



COMMUNITY  
INTEREST  
COMPANIES

A N N U A L

# REPORT

Regulator of

**Community  
Interest  
Companies**

2019 | 2020

# OGL

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# Regulator of Community Interest Companies

## Annual Report 2019 - 2020

Presented to Parliament pursuant to schedule 3, section 7 of the Companies (Audit, Investigations and Community Enterprise) Act 2004. The Office of the Regulator of Community Interest Companies (CICs) is part of the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy.

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# MISSION STATEMENT

## MISSION

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To ensure effective regulation and provision of information to support the growth of community interest companies in the UK.

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## OBJECTIVES

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To build public confidence in CICs through effective impartial regulation and provision of information.

To develop strong links with key organisations to ensure an integrated approach to regulation.

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## VISION

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That community interest companies are recognised and trusted by society for serving our communities with integrity and excellence.

# Foreword

by Ceri Witchard  
Regulator of Community  
Interest Companies



Welcome to the 2019-20 Annual Report of the Office of the Regulator of Community Interest Companies (CICs).

This is my last annual report as the Regulator of Community Interest Companies. At the time of my appointment the CIC model had been in place for 10 years. This year the CIC model, and indeed some CICs, turned 15 years old. As well as celebrating the longevity of CICs over this period, at the end of this year we also exceeded 18,900 CICs on the public register – a fantastic achievement and testament to the ongoing growth of the CIC sector. Ahead of schedule, the office also achieved full cost recovery for its day to day running costs. This is an impressive accomplishment, demonstrating the sustainable model the regulation of CICs offers and reflecting the efforts made by my team to offer a high quality and highly efficient service.

At the start of my tenure I identified some key goals I wanted to achieve, primarily around increasing digitisation of our services and our communications. We have made great strides in this area. I am delighted to say that CICs can now be incorporated online and can carry out many transactions, such as filing accounts, digitally. These services are more convenient, efficient and cost effective than older, paper-based systems and are supporting the entire sector to adapt to an ever-changing world. During this time, we have also taken forward legislative changes and continually worked towards a light touch, but effective, level of Regulation. Indeed, in the last year, we have undertaken the first ever investigations using my Regulatory powers, resulting in a series of undertakings and actions to protect the integrity of the CIC sector.

Whilst this report covers the financial year ending March 2020, it would not be right to ignore the devastating impact that the Covid 19 virus has had across the UK this year. CICs are in a world that, especially now, is changing rapidly around them. However, CICs have always been adaptable and at the ‘front-line’ of change, meeting public need and adapting to that need as required - indeed proving the true value of the CIC model in delivering community benefits in difficult times. In light of the impact of Covid 19, this is a more streamlined report than previous years. I have chosen to focus on the key facts, and the CIC statistics over the last year are all incredibly positive, together with a few case studies from CICs working in key areas which now, more than ever, are providing vital benefit to communities across the length and breadth of the UK.

Of course, I have to credit my team for making all of this possible. They have always worked so effectively with the sector, individual CICs, Companies House, BEIS and many more. It’s going to be hard to leave, but I have no doubt that my successor will be a key figure in continuing the drive and momentum in social enterprise across the UK. The ongoing growth of the sector is hugely exciting, and will create many opportunities, and possibly some challenges, for my successor. My parting wish is that CICs continue to grow and thrive and that we have a Regulator taking over the reins to continue to advocate for the sector, raising its profile further, driving positive change and enabling lasting benefit via all the amazing CICs who continue to surpass all our expectations.

# Executive Summary



This has been a major year of achievement and progress for the Office of the Regulator of Community Interest Companies. The work and focus of the office is to ensure effective regulation and provision of information to support the growth of community interest companies in the UK.

For the first time ever, the office realised full cost recovery of Office running costs. This was achieved by realising a number of costs savings and achieving a further 7% cost recovery this year: of income against expenditure. This has been achieved through a combination of a rise in income generation due to a significant increase in CIC applications & annual reports and managing expenditure through more digital communications and less travelling. These have had no impact on the service we are able to provide customers. Against the backdrop of controlling costs, we also have a steadily growing register: the number of CICs on the register rose by 20% this year with the team approving 5,106 new community interest companies.

