

ANNUAL REPORT



2023 - 2024

 @North West Migrants Forum
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 2nd & 3rd floor, Embassy Building,
3 Strand Road
Derry/Londonderry, BT48 7BH

ADMINISTRATION DETAILS

North West Migrants Forum

Charity Number: 103178

Principal Address: 2nd & 3rd Floor, Embassy Building, 3 Strand Road, Derry, BT48 7BH

Auditor: Laurie Duffy; FCA L Duffy & Co Chartered Accountants & Registered Auditors, 12 Queen Street, Derry, BT48 7EG

Bank: Danske Bank

Chairperson: Marija Stuke

Treasurer: Irina Chernichenko

Board Members: Munadel Bazzara, Ibrahim Dandousha, Cristina Kozak, Idris Mohammed, Charlie Dillon (until August 31 2023), Philip McDermott (from September 19 2023), Paul Sceeny (from September 19 2023) – Secretary (also from September 19 2023)

Policy and Strategic Planning Advisors: Hannah Davies, Philip McDermott (also Director from September 19 2023), Beverly Simpson and Mike Waldron



About Us

With over 50 volunteers and seven staff, the North West Migrants Forum (NWMF) is the leading anti-racism charity in the north west. In the 13 years of its existence, the organisation has developed a wide range of programmes to assist people seeking safety and those granted international protection, students and indeed anyone from a minority ethnic background who has come to live and work in the Derry City and Strabane District and beyond.



Our Vision

Our vision is to change lives and transform the narrative around black and minoritised communities.

We do this through tackling prejudice and stereotypes, normalising access to services and promoting respect, fairness, equality and success.

Our Mission

Our key mission is to promote the benefit of migrants, international students, people seeking international protection, people granted international protection and their families.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Marija Stuke

It is with great pleasure and gratitude that I present to you the annual report for the North West Migrants Forum.

This past financial year has been one of progress and of change for our organisation. It was also a year packed with achievements that continued to underscore our collective commitment to fostering positive change.

As the charity's work, scope and administrative requirements expanded, it was agreed that we had outgrown our premises at Fountain Street. Following discussions with our landlord, Martin Bros, we decided that The Embassy Building would be a better fit. We moved on October 3 2023 and quickly settled in to our new home.

In April 2023 we welcomed Conor Sharkey to the team as our Media and Communications Officer while in early 2024 both our Community Integration and Welfare Officer Al Albawab and Programmes Manager Naomi Green tendered their resignations. Their departures were met with sadness and I want to take this opportunity to thank them for the sizeable contributions they made during their time with the North West Migrants Forum.

With conflicts erupting or escalating in the Middle East, in Europe, in Africa and elsewhere, countless individuals and families were forced to seek safety outside their home countries. Many of them found their way to the north west, leading to an increased demand for our support services. On a daily basis dozens of individuals and families sought us out to assist them with important issues such as housing, GPs and dentists, education, visas and financial matters.

Away from the day-to-day support we provided, we continued to deliver our big calendar events like the Advancing Race Equality Awards, our Black History Summit and our annual fun day.

Our Social Café continued to be a vital outlet for reducing isolation, building connections, holding activities, workshops and meetings as well as language skill improvement.

The dedication of our team meant we were also able to continue progressing projects such as Let's Talk Race and Racism, Racial Justice in NI: Influencing Lasting Change, Black Heritage: Hidden History in Northern Ireland, New Beginnings: Building Pathways to a Shared Future and the youth-led Future Communities project.

Add to all that meetings with top-level officials within the UK and Irish governments, fact-finding trip to Wales, a visit to London to collect the

'Good For Me, Good For FE' award we won for our collaboration with the North West Regional College and you get a picture of just how much we have achieved.

As Chairperson, I extend my gratitude to our dedicated team, partners and supporters. Together we are creating a positive and lasting impact on lives and communities across the North West and beyond.



DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMMES'S REPORT

Lilian Seenoi Barr

2023-24 was another year of change, growth and impact for the North West Migrants Forum, as we reflected on more than a decade of supporting migrant and minoritised communities in Derry and beyond, as well as looking forward to how NWMF's activities might evolve in the coming years.

