

First Star Scholars UK

(A company limited by guarantee)

Report and Financial Statements For the Year Ended 31 March 2022

**Charity number 1180754
Company number 11067711**

First Star Scholars UK
(A company limited by guarantee)

Financial Statements
For the Year Ended 31 March 2022
Accompanying document of unaudited
accounts

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First Star Scholars UK
Report of the Board of Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2022

The Board of Trustees presents its report and unaudited financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2022.

Reference and Administrative Information

Charity Name:	First Star Scholars UK
Charity registration number:	1180754
Company registration number:	11067711
Registered Office	c/o Critchleys LLP Beaver House 23-28 Hythe Bridge Street Oxford OX12EP
Operational address:	37 Deerpark Close Hanworth Park Middlesex TW13 7HS

Board of Trustees

Mr P Samuelson	Chair
Mr F Young	Vice Chair
Mr S Irvine	
Ms M Drummond	
Ms AM Bird	
Dr J Arday	
Dr N Dosanjh	
Ms C Dovey	

Senior Management

Dr L Goodwin	Executive Director
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Independent Examiners -	Critchleys Audit LLP Beaver House 23-28 Hythe Bridge Street Oxford OX1 2EP
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Bank-	NatWest
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Legal advisors -	Gibson, Dunn and Crutcher
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Our Aims and Objectives

Purposes and Aims

Our charity's purposes as set out in the objects contained in the company's articles of association are to:

1. To provide relief and assistance to people in need who are young people in the United Kingdom who have entered into the social care system in particular but not exclusively by providing them with academic and life skills education and caregiver engagement.
2. To advance the education of people in need who are young people in the United Kingdom who have entered into the social care system in particular but not exclusively by providing them with academic and life skills education and caregiver engagement

Core Values

Aspiration: Young People in Care to enter higher education.

Support: Young People in Care to succeed in GCSE and post 16 education

Challenge: Involve universities, STEAM mentors, educators, social services and carers.

Collaboration: Leverage collective intent and aspiration - political, educational, technological and philanthropic.

Accountability: challenge universities, companies, society, schools, local authorities and our programmes to be accountable for progress of young people.

Make a difference: To the lives of Young People in Care/ Care leavers.

Aims and Objectives - the Scholars

Mental Health - for all First Star graduates to be able to access the support and advice they need to sustain their mental health.

Accommodation - no First Star graduate becomes homeless.

Civil engagement - no First Star graduate drawn into crime and incarcerated.

GCSE transition - for 50% of scholars to achieve 5 + GCSEs at **grade 4+**.

Aspire to HE - for 34% of scholars to transition to HE {in line with % of all peers}.

Secure further training, education or employment - for 100% of students to transition to adulthood with none being NEETS (Not in Education, Employment or Training).

Ensuring our work delivers our aims

We review our strategic plan and the aims, objectives, and activities in this plan each year. This review looks at progress made towards objectives, the impact of what we achieved in the previous 12 months. The review of our strategic plan helps us ensure our aim, objectives and activities remained focused on our stated purposes and that we respond to current events, notably the Corona virus pandemic and programme expansion. In particular, the trustees consider how objectives are progressed through planned activities and how these contribute to the aims and objectives set.

The focus of our work

Our strategic themes (2019 - 2024) are

- Programme provision throughout the Home Countries
- Sustainability of First Star UK
- Programme development
- Board of Trustees development
- Advocacy and engagement

Main objectives for the year 2021-2022

- Establish new cohort / programme
- Develop trustee roles and appoint additional trustees
- Establish new university partner- programme provider for 2021 start
- Develop annual lecture series, if possible, under COVID-19 restrictions
- Develop staff training programme
- Sustain advocacy with DFE and other organisations
- Develop Virtual / online provision

Outcomes

- Established new programme and recruiting FS2U cohort
- First cohort graduated summer 2021

50% progressed to HE. 72% of scholars completed the 4 years programme, no guardian scholars (graduates) are homeless. 5% of guardian scholars (graduates) are NEETS, 45% are in further education, training or employment.

- Alumni provision

Guardian scholars (Alumni) support has included financial support, equipment (eg. microwave; kettle; clothing/specialist equipment for interviews); travel. Networking events have been supported by guardian scholars traveling to Liverpool, Stoke and Brighton for launch and engagement events and joining webinars and online events to raise awareness of the impact of First Star. Celebratory events have included a graduation certificate presentation and a Christmas meal.

- Develop trustee roles and appoint additional trustees

Skills audit and review of roles has been instrumental in guiding our careful development of the Board of Trustees with potential new trustees approached. A new trustee with experience and expertise in

fundraising was appointed in March 2022. Trustees also agreed the formation of a fundraising oversight committee (March '22)

- Establish new programme for 2022 start

A fourth cohort with support from a new university partner – Our First Star 2U programme started in 2022 – funding well established, with new funder support specifically for this FS2U programme and a programme director appointed. Partnership with University of Sussex for residential provision has been established and the support of this new partner for the residential provision is hugely beneficial for the development of this programme. Residential provision is 7 days each year with summer 2022 being the first residential.

- Accredited diplomas under way

Level 3 diploma and level 4 diploma awards delivered through First Saturday and summer residentials. For the FS2U programme monthly provision will continue online with experienced tutors to be appointed for academic provision.

- Annual lecture

Venue retained – Due to ongoing covid restrictions in 21-22 this is planned for next 22-23 - guest speaker – to be confirmed

- Develop staff training in conjunction with additional staff for FS2U – initial training focuses on staff for residential (this will expand to include tutors and mentors in following year)
- Sustain advocacy with DFE and other organisations

Engagement with a range of organisations continues, including the Fair Education Alliance, National Association of Virtual School Heads and the National Network for the Education of Care Leavers

- Developed Online provision

FS2U programme with a cohort to start in 22-23 – with central team director appointed and planned 7 night residential - with new university provider – University of Sussex

- Developed plans for STEAM lecture series which initially launched in autumn 2021.

