

Doorstep

“Opening doors for homeless families”

25 YEARS!



Annual Report 2014 and Accounts 2013-2014

Director's Report

When I first came to Doorstep as a temporary play worker in September 1990 little did I think that I would become the Director and still be here to see the 25th anniversary. From that unique perspective I can look back at the highlights of the last 25 years.

Doorstep was set up as Adelaide Road Project (ARP) in 1982 after a serious road accident involving a child. The child was living in temporary accommodation with no space or resources to play. ARP was set up by a steering group of concerned local people, specifically, to provide practical support to 28 homeless families and a place for their children to play safely. ARP also provided some play and advice sessions at Levine Hostel. In 1989 ARP was invited to move to premises in the newly refurbished Abbots Hostel, adjoining Levine Hostel, to provide support services. At that time ARP operated under the umbrella of Voluntary Action Camden. On moving the project set up as an independent registered charity and a Company Limited by Guarantee re-named as Doorstep.

When I first joined there were the equivalent of 3.5 full time staff members and the premises were comprised of two playrooms, a kitchen and a tiny office which had originally been a coal cellar. There were also gardens which were in need of a great deal of renovation. Over the years fundraising enabled the gardens to be landscaped and our premises increased as we spread across the basement of three of the hostel's houses giving us much better office and quiet/counselling/advice room space and a laundry room. The additional space reflected development in terms of a bigger staff team and additional services. The staffing levels have fluctuated at Doorstep according to the funding situation at any given time.

Obviously, in a 25 year span there have been changes in policy and legislation which have affected the families we work with. We saw a steep increase (28%) in the numbers of asylum seekers and refugees in our service users between 1994 and 1998, peaking at 93%. The introduction of a dispersal policy, placing asylum seekers in the provinces, saw the figure drop to 16% by 2006. Currently, there are no refugees or asylum seekers amongst our user group.

In 2002-2003 benefit claimant payment order books, which could be cashed at a post office were scrapped in favour of direct payments into client's bank accounts. Our service users often found it difficult to open a bank account as they couldn't comply with the requirements and provide the necessary documents to do so. Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credits were also introduced at this time.

In 2004 an on line bidding system was introduced for the allocation of available social housing as opposed to direct offers being made to eligible families. Successful bidding is dependent on a family having accrued sufficient points. After bidding the family with the highest number of points will be invited to view and the property is allocated on the basis of acceptance, e.g. the family with the highest points views and accepts then the property is theirs, if they decline it is then offered to the family with the second highest number of points and so on.

Also, in 2004 legislation was introduced which required families in temporary accommodation to be provided with their own kitchen and bathroom. In theory not having to share kitchens and bathrooms was an improvement in living conditions. However, the necessary refurbishment to create the additional bathrooms & kitchens often meant a reduction of families' actual living space.

Doorstep has made significant achievements such as the Investor's in People award in 2000 and the Quality Mark for the advice service in 2004. We have also experienced crises, especially those created by cuts in funding which have resulted in loss of staff.

In 2007 Doorstep's staff team was the equivalent of 5 full time staff. However, we suffered the most severe cuts to funding from Camden Council over the last 7 years. Initially there was a cut of 25% in 2007 which resulted in a dramatic reduction in staff leaving only myself, the Director. I set about the process of stabilising, consolidating and finding the way forward. We were fortunate to have support from volunteers and bought in sessional staff as and when needed. In this way we were able to put services back in place and were working towards creating much needed new posts to bring the staffing levels back up to a more realistic level. Unfortunately, we then suffered another 50% cut in 2012-13 and a further 50% in 2013-2014. From April 2014 Doorstep receives no funding from the council and must be completely financially independent. Currently, we have one full time Director and 2 part time Children's Workers. Despite diligent bidding to raise funds for the Director's post we have not been successful. For 2014-2015 the post will be funded from the reserves we have accrued through prudent financial management. At a time when more work is being generated by the need for writing multiple funding bids and reporting to multiple funders the role of Director has never been more necessary. Additionally, more staff members are desperately needed to share the administration and day to day running of Doorstep. One service which was lost in 2007 and which we have not been able to replace is the advice service. With current benefit cuts and the lack of social housing stock this is a service which is very much needed and which we would like to reinstate in some form. While it has proved easier to raise money for special projects and work with children funding for the essential back room staff to support front line services and enable development is much harder to secure.