Alongside an expansion of our community welfare services and English language support and continuing education programmes, we completed the 'development' phase of our groundbreaking Black History project that will uncover and celebrate Black history and heritage within (especially) the north of Ireland. One of the highlights of that work was meeting with officials from the Welsh

Government and DARPL programme to explore how anti-racism has been embedded into the schools' Curriculum for Wales. We look forward to encouraging similar approaches here as this project enters its next phase.

Another of our key projects reaching a milestone phase was the campaign for free movement rights throughout the island of Ireland and end to the 'invisible hard border'. We were grateful to the Communication Workers' Union for hosting our largest townhall event to-date at their conference centre beside Croke Park, where we welcomed TDs and Senators from each of the main government and opposition parties. We continued to make the case for changes to the Common Travel Area (CTA) arrangements to both the British and Irish governments, as well as working with our colleagues at the Committee for the Administration of Justice (CAJ) to counter misinformation about asylum seekers crossing the land border.

We held our third, and biggest, Advancing Racial Equality Awards ceremony – filling the Ballroom at the Everglades Hotel with a night of celebration and entertainment, as well as a serious message about promoting inclusivity and diversity. Our annual Black History Summit has also now become a regular fixture, hosted this time by Ulster University at Magee campus.

As well as welcoming two new Board members, we moved from our previous base in Fountain Street into the iconic Embassy Building. As well as being closer to Derry's main transport hub, this new location gives us more space that will better suit our long-term needs and exciting plans for expansion. Reflecting our drive for further growth, we also engaged an external HR services provider that can offer us round-the-clock professional advice as well an online portal that holds staff

records in one place and allows them to log their hours and leave requests more seamlessly.

None of this vital work would be possible without the dedication of our staff, volunteers, partners and supporters, and I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all of you.

Thank you for being part of the NWMF journey.



OUR FUNDERS





KEY HIGHLIGHTS

2023-2024

Growing conflict and record displacement meant it was another extremely busy 12 months for the North West Migrants Forum. Despite the challenges we were still able to progress our campaigns, deliver flagship events like our Black History Summit, hold family fun days and community workshops alongside our normal day-to-day support and services.

DUBLIN TOWNHALL MEETING

The Common Travel Area was the focus of a day of discussion hosted by ourselves in the Communications Workers' Union, William Norton House, Dublin, on September 21 2023.

In conjunction with the Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ) and the Irish Network Against Racism (INAR), the townhall meeting examined the challenges the Common Travel Area (CTA) creates for some people living on the island of Ireland.



BLACK HISTORY SUMMIT

Our annual Black History Summit for 2023 took place in Ulster University's Magee campus, Derry, on October 21 2023.

Around 100 people gathered in the Great Hall to hear why the diverse experiences of black and minority ethnic communities and individuals should be taught as part of the school curriculum.

Among the speakers was Dr Ebun Joseph along with Dr Hyab Yohannes and Professor Charlotte Williams who travelled from Wales for the Summit.

CHRISTMAS PARTY

We held our Christmas party in our new home in The Embassy Building on December 14 2023.

It was our first major event in our new centre and over 60 people, including a group of students and their families from Singapore, gathered to enjoy foods from all over the world, including Greece, Iran, Africa and Yemen.

It was a lovely evening with Santa handing out gifts to all the wide-eyed young people.





ADVANCING RACE EQUALITY AWARDS

On March 7 2024 over 300 people gathered in the Everglades Hotel for the 2023 Advancing Race Equality Awards. Nine awards were given out:

- Schools Anti-Racism Ambassadors
- Anti-Racism School of the Year
- Anti-Racism Teacher of the Year
- Community Champion
- Advancing Racial Justice and Fairness
- Anti-Racism Leader of the Year
- Anti-Racism Media of the Year
- Young Leader
- Special Recognition Award

SOCIAL CAFÉ

Our Social Café continued to provide a much-needed outlet for our members, helping reduce isolation and encourage integration and friendship-building. Over the 12 months literally hundreds of people and families dropped in to meet up, enjoy an activity or workshop and to participate in an English language class.



LET'S TALK RACE AND RACISM

Between October 2023 and January 2024 we delivered Let's Talk Race and Racism workshops to seven schools across the city and district, reaching a total of 549 young people.

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION EVENING

On June 12 2023 we gathered in our Fountain Street premises offices to celebrate the work of our volunteers, without whom our charity would not exist. We were joined by Mayor Sandra Duffy and we were delighted to have her with us to say a big thank you to those who keep the wheels of the North West Migrants Forum turning.





