

Charity Registration Number: 1096874

BEDFORDSHIRE REFUGEE AND ASYLUM SEEKER SUPPORT (BRASS)

TRUSTEES REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

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FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

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LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

CHARITY NAME: Bedfordshire Refugee and Asylum Seeker Support

OTHER NAME CHARITY IS KNOWN BY: BRASS

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1096874

CHARITY'S PRINCIPAL ADDRESS:

27B Tavistock Street

Bedford

MK40 2RB

NAMES OF THE CHARITY TRUSTEES WHO MANAGE THE CHARITY

Victoria Hilliard

Cathy Moorhouse - Left 30th August 2024

Morris Johns - Chair since 3rd July 2020

Sanja Radic

James Biggs

Cass Howes

Jo Tester

Eric Masih

PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR

Brian Cunningham

BANKERS

RBS

Bedford Branch

15-19 Mill Street

Bedford

MK40 3EU

Main current account held since May 2021:

The Co-operative Bank

Delf House

Skelmersdale

WN8 6WT

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

The Trustees of the charity present their report together with the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025, prepared in accordance with the Charities Act 2011 and the Accounting and Reporting by Charities Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP 2005).

From April 2024 to March 2025 finance meetings and Trustee meetings were held quarterly, attended by the Chair, Committee members and staff. BRASS employs a Project Co-ordinator to oversee day to day business and to provide specialist advice, a part-time Benefits and Integration Adviser, two Employment and Immigration Advisers, a Finance Manager, Finance Officer, Fundraiser and Admin Officer. Much of the charity's work is undertaken by a team of dedicated volunteers.

The National Lottery Community Fund is part funding costs of the following posts - the Project Co-ordinator, the Admin Officer, the Benefits Adviser and the Immigration Adviser

A further two year grant was awarded by Harpur Trust from October 2024 to support the costs of the part-time posts of the Finance Manager & Finance Officer, as well as the Integration Adviser salary costs.

East of England Local Government Association (EELGA) is funding the costs of the Employment Adviser posts.

We thank Wixamtree Trust for their continued ongoing support for funding. Also, we would like to thank The Steel Trust, Gale Family Charity Trust, 29th May 1961 charitable Trust and Margaret Brereton for providing unrestricted funding. We would like to thank all our funders for their ongoing support.

OBJECTIVES AND REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

The charity is an established non-political, voluntary organisation working to empower, inform and support refugees and asylum seekers and their families, protect their rights and enable them to develop their independence and involvement in UK society. Specifically the charity was established for the benefit of refugees and asylum seekers in the County of Bedfordshire to assist in the relief of poverty, hardship or distress. Services are delivered from a local government owned property in Bedford town centre which is leased by BRASS.

BRASS continues to have strong working relationships with local organisations providing advice so that individuals can get support from the organisations best placed to offer it. Luton Law Centre and Luton law firms have qualified solicitors and case workers who take referrals from BRASS and provide telephone support to BRASS advisors. BRASS also works with the University of Bedfordshire Law Department to assist refugees with family reunification applications. BRASS works with the Citizens Advice Bureau to cross refer clients and makes referrals to the local MP who, in specific cases, helps with representations to the Home Office.

Referrals are received from Children's Services which is responsible for unaccompanied asylum seekers under the age of 18. The Community Voluntary Service (CVS) provides a regular supply of enthusiastic and committed volunteers and the Charity continues to receive invaluable support from the Bedford Borough Council.

BRASS works in partnership with both local and national charities. Advice and support are provided by the Refugee Council, which is the largest refugee agency in the UK, and Migrant Help. We are also a registered referrer for Bedford Food Bank. BRASS seeks to support the local voluntary sector and work towards financial self-sustainability.

