christie Charity, The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, The Evan Cornish Foundation, Fowler, Smith and Jones Trust, The Francis Crick Institute, The Hadley Trust, Harford Charitable Trust, Harold Hyam Wingate Foundation, The Javon Charitable Trust, The John Aphthorp Charity, John Laing Charitable Trust, London Legal Support Trust, Michael Cornish Charitable Trust, The Oak Trust, Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Rotary Club of Royal Wootton Bassett Town, Royal Masonic Trust for Girls & Boys - Stepping Stones, The Sandringham Estate Cottage Horticultural Society Trust, The Westminster Foundation, The Wixamtree Trust and the Zurich Community Trust for their support.

Donations from corporate partners, individual supporters and community events totalled £18,672 (2014 - £29,307) as well as gifts in kind from Corelogic and Skylark.

Also included were contributions from our generous regular givers, Team Coram Voice runners in the London Marathon, sponsorship of a team of Coram Voice staff on the 10k London Legal Walk (including a donation from Saracens Solicitors) and community events including a collection from The United Benefice of Moseley, St Mary and St Anne, a collection through Waitrose Community Matters in Islington, a collection from the Rotary Club of Royal Wootton Bassett Town and donations received as a result of the Peak District Challenge.

Coram Voice wrote 15 tenders for new contracts from local authorities and other statutory sources in 2014/15 to the value of £3,573,886, of which £966,836 was secured. This success rate of 27% is slightly lower than in 2013/14 and we are constantly balancing our wish to submit a high quality offering against the increased call for cheaper services. Where unsuccessful, the tenders consistently scored very high against the competition, often only missing first place ranking by a few points. The quality of tender writing has continued to increase in 2014/15.

### **Looking forward**

Driven by the aspirations in our 2013/16 Strategic Framework, and the changing pattern of local authority contracts, next year we aim to:

- ◆ Provide direct support to at least 3,700 children and young people through our advocacy and independent services, including helping 50 homeless young people through our outreach partnerships with homelessness day centres;
- ◆ Launch the survey into children's views on their life in care through Bright Spots programme and encourage uptake by all local authorities. The results from this will help identify the practices to be adopted by local authorities if they are to provide a good care journey, and we will begin to promote action to ensure this; and
- ◆ To respond to the growing number of children seeking our help, pressure upon contract values and the increasing complexity of their cases, we will change the way our helpline and advocacy services work, ensuring that we can provide the best support to children and young people as quickly and efficiently as possible and including development of online tools to support young people who want to advocate for themselves.

### **Financial review**

During the year there were total incoming resources of £2,048,772 (2014: £1,994,412) and total resources expended of £2,315,023 (2014: £2,299,809).

Details of movements in the restricted funds can be found in note 10 to the accounts on page 26.

68% of our income is from contracted services. The remaining income is mostly (24%) from grants, primarily from trust funds (see note 10, page 26). The remaining income (8%) is a combination of donations and income from events.

All Coram Voice expenditure supports the objectives of the charity as described above.

### ***Reserves policy***

Coram Voice aims to hold a reserve of at least £500,000 in order to:

- ◆ Allow continued operation in the event of a loss of a major source of funding while a new source of income is secured or while costs are cut in a considered manner;
- ◆ Bridge cash flow challenges resulting from slow payment or bad debt;
- ◆ Provide a buffer in the event of making an operational loss in a given financial year (this use should normally be exceptional rather than planned); and
- ◆ Invest in specific projects which will increase our operational effectiveness and/or sustainability.

## Report of the Trustees Year to 31 March 2015

### Financial review (continued)

#### *Reserves policy (continued)*

At the end of the 2014/15 financial year our reserves stood at £603,562, which included restricted funds of £85,468 for expenditure on specific projects.

This policy is reviewed annually alongside the production of the annual accounts in order to:

- ◆ Ensure that the reserves held are equal to or greater than the minimum level identified;
- ◆ Check that the assumptions underlying the policy are still valid and the minimum amount is still sufficient for its purpose; and
- ◆ Agree any action which may be required to ensure adequate reserves are maintained.

