

# ☒ Annual Review 2024



# Joint statement from our Chair and Chief Executive

We are pleased to introduce the FARA Foundation 2024 annual review.

The challenges faced by vulnerable populations in Romania remain significant. Romania continues to have one of the highest rates of children at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the EU, at 33.8%.<sup>1</sup> This underscores the vital importance of Fundația FARA's work in Romania. We are proud to report that in 2024, the programmes of Fundația FARA – to whom we granted the money we raised here in the UK – reached more than 1,800 beneficiaries.

The three Therapy and Rehabilitation programmes helped children with disabilities and their families with free and vital therapies to help the children overcome the limitations of their disability and facilitate their inclusion in mainstream education. The Tackling Poverty Through Education programmes worked with disadvantaged or marginalised primary, secondary and high school students, providing educational and wraparound support, aimed at preventing school drop-out, fighting poverty and promoting social inclusion. And the residential and outreach programmes for adults with disabilities helped them to gain independence and live their lives in dignity.

It's hugely inspirational to see the effect and impact of the programmes we fund. One of the things that always strikes us when we visit Romania is just how much joy there is within the

programmes. As one of the specialists who works within the adults with disability programmes commented:

 **Impact is measured in small steps, through seemingly minor activities that those with disabilities do for the first time. I measure impact by the joy the beneficiaries express.**

**Specialist Disability Support Staff**

This year saw a significant change take place within the Fundația FARA programmes. St Nicolas children's home, which marked the beginning of FARA as we know it today, closed its doors at the end of 2024 after 27 years of service. Opened in 1997, St Nicolas was FARA's first residential care facility and official programme. Alongside its sister home, St Gabriel's (1999–2019), 78 children were given a family, and the love generated through the programme continues to resonate and extend into the wider community, enriching many lives. Since St Nicolas and St Gabriel's opened, Romanian society has changed significantly. The development of foster care services has reduced the need for residential homes for children and switched the focus to community work. Though St Nicolas and St Gabriel's



have now closed, their legacy lives on in the lives they touched and the hope they brought to so many. These homes offered a true family environment where children were loved, cared for, educated, supported and encouraged to succeed in life.

The year was not without its challenges. In 2024, we continued to navigate economic pressures in the UK and Romania, and we're incredibly grateful for the tireless commitment and professionalism of our staff. On the UK side, our retail operations, comprising 40 shops in 26 neighbourhoods across London, remained a vital source of funding. Because of this, we have continued to invest time and effort into strengthening our retail arm and raising the profile of our shops as a core part of our wider strategy.

We continue to focus on the delivery of our three key strategic objectives from our 2024-2026 strategy.

**1 Programmes:** We will continue to fund work which delivers services of the highest quality to help the most vulnerable children, young people, adults and families in Romania, ensuring it is effective, professional and sustainable.

**2 Public engagement:** We will consolidate and grow the contributions from our retail operation to ensure its continued success and resilience,

while also looking to diversify our income base by increasing our public profile and community engagement.

**3 People:** We will cultivate a thriving and productive workforce supported by dedicated and professional governance, united under our shared values, vision and mission.

It's been a pleasure to continue working alongside our hardworking leadership team and Board of Trustees. And we remain hugely grateful to the generosity of the people who shop in and donate goods to our stores, donate financially, and raise funds for us – you enable us to fund the excellent programmes that make real change happen for many of Romania's most vulnerable people.



**Siobhan Cross,**  
Chair of the Board  
of Trustees,  
FARA Foundation



**Libby Gordon,**  
CEO, FARA Foundation

## >About FARA

The FARA Foundation (FARA UK) is a registered charity in the UK which was founded in 1991 to provide “relief of suffering of those children and adults in Romania who are living in poverty or are marginalised or who have disabilities”.

This is done in a number of ways, including funding community-based care to those living in poverty, with a focus on education for children, the provision of social support for children and adults with complex needs and disabilities (in day centres, outreach programmes and supported living accommodation), and through work that advocates for social and economic inclusion of disadvantaged children and adults.

To deliver on our charitable objectives, in 2024 FARA UK made grants to Fundația FARA, a non-profit, non-governmental organisation supporting Romania's poorest and most vulnerable children, young people and families. The funding relationship was formalised by a Grant letter and supported by a Memorandum of Understanding (Partnership Agreement). Although independent of each other, these two organisations worked to fulfil a shared vision, mission and values, and were governed by two separate boards with defined remits and responsibilities. Each board was responsible for implementing its strategic objectives and FARA UK closely monitored and evaluated Fundația FARA's work.

In 2024 FARA UK remitted funds to Fundația FARA every quarter based on an approved annual grant, providing 96% of the funds required by Fundația FARA to run the programmes. In 2024 the net funding granted amounted to £2,086,460



with the remaining 4% being raised in Romania. Fundația FARA also raised funds in country to provide additional services over and above the core services.

The work delivered under this grant enabled Fundația FARA to provide support for some of the most vulnerable social groups facing extreme poverty by addressing social inclusion and poverty reduction. Operating in two regions of Romania, it fulfils lives, builds futures and spreads hope. The work was life-changing for many families living in poverty and for children and adults with disabilities.

# ☒ Our Vision, Mission and Values



Our **Vision** is of a world in which everyone can live with freedom and dignity in a loving, protective environment, experiencing fulfilled lives whatever their ability.

Our **Mission** is to transform the lives of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children, young people, adults and families living in Romania's poorest communities.

Our **Values** underpin all the work and are shared by all those involved in carrying out our mission both in the UK and Romania. FARA strives to build a just society serving the common good, based on Christian values of love, justice, dignity and respect, welcoming people of all faiths and none.

- We act with kindness and compassion.
- We respect the human dignity of every person.
- We believe in practical hands-on care.
- We strive to build a just society.
- We responsibly collaborate across all sections of society.
- We strive to be a best-practice organisation.

## ☒ FARA on the UK high street

After opening its first shop on Fulham Road in 1992, FARA UK – through its wholly owned trading subsidiary FARA Enterprises Limited (trading as FARA Charity Shops) – ran 40 retail charity shops in London in 2024, which provided the income to fund projects and programmes in Romania.



These shops were located within 26 London communities and, across all these, we sold a wide range of value, designer, stylish, unique and interesting items. We had 22 general stores, 14 children's stores, two bookstores, a homeware store and a vintage store. In addition, we sold goods online.

While the main aim of the shops has always been to raise money to support the work in Romania, they also supported what has become a growing agenda around sustainability and aimed to be a positive presence in the communities where they were located.