We continue to refine and improve our digital communications. We have a very active Twitter account – with almost 2,300 subscribers – which highlights CIC successes and shares best practice information across the sector.

Working closely with Companies House and HM Revenue & Customs we have delivered a series of webinars for the Office of the Regulator, as well as our first interactive advice tool specifically for CICs. This explains many aspects of help and interest to CICs, as well as sharing information on the work of the Regulator and her office.

During the last year trading activity amongst CICs has been diverse: with CIC profitability comparable to private companies this has meant a busy but productive year for the Office of the Regulator. Our work has been stretched across a wide range of activities; including incorporation, regulation, complaints, communication & promotion, online filing work, policy discussions, meetings and events.

As a small team we work across-government and with other regulators to maximise CIC development and impact, whilst minimising cost to the public purse. This enables us to promote and benefit the CIC sector - helping CICs support and benefit the communities they serve.

# KEY FACTS



**5,106**

New CICs  
established



**107%**

Spend  
Recovered



**18%**

Increase in Cost  
Recovery



**12%**

Increase in Twitter  
Followers



**460,148**

No. Web Pages  
viewed



**20%**

Growth in Number  
of CICs



**18,904**

of CICs on public  
record



# Finance



The Regulator's office is supported by staff from the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) under BEIS terms and conditions. BEIS systems and controls are in place across the board. The fee to incorporate a community interest company or to file a community interest report was set at a rate comparable to company incorporations and the filing of foreign accounts.

The fees are payable to the Registrar of Companies on delivery of the documents relating to the listed events. Fifteen pounds of the fee is transferred to the consolidated fund to cover an element of the Regulator's costs.

The Regulator is committed to securing efficiencies and helping BEIS meet its requirements under the 2015 Spending Review and has continued to take measures to reduce our spend throughout the year.

The Regulator has also achieved her long-term goal of removing reliance on the public purse and, for the first time, achieved full cost recovery for her office.

The Regulator recovered 107% of costs against expenditures – greatly exceeding full cost recovery and well within the timescales previously envisaged. This is a huge achievement and the extra monies will be invested into the ongoing digital development and regulatory services to support the CIC sector.

The office has continued to ensure efficiencies throughout the year and with expenditure only increasing by 7% since the previous financial year. This is a considerable achievement given that savings have been realised in the face of significantly increased applications and workload and have not impacted on the level of service provided by the Regulator and the team.

The measures taken throughout 2019-20 include:

- Digital based communications to reduce travel costs and increase reach and effectiveness
- Closer working with Companies House regarding fees recovery
- Holding more meetings in the Regulator's office in Cardiff

PERIOD	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15
<b>a) EXPENDITURE</b>						
<b>31 March</b>	<b>253,000</b>	<b>235,000</b>	<b>231,000</b>	<b>234,000</b>	<b>267,000</b>	<b>290,000</b>
<b>b) INCOME</b>						
Formations and Conversions	5,106	3,215	2,844	2,812	2,727	2,569
CIC Reports	13,004	10,789	9,666	8,886	7,513	6,189
<b>31 March</b>	<b>271,000</b>	<b>210,000</b>	<b>187,000</b>	<b>174,000</b>	<b>153,000</b>	<b>131,000</b>
<b>c) PERCENTAGE OF INCOME AGAINST SPEND</b>						
<b>31 March</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>45</b>

# Online Accounts Filing for CICs

CIC Accounts:  
A new option



As part of the office's ongoing commitment to digitise services for community interest companies, we are now able to provide an online filing process for submitting certain types of CIC annual accounts.

This on-line filing service can be used by small companies which choose to file "full" accounts under S444 of the Companies Act 2006 (also known as small-"full" accounts).

## Criteria

From an accounts perspective the criteria to qualify as a 'small' CIC, for a given financial year, are:

- Turnover: not more than £10.2m
- Balance Sheet total: not more than £5.1m
- Average Number of Employees: not more than 50

If you are a CIC that meets the above criteria you can file online if you choose to file small-"full" accounts. CICs who currently file "abridged" accounts or "micro-entity" accounts are eligible to use the filing service but would need to file using the small-"full" format; as "micro-entity" and "abridged" accounts formats are not yet available to file online.