BRASS is focused on working in partnership with other organisations to share knowledge and skills, prevent duplication, maximise effectiveness, cut costs and share facilities. On behalf of the Trustees of BRASS I can confirm that in carrying out our financial review we have considered and complied with our duty to have due regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

During the last financial year BRASS has supported 949 clients. We seek to support our client group's changing needs; the changes to the Benefits system and ever increasing complexity of immigration applications has increased demands for our services. Creating eVisa accounts was much more in demand this reporting year because the Home Office replaced Biometric Residence Permits (BRPs) with online immigration status records called eVisa. Most BRPs had an expiry date of 31 December 2024, and hence, there was a sudden demand to create eVisa accounts. We have had increasing numbers of clients with housing problems and needing help with the complexities of joining the social housing waiting lists.

We continue attending to our advice sessions three days a week, from 10am-2pm. We also offer appointments with our Immigration and Employment Advisers and with our Benefits Adviser. From April 2024 to March 2025 we were part of the Employment for Overseas Nationals (EON) project for the whole of Bedfordshire including in asylum hotels. The aim of the project was to promote effective integration by actions that support access to the labour market for overseas nationals in the East of England in order to deliver better employment outcomes. We worked with refugees and Ukrainians, and in addition we worked with asylum seekers before a decision was taken to assist them with the transition if they are granted asylum. Our target was to work with 100 clients but we exceeded that by registering 137 clients, with just over 50% being asylum seekers.

During the year we had 59 students attending classes with 13 volunteers providing English as a Second/Other Language lessons, amounting to a total of 399 lessons. In April we took over 50 people from the Sharnbrook Hotel to the Raptor Foundation and in August we had our annual seaside visit to Hunstanton. Refugee Week market stall was a success and the Football tournament at Russell Park was well attended and a great community event. We also had Christmas party for our clients and another at the Higgins Museum for the Sharnbrook residents.

Report of the Trustees cont'd....

FINANCIAL REVIEW

As in previous years, BRASS is very fortunate to have received funding from various different sources this year. During this year, we have received funding from:

The National Lottery Community Fund
Harpur Trust
Wixamtree Trust
Bedfordshire and Luton Community Foundation
The Garfield Weston Foundation
East of England Local Government Association (this is now called Local Government East)
Lottery Awards for All
29th May 1961 Charitable Trust
Bedfordshire Charitable Trust
Postcode Places Trust
The Hilden Charitable Fund
Gale Family Charity Trust

We thank all of our funders for their continued ongoing support this year.

Total Incoming Resources during the financial year were £196,497, almost 3% increase on the previous year. This has been used to provide funding to cover all our existing posts which are all filled and other direct costs and overheads. We are well on our way to completing funding for next year. We have a new fundraiser who started this year and have accessed 3 new funding sources and have other bids submitted awaiting results.

Costs increased this year by approximately 6% to £187,957 mainly due to an increase in staff pay and overheads.

FINANCIAL REVIEW RESERVES POLICY.

BRASS reserves as 31st March 2025, were £118,465. Of these funds £41,213 were restricted funds, the remaining £72,252 were unrestricted funds. The Trustee Board have established a policy whereby it aims to maintain sufficient unrestricted funds not invested in tangible fixed assets and not required to meet future budgeted expenditure, being the "free reserves", to be sufficient to support the future growth of the charity and provide sufficient reserves for dealing with possible contingencies such as short-term cessation of project activity or redundancy.

Approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf by:



Morris Johns,
Chair

Date: 16.9.25

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF BEDFORDSHIRE REFUGEE AND
ASYLUM SEEKER SUPPORT**

I report on the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2025 as set out on pages 7 to 12

This report is made solely to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). My work has been undertaken so that I might state to the charity's trustees those matters I am required to state to them in this report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, I do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's trustees as a body, for my work, for this report, or for the opinions I have formed.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

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

It is my responsibility to:

- * examine the financial statements under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- * to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- * to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

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

Independent examiner's statement

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

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

- * to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
 - * to prepare financial statements which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act;
- have not been met; or