## ☒ Children and people with disabilities in Romania today

Romania is home to nearly four million children but, unfortunately, many of them are still struggling with poverty, inadequate education and a lack of medical services.



Although the economy is growing, the country still faces various challenges and many people find it hard to make ends meet. Despite gains, Romania continues to have some of the highest absolute and relative poverty rates in the EU, with

approximately one-third of its population at risk of poverty or social exclusion.<sup>2</sup> Romania continues to have one of the highest rates of children at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the EU, at 33.8%.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> World Bank 2024, <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099706001062584691/pdf/IDU-7899d5b3-4631-4429-9d13-4a4238bc88a0.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Eurostat, 2024, [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Children\\_at\\_risk\\_of\\_poverty\\_or\\_social\\_exclusion](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Children_at_risk_of_poverty_or_social_exclusion)

## Despite some progress, Romania still has a long way to go in terms of providing support to vulnerable social groups.

Families living in poverty often lack the necessary support, leaving children at risk of dropping out of school or being placed in social service provision.

In Romania 75.7% of children aged over three are in early childhood education, which is well below the EU average of 94.6%.<sup>4</sup> More than 300,000 children do not complete compulsory education, and nearly 50% do not have basic literacy and numeracy skills at the age of 15.<sup>5</sup> Leaving school early can also lead to unemployment, social exclusion and poverty. Romania has the highest rate of early school leavers within the EU, with this figure sitting at 16.8% compared to an average of 9.3%.<sup>6</sup> The level of basic skills among young Romanians is low, with consequences for competitiveness, employment and innovation potential in the country. It has shown downward trends in school enrolments at 83.5% for lower secondary education and 79.8% for upper secondary education.<sup>7</sup>

Children with disabilities are unable to access vital life-changing therapies and education, and adults with learning disabilities also remain in institutional care. All this further exacerbates the cycle of poverty. People with disabilities are more likely to experience poverty or social exclusion. In Romania, there are more than 84,000 children registered with disabilities<sup>8</sup>, but this number is believed to be an underestimate as many individuals remain unseen.

Additionally, there are reportedly over 16,000 adults with disabilities living in social care residential centres under the social protection system.<sup>9</sup> The disability employment gap sits at 44.8% – the highest in the EU, significantly higher than the EU average of 24%.<sup>10</sup> Romanians with disabilities are often socially isolated and less materially well-off, encounter barriers in accessing their physical environment, and face exclusion from employment opportunities and the health system.<sup>11</sup>

4 Eurostat 2023, [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Early\\_childhood\\_education\\_statistics](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Early_childhood_education_statistics)  
 5 UNICEF 2021, <https://www.unicef.org/romania/stories/romania-doesnt-have-any-excuse-not-act-now-fight-child-poverty-and-social-exclusion>  
 6 Eurostat 2023, [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Early\\_leavers\\_from\\_education\\_and\\_training](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Early_leavers_from_education_and_training)  
 7 UNICEF Romania, Annual Report 2024, <https://open.unicef.org/download-pdf?country-name=Romania&year=2024>  
 8 UNICEF Romania, Annual Report 2024, <https://open.unicef.org/download-pdf?country-name=Romania&year=2024>  
 9 Eurostat 2024, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/romania/brief/disability-inclusive-social-protection-in-romania>  
 10 Eurostat 2024, [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/hlth\\_dlm200/default/table?lang=en&category=dsb.ds\\_b\\_lab](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/hlth_dlm200/default/table?lang=en&category=dsb.ds_b_lab)  
 11 Disability:IN 2024, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/romania/brief/disability-inclusive-social-protection-in-romania>

## ☒ The work we fund in Romania

Fundația FARA, whose programmes were funded by FARA UK during 2024, is an experienced care provider in Romania. Supporting vulnerable children with and without disabilities, young people, adults with disabilities, and their families, is FARA's core mission.



☒ Over 2024, Fundația FARA served more than 1,800 beneficiaries and demonstrated strong programmatic achievements, exceeding targets and expanding services.

Throughout 2024 FARA UK granted Fundația FARA £2.08 million to fund the core programmes that it delivered in Romania.

The core programmes funded by the FARA UK grant are as follows:

- **Therapy and Rehabilitation:** Supporting children with disabilities and their parents

in the therapeutic process. Helping professionals to work better with these children and support their social inclusion.

- **Homes for Life and Outreach:** Providing safe accommodation in a family-type environment, psychosocial assistance, non-formal education, and socialisation for adults with disabilities, and working in the community supporting people with disabilities and their families.

- **Tackling Poverty Through Education:** Providing educational support, non-formal learning opportunities, psychosocial and material support, and social inclusion activities for disadvantaged and/or marginalised children, their family members and other professionals.

- **Educational Bursaries:** Offering financial assistance and other support to help teenagers with educational performance and achievement.

- **A family for those without:** Providing residence, psychosocial assistance, non-formal education and socialisation in a family-type home, St. Nicolas, in Suceava, for children and young people from the protection system, lacking parental and family support and care.

- **Solidarity with Ukrainian refugees:** This work was started in 2022 to provide accommodation, essential material support and psychological assistance to Ukrainian refugee families.

**Looking to 2025, FARA UK will continue to fund Fundația FARA's work**, which will have a focus on strengthening all core areas of their operations. Alongside this they are aiming to diversify and increase external partnerships, increase beneficiary participation (which will be a distinct component of every programme) and continue to advocate for vulnerable populations.



# ☒ Therapy and Rehabilitation

Fundația FARA provided free access to a range of therapies for more than 250 children with disabilities from low-income families, and/or families affected by poverty, at their three centres: Rafael in Bucharest; Emmanuel in Suceava; and St Teresa's in Fălticeni, Suceava County.

The therapies include speech and psychological treatment, physiotherapy and creative therapies (such as art therapy, sensory, animal-assisted therapy, hydrotherapy). The work aims to help the children overcome the barriers of their disability, facilitate inclusion in mainstream education, and improve their functionality at home, school and in their community.

More than 18,000 therapy sessions were carried out across these centres, together with piloting respite camps – a new initiative launched in 2024.

The CAMP Connect programme featured three respite camps organised for 30 children and 29 parents. Participants were given the opportunity to learn, interact with peers, volunteers and professionals, rest and have fun in a family-type environment outside of their homes, surrounded by breathtaking nature. Piloting these camps showed that innovation in therapy is needed to expose children and parents to formal and informal social interactions that have a lasting impact and increase their feelings of belonging to a supportive community.