Doorstep has experienced many successes and surmounted many difficulties. Doorstep has always listened to its service users and the services have been developed in direct response to their expressed needs. We know how much our services are needed and the positive difference they make to the quality of life for children and their families. That is the motivation to keep going to sustain Doorstep and the inspiration to strive to improve and grow.

Vicky Fox

Staffing & Volunteers

My sincere thanks to my colleagues, Sarah Lough, Ebanie Kajue and our team of regular day to day volunteers, Kiki Banjica, Valbona Haxholli, Fijolla Banjica and Mel Murly for their support and unfailing dedication to make it all happen. I would also like to give thanks to the ever growing army of volunteers who raise money, tend our gardens, collect, cook and donate food. To those who collect and donate winter coats, gifts for children at Eid and Christmas, as well as those who keep our free weekly bazaars stocked with quality, gently used clothing, toys, books, baby equipment and home making items all year round.



Examples of our achievements over the last year

In 2013-2014 seventy six adults and ninety six children used our services. We also hosted two graduate students from abroad who helped us to devise systems to measure our effectiveness and the outcomes our work achieves while they conducted their academic research.

The Step to Employment Work Club, which we introduced last year, was very successful and productive offering support to 27 people to access employment or developing skills which lead to employability. 6 people progressed into paid employment and 2 gained qualifications. 10 participants either started a CV from scratch or have improved their existing ones. Three learned English pronunciation techniques and spelling. Three accessed work experience placements with local charities. Some used laptops to search for work and for colleges to study. One gained a Food Hygiene certificate and found part-time work in a restaurant, achieving a balance between childcare responsibilities and employment. One sought out a driving training school to train to be a professional driver. Twelve women took part in assertiveness and interview techniques workshops. Four women found work with young children as nannies or carers. One woman progressed into full-time paid learning support role with deaf children. One participant told us "I've received more help and support from Doorstep than from anywhere else. I really feel like I have a future now" SB.

Unfortunately, funding for that activity has now come to an end and we need to raise further funds for it to continue.

Of the ninety six children eleven made a good transition to nursery and school. 5 children improved their social skills and a four improved their communication skills. 3 improved their spoken and written skills, 4 improved their reading ability and 3 demonstrated improved self confidence.

Our Services

- Opportunities for children to play, learn and develop at our after school club, crèches and drop-ins.
- Joint activities with the American School in London.
- Regular creative workshops, such as, jewellery making, pottery, gardening and cooking.
- A weekly exercise class such as Yoga and Zumba.
- A programme of special activities and outings during the summer and school holidays.
- A weekly 'bazaar' giving access to free essential goods donated by the wider community.
- Free daily access to laundry facilities.
- Healthy snacks and meals.



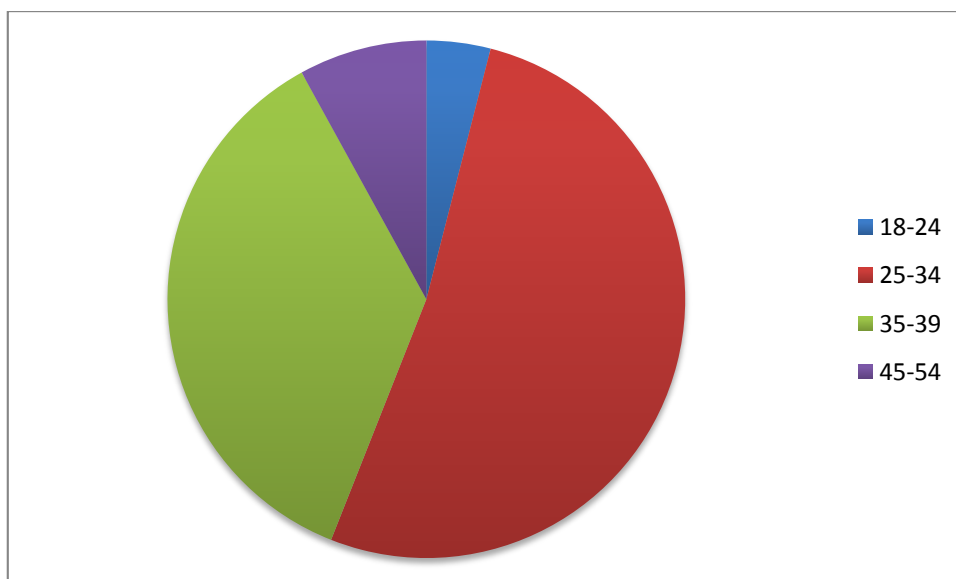
The value of Doorstep

We conducted a review of our services and our findings are below:

Consultation with a sample group of 25 Doorstep service users

The following data is drawn from a consultation (using survey technique) with service-users of Doorstep who engage with services on differing levels. To be considered as a first phase of a fuller, more comprehensive and participative consultation including the England's Lane site, the results have been prepared for ease of use in presentations and to feed into Doorstep's future planning.

Ages of Service Users by age band: 18-24 = 4%
25-34 = 52%
35-39 = 36%
45-54 = 8%



12% of the samples were male.

Families and children

Of the 25 families surveyed, there was an average of 3.4 children per family. This is nearly twice the rate of 2010 average nationally. Doorstep supports the lives of families with more children than average.

Of the 85 children represented, a quarter are under 5years old, and 5 are 20months old or under.

Reasons for homelessness

Prior to becoming homeless, 24% of the samples were living with family. Half of this 24% cited family tensions as reason for leaving whilst the other half cited overcrowding. It is acknowledged there may be overlap between these identified root causes.

A sixth of families were renting privately. A quarter were in hostels already due to never having been in permanent accommodation either through entering the UK as immigrants or if UK citizens by never having successfully sought accommodation via the council or had the means to rent privately.

Language at home

The families using Doorstep speak up to 10 languages altogether. Less than a third of families speak only English at home. 16% speak Bengali only. An equal number speak Arabic, Somali or Albanian as the main language at home. Other languages spoken are Polish, Tigrinya, German and Kosovan.

Paid Employment

A third of the families have one family member who is in paid employment.

Services - quality and value

Laundry

19 out of 25 families use the laundry and nearly all of these rate it as very good.

Bazaar

19 out of 25 families make use of the Bazaar and rate it as good/very good.

Crèches, Drop- Ins and After School Club

All of the families with younger children who were surveyed had made regular use of the crèche or drop-ins and rated them Very Good. 25%use the After School Club and rate it Good/Very Good.

Other services - Yoga and Work club

Those who attended Yoga or Work-club rated them as Good.

How Doorstep has made a difference

80% of families agreed that Doorstep made a difference in “supporting your children” as a category in the survey. Nearly half perceived a positive change for them in all of the following:

- Financial state
- Social health
- Supporting their children
- Wellbeing.

Service User’s Comments-(comments have not been edited and are verbatim)

Comments relevant to children:

- The children were happy and experience with children
- Summer trips were very good, mini-trips in London and getting out of London trips

Comments relevant to social health and wellbeing:

- Coming to Doorstep relieve the stress (gives us space comparing to cramped rooms)
- Come here for laundry Fridays and to meet other Mums
- Community was and is important

Comments regarding Doorstep and staff:

- It means a lot to be able to come here
- I approach staff for advice, to find books for children..., the way to deal with them in some cases
- Service is fantastic

Advice

50% of families make active use of the internet to seek advice. The advice they require mostly is to do with their housing and their child’s education. Whilst a handful of the families had approached staff for advice and felt their queries had been dealt with well, some were not sure in what capacity the staff at Doorstep were able to advise. Some felt there needed to be more communication between staff and hostel residents, even if it just knew staff names and what kind of advice was available.

Most stated that they would use a lawyer for legal advice if one was brought into Doorstep.

Other contributions

Some suggestions for future services/workshops: more activities for 5-10 year olds, more outdoor play, more trips, IT classes and cooking in one pot.

