

CHARITY NUMBER: 328729
COMPANY NUMBER: 02513874



ANNUAL REPORT

Trustees' Report and Financial Statements
for the year ended 31 December 2024





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Company number: 02513874

CONTENTS

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS	4
A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & CHAIR OF TRUSTEES	6
WHO WE ARE	7
ASYLUM AID ACTIVITIES	8
I. WE INCREASED ACCESS TO PROTECTION THROUGH OUR CASEWORK	9
II. OUR PARTNERSHIPS: WE BUILT CAPACITY TO PROVIDE PROTECTION IN COMPLEX CASES	14
III. WE INFLUENCED SYSTEMIC CHANGES THROUGH STRATEGIC LEGAL WORK AND POLICY ADVOCACY	18
IV: WE SECURED FINANCIAL STABILITY	22
V: WE BUILT A FRIENDLY, INCLUSIVE AND SUPPORTIVE WORK CULTURE	23
OUR FUTURE	24
FINANCIAL REVIEW	26
INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF ASYLUM AID	31

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

TRUSTEES

Elizabeth Mottershaw – Chair
Sir Nicolas Bratza
Kat Lorenz
Yehia Nasir
Constantine Partasides
John Scampion – Treasurer
Ruth Tanner

MANAGEMENT EXECUTIVES (2024)

Alison Pickup – Executive Director
Gareth Holmes – Group Executive Director of
Fundraising and Communications
Thomas Smith – Group Director of Finance and
Governance
Kerry Smith – Chief Executive Officer

CHARITY NUMBER 328729
(registered in England and Wales)

COMPANY NUMBER 02513874
(incorporated in the United Kingdom)

REGISTERED OFFICE AND OPERATIONAL ADDRESS

26 Westland Pl
London
N1 7JH

AUDITOR

Sayer Vincent LLP
Chartered Accountants & Statutory Auditors,
110 Golden Lane, London EC1Y 0TG

BANKERS

Co-Operative Bank

IN 2024 WE ENSURED THAT MANY MORE PEOPLE RECEIVE PROTECTION AND ARE TREATED FAIRLY AND WITH DIGNITY



WE CHANGED LIVES

246

clients received vital immigration legal representation including:

108

children and young people (aged 18-25)

82

survivors of trafficking and/or torture

22

stateless people

35

people at risk of rough sleeping

50

clients were granted legal protection

93

new immigration clients were taken on board

3

stateless people were recognised as such and given permission to stay

9

families were reunited

764

individuals received advice in community languages through our involvement in the Westminster Advice Services Partnership



WE TRANSFORMED SYSTEMS

We ensured that the **Safety of Rwanda Act** is repealed

96%

of judicial review cases brought on behalf of our clients resulted in positive outcomes

We challenged the Home Office's decision to deem thousands of people inadmissible to the asylum system, which had left them living in limbo

We revealed the problems with access to justice for people held at the asylum camp at RAF Wethersfield

We fought against delays in asylum decision-making

We challenged policies that make family reunion much harder for two groups of vulnerable people: those living in conflict zones and stateless people

We led a coalition **to champion asylum rights and justice**



WE BUILT PARTNERSHIPS AND LEGAL CAPACITY

We trained and supervised **our second cohort of Immigration Advice Authority (IAA) Level 2 advisers** to take on more complex asylum and human rights casework

Our current Justice First Fellow completed her training contract, working on 20 cases during her training period and qualifying as a solicitor in our public law team

As part of the Migrant Justice Greater London partnership, we **delivered remote supervision to IAA advisers in small community-led organisations across London**

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & CHAIR OF TRUSTEES

2024 was a year of exciting change and consolidation for Asylum Aid. As the final year of working towards the 2022-2024 strategic objectives, we successfully delivered on our commitment to increase our own capacity to provide our much-needed expert legal representation to survivors, taking on 93 new clients across the year. We worked in partnership to increase capacity across legal deserts, partnering with legal advice providers from Devon to Manchester through our innovative model of training and remote supervision. We grew our statelessness project and our casework, enabling us to reach many more survivors.

The first half of the year was dominated by the continuing fight against the previous government's plans to send people seeking protection thousands of miles away to Rwanda. Despite the Supreme Court's ruling at the end of 2023 that Rwanda would not be safe, the government persisted with its plan. It pushed through draconian legislation in the Safety of Rwanda (Asylum and Immigration) Act 2024, which undermined the Rule of Law and tried to insulate the government from the scrutiny of the courts. Asylum Aid worked hard, together with our partners and clients, to challenge this horrendous policy through Parliament and in the courts. We were delighted when the new government scrapped the plan within days of being elected and finally, in response to our litigation, committed to repealing the legislation. However, serious harm had already been done to our clients, who experienced high levels of distress and anxiety when faced with the threat of removal to Rwanda. Many had spent months or years in limbo. The impact of years of hostile rhetoric towards our clients was seen in the horrific racist violence across multiple UK cities during the summer.

All of this made the work we do at Asylum Aid even more significant and urgent. We were delighted to grow our services in October thanks to our wonderful new office in central London. We moved into the new Trauma Centre together with our sister charity, the Helen Bamber Foundation. The building's trauma-informed design, equipped with calming consultation rooms, areas for clients to decompress after difficult meetings, and plenty of space for our team to work and meet, has been welcomed by staff, volunteers, clients and partners. We are excited to use this space to increase our collaborations and partnerships with colleagues across the sector.

None of this would be possible without our fantastic and talented team – whose expertise was recognised at the end of 2024 with a rare Peer Review rating of 1 (excellent) from the Legal Aid Agency – our volunteers, funders, partners and supporters. We are excited to be starting work under a new strategic framework, which is an evolution of the objectives we set for the past three years. We remain committed to work hard to achieve our vision and will continue to work collaboratively, to be courageous and act with integrity, to share our expertise and learn from others, and to promote equity.

WHO WE ARE

Asylum Aid is a leading provider of high-quality legal representation to people with complex cases who are seeking asylum in the UK. For more than 30 years, we have worked with survivors of trafficking and torture, stateless people, unaccompanied children, and other vulnerable people seeking asylum, to help them gain legal protection in the UK. We believe everyone deserves access to protection; we take on the complex cases that others do not; and we provide the necessary support and expertise that such cases require when Legal Aid falls short. Since 2020, Asylum Aid has been part of the Helen Bamber Foundation Group. In 2023, we were joined by The Migrants' Law Project (MLP), a legal representation and public education project promoting the fair treatment and access to justice for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in the UK.

OUR VISION

All those who come to the UK in need of protection from persecution and other forms of human cruelty obtain it and are treated fairly and with dignity.

OUR VALUES

Pursuing Excellence: We strive to be the best we can be in our work. We continuously learn from our clients and share it with others. Our advocacy is rooted in evidence and expertise.

Courageous: We advocate bravely for human rights and are not afraid to speak out against injustice. We are courageous in the advice we give, and we persevere in seeking lasting solutions, undaunted by the barriers we encounter and inspired by the bravery of our clients.

Collaborative: We proactively seek opportunities for partnerships, for sharing knowledge, and for joint work. We work collaboratively as a team. We listen to our clients and, through our advice, we enable them to get the best outcomes.

Acting with Integrity: We are honest, open, respectful and professional in all our dealings with our clients, partners, the Home Office, other government departments, courts, and each other. We fight fearlessly without compromising our ethical duties. We are accountable to these values, and we bring our whole selves to our work.

Promoting Equity: We believe that all those seeking protection should have equitable access to a fair system and must be treated equally. We are committed to promoting equity, diversity and inclusion within our organisation and in our dealings with our clients, volunteers and partners.

ASYLUM AID ACTIVITIES

OUR MISSION: WHAT WE DO



Objectives for 2022-2024

- Consolidate and grow our capacity to deliver expert advice, direct legal representation, and casework in the most complex cases, enabling more survivors of human cruelty to secure legal status and meaningful protection
- Working in partnership with others, build capacity across the immigration advice sector to deliver expert advice and representation in complex cases
- Increase our capacity to engage in policy advocacy and strategic legal work to make the asylum system fair and dignified, and to improve access to effective and quality advice for those seeking protection
- Achieve financial sustainability, with reserves of between three to six months by 2024
- Ensure that Asylum Aid is a friendly, inclusive and supportive place to work, in which each member of the team feels valued and able to develop to their full potential

I. WE INCREASED ACCESS TO PROTECTION THROUGH OUR CASEWORK



“I feel compelled to express my deepest gratitude for the extraordinary way you have supported me. Not only have you fought for me with unparalleled skill and dedication, but you have also demonstrated a level of care and thoughtfulness that I will never forget...”