This programme also focused on helping parents to continue therapy at home, with activities involving family members and professionals to enhance their understanding of children's

disabilities, their pace of development, and pathways for rehabilitation. Parents are hugely appreciative of the help they receive from the programme, as their feedback indicates:

 Since coming to this centre, there have been significant changes; he started to walk, to talk. He only said 'mama-dada' and then he started to say other words and form sentences, but only recently. Now we go to kindergarten. He is very loving, happy to come to the centre; sometimes he cries for reasons known only to him, but I know he is always happy to come here.

He is now working on motor skills, attention, and patience. He is much more receptive; he accepts staying in one place longer; he is more compliant with tasks. There's been progress in this regard. He is cheerful in the morning when I bring him here.

## ☒ Homes for Life and Outreach

This programme has two components: residential and community outreach. It is implemented in Suceava County in two communities, at St Mary's Home in Vadu Moldovei and at Casa Elizabeta in Cacica, and in Popeşti-Leordeni, Bucharest.



- **Residential:** The aim of this is to create a loving and supportive family life for 19 adults with disabilities who have a history of institutionalisation, are permanently deprived of family care and have a disability requiring support over their lifetimes. It provides ongoing support for the individuals living in these homes, including specialised healthcare, psychological counselling and emotional support, and creative and leisure activities.

- **Community:** This work aims to reduce barriers and foster social inclusion for 63 adults with disabilities who live with their families in Vadu Moldovei and Cacica, through social interactions, non-formal education and community awareness. This support included holding sessions on independent living, occupational therapy and providing food and other items to support daily life.

At the core of these services is providing ongoing quality and individual support tailored to specific needs of adults with disabilities to help them develop their autonomy and the ability to responsibly build an independent life in more inclusive communities.

For more than 13 years, Fundația FARA has been actively involved in the recovery and deinstitutionalisation of adults with disabilities. Efforts have focused on developing tailored support services, providing welcoming homes for those without families, and strengthening caregivers. A significant aspect of their work has been advocating for the rights of people with disabilities, promoting their participation in society and their ability to live active, independent lives. Through their approach to working with individuals with disabilities, they have gained valuable insights into their needs and potential. They have used these experiences to create a model of best practice in the community, particularly through close collaboration with local authorities. This programme has a significant impact on the lives of people with disabilities.

A key part of this work and programme is introducing these adults to a variety of creative activities, such as drawing and colouring, and group discussions to encourage self-expression. After a Therapy in Nature session, one person said: *"I painted something beautiful in nature. It was like I was Picasso. I liked it."*

Two exhibitions took place involving 19 adults with disabilities who exhibited their hand-made crafts to demonstrate their special talents. The events were well attended by the community, helping to break down barriers and build an understanding about disability.

One of the specialists working at St Mary's said:

 **We offer trust, love, harmony, balance, emotional support, safety; we form a true family together with them... we give them confidence and courage.**

Reflecting on the programme, a local priest in Vadu Moldovei commented:

*"I know well and closely the work the ladies from FARA do. I have the highest appreciation. I also know the beneficiaries. They are loved, well taken care of, and lack nothing. You can see they are content. They are not discouraged or frightened. Everyone is around them to help and teach them what is good. I often go to their home. When it's their house's feast day or on other occasions."*

*"The atmosphere is family-like, warm, pleasant. The young people also come to church, and everyone loves them. We keep an eye on them to see them. If they don't show up, we ask what happened. We care about them."*

*"The work of the FARA ladies has had a special impact in our community. Seeing how beautiful their activity is, more women have been inspired; they have grown fond of children without families and have become foster parents. We now have children in about 15 families. We see them regularly. They are well taken care of and happy. These women say that they never thought about becoming foster parents and helping abandoned children and those with health issues if FARA had not offered such a beautiful example of dedication."*

## ☒ Tackling Poverty Through Education

This community-based programme is delivered in Baia and Preuteşti, two communes in Suceava County, and in Popeşti-Leordeni, Bucharest. It aims to prevent school drop-out, combat poverty, promote social inclusion and integration, and support growth through education, community involvement and access to opportunities.



The programme contributes to implementing national and international policies, strategies and legislation regarding poverty reduction, promoting social inclusion, promoting and respecting the rights of children and young people, including those with disabilities, and

building sustainable communities. It aims to improve wellbeing, help vulnerable individuals thrive, facilitate access to education and employment, improve quality of care, strengthen community-based services and amplify beneficiaries' voices in decisions relating to their lives.

During 2024 in Suceava, 100 kindergarten and 200 primary school children were supported through the after-school programme, which provided more than 36,000 hot meals and more than 3,500 hours of support with homework. More than 450 educational packages were provided and there was a 100% graduation rate for primary school students.

**More than 2,000 packages of food and non-food items were distributed in the community, while more than 120 families received gardening articles and household tools.**

Within the wider community, Fundația FARA also provided support for families struggling with poverty. This included provision of more than 2,000 packages of food and non-food items, while more than 120 families received gardening articles and household tools. Approximately 150 educational kits were distributed to families. More than 140 people received medical help in the form of tests, consultations, and dental and eye care. Twenty sessions were run over the year on topics related to health, communication, nutrition, financial education, relationships, first aid, friendship, bullying, solidarity and empathy.

Fundația FARA's corporate partner Lenovo has continued to support the programme, with their STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) educational room being used by 335 unique beneficiaries.

One of the parents had this to say: *"I am very satisfied because my daughter does her homework and because she is happy."*

*She enjoys having more time. She doesn't feel tired because she falls asleep by 8pm. She is happy to do her homework and is learning to speak correctly, to interact with other children. I am very satisfied, may God keep this programme going as long as possible, even until the 8th grade if possible. My daughter doesn't cry about not going to school, but if she misses two days of FARA, she cries. She even gets out of bed when sick to come to FARA."*



*My son was with Ms. M.B. and I am very satisfied because he gets help with his homework. He gets very good things from FARA. He learns well. If he had to bring his homework home, we wouldn't manage to help him. We don't know how to assist. The homework they get is very different. We don't understand any of it. Ms. M.B. is great; she's warm, stays with them, explains correctly, and has patience and a good heart.*

Parent

The Popești-Leordeni programme provided daily support for 14 people with disabilities at the day centre. Activities included group therapy, individual counselling and guidance, creative activities and recreational activities. Approximately 2,400 support packages of food and non-food items were distributed to families, who also had access to individual counselling and group discussions to help them overcome crisis and difficult situations.