This 2021 provision proved to be a false start and a revived provision in partnership with Villiers Park Education Trust is planned for 2022-23. We are establishing provision with this collaborative partner to secure an annual programme of lectures (10-12 annually). Initial lectures will include climate change and sustainability as themes.

How our activities benefit stakeholders.

Our main activities and who we try to help are described below. All our charitable activities focus on the provision of the First Star programme and advocacy for young people in care and care leavers

Advocacy

First Star has advocacy at its heart. The commissioning of the Centre for Social Justice research and report on Care Leavers transition to and progression at Higher Education (HE) resulted in the **12by24 Report** published by the Centre for Social Justice in May 2019. With funding support from the Portal Trust secured, we are planning, researching and will produce a follow up report in 2022 on the progress

of care leaver access to HE provision.

Our advocacy can now be informed by our own data. Children Looked After continue to fare less well than non-looked-after children in their progress between primary school and Key Stage 4, with their average Attainment 8 score being just 21.4 compared to 50.2 (2020) for non-looked after children. The latest cohort of First Star scholars to complete their GCSEs have an average attainment 8 score of 47.1 with 32% of scholars passing GCSE English and mathematics at grade 5 and above compared to 10% of young people in care nationally and 50% of all pupils nationally.

Revised DfE data suggests that only Traveler children and those of Gypsy/Romany communities fare less well in our education system than those in care. Most recent (and using revised metrics) Department for Education (DfE) data indicates that just 13% of care leavers aged 19-23 go on to higher education, compared to 44% of 19-23-year-olds in the general population. First Star data shows 50% of our first graduating cohort progressed to university, with a further 45% in further education, training, or employment. Only 5% of our graduates are NEETS (compared to 39% of care leavers nationally). This matters a great deal, because access to higher education can be a powerful gateway to opportunity, particularly for those who have started with so little in life. The First Star programme recognises that not all our scholars will progress to higher education, and we ensure provision prepares them for employment, for apprenticeships and new education opportunities provision including T levels.

The self-advocacy and opinions of those who have lived experience of foster care illustrate the impact and the need for such a programme. Our Scholars tell us:

- *'First Star is a place where you'll be praised rather than tolerated and people actually care about you'*
- *'One day one of the mentors said shoot higher and now I'm at a Russell group university'*
- *'First star is a place which always helps me find my best even when I feel down or lost. There are so many people that help you here'*

The impact of the Pandemic is still being played out through our education system and data indicates that disadvantaged pupils are educationally 18 months behind their more advantaged peers by age 16. While the accepted metrics fluctuate with both 6% (19-21yrs old) compared to 34% of peers and 13% (18-23yrs old) compared to 44% of peers being used as measures of progression into HE, the gap between care leavers and their peers remains significant. First Star believes that GCSE outcomes are a significant barrier to progression (eventually HE) and have placed additional resources throughout covid and into programmes post covid with the aim of increasing the numbers of scholars passing 5 or more GCSEs. With the launch of the NNECL Quality Mark for Universities developed through the advocacy of the DfE Advisory Board supported by the DfE and First Star, has given impetus to the creation of the Report Card initiative which will examine, annually, the progress HE institutions have made in their intake, Access and Participation Plans and widening participation engagement

As in the previous year, 2021-2022 has seen Covid-19 significantly impact our advocacy engagement through some events including a proposed roundtable with donors and political voices, Care Leavers and First Star Scholars remaining on hold; our inaugural First Star lecture with special guest Stephen Fry is similarly (temporarily) postponed until 2023.

Scholar advocacy reflects our mission and each year two scholars join the Board of Trustees as special advisors. This has remained the case throughout lockdowns and scholars remain articulate and engaged sharing with Trustees educational and social issues being faced by them and their peers. A scholar's council is being developed as we engage with new cohorts, to ensure voice and advocacy includes all scholars.

First Star continues advocate for support for young people in care through the overarching strategy committee of the Fair Education Alliance, NNECL and NAVSH conferences and staff are keenly involved in the Learning Networks of the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. Collaborations with other charities including

PYE Global aid our programme provision for Scholars. Charities such as *mybnk* and *Become* continue to contribute to programme provision. Our latest collaboration with Villiers Park Education Trust will support our First Star2U provision as well as carer engagement and leadership challenges for scholars.

Who used and benefited from our services?

First Star Scholars UK was established in 2017 with the pilot programme at St Mary's University, Twickenham, graduating our first scholars in 2021. First Star Scholars UK is based on the model successfully established in the US by Peter Samuelson in 2011 and there are 18 programmes across nations with three in the UK. As we know there are a record number of looked-after children in the UK, with 90 entering the care system every day and a projected 100,000 children in care by 2025. First Star is reflecting the national *Leveling up* or 'catching up' agenda and focusing provision for years 1 and 2 on GCSE and individual scholars' missed education.

First Star programmes develop this theme to a much a deeper level and build long-term pathways based on scholars' own aspirations. The outcomes for our first graduating cohort authenticates the longevity of the programme through continued engagement with our alumni programme ensuring scholars and alumni are never alone in their personal and educational journey. 50% of graduating Alumni were awarded places at HE, while only 5% are NEETs. Retention remains high across cohorts with our University of Winchester cohort sustaining 100% retention. Cohort two at St Mary's was impacted by an outbreak of Covid-19 in the summer of 2021, a further residential was offered at Easter and well received by scholars and staff. Despite the challenges of Covid-19 scholars remain consistent in their attendance through the First Saturday programme.

Our Alumni have positively engaged with First Star, and we are building this programme. Opportunities to develop networking skills have been enhanced by alumni presence at events in Liverpool, Stoke and Brighton engaging with and launching new university partners. Our alumni support has offered support for course fees, course materials and resources including specialist dance equipment. We continue to offer support in terms of personal items such as microwaves. We know that the numbers entering care reportedly increased by 44% during Covid -19 (Barnardo's, 2020) and the gap in learning between disadvantaged young people and their peers is now an estimated 18 months; we also know that 50% of care experienced students have considered withdrawing from HE due to financial circumstances, physical and mental health issues and stress of academic and First Star is working to support scholars into and through their HE and post-graduation experience, providing mentors, equipment and financial support.