Waleed, a stateless client from Kuwait

In 2024, we successfully expanded our capacity to provide legal representation to many more vulnerable men, women, non-binary people and children. We took on 93 new clients – each with a complex case, requiring the highest quality of legal support, which we are proud to have provided. **Thanks to the commitment and hard work of our team, 50 of our clients were granted protection during the year.**

Our work has not gone unnoticed. Our annual Lexcel audit, a nationally recognised legal practice quality mark awarded by the Law Society, stated that Asylum Aid *“demonstrated outstanding commitment to client care and quality of service”*. **In December 2024, the Legal Aid Agency awarded us a rare ‘excellence’ (Level 1) rating following a peer review of a sample of our files.**



SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE (AGED 18-25)



When Ali, a child survivor of war and trafficking, entered the UK, he was wrongly assessed to be 25 years old, based solely on his appearance. He was placed in shared adult accommodation in a hotel, which was very distressing for him. We quickly took on his case due to his vulnerability and issued a challenge against his age assessment. Sadly, Ali was beaten up outside of the hotel and ran away out of fear of further violence. Ali is illiterate and speaks a language that is rare outside his home country, so when he met an adult who could speak his language, he agreed to travel to another town in the UK with him. We managed to stay in contact with him by exchanging voice messages, and he agreed to share pictures of the park bench he had been sleeping on. We soon identified the town he was in, and we urgently contacted our partner organisation there to organise safe temporary accommodation for him. In the meantime, we sent a pre-action letter to the local authority explaining that we would take legal action if they failed to provide the care he is entitled to as a child. We also discovered that Ali may be neurodiverse, which was adding to his distress and inability to communicate his needs. Our involvement has ensured that Ali is now living in local authority care. As well as gaining the specialised welfare support he needs, Ali has built enough trust with us to tell us his story and engage more confidently with the legal process as we build a strong case for his legal protection.



Photos and names in the case studies included in this report have been changed to protect clients' privacy.

Ali is among the many children and young people we have supported in 2024. The work we do with them is uniquely challenging, as unaccompanied minors frequently find it difficult to obtain good quality legal representation. This is due to the complexity of their cases. Many involve histories of trafficking or other trauma, and in all cases, they are coping with the strain of family separation. This inevitably requires extra work and time, for which payment from the Legal Aid Agency is usually only received at the closure of their case. We are proud that we supported **108** children and young people seeking protection in 2024.

- In 2024, around 44% of the clients for whom we provided legal representation were children and young people (aged 18-25), from nationalities such as Albania, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Sudan
- 21% of our child clients and 47% of clients who are young people were also victims of trafficking

PROVIDING QUALITY LEGAL REPRESENTATION TO SURVIVORS OF TRAFFICKING AND TORTURE



In 2017, Aza, 27, a non-binary Kurdish political activist for LGBTQIA+ and women's rights, was attending a memorial meeting held in their university to mark the second anniversary of the 10 October 2015 bombing in Ankara. They were detained by the local police for leading a political protest. They were kept for days in a dirty cramped cell, denied access to the toilet and not given any food or water. Four years later, they attended a Kurdish women's open-air event in Ankara, wearing traditional Kurdish female garb, and were targeted by police once again. Aza experienced sexual and gender-based violence by the police, who humiliated them by strip searching them in public and photographing them in a degrading manner. A year later, they were detained for a third time at an LGBTQIA+ Pride event, where they faced extreme psychological violence (using intense light and noise).



Aza soon fled Turkey and arrived in the UK. They were faced with a rude shock as they received poor legal advice and were housed in accommodation unsuitable for a non-binary person. They were referred to Asylum Aid by a panellist appearing at an academic conference. We took on Aza's case and submitted an asylum application on their behalf and supported them in gaining suitable accommodation and the right to work. As a result, Aza now lives in a house that they are happy with and they are working to support themselves. They hope to continue to fight for the rights of sexual and gender minorities while living in the UK.

Like Aza, survivors of trafficking and torture often find it difficult to obtain good quality and timely legal representation because of the impact of their experiences on their mental health and the complexity of their cases. Our legal team is trained to work in a trauma-informed way with survivors. We understand that the experience of torture and trafficking can impact survivors' ability to give a coherent and chronological account of their experiences. That's why we spend extensive time with our clients and obtain medical evidence to document the torture and other abuses that our clients have experienced. We support them to access therapy and other assistance required to manage the consequences of their trauma during the asylum process.

- In 2024, 34% of Asylum Aid's clients were survivors of trafficking and/or torture
- We secured protection for 16 survivors of trafficking and/or torture

ENSURING STATELESS PEOPLE ARE GRANTED PERMISSION TO STAY IN THE UK



Waleed is a Kuwaiti Bidoon. The Bidoons are a stateless Arab minority descended from the nomadic Bedouin tribes of the Middle East. When Kuwait became independent in 1961, the Bidoons were not included as citizens and were classified as 'illegal residents'. Kuwaiti law bestows nationality only on children with a Kuwaiti father. It is not enough to be born in Kuwait or to have only a Kuwaiti mother. The Bidoons are therefore a largely stateless population who are discriminated against in many ways.

Waleed arrived in the UK in July 2013 and claimed asylum. He had taken part in Bidoon demonstrations in Kuwait and left the country illegally. It took more than two years for the claim to be finally refused at appeal. For the next five years, Waleed lived in limbo with no ability to work, study, or continue with his life in any way. He developed physical and mental health issues.

Waleed was referred to Asylum Aid in September 2022. Our pro bono partner Dentons worked with us to prepare Waleed's case. He had made a previous statelessness application, but without specialist advice, and the application was refused. It took Asylum Aid and Dentons more than a year to prepare the case. We visited the Embassy of Kuwait with Waleed, took detailed witness statements and compiled information about Bidoons. It took another year to get a decision. Initially, the Home Office refused this second application, but following our intervention, they reconsidered and granted statelessness leave in December 2024, without Waleed having to go through the long process of applying for Administrative Review. After 12 years of living in limbo, he finally got his life back.



"Thank you from the bottom of my heart for changing my life. It is the beginning of a new chapter where I can finally feel safe and hopeful for the future. Your dedication will always be a light in my life, and I will be eternally grateful to all of you."

Waleed's experiences are shared by many stateless people who have no documents, no rights and no state protection. They are often invisible. This takes a huge toll on their mental health and denies them a meaningful life. If they are given only basic state support, they cannot choose where they live or even what they eat. All of this makes them particularly vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation.

We are among the very few organisations in the UK that specialise in this area of law. We offer free representation as there is usually no legal aid for applications on grounds of statelessness. We are supported by 10 corporate firms: Akin, Ashurst, Cooley, Dentons, Freshfields, Morrison Foerster, O'Melveny & Myers, Orrick, Reed Smith and Skadden.

Applications are complex and generally take more than a year to prepare. To prove statelessness, a person must exhaustively try to establish their nationality or right of admission to any relevant country. This takes vast amounts of work, and we are immensely proud of the achievements of our statelessness project, given the limited capacity we have within our charity to drive forward this strand of legal work.

- Three people were granted statelessness leave, and six cases are awaiting a decision
- We worked on **24** statelessness cases through the year, including seven new cases
- A mother and a child of a stateless client were **granted a family reunion** visa
- **57** volunteers from our partner firms worked with us on our statelessness cases pro bono

REUNITING FAMILIES



FATIMA

Fatima is a young Sudanese refugee seeking reunion with three of her siblings, now aged nine, 13 and 16. She had been taking care of them after her parents disappeared, but fled Sudan when she was 14, fearing for her safety, and took a risky and traumatic journey across Libya and Europe to the UK, where she has faced often difficult experiences. She turned 18 in 2023 and had to leave her foster family.

After many years in which she was unable to reach her own family, Fatima found that her siblings had been taken to Niger by their father. After her father passed away, her brother Abdi (then aged 13) disappeared, and it is feared that he has been kidnapped by an Islamist group. The other three were sheltered by a woman in Niger. However, they did not know her name or speak the same language as her, and she was abusive, hitting them and making them do household chores. Fatima's siblings were aged just seven, 11 and 14 at the time.



A key issue was that the UK government would not reunite the family without biometrics, yet there were no facilities in Niger. The Migrants' Law Project (MLP) raised £5,000 in 2023, including from a crowdfunder, to send biometric equipment and staff from Ghana to Niger to get the children's biometric data. However, just as arrangements were being made, there was a coup in Niger and the private company taking the biometrics cancelled the trip. The children and Fatima became increasingly distressed as the delays mounted. We continued to work on the case, but it was only in 2025 that we were able to reunite the siblings, coordinating with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) to evacuate them from Niger. We reallocated the crowdfunded income to pay for this expensive process.