REVIEW OF PROGRAMMES & ACTIVITIES

2023-2024

It was a year of change for the North West Migrants Forum as we left our long-time home at Fountain Street and moved to the Embassy Building at 3 Strand Road. This is a review of our main activities and projects, offering an insight into the effectiveness and impact of our initiatives.

Our day-to-day work

Global unrest in Somalia, Sudan, Palestine, Eritrea, Yemen and other countries meant we faced an increased demand for our support services. On a daily basis dozens of individuals and families sought us out to assist them with important issues such as housing, GPs and dentists, education, visas and financial matters.

Thanks to funding from a range of sources we were able to deal with the influx of people and the complex matters they often needed to discuss.

We were also able to provide a variety of workshops aimed at helping those arriving in the north west for the first time meet friends and get to know the city and district better.

With the number of people seeking sanctuary in Northern Ireland on the rise, several high profile politicians and figures agreed to meet us to hear the challenges we as an organisation were facing.

Among those who visited us were Steve Baker MP, SDLP MP Colum Eastwood, DUP MLA Deborah Erskine, Sinn Féin MP Órfhlaith Begley and Chief Commissioner of the Equality Commission Geraldine McGahey who, along with her colleagues, travelled from Belfast to the North West Migrants Forum in August 2023.

Sadly we said goodbye to both our Community Integration and Welfare Officer Al Albawab and Programmes Manager Naomi Green, both of whom departed in early 2024. Their resignations left a significant gap in the organisation and we would take this opportunity to thank them both for the contributions.



Racial Justice in Northern Ireland: Influencing Lasting Change



The impact of our Racial Justice in Northern Ireland project has been significant and far-reaching. Through extensive engagement with a wide range of sectors in the north west, including local councillors, schools, the Police Service of Northern Ireland, Ulster University, and the broader community, we have played a crucial role in fostering peace and inclusivity.

Learning Exchange Trip to Wales

In September 2023 we, along with members of all Northern Ireland's main political parties and representatives from the education sector, embarked on a trip to Cardiff to explore the development of an inclusive curriculum that centres on anti-racism education in schools. Wales, being the first part of the UK to implement an anti-racism action plan and an inclusive curriculum, offered valuable insights for policymakers and community activists working on racial justice initiatives. The experience helped influence decisions and advocate for an inclusive curriculum aimed at tackling racism both in schools and across society. In addition to learning from Welsh institutions that have successfully integrated black history into their curriculum, a key goal of the trip was to establish connections, which was achieved successfully.



Connecting Communities; campaign for change

THE
JOSEPH
ROWNTREE
CHARITABLE
TRUST

Joseph Rowntree

Dublin Townhall Meeting

On September 21 2023 we ran buses from Derry and from

Belfast to the Communications Workers' Union, William Norton House, Dublin.

In conjunction with the Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ) and the Irish Network Against Racism (INAR), the townhall meeting examined the challenges the Common Travel Area (CTA) creates for some people living on the island of Ireland.

As well as a lived experience panel of individuals – some of whom had to apply for a visa just to travel to Dublin – speakers included Chief Commissioner of Northern Ireland's Human Rights Commission Alyson Kilpatrick, Senator Emer Currie, People Before Profit TD Paul Murphy, Daniel Holder of CAJ, Sinn Féin TD Martin Kenny and Shane O'Curry of INAR.

There was significant press coverage in the run-up to the event with the Derry Journal, the Derry News, Derry Daily, Radio Foyle, UTV and the Irish Examiner all picking up on it. This helped us bring the issue of the Common Travel Area to a much wider audience.

On October 25 2023 a joint North West Migrants Forum/CAJ delegation met with representatives from the Irish Government in Dublin. Around the table were officials from the Department of Justice, Department of Foreign Affairs and the Department of the Taoiseach.



And on November 24 we were back in Dublin for what was due to be a follow-up to our September townhall meeting. It had to be postponed however due to the riots which erupted in Dublin city centre on November 23.



Community Engagement in Enniskillen

Black Heritage: The Hidden History in Northern Ireland



The core aim of this project was to widen the scope of engagement with the heritage of Northern Ireland, inviting participation from a wide spectrum of individuals and groups. While it specifically highlights black history and heritage, the broader mission is to enlighten and involve a diverse demographic across Northern Ireland. This project also served as a vital platform for black and ethnic minority communities to acknowledge and celebrate their contributions to Northern Ireland's history and heritage.