### Volunteers

Coram Voice volunteers contribute in many different but important ways to our achievements with and for children and young people. During 2014/15, 71 volunteers (up from 50 in 2013/14), including young people, independent visitors, supporters, trustees, admin assistants and advisors donated over 2,300 hours of their time (1,900 in 2013/14). We are very grateful for their vital support.

### Governance

Coram Voice is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity. It was founded as 'Voice for the Child in Care'. On 1 October 2013 we adopted a new governing instrument in the form of revised Memorandum and Articles of Association. 'Voice for the Child in Care' became part of the Coram group, our name changed to 'Coram Voice (formerly Voice for the Child in Care)', and our trading name became 'Coram Voice'.

Our governing body is a Board of Trustees. Candidates for appointment as Trustees are nominated by the Coram Nominations and Governance Committee for approval by the Boards of both Coram and Coram Voice.

The Board of Trustees meets four times a year to ensure that Coram Voice has a clear vision, mission and strategic direction, and to monitor that activities are focused on achieving them. The Board has oversight of our finances, plans and policies, risk management and legal and regulatory compliance.

Day-to-day management of Coram Voice is delegated to the Managing Director who is accountable to the Coram Voice Board of Trustees and the Coram Chief Executive.

Trustees regularly review the membership of the Board to ensure that the necessary skills and experiences are in place to allow effective governance, aiming to reflect the diversity of the UK population. A full review of Governance was undertaken during 2012 and led to several changes including a clearer framework of delegation, recruitment of new trustees, an improved induction programme and agreement to appoint up to three Youth Advisors to the Board. The Governance was further reviewed as part of the amalgamation process during 2013, resulting in the arrangements described above.

## Report of the Trustees Year to 31 March 2015

### Governance (continued)

Trustees are also directors for the purposes of company law. The Trustees who served during the year and up to the date on which this report was approved were as follows:

	Appointed/Resigned
Judith Trowell, Chair	
Carolyn Pilmore-Bedford, Vice Chair	Resigned December 2014
Simon Greenhalgh, Treasurer	
Ade Adetosoye	Resigned June 2015
Selina Anderson	
Vivien Cochrane	
Paul Curran	Resigned June 2015
Jonah Grunsell	Resigned November 2014
Mike Lauerman	
Rosemary Mayes	
Paula Reid	
Tim Sharp	Appointed June 2014

Youth Advisors who served in the period are as follows:

	Appointed/Resigned
Precious Ugbomah, Youth Advisor to the Board	Resigned June 2014
Matt Langsford, Youth Advisor to the Board	Appointed September 2014
Semhar Mebre, Youth Advisor to the Board	Appointed September 2014
Mariam Shams, Youth Advisor to the Board	Appointed September 2014

The Trustees met 4 times in the 2014/15 financial year.

### Public benefit

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty in section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Commission on determining the activities undertaken by the Charity.

### Risk management

The Board of Trustees has adopted a risk management protocol to assess and mitigate the major risks to which the charity is exposed. It reviews the risk register annually to assess recorded risks and any new ones, in particular those related to the operations and finances of the charity, and ensures that systems are in place to mitigate the charity's exposure to the major risks.

The risks which are considered to threaten the highest impact, taking into account controls and mitigation plans we have in place, are:

- ♦ loss of a major source of income affecting our ability to achieve full recovery of all costs of running the charity;
- ♦ loss of experienced and skilled staff affecting our ability to achieve our objectives; and



## Report of the Trustees Year to 31 March 2015

### **Risk management** (continued)

- ◆ compromise of our phone or computer systems leading to loss of data or otherwise affecting our ability to deliver our services.

The risks were satisfactorily managed and no significant operational problems were encountered during the year.

### **Statement of Trustees' responsibilities**

The Trustees (who are also directors of Coram Voice for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and 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 that period.

