



Action for M.E.

Trustee report and accounts 2014–2015



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Legal and administrative details

Action for M.E. company information

Registered charity No 1036419
Registered in Scotland SC040452
Incorporated on 10 March 1994
Company registration number 2906840

Registered office

42 Temple Street, Keynsham,
Bristol BS31 1EH

President

Clare Francis MBE

Founding President

Sue Finlay

Vice President

Martin Arber

Patrons

Lord Bragg
Julie Christie
Clare Francis MBE
Professor Anthony Pinching
Lord Puttnam CBE

Trustees and Directors 2014-2015

Alan Cook CBE (Chair)
Anthony Golding (Vice-Chair)
Christopher J Cundy (Treasurer)
Clair Thienel
Prof Derek Pheby[†]
Dr Gregor Purdie^{*}
Jane Logan
Jane Stacey
Jane Young
Lionel R A Godfrey
Martin Jarvis[#]
Ondine Upton
Philip Fearn[‡]
Philip Marsden
Sarah Helton[◊]
Susan O'Shea[~]

[†]resigned 18/9/14

^{*}appointed 14/11/14

[#]resigned 21/5/15

[‡]resigned 21/5/15

[◊]resigned 12/2/15

[~]resigned 18/9/14

Chair of Board of Trustees and Directors

Alan Cook CBE

Chief Executive

Sonya Chowdhury

Principal Medical Adviser

Dr Alastair Miller

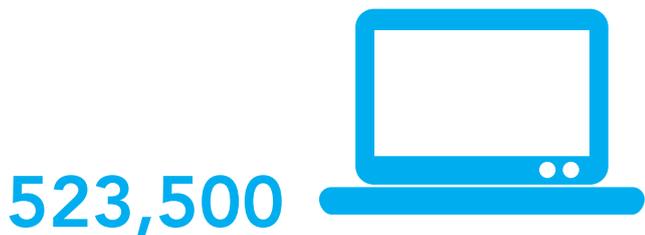
Bankers

The Royal Bank of Scotland
79-83 Colmore Row
Birmingham B3 2AP

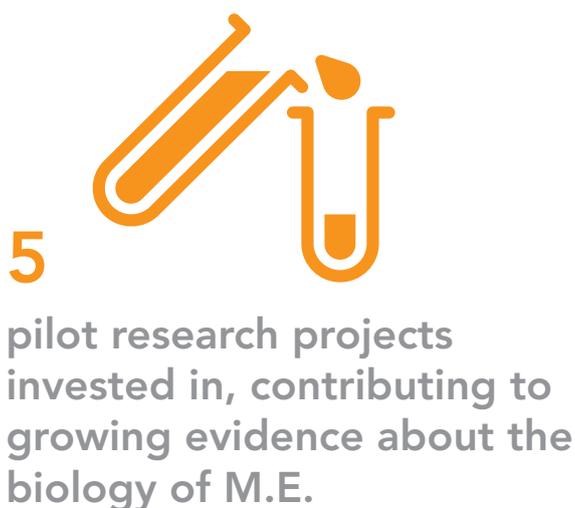
Auditor

BDO LLP
Bridgewater House
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Counterslip
Bristol BS1 6BX

How we made a difference



visits to our Online M.E. Centre to access critical information and support



A word from our Chair

The past year has seen us successfully continue on our journey to be a well-governed, financially secure charity with a clear aim of supporting people with M.E. in every way we can. We do this by providing information and support, raising public awareness, lobbying key stakeholders and encouraging a steadily developing research agenda.

In pursuit of these aims, we have increased the number of times we have had contact with people affected by M.E. to 632,000 – that's the number of times we have shared information, advice, signposting and support with patients, carers and advocates in 2014–2015.

Our website, the Online M.E. Centre, remains our key channel for providing this. During the year we have expanded our offering and have seen the number of monthly visitors rise steadily throughout the year, peaking at 63,300 in March. Visitors to the centre spend an above-average length of time on the site. These figures support the regular positive feedback we receive about the quality of the centre and its contents.

Many disabled people have been affected by the recent welfare changes and the roll-out of the new benefit, the Personal Independence Payment. Our specialist Welfare Advice and Support Service has provided some critical support to people affected by M.E., including those going through the appeals process. We are currently exploring a partnership with a Law Centre to establish whether we can add legal casework to the services we already provide.

None of our support, influencing or research activities would be possible without the activity that goes on behind the scenes to raise income. For the first time in a number of years, we can report that we finished the year with a financial surplus of £44,644 on unrestricted funds

(and £220,584 including restricted funds), which has enabled us to move towards our target level of reserves. This is crucially important in securing the charity's future and means we can be more certain of our ability to continue providing critical support to people affected by M.E.

During the year, we were asked by the CFS Research Foundation to take over management of £231,400 funding for the 'Brain in pain' research project when the charity closed following the death of its founder, Anne Faulkner. This exceptional income was supplemented with a donation of £26,500, creating a small surplus to help fund our other research activity.

Finally, I would like to thank our staff and Trustees for all the hard work they have put in over the last year. Without them, all that we have achieved would not have been possible. We have also seen a material increase in the number of volunteers supporting us, and now have nearly 70 people working with us from home and in our new Keynsham office which we moved into in June 2014. We seriously could not deliver the breadth of support and services without this invaluable help, so thank you to our volunteers for all that you do.



Alan Cook
Chair of Trustees

"I would like to thank our staff and Trustees for all the hard work they have put in over the last year. Without them, all that we have achieved would not have been possible."

Chief Executive's introduction

People with M.E. deserve better. That has been a message that we, and others, have been pushing for many years. But people with the most severe form of M.E. deserve even more than that: they are amongst the most disadvantaged and neglected in our society.

In November, we held our AGM and Severe M.E. Symposium. More than 200 people, including those joining via Livestream and Google Hangout or contributing in advance, were able to share their views and ideas about what the charity could do to try and make this a reality.

The overriding message was that direct advocacy support for people with M.E. and their carers needs to be increased. Following the symposium, we have undertaken a review of current advocacy provision to explore accessibility and suitability for people with M.E. and launched a survey to help identify need and current provision. All of this has been led by one of our wonderful volunteers, Catherine Hale. We are now exploring funding opportunities to be able to take this forward.

Continuing to look into 2015–2016, we have already seen some exciting developments with my invite to the World Health Assembly Summit at the United Nations, Geneva. Here I was able to open up the potential for M.E. to feature on the global health agenda and we are now exploring plans for taking this forward. We are also setting up an International Alliance of CEOs from leading M.E. charities to share, debate and enhance our work.

We recently heard that we have been chosen as the recipient of the Whitehouse Consultancy's annual pro bono scheme. Following a competitive application process, Whitehouse will provide Action for M.E. with free policy, public affairs and communications support over the next 12 months. I look forward to reporting on our achievements next year as we are exploring some exciting plans in order to get the most out of this partnership.