Research: The project has unearthed local and national stories through extensive searches in archives and academic papers, bringing forward narratives that have been marginalised or forgotten.

Oral Histories: The project has recorded the experiences of black and mixed heritage individuals in NI, providing personal insights into the lived experiences of these communities. The research findings and discoveries will be meticulously curated into a Black History Exhibition.

Workshops at schools and organisations: A tailored workshop was delivered at schools and organisations aiming to educate the younger generation about black heritage and history.

Development of Black History Curriculum: At the core of our project was the creation of a flexible black history tool, tailored for educational use in schools. This tool has undergone meticulous development, shaped by continuous feedback, review, and refinement.

Black History Summit



Our annual Black History Summit took place in Ulster University's Magee campus, Derry, on October 21 2023.

Around 100 people gathered in the Great Hall to hear why the diverse experiences of black and minority ethnic communities and individuals should be taught as part of the school curriculum.

The Summit came hot on the heels of our learning exchange visit to Wales.

Among the speakers was Dr Ebun Joseph, a Nigerian-Irish lecturer, author and consultant and now Special Rapporteur for Ireland's National Action Plan Against Racism. Dr Joseph spoke passionately about the need for black education to be embedded in the school curriculum as did Dr Hyab Yohannes and Professor Charlotte Williams who travelled from Cardiff for the Summit.

Those in attendance were told that it was really important the lessons from the event did not stay in the room. *"Share them with your families, friends, share them on your social media,"* said our Chief Executive Lilian Seenoi Barr. *"The more we share, the greater the chance we have of building a more inclusive society."*

New Beginnings: Building Pathways to a shared future



Through this project, we were able to facilitate discussions within schools and communities to raise awareness about race and racism, emphasising the imperative of combating racial inequality. These workshops were delivered at: St Theresa's Primary School, Sion Mills Primary School, Edward's Primary School, Model Primary School, St Anne's Primary school, Hazelwood College and Lisneal College. Some additional workshops were also delivered at: Housing Services Forum/Housing Executive office and PTA Long Tower Primary School, Derry.



A Fairer Future: Migrant Justice Fund



Our joint project with the Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ) took off in February 2024 with the hiring of our Joint Project Research and Campaigns worker Shannon Doherty. Shannon hit the ground running in her role and has become a welcome addition in both organisations.

A key outcome of this project is to centre and embed opportunities for black and minoritised people to become more engaged in participatory politics across all areas of policy in an all-Ireland basis. The project work will particularly focus on bridging the gap between lived experience expertise and legal and policy expertise in NI.

It will increase confidence and capabilities of people with lived experience, develop permanent capacity among racially minoritised communities to campaign and achieve change in racial justice policies.

The project will ensure public discussion of migration issues within the context of the Common Travel Area and hostile environment is better informed, by highlighting human impact experience.

Social Café

With the number of individuals seeking sanctuary in Northern Ireland on the rise, our Social Café continued to be a vital part of our projects.



The primary aim of this initiative was to bridge cultural gaps and cultivate inclusivity and community engagement among a diverse range of individuals. But with the move to our new premises we were able to develop our Social Café into much more than that. It became a classroom, a pool hall, a friendship circle, a youth club, a creative place and most importantly, a safe space.



Coshquin Family Fun Day



Our annual Family Fun Day took place in Coshquin on May 14 2023 and was a fantastic gathering that brought the community together for a day of enjoyment and connection. With activities for everyone, including games, crafts and a variety of food options, there was something for all ages to enjoy. The air was filled with laughter as families explored the stalls, the bouncy castles and took part in the drumming workshop provided by Wilson.

The energy and sense of community made the Coshquin Family Fun Day a memorable experience for all who attended.



Future Communities, Youth Leadership Development



Following the awarding of £150,000 from the Co-Op Foundation we were able to develop our Summer Club. We recruited youth workers Adrián Baena, Aoife Greenberg and Dearbhla Herron who, along with some of our members, reached out to children aged seven to 16 across the city and district.

The children spent the summer months enjoying wall climbing, playing sports, visiting the local bowling alley and cinema and generally engaging in activities that benefitted both their mental and physical health.



