

A Company Limited by Guarantee

Report and Financial Statements

For the Year Ended March 2024

Charity no: 1092265  
Company no: 4361627

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## **Legal and administrative information**

### **Charity Name and Number**

Asylum Welcome

Registered Charity number: 1092265

Registered as a Company limited by guarantee, number: 04361627

### **Trustees**

Limyaa Ali

Aiham Al Aswadi (Co-opted December 2023)

Dr Alison Baxter

Valerie Johnson (Co-chair)

Lucy Keating

Dr Tina Leonard

Dr David Levy

Humphrey Lloyd (Treasurer)

Clare Miller

Tony Samuel (Co-chair)

Courtenay Stock (Company Secretary) (Co-opted October 2023)

### **Chief Executive/ Director**

Mark Goldring CBE

### **Registered Office**

Unit 7 Newtec Place, Magdalen Road, Oxford OX4 1RE

### **Auditors**

Critchleys Audit LLP, Beaver House, 23-28 Hythe Bridge St., Oxford OX1 2EP

### **Bankers**

The Cooperative Bank plc, PO Box 250, Skelmersdale, WN8 6WT

CCLA Fund Managers Ltd One Angel Lane, London, EC4R 3AB

## **Report of the Trustees**

### **For the year ended 31 March 2024**

The Trustees are pleased to present their report, together with the financial statements of the charity, for the year ended 31 March 2024.

The legal and administrative information set out on page one, above, forms part of this report. The financial statements comply with current statutory requirements, the Articles of Association, and the Statement of Recommended Practice – Accounting and Reporting by Charities.

#### **Aims and Objects**

The charity's objects are to provide charitable assistance, operating principally from Oxfordshire, for the relief of poverty, sickness and distress and for educational purposes, for the benefit of asylum seekers, refugees and vulnerable migrants who have a humanitarian need for assistance in the UK, including those detained within the legal or penal system.

During 2023, following extensive consultation with staff, clients and volunteers, the Board re-examined the wording for its Vision, Mission and Values in order to express them more clearly. In the new Strategic Framework for 2024-2027, we state:

#### **Our vision**

Asylum seekers, refugees and vulnerable migrants will feel welcomed, respected, empowered and included. They will be able to live in dignity, have hope for the future, exercise their rights, have their cases fairly considered, access services to meet their needs, and have opportunities to develop and share their talents.

#### **Our mission**

Asylum Welcome works to alleviate poverty, suffering and isolation among asylum seekers, refugees and vulnerable migrants in need of humanitarian assistance, who seek refuge in Oxfordshire. We do this through working collaboratively with people seeking sanctuary, providing services and opportunities, supporting people to access services provided by others, promoting independence and challenging the policies and practices that undermine people's rights.

#### **Our values**

- Common humanity: we are all one people – part of a local and global community.
- Social justice: we believe in a fair, compassionate and inclusive society that provides rights and opportunities for all people.
- Voluntary action: we value volunteers who generously give their time to deliver services, and we seek to make this a rewarding and mutually beneficial experience.

## **Structure, Governance and Management**

### **Structure**

Asylum Welcome is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity governed by its Articles of Association.

The directors of the charitable company (“the charity”) are its Trustees for the purposes of charity law, and throughout this report are collectively referred to as the “Trustees”. As set out in the Articles of Association, the members of the charitable company who attend the Annual General Meeting elect the Trustees.

The Board of Trustees (the Board) governs the charity, and consists of not less than 5 and not more than 13 Trustees, elected, normally for a three-year term, by the Members at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). In addition to the elected Trustees, the Board may co-opt up to three more between AGMs. A Trustee co-opted by the Trustees may only serve office until the next AGM, at which point they must retire, and members have the opportunity to appoint them as a Trustee.

A Director is appointed by the Board to manage the day-to-day operation of the charity, and to lead the staff team and the volunteers. The Director has delegated authority, within the terms of the delegation appointed by the Board, for operational matters including finance, employment and asylum and refugee related issues.

The Director leads a team of staff who, in turn, work with volunteers to deliver the services of the charity.

By the end of 2023/24 staff numbers had stabilised at 36 employees at the end of the year, around 60% of whom were full-time. This number reflects growth in some areas, offset by the conclusion of the large Afghan hotels and Ukraine programmes.

### **Governance**

In 2023/24 the Board welcomed the inclusion of two new Trustees, bringing new ideas and insights. Sadly, we also saw the resignation through ill-health of Linda Bond at our AGM in September 2023. It is with great sadness that we report that Linda died in April 2024.

We started the financial year with 10 Trustees. Following Linda’s retirement in September 2023, the number was reduced to nine. In October 2023 we co-opted Courtenay Stock as a new Trustee. She had applied to an advert where we were specifically looking for younger Trustees and for people who could bring legal expertise to our Board. Courtenay is a corporate lawyer in London (originally from South Africa). She brings considerable company law knowledge, coupled with a passion, through voluntary work and research, in the field of refugee and asylum law.

At almost the same time, Joanna Steele, our voluntary Company Secretary for the charity, announced her retirement and a move away from Oxford. Courtenay agreed to act as our Company Secretary with effect from October 2023.

That same advert looking for younger people and especially seeking those with lived-experience of being an asylum seeker or refugee brought an application from Aiham Al Aswadi - a former client of Asylum Welcome, then a volunteer, and later a paid member of staff. Aiham has truly seen the work of the charity from an inside perspective. We were delighted to co-opt Aiham as our newest Trustee in December 2023.

At the end of 2023/24 we had 11 Trustees, many of whom have been in post for 3-5 years, with two Trustees now with eight years on the Board. This has provided valuable consistency and continuity at a time when many new members of staff have joined the charity.

The Board appoints a Finance Committee of 3-4 Trustees, chaired by the Treasurer, with the Director and Finance Manager in attendance. A similar People and Governance Committee oversees these specific areas. Other 'ad hoc' groups of Trustees meet to advise the Board or Director on particular governance issues, depending on their skills and experience. These committees are generally delegated to deliberate and formulate proposals to be agreed by the Board. The Director normally attends Board meetings in an executive/advisory capacity.

Asylum Welcome has also been fortunate to have valuable support from Patrons over many years.

Sadly, we reported the death of our first Patron, Dr Uwe Kitzinger CBE in May 2023. Uwe had been a true friend of Asylum Welcome, helping it from its early development right through to more recently, giving generously of his time, money, and extensive contacts. His inquisitive mind, fierce intellect and contagious enthusiasm were a constant inspiration to all who knew him.

We were delighted to appoint two new Patrons during the year. They join The Rt. Rev the Lord Bishop of Oxford, Stephen Croft, who remains a Patron.

- Baroness Jan Royall has been Principal of Somerville College since 2017. Jan had a distinguished career in politics, notably serving as Chief Whip in the House of Lords and then as Leader of the House from 2008-2010. She also served as Shadow Leader of the House of Lords from 2010-2015.  
Jan has a passion for the rights of refugees and asylum seekers. Jan was central in enabling the University of Oxford to become a University of Sanctuary in 2023.
- Professor Roger Zetter is Emeritus Professor of Refugee Studies, and was the former Director of the Refugee Studies Centre at University of Oxford. His teaching, research, publications and consultancy on forced displacement, refugee and humanitarian affairs include all stages of the refugee and displacement cycle. Roger was a Trustee of Asylum Welcome from 2012 to 2018 – he has a passion for our work and direct experience of the charity.

## Management

As noted above, the Director has delegated authority for operational matters including finance, employment and asylum and refugee related issues. Detailed reports follow, giving much greater clarity on Asylum Welcome's extensive work during 2023/24.

Looking back on 2023/24, we can say that, whilst we were spared new international crises that dominated our work in recent years, we continued to deal with the devastating after-effects of recent ones. The Syrian conflict, the crisis in Afghanistan, the war in Ukraine (to name just a few global issues that triggered the flight of refugees) are far-reaching and long-lasting; they continued to influence much of our work in the last 12 months.

The Board supported the Director and staff in tackling these challenges. At the same time the UK government doubled down on creating a 'hostile environment' for those seeking asylum or beginning their lives as refugees in the UK. The growing number of people arriving in the UK on small-boats became a defining issue for the government, with successive Home Secretaries championing ever-harsher legislation to criminalise asylum seekers.

In 2023/24, the government passed the Illegal Migration Act despite vigorous opposition from refugee charities (including Asylum Welcome) and impassioned debate in the House of Lords. Within months of its introduction the Supreme Court unanimously ruled against the government's plan to send all new asylum seekers to Rwanda and the government in turn rushed through legislation, the 'Safety of Rwanda Act', as the name implies, to expressly affirm their belief that Rwanda is a safe place to which it can send asylum seekers.

Whilst the government was intent on criminalising asylum seekers and making the lives of refugees as difficult as possible, Asylum Welcome worked tirelessly to help vulnerable people facing fear of persecution and fleeing for their lives. Our supporters and partners confirm our values – they have once again responded with great generosity and commitment, resulting in almost £1.8M in income to fund our work, only slightly less than that achieved in the previous year when the crises first arose.

The Board spent a considerable time in 2023/24 working with the Director, Senior Management Team (SMT), staff and volunteers on Strategic Planning for our future direction as a charity (with support from the Lloyds Bank Foundation who provided consultancy support for the strategy planning process).

The Board meets normally six times a year for routine Trustee meetings. In 2023/24 we added two further meetings specifically to plan and confirm our new Strategy.

The culmination of the strategic planning process came in January 2024 when the Board approved the new Strategic Framework for 2024-27.

The framework deliberately aims to guide organisational programming, focus and resource allocation, in the period 2024-27, without being prescriptive in every detail. It will be translated into practice through team plans, organisational policies, annual plans and budgets. It is available to staff, clients and volunteers - and on our website for all to see -

<https://www.asylum-welcome.org/our-strategy/>

In short, our primary focus, above introducing anything new, is to enhance the effectiveness of our existing services. In some areas, this means expansion, while in others, it means improvement.

Our plan is;

- i) To improve the quality of services provided to asylum seekers and refugees and those trying to obtain status. Also, to be responsive to new groups as they arrive.
- ii) To develop partnerships and engagement with other specialist providers.
- iii) To boost cross cutting issues, such as management, monitoring and evaluation, and triage.

The number of volunteers remained steady at 224. We are indebted to their service; we couldn't deliver the quantity and quality of support without them.

Asylum Welcome seeks to lead by example - helping refugees to participate in all aspects of running the charity, according to their abilities and interests. At the end of 2023/24 our staff included 16 people with a personal displacement background and more with close family connections. We continued to increase the number of talented asylum seekers and refugees as volunteers and members of the organisation.

The Board wants to put on record our enormous thanks to everyone who has contributed to helping our clients over this past year. It is a notable fact that whilst some seek to demonise asylum seekers, refugees and vulnerable migrants, there are many who work tirelessly to improve their situation.