Our 2021 GCSE results bucked the attainment trends for Looked After Young People, with scholars' average EBacc score was 5.28 compared to 4.38 for all pupils (2020) and 1.7 for CLA (2020). First Star scholars overall pass rate (grade 4+) was 89% compared to 79.7% (England) and 76.9% (London). Scholars overall pass rate (grade 5+) also exceeded their peers at 62.8%.

In a busy year, cohort 1 graduates entered HE and work; cohort 2 completed GCSEs in 2021 and transitioned to further education and post 16 courses. All cohort 2 scholars continue their education pathway but several also experienced upheavals in placement, social workers, and education settings. Of concern is that some of our scholars are being placed in unregulated residential settings in less than suitable circumstances and First Star Directors are supporting them through these challenges. Our First Star 2U programme is up and running. Our new programme Director has been appointed and we are busy recruiting scholars nationally. Our initial FS2U residential is planned for summer 2022 at Sussex University. For 2022/3 new cohorts are being explored and fundraising and university partners already engaged.

We remain committed to principles of not 'cherry picking', a concept even more important with the education attainment gap increasing and absence and missing for education numbers rising among school populations. We are enhancing our evaluation and monitoring of scholars' progress with baseline assessments include in new programmes, regular reporting to schools, carers, virtual heads and social workers included in our planned provision for FS2U. Our University of Winchester Director has led the way in holistic engagement in the provision and monitoring of scholars' development including attendance at PEPs.

Selection and recruitment has expanded nationwide with the launch of FS2U. Scholars are being recruited from as far afield as Newcastle, Manchester, Leeds, and Sussex. Scholars can self-nominate, and nominations can be made by an adult as well as their virtual school heads and schools. Eligible scholars should have a care plan; be in kinship care; have been identified by children's services as on the edge of care or have appropriate refugee status. Each application is reviewed upon its own merits, but we do not judge potential on current academic progress or school attendance as these can already be barriers to success for those in care.

Programme provision has been impacted by the Covid – 19 pandemic. St Mary's programme had to close in the summer of 2021 after a week and a half for cohort 1 (now alumni) and in the first week of the cohort 2 residential. Cohort 3 at Winchester successfully ran the whole 3-week provision. Both programmes are running a First Saturday programme each month to sustain engagement and support scholars, and both also offered a four day Easter residential to enhance scholars First Star engagement.

First Star 2U saw the appointment of the programme director, and confirmation of the host university for summer 2022. The STEAM lecture series commenced in autumn 2021 but was not overly successful with very limited engagement. A review with our partners Villiers Park Education Trust has taken place and plans for relaunch in conjunction with the online provision for FS2U have been made. The planned STEAM lecture programme will support the First Star aim to enhance career ideas and aspirations, will support GCSE provision and is targeted towards any teen in care studying GCSEs.

Impact

Our pilot cohort graduated in the summer of 2021 having done so well at GCSE and with 50% progressing to HE and most others to FE and employment. We have developed a staff alumni role and are striving to keep links with as many alumni as possible. We aim to provide support through the challenges of year one at university where we know that care leavers are 36% more likely to give up - this provision includes seeking mentors for alumni – someone to share highs and lows with; 18% of alumni at HE institutions have a mentor through this project.

St Mary's First Star Scholars GCSE results in 2021 reflected the increased emphasis on 1-1 provision, albeit driven by the pandemic and lockdowns. This has helped generate First Star templates for FS2U provision. Future FS2U classes will be staged for different abilities, including those taking higher and foundation GCSEs and we will provide 1-1 support with tutors on a termly basis. First Star GCSE outcomes are keeping pace with or exceeding national expectations.

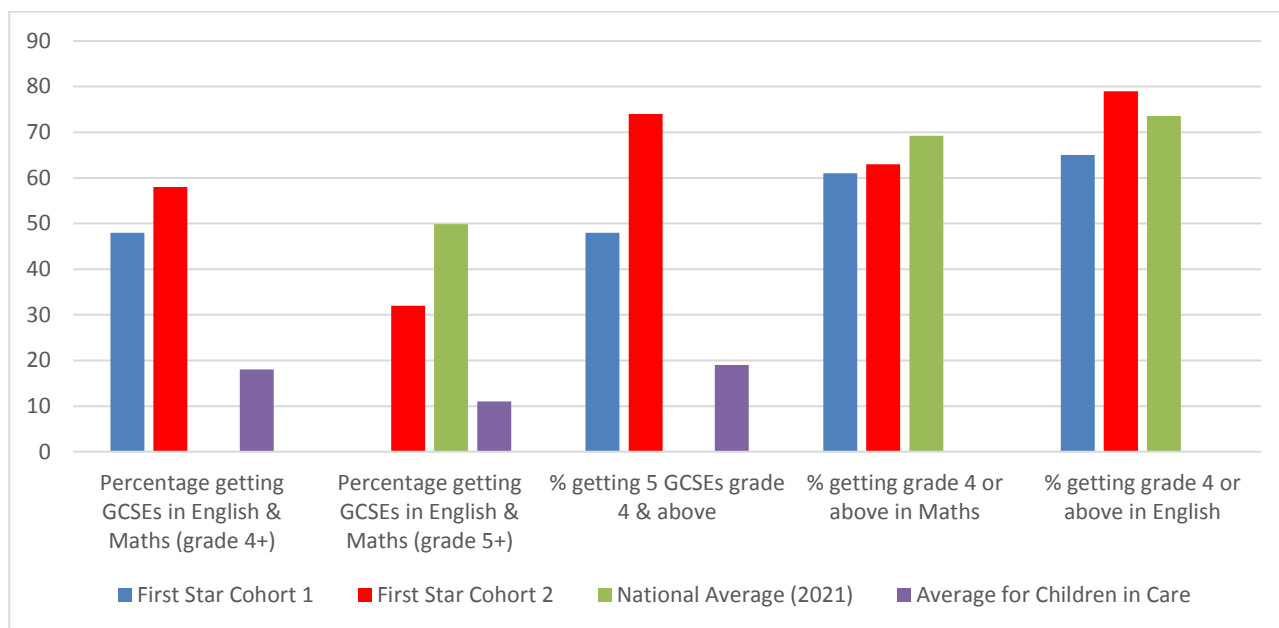
First Star aims

- Progression to HE = more than 34%
- 5+ GCSE passes = more than 54% (national average pre covid)
- 0% NEETs = less than 39% which is national figure for care leavers generally
- 0% homeless = whereas 25% of care leavers likely to become homeless in the first two years of aging out