In 2024, we reunited families like that of Fatima thanks to our partnership with The Migrants' Law Project (MLP), which has gone from strength to strength. A small, strategic legal project that seeks to protect and promote the rights of asylum seekers, refugees and vulnerable migrants through strategic legal work, the MLP has expanded our work on family reunions significantly. Throughout the year, the MLP reunited refugees and vulnerable migrants with their families who were locked out of mainstream family reunion policies.

In a significant case, the MLP successfully won a legal challenge against a Home Office refusal to allow a Palestinian refugee's family in Gaza to apply for UK visas without fingerprints. We took action on behalf of our client after officials rejected his request for his wife and children to be exempt from the usual rules because of the situation in Gaza. Court said the Home Office must allow the family to apply without biometrics, securing a major win for our client and his family. We have helped four Palestinian families, comprising more than 20 individuals, to leave Gaza with a view to join their families in the UK.

- In 2024, The Migrants' Law Project reunited six families
- The MLP contributed to a briefing with HBF, Refugee and Migrant Forum of Essex and London (RAMFEL) and Together Now on family reunion for people in Sudan seeking to join family members in the UK

II. OUR PARTNERSHIPS: WE BUILT CAPACITY TO PROVIDE PROTECTION IN COMPLEX CASES

WE GREW CAPACITY THROUGH TRAINING AND SUPERVISION

With a goal to extend our high-quality legal service to many more individuals in need of protection, we continued to build on our 'grow your own' model in 2024. We trained and developed new advisers within Asylum Aid with programmes such as the Justice First Fellowship – a grant that helped us recruit and train an aspiring solicitor – and a partnership with Justice Together Initiative to provide training, supervision, and shadowing opportunities to Immigration Advice Authority (IAA) Level 2 advisers working in organisations in 'advice deserts' across the UK. Through programmes such as these, we continue to grow capacity not just within our charity but also the immigration and asylum sector at large.

BUILDING FUTURE LEADERSHIP THROUGH THE JUSTICE FIRST FELLOWSHIP

Funded by the Legal Education Foundation, the Justice First Fellowship is a route to a long and rewarding career using law as a tool for social justice. We are proud to be a host in this programme, which enables us to offer a two-year training contract to an aspiring solicitor. Our first Justice First Fellow completed her training contract in 2024, working on 20 cases during her training period, and is now a solicitor in our public law team. She has successfully taken on several complex cases including asylum, trafficking and family reunion cases, and supported a client to move out of the asylum camp at RAF Wethersfield.



“The Justice First Fellowship at Asylum Aid has been the most incredible opportunity to pursue my career in the area of law that I really care about. The charity and legal aid sectors are sadly often unable to take on trainees due to funding limitations, but the Fellowship provides a mutually beneficial relationship between host and fellow.”

Justice First Fellow, cohort 2023-2025

At the end of 2024, we launched the recruitment for our next Justice First Fellow, starting in April 2025. We were delighted to recruit our new Justice First Fellow, working in our asylum team, to carry forward this partnership.

COMPASS: THE ASYLUM AID ADVISOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

This ambitious project in partnership with Justice Together Initiative aims to build capacity and confidence of IAA Level 2 advisers to take on more complex asylum and human rights casework, contributing significantly to the availability of legal support in 'advice deserts' across the UK. In 2024, we provided training and supervision to our second cohort of advisers, who come from various frontline organisations, some led by people with lived experience, in South Wales, Devon, Manchester, Halifax and South London. Underpinning this flagship programme is a goal to establish a pipeline of high-quality legal advisers in the immigration and asylum system. We have already seen great success in fulfilling this vision, as participants have stayed within the sector after completing the programme and have contributed significantly to their organisations.



“Working with Asylum Aid has hugely improved my knowledge, skills and confidence in complex asylum and immigration work. Since the project started, I’ve gained my IAAS Senior Caseworker qualification and am now IAA Level 3 in Immigration and Asylum and Protection, meaning I can work on clients’ appeals under Legal Aid. This is thanks to the training and supervision from Asylum Aid and support of the JTI project.”

A cohort 2 trainee

MIGRANT JUSTICE GREATER LONDON (MJGL) PROJECT

We have partnered with charities Refugee Action and Praxis to deliver remote supervision to IAA advisers in small community-led organisations across London. The project aims to increase the availability and quality of immigration support services for vulnerable migrant communities by better equipping advisers with knowledge of complex immigration cases.

After a successful first year of this project in 2024, we are now delivering supervision to partner organisations such as Sufra NW London and Children and Families Across Borders.

In 2024, our training sessions on topics such as domestic violence and legal aid were exceptionally well attended by advisers across the organisations. These sessions are crucial in equipping individuals to handle a host of complex issues.



“The MJGL project has been pivotal in our development, enabling us to improve service delivery, build organisational confidence, and refine our case management practices to better serve our community and uphold the highest standards of diligence and care.”

Harrow Association of Somali Voluntary Organisations, a partner charity

WE INCREASED CAPACITY THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

We know that good quality legal representation is life-saving for our clients, and that by working together with other charities and organisations, we can help more people. We collaborate with other organisations to change policies and practices that affect those who have suffered some of the worst forms of inhumanity. We share best practice and seek to build capacity through training, second-tier support, and the publication of resources.

PROVIDING LIFE-CHANGING WELFARE ADVICE



Kira arrived in the UK from Algeria with her two children (both under five-years-old) to seek asylum. Having fled her home country, she experienced depression and mental health problems. Her condition worsened as the Home Office placed her in a Westminster hotel, where she struggled to provide good quality food for her children. The food provided at the hotel lacked nutrition, was very spicy for her young children, and was often rotten. As a result, the family's health severely deteriorated. We provided Kira with food vouchers at a drop-in session and kept in touch with her.

After six months in the hotel, Kira and her children were moved far outside Westminster after a fire broke out. Kira lost all of the support network she had managed to build. She was moved to a completely new area and could not afford the travel costs of taking her children to their school in Westminster.

We supported Kira in applying for a hardship fund grant of £300 for her family, which helped her a lot during these tough times. When the fire broke out, Kira had to leave the family's already scarce belongings behind, so they needed clothes and shoes. We signposted her to different pop-up charity events and other charities that help with providing clothes to children in need. Kira told us that she felt less stressed and more empowered after our calls, as we spoke to her in Arabic, her native language, and she could truly express her concerns and feelings.

Kira is among the hundreds who benefitted from our partnership with Westminster City Council. Our Welfare Advice Services Partnership (WASP) team provides high-quality advice to migrant communities in Westminster on a range of welfare issues. Most of the people we support do not have English as a first language. Our advisers and volunteers are multilingual, and we work with volunteer community interpreters to support some of the most vulnerable people in Westminster.



In 2024:

- Our welfare advice team provided vital support to 764 individuals
- More than 80% of those receiving welfare advice from Asylum Aid were migrants and/or people of colour, and 58% declared a disability or long-term ill health
- In 67% of cases, advice was given in a community language, of which it was predominantly Arabic language (48%) and a significant number of clients speaking Farsi (8%) or Kurdish (7%)

DELIVERING A ROUTE OUT OF HOMELESSNESS



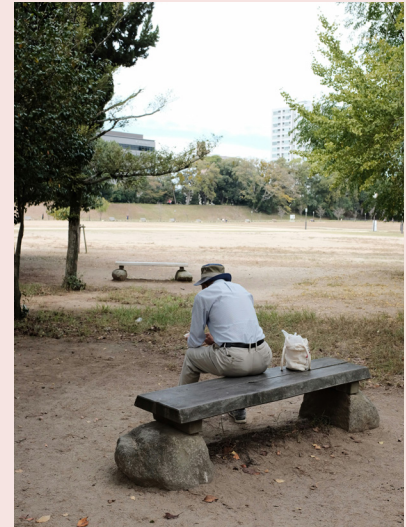
After being arrested at a peaceful anti-government demonstration in Egypt in 2017, Anwar was beaten by the Egyptian authorities and detained for four months. During his time in detention, he was tortured and interrogated on approximately five occasions. He was blindfolded and tied to chairs, beaten with rifle butts and belts, stripped and electrocuted. He was kept in cells that were so overcrowded that the inmates had to take turns to lie down to sleep, was denied visitors, and received no medical treatment for the beatings he suffered from his interrogators.

Shortly after he was released from detention, Anwar fled Egypt. He initially travelled to Libya, where he was again detained, tortured and exploited for labour by the people who facilitated his journey. After fleeing Libya, he continued his journey across Europe. Soon after his arrival in the UK in 2022, he discovered that he had been sentenced in absentia by an Egyptian court to life imprisonment, for his attendance at the 2017 demonstration.

Anwar claimed asylum upon his arrival in the UK but was initially unable to find legal representation. He was homeless and lost contact with and was treated as an absconder by the Home Office. He was referred to Asylum Aid through our partnership with the Refugee and Migrant Forum of Essex and London (RAMFEL).