The aim of the Summer Club was to break down barriers, bring young people together and give them a safe place where they could have fun and make friends. They were also given the opportunity to build connections with people from a range of places and backgrounds, fundamentally providing them with a host of skills and experiences to build a more inclusive and empowered future.

To watch them develop in confidence and create lasting friendships was very rewarding for everyone associated with the North West Migrants Forum.





Mothers and Babies Group



January 2024 saw our first gathering of our new Mum and Baby Group, under the expert watch of Western Trust Health Visitors Donna McNally and Cheryl McElhinney.

Held each Friday morning, the Mother and Baby Group brought fun and giggles to the North West Migrants Forum.

The aim of the project was to reduce isolation and creating connections. From music and dance mornings to making play dough to handing out halal food packages during Ramadan, the Mum and Baby Group quickly became a breath of fresh air for everyone involved in the North West Migrants Forum.

By their own admission, Donna and Cheryl said it was the highlight of their week with “Fridays full of fun, laughter, singing and dancing”.

“We work in a constantly changing environment, interacting with families who have diverse beliefs, life experiences and culture. This helps us as health professionals learn, listen and understand their needs and adjust our practice accordingly to ensure high quality care delivery.”



Advancing Race Equality Awards



On March 7 2024 around 300 people from all sections of society gathered in the Everglades Hotel for the 2024 Advancing Race Equality Awards.

It was a memorable night for many – those who collected winner and runners-up trophies and those there representing sponsors, organisations or who were there to cheer on a colleague.

The host, comedian and TikTok star Fabu D, better known as Black Paddy, put on quite a show, keeping the audience entertained throughout.

Speaking after the awards, the internet celebrity said he was humbled to be asked to host such an inspirational event.

“This has been one of the best occasions of my life. The organisers, the participants, the speakers, the sponsors - everyone should take a bow. I am so grateful to have been asked to do this and it has been incredible to meet so many people working every day to create a better world. An amazing event, just amazing.”

The winners were:

- **Schools Anti-Racism Ambassadors: Strabane Academy**
- **Anti-Racism School of the Year: North West Regional College**
- **Anti-Racism Teacher of the Year: Edel Sweeney, Oakgrove PS**
- **Community Champion: Hilda Orr**
- **Advancing Racial Justice and Fairness: MSCNI**
- **Anti-Racism Leader of the Year: Mukesh Chugh**
- **Anti-Racism Media of the Year: BBC Spotlight NI**
- **Young Leader: Chaudhary Hamza Riaz**
- **Special Recognition Award: Sarah Roberts**

Funders and Sponsors of the Event:



Our American friends

We had two students from the USA spend time with us during the year, Faith Boirard and Finian Falvey.

Faith Boirard, who is studying at Denison University, came to Derry as part of the Conflict, Peace and Transition in Northern Ireland Programme at Ulster University. She immediately became an enthusiastic and dedicated member of our team, working on a variety of projects but focusing on our Black History Project where she helped conduct oral history research. Faith also took part in our school visits and assisted with our Common Travel Area campaign.

Finnian Falvey came to us from St Olaf College in Minnesota. Like Faith, Finnian got stuck in to work at the Forum, helping in various capacities including the organising of our Advancing Race Equality Awards.

We are thankful for their dedication to the Forum during their time here and we are confident they will both excel in whatever career path they choose to pursue.



North West Regional College's Asylum Seeker Scholarship



A developing relationship with the North West Regional College bore fruit in November 2023 when it was announced that our member and volunteer Chukwuka 'Frank' Nwanonenyi was to receive the College's first ever Asylum Seeker Scholarship.

Frank left his native Nigeria in June 2022 and arrived in Derry in January 2023. After seeking support from ourselves and following discussions with the College, Frank was accepted on to an Access Adult Learning Diploma in Health and Welfare.

The collaboration between the College and ourselves caught the eye of the judges in the 'Good For Me, Good For FE Awards', held each year to celebrate the good work of further education colleges.

They invited both parties to the House of Lords in London to collect the 'Charity Partner of the Year' trophy.

Addressing those gathered in the House of Lords, the College's Head of Client Services, Gillian Moss (*pictured bottom left with our Media Officer Conor Sharkey*) said, "Working in partnership, the College and Migrants Forum have been able to open doors to education for many people who otherwise would not have been able to pursue their learning."



Event to mark World Refugee Day

Over 75 people gathered in our former base at Fountain Street on June 20 2023 for an event organised to mark World Refugee Day. The audience comprised representatives from a range of sectors including community, government, education, voluntary and legal.