50% of graduates have earned places in HE; compared to the national care leaver average of 13. NEETS among First Star graduates = 5% of graduates; 0% of our alumni are homeless yet they have experienced numerous moves since reaching the age of 18.

First Star programmes have a significant focus on GCSE preparation, exam techniques and revision in the first two years of the academic component of each First Star programme, particularly English, Maths and Science. This focus is impacting scholars' outcomes with our young people doing well in GCSEs.

Category	First Star Cohort 1	First Star Cohort 2	National Average	Average for Children in Care
Percentage getting GCSEs in English & Maths (grade 4+)	48%	58%	N/A for 2021	17.5% (2018)
Percentage getting GCSEs in English & Maths (grade 5+)		32%	49.9% (2020)	10.9% (2019)
% getting 5 GCSEs grade 4 & above	48%	74%	N/A for 2021	19% (2018)
% getting grade 4 or above in Maths	60.8%	63%	69.2%	
% getting grade 4 or above in English	65.4%	79%	73.6%	



Scholars' voice

...continues to be important to First Star and annually two scholars are elected each year as special advisors on the board of trustees. With the advent of new programmes a scholars' council is being established to give a voice to all scholars.

'It's given me belief I can do everything'

'People here have given me so much confidence I was able to overcome my fears'

'First Star is a place which always helps me find my best even when I feel down or lost. There are so many people that help you here'

'I wasn't sure what to expect but now I'm here it was the best decision I made'

- Overall GCSE results improved despite the impact of the Pandemic. As the data shows the second cohort GCSE results improved upon previous years – despite being the Covid GCSE generation – success was facilitated through a hybrid approach, perpetuating the efficacy of the First Star provision.

The context of Covid – 19 national data and issues

The average disadvantaged student is now educationally 18 months behind their peers. 48% of children in care in mainstream schools are not entered for GCSEs while only 30.6% of children in care obtain a GCSE pass. With 100% of First Star cohorts exceeding the minimum national average of entry to 3 GCSEs (and obtaining better than national average outcomes) the impact of First Star interventions and the progress of First Star young people is demonstrated.

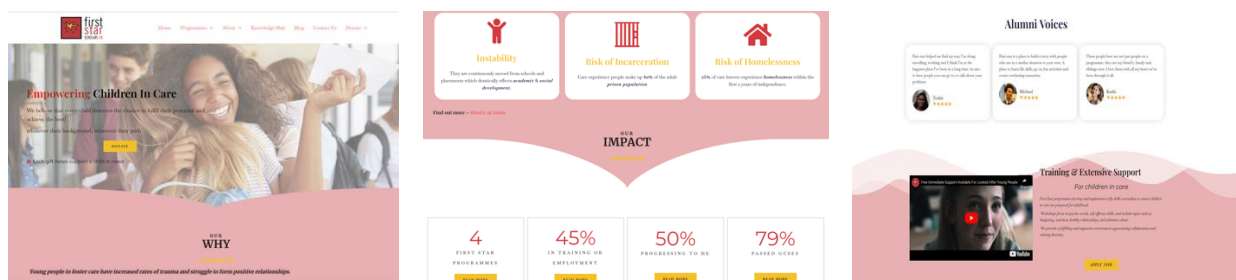
First Star data signposts that:

- Our programmes succeed in creating a 'family' atmosphere. The notion of the First Star family underpins our education and learning activities, and the young people feel safe, welcome, valued, and have a sense of belonging.
- What proves particularly valuable is building relationships with other foster children; making friends with, and being encouraged by, their peers and mentors and being supported by educational staff who really care.
- That the residential summer school aspect of our programmes serves an important function in enriching close relationships, but also giving young people a taste of independent living. It also provides time for very intensive academic support
- Our programmes are successful in giving students a 'taste' of university life in a way that is subtle and uncontrived. FS2U aims to emulate this provision within the online and shorter residential provision – this is a pivotal element of provision

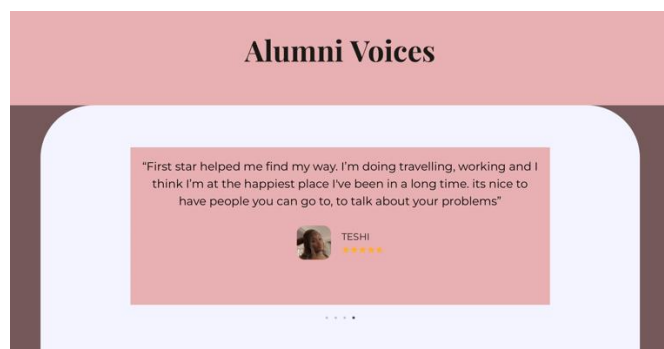
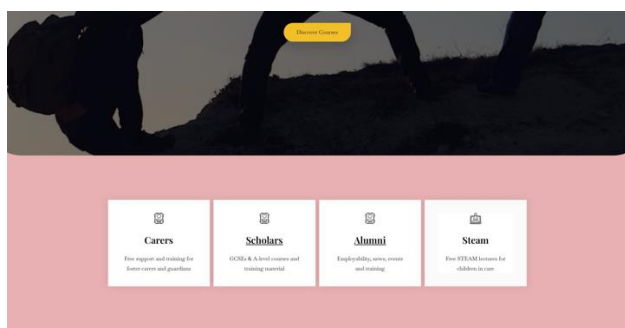
Impact of Covid-19

At FSSUK we have redeveloped our web site and FSSUK continues to provide a resources section developing a hub of care experience knowledge.