We made submissions to the Home Office on Anwar's behalf, stating that we were in the process of having court documents from Egypt translated in support of his asylum claim. However, the Home Office refused his asylum claim on all grounds, partly because Anwar had not provided the evidence that the Home Office was aware was in the process of being translated.

We lodged an appeal on behalf of Anwar and arranged for expert medical and country reports to be prepared in support of this. The evidence for this appeal was submitted to the Home Office and the First-tier Tribunal. Shortly before Anwar's appeal hearing, the UK authorities conceded the appeal and granted him asylum in the UK. He has now begun the process of rebuilding his life in the UK and is recovering from his traumatic experiences.



Since 2022, we have been working in partnership with RAMFEL to provide immigration advice to people like Anwar, who have slept on the streets or were at risk of doing so. Regularising immigration status can be a route out of homelessness, as it enables individuals to access accommodation, financial support, and vital medical care while their applications are pending. Eventually, by securing their stay, they can access housing, benefits and the labour market.

More than half of the clients referred to us under this partnership have significant mental and/or physical health issues. They often have a history of trafficking, exploitation, abuse or criminal records (often directly or indirectly linked to their lack of an immigration status within the UK). Their cases are often particularly complex, with long histories of rejection by the immigration system, making them especially vulnerable.

Under the partnership with RAMFEL, Asylum Aid takes up to 30 referrals a year to investigate eligibility for legal aid in asylum, humanitarian protection, trafficking, statelessness, and complex human rights cases. If eligible, we provide them with advice and representation on their asylum and immigration matters. Since the project started in October 2022, we have taken on 44 cases, with five clients securing immigration status to date following our advice, and many more with applications still pending decisions.

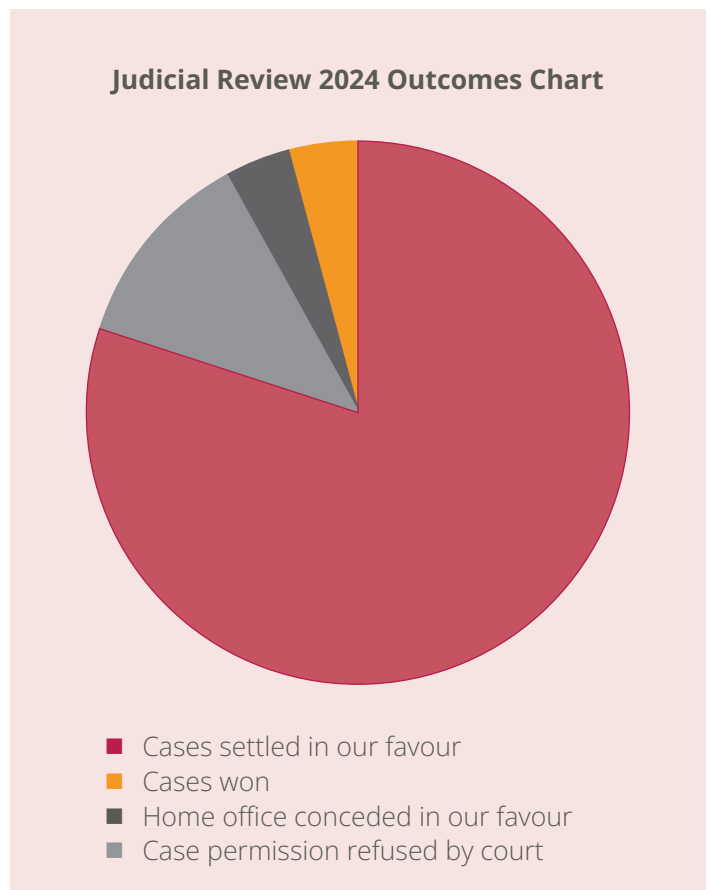
III. WE INFLUENCED SYSTEMIC CHANGES THROUGH STRATEGIC LEGAL WORK AND POLICY ADVOCACY

Over three decades, Asylum Aid has successfully changed policies that affect hundreds of people seeking protection, using strong evidence and client testimonies. Through our expertise and experience of working with vulnerable people, we encourage other organisations and charities to take on complex cases. We influence the government to deliver humane and effective asylum and immigration systems that uphold human rights.

In 2024, we saw a shift in political power with the election of the Labour government. Soon after taking office, it announced some much-needed reforms to the asylum system, including tackling the backlog of asylum cases. It committed to repeal the Safety of Rwanda Act in response to Asylum Aid’s legal challenge and is proposing to repeal a significant amount of the Illegal Migration Act, which aimed to strip those fleeing war, persecution, and human rights abuses of their right to seek safety in this country. However, the government also introduced measures that we continue to oppose, such as the suspension of decision-making in Syrian asylum cases, and tough new guidance that makes it harder for refugees to obtain British citizenship and fully integrate.

Our public law work was instrumental in 2024, delivering positive outcomes for our clients and bringing about systemic changes. In more than half of the cases (57%) in which we sent a pre-action letter in a public law case, the Home Office conceded before we got to court. Of the judicial review cases (43%) that did go to court, the overwhelming majority (24 out of 25) resulted in a positive outcome for our client – with only one case refused permission. A judicial review is a type of court case in which a judge reviews the lawfulness of a decision or action made by a public body and is an influential mechanism through which we bring about systems change.

To maximise our capacity to do strategic litigation work and policy advocacy, we developed internal systems for identifying trends in our casework. This allowed us to address emerging issues and provide robust evidence to influence policy and advocacy. Our regular engagement with the UK and international media raised our profile significantly among key influencers including MPs and ministers.



We led the sector in its joint response to systemic harms by working in coalitions such as the Refugee and Migrant Children's Consortium, the Immigration Law Practitioners Association (we co-chair the refugee working group and are active participants in the Strategic Litigation Advisory Committee), and the European Network on Statelessness. We continue to host the Refugee Legal Group UK, an online group with approximately 1,750 members that is a vital forum for sharing information and support on legal, policy and practical developments in the field.

WE ENSURED THAT THE SAFETY OF RWANDA ACT IS REPEALED

Since 2022, when the previous government announced its Rwanda scheme, we were absolutely determined to ensure that this plan was never implemented. We are proud that we accomplished that goal. In response to our legal challenge to the Rwanda plan, the Home Secretary confirmed that the government would repeal the Safety of Rwanda (Asylum and Immigration) Act 2024. After coming to power, the new government announced that no one would be sent to Rwanda, but the Safety of Rwanda Act (which declares the country to be 'safe' despite the opposite finding by the Supreme Court) remained on the statute books. It undermined the constitutional role of the Courts and damaged the UK's international reputation. It is important that the Act is repealed and not simply left unimplemented. We therefore carried on our fight against the Rwanda plan until we received confirmation in January 2025 that the Safety of Rwanda Act 2024 would be repealed.

WE CHALLENGED AND CHANGED POLICIES AFFECTING FAMILY REUNION FROM GAZA


The Migrants' Law Project team secured a significant win for families in Gaza seeking to reunite with their loved ones in the UK. On behalf of our client, and together with partners at Islington Law Centre, we challenged the Home Office's refusal to decide on family reunion applications from families in Gaza without biometric data, including fingerprints and photographs. The Upper Tribunal found that this policy was unlawful. The judge ruled that the Home Office's decisions were irrational and a 'disproportionate interference' in applicants' right to a family life. We ensured that the Home Office complies with this judgment, amends its policies and approach, and adopts a lawful approach to the biometric enrolment requirement, so that more families from Gaza and elsewhere are not unlawfully deprived of decisions on their entry clearance applications.



WE FOUGHT AGAINST DELAYS IN ASYLUM DECISION-MAKING

As a result of Asylum Aid's legal challenge, a 52-year-old man from Cote d'Ivoire seeking protection in the UK received an apology and compensation from the Home Office for waiting four years and two months for a decision on his asylum claim. This was a vital legal challenge. Asylum Aid has been fighting against one of the UK asylum system's biggest problems: delayed decisions on claims.

These delays, and a lack of clarity on timeframes, not only take a huge toll on the mental health and recovery of those who have survived some of the worst forms of cruelty, but also have a knock-on effect on the availability of legal aid solicitors in taking on other cases. According to statistics published by the Home Office on 28 November 2024, there were 83,888 asylum applicants awaiting an initial decision for more than six months. Our legal challenge, therefore, had wide implications for thousands of vulnerable people seeking protection in the UK.



Home Office

UK Visas and Immigration
1st Floor Link House
Melbourne Street
Newcastle
NE1 2JQ
Tel 0300 790 6268
Please refer to www.gov.uk/contact-ukvi-inside-outside-uk
Web www.gov.uk/uk-visas-immigration

Asylum Aid
Derry House
Church Street Estate
LONDON
NW8 8HJ

Our Ref [REDACTED]
Your Ref [REDACTED]
Case ID [REDACTED]
Date 6 December 2024

Dear Sirs,

Re: [REDACTED] Cote D'Ivoire (Ivory Coast) [REDACTED]

I write on behalf of the Secretary of State in relation to your above-named client, in accordance with the Judicial Review Consent Order sealed on 15 November 2024, relating to JR-[REDACTED].