It is each company's choice as to what type of accounts they want to prepare and, legally, they are then required to file a copy of those accounts with the Registrar of Companies. It should be noted that a CIC cannot prepare accounts of one type and then file accounts of a different type.

## Benefits

The new service now makes it easier for CICs to file a simplified version of their accounts, annual report and payment efficiently: saving both time and money.

The service:

- significantly reduces filing times
- helps to avoid late-filing penalties
- offers online convenience
- provides 24-hour availability

The new system also:

- confirms receipt of the documents
- enables the Companies House Registrar to process and place the documents on the public register far more quickly than paper documents
- provides immediate notification that your accounts have been received.

## Filing

CICs can of course continue to file hardcopies of their annual report, accounts and send payment (all together) but, as this takes time and CICs are disproportionately affected by late filing penalties, online filing will help address such issues as it provides a much faster and accessible filing option.

A link to the new online account filing for CICs is on the homepage of our website: [www.gov.uk/cic-regulator](http://www.gov.uk/cic-regulator) and there is also a step by step webinar to aid submissions.

# Applications and Growth



The CIC brand is continuing to grow beyond all expectations. When Community Interest Companies were originally established in 2005, it was anticipated that around 200 CICs would be added to the company register annually, we are now receiving almost double of that in applications and are adding more than that amount to the register every month!

We have registered 5,106 CICs this year with February 2020 recording the largest number of approvals at 513.

There are almost 19,000 CICs (as of 31st March 2020) delivering real and tangible benefit to communities throughout the UK and engaged in every sector of the community including, health, social care, transport and the environment. Many of our CICs operate with a couple of directors, others are multi-million-pound organisations delivering benefits both in the UK and overseas.

The Regulator's office is always seeking ways to improve the examination process in order to speed up the application process. Throughout the year, we continued to work closely with Companies House to refine the CIC online incorporation service for CIC customers, making tweaks to the system so that the online application process is easier than ever to use. We have seen that the service is now the default option for CIC customers, with over 75% of applications submitted online. This has not only enabled customers to have a quicker turn around on their applications, but also saves the customer both time and money and is more environmentally friendly.

The next aim for the office to secure online provision for converting limited companies to community interest companies. At present, we are only able to offer to a paper service for this function, however, the Regulator and her office are continually engaging with Companies House to design a reputable system to enable companies to easily convert to a CIC online, which will also deliver a faster return on applications, alongside continuing our efforts to provide the CIC community with a fully digital service.

Co-operatives, social firms, charities, ordinary companies and LLPs have also adopted or converted to the CIC model. It is increasingly the legal form of choice by social enterprises but we accept not all may be viewed as social enterprises by traditionalists. What unites them all is the common purpose of delivering community benefit and agreeing to regulation to ensure they do this without the tax and associated benefits enjoyed by charities.

The CIC brand is a broad church which is rapidly changing the social enterprise landscape.

## Number of CICs approved on the Public Register each month

April 19	425
May 19	432
June 19	446
July 19	445
August 19	400
September 19	391
October 19	452
November 19	399
December 19	344
January 20	433
February 20	513
March 20	426
<b>Total</b>	<b>5106</b>

# CIC CASE STUDIES



# Ultimate Counselling Training and Support Services CIC (UCTS)

Company Number: 09176137

Incorporated: 14 August 2014



Ultimate Counselling, Training, and Support Services (UCTS) was established in 2014 to address mental health in the BAME community living in London and the UK. UCTS is based in Barking and Dagenham, and is the first point of contact for mental health for Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities. It offers inclusive, holistic, and culturally sensitive mental health and well-being services.

Since 2014, over 3,500 people have accessed care and mental wellbeing services from UCTS. These include victims of domestic violence, sexual abuse, torture, homelessness, trafficking and modern slavery, long term illnesses, undocumented immigrants, asylum seekers, refugees, migrants, single parents among others. UCTS offers culturally sensitive mental health awareness workshops and talks to the BAME community, academic institutions and other service providers throughout the UK, and has trained over 100 community mental health volunteers. The CIC offers an inclusive service to one of the most marginalized communities within the BAME population and that is the LGBTIQ+ community.