During the remaining months of 2015–2016, we will be developing our plans for 2016–2019. We are engaging with key stakeholders in a range of different ways and using information, feedback and ideas from events, such as the symposium, to inform our work.

This includes working with our Patient and Carer Reference Group, around 45 people affected by M.E. who input into our health and research work, including our resources and events.

One of our big challenges this year is to launch a new Online M.E. Centre as our website host is switching off the current platform. By the time we publish this report, our new website should be almost ready to launch. We have consulted with a range of people who use our Online M.E. Centre and will be making the site easier and quicker to use and navigate around. It will also be suitable for use on any device, including smartphones.

As we move into setting out our new promises to people affected by M.E., we remain very ambitious about what this might look like. We are determined to deliver against them, as we have done over the past three years with our current promises, as set out in the *Statement of strategic intent 2013–2016*. People with M.E. deserve better and we will do everything we can to make sure that they get the support and services they need and deserve.



Sonya Chowdhury
Chief Executive

“As we move into setting out our new promises to people affected by M.E., we remain very ambitious about what this might look like. We are determined to deliver against them.”

The Trustees' report 2014–2015

This is the Trustees' report for the year April 2014 to March 2015. It is prepared in accordance with all statutory and regulatory requirements and seeks to provide a summary of activity and successes during this time.

Public benefit

The charity's purpose, which remains unchanged and is set out in the Company's Memorandum and Articles of Association, is for the relief of people suffering from the disease M.E. and to provide information, advice and support to promote public education and research into the disease.

The Trustees routinely consider how our resources can be most effectively used to further our charitable objectives for the benefit of the public.

The Trustees refer to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when planning the charity's work and developing the organisational strategies to ensure that our planned activities contribute to our aims and objectives set.

The focus of our work

In May 2013, we launched our *Statement of strategic intent* which set out the charity's plans for the following years as we move towards our vision of a world without M.E. In April 2014, we published more detailed strategies outlining how we would achieve our intent.

Our mission is empowering people with M.E. to fulfil their potential and secure the care and support they need, while working towards a greater understanding of the illness and ultimately a cure.

This is achieved through three strategic touchstones which underpin our promises to people affected by M.E. and it is under these that the Trustees report:

Inform and influence

We increase awareness and understanding of the illness and its impact alongside working to influence policy-makers and others to increase investment in research and improve the services, care and support for people affected by M.E.

Empower and support

We empower and support people affected by M.E. to live life to their full potential, while providing them with a wide range of up-to-date information about M.E. and resources available to them.

Research

We support high-quality, evidence-based medical and social policy research and invest in pilot research projects to help us learn more and to stimulate greater mainstream funding of M.E. research.

Five priorities have been identified and will be the focus of our work over the next three years:

- awareness and understanding
- health
- welfare
- research
- employment.

“Our mission is empowering people with M.E. to fulfil their potential and secure the care and support they need, while working towards a greater understanding of the illness and ultimately a cure.”



Our values

Shared values are held with high regard in our organisation and reflect how we seek to work with our supporters, partners and other key stakeholders. They reflect the attitudes, beliefs and behaviours that we value in each other and underpin our whole approach and culture.

Empathy

The majority of our Trustees have direct experience of M.E. themselves. Their strategic leadership will set the parameters that reflect this intrinsic empathy and instil this value into all staff and volunteers who do not have such direct experience.

Clarity

We will be clear and transparent about what we're doing, why we're doing it and how we're doing it.

Courage

We will have the moral courage to campaign openly on behalf of people affected by M.E. and to state our evidence-based policies regardless of how unpopular this may make us.

Collaboration

We will work collaboratively and inclusively with others to create capacity and achieve the level of transformation needed.

"Action for M.E. is a transforming organisation."

Statement of strategic intent 2013–2016



Our promises 2013–2016

Inform and influence

We will:

- raise public awareness and understanding of M.E. and its impact through building stronger coverage in the media, facilitating events and working with our Ambassadors to raise the profile of the illness.
 - work with policy-makers and senior decision-makers to ensure that the needs and voices of people affected by M.E. are heard and acted upon.
 - work collaboratively with other organisations to challenge inequalities and injustice within the welfare benefits system.
 - establish the M.E. Inform programme to improve understanding and awareness of M.E. with health and social care practitioners.
 - raise awareness and understanding of M.E. with employers, other support organisations and government departments.
- create an information resource for people who are newly diagnosed with M.E. to pass on to family/friends to help them better understand the illness and its impact.
 - assess what support local M.E. support groups want from us and what we can do to provide this.
 - increase our welfare rights support and provision.
 - establish a pilot Welfare Rights Advice & Advocacy Service providing casework and tribunal support to individuals.
 - establish a pilot project to help people with M.E., where possible and appropriate, to stay in work and/or access employment in partnership with health and employment services.

Empower and support

We will:

- provide up-to-date and accurate information, support and access to services for people affected by M.E. particularly through our Online M.E. Centre, Services Directory and publications.
 - evaluate and review our services on an ongoing basis to know what difference we make for people affected by M.E. and ensure continuous improvement and development of our work.
 - work with the health service to ensure that patients receive improved information and support at the point of diagnosis.
- work strategically with others, including the UK CFS/M.E. Research Collaborative and international researchers to help achieve our mission and vision.
 - develop a programme of work with others, including universities, to initiate and support social policy research projects to enhance insight of the illness and its impact.
 - fund medical research pilot studies to expand knowledge and attract mainstream funding with an additional focus on under-researched areas.
 - partner with at least three research projects to support patient participation at all levels.
 - keep patient voice at the heart of our research work and will ensure representation from a minimum of three people with M.E. on our Research Panel to oversee and steer our research work.



Delivering our promises

Resources

Increasing our income and resources is a priority to ensure that we can deliver on our promises. The current financial climate is challenging but the case for supporting work with people affected by M.E. is a compelling one. We must build on this and engage with both current and potential funders to maximise support for our work.

We recognise that people are our biggest asset. We will work in a way which values everyone's contribution; where everyone can see how their work contributes to achieving our strategic intent; working together to achieve a world without M.E.

We will be creative and use our insight to both seize and create new opportunities. Alongside this, we will continue to develop our systems, processes and procedures to become even more effective and efficient to ensure that valuable resources are released to invest in our ambitious plans.

We will:

- implement our new income generation strategy to deliver sustained growth to empower and support more people affected by M.E.
- ensure legacies, which fund long-term developments for people with M.E., are a core part of our fundraising work.
- create a culture where good ideas, innovation and leadership can come from anyone in the organisation.
- ensure our team of staff, volunteers and Trustees have the skill, capabilities, insight and creativity required to deliver our promises to people affected by M.E.
- ensure that our work is both efficient and effective.

Collaboration

Stronger collaboration is fundamental; we cannot deliver our ambitious plans alone. We aim to select and work with partners who share our ethos, values and commitment to the highest standards. We recognise and value the different views, opinions and beliefs that others bring. To enrich our work, we will seek to include, rather than exclude. We will work with others to find common goals while recognising differences we might have.