Everyone who helps in us in that goal is taking us one step closer to our Vision that "Asylum seekers, refugees and vulnerable migrants will feel welcomed, respected, empowered, and included. They will be able to live in dignity, have hope for the future, exercise their rights, have their cases fairly considered, access services to meet their needs, and have opportunities to develop and share their talents".



## Our Programmes, An Overview

After the major and unexpected groups of arrivals from Afghanistan in 2021, Ukraine in early 2022 and the opening of local hotels for asylum seekers from many countries in 2022 and 2023, the last year has, in one sense, been relatively calm. However, it certainly has not felt that way to our staff and volunteers trying to provide services, nor to our clients, most especially to asylum seekers caught up in an ever-changing set of laws, policies, practices and threats.

The Oxfordshire landscape has changed hugely over recent years, with nearly 2,000 Ukrainians now living across the county, more resettled families from Afghanistan in our cities and towns, and, as of the end of 2023/24, about 600 asylum seekers staying in four hotels, alongside many others housed in the community.

Two recurring issues, seen time and time again by our staff and volunteers, bring alive the way the asylum system has felt through the year. One is that of more clients receiving decisions on their asylum applications. Most were positive, but the good news was accompanied by the desperate struggle to find affordable housing within four weeks or less, or risk homelessness. The other factor is the government's highly publicised plan to send asylum seekers to Rwanda, which has caused fear for many and left others in legal limbo, their cases unprocessed pending possible deportation. In this context, the ongoing Home Office plan to reopen Campsfield House immigration detention centre in 2024 casts a particularly dark shadow.

Together, these dynamics have heavily influenced our work in 2023/24, with our efforts to help clients make and evidence asylum claims, link them with lawyers, collaborate with councils and partners to help them find housing all increasing significantly. The sense of despair and anger when staff have very occasionally had to give out sleeping bags because they simply couldn't find a client somewhere to stay has been profound.

One major aspect of our work this year, addressing these needs, has been embedding a programme that delivers regular services to the asylum seekers in three locations (Oxford, Banbury and Witney). These "drop-in" services support people to meet their immediate needs, link them with lawyers, and help them prepare for a possible move on. We have also worked with an Abingdon community group to support residents in houses in Abingdon and Faringdon.

One issue our strategic review highlighted was the need to improve the way we review and handle enquiries, requests for help, and the making of appointments for our different services. We responded by designing and staffing a new Triage Service that simplifies and speeds up this process. Whilst just outside the financial year 2023/24, this service went live in April 2024.

The year saw the conclusion of two major programmes run in conjunction with the County Council. We supported 250 Afghans evacuated from Kabul in 2021, housing them in three hotels until the last of them were properly accommodated in mid-2023. Our support encompassed greeting families upon arrival, opening bank accounts, explaining basic aspects of UK life, facilitating access to healthcare, assisting with benefit claims, enrolling children in schools, improving English skills, securing employment and relocating. The families are now dispersed across the UK, with some contentedly settled in Oxford and maintaining regular contact with us.

The second programme was supporting Ukrainians and the families and communities hosting them. Our team, which included several Ukrainians, made a real difference to many hundreds of parents and children, both in their early days and in their gradual progression and integration. Many are now living in their own houses, with others still enjoying the hospitality of generous hosts across the county. The Ukraine Programme came to an end in February 2024 as the County Council awarded the extension of the contract to another organisation.

June 2023 also saw the end of a useful Home Office supported programme which enabled us to assist vulnerable European migrants to regularise their settlement status in the UK, as needed post-Brexit. The biggest group of clients who we were able to help under this programme were East Timorese migrants, of whom there are several thousand in the county, and we have retained links with and supported the East Timor community organisation, to continue to offer a service to this community.

The arrival of a range of new sanctuary seekers in three hotels across the county and in rented houses has stimulated much closer collaboration among local authorities across the county. This collaboration is something we played a leading role in organising in the early days, but is now led by councils, with us acting as a civil society voice.

We have tried to build on this greater awareness by supporting activities linked to the City of Sanctuary movement. This framework encourages, assists and accredits organisations to consider and plan for meeting refugees' needs in their work. We are collaborating with Oxford City and Oxfordshire County Councils, the University of Oxford and Oxford Brookes University as they progress on their own journeys.

One of the roles that we have played is helping the four organisations to hear directly from refugees as they plan their work, so that they are aware of their needs, and better able to include refugees in their thinking. This effort to give voice is part of a wider commitment that Asylum Welcome is prioritising across our work, and is just as relevant to us looking inwards at ourselves as to our influencing of other organisations.

Listening to lived experience is one of the commitments highlighted in the new strategy approved in 2024. There was clear positive feedback from clients, staff, volunteers and partners as we prepared our strategy that we had a comprehensive range of highly valued services. We received widespread endorsement for our quick, client-focused and responsive approach and our efforts to address a wide range of needs. This included creating a specific service to support our outreach to the asylum hotels rather than treating it as part of our general Adult and Family Service.

What we heard that we needed to concentrate on was quality assurance, linkage and management support to enhance this strong base. We took steps to respond to this by defining the scope of services more clearly, creating new management posts and reallocating resources within the limited flexibility that we had.

One area of linkage that we are very pleased with is the integration of Sanctuary Hosting into Asylum Welcome, following the merger in 2022/23. The programme hosted 37 different guests during the year and is growing steadily, responding quickly to the needs of some of our existing clients, including the most vulnerable of those having to leave the asylum hotels, with nowhere to go.

The ending of three commissioned programmes limited our cost recovery and so financial flexibility to develop new work, particularly as there were not the same funding flows attached to our increased work with asylum seekers in the hotels. We were, however, able to develop new work to help improve the access of our clients to health services and start a collaboration with Oxford University on a creative arts programme that involves clients from many different backgrounds, and will culminate in an exhibition in 2024.

As we look ahead to 2024/25, we cannot predict what the year will bring. However, we are confident that our staff, volunteers and supporters will ensure that we respond quickly and effectively to changing needs, particularly of those struggling with the asylum system.

## Summary of our main Services in 2023/24

Programme	Description
<b>Adult &amp; Family Service</b>	Core Asylum Welcome service and first port of call within the charity. Advice and support, signposting to internal and external services. Benefits, housing, hardship and immigration rights. We separated the Outreach Service this year, and hired new staff to cater for large numbers.
<b>Outreach Service</b>	Providing efficient advice to large numbers of clients living in dispersal accommodation such as hotels, hostels, and single unit accommodation in Oxfordshire. New team in place who provide briefings and advice clinics, covering immigration issues, healthcare and move-on support for when people are given refugee status. Some arts and sports provision.
<b>Youth Project &amp; Youth Clubs</b>	Supporting young refugees and asylum seekers (many of whom are unaccompanied). Our youth team provides intensive casework and practical support as well as a weekly Youth Club for young people of many nationalities. Also facilitate boxing, cricket and football clubs. We also provide engaging outings in school holidays.
<b>Food Bank &amp; Hardship Fund</b>	For many people in immigration limbo, they will receive less than £7 a day (or £8.86 per week for those living in hotels) or have No Recourse to Public Funds and will struggle without our help. We provide small subsistence grants for emergency needs. These interventions are a stopgap, while we attempt to ensure clients are moved on to more sustainable support.
<b>Asylum and Immigration Advice</b>	Service helping people to submit timely and complete claims for asylum or appeal. Aimed at improving access to legal immigration advice, expediting outcomes allowing people to move on with their lives. As well as our Oxford-based service, we run a Thames Valley Partnership with Slough & Reading Refugee groups and with Settled.
<b>Education and Employment</b>	Language lessons, employment support, CV building, interview practice etc, and referrals to schools & colleges. New employment mentoring project underway in 2024. We have established links with local colleges and employers.
<b>Advocacy &amp; Co-production</b>	Our Advocacy service has been involved in coordinating with other organisations working towards a fairer immigration system. We are also working with people with lived experience. We run fortnightly co-production workshops which give a platform to refugees and asylum seekers to discuss the issues that matter to them, to inform our work and to campaign locally for change.
<b>UKRS Resettlement Project</b>	Intensive mentoring and material assistance for new arrivals who have received refugee status (Syrian /Afghan/etc) with admin & basic needs when they are placed in Oxfordshire by the Home Office. Commissioned by Oxford City Council.
<b>Huntercombe Prison/Detention Support</b>	Supportive visits by volunteers to foreign national prisoners held at HMP Huntercombe. Provides complex advocacy and practical support as well as emotional support. Immigration advice for prisoners is complex and prison staff are not trained in this area. AW support commended as extremely valuable by HMP Huntercombe staff as well as beneficiaries.
<b>Sanctuary Wheels- Bike Project</b>	Free refurbished bikes (& helmets & locks) for migrants throughout Oxfordshire. Independence, mobility and fitness as well as a free way to travel. Partnering with Active Oxford. Featured on BT Sports and BBC news.
<b>Digital Inclusion - Laptop Project</b>	Free refurbished lap-tops & devices, and wi-fi passes plus personalised IT training for refugees and asylum seekers. Have been donated hundreds of unused devices from the general public and businesses which are then wiped and refurbished. Project has expanded this year, received large multi-year grant award from Santander and employed new coordinator with lived-experience.
<b>Schools Advocacy</b>	Intensive mentoring for newly-arrived parents to engage and understand the English school system, to support good educational outcomes for their children. Can include English language classes for parents. Now into fully-funded 3rd year after successful pilot, with huge demand from schools throughout the city.
<b>Sanctuary Hosting</b>	Sanctuary Hosting merged with Asylum Welcome at the end of December 2022, supporting migrants at risk of homelessness with hosted homestays. Guests can also benefit from the range of services on offer at Asylum Welcome. The service operates across Oxfordshire, and throughout the Thames Valley, including Reading.
<b>Health Access Support Group</b>	New project to enable asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in Oxfordshire to access reliable, accurate information about healthcare and their rights; to oversee Asylum Welcome's engagement with healthcare organisations; and to contribute towards positive outcomes for wellbeing and healthier migrant communities in Oxfordshire. Health information collated in multiple languages to support health and wellbeing.
<b>Ukraine Programme</b>	Working with councils & community groups across Oxfordshire to help provide the best possible experience for Ukrainians coming to the region under the 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme. Focussed less on initial settlement in 2023 and more on integration and well-being. Project completed Feb 2024. A lot of the work supported community activity, and many mass events, including leisure activities, art workshops and music concerts.
<b>Europa Welcome</b>	Post-Brexit support for vulnerable EU citizens, advice on regularising status. Project completed in June 2023.
<b>Afghan Transition Hotels</b>	Support to Afghans who came in the airlifts from Kabul and were housed in two hotels until their resettlement in permanent accommodation. Project completed in July 2023.
<b>Refugee Employment Support Project (RESP)</b>	Asylum Welcome's mentoring service under the Refugee Employment Support Project (RESP) provides 1-2-1 mentoring for Oxford-based participants, mostly Syrian, who came to the UK under the VPRS more than five years ago and need some additional support in accessing employment. The 15-month project is funded by Oxford City Council and runs to end August 2024, in partnership with Aspire and EMBS.

