

SLOUGH IMMIGRATION AID UNIT

England & Wales · Charity number 1064293

Details

Other names SIAU

Status Registered

Legal form Trust

Registered 1997-09-09

Register [View on the Charity Commission register](#)

Contact

Address Slough Immigration Aid Unit
First Floor
52 Chalvey High Street
Slough
SL1 2SQ

Phone 01753246730

Email info.siau@gmail.com

Website www.siauslough.org.uk

Activities

Objects: 1) TO RELIEVE HARDSHIP BY THE PROVISION OF FREE LEGAL ADVICE, ASSISTANCE AND REPRESENTATION TO PEOPLE WHO LIVE OR WORK OR STUDY IN SLOUGH AND NEIGHBOURING AREAS, AND THEIR FAMILIES, WHO HAVE DIFFICULTIES CAUSED BY IMMIGRATION, NATIONALITY OR REFUGEE LAW AND PRACTICE AND WHO CANNOT AFFORD ALTERNATIVE REPRESENTATION AND TO COLLABORATE WITH OTHERS TO IMPROVE SUCH ADVICE FOR THE PEOPLE OF SLOUGH2. TO PROVIDE INFORMATION AND EDUCATION ON IMMIGRATION, NATIONALITY AND REFUGEE LAW TO THOSE WHO ARE MOST CLOSELY AFFECTED BY THEM, AND OTHERS

Activities: SIAU provides specialist legal advice, assistance and representation to people who live, work or study in Slough and neighbouring areas, and their families, who have difficulties with UK immigration, nationality or refugee law.

Classification

- **How:** Provides Advocacy/advice/information
- **What:** Education/training, Human Rights/religious Or Racial Harmony/equality Or Diversity
- **Who:** People Of A Particular Ethnic Or Racial Origin

Geography

- **Area of benefit:** SLOUGH
- Slough

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£31,474	£41,291	-	-
2024-03-31	£52,607	£43,224	-	-
2023-03-31	£37,934	£44,366	-	-
2022-03-31	£34,135	£37,989	-	-
2021-03-31	£41,807	£33,128	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
SUE SHUTTER	Chair	2023-10-24
JOHN RAYMOND BARKLEY		2024-10-15
Keren Beddow		2024-04-23
Shabana Saeed		2023-04-25

SLOUGH IMMIGRATION AID UNIT

England & Wales - Charity number 1064293

Accounts



Annual Report

and

Financial Statements

for the year ended 31 March 2025

for

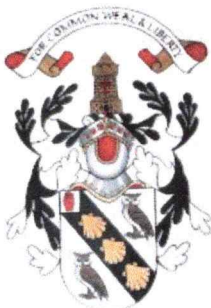
Slough Immigration Aid Unit

funded by:

#OneSlough



**BERKSHIRE
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION**



**The Ian Mactaggart Trust and
the Mactaggart Third Fund**

The Louis Baylis
CHARITABLE TRUST

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for the year ended 31 March 2025

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Slough Immigration Aid Unit
General Information
for the year ended 31 March 2025

CHARITY NAME: SloughImmigration Aid Unit

REGISTERED NUMBER: 1064293

ADDRESS: 52 Chalvey High Street
Slough
Berkshire
SL1 2SQ

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER: Ms PGrevett
Grevett & Co
Certified Accountants
346a Farnham Road
Slough
Berkshire
SL2 1BT

Slough Immigration Aid Unit

Trustees' Report for the year ended 31 March 2025

The Trustees of the Slough Immigration Aid Unit (also known as SIAU) present their Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2025.

Trustees

Ms S M Shutter (Chair)
Mr J R Barkley (Treasurer)
Mrs M A Knibbs (died 8 May 2024)
Ms N Shabir (resigned 14 October 2025)
Ms S Saeed
Ms K Beddow (appointed 23 April 2024)

The Trustees are appointed at Trustees' meetings.

The Charity is governed by the Trust Deed dated 18 December 1996 as amended by Special Resolution on 15 August 1997.

Objects

The objects of the Charity are to relieve hardship by the provision of free legal advice, assistance and representation to people who live or work or study in Slough and neighbouring areas, and their families, who have difficulties caused by immigration, nationality or refugee law and practice and who cannot afford alternative representation; and to collaborate with others to improve such advice for the people of Slough.

In addition other objects are to provide information and education on immigration, nationality and refugee law to those who are most closely affected by them.

This work is clearly for the public benefit, as required under charity law. The Trustees have had regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission when exercising any powers or duties to which the guidance is relevant.

Financial summary for the year

The Charity was funded through unrestricted grants from the Berkshire Community Foundation, the Louis Baylis Charitable Trust, the Foyle Foundation, the Mactaggart Third Fund, the Ian Mactaggart Trust and the London Legal Support Trust from our participation in its sponsored walk. The #OneSlough funding, from Slough council, administered by Slough Council for Voluntary Service, to provide immigration advice to Slough residents, continued through the year.

We continue to seek further grant funding for our work, and to maintain our aim of having at least three months' running costs in reserves. The Charity is also funded by cost recovery fees from some clients whose cases we represent and who do not qualify for a free service and by donations from individuals.

At the year end we held cash at bank of £12,533 which is unrestricted funding held to meet the running costs of the Charity's office and related expenditure.

The Trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

.....*Susan M. Shutter*.....

Ms SM Shutter (Chair)

.....16-12-25.....

Date

SIAU's work during the year April 2024 to March 2025

SIAU's work and aims

SIAU is a charity which provides specialist legal advice, assistance and representation to people who live, work or study in Slough and neighbouring areas, and their families, who have difficulties with UK immigration, nationality or refugee law and practice. We have done this work for over 19 years.

All our advice work is free. We provide a free representation service to people on low incomes, or no income, and who would have qualified financially for Legal Help, when this still existed for immigration matters. Where people's income or savings are too high to qualify for Legal Help, we may operate a cost recovery process, charging a fee towards our costs only – we do not make a profit.

We work closely with other groups giving advice in Slough and provide information and support to them. For the past few years this was formalised through the Slough Community Network, #OneSlough, organised through Slough Council for Voluntary Service. We have helped other voluntary and community organisations to understand the law and to help their members or refer them on to appropriate advice and help.

This year our work largely continued in a hybrid way, following the covid-19 pandemic and its after-effects. Since March 2000, the majority of our work has been done from home, through phone and email and zoom and post. We have got used to working in this way, explaining to clients about sending scans and photos of documents by email to us in support of their cases, and providing information on-line for us to be able to advise. We now normally have a presence in the office at least once a week to collect and retrieve documents and to see some clients, but most of our work continues remotely. There are advantages and challenges in this; we are considering our plans for the longer term.

Why our work is so important

Immigration law is complex and can affect all aspects of people's lives. Access to competent immigration advice and representation can be vital, making the difference between, for example, a couple or family being able to live together in the UK or remain separated on different continents; an asylum seeker having more understanding of the complex process; relatives being able to visit for a family wedding or being refused a visa to come. It may enable people confused and worried by the complexities of the EU Settlement Scheme to understand what they may be able to do to secure their position; or elderly parents being able to live with their adult children here rather than left alone and in need of care abroad.

Ignorance of the law can lead to serious and unnecessary difficulties. Not understanding the basis on which immigration decisions are made, or the importance of using the right forms and providing all the right documentation to the Home Office or to British Visa Application Centres abroad at the right time, can result in applications which could meet the requirements of the immigration rules being refused. The fees for immigration applications were raised again in April 2025, from £2885 to £3029 for settlement as a spouse or partner, from £1048 to £1321 for family extension of stay, from £1846 to £1938 for family entry clearance abroad, making the importance of preparing a case well and getting the application right first time of huge significance. Since April 2015, most immigration applicants also have to pay a 'health surcharge,' which rose to £624 per year in October 2020, and to £1036 in February 2024, for access to the NHS, for which most of them will already be paying through their taxes.

When immigration problems can be solved, people are able to continue their lives without this extra problem. Uncertainty about immigration status can cause and exacerbate poverty and exploitation. People who have at last been allowed to work and thus to support their family will be able to do so, and will have the security not to be exploited at work and to be able to access other rights. The basic security for people knowing that they are able to remain with their family and continue in their life enhances community cohesion and makes for a more unified and stronger society.

SIAU remains the only source of free specialist immigration and nationality law advice based in Slough. Such work is much needed in Slough; around half of its population is of minority ethnic origin, with the largest communities from Kashmir and the Punjab, but there are also significant African, East European, other Asian and Middle Eastern populations, as well as those from the Caribbean. There remains a large unmet need for immigration advice, information and representation.

Changes in the law

The unbroken flow of new laws and proposals on migration and asylum continued, both before and after the July 2024 general election. The Safety of Rwanda (Immigration and Nationality) Bill was introduced on 7 December 2023 and enacted on 25 April 2024. The new government confirmed that it would not operate this policy but put forward yet another bill, the Border Security, Asylum and Immigration Bill, which was introduced on 30 January 2025 and enacted on 2 December 2025. An immigration White Paper, *Restoring control over the immigration system*, was published on 12 May 2025 and the Home Secretary proposed sweeping changes in November 2025. Thus migration and asylum issues have frequently been in the news.

There were three significant Statements of Changes in the immigration rules from April 2024 to March 2025, as well as proposals not yet implemented, causing huge distress and anger. There were three Supreme Court decisions relating to immigration and nationality matters.

The rules on family migration remain extremely complex and restrictive, and the cost of living crisis means many people are unable to meet them as they do not earn £29,000 per year, required since 11 April 2024, to be able to maintain their spouse, or cannot provide the very precise evidence demanded. The financial difficulties caused by the long-term effects of the pandemic have meant fewer people could qualify, even before this rise. This has meant an increase in family members who cannot meet the financial requirement getting permission to stay on the ten-year route to settlement, meaning they will not have a secure "settled" status in the UK for ten years. More people have needed to apply for their immigration fees to be waived, or for their conditions restricting access to public funds to be amended. These applications are labour-intensive, as the Home Office requires extremely detailed financial evidence and explanations.

The 'hostile environment' created for people without immigration rights, officially renamed the 'compliant environment' by Sajid Javid when Home Secretary, continues and affects others who have the right to remain. The most extreme injustice affected many from the 'Windrush generation' – with people still fighting for slow and inadequate compensation. A similar situation has arisen for those who did not apply in time under the EU Settlement Scheme, for whatever reason, as late applications are continuing. From 9 August 2023, such late applications are much more likely to be rejected. The concentration on asylum issues and dealing with the backlog of asylum applications still drains resources from other immigration areas so that family human rights applications are still taking 12 months on average to process. The government's continued use of outsourcing to private sector providers to operate the immigration system, VFS Global abroad, and now TLScontact in the UK, makes the processes less transparent and harder to deal with, and it is more difficult to find out where responsibility for problems caused to individual applicants lies.

SIAU helps people to understand the immigration law and rules and how to satisfy the authorities that they can qualify, or advises them how they can do so, but also explains when they do not. SIAU's work empowers people by helping them to be aware of their position under immigration law and to access their rights and by reducing the need for people to pay often expensive and incompetent consultants.

British nationality law is complicated and people often need help in understanding it, collecting the documents needed and making their applications to become British citizens. Naturalisation is always discretionary and the Home Office changes its criteria for using its discretion without publicity. Again, the naturalisation fee, raised to £1735 on 9 April 2025, is non-refundable if the application is refused. SIAU's specialist workers are able to help people through this maze. We have advised and represented people on applying under the new sections of the law aimed at rectifying historical injustices, and for children's fee waivers.

SIAU's advice work and casework

Our legal advice and representational work through the year continued. Our work is regulated by the Immigration Advice Authority (formerly Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner), no. F200500137. OISC most recently audited SIAU's work in May 2016 and was fully satisfied.

During the year April 2024 – March 2025, SIAU records show we advised 438 people and families and took up 68 new cases to represent to the immigration authorities, with work continuing on many others. Our website had 1206 interactions, according to Google Business Profile statistics.

Our records show that the people we advised or represented were of 77 different nationalities - the largest numbers were again Pakistani (68) and Indian (47), but there were 136 from different African countries and 18 from the Caribbean. There were 68 inquiries from citizens of 15 other EEA countries this year, often those of minority ethnic descent; the largest numbers were Romanian, Polish and Italian (11 each). Other nationalities include Ghanaian (22), Nigerian (20), Zimbabwean (21), South Africa (11), Sri Lankan (10) Algerian (9), and fewer than 9 people from each of the other nationalities.