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



John Esam

Mayfield Lodge
1 Main Road,
Biddenham
MK40 4BB

Dated: 8th Sept 2025

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES AS AT 31ST MARCH 2025

Incoming Resources	Note	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2025	Total 2024
		£	£	£	£
Grants receivable	3	46,430	142,863	189,293	181,156
Donations and other fund-raising activities	3	3,326	2,000	5,326	6,088
Investment income		405	-	405	375
Other income		1,473	-	1,473	3,300
Total Incoming Resources		51,634	144,863	196,497	190,919
Resources Expended					
Costs of generating funds		11,550	-	11,550	9,300
Charitable activities		23,628	152,672	176,300	166,234
Governance costs		107	-	107	39
Total Resources Expended		35,285	152,672	187,957	175,573
Net Incoming/ (Outgoing) Resources		16,349	(7,809)	8,540	15,346
Funds brought forward		70,033	39,892	109,925	94,579
Transfers between funds		(9,130)	9,130	-	-
Funds carried forward		77,252	41,213	118,465	109,925

All of the charity's activities are derived from the continuing operations during the two periods above.


BALANCE SHEET AT 31ST MARCH 2025

	Note	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2025	Total 2024
		£	£	£	£
Tangible assets	5	554	-	554	1,267
Current Assets					
Debtors and Prepayments	6	-	11,219	11,219	30,316
Cash and Bank in hand		76,698	32,814	109,512	85,916
Total Current Assets		76,698	44,033	120,731	116,232
Creditors Amounts falling due within one year	7	-	2,820	2,820	7,574
Net Current Assets		76,698	41,213	117,911	108,658
Net Assets		77,252	41,213	118,465	109,925
Funds of the Charity					
Restricted funds	10	-	41,213	41,213	39,732
Unrestricted & Restricted capital reserve		554	-	554	1,267
Designated funds		529	-	529	775
Total funds		77,252	41,213	118,465	109,925

Trustees' responsibilities

The trustees acknowledge their responsibility to comply with the requirements of the Charity Commission and confirm that the accounts have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP 2005) and Charities Act 2011.

Approved by the trustees and signed on their behalf by:

Name.....

Dated.....1.10.25

1. Accounting Policies

Statement of compliance

The financial statements have been prepared on the basis of historic cost and in accordance with the applicable United Kingdom Reporting Standards, the Charities Act 2011 and the Accounting and Reporting by Charities Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP 2005).

Basis of Preparation

As permitted by SORP 2005 the trustees have adapted the heading used to describe Incoming Resources and Resources Expended within the Statement of Financial Activities when presenting the results for the year.

INCOMING RESOURCES

Incoming resources are recognised when received or receivable by the charity. Income is derived from fund raising activities, donations. Grants are recognised on receipt or award unless, in the judgement of the trustees, conditions attached to the grant make it improbable that they will be received.

RESTRICTED FUNDS

Restricted funds are to be used for a specific purpose as laid down by the donor. Expenditure which meets these criteria is identified against the fund.

UNRESTRICTED FUNDS

Unrestricted funds are incoming resources received or receivable generated for charitable purposes and available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity and have not been designated for other purposes.

Paid Employees

BRASS employs a Project Co-ordinator to oversee day to day business and to provide specialist advice, a part-time Benefits Adviser and Integration Officer, two Employment and Immigration Advisers, a Finance Manager, a Finance Officer, a Fundraiser and an Admin Officer. Much of the charity's work is carried out by a team of dedicated volunteers.

Trustee Expenses

There were no payments or reimbursements made to any trustees during the financial year.

Fixed Assets

Assets with a useful life of more than two years are capitalised at cost and depreciated over their useful life. Depreciation on computer equipment is charged at 33% on a straight line basis.

Fixed Assets funded by capital grants are capitalised and a restricted capital reserve created. The reserve is reduced by the depreciation charge.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2025

2. Property & Operating Leases

i) Operating Lease Commitments - Nil.

(ii) The annual commitment for the land and buildings lease amounts to £10,686, (£9,688 in 2023/24), where the term remaining is between one and five years. There are no further lease commitments. Rent charges have increased for the current year.