## ☒ Educational Bursaries

Following its successful launch in 2023, the Fundația FARA Educational Bursaries programme expanded in 2024 to support 56 recipients, 30 funded by FARA UK. These were awarded to high-achieving students from disadvantaged backgrounds to support their continued education. This programme is more than just financial support. It consists of counselling, guidance, mentoring, emotional support for national exams and admission to university, support for participation in national competitions and contests, advice at the exit of the protection system and access to personal development opportunities in addition to financial aid. This enables the recipients to maximise their chances for increased academic performance and achievement of career plans.

 I appreciate this wonderful programme because it helped me financially when I needed it most to overcome barriers and provided me with learning opportunities that helped me accumulate knowledge and develop new skills faster than I could imagine.

Bursary Student



 Nobody has helped me so far, not emotionally, not morally, not financially. I believe that this programme is my chance to go beyond my limits and find ways to use my full potential through learning and education.

Bursary Student

## ☒ A family for those without: St Nicolas

After 27 years of activity, Fundația FARA's St Nicolas home for children closed its doors at the end of 2024. Opened in 1997, St Nicolas was Fundația FARA's first residential care facility and official programme.



Alongside its sister home, St Gabriel's (1999 to 2019), St Nicolas marked the beginning of Fundația FARA as we know it today. The creation of St Nicolas and, subsequently, St Gabriel's, allowed Fundația FARA to help more children than ever before by providing an independent, nurturing, loving home that was desperately needed by its beneficiaries.

Since St Nicolas and St Gabriel's opened, Romanian society has changed significantly. The development of foster care services has reduced the need for residential homes for children and switched the focus to community work.

St Gabriel's had 36 beneficiaries before it closed and, over its lifetime, St Nicolas has been home to 42 children at different



times. The homes offered a true family environment where children were loved, cared for, educated, supported and encouraged to succeed in life. The children who lived at St Nicolas came from diverse and often traumatic backgrounds, including those abandoned, without families, and others removed from their parents' care. As a result of investments in this programme and professional interventions, many children were reunited with their families, making room to support others in need.

Many beneficiaries grew out of full-time care and went on to pursue higher education, enter the workforce, and live happy, independent lives. Plenty now have their own families and keep in touch with the Fundația FARA staff who helped raise them.

 For the young adults who have left the programme, it's like coming home to their families. They come and see us and visit us. I would share a wonderful success story of a child at St Gabriel's who was reunited with his mother 20 years ago when he was about 12. I feel his gratitude and respect when he calls me to share his achievements, happiness and feelings about his experience in our care, or ask for advice, as we're still in contact at least once a month. And this is common because they feel that [FARA] family is where they found love and support and they knew that people cared about them.

**Regina Bulai, Associate Director of Fundația FARA**

The goal of St Nicolas was always, first and foremost, to provide care, love and a family to those without. The Fundația FARA team who ran the home treated the children as their own each day, not as a technical job, showing their extraordinary dedication.

We thank Fundația FARA's incredible staff for their tireless devotion and commitment to the children in their care.

## ☒ Support for Ukrainian Refugees

Following the outbreak of war in Ukraine in February 2022, Fundația FARA created the Solidarity Team for Ukraine providing essential material support and psychological assistance to the Ukrainian refugees, children and families.



This work continued in 2024, although it is winding down and scheduled to close in 2025. Fundația FARA helped a total of 60 people (24 adults and 36 children) over the course of the year. Half of these people were supported in the community in Suceava. The others were supported with accommodation. Services included Romanian language lessons, educational activities, recreation, social activities and childcare support.

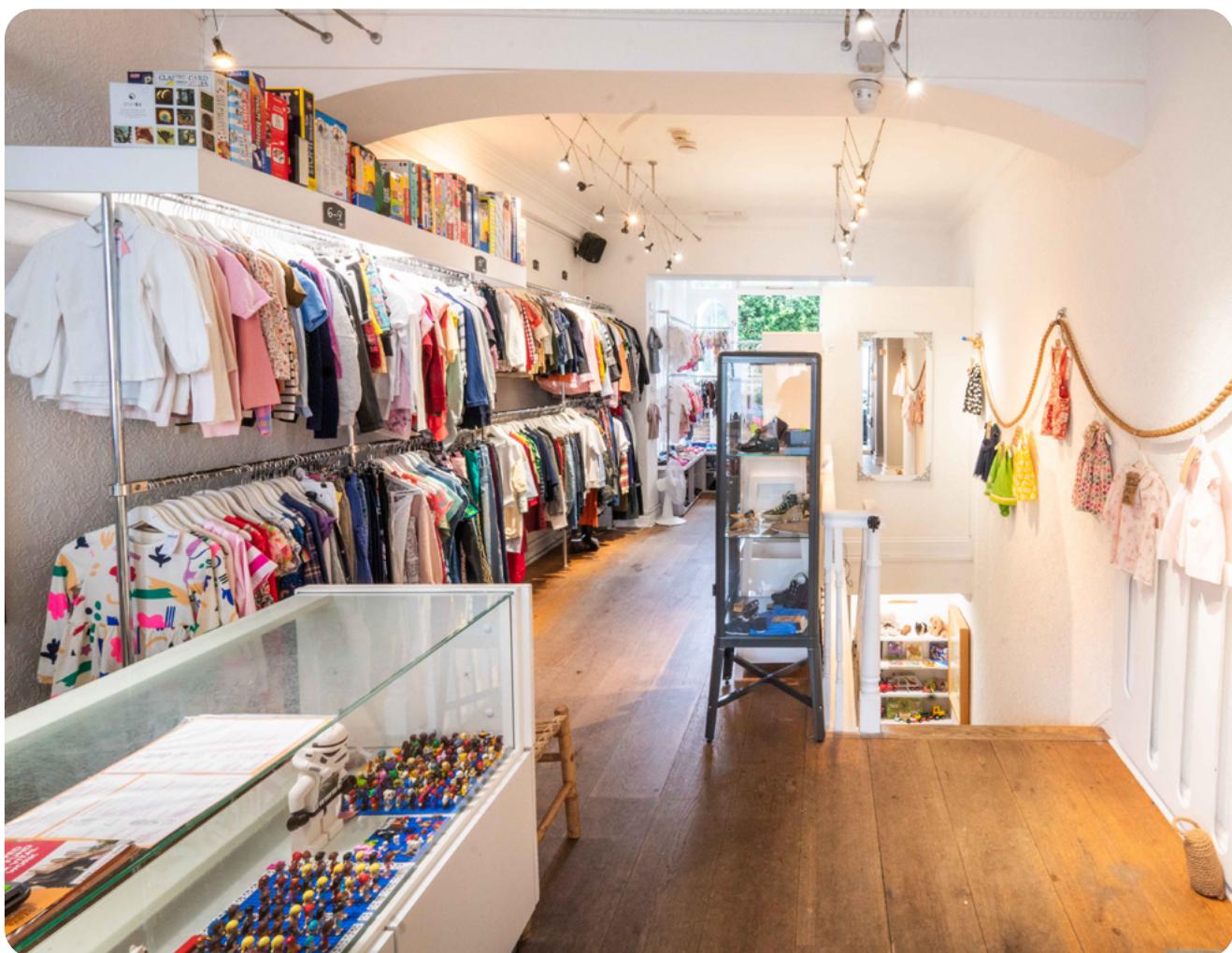
One refugee we supported said:

 **Thanks to FARA we managed to bring peace to our souls. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts for every moment of peace.**

**Ukrainian Refugee**

## ☒ FARA in the UK

During 2024, we began to implement FARA UK's 2024-2026 strategy which focused on three key areas.



- **Programmes:** We will continue to fund work that delivers' services of the highest quality to help the most vulnerable children, young people, adults and families in Romania, ensuring it is effective, professional and sustainable.

- **Public engagement:** We will consolidate and grow the contributions from our retail operation to ensure its continued success and resilience, while

- also looking to diversify our income base by increasing our public profile and community engagement.

- **People:** We will cultivate a thriving and productive workforce supported by dedicated and professional governance, united under shared values, vision and mission.

## ☒ Retail operations

The total 2024 retail income (revenues from shops and online operations) was £11.9 million, and after deducting retail costs (£10.4 million), the total contribution to the charity is £1.56 million.

Although still a significant amount, this represents a substantial decrease from 2023. The decline was caused by a combination of reduced income from shops, lower recycling income, and increased direct operational costs (mainly staff costs).

With a challenging trading outlook for retail, the strategic focus and investments during 2024 were directed at strengthening the existing shop portfolio. To maintain FARA's competitive edge and counter rising staff costs, the retail strategy emphasised five key steps to support the development of inclusive teams of staff and volunteers in each shop: Space Organisation, Ground Rules, Staff Training, Volunteering, and Community Engagement. A series of operational improvements, including a new till system, were implemented throughout the year to enhance efficiency, control costs, and foster creativity in order to achieve the ultimate goal of increasing the retail contribution.

Non-shop trading operations continued, with online sales shifting the focus away from clothing and accessories to books, art and collectables. The development of relationships with auction houses aims to maximise artwork sales, while closer collaboration with FARA's book shops seeks higher book revenue through volume sales. Work to establish and test new stock-in channels was undertaken in 2024, including the introduction of free postal donations,

a warehouse donation hub, and the development of corporate partnerships.

The fragility of outbound channels for unsaleable stock was revealed, with prices for recycled textiles dropping over 50% and more waste donated to FARA. Initiatives have been introduced, and further development is needed to limit waste intake and reduce reliance on a single recycling merchant. In addition, partnerships are being explored around re-using and repairing non-sellable items as part of the drive to reduce waste output from FARA's business operations.



A sustainability policy is being introduced in 2025 focusing on reductions in waste textiles, hard waste and consumables and energy consumption.

We once again collaborated with London College of Fashion to deliver an event 'Sustainability in our Jeans' in February 2024. Students took deadstock and transformed it into creative and innovative outfits.

Marketing and communications efforts in 2024 focused on building capacity and capability internally and externally to deliver on the twin strategic aims of promoting our retail network and planning to launch a programme to diversify income generation through other fundraising activities in 2025.

An audience insight project was completed to better understand the audiences who support us. It was wonderful to see that people described FARA as warm, welcoming and part of their community, with many saying our shops are their favourite places to browse for quality, affordable items. It also showed us that donors who support us via our shops network were interested in learning more about our work in Romania and supporting us beyond retail.

 I like to explore charities to find good things at reasonable price. I bought very nice clothes and I saw the receipt at the back. It says about donating to Romania and that really touched me - I say of wow, they money go to actually my country.

Romanian FARA customer

We also worked to put in place systems and processes to increase efficiency to support us in becoming a truly supporter-centric organisation.

We have prioritised Instagram as a key social platform for our retail audience and seen follower growth of 36% between May and December 2024, along with a healthy increase in engagement. In addition, we are supporting our stores in building up their social media accounts and working to grow our community engagement activity through a series of events to promote our shops.

The FARA workforce includes about 300 paid staff, with 180 full-time employees, plus volunteers and Trustees. 2024 brought notable changes, such as launching a self-service HR app for holiday bookings, a staff shift-booking system for the shop team, and ongoing staff development. The HR team implemented policies and provided support, including wellbeing and financial advice and continued to focus on recruitment, employee relations, absence management, and technology support.

Communication with staff is maintained via newsletters, emails, the intranet, meetings, and engagement with senior management. Shops are regularly visited by Area Managers, with periodic visits from Executive Leadership and Trustees. An annual appraisal reviews staff development, career goals, and skills. The Training Academy at Islington offers training sessions and e-learning to support growth. The key staff wellbeing initiative continues to be the Enhanced Company Sick Pay scheme and the provision of an employee assistance programme.

# ☒ Structure, governance and management

FARA UK is governed by a Board of Trustees, who are legally responsible for directing the affairs of the charity. The Trustees have full legal responsibility for the actions of the organisation. The Board of Trustees meets at least three times a year to review and direct strategy, budget and performance.

FARA UK has three Board Subcommittees, which aim to ensure that FARA and all its subsidiary entities in the UK are properly governed and that the funds remitted to Fundația FARA are spent appropriately. Each Subcommittee has a specific remit.

- **Services Subcommittee:** responsible for HR governance, strategy and oversight of services delivered in Romania. (Chair: Lucinda Dawson)
- **Trading Subcommittee:** responsible for charity retail matters and marketing and communications. (Chair: Hannah Middleton)
- **Finance & Risk Subcommittee:** responsible for all finance and risk matters. (Chair: Robert Davidson)
  - Within this there's an Investment Committee that reviews the investment portfolio (Chair during 2024: Natalia Nowak)

In addition, there's a **Remuneration Committee** that meets annually and is responsible for reviewing the annual increases for all staff and overall pay principles and providing recommendations to the Board.

