

Oxfordshire Breastfeeding Support: Reserves Policy 2021/22

OBS will review the level of reserves held, both restricted and unrestricted, at each Trustee meeting. The charity relies on donations from individuals, grants and fundraising to fund the majority of its charitable activities. The nature of these income streams is that funds are not certain to be received and are not evenly spread throughout the year. As future income from donations is uncertain and would be affected by wider economic conditions, holding reserves allows the charity time to plan the best way to reduce services or investigate other sources of funding. The charity has been awarded some long term grant funding, most notably £114k over 4 years from the National Lottery. This has meant that the charity feels more confident in holding a reduced level of reserves compared to prior years, using this money to invest in sessions that aren't funded by the grants.

The charity operates a mixture of face to face booked breastfeeding groups alongside one to one and group online support. The Trustees believe it is reasonable to hold enough reserves to enable the organisation to change the mix of face to face and online operations at short notice. In addition, with the charity moving from a self employed contractor organisation to employing staff, the Trustees believe that it is prudent to hold enough reserves to provide a buffer for any unexpected employment costs, emergency expenses and potential redundancy costs, as well as to ensure that funds are available in a timely manner to continue to maintain our level and nature of service provision.

The charity is now holding an increasing number of sessions a week, and in order to assist in the planning of future service levels and to enable giving notice to both service users and facilitators of any reductions in service levels because of lack of funds, the Trustees consider it reasonable to hold between 6 and 9 months of expenditure in reserve. Unrestricted reserves at the end of the year were £45k which represents about 7 months of expenditure, along with an additional £10k of deferred grant income which has been earmarked for future activities.

May 2022