We will:

- work strategically with others to create and increase capacity to achieve our vision.
- consult with people affected by M.E. in identified priority areas to better inform and influence policy-makers.
- engage with the media, Government, professionals and the public to grow awareness and understanding of M.E.
- collaborate with patients, other M.E. charities, clinicians, policy-makers and others to identify common goals and make the most of limited resources available in delivering and developing services.

Strategies launched

In April 2014, we launched our *Inform and Influence, Empower and Support Strategy* and *Research Strategy* which outline how we would achieve these promises.

These were developed through consultation with people affected by M.E. including our Patient Reference Group. You can read these strategies on our Online M.E. Centre or contact our office for a copy.

"Just wanted to say thank you for the film you posted the other day. People I know who haven't really listened to anything I've said about my son's M.E. watched it and finally understand. Well done."

AP, on Facebook

"Your magazine gives out a great deal of information as well as hope for us all. I would like to take this opportunity of saying what a wonderful job you are doing."

NW, by letter

"Thank you very much for raising awareness about severe M.E. and looking at ways of supporting individuals."

Lorna, on Facebook

"To the lovely, helpful and very patient young lady who answered the phone to a very upset and desperate mum/carer and her daughter, thank you so very much. We were so grateful to have someone to reassure us."

SH, by email

The impact of our work

The following pages summarise the progress we have made in delivering the promises we set out in our Statement of strategic intent 2013–2016, guided by our three strategic touchstones.

Inform and influence

Our *Empower, support, inform and influence strategy*, published in April 2014, clearly set out our promises, working towards a goal of integrated care and support for people affected by M.E.

In the 12 months that followed we have:

- published *M.E. time to deliver*, an initial findings report based on our survey of 2,018 people with M.E., evidencing the health, social care, welfare, education and employment challenges faced by those affected by M.E. A motion for debate in Parliament in support of the report was signed by 20 MPs
- hosted a roundtable discussion event at the Scottish Parliament to engage with MSPs and other decision-makers; we also launched our *M.E. time to deliver in Scotland* report
- appeared twice (May 2014 and March 2015) on Channel 5 TV's morning show *The Wright Stuff* with Matthew Wright, with CEO Sonya Chowdhury talking about the illness and its impact, helping to raise awareness and understanding
- supported our media case study volunteer Natalie Fagan-Brown to question Capita boss Dr Stephen Duckworth on *The One Show* on BBC One
- sent our new booklet *Managing M.E.-CFS: a guide for GPs in Scotland*, to GPs and practice managers in Scotland, highlighting key information and signposting GPs to sources of professional support
- produced and promoted awareness-raising films based on our *M.E. time to deliver* data, and the impact of severe M.E., which have been viewed online nearly 10,000 times
- led a workshop at the British Association of CFS/M.E. (BACME) conference to explore how clinicians can work with people with M.E. who have needs relating to employment, volunteering or training. This was delivered by Paul Davey, Project Co-ordinator for SEE M.E., our 18-month pilot employment project for people with M.E. (see p 11)
- held a workshop for GPs in Scotland on diagnosing and managing M.E., recorded for our YouTube channel and broadcast in four parts, which have so far been viewed more than 300 times.
- responded to calls for evidence for independent reviews of the Work Capability Assessment and Personal Independent Payment, informed by the experiences of people affected by M.E. These helped highlight the impact of the benefits system on people with M.E.
- made our Severe M.E. Symposium as accessible as possible, enabling those severely affected by M.E. to contribute their ideas and suggestions. As a result, we came away with a number of ideas that we are still developing, such as our advocacy service (see p 5)
- raised awareness of M.E. 254 times throughout the year – that's equivalent to once every working day – via letters, articles and case studies in local, national and specialist press including the *Nursing Times*, *Guardian*, *Telegraph* and *Independent*. Total advertising value for this coverage was more than £145,000

"As a wife and carer of someone who has severe M.E. and has been ill for 17 years, I just wanted to say your film about severe M.E. is absolutely brilliant. Although I am crying as I type this, it is wonderful that you made it. Thank you."
S, by email

"I've just seen Sonya Chowdhury on The Wright Stuff and was again so impressed with how articulately and powerfully she speaks up for people such as myself, too ill to speak up for themselves."
Craig, by email

"Managing M.E.-CFS: a guide for GPs in Scotland is the best document I have ever read for advising GPs. Relapsing again after 10 good years (and 12 bad ones), I am glad to see there has been at least a bit of progress in understanding M.E./CFS."
TT, on Facebook

Empower and support

Our innovative 18-month pilot project, SEE M.E. (Support, employ and empower people with M.E.) began in January, offering specialist employment advice and support to people with M.E. SEE M.E. (funded by the Henry Smith Charity, Lloyds Bank Foundation, Rayne Foundation, Big Lottery Fund and other funders) is our response to needs identified by people with M.E. and we aim to develop and demonstrate good practices in integrated support for people with M.E., raising aspirations and helping them achieve their employment goals.

We also achieved the following:

- We continued to engage with even more people affected by M.E. to offer them information, advice, support and signposting. Our Online M.E. Centre alone was visited on average more than 1,430 times each day.
- For the first time, those unable to attend our AGM and conference in person were able to watch presentations by Livestream and virtual table discussions. This effectively doubled the number of people affected by M.E. who were able to contribute.
- Our Online M.E. Centre was visited on average 43,600 times each month, with users accessing information, support and signposting about diagnosis, management and other aspects of living with M.E.
- Our booklets, factsheets and articles about managing symptoms and applying for welfare benefits were downloaded 42,400 times over 12 months. We also sent out 2,500 paper copies. Most popular were our booklets *Pacing for people with M.E.* and *All about M.E.*
- Our new booklet *Newly diagnosed with M.E.* empowers people with M.E. to be a shared partner in their own care and signposts GPs to clinical guidelines; we were expecting this to be officially endorsed by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence as this report went to press.
- Our services directory was visited 23,335 times – that’s an average of 64 visits a day, up from 47 the previous year.
- Our lively peer-support forum, M.E. Friends Online, helps reduce isolation. On average it was viewed more than 7,000 times each month; 85% of M.E. Friends Online users agreed they had learnt from other forum users and felt less isolated and 75% said they felt more supported.
- More than 900 enquiries were answered by our Welfare Advice and Support Service, which supports people affected by M.E. to access the welfare benefits to which they are entitled.
- More than 5,000 people receive our monthly email newsletter, Keep me updated, with information about our work, and key health, social care, welfare benefit and research news.
- By the end of the year, we were just shy of 12,000 followers on Facebook, with our posts and updates encouraging information-sharing and peer support. We also engaged with more people on Twitter, and our tweets were interacted with more than 20,700 times.
- As part of our *Hear me, influence M.E.* project (funded by a Big Lottery, Awards for All Scotland grant), we held open meetings in Glasgow and Lockerbie, People affected by M.E. discussed support for the newly diagnosed, ongoing symptom management, access to social care and benefits, supporting carers and families and employment, education and training support.
- Working with professional storyteller Michael Williams, we published a digital storytelling toolkit, a step-by-step guide to telling your own M.E. story, building on the success of our 2014 Scottish storytelling project.
- We produced a film to help M.E. support groups maximise their fundraising potential, with information and advice from our Director of Fundraising and Communications, Simon Pearson.