A handful of families from England's Lane Hostel (which can accommodate 160 families) currently use Doorstep. We wanted to find out if there were obstacles that were preventing families from England's Lane using Doorstep. Our findings are below:

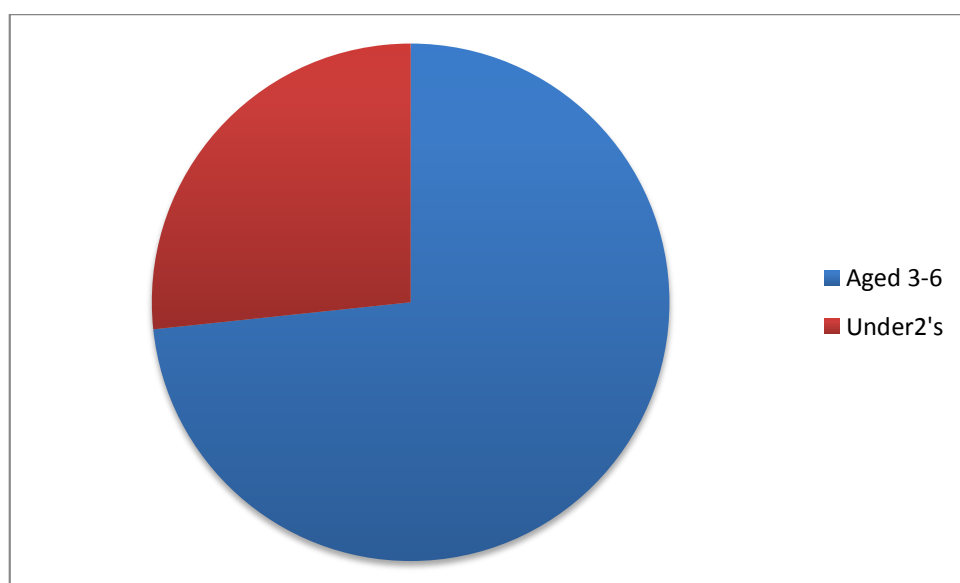
England's Lane Residence engagement sessions

Barriers to accessing Doorstep

Most mothers (there were not any fathers present) had not heard of Doorstep. However, they were interested in the services it had to offer, especially the crèches and laundry. When asked if the bus fare would be a problem only one said this may cause them to not engage, but most saw this as fair transaction for free use of Doorstep services.

Children

There were 15 children overall in families surveyed, all under 6 years old. Four of these were under 2 years.



Reasons for homelessness

Families had been at England's Lane from 6 months to 4 years; however most had always been homeless due to refugee status and/or eviction from council and private properties.

Work/Study

Of 10 women surveyed, 8 are full time carers and 2 are studying.

Languages spoken

Families spoke a mixture of English, Somali, Farsi, Mandarin, Swedish, Spanish and Portuguese.

England's Lane- social support activities

The survey had a section which gauged residents' use of laundry services, shopping, childcare, home-based learning, holidays, sport/leisure and counselling and child welfare/parenting groups.

Most stayed local for laundry and shopping (Belsize area). Most cited laundry as expensive and problematic. Most found shopping facilities fine if a bit over-priced. Most found leisure activities too expensive to engage. Overall, health based services were deemed adequate.

Important points that could be drawn from this last section of survey: women would like some women only activities, many would like a rest if not an official holiday, as about a third were seeking some sort of social work support they were vulnerable, frustrated and expressed a desire for a little bit more help.

Dreams for the future

Most families wanted permanent accommodation in council flat or private home. Many wanted their children to continue in education and get a degree. All wanted to get back to work after caring for their children, one speculated on feasibility of working from home and one expressed a wish to start up her own nursery.



Housing/Homelessness & Benefits

The following is taken from the “Impacts of Welfare Changes in Camden-August 2014”.