UCTS is working hard to raise mental health awareness in the BAME community and to ensure that people with mental health issues obtain equal opportunities in terms of social inclusion and service accessibility like everyone else in society without feeling excluded.

Over the last 12 months, UCTS has received funding from the National Lottery, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham, City Bridge Trust, and private donations from well-wishers. The funds have enabled the delivery of projects namely the Afro-Caribbean Family Support, Fervent and Flourishing Families plus BAME COVID-19 Emergency Response. The work of UCTS has been recognized and nominated in the National Diversity Awards 2020.



# Empanda Care & Support CIC

Company Number: 09959609

Incorporated: 19 January 2016



Empanda Care & Support CIC was established in 2016 by three colleagues who had worked together for many years. The team started with three supported housing services offering homeless 16 to 24-year old's temporary accommodation and person-centred support to enable clients to gain the skills and confidence needed to move on to their own independent accommodation. They also support adults with learning disabilities either in their own homes or, at their Respite Care service, Oak Trees which provides short stays of between one night and three weeks, allowing family carers a break.

In 2017, the CIC was approached to take on a day care service threatened with closure. The team were able to see the potential to develop a community hub to maximise the use of the building, bring people in and encourage more interest in the day care service. They then formed a steering group of elected council members and officers, other local voluntary and statutory groups and helped developed a vibrant community resource used by many VCS groups including 'Meet Up Mondays', dementia support, carer support and mental health. The next planned project is to open a 'Men's Shed'.

In the past year, the CIC has taken over another two failing/failed day services and, by replicating their model, the services are now becoming sustainable, securing their future and ensuring they remain a benefit to the communities in which they are located.

Empanda now employs 100 staff (96% in front-line service delivery) and has 20 dedicated volunteers. The team have been stringent with their overheads by outsourcing many back-office functions to local social enterprises or not-for-profit organisations. This has enabled the re-investment of any surplus back into the development of its employees, customers and services.



# Funky Fitness And Fun CIC

Company Number: 08332080

Incorporated: 14 December 2012



Funky Fitness and Fun CIC was created in 2008 to work with adults who have additional needs with an aim to promote independence, health and well-being, mindfulness and awareness of others. The CIC works in collaboration with social services, health-care professionals and other care providers.

Funky Fitness and Fun CIC operates 5 days a week with over 50 members ranging from those who need minimal support to engage in all activities to some who require 1:1 support. The CIC acts as an advocate for its clients and their families, spending considerable amounts of time in meetings with social workers and health-care professionals to ensure families are receiving the most appropriate levels of support.

They recently hosted an inaugural “Move and Groove” event, with the premise that learning to be more active is the key to well-being, encouraging members even with less mobility skills to gently build up and take part in the following activities:

- Dance/Keep-fit sessions – alongside Laughter Yoga
- Dance Leader Qualifications
- Walks throughout the local countryside including nature
- Therapy dogs
- Martial Arts
- Interactive workshops (in music, dance and drama)

The CIC also partners with other groups in the local area and held a stressbuster course on musical movement, mindfulness and circus skills to reduce social isolation, encourage community cohesion and acceptance.

They recently ran a 26-week programme of learning members to grow and cook healthy meals which were taken to local sheltered housing complexes where members served and shared meals with elderly residents. Funky Fitness CIC have also encouraged other local community groups to work together to collect food and clothing for the local Food Bank and other homeless charities.



# Kingdom Support and Care CIC

Company Number: SC545491

Incorporated: 15 September 2016



Kingdom Support and Care (KSC) was formed in April 2017 to provide support and care services. KSC aims to assist people with support needs to live great lives as part of their community, with the same opportunities, roles and responsibilities as those without support needs. Operating over Central Scotland, the CIC currently support around 260 individuals and families, ensuring clients receive the personal care they need, are able to carry out their daily lives and tasks, have opportunities for activity in the community, support for mental health or other issues and can be as independent as possible whilst remaining safe and well.

The benefits for communities are well demonstrated, with people who are supported in their homes encouraged to contribute to their community, whether through employment, voluntary work and training, taking part in community groups or simply being a good neighbour.