I would like to apologise for the casework errors which contributed to the time taken to resolve your client's asylum claim. We will reflect on the lessons learnt from the handling of your client's claim.

Yours faithfully,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
Asylum Chief Caseworker
Asylum and Human Rights Operations
On behalf of the Secretary of State

WE LED A COALITION TO CHAMPION ASYLUM RIGHTS AND JUSTICE

In partnership with the Public Law Project, since 2023, we convene a coalition of NGOs to respond to the threats posed by the Illegal Migration Act and the Rwanda plan. After the general election, the coalition considered what role we might play under the new government and in a significantly changed policy context. We recognised the benefits of working together to respond through legally-informed advocacy and, where necessary, strategic legal work to pursue common aims.

The coalition has adopted three objectives for 2025, on which we will continue to work collaboratively with each other and with the wider sector:

- Defending the right to territorial asylum
- Promoting a fair, effective and humane asylum system
- Resisting the use and expansion of detention and quasi-detention

WE SUCCESSFULLY FOUGHT FOR FAMILY REUNION OF STATELESS PEOPLE

In a major win for stateless people and their families, the High Court found in a case brought by Asylum Aid that the previous government's changes in Immigration Rules, which made it significantly harder for stateless people to reunite with their families, are unlawful and unreasonable. We were delighted by the judgment.

Stateless people are particularly disadvantaged, and especially vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation. Statelessness can result in the separation, often prolonged, of families if some members are unable to obtain citizenship or legal residency status, to the detrimental wellbeing of the stateless persons and their families. The changes to the family reunion rules pushed an already disadvantaged group of people further into despair. The High Court decision was a huge relief for stateless people and their families.

WE PROVIDED VITAL EVIDENCE ON THE HARM CAUSED BY ASYLUM HOTELS AND WETHERSFIELD CAMP

Along with our sister charity, the Helen Bamber Foundation (HBF), we worked tirelessly to highlight the harm caused to survivors housed in hotels and ex-military sites. We published a briefing examining the existing barriers to accessing quality legal advice in Wethersfield. We advocated for the urgent need to address the broader systemic problems that prevent people seeking protection from accessing justice. We published a report with HBF highlighting the harm caused by asylum hotels on people seeking protection in the UK who are forced to live in these spaces, and urged the government to house people in communities, not hotels and camps.

WE PUBLISHED VITAL RESEARCH ON THE CRIMINALISATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE SEEKING ASYLUM

As a result of a two-year research collaboration between Commons Law CIC and The MLP, we published a significant report on the criminalisation of young people seeking asylum in the UK, who are often particularly vulnerable due to their life experiences before, during and after migration. The report was launched at an event at Doughty Street Chambers, igniting a lively discussion on this complex and relevant topic.

IV: WE SECURED FINANCIAL STABILITY

2024 was a year of strengthening our financing. We improved our certificated billing procedures to ensure a smooth flow of income from our judicial review and higher court work. With the goal to diversify our income sources, we successfully held our first philanthropy event in our new office. At the end of the year, we were delighted that the government had announced an increase in legal aid rates for immigration, which were last revised three decades ago. However, a 10% increase in hourly rate is still not close to inflationary.

Going forward, we hope to grow sustainable income and test new ways of supporting donor engagement and commitment in 2025.

More information about our financial position is provided in the Financial Review below.

V: WE BUILT A FRIENDLY, INCLUSIVE AND SUPPORTIVE WORK CULTURE

Moving to a spacious and comfortable new office in central London has provided a significant boost to the team's morale and productivity. It has enabled us to work closely as a team and in collaboration with our partners at the Helen Bamber Foundation.

Working with some of the most vulnerable people in the UK asylum system can be extremely challenging and emotionally draining for our team. In the first half of 2024, we faced unprecedented challenges with the previous government rushing through its Rwanda plan and detaining people seeking asylum. Its impact on our clients, and the fear and distress it has caused, has inevitably had an impact on our team as well. We provided access to monthly group clinical supervision for all caseworkers, as well as additional 1:1 sessions for individuals experiencing particular challenges. We had a team event in May focused on looking after ourselves when working with trauma, led by the HBF's Director of Therapy. Our legal administrator shared key learnings from a training she had attended on handling suicidal conversations.

Team building is vital for us, and we regularly participate in events that bring us together. For example, we attended the London Legal Walk in June, sporting new Asylum Aid 'Protection from Persecution' T-shirts. Providing a friendly, inclusive and supportive environment continues to be of utmost importance to the charity.

OUR FUTURE

Asylum Aid is at an exciting juncture of ambitious organisational growth, kickstarting a new strategy (from 2025 to 2027). In this period, we commit to:

- 1. Drive quality legal support for all survivors:** By 2027, we will substantially increase the number of specialist caseworkers at Asylum Aid through our 'grow your own model' so that we have the capacity to provide specialist casework and legal representation to more survivors.
- 2. Champion collaboration to increase impact:** Through partnerships, training and supervision, we will increase the availability of expert legal advice and representation for all survivors in the UK.
- 3. Challenge harmful systems:** Using evidence and expertise, we will challenge and secure policy changes on the risk of re-trafficking and the impact of worsening mental health driven by a harmful system. Our work with lived-experience experts is vital to achieving this goal.



4. **Transform access to legal support:** We will work towards democratising provision of advice by supporting legal education activity and working toward the simplification of protection and welfare systems.
5. **Deliver best practice for our team and supporters:** The welfare and wellbeing of our team is of utmost importance to us – and will remain a priority going forward. We also aim to increase our income sustainably and test new ways to support donor engagement and commitment.

Your continued support and generosity are fundamental to achieving these goals and ensuring that survivors have access to justice and fairness and are treated with dignity. Thank you to all our supporters and patrons from the entire Asylum Aid team and all our clients!

FINANCIAL REVIEW

FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK

Policies relating to reserves and the need to generate an annual operating surplus together provide a financial framework within which the Helen Bamber Foundation Group, including Asylum Aid, seeks to function.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Asylum Aid has had a successful year in 2024, which ended in a surplus. This is as a result of the donations kindly made by our supporters, our ability to respond to urgent situations and take forward new projects and collaborations, as well as income from the Legal Aid Agency for work undertaken. As we go forward, we will further grow the income generated for Asylum Aid in order to increase the impact of Asylum Aid and the Helen Bamber Foundation Group as a whole, and sustain financial stability.

DESIGNATED FUNDS

1. Casework in Progress

Our casework work in progress (WIP) designated fund (£1,066,761) reflects future income recognised in our accounts, but which is an illiquid asset that cannot be relied upon as part of our reserves policy. As casework is a source of unrestricted income, we show our WIP as a designated fund in order to avoid misleading funders that these funds are available to invest in our charitable activities. For instance, in 2025, we are currently budgeting to bring in £350,000 cash from Legal Aid work, which represents 35% of our total WIP. However, we recognise that the value of this WIP is a helpful indicator of future legal aid income and helps ensure that the organisation remains a going concern. Finally, we cannot bill for legal aid work until the case is completed. This means that delays in Home Office decision-making and in hearing appeals, which have remained an issue, have a direct impact on our ability to convert our WIP into cash.

2. The Migrants' Law Project Restricted Fund

The Migrants' Law Project (MLP) is a legal representation and public education project promoting the fair treatment and access to justice for migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers in the UK. The MLP was hosted by Islington Law Centre (ILC) until July 2023, at which point it moved to Asylum Aid. The MLP is hosted as a separate project within Asylum Aid. Its work is currently focused on supporting young refugees to reunite with their family members.

The MLP has joined Asylum Aid for a trial period of three years. During this period Asylum Aid's Trustees have agreed that in addition to the restricted funds mentioned above, 80% of any legal aid income and inter partes costs received by Asylum Aid in respect of work done by the MLP lawyers will be put into a designated fund to be used towards meeting the MLP's running costs and will not be available to Asylum Aid. £22,726 of legal aid cash income received in 2024 falls to be designated in this way, and £269,862 of the Designated Casework in Progress fund relates to work done by MLP solicitors, 80% of which will be designated to the MLP when realised.

Asylum Aid's budgeting assumption is that the funds allocated to the MLP will gradually be spent by the project during the trial period, thus reducing the amounts in the restricted fund.