Many inquiries, 59, related to the EU Settlement Scheme, often including non-EU national family members. Many others related to establishing or acquiring British citizenship, 33 in relation to adult naturalisation, 19 in relation to children, either registering as British or establishing the status of children born here. The majority of the other issues raised were in relation to family matters, 59 about spouses, partners and children in the UK, 34 about entry clearance for spouses, partners and children currently abroad. 47 related to marriage breakdown and domestic abuse and the immigration law effects of escaping a violent relationship or the possibility of qualifying to remain in the UK independently. 38 related to work rights in the UK, including many on the health and care worker visa. 30 were related to asylum or discretionary leave matters. 23 people inquired about qualifying to remain on long residence grounds. 21 people needed advice or help about their entitlement to benefits, or in trying to change the conditions on their stay that they cannot have recourse to public funds, and 17 about applying to waive the Home Office application fees and the immigration health surcharge. Other matters included 14 people wanting advice about family members coming to visit from abroad, and matters such as NHS charges, proving the right to work or to claim benefits and obtaining travel documents and biometric residence permits. Inquiries about setting up UKVI accounts, and accessing eVisas continued through the year, 33, as all immigration records are online only from January 2025.

In relation to the 68 people and families whose cases were represented, they were of 29 different nationalities; the largest numbers were Pakistani (13), Nigerian (7), Zimbabwean (5), Gambian and Indian (4 each). Many couples and families have more than one nationality between them, and non-EU nationals married to, or children of, EU nationals, may have most difficulty in establishing their EU SS status; we represented 7 such cases. Others included permission to remain with settled or British spouses or as parents of such children (18) or entry clearance to join family (2), applying to remain after experiencing domestic abuse (12), long residence applications (12), applying for change of conditions on stay, to be able to access public funds (4) and applying for British citizenship (17). We represented 6 people in successfully obtaining fee waivers for their family and human rights applications, or children's citizenship applications.

The majority of people we advised and helped were local. 202 came from Slough, 37 from Bracknell, 38 from High Wycombe, 18 from Reading, 37 from Maidenhead, 3 from Windsor, others from a bit further afield, such as Wokingham, Ascot, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, and west London, and a few from other areas, usually by email or phone. 60 people self-identified as having a person with a disability in the family, ranging from mobility difficulties to mental health issues, autism, dyslexia, or had a medical condition such as cancer, stroke, diabetes or heart failure.

A family we helped

SIAU advised and represented a Thai woman to apply to remain as the parent of her two young British citizen children. Her British citizen sister-in-law contacted us, concerned that her brother had abandoned his wife and children, and she had not applied to extend her stay. SIAU met her and discussed the events of her marriage. We found that she had been in the UK since 2012 but had not passed the Life in the UK test so had never applied for settlement. She had relied entirely on her husband to deal with bureaucracy and did not know how to find out for herself. She had overstayed her permission as a partner for over two years, so was not able to work or claim anything for herself and her children, relying on intermittent payments from her husband. SIAU represented her in applying for an immigration fee waiver, which was successful, and then for permission to stay to care for her children. After many months, she was granted that permission in December 2024, and was at last able to begin to rebuild her life.

SIAU's staff are highly skilled and experienced, and their expertise can make a significant difference to chances of success in an application. Shabana Bokhari, OISC level 3 regulated, has continued to work for one day a week for most of this year; Parveen Akhter, OISC Level 2 regulated, worked for four days a week until she left in June 2025. Ansa Khan, Level 3 regulated, started work in June 2025. Sue Shutter, level 2 regulated, volunteered more frequently, dealing with advice queries and some casework from home. We have not been able to support admin volunteers, but Nazia Shabir continued to provide vital volunteer casework support, and Rachel Levy from November 2024 to June 2025, supervised by Parveen Akhter. There is a huge demand for our work, which we have mainly continued remotely, through email and phone, throughout this year.

SIAU continues to work with and receive referrals from other local organisations and community groups doing complementary work in Slough and the surrounding area, including Citizens Advice East Berkshire, Slough Refugee Support, Hestia, The Dash Charity (Domestic Abuse Stops Here), SEWAK refuge, until it closed in July 2024, SHOC (Slough Homeless Our Concern), Slough Foodbank, neighbouring Citizens Advice Bureaux and others. The council, Slough Children First, and the Slough MP's office, as well as community groups, may also refer people to us for help and advice. We continue to be a member of the #OneSlough network of voluntary organisations, with regular zoom and in-person meetings facilitated through Slough Council for Voluntary Service. We are represented in their community decorating of a temporary hoarding in Slough High Street. As an IAA-regulated organisation, we hold their Slough Quality Protects Platinum level accreditation.

SIAU's information and lobbying work

SIAU participated in lobbying on changes in the law and rules and in raising issues of concern, such as about the EU Settlement Scheme and the minimum income requirement, through our membership of the Immigration Law Practitioners' Association. We participate in on-line discussion groups of immigration advisers and lawyers, sharing ideas and information. We advise many individuals about their situations and queries.

SIAU expects to continue all our areas of work into the future, as we anticipate the need for it will remain and increase as more parts of the new immigration system and the ever-increasing legislation come into effect. Huge changes are proposed for 2026. The EU settlement and pre-settlement scheme and its June 2021 deadline, and people travelling in small boats across the English Channel and the Mediterranean, and government announcements of huge proposed changes, keep migration in the forefront of public debate. We continue to advise many EU nationals and their families worried about their status, or applying late, along with others having difficulties caused by the family migration rules. The move to "digital by default" so that all immigration records are now online only since the end of 2024 causes many problems and worries, especially for people who are not digitally confident or do not have access to the internet. Domestic abuse remains a large proportion of our casework. Restrictions on eligibility to claim benefits, and the increased level of the Home Office fees have added to difficulties this year, and fee waivers and change of conditions applications remain a significant proportion of our work. We continue mainly working remotely, and rely on email, internet, phone and post, as well as meeting people in the office. We continue to attempt to mitigate some of the worst effects of the laws and practice for our clients and their families and to help them to achieve their aims.

SIAU's staff

Parveen Akhter (to June 2025), Ansa Khan (from June 2025), Shabana Bokhari

SIAU's volunteers

Azhar Chohan, Nazia Shabir, Rachel Levy (November 2024 – June 2025), Sue Shutter

SIAU's Trustees

Sue Shutter (chair), Ray Barkley (treasurer), Nazia Shabir (to October 2025), Shabana Saeed, Keren Beddow

Slough Immigration Aid Unit

**Independent Examiner's Report
to the trustees of Slough Immigration Aid Unit**

I report on the accounts of Slough Immigration Aid Unit for the year ended 31 March 2025, which are set out on pages 9 and 10.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- 1* examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act
- 2* to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act
- 3* to state whether particular matters have come to my attention

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the next statement.

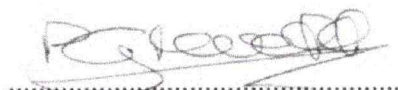
Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

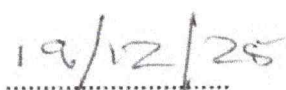
- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
 - * to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act and
 - * to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the requirements of the 2011 Act

have not been met or

- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Ms P Grevett FCCA



Date

Slough Immigration Aid Unit

Income and Expenditure Account
for the year ended 31 March 2025

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2025 Total funds £	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2024 Total funds £
Income						
Grants	23,339	-	23,339	38,666	-	38,666
Donations	1,449	-	1,449	8,451	-	8,451
Fees recovered	3,915	-	3,915	3,870	-	3,870
Rents received	2,470	-	2,470	1,400	-	1,400
	31,173	-	31,173	52,387	-	52,387
Other income						
Deposit account interest	301	-	301	220	-	220
	301	-	301	220	-	220
Total income	31,474	-	31,474	52,607	-	52,607
Expenditure						
Rent	5,700	-	5,700	5,040	-	5,040
Wages	29,700	-	29,700	29,700	-	29,700
Cloud based data system & training	480	-	480	-	-	-
Professional services	-	-	-	-	-	-
Telephone & internet	2,078	-	2,078	1,837	-	1,837
Post & stationery	707	-	707	729	-	729
Professional indemnity insurance	241	-	241	251	-	251
Employers liability insurance	217	-	217	198	-	198
Sundry expenses	460	-	460	414	-	414
Accountancy	1,000	-	1,000	1,000	-	1,000
Membership fees	159	-	159	150	-	150
Professional fees	-	-	-	1,646	-	1,646
Bank charges	74	-	74	74	-	74
Nest pension	475	-	475	475	-	475
Computer equipment written off	-	-	-	1,710	-	1,710
	41,291	-	41,291	43,224	-	43,224
NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	- 9,817	- -	9,817	9,383	-	9,383
Reconciliation of funds						
Total funds brought forward	21,445	-	21,445	12,062	-	12,062
Total funds carried forward	11,628	-	11,628	21,445	-	21,445

Slough Immigration Aid Unit

**Balance Sheet
for the year ended 31 March 2025**

	2025		2024	
	£	£	£	£
FIXED ASSETS				
Computer equipment		-		-
CURRENT ASSETS				
Debtors	520		405	
Prepayments	169		159	
Bank deposit account	10,203		18,478	
Bank account no. 1	198		1,869	
Bank account no. 2	2,132		2,147	
	<u>13,222</u>		<u>23,058</u>	
CURRENT LIABILITIES				
Grant received in advance	-		-	
Creditors and accrued expenses	1,594		1,613	
	<u>1,594</u>		<u>1,613</u>	
NET CURRENT ASSETS		11,628		21,445
NET ASSETS		<u>11,628</u>		<u>21,445</u>
REPRESENTED BY:				
Restricted funds		-		-
Unrestricted funds		11,628		21,445
		<u>11,628</u>		<u>21,445</u>

SLOUGH IMMIGRATION AID UNIT

England & Wales - Charity number 1064293

Accounts



Annual Report
and
Financial Statements

for the year ended 31 March 2024

for

Slough Immigration Aid Unit

funded by:



#OneSlough



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for the year ended 31 March 2024

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Slough Immigration Aid Unit
General Information
for the year ended 31 March 2024

CHARITY NAME: Slough Immigration Aid Unit

REGISTERED NUMBER: 1064293

ADDRESS: 52 Chalvey High Street
Slough
Berkshire
SL1 2SQ

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER: Ms PGrevett
Grevett & Co
Certified Accountants
346a Farnham Road
Slough
Berkshire
SL2 1BT

Slough Immigration Aid Unit

Trustees' Report
for the year ended 31 March 2024

The Trustees of the Slough Immigration Aid Unit (also known as SIAU) present their Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2024.

Trustees

Ms S M Shutter (Chair)
Mr J R Barkley (Treasurer)
Mrs M A Knibbs (died 8 May 2024)
Ms P K Matharu (resigned April 2023)
Ms N Shabir
Ms S Saeed (appointed April 2023)
Ms K Beddow (appointed April 2024)

The Trustees are appointed at Trustees' meetings.

The Charity is governed by the Trust Deed dated 18 December 1996 as amended by Special Resolution on 15 August 1997.

Objects

The objects of the Charity are to relieve hardship by the provision of free legal advice, assistance and representation to people who live or work or study in Slough and neighbouring areas, and their families, who have difficulties caused by immigration, nationality or refugee law and practice and who cannot afford alternative representation; and to collaborate with others to improve such advice for the people of Slough.

In addition other objects are to provide information and education on immigration, nationality and refugee law to those who are most closely affected by them.

This work is clearly for the public benefit, as required under charity law. The Trustees have had regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission when exercising any powers or duties to which the guidance is relevant.

Financial summary for the year

The Charity was funded through several grants, including £8,483 carried forward from a grant of £12,196 from the Access to Justice Foundation Community Justice Fund last year. We also received unrestricted grants from the Berkshire Community Foundation, the Louis Baylis Charitable Trust, UNITE, the Mactaggart Third Fund, the Ian Mactaggart Trust and the London Legal Support Trust from our participation in its sponsored walk. The #OneSloughfunding, administered by Slough Council for Voluntary Service, to provide immigration advice to Slough residents, continued through the year.

We continue to seek further grant funding for our work, and to maintain our aim of having at least three months' running costs in reserves. The Charity is also funded by cost recovery fees from some clients who do not qualify for a free service and by donations from individuals.

At the year end we held cash at bank of £22,494 which is unrestricted funding (including £10,000 from the Ian Mactaggart Trust for 2023-2024), held to meet the running costs of the Charity's office and related expenditure.

The Trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

.....
Susan M. Shutter

Ms SM Shutter (Chair)

.....
7-12-24

Date

SIAU's work during the year April 2023 to March 2024

SIAU's work and aims

SIAU is a charity which provides specialist legal advice, assistance and representation to people who live, work or study in Slough and neighbouring areas, and their families, who have difficulties with UK immigration, nationality or refugee law and practice. We have done this work for over 17 years.