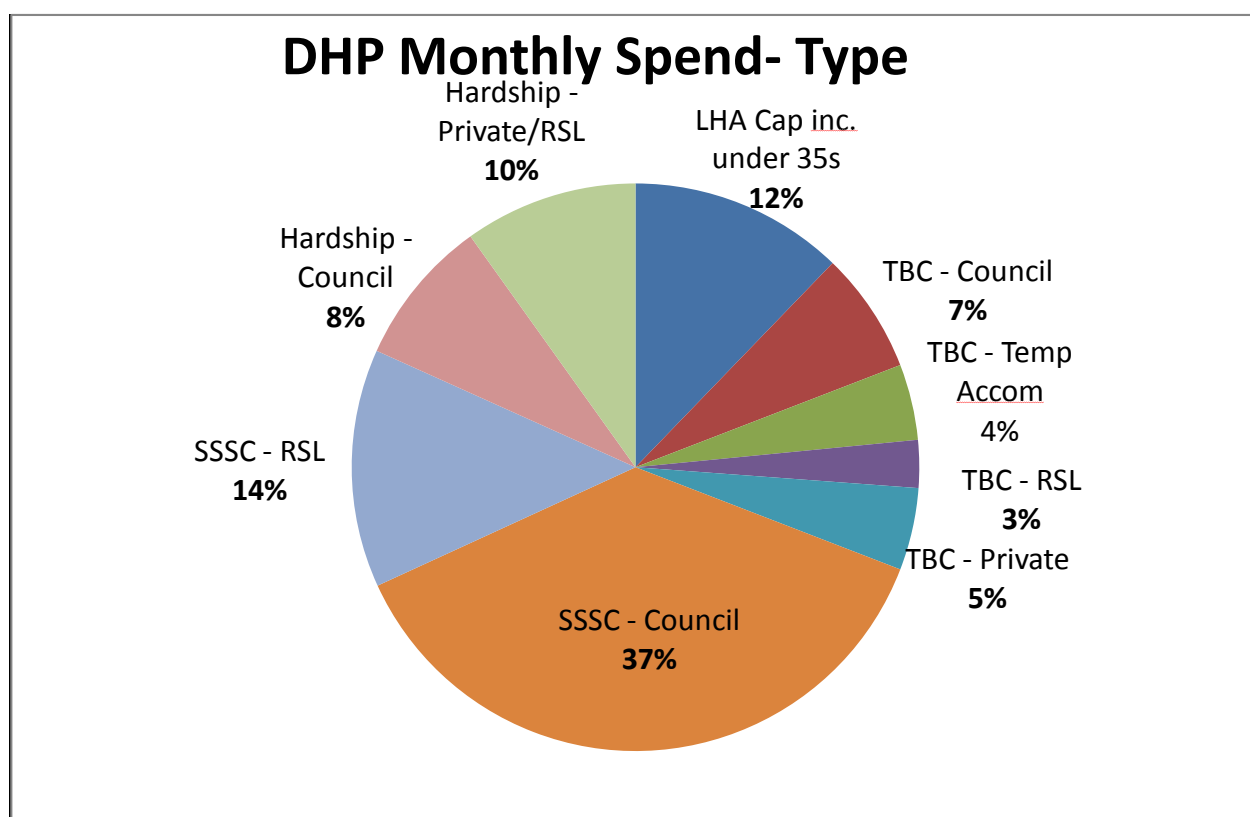
Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) are one of the main tools at the Council’s disposal to mitigate the impact of welfare changes and the funding allocated by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to Camden has increased accordingly. Spend has more than doubled since the Total Benefits Cap (TBC) came into effect.

The numbers of DHP claims have increased by three times.

The table below shows how much the council has spent on DHP and how much funding it has received from the DWP.

Expenditure has more than doubled since end of August due to introduction of total benefit cap.

Expenditure in 2014/15 to date has been £356,738.



The largest numbers of people who receive DHP are 302 council tenants impacted by the Social Sector Size Criteria (SSSC) where the accommodation is larger than the household occupancy needs. Last month, they were paid £32,796 and have received £93,785 in the year to date. The difference in HB and rent is significant in private tenants. This is due to the LHA caps. Although new claims have fallen in Camden, claimants who are already in private properties are

finding it hard to cope financially. Claimant's circumstances are such that for them to sustain the tenancy we have to pay DHP to cover the difference.

At end of June 2014, total of 527 households were in temporary accommodation (TA).

The following is an extract from Camden Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2014/15

"In the long term, it is our social, economic and environmental circumstances, which include factors such as how safe we feel in the environment in which we live, the physical condition of our housing and the wider physical environment in which we live, job security, income and education levels, that have the strongest impact on health outcomes.

The availability and quality of housing (e.g. accommodation that may be cold, damp or overcrowded) impacts on both physical and mental wellbeing. In Camden high house prices and private rents mean securing affordable housing of appropriate quality is a key challenge for many households. The uncertainty that goes with living in temporary accommodation can have a negative impact on health and wellbeing. The number of homeless households in Camden placed in temporary accommodation (over 500 households) has remained stable in recent years.