### **Number of clients per service**

Programme	No. of clients 2023/24
Adult & Family Service	553
Outreach Service	585
Youth Project & Youth Clubs	200
Food Bank & Hardship Fund	Food Bank: 171 Hardship Fund: 92
Legal Immigration Advice	671
Education and Employment	250
Advocacy & Co-production	N/A
UKRS Resettlement Project	90
Huntercombe Prison Support	119
Sanctuary Wheels	257
Digital Inclusion - Laptop Project	258
Schools Advocacy	126
Sanctuary Hosting	37
Health Access Support Group	N/A
Ukraine Programme	500 approx
Europa Welcome	252
Afghan Transition Hotels	170
Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS)	90 people

### **Our Total Client Numbers**

Clients come into Asylum Welcome through various routes. Our philosophy is to support individuals or families on their journey to thrive in the UK, not just respond to one narrowly defined need; thus, many clients are supported by more than one service simultaneously or over an extended period. We work with some clients through multiple meetings over many years, others have immediate but very intensive needs, and some only require a single piece of advice or assistance. Therefore, counting the total number of clients served doesn't provide a clear picture of our workload.

Our best estimate, with the caveats described above, is that we directly assisted 2,693 individual clients in 2023/24. The main changes from 2022/23, when the total was 3,183, include fewer new Ukrainian arrivals, the closure of the Afghan transition hotels, and the end of the Europa Welcome programme, alongside the expansion of the asylum hotels work. A key challenge of these changes is that while the official settlement programmes were well-funded by the central government, the increased asylum work is not. Paradoxically therefore, the reduced overall numbers have put more pressure on our finances.

In addition to direct engagement, our work will benefit many other sanctuary seekers in ways that we can't strictly define through numbers. When we help an individual asylum seeker with their claim, a whole family may benefit in due course. Our advocacy work and support to councils and universities to develop Sanctuary programmes, our efforts to improve access to health services for all, and our ongoing support to East Timorese and other community organisations will all contribute to positive change but cannot be counted as 'direct' beneficiaries in numerical terms.

## **The Political Context and Asylum Welcome's Advocacy Work**

This year has been littered with abandoned, unworkable asylum policies. While parts of the Illegal Migration Act were brought into force in July 2023, including an expansion of immigration detention powers, much of this wide-ranging, headline-grabbing legislation remains unenforced - and arguably unenforceable. Tens of thousands of asylum seekers remain in limbo, as the inadmissibility procedure prevents claims from people who arrived irregularly from being processed in the UK. Between July 2022 and September 2023, nearly 16,000 people - a fifth from Afghanistan - were considered 'inadmissible' and issued with 'notices of intent' of removal to Rwanda.

The prospect of being sent to Rwanda has been a constant source of fear and confusion for clients this year. In June 2023, the Rwanda scheme was ruled unlawful by the Court of Appeal, a decision upheld by the Supreme Court in November. The 'Safety of Rwanda' bill was then introduced in December 2023, which stated, in opposition to the Supreme Court's ruling, that 'every decision-maker must conclusively treat the Republic of Rwanda as a safe country.' Clients have also been pushed into limbo through the increase in 'involuntary withdrawals' from the asylum system. Between March 2023 and 2024, nearly 25,000 asylum claims were withdrawn by the Home Office without being processed, more than double the year before. These individuals are still here, with no long-term solution to regularise their status.

In February 2023, the Streamlined Asylum Questionnaire was developed to speed up the processing of asylum claims from nationalities with the highest acceptance rates, including Afghanistan, Eritrea, Syria and Sudan. This effort to clear the 'asylum backlog', which reached over 160,000 cases, created a spike in asylum grants in the middle of 2023. While positive for some, this placed a strain on local housing services, leading to an increase in homelessness amongst newly recognised refugees. The grant rate for asylum claims dropped significantly after those streamlined cases were processed; the acceptance rate for the first quarter of 2024 was just 43%, down from 71%. This will lead to more appeals, longer waiting times, and greater pressure on already-stretched legal aid providers.

When asylum seekers in Oxford began to be moved to the Bibby Stockholm barge in August 2023, clients held a protest outside their asylum hotel and spoke to the media about their fears. Further demonstrations took place in Oxford relating to the reopening of Campsfield detention centre. In June 2023, a demonstration at the Radcliffe Camera accompanied the publication of an open letter, signed by over 140 student bodies and academic staff from the University of Oxford, 'to oppose the reopening of Campsfield House and to encourage the government to consider viable alternatives to immigration detention.'. In November, 50 people - mainly university students - demonstrated outside the entrance to the Campsfield site. Little progress has been made so far on the planned refurbishments, although shortly after the end of our financial year 2023/24, the government confirmed that a £70m contract for redevelopment has been approved.

## Some Highlights and Developments in Selected Services

### Asylum and Immigration Advice

Our Asylum and Immigration Advice (AIG) team's role is to support people to navigate the immigration legal system, provide good quality advice and casework, and support people in submitting their claims and appeals. The service has witnessed a significant increase in service users over the year, in what has been a turbulent period for immigration law, our service, and clients. In 2023/24, 671 clients used the service, up from 369 in 2022/23. There has also been a notable increase in complexity of many cases, with multiple appointments required, an average of three per application.

The extent and frequency of change in immigration law, and developments with the Rwanda Bill, led to a need to rapidly change our prioritisation of different casework. There was an increase in volume of questionnaires, and difficulties in accessing legal aid solicitors, resulting in volunteers and senior staff needing to support clients with them. This is an ongoing issue, and led to the establishment of the Legal Access Group, which assists service users to find solicitors and legal representation.

One development that the service has undergone this year is to have expanded to deal with other aspects of immigration work, for example with supporting service users with fee waivers, and settlement applications.

#### Case study

*Maryam\* came to the UK in May 2023, on a spousal visa. After some months, she was referred to Asylum Welcome by a local domestic violence service. She was initially unable to speak but communicated in writing that she had stopped talking due to the abuse she had suffered at home.*

*She had been forced by her husband's family to carry out domestic tasks continually, and she was only able to wash once a week. She was never allowed to leave the house and was not registered with a GP. Maryam's in-laws withheld her passport and biometric card and used the threat of deportation as a tool of coercion and control.*

*With our staff's support, over many weeks, she regained her ability to speak, and opened up about her experiences of abuse, which had led to depression and hospitalisation. Slowly, her physical health and self-esteem are returning, but her situation, like that of many of our clients, is far from resolved. Her husband and in-laws have continued to harass her. Now she is staying in a refuge, we continue to provide emotional support, and crucially, we are helping her to apply for indefinite leave to remain in the UK, as a victim of domestic violence and abuse.*

*She is still awaiting the result of this application.*

*\* Name has been changed to protect client's identity*

## **Transport Campaign**

Asylum Welcome's 'Local Action Group' meets regularly to discuss, organise and campaign for change on local issues that matter to us. The group has participated in consultations and focus groups, sharing important insights into health and wellbeing, public services and the local area. An introductory training course, delivered in partnership with Citizens UK, covered the principles of community campaigning. It equipped the group with skills in community organising, conducting research and listening campaigns, organising, and negotiating with authorities.

The group debated several campaign topics, including the right to work, ESOL for asylum seekers, legal aid, immigration detention and healthcare. We settled on access to public transport because regular bus travel is unaffordable for asylum seekers who receive £8.86 per week. A needs assessment conducted on behalf of Oxford City Council, to which the Local Action Group contributed, details how the inaccessibility of public transport creates knock-on barriers to other services and contributes to isolation and poor mental health. The transport campaign has taken significant steps since its inception, working closely with local authorities to pursue its goal.

### **Case study**

*Micah\* moved to the asylum hotel in Oxford in March 2023. When he first attended a meeting of the Local Action Group, Micah had been in the hotel for six months. Micah felt isolated as he spoke very little English and did not share a language or nationality group with other hotel residents. Initially, Micah did not contribute during meetings, but he continued to attend every session and developed a good understanding of local and national power holders. Micah became more confident as his English language ability improved. As the sessions progressed, he took on an organising role, planning meetings and recruiting others to the group.*

*In March 2024, Micah spoke to his MP, Anneliese Dodds, about issues identified by the Local Action Group. He made a convincing speech on access to public transport to Cllr Andrew Gant, cabinet member for transport at Oxfordshire County Council. Micah's increased confidence, public speaking and English language skills allowed his commitment to improving life for his fellow asylum seekers to shine through.*

*\* Name has been changed to protect client's identity*

## **Outreach Service**

A development over the past year is the separation of our Adult & Family Service (AFS) and Outreach Service. The former is based in our office and sees clients who make an appointment, drop in or are referred. The latter runs regular drop-in surgeries in or near the three hotel sites and is focussed on asylum hotel residents. For the majority of our clients, our AFS and Outreach Services are their first point of contact with Asylum Welcome.



As with many of our programmes, 2023/24 was an extremely challenging year, and we witnessed a massive increase in demand for our Outreach Service. Compared to last year, we saw a significant increase in service users, rising from 221 in 2022/23 to 585 clients in 2023/24. This was done with a team of just three fulltime staff, and around 18 volunteers.

The team supported individuals and families through a series of crises throughout the year, most of which demanded urgent attention. From Bibby Stockholm transfers, Streamline Asylum Questionnaires resulting in higher refusal rates (necessitating urgent responses at to avoid destitution and rough sleeping), and supporting increasing numbers of new arrivals in the hotels.

A key pressure has stemmed from the speeding up of decisions on asylum claims. Many new arrivals are being moved into hotels and the wider community at a faster rate than we have been able to secure legal representation for them. Throughout the year, 166 people secured legal representatives, with 142 still on the waiting list.

During the financial year, we delivered briefings in both Witney and the Kassam hotels. In these briefings, we have been explaining people's rights in the asylum process, their rights, and entitlements in terms of housing, benefits, and refugee family reunion once granted refugee status. We are also collaborating in a SOAS University (School of Oriental and African Studies) funded project, to better understand and map the challenges that asylum seekers face, and support clients situated in hotels going through the move-on process. The project focuses on the obstacles faced by clients once they receive refugee status, and have to find housing in a very short period.

Upon receiving their status, clients have just 28 days to secure a job or Universal Credit, find accommodation amidst a housing crisis, with very sparse social housing or affordable private rented accommodation. Landlords are reluctant to accept foreign nationals, or tenants that are in receipt of Universal Credit. This is compounded by the fact that asylum seekers are prohibiting from working, meaning that they have not had the opportunity to accumulate funds for a deposit or first rent payments. Overwhelmingly, refugees must negotiate a complex system while facing significant language barriers and use digital platforms that they may not have access to, or any prior experience of using.