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

- ◆ select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- ◆ observe the method and principles in the Statement of Recommended Practice (Accounting and Reporting by Charities) (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; and
- ◆ 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 proper 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.

Each of the Trustees confirms that:

- ◆ there is no relevant audit information of which the company's auditor is unaware; and
- ◆ the Trustee has taken all steps that he/she ought to have taken to make himself/herself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charitable company's auditor is aware of that information.

## Report of the Trustees Year to 31 March 2015

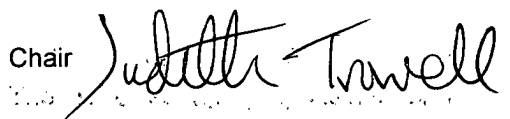
### Statement of Trustees' responsibilities (continued)

The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

This confirmation is given and should be interpreted in accordance with the provisions of s418 of the Companies Act 2006.

Approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf by:

Chair



(JUDITH TROWELL)

Date of approval:

17/11/15

**Independent auditor's report to the member of Coram Voice**

We have audited the financial statements of Coram Voice (formerly Voice for the Child in Care) for the year ended 31 March 2015, which comprise the statement of financial activities, the balance sheet, the principal accounting policies and the related notes. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

This report is made solely to the charitable company's member, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's member those matters we are required to state to it 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 charitable company and its member for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

**Respective responsibilities of trustees and auditor**

As explained more fully in the statement of Trustees' responsibilities set out in the report of the Trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view.

Our responsibility is to audit and express an opinion on the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland). Those standards require us to comply with the Auditing Practices Board's (APB's) Ethical Standards for Auditors.

**Scope of the audit of the financial statements**

An audit involves obtaining evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error. This includes an assessment of: whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the charitable company's circumstances and have been consistently applied and adequately disclosed; the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by the Trustees; and the overall presentation of the financial statements. In addition, we read all the financial and non-financial information in the report of the Trustees to identify material inconsistencies with the audited financial statements and to identify any information that is apparently materially incorrect based on, or materially inconsistent with, the knowledge acquired by us in the course of performing the audit. If we become aware of any apparent material misstatements or inconsistencies we consider the implications for our report.

**Opinion on financial statements**

In our opinion the financial statements:

- ◆ give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2015 and of its incoming resources and apportionment of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- ◆ have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- ◆ have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

**Opinion on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006**

In our opinion the information given in the report of the Trustees for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements.

**Matters on which we are required to report by exception**

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 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; or
- ◆ the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- ◆ certain disclosures of Trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made;
- ◆ we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- ◆ the Trustees were not entitled to take advantage of the small companies exemption from the requirement to prepare a strategic report.

Buzzacott LLP

Amanda Francis, Senior Statutory Auditor  
for and on behalf of Buzzacott LLP, Statutory Auditor  
130 Wood Street  
London  
EC2V 6DL

16 December 2015

# Statement of financial activities Year to 31 March 2015

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds 2015 £	Total funds 2014 £
<b>Income and expenditure</b>					
<b>Incoming resources</b>					
Incoming resources from generated funds:					
. Voluntary income	1	270,656	250	270,906	87,307
. Investment income		1,664	—	1,664	1,756
. Other income		—	—	—	9,614
Activities for generating funds					
. Fundraising events		4,498	—	4,498	6,779
Incoming resources from charitable activities					
. Advocacy services	2	1,390,100	149,389	1,539,489	1,665,650
. Policy and campaigning		—	230,668	230,668	178,370
Other incoming resources					
. Surplus on disposal of leasehold property		—	—	—	41,354
. Miscellaneous income		1,547	—	1,547	3,582
<b>Total incoming resources</b>		<b>1,668,465</b>	<b>380,307</b>	<b>2,048,772</b>	<b>1,994,412</b>
<b>Resources expended</b>					
Cost of generating funds					
. Fundraising		71,946	—	71,946	140,694
Charitable activities					
. Advocacy services	3	1,874,639	131,570	2,006,209	1,927,820
. Policy and campaigning	3	52,974	176,601	229,575	222,551
Governance costs		7,302	—	7,302	8,744
<b>Total resources expended</b>		<b>2,006,861</b>	<b>308,171</b>	<b>2,315,032</b>	<b>2,299,809</b>
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	5	<b>(338,396)</b>	<b>72,136</b>	<b>(266,260)</b>	<b>(305,397)</b>
<b>Balances brought forward at 1 April 2014</b>		<b>856,490</b>	<b>13,332</b>	<b>869,822</b>	<b>1,175,219</b>
<b>Balances carried forward at 31 March 2015</b>		<b>518,094</b>	<b>85,468</b>	<b>603,562</b>	<b>869,822</b>