"I would definitely give the Newly diagnosed with M.E. booklet to a new patient and also my own surgery. I wish there had been something like this when I was diagnosed to help not only me, but also the doctors."
Janet, by email

"I have to write to say how much I appreciated the last issue of InterAction. I felt so included. I have severe M.E. and those of us at the bedbound end of the spectrum can feel very left out."
SL, by email

"Using your guides and advice I was able to apply for benefits successfully. I know I would not have been able to do this without such brilliant information and help."
Jess, by email

"It feels like at last somebody understands. This is the first time I have actually spoken to anybody else with M.E. and it makes me feel so much better. I'm glad I posted my story on here."
J, in our M.E. Friends Online forum

Research

Our latest research projects, announced during M.E. Awareness Week, got well underway, looking at mitochondrial DNA variation and immune responses in M.E. Both were prioritised from a list of six potential projects following voting by Action for M.E. Supporting Members and donors to our research appeal.

In July, Action for M.E. took over the management of a three-year neurophysiology of pain in M.E. (aka the 'brain in pain') study, following the closure of the CFS Research Foundation, which had already secured and allocated funding for it. We expect this will contribute to work being undertaken to identify more targeted treatments.

We also:

- saw the completion of the establishment phase of the UK M.E./CFS biobank (2011-2014), which we co-funded with the M.E. Association, M.E. Research UK, and a private donor, with the potential to improve diagnosis and treatment for the 17 million people around the world with M.E.
- provided considerable support to the UK CFS/M.E. Research Collaborative, including helping to organise its first annual science conference, attended by more than 70 researchers and nearly 60 patients and carers
- revised our research funding assessment process to achieve better transparency, clarity and rigour, ensuring that we make the best use of the expertise available to us
- set up listings in our Online M.E. Centre for research projects seeking participants, enabling people with M.E. to apply to take part
- consulted with 140 people affected by M.E. to inform our response to the landmark report published by the Institute of Medicine (IOM) committee in the United States
- contributed and responded to media coverage of M.E. research, with our statements appearing in the *Guardian*, *Independent*, *Telegraph* and BBC News online; Sonya was interviewed by BBC 5 Live about emerging US research on distinct immune changes in M.E.

Collaboration and resources

To make the most of all the resources and opportunities available, we have developed a sustainable income-generation strategy which delivers rapid growth to empower and support people affected by M.E.

We are committed to working collaboratively with partners who share our ethos, values and commitment to the highest standards.

We have also undertaken the following:

- We are delivering our 18-month pilot project, SEE M.E. (Support, employ and empower people with M.E., see p 11) in partnership with North Bristol NHS Trust, JobCentre Plus, Remploy, Pluss and Action on Disability & Work.
- Collaborating with the ME Association, we hosted a research seminar for US scientist Prof Ian Lipkin in London, attended by more than 40 people; the film has been viewed nearly 800 times on our YouTube channel.
- We made links with Remap, signposting people with M.E. to its service supporting independent living by designing and tailor-making equipment for their individual needs, free of charge.
- Our Patient and Carer Reference Group contributed to and commented on new publications, including our *Newly diagnosed with M.E.* booklet, and the content and structure of our Severe M.E. Symposium.
- Around 140 people attended *M.E. research and practice*, our conference in Hove in October held jointly with the Sussex and Kent M.E./CFS Society, to learn more about M.E. research and symptom management.
- We worked with Carers Trust, the Association of Young People with M.E. and Fibromyalgia UK to produce a resource for children and young people who are caring for a close family member with M.E. and/or fibromyalgia.

"As a retired clinical physician and research epidemiologist, as well as a person diagnosed with M.E. for many years, I am very impressed with your statement on medical research. I think your organisation's work is spot on."

Dr DE, by email

"Reading InterAction, I can see the tremendous work being done by everyone, taking a good step forward to achieve the ultimate answer of how this debilitating illness started in the first place."

Nina, by letter

"I just wanted to say a big 'thank-you' for all the work you do, and the amazing support and valuable help you provide for people like myself. It really has made such a big difference."

JC, by email

"Thank you so much for hosting this event. It was so important to see that people are researching into this terrible illness, and vital to raise awareness and understanding."

Jackie, who attended our M.E. research and practice conference

Structure and governance

Trustees

The Trustees, for the purposes of Charity law and under the Company's Articles, are known as members of the Board of Trustees. Under the requirements of the Memorandum and Articles of Association the members of the Board are elected to serve for a period of three years after which they must be re-elected at the next Annual General Meeting. Trustees can be elected for two, three-year terms with the potential for an additional term. As the charity is also a Company Limited by Guarantee, the Trustees are also Directors of the Company.

The Board of Trustees of the Charity meets quarterly with the Chief Executive and relevant staff to exercise corporate governance, to give strategic direction, and to manage the performance and achievement of corporate objectives. The Board also exercises fiscal oversight and takes the lead on strategic risk management. All Trustees receive comprehensive monthly financial management reports with a commentary by the Director of Finance.

Day-to-day management is delegated to the Senior Leadership Team (the Director of Fundraising and Communications and the Finance Director) under the leadership of the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive's quarterly reports to the Board include a report against key performance indicators identified in our High Level Delivery Plan.

All staff, including the Chief Executive, have performance targets that link directly to the charity's strategies. Progress against these are monitored through regular one-to-one meetings and an annual performance review. An annual outcomes summary is provided to the Board to assist with performance management responsibilities.

All Trustees give their time voluntarily and received no benefits from the Charity. Any expenses reclaimed from the Charity are set out in the notes to the accounts.

The Trustees aim to ensure that we have all the necessary skill sets on the Board, and regularly review its constituency. Our constitution requires that a minimum of 51% of our Trustees have M.E. The majority of the rest have strong connections with M.E., usually through a family member or close friend.

Trustees are generally recruited by advertising openly in our *InterAction* magazine and Online M.E. Centre or through targeted recruitment if there is a skill that would be beneficial to the Board and that the charity that is missing. One new Trustee was elected as he brought primary healthcare experience in a devolved nation which was a gap in the Board's skill set. Supporting Members were asked to vote on these new appointments and the re-election of others. These results were subsequently confirmed at our annual general meeting on 14 November 2014.

Each new Trustee receives a full induction and the opportunity to be paired with a 'buddy' for the first year on the Board.