There have been various good news stories regarding the CIC's clients following the support they have received, with people achieving their ambitions such as completing the KiltWalk to make money for charity, reconnecting with lost families and friends, making new friends and learning new skills such as cooking and are actively contributing to their communities through volunteering at meal centres, charity shops, community gardens and more. This year, the CIC has celebrated its first anniversary in the number of people moving from long stay hospital to their own homes in a core and cluster supported living environment. KSC recognises that an important part of someone's sense of well-being is being able to and being seen to contribute to the community around them and their support services have enabled people to do so.





# Dissolutions

# Complaints

During the 2019-20 financial year, 1,894 community interest companies dissolved, representing 10% of the total number of CICs on the public register:

This is a slightly higher percentage of CIC dissolutions compared to last year and equates to just 0.4% of the total number of dissolved companies on the public register. This also compares favourably with overall dissolutions on the register, where the Companies House Registrar dissolved 12% of all companies over the same period.

We are aware that most CICs will close within the first two years of incorporation, simply because they have not been able to get off the ground. Using our communication platforms, we advise newly formed CIC's to seek start-up advice and help and advice from a wide variety of bodies that support all types of social enterprises, including CICs. This includes the Business Support Helpline, the free government service, which advises on all aspects of running a business.

It continues to be the case that the main reason cited for CIC dissolutions is the difficulties accessing funding. The Regulator continues to identify ways to support CICs and reduce the number of closures. Through continued engagement with the Business Support Helpline, the National Lottery Fund and others, funders have opened a wider margin in terms of their eligibility criteria, which is positive news for the CIC sector.

We draw positives from the fact the percentage of dissolutions over the last year has reduced by 1% and that approximately a third of those CICs incorporated in 2005/06 are still on the register.

There is no doubt that the UK economy is in a period of unprecedented change and challenge, however, the Regulator is confident that the CIC brand will continue to grow and support almost every sector and every UK region, as it has done since 2005.

In the year 2019-20, the CIC office received 18 new complaints, which is markedly less than the number received in same period last year. With 18,904 CIC's on the public register, as of March 2020, this equates to less than 0.1% of CICs receiving a complaint.

A number of the complaints we receive are found to be unfounded or based on a misunderstanding so, to maintain confidentiality, our approach is to neither confirm nor deny whether an investigation is taking place and to ensure the integrity of the CIC.

The Regulator takes every complaint regarding community interest companies very seriously. Each complaint is carefully considered, reviewing the best form of action to take where applicable, in order to ensure and maintain the public confidence in the CIC brand.

The Regulator has published a detailed 'Complaints Procedure' guide, published on our website, which defines the types of complain the Regulator will and will not pursue. In certain circumstances, it may be concluded that the complaint is best dealt with by another agency.

This year the Regulator continued to use her powers to investigate the affairs of a CIC. This is not a decision taken lightly but as the number and size of CICs grows there will be more of a need to appropriately use the Regulator's powers.

Nature of complaint	Numbers
Asset Transfer	2
Activities	3
Confusion CIC or Charity	1
Directors Activities	2
Fundraising	1
Directors Remuneration	2
Financial Mismanagement	2
Fundraising	1
Governance	3
Political Activity	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>18</b>

# Report of the Official Property Holder

Anne Vincent

## Official Property Holder

1. In discharge of my responsibilities under Schedule 5 to the Companies (Audit, Investigations and Community Enterprise) Act 2004 (“the Act”), I submit my report on the exercise of the functions of the Official Property Holder for Community Interest Companies during the financial year 2019 - 2020.

### Status

2. The Official Property Holder is a corporation sole by virtue of paragraph 1(1) of Schedule 5 to the Act.

3. The Act and the Community Interest Company Regulations 2005 establish community interest companies as a new type of limited company registered by the Registrar of Companies, which may be private (limited by shares or by guarantee), or public.

4. Section 29(2) of the Act requires the Regulator of Community Interest Companies (“the Regulator”) to appoint a member of the Regulator’s staff to be the Official Property Holder.

5. The relationship between the Regulator and the Official Property Holder is further specified, with other relevant details, in Schedule 5 to the Act. Copies of section 29 and Schedule 5 are annexed to this report.