FARA UK was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee, as defined by the Companies Act 2006, on 8 November

2010, and is governed by its Articles of Association. The Articles of Association were updated in March 2024 to ensure they are appropriate and fit for purpose.

During the year, the charity had two wholly owned subsidiaries.

FARA Enterprise Limited (FEL) operates a retail charity business that in 2024 donated all its profits to Fundația FARA. This comprised 40 high street stores: 22 general stores, 14 children's stores, two bookstores, a homeware store and a vintage store. In addition, it had an online store. Four members of the Board of Trustees sat on the board of FARA Enterprises Limited along with the Chief Executive Officer and Chief Operating Officer / Company Secretary of FARA.

FARA Properties Limited (FPL) was a property holding company. It disposed of all its property holdings during 2023 and was dissolved on 26 November 2024.



## Appointment of Trustees

The appointment of Trustees is outlined in the Articles of Association and follows the advice of the Charity Commission. The Articles of Association were updated in March 2024 to support and simplify the process around the appointment, retirement and removal of Trustees and to bring it into line with the Charities Act 2011.

## Public benefit

The FARA UK Trustees confirm that they meet the Charities Act 2011 public benefit requirement. FARA fulfilled this by grant funding to Fundația FARA for the relief of poverty, the improvement of the lives of people with disabilities, and its programme to tackle poverty through the education of school-aged children. The programmes and work are outlined in the first part of this report.

## Executive Leadership

Libby Gordon has continued as Chief Executive of the FARA Foundation and she, along with the executive leadership

team, has responsibility for running the charity and trading arm in accordance with the strategy set by the Board. The organisation's director roles include Chief Operating Officer, Trading Director, Marketing and Communications Director, Development and External Engagement Director, and Human Resources Director all working collectively to lead the organisation.

## Equal Opportunities Policy

FARA UK does not discriminate on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnicity or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

## Remuneration Policy

Our approach to remuneration is designed to ensure that we attract and retain staff and maintain affordability. Pay principles and banding are in place to ensure fairness and consistency. The Remuneration Committee oversees this area on behalf of the Board.

# ☒ FARA UK finances

2024 was a difficult year for trading following the post-COVID surge in sales that took place in 2022 and 2023.

FARA Enterprises Limited (retail shops and online operations) generated a surplus of £1,699,341, which it was able to covenant to FARA UK during 2024. After accounting adjustments, the retail contribution for the year amounted to £1,560,720.

FARA UK Trading Operations continues to generate almost 96% of FARA UK's annual income, and the remaining 4% comes from generous regular UK givers and investment returns.

During 2024, income received from listed investments and bank deposit accounts amounted to £437,208 (2023: £287,376), reflecting an improvement in dividend yields and interest rates. At the same time, the unrealised gains made on investments amounted to £154,664 (2023: £183,842). Income generated outside of the shops will continue to be developed in 2025 as part of the priorities outlined in the three-year 2024-2026 strategy.

## Reserves

FARA UK remains in a strong financial position, with over £11.62 million in reserves. These were drawn on to a minor extent for grant funding in 2024 and will again be drawn on in 2025 and 2026 to maintain our grant levels in line with our current strategy. Our detailed reserve position can be viewed in our full accounts.

## Our donors

We are enormously lucky to have a loyal cohort of individuals who continue to support us financially through regular donations – many who have been with us since the early years of FARA. We are also hugely grateful to those people who fundraise for us through events and other individual and team fundraising initiatives. We are also indebted to those who generously donate goods to our stores and to our thousands of loyal shop customers. We could not fund the work of the projects in Romania without this incredible support.

The financial information presented in the following pages of this report is a summary extracted from the full audited accounts. The full audited accounts, including the Auditor's Report, Trustees' Report, Directors' Report and Strategic Report were approved by the Board on 7 July 2025 and can be accessed via the Charity Commission website and Companies House.

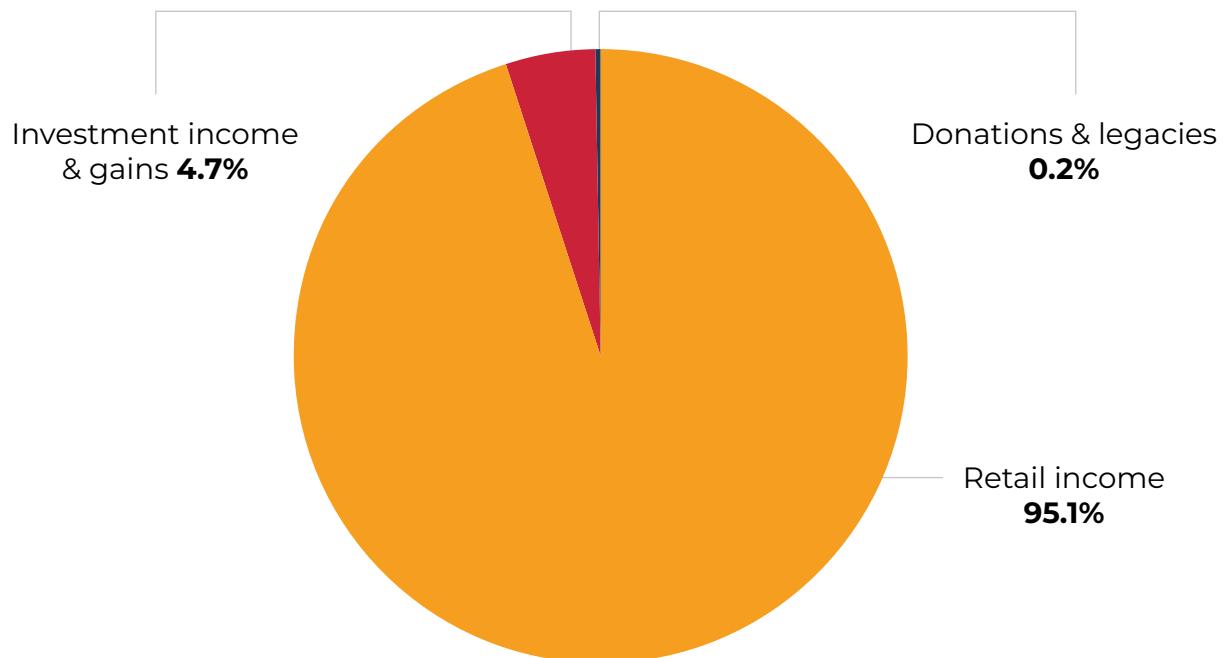
## FARA UK Statement of financial activities for year ended 31 December 2024