There is no difference between the net movement in funds stated above and the historical cost equivalent.

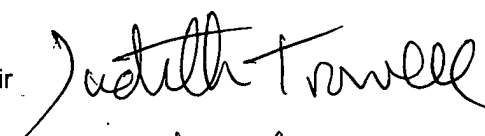
All of the charity's activities derived from continuing operations during the above two financial periods.

The charity has no recognised gains and losses other than those shown above and therefore no separate statement of total recognised gains and losses has been presented.

**Balance sheet 31 March 2015**

	Notes	2015 £	2015 £	2014 £	2014 £
<b>Fixed assets</b>					
Tangible assets	6		163,843		123,792
<b>Current assets</b>					
Debtors	7	388,529		317,105	
Cash at bank and in hand		389,249		665,430	
		<u>777,778</u>		<u>982,535</u>	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	8	(338,059)		(236,505)	
<b>Net current assets</b>			439,719		746,030
<b>Total net assets</b>			<u>603,562</u>		<u>869,822</u>
<b>Represented by:</b>					
<b>Funds and reserves</b>					
Restricted funds	10		85,468		13,332
Unrestricted funds:					
General funds			518,094		856,490
<b>Total funds</b>	11		<u>603,562</u>		<u>869,822</u>

Approved and authorised by the Trustees of Coram Voice, Company Registration Number 3050826 (England and Wales), and signed on their behalf by:

Chair   
15/11/15

(JUDITH TROWELL)

Approved and authorised by the Trustees of Coram Voice, Company Registration Number 3050826 (England and Wales), and signed on their behalf by:

**Basis of accounting**

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006. Applicable United Kingdom Accounting Standards (Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) and the Statement of Recommended Practice (Accounting and Reporting by Charities) (SORP 2005) have been followed in preparing these financial statements.

**Basis of consolidation**

Coram Voice is part of a larger group and its ultimate controlling party, Coram, consolidates the financial statements of Coram Voice with its own and those of other group members.

**Incoming resources**

Donations are included in full in the statement of financial activities where there is adequate certainty of receipt and value.

Grants are recognised in full in the statement of financial activities in the year in which they are receivable, and conditions for receipt have been met. Income is deferred only when the charity has to fulfil certain conditions before becoming entitled to it or where the donor or funder has specified that the income is to be expended in a future accounting period.

Gifts and services received in kind are included within donations and charged to the respective expenditure heading within the statement of financial activities at the best estimate of their open market value or capitalised as a fixed asset if appropriate.

**Resources expended**

Resources expended are included in the statement of financial activities on an accruals basis, inclusive of any VAT which cannot be recovered.

The cost of generating funds includes the direct costs associated with generating voluntary income.

The cost of charitable activities comprises expenditure on the charity's primary charitable purpose.

Governance costs include the costs of governance arrangements which relate to the general running of the charity as opposed to the direct management functions inherent in generating funds and the charitable activities. This includes such items as external audit and costs associated with constitutional and statutory requirements.

Certain expenditure is directly attributable to specific activities and has been included in those cost categories. Certain other costs, which are attributable to more than one activity, are apportioned. Where expenditure incurred relates to more than one activity it is apportioned using the most appropriate basis.

**Resources expended (continued)**

Staff costs and overheads are allocated to the various services on the basis of the amount of use of central resources represented by the various services and are agreed annually by the Trustees.