6. The Official Property Holder is based in the Office of the Regulator in Companies House in Cardiff.

### Functions

7. The Act gives the Regulator various powers to protect the assets of a community interest company. In essence, the function of the Official Property Holder is to protect such assets until authorised to arrange for its transfer, as directed by the Regulator.

8. In particular, under section 48(1), the Regulator may by order transfer to the Official Property Holder any property held by, or held in trust for, a community interest company. Or they may by order require persons in whom such property is vested to transfer it to the Official Property Holder.

9. The Official Property Holder’s function is then to hold the property transferred to or vested in them as a trustee.

10. The Official Property Holder may release, or deal with, the property: to give effect to any interest in, or right over, the property of any person (other than the community interest company by which, or in trust for which, the property was held before it was vested, or transferred), or at the request of a person appointed to act as administrative receiver, administrator, provisional liquidator, or liquidator of the company.

11. On discharging an order made under section 48(1) the Regulator may make any order as to the vesting, or transfer, of the property and give any directions which they consider appropriate.

12. Except as mentioned in paragraph 8 above, the Official Property Holder may not release or deal with property vested in or transferred to them, except in accordance with directions given by the Regulator.

13. As soon as possible after the end of each financial year, the Official Property Holder must prepare a report on the exercise of the Official Property Holder’s functions during the financial year.

14. The Official Property Holder must send a copy of the report to the Regulator, who must send it to the Secretary of State.

### Recruitment

15. I have held the office of Official Property Holder for Community Interest Companies since 1 November 2016.

16. On 25 July 2005, when the Regulator’s office opened to receive applications, the previous property holder was able to fully exercise these functions.

17. The Official Property Holder has not recruited staff during this financial year and has no staff to date.

### Control

18. As the Official Property Holder, I have responsibility for ensuring that a sound system of internal control is maintained to achieve the aims and objectives of the Office of the Regulator of Community Interest Companies in respect of my functions.

19. Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy systems and controls are in place across the board.

### Performance

20. In the exercise of my functions for 2019 - 2020, I can confirm that:

- No property either held by, or in trust for a community interest company has been vested in the Official Property Holder;
- No persons in whom such property is vested has been required to transfer it to the Official Property Holder.

### Finance

21. No expenses were incurred during the financial year ended 31 March 2020.

# STATISTICS

CICs by Region	Number	%
East Midland	1065	6
East of England	1419	7
London	3050	16
North East	894	5
North West	2400	13
South East	2396	13
South West	2340	12
West Midlands	1915	10
Yorkshire and Humber	1176	6
<b>Total England</b>	<b>16655</b>	<b>88</b>
Northern Ireland	370	2
Scotland	1168	6
Wales	711	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>18904</b>	<b>100</b>

Financial Year	Approved	Dissolved	Converted*	Increase	Cumulative
April 05 - March 06	208	0	0	208	208
April 06 - March 07	637	0	0	637	845
April 07 - March 08	814	35	4	776	1621
April 08 - March 09	1120	86	2	1032	2653
April 09 - March 10	1296	372	5	919	3572
April 10 - March 11	1824	483	7	1333	4905
April 11 - March 12	2087	590	11	1486	6391
April 12 - March 13	2055	765	11	1279	7670
April 13 - March 14	2494	976	11	1507	9177
April 14 - March 15	2569	1104	3	1462	10639
April 15 - March 16	2727	1433	11	1283	11922
April 16 - March 17	2812	1665	14	1133	13055
April 17 - March 18	2844	1631	14	1199	14254
April 18 - March 19	3217	1711	31	1475	15729
<b>April 19 - March 20</b>	<b>5106</b>	<b>1894</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>3175</b>	<b>18904</b>

\* Converted from a CIC

## Total Number of CICs on the Public Register

	Mar 19	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
CLG	12358	256	287	308	263	207	203	273	270	195	261	351	234	15466
CLS	3371	-5	14	4	11	9	11	4	8	-2	12	-2	3	3438
	15729	251	301	312	274	216	214	277	278	193	273	349	237	18904

CLG = Company Limited by Guarantee  
CLS = Company Limited by Shares

ANNUAL  
REPORT

2019 | 2020



COMMUNITY  
INTEREST  
COMPANIES