Our new web site provides a renewed platform for donations and knowledge



Learning and support was transferred to a second learning platform (website) at the same time as our main site was updated and www.firststar2U.org established. This is a secure learning website



Unfortunately, Covid - 19 continues to have a knock-on effect on the residential programmes in the summer, impacting through a summer outbreak of the virus at our St Mary's Programme. All university and local health protocols were in place and plans to return scholars to their placements and carers activated. Furthermore, programme plans supported those unable to attend due to Covid and continue to ensure they remain part of the First Star family. The response to the challenges of covid included shortened summer residentials and these were supported with an Easter residential making up the time. Each aspect of change has been supported through plans and activities and shared with supporters and other programmes as activities progress –ensuring that the programme may need to be delivered differently to maintain safety and safeguarding.

First Star Programme

University First Star Directors worked from home during the pandemic and continue to do so as appropriate and in line with the return-to-work provision of their campus. Our immediate focus has been on ensuring the online provision and face to face support for scholars continues and this has been revised and increased – offering 1 -1 revision and career support as well as group and cohort sessions. First Star programme protocols support '*keeping in touch*' and the First Star alumni provision has extended this beyond programmes keeping care leavers engaged.

Staff and scholar recruitment, and staff training has continued despite during the impact of covid – 19 and people's ongoing concerns with social distancing – long-term issues are being considered and planned for.

The First Star 2U programme

First Star developed this new provision to provide support for scholars and carers beyond the geographical locations of our campus programmes. Our campus model stands as the principal offer for First Star programmes. First Star 2U is a stand-alone provision that expands access for scholars and raises awareness among virtual school heads, schools, MATs, fostering agencies, organisations, charities, and universities across England – reflecting our determination to support Children Looked After in any setting. The essential ingredient of the First Star Family remains at the core of this provision. Each cohort will undertake a four-year programme mirroring our campus provision with a 7-night condensed residential each year. The Programme Director – appointed in December 2021 will manage both the FS2U and the STEAM provision

The challenges of education and growth through the pandemic and the excellent outcomes of our scholars at GCSE level and beyond have demonstrated that there is scope to increase the use of online learning platforms. The inaugural First Star STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths) lecture was due to take place in autumn 2021 – this launch had limited success, not

achieving the intended outcome of leading more young people to our provision. Following a reevaluation through our partnership with Villiers Park Education Trust this provision has been reviewed and relaunched in 2022.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding remains a key consideration with annual updates of policies. The risks are several for our young people. First Star policy and procedures reflect updated guidance, including Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021); to ensure compliance and best practice is maintained. The issues of online provision, Peer to Peer abuse, radicalisation and FGM are all included and updated in our annual policy review. New staff undertake NSPCC (or equivalent) training and annual updates in training are included for staff. As our provision expands additional advice and safety protocols are introduced to manage new activities including more live online lessons and new partnerships. We continue to review our protocols to ensure our provision complies with advice and legislation

Our Scholars

Our scholars' placements continue to display the vulnerability we saw during covid, indeed post covid placement instability has increased. It is also clear that more children have entered the care system and that both they and those already in care may experience placement breakdown for several reasons - First Star programme directors continue to monitor our scholars' placements carefully, offering support to carers and scholars and are now getting involved in attending PEPS meetings helping to secure pupil voice and ensuring LAC are not lost to education. Community engagement with carers and others is becoming stronger with programme staff maintaining contact with scholars and their carers.

Financial Review

First Star has secured new funders despite the challenges of Covid-19 and in addition has secured restricted funding for programmes (university led). First Star had a net increase in funds of £5,957. First Star reports to donors in an annual cycle determined by the timing of funded donations and donor requirements. Restricted Funds - University led programmes report to First Star where restricted funding from donors requires this. University programme providers also secure funding directly from donors and are solely responsible for reports and audits in relation to these funds. This year restricted funds for university partners have been secured and these are noted in the accompanying accounts - First Star Scholars Unaudited Accounts for the Year Ended 31st March 2022 - see accompanying document.

Principal Funding Sources

The principal funders for First Star Scholars UK are:

The MariaMarina Foundation; The Peter Cundill Foundation; the National Lottery Community Fund. For our university-based programmes funders include The Linbury Trust, The Paul Hamlyn Foundation, the Dulverton Foundation.

Investment Policy

First Star does not currently invest funds received

Reserves Policy

The Board of Trustees considered the charity's requirements for reserves in light of the main risks to the charity. It has established a policy whereby the unrestricted funds not committed by the charity should be a minimum of 3 months of the expenditure. The reserves target agreed by Trustees is three months in general funds.

The present level of reserves available to the charity of £135,710 exceeds this target level which is considered a minimum level. This is in the main due to the impact of Covid-19 – the pandemic has slowed key activities and developments. New staff employees include the programme director for the FS2U/STEAM provision and a head of development (fundraising) – planned for summer 2022). Other events have been delayed still further but are planned for 2022-23 - these include the research and lecture / advocacy activity. The charity continues with a work from home policy with appropriate online and face to face meetings. The proposed acquisition of office space /hot seats within an office setting has been ended and the appointment of additional staff now focuses on expansion plans with the Board of Trustees settled upon a high-level engagement with fundraising and the development of our financial and funding activities, including stewardship. Reserves available are £135,710. The timing of donations can affect the held reserves throughout the year.