Host for the day was our former Programmes Manager Naomi Green while guest speakers included Úna Boyd of the Committee on the Administration of Justice, solicitor Suzanne Moran of SRM Legal and our CEO Lilian Seenoi Barr.

Their contributions were followed by a question and answer session for members of the public.

Mrs Barr said, "For us World Refugee Day is a day to reflect on the difficulties facing so many people across the globe. But it is also a day to celebrate the diversity and contribution those seeking sanctuary and those who have already been granted it make to society.

"This event was deeply poignant as we remembered all those who have perished in pursuit of safer, better lives. But it was also an opportunity to inform and to tell the stories of those who have survived and who now want to give back to the communities that have offered them shelter.

"It was a great day and I want to thank all those who came along. Hopefully they left feeling they had learnt something and hopefully they will carry that with them and help us in the goals we are trying to achieve."



North West Migrants Forum

AGM 21 January 2024

Auditor's Report to Members

Financial Statements For Year Ended 31 March 2024

**L Duffy & Co Chartered Accountants
12 Queen Street, Derry**

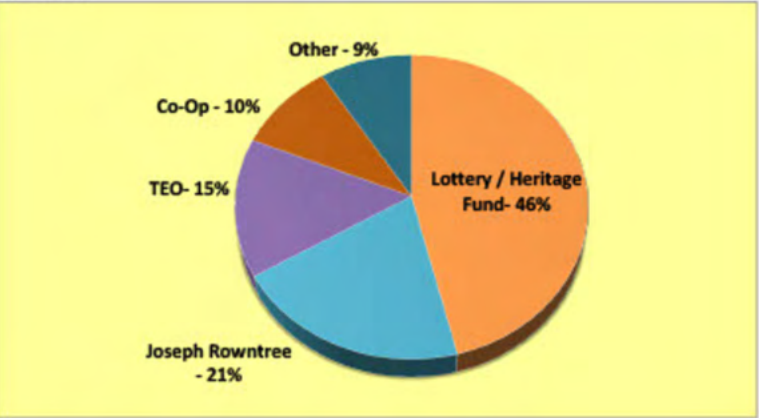
North West Migrants Forum
Income and Expenditure For year to 31 March 2024

Income	2024	2023
National Lottery	101,500	60,000
Lottery Heritage Fund	40,000	50,000
TEO	45,186	25,902
Joseph Rowntree Trust	62,638	76,124
Co-Op Foundation	30,000	
NIHE	5,000	4,999
Community Foundation	12,646	4,847
Ulster University	1,825	
Education Authority	4,000	
Small unrestricted	1,200	
WHST	2,000	
Derry City Council		3,012
St Stephen's Green Trust		27,186
STEP EUSS		5,333
Fundraising and donations	2,423	6,970
	308,418	264,373
Expenditure		
Program Costs	72,543	49,894
Wages and Pensions	231,489	150,992
Rent	27,387	16,835
Insurance	1,996	1,219
Heat and Light	5,890	5,454
Telephone and internet	2,581	2,267
Travel	25,734	6,803
Printing, postage and stationery	673	950
Website and software costs	4,322	5,189
Professional Fees	3,014	96
Audit and accountancy	4,800	4,800
Repairs and cleaning costs	2,526	2,028
Bank charges	119	55
Training and subscriptions	1,195	
Depreciation	5,974	6,075
Total Expenditure	390,243	252,657
Excess Income Over Expenditure/(Expenditure Over Income)	(81,825)	11,716
Funds Brought Forward	117,674	105,958
Total Funds Carried Forward	35,849	117,674
Total Charity Funds		
Unrestricted	19,942	10,508
Restricted	15,907	107,166
	35,849	117,674

North West Migrants Forum
Financial Summary For Year Ended 31 March 2024

Income	2024	%
National Lottery/ Heritage Fund	141,500	46%
Joseph Rowntree	62,638	20%
TEO	45,186	15%
Co-Op Foundation	30,000	10%
Other	29,097	9%
Total income	308,421	100%

Income



Expenditure	2024	%
Programme costs (incl travel)	72,543	19%
Wages	231,489	59%
Rent	27,387	7%
Travel	25,734	7%
Other Costs	33,090	8%
Total expenditure	390,243	100%

Expenditure