3. Income from grants, donations and legacies	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2025	Total 2024
	£	£	£	£
Grants receivable	46,430	142,863	189,293	181,531
Donations and other fund raising activities	3,326	2,000	5,326	6,088
	49,756	144,863	194,619	187,619

4. Resources Expended

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2025	Total 2024
	£	£	£	£
Staff payroll costs	3,253	135,843	139,096	115,174
Volunteer expenses & training	(115)	-	(115)	394
Staff travel & training	848	-	848	840
Social worker	-	-	-	2,549
Rent, rates & insurance (Note 2)	4,406	7,378	11,784	13,135
IT, telephone & internet	756	4,000	4,756	4,824
Utilities, cleaning & maintenance.	7,776	-	7,776	4,204
Stationery, printing & postage	599	825	1,424	1,943
Publications & subscriptions	595	-	595	309
Web & promotional costs	716	-	716	179
Client outings & welfare costs	622	3,466	4,088	2,587
Depreciation	554	160	714	1,335
Governance costs	107	-	107	572
Other expenses	15,168	1,000	16,168	17,235
Total	35,285	152,672	187,957	165,280

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2025

5. Fixed Assets	Computer Equipment
Cost	£
At 1 April 2024	16,532
Additions	-
At 31 March 2025	<u>16,532</u>
Depreciation	
At 1 April 2024	15,265
Charge for year	<u>713</u>
At 31 March 2025	<u>15,978</u>
Net Book Value	
At 31 March 2024	<u>1,267</u>
At 31 March 2025	<u>554</u>

6. Debtors and prepayments due within one year

	2025	2024
	£	£
Debtors	-	-
Prepayments and accrued income	<u>11,219</u>	<u>30,316</u>
	<u>11,219</u>	<u>30,316</u>

7. Creditors and accruals due within one year

	2025	2024
	£	£
Creditors	30	30
Deferred income	-	-
Accruals	<u>2,790</u>	<u>7,544</u>
	<u>2,820</u>	<u>7,574</u>

8. Staff Costs

	2025	2024
	£	£
Gross wages	128,450	121,366
Employers National Insurance costs	9,482	8,535
Employers National Insurance rebate	(5,000)	(5,000)
Pension costs	6,164	5,821
	<u>139,096</u>	<u>130,722</u>

During the year BRASS employed; one full-time employee and seven part-time employees.

No employee earned more than £60,000.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2025

9. Restricted Income Funds as at March 31st 2025

Fund Name	Purpose and restriction
National Lottery Community Fund (i)	The money is part funding the salary costs of the Project Co-ordinator, the Admin Officer, the Benefits Adviser and the Immigration Adviser.
Lottery Awards for all (i) (a)	This fund is used to pay for beneficiary events and days out.
Harpur Trust (ii)	A two-year grant was awarded from October 2024 to support part of the salary costs of the part-time posts of the Finance Manager, Finance Assistant and the Integration Adviser.
East of England Local Government Association (iii)	These restricted funds are funding the Employment Support work.
Bedfordshire & Luton Community Fund	This money has funded part of the rent overheads cost.

10.Movement of Major Funds

Fund Name	Balance at 1st April 2024 £	Incoming resources £	Outgoing resources £	Transfers £	Balance at 31st March 2025 £
Other	70,033	51,634	(35,285)	(9,130)	77,252
Unrestricted Funds	70,033	51,634	(35,285)	(9,130)	77,252
Bedfordshire and Luton Community Trust	2,378	5,000	(7,378)		-
East of England Local Government Association	29,585	42,238	(38,286)	-	33,537
Big Lottery (i)	-	65,625	(71,206)	5,581	-
Lottery Awards for All (i) (a)	6,420	-	(3,466)	-	2,954
Harpur Trust (ii)	(2,103)	30,000	(30,176)	2,279	-
Panacea Trust	(1,270)	-	-	1,270	-
Small restricted grants	4,722	2,000	(2,000)	-	4,722
	39,732	144,863	(152,512)	9,130	41,213
Restricted capital reserve	160	-	(160)	-	-
Restricted Funds	39,892	144,863	(152,672)	9,130	41,213
	109,925	196,497	(187,957)	-	118,465