Plans for Future Periods

First Star expansion has continued with the opening of a third cohort at the University of Winchester in the summer of 2021. The development and imminent launch of the FS2U Programme ensures that greater numbers of scholars can access our programmes from a greater geographical area in England. Such expansion is essential to ensure access to, quality and sustainability of our programmes. The launch of the FS2U programme and the associated STEAM lecture series are made possible by the increase in reserves at the end of the past financial year which bore the brunt of covid restrictions. First Star reviewed staffing plans and husbanded resources to focus on expansion this year. The appointment of a Director at the University of Winchester programme paralleled and preceded the appointment of the Director of FS2U – a direct FS employee.

Key Performance Indicators over the first 5 years (established 2019):

1. Expansion of Board and the development of an advisory group
2. 6 programmes by 2024
3. UK (and beyond) wide expansion to include Home Countries and Ireland
4. To ensure sustainability of First Star Scholars UKs 3-5-year business plan includes fundraising, corporate partnerships, office and staff expansion, marketing and event management.
5. Development projects continue to focus on
 - o Annual lecture series (2022/23 revised plan for inaugural lecture)
 - o First Star Diploma Awards linking curriculum across programmes
 - o Training and support for directors, mentors, youth coaches, tutors and volunteers

First Star Scholars UKs 5-year strategic plan, approved in November 2019, focuses on meeting these KPIs. First Star has made considerable advances to completing these KPIs including our 4th programme in recently partnering with the University of Sussex as the provider of the residential setting for the Summer residential for FS2U. First Star is in various stages of discussions with a new university partners and has established initial plans for a Midlands programme – including financial targets, philanthropic plans, stakeholder groups and organisations' engagement. New university partners involved in discussions reflect the national aims of First Star to move beyond our original regional setting. Discussion and contacts have taken place at over 16 universities in England.

The addition of the FS2U programme focuses on scholars not able to access a physical campus setting programme while offering the same support, development through our diploma curriculum and GCSE / post 16 academic development and a hybrid campus residential of 1 week. Plans include lectures with a focus on Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths to reflect the employment and academic opportunities at HE that scholars can aspire to.

Current cohorts continued online until lockdown eased, and while we still respond to covid issues in each setting, programmes have returned to face to face provision. Residentials for our campus programmes included 4 days at easter and three weeks in the summer - as hoped we saw a return to our full residential programme for easter/summer 2021.

Some advocacy activity including our planned Annual Lecture series have once again been postponed following the extended impact of the pandemic and we plan that these will go ahead at some point in 2022-2023/24 reflecting the prevailing sense of public interest in physical engagements. First Star continues engagement with stakeholders including local authorities (virtual school heads especially), programme (University) providers and the university sector, the Government through the Department of Education, NNECL, the Fair Education Alliance and other charities and funders to support our scholars.

Structure, Governance and Management

Governing Document

First Star Scholars UK is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 16th November 2017 and registered as a charity on 19th November 2018. 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. Originally established as First Star Academies UK; on 12th February 2020 a resolution was passed to change the name of the charitable company to First Star Scholars UK. This change was confirmed at Companies House and the Charities Commission. In the event of the company being wound up members are required to contribute an amount not exceeding £10.

Recruitment and Appointment of Trustees

The Directors of the company are also charity trustees for the purposes of charity law and under the company's Articles are known as Trustees. All Trustees give their time voluntarily and received no benefits from the charity. Any expenses reclaimed from the charity are set out in note 9 to the accounts in the accompanying document.

First Star's work focuses upon young people in care. The Board of Trustees seeks to ensure that the needs of this group are appropriately reflected through the diversity of the trustee body. Recent recruitment of trustees reflects the attention of the Board on sustainability and governance

Two scholar special advisors are nominated to the Board each year and represent the view and ideas of the cohorts. In addition, the strategic plan continues to drive our recruitment with potential new trustees in roles related to Marketing/ PR; Finance/ accountancy; Media; Fundraising and development; Political Advocacy; Care experienced or Care Leaver with HE experience.

Trustee Induction and Training

Most trustees are already familiar with the practical work of the charity and are encouraged to visit a First Saturday / summer programme. During the interview and selection process new trustees are introduced to the obligations and roles of trustees, including the importance of safeguarding.

All trustees are updated and engage with safeguarding policy and training. An induction pack for new trustees is under review as per our strategic planning to enable trustees to familiarise themselves with the charity and the context within which it operates. All materials are securely shared through our online HUB and include:

- The code of conduct and Nolan principles of public life
- The main documents which set out the operational framework for the charity including the Memorandum and Articles.
- Resourcing and the current financial position as set out in the latest published accounts.
- Strategic plans and objectives.
- Reporting to and stewardship of funders
- Board records and minutes
- Policies and procedures

Information is also shared in relation to information from the various Charity Commission publications signposted through the Commission's guide "the Essential Trustee". This is distributed to all new trustees through the HUB.

Risk Management

The Trustees are responsible for the overseeing of the risks faced by First Star. Detailed considerations of risk are delegated to the Executive Director of First Star Scholars UK. Risks are identified, assessed and controls established throughout the year. A formal review of the charity's risk management processes is undertaken on an annual basis with reporting by exception at quarterly board meetings. Risk is managed under the headings of Governance, External Risk/Covid- 19 Risk, Regulatory and Compliance Risk, Financial Risk and Operational Risk.

Policies are reviewed on an annual/biannual cycle as appropriate to each policy.

The main risks that the Trustees have identified and the plans to manage those risks are:

- Governance: First Star's aim is for continued expansion with clear robust strategic governance.

We manage this risk through trustee access to trust material and support through the HUB which is to be supplemented by an induction programme under development; a review of trustee engagement is also planned.

- External Risk/ Covid -19 risk. Our sustainability is reliant on raising funds; in addition expansion and new projects required the appointment of new staff; engagement of university partners in provision leading to successful outcomes for scholars. Risks Include: Programme closure; new programmes not starting; deteriorating relationships with donors; changing government policy; safeguarding concerns; online issues including scholars not engaging or getting zoom fatigue.