We are also collaborating in a SOAS (School of Oriental and African Studies) University funded programme, to better understand and support clients situated in hotels going through the move-in process.

#### Case study

*K arrived in the UK in Autumn 2022, having made the long, difficult and at times dangerous journey from Afghanistan. When he claimed asylum, he was placed in Contingency Accommodation in Oxford, and, after many months, he was granted refugee status. In early March, he received a notice from the accommodation provider, informing him that he would have to leave the premises in early April.*

*With no friends or family in the UK, he submitted a Homelessness Prevention Application, but, as he didn't suffer from any major health issues, he was not assessed as Priority Need. As such, he was told he would have to find himself private rented accommodation. With intermediate English and limited digital literacy, he struggled to search for rooms on websites, and harder still to contact and communicate with prospective landlords and did not know what to say.*

*Two days before eviction, Asylum Welcome identified a household advertising for a new tenant. At one hour's notice, in the pouring rain, K cycled to the viewing. The existing tenants immediately took to K and was keen for him to join their household. Asylum Welcome helped K to apply to the council for support with the deposit, and rent-in-advance. However, K could not move in immediately, and was still faced with imminent eviction, was at risk of becoming homeless. Asylum Welcome drew on its Hardship Fund, to pay for two nights in a hostel, and then found a volunteer for him to live with, until his move in date.*

*Today, K's English has vastly improved, thanks in large part to his regular attendance at English classes, and interactions with his housemates. He is currently applying for jobs and feels much better in his new home. "I am happy here and would like to stay here for a long time. I talked with the housemates and they are happy for that too".*

### Jack's Story

Jack is from Burma, a country in a deeply precarious state, where the military seized power in February 2021. During the military coup, many atrocities were inflicted upon the population, including ethnic and religious persecution. Anyone that spoke up against these acts were arrested, imprisoned, tortured, or killed.

*I am a member of the Chin tribe, a minority ethnic group, who collectively opposed the military government, and were targeted and monitored by the Military Junta. People from my community soon began to be kidnapped, and many completely disappeared. Jack that felt that his life was in danger, and decided he had to flee the country, leaving behind his loved ones, and all he knew.*

*Once I had arrived in the UK and applied for asylum, the Home Office sent me to a hotel in Oxford, and told that while my asylum claim was being processed, I would not be allowed to work or study, and received £8 per week. Thankfully, I had the support of Asylum Welcome. They help vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers providing food, bikes, laptops, immigration advice, language and mental health support, and crucially, made me feel welcome, and part of the community. I was so inspired by the work that was being done, that I volunteered, both on the reception desk, and on the Digital Inclusion Programme.*

*Even while volunteering for them, Asylum Welcome continued to provide me with help me and make a huge difference to my life. In November 2023, I received a letter from the government informing me that I was to be moved to the Bibby Stockholm Barge- which has been described as a “floating prison”-causing me immense anxiety. With Asylum Welcome’s amazing support, I submitted an appeal, which, thankfully, was successful.*

*As both a client and a volunteer of Asylum Welcome, I have seen the transformational impact of their work first hand, helping people to flee some of the most dangerous places on earth, from more than 25 countries. My life is richer for it. Today, I am incredibly proud to say that I have moved out of the hotel and am living in private rental accommodation here in Oxford and have recently secured full-time employment as an administrator at a health centre.*

### **Schools Advocacy**

The Schools Advocacy Service provides targeted support for refugee, asylum seeker and migrant families, supporting them to navigate and engage with the schools that their children attend. From language difficulties, lack of knowledge around the schooling system, confidence, and experience, we support students and their families to overcome a myriad of barriers. The service’s objective is to provide families with a platform for meaningful engagement in their children’s education. We offer structured support, including 1:1 family mentorship, signposting to ESOL, information workshops, and a weekly advice clinic.

In 2023/24, we supported 23 families, comprising 82 children and 44 adults, and provided a total of 690 mentor/mentee meetings in schools. In addition to meetings, the service also supports families to attend school events, including plays, concerts, fetes and school information sessions. The service extends beyond a sole focus on schooling, with the additional aim to promote social inclusion and community cohesion and improving promotion of and access to educational resources outside of the schooling system. This includes organising visits to museums, theatres, local parks, libraries and community groups.

The feedback that we have received throughout the year for the service has been overwhelmingly positive. 100% of families reported an improved understanding of the school system, and 100% of schools feel that Schools Advocacy is an “invaluable” and “pivotal” service.

### **Case study**

*In April 2023, student A started Year 8 at The Swan School. Upon our first meeting with her, at our Schools Advocacy induction interview, Student A essentially spoke no English whatsoever. With our support, she was successfully settled into the school, the family supported with a school uniform for her, resources, an introduction to the school curriculum, and connected to relevant school staff.*

*Mentor meetings have been held every week with the family, to ensure that any issues that arise can be quickly addressed, and that they understand their commitments. An interpreter has been provided at each of these meetings.*

*We have provided extensive language support to A, including extra EAL (English as an Additional Language) and extra-curricular English classes with Jacari. Added to this, she was also referred for online subject base tutoring.*

*In a recent Parent Teacher Consultation, A's school attendance was reported to be 97%, and she is achieving a rating of either "Outstanding" or "Very Good" in every single one of her subjects. In explaining her recent choice of elective subjects, she explained:*

*"Psychology because I want to help others cope with difficult situations, Geography because I am interested in the world and Art because it helps me relax."*

### **Sanctuary Hosting**

Sanctuary Hosting is a service that matches vulnerable asylum seekers, refugees and migrants with volunteer hosts, who provide them with a room, without charging rental fees to the guest. The scheme has consistently proven to represent a vital tool against homelessness for our clients.

A development that has faced most of our services, Sanctuary Hosting included, is more people living in dispersal hotels across the county being referred to us when they are evicted but have nowhere to go. We have responded to this by increasing the number of people that can be viably hosted and working closely with our other services.

Since merging with Asylum Welcome in December 2022, Sanctuary Hosting has continued to grow as a service. During 23/24, we facilitated the hosting of 37 guests, an increase of 12 from 2022. Overall, we now have 36 households signed up to the service, with a maximum capacity of 38 guests. Throughout this period, we have also increased the number of hosting households volunteering for the service, and volunteers that support the service, with for example, transport to and from properties. We have also recruited more guest buddies, who provide company to guests, and help them with the practicalities of setting up their lives in a new place.

### **Case study**

*Ms MH is originally from Iran, and prior to being referred to Asylum Welcome, was living in an Asylum Hotel in Banbury, while her claim was being considered. She was eventually given leave to remain, but upon receiving it, had very little time to leave the hotel.*

*Without having had enough time to find suitable, affordable housing, she soon found herself living in a homeless shelter. This experience was deeply traumatic, stressful, and actively frightening to her, and as a result was referred to our service as an urgent case.*

*Within a matter of hours, we interviewed Ms MH, got her references, and found her an appropriate host household. While hosted here, she was able to access other relevant Asylum Welcome services. She received a laptop from our Digital Inclusion programme so that she could develop her English, and make arrangements for her “move on”. In total, Ms MH was hosted for three months, and has since relocated.*

### **Ukraine Support Programme**

The Ukrainians we supported with employment support are today better set up to navigate the job market in Oxfordshire. Asylum Welcome was able to offer an individualised service to Ukrainians which has been unparalleled in the county. While using our service, they would speak with an experienced professional who would help them understand their qualification and how it may (or may not) fit into the UK labour market; get help with (re-) writing their CV, support with job application statements, and interview preparations. We supported clients who might not be able to work in the UK in their original profession (e.g. as a dentist) by helping them understand what the alternatives were, and why. The individual contact also helped them comprehend the difficulties of their situation; we were often able to convince them that they were not being discriminated against, but that larger systemic issues (e.g. UK non-acceptance of Ukrainian qualifications) were the primary reason they could not continue in their trained profession while living in the UK. Once they understood this, they were more willing to explore alternatives. In some cases, we were able to support them in applying to have their qualification accepted in the UK to help them on their path towards practicing their profession.

We also provided practical financial help when that was not available from any other sources. In many cases, this meant helping Ukrainians who had been temporarily accommodated by the council in a hotel room after their hosting arrangement had come to an end/had broken down and the council had not yet been able to find a new host. While a hotel room accommodation provided clients with a roof over their head, they had no access to a fridge, a stove or a washing machine, which meant that they incurred additional cost as daily life expenditure. Other Ukrainian clients we helped found themselves waiting for the first payment of universal credit and were in desperate need of basic funds for food and hygiene items. Being offered funds for items such as new bedding or curtains played an important role in retaining their dignity in a life otherwise constricted by adverse circumstances. We know how important this service was given the numbers of times we were approached, unsolicited, when a Ukrainian told us, sometimes in tears, how important our financial help had been.

One Ukrainian man who had suffered a war injury and now lived with disabilities required a most intensive level of engagement, often taking him and us into conversations that were very private. Having been rejected for disability benefit, we helped him with the appeals process, documents such as the work capability assessment documentation; we also accompanied him to the tribunal hearing. He was notified of a positive outcome five weeks later.

The request for laptops and bicycles remained constant over time. When word-of-mouth made it seem as if Asylum Welcome provided a general laptop service, we introduced a light-touch needs assessment to the requests we received; this allowed us to provide laptops to Ukrainians who needed them most, e.g. for job applications or school assignments. Our most intensive support delivered included employment support to Ukrainians looking for different work; interpreting services to Ukrainians struggling with the requirements of the UK benefits system as well as emergency cash assistance. Community activities which aimed at bringing Ukrainians and other members of the local community together probably represented the most innovative aspect of our work, including working with wonderfully talented artists, such as Olena Naumenko.

#### *Olena Naumenko's Story – Ukraine Programme*

*I am a Ukrainian artist, Naumenko Olena, and a Ukrainian refugee who has been granted temporary asylum in the UK. We came to the UK together with my 9-year-old daughter. We weren't just leaving, we were fleeing a terrible, unjust war, that had already claimed many Ukrainian lives. My helplessness upon arrival in Britain was overwhelming. After a while, I met the staff of Asylum Welcome and finally the clouds of darkness began to change towards light. I was able to resolve the issue with some documents.*

*Thanks to very attentive workers like Gilberto, I was noticed as an artist and art teacher, and started working in my profession. Thanks to Asylum Welcome, I received free bicycles for my daughter and me. This gave me the opportunity to save a lot of time in the city, move heavy things and travel free of expense.*

*I think that Asylum Welcome is doing a great job supporting people like my daughter and me, who came all alone, and really needed help. Asylum Welcome supported us psychologically. I felt that I was not alone anymore and that I could ask for help at any time and that I would be heard and helped. Psychological assistance includes talks with people and open days and artistic events such as concerts and exhibitions. This is very, very good for refugees in such a difficult time.*

*The most important thing that every living thing needs, especially in difficult times, is attention. Attention is so little and so much in reality. The staff at Asylum Welcome gave me that attention and were able to recognise my usefulness to this country, and in particular to refugees like me, in the form of art classes for relaxation, good communication, activities for children, as well as some serious training in the basics of drawing and painting, and some workshops on creating beauty for life. The Asylum Welcome staff also gave us a lot of attention and care during the art classes. We drank tea and coffee, hugged each other. At the same time, our children were making beautiful little sculptures.*

*I was happy in those days because it was a time when I did not think about the war and grief in my country. I am immensely grateful to Asylum Welcome for such strong support.*

## **Our Staff**

Our staff numbers fell during the year from 45 at the end of 2022/23 to 36 at the end of March 2024. This reflects the closing of the Afghan hotels, the Ukraine and Europa Welcome programmes, alongside modest growth in some other areas as we tried to respond to increased demand from asylum seekers and resettled refugees.