Support costs of the charity relate to the central costs of supporting the charitable activities of the organisation and comprise the salary costs of the Managing Director and the support staff.

**Tangible fixed assets**

Expenditure on fixtures and equipment of less than £1,000 per item is expended in the year of purchase. Items over £1,000 are capitalised and are stated at cost less depreciation. Assets are retired at the end of their useful economic life.

Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost less estimated residual value of each asset over its expected useful life, as follows:

- ◆ Computer equipment – 25% straight line
- ◆ Fixtures and fittings – 25% straight line
- ◆ Database – 10% straight line

**Fund accounting**

Restricted funds are to be used for specified purposes as laid down by the donor. Expenditure which meets these criteria is charged to the fund, together with a fair allocation of management and support costs.

Unrestricted funds are donations and other income received or generated for the objects of the charity without further specified purpose and are available as general funds.

Designated funds comprise monies set aside out of unrestricted funds for specific future purposes or projects.

**Pensions**

The charity operated a defined contribution pension scheme where the employer contributions are charged to the statement of financial activities in the period in which they are payable.

**Cash flow**

The financial statements do not include a cash flow statement because the charity, as a small reporting entity, is exempt from the requirement to prepare such a statement under Financial Reporting Standard 1 "Cash flow statements".



## 1 Voluntary income

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2015 Total funds £	2014 Total funds £
Donations	164,023	250	164,273	37,307
Grants	106,633	—	106,633	50,000
	<u>270,656</u>	<u>250</u>	<u>270,906</u>	<u>87,307</u>

Included in donations above are gifts in kind from Skylark and Core Logic in relation to a review of administration services and IT consultancy services respectively. The Trustees have estimated the value of this pro bono work to be £147,634. Corresponding expenditure is recognised within charitable expenditure on advocacy services.

## 2 Incoming resources: Advocacy services

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2015 Total funds £	2014 Total funds £
Contract income				
. Advocacy service	905,180	—	905,180	855,728
. Visiting advocacy service	193,263	—	193,263	169,179
. Visiting advocacy secure service	67,619	—	67,619	97,314
. YOI advocacy	—	—	—	134,796
. Independent person (complaints)	94,172	—	94,172	110,449
. Independent person (reviews)	129,866	—	129,866	119,584
	<u>1,390,100</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>1,390,100</u>	<u>1,487,050</u>
Grants	—	149,389	149,389	178,600
	<u>1,390,100</u>	<u>149,389</u>	<u>1,539,489</u>	<u>1,665,650</u>

## 3 Resources expended: Advocacy services

	Direct £	Support and manage- ment £	2015 Total funds £	2014 Total funds £
Advocacy				
. Advocacy service	1,006,771	418,001	1,424,772	1,273,055
. Visiting advocacy service	163,719	67,974	231,693	208,687
. Visiting advocacy secure service	53,652	22,276	75,928	88,302
. YOI advocacy	—	—	—	113,732
. Independent persons (complaints)	108,467	45,034	153,501	138,157
. Independent persons (reviews)	85,017	35,298	120,315	105,887
Total advocacy services	<u>1,417,626</u>	<u>588,583</u>	<u>2,006,209</u>	<u>1,927,820</u>
Policy and campaigning	<u>162,222</u>	<u>67,353</u>	<u>229,575</u>	<u>222,551</u>
Total charitable activities	<u>1,579,848</u>	<u>655,936</u>	<u>2,235,784</u>	<u>2,150,371</u>

Support costs have been allocated in line with the direct expenditure incurred.

#### 4 Staff costs

	2015 £	2014 £
Salaries and wages	1,019,842	1,291,996
Social security costs	90,048	122,785
Pension costs	24,261	24,738
	<b>1,134,151</b>	<b>1,439,519</b>

	2015 number	2014 number
The average number of employees during the year was as follows:	43	50
The average number of full time equivalent employees during the year was as follows:		
Advocacy service provision	21	21
Policy and campaigning	4	3
Support services	7	11
Fundraising and publicity	—	4
	<b>32</b>	<b>39</b>

No employee earned over £60,000 per annum during the year (2014 – none).