We manage these risks by collaborating closely with university partners in programme development and fund-raising activities; national and local marketing; social media engagement; working with local and central government agencies and departments including attending PEP meetings with young people and the team surrounding them; clear safeguarding policies and regular training for staff and good communication with donors regarding the impact of any restrictions.

- Regulatory and compliance risks; security of documents; compliance with government, company and charity law is essential to our reputation and the well-being of staff and those we benefit. Risks include : Non return of compliance documents; incomplete and late reports to donor's; security of documents.

We manage these risks through a secure Hub; the support and advice of our legal advisors; the engagement

of accountancy firm to reconcile expenditure and process salaries each month; through annual financial audit; reporting and stewardship with donors and contracts securing timeline's with donors and university programmes.

- Financial risk: sustainability of First Star Scholars UK is essential if the programme is to expand nationally. Risks include : Poor budgetary control; inadequate reserves; lack of fund raising

We manage these risks ensuring sufficient reserves to ensure sustainability; financial procedures; monthly and quarterly budget monitoring; strategic fund raising for First Star and university programmes; the planned appointment of fundraiser/head of development.

- Operational Risk: expansion brings some additional risk including as additional staff and volunteers are engaged and new partners sought. These risks include : Lack of staff capacity; lack of resources for projects and initiatives; lack of attention to staff well-being and health and safety; volunteer issues

We manage these risks through consideration of budget for staff resources to support expansion; regular review of policies; a fundraiser to be appointed in 2021-2022; expansion is secured for the benefit of scholars and sustainable for their four-year programme

Organisational Structure

First Star Scholars UK has a Board of Trustees of 8 trustees and the Executive Director who meet quarterly and are responsible for the strategic direction and policy of the charity. In addition, legal representatives and scholar's' representatives attend board meetings.

Day to day responsibility for the provision of the services rests with the Executive Director. The Executive Director is responsible for ensuring that the charity delivers the services specified and that key performance indicators are met along with ensuring the charity continues to develop working practices in line with good practice.

Related Parties

First Star works closely with the university providers offering the First Star programme. Scholars are associated with a particular programme and university, or in the case of FS2U with First Star. Each university programme has a full time Director appointed by the University who works with the Executive Director (FSSUK) to ensure the programme runs according to the curriculum, safeguarding and budget expectations of First Star as established through the Memorandum of Agreement.

With the increase in programmes and providers, Director's meetings and conferences have been introduced in 2021-2022. These facilitate the sharing of best practice and resources, recruitment and offer support for Directors / programmes.

Biannual reports from each programme are presented the Executive Director from Programme Director/s and – each quarter the Executive Director presets an update on programmes to the Board. Six monthly and annual reports to funders/donors are prepared and presented as requested – some aspects of stewardship for programme funding run through First Star and in some cases for specific funders programmes report directly to their donor. The University Programme Directors are responsible for reports to direct donors. The reporting process is negotiated with each donor separately, with some funds channeled through First Star and some funds provided directly to the university for each programme.

First Star maintains its own core costs and secures the FS2U budget and funding – both

remaining separate from the Programmes at different university providers. University providers are responsible for auditing their own accounts.

Responsibilities of the Board of Trustees

Company law requires the Board of Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of the affairs of the charitable company as at the balance sheet date and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including income and expenditure, for the financial year.

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees followed best practice and:

- ▶ Selected an accounting firm and adopted their accounting policies applying them consistently to provide monthly reconciling and reports, quarterly reports and provide annual unaudited accounts;
- ▶ made judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent; and
- ▶ prepared financial statements on a going concern basis.

The Board of Trustees is responsible for maintaining proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 1985. The monthly accounting records are delegated to the Executive Director and regular reports are provided for trustees. The trustees prepare and ensure a quarterly update is scrutinised at the quarterly Board meetings.

The Board of Trustees is also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees are directors for the purpose of company law and trustees for the purpose of charity law, who served during the year and up to the date of this report are set out in the accompanying document.

In accordance with company law, as the company's directors, we certify that:

- ▶ *so far as we are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the company's independent examiners are unaware; and as the directors of the company we have taken all the steps that we ought to have taken in order to make ourselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charity's independent examiner is aware of that information.*

Auditors / Independent Examiner

Critchley's were re-appointed as the charitable company's Independent Examiners providing unaudited accounts and have expressed their willingness to continue in that capacity.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006. The Independent Examiner is satisfied that the accounts of the company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination. The Independent Examiners Report accompanies this document.

Agreed by the Board of Trustees

Peter Samuelson

Frank Young

Marta Drummond

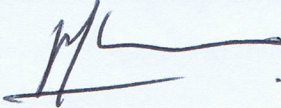
Stuart Irvine

Jason Arday

Nawtej Dosanjh

Cath Dovey

and signed on their behalf by:

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'P. Samuelson', written over a horizontal line.

Mr Peter Samuelson. Chair of Trustees

Date 15th December 2022

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

I report to the trustees on my examination of the financial statements of First Star Scholars UK for the year ended 31 March 2022.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees charity (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 (the 2006 Act).

Having satisfied myself that the financial statements of the charity are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of the charity's financial statements carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act). In carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

Since the charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of , which is one of the listed bodies.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- 1 accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
- 2 the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
- 3 the financial statements do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
- 4 the financial statements have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the financial statements to be reached.



Robert Kirtland FCA
Critchleys Audit LLP

Beaver House
23-38 Hythe Bridge Street
Oxford
OX1 2EP

Dated: 19/12/2022

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2022 £	Unrestricted funds 2021 £
<u>Income from:</u>			
Donations and legacies	3	263,600	182,072
		<hr/>	<hr/>
<u>Expenditure on:</u>			
Charitable activities	4	269,557	114,744
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Net (expenditure)/income for the year/ Net movement in funds		(5,957)	67,328
Fund balances at 1 April 2021		141,667	74,448
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Fund balances at 31 March 2022		135,710	141,776
		<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

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

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

The statement of financial activities also complies with the requirements for an income and expenditure account under the Companies Act 2006.