Trustees and Directors 2014–2015

Alan Cook CBE (Chair)
Anthony Golding
(Vice-Chair)
Christopher J Cundy
(Treasurer)
Clair Thienel
Prof Derek Pheby[†]
Dr Gregor Purdie*
Jane Logan
Jane Stacey
Jane Young
Lionel R A Godfrey
Martin Jarvis[#]
Ondine Upton
Philip Fearn[‡]
Philip Marsden
Sarah Helton[°]
Susan O'Shea[~]

[†]resigned 18/9/14

*appointed 14/11/14

[#]resigned 21/5/15

[‡]resigned 21/5/15

[°]resigned 12/2/15

[~]resigned 18/9/14

Chief Executive

The Chief Executive is responsible for setting the strategic direction for the charity with the Trustees and for leading its implementation. Supported by the two part-time members of the Senior Leadership Team, the Chief Executive oversees the day-to-day running of the charity. The Chief Executive holds delegated financial authority within parameters set out by our financial controls.

Our volunteers

Our work is hugely enriched because of our volunteers, who enable us to deliver extraordinary results with a small budget. In return, we support them to develop their skills and experience, celebrating their achievements and making sure they know they are a valued member of our team.

During the past year, we have continued our strong history of volunteer involvement which added considerable value to our work. This work includes a range of activities including working in the office, supporting our fundraising and communications work alongside providing administrative support and contributing to our *InterAction* magazine. The level of contribution made by volunteers varies from a couple of hours to a couple of days per week.

As we move forward, we are recruiting members to our Research Panel and Voice Committee, to contribute to decisions about what research we fund. A range of medical, research and professional advisers also provide an invaluable network of support on a pro bono basis. To all of them, we would like to say a big thank you: we could not achieve what we do without you.

Our committees

Five sub-committees, established as part of the Board, operate according to clearly defined terms of reference. These committees hold delegated authorities, acting as a resource to the Chief Executive and staff team and make recommendations to the Board. They are made up of Trustees, staff and people outside of the organisation, including our Supporting Membership.

The Audit, Finance and Fundraising Committee comprises the Chief Executive, Finance Director, Director of Fundraising and Communications and three Trustees. It meets quarterly and reviews finances, risk controls, audit requirements, fundraising and income-generation activity to support and grow our work.

The new Fundraising Leadership Board held its first meeting in March 2015. A formal sub-group of the Audit, Finance and Fundraising Committee, it supports the charity's income generation objectives by identifying major donors and other funding sources, and championing our work at the highest levels.

The Policy Group meets quarterly and provides a steer for the charity's policy and influencing work. Trustees and relevant staff meet to review and plan future activity as well as ensure that we collaborate effectively with others.

The Research Panel meets quarterly and comprises a mix of Trustees, Supporting Members, medical adviser and Prof Stephen Holgate. Alongside helping to monitor the charity's research-funded activity, it also oversaw the development of our new Research Strategy, launched in April 2014.

The Remuneration and Nominations Committee meets as and when required, to make recommendations to the Board on senior appointments and related governance issues. It did not meet during 2014–2015.

"Just to say a big thank you to all the staff at Action for M.E. for the valuable work you all do – it really helps and is much appreciated. Thank you also for letting me loose on proofreading InterAction – I really do enjoy it."

Sherry, one of our volunteer *InterAction* proofreaders

"Your magazine gives out a great deal of information as well as hope for us all. I would like to take this opportunity of saying what a wonderful job you are doing."
NW, by letter

"A week ago I was diagnosed with M.E after having symptoms and investigations for the past seven months. Your website was recommended by the specialist; and I have found the information so incredibly supportive and helpful."
Jemma, by email

Governing document

The organisation is a charitable company limited by guarantee and is a registered charity in England and Wales and in Scotland. The Company was established under a *Memorandum of Association* which established the objects and powers of the charitable company and is governed under its *Articles of Association*. In the event of the Company being wound up members are required to contribute an amount not exceeding £1.

Risk

The Risk Register and other key audit reports are reviewed regularly to ensure that there is effective management of risk.

The Risk Register is reviewed regularly by the Audit, Finance and Fundraising Committee and annually by the Board. The Finance Director is responsible for the Risk Register and reports directly to the Chief Executive.

Risks are categorised in a way that enables us to see the cumulative impact of risks and therefore ensure that we take action to protect the quality of our work, our reputation and our income.

During 2014–2015, Trustees were satisfied that this was undertaken in a satisfactory manner. Given the financial situation of the charity, Trustees took a proactive role in supporting additional work in this area.

Related parties

The charity works collaboratively with other M.E. charities, influencing groups, health and social care, government and senior officials and others to achieve its objectives.

Action for M.E. is a member of a number of organisations and alliances including Disability Rights UK, the Disability Benefits Consortium and the Neurological Alliance. We are continuing to increase the level of collaboration to increase capacity and impact through the pursuit of common objectives.



Financial review

Statement of financial activities

After two years of deficits, it is great to be reporting on a very sound financial performance this year. Total income of £970,222 is up by 45% on last year, with expenditure at £749,638 down 2%, the net result being a surplus of £44,644 on unrestricted funds and £220,584 including restricted funds.

We have been the beneficiary of a very large restricted donation of £231,400 on the closure of the CFS Research Foundation, which is included in the total surplus. This money is being used to support a research project over a three-year period (see p 12).

We continue to maximise the work that we do while ensuring that we have an appropriate level of reserves and strong income generation plans for the future.

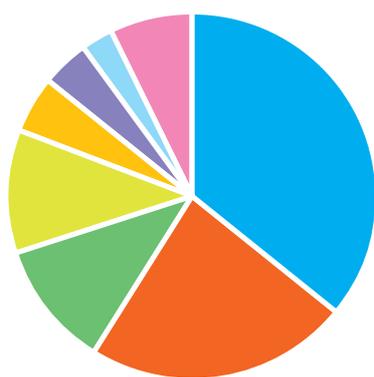
Our income and expenditure

We are acutely aware that we have a significant responsibility as the largest of the UK M.E. charities, working with a tiny income in comparison to the scale of the challenge: 250,000 people with M.E. and the many more children, families, friends, employers and professionals affected by their illness.

Our intent is to grow the charity in order to support more people affected by M.E. We believe that we now have a sustainable income generation strategy to deliver that growth. We anticipate a further surplus next year which will strengthen our financial position, and allow us to deliver the promises we made to people affected by M.E.

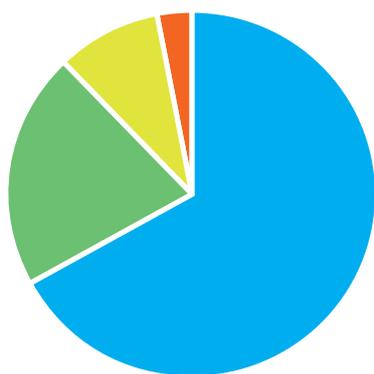
We aim to raise £3 to £5 for every pound spent on fundraising. During this year, we raised £3.49 for every £1 invested (if the CFS Research Foundation donation is excluded), which is an improvement on last year's £3. Early indications for 2015–2016 are that we remain on track and are making significant progress towards achieving our target again.