However, there are still a significant number of households in temporary accommodation and many of them remain in temporary accommodation for long periods of time. Living in overcrowded situations can also adversely affect health and wellbeing, particularly for children. Levels of overcrowding in Camden are among the highest in the country.....

Poverty is for a key determinant of poor outcomes in health and wellbeing. Higher levels of deprivation are linked to numerous health problems (e.g. chronic illness, lower life expectancy) and unhealthy lifestyles (e.g. obesity, smoking, drugs misuse). These factors mean that needs for health, social care and lifestyle services are higher amongst populations living in more deprived areas.

Camden is ranked the 15th most deprived borough in London (out of 33) and 74th most deprived in England (out of 326). Within Camden there are areas that are within the 10% most deprived areas in England and some areas that are in the 20% least deprived. The impact that poverty (in terms of unemployment or low income) has on families with young children is particularly important. Disadvantage experienced in childhood has strong ties with health throughout life. In 2011, 34% of children (under the age of 16) in Camden were living in poverty in real terms (this equates to 13,000 children), compared to 21% nationally. Camden had the sixth highest proportion of children living in poverty in London. The emotional health of children is also correlated with poverty...."

CHAIR'S REPORT

It gives me great pleasure to write this year's Chair's report, which celebrates 25 years of Doorstep's existence. This year more work than ever has been done to build on and develop Doorstep's services to meet the needs of children, young people, adults and families.

We constantly work to improve and evolve our services, and have been able this year to bid successfully for funding to develop some areas of work, such as the Step to Employment Work Club for adults. We are also fortunate that we have had various streams of funding. In addition to the voluntary sector, we have had support from the private sector including banks, supermarkets and other institutions.

The Management Committee wishes to express their heartfelt thanks to our Director Vicky Fox. Her tireless dedication to fundraising is paramount to the success of securing the resources required to provide families living in temporary accommodation in North Camden with access to vital services. These provide the emotional and practical support required for a good quality of life, create real prospects and support families to make the best use of any life opportunities which arise.

However this year Doorstep needs to recruit more staff members if it is to expand and evolve the services it already provides, and share with the existing staff the day to day running of the Project. The reliance on one full time member of staff is not sustainable. Various applications are being made to charitable foundations and trusts in an effort to remedy this situation, and this is included in our funding strategy for the year.

We are proud of our continuing After School Club Service where there are sessional teachers to help with homework, some fun creative activities and healthy snacks/meals. We are equally pleased with our Step to Employment Work Club which has as its aim to move the service users into meaningful work or training.

I thank the efforts of our great staff who work as Children's Workers' delivering the crèche, and supporting other services. We benefit from their skills and competence, and we are extremely fortunate to have them as part of such a dedicated and supportive team.

I extend a sincere thank you to our volunteers who have generously given up their free time and offered their skills giving support to Doorstep. Our volunteers provide invaluable help and bring an extra dimension of support to our service users.

I owe a big thank you to our funders and supporters, all the trusts, foundations, charities, individual donors, private sector organisations and everyone who has supported us throughout the year. I also give my grateful thanks to local organizations, schools, churches and to the local community.

I express my gratitude to all the other members of the Management Committee for their work and support, and for taking collective responsibility in governing Doorstep.

Sara Katchi

Treasurer's Report

The financial statements for Doorstep (or 'the charity') cover the year ended 31st March, 2014. These statements may not contain sufficient information to allow full understanding of the financial affairs of the charity. For additional information relating to the statutory annual accounts, please consult the auditor's report relating to those accounts and the Trustees Annual Report.

Fiscal year 2014 ended in a stable position. However, it is important for Doorstep to prioritise fundraising to maintain services for children and to increase staffing levels to meet our service users' growing needs.

Careful financial and operating records have been kept throughout this financial year. If further clarification of any financial matter is required, copies of any bank statements, receipts, invoices, etc. may be obtained from Doorstep Homeless Families Project, 13A Broadhurst Gardens, London NW6 3QX.

The Management Committee members are satisfied that **Doorstep** is entitled to exemption from the provisions of the Companies Act 2006 (the Act) relating to the audit of the financial statements for the year by virtue of section 477, and that no member or members have requested an audit pursuant to section 476 of the Act.