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 MARCH 2022

	Notes	2022 £	£	2021 £	£
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	7		2,840		268
Current assets					
Cash at bank and in hand		143,516		147,130	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	8	(10,646)		(5,622)	
Net current assets			132,870		141,508
Total assets less current liabilities			135,710		141,776
Income funds					
Unrestricted funds			135,710		141,776
			135,710		141,776

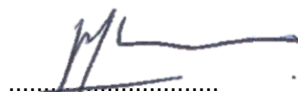
The company is entitled to the exemption from the audit requirement contained in section 477 of the Companies Act 2006, for the year ended 31 March 2022.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 with respect to accounting records and the preparation of financial statements.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year in question in accordance with section 476.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees on 15 December 2022



Mr Peter Samuelson
Chair of Trustees

Company registration number 11067711

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

1 Accounting policies

Charity information

First Star Scholars UK is a private company limited by guarantee incorporated in England and Wales. The registered office is Beaver House, 23-38 Hythe Bridge Street, Oxford, OX1 2EP.

1.1 Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the charity's articles of association, the Companies Act 2006, FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" ("FRS 102") and the Charities SORP "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (effective 1 January 2019). The charity is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

The charity has taken advantage of the provisions in the SORP for charities not to prepare a Statement of Cash Flows.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charity. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £.

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention. The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below.

1.2 Going concern

At the time of approving the financial statements, the trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus the trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

1.3 Charitable funds

Unrestricted funds are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of their charitable objectives.

1.4 Income

Income is recognised when the charity is legally entitled to it after any performance conditions have been met, the amounts can be measured reliably, and it is probable that income will be received.

Cash donations are recognised on receipt. Other donations are recognised once the charity has been notified of the donation, unless performance conditions require deferral of the amount. Income tax recoverable in relation to donations received under Gift Aid or deeds of covenant is recognised at the time of the donation.

Legacies are recognised on receipt or otherwise if the charity has been notified of an impending distribution, the amount is known, and receipt is expected. If the amount is not known, the legacy is treated as a contingent asset.

1.5 Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to transfer economic benefit to a third party, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement, and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Expenditure is classified by activity. The costs of each activity are made up of the total of direct costs and shared costs, including support costs involved in undertaking each activity. Direct costs attributable to a single activity are allocated directly to that activity. Shared costs which contribute to more than one activity and support costs which are not attributable to a single activity are apportioned between those activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

1 Accounting policies (Continued)

1.6 Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are initially measured at cost and subsequently measured at cost or valuation, net of depreciation and any impairment losses.

Depreciation is recognised so as to write off the cost or valuation of assets less their residual values over their useful lives on the following bases:

Office equipment	Straight line depreciation over 4 years.
------------------	--

The gain or loss arising on the disposal of an asset is determined as the difference between the sale proceeds and the carrying value of the asset, and is recognised in the statement of financial activities.

1.7 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash in hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts.

Basic financial assets

Basic financial assets, which include debtors and cash and bank balances, are initially measured at transaction price including transaction costs and are subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the transaction is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial assets classified as receivable within one year are not amortised.

Basic financial liabilities

Basic financial liabilities, including creditors are initially recognised at transaction price unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial liabilities classified as payable within one year are not amortised.

1.8 Employee benefits

The cost of any unused holiday entitlement is recognised in the period in which the employee's services are received.

Termination benefits are recognised immediately as an expense when the charity is demonstrably committed to terminate the employment of an employee or to provide termination benefits.

1.9 Retirement benefits

Payments to defined contribution retirement benefit schemes are charged as an expense as they fall due.

2 Critical accounting estimates and judgements

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, the trustees are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised where the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods where the revision affects both current and future periods.

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

3 Donations and legacies

	Unrestricted funds	Unrestricted funds
	2022	2021
	£	£
Grants	251,574	174,392
Donations	12,026	7,680
	<u>263,600</u>	<u>182,072</u>

4 Charitable activities

	Charitable Expenditure	Charitable Expenditure
	2022	2021
	£	£
Support costs		
Staff costs	115,170	77,810
Depreciation and impairment	725	405
Advertising and marketing	2,222	819
Office costs	12,355	5,340
Travel and subsistence	8,971	-
Information technology	9,906	7,500
Other costs	3,795	885
Independent examination fees	2,709	2,580
Accountancy and payroll fees	5,284	4,345
	<u>161,137</u>	<u>99,684</u>
Activities undertaken directly		
Provision of academic and life skills education to children in social care	108,420	15,060
	<u>269,557</u>	<u>114,744</u>

5 Trustees

None of the trustees (or any persons connected with them) received any remuneration or benefits from the charity during the year.

Travel and subsistence expenses amounting to £3,679 were paid to 2 trustees during the year (2021: nil).

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

6 Employees

The average monthly number of employees during the year was:

2022 Number	2021 Number
2	1

Employment costs

	2022 £	2021 £
Wages and salaries	103,775	70,385
Social security costs	7,373	4,610
Other pension costs	4,022	2,815
	115,170	77,810

The number of employees whose annual remuneration was more than £60,000 is as follows:

2022 Number	2021 Number
1	1

7 Tangible fixed assets

	Office equipment £
Cost	
At 1 April 2021	1,618
Additions	3,297
At 31 March 2022	4,915
Depreciation and impairment	
At 1 April 2021	1,350
Depreciation charged in the year	725
At 31 March 2022	2,075
Carrying amount	
At 31 March 2022	2,840
At 31 March 2021	268

FIRST STAR SCHOLARS UK

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CONTINUED) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022

8 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2022 £	2021 £
Other taxation and social security	4,044	2,422
Trade creditors	3,729	38
Other creditors	293	582
Accruals and deferred income	2,580	2,580
	<u>10,646</u>	<u>5,622</u>

9 Related party transactions

During the year ended 31 March 2022, trustee expenses were paid totalling £3,679.
During the year ended 31 March 2021, there were no related party transactions.