RESERVES POLICY

Our Group reserves policy is to maintain an unrestricted general fund of between three and six months of gross expenditure for the next financial year. This target level of reserves is kept under review by the trustees. It has been set to provide the charity with sufficient funds to accommodate potential cost of identified risks, without being excessive and reducing funds available to further Asylum Aid's charitable objects. Asylum Aid joined the Helen Bamber Foundation Group in August 2020 with no reserves or assets. Given the importance of being confident that Asylum Aid can maintain its support to our very vulnerable clients, the Trustees aimed to increase the sum in the unrestricted general fund in order to ensure that the minimum level of reserves was met throughout the year by 2024. This has been achieved and in December 2024, Asylum Aid ended the year with an increased reserve level at £408,759 (2023: £257,103), the equivalent to three months, which is within our reserves policy.

RISKS

The major risks to which Asylum Aid is exposed, as identified by the Trustees, have been reviewed and systems have been established to mitigate these risks. Among the risks identified, the most significant are:

- The challenge of the delays in receipt of Legal Aid funding due to delays in decision making and therefore closure of cases.
- and that activities are planned in order to meet budget requirements.
- The operational strain that arises from the significant level of demand for the services of the organisation, while delays in decision-making impact capacity.
- The continuing impact of the hostile and external environment, despite some positive developments in 2024 following the change in government, which are causing real anxiety and harm to our clients while also complicating the provision of advice. The new government's increased focus on efficiency means quicker decisions which, while positive for many clients, also means more survivors at risk of being removed without having had meaningful access to legal advice.
- The continuing challenging economic context and cost of living crisis mean that despite the change in government following the general election, there is little scope for any extra central government funding for legal advice or to invest in the wider asylum system. These economic impacts make an already hostile environment more challenging for our clients and therefore for our work more generally.

These risks are mitigated in part through close operational monitoring and application of the reserves policy.

In our 2023 annual report we identified the lack of appropriate space for staff to work and meet clients as a significant risk. This risk has been addressed in 2024 following our move to the Trauma Centre which provides a wonderful space for our staff, clients and partners to meet and work in a trauma-informed home.

SUBSEQUENT EVENTS AND GOING CONCERN

The contract for Westminster Advice Services Partnership was due to end in September 2025 but in May 2025 we received confirmation that we have been successful in being awarded a new contract for an initial period of 5.5 years at an increased annual rate for Asylum Aid of £98,000, thus securing the future of our welfare advice service.

The Legal Aid Agency suffered a major cyber incident in spring 2025 which has led to their online systems for legal aid applications and billing being taken offline for an extended period. Asylum Aid has been able to mitigate the impact of this on its work and cashflow through the contingency arrangements provided by the LAA and a focus on inter partes billing, which is unaffected.

Having regard to these developments and the reserves held at the year-end both by Asylum Aid and the Helen Bamber Foundation, the Trustees consider it reasonable to expect that Asylum Aid has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Accordingly, the Trustees continue to adopt the 'going concern' basis in preparing the accounts.

REMUNERATION POLICY

The objectives of HBF Group's remuneration policy are to:

- Reward staff appropriately and enable the recruitment and retention of high-calibre personnel.
- Ensure the proper use of the charity's resources in accordance with its aims and within affordable limits, based on the financial circumstances of the charity.
- Be non-discriminatory, just and equitable in the evaluation of jobs and their remuneration by providing a stable framework for the remuneration of the team.
- Pay at a competitive level taking account of external market rates – the aim being to set pay around the median level for comparable posts in the voluntary sector, subject to the charity's financial position.
- Operate within the law.

Remuneration is reviewed on an annual basis and agreed by the Board of Trustees. When setting pay levels, the charity gives consideration to external benchmark comparators, changes in the national average earnings index, affordability and other internal and external pressures including recruitment and retention. The policy applies to all staff, including the charity's management team.

FUNDRAISING

Asylum Aid is supported by the same fundraising team as the Helen Bamber Foundation as part of the Group structure, with its own dedicated fundraiser. An annual income generation strategy is produced, against which performance is regularly monitored by the senior management and trustees. In 2024, Asylum Aid secured fundraised income of £996,080. We are incredibly grateful to the funders who have supported Asylum Aid over the years, enabling us to grow since joining HBF Group. Asylum Aid and the Helen Bamber Foundation's fundraising approach reflects the principles published on our websites, www.asylumaid.org.uk and www.helenbamber.org. The charity's fundraising programme is delivered using internal resources and in 2024 did not involve external professional fundraisers or commercial participators.

Asylum Aid and the Helen Bamber Foundation are registered with the Fundraising Regulator. Registration represents a commitment to the highest standards of practice and ensures that all fundraising activity is open, legal and fair. As a registered participant, Asylum Aid commits to the Regulator's Codes of Fundraising Practice, which is the standard set for fundraisers in the UK. Registered participants also commit to abide by its Fundraising Promise. The Fundraising Promise is based on five key pledges that reflect the core values of respect, honesty, accountability and transparency. HBF Group's strong commitment to recognise sector standards means that the charity is actively working to protect vulnerable people and other members of the public from behaviour which:

- is an unreasonable intrusion on a person's privacy;
- is unreasonably persistent;
- places undue pressure on a person to give money or other property.

Neither Asylum Aid nor the Helen Bamber Foundation have received any complaints with regard to our fundraising activities in 2024.

PUBLIC BENEFIT

In setting Asylum Aid's objectives and planning its activities, the Board of Trustees has given careful consideration to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit. In particular, the Board of Trustees considers how planned activities will contribute to its stated aims and objectives. The benefits that Asylum Aid brings to those seeking asylum and those already granted refugee status and their dependents are:

- the relief of their conditions of need, hardship or distress (including providing them with legal advice and representation);
- the preservation and protection of their physical and mental health;
- the advancement of their education and training so as to further their rehabilitation and integration within a new community;
- the advancement of public knowledge on the situation of asylum seekers and refugees and on the conditions that give rise to refugee movements, as well as on all issues concerning gross violation of human rights, torture and atrocities and the impact on people who experience such suffering;
- assisting them in other such exclusively charitable ways as the Charity determines from time to time.

STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TRUSTEES

The Trustees (who are also directors of Asylum Aid for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' annual report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice). Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year that give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- State whether applicable UK Accounting Standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the finance statements;
- Prepare the finance statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are 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 Trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

The Helen Bamber Foundation is the sole member of the charity. As such it guarantees to contribute an amount not exceeding £5 to the assets of the charity in the event of winding up.

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

The trustees' annual report has been approved by the trustees on 15 September 2025 and signed on their behalf by

John Scampion
Treasurer

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF ASYLUM AID

OPINION

We have audited the financial statements of Asylum Aid (the 'charitable company') for the year ended 31 December 2024 which comprise the statement of financial activities, balance sheet, statement of cash flows and notes to the financial statements, including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- Give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 December 2024 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure for the year then ended
- Have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice
- Have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006

BASIS FOR OPINION

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

CONCLUSIONS RELATING TO GOING CONCERN

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on Asylum Aid's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

OTHER INFORMATION

The other information comprises the information included in the trustees' annual report other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

OPINIONS ON OTHER MATTERS PRESCRIBED BY THE COMPANIES ACT 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- The information given in the trustees' annual report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- The trustees' annual report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

MATTERS ON WHICH WE ARE REQUIRED TO REPORT BY EXCEPTION

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the trustees' annual report. We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- Adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- The financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- Certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- We have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- The directors were not entitled to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the small companies regime and take advantage of the small companies' exemptions in preparing the trustees' annual report and from the requirement to prepare a strategic report.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRUSTEES

As explained more fully in the statement of trustees' responsibilities set out in the trustees' annual report, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

AUDITOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE AUDIT OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud are set out below.

CAPABILITY OF THE AUDIT IN DETECTING IRREGULARITIES

In identifying and assessing risks of material misstatement in respect of irregularities, including fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations, our procedures included the following:

- We enquired of management, and the audit and risk committee, which included obtaining and reviewing supporting documentation, concerning the charity's policies and procedures relating to:
- Identifying, evaluating, and complying with laws and regulations and whether they were aware of any instances of non-compliance;
- Detecting and responding to the risks of fraud and whether they have knowledge of any actual, suspected, or alleged fraud;
- The internal controls established to mitigate risks related to fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations.
- We inspected the minutes of meetings of those charged with governance.
- We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory framework that the charity operates in, focusing on those laws and regulations that had a material effect on the financial statements or that had a fundamental effect on the operations of the charity from our professional and sector experience.