The Management Committee members acknowledge their responsibilities for:

1. Ensuring that the charity keeps adequate accounting records which comply with section 386 of the Act, and
2. Preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of Doorstep as at the end of the financial year and of its profit or loss for the financial year in accordance with the requirements of section 393, and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Act relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to **Doorstep**.

These financial statements were approved by the members of the committee on the 7th November 2014 and are signed on their behalf by:

David Hightower

DOORSTEP

Company Limited by Guarantee

Statement of financial activities incorporating the Income & Expenditure Account

Year Ended 31 March 2014

		Unrestricted	Restricted	Total Funds	Total Funds
		Funds	Funds	2014	2013
Note		£	£	£	£
INCOMING RESOURCES					
Incoming resources from generating funds:					
Voluntary income	2	3,375	87,195	90,570	64,008
Other incoming resources	3	50	—	50	1,851
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES		3,425	87,195	90,620	65,859
RESOURCES EXPENDED					
Costs of generating funds: Costs of generating					
voluntary income	4	—	(1,388)	(1,388)	(300)
Charitable activities	5/6	—	(88,133)	(88,133)	(83,665)
Governance costs	7	—	(1,080)	(1,080)	(1,470)
TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED		—	(90,601)	(90,601)	(85,435)
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources for the year/net income/(expenditure) for the year					
	8	3,425	(3,406)	19	(19,576)
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		62,706	15,000	77,706	97,282
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		66,131	11,594	77,725	77,706

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses in the year and therefore a statement of total recognised gains and losses has not been prepared.

All of the above amounts relate to continuing activities.

Doorstep
Balance Sheet
31 March 2014

		2014	2013
		£	£
	Note		
FIXED ASSETS	10	358	
Tangible Assets			
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors	11	1,409	512
Cash at bank		78,075	123,293
		<u>79,484</u>	<u>123,805</u>
CREDITORS: Amounts falling due within one year	12	<u>(2,117)</u>	<u>(46,100)</u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS		77,367	77,705
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>77,725</u>	<u>77,706</u>
NET ASSETS		<u><u>77,725</u></u>	<u><u>77,706</u></u>
FUNDS			
Restricted income funds	14	11,594	15,000
Unrestricted income funds	15	66,131	62,706
TOTAL FUNDS		<u><u>77,725</u></u>	<u><u>77,706</u></u>

For the year ended 31 March 2014 the charity was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

We give our most sincere and grateful thanks to the following organisations for their support of Doorstep and our families:

*Accurist
BBC Children in Need
CARIS
Catwalk Schoolgates
Comic Relief
Emmanuel Church & School
Fitzdale Trust
Fortune Hill Executive Search
Hampstead & Highgate Express
Hampstead Wells & Campden Trust
Hands on London
JW3
Lloyds TSB Foundation
Land Securities
London Borough of Camden
London Community Foundation
London International Gallery of Children's Art
Maida Vale Mums
Manuel Swaden Solicitors
Mitzvah Day UK
NW8 Closet
St Mary's School
St John Southworth
StreetSmart
Sarum Hall School
South Hampstead Synagogue
Team 24
The American School in London
The Childhood Trust
The Liberal Jewish Synagogue Social Action Committee
Voluntary Action Camden
Waitrose
Xander Lily Fund*

Also, to the very many kind and generous individuals who donated money, food, toys, clothes, books, and their time.

The Management Committee

Chair -Sara Katchi

Secretary-Francoise Wagneur

Annabel Smith

Margaret Grandy

Caroline Garkisch

Janet McKnight

Sharon Henry

Treasurer-David Hightower

The Staff Team

Vicky Fox- Director

Sarah Lough & Ebanie Kajue-Children's Workers

Lila Mars-Step to Employment Work Club Tutor/facilitator

The Volunteers

Belkize Banyica

Fijolla Banyica

Valbona Haxholli

Mel Murly

Fasai Kajue

Zoe Fox

Not forgetting the hundreds of other individuals who took part in occasional projects to help Doorstep and our families- we give our sincere thanks to each and every one!

Doorstep Homeless Families Project

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Fax: 0207 625 8684

Email: Vicky.fox@btconnect.com

Website: www.doorsteplondon.org

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