	2024 £'000 Total unrestricted funds	2023 £'000 Total unrestricted funds
<b>Income</b>		<b>£</b>
Donations & Legacies	28	24
Retail Income	11,993	12,364
Other Income	0	1
Investment Income	437	287
Investment Gains	155	184
<b>Total income</b>	<b>12,612</b>	<b>12,861</b>
 <b>Expenditure</b>		<b>£</b>
Retail Costs	10,432	9,499
Other Costs	15	19
Governance costs	193	311
Investment losses	30	-
Grant Funding	2,086	2,383
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>12,757</b>	<b>12,211</b>
 Net Movement in Funds for the year	(145)	650
Fund Balance brought forward	11,766	11,116
<b>Total Fund Balance carried forward</b>	<b>11,621</b>	<b>11,766</b>

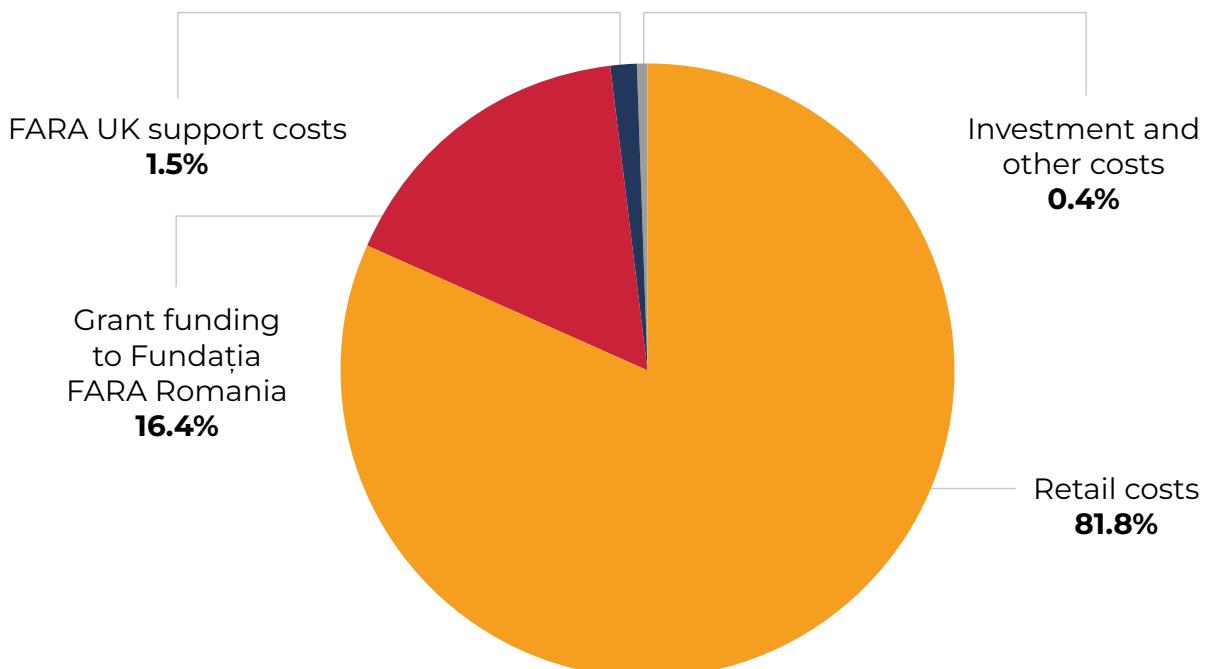
## FARA UK balance sheet as at 31 December 2024

	<b>2024</b> £'000	<b>2023</b> £'000
<b>Fixed assets</b>		£
Tangible assets	204	198
Investments	6,568	6,794
Long term debtors	8	44
<b>Current assets</b>	6,145	5,902
<b>Liabilities</b>		£
Short term	(424)	(483)
Long term	(879)	(689)
<b>Net assets</b>	<b>11,621</b>	<b>11,766</b>
<b>Funds</b>		
Designated funds	8,991	9,890
General funds	2,630	1,876
<b>Total Charity Funds</b>	<b>11,621</b>	<b>11,766</b>