We are pleased that we have been able to continue to increase the proportion of our staff with lived experience and now have 15 such staff working for us, even having lost our Ukrainian colleagues at the end of that programme in February. One highlight is that all five staff who manage and work on our Resettlement programme have relevant lived experience, another is that we have a client still living in an asylum hotel, but having the right to work, as part of the staff team. Several other staff members have close family experience.

As we have grown in recent years, there has been a need to focus on better management support to staff. We have sought to address this in two ways. Firstly, we scoped and delivered a management development course for service coordinators, helping them improve their skills in people, programme and financial management. Secondly, as part of the new strategy, we restructured our management lines so that one person no longer oversaw all services, allowing staff to receive closer support and supervision. This led us to create a new post of Co-Director of services to oversee our resettlement and related programmes, while our existing Services Director concentrated on asylum and initial services. In addition, we recruited for a new Operations Manager, to better support the busy and stretched advice services and were pleased to appoint an experienced manager who had himself used similar services when he first arrived in the UK.

## **Our Volunteers**

The vast majority of our services are delivered and sustained by our volunteer body, supported by a small staff team. Some of our volunteers have worked with us for several years, some are newer to the organisation, with 88 new volunteers recruited between 2023/24. Of our 224 active volunteers, 18 have lived experience, having originally come to the UK as refugees, asylum seekers or vulnerable migrants. Our volunteers are crucial to our work, extending our impact and reach, significantly reducing the costs of service provision, providing over 18,000 hours of support last year alone. Crucially, they also help to foster a true sense of community and solidarity throughout the organisation.

Since January 2023, we have standardised the induction process, providing bi-monthly induction training sessions, and monthly information sessions. Added to this, we share a SharePoint folder with all volunteers, which includes a welcome message from Mark, an overview of our services, key policies, volunteer management processes and safeguarding information.

Another development has been the continuation of fortnightly meetings of clients who wish to enhance their education, employment and volunteering experience, as well as their support of Asylum Welcome's services. This has served to strengthen the relationship between staff and volunteering clients.

In November 2023, we launched a cross-team peer support group for volunteers. The group itself is led by a volunteer who is a professional counsellor and has experience of this kind of facilitation for similar organisations.

#### Case study from a volunteer with lived experience

Samrah came to the UK more than one year ago, after fleeing her home country, Sudan, which is undergoing a brutal civil war. She first engaged with Asylum Welcome as a client, when she was housed in an Oxfordshire hotel, along with her younger sister, whom she cares for. After some months, she felt more settled in the area, and decided to volunteer for Asylum Welcome. Initially, she worked on the Welcome Desk.

*"I received help myself, and it means a lot to help others. I know how supportive Asylum Welcome is and how much this help matters. The support from Asylum Welcome helped me adapt and gain independence; it made things easier for me. Asylum Welcome staff care, they do their best to try to meet people's individual needs, not just about your case but on a personal level as well. I know how it feels to be in others' shoes. With volunteering, it feels like you're taking part in getting people the right help. Every day is different and unpredictable. I have met a lot of people and gained a lot of new skills and knowledge. It has helped take my mind off over-thinking, doing something meaningful."*

More recently, Samrah has been volunteering in our new triage role, helping to ensure that those referred to Asylum Welcome or seeking support at our Welcome Centre, are quickly directed to relevant and appropriate services as efficiently as possible.

#### **Our Fundraising, Partnerships and Communications**

2023/24 has been a very busy year for Asylum Welcome's fundraising and communications teams – as it has been for many other refugee charities locally and nationally. This has largely been caused by the ever-increasing hostile environment, the cost-of-living crisis, and by Oxfordshire becoming a dispersal area, which has brought a sudden surge in need for our services. From a fundraising perspective, we have managed to respond proactively and creatively to Asylum Welcome's exponential growth over the last few years.

Six years ago, we were raising about £400k per year, we had around six services, and eight members of staff, of whom only three were full-time. Today, we have 15 services, three buildings (including the Sanctuary Wheels garage) and 36 people in post, around 60% of whom are full time.



We can all take immense pride in the fact that this year we raised £1,704k, just short of the record £1,827k raised in 2022/23. This achievement is all the more remarkable given that three much loved - and significant - programmes ended this year: Europa Welcome, the Afghan Hotels and the Ukrainian Support Service, which concluded in February.

Significantly, 61% of our funds - £1,032k - has come from individual, community, and trust and foundation income streams, as detailed in the finance section. The remaining 39% comes from grants and contracts with Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County Council and other district councils (West Oxfordshire and Cherwell). These funds support specific activities, including assisting asylum seekers in hotels across Oxfordshire and in temporary asylum accommodation, aiding resettled families in the city, and running our popular Schools Advocacy programme, which supports refugee parents and their children in schools. Our income derives from a healthy and diverse range of sources, greatly contributing to our independence, sustainability and capacity to respond to needs at short notice.

As Asylum Welcome has grown, the fundraising team has been creative and proactive in responding to increased demand and the pressing need to expand our services. Our income from City and County Council contracts grew, as did our income from trusts, foundations, individuals, community partnerships and even corporations. We continue to respond to other fundamental needs, such as providing phones and laptops for the Digital Inclusion project, the Recycled Bike project and the Schools Advocacy programme, among others.

We have extended and deepened the pool of trusts and foundations supporting us, building relationships with many new funders (e.g. Blue Thread, Garfield Weston, Santander Foundation) and strengthening our existing relationships with long-term supporters (e.g. The Tolkien Trust, Henry Smith Charity and Lloyds Foundation). We are developing a positive relationship with the excellent Justice Together Initiative, working in partnership with Refugee Support Group (in Berkshire), Slough Refugee Support and Settled to improve clients' access to immigration advice across the Thames Valley. Through this partnership, we are better understanding and developing support mechanisms for those facing domestic abuse and violence, particularly women.

We have also expanded our base of individual and community supporters and partnerships. We have steadily grown our individual supporters from the 400 we had 5-6 years ago to around 2,000 today. This has brought a considerable amount of much-needed unrestricted income, peaking at an incredible £339k during the Covid pandemic in 2021, and still bringing in a remarkable £251k this year from individual donations, community-led events and fundraisers across the county, from local neighbourhood cake sales to concerts, poetry readings, art exhibits, film screenings, market stalls and talks, all in aid of refugees and asylum seekers.

We continue to build positive relationships with fantastic partners who support us in many ways: financially, in-kind, with access to their facilities, mentoring, and their valuable time. Examples include Magdalen College School, St Edward's School, Active Oxfordshire, Music

at Oxford and The Starling Sessions. A brilliant example was making music together and performing at the wonderful One World Festival at the Ashmolean Museum in February 2024.

Special mention must go to Shena Guild, our ambassador, and to St Edward's School, who kindly hosted a fantastic event we co-organised with them in November in aid of Asylum Welcome. John Simpson, CBE, BBC World Affairs Editor, explored "Russia and the West: Where do we go from here?" with a panel of distinguished guests. This magnificent event closed with a powerful speech by Jack, one of our amazing clients and volunteers living in one of the hotels. He eloquently highlighted the connection between Russia's support for the military junta in Myanmar and his own status as a Burmese refugee in the UK, receiving a standing ovation.

We are delighted to have been chosen this year as Charity of the Year by the Dragon School, for which we are incredibly grateful. We are building many other positive relationships with numerous colleges, research centres and the University of Oxford as a whole – as well as with Oxford Brookes University. We have also received support from churches and religious groups across the county, as well as local refugee support groups in Wheatley, Charlbury, Witney, Brightwell, Banbury, Sunningwell, Abingdon and Faringdon, to name a few.

Along similar lines, we have built positive relationships with several corporate organisations that we did not have a few years ago. These include Taylor & Francis and BlackRock, who have not only provided financial donations supporting several of our programmes, but also more than 100 laptops and bicycles, whilst giving us a platform to recruit more supporters and help us spread our message. We have developed a very positive mentoring programme with BlackRock employees, supporting some of our clients with monthly one-on-one meetings supporting them into employment, as they try to enter the banking/finance sector.

Additionally, we have been building and strengthening our relationships with the City Council, the County Council and several district councils as we provide more support to an increasing number of clients across the county. We are very grateful to the outgoing Lord Mayor of Oxford Councillor Lubna Ashrad, who chose Asylum Welcome as one of her three Charities of the Year for 2023/24. We have many other positive relationships, working with Oxfordshire Homeless Movement, the British Red Cross, the One World Festival at the Ashmolean Museum, the Multaka Project at the Pitt Rivers Museum, and The Story Museum.

Most importantly of all, in 2023/24, we have made good progress in engaging people with lived experience of displacement in all areas of Asylum Welcome's work. This has been crucial in helping us better understand who we are, what we do, why we do it and how to improve our approach, working 'with' rather than 'for' refugees and asylum seekers. This requires considerable work, patience and engagement on all sides. Slowly but surely, we are progressing, and can already see many positive outcomes of this new approach across our services and advocacy efforts.

## **Communications**

We have continued to focus attention and resources on engaging supporters, both current and prospective. Locally and nationally, we have made our presence felt by participating in ongoing debates about the political landscape affecting our clients, whilst keeping our supporters, funders and donors informed of the latest developments. We have achieved this through various approaches, including regular newsletters, seasonal appeals and a more dynamic website. Additionally, we have been active across our social media channels (including Facebook, X, Instagram and LinkedIn), reaching new and younger audiences through both text and videos.

### **Website and Social Media**

Our website is more user-friendly and visually appealing, featuring individual service icons and embedded films. We have developed a client-focused Community News page to share events and opportunities locally. Our new innovative pop-up ads enable us to respond to the latest news. Our social media following has continued to grow steadily; we now have 9,261 followers on X (formerly Twitter), 3,000 on Facebook and 1,167 on Instagram. We have invested in digital fundraising initiatives and will be developing more over the coming year(s). Our new combined supporters' and volunteers' newsletter is sent approximately every four weeks to 1,970 volunteers and supporters.