We provide a free service to people on low incomes, or no income, and who would have qualified financially for Legal Help, when this still existed for immigration matters. Where people's income or savings are too high to qualify for Legal Help, we may operate a cost recovery process, charging a fee towards our costs only – we do not make a profit.

We work closely with other groups giving advice in Slough and provide information and support to them. For the past few years this was formalised through the Slough Community Network organised through Slough Council for Voluntary Service. This network is now called #OneSlough. We have helped other voluntary and community organisations to understand the law and to help their members or refer them on to appropriate advice and help.

This year our work largely continued in a hybrid way, because of the covid-19 pandemic and its after-effects. Since March 2000, the majority of our work has been done from home, through phone and email and zoom and post. We have got used to working in this way, explaining to clients about sending scans and photos of documents by email to us in support of their cases, and providing information on-line for us to be able to advise. One member of staff was working from abroad for part of the year. We now normally have a presence in the office once a week to collect and retrieve documents and to see some clients, but most of our work continues remotely. There are difficulties and advantages; we are considering our plans for the longer term.

Why our work is so important

Immigration law is complex and can affect all aspects of people's lives. Access to competent immigration advice and representation can be vital, making the difference between, for example, a couple or family being able to live together in the UK or remain separated on different continents; an asylum seeker having more understanding of the complex process; relatives being able to visit for a family wedding or being refused a visa to come. It may enable people confused and worried by the complexities of the EU Settlement Scheme to understand what they may be able to do to secure their position; or elderly parents being able to live with their adult children here rather than left alone and in need of care abroad.

Ignorance of the law can lead to serious and unnecessary difficulties. Not understanding the basis on which immigration decisions are made, or the importance of using the right forms and providing all the right documentation to the Home Office or to British Visa Application Centres abroad at the right time, can result in applications which could meet the requirements of the immigration rules being refused. The fees for immigration applications were raised again in October 2023, to £2885 for settlement as a spouse or partner, £1048 for family extension of stay, £1846 for family entry clearance abroad, making the importance of preparing a case well and getting the application right first time of huge significance. Since April 2015, most immigration applicants also have to pay a 'health surcharge,' which rose from £400 to £624 per year in October 2020, and to £1036 in February 2024, for access to the NHS, for which most of them will already be paying through their taxes.

When immigration problems can be solved, people are able to continue their lives without this extra problem. Uncertainty about immigration status can cause and exacerbate poverty and exploitation. People who have at last been allowed to work and thus to support their family will be able to do so, and will have the security not to be exploited at work and to be able to access other rights. The basic security for people knowing that they are able to remain with their family and continue in their life enhances community cohesion and makes for a more unified and stronger society.

SIAU remains the only source of free specialist immigration and nationality law advice based in Slough. Such work is much needed in Slough; around half of its population is of minority ethnic origin, with the largest communities from Kashmir and the Punjab, but there are also significant African, East European, other Asian and Middle Eastern populations, as well as those from the Caribbean. There remains a large unmet need for immigration advice, information and representation.

Changes in the law

The unbroken flow of new laws on migration continued. The Illegal Migration Bill was introduced to Parliament on 7 March 2023, including still more measures to stop “small boat” arrivals across the English Channel, and was enacted on 20 July 2023. The Supreme Court declared the Rwanda policy, in the Nationality and Borders Act 2021, unlawful on 15 November 2023. The Safety of Rwanda (Immigration and Nationality) Bill was introduced on 7 December 2023 and enacted on 25 April 2024. After the general election of 7 July 2024, the new government confirmed that it would not operate this policy but has plans for yet another bill, the Border Security, Asylum and Immigration Bill.

The positive provisions on nationality, enabling people to register to become British citizens without charge if historical injustice in the previous laws meant they were not born British, are in effect. After some confusion on status, the British Nationality (Regularisation of Past Practice) Act was in force from 29 June 2023, confirming that children born in the UK to EU nationals between 1 January 1983 and 1 October 2000 were born British citizens, as had previously been believed. Migration and asylum issues have frequently been in the news.

There were six separate Statements of Changes in the immigration rules from April 2023 to March 2024, including several amendments to the EU Settlement Scheme and increasing the minimum income requirement for sponsoring family migration. There were four Supreme Court decisions relating to immigration matters, including the Rwanda case and cases on the interpretation of long residence.

The rules on family migration remain extremely complex and restrictive, and the cost of living crisis means many people are unable to meet them as they do not earn £29,000 per year, required since 11 April 2024, to be able to maintain their spouse, or cannot provide the very precise evidence demanded. The financial difficulties caused by the long-term effects of the pandemic have meant fewer people could qualify, even before this rise, and the Home Office’s covid-19 concessions did not cover all issues. This has meant an increase in family members who cannot meet the financial requirement getting permission to stay on the ten-year route to settlement, meaning they will not have a secure “settled” status in the UK for ten years. More people have needed to apply for their immigration fees to be waived, or for their conditions restricting access to public funds to be amended. These applications are labour-intensive, as the Home Office requires extremely detailed financial evidence and explanations.

The ‘hostile environment’ created for people without immigration rights, officially renamed the ‘compliant environment’ by Sajid Javid when Home Secretary, continues and affects others who have the right to remain. The most extreme injustice affected many from the ‘Windrush generation’ – with people still fighting for slow and inadequate compensation. A similar situation has arisen for those who did not apply in time under the EU Settlement Scheme, for whatever reason, as late applications are continuing. From 9 August 2023, such late applications are much more likely to be rejected. The concentration on asylum issues and dealing with the backlog of asylum applications still drains resources from other immigration areas so that family human rights applications are still taking 12 months on average to process. The government’s continued use of outsourcing to private sector providers to operate the immigration system, TLS Contact and VFS Global abroad, and now TLS Contact in the UK as well, makes the processes less transparent and harder to deal with, and it is more difficult to find out where responsibility for problems caused to individual applicants lies.

SIAU helps people to understand the immigration law and rules and how to satisfy the authorities that they can qualify, or advises them how they can do so, but also explains when they do not. SIAU’s work empowers people by helping them to be aware of their position under immigration law and to access their rights and by reducing the need for people to pay often expensive and incompetent consultants.

British nationality law is complicated and people often need help in understanding it, collecting the documents needed and making their applications to become British citizens. Naturalisation is always discretionary and the Home Office changes its criteria for using its discretion without publicity. Again, the naturalisation fee of £1580, raised to £1630 on 10 April 2024, is non-refundable if the application is refused. SIAU’s specialist workers are able to help people through this maze. We have advised and represented people on applying under the new sections of the law aimed at rectifying historical injustices, and for children’s fee waivers.

SIAU's advice work and casework

Our legal advice and representational work through the year continued. Our work is regulated by the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner, no. F200500137. OISC most recently audited SIAU's work in May 2016 and was fully satisfied.

During the year April 2023 – March 2024, SIAU records show we advised 366 people and families and took up 69 new cases to represent to the immigration authorities, with work continuing on many others. Our website had 1054 interactions, according to Google Business Profile statistics.

Our records show that the people we advised or represented were of 81 different nationalities - the largest numbers were again Pakistani (69) and Indian (32), but there were 82 from different African countries and 13 from the Caribbean. There were 75 inquiries from citizens of 18 other EEA countries this year, often those of minority ethnic descent; the largest numbers were Romanian (12), Polish (11), Italian (13) and Portuguese (9). Other nationalities include Ghanaian (26), Nigerian (23), Zimbabwean (14), Algerian (9), and fewer than 9 people from each of the other nationalities.

Many inquiries, 52, related to the EU Settlement Scheme, often including non-EU national family members. Many others related to establishing or acquiring British citizenship, 25 in relation to adult naturalisation, 15 in relation to children, either registering as British or establishing the status of children born here. The majority of the other issues raised were in relation to family matters, 53 about spouses, partners and children in the UK, 37 about entry clearance for spouses, partners and children currently abroad. 46 related to marriage breakdown and domestic abuse and the immigration law effects of escaping a violent relationship or the possibility of qualifying to remain in the UK independently. 22 were related to asylum or discretionary leave matters. 19 people inquired about qualifying to remain on long residence grounds. 13 people needed advice or help about their entitlement to benefits, or in trying to change the conditions on their stay that they cannot have recourse to public funds, and 15 about applying to waive the Home Office application fees and the immigration health surcharge. Other matters included 20 people wanting advice about family members coming to visit from abroad, and matters such as NHS charges, proving the right to work or to claim benefits and obtaining travel documents and biometric residence permits. Inquiries about setting up UKVI accounts, and accessing eVisas increased through the year, as all immigration records are planned to be online only from 2025.

In relation to the 69 people and families whose cases were represented, they were of 33 different nationalities; the largest numbers were Pakistani (12), Ghanaian (9), Gambian (4) and Bangladeshi, Indian, Italian, Nigerian (3 each). Many couples and families have more than one nationality between them, and non-EU nationals married to, or children of, EU nationals, may have most difficulty in establishing their EU SS status; we represented 8 such cases. Others included permission to remain with settled or British spouses or as parents of such children (25) or entry clearance to join family (3), applying to remain after experiencing domestic abuse (16), long residence applications (5), applying for change of conditions on stay, to be able to access public funds (2) and applying for British citizenship (10). We represented 12 people in successfully obtaining fee waivers for their family and human rights applications, or children's citizenship applications.

The majority of people we advised and helped were local. 164 came from Slough, 33 from Bracknell, 30 from High Wycombe, 18 from Reading, 17 from Maidenhead, 12 from Windsor, others from a bit further afield, such as Wokingham, Ascot, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, and west London, and a few from other areas, usually by email or phone. 52 people self-identified as having a person with a disability in the family, ranging from mobility difficulties to mental health issues, autism, HIV+, or had a medical condition such as cancer, stroke, diabetes or heart failure.

A family we helped

SIAU has advised and represented one Ghanaian family since 2020, when we applied for a mother and her three UK-born children, then seven, six and one, for permission to remain on human rights grounds, as her oldest child had lived here for seven years. The family was supported by social services, so we applied for a fee waiver first. The application was successful, and we were then contacted by the father of her youngest child for advice in securing his own status, as a parent and step-parent. The family were granted permission to remain for 30 months, and then needed to apply again for another extension, with SIAU's representation. By that time, the two older children were over 10, so SIAU applied for fee waivers for them to register for British citizenship. The family has been able to remain here securely because of SIAU's support and help.

SIAU's staff are highly skilled and experienced, and their expertise can make a significant difference to chances of success in an application. Shabana Bokhari, OISC level 3 regulated, has continued to work for one day a week for most of this year; Parveen Akhter, OISC Level 2 regulated, worked for four days a week. Sue Shutter, level 2 regulated, volunteered more frequently, dealing with advice queries and some casework from home. We have not been able to support admin volunteers, but Nazia Shabir continued to provide vital volunteer casework support, supervised by Parveen Akhter. There is a huge demand for our work, which we have continued remotely, through email and phone, throughout this year.

SIAU continues to work with and receive referrals from other local organisations and community groups doing complementary work in Slough and the surrounding area, including Citizens Advice East Berkshire, Slough Refugee Support, Hestia, The Dash Charity (Domestic Abuse Stops Here), SEWAK refuge, until it closed in July 2024, SHOC (Slough Homeless Our Concern), Slough Foodbank, neighbouring Citizens Advice Bureaux and others. The council, Slough Children First, and the Slough MP's office, as well as community groups, may also refer people to us for help and advice. We continue to be a member of the #OneSlough network of voluntary organisations, with regular zoom and in-person meetings facilitated through Slough Council for Voluntary Service. We are represented in their community decorating of a temporary hoarding in Slough High Street. As an OISC-regulated organisation, we hold their Slough Quality Protects Platinum level accreditation.

SIAU's information and lobbying work

SIAU participated in lobbying on the Illegal Migration Bill and in raising issues of concern, such as about the EU Settlement Scheme and the minimum income requirement, through our membership of the Immigration Law Practitioners' Association. We participate in on-line discussion groups of immigration advisers and lawyers, sharing ideas and information.

SIAU expects to continue all our areas of work into the future, as we anticipate the need for it will remain and increase as more parts of the new immigration system and the ever-increasing legislation come into effect. The EU settlement and pre-settlement scheme and its June 2021 deadline, and people travelling in small boats across the English Channel and the Mediterranean keep migration in the forefront of public debate. We continue to advise many EU nationals and their families worried about their status, or applying late, along with others having difficulties caused by the family migration rules. The move to "digital by default" so that all immigration records will be online only after the end of 2024 causes many problems and worries, especially for people who are not digitally confident or do not have access to the internet. Domestic abuse remains a large proportion of our casework. Restrictions on eligibility to claim benefits, and the increased level of the Home Office fees have added to difficulties this year, and fee waivers and change of conditions applications remain a significant proportion of our work. We continue mainly working remotely, and rely on email, internet, phone and post, as well as meeting people in the office. We continue to attempt to mitigate some of the worst effects of the laws and practice for our clients and their families and to help them to achieve their aims.