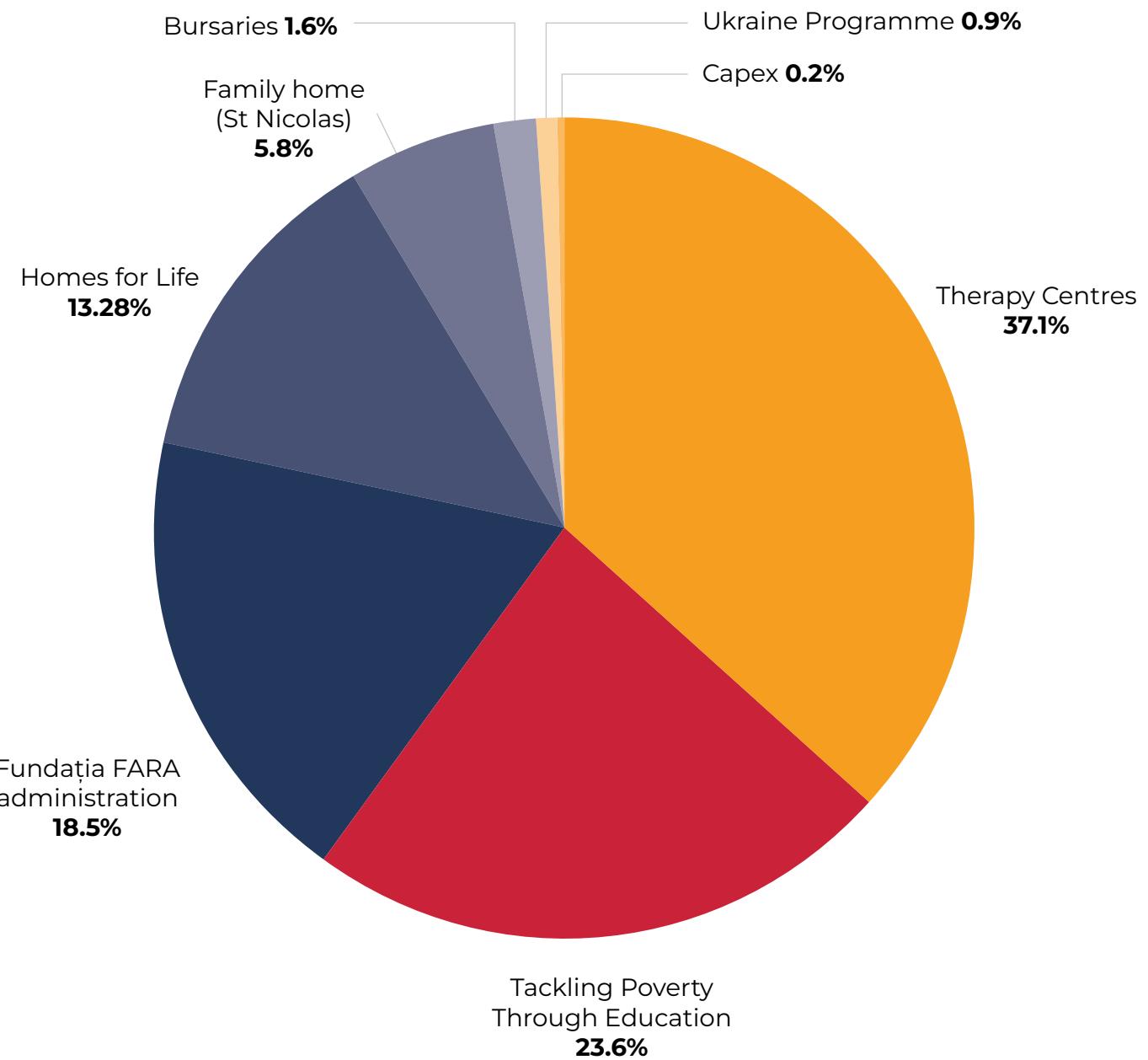
## FARA UK income 31 December 2024



## FARA UK expenditure 31 December 2024



## How the FARA UK grant was spent 31 December 2024



## Incorporation

**The charitable company was incorporated on 8 November 2010.**

## Reference and administrative details

### **Registered Company number**

07432706 (England and Wales)

### **Registered Charity number**

1139349

### **Registered office**

2nd Floor  
Suite 1  
8 Waldegrave Road  
Teddington  
England  
TW11 8GT

## Key Management Personnel

### **Trustees (Directors)**

Ms S G Cross (Chair)  
Mrs L J Dawson  
Mr R H C Chalk  
Mr P W Groves  
Mr R Davidson (Treasurer)  
Mrs N Nowak (resigned 31 December 2024)  
Ms E H A Middleton  
Mr R Lynas (appointed 25 March 2024)  
Dr Y S H Johnson (appointed 25 March 2024)  
Ms K Higgins (appointed 14 June 2024)

### **Company Secretary and Chief Operating Officer (COO)**

Mr R Phelan

### **Chief Executive Officer (CEO)**

Ms E Gordon

### **Administrator**

Ms J Sugden

### **Patron**

His Majesty King Charles III

## Our charity shops

<b>Balham</b> 27 Bedford Hill SW12 9EX	020 8675 7607
<b>Balham Kids</b> 15 Hildreth Street SW129RQ	020 8675 4137
<b>Barnes Kids</b> 25 High Street SW13 9LW	020 8878 5593
<b>Battersea</b> 254 Battersea Park Road SW11 3BP	020 7924 5575
<b>Belsize Park</b> 204 Haverstock Hill NW3 2AG	020 7435 0162
<b>Chiswick</b> 78 Turnham Green Terrace W4 1QN	020 8994 4724
<b>Chiswick Kids</b> 40 Turnham Green Terrace W4 1QP	020 8994 2287
<b>Clapham</b> 70 Chatham Road SW11 6HG	020 7978 4608
<b>Clapham Books For Kids</b> 74 Chatham Road SW11 6HG	020 3202 1059
<b>Clapham Kids</b> 144 Northcote Road, SW11 6RD	020 7223 2781
<b>Ealing Kids</b> 18 The Green W5 5DA	020 8579 1731
<b>Earlsfield</b> 551 Garratt Lane SW18 4SR	020 8947 8308
<b>Earlsfield Kids</b> 589 Garratt Lane SW18 4ST	020 8879 7279
<b>East Sheen</b> 407 Upper Richmond Rd West SW14 7NX	020 8487 5812
<b>Fulham Road</b> 674 Fulham Road SW6 5RX	020 7371 0141
<b>Fulham Kids</b> 614 Fulham Road SW6 5RP	020 7610 6752
<b>Fulham (New Kings Road)</b> 297 New Kings Road SW6 4RE	020 7736 2833
<b>Fulham (North End Road)</b> 341 North End Road SW6 1NN	020 7385 4949
<b>Greenford</b> 8 The Broadway UB6 9PR	020 8813 0819
<b>Islington</b> 28-32 Pentonville ROAD N1 9HJ	020 7713 0931
<b>Kensington</b> 26 Gloucester Road SW7 4RB	020 7581 8219
<b>New Malden</b> 162 High Street KT3 4ES	020 8336 1129
<b>Notting Hill</b> 10 Elgin Crescent W11 2HX	020 7243 6381
<b>Notting Hill Kids</b> 39 Ledbury Road W11 2AA	020 7229 3634
<b>Pimlico</b> 13a Warwick Way SW1V 1QT	020 7630 1774
<b>Pimlico Kids</b> 40 Tachbrook Street SW1V 2JS	020 7630 7730
<b>Primrose Hill Kids</b> 83 Regents Park Road NW1 8UY	020 7483 3827
<b>Retromania London</b> 6 Upper Tachbrook St. SW1V 1SH	020 7630 7406
<b>Richmond Bridge</b> 420 Richmond Road TW1 2EB	020 8892 9923
<b>Richmond Bridge Kids</b> 416 Richmond Road TW1 2EB	020 8892 7890
<b>Streatham</b> 100 Streatham High Road SW16 1BS	020 8677 0985
<b>Shepherds Bush</b> 84 Uxbridge Road W12 8LR	020 8743 7799
<b>Southfields</b> 261 Wimbledon Park Rd SW19 6NW	020 8785 0505
<b>Southfields Kids</b> 273 Wimbledon Park Rd SW19 6NW	020 8789 1656
<b>Surbiton Kids</b> 25 Victoria Road KT6 4JZ	020 8399 9643
<b>Teddington</b> 34 Broad Street TW11 8RF	020 8943 0876
<b>Teddington Kids</b> 106-108 High Street TW11 8JD	020 8977 4025
<b>Fara Books (Teddington)</b> 34d Broad Street TW11 8RF	020 8977 6475
<b>Fara Homeware (Whitton)</b> 96 High Street TW2 7LN	020 8898 9435

To shop with us online please visit [shop.faracharity.org](http://shop.faracharity.org)



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