### **Media, Co-Production and Storytelling**

We have secured approximately 40 media engagements this year. Of particular importance have been the opportunities for individual clients to share their stories on their own terms, increasing awareness of the refugee experience in the UK. We have also generated our own media events – running a social media campaign for host recruitment at Christmas, for instance. Additionally, we facilitated and amplified a client-led protest against the Bibby Stockholm transfers in November (that was brought to wider attention through the Christmas Oratorio in December).

### **Sanctuary Fair and Refugee Week 2023**

Asylum Welcome took the lead in producing impactful communications for Oxford/Reading Refugee Week 2023, collaborating closely with local refugee community organisations (RCOs) and other partners. We organised three well-attended events: a Ukraine Celebration in Summertown, the Asylum Welcome Summer Party (for clients, volunteers and partners) in Florence Park, and a powerful Community Dialogue event in Blackbird Leys featuring client testimonies from local asylum hotels.

Another highlight was the inaugural Oxford Sanctuary Fair organised in partnership with the Refugee Studies Centre and Oxford City Council. This event, held on 11 May 2023, attracted over 200 attendees and helped to progress the University of Oxford's efforts to become a University of Sanctuary, with strong support from Asylum Welcome. Some of the panel discussions from the day are available online for those who couldn't attend in person.

Lastly, in March 2024, we launched an exciting Cultural Democracy Project in collaboration with the Cultural Programme at the University of Oxford. This initiative actively engages everyone in determining what constitutes culture, where it occurs, who creates it, and who experiences it.

The Cultural Programme is partnering with Asylum Welcome in the co-creation, co-production and co-deliver refugees, asylum seekers, artists and the University of Oxford's Cultural Programme. This collaboration will result in a series of creative projects showcasing refugees' and asylum seekers' art and voices through painting, photography and film exhibitions in mid-2024.

#### The Coalition to Keep Campsfield Closed

Over the past year, the Coalition to Keep Campsfield Closed has grown significantly. The Coalition now has a mailing list with 200+ subscribers, an active Slack channel, a monthly meeting, and a regular awareness-raising stall. The campaign also has an informative website, a petition with 1,154 signatures, a Twitter account with 1,310 followers, and an Instagram account with 429 followers. Working closely with the Oxford University Student Union and a reinvigorated Student Action for Refugees group, we were able to facilitate the publication of an open letter in June, signed by over 140 academics, college heads, and student societies at the University of Oxford. This resulted in coverage on both ITV and BBC news. A Keep Campsfield Closed demonstration in November also attracted ample coverage.

#### Films and podcast

Our new seven-minute "Welcome to Asylum Welcome" film for Refugee Week 2023 was developed as a co-production with three current AW clients, featuring their voices alongside staff and volunteers. This comprehensive introduction to the charity was screened three times at a local cinema during Refugee Week, raising awareness of our work. Another film is now in production focusing on a client-led campaign for free bus travel (part of the Cultural Democracy project mentioned above), which will give some of our clients a platform to share their art and ideas with the wider community. We also launched Welcomecast, an Asylum Welcome podcast, during Refugee Week. This longer-form platform is allowing us to share more in-depth stories and will be fully co-produced going forward. So far, we have produced three episodes, attracting 99 listeners.

## Annual Review, Annual General Meeting and New Strategy

Our redesigned annual review for 2022/23 placed a strong emphasis on hearing from the people we support. They aimed to capture the breadth and depth of our work in an ever-changing and challenging political environment. Attention was also paid to the visual identity of our services with the development of new service icons. Building on this approach, the 2023 AGM featured a panel of clients who shared their experiences in conversation with our Director. We also produced an engaging and accessible public document communicating our new 2024-2027 strategy, available on our website.

## Our Finances

### Income

Total income of £1,721k in 2023/24 was 6% below prior year income of £1,827k (excluding £188k transferred on the 2022/23 merger with Sanctuary Hosting). The most significant element in this reduction was income from statutory contracts, principally those with Oxfordshire County Council to support Afghan and Ukrainian refugees which came to an end during 2023/24. The Oxford City Council contract to support the UK Resettlement Scheme has continued to grow and new funding from Oxford City Council to support asylum seekers in the local dispersal hotel commenced during the year. Overall income from statutory sources nevertheless fell by £263k compared to the prior year.

The reduction in statutory income has been partially offset by a successful year in securing funding from trusts and foundations, from which income grew by around 30% for the second consecutive year.

Income from individuals, colleges and schools declined modestly following two exceptionally strong years, offset by increased income from partnerships with community organisations and corporate donations.

	2023/24	2022/23	Change	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	%
<b>Principal sources of funding:</b>				
Trusts and foundations	699	543	156	29
Statutory grants and contracts	672	935	(263)	(28)
Faith organisations	11	17	(6)	(35)
Colleges and schools	15	36	(21)	(58)
Individual donations and legacies	208	238	(30)	(13)
Partnerships & other community organisations	99	58	41	71
Interest income	17	-	17	-
<b>Total income excluding reserves transfer</b>	<b>1,721</b>	<b>1,827</b>	<b>(106)</b>	<b>(6)</b>

## Expenditure

Total expenditure for the year amounted to £1,793k (2022/23 £1,771k), a 1% increase.

Overall expenditure on charitable activities remained relatively stable but within this total there were reductions where contracts have come to an end, e.g. Afghan, Ukraine and Europa Welcome, and increases for instance to reflect a full year of Sanctuary Hosting costs and increased spending in areas such as adult advice, youth, advocacy, UKRS, schools and digital inclusion.

Fundraising costs have increased by £34k as the fundraising resource has been expanded with the aim of maintaining and increasing grants from foundations and trusts, and donations from individual and community sources. The investment in fundraising remains relatively low at 7% of total income.

Expenditure	2023/24	2022/23	Change	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	%
Adult Advice/RESP/Triage/Health/Dispersal	316	223	93	42
Youth	92	74	18	24
Detainee Support	40	36	4	9
Refugee rights/Foodbank/Bikes	104	117	(13)	(11)
Employment & Educational Services	49	46	3	6
Volunteer recruitment & training	49	53	(4)	(8)
Europa Welcome	24	82	(58)	(70)
Sanctuary Hosting	143	50	93	186
Advocacy & Comms	86	67	19	29
UKRS/ARAP	217	196	21	11
Schools Project	69	43	26	60
Afghan Project	98	316	(218)	(69)
Justice Together	132	135	(3)	(2)
Digital Inclusion	46	17	29	174
Ukraine	201	223	(22)	(10)
Charitable Activities	1,666	1,678	(12)	(1)
Raising Funds	127	93	34	37
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>1,793</b>	<b>1,771</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>1</b>

## Overall Result

The net result for the year was a deficit of £72k (2022/23: £57k surplus, excluding the reserves transfer). Of this overall deficit, £35k is the use of restricted funds brought forward at the start of the year for specific purposes and £37k is a reduction in general, unrestricted reserves reflecting a decision to use reserves built up during a couple of years of very rapid expansion in order to consolidate core services and invest in a sustainable structure for the future.

This result leaves us with unrestricted reserves of £666k (5% reduction), of which £50k remains designated for potential property expenses. Our restricted reserves of £46k represent unspent funds received for specific restricted activities to be carried out in 2024/25.

Reserves	2023/24	2022/23	Change	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	%
Unrestricted general funds	616	653	(37)	(6)
Designated funds	50	50	-	-
Total unrestricted funds	666	703	(37)	(5)
Restricted funds	46	81	(35)	(43)
Total funds	712	784	(72)	(9)

Asylum Welcome has a policy of holding reserves for the following reasons:

- To fund cash flow in the short term, for example where a donor pays in arrears;
- To act as a buffer against negative external events, such as a drop in income;
- To allow investment and expenditure on new initiatives and increases in organisational capacity to further the charity's work;
- To allow an orderly wind-down of the organisation if it ceased operating.

Our policy is to set a reserves target equal to 3-4 months' anticipated running costs plus an estimate of closure costs, implying a target range for the coming year of £470k to £605k. Taking into account designated reserves and our 2024-25 expenditure plans, unrestricted reserves are projected to be around the middle of the target range at the end of the forthcoming financial year (31 March 2025).

## The year ahead: Priorities for 2024/25

Having finalised and published our new strategy in January 2024, our top priority in our planning and budgeting for 2024/25 is to begin to deliver on this plan. In this context, our Board approved the following organisational priorities for the year 2024/25:



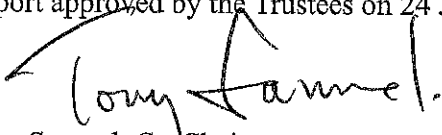
## Programme Objectives

1. Enhance and improve our advice services by:
  - A. Embedding a new management role that adds value to our three advice services, including better external linkages and funding.
  - B. Renewing Justice Together and/ or other funding for our immigration service, including for development of a programme of support for women with insecure immigration status affected by domestic violence.
  - C. Delivering more systematic advice and assistance to asylum seekers in hotels and community to apply for refugee status, prepare for and navigate their move-on, including working with partners to ensure more help with housing options.
2. Build on the successful Schools Advocacy programme in Oxford City to develop a county-wide programme for children and their parents.
3. Utilise the City of Sanctuary and related schemes and co-production opportunities to improve local services and inclusion for asylum seekers and refugees in the county (particularly within councils, educational institutions, leisure facilities and health services).
4. Develop relations with whoever runs the new Campsfield House, (assuming it goes ahead) and based on this and eventual timing, to design/ deliver a programme that responds to detainees needs as best we can.

## Enabling objectives

5. Develop and deliver an effective triage service to improve information sharing, client journeys and referrals within AW, and getting enquirers to the right external organisations where more appropriate.
6. Purchase, install, train for, and begin to use a new unified client database.
7. Build a stronger financial / fundraising base, whereby we begin 2025/26 with at least £100,000 more guaranteed/probable non-contract income than we start 2024/25 with.

Report approved by the Trustees on 24 July 2024 and signed on their behalf by:

  
Tony Samuel, Co-Chair

Date

24/7/24

## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF ASYLUM WELCOME

---

### Opinion

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

In our opinion, the financial statements:

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

### Basis for opinion

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

### Conclusions relating to going concern

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

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

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

### Other information

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

We have nothing to report in this regard.

# ASYLUM WELCOME

## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT (CONTINUED) TO THE MEMBERS OF ASYLUM WELCOME

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### Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

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

- the information given in the trustees' report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared, which includes the directors' report prepared for the purposes of company law, is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the directors' report included within the trustees' report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

### Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the Charity and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the directors' report included within the trustees' report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

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

### Responsibilities of Trustees

As explained more fully in the statement of trustees' responsibilities, the Trustees, who are also the directors of the Charity for the purpose of company law, are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error. In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees are responsible for assessing the Charity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

### Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

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

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

- the engagement partner ensured that the engagement team collectively had the appropriate competence, capabilities and skills to identify or recognise non-compliance with applicable laws and regulations;
- we identified the laws and regulations applicable to the company through discussions with trustees and other management, and from our knowledge and experience;
- we focused on specific laws and regulations which we considered may have a direct material effect on the financial statements or the operations of the charitable company, including the terms of grant agreements and Charity Commission regulation.
- we assessed the extent of compliance with the laws and regulations identified above through making enquiries of management and inspecting legal correspondence where applicable; and
- identified laws and regulations were communicated within the audit team regularly and the team remained alert to instances of non-compliance throughout the audit.