SIAU's staff

Parveen Akhter, Shabana Bokhari

SIAU's volunteers

Nazia Shabir, Sue Shutter

SIAU's Trustees

Sue Shutter (chair), Ray Barkley (treasurer), Nazia Shabir, Shabana Saeed, Keren Beddow

Slough Immigration Aid Unit

Independent Examiner's Report
to the trustees of Slough Immigration Aid Unit

I report on the accounts of Slough Immigration Aid Unit for the year ended 31 March 2024, which are set out on pages 9 and 10.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- 1* examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act
- 2* to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act
- 3* to state whether particular matters have come to my attention

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the next statement.

Independent examiner's statement

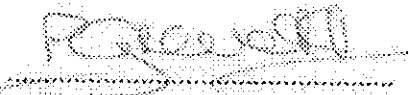
In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- * to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act and
- * to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the requirements of the 2011 Act

have not been met or

- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.


Ms P Grevett FCCA


Date

Slough Immigration Aid Unit

Income and Expenditure Account
for the year ended 31 March 2024

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	2024 Total funds	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	2023 Total funds
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Income						
Grants	38,666	-	38,666	23,619	-	23,619
Donations	8,451	-	8,451	7,391	-	7,391
Fees recovered	3,870	-	3,870	6,785	-	6,785
Rents received	1,400	-	1,400	-	-	-
	52,387	-	52,387	37,795	-	37,795
Other income						
Deposit account interest	220	-	220	139	-	139
	220	-	220	139	-	139
Total income	52,607	-	52,607	37,934	-	37,934
Expenditure						
Rent	5,040	-	5,040	5,040	-	5,040
Wages	29,700	-	29,700	27,170	3,430	30,600
Cloud based data system & training	-	-	-	480	-	480
Professional services	-	-	-	1,750	-	1,750
Telephone & internet	1,837	-	1,837	1,634	-	1,634
Post & stationery	729	-	729	636	-	636
Professional indemnity insurance	251	-	251	235	-	235
Employers liability insurance	198	-	198	182	-	182
Sundry expenses	414	-	414	451	-	451
Accountancy	1,000	-	1,000	1,000	-	1,000
Membership fees	150	-	150	195	-	195
Professional fees	1,646	-	1,646	1,646	-	1,646
Bank charges	74	-	74	74	-	74
Nest pension	475	-	475	443	-	443
Computer equipment written off	1,710	-	1,710	-	-	-
	43,224	-	43,224	40,936	3,430	44,366
NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	9,383	-	9,383	3,002	3,430	6,432
Reconciliation of funds						
Total funds brought forward	12,062	-	12,062	15,064	3,430	18,494
Total funds carried forward	21,445	-	21,445	12,062	-	12,062

Slough Immigration Aid Unit

Balance Sheet
for the year ended 31 March 2024

	2024		2023	
	£	£	£	£
FIXED ASSETS				
Computer equipment		-		1,710
CURRENT ASSETS				
Debtors	405		665	
Prepayments	159		150	
Bank deposit account	18,478		14,159	
Bank account no. 1	1,869		1,460	
Bank account no. 2	2,147		3,900	
	<u>23,058</u>		<u>20,334</u>	
CURRENT LIABILITIES				
Grant received in advance	-		8,483	
Creditors and accrued expenses	1,613		1,499	
	<u>1,613</u>		<u>9,982</u>	
NET CURRENT ASSETS		21,445		10,352
NET ASSETS		<u>21,445</u>		<u>12,062</u>
REPRESENTED BY:				
Restricted funds		-		-
Unrestricted funds		21,445		12,062
		<u>21,445</u>		<u>12,062</u>

SLOUGH IMMIGRATION AID UNIT

England & Wales - Charity number 1064293

Accounts



Annual Report

and

Financial Statements

for the year ended 31 March 2023

for

Slough Immigration Aid Unit

funded by:



THE
ACCESS
TO JUSTICE
FOUNDATION



#OneSlough

and the Louis Baylis (Maidenhead Advertiser) Charitable Trust
and the Mactaggart Third Fund

Contents of the Financial Statements
for the year ended 31 March 2023

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Trustees' Annual Summary	5
Independent examiner's report on the Accounts	9
Income and Expenditure Account	10
Balance Sheet	11

Slough Immigration Aid Unit
General Information
for the year ended 31 March 2023

CHARITY NAME: SloughImmigration Aid Unit

REGISTERED NUMBER: 1064293

ADDRESS: 52 Chalvey High Street
Slough
Berkshire
SL1 2SQ

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER: Ms P Grevett
Grevett & Co
Certified Accountants
346a Farnham Road
Slough
Berkshire
SL2 1BT

Slough Immigration Aid Unit

Trustees' Report
for the year ended 31 March 2023

The Trustees of the Slough Immigration Aid Unit (also known as SIAU) present their Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2023.

Trustees

Ms S M Shutter (Chair)
Mr J R Barkley (Treasurer)
Mrs M A Knibbs
Ms P K Matharu (resigned April 2023)
Mr N A Rehman (resigned September 2022)
Ms N Shabir (appointed December 2022)
Ms S Saeed (appointed April 2023)

The Trustees are appointed at Trustees' meetings. The Charity is governed by the Trust Deed dated 18 December 1996 as amended by Special Resolution on 15 August 1997.

Objects

The objects of the Charity are to relieve hardship by the provision of free legal advice, assistance and representation to people who live or work or study in Slough and neighbouring areas, and their families, who have difficulties caused by immigration, nationality or refugee law and practice and who cannot afford alternative representation; and to collaborate with others to improve such advice for the people of Slough.

In addition other objects are to provide information and education on immigration, nationality and refugee law to those who are most closely affected by them.

This work is clearly for the public benefit, as required under charity law. The Trustees have had regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission when exercising any powers or duties to which the guidance is relevant.

Financial summary for the year

The Charity was funded through several grants, including £3430 carried forward from a restricted grant of £10,000 through the Access to Justice Foundation Community Justice Fund. We also received £12,196 from the Access to Justice Foundation, and unrestricted grants from the Berkshire Community Foundation, the Louis Baylis Charitable Trust, UNITE, the Mactaggart Third Fund, and the London Legal Support Trust from our participation in its sponsored walk. The #OneSloughfunding, administered by Slough Council for Voluntary Service, for £4,000 per year to provide immigration advice to Slough residents, replacing SPACE, continued through the year.

We continue to seek further grant funding for our work, and to maintain our aim of having at least three months' running costs in reserves. The Charity is also funded by cost recovery fees from some clients who do not qualify for a free service and by donations from individuals.

At the year end we held cash at bank of £20,334 which is unrestricted funding (including £6000 from the Mactaggart Third Fund for 2023-2024), held to meet the running costs of the Charity's office and related expenditure.

The Trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

.....
Susan M. Shutter

Ms SM Shutter (Chair)

.....
19-12-23

Date

SIAU's work during the year April 2022 to March 2023

SIAU's work and aims

SIAU is a charity which provides specialist legal advice, assistance and representation to people who live, work or study in Slough and neighbouring areas, and their families, who have difficulties with UK immigration, nationality or refugee law and practice. We have done this work for over 17 years.

We provide a free service to people on low incomes, or no income, and who would have qualified financially for Legal Help, when this still existed for immigration matters. Where people's income or savings are too high to qualify for Legal Help, we may operate a cost recovery process, charging a fee towards our costs only – we do not make a profit.

We work closely with other groups giving advice in Slough and provide information and support to them. For the past few years this was formalised through the Slough Community Network organised through Slough Council for Voluntary Service. This network is now called #OneSlough. We have helped other voluntary and community organisations to understand the law and to help their members or refer them on to appropriate advice and help.

This year our work largely continued in a hybrid way, because of the covid-19 pandemic and its after-effects. Since March 2000, the majority of our work has been done from home, through phone and email and zoom and post. We have got used to working in this way, and explaining to clients about sending scans and photos of documents by email to us in support of their cases, and provide information on-line for us to be able to advise. One member of staff was working from abroad for part of the year. We now normally have a presence in the office once a week to collect and retrieve documents and to see some clients, but most of our work continues remotely. There are difficulties and advantages; we are considering our plans for the longer term.

Why our work is so important

Immigration law is complex and can affect all aspects of people's lives. Access to competent immigration advice and representation can be vital, making the difference between, for example, a couple or family being able to live together in the UK or remain separated on different continents; an asylum seeker having more understanding of the complex process; a grandmother being able to visit for her granddaughter's wedding or being refused a visa to come. It may enable people confused and worried by the complexities of the EU Settlement Scheme to understand what they may be able to do to secure their position; or elderly parents being able to live with their adult children here rather than left alone and in need of care abroad.

Ignorance of the law can lead to serious and unnecessary difficulties. Not understanding the basis on which immigration decisions are made, or the importance of using the right forms and providing all the right documentation to the Home Office or to British Visa Application Centres abroad at the right time, can result in applications which could meet the requirements of the immigration rules being refused. The fees for immigration applications were raised again in October 2023, to £2885 for settlement as a spouse or partner, £1048 for family extension of stay, £1846 for family entry clearance abroad, making the importance of preparing a case well and getting the application right first time of huge significance. Since April 2015, most immigration applicants also have to pay a 'health surcharge,' which rose from £400 to £624 per year in October 2020, for access to the NHS, for which most of them will already be paying through their taxes. It is due to rise again in January 2024.

When immigration problems can be solved, people are able to continue their lives without this extra problem. Uncertainty about immigration status can cause poverty and exploitation. People who have at last been allowed to work and thus to support their family will be able to do so, and will have the security not to be exploited at work and to be able to access other rights. The basic security for people knowing that they are able to remain with their family and continue in their life enhances community cohesion and makes for a more unified and stronger society.

SIAU remains the only source of free specialist immigration and nationality law advice based in Slough. Such work is much needed in Slough; around half of its population is of minority ethnic origin, with the largest communities from Kashmir and the Punjab, but there are also significant African, East European, other Asian and Middle Eastern populations, as well as those from the Caribbean. There remains a large unmet need for immigration advice, information and representation.

Changes in the law

The Nationality and Borders Act came into force on 28 April 2022. Rightly, the proposals to send asylum seekers to Rwanda to be processed and to deprive people of their British nationality without informing them received most hostile comment, and there were court challenges to them both. The Supreme Court declared the Rwanda policy unlawful on 15 November 2023. There are also positive provisions on nationality, enabling people to register to become British citizens without charge if historical injustice in the previous laws meant they were not born British. Then the Illegal Migration Bill was introduced to Parliament on 7 March 2023, including still more measures to stop “small boat” arrivals across the English Channel, and was enacted on 23 July 2023. Migration and asylum issues have frequently been in the news.

There were four separate Statements of Changes to the immigration rules from April 2022 to March 2023, including further codification of the rules on families and human rights. There were three linked Supreme Court decisions relating to immigration matters, on the assessment of the “serious harm” caused to British partners and children if their husband/father were to be deported. In June 2022 the Home Office introduced the possibility of waiving children’s citizenship application fees, following a court challenge from the Project for the Registration of Children as British Citizens.

The rules on family migration remain extremely complex and restrictive, and the cost of living crisis means many people are unable to meet them as they do not earn the £18,600 per year required to be able to maintain their spouse, or cannot provide the very precise evidence demanded. The financial difficulties caused by the long-term effects of the pandemic have meant fewer people can qualify, and the Home Office’s covid-19 concessions did not cover all issues. This has meant an increase in family members who cannot meet the financial requirement getting permission to stay on the ten year route to settlement, meaning they will not have a secure “settled” status in the UK for ten years. There are further proposals to increase the financial requirement. More people have needed to apply for their immigration fees to be waived, and for their conditions restricting access to public funds to be amended. These applications are labour-intensive, as the Home Office requires extremely detailed financial evidence and explanations.

The ‘hostile environment’ created for people without immigration rights, officially renamed the ‘compliant environment’ by Sajid Javid when Home Secretary, continues and affects others who have the right to remain. The most extreme injustice affected many from the ‘Windrush generation’ – with people still fighting for slow and inadequate compensation. A similar situation is now arising for those who did not apply under the EU Settlement Scheme, for whatever reason, as late applications are continuing. From 9 August 2023, such late applications are almost automatically rejected. The concentration on asylum issues, and dealing with the backlog of asylum applications, still drains resources from other immigration areas so that family human rights applications are taking 12 months on average to process. The government’s continued use of outsourcing to private sector providers to operate the immigration system, TLS Contact and VFS Global abroad, Sopra Steria in the UK, makes the processes less transparent and harder to deal with, and it is more difficult to find out where responsibility for problems caused to individual applicants lies.