“We continue to maximise the work that we do while ensuring that we have an appropriate level of reserves and strong income generation plans for the future.”



Income

- Donations 36%
- Trusts 23%
- Subscriptions 11%
- Community fundraising 11%
- Appeals 5%
- Grants 4%
- Gift Aid 3%
- Other 7%



Expenditure

- Charitable activity 67%
- Fundraising 21%
- Administration 9%
- Governance 3%

Funding sources

The principal funding sources for the charity are charitable trusts, community fundraising, supporting membership income and individual gifts. Other funding sources include Big Lottery Fund, Scottish Government grants, Gift Aid, legacies and Christmas card sales. The economic climate has had an impact on the charity and we have had to work hard to ensure that we retain as broad a funding base as possible.

Investment policy

Aside from retaining a prudent amount in reserves each year most of the charity's funds are spent in the short term so there are few funds for long term investment. The charity has an investment policy which currently uses the COIF Charities Investment Fund to provide a short term interest bearing account that optimises the balance between flexibility and rate of return.

Reserves policy

The current policy is to maintain the level of 'free' funds at no less than three times, and no more than five times, the monthly unrestricted running costs of the charity. Available 'free' reserves at 31 March 2015 were £112,700, equating to 2.3 months at an average monthly spend rate of £48,000.

Trustees have agreed to temporarily operate at a lower level whilst putting in place plans to recover the situation in order to sustain Action for M.E. as a robust, going concern.

Grant-making policy

This policy sets the criteria and rules for making grants. This is reviewed annually and grants are restricted to the funding of medical research.

Statement of Trustee's responsibilities

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' annual report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company and charity law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under company law the Trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, of the charity for the year.

In preparing those 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
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate and proper accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charity's transactions.

They must disclose, with reasonable accuracy, at any time, the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005, regulation 8 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended) and with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

"Funding sources include Big Lottery Fund, Scottish Government grants, Gift Aid, legacies and Christmas card sales. The economic climate has had an impact on the charity and we have had to work hard to ensure that we retain as broad a funding base as possible."

They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

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

Auditor

A resolution to re-appoint BDO LLP as auditor for the ensuing year will be proposed at the Annual General Meeting.

Provision of information to Auditor

So far as each of the Trustees is aware at the time the report is approved:

There is no relevant audit information of which the company's auditor is unaware, and the Trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information.

Small company provisions

This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions for small companies under Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006.



Alan Cook
Chair of Board of
Trustees and Directors



Christopher J. Cundy
Director & Treasurer

Approved by the Board of Trustees and signed on its behalf on 30 September 2015

Independent Auditor's report to the Trustees and members of Action for M.E.

We have audited the financial statements of Action for M.E. for the year ended 31 March 2015 which comprise the *Statement of financial activities*, the *Balance sheet* 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 charity's Trustees and members, as a body, in accordance with chapter three of part 16 of the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charity's Trustees and members 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 charity and the charity's Trustees and members as a body, 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 (see p 17), 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.

We have been appointed as auditor under section 44(1)(c) of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and under the Companies Act 2006 and report in accordance with regulations made under those Acts.

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 Financial Reporting Council's (FRC's) Ethical Standards for Auditors.

Scope of the audit of the financial statements

A description of the scope of an audit of financial statements is provided on the FRC's website at www.frc.org.uk/auditscopeukprivate

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 application 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
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006, the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and regulation 8 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended).

Opinion on other matter prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion the information given in the Trustees' Annual Report 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 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended) requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the charitable company has not kept proper and adequate accounting records 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; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- the Trustees were not entitled to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the small companies regime, take advantage of the small companies exemption in preparing the directors' report or the exemption from the requirements to prepare a strategic report.



Neil Dimes Senior Statutory Auditor
for and on behalf of BDO LLP, Statutory Auditor
Bristol
United Kingdom

Dated 23 October 2015

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

BDO LLP is a limited liability partnership registered in England and Wales (with registered number OC305127).

Statement of financial activities (SOFA)

Including income and expenditure account for the year ended 31 March 2015

	Notes	Unrestricted funds (£)	Restricted funds (£)	Total 2015 (£)	Total 2014 (£)
Incoming resources					
Incoming resources from generated funds:					
Voluntary income	3	366,116	215,922	582,038	541,838
Exceptional voluntary income	3	–	231,400	231,400	–
Activities for generating funds	3	19,527	–	19,527	12,149
Investment income	5	799	–	799	418
Incoming resources from charitable activities	3	136,458	–	136,458	114,439
Total incoming resources		522,900	447,322	970,222	668,844
Resources expended					
Costs of generating funds:					
Costs of generating voluntary income	4	166,728	–	166,728	173,425
Fundraising trading: costs of goods sold and other costs		3,016	–	3,016	4,563
Charitable activities	4	282,618	271,382	554,000	562,993
Governance costs	4	25,894	–	25,894	25,146
Total resources expended		478,256	271,382	749,638	766,127
Net movement in funds	2	44,644	175,940	220,584	(97,283)
Fund balances at 1 April 2014		64,538	88,099	152,637	249,920
Fund balances as at 31 March 2015		109,182	264,039	373,221	152,637

All incoming resources and resources expended derive from continuing operations.

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

The notes on pages 23 to 31 form an integral part of these accounts.

Balance sheet

As at 31 March 2015
(Company registered number 2906840)

	Notes	2015 (£)		2014 (£)	
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	8		9,169		12,905
Current assets					
Debtors	9		40,967		31,099
Cash at bank and in hand			402,898		255,361
			443,865		286,460
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	10		(79,813)		(146,728)
Net current assets			364,052		139,732
Total assets less current liabilities			373,221		152,637
Capital and reserves					
Unrestricted funds:					
General funds	11		109,182		64,538
Designated funds	11		–		–
			109,182		64,538
Restricted funds	12		264,039		88,099
Accumulated funds			373,221		152,637

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 and in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (effective 2008).

The notes on pages 23 to 31 form an integral part of these accounts



Alan Cook
Director & Chair of Trustees



Christopher J. Cundy
Director & Treasurer

Approved by the Trustees on 30 September 2015

Notes to the accounts

1 Accounting policies

The accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention on a going concern basis and in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (FRSSE), effective April 2008, the Statement of Recommended Practice (the SORP) issued by the Charity Commissioners for England & Wales (effective 2005). The accounts have been drawn up in accordance with the provisions of the Charities Act and the Companies Act 2006.

The particular accounting policies adopted are set out below.

Fund Accounting

General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the Charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Designated funds comprise unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the Trustees for particular purposes. The aim and use of each designated fund is set out in the notes to the accounts.

Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors or which have been raised by the charity for particular purposes. The aim and use of each restricted fund is set out in the notes to the accounts.

Deferred Income

In accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice (the SORP) issued by the Charity Commissioners for England & Wales, grants received in advance and specified by the donor as relating to specific accounting periods are deferred on an accruals basis to the period to which they relate. Such deferrals are shown in the notes to the accounts and the sums involved are shown as creditors in the accounts.

Recognition of Liabilities

Liabilities are recognised on the accruals basis.

Incoming Resources

Incoming resources, including bank interest receivable, are accounted for on a receivable basis when the charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy. Donated services and facilities are included as voluntary income at their estimated value to the charity when received, and under the appropriate expenditure heading depending on the nature of the service or facility provided. Time donated by volunteers is not recognised in the financial statements as this cannot be reliably valued. For Legacies, entitlement is the earlier of the Charity being notified of an impending distribution or the legacy being received. Deferred income, where appropriate, is described above.

Resources Expended

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to that category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources. Support costs are allocated to operational and fundraising functions on the basis of their use of central support services.

Grants payable are payments made to third parties in furtherance of the Charity's objectives. Single or multi-year grants are accounted for when either the recipient has a reasonable expectation that they will receive a grant and the Trustees have agreed to pay the grant without condition or, when the recipient has a reasonable expectation that they will receive a grant and any condition attaching to the grant is outside the control of the Charity. Where a grant includes specific performance terms, grants payable are recognised as performance milestones are met.

Provisions for grants are made when the intention to make a grant has been communicated to the recipient but there is uncertainty about either the timing or the amount of the grant.

Fundraising costs are those incurred in seeking voluntary contributions and do not include the costs of disseminating information in support of the charitable activities.

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the Charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them.

Support costs include all expenditure not directly related to charitable activity. The Trustees have applied what they consider to be reasonable judgements in apportioning such costs between direct charitable costs and support costs. The central office functions such as general management, payroll administration, budgeting and accounting, information technology, human resources and financing, are allocated across the categories of charitable expenditure and the costs of generating funds. The basis of the cost allocation is explained in note 4 to the accounts.

Governance costs are the costs associated with the governance arrangements of the Charity which relate to the general running of the Charity as opposed to those costs associated with fundraising or charitable activity. Included within this category are the cost of audit fees and costs linked to the strategic management of the Charity.

Fixed assets and depreciation

Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost less depreciation. Items of less than £500 are not capitalised.

Depreciation has been provided at the following rates in order to write off cost of the assets (less their expected residual value) over their estimated useful economic lives.

Office Equipment – 25% on the straight line method.

Pensions

The Charity operates an occupational pension scheme. Contributions are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities as they become payable in accordance with the rules of the scheme. The scheme is a defined contribution scheme.

Taxation

The Charity operates a partial-exemption method for the recovery of certain VAT. Unrecoverable VAT is included in support costs.

Operating lease agreements

Rentals applicable to operating leases when substantially all of the benefits and risks of ownership remain with the lessor are charged against profits on a straight line basis over the period of the lease.

2 Net movement in funds

	2015 (£)	2014 (£)
This is stated after charging:		
Depreciation of owned fixed assets	5,753	7,885
Auditor remuneration	5,675	6,472
Trustees' expenses	221	739
Pension costs	2,386	4,686

Funds belonging to the charity have been used for the purchase of insurance to protect the charity from loss arising from the neglect or defaults of its employees or agents, acting as such, or to indemnify the employees, acting as such, against the consequences of any neglect or default on their part. This does not cover any employees who are also trustees in their capacity as Trustees and acting as such. The sum expended by the charity on such insurance for the year to 31 March 2015 was £1,048 (in 2014 it was £1,038).

3 Details of incoming resources

	Unrestricted funds (£)	Restricted funds (£)	Total 2015 (£)	Total 2014 (£)
Voluntary income				
Trusts & companies	79,754	93,508	173,262	198,949
Donations & appeals	230,400	78,386	308,786	243,706
Exceptional donation	–	231,400	231,400	–
Legacies	10,088	–	10,088	8,586
Tax recoverable	23,527	4,426	27,953	41,848
Gifts in kind	22,100	–	22,100	1,000
Grant income S.16b Scottish Executive	247	19,602	19,849	20,000
Grant income Scottish LTCAS	–	20,000	20,000	27,749
	366,116	447,322	813,438	541,838
Activities for generating funds				
Christmas cards	5,865	–	5,865	8,069
Supplement commission	3,456	–	3,456	3,595
Merchandise	206	–	206	485
Events	10,000	–	10,000	–
	19,527	–	19,527	12,149
Incoming Resources from charitable activities				
Subscriptions	107,885	–	107,885	108,829
Conference fees	21,913	–	21,913	–
Charity journal	2,899	–	2,899	3,604
Information and publications	3,761	–	3,761	2,006
	136,458	–	136,458	114,439

The 'exceptional donation' of £231,400 shown under Voluntary Income above is the amount donated by the CFS Research Foundation when the charity closed. It represents restricted funds for the funding of the 'Brain in pain' research project which was being managed by the CFS Research Foundation and is now managed by Action for M.E.

4 Resources expended

	Unrestricted funds (£)	Restricted funds (£)	Total 2015 (£)	Total 2014 (£)
Costs of generating voluntary income				
Staff costs	93,081	–	93,081	98,961
Direct fundraising costs	21,060	–	21,060	41,000
Support costs – see below	52,587	–	52,587	33,464
	166,728	–	166,728	173,425

Direct fundraising costs includes £nil (in 2014 it was £1,000) for gifts in kind.

	Unrestricted funds (£)	Restricted funds (£)	Total 2015 (£)	Total 2014 (£)
Charitable activities				
Communications and policy	98,027	35,460	133,487	176,049
Information and services	165,511	81,110	246,621	312,632
Research	19,080	154,812	173,892	74,312
	282,618	271,382	554,000	562,993

Costs of Charitable Activities for Unrestricted funds are further analysed as follows:

Activity	Activities undertaken directly	Support costs as below	Total £
Communications and policy	73,857	24,170	98,027
Information and services	82,546	82,965	165,511
Research	15,487	3,593	19,080
	171,890	110,728	282,618

Research costs include £15,000 (in 2014 it was £nil) for gifts in kind.

4 Resources expended (continued)

Support costs	Directorate activity	Finance admin	Property management	Office management	IT admin	Total £
Communications and policy	–	7,321	9,309	4,808	2,732	24,170
Information and services	–	25,129	31,954	16,505	9,377	82,965
Research	–	1,088	1,384	715	406	3,593
	–	33,538	42,647	22,028	12,515	110,728
Fundraising	–	15,928	20,254	10,462	5,943	52,587
	–	49,466	62,901	32,490	18,458	163,315

Central support costs have been allocated to the above categories of support costs according to the full-time equivalent number of staff per activity.