# ASYLUM WELCOME

## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT (CONTINUED) TO THE MEMBERS OF ASYLUM WELCOME

---

We assessed the susceptibility of the company's financial statements to material misstatement, including obtaining an understanding of how fraud might occur, by:

- making enquiries of management as to where they considered there was susceptibility to fraud, their knowledge of actual, suspected and alleged fraud; and
- considering the internal controls in place to mitigate risks of fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations.

To address the risk of fraud through management bias and override of controls, we:

- performed analytical procedures to identify any unusual or unexpected relationships;
- tested journal entries to identify unusual transactions;
- assessed whether judgements and assumptions made in determining the accounting estimates were indicative of potential bias; and
- investigated the rationale behind significant or unusual transactions.

In response to the risk of irregularities and non-compliance with laws and regulations, we designed procedures which included, but were not limited to:

- agreeing financial statement disclosures to underlying supporting documentation;
- reading the minutes of meetings of those charged with governance;
- enquiring of management as to actual and potential litigation and claims;
- reviewing correspondence with the Charity Commission and the company's legal advisers; and
- reviewing the terms of grant agreements

There are inherent limitations in our audit procedures described above. The more removed that laws and regulations are from financial transactions, the less likely it is that we would become aware of non-compliance. Auditing standards also limit the audit procedures required to identify non-compliance with laws and regulations to enquiry of the directors and other management and the inspection of regulatory and legal correspondence, if any.

Material misstatements that arise due to fraud can be harder to detect than those that arise from error as they may involve deliberate concealment or collusion.

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

### Use of our report

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



**Robert Kirtland (Senior Statutory Auditor)**  
**for and on behalf of Critchleys Audit LLP**

12/8/2024

Beaver House  
23-38 Hythe Bridge Street  
Oxford  
OX1 2EP

**Chartered Accountants**  
**Statutory Auditor**

# ASYLUM WELCOME

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

		2024				2023			
	Further details Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Total £	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Total £
<b>Income</b>									
<b>Income from</b>									
Donations & Grants	3	399,404	587,535		986,939	399,463	407,180		806,643
Charitable Activities	4	305,801	411,041		716,842	605,251	414,656		1,019,907
Investment Income		17,188	-		17,188	745	-		745
Transfer of Reserves- Sanctuary Hosting		-	-		-	131,285	56,972		188,257
<b>Total</b>		<b>722,393</b>	<b>998,576</b>		<b>1,720,969</b>	<b>1,136,744</b>	<b>878,808</b>		<b>2,015,552</b>
<b>Expenditure on</b>									
Raising funds		126,856	-		126,856	92,405	-		92,405
Charitable activities		632,730	1,033,784		1,666,514	826,986	851,229		1,678,215
<b>Total</b>	17	<b>759,586</b>	<b>1,033,784</b>		<b>1,793,370</b>	<b>919,391</b>	<b>851,229</b>		<b>1,770,620</b>
<b>Net income/(expenditure)</b>									
		(37,193)	(35,208)		(72,401)	217,353	27,579		244,932
<b>Transfers between funds</b>									
		-	-		-	-	-	-	-
<b>Net movement in funds</b>									
		(37,193)	(35,208)	-	(72,401)	217,353	27,579		244,932
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>									
Total funds brought forward	12	653,325	81,285	50,000	784,610	435,972	53,706	50,000	539,678
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		<b>616,132</b>	<b>46,077</b>	<b>50,000</b>	<b>712,209</b>	<b>653,325</b>	<b>81,285</b>	<b>50,000</b>	<b>784,610</b>

The notes on pages 39 to 45 form part of these accounts.

# ASYLUM WELCOME

## BALANCE SHEET

AT 31 MARCH 2024

	Further details	2024		2023	
		£	£	£	£
<b>Fixed Assets</b>					
Office Equipment, Furniture & Fittings	5		-		-
Website	6		-		1,541
			-		1,541
<b>Current Assets</b>					
Debtors	7	139,048		199,052	
Cash on Deposit		667,817		710,620	
Cash at bank and in hand		56,038		129,097	
			862,903		1,038,769
<b>Current Liabilities</b>					
Creditors: Falling due within one year	8	150,694		255,700	
			(150,694)		(255,700)
<b>Net Current Assets</b>			712,209		783,069
<b>Creditors: Amounts falling due after more than one year</b>			-		-
<b>Total Assets</b>			712,209		784,610
Represented by:					
<b>Unrestricted Income Funds</b>			616,132		653,325
<b>Designated Funds</b>			50,000		50,000
<b>Restricted Income Funds</b>	10		46,077		81,285
			712,209		784,610

Approved by the Trustees on 24 July 2024 and signed on their behalf by:

Tony Samuel Co-Chair

Date

24/7/24 Tony Samuel

## ASYLUM WELCOME

### NOTES FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

#### 1 ACCOUNTING POLICIES

##### Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities (FRS102) applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) (effective 1 January 2015) – (Charities SORP (FRS102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006. They have been prepared under the historical cost convention. The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the company. Monetary amounts in these accounts are rounded to the nearest £.

##### Income

All incoming resources are included in the Statement of Financial Activities once the charity has legal entitlement to the resources, it is probable that the resources will be received and the monetary value of the incoming resources can be measured with sufficient reliability.

- (1) Donations and grants are recognised on a receivable basis in accordance with the restrictions or conditions placed on their use and are deferred to the following period when their use is specified for future periods by the donor.
- (2) Restricted income that is unspent at the end of a financial year, will be carried forward within the Restricted Fund.
- (3) For Legacies, entitlement is the earlier of the charity being notified of an impending distribution or the legacy being received.

At this point income is recognised. On occasion legacies will be notified to the charity where it is not possible to measure the amount expected to be distributed. On these occasions the legacy is treated as a contingent asset and disclosed.

- (4) Interest income is included in the accounts when it is earned.
- (5) Donated goods and services are recognised in income at their fair value when their economic benefit is probable, it can be measured reliably and the charity has control over them. Fair value is determined on the basis of the value of the gift to the charity. A corresponding amount is recognised in expenditure.

##### Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised where there is a legal or constructive obligation to make payments to third parties, it is probable that the settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis.

Direct costs are those that can be readily attributed to specific activities. Support costs are allocated according to the amount of direct salaries charged to activities and with regard to the level of activity by our volunteers, to arrive at a reasonable statement of the cost of each activity.

##### Fixed Assets and depreciation

Tangible fixed assets are included at cost less depreciation. Depreciation is provided on Office Equipment and Office Furniture at the rate of 25% (straight line basis), from the date of acquisition of the asset. Fixed Assets costing over £1,000 are capitalised in accordance with our Capitalisation Policy. Intangible assets are measured at cost less accumulated amortisation.

Amortisation is charged so as to allocate the cost of intangibles less their residual value over their estimated useful lives using the straight line method. The intangible assets are amortised over the following useful lives : website 3 years.

##### Debtors and Creditors receivable/payable within one year

Debtors and creditors with no stated interest rate and receivable or payable within one year are recorded at transaction price.

Any losses arising from impairment are recognised in expenditure.

##### Cash at Bank

Cash at bank and in hand includes cash and bank accounts.

##### Financial Instruments

The charity only has assets and liabilities of an ordinary kind that qualify as basic financial instruments.

##### Unrestricted Funds

Unrestricted funds represent donations, grants and other incoming resources received for the objects of the charity without a specified purpose and are available as general funds. From time to time the Trustees may establish Designated Funds out of Unrestricted Funds to meet contingencies.

##### Restricted Funds

Restricted funds are used for specific purposes as laid down by the donor. Expenditure which meets these criteria is charged to the fund, together with a fair allocation of management and support costs.

#### 2 LEGAL STATUS OF THE COMPANY

Asylum Welcome is a company limited by guarantee, incorporated in the United Kingdom, with its registered office at Unit 7 Newtec Place, Magdalen Road, Oxford OX4 1RE.

The liability of each member in the event of a winding up is limited to £1.

# ASYLUM WELCOME

NOTES FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024 (continued)

		2024			2023
3 DONATIONS		Unrestricted	Restricted	Total	Total
		£	£	£	£
<b>Trusts and Foundations</b>	Asda Foundation	-	-	-	1,460
	Beatrice Laing Trust	6,000	-	6,000	6,000
	Bromley Charitable Trust	-	20,000	20,000	20,000
	Society of The Holy Child Jesus	-	-	-	12,000
	Oxfordshire Community Foundation Loneliness	-	-	-	7,500
	Lloyds Bank Foundation	25,250	-	25,250	27,250
	Henry Smith Charity	-	107,300	107,300	60,000
	Oxfordshire Community Foundation RCOs	-	-	-	10,112
	Leigh Trust	-	2,500	2,500	-
	Maggie Black Trust	-	5,000	5,000	-
	Oxfordshire Community Foundation	-	4,000	4,000	-
	Garfield Weston	25,000	-	25,000	-
	Oxfordshire Community Grant	-	10,000	10,000	-
	St Michael's & All Saints' Charities	-	2,500	2,500	2,000
	CAF Bank Foundation	31,250	-	31,250	-
	Horseman Trust	5,000	-	5,000	-
	The Tolkien Trust	-	124,000	124,000	110,000
	St Clement's Charities	-	-	-	4,000
	Oxflap	-	15,009	15,009	3,970
	National Lottery	-	-	-	10,000
	Educational Opportunity Foundation (formerly BFSS)	-	21,355	21,355	6,227
	The Roundton Trust	-	-	-	5,000
	Santander Digital Inclusion	20,000	47,505	67,505	20,678
	Silken Trust	6,000	-	6,000	-
	BRC Ukraine	-	6,000	6,000	-
	Oxford Homeless Movement NRPF	-	22,050	22,050	21,000
	29th May 1961 Settlement	-	7,000	7,000	7,000
	Nominet Foundation	-	10,000	10,000	-
	Odin Charitable Trust	10,000	-	10,000	-
	Heinz Foundation	-	3,215	3,215	-
	Black Rock Charitable Foundation	-	6,067	6,067	8,900
	Brunner Trust	2,500	-	2,500	-
	Anglo American Charitable Trust	1,560	-	1,560	-
	Pye Charitable Trust	-	-	-	4,000
	Stanton Ballard Charitable Trust	1,000	-	1,000	-
	Bluc Thread	2,000	-	2,000	35,000
	OCVA NRPF	-	-	-	10,380
	Adrian Swire Trust	-	15,000	15,000	-
	Small grants (amounts less than £1,000)	2,550	2,501	5,051	3,720
		<b>138,110</b>	<b>431,002</b>	<b>569,112</b>	<b>396,197</b>
<b>Statutory Grants</b>	National Insurance Rebate	5,000	-	5,000	5,000
	West Oxfordshire DC Outreach	-	14,500	14,500	-
	Oxford City Council Syrian Resettlement	-	-	-	4,500
	Oxford City Council Youth Opportunities	-	-	-	4,192
	Oxford City Council Community Champions	-	-	-	5,500
	Oxford City Council Hardship	-	4,000	4,000	-
	Oxford City Council Research Project	-	9,900	9,900	-
	Oxford City Council Kassam outreach	-	1,250	1,250	5,000
	Oxford City Council Big Ideas	-	8,400	8,400	6,750
	Oxford City Council Health Project	-	7,000	7,000	-
	South Oxfordshire DC Bike Project	-	1,380	1,380	-
	Oxford City Council Schools Project	-	33,820	33,820	31,590
		<b>5,000</b>	<b>80,250</b>	<b>85,250</b>	<b>62,532</b>