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British nationality law is complicated and people often need help in understanding it, collecting the documents needed and making their applications to become British citizens. Naturalisation is always discretionary and the Home Office changes its criteria for using its discretion without publicity. Again, the naturalisation fee of £1330, raised to £1580 on 4 October 2023, is non-refundable if the application is refused. SIAU’s specialist workers are able to help people through this maze. We have advised and represented people on applying under the new sections of the law aimed at rectifying historical injustices, and for children’s fee waivers.

SIAU's advice work and casework

Our legal advice and representational work through the year continued. Our work is regulated by the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner, no. F200500137. OISC most recently audited SIAU's work in May 2016 and was fully satisfied.

During the year April 2022 – March 2023, SIAU records show we advised 347 people and families and took up 76 new cases to represent to the immigration authorities, with work continuing on many others.

Our records show that the people we advised were of 70 different nationalities - the largest numbers were again Pakistani (43) and Indian (26), but there were 85 from different African countries and 14 from the Caribbean. There were 49 inquiries from citizens of 14 other EEA countries this year, often those of minority ethnic descent; the largest numbers were Polish and Romanian (9 each), Spain (8) and Italian (5). Other nationalities include Ghanaian (13), Kenyan (10), Nigerian and Jamaican (9 each), and fewer than 9 people from each of the other nationalities.

Many inquiries, 39, related to the EU Settlement Scheme, often including non-EU national family members. Many others related to establishing or acquiring British citizenship, 25 in relation to adult naturalisation, 17 in relation to children, either registering as British or establishing the status of children born here. The majority of the other issues raised were in relation to family matters, 48 about spouses, partners and children in the UK, 26 about entry clearance for spouses, partners and children currently abroad. 32 related to marriage breakdown and domestic violence and the immigration law effects of escaping a violent partnership or the possibility of qualifying to remain in the UK independently. 15 were related to asylum or discretionary leave matters. 14 people inquired about qualifying to remain on long residence grounds. 20 people needed advice or help about their entitlement to benefits, or in trying to change the conditions on their stay that they cannot have recourse to public funds, and 12 about applying to waive the Home Office application fees and the immigration health surcharge. Other matters included people wanting advice about family members coming to visit from abroad, and matters such as NHS charges, proving the right to work or to claim benefits and obtaining travel documents and biometric residence permits.

In relation to the 76 people and families whose cases we represented, they were of 29 different nationalities; the largest numbers were Pakistani (23) and Indian (7), Nigerian (5), Ghanaian and Filipino (4 each). Many couples and families have more than one nationality between them, and non-EU nationals married to, or children of, EU nationals, may have most difficulty in establishing their EU SS status; we represented 4 such cases. Others included permission to remain with settled or British spouses (12) or as parents of such children (8) or entry clearance to join family (3), applying to remain after experiencing domestic abuse (26), long residence applications (6), applying for change of conditions on stay, to be able to access public funds (2) and applying for British citizenship (8). We represented 12 people in successfully obtaining fee waivers for their applications.

The majority of people we advised and helped were local. 189 came from Slough, 26 from High Wycombe, 20 from Maidenhead, 17 from Reading, 17 from Bracknell, 6 from Windsor, others from a bit further afield, such as Wokingham, Ascot, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, and west London, and a few from other areas, usually by email or phone. 53 people self-identified as having a person with a disability in the family, ranging from mobility difficulties to mental health issues, autism, HIV+, or had a medical condition such as cancer, diabetes or heart failure.

A family we helped

Mr R and Mrs D are Zimbabweans who have been in the UK since September and December 2001 when they had to leave due to political violence and intimidation. They left their five-year-old son in the care of Mr R's sister, thinking it would not be long before he could join them. But Mr R's asylum application was refused and nothing seemed to happen about Mrs D's. They are both HIV+ and the drugs they were on would not have been available to them in Zimbabwe. In 2014 they had a daughter born in the UK. Mrs D's sister in the UK has been helping and supporting them, and they had foodbank vouchers. They contacted SIAU in mid-2021 to ask how they could sort out their immigration stay. We applied for fee waivers for them all, and then for permission to stay on long residence grounds, and because of their daughter. After over 15 months their application was at last successful.

SIAU's staff are highly skilled and experienced, and their expertise can make a significant difference to chances of success in an application. Shabana Bokhari, OISC level 3 regulated, has continued to work for one day a week for most of this year; Parveen Akhter, OISC Level 2 regulated, worked temporarily full-time from March to October 2022 then returned to four days a week. Shabana was away in Pakistan for personal reasons for some months; she has been able to work remotely from there. Sue Shutter, level 2 regulated, volunteered more frequently, dealing with advice queries and some casework from home. We have not been able to support admin volunteers but Nazia Shabir and Amina Akhter have provided some vital volunteer casework support, supervised by Parveen Akhter, and Magda Harris some legal research. There is a huge demand for our work, which we have continued remotely, through email and phone, through this year.

SIAU continues to work with and receive referrals from other local organisations and community groups doing complementary work in Slough and the surrounding area, including Citizens Advice East Berkshire, working in Slough since October 2021, Slough Refugee Support, Hestia, SEWAK refuge, The Dash Charity (Domestic Abuse Stops Here), SHOC (Slough Homeless Our Concern), Slough Foodbank, neighbouring Citizens Advice Bureaux and others. The council, Slough Children's Services Trust, and the Slough MP's office, as well as community groups, may also refer people to us for help and advice. We continue to be a member of the #OneSlough (formerly SPACE) consortium of voluntary organisations funded by Slough council through Slough Council for Voluntary Service, to deliver advice and social support in Slough. We participate in their regular zoom and in-person meetings. As an OISC-regulated organisation, we hold their Slough Quality Protects Platinum level accreditation.

SIAU's information and lobbying work

SIAU has participated in lobbying on the Illegal Migration Bill, and raising issues of concern, through our membership of the Immigration Law Practitioners' Association. We participate in on-line discussion groups of immigration advisers and lawyers sharing ideas and information.

SIAU expects to continue all our areas of work into the future, as we anticipate the need for it will remain and increase as more parts of the new immigration system and the ever-increasing legislation come into effect. The EU settlement and pre-settlement scheme and its June 2021 deadline, and people travelling in small boats across the English Channel and the Mediterranean and the Rwanda policy keep migration in the forefront of public debate. We continue to advise many EU nationals and their families worried about their status, or applying late, along with others having difficulties caused by the family migration rules. Domestic abuse remains a large proportion of our casework. Restrictions on eligibility to claim benefits, and the level of the Home Office fees have added to difficulties this year, and fee waivers and change of conditions applications remain significant proportion of our work. We continue mainly working remotely, and rely on email, internet, phone and post, as well as meeting people in the office. We continue to attempt to mitigate some of the worst effects of the laws and practice for our clients and their families and to help them to achieve their aims.

SIAU's staff

Parveen Akhter, Shabana Bokhari

SIAU's volunteers

Amina Akhter (to October 2022), Magda Harris (November 2022 to March 2023)
Nazia Shabir, Sue Shutter

SIAU's Trustees

Sue Shutter (chair), Ray Barkley (treasurer), Mai Knibbs, Nazia Shabir, Shabana Saeed

Slough Immigration Aid Unit

**Independent Examiner's Report
to the trustees of Slough Immigration Aid Unit**

I report on the accounts of Slough Immigration Aid Unit for the year ended 31 March 2023, which are set out on pages 10 and 11.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- 1* examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act
- 2* to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act
- 3* to state whether particular matters have come to my attention

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the next statement.

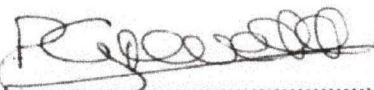
Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
 - * to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act and
 - * to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the requirements of the 2011 Act

have not been met or

- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.


.....

Ms P Grevett FCCA

5/1/24
.....

Date

Slough Immigration Aid Unit

Income and Expenditure Account
for the year ended 31 March 2023

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	2023 Total funds	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	2022 Total funds
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Income						
Grants	23,619	-	23,619	13,624	10,000	23,624
Donations	7,391	-	7,391	5,266	-	5,266
Fees recovered	6,785	-	6,785	5,235	-	5,235
	37,795	-	37,795	24,125	10,000	34,125
Other income						
Deposit account interest	139	-	139	10	-	10
	139	-	139	10	-	10
Total income	37,934	-	37,934	24,135	10,000	34,135
Expenditure						
Rent	5,040	-	5,040	5,040	-	5,040
Wages	27,170	3,430	30,600	19,530	6,570	26,100
Cloud based data system & training	480	-	480	480	-	480
Professional services	1,750	-	1,750	-	-	-
Telephone & internet	1,634	-	1,634	1,530	-	1,530
Post & stationery	636	-	636	972	-	972
Professional indemnity insurance	235	-	235	231	-	231
Employers liability insurance	182	-	182	165	-	165
Sundry expenses	451	-	451	385	-	385
Accountancy	1,000	-	1,000	1,000	-	1,000
Membership fees	195	-	195	435	-	435
Professional fees	1,646	-	1,646	1,290	-	1,290
Bank charges	74	-	74	73	-	73
Nest pension	443	-	443	288	-	288
	40,936	3,430	44,366	31,419	6,570	37,989
NET DEFICIT	- 3,002	- 3,430	- 6,432	- 7,284	3,430	- 3,854
Reconciliation of funds						
Total funds brought forward	15,064	3,430	18,494	22,348	-	22,348
Total funds carried forward	12,062	-	12,062	15,064	3,430	18,494

Slough Immigration Aid Unit

Balance Sheet
for the year ended 31 March 2023

	2023		2022	
	£	£	£	£
FIXED ASSETS				
Computer equipment		1,710		1,710
CURRENT ASSETS				
Debtors	665		920	
Prepayments	150		150	
Bank deposit account	14,159		13,989	
Bank account no. 1	1,460		1,071	
Bank account no. 2	3,900		2,282	
	<u>20,334</u>		<u>18,412</u>	
CURRENT LIABILITIES				
Grant received in advance	8,483		-	
Creditors and accrued expenses	1,499		1,628	
	<u>9,982</u>		<u>1,628</u>	
NET CURRENT ASSETS		10,352		16,784
NET ASSETS		<u>12,062</u>		<u>18,494</u>
REPRESENTED BY:				
Restricted funds		-		3,430
Unrestricted funds		12,062		15,064
		<u>12,062</u>		<u>18,494</u>

SLOUGH IMMIGRATION AID UNIT

England & Wales - Charity number 1064293

Accounts



Annual Report

and

Financial Statements

for the year ended 31 March 2022

for

Slough Immigration Aid Unit

funded by:



**BERKSHIRE
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION**

**THE
ACCESS
TO JUSTICE
FOUNDATION**



**Community Justice
Fund**



#OneSlough



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for the year ended 31 March 2022

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Independent examiner's report on the Accounts	9
Income and Expenditure Account	10
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Slough Immigration Aid Unit
General Information
for the year ended 31 March 2022

CHARITY NAME: Slough Immigration Aid Unit

REGISTERED NUMBER: 1064293

ADDRESS: 52 Chalvey High Street
Slough
Berkshire
SL1 2SQ

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER: Ms P Grevett
Grevett & Co
Certified Accountants
346a Farnham Road
Slough
Berkshire
SL2 1BT

Slough Immigration Aid Unit

Trustees' Report
for the year ended 31 March 2022

The Trustees of the Slough Immigration Aid Unit (also known as SIAU) present their Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2022.

Trustees

Ms S M Shutter (Chair)
Mr J R Barkley (Treasurer)
Mrs M A Knibbs
Ms P K Matharu
Mr N A Rehman

The Trustees are appointed at Trustees' meetings. The Charity is governed by the Trust Deed dated 18 December 1996 as amended by Special Resolution on 15 August 1997.

Objects

The objects of the Charity are to relieve hardship by the provision of free legal advice, assistance and representation to people who live or work or study in Slough and neighbouring areas, and their families, who have difficulties caused by immigration, nationality or refugee law and practice and who cannot afford alternative representation and to collaborate with others to improve such advice for the people of Slough.

In addition other objects are to provide information and education on immigration, nationality and refugee law to those who are most closely affected by them.

This work is clearly for the public benefit, as required under charity law. The Trustees have had regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission when exercising any powers or duties to which the guidance is relevant.