	2015 (£)	2014 (£)
Governance costs		
Administrative salaries – based on time spent	8,964	15,225
Indemnity insurance for trustees	1,048	1,038
Governance training	45	–
Trustees' expenses	221	739
Meeting room hire and refreshment costs	9,187	1,842
Auditors' fees	5,675	6,472
Professional fees	754	35
Bad debts	–	(205)
	25,894	25,146
Grant activities		
Grants made by the charity during year all related to research projects and were all to institutions.		
London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine – biobank	–	26,114
Buckinghamshire New University – disease register	1,668	3,336
University of Newcastle – muscle dysfunction	7,000	7,000
University of Sheffield – biological correlates of cognitive impairment	–	7,832
University of Northumbria – sleep	–	5,550
University of Northumbria – immune responses	9,750	–
Queen Mary University London – brain in pain	84,969	–
University of Newcastle – mitochondria DNA	23,000	–
	126,387	49,832

The above costs for Grant activities are included in research expenditure which also includes related Support costs. The Biobank funding in 2013-14 enabled delivery of this research project in 2014-15. It ceased and was signed off in January 2015.

5 Investment income

	2015 (£)	2014 (£)
Interest from cash investments in the UK	785	295
Interest from gift aid and covenants	14	123
	799	418

6 Staff costs and emoluments

	2015 (£)	2014 (£)
Gross salaries	319,342	349,025
Employer's national insurance	29,651	33,649
Pension contributions	2,386	4,686
	351,379	387,360

	Number	Number
Numbers of full time employees or full time equivalents		
Engaged on charitable activities	6	8
Engaged in fundraising activities	3	2
Engaged on management and administration	1	2
	10	12

The number of employees whose emoluments as defined for taxation purposes amounted to over £60,000 in the year was as follows:

	Number	Number
£70,001 – £80,000	1	1

7 Trustees

	2015 (£)	2014 (£)
Trustees are reimbursed for out of pocket expenses for travelling to meetings, telephone calls together with direct costs relating to fund raising activities.	221	739
Number of Trustees Reimbursed for Expenses	2	2

8 Tangible fixed assets

	Office equipment (£)
Cost	
At 1 April 2014	48,255
Additions for Year	2,017
At 31 March 2015	50,272
Depreciation	
At 1 April 2014	35,350
Charge for the Year	5,753
At 31 March 2015	41,103
Net book value	
At 31 March 2014	12,905
At 31 March 2015	9,169

9 Debtors

	2015 (£)	2014 (£)
Trade debtors	5,523	3,664
Other debtors	6,896	4,036
Prepaid expenses	27,020	21,058
Due from HMRC	1,528	2,341
	40,967	31,099

10 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2015 (£)	2014 (£)
Trade creditors	52,972	62,984
Accrued expenses	17,611	53,842
Unpaid pension contributions	337	660
Other taxation and social security costs	8,893	7,579
Deferred income	–	21,663
	79,813	146,728

11 Funds

Statement of unrestricted funds	General (£)	Designated funds (£)	Total funds (£)
Balance at 1 April 2014	64,538	–	64,538
Transfer between funds	–	–	–
Surplus for year	44,644	–	44,644
Balance at 31 March 2015	109,182	–	109,182

Analysis of net assets between funds	Tangible fixed assets (£)	Net current assets (£)	Total (£)
Unrestricted funds;			
General funds	9,169	100,013	109,182
Designated funds	–	–	–
	9,169	100,013	109,182
Restricted funds	–	264,039	264,039
	9,169	364,052	373,221

12 Restricted funds

Movements in restricted funds	Opening balances	Incoming resources	Outgoing resources	Closing balances
Revenue restricted funds	£	£	£	£
Research	28,933	320,212	(155,478)	193,667
Welfare advice and support service	3,000	3,024	(6,024)	–
Action for M.E. services	47,237	27,021	(73,358)	900
Online M.E. centre	3,929	6,705	(10,634)	–
Scottish Executive 16b	–	20,000	(20,000)	–
Scotland services	–	1,000	(1,000)	–
SEE M.E. employment project	5,000	55,758	(3,062)	57,696
Young carers resource	–	2,000	–	2,000
<i>Newly diagnosed with M.E.</i> booklet	–	2,000	–	2,000
Hear M.E., influence M.E.	–	9,602	(1,826)	7,776
	88,099	447,322	(271,382)	264,039

Research – donations are regularly received from donors wishing to see advances in research. Five pilot research studies have been supported in part from this fund during the year. See the grant activities table on p 27 for more details.

Welfare Advice and Support Service – information, advice and signposting by telephone and email to help people affected by M.E. access the welfare benefits to which they are entitled.

Action for M.E. services – including our Online M.E. Centre and resources including our membership magazine, *InterAction*. Funds received from several sources have facilitated ongoing work of these services.

Online M.E. Centre – our website, which provides information, signposting, support and advice and continues to attract more users each year.

Scottish Executive 16b – funds granted for further development work on the Scottish hub section of our Online M.E. Centre, plus new funds for a one-year pilot project that aims to educate GPs and primary healthcare practitioners about M.E., to improve patient experiences and to reduce health inequalities that exist for patients with M.E.

Scotland services – donations given by the MacDonald Trust and Hugh Fraser Foundation for our support services in Scotland.

SEE M.E. employment project – our 18-month pilot project offers specialist employment advice and support to people living in Bristol, North Somerset, Gloucestershire and South Gloucester who have a diagnosis of M.E./CFS.

Young carers resource – this offers information and signposting to children and young people caring for a family member with M.E. and/or fibromyalgia, and was produced in collaboration with the Carers Trust, Association of Young People with M.E. and Fibromyalgia UK.

Newly diagnosed with M.E. booklet – produced in direct response to people with M.E., this resource is designed for them to share with their GP and supports them to be an active partner in their own care.

Hear M.E., influence M.E. – funded by a Big Lottery Awards for All Scotland grant, this project brought people affected by M.E. together to identify challenges and possible solutions to a number of aspects of living with M.E.

13 Operating leases

At the year end the Charity had annual commitments under non-cancellable operating leases as set out below.

	Office equipment	Land and buildings	Total 2015 (£)	Total 2014 (£)
Operating leases which expire:				
within one year	–	–	–	–
within two to five years	3,577	–	3,577	2,853
over five years	–	23,250	23,250	–
	3,577	23,250	26,827	2,853

The charity has moved offices this year resulting in a new premises lease and office copier rental agreement.

14 Research funding commitments

The charity is committed to funding a number of research grants over forthcoming years subject to certain performance conditions being met. The charity is committed to further expenditure of £165,109 over this period, with £83,422 to be spent in the year to 31 March 2016.

“Keep up the good work,
Action for M.E. I would
be lost without you.”

Amy, on Facebook



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Registered charity in England and Wales no. 1036419

Registered in Scotland no. SC040452

Company limited by guarantee, registered in England no. 2906840

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