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme. The annual contribution made by the charity to the Scheme is £24,261 (2014 – £24,738) and contributions totalling £9,238 (2014 - £3,131) were payable to pension scheme at the year end.

No Trustee received any remuneration during the year (2014 - £nil). No Trustees were reimbursed for travelling expenses (2014 - £132 reimbursed to one trustee).

#### 5 Net movement in funds

This is stated after charging:

	2015 £	2014 £
Auditor's remuneration	7,200	8,040
Rental of office equipment	1,111	1,111
Depreciation	34,835	26,771

## 6 Tangible fixed assets

	Database £	Fixtures, fittings and equipment £	Total £
Cost			
At 1 April 2014	140,000	84,742	224,742
Additions	59,921	14,965	74,886
Retiring assets	—	(53,429)	(53,429)
At 31 March 2015	199,921	46,278	246,199
Depreciation			
At 1 April 2014	42,000	58,950	100,950
Charge for the year	22,068	12,767	34,835
Retiring assets	—	(53,429)	(53,429)
At 31 March 2015	64,068	18,288	82,356
Net book values			
At 31 March 2015	135,853	27,990	163,843
At 31 March 2014	98,000	25,792	123,792

## 7 Debtors

	2015 £	2014 £
Fees and grants receivable	286,754	238,249
Accrued income	85,750	55,948
Other debtors and prepayments	12,278	22,908
Amount due from Coram Trading Limited	3,747	—
	388,529	317,105

## 8 Creditors: amount falling due within one year

	2015 £	2014 £
Expense creditors	113,801	112,335
Other creditors	10,338	5,420
Amount due to parent undertaking	136,065	41,240
Accruals	30,560	29,356
Social security and other taxes	23,851	25,851
Deferred income (note 9)	23,443	22,303
	338,058	236,505

## 9 Deferred income

	£
At 1 April 2014	22,303
Released in the year	(22,303)
New deferrals	23,443
At 31 March 2015	23,443

Deferred income relates to annual contract amounts for the year to 31 March 2016 received prior to 31 March 2015.

## 10 Restricted funds

The specific purposes for which the funds are to be applied are as follows:

	At 1 April 2014 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	At 31 March 2015 £
Advocacy	—	51,639	(51,639)	—
Outreach	—	93,000	(74,931)	18,069
Peer Rights Training Programme	—	5,000	(5,000)	—
Bright Spot	13,332	200,668	(174,471)	39,529
e-learning	—	30,000	(2,130)	27,870
	13,332	380,307	308,171	85,468

### *Advocacy*

General grants and donations to run the advocacy service.

### *Outreach*

Grants received for providing advocacy services to homeless young people.

### *Peer Rights Training Programme*

Grants received for Peer Rights Training, a programme for young people with experience of the care system.

### *Bright Spot*

Grant from the Hadley Trust to be used for the Bright Spot project.

### *e-learning*

Grant from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation to be used to develop online training courses as part of the e-learning project.

# **11 Analysis of net assets between funds**

	General funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
Tangible fixed assets	163,843	—	<b>163,843</b>
Current assets	692,310	85,468	<b>777,778</b>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(338,059)	—	<b>(338,059)</b>
	<b>518,094</b>	<b>85,468</b>	<b>603,562</b>

## **12 Liability of member**

The charity is constituted as a company limited by guarantee. In the event of the charity being wound up, the member is required to contribute an amount not exceeding £1.

## **13 Ultimate parent undertaking**

The Thomas Coram Foundation for the Children ('Coram'), a registered charity with Charity Registration Number 312278, is the sole member of Coram Voice.

The financial statements do not include disclosure of transactions between Coram Voice and Coram. As a 100% controlled subsidiary undertaking, Coram Voice is exempt from the requirement to disclose such transactions under Financial Reporting Standard 8 'Related Party Disclosures'.