Financial summary for the year

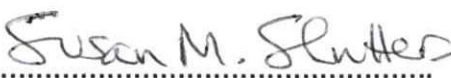
The Charity was funded through a restricted grant of £10,000 through the Access to Justice Foundation Community Justice Fund. This comprised £6,570 from the Ministry of Justice and £3,430 from Independent Funders. We spent the Ministry of Justice grant in this year and carried the Independent Funders grant forward to the 2022-2023 financial year. The Charity was also funded through unrestricted grants from the Berkshire Community Foundation, the Mactaggart Third Fund, and the London Legal Support Trust from our participation in its sponsored walk. The OneSlough funding, administered by Slough Council for Voluntary Service, for £4,000 per year to provide immigration advice to Slough residents, replacing SPACE, continued through the year.

We continue to seek further grant funding for our work, and to maintain our aim of having at least three months' running costs in reserves. The Charity is also funded by cost recovery fees from some clients who do not qualify for a free service and by donations from individuals.

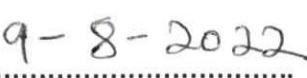
At the year end we held cash at bank of £17,342, which is represented by restricted funds of £3430 and the balance by unrestricted funds (including £6000 from the Mactaggart Third Fund for 2022-2023), held to meet the running costs of the Charity's office and related expenditure.

The Trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees


.....

Ms S M Shutter (Chair)


.....

Date

SIAU's work during the year April 2021 to March 2022

SIAU's work and aims

SIAU is a charity which provides specialist legal advice, assistance and representation to people who live, work or study in Slough and neighbouring areas, and their families, who have difficulties with UK immigration, nationality or refugee law and practice. We have done this work for over 16 years.

We provide a free service to people on low incomes, or no income, and who would have qualified financially for Legal Help, when this still existed for immigration matters. Where people's income or savings are too high to qualify for Legal Help, we may operate a cost recovery process, charging a fee towards our costs only – we do not make a profit.

We work closely with other groups giving advice in Slough and provide information and support to them. For the past few years this was formalised through the Slough Community Network organised through Slough Council for Voluntary Service. This network is now called OneSlough. We have helped other voluntary and community organisations to understand the law and to help their members or refer them on. We have lobbied the Home Office for change and improvement in the law and practice.

This year our work largely continued in a hybrid way, because of the covid-19 pandemic. Since March 2000, the majority of our work has been done from home, through phone and email and zoom and post. We have got used to working in this way, and explaining to clients why they have to send scans and photos of documents by email to us in support of their cases, and provide information on-line for us to be able to advise. One member of staff has been working from abroad for much of the year. We have gone to the office every few weeks to collect and retrieve documents and to see those clients who are not able to use the internet, but most of our work has been done remotely. There were difficulties and advantages; we are beginning to plan for longer term.

Why our work is so important

Immigration law is complex and can affect all aspects of people's lives. Access to competent immigration advice and representation can be vital, making the difference between, for example, a couple or family being able to live together in the UK or remain separated on different continents; an asylum seeker being recognised as a refugee or being refused and returned to danger; a grandmother being able to visit for her granddaughter's wedding or being refused a visa to come. It may enable people confused and worried by the EU Settlement Scheme to understand what they can do to secure their position; or elderly parents being able to live with their adult children here rather than left alone and in need of care abroad. The covid-19 pandemic has added another dimension of worry, with delays and changes at short notice, international travel restrictions and dangers.

Ignorance of the law can lead to serious and unnecessary difficulties. Not understanding the basis on which immigration decisions are made, or the importance of using the right forms and providing all the right documentation to the Home Office or to British Visa Application Centres abroad at the right time, can result in applications which could meet the requirements of the immigration rules being refused. The fees for immigration applications were raised in April 2022, now £2404 for settlement as a spouse or partner, £1048 for family extension of stay, £1538 for family entry clearance abroad, making the importance of preparing a case well and getting the application right first time of huge significance. Since April 2015, immigration applicants also have to pay a 'health surcharge,' which rose from £400 to £624 per year in October 2020, for access to the NHS, for which most of them will already be paying through their taxes.

When immigration problems can be solved, people are able to continue their lives in a normal way. Uncertainty about immigration status can cause poverty and exploitation. People who have at last been allowed to work and thus to support their family will be able to do so, and will have the security not to be exploited at work and to be able to access other rights. The basic security for people knowing that they are able to remain with their family and continue in their life enhances community cohesion and makes for a more unified and stronger society.

SIAU remains the only source of free specialist immigration and nationality law advice based in Slough. Such work is much needed in Slough; around half of its population is of minority ethnic origin, with the largest communities from Kashmir and the Punjab, but there are also significant African, East European, other Asian and Middle Eastern populations, as well as those from the Caribbean. There remains a large unmet need for immigration advice, information and representation.

Changes in the law

Parliamentary debate on migration was dominated by the Nationality and Borders Bill, starting with its second reading on 19 July 2021 until its enactment on 28 April 2022. Rightly, the proposals to send asylum seekers to Rwanda to be processed and to deprive people of their British nationality without informing them received most hostile comment, but there are positive provisions on nationality, enabling people to register to become British citizens without charge if historical injustice in the previous laws meant they were not born British. There were eight separate Statements of Changes in the immigration rules from April 2021 to March 2022, including several further changes to the post-Brexit EU Settlement Scheme, and to the points-based system on routes to work in the UK and to the schemes for British nationals (overseas) from Hong Kong and for people from Ukraine, as well as changes following on the Law Commission's 2020 proposals and further codification of the rules on families and human rights. There were five Supreme Court decisions relating to immigration, asylum or nationality matters, including on children's citizenship applications and benefits entitlements in connection with the EU Settlement Scheme.

The rules on family migration remain extremely complex and restrictive, and many people are still unable to meet them as they do not earn the £18,600 per year required to be able to maintain their spouse, or cannot provide the very precise evidence demanded. The financial difficulties caused by the long-term effects of the pandemic have meant fewer people can qualify, and the Home Office's covid-19 concessions have not covered all issues. In the UK, it has meant an increase in family members who cannot meet the financial requirement getting permission to stay on the ten year route to settlement, meaning they will not have a secure "settled" status in the UK for ten years. More people have needed to apply for their immigration fees to be waived, and for their conditions restricting access to public funds to be amended. These applications are labour-intensive, as the Home Office requires very detailed financial evidence and explanations.

The 'hostile environment' created for people without immigration rights, officially renamed the 'compliant environment' by Sajid Javid when Home Secretary, continues and affects others who have the right to remain. The most extreme injustice affected many from the 'Windrush generation' – with people still fighting for slow and inadequate compensation. It is clear that a similar situation may arise in future for those who do not apply under the EU Settlement Scheme, for whatever reason, as late applications are continuing. The reaction to the situation in Afghanistan from August 2021 and Ukraine from February 2022 has drained resources from other immigration areas so that family human rights applications are now taking 11 months on average to process. The government's continued use of outsourcing to private sector providers to operate the immigration system, TLS Contact and VFS Global abroad, Sopra Steria in the UK, makes the processes less transparent and harder to deal with, and it is more difficult to find out where responsibility for problems caused to individual applicants lies.

SIAU helps people to understand the immigration law and rules and how to satisfy the authorities that they can qualify, or advises them how they can do so, but also explains when they do not. SIAU's work empowers people by helping them to be aware of their position under immigration law and to access their rights and by reducing the need for people to pay often expensive and incompetent consultants.

British nationality law is complicated and people often need help in understanding it, collecting the documents needed and making their applications to become British citizens. Naturalisation is always discretionary and the Home Office changes its criteria for using its discretion without publicity. Again, the naturalisation fee of £1330 is non-refundable if the application is refused. SIAU's specialist workers are able to help people through this maze. We lobbied through ILPA on the nationality sections of the Nationality and Borders Bill, being debated in Parliament through 2021 and 2022, and have advised people on applying under the sections aimed at rectifying historical injustices.

SIAU's advice work and casework

Our legal advice and representational work through the year continued. Our work is regulated by the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner, no. F200500137. OISC most recently audited SIAU's work in May 2016 and was fully satisfied.

During the year April 2021 – March 2022, SIAU records show we advised 417 people and families and took up 73 new cases to represent to the immigration authorities, with work continuing on many others. Our records show that the people we advised were of 83 different nationalities - the largest numbers were again Pakistani (81) and Indian (45), but there were 119 from different African countries and 13 from the Caribbean. There were 52 inquiries from citizens of 19 other EEA countries this year, often those of minority ethnic descent; the largest numbers were Italian (10), Romanian (7) and Polish (6). Other nationalities include Nigerian (21), Ghanaian (16), Afghan (11), Kenyan and Sri Lankan (10 each), and fewer than 10 people from each of the other nationalities.

Many inquiries, 65, related to the EU Settlement Scheme, including 34 about acquiring permanent residence, 11 about pre-settled status, many including non-EU national family members, 11 about EU SS family permit entry clearance. Many inquiries related to establishing or acquiring British citizenship, 30 in relation to adult naturalisation, 24 in relation to children, either registering as British or establishing the status of children born here. The majority of the other issues raised were in relation to family matters, 87 about spouses, partners and children in the UK, 37 about entry clearance for spouses, partners and children currently abroad. 7 inquiries related to other dependent relatives. 56 related to marriage breakdown and domestic violence and the immigration law effects of escaping a violent partnership or the possibility of qualifying to remain in the UK independently. 11 were related to asylum or discretionary leave matters. 17 people inquired about qualifying to remain on long residence grounds. 24 people needed advice or help about their entitlement to benefits, or in trying to change the conditions on their stay that they cannot have recourse to public funds, and 29 about applying to waive the Home Office application fees and the immigration health surcharge. Other matters included people wanting advice about family members coming to visit from abroad, and matters such as NHS charges, proving the right to work or to claim benefits and obtaining travel documents and biometric residence permits.

In relation to the 73 people and families whose cases we represented, they were of 25 different nationalities; the largest numbers were Pakistani (24) and Indian (11), Nigerian (5), Kenyan (4) Ghanaian and Zimbabwean (3 each). Many couples and families have more than one nationality between them, and non-EU nationals married to, or children of, EU nationals, may have most difficulty in establishing their EU SS status; we represented 7 such cases. Others included permission to remain with settled or British spouses (7) or parents of such children (8) or entry clearance to join family (5), applying to remain after experiencing domestic abuse (25), long residence applications (6), applying for change of conditions on stay, to be able to access public funds (4) and applying for British citizenship (5). We represented nine people in successfully obtaining fee waivers for their applications.

The majority of people we advised and helped were local. 209 came from Slough, 30 from High Wycombe, 24 from Maidenhead, 24 from Bracknell, 11 from Reading, 13 from Windsor, others from a bit further afield, such as Wokingham, Amersham, Surrey, Buckinghamshire, and west London, and a few from other areas, usually by email or phone. 49 people self-identified as having a person with a disability in the family, ranging from mobility difficulties to mental health issues, autism, HIV+, suffering heart attacks or stroke, or had a medical condition such as cancer or heart failure.

A family we helped

Mrs TM contacted SIAU at the end of her tether, after enduring years of abuse from her partner, the father of her four children. The last straw was him claiming that their youngest child was not his, and presenting her with alleged DNA evidence to show this. He had refused to apply for an extension of her permission to remain as his partner, making her into an overstayer and even more dependent on him as she was no longer permitted to work. She was desperate to escape from this control. SIAU explained that she could apply for the Destitution – Domestic Violence concessionary three months permission to remain, with eligibility to claim benefits, so she could leave her partner's home and get support for herself and the children. We obtained evidence of the abuse that had continued through the years, from the police and from her GP. We looked at the claimed DNA evidence and showed the flaws in it, and that it was not from a company recognised by the UK government, so she was reassured that it was not real. We then applied to the Home Office for indefinite leave to remain for her and it was granted in only three weeks, as the ordeals she had suffered were so clear. She and her children have been able to make a new life in safety.

SIAU's staff are highly skilled and experienced and their expertise can make a significant difference to chances of success in an application. Shabana Bokhari, OISC level 3 regulated, has continued to work for one day a week for most of this year; Parveen Akhter, OISC Level 2 regulated, worked four days a week from February 2021, and temporarily full-time from March 2022. Shabana was away in Pakistan for personal reasons for many months; she has been able to work remotely from there. Sue Shutter, level 2 regulated, volunteered more frequently, dealing with advice queries and some casework from home. We have not been able to support admin volunteers but Meghan Curran, Nazia Shabir and Amina Akhter have provided some volunteer casework support, supervised by Parveen Akhter. There is a huge demand for our work, which we have continued remotely, through email and phone, through the remainder of this year.