# ASYLUM WELCOME

NOTES FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024 (continued)

		2024			2023
3 CONTINUED		Unrestricted	Restricted	Total	Total
		£	£	£	£
<b>Faith organisations</b>	Oxford Jewish Congregation	-	-	-	1,122
	Dorchester Abbey	1,250	-	1,250	-
	St Andrew's PCC	2,258	-	2,258	4,925
	St Peter's Wolvercote	1,135	-	1,135	-
	St Mary's Church Garsington	-	-	-	1,660
	Other Faith Organisation Donations (under £1,000)	6,890	-	6,890	8,986
		<b>11,533</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>11,533</b>	<b>16,693</b>
<b>Colleges &amp; Schools</b>	Abingdon School	-	-	-	2,000
	Dragon School Oxford	-	-	-	1,250
	St Edward's Oxford	8,185	-	8,185	24,250
	Magdalen College School Oxford	500	-	500	4,360
	Other College Donations (less than £1000)	6,000	-	6,000	3,963
		<b>14,685</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>14,685</b>	<b>35,823</b>
<b>Individual donations &amp; legacies</b>	Major donations (3 donors)	14,893	-	14,893	16,925
	Legacy	-	-	-	7,013
	Other Individual Donations	178,603	282	178,885	190,527
	Gift Aid	13,862	-	13,862	23,034
		<b>207,358</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>207,640</b>	<b>237,499</b>
<b>Partnerships &amp; other community organisations</b>	Key 2 Futures	-	2,400	2,400	4,800
	Red Cross Destitution Fund	-	10,229	10,229	18,665
	RRSG	-	-	-	6,700
	One World Festival	-	-	-	435
	Aspire RESP	-	25,022	25,022	-
	Active Oxfordshire	-	14,260	14,260	-
	SOAS	-	7,590	7,590	-
	Community Organisations	16,780	500	17,280	27,299
	Corporate Donations	5,938	16,000	21,938	-
		<b>22,718</b>	<b>76,001</b>	<b>98,719</b>	<b>57,899</b>
<b>Total Donations and Grants</b>		<b>399,404</b>	<b>587,535</b>	<b>986,939</b>	<b>806,643</b>
4 CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES					
<b>Trusts &amp; Foundations</b>	Justice Together	-	129,955	129,955	147,088
		<b>-</b>	<b>129,955</b>	<b>129,955</b>	<b>147,088</b>
<b>Statutory Grants &amp; Contracts</b>	Oxford City Council UKRS/ARAP	-	249,650	249,650	202,934
	Oxfordshire County Council Afghan Hotels Support Contract	112,638	-	112,638	373,101
	Oxfordshire County Council Ukraine Refugees Support Contr	193,163	-	193,163	232,150
	EUSS	-	11,498	11,498	64,634
	Oxford City Council Dispersal	-	19,938	19,938	-
		<b>305,801</b>	<b>281,086</b>	<b>586,887</b>	<b>872,819</b>
<b>Total Charitable Activities</b>		<b>305,801</b>	<b>411,041</b>	<b>716,842</b>	<b>1,019,907</b>

# ASYLUM WELCOME

## NOTES FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31 2024 (continued)

### 5 FIXED ASSETS

	Office Equipment, Fixtures & Fittings
<b>Cost</b>	£
Opening Balance April 1 2023	7,954
Disposals	-
Closing Balance March 31 2024	<u>7,954</u>
<b>Accumulated Depreciation</b>	
Opening Balance 1 April 2023	7,954
Charge for year	-
Closing Balance 31 March 2024	<u>7,954</u>
<b>Net Book Value</b>	
At 31 March 2024	<u>-</u>
At 31 March 2023	<u>-</u>

### 6 INTANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Website
<b>Cost</b>	
Opening Balance 1 April 2023	4,625
Additions in the year	-
Closing Balance 31 March 2024	<u>4,625</u>
<b>Accumulated Amortisation</b>	
Opening Balance 1 April 2023	3,084
Charge for the year	1,541
Closing Balance 31 March 2024	<u>4,625</u>
<b>Net Book Value</b>	
At 31 March 2024	<u>-</u>
At 31 March 2023	<u>1,541</u>

### 7 DEBTORS

	2024	2023
Prepayments	22,878	17,820
Debtors		
Accounts Receivable	13,072	
Other Debtors	<u>535</u>	<u>158,890</u>
Accrued Income	<u>102,563</u>	<u>22,342</u>
	<u>139,048</u>	<u>199,052</u>

### 8 CREDITORS : AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2024	2023
Creditors & Accruals	30,290	54,454
PAYE & National Insurance	22,031	25,040
Pension Creditor	3,685	4,431
Deferred Income	<u>94,688</u>	<u>171,775</u>
	<u>150,694</u>	<u>255,700</u>

Note 9

### 9 DEFERRED INCOME

	Balance 1.4.23	Funding Received	Released to SOFA	Deferred 31.3.24
Bromley Trust	15,000	20,000	20,000	15,000
Santander Digital	40,891	39,684	47,505	33,070
Oxfordshire Community Foundation	22,050	-	22,050	-
Lloyds Foundation	18,750	25,000	25,000	18,750
Educational Opportunity Foundation (formerly BFSS)	6,227	24,906	21,355	9,778
Swan Mountain Trust	-	4,000	-	4,000
Black Rock Foundation	6,067	-	6,067	-
St Michael's & All Saints' Charities	-	2,500	2,500	-
Justice Together	-	129,955	129,955	-
BRC Ukraine	6,000	-	6,000	-
Leigh Trust	2,500	-	2,500	-
Maggie Black Trust	5,000	-	5,000	-
Sanctuary Wheels	1,380	-	1,380	-
Oxford City Council Schools project	47,910	-	33,820	14,090
	<u>171,775</u>	<u>246,045</u>	<u>323,132</u>	<u>94,688</u>

Deferred Income represents income received prior to 31 March 2024 but which relates to periods post 1 April 2024

NOTES FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024  
(continued)

10 RESTRICTED FUNDS		Movement in Resources			
	Balance				Balance
	1.4.2023	Additions	Outgoings	Transfers	31.3.2024
Services	£	£	£	£	£
Adult & Family Advice	-	90,450	90,450	-	-
Youth	-	42,400	42,400	-	-
Huntercombe project	-	20,000	20,000	-	-
Employment and Education	421	13,067	13,488	-	-
Food	-	2,500	2,500	-	-
Hardship	-	37,736	32,322	-	5,414
Dispersal/Outreach	-	35,688	32,960	-	2,728
Europa Welcome	-	11,498	11,498	-	-
Bike Scheme	-	9,640	9,640	-	-
Aspire RESP	-	25,022	25,022	-	-
UKRS/ARAP	-	249,650	249,650	-	-
Schools Project	8,454	55,175	55,175	-	8,454
Justice Together	-	129,955	129,955	-	-
Digital Inclusion	5,263	57,505	39,915	-	22,853
Ukraine	(570)	26,000	25,430	-	-
Health Project	-	7,000	4,778	-	2,222
Research projects	-	17,490	13,836	-	3,654
Sanctuary Hosting	27,717	83,800	110,765	-	752
Core	40,000	84,000	124,000	-	-
	81,285	998,576	1,033,784	-	46,077

Core funding is for core services or for support costs.

The current lease for the premises occupied by Asylum Welcome was renewed in March 2022 for an eight and a half year term. The Trustees believe it is prudent to designate £50,000 to cover the cost of upgrading our premises and dilapidations

12 ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS				2024	2023
	Fixed Assets	Net Current Assets	Total	Total	
	£	£	£	£	
Restricted Funds	-	1,079,861	1,079,861	81,285	
Unrestricted funds	-	417,652	417,652	653,325	
Designated Funds	-	50,000	50,000		
	-	712,209	712,209	784,610	

## ASYLUM WELCOME

### NOTES FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024 (Continued)

#### 13 STAFF COSTS

	2024	2023
	£	£
Salaries	1,047,729	994,967
National Insurance and Pension Contributions	123,534	119,715
Total	<u>1,171,263</u>	<u>1,114,682</u>

#### Numbers

	2024	2023
Number of staff employed	<u>36</u>	<u>45</u>
Full time Equivalents	<u>28</u>	<u>36</u>

No employees received employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) of more than £60,000

Employee benefits paid to key management personnel totalled £54,056 (2023 £51,640)

The evaluated value of our volunteers time, for the year under review, of 18,338 hours at rates provided by the European Social Fund, equates to a value of £315,078

The staff annual leave year is co-terminus with our year end and as an insignificant number of holidays are carried forward, we have not accounted for any liability in respect of holidays owed.

#### 14 TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND EXPENSES

No remuneration, directly or indirectly, out of the funds of the charity was paid or was payable for the year to any trustee or to any person known to be connected to any trustee.

No amounts were reimbursed to any Trustees (2023 - NIL) during the year.

#### 15 OBLIGATIONS UNDER LEASES

##### Operating leases

The total of future minimum lease payments is as follows:

	2024	2023
	£	£
Not later than one year	57,380	57,380
More than one year until first break clause	319,175	376,585
	<u>376,555</u>	<u>433,965</u>

The amount of non-cancellable operating lease payments recognised as an expense during the year was £57,380

#### 16 RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

Aggregate donations from Trustees, and connected parties, in the year amounted to £2,726 (2023 £2,546). The Trustees confirm that there have been no other related party transactions that require disclosure in the accounting period.

## NOTES FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024 (Continued)

## Raising Funds Charitable Activities

Direct costs have been allocated to the charity's activities when they can be identified. Support costs are allocated according to broad judgements of the amount of staff and volunteer time spent on each activity. Auditors fees were £8,100 for 2023-24 (£7,332 for 2022-23).