- We communicated applicable laws and regulations throughout the audit team and remained alert to any indications of non-compliance throughout the audit.
- We reviewed any reports made to regulators.
- We reviewed the financial statement disclosures and tested these to supporting documentation to assess compliance with applicable laws and regulations.
- We performed analytical procedures to identify any unusual or unexpected relationships that may indicate risks of material misstatement due to fraud.
- In addressing the risk of fraud through management override of controls, we tested the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments, assessed whether the judgements made in making accounting estimates are indicative of a potential bias and tested significant transactions that are unusual or those outside the normal course of business.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

A further description of our responsibilities is available on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

USE OF OUR REPORT

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Joanna Pittman (Senior statutory auditor)

26 September 2025

for and on behalf of Sayer Vincent LLP, Statutory Auditor

110 Golden Lane, LONDON, EC1Y 0TG

Statement of financial activities (incorporating an income and expenditure account)

For the year ended 31 December 2024 Company no. 02513874

	Note	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2024 Total £	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2023 Total £
Income from:							
Donations and legacies	2	594,835	401,245	996,080	305,301	403,473	708,774
Charitable activities							
Legal Aid Services	3	244,401	-	244,401	155,115	-	155,115
Other Legal Aid Services (Work in progress)	3	583,520	-	583,520	247,699	-	247,699
Ramfel	3	38,147	-	38,147	57,318	-	57,318
Westminster CAB	3	124,745	-	124,745	117,191	-	117,191
MLP Income	3	-	251,104	251,104	-	398,461	398,461
Other income		37,081	-	37,081	38,937	-	38,937
Total income		1,622,729	652,349	2,275,078	921,561	801,934	1,723,495
Expenditure on:							
Raising funds	4a	69,983	-	69,983	46,545	-	46,545
Charitable activities							
Legal Aid Services/Westminster CAB		900,743	684,078	1,584,821	600,154	556,662	1,156,816
Total expenditure		970,726	684,078	1,654,804	646,699	556,662	1,203,361
Net income for the year and net movement in funds	5	652,003	(31,729)	620,274	274,862	245,272	520,134
Reconciliation of funds:							
Total funds brought forward		765,343	292,746	1,058,089	490,481	47,474	537,955
Total funds carried forward		1,417,346	261,017	1,678,363	765,343	292,746	1,058,089

All of the above results are derived from continuing activities. There were no other recognised gains or losses other than those stated above. Movements in funds are disclosed in Note 12a to the financial statements.

Balance sheets

As at 31 December 2024

Company no. 02513874

	Note	£	2024 £	£	2023 £
Fixed assets:					
Tangible assets	8		23,708		13,184
			<u>23,708</u>		<u>13,184</u>
Current assets:					
Work in progress		1,066,760		483,240	
Debtors	9	106,830		76,843	
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>1,001,531</u>		<u>966,018</u>	
		2,175,121		1,526,101	
Liabilities:					
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	10	(462,291)		(481,196)	
		<u>(462,291)</u>		<u>(481,196)</u>	
Net current assets			1,712,830		1,044,905
Creditors: amounts falling due in more than one year		(58,174)			
		<u>(58,174)</u>			
Net Assets			<u>1,678,363</u>		<u>1,058,089</u>
The funds of the charity:					
Restricted income funds	11a	-	261,017	-	292,746
Unrestricted income funds:					
Designated funds (Work in Progress)		1,066,761		483,240	
Designated Funds – Rent Free Period		(58,174)		-	
Designated- New Premise Fund		-		25,000	
General funds		408,759		257,103	
		<u>408,759</u>		<u>257,103</u>	
Total unrestricted funds			1,417,346		765,343
Total charity funds			1,678,363		1,058,089

Approved by the trustees on 15 September 2025 and signed on their behalf by

John Scampion
Treasurer

Statement of cash flows

As at 31 December 2024

	2024	2023
£	£	£
Cash flows from operating activities		
Net income for the year and net movement in funds (as per the statement of financial activities)	620,274	520,134
Depreciation charges	5,514	2,554
(Increase) in debtors	(613,507)	(284,713)
Increase in creditors	39,270	174,081
Net cash provided by operating activities	51,551	412,056
Cash flows from investing activities:		
Purchase of fixed assets	(16,038)	(13,122)
Net cash (used in) investing activities	(16,038)	(13,122)
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year	35,513	398,934
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year	966,018	567,084
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year	1,001,531	966,018

Analysis of cash and cash equivalents and of net debt

	At 1 January 2024	Cash flows	Other non-cash changes	At 31 December 2024
	£	£	£	£
Cash at bank and in hand	966,018	35,513	-	1,001,531
Total cash and cash equivalents	966,018	35,513	-	1,001,531

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 31 December 2024

1 Accounting policies

a) Statutory information

Asylum Aid is a charitable company limited by guarantee and is incorporated in the United Kingdom.

The registered office address and principal place of business is 26 – 30 Westland Place, London, N1 7JH

b) Basis of preparation

The financial statements of the charitable company have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS102) "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)", Financial Reporting Standard 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" and the Companies Act 2006.

Key judgements that the charitable company has made which have a significant effect on the accounts include the estimation of the value of the work in progress.

The Trustees do not consider that there are any sources of estimation uncertainty at the reporting date that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next reporting period.

The charitable company meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy or note.

As of July 2023, the activities of the Migrant Law Project (MLP) were transferred to Asylum Aid from Islington Law Centre. The transfer included staff working on the project, £200,000 in unrestricted funds to fund the next two years of the project, unspent restricted project funding allocated to the project, and work in progress on project files totalling approximately a further £200,000.

c) Going concern

The trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern due to the ongoing support of the parent company.

d) Income

Income is recognised when:

- 1) The charity has entitlement to the funds
- 2) Any performance conditions attached to the income have been met
- 3) It is probable that the income will be received
- 4) The amount can be measured reliably.

1 Accounting policies (continued)

Income from government and other grants, whether 'capital' grants or 'revenue' grants, is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the grants have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably and is not deferred. Income received in advance for the provision of specified service is deferred until the criteria for income recognition are met.

We recognise work done under the legal aid contract where the criteria for entitlement to payment under the legal aid regulations are met.

e) Donations of gifts, services and facilities

Donated professional services and donated facilities are recognised as income when the charity has control over the item or received the service, any conditions associated with the donation have been met, the receipt of economic benefit from the use by the charity of the item is probable and that economic benefit can be measured reliably. In accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102), volunteer time is not recognised so refer to the trustees' annual report for more information about their contribution.

f) Interest receivable

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the bank.

g) Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are available to spend on activities that further any of the purposes of charity. Restricted funds are donations which the donor has specified are to be solely used for particular areas of the charity's work or for specific projects being undertaken by the charity. Designated funds are unrestricted funds earmarked by the trustees for particular purposes.

h) Expenditure and irrecoverable VAT

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is classified under the following activity headings:

- Costs of raising funds comprise of costs incurred by the charitable company in inducing third parties to make voluntary contributions to it, as well as the cost of any activities with a fundraising purpose.
- Expenditure on charitable activities includes the costs of delivering services and activities undertaken to further the purposes of the charity and their associated support costs.
- Other expenditure represents those items not falling into any other heading.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

1 Accounting policies (continued)

i) Allocation of support costs

Support costs are those functions that assist the work of the charity but do not directly undertake charitable activities. Support costs include office costs, finance, personnel, payroll and governance costs which support the charity's programmes and activities. These costs have been allocated between cost of raising funds and expenditure on charitable activities. The bases on which support costs have been allocated are set out in note 4.

j) Tangible fixed assets

Items of equipment are capitalised where the purchase price exceeds £250. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write down the cost of each asset to its estimated residual value over its expected useful life. The depreciation rates in use are as follows:

- Office equipment 25% straight line basis

k) Work in progress

Work in progress is valued at the average hourly rate paid by the Legal Aid Agency less any necessary provisions.

l) Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

m) Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

n) Creditors and provisions

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

o) Pensions

Employees of the charity are entitled to join the Pensions Trust Pension Scheme which is funded by contributions from employees and the charity as employer. The pension charge recorded in these accounts is the amount of contributions payable in the accounting year.