SIAU continues to work with and receive referrals from other local organisations and community groups doing complementary work in Slough and the surrounding area, including Citizens Advice East Berkshire, working in Slough since October 2021, Slough Refugee Support, Hestia, SEWAK refuge, The Dash Charity (Domestic Abuse Stops Here), Slough Foodbank, neighbouring Citizens Advice Bureaux and others. The council, Slough Children's Services Trust, and the Slough MP's office, as well as community groups, may also refer people to us for help and advice. We continue to be a member of the OneSlough (formerly SPACE) consortium of voluntary organisations funded by Slough council through Slough Council for Voluntary Service, to deliver advice and social support in Slough. We participate in their regular zoom meetings set up for groups to remain in contact during covid-19 lockdowns. As an OISC-regulated organisation, we hold their Slough Quality Protects Platinum level accreditation.

SIAU's information and lobbying work

SIAU has participated in lobbying on the Nationality and Borders Bill through our membership of the Immigration Law Practitioners' Association. We responded to the government's New Plan for Immigration document in April 2021 and have continued to comment on changes. We participate in on-line discussion groups of immigration advisers and lawyers sharing ideas and information.

SIAU expects to continue all our areas of work into the future, as we anticipate the need for it will remain and increase as more parts of the new immigration system and the Nationality and Borders Act comes into effect. The EU settlement and pre-settlement scheme and its June 2021 deadline, and people travelling in small boats across the English Channel and the Mediterranean and the Rwanda proposal keep migration in the forefront of public debate. We continue to advise many EU nationals and their families worried about their status, or applying late, along with others having difficulties caused by the family migration rules. The greater incidence of domestic abuse during covid-19 led to an increase in our casework in this area. Restrictions on eligibility to claim benefits, and the level of the Home Office fees have added to difficulties this year, and fee waivers and change of conditions applications are an increasing proportion of our work. The restrictions on our working because of covid-19 and the need to work remotely, and to rely on email, internet, phone and post, and the difficulties in meeting people, add to the complications of our work. We continue to attempt to mitigate some of the worst effects of the laws and practice for our clients and their families and to help them to achieve their aims.

SIAU's staff

Parveen Akhter, Shabana Bokhari

SIAU's volunteers

Amina Akhter (from November 2021), Meghan Curran (to September 2021)
Nazia Shabir (from October 2021), Sue Shutter

SIAU's Trustees

Sue Shutter (chair), Ray Barkley (treasurer), Mai Knibbs, Parvinder Matharu, Nisar Rehman

Slough Immigration Aid Unit

**Independent Examiner's Report
to the trustees of Slough Immigration Aid Unit**

I report on the accounts of Slough Immigration Aid Unit for the year ended 31 March 2022, which are set out on pages 10 and 11.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- 1* examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act
- 2* to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act
- 3* to state whether particular matters have come to my attention

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the next statement.

Independent examiner's statement

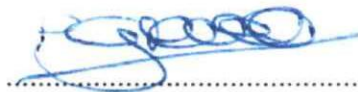
In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- * to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act and
- * to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the requirements of the 2011 Act

have not been met or

- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Ms P Grevett FCCA

15/8/22

Date

Slough Immigration Aid Unit

Income and Expenditure Account
for the year ended 31 March 2022

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	2022 Total funds	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	2021 Total funds
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Income						
Grants	13,624	10,000	23,624	19,370	15,190	34,560
Donations	5,266	-	5,266	1,069	-	1,069
Fees recovered	5,235	-	5,235	6,175	-	6,175
	24,125	10,000	34,125	26,614	-	41,804
Other income						
Deposit account interest	10	-	10	3	-	3
	10	-	10	3	-	3
Total income	24,135	10,000	34,135	26,617	15,190	41,807
Expenditure						
Rent	5,040	-	5,040	5,040	-	5,040
Wages	19,530	6,570	26,100	7,309	13,036	20,345
Cloud based data system & training	480	-	480	-	2,154	2,154
Course fees & books	-	-	-	-	-	-
Telephone & internet	1,530	-	1,530	1,469	-	1,469
Post & stationery	972	-	972	637	-	637
Travelling	-	-	-	-	-	-
Professional indemnity insurance	231	-	231	203	-	203
Employers liability insurance	165	-	165	160	-	160
Sundry expenses	385	-	385	228	-	228
Accountancy	1,000	-	1,000	1,000	-	1,000
Membership fees	435	-	435	270	-	270
Professional fees	1,290	-	1,290	1,290	-	1,290
Bank charges	73	-	73	72	-	72
Nest pension	288	-	288	260	-	260
	31,419	6,570	37,989	17,938	15,190	33,128
NET INCOME	-7,284	3,430	-3,854	8,679	-	8,679
Reconciliation of funds						
Total funds brought forward	22,348	-	22,348	13,669	-	13,669
Total funds carried forward	15,064	3430	18,494	22,348	-	22,348

Slough Immigration Aid Unit

Balance Sheet
for the year ended 31 March 2022

	2022		2021	
	£	£	£	£
FIXED ASSETS				
Computer equipment		1,710		1,710
CURRENT ASSETS				
Debtors	920		210	
Prepayments	150		150	
Bank deposit account	13,989		18,728	
Bank account no. 1	1,071		902	
Bank account no. 2	2,282		4,275	
Cash in hand	-		-	
	<u>18,412</u>		<u>24,265</u>	
CURRENT LIABILITIES				
Creditors and accrued expenses	<u>1,628</u>		<u>3,627</u>	
NET CURRENT ASSETS		16,784		20,638
NET ASSETS		<u>18,494</u>		<u>22,348</u>
REPRESENTED BY:				
Restricted funds		3,430		-
Unrestricted funds		15,064		22,348
		<u>18,494</u>		<u>22,348</u>

SLOUGH IMMIGRATION AID UNIT

England & Wales - Charity number 1064293

Accounts



Annual Report

and

Financial Statements

for the year ended 31 March 2021

for

Slough Immigration Aid Unit

funded by Louis Baylis (Maidenhead Advertiser) Charitable Trust, and



Contents of the Financial Statements
for the year ended 31 March 2021

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Income and Expenditure Account	10
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Slough Immigration Aid Unit
General Information
for the year ended 31 March 2021

CHARITY NAME: Slough Immigration Aid Unit

REGISTERED NUMBER: 1064293

ADDRESS: 52 Chalvey High Street
Slough
Berkshire
SL1 2SQ

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER: Ms P Grevett
Grevett & Co
Certified Accountants
346a Farnham Road
Slough
Berkshire
SL2 1BT

Slough Immigration Aid Unit

Trustees' Report
for the year ended 31 March 2021

The Trustees of the Slough Immigration Aid Unit (also known as SIAU) present their Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2021.

Trustees

Ms S M Shutter (Chair)
Mr M D Connolly (until his death on 2 January 2021)
Mrs L E Simmons OBE (resigned April 2020)
Mrs M A Knibbs
Ms P K Matharu
Mr J R Barkley (Treasurer)
Mr N A Rehman (from 8 February 2021)

The Trustees are appointed at Trustees' meetings. The Charity is governed by the Trust Deed dated 18 December 1996 as amended by Special Resolution on 15 August 1997.

Objects

The objects of the Charity are to relieve hardship by the provision of free legal advice, assistance and representation to people who live or work or study in Slough and neighbouring areas, and their families, who have difficulties caused by immigration, nationality or refugee law and practice and who cannot afford alternative representation and to collaborate with others to improve such advice for the people of Slough.

In addition other objects are to provide information and education on immigration, nationality and refugee law to those who are most closely affected by them.

This work is clearly for the public benefit, as required under charity law. The Trustees have had regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission when exercising any powers or duties to which the guidance is relevant.

Financial summary for the year

The Charity was funded through restricted grants from The Barrow Cadbury Trust Covid-19 Support Fund of £6,510 and The National Lottery Community Fund, distributed by the Access to Justice Foundation Community Justice Fund, of £8,680. The Charity was also funded through unrestricted grants from the Berkshire Community Foundation, the Mactaggart Third Fund, the Louis Baylis Charitable Trust, and the London Legal Support Trust from our participation in its sponsored walk. SPACE (Slough Prevention Alliance Community Engagement) funding, administered by Slough Council for Voluntary Service, for £4,000 per year to provide immigration advice to Slough residents, continued until March 2021, when it was replaced by OneSlough.

We continue to seek further grant funding for our work, and maintain our aim of having at least three months' running costs in reserves. The Charity is also funded by cost recovery fees from clients who do not qualify for a free service and by donations from individuals.

At the year end we held cash at bank of £23,905 which is represented by restricted funds of £2,154 for the cloud-based database system which was paid for in April 2021 and the balance by unrestricted funds, held to meet the running costs of the Charity's office and related expenditure.

The Trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

.....
Susan M. Shutter

Ms S M Shutter (Chair)

.....
13-12-21

Date

SIAU's work during the year April 2020 to March 2021

SIAU's work and aims

SIAU is a charity which provides specialist legal advice, assistance and representation to people who live, work or study in Slough and neighbouring areas, and their families, who have difficulties with UK immigration, nationality or refugee law and practice. We have done this work for over 15 years.

We provide a free service to people on low incomes, or no income, and who would have qualified financially for Legal Help, when this still existed for immigration matters. Where people's income or savings are too high to qualify for Legal Help, we may operate a cost recovery process, charging a fee towards our costs only – we do not make a profit.

We work closely with other groups giving advice in Slough and provide information and support to them. For the past four years this was formalised in the SPACE (Slough Prevention Alliance Community Engagement) consortium organised through Slough Council for Voluntary Service, of which we are an Associate. This is now called OneSlough. We have helped other voluntary and community organisations to understand the law and to help their members or refer them on. We have lobbied the Home Office for change and improvement in the law and practice.

This year our work was carried out in a very different way, because of the covid-19 pandemic. The last day we were working in the office as usual was 19 March 2020. Since then, the majority of our work has been done from home, through phone and email and zoom and post. We have got used to working in this way, and explaining to clients why they have to send scans and photos of documents by email to us in support of their cases, and provide information on-line for us to be able to advise. We have occasionally gone to the office to collect documents and to see those clients who are not able to use the internet, but most of our work has been done remotely. It was difficult and we are still learning.

Why our work is so important

Immigration law is complex and can affect all aspects of people's lives. Access to competent immigration advice and representation can be vital, making the difference between, for example, a couple or family being able to live together in the UK or remain separated on different continents; an asylum seeker being recognised as a refugee or being refused and returned to danger; a grandmother being able to visit for her granddaughter's wedding or being refused a visa to come. It may enable people confused and worried by the EU Settlement Scheme to understand what they can do to secure their position; or elderly parents being able to live with their adult children here rather than left alone and in need of care abroad. The covid-19 pandemic has added another dimension of worry, with biometrics centres being closed, international travel restrictions and dangers.

Ignorance of the law can lead to serious and unnecessary difficulties. Not understanding the basis on which immigration decisions are made, or the importance of using the right forms and providing all the right documentation to the Home Office or to British Visa Application Centres abroad at the right time, can result in applications which could meet the requirements of the immigration rules being refused. For many months most Visa Application Centres were closed and existing entry clearance applications were paused, leading to much frustration and uncertainty. The fees for immigration applications remain very high - £2389 for settlement as a spouse or partner, £1523 for their entry clearance abroad since April 2018 – making the importance of preparing a case well and getting the application right first time of huge significance. Since April 2015, immigration applicants also have to pay a 'health surcharge,' which rose from £400 to £624 per year in October 2020, for access to the NHS, for which most of them will already be paying through their taxes.

When immigration problems can be solved, people are able to continue their lives in a normal way. Uncertainty about immigration status can cause poverty and exploitation. People who have at last been allowed to work and thus to support their family will be able to do so, and will have the security not to be exploited at work and to be able to access other rights. The basic security for people knowing that they are able to remain with their family and continue in their life enhances community cohesion and makes for a more unified and stronger society.

SIAU remains the only source of free specialist immigration and nationality law advice based in Slough. Such work is much needed in Slough; around half of its population is of minority ethnic origin, with the largest communities from Kashmir and the Punjab, but there are also significant African, East European, other Asian and Middle Eastern populations, as well as those from the Caribbean. There remains a large unmet need for immigration advice, information and representation.

Changes in the law

The Brexit transition period until 31 December 2020, and then the deadline for most people to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme of 30 June 2021 continued to play a large part in the Parliamentary and other discussion on immigration during the year. The European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Act gained Royal Assent on 23 January 2020 and the Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal) Act, ending free movement, on 11 November 2020. There were 12 separate Statements of Changes in the immigration rules from April 2020 to March 2021, including five further changes to the EU Settlement Scheme, other changes following on from the UK withdrawing from EU agreements, such as the Dublin Regulations, and to routes to work in the UK and the new scheme for British nationals (overseas) from Hong Kong. There were four Supreme Court decisions relating to immigration or asylum matters. The new revamped points-based system to apply to EU and non-EU citizens alike coming to the UK was in effect from 1 January 2021. It made few substantial changes to the current system for non-EU nationals and their families, the bulk of SIAU's work. The Law Commission report, *Simplifying the immigration rules*, was published on 14 January 2020 and the Home Office continues its programme of redrafting some sections of the rules in batches. Through its membership of ILPA, SIAU has contributed to comments and lobbying on this work.

The rules on family migration remain extremely restrictive, and many people are still unable to meet them as they do not earn the £18,600 per year required to be able to maintain their spouse, or cannot provide the very precise evidence demanded. The financial difficulties caused by covid-19 lockdowns and furlough have meant fewer people can qualify, and the Home Office's covid-19 concessions have not covered all issues. In the UK, it has meant an increase in family members who cannot meet the financial requirement getting permission to stay on the 'ten year route to settlement,' meaning they will not have a secure "settled" status in the UK for ten years. More people have needed to apply for their fees to be waived, and for their conditions restricting access to public funds to be amended. These applications are labour-intensive, as the Home Office requires very detailed financial evidence and explanations.

The 'hostile environment' created for people without immigration rights, renamed the 'compliant environment' by Sajid Javid when Home Secretary, continues under Priti Patel and affects others who have the right to remain. The most extreme injustice affected many from the 'Windrush generation' – with people still fighting for slow and inadequate compensation. It is likely that a similar situation will arise in future for those who do not apply under the EU Settlement Scheme, for whatever reason. The government's use of outsourcing to private sector providers to operate the immigration system, TLS Contact and VFS Global abroad, Sopra Steria in the UK, makes the processes less transparent and harder to deal with, and it is more difficult to find out where responsibility for problems caused to individual applicants lies.

SIAU helps people to understand the immigration law and rules and how to satisfy the authorities that they can qualify, or advises them how they can do so, but also explains when they do not. SIAU's work empowers people by helping them to be aware of their position under immigration law and to access their rights and by reducing the need for people to pay often expensive and incompetent consultants.

British nationality law is complicated and people often need help in understanding it, collecting the documents needed and making their applications to become British citizens. Naturalisation is always discretionary and the Home Office changes its criteria for using its discretion without publicity. Again, the naturalisation fee of £1330 is non-refundable if the application is refused. SIAU's specialist workers are able to help people through this maze. We have lobbied through ILPA on the nationality sections of the Nationality and Borders Bill, being debated in Parliament through 2021.

SIAU's advice work and casework

Our legal advice and representational work through the year continued. Our work is regulated by the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner, no. F200500137. OISC most recently audited SIAU's work in May 2016 and was fully satisfied.

During the year April 2020 – March 2021, SIAU records show we advised 441 people and families and took up 53 new cases to represent to the immigration authorities, with work continuing on many others.

Our records show that the people we advised were of 76 different nationalities - the largest numbers were again Pakistani (83) and Indian (34). There were 53 inquiries from citizens of other EU countries this year, often those of minority ethnic descent, the largest numbers were Romanian (9), Polish and Italian (8 each), and Spanish (5). Other nationalities include Ghanaian (23), Nigerian (22), Zimbabwean (15), Kenyan and Moroccan (13 each), Filipino and Gambian (10 each), and fewer than 10 people from each of the other nationalities.

Many inquiries, 57, related to the EU Settlement Scheme, including 31 about acquiring permanent residence, 16 about pre-settled status, many including non-EU national family members, 10 about EU SS family permit entry clearance. Many inquiries related to establishing or acquiring British citizenship, 37 in relation to adult naturalisation, 11 in relation to children, either registering as British or establishing the status of children born here. The majority of the other issues raised were in relation to family matters, 77 about spouses, partners and children in the UK, 30 about entry clearance for spouses, partners and children currently abroad. 4 inquiries related to other dependent relatives. 41 related to marriage breakdown and domestic violence and the immigration law effects of escaping a violent partnership or the possibility of qualifying to remain in the UK independently. 6 were related to asylum or discretionary leave matters. 26 people needed advice or help about their entitlement to benefits, or in trying to change the conditions on their stay that they cannot have recourse to public funds, and 20 about applying to waive Home Office application fees and the immigration health surcharge. Other matters included 11 people wanting advice about family members coming to visit from abroad, and matters such as long residence in the UK, NHS charges and obtaining travel documents and biometric residence permits.

In relation to the 53 people and families whose cases we took up to represent, they were of 26 different nationalities; the largest numbers were Pakistani (9) and Indian (7), Cameroonian, Ghanaian and Jamaican (3 each). Many couples and families have more than one nationality between them, and non-EU nationals married to, or children of, EU nationals, may have most difficulty in establishing their EU rights; we represented three such cases. Others included permission to remain with settled or British spouses (5) or parents of such children (6) or entry clearance to join family (4), applying to remain after experiencing domestic violence (16), applying for change of conditions on stay, to be able to access public funds (6) and applying for British citizenship (4).

The majority of people we advised and helped were local. 259 came from Slough, 28 from High Wycombe, 25 from Maidenhead, 22 from Bracknell, 14 from Reading, 11 from Windsor, others from a bit further afield, such as Wokingham, Amersham, Surrey, Buckinghamshire, and west London, and a few from other areas, usually by email or phone. 69 people self-identified as having a person with a disability in the family, ranging from mobility difficulties to mental health issues, autism, HIV+, suffering heart attacks or stroke, or had a medical condition such as cancer or heart failure. 8 claimed either personal independence payments or carer's allowance.

A family we helped

Mrs A is a Nigerian healthcare worker, a lone parent with two children born in the UK, now aged 12 and 10. She has faced huge difficulties in caring for them, and continuing to work, through the pandemic, and could not make ends meet and pay her rent. She had permission to stay because her elder child is British, but without recourse to public funds, and asked SIAU what could be done. We helped her to make an application to change her conditions of stay, providing very detailed financial evidence and arguments to the Home Office, and this was successful. She then told us that she could not afford the fees to apply for permission for her younger child to stay in the UK. SIAU explained that she could apply to waive the fees, and again represented her son in doing so. That fee waiver was granted, and he was given an extension of stay in line with his mother. She would like to register her son to become British, to which he is entitled as he has lived in the UK for the first 10 years of his life – but there are no fee waivers for nationality applications. The fee is £1012. SIAU has advised her to wait for the outcome of a pending challenge to the level of this fee in the Supreme Court, in the hope that this case is successful and the children's citizenship fee is changed.

SIAU's information and lobbying work

SIAU's staff are highly skilled and experienced and their expertise can make a significant difference to chances of success in an application. Shabana Bokhari, OISC level 3 regulated, has worked for SIAU since January 2018, for one day a week for most of this year; Parveen Akhter, OISC Level 2 regulated, returned to SIAU in September 2019, working three days a week initially, and four days from February 2021. Shabana was away in Pakistan for personal reasons for many months from November 2020; she has been able to work remotely from there for several months. Sue Shutter, level 2 regulated, volunteered more frequently, dealing with advice queries and some casework from home. We were unable to provide work and support for our admin volunteer Naseem Abid remotely, but Meghan Curran was able to do some casework support, supervised by Parveen Akhter. There is a huge demand for our work, which we have continued remotely, through email and phone, through the remainder of this year.

SIAU continues to work with and receive referrals from other local organisations and community groups doing complementary work in Slough and the surrounding area, including Shelter, Slough Advice Centre (which both closed at the end of June 2021, with Citizens Advice providing only a skeleton telephone service since then), Slough Refugee Support, Hestia, SEWAK refuge, The Dash Charity (Domestic Abuse Stops Here), Slough Foodbank, neighbouring Citizens Advice Bureaux and others. The council, Slough Children's Services Trust, and the Slough MP's office, as well as community groups, may also refer people to us for help and advice. We continue to be a member of the OneSlough (formerly SPACE) consortium of voluntary organisations funded by Slough council through Slough Council for Voluntary Service, to deliver advice and social support in Slough. We participate in their regular zoom meetings set up for groups to remain in contact during covid-19 lockdowns and, as an OISC-regulated organisation, hold their Slough Quality Protects Platinum standard.

SIAU has participated in responses to government consultations, either through our membership of the Immigration Law Practitioners' Association, or direct. We responded to the government's New Plan for Immigration document in April 2021. We participate in on-line discussion groups of immigration advisers and lawyers sharing ideas and information.

SIAU expects to continue all our areas of work into the future, as we anticipate the need for it will remain and increase as more parts of the new immigration system comes into effect. The EU settlement and pre-settlement scheme and its June 2021 deadline, and people travelling in small boats across the English Channel and the Mediterranean keep migration in the forefront of public debate. We have advised many EU nationals and their families worried about their status, or applying late, along with others having difficulties caused by the family migration rules. Restrictions on eligibility to claim benefits, and the level of Home Office fees have added to difficulties this year, and fee waivers and change of conditions applications are an increasing proportion of our work. The restrictions on our working because of covid-19 and the need to work remotely, and to rely on email, internet, phone and post, and the inability to meet people, add to the complications of our work. We continue to attempt to mitigate some of the worst effects of the laws and practice for our clients and their families and to help them to achieve their aims.

SIAU's staff

Parveen Akhter, Shabana Bokhari

SIAU's volunteers

Naseem Abid (to March 2020), Meghan Curran (to September 2021), Sue Shutter

SIAU's Trustees

Sue Shutter (chair), Ray Barkley (treasurer), Mike Connolly (to 2 January 2021),
Mai Knibbs, Parvinder Matharu, Nisar Rehman (from February 2021)

We were deeply saddened by the death of Charles Blake in September 2020, a long-standing committed and knowledgeable trustee who resigned in February 2020 due to ill-health, and by that of Mike Connolly, from covid-19, in January 2021. We miss them both greatly.

Slough Immigration Aid Unit

**Independent Examiner's Report
to the trustees of Slough Immigration Aid Unit**

I report on the accounts of Slough Immigration Aid Unit for the year ended 31 March 2021, which are set out on pages 10 and 11.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- 1* examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act
- 2* to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act
- 3* to state whether particular matters have come to my attention

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the next statement.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
 - * to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act and
 - * to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the requirements of the 2011 Act

have not been met or

- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.


.....
Ms P Grevett FCCA


.....
Date

Slough Immigration Aid Unit

Income and Expenditure Account
for the year ended 31 March 2021

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2021 Total funds £	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2020 Total funds £
Income						
Grants	19,370	15,190	34,560	15,400	-	15,400
Donations	1,069	-	1,069	5,245	-	5,245
Fees recovered	6,175	-	6,175	12,165	-	12,165
	26,614	15,190	41,804	32,810	-	32,810
Other income						
Deposit account interest	3	-	3	29	-	29
	3	-	3	29	-	29
Total income	26,617	15,190	41,807	32,839	-	32,839
Expenditure						
Rent	5,040	-	5,040	5,040	-	5,040
Wages	7,309	13,036	20,345	18,905	-	18,905
Cloud based data system & training	-	2,154	2,154	-	-	-
Course fees & books	-	-	-	-	-	-
Telephone & internet	1,469	-	1,469	1,312	-	1,312
Post & stationery	637	-	637	1,034	-	1,034
Travelling	-	-	-	521	-	521
Professional indemnity insurance	203	-	203	203	-	203
Employers liability insurance	160	-	160	157	-	157
Sundry expenses	228	-	228	404	-	404
Accountancy	1,000	-	1,000	1,000	-	1,000
Membership fees	270	-	270	150	-	150
Professional fees	1,290	-	1,290	1,290	-	1,290
Bank charges	72	-	72	72	-	72
Nest pension	260	-	260	871	-	871
	17,938	15,190	33,128	30,959	-	30,959
NET INCOME	8,679	-	8,679	1,880	-	1,880
Reconciliation of funds						
Total funds brought forward	13,669	-	13,669	11,789	-	11,789
Total funds carried forward	22,348	-	22,348	13,669	-	13,669

Slough Immigration Aid Unit

Balance Sheet
for the year ended 31 March 2021

	2021		2020	
	£	£	£	£
FIXED ASSETS				
Computer equipment		1,710		1,461
CURRENT ASSETS				
Debtors	210		560	
Prepayments	150		854	
Bank deposit account	18,728		8,516	
Bank account no. 1	902		1,204	
Bank account no. 2	4,275		2,477	
Cash in hand	-		-	
	<u>24,265</u>		<u>13,611</u>	
CURRENT LIABILITIES				
Creditors and accrued expenses	<u>3,627</u>		<u>1,403</u>	
NET CURRENT ASSETS		20,638		12,208
NET ASSETS		<u>22,348</u>		<u>13,669</u>
REPRESENTED BY:				
Restricted funds		-		-
Unrestricted funds		22,348		13,669
		<u>22,348</u>		<u>13,669</u>