Notes to the financial statements

2. Income from donations and grants

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2024 Total £	2023 Total £
Donations				
Individual donations	68,715	-	68,715	100,547
Corporate donations	50,000	92,000	142,000	159,150
Legacies	300,000	-	300,000	-
Grants				
Strategic Legal Fund	-	14,040	14,040	30,000
The Legal Education Foundation	-	53,000	53,000	46,000
Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust	-	2,500	2,500	10,000
London Legal Support Trust	10,000	-	10,000	-
Trust for London (Statelessness)	-	28,850	28,850	17,920
National Lottery Community Fund	-	-	-	9,653
Disrupt Foundation	50,000	-	50,000	50,000
Unbound Philanthropy	20,000	-	20,000	25,000
Open Society Foundation	60,000	20,000	80,000	80,000
Good Law Ltd	-	-	-	29,040
Choose Love	-	50,000	50,000	-
Justice Together Initiative	-	95,855	95,855	88,860
Society of the Holy Child Jesus	20,000	-	20,000	-
BBC Children In Need	-	25,000	25,000	-
Evan Cornish	-	12,000	12,000	-
Anonymous	15,000	8,000	23,000	61,500
Other	1,120	-	1,120	1,104
	594,835	401,245	996,080	708,774

(2023 Unrestricted £305,301, Restricted £403,473)

3. Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2024 Total £	2023 Total £
Legal Aid Claims	244,401	-	244,401	155,115
Other Legal Aid Claims Work in Progress	583,521	-	583,521	247,699
Ramfel	38,147	-	38,147	57,318
Westminster CAB Project	124,745	-	124,745	117,191
MLP Income	-	251,104	251,104	398,461
Total income from charitable activities	990,814	251,104	1,241,918	975,784

(2023: Unrestricted £577,323, restricted £398,461)

4a. Analysis of expenditure (current year)

	Basis of allocation	Raising funds	Charitable Activities	Governance costs	Support costs	2024 Total
			Legal Aid Services			
Staff costs (Note 6)	Staff time	46,040	959,702	19,966	81,718	1,107,426
Direct costs	Direct	6,713	297,748	-	-	304,461
Premises costs	Staff time	-	-	-	131,538	131,538
Staff recruitment/training	Staff time	-	-	-	8,855	8,855
Office costs/comms	Staff time	-	-	1,284	85,176	86,460
Depreciation	Staff time	-	-	-	5,514	5,514
Audit & Accountancy fees	Staff time	-	-	10,550	-	10,550
		<u>52,753</u>	<u>1,257,450</u>	<u>31,800</u>	<u>312,801</u>	<u>1,654,804</u>
Support costs		15,640	297,161	-	(312,801)	-
Governance costs		1,590	30,210	(31,800)	-	-
Total expenditure 2024		<u>69,983</u>	<u>1,584,821</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,654,804</u>

(2023 Unrestricted £577,323, restricted £398,461)

4b. Analysis of expenditure (prior year)

	Basis of allocation	Raising funds	Charitable Activities	Governance costs	Support costs	2023 Total
			Legal Aid Services			
		£	£	£	£	£
Staff costs (Note 6)	Staff time	34,984	693,005	19,250	31,212	778,451
Direct costs	Direct	2,354	288,877	-	-	291,231
Premises costs	Staff time	-	-	-	39,325	39,325
Staff recruitment/training	Staff time	-	-	-	15,414	15,414
Office costs/comms	Staff time	-	-	808	64,778	65,586
Depreciation	Staff time	-	-	-	2,554	2,554
Audit & Accountancy fees	Staff time	-	-	10,800	-	10,800
		<u>37,338</u>	<u>981,882</u>	<u>30,858</u>	<u>153,283</u>	<u>1,203,361</u>
Support costs		7,664	145,619	-	(153,283)	-
Governance costs		1,543	29,315	(30,858)	-	-
Total expenditure 2023		<u>46,545</u>	<u>1,156,816</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,203,361</u>

5 Net income for the year

This is stated after charging	2024	2023
	£	£
Depreciation	5,514	2,554
Auditor's remuneration:		
Audit fees	9,400	9,000
Corporation Tax Fees	1,150	-

6 Analysis of staff costs, trustee remuneration and expenses, and the cost of key management personnel

Staff costs were as follows:	2024	2023
	£	£
Salaries and wages	976,128	686,357
Social security costs	95,521	64,707
Employer's contribution to defined contribution pension schemes	35,777	27,387
	1,107,426	778,451

One employee received employee benefits (excluding employer pension and employer's national insurance (of between £70,000 and £80,000)). (2023: none)

The total employee benefits including pension contributions of the key management personnel were £119,529 (2023: £111,961).

The charity trustees were not paid or received any benefits from employment with the Trust in the period (2023: £nil) neither were they reimbursed expenses during the period (2023: £nil). No charity trustee received payment for professional or other services supplied to the charity (2023: £nil).

Staff numbers

The average number of employees (head count based on number of staff employed) during the period was as follows:

	2024	2023
	No.	No.
Raising funds	2	2
Charitable activities	25	20
Support & Governance	2	2
	29	24

7 Taxation

The charitable company is exempt from corporation tax as all its income is charitable and is applied for charitable purposes.

8 Tangible fixed assets

	Office equipment £	Total £
Cost		
At the start of the year	16,791	16,791
Additions in year	16,037	16,037
At the end of the year	<u>32,828</u>	<u>32,828</u>
Depreciation		
At the start of the year	3,606	3,606
Charge for the year	5,514	5,514
At the end of the year	<u>9,120</u>	<u>9,120</u>
Net book value		
At the end of the year	<u>23,708</u>	<u>23,708</u>
At the start of the year	<u>13,185</u>	<u>13,185</u>

9 Debtors

	2024 £	2023 £
Trade debtors	67,523	56,795
Other debtors	-	385
Prepayments	21,807	9,663
Accrued income	17,500	10,000
	<u>106,830</u>	<u>76,843</u>

10 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2024 £	2023 £
Trade creditors	104,296	12,034
Taxation and social security	48,305	19,289
Other creditors	84,500	25,948
Amounts owed to Helen Bamber Foundation	54,090	65,095
Accruals	24,220	40,219
Deferred income	146,880	318,611
	<u>462,291</u>	<u>481,196</u>

10 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year (continued)

Deferred income

	2024	2023
	£	£
Balance at the beginning of the year	318,611	69,061
Amount released to income in the year	(191,333)	(69,061)
Amount deferred in the year	19,602	318,611
	146,880	318,611

Deferred income comprises grants received from Corporates and Trusts and foundations in the current year which relate to a future period. It also contains the Migrant Law Project grant which will fund that

11a Analysis of net assets between funds (current year)

	General unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	Total funds
	£	£	£	£
Tangible fixed assets	23,708	-	-	23,708
Net current assets	385,051	1,066,761	261,017	1,712,829
Creditors: amounts falling due in more than one year	-	(58,174)	-	(58,174)
Net assets at 31 December 2024	408,759	1,008,587	261,017	1,678,363

11b Analysis of net assets between funds (prior year)

	General unrestricted	Designated	Restricted	Total funds
	£	£	£	£
Tangible fixed assets	13,184	-	-	13,184
Net current assets	243,919	508,240	292,746	1,044,905
Net assets at 31 December 2023	257,103	508,240	292,746	1,058,089

12a Movements in funds (current year)

	At 1 January 2024	Income & gains	Expenditure & losses	At 31 December 2024
	£	£	£	£
Restricted funds:				
Legal Aid Services	79,288	401,245	480,533	-
Migrants' Law Project	213,458	251,104	203,545	261,017
Total restricted funds	292,746	652,349	684,078	261,017
Unrestricted funds:				
General funds	257,103	1,039,208	887,552	408,759
Designated – Rent Free Period	-	-	58,174	(58,174)
Designated -work-in-progress	483,240	583,521	-	1,066,761
Designated -New premise fund	25,000	-	25,000	-
Total unrestricted funds	765,343	1,622,729	970,726	1,417,346
Total funds	1,058,089	2,275,078	1,654,804	1,678,363

12b Movements in funds (prior year)

	At 1 January 2024	Income & gains	Expenditure & losses	At 31 December 2024
	£	£	£	£
Restricted funds:				
Legal Aid Services	47,474	404,134	372,320	79,288
Migrants' Law Project	-	397,800	184,342	213,458
Total restricted funds	47,474	801,934	556,662	292,746
Unrestricted funds:				
General funds	229,940	673,862	646,699	257,103
Designated – Rent Free Period	235,541	247,699	-	483,240
Designated -work-in-progress	25,000	-	-	25,000
Designated -New premise fund	25,000	-	25,000	-
Total unrestricted funds	490,481	921,561	646,699	765,343
Total funds	537,955	1,723,495	1,203,361	1,058,089

Legal Aid Services

The income of the charity includes grants received for specific restricted projects, including the Migrant Law Project. The restricted funds have enabled the charity to continue in its campaign of providing legal representation and access to justice and specifically have allowed the charity to protect vulnerable needy people against the backdrop of an ever more challenging external environment

13 Legal status of the charity

The charity is a company limited by guarantee incorporated in England and has no share capital. Each member is liable to contribute a sum not exceeding £1 in the event of the charity being wound up.

14 Related party transactions

The total amount of donations received in 2024 from Trustees or parties related to them was £0. (2023: £5,000 from 1 trustee).

There are no donations from related parties which are outside the normal course of business and no restricted donations from related parties.

15 Ultimate Controlling Party

The company's ultimate parent undertaking and controlling party is Helen Bamber Foundation, a registered charity (charity number 1149652) and company limited by guarantee (company number 08186281). Copies of the financial statements are available from Companies House and the Charity Commission.



Charity number: 328